

## A Banquet Speech

*āfrīn ī sūr*

This is a benediction pronounced in the *sūr*<sup>1</sup> “where excellent food was served and where cooks and table boys, singers and musicians, and gate-keepers were engaged.”<sup>2</sup> The text is also an example of after-meal speech at banquets and at anniversary ceremonies (different from death anniversary), the *rōzgār*. The text as reached us dates back to the Sasanian era; and a list of Persian dignitaries in it shows that it belongs to the sixth century, or as Tavadia states: “We have found only the upper limit, namely the reign of Xusrav I.”<sup>3</sup> It is called with different headings by different scholars.<sup>4</sup> It can be compared with another text, the *Āfrīn ī myazd* ‘Benediction of a ritual repast’.<sup>5</sup> Tavadia’s commentary is yet invaluable.<sup>6</sup>

### Text

*mādayān*

ped nām ī yazdān

(1) āzādīh ī<sup>7</sup> yazdān ud vehān andar harv gāh ud zamān  
guftan ud hangārdan sazāgvār, ped nāmcišt andar rōzgār-ē ī ped  
ēn ēvēnag.

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<sup>1</sup> . Pers. *sūr* ‘banquet, feast; morning meal’; Av. *sūra-* adj. ‘morning’, *ušā sūra* ‘morning dawn’, *sūrya-* nt. ‘morning meal’. (Pers. *šām* ‘evening; evening meal’, cf. Dk vi M 516 *šām ud sūr*) Pers. *sūr* also renders Av. *draonah-* nt. ‘portion, quantity, oblation’, and is in turn rendered by Skt. *utsavapāka-* ‘festival cooking’. The four stages of a *sūr* or a *rōzgār* are planning (*handāxtan*), making (*kirdan*), preparing (*sāxtan*) and organising (*rāyēnīdan*) (Cf. the three stages of the *drōn* service).

HAM 151 *sūr ud x<sup>v</sup>aran*; DA 37<sub>61</sub> *stabr sūr vazurg*; TM 47 II *sūr x<sup>v</sup>ard ud dāšn pedīrīft ... ēn mard sūr nēk kird dāšn dād*; Dk iii, M 367 *sūr-dahišnīh ī abar dar ī dahriz ped hāmrōz*.

<sup>2</sup> . Tavadia, 14.

<sup>3</sup> . Tavadia, 21.

<sup>4</sup> Peshotan Sanjana (1871) *mādayān ī āzādīh ī az yazdān* ; West (1888) *stāyīšn ī drōn* ; Jamaspji Asana/ T. D. Anklesaria (1913) *abar stāyēnīdārīh ī sūr āfrīn* ; Tavadia (1935) *sūr sax<sup>v</sup>an*.

<sup>5</sup> . “We may call it an *āfrīn*, say, *sūr āfrīn* or rather *āfrīn ī sūr* like *āfrīn ī myazd*, because of some common traits.” Tavadia, 11

<sup>6</sup> . TD 23 (in the private collection of B.T. Anklesaria), 247-250; D 3 (Mulla Firoze Library), 78-91; Suppl. Pers. 2044 (BNF), 141-144; D 3, 78-91. *The Pahlavi Texts*, edited by J.M. Jamasp-Asana, II, Bombay, 1913, 155-159.

Jehangir C. Tavadia, “Sūr Sax<sup>v</sup>an or a dinner speech in Middle Persian”, *Journal of the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute*, 29, 1935, 1-99.

بیژن غیبی، سور سخن، بیلند، ۱۳۷۲ یزدگردی.

<sup>7</sup> . var. *ī az*.

(2) gōš andar dāred ašmā vehān ī ēdar mad ēsted, dā abar stāyēnīdārīh ī ēn sūr, āfrīn az yazdān, ud spāsdārīh ī ēn myazdbān<sup>8</sup> soxan gōbam :

[hamāgzōr]

(3) hamāgzōr baved, hamāgzōr ohrmazd ī x<sup>v</sup>adāy kē ped mēnōgān ud gētīgān mahist, kē hamāg ēn dām ud dahišn dād, pediš pānag ud dāštār būd ēsted.

(4) hamāgzōr ēn haft amehrspond ī ped garōdmān hend : ohrmazd ud vahman ud urdvahišt ud šahrever ud spendarmed ud hurdad ud amurdad.

(5) hamāgzōr ēn haft vahišt kē ped <sup>+</sup>gerbālāy ēk, ped midrag pāyag<sup>9</sup> do, ped star pāyag si, ped māh pāyag cahār, ped x<sup>v</sup>aršēd pāyag panz, ped harburz pāyag šaš, <sup>+</sup>haft ped rōšn garōdmān ī vasrōšnīh ī huzihr ī brāzāgdum ī puranōš<sup>10</sup> ī purnēkīh, kū<sup>11</sup> pēšgāh ī ohrmazd ī x<sup>v</sup>adāy, ī x<sup>v</sup>ad ped mēnōgān x<sup>v</sup>adāyīh, kē ēn haft amehrspond.

