

AN HISTORIOGRAPHICAL STUDY

of

ABŪ ḤANĪFA

AḤMAD IBN DĀWŪD

IBN WANAND

AL-DĪNAWARĪ'S

Kitāb al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl

(ESPECIALLY OF THAT PART

DEALING WITH

THE SASANIAN KINGS)

by

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Oriental Studies*

کی بود در زمانہ وفا جام می یار تا من حکیت جم و کاوس کی کنم

ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of the pre-Islamic passages of Abū Ḥanīfa Aḥmad ibn Dāwūd ibn Wanand Dīnawarī's *Kitāb al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*. This is to say that it stops at the beginning of the Arab conquest of Iran. It is intended for scholars of Late Antiquity. Special emphasis is placed on Dīnawarī's exposition of the rule of the Sasanian dynasty and questions relating to the mysterious *Hudāynāma* tradition which are intimately connected with it. Beginning with a discussion of Dīnawarī and his work, the thesis moves into a discussion of indigenous Iranian historiography. Speculation on the sources of *Kitāb al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* follows, and the historiographical investigation of the most substantial portion of *Kitāb al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*'s notices on the Sasanian dynasty comes next. The conclusion summarises the findings of the thesis. The final section (an appendix) is a translation of the relevant part of *Kitāb al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* running from the beginning of that text to the reign of Šīrūya.

This thesis was written with one main question in mind: what does Dīnawarī's *Kitāb al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* have to say about pre-Islamic Iranian history? A host of other questions arose immediately: who was Dīnawarī; when did he live; what did he do; how was his work perceived by others; where did Dīnawarī get his information and how did he present it; is Dīnawarī's information reliable? These questions are addressed one by one in my thesis.

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TRANSLITERATION OF THE PERSO-ARABIC ALPHABET

(Letters marked with an asterisk represent conventions peculiar to Persian)

ا	‘
ب	<i>b</i>
پ	<i>p</i> *
ت	<i>t</i>
ث	<i>ṭ, s</i> *
ج	<i>j</i>
چ	<i>č</i> *
خ	<i>h</i>
ح	<i>ḥ, h</i> *
د	<i>d</i>
ذ	<i>ḏ, z</i> *
ر	<i>r</i>
ز	<i>z</i>
ژ	<i>ž</i> *
س	<i>s</i>
ش	<i>š</i>
ص	<i>ṣ, s</i> *
ض	<i>ḍ, z</i> *
ع	‘, ‘*
غ	<i>ğ</i>
ق	<i>q</i>
ك	<i>k</i>
گ	<i>g</i> *
ل	<i>l</i>
م	<i>m</i>

ن	n
و	w, v^*
ه	h
ي	r

TRANSLITERATION OF THE ARMENIAN ALPHABET

Ա, ա	A, a
Բ, բ	B, b
Գ, գ	G, g
Դ, դ	D, d
Ե, ե	E, e
Զ, զ	Z, z
Է, է	Ē, ē
Ը, ը	Ė, ė
Թ, թ	Tʻ, tʻ
Ճ, ճ	Ž, ž
Ի, ի	I, i
Լ, լ	L, l
Խ, խ	X, x
Ս, ս	C, c
Կ, կ	K, k
Հ, հ	H, h
Չ, չ	Dz, dz
Ղ, ղ	Ł, ł
Ճ, ճ	Č, č
Մ, մ	M, m
Յ, չ	Y / H, y
Ն, ն	N, n
Շ, շ	Š, š
Ո, ո	O / Vo, o
Չ, չ	Čʻ, čʻ
Պ, պ	P, p
Ջ, յ	J, j

$\mathfrak{R}, \mathfrak{r}$	$\mathbb{R}, \mathfrak{r}$
$\mathfrak{U}, \mathfrak{u}$	$\mathbb{S}, \mathfrak{s}$
$\mathfrak{V}, \mathfrak{v}$	$\mathbb{V}, \mathfrak{v}$
$\mathfrak{S}, \mathfrak{s}$	$\mathbb{T}, \mathfrak{t}$
$\mathfrak{R}, \mathfrak{r}$	$\mathbb{R}, \mathfrak{r}$
$\mathfrak{C}, \mathfrak{c}$	$\mathbb{C}', \mathfrak{c}'$
$\mathfrak{W}, \mathfrak{w}$	$\mathbb{W}, \mathfrak{w}$
$\mathfrak{P}, \mathfrak{p}$	$\mathbb{P}', \mathfrak{p}'$
$\mathfrak{K}, \mathfrak{k}$	$\mathbb{K}', \mathfrak{k}'$
$\mathfrak{u}$	$\mathfrak{u}$

TRANSLITERATION OF THE SYRIAC ALPHABET

ܐ	ʾ
ܒ	b, v
ܓ	g, ġ
ܕ	d, ḏ
ܗ	h
ܘ	w
ܙ	z
ܠ	ḥ
ܡ	ṭ
ܢ	y
ܟ	k, ḵ
ܠ	l
ܡ	m
ܢ	n
ܫ	s
ܬ	ʿ
ܦ	p, f
ܩ	ṣ
ܩ	q
ܪ	r
ܫ	š
ܬ	t, ṭ

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INTRODUCTION

Though the state of oriental learning in the West has improved greatly since the late eighteenth century, a modern author repeating Sir William Jones' eighteenth-century complaint could be accused of only slight exaggeration:¹

...while the excellent writings of Greece and Rome are studied by every man of a liberal education, and diffuse a general refinement though our part of the world, the works of the Persians, a nation equally distinguished in ancient history, are either wholly unknown to us, or considered as entirely destitute of taste and invention.

Despite Muslim historians' rich and copious output, many of their works still remain in manuscript, unedited, and unpublished; and many of them that have received new life in modern editions have yet to become the subject of a learned commentary.

Though many valuable works on Islamic historiography have been written, individual works of history have only rarely been blessed by scholarly attention.² How different is the condition of classical studies. Since the Renaissance, few classical texts have *not* been edited, commented on, translated, and studied many times from a variety of different perspectives. This applies even to texts which are of no historical value: Velleius' *Compendium of Roman History*, a slovenly medley of chronological inconsistency and inflated rhetoric, has seen thirteen editions since Beatus Rhenanus found a manuscript of it in 1515, and (to judge by records in the Bodleian library) there have been many commentaries on it. Enthusiasts of Byzantine history would probably be delighted at the prospect of translating and commenting on a long-neglected hagiography, even if it were bereft of historical insight, or if it were downright mendacious. Similarly, scholars of mediaeval European history do not suffer from neglect or ignorance of the historical productions of

1. JONES 1771, p. iii.

2. PEACOCK 2007, p. 1–4; *Cf.* JACKSON BONNER 2011, p. 17.

Christendom, but rather from fatigue and the danger of rehashing what was written long ago.³ Scholarship on Muslim historiography does not pose such dangers, and yet the study of neglected texts goes forward at a testudineous pace.

I have tried to advance knowledge of Muslim historiography by beginning at the beginning. Dīnawarī's *Kitāb al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*, a ninth-century universal history written from an Iranian perspective, is one of the earliest (perhaps *the* earliest) universal Muslim history to come down to us.⁴ To the best of my knowledge, the whole of this work has never been the subject of a commentary, nor has it been translated into a European language. These facts alone ought to have made *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* material fit for detailed study.

But commenting on the whole of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* is too great a task for a DPhil thesis. So I have focused on Dīnawarī's treatment of pre-Islamic history, and put special emphasis on his account of the Sasanian dynasty, a subject of great personal interest to me. I hope others will undertake a study of Dīnawarī's account of Muslim history based on the beginning that I have made here.

This thesis aims to answer one main question: what does *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* have to say about pre-Islamic Iranian history. All other lines of inquiry grow out of that question: who was Dīnawarī; where did he get his information; how does it fare in comparison with other sources of known value? These questions are broached one by one in each section of the thesis.

A. The first chapter is devoted to the life and work of Dīnawarī. What little we know about his life is set forth and analysed in preparation for the following discussion of Dīnawarī's

3. On the abundant sources of mediaeval European history, see McKITTERICK 2001, p. 4–9. Cf. McKITTERICK 2004, p. 1–2 on the dangerous 'escape route' of turning mediaeval European historiography into the study of historical texts merely as literature.

4. CHEDDADI 2004, p. 85. Peacock claims that the first surviving universal history is the so-called *Ta'riḥ* of Ḥalīfa Ibn Ḥayyāt (d. 854) (PEACOCK 2007, p. 13). But this is *not* a universal history, as it is a chronicle beginning with the birth of Muḥammad, taking no notice of the pre-Islamic era (DONNER 1998, p. 133).

scholarly interests. Next *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* is situated within Dīnawarī's other interests, and within the broad *tableau* of Muslim historiography. The result of this effort shows clearly that *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* is a literary work, so this chapter involves brief discussion of Dīnawarī's style. The neglect of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* is explored in detail and the text is scrutinised for reasons why Muslim scholars might have been driven to ignore it. The most apparent reason is revealed to be *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*'s pronounced *ṣu'ūbī* leanings and Dīnawarī's tendency towards Iranian supremacy. This is made clear by comparing *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* with other, similar works. Discussion of the *ṣu'ūbīyya* controversy is inseparable from the political state of ninth-century Iran, so this is not neglected also.

B. Source criticism is my concern in the second chapter. The chapter begins with an investigation of the few citations which Dīnawarī includes in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*. Dīnawarī's off-hand mention of Ibn Muqaffā' leads us headlong into the the great haystack of texts known collectively as the *Hudāynāma* tradition. This forms the meat of this chapter. Careful probing reveals that a great mass of documents of diverse genres and origins must lie behind the *Hudāynāma* tradition. It is not a unitary tradition going back to a single text, and the much repeated connexion between the *Hudāynāma* tradition and Ibn Muqaffā' does not withstand scrutiny. The rest of the chapter is devoted to conjuring out of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* other sources which Dīnawarī may have consulted, a difficult and laborious task. The method applied here is comparison to other texts whose material is almost the same as Dīnawarī's, but which cite sources. This investigation reveals Dīnawarī's broad reading and surprising acquaintance with certain elements of Christian apocrypha and Classical ethnography. Much of this chapter is highly speculative, but speculation is in the nature of *Quellenforschung*.

C. If a coherent and reliable account of Sasanian history is our goal, we must not only develop an intimate knowledge of our sources, but we must also see them in action. Accordingly, the third chapter consists of eight case studies in which a handful of notices in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* are put to work in the context of matters of high importance in Sasanian history. It is thus that the value of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* can be determined in comparison with sources of known value. This chapter begins with a survey of the contents of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* and a brief explanation of my

choice of case studies. Dīnawarī's history is most detailed from about 484 to 600, so case studies deal with key events within this time frame. This section ends with an historical narrative which ties together the findings of the case studies. Sasanian names are given in their New Persian forms.

