

## **The traditional history of The Zoroastrian Scriptures**

There exists a statement about the fate of the scriptures of the Daēnā which extends till the first centuries of the onset of Islam. After collecting and arranging for the last time the fragments of the Dēnkird, Ādurbād son of Emēd son of Ašavahišt added it, at the end of the third book of the Dēnkird, as a historical record.

Ādurbād first has traced the history of the transmission of the Avesta and Zand (§§ 1-8), and then has given the history of the last editions of the Dēnkird (§§ 9-13). The latter part “may be accepted as the actual history of the compilation of the work itself, the facts of which may, very possibly, have all been within the personal knowledge of the writer of the statement.”<sup>1</sup> His own work was rather to collect those written documents that fell to pieces and were scattered some time after the awful calamity that happened to Zardušt son of Ādurfarrōbay.

Ādurbād called this calamity *škeft* 𐬯𐬀𐬎 [ʾlm] *ud vizend* ‘terrible - - and harm’. According to B.T. Anklesaria and M.F. Kanga this makes allusions to the conversion of that son of Ādurfarrōbay to Islam.<sup>2</sup> Indeed Tabarī in his account of the trial of Afšīn has

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<sup>1</sup> . E.W. West, *Pahlavi Texts*, Part IV. Contents of the Nasks, Oxford U.P., 1892, xxx.

<sup>2</sup> . See Behrangore T. Anklesaria, *Vichītakīhā-i Zātsparam*, I, Bombay, 1964, vii; *The Pahlavi Rivāyat of Ātar-farnbag and Farnbag-Srōš*, Bombay, 1969, 21: “... and Zardušt-i Ātar-frenabag having deserted (his) own faith ...”.

M.F. Kanga, “The last chapter of Dēnkard Book III apar dēn nipēk dēnkart nipēk”, *Acta Orientalia*, 30/1966, 116-127.

reported that the high priest (Mubed) who took part in the trial “was a Magian who was later converted to Islam at the instance of the ‘Abbāsīd Khaliph Mutawakkil and became his boon companion.” At the time of this trial (841 A.D.) the Mubed was yet Mazdayasnian, although Afšīn said that “he was not a staunch believer in his own religion.”<sup>3</sup> Recently, François de Blois has revived Anklesaria’s conjecture in his article about the Persian calendar. To substantiate the claim that Zardušt was the “renegade” Mubed, he has amended the word 𐭮𐭥𐭥 to attribute to it the meaning of “an apostate”: “If one could countenance the conjecture that it is a scribal error for <’>hlmw<kyh>, the phrase could mean something like “as a result of the severe damage of the apostasy which befell Zardušt ī Ādurfarrōbayān, who had been the chief priest.”<sup>4</sup>

If Zardušt had really become a convert to Islam, the Magi would call him *agdēn* ‘of evil religion, infidel’ (Av. *aya.daēnā-*), *guzastag* ‘accursed’, and even *durvand* ‘lieful’ (Av. *drvant-*); the term *ahlemōg* ‘heretic’ (Av. *ašəmaoya-*) could not be used in referring to a convert to an evil religion. For example, Mazdak was cited as the typical *ahlemōg*<sup>5</sup>, whereas ‘Abdallāh, a convert, appeared as a *guzastag*.<sup>6</sup> Indeed apostasy<sup>7</sup> from the Good Religion includes two categories: *ahlemōgīh* ‘heresy’ and *agdēnīh* ‘evil religion’. The Magi made the difference between a heretic (*ahlemōg*) who nevertheless belonged to the community of the good religion and the one who was a member of an

<sup>3</sup> . طبری، تاریخ الرسل والملوک، de Goeje ، ۳ ، ۱۳۱۰ (ا. پاینده، ۱۳، ۵۹۲۷)

<sup>4</sup> . F. de Blois, « The Persian Calendar », *Iran*, 34/1996, (39-54), 53.

<sup>5</sup> . Cf. Vd 4.49 Z.

<sup>6</sup> . Cf. MGA 1.

