

šāhzādag ud dogānag ī ōy  
**The Prince and his alter ego**  
The so-called “Hymn of the Pearl”

This “hymn”, of which early Syriac and Greek versions exist, was originally composed by a poet-singer (Parth. *gōsān*), probably in Parthian.<sup>1</sup> It relates the journey of a young prince from Orient (Parthia) to Occident (Egypt) and his adventures there. The object of the journey is not only to seize the unique pearl, but indeed it is a rite of the royal trial to make manifest if the hero possess the royal Fortune. The letter-eagle of the hymn that guided the prince home may be compared with that of Kavi Haosravah who showed his possession of the royal Fortune (*kayān farr*, Av. *kavaēm x<sup>v</sup>arənō*) through a journey to Vahmandiz and the capture of the fortress by the help of the letter-bird.<sup>2</sup> The fortune itself appears in the Avesta Yašt to the Earth and the Fortune (Yt 19) as a bird of prey, *vārəyna*, “the swiftest of birds, the quickest of flying creatures” (Yt 14.19). The eagle (Syr. *našrā*) of the Hymn is described as “the king of all birds”; in the Zand(-Avesta), *saēna* ‘eagle’ is the royal chief (Av. *ahu-*) of the birds, and *karšiptar* ‘raven’ the religious chief, the *ratu*.<sup>3</sup> The alter ego of the hero that seemed to him to become like a mirror of himself was called *z<sup>e</sup>hūtā* ‘splendid, shining’, resembling the *daēnā* of a truthful, that in the Hādōxt Nask 2.9 has been described as *xšōiθnī* (rendered by Pers. *rōšn* ‘light, radiant’). In the hymn the “splendid” of the prince grew according to his actions (Syr. ‘*amlā*’), just like the *daēnā* of a truthful.<sup>4</sup>

Raham Asha

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<sup>1</sup> . For the edition of both the Syriac and Greek texts, and the different modern interpretations of the hymn, see P.-H. Poirier, *L’hymne de la perle des Actes de Thomas*, Louvain-la-Neuve, 1981.

<sup>2</sup> . See

رهام اشه، دستور دینیار و پیامبر دمدار، ارمان، ۱۳۶۲/۱۹۹۳، ۴۸-۵۷.

<sup>3</sup> . Cf. Bd 121.

<sup>4</sup> . Cf. Hn 2.9 *hava daēna : hān ī xvēš dēn hunišn ī xvēš*.

Here is the text rendered into Pārsīg.

- 1 ka an aburnāydād mānēn  
ped šahr ī (x<sup>v</sup>ad, ped) vīs ī pidar
- 2 ud andar x<sup>v</sup>āstag ud nāz  
ī parvarāgān āsāyēn
- 3 az x<sup>v</sup>arāsān, hān ī amā mēhan  
pidarān tōšag sāxt u-n an frēstīd
- 4 u-n az x<sup>v</sup>āstag ī-mān ganz  
bār-ē bē bast man vasnād
- 5 kalān bē-z sabuk  
kū-m x<sup>v</sup>ad bē burd hād.
  
- 6 zarr ī abaršahr<sup>5</sup>  
ud asēm ī ganzag<sup>6</sup> ī vazurg
- 7 ud kargehan<sup>7</sup> ī hindūgān  
ud gōhr ī az kušān šahr<sup>8</sup>
- 8 u-n ped meyān-am bast kamar ī ped x<sup>v</sup>ēnāhan  
ī āhan-škenn.
- 9 u-n kand (vastarg-am ī bāmīg<sup>9</sup>)  
ī-šān ped dōšārm kird man vasnād
- 10 ud varr ī karmēr  
ī abar bašn-am peymānīg vaftag.
  
- 11 u-n abāg man pašt-ē bē kird  
ud hō nibišt ped hān ī man dil kū dā nē framōšān:
- 12 “agar frōd šavāy andar mudrāy<sup>10</sup>  
ud āvarāy murvārīd ēvtāg
- 13 hān ī ast niyandar drayā  
nazd aviš az-ē damān,
- 14 ā bē peymōzāy hān ī tō bāmīg  
u-t varr kē-š abar sayed;
- 15 ud abāg hān ī tō brādar, hān ī amāh bidaxš<sup>11</sup>  
nāmburdār bavāy ped šahr.”
  
- 16 hišt-am x<sup>v</sup>arāsān, frōd šud ham  
do parvānag<sup>12</sup> abāg;

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<sup>5</sup>. Syr. ܐܒܪܫܗܪ / Gr. χρουσός ἐστὶν ὁ φόρτος τῶν ἄνω. Pers. *abar-šahr* lit. ‘upper country’, the north-eastern half of the Persian kingdom (Parth. inscr. ṗrhštr); a district in Xvarāsān (Syr. ܝܚܘܪܫܐܝܢ) with the principal city Nēšābuhr.