D. A conclusion follows, which summarises the findings of the thesis, and offers some speculation on the nature of Iranian historiography of the pre-Islamic period.

E. The final portion of this thesis is an appendix consisting of an annotated translation of the pre-Islamic passages of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*. It is *not* a critical translation, and it may be best to consider it something of a work in progress. It begins at the beginning of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* and goes down to the point at which Pourshariati's selective translation of it takes over.⁵ I have tried to render in English the effect that *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* has on a speaker of modern Arabic. The result of this is reminiscent of the archaising, but consistent, grammatical structure of the King James Bible, and I have not resisted the influence of Tyndale, Coverdale, and Cranmer: the greatest translators in English literature. One of the main advantages of using such a style is that it preserves the singular pronoun of the second person — something which modern English has lost. Thus, when I write 'thou' there will be no doubt that Dīnawarī's was referring to one person; likewise 'ye' can only refer to three or more persons. I should also note that I have tried to limit myself to words of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and if necessary Norman origin: this forced me to find my own way of phrasing things and prevented me from copying others. In anticipation of inevitable complaints about this, I must stress that this was a splendid linguistic exercise for one who goes in for such things, and that I would never conceive of publishing a translation in such a style. If some or all of this thesis is considered worthy of publication, I shall rework the translation. The notes which I have added are meant not only to explain whatever may be unclear to a modern reader, but also to deal with points or arguments not substantial enough to merit longer treatment in the cases studies of the fourth chapter. For the sake of structure and organisation, I

5. POURSHARIATI 2010, p. 253–286.

have added headings: it must be stressed that no headings of any kind are in the manuscripts of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*. My supervisor, Prof. Robert Hoyland, vetted two drafts of my translation, but minute inspection of subsequent drafts would have been not only time-consuming but also far beyond what I could reasonably expect from a supervisor. All infelicities or mistakes that remain are my own. Nevertheless, translation is hard and I have done my best.

This thesis should be understood as primarily a ‘user’s guide’ to the Sasanian passages in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* directed chiefly at scholars of Late Antiquity. This is an inevitable consequence of my background in Classics and eventual conversion to Byzantinism as a graduate. I had a good dose of Persian and Arabic as an undergraduate, but I am not an Islamicist. I have not focused on matters that are not of immediate relevance to the history of Sasanian Iran. Islamicists must therefore search in vain for any great insight into pre-Islamic Arab genealogy, ethnography, or any serious criticism of sources attributed to Ibn Šarya, Wahb Ibn Munabbih, Hišām Ibn Muḥammad, and their ilk, except in so far as it is relevant to Sasanian historiography. Instead the focus is squarely on the origin and reliability of *Hudāynāma* tradition and other sources by which it was pollinated.

The understanding of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* presented in this thesis is founded chiefly on Guirgass’ edition of 1888. There are other editions. The two most recent editions do not offer a text that is demonstrably superior to that of Guirgass, whose scholarly apparatus is unrivalled. Admittedly, though, I was pleased to consult ‘Abd al-Mun‘im’s 1960 edition when baffled as to how best to punctuate some of Dīnawarī’s sentences, as Guirgass includes almost no punctuation, nor does he divide the text into paragraphs.⁶ The 1960 edition is well punctuated and the layout is more ‘user friendly’ than that of Guirgass — but Guirgass’ edition is more common (at least in Anglo-Saxon libraries), and the overwhelming majority of scholars who have referred to *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* have cited his edition. This is why I clove to Guirgass’ edition.

6. DĪNAWARĪ 1960.

Perusal of Guirgass' critical apparatus shows that variant readings are few, and never alter the meaning of the text in a radical manner. Nevertheless, something more must be said about the manuscripts of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*. Guirgass' edition is founded on three manuscripts, two of which survived in Leiden, and one in St Petersburg. One of the manuscripts in Leiden is an autography of the well-known Aleppan historian Kamāl al-Dīn ibn al-ʿAdīm. This is the eldest and best manuscript that Guirgass used, and its date is 1275.⁷ But there is an older manuscript of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* which Guirgass did not know about: it was discovered in 1957 in the former library of Rifāʿa Rāfiʿ Ṭaḥṭawī, an Egyptian journalist who died in 1873. The date of this manuscript is 1183, and ʿAbd al-Munʿim used it in his edition of 1960 which I mentioned above.⁸ These four manuscripts are not significantly different from one another — an observation which is liable to establish confidence in the chain of transmission. But the earliest manuscript was written down nearly three hundred years after Dīnawarī's death. And so we must remark that we do not know for certain what *Kitāb al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* looked like after it dropped from the pen of Dīnawarī.

Does the text of the *Kitāb al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*, that has come down to us in those four manuscripts, represent what Dīnawarī originally wrote? Or could it be that what we have before us is an abridgement of Dīnawarī's history which was originally a much longer work? Or is it merely a rough draft at an early point in its preparation before Dīnawarī himself completed a final version? The reader of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* occasionally comes across abrupt changes of topic and laconic phraseology, which *may* suggest an affirmative answer to any of those questions. But they may rather suggest that Dīnawarī saw no need to recount in exhaustive detail what he believed to be well-known to his audience; or the exuberance of youth may have marred his style in a few places. We may never know. But these are questions which, to my knowledge, no historian has yet asked; for everyone seems to have assumed that modern editions of *Kitāb al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* de-

7. KRATCHKOVKY 1913, p. 10–19.

8. BOSWORTH 1985.

scend directly from Dīnawarī's autograph.⁹ And Ibn Nadīm's tenth-century book list (commonly called the *Fihrist*) plainly refers to *Kitāb al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* as a complete and finished work — not a lacunary draft or inchoate set of notes. Thus on balance, we can be fairly confident that the text of *Kitāb al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* that has come down to us is substantially what Dīnawarī himself wrote, and that it is finished.

In a not dissimilar vein, something must be said about the *Nihāya*. The similarities between *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* and the anonymous *Nihāyat al-ʿIrāq fī Aḥbār al-Furs wa'l-ʿArab* were noted long ago by Browne, who published a summary of the latter text based on a manuscript which he found at Cambridge.¹⁰ The *Nihāya* corresponds closely to many parts of Dīnawarī's pre-Islamic material, but is about three times longer than that portion of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*. It is also a manifest forgery, as it purports to have been composed in the late seventh century for the Umayyad caliph ʿAbd al-Malik, as though the man who built the Dome of the Rock, and who brought North Africa under the yoke of Islam, would have troubled himself to preserve the legends of ancient Iran.¹¹ The first modern edition of the *Nihāya* came out in 1997 — and this despite the attention lavished on it by Grignaschi.¹² Though no study of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* could be complete without reference to the *Nihāya*, paucity of secondary authorities has made me shy away from probing the relationship between these two texts in great detail, and I have not entered into questions concerning its author or its date. I have merely worked under Browne's safe assumption

9. The following scholars have looked into *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* in more than a superficial manner, or have used it to write Sasanian history: DAMĠĀNĪ A.H. 1354; JACKSON BONNER 2011, p. 107–111; POURSHARIATI 2010, p. 253–260; SCHILLING 2008, p. 104; LAROUÏ 1999, p. 54; WIDENGREN 1952; GRIGNASCHI 1969, p. 23–26; PIGULEVSKAJA 1963, p. 221–228; NÖLDEKE 1879, p. 467–474; p. 478–487; NÖLDEKE 1890, p. 35–42; BROWNE 1900, p. 195–259; BOSWORTH 1999. Not one has speculated that Dīnawarī's text may be incomplete, lacunary, abridged, wrongly attributed, or pseudonymous.

10. BROWNE 1900.

11. BROWNE 1900, p. 200.

12. GRIGNASCHI 1973.

that certain passages of the *Nihāya* and *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* may go back to a common source.¹³ But the *Nihāya*, a charming text with more than a touch of the *Thousand and One Nights* about it, must wait for its own translation and commentary.

In my translation of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*, I have rendered names exactly as they appear in the Arabic text. But in the body of my thesis I have tended to suppress the Arabic definite article wherever it appears. I have done this for the sake of consistency and because it seems to me to make better English to avoid importing foreign parts of speech. It seemed to me highly artificial to refer (for instance) to ‘Ibn al-Muqaffa’, or ‘Ibnu’l-Muqaffa’i’ as though Arabic particles and case endings had some meaning in English. The result of retaining the transliterated article without some effort to express the grammatical relationship between the two words involved struck me as neither fish nor fowl, and expressing both struck me as the height of pedantry. It may be objected that ‘Ibnu’l-Muqaffa’i’ is really an epithet or nickname and therefore should be retained in English. In that case, transliteration would not be the solution but rather translation: but who could endure reading again and again of ‘the son of the man with the crushed hand’, or (in the case of Dīnawarī) ‘the man of Dīnavar’? This is why I do not use the Arabic definite article in the body of the thesis.

A final word about footnotes. Whenever it seemed to me appropriate to do so, I have quoted sources in their original languages. I have done this where I believe the argument benefits from the exact wording of a source. Nevertheless, I have striven to make sure that these passages are either translated fully, paraphrased, or clearly explained by the context of my argument. I did not wish to leave myself open to the accusation that I had disguised the meaning of my sources by failing to quote them fully, or (worse) to have recycled the citations of others. And to translate without quoting would entail claims that I had impressed my own views on my

13. I cannot *falsify* the proposition (which no one has yet suggested) that the *Nihāya* does *not* take all its information from an original, longer version of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*. So this is a *possibility* which future research may wish to investigate. But since there is no evidence that there ever was a longer redaction of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*, that possibility must be considered exceedingly remote.

sources without warrant. I may, however, be accused of pedantry or showing off, but it would be worse to be found out for not knowing what the sources actually say...

Dīnawarī's presentation of his own nation at the centre of world history, both before and after Islam, is his singular contribution to Muslim historiography. My contribution to Oriental Studies is to explain why Dīnawarī presented Iranian history in this fashion, to show how he achieved it in his account of the pre-Islamic age, and to evaluate his historical sources and his use of them. I began this study in the joyful expectation that untold historical gems lay within *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*, and that I would discover them. This proved not to be the case. Though I was disappointed, this is not to say that my labour was in vain. Dīnawarī's prose is always pleasant to read (and I enjoyed translating it), and many of his notices, which I have analysed in the case studies, often do add nuance and texture to our knowledge of the history in question.