<sup>7</sup> . Pers. *abāz-stāyīdan*, opp. *āstavānīh*.

external cult (that is, *agdēn*).<sup>8</sup> Manušcihr, a high priest who was nearly contemporary of that Zardušt, has only spoken of his innovations, and he has considered the innovations of his own brother, Zādspram, more radical.<sup>9</sup> We know that Zādspram was a good Mazdayasnian. It is inconceivable that Manušcihr had compared him with an “infidel”. We notice that de Blois is unfamiliar with the vocabulary of the good religion.

How can we read the word سج?<sup>10</sup>

There is no reason to amend it. سج /*alam*/ is a loan-word: Arabic ألم /*alam*/ ‘affliction; grief; suffering’, e.g. ألم يسوع المسيح /*alam yasū* ‘*al-Masīh*/ ‘the suffering of Jesus’, أسبوع الآلام /*usbū* ‘*ul-ālām*/ ‘the week of the suffering of Jesus’. The calamity which befell Zardušt was indeed his “suffering” and death. The absence of the idea of “martyr” among the Aryans has led the last compiler of the Dēnkird, Ādurbād, to use a foreign word, ‘*alam*. The ‘*alam* also befell Ādurbād’s son, Spendyād, who was “the leader of the faithful” (*hudēnān pēšubāy*), who was killed by the order of the Khaliph Al-Rāḏī (936 A.D.)<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> . Cf. Dk iii M 201 : sāmān ī āstavānīh ī abar veh dēn azabar andar x<sup>v</sup>ēš darag pēdāgēnīd. abāz-stāyīdan ī hangīrdīg do ēvēnag : ahlemōgīg, cōn anast menīdan, agdēnīg cōn a-veh menīdan ī veh dēn. R.C. Zaehner, quoting this passage, arrives at an opposite conclusion : The former (*ahlemōg*), who ignores the Good Religion, would seem to be a member of an external cult, a non-Zoroastrian ; the latter (*agdēn*) acknowledges the Good Religion, but considers it to be ‘not good’, or is not in agreement with the orthodox doctrine. *Zurvān, a Zoroastrian Dilemma*, Oxford, 1955, 45.

<sup>9</sup> . Cf. NM II 1, 13.

<sup>10</sup> . Haug reads *āramu*, West ‘displeasure (or defect)’, Nyberg *a-ram* ‘unrest, trouble’.

<sup>11</sup> . مسعودی، التنبيه والإشراف، بريل، ۱۸۹۳ء ۵-۱۰۴ .

Here is the Pārsīg text of Ādurbād's statement<sup>12</sup> with an English translation.

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<sup>12</sup> . As preserved in the Manuscripts K (K43, 2<sup>f</sup>-3<sup>f</sup>) and T (T 66, 324-325) and published by Madan (M 405-407) and Hoshengji Jamaspji and Haug, *An Old Zand-Pahlavi Glossary*, Bombay, 1867, xxxi-xxxv: Extract from the third volume of the Dīnkard (taken from Mulla Fīrūz, Avīzeh dīn, 5-22).

*mādayān/ Text*

Dk iii 420<sup>13</sup>

<sup>M405</sup> *abar dēn nibēg, dēnkird nibēg*<sup>14</sup>

*az nigēz ī veh dēn*

hād. (1) dēnkird nibēg kird(ag)<sup>15</sup> ast ī az visp-dānāgīh-pēsīd (pixšt)<sup>16</sup> dēn mazdesn pēdāgīh.

(2) nax<sup>v</sup>ist kird(ag) ī az veh-dēn pōryōdkēšān, ī vaxšvar yašt-fravahr spitāmān zardušt fradum hāvištān, ped pursišn ud ašnavišn ī az ham yašt-fravahr veh dēn pēdāgīg<sup>17</sup> dānišn ud āgāhīh ī abar harv dar, hangōšīdag ī rōšnīh ī az bun rōšn. (3) hān bun pursišn vizīr ī dahyubed burzāvand kay-vištāsp nibēgēnīdan bun, ud bun ō ganz ī 𐭮𐭥𐭥𐭥 /šasabīgān/ abespārdan, peccēn pessazagīhā vistardan framūd. (4) ud az hān pas peccēn ō diz ī nibišt frēstīd(an) ud ānōh-iz dāštan āgāhīh.