< hamāgzōr ēn haft kišvar :> arzah ud savah ud fradadafš ud vīdadafš ud vorubaršt ud vorujaršt, ud kē ped meyān, x<sup>v</sup>anirah ī bāmīg ī vashambār ī purmardōm ī purnēkīh.

(6) hamāgzōr ādur farrōbay ud ādur gušnasp ud ādur burzēnmihr, ud abārīg ādurān <ud> ātašān ī ped dādīgān nišāst ēstend, cand ahīdar hamēšagsōz ud hamēšagpih<sup>12</sup> ud hamēšagzōhr bavānd.

(7) hamāgzōr mihr ī frāxgōyōd, ud srōš ī tagīg, ud rašn ī ristag<sup>13</sup>, ud varhrām ī amāvand, ud vāy ī veh, ud veh dēn ī mazdesnān, ud aštād ī frādādār-gēhān<sup>14</sup>, ud fravahr ī ahlavān.

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<sup>8</sup> . var. *myazdbān rāy*.

<sup>9</sup> . 𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥 /*abr pāyag*/, or /*midrag pāyag*/ (Av. \**miz-*, OPers. \**mid-*, \**mid-ra-*, Skt. *mīh-* ‘mist, fog’, *mihikā-* ‘cloud’) rendering Av. *mānō* (see *Pahlavi Texts*, 72). Cf. F 7 *aβra*: *midrag*.

<sup>10</sup> . 𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥 /

<sup>11</sup> . 𐭠𐭣𐭥 /*kē*/.

<sup>12</sup> . 𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥 MK, 𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥 JJ (Jamasp-Asana 𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥).

<sup>13</sup> . 𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥 /*rašn rāstag*/ (Cf. Dk viii M 719 𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥 /*rašn ristag*/, <sup>T</sup>Parth. *rist* adv. ‘rightly’).

<sup>14</sup> . 𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥 JJ corrected into 𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥 (also *frāzdādār ī gēhān*) rendering Av. *frādaṭgaēθa-*.



abāg mardōmān ī x<sup>v</sup>ad tandrust ud dagrzīvišn ud x<sup>v</sup>āstag ped  
abzōn ēdōn bavād cōn az abestāg pēdāg: (17) “ka-mān nēk  
stāyend hāmōyēn gētīg x<sup>v</sup>aštar.”

ud hamvār āfrīn ped ēn mān kunād kū: vas bavād ped ēn mān  
vas asp ī ray, zan<sup>23</sup> ud mard ī juvān<sup>24</sup> ī šāyendag ī hanzamanīg,  
guftār abāg yazdānāyād<sup>25</sup>, vaszarr abāg-asēm, vasjav abāg-  
gannum, vashambār ī purnēkīh, ud hūram ud huniyāg.

+bavād nēk zamān ud nēk sāl ud nēk māh ud nēk rōz, ud  
nēkīh az ēn mīzdbān rāy vas nektar.

[spās]

(18) spās ī ohrmazd; spās ī amehrspendān.

spās āsrōnān ud spās arsēštārān ud spās vāstryōšān ud spās  
hudoxšān.

spās ātašān ī ped gēhān.

spās x<sup>v</sup>āngarān (x<sup>v</sup>ālegarān)<sup>26</sup> ud spās huniyākārān, ud spās  
darbānān ī ped dar.

spās ēn mīzdbān kē ēn rōzgār handāxt ud sāxt, kird ud  
rāyēnīd. nēk-amān pih, ud stabr-mān sūr, ud pahlum-amān  
hamrasišnīh ud stāyišnīg menišnīg gōbišnīg ud kunišnīg spāsdār  
–ī azabar spāsdārīh anī tis nest.

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(19) bē man soxan vēš abāyed guftan pēš ašmā vehān, kū  
sagr ham az x<sup>v</sup>arišn, ud purr ham az may, ud hūram ham az  
rāmišn. bē, ašmā vehān, stāyišn ī yazdān ud āfrīn ī vehān  
bavandag guftan nē x<sup>v</sup>šāyam<sup>27</sup>. ašmā vehān ī ēdar mad ēsted harv

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<sup>23</sup> . 𐭠𐭣𐭥 Tavadia *ud x<sup>v</sup>arra*h.

<sup>24</sup> . 𐭠𐭣𐭥.

<sup>25</sup> . 𐭠𐭣𐭥 𐭠𐭣𐭥 𐭠𐭣𐭥 /vehān āyād/. Cf. Pap. 44<sub>1</sub> (Or. var. 45) *burzādur yazdānāyād*.

<sup>26</sup> . 𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭠𐭣𐭥. Pers. خوالیگر /xualīgər/ ‘table-decker’, خوالیگر /xualīgər/ ‘cook’.