A. THE LIFE AND WORK OF DĪNAWARĪ

The Life of Dīnawarī

It is impossible to write a satisfactory biography of Dīnawarī. Yāqūt's thirteenth-century biographical encyclopaedia of learned men, and Ibn Nadīm's tenth-century book list commonly called the *Fihrist* are our chief sources,¹⁴ but they offer us very little in the way of biographical details. We can be more or less certain about only a handful of facts, far too few to amount to a full narrative of Dīnawarī's life.

Abū Ḥanīfa Aḥmad Ibn Dāwud Ibn Wanand Dīnawarī was a scholar of Iranian extraction who lived during the ninth century of our era. Like other Muslim savants of his age, Dīnawarī wrote in Arabic. We do not know Dīnawarī's date of birth, and his date of death is subject to some confusion, as Yāqūt cites four authorities alleging different dates.¹⁵ Nevertheless, Dīnawarī must have died before 903, since Yāqūt gives no later date. Most modern scholars agree on 894 or 895, because dates in this vicinity are cited most frequently by Yāqūt's authorities.¹⁶

Dīnawarī's Iranian origin¹⁷ is to be inferred from two elements of his name. First, Wanand (the name of Dīnawarī's grandfather) is the name of a star and astral deity mentioned in

14. YĀQŪT, p. 123–127; FIHRIST, p. 86 (Cf. BRESLIN 1986, p. 1–2; LEWIN 1974, p. v; HAMIDULLAH 1973, p. 31–52; KRATCHKOVSKY 1912, p. 20). Yāqūt's biographical encyclopaedia, entitled *Kitāb al-ʿIršād al-Arīb ilā Maʿrifat al-Adīb*, is founded on many different authorities to whom the author makes explicit reference. Ibn Nadīm's *Kitāb al-Fihrist* is an index of books which includes (in most cases) summaries of their contents and biographies of their authors.

15. YĀQŪT, p. 123: l. 19 to p. 124: l. 8

16. Cf. POURSHARIATI 2010, p. 202; BRESLIN 1986, p. 1; LEWIN 1960; KRATCHKOVSKY 1912, p. 23.

17. The *Kurdistanica* online encyclopedia insists (on the warrant of no evidence) that Dīnawarī was a Kurd (IZADY 2008); Kratchkovsky notes the *possibility* that the name of Dīnawarī's grandfather was Kurdish (KRATCHKOVSKY 1912, p. 21). Dīnawarī mentions the Kurds in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 7: l. 12). Dīnawarī wrote a history of the Kurds which is now lost (FIHRIST, p. 86).

the *Bundahišn*, a Zoroastrian holy book.¹⁸ Second, his *nisba* ‘Dīnawarī’ is clearly derived from the town of Dīnavar, once a prosperous settlement, now a ruin northeast of modern Kirmānshāh in Iran.¹⁹ That Dīnawarī’s grandfather retained the name Wanand implies that he did not convert to Islam. This makes it probable that Dīnawarī (a second-generation Muslim) was acquainted with pre-Islamic Iranian religion and culture first-hand.

That the town of Dīnavar was Dīnawarī’s place of birth is an inference based on his *nisba* Dīnawarī²⁰ — a doubtful piece of evidence, given the fact that another notable man with the *nisba* Dīnawarī was Ibn Qutayba who was born, as we know, at Kūfā.²¹ Though the *Fihrist* describes Dīnawarī as ‘of the folk of Dīnavar’, this does not mean that he was born in that city: his *nisba* may well have been acquired by his father or grandfather.²² Alternatively Dīnawarī may have acquired his *nisba* by spending a great deal of time in Dīnavar, where he may have founded an astronomical observatory.²³ Dīnawarī had lived in many places and may have travelled widely.²⁴ He had travelled throughout Iraq, where he pursued his philological studies (perhaps at Bagh-

18. BUNDAHIŠN, II.4 (Cf. KRATCHKOVSKY 1912, p. 21 with note 5). The star Wanand is to be identified with Antares, a red supergiant in the Milky Way (GARFINKLE 1997, p. 151–153).

19. BOSWORTH 1996, p. 416.

20. KRATCHKOVSKY 1912, p. 21.

21. *Contra* POURSHARIATI 2010, p. 201–202; LECOMTE 1965, p. 31.

22. FIHRIST, p. 86; KRATCHKOVSKY 1912, p. 21.

23. POURSHARIATI 2010, p. 203. For more on the city of Dīnavar, see BOSWORTH 1996.

24. According to Hamidullah, Dīnawarī offers three quasi-autobiographical details in his *Kūtāb al-Nabāt*, a philological treatise on plants. If Hamidullah’s observations can be trusted, it seems that Dīnawarī claimed to live in Kūhistān; he had been to Mecca and Medina, where he saw tamarinds growing; and he had visited Qazwīn and Daylam (HAMIDULLAH 1973, p. 50). That Dīnawarī was well-travelled is by no means unbelievable, and his dwelling in Kūhistān is not improbable. But I cannot verify Hamidullah’s claims, because he offers no references to *Kūtāb al-Nabāt* which correspond to them.

dad) with Ishāq Sikkit and his son Abū Yūsuf Ya‘qūb, two famous scholars in that field.²⁵ So, once again, there must have been a good reason to associate our historian in the end with Dīnawar and not another place. But this is not grounds to infer that Dīnawar was Dīnawarī’s place of birth.²⁶

We may fairly doubt Pourshariati’s suggestion that Dīnawarī grew up in Dīnawar when that city was greatly troubled by the early ninth-century rebellion of Bābak Ḥurramdīn against the Abbasid caliphate.²⁷ Nevertheless, one would be tempted to believe it, were it not uncertain where Dīnawarī was born. For *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* evinces a certain interest in rebellions and insurrections: the uprisings of Anūš Zād, Bahrām Čōbīn, Biṣṭām, and Bābak — all of which receive meagre or no treatment in Ṭabarī’s *Annals* and elsewhere — are cases in point.

Dīnawarī had a reputation for being extremely learned, as the *Fihrist* says and as Mas‘ūdī confirms.²⁸ Yāqūt, moreover, names Dīnawarī, Jāḥiẓ, and Balḥī as the greatest scholars of their age.²⁹ But Dīnawarī is not identified as an historian. The breadth of his learning, which we shall

25. YĀQŪT, p. 123: l. 19–20; FİHRIST, p. 86; (Cf. POURSHARIATI 2010, p. 203).

26. Pourshariati makes too much of this assumed association between Dīnawarī and Dīnawar. For instance, the first Friday mosque in Dīnawar is supposed supposed to have been built in about the middle of the tenth century. Moreover, Ḥallāj, the famous Sufi martyr, went to that city in 898 in order to visit his disciples long-established there (POURSHARIATI 2010, p. 202). From these, and perhaps other coincidences, Pourshariati infers a culture of Sufism at Dīnawar. This may have been true, but what is its significance? Are we meant to infer that Dīnawarī’s Muslim beliefs were aberrant or of doubtful sincerity? I do not know, and Pourshariati does not say.

27. POURSHARIATI 2010, p. 203. Dīnawarī’s interest in seditions and uprisings could have developed no matter where he came from, especially since the Muslim world was generally convulsed by rebellion in the ninth century (LECOMTE 1965, p. xii *et seqq.*).

28. FİHRIST, p. 85:

وكان في علوم كثيرة منها النحو واللغة والهندسة والحساب وعلوم الهيئة .

MAS‘ŪDĪ 2, p. 359. See note 63 below.

29. YĀQŪT, p. 124: l. 8 to p. 125: l. 16.

look at more closely in the following section, testifies to the sort of catholic tastes expected of a Muslim gentlemen of his era. But it is impossible to say very much about his expansive erudition, because most of his work, apart from *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* and fragments of his *Kitāb al-Nabāt*, have perished or at best remain undiscovered.

Dīnawarī's Work and its Place in Muslim Historiography

The details of Dīnawarī's life are scant in the extreme, and our knowledge of his intellectual interests and writings is only slightly better.³⁰ Most of his work has not come down to us, but Ibn Nadīm's *Fihrist* and Yāqūt's *Kitāb al-Irṣād*³¹ provide evidence that he wrote extensively on mathematics (including the Indian variety and algebra), logic, astronomy (two books dealt with solar eclipses and astral orientations), botany, medicine, flora, geography, philology, Quranic exegesis (in thirteen volumes), law (he wrote two treatises on the rules of inheritance), and rhetoric. He is credited with the composition of a treatise on errors in language, a history of poetry, and an erotic manual. Dīnawarī also composed a history of the Kurds. Dīnawarī was indeed prolific, and many a passage of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* shows forth his interest in philology and geography, and there is an interesting botanical digression in connexion with Alexander the Great.³² But history

30. KRATCHKOVSKY 1912, p. 27–55.

31. FIHRIST, p. 86; YĀQŪT, p. 123–127.

32. Dīnawarī's philological interests appear in occasional etymological explanations: notably of the name Idris (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 3: l. 9–10); of the name Iskandar (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 32: l. 4–5); the name of the lake, *Day Marj*, into which Bahrām Gōr fell (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 59: l. 19 to p. 60: l. 2); and of the Arabicised Persian phrase *sarāy samarra* (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 73: l. 8–13). Dīnawarī reports a bizarre story about two men whom Alexander crucified above the grave of Darius, just so he can make a pun about being 'raised up' above the rest of the army (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 35: l. 13–14), also evidence of a philological cast of mind. Dīnawarī's interest in geography crops up in: a citation from Ibn 'Abbās on the wandering of Noah's sons and the distances of various countries from one another (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 34: l. 12 to p. 35: l. 2); brief break-downs of Sasanian administrative geography in the reigns of Ardašīr (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 47: l. 11–15), Sābūr I (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 51: l. 4–6), Pērōz (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 61: l. 7–8), Qubād (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 68: l. 13–19), Ḥusraw I (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 75: l. 9–16). Dīnawarī's botanical digression occurs in his discussion of the name Iskandar (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 32: l.

was not high on the list of Dīnawarī's interests, as it seems. So it is strange that Dīnawarī's only work that has survived intact is *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*, a highly literary universal history. This section will situate Dīnawarī in the pantheon of Muslim historians, and examine the nature of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*.