<sup>6</sup>. Syr. ܐܒܪܫܗܪ (but the Greek version renders *ganzag* ad sensum: ἄσμος τῶν μεγάλων). We know two Ganzag: one in Sogdiana (Sogd. qnz’ γ, Gr. Γάζακα), the other in Atropatene (/ Lesser Media).

<sup>7</sup>. Syr. ܟܪܓܗܢ ‘chalcedony, carnelian’. Pers. *kargehan* from Skt. *karketanaḥ* m. ‘chrysoberyl’; Armen *karkehan*.

<sup>8</sup>. Syr. ܟܘܫܐܢ / Gr. μαργαρίται ἐκ Κοσάνων. Parth. inscr. kwšn ḥštr.

<sup>9</sup>. ܒܐܡܝܓ: *bāmīg*. Cf. *vastrāscā kašā bāminivā*.

<sup>10</sup>. ܡܘܕܪܐܝܢ: *mudrāy* (OPers. *mudrāya*- ‘Egypt’).

<sup>11</sup>. ܒܝܕܐܝܫ ‘second (in command)’ possibly renders *bidaxš* ‘secundus a rege’, cf. *jāmāsp ī bidaxš*.

<sup>12</sup>. ܩܪܘܢܐܓ (ܩܪܘܢܐܓ) / ὀδηγός. Pers. *parvānag* ‘guide, forerunner’.

- 17 cē rāh tarsagāvand būd ud dušvār  
ud an aburnāy būd ham ped ēvarzīdan rāy.
- 18 vidašt ham tar ō marz ī mēšān,  
kāravānsrāy ī vāzāragānān ī x<sup>v</sup>arāsān,  
19 ud rasīd ham ō bābil zamīg,  
ud šud ham andar parvār ī sarbāg<sup>13</sup>
- 20 frōd šud ham niyandar mudrāy,  
pas hamrāhān drod ō man dād.
- 21 rāst šud ham ō az rōn,  
nazd aviš aspanz<sup>14</sup> (pand) pād ham,  
22 kū dā x<sup>v</sup>afsād ud dā nibayād,  
ud aziš murvārīd bē stānān.
- 23 cē tan-ē būd ham, ēvtāg būd ham,  
az hamespanzān-am bēgānag būd ham.
- 24 hamcihr ī x<sup>v</sup>ad, āzād-ē  
az x<sup>v</sup>arāsān ānōh dīd-am  
25 rēdak ī abāyišnīg ī huxēm  
ī vāspuhr<sup>15</sup>;
- 26 ō man āmad ud peyvast.
- 27 u-m ōy kird hamxāg ī x<sup>v</sup>ēš,  
hamāl-ē kē-m xīr abāg hambaxt.
- 28 handarzēnīd-am aviš abar mudrāyīgān,  
ud abar gumēzišn abāg nēpākān.
- 29 u-m ēdōn jāmag peymuxt cōn avēšān  
dā ka-m tar mā kunānd kū az bē-kišvar mad ham  
30 ped stadan ī murvārīd,  
u-šān bē vigrāsānd az andarg man.
- 31 bē ōn jast kū-šān  
āgāh būd hend kū nē ham ādehīg.
- 32 pas avēšān āmixt hend abāg man ped frēb,  
u-šān an caxšēnīd hān-z ī x<sup>v</sup>ēš x<sup>v</sup>arišn.
- 33 man framušt kū šāhzādag ham<sup>16</sup>  
u-m perstīd hān ī avēšān šāh.
- 34 u-m framušt murvārīd  
ī hān jādag rāy pidarān frēstīd ham;  
35 az bahr ī sangēnīh ī-šān pih rāy  
nibast ham ped būšyāsp.
- 36 hān ī andar man jast  
pidarān aviš āgāh būd hend ud bēš burd hend.
- 37 pas x<sup>v</sup>and andar šahr ī x<sup>v</sup>ēš  
kū harv kas ō dar āyēh.
- 38 šahriyārān ud sālārān ī pahlav<sup>17</sup>,

<sup>13</sup> . 𐭮𐭥𐭥𐭥 / λαβύρινοϛ. Pers. *sarbāg*; Sogd. s'rbwγ/ C s'rb'γ 'tower'.

<sup>14</sup> . 𐭮𐭥𐭥𐭥 from Pers *aspanz* 'lodging, inn'.

<sup>15</sup> . 𐭮𐭥𐭥𐭥 / υἷον μεγιστάνων.

<sup>16</sup> . Cf. AJ 16 *harv kas ō bēgānagīh ī nāf ... rasend*.