(5) ud andar vizend ī az mar ī dušfarr aleksander ō ērānšahr dēn ud xvadāyīh mad, hān ī ped diz ī nibišt<sup>M406</sup> ō sōzišn, hān ī ped ganz ī šasabīgān ō dast ī hrōmāyān mad, u-š ō-z 𐭮𐭥𐭥𐭥

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<sup>13</sup> . K : K 43 ; T : T 66 ; H : Haug (& Hoshangji) ; M : Madan.

<sup>14</sup> . 𐭮𐭥𐭥𐭥 𐭮𐭥𐭥𐭥 K.

<sup>15</sup> . 𐭮𐭥𐭥𐭥 T, 𐭮𐭥𐭥𐭥 K.

<sup>16</sup> . 𐭮𐭥𐭥𐭥 M, 𐭮𐭥𐭥𐭥 K, H.

<sup>17</sup> . 𐭮𐭥𐭥𐭥 M, K, 𐭮𐭥𐭥𐭥 H.

/yōnāyīg/ uzvān vizārdan ped āgāhīh<sup>18</sup> ī az pēšēnīgān peyvastag<sup>19</sup>.

(6) ud ōy bay ardašēr šāhān šāh ī pābagān mad ō abāz-ārāstārīh ī ērān x<sup>v</sup>adāyīh, ham nibēg az pargandagīh ō ēk-gyāg āvurd. (7) pōryōdkēš ahlav tōsar ī hērbēd (hērbēdān herbed K) būd abar mad, ud abāg pēdāgīh ī az abestāg abāz handāxtan, ud az hān pēdāgīh bavandagēnīdan framūd. (8) ud hamgōnag<sup>20</sup> kird, hangōšīdag ī brāh ī az bun rōšn<sup>21</sup>. <bun> ped ganz ī šasabīgān<sup>22</sup> dāštan, ud peccēn pessazagīhā frāxēnīdan (×frāyēnīdan) framūd āgāhīh.

(9) ud pas az vizend višōbišn ī az tāzīgān ō-z dīvān ud ganz ī kišvar mad, hufravard ādurfarrōbay<sup>23</sup> ī farroxzādān ī hudēnān pēšubāy būd hān peccēn ī kustagīhā pargandag būd nōg-abzār az pargandagīh abāz ō hamīh ud dīvān ī-š dar āvurd andar nigerišn ud handāzišn ī ō veh dēn abestāg ud zand pōryōdkēšān gōbišn, hangōšīdag ī peyrōg ī az hān brāh abāz kird.

(10) ped škeft  /alam/ ud vizend ī ō zardušt ī ādurfarrōbayān ī hudēnān pēšubāy būd jast, hān-z dīvān ō

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<sup>18</sup> . سو سوید K.

<sup>19</sup> . 𐭮𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥 M, 𐭮𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥 K, 𐭮𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥 H.

<sup>20</sup> . 𐭮𐭥𐭥𐭥 M, H.

<sup>21</sup> . 𐭮𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥 K, 𐭮𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥 M, H.

<sup>22</sup> . 𐭮𐭥𐭥𐭥 M, H, 𐭮𐭥𐭥𐭥 K.

<sup>23</sup> . 𐭮𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥 M, H, T.

višōbišn, ud hān nibēg <aziš> 𐭠𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥 /visistagīh/<sup>24</sup> ud  
pargandagīh ud aziš 𐭠-z kahvanīh, nastagīh<sup>25</sup> ud pūdagīh mad.

(11) ud az hān pas, an, ādurbād ī emēdān ī hudēnān pēšubāy,  
az yazdān 𐭠𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥 /nixvārišn/, dēn mazdesn ayyārīhišnīh<sup>26</sup>  
nōg-abzār ped x<sup>v</sup>āyišn ud vizōyišn ud ranz ī vēš im nibišt, <ēd>  
cē az hān <sup>M 407</sup> visāndag ud zruftag ud sūdāg ud xākāmēg dīvān  
abāz vindīd, ud ēd cē az abāz-griftagīh ud burdagīh ud truftagīh  
abāz āvurd ; (12) aziš vizīd 𐭠𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥 /mog/<sup>27</sup>-hampursagīg xrad-  
ayyārīh ped abāz-handāxtārīh ī 𐭠 pōryōdkēšān ī pēšēnīgān  
gōbišn ud kirdag<sup>28</sup> ud abestāg pēdagīh ; (13) ud abzōn ī az veh  
dēn dānāgīh<sup>29</sup> daragīhā pediš ārāst ud ristagēnīd, <hangōšīdag ī>  
bām-ē<sup>30</sup> ī az peyrōg ī hān brāh ī az rōšnīh ī bun rōšn ; ud  
hāmīsihā kird ped veh dēn nimūdārīh ēn ī nāmēnīd ped stūr-  
mānāgīh<sup>31</sup> ī hān vazurg bun dēnkird ī hazār-darag.