The origin and development of Muslim historiography is attended with controversy — especially because the very early development of it cannot be reconstructed.³³ Nevertheless, it is probable that there is a common origin to historical reports (*aḥbār* in the plural, *ḥabar* in the singular) and the collection of doings and sayings of the prophet Muḥammad (*aḥādīṭ* in the plural, *ḥadīṭ* in the singular). *Aḥādīṭ* were remembered and transmitted because the life of the prophet was believed to be worthy of emulation, and *aḥbār* explained the origin of the Muslim community — two concerns which grew out of an early Muslim preoccupation with legitimacy and identity in contrast to well-established Christian, Jewish, and Zoroastrian communities.³⁴

Aḥādīṭ should be understood as legal proof texts, establishing the authenticity of a saying or action of Muḥammad.³⁵ Since it was essential to verify a tradition going back to the prophet, *muḥaddiths* (transmitters of *aḥādīṭ*) developed a system of evaluating the reliability of reports. Accordingly, *aḥādīṭ* were accompanied by an *isnād*: a list of authorities who transmitted the report in question, reaching back to Muḥammad himself or to a witness to, or participant in, a particular event.³⁶ But *aḥbārīs* (transmitters of *aḥbār*) did not develop such an apparently rigorous system of

4–5).

33. PEACOCK 2007, p. 8–10. We simply do not know what most early historical texts were like because they have not survived intact (HUMPHREYS 1991, p. 76). We should therefore be wary of Duri's confident history of Muslim historiography detailing the contents and style of histories which are no longer extant, and we should reject his division of long-lost historical works into the competing schools of Kūfa and Baṣra (DURI 1960, p. 10–75). We should prefer instead Robinson's broader, more general treatment of the development of Muslim historiography.

34. DONNER 1998, p. 35–122; 275–282.

35. MELCHERT 2001; LECKER 1995, p. 23–24; GOLDZIEHER 1967B, p. 145.

36. *Isnāds* have been called 'early analogues to modern academic citations', and they are often

verifying their reports, for *aḥbār* were not originally accompanied by a chain of witnesses who vouched for their authenticity. This led to a great amount of suspicion, especially if a writer transmitted both *aḥādīṭ* and *aḥbār*.³⁷ By analogy with *aḥādīṭ*, however, *isnāds* were eventually added to *aḥbār* so as to boost their credibility, and authors such as Ṭabarī steered round the problem of suspicion altogether by attaching *isnāds* to both *aḥādīṭ* and *aḥbār*.

There were three main phases in the development of Muslim historiography.³⁸ During the first phase, from about 670 to 730, ‘Urwa Ibn Zubayr (d. 712) emerges as the first to collect *aḥādīṭ* pertaining to the prophet Muḥammad, and may be considered a prototype of later Muslim historians.³⁹ Though oral history was dominant, as an aid to memory Ibn Zubayr probably kept notes on the sayings of Muḥammad, many of which recorded snippets of conversations with some of the prophet’s companions, notably Jābir Ibn ‘Abd Allāh and ‘Ā’iṣa, his favorite wife. Details of the prophet’s life and times were then declaimed publicly. Though these notes do not survive,⁴⁰ they can probably be considered a forerunner the *maḡāzī*-genre, an early form of biography of the prophet. Robinson’s emphasis on the growth of lists of Caliphs and governors ‘as a sequential scaffolding’⁴¹ for subsequent dynastic histories during this phase is probably wrong:

construed as an advance in the writing of history (HOWARD-JOHNSTON 2010B, p. 359–360). For more on the *isnād* see HOYLAND 2006, p. 20–23; ROBINSON 2003, p. 15–16; SCHÆLER 2002, p. 44; KHALIDI 1975, p. 23–27; and DURI 1960, p. 23–24; for more on the *ḥabar* see ROSENTHAL 1968, p. 66–71.

37. Cf. PEACOCK 2007, p. 9; LECKER 1995, p. 25.

38. ROBINSON 2003, p. 18–30.

39. SCHÆLER 2002, p. 45–49.

40. Ibn Zubayr destroyed them during the Medina revolt against the Umayyads in 683.

41. ROBINSON 2003, p. 20–24.

chronology would have been of no relevance to Ibn al-Zubayr and other collectors of sayings and doings of Muḥammad.⁴²

The second phase, from about 730 to 830, saw the development of distinct genres of biography, prosopography, and chronography, which had all emerged in forms recognisable to posterity.⁴³ This ‘sharpening’, as Robinson calls it, of literary and historical genres can be seen in the eventual restriction of the term *mağāzī* (which had formerly been used to describe biographies of Muḥammad) to its literal sense of ‘military campaign’,⁴⁴ a development which seems to have gone hand in hand with a growing respect for writing. Ibn Zuhri (d. 742), perhaps the greatest disciple of Ibn Zubayr, and an authority in the evolving *mağāzī*-genre, was initially opposed to writing but soon convinced himself of the high importance of noting down all that he heard.⁴⁵ It was Waqidī (d. 823) who was the first to make the distinction between *mağāzī* and biography, and after him biography came to be called *sīra*, literally ‘course of life’. Similarly, we find the growth of works called *ṭabaqāt*, meaning compilations of biographical material ordered chronologically. Ibn Sa‘d’s *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr* is the earliest surviving example of this genre.⁴⁶

This phase is characterised by a proliferation of *aḥbār* with *isnāds* attached, and the growth of narratives to contain and order them. Monographs such as *The Impostor Musaylima*, *The Death of*

42. SCHÆLER 2002, p. 48.

43. This period should perhaps be connected with the translation boom in the late eighth century under Abbasid patronage. The Abbasids, who were new on the political scene, had good reason to patronise learning and history so as to bolster their claims to legitimacy. On the Abbasid *Machtergreifung*, see KENNEDY 1986, p. 126–157. For a brief exposition of some of the main themes in Abbasid history, see LEWIS 1995, p. 75–85.

44. For a discussion of the *mağāzī* genre, and many of the works which belong to it, see ZAMAN 1996.

45. SCHÆLER 2002, p. 52–53.

46. For a general discussion of the term *ṭabaqāt*, see GILLIOT 2002, p. 7–10. On the identification of Al-Mu‘āfa Ibn ‘Imrān as the originator of the *ṭabaqāt* genre — a notion which Robinson rejects — see ROBINSON 1996A.

Ḥusayn, *The Battle of the Camel*, and Ibn Zuhri's biography of Muḥammad show that written history had come to replace the oral transmission of Muḥammad's doings and sayings.⁴⁷ And it was in this period that Ibn Ishāq (d. 767) was commissioned to write his famous biography of Muḥammad.⁴⁸

The third phase of Muslim historiography went from about 830 to 925. Fields of learning were made systematic, and authoritative collections were established. The growth of canonical works in this period meant that the literature or notes upon which they were based began to disappear. The loss of Ibn Ishāq's biography of Muḥammad is a case in point: we go from Ibn Ishāq to Ibn Hišām, who copied the former's work, and thence in the end to Ṭabarī, who recycled Ibn Hišām. With such huge works to hand as Ṭabarī's *Annals*, written at the end of this phase, there was no reason to bother reading the older, shorter ones on which they were based, or so the reasoning went. This was the age of the synthetic collection on a grand scale, not of the short monograph. It was during this period that *ta'riḥ* — a word of uncertain etymology — came to replace *aḥbār*, *sīra*, *ṭabaqāt*, and *mağāzī* as the word for 'history' *par excellence*.⁴⁹

In the early days of muslim historiography *muḥaddiths* and *aḥbārīs* seem to have been pious scholars, not literary men or bureaucrats. This changed in the ninth century, when the writing of history tended not to reflect the conventions of reporting and evaluating *aḥādīth*.⁵⁰ Accordingly authors used the *isnād* only rarely, and elegant historical narratives in high style evinced the tastes of a class trained up in *adab* or belletrist style.⁵¹ Dīnawarī's *Kitāb al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* is one of the first histories (if not *the* first history) written in such a belletrist style.

47. Cf. Duri who argued that Ibn Zuhri gave definitive shape to the *sīra* genre by employing a strict chronological structure and by verifying his *isnāds* (DURI 1957, p. 8).

48. ROBINSON 2003, p. 24–30.

49. Cf. CAHEN 1986, p. 135–149.

50. PEACOCK 2007, p. 9.

51. YÜCESOY 2007, p. 135–137.

Though it seems that, on occasion, Dīnawarī deliberately composed passages in a grand declamatory fashion, his writing is generally straightforward and unpretentious — very much in step with the tastes of the highly literate class of learned men to which he belonged.⁵² The ninth century, as Lecomte has noted, saw great change in Arabic prose style. The heavy and solemn periods of Ibn Muqaffāʿ and ʿAbd Ḥamīd (influenced perhaps by the grand tones of the Sasanian chancery) gave way to brevity and clarity, and a new, *literary* style developed.⁵³ The greatest stylist of the age was Dīnawarī's near contemporary, Jāḥiẓ (d. c. 868), who described good literature as possessing *ījāz* (brevity) and *idlāḥ* (clarity), and avoiding *takalluf* (mannerism or affectation).⁵⁴ In other words straightforward, unpretentious prose, in which the word was exactly suited to the idea, was held in highest esteem in the ninth century, and *saqʿ*, or the ornate rhymed prose familiar from the Quran and oracular utterances, was generally avoided.

The *isnād* was not a major feature of belletrist style. The luminaries of the age of Jāḥiẓ,⁵⁵ such as Balāḍurī (d. 892), Yaʿqūbī (d. 897), Ibn Muʿtazz (d. 908), Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih (d. 940) and

52. KHAN 1969, p. 714. It has been noted that Dīnawarī occasionally exercises his 'powers of dramatic description' — most notably as Bosworth observes in the case of Muḥtār's revolt and the downfall of the Umayyads in Ḥurāsān (BOSWORTH 1985, p. 715). Furthermore in his account of Ḥusraw I's letter concerning the fate of his rebellious son Anūš Zād, Dīnawarī employs some highly rhetorical and florid language (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 71: l. 19 to p. 72: l. 17). This may well reflect the qualities of his source material. For the most part, Dīnawarī's style is clean, sparse, and polished. Like his contemporary Ibn Qutayba and his successor Masʿūdī, Dīnawarī seems to have respected the standards expounded by Jāḥiẓ. Most of his periods are short, his diction is vivid, and there is hardly ever a superfluous word or phrase. Consider, for instance, Dīnawarī's terse and laconic account of Alexander's conquest of India (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 35: l. 18 to p. 36: l. 1); or his description of Ḥusraw I's crackdown on Mazdakism (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 69: l. 8–11); or his description of the murder of Hurmazd IV by Ḥusraw II's uncles Bindūya and Bisṭām (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 91: l. 7–10).

53. LECOMTE 1965, p. 488–489.

54. See KHALIDI 1975, p. 19.

55. Jāḥiẓ' influence was apparently so great that Lecomte has called the ninth century 'l'époque d'al-Gāḥiẓ' (LECOMTE 1965, p. 448).