<sup>27</sup> . 𐭠𐭣𐭥.



(4) *hamāgzōr* (with) these seven Holy Immortals (the Aməša Spənta) who are in the House of Song (Garō.nmāna): Ahura Mazdā, Vohu Manah, Aša Vahišta, Xšaθra Vairya, Spəntā Ārmaiti, Haurvatāt, Amərətātāt.

(5) *Hamāgzōr* (with) these seven heavens, which are: one at the top of a mountain<sup>34</sup>; two at the cloud station; three at the star station; four at the moon station; five at the sun station; six at the Harā Bərəzaitī station; seven at the bright Garō.nmāna, which is very bright, which is beautiful, which is most shining, which has much nectar, which has much goodness, which is the (royal) court of Ahura Mazdā the lord who himself rules over the celestial (spiritual) beings, who are these Holy Immortals.

<*Hamāgzōr* with these seven continents:> Arəzahi, Savahi, Fradaḍafšu, Vidaḍafšu, Vouru.baršti, Vouru.jaršti, and that which is in the Middle, viz. the luminous X<sup>v</sup>aniraθa, which has many stores, which has many people, which has much goodness.

(6) *Hamāgzōr* (with) the Fire of Farrōbay and the Fire of Gušnasp and the Fire of Burzēnmīhr, and the other Fires that are established in temples<sup>35</sup>; may they be ever-burning, ever having fuel, and ever having libations as early as possible.

(7) *Hamāgzōr* (with) Miθra who provides wide prairies, Sraoša the steadfast, Rašnu the straightest, Vərəθraγna the forceful, Vayu the good, Vaŋ<sup>v</sup>hī Daēnā Māzdayasni (the good religion of the Mazdā-worshippers), Arštāt who furthers the world of life, and the Fravaši of the truthful.

(8) *Hamāgzōr* (with) the great and good Spirits which become manifest in the thirty days (of the month).

(9) *Hamāgzōr* (with) the King of Kings who is the best of men<sup>36</sup>.

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<sup>34</sup> MK, JJ, SP , DP. Tavadia [1000] *vīrō(γ)-bālāy* ‘a [thousand] men’s height’. But cf. Pahlavi Texts 72 .  
Av. *gairi.bərəz-* f. ‘the height of a mountain’.

<sup>35</sup> . *dād-gāh*, cf. Av. *dāityō.gātu-* adj. ‘who is in (his) prescribed place’.  
Cf. also Bd Ind. 16 *u-š ādur farrōbay ō dād-gāh ... nišast ēsted*.

<sup>36</sup> . *mardān pahlum*. In the HKR 66 Husrav son of Kavād is called *mardān pahlum*; Paul the Persian calls him . Cf. also ŠPs II, 5; NP 5/5; KAP 13.13.



capable and “eloquent”<sup>42</sup>, who speak remembering the Yazata, who have much gold with silver, much barley with wheat, many stores of much goodness, and who are merry and delightful.

May there be good time and good year and good month and good day, and much more goodness be for the host!

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(18) Gratitude towards Ahura Mazdā. Gratitude towards the Holy Immortals. Gratitude towards priests. Gratitude towards warriors. Gratitude towards husbandmen. Gratitude towards artisans. Gratitude towards the fire(-temples) of the world. Gratitude towards the cooks. Gratitude towards the musicians. Gratitude towards the gate-keepers who are at the court. Gratitude towards this host, who planned and prepared, made and organized this day. Good is our food, grandiose is our feast, and best is our meeting.

(We are) grateful with praise, with thought and word and deed, (for) there is nothing above gratefulness.

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(19) Well, I should speak more before you good ones, that I am satiated from food, and full of wine, and merry from pleasure.

But I cannot completely utter, O you good ones, the praise of the Yazata and the blessing for the good. You the good ones who have come here, say whatever you can say better. (20) For I am rather a student (before you), for I am with little wisdom; and I have drunk wine too much.

Sleep well, and see the Yazata in dream; and get up healthy, and be diligent in doing secular and religious works.<sup>43</sup> For, from the primeval creation(s) up to the final action, he is the most fortunate, whom the Yazata consider worthy for his righteousness and diligence.

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<sup>42</sup> . *hanzamanīg* ‘assemblyman, councilor’ rendering Av. *vyāxana-* ‘who is skillful in debates’.

<sup>43</sup> . Cf. X<sup>v</sup>R 2. 21-3 *x<sup>v</sup>aš x<sup>v</sup>afsed drust āxēzed; dibīrestān ped kām vēned*.

(21) May there come blessings, as I have uttered; may they come in the width of earth, in the length of river, and in the height of sun! May it be so; may it be more than so!

Finished with peace, joy and pleasure unto all, the good and the righteous dealer.

(Raham Asha)