(14) ud peyrāst ēsted ped yazdān nirōg-dahišnīh, frēstīd ī 𐭠-z  
abar-mad ī pahlum dēnburdārān ī andar zamānag, ud madan-z ī  
𐭠 hudēnān dānišn<sup>32</sup> ud ruvān-ayyārīh, ud abāz peyvastan-z ī<sup>33</sup> 𐭠

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<sup>24</sup> . 𐭠𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥 K /kastagīh/ ?

<sup>25</sup> . vinastagīh ?

<sup>26</sup> . Cf. Dk iii M176<sub>1</sub>.

<sup>27</sup> . 𐭠𐭥𐭥𐭥 is a graphic variant of 𐭠𐭥𐭥 /mog, magūg/. Cf. Dk iii M 308

*handāzag 𐭠 pōryōdkēšān dastvarīh ud 𐭠𐭥𐭥 /mog/ dānāg hērbed hamvēnišnīh  
kirdan, VZ 21.10 kustag ī 𐭠𐭥𐭥𐭥 /mogān/.*

<sup>28</sup> . Cf. Petit ī Ādurbād 1.3 kirdag ī pōryōdkēšān.

<sup>29</sup> . 𐭠𐭥𐭥𐭥 T, H, 𐭠𐭥𐭥 K.

<sup>30</sup> . 𐭠𐭥𐭥 T, 𐭠𐭥𐭥 K.

<sup>31</sup> . 𐭠𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥 K, 𐭠𐭥𐭥𐭥 M, H, T. Cf. Dk col. M 947 *stūr-  
mānāg x<sup>v</sup>ēšīh ī x<sup>v</sup>ēš rāy kē nibišt.*

<sup>32</sup> . 𐭠𐭥𐭥𐭥 K ; 𐭠𐭥𐭥𐭥 T, M.

abārīg ērān nigēz ī dēn mazdesn āgāhīh ud hambun abzārdar  
abāz kirdan ī az-iz hān ī abardum kird hāvištān ī ušīdar ī  
zarduštān ped abāz-peyvastārīh ī az ušīdar veh dēn.<sup>34</sup>

### **Translation/ *vizārišn***

#### **About the Avesta scripture and the book Dēnkird**

(1) The book Dēnkird is a work according to the revelation of the Daēnā Māzdayasni, which is written<sup>35</sup> about all the knowledge.

(2) It was, at first, made by the first teachers of the good religion who were the first disciples of the prophet<sup>36</sup> Spitama Zaraθuštra, of the revered fravaši, through asking and hearing the same (Zaraθuštra) of the revered fravaši the revealed science of the good religion and knowledge on every subject<sup>37</sup>, such a light (that emanates) from an original light.

(3) Kavi Vištāspa, the lord of the land, who was with sublime insight<sup>38</sup>, ordered the original questions and sentences to be recorded in an original book (Avesta), and the original to be deposited in the Royal Treasury, and the copies to be distributed in an appropriate manner. (4) After that, he sent a copy to the Record Fortress, and he kept the knowledge (Zand)<sup>39</sup> also there.

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<sup>33</sup> . 𐬨𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀𐬎𐬀𐬎𐬀 M,T, 𐬨𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀𐬎𐬀𐬎𐬀 H, 𐬨𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀𐬎𐬀𐬎𐬀 K.

<sup>34</sup> . K adds pēdāgīh .

<sup>35</sup> . pēsīd/ pixšt lit. ‘adorned’, it also means ‘inscribed’, cf. my  
« Education (to learn and teach, to write and read) ».

<sup>36</sup> . *vaxšvar* ‘who brings word, prophet’.

<sup>37</sup> . *pēdāgīg dānišn* refers to the Avesta, and *āgāhīh* to the Zand.