Mas‘ūdī (d. 956), all wrote in an elegant style on many edifying subjects raging widely over Indian, Byzantine, and Chinese history — and all tended to avoid the *isnād*. In striving for elegance and polish, Ibn Mu‘tazz judged the *isnād* ‘cumbersome and excessive’.⁵⁶ Similarly Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih explains his motive for avoiding the *isnād*:⁵⁷

I have dropped the *isnāds* from most reports, seeking simplicity and brevity and fleeing ponderousness and prolixity; for these are entertaining reports coupled with wise sayings and anecdotes, which neither profit from a chain of *isnāds* nor suffer from the lack thereof. Some used to drop the *isnād* of the *ḥadīṭ* from a customary *sunna* and obligatory *ṣarī‘a*. How much more reason have we to drop it from a stray anecdote, a common proverb, an amusing report [or an account whose lustre would fade if it grew long and bulky].

So if we can generalise from this testimony, which is admittedly later than Dīnawarī’s time, we may infer that Dīnawarī was driven by the same motive: to present a wide-ranging history in well-written prose, unencumbered by long chains of witnesses and authorities. The belletrist style, or *adab* style,⁵⁸ had clearly exerted a strong influence on Dīnawarī, and prompted him to strive for elegance, concision, and clarity. Instead of using *isnāds*, Dīnawarī presents a continuous narrative without headings or chapters, in which changes of subject are often noted by the vague

56. KHALIDI 1975, p. 25.

57. IBN ‘ABD RABBIH, p. 5–6:

وحذفتُ الأسانيدَ من أكثر الأخبار طلباً للاستخفاف والإيجاز، وهرباً من التثقيب والتطويل؛ لأنها أخبارٌ مُمتعةٌ وحِكْمٌ ونوادر، لا ينفعها الإسناد باتصاله، ولا يضرُّها ما حُذِفَ منها. وقد كان بعضهم يحذفُ أسانيدَ الحديث من سنّةٍ مُتبّة، وشريعةٍ مفروضة؛ فكيف لا نحذفه من نادرةٍ شاردة، ومثل سائر، وخبرٍ مُستطرف، [وحديثٍ يذهب نوره إذا طال وكثر].

See also KHALIDI 1975, p. 25–26 (I have modified slightly Khalidi’s translation of the passage above), and see HOYLAND 2006, p. 23.

58. For further details on *adab*, see ALLEN 1998, p. 220–260, and KHAN 1969, p. 713–714. For an illuminating discussion of *adab* and the influence of Persian culture upon it, see PELLAT 1964, p. 19–37.

phrase ‘they say’, or *qālū* in Arabic.⁵⁹ This is how, to borrow Howard-Johnston’s expression, Dīnawarī concealed the ‘scholarly infrastructure’ of his history.⁶⁰

Belletrist historians such as Balāḍurī, Ya‘qūbī, and Mas‘ūdī wrote on secular themes. Their *adab* background implied a high level of education in profane, not religious, lore and their histories put emphasis on ‘worldly and practical’ things including manners, politics, and all forms of secular knowledge.⁶¹ Their dropping the *isnād* can therefore be understood as avoiding a hallmark of specifically religious literature and thereby freeing Muslim history from its hieratic and legal origin. Dīnawarī’s *Kitāb al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*, devoid of long and cumbrous *isnāds*, is likewise free from overtly religious sentiment, and has a clearly secular tone.

This makes Dīnawarī and his fellow *aḥbārīs* and *littérateurs* very different from Ṭabarī, widely regarded as the greatest Muslim historian, who claims only to have transmitted *aḥbār* exactly as he found them and to have ascribed them by name to their transmitters,⁶² thereby reinvigorating the historiographical use of the *isnād*. So Ṭabarī’s work can be understood as restoring historiography to its original place beside the collection and evaluation of *aḥādīth*. Ṭabarī’s *Annals* was so influential that the *aḥbārīs*’ literary approach to history had few imitators after the early tenth century.⁶³ By consequence *Kitāb al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* came to be neglected and was rarely cited by other Muslim historians.

59. JACKSON BONNER 2011, p. 32.

60. HOWARD-JOHNSTON 2010B, p. 365.

61. YÜCESOY 2007, p. 136-137. Cf. KHALIDI 1975, p. 25.

62. ṬABARĪ, p. 6–7; HUMPHREYS 1991, p. 73–74.

63. PEACOCK 2007, p. 10. Few quoted from *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*, as we shall see, but the greatest historians of later times — Ibn Jawzī (d. 1200), Ibn Aṭīr (d. 1234), and Ibn Kaṭīr (d. 1373), for instance — lifted long passages from Ṭabarī *verbatim* (PEACOCK 2007, p. 13–14).

Why was it that *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* (as Lewin puts it) ‘n’a jamais connu une grande estime ni une grande popularité dans le monde arabe’?⁶⁴ Pourshariati explains this by claiming that there was much in Dīnawarī’s work that ‘might have been unpalatable to an Arab audience’.⁶⁵ This may have some truth to it, but the Muslim scholarly community was not populated only by Arabs, and *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* seems to have been ignored by *all* Muslim scholars. It may be that the fate of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* has much to do with the overwhelming impact of Ṭabarī’s *Annals*, which retains to this day in the catalogue of Arabic histories a seemingly unshakable position of privilege. The towering stature of the *Šāhnāma* cannot be ignored either, for this work is the greatest triumph of Iranian literature, and it deals with much the same things as the earlier sections of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*.⁶⁶ So neglect in the face of much larger works on the same subjects, rather than prejudice or racism,⁶⁷ is a better explanation for widespread ignorance of Dīnawarī in his own time and shortly afterwards. But there are other reasons...

It seems that Dīnawarī’s preeminence in other areas — his work (probably his astronomical work) was good enough to merit being plagiarised by Ibn Qutayba⁶⁸ — did not boost his rep-

64. LEWIN 1977; Cf. POURSHARIATI 2010, p. 204.

65. POURSHARIATI 2010, p. 204.

66. That the *Šāhnāma* was written in Persian probably increased its appeal among enthusiasts of Iranian history also.

67. ‘L’époque de Dīnawarī fut celle du racisme...’ we are confidently told by Hamidullah (HAMIDULLAH 1973, p. 51).

68. Such was the claim of Mas‘ūdī (MAS‘ŪDĪ 2, p. 359 (sec. III, 442)):

فَأَمَّا قَبْلَهُ أَهْلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَالتَّيْمَنِ الْجَرَبِيِّ فَقَدْ ذَكَرْنَا جَمَلًا مِنْ ذَلِكَ فِي كِتَابِنَا فِي أَخْبَارِ الزَّمَانِ وَقَدْ جَرَدَ ذَلِكَ أَبُو حَنِيفَةَ الدِّينَوَرِيُّ فِي كِتَابِهِ وَقَدْ سَلَبَ ذَلِكَ ابْنَ قُتَيْبَةَ فَنَقَلَهُ إِلَى كِتَابِهِ نَقْلًا وَجَعَلَهُ عَنْ نَسْفِهِ، وَقَدْ فَعَلَ ذَلِكَ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِنْ كُتُبِ أَبِي حَنِيفَةَ الدِّينَوَرِيِّ هَذَا وَكَانَ أَبُو حَنِيفَةَ ذَا مَحَلٍّ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ كَبِيرٍ.

See also POURSHARIATI 2010, p. 203 with n. 24, and and LECOMTE 1965, p. 204–205.

utation as an historian. Bosworth has noticed that a single author, Damīrī (d. 1405), cites *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*: he does so twice, once on the caliph ‘Abd al-Malik and once on the caliph Ma’mūn.⁶⁹ Apart from these, I know of only one reference to *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*, and it is in Ibn Azraq’s history of Martyropolis, much of which remains in manuscript, unpublished.⁷⁰ The reference in question is partly illegible and partly corrupt. Here is the passage:⁷¹

This was in the eleventh year of the reign of Kisra Hurmaz Nusharwan the Just [*sic*], as it is found in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*, composed by Abū Ḥanīfa Ibn Dawūd al-Dīnawarī: and in this year Persia was first victorious over Rome, and God sent down [in his book the *sūra*] ‘Rome hath been vanquished’, etc.

On Dīnawarī’s authority, the passage in question makes reference to an event in the eleventh year of the reign of a king whose name is probably a corruption of something like ‘Kisrā [Abarwīz] son of Hurmazd son of Anušarwān the Just’, therefore Ḥusraw II. But whichever king is actually meant, the passage supposes that Dīnawarī referred to an event in the eleventh year of that monarch’s reign which coincided with an Iranian victory over Rome commemorated in the Qur’an. This corresponds to nothing which Dīnawarī actually wrote, though it does recall vaguely the part of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* in which that Quranic passage is mentioned. Dīnawarī presents the life

69. BOSWORTH 1985, p. 715.

70. Little is known about Ibn Azraq, and the title of his work, commonly called *The History of Mayyāfāriqīn* (Martyropolis) is doubtful, and Robinson notes that its scope is not limited only to that city (ROBINSON, 1996B, p. 8; 26). Robinson’s outline of the contents of the first one hundred and twenty folios (which have not been published) help to give context to Ibn Azraq’s invocation of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* (ROBINSON, 1996B, p. 9–12).

71. The full sentence is (IBN AZRAQ, fol. 12b: ll. 6–8):

وكان ذلك في السنة حادي عشر من ملك كسرى هرمز نوشروان العادل كذلك وجدت في الاخبار الطوال تصنيف ابني حنيفة ابن داود الدينوري وفي تلك السنة الاولى غلبت الفرس الروم وانزل الله [*non legitur*] غلبت الروم، الخ.

What follows is a quotation from the beginning of the Quranic *Sūrat al-Rūm*. I am very grateful to Dr Harry Munt, who gave me this reference to Ibn Azraq.

of Muḥammad in terms of regnal years of Iranian kings⁷² — an eccentric method of dating to say the least. Dīnawarī makes a very brief reference to the victory of the Heraclius and the Quranic *Sūrat al-Rūm* in connexion with it.⁷³ But there is no mention anywhere of anything occurring in a given king's eleventh regnal year, nor can such a dating be inferred from Dīnawarī's work. Moreover, Ibn Azraq's dating of Heraclius' victory is inaccurate: Ḥusraw II's Roman war began in 602, his twelfth regnal year. So it seems that the only scholar who claimed to quote from *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*'s Sasanian passages had not really read them.