- ud hāmōyēn vazurgān ī x<sup>v</sup>arāsān.  
39 u-n bast abar man pašn<sup>18</sup>-ē  
kū: andar mudrāy hišt nē bavān.  
40 u-n nibišt ō man nāmag-ē,  
ud hāmōyēn vazurgān nām ī x<sup>v</sup>ēš ped (bun ī nāmag) nihād:  
41 “az hān ī tō pidar, šāhān šāh,  
ud mādar, x<sup>v</sup>arāsān bāmbišn,  
42 ud brādar, hān ī amāh bidaxš,  
tō rāy, hān ī amāh pusar kē hē andar mudrāy, drod!  
43 vigrās, ud āxēz az x<sup>v</sup>āb,  
ō soxan ī amāh nāmag bē dār gōš!  
44 āyās kū šāhzādag hē;  
vēn bannagīh kē rāy hamē kunē!  
45 āyās hān ī murvārīd  
kē rāy ō mudrāy mad hē!
- 46 āyād āvar hān ī tō bāmīg,  
u-t varr ī naxšag āyās,  
47 dā-šān bē peymōzāy ud x<sup>v</sup>ad bē ārāy,  
ka ped gurdnāmag nām-at bē barānd,  
48 ud abāg brādar, hān ī amāh pasāgrīv<sup>19</sup>  
abāg ped šahr bē bavāy.”  
49 nāmag ī man nāmag-ē būd  
ī šāh ped dast ī x<sup>v</sup>ēš āvašt būd,  
50 az bazagān ī bābil-zādag,  
ud dēvān<sup>20</sup> ī stambag ī sarbāg.
- 51 vāyīd hangōšīdag ī āluh  
šāh ī hamāg vayān  
52 vāyīd ud pedispurd ped-pahlūg ī man  
ud hamāg būd soxan.  
53 ped vāng ī ōy ud vāng ī cannišn (/ mārīšn) ī ōy,  
vigrād ham ud āxist ham az būšyāsp.  
54 grift-am ud bōsīd-am  
višād-am<sup>x</sup> muhr ī ōy, pehipursīd-am.  
55 pedisāy cē ped dil-am pišt būd  
soxan ī nāmag-am nibišt būd.
- 56 āyāst-am kū: šāhzādag ham,  
ud hān ī man āzādīh cihr ī x<sup>v</sup>ēš peyvahēd.  
57 āyāst-am hān ī murvārīd  
kē rāy ō mudrāy frēstīd ham.  
58 u-m nivist afsāyān ōy ī  
az ī zōrīg ī damān  
59 unāyēnīd-am u-m nibāst  
cē nām ī pidar ī x<sup>v</sup>ad abar ōy āyādēnīd-am

<sup>17</sup> . 𐭎𐭕𐭕𐭕 / Παρθενία: *pahlav* ‘Parthia’.

<sup>18</sup> . 𐭎𐭕𐭕𐭕 / γνώμη.

<sup>19</sup> . 𐭎𐭕𐭕𐭕. Pers. *pasāgrīv* lit. ‘behind of the self’, Sogd. pš’γryw.

<sup>20</sup> . 𐭎𐭕𐭕 from Pers. *dēv(ān)*, rendered by Gr. δαίμονας.

- 60 ud nām ī hān ī amāh bidaxš  
ud hān ī mādar ī x<sup>v</sup>ad, x<sup>v</sup>arāsān bāmbišn.
- 61 u-m rubūd murvārīd  
ēg-um frāz grift abāz vaštan ō xānag ī pidar.
- 62 u-m hān ī-šān jāmag ī rīman ī ālūdag  
kand ud hišt ped gyāg.
- 63 rāh-ē rāyēnīd-am kū āyād  
ō rōšnīh ī hān ī amāh deh, xvarāsān.
- 64 u-m ōy ī nāmag, vigrāsēdag,  
parvān x<sup>v</sup>ad ped rāh vindād.
- 65 cōn-iš ped vāng ī x<sup>v</sup>ēš an guhrāyēnīd  
did ped rōšnīh ī x<sup>v</sup>ēš an hamē ānīd.
- 66 cē abrēšum šāhvār  
parvān man ped dīdišn<sup>21</sup> ī ōy hamē brāzīd,  
67 ud ped vāng ud rāyēnīdārīh ī ōy  
did-iz avištāb-um dilīh dād.
- 68 ud ped dōšārm ī ōy an āhanzīd  
69 frāz šud ham, vidašt ham tar ō sarbāg;  
hišt-am bābil ped hān ī x<sup>v</sup>ad hōy;  
70 ud ō mēšān ī vazurg rasīd ham  
banndar ī vāzāragānān  
71 kū ped damb ī drayā sayist.
- 72 bāmīg ī-m kand būd  
ud varr kē pediš nihuft būd  
73 az bālist ī gurgān<sup>22</sup>  
ō hān rōn frēstīd man vasnād  
74 ped dast ī ganzvarān<sup>23</sup>  
cē ped ōstīgānīh ī avēšān abar hān ped-vurravišn (būd hend).
- 75 agar-z-am nē āyāst brahm-iš,  
cē-m hān ped aburnāyīh ped vīs ī pidar hišt,  
76 ēvbār ka pedīrag-iš ēstād ham  
jāmag ēdōn sahist cōn āyēnag-am.
- 77 man ōy drustag andar x<sup>v</sup>ēš dīd,  
u-m-iz drustag pedīrag andar ōy ēstād.
- 78 do būd hem ped judāgīh,  
ud ēk abāz ped ēk kirb.  
79 ud ganzvarān-z  
kē āvurd ēdōn dīd-am  
80 cōn do būd hend <bē> ēk kirb;  
cē ēk nišān ī šāh pešān pišt būd.
- 81 hān ī pedixšar ī abāz dād ō man  
zēn ud x<sup>v</sup>āstag ī man ped dast ī avēšān.