<sup>38</sup> . *burzāvand* ‘exalted’ rendering Av. *bərəzaidī-*.

<sup>39</sup> . zand : āgāhīh.

(5) During the damage which came upon the Religion and Kingdom of the Aryan land<sup>40</sup>, from the brigand of evil fortune, Alexander, that (copy) which was in the Record Fortress was burnt, and that (original text) in the Royal Treasury came into the hands of the Greeks who translated it into the Greek language, as knowledge connected with the ancients.

(6) His (late) Majesty Ardašēr, king of kings, son of Pābag, came to restore the Aryan kingdom, and alike he collected the scripture which was in a scattered state. (7) And there appeared an “orthodox”<sup>41</sup> teacher, Saint Tōsar<sup>42</sup> who was a teaching priest.<sup>43</sup> Ardašēr ordered him to collate [the dispersed texts] according to the revelation from the Avesta, and to complete [the scripture] on the basis of the same revelation. (8) He did so accordingly, such splendour emanating from an original light. He (the king) ordered the original to be kept in the Royal Treasury, and copies to be disseminated in an appropriate manner; the Knowledge (Zand) too.

(9) After the damage and devastation which came from the Arabs, even to the archives and treasurers of the region, [a descendant of the blessed Ādurbād], Ādurfarrōbay, son of Farrozzād, who was the responsible to the Khaliph for the Mazdayasnians<sup>44</sup>, brought anew the copies which were scattered on all sides, [thus] bringing [the scripture] from its scattered state back to unification and [depositing it] in the Archives of

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<sup>40</sup> . \**airyānaqm xšaθra* = Persia.

<sup>41</sup> . *pōryōdkēš* ‘a professor of the ancient (teaching)’.

<sup>42</sup> . He is also called « Tansar » in Arabic and Persian texts.

<sup>43</sup> . K : *hērbedān hērbed* ‘head of the teaching priests’. Cf. NT :

جواب نامه جشنسفشاه شاهزاده طبرستان از تنسر دانای پارس هرید هرابده اردشیر بابک.

<sup>44</sup> . *hudēnān pēšubāy* lit. ‘leader of those of the good religion’, cf. Aram. *rēš gālūtā* ‘exilarch’.

the Court (his library in Bagdād), after having inspected and collated them with the good religion, (i.e.) the Avesta and Zand and the discourses (/ books) of the first teachers, such a luminosity which was made again from that splendour.

(10) Following the terrible suffering and harm that happened to Zardušt, son of Ādurfarrōbay, who was the leader of the people of the good religion, the Archives also came to devastation, and the book was affected, one part, due to break and dispersion, and another, by obsolescence, deterioration and decay.

(11) And after that, I, Ādurbād, son of Emēd, who am the leader of the people of the good religion, through the prompting of the Yazata, with the help of the Daēnā Māzdayasni, with much research, investigation and toil, wrote anew this [book of the Dēnkird], from whatever I found from that decomposed, swept, worn out, and dust-covered Archives, or whatever I recovered from snatching, abstracting, and stealing; (12) and, having consulted the Magi, and with the help of wisdom, I collated them with the discourses and works of the ancient teachers and the revelations of the Avesta; (13) and as an increase from the *Scientia Divina*<sup>45</sup> I arranged it into chapters and put them in order, such a beam that emanates from the luminosity of that splendour that emanates from the light of the original light. And I compiled the whole (book) as an exposition of the good religion, and called this, as a substitute successor of that great original [scripture], the “Dēnkird of one thousand chapters”.

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<sup>45</sup> . *veh dēn dānāgīh* lit. ‘science of the good religion’

(14) It was accomplished owing to the strength given by the Yazata; and it was also sent for the decision of the best laymen<sup>46</sup> of the period, and it also came for the knowledge of the people of the good religion and the assistance of their soul, and also for transmitting to the rest of the Aryans the exposition of the knowledge (Zand) of the Daēnā Māzdayasni, and in order to make again, a little more powerfully, from the superior work of the disciples of Uxšyaṭ.ərəta, son of Zaratuštra, concerning the restoration of the good religion from Uxšyaṭ.ərəta.

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<sup>46</sup> . *dēnburdārān* lit. ‘upholders of religion’, cf. AVN 1.7 *mubedān ud dēnburdārān*.