A brief look at Dīnawarī's other work may shed some light on the neglect of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*. Dīnawarī's most popular work was *Kitāb al-Nabāt*, a sort of botanical treatise (which has come down to us only in large fragments).⁷⁴ It is important to note that *Kitāb al-Nabāt* (literally, *The Book of Plants*) was not, as many may think, a scientific work, but rather a philological one. *The Book of Plants* consisted of two portions: one was a series of 'specialised monographs' in which the names, qualities, and uses of plants are discussed, as well as terminology related to these names and its derivation; the second portion was an alphabetical list of plant names and botanical terms mentioned in the monograph section. Much the same information is included in both sections, and Dīnawarī often refers the reader of the second section back to the first.⁷⁵ Dīnawarī's main purpose in this work, as Breslin observes, was 'to compile as much information as he could on plant *names* and botanical *terminology* from both written and oral sources'.⁷⁶ Thus, from a scientific

72. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 75: l. 17 to p. 76: l. 6.

73. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 111: l. 8–9.

74. The *Fihrist* describes this text generously (FIHRIST, p. 86):

كتاب النبات . يفضّله العلماء في تأليفه .

For modern editions of the fragments of this text see BRESLIN 1986; LEWIN 1974; and HAMIDULLAH 1973.

75. BRESLIN 1986, p. 2–3.

76. BRESLIN 1986, p. 4 (my emphasis). Dīnawarī's main source was a work, now lost, by Abū Ziyād Kilābī (d. c. 820). Works by Aṣma'ī (d. 831), Abū Naṣr Aḥmad Ibn Ḥātim Bahilī (d.

perspective, the book is quite useless: ‘Abū Ḥanīfah’ says Breslin, ‘has more interest in discussing the meaning, grammar, orthography, and philology of plant names and related terms than he has in merely describing plants’.⁷⁷ Dīnawarī was not really a botanist, nor even a specialist in any particular field.

Dīnawarī’s high reputation for general, secular learning and belletrist style probably did not endear him to the ‘*ulamā* of his own day or of subsequent ages.⁷⁸ That Dīnawarī was a man of general knowledge who dabbled in botanical philology and history (amongst many other fields) is surely a great part of the reason why *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* was neglected by other Muslim authors.

A historian such as Ṭabarī, whose solid credentials as a theologian would have endeared him to religious authorities, would have been in step with received notions of the Muslim historian’s proper task, which was to convey objective knowledge about past events generally believed to possess legal, political, or religious knowledge.⁷⁹ Thus Ṭabarī describes his approach to history in the introduction to his *Annals*:⁸⁰

845/6), and Abū ‘Amr Šaybānī (d. 821) are also quoted, and Dīnawarī claims to have got a good deal of information directly from Bedouins and tribal loremasters (or *rāwīs*) (BRESLIN 1986, p. 4).

77. BRESLIN 1986, p. 5.

78. His commentary on the Quran, which has not survived, seems not to have altered Dīnawarī’s reputation at all.

79. HOYLAND 2006, p. 16–46; HUMPHREYS 1991, p. 74.

80. ṬABARĪ, p. 6: l. 1 to p. 7: l. 7:

وليعلم الناظر في كتابنا هذا ان اعتمادى في كل ما احضرت ذكره فيه مما شرطت انى راسمه فيه؛ انما هو على ما رويت من الاخبار التي انا ذاكرها فيه، والآثار التي انا مسندها الى روايتها فيه، دون ما ادرك بحجج العقول، واستنبط بفكر النفوس، الا اليسير القليل منه... وانا انما ادبنا ذلك على نحو ما ادبى البنا.

My translation is modified from that of Rosenthal (ROSENTHAL 1989, p. 170–171). Rosenthal’s claim that Ṭabarī uses *aḥbār* and *āṭār* without distinction (ROSENTHAL 1989, p. 170: n. 21) is wrong. Whereas *aḥbār* are historical events ‘pure and simple’, *āṭār* are patterns of moral conduct going back to Muḥammad and other pious persons: on this account divergent *aḥbār* could be allowed to stand as they were, but *āṭār* needed to be ‘pruned and made uniform before being

Let the reader of this my book know that, with respect to all that I have reported and taken upon myself to set down in it, I have relied upon *ahbār* which I have transmitted, and upon *ālār* which I attribute to their transmitters. Only very rarely do I rely on what is learned through rational proofs and produced by mental thought-processes...I have merely reported it as it was reported to me.

Accordingly, not long after Dīnawarī wrote his history, the historian's task came to be seen not as to evaluate or interpret the past, but rather to determine which accounts of it (*ahbār*) were acceptable — and this (as Khalidī observes) often from a religious perspective.⁸¹ Though there are reasons to doubt Ṭabarī's purported objectivity and lack of editorialism, there is no doubt that this description accurately reflects the spirit of the age. Ṭabarī's self-professed reluctance to speak with his own voice must have been preferable to Dīnawarī's selective, polished, and above all literary presentation of history, especially if Ṭabarī's *isnāds* allowed him to avoid taking personal responsibility for controversial *ahbār*. In the eyes of Muslim scholars of later ages, Dīnawarī's general knowledge was probably no match for Ṭabarī's specific religious qualifications.

The modern age has not been much kinder to Dīnawarī and his work. Though modern authors have quoted from *al-Ahbār al-Ṭiwāl* far more often than did the ancients, the whole work has not (to my knowledge at least) been subjected to thorough study, nor has it been fully translated into any European language.⁸² This is especially odd, because *al-Ahbār al-Ṭiwāl* is the earliest served up to believers' (KHALIDĪ 2008, p. 7).

81. 'A great deal of social and intellectual tension lies sometimes upon and more often just below the surface of al-Ṭabarī's writings. The urgency to define what the true believer needed to know for right guidance was, for al-Ṭabarī, more pressing by far than any foray into areas of knowledge of no obvious religious value of intellectual certitude' (KHALIDĪ 2008, p. 3).

82. The only complete translation of *al-Ahbār al-Ṭiwāl*, which I know of, is Damgānī's Persian translation (DAMGĀNĪ A.H. 1354). I published as a short appendix to my *Study of Three Neglected Sources of Sasanian History* an abridged translation of Dīnawarī's treatment of the reign of Ḥusraw Anūšarwān, but this amounts only to a few pages (JACKSON BONNER 2011, p. 107–111). Pourshariati has published several passages of this history dealing with the Arab conquest of Iran and its aftermath (POURSHARIATI 2010, p. 261–286), but her translation is not complete and is often more difficult to understand than the original Arabic. The same volume also includes what

Muslim universal history that has come down to us⁸³ — a fact which ought to have drawn attention to it.

Dīnawarī has not fared well in general studies of Islamic historiography. Rosenthal's vast study of Muslim historiography passes over Dīnawarī in a brief paragraph in which he notes his decidedly Persian perspective on history and his unusual treatment of the life of Muḥammad.⁸⁴ Rosenthal's paragraph, though by no means as informative as one might have hoped, is nevertheless balanced and fair. Dismissive and downright harsh treatments of Dīnawarī are offered by Duri and Laroui. For Duri, Dīnawarī 'shows little aptitude for criticism in his book'.⁸⁵ Laroui calls *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* 'naïve', and 'aveugle à son caractère subversif' in reference to Dīnawarī's

Pourshariati calls an 'overall analysis of the contents of the *Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*' (POURSHARIATI 2010, p. 253–260), but this is rather more of a summary of Dīnawarī's prehistoric run-up to the Sasanians, who are passed over in a single paragraph (POURSHARIATI 2010, p. 259). Schilling has offered a French translation of Dīnawarī's brief passage dealing with the arrival of a Christian apostle at the court of Ardašīr (SCHILLING 2008, p. 104). Laroui has translated into French Dīnawarī's peculiar treatment of the life of Muḥammad, but that is all (LAROUİ 1999, p. 54). Widengren has construed into French a few lines of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* dealing with the fall of the Hephthalites (WIDENGREN 1952). Similarly, a few of the earlier passages of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* were put into French by Grignaschi (GRIGNASCHI 1969, p. 23–26). In her interpretation of Sasanian history, Pigulevskaja includes fast and loose translations of a few portions of Dīnawarī's passages on the revolt of Anūš Zād (PIGULEVSKAJA 1963, p. 221–228). Two of Nöldeke's excursuses in his famous work on Ṭabari include an abridged German translation of the episodes involving the revolt of Anūš Zād and that of Biṣṭām (NÖLDEKE 1879, p. 467–474; p. 478–487). His study of the Alexander romance includes a translation of Dīnawarī's passages on Alexander (NÖLDEKE 1890, p. 35–42). A description of the anonymous *Nihāyat al-ʿIrāq*, whose treatment of Sasanian Iran is similar to that of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*, was published in 1900 by E. G. Browne (BROWNE 1900, p. 195–259), who makes frequent comparative reference to Dīnawarī, but little of his history is quoted. Bosworth's translation of the Sasanian portion of Ṭabari's *Annals* (BOSWORTH 1999), though published ninety-nine years later, likewise includes only brief nods to Dīnawarī in the footnotes, and none of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* is quoted.

83. CHEDDADI 2004, p. 85.

84. ROSENTHAL 1968.

85. DURI 1983, p. 68–69.

unusual approach to the life of Muḥammad — an opinion recently reinforced by Pourshariati.⁸⁶ But Laroui continues: ‘on peut se demander si son ouvrage...est bien un livre d’histoire plutôt qu’un recueil de situations dramatiques où poètes et prosateurs sont invités à trouver des sujets d’inspiration’.⁸⁷ For Laroui, *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* may not have been a real work of history at all...

What is the reason for modern neglect of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*? It is hard to say for certain, but it seems that both ancient and modern scholars have tended to avoid it for the same reason: because this work is believed to be an inferior historical source to what is usually considered the greatest work of Muslim history, Ṭabarī’s *Annals*.⁸⁸ Yar-Shater’s criticism in the *Cambridge History of Iran*, for instance, focuses principally on the structure of Dīnawarī’s history, in which sources appear to have been blended into a single narrative.⁸⁹ One might therefore easily entertain the idea (as Yar-Shater implies) that Dīnawarī altered his source material substantially, and so by implication Ṭabarī’s method of laying his sources side by side without reconciliation is preferred, for this approach is believed to show clearly that the author did not tamper with his source material. Robinson has also made much of Ṭabarī’s *appearance* of being a serious historian,⁹⁰ one whom later authors were inclined to trust implicitly at the expense of all other writers. If Laroui is any guide, Dīnawarī may have been held in low esteem by some scholars chiefly for deviating from the orthodox Muslim party-line in his eccentric, and possibly subversive, presentation of the life of Muḥammad. Conversely, nothing in Ṭabarī’s *Annals* leaves the author’s orthodoxy open to question.

86. POURSHARIATI 2010, p. 259.

87. LAROUÏ 1999, p. 52–54.

88. This inference can be connected easily with Robinson’s third phase of Muslim historiography, which saw the growth of the *isnād* and the obsolescence of older texts.