<sup>21</sup> . ۱ : x<sup>v</sup>arg ‘embers’? Cf. Bd 124.

<sup>22</sup> . 𐭪𐭫𐭮 (from Parth. wrkn): Pers. *gurgān* ‘Hyrcania’, Av. *vəhrkānō*<sup>o</sup>, OPers. *varkāna*.

<sup>23</sup> . 𐭪𐭫𐭮𐭫 : Parth. *ganzvar*, Pers. *ganzvar* ‘treasurer’.

- 82 bāmīg ī peyrāst  
ped gōn škōhumand; azrāst
- 83 ped zarr ud gōmazd  
ud kargehan ud gōhr
- 84 ud nigandag judgōn; anīz ped bālist virāst
- 85 ped sang ī almās  
hāmōyēn pixag duxtag.
- 86 ud pehikar ī šāhān šāh  
sarāpāy nigārdag ud tāšīdag
- 87 ud cōn sang ī asmāngōn  
vas-rang-iz būd.
- 88 anīz-am dīd ped ōy vīsp  
jumbišn ī zand (āgāhīh) cannān
- 89 u-m cōn ka ped guftan-z  
dīd kē āmāyān.
- 90 vāng ī-š huniyāg ašnūd-am  
ī peyvāzān vāxt:
- 91 “hān ī ōy ham nēvdum ī bannagān,  
cē ōy vasnād vazurg kird ham pēš pidar.
- 92 man-z mārđ andar x<sup>v</sup>ad  
kū bašn-um cōn kunišn ī ōy vazurg būd.”
- 93 pas ped jumbišn ī šāhvār  
āšixt ō man ālag,
- 94 ud ped dast ī dādārān ī x<sup>v</sup>ad  
nix<sup>v</sup>ārd dā ka-š bē gīrān.
- 95 ud dōšārm ī man-z hangixt ham  
avištāftan dā ka aviš rasān u-š gīrān.
- 96 u-m āgōš višād ud pedīrag-iš šud ham  
ped nekōgīh ī hān ī ōy gōn peyrāst x<sup>v</sup>ad peyrāst-am
- 97 u-m varr ī brāzāg gōn  
sarābāy peymuxt.
- 98 nihuft-am x<sup>v</sup>ad andar ōy, ud ul šud ham  
ō dar ī drod ud namāz.
- 99 sar nigōzīd-am ud namāz burd ham  
ō brāh ī pidar kē an frēstīd būd.
- 100 u-m pardaxt hān ī ōy framūd būd  
ud ōy-iz kird hān ī pedistāvag ī kird būd.
- 101 ud ped dar ī vispuhrān<sup>24</sup>  
abāg vazurgān āmixt ham;
- 102 cē-š veh-ōr guft u-š pedīriftārīh kird  
ud abāg ōy ped šahr būd ham.
- 103 ud ped vāng ī niyāyišn<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> . 𐬵𐬀𐬯𐬀 from Parth./ Pers. *vispuhr/ vāspuhr* ‘prince’ (Av. *vīsō puθrəm*).

<sup>25</sup> . 𐬵𐬀𐬯𐬀, corr. 𐬵𐬀𐬯𐬀 ‘(Magian) prayer’.

hamāg peristagān ōy bē stūd.

- 104 u-š nistūd kū ō dar-z  
ī šāhān šāh abāg ōy bē bavam,  
105 ud ped pārag ud murvārīd  
abāg ōy pēš šāh vēnīham.