89. YAR-SHATER 1983, p. 361; JACKSON BONNER 2011, p. 43: n. 120.

90. ROBINSON 2003, p. 35–36. As I have already argued in my *cahier*, there are good reasons to reevaluate the comparative merits of Ṭabarī and Dīnawarī (JACKSON BONNER 2011, p. 43: n. 120), and these will be looked at again below.

The Character of Kitāb al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl

Neglect of *Kitāb al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* may well be related to Dīnawarī's treatment of specific aspects of history. Yücesoy has drawn attention *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*'s prevailing themes of Iranian monarchy and secular history, its geographical focus on Iran, and its downplaying the role of prophecy in human history — all of which make *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* stand out as a work of Muslim history.⁹¹ But Yücesoy has not related these themes to the political state of the Muslim world in Dīnawarī's day, during which Dīnawarī's presentation of history may have seemed provocative; nor has he explored the relationship between *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* and the *šū'ūbīyya* controversy, perhaps the most important cultural and intellectual struggle of the ninth-century Muslim world. So it is important to look at *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* against the backdrop of ninth-century Abbasid political history and the *šū'ūbīyya* controversy. Far from being a naive text, as Laroui would have us believe,⁹² *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* shows forth the work of a refined man of letters, who may have been critical of caliphal supremacy over matters spiritual and temporal, who took great pride in Iranian culture, and who scoffed at ideas of Arab superiority.

The potent influence of Persian culture in the early Abbasid caliphate must have stirred up interest in Iranian history. The adoption of Persian court etiquette, the celebration of Persian new year (Nawrūz), and the revival of the office of vizier under the reign of the caliph Maṣṣū' (754–775) cannot have failed to engender interest in the origin and history of these things.⁹³ Abbasid 'Persianism', to borrow Katouzian's phrase, reached its height under the reign of Ma'mūn (813–833), son of the caliph Hārūn al-Rašīd (r. 786–809). To provide cultural and ideological support for this Persianism, the Abbasid translation movement in the early eighth century saw the transfer of much Iranian literature into Arabic — perhaps most famously Ibn Muqaffa's

91. YÜCESOY 2007.

92. LAROUÏ 1999, p. 52–54.

93. For a discussion of Persian influences in Abbasid culture see KATOZIAN 2010, p. 73–79.

Kalīla wa Dimna.⁹⁴ Dīnawarī, Balāḍurī, Yaʿqūbī, Ibn Qutayba, and Ṭabarī all dealt with Iranian history in similar ways,⁹⁵ so we might be tempted to assume that Abbasid *engouement* for Persian culture carried on throughout the ninth century, and that Dīnawarī's *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* merely catered to the refined taste of Abbasid bureaucrats and functionaries.

But this inference would be a gross oversimplification. If we impute a lifespan of about eighty years to Dīnawarī, who died around 895, he cannot realistically have produced a work as mature as *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* much earlier than about 845 when he would have been around thirty years old. Such an inference accords well with the fact that Dīnawarī's history terminates with the death of the caliph Muʿtaṣim in 842. If *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* were written immediately after this date, then its composition brings us to a time when Persian influence among the highest levels of Abbasid government and bureaucracy had already reached its peak and was on the wane.

Recruitment of minority groups (chiefly Turks) into the Abbasid army by the caliph Muʿtaṣim, who came to the throne in 833, entailed competing foreign influences at the Abbasid court. Over the course of the ninth century, the fate of the caliphate came increasingly to be dominated by the interests of Turkish military leaders, whose ever-increasing lawlessness obliged Muʿtaṣim to move his capital from Baġdād to Samarrā in 836.⁹⁶ It was the elite of this Turkish praetorian guard who murdered Muʿtaṣim's successor Mutawakkil — a plot supported by Muntaṣir, the heir apparent who feared exclusion from the succession. Nine years of anarchy ensued from 861 to 869 during which several caliphs, backed by rival factions, succeeded one another with alarming swiftness. Baġdād itself was besieged, and most caliphs' reigns ended in murder at the behest of Turkish military leaders, who were often in conflict with one another also.⁹⁷ It was

94. See ARJOMAND 1994.

95. ZAKERI 2008, p. 34–45.

96. GOLDEN 2004, p. 280–287; KENNEDY 1986, p. 158–171.

97. Kennedy infers conflict over diminishing economic resources (KENNEDY 1986, p. 171).

only toward the end of Dīnawarī's life with the death of Muhtadī in 870 that a measure of stability returned to the Abbasid caliphate, but Turkish military power and culture was there to stay.

Strife at court and intestine warfare was accompanied by peripheral insurrection. Egypt flirted with independence under its governor Aḥmad Ibn Ṭūlūn, and the insurrection known as the Zanj Revolt, which began near Baṣra in 869, went unchecked for ten years.⁹⁸ During Mu'taṣim's reign caliphal authority was challenged by Bābak's revolt in the mountains of Āzar-bāyjān and that of Māzyār Ibn Qārīn in Ṭabaristān. The power of the caliph sat lightly on the more remote areas of the former Sasanian empire, and competition for authority and prestige arose between rival Iranian families whose growing power was acknowledged by the caliphate only grudgingly.⁹⁹ It was the Samanids, a dynasty which fancifully traced its lineage to the rebel Bahrām Čōbīn, who managed to carve out the first independent Iranian principality since the fall of Yazdgard III. Their power in Central Asia had risen steadily since the beginning of the ninth century, but it was their conquest of Buḥārā in 873–874 which allowed the Samanids to challenge Abbasid prestige.¹⁰⁰

In the fullness of time, a Persian cultural reawakening followed the rise of the Samanids, the most potent sign of which was the tenth-century revival of Persian as a language of literature, which flourished in the poetry of Rūdakī (d. *ca.* 941) and his successors under the patronage of the Samanid court at Buḥārā.¹⁰¹ This Persian awakening culminated, as it may be argued, in

98. KENNEDY 1986, p. 178–181.

99. The three most prominent were the Saffarids, Tahirids, and Samanids (BOSWORTH 1978, p. 12–27; *Cf.* MEISAMI 1999, p. 15).

100. TREADWELL 2012, p. 7.

101. TREADWELL 2012, 10–13; PEACOCK 2007, p. 37–40; SOUCEK 2000, p. 70–76; YAR-SHATER 1970, p. 672.

about 1010 with Firdawsī's composition of the *Šahnāma*, the Iranian national epic, under the patronage of the Ghaznavid dynasty.¹⁰²

Al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl must be understood in the context of the foregoing elements of Abbasid and Iranian history. Ninth-century readers of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* must have been struck by its emphasis and focus on Iran and by its downplaying of distinctly Arabian themes, and it is difficult to imagine that Dīnawarī's audience would have failed to connect these aspects with political events unfolding around them. Though Dīnawarī does not mention any fledgling Iranian dynasties by name, there is no reason to doubt that he and his readers were aware of the state of the Muslim world around them. Many readers of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* must have connected that text with the re-virescence of Iranian monarchy, and this may well have been Dīnawarī's intention.

Be this as it may, Dīnawarī's focus on kings of Iran may have bothered readers who approached history from a position of Muslim orthodoxy. In this connexion we cannot pass over Dīnawarī's presentation of the origins of Iranian monarchy itself:¹⁰³

Jamm son of Wīwanjahān son of Īrān set up the beacon of monarchy, and he was Arfaḥšād son of Sām son of Nūḥ...

[Sām] is the one that the Persians call Īrān, he had settled in the land of 'Irāq and had taken possession of it for himself, and he called it 'Īrān-Šahr'. And his son Šālah rose to power after him, and when death was upon him, he entrusted command to the son of his brother: Jamm son of Wīwanjahān son of Arfaḥšād. He established the foundation of monarchy, made firm its pillars, set up its emblems, and adopted the day of Nayrūz as a festival.

Iranian monarchy (says Dīnawarī) emerged as a human institution. As the context set by Dīnawarī is the time of the confusion of tongues, when the city of Babel became overcrowded, we might also infer that kingship arose when the human population was large enough to require or-

102. POURSHARIATI 2010A, p. 248 with note 3. On the Ghaznavids see SOUCEK 2000, p. 96–98.

103. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 4.

ganisation.¹⁰⁴ But monarchy was not a divine institution, coeternal with God's creation of the world, as Muslim orthodoxy had it. For Dīnawarī, political authority is an entirely secular matter. Jamm's establishment of monarchy has no religious element at all, and the careers of Moses, Zoroaster, Aristotle, Jesus, Muḥammad, and other prophets, are passed over with little comment or emphasis. Zoroaster and Aristotle, the only prophets who have any real role in Dīnawarī's history, enter the narrative only in order to advise kings.¹⁰⁵

Muslim orthodoxy held that all authority proceeded from God, whose lawful vicegerent on earth was not a king (as was the Byzantine emperor), but rather a prophet.¹⁰⁶ Some pre-Islamic rulers, such as David and Solomon, were both prophets and kings, but it was their standing as prophets that made their authority legitimate in Muslim eyes. Similarly, by virtue of their descent from Muḥammad, caliphs enjoyed something of the legitimacy of prophethood, as well as supreme temporal authority. As Crone observes, the Muslim *umma* was from its beginning 'both congregation and state rolled together'.¹⁰⁷ But during the reigns of Ma'mūn to Mutawakkil (813 to 861), caliphs claimed overt religious authority greater than that of the '*ulamā*', imposing the doctrine of Mu'tazilism as the touchstone of both Muslim orthodoxy and political loyalty, and establishing the *mihna*, a sort of Muslim inquisition.¹⁰⁸

Dīnawarī's emphasis on secular kingship and downplaying the role of prophets can be understood as a rejection of the caliphal mixture of secular and religious authority. Dīnawarī's views on secular history make him a forerunner of Ibn Miskawayh who considered prophecy unfit for historical study because miracles do not admit of imitation or repetition, and thus cannot be

104. YÜCESOY 2007, p. 142.

105. YÜCESOY 2007, p. 141–149.

106. CRONE 2005, p. 3–16.

107. CRONE 2005, p. 13.

108. KENNEDY 1986, p. 163–165; LAPIDUS 1975, p. 378–382.

taken for models of human conduct.¹⁰⁹ Dīnawarī's opinions in this connexion, expressed in the heyday of Abbasid autocracy, may not have endeared him to many of his contemporaries, and this may in some measure explain neglect of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*.

Dīnawarī's criticism of caliphal authority and defense of Iranian monarchy and culture connect him also with the *šū'ūbīyya* controversy, a tendency within Muslim thought which, to borrow Allen's phrase, 'challenged the implied superiority of the values that the members of the Arab tribes had brought to the increasingly cosmopolitan Muslim community'.¹¹⁰ This movement began in the late seventh century, and gained momentum as Abbasid power and prestige waned, giving ideological impetus to Samanid rule. The *šū'ūbīyya* tended to disavow Arab superiority and to assert the equality of other races with Arabs — equality, we should note, on the level of high culture, not in a socio-economic sense. Some authors, such as Ishāq Ibn Ḥassān Ḥurramī (d. 815), ʿĪrār Ibn ʿAmr Ġaṭafānī (d. 826), Ṭumāma Ibn Ašras (d. 826), and Ibn Waḥšīyya (*fl.* 9th–10th centuries), showed at times an aggressive hatred of Arabs and emphasised the ancient splendour of other civilisations such as Sogdiana, Nabataea, Egypt, and Babylonia.¹¹¹ But most writers of the *šū'ūbīyya* movement pleaded simply for the *equality* of other Muslim peoples with Arabs. Though many non-Arab scholars participated in the *šū'ūbīyya* movement, the hallmark of the *šū'ūbīyya* in Iran was the Persian aristocracy's reassertion of their dignity and power by reassociating themselves with their native language and literature, especially of the pre-Islamic era.¹¹²

Broadly speaking, *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* would have appealed to partisans of the *šū'ūbīyya*. It is, after all, a universal history told from an Iranian perspective. But it seems that Dīnawarī was a

109. YÜCESOY 2007, p. 146–147; KHALIDI 1975, p. 173–174.

110. ALLEN 1998, p. 56–57, p. 229; see also RYPKA 1968, p. 115.

111. GOLDZIER 1967A, p. 137–163. His is still one of the best discussions of the *šū'ūbīyya* movement. On the controversies surrounding the *šū'ūbīyya*, see ENDERWITZ 1998, p. 532–536.

112. Whether this entailed the *equality* of Persians with Arabs, or their *superiority* over them, varied from author to author.

vigorous partisan of what Goldziher called ‘the more daring formulations’ of the *šū‘ūbīyya* movement.¹¹³ This is to say that Dīnawarī appears to have championed not the *equality* of his own nation with Arabs, but rather Iranian *superiority* over them.

There are specific proofs of Dīnawarī’s extreme *šū‘ūbīyya* leanings in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*. First, we have Dīnawarī’s clear interest in the Persian language. Notable examples of his etymological explanations of Persian words have been mentioned above.¹¹⁴ Second, towards the end of his Sasanian passages, Dīnawarī includes three Persian phrases, only two of which are translated.¹¹⁵ ‘The national vanity of the Arabs’, to borrow Goldziher’s phrase, tended to express itself in a kind of linguistic chauvinism, according to which Arabic was ‘the most beautiful sounding, richest, and best of all the languages of mankind.’¹¹⁶ Dīnawarī’s inclusion of Persian words and phrases may be considered a reaction to this belief. Third, Dīnawarī places great emphasis on the careers of many non-Arab kings and prophets. To mention a few examples, we read of the civilising influence of the Iranian king Jamm, the glory of king Solomon’s reign, the preaching of Zoroaster, the reigns of the mythical kings of pre-historic Iran, the preaching of monotheism by Aristotle, the conquests of Alexander the Great, and the history of the Sasanian dynasty — all of which serve to illustrate the very ancient and glorious past of non-Arab peoples in the face of more recent and far less significant Arab traditions, whose monotheist religion was, for Dīnawarī, hardly an innovation.¹¹⁷ In this connexion, we cannot ignore the fact that Dīnawarī passes over

113. GOLDZIHHER 1967A, p. 137.

114. Dīnawarī’s Persian etymologies: the name Iskandar (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 32: l. 4–5); the name of the lake, *Day Marj*, into which Bahrām Gōr fell (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 59: l. 19 to p. 60: l. 2); and of the Arabicised Persian phrase *saray samarra* (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 73: ll. 8–13).

115. The phrases are: *Wahrām-rūz*, the name of the festival commemorating the death of Bahrām Čōbīn (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 102: l. 5); *zih suwār*, an exclamation directed at a polo player (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 103: l. 18); and *mard u mard*, a reference to single combat (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 130: l. 3). Only the last phrase is translated in Dīnawarī’s history.

116. GOLDZIHHER 1967A, p. 191.

117. For further elaboration of this point see GOLDZIHHER 1967A, p. 154–155.

the career of Muḥammad himself in less than a page, laying no particular emphasis on it at all. Nor can we ignore the fact that Dīnawarī ascribes Iranian ancestry to Abraham, to Alexander the Great, and to most other noteworthy historical figures.¹¹⁸ Fourth, Dīnawarī gives a generally negative impression of Arabs, and even ascribes an Arab ancestry to the Egyptians pharaohs, figures of universal loathing in Muslim tradition, and to ʿAḥḥāk, the great homicidal villain of Iranian mythology.¹¹⁹

In fact, Dīnawarī almost always casts Arabs in a bad light, and Pourshariati has noted that in certain places Dīnawarī portrays Arabs specifically as ‘the archetypal conquerors of other lands’.¹²⁰ Restricting ourselves to Dīnawarī’s general impression in this connexion we might contrast *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* with the little-known and under-studied *Aḥbār ‘Ubayd* of ‘Ubayd Ibn Šarya Jurhumī.¹²¹ The latter text is a collection of historical anecdotes, covering some of the same ground as *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*, written probably at the beginning of the ninth century, and cast in the form of a dialogue between the caliph Mu‘āwiya and the author (Ibn Šarya) who discuss Arab history.¹²² This comparison is especially apt since Dīnawarī probably used the *Aḥbār ‘Ubayd*

118. Abraham is made a Persian by virtue of his descent from king Jamm, his great great great grandfather, whom Dīnawarī identifies with Arphaxad (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 7–9). Dīnawarī makes Alexander the Great the son of Darius III (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 31–32).

119. The ancestry of the Pharaohs is traced through al-Rayyān son of Walid son of ‘Ad son of Iram son of Shem (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 4: ll. 6–13). Dīnawarī traces ʿAḥḥāk’s lineage thus: he was son of ‘Alwān son of ‘Amlīq son of ‘Ād son of Iram son of Shem son of Noah (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 6: l. 4–5). Cf. POURSHARIATI 2010, p. 254–255.

120. POURSHARIATI 2010, p. 255.

121. CHADDADI 2004, p. 36–70. CROSBY 2007 is the only monograph on *Aḥbār ‘Ubayd* that I know of.

122. Ibn Šarya’s existence long been considered hypothetical. According to Rosenthal, ‘il était peut-être plutôt quelque antiquaire de Baghdād qui essaya de tirer profit de l’engouement qui régnait pour l’antiquité de l’Arabie du Sud’ (ROSENTHAL 1990, p. 962). Crosby’s recent monograph seems to assume, however, that ‘Ubayd Ibn Šarya (whom she calls ‘Abīd) was not only a real person but also that the dialogue between him and Mu‘āwiya really took place and was transcribed, as it was happening, by secretaries (CROSBY 2007, p. x). I find the first claim

as a source, as he makes reference to Ibn Šarya in connexion with the early history of Arabia.¹²³ This text is unmistakably pro-Arab in outlook, and Yemenite Arab at that.¹²⁴

The contrast between *Aḥbār ‘Ubayd* and *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* is especially obvious in the two texts’ very different treatments of the confusion of tongues and the scattering of the sons of Noah. This episode is derived from the Old Testament story of the aftermath of the flood (Genesis 11: 1–9). ‘Ubayd Ibn Šarya reports that, though Syriac was the language of Babel, the first language spoken after the confusion of tongues was Arabic, and the first to leave Babel were the Semites under the leadership of Ya‘rub, mythical ancestor of the Arabs.¹²⁵ Thus ‘Ubayd Ibn Šarya says:¹²⁶

[The full-blooded Arabs] were the first people. Descended from them was Ya‘rub, who spoke in Arabic. Everyone learnt Arabic from Ya‘rub son of Qaḥṭān son of Hūd...

The first to leave Bābil was Ya‘rub son of Qaḥṭān son of Hūd son of ‘Ābir — he was Hūd the prophet, upon whom be peace — son of Šālah son of Arfaḥšad son of Sām son of Nūḥ.

Ibn Šarya then begins to dilate on the glory of the Arabic language, whose first utterances were in verse. The Arabs therefore enjoy pride of place in the *Aḥbār ‘Ubayd*, as well as a sort of cultural

doubtful, and the second impossible to believe.

123. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 10: l. 1.

124. CHEDDADI 2004, p. 56.

125. AḤBĀR ‘UBAYD, p. 315 *et seqq*; Cf. CHEDDADI 2004, p. 60.

126. AḤBĀR ‘UBAYD, p. 315:

فهم كانوا اوائل الناس منهم يعرب الذي تكلم بالعربية كل اخذه من يعرب بن قحطان بن هود واليه تنسب العربية...

AḤBĀR ‘UBAYD, p. 316:

اول من توجه من بابل يعرب بن قحطان بن عابر وهو هود النبي عليه السلام ابن شالخ بن ارفخشذ بن سام بن نوح.

and linguistic supremacy, which we may fairly take as representative of the pro-Arab opposition to the *šū‘ūbīyya* movement.

Things are quite different in the corresponding anecdote in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*, where Dīnawarī makes a subtle, but clear declaration of Iranian superiority. To see this, the relevant passage must be appreciated in full:¹²⁷

They say: in the time of Jamm tongues were confounded in Bābil — this was because the progeny of Nūḥ had multiplied there and [Bābil] was burdened of them. The speech of all men had been the Syrian language, namely the language of Nūḥ, but at the beginning of that day their tongues became muddled, expressions changed, and they were convulsed one to another, and every group of them spoke in the tongue which their descendants speak unto this day. They went out from the land of Bābil, and each group became separated in a particular direction. The first that went out from among them were the sons of Yāfiṭ son of Nūḥ, and they were seven brothers: Turk, Ḥazar, Ṣaqlāb, Tārīs, Mansak, Kamārā, and Šīn. They took what lay between the east and the north. Then the sons of Ḥām son of Nūḥ left after them, and they were also seven brothers: Sind, Hind, Zanj, Qibt, Ḥabaš, Nūba, and Kan‘ān. And they took what lay between the south and the west. And the sons of Sām son of Nūḥ dwelt with their cousin Jamm the king in the land of Bābil notwithstanding the change of their expressions. Sām son of Nūḥ had five sons: Iram, who was the eldest of them by a year, Arfaḥšād, ‘Alam, Yafār, and Aswar. The sons of Iram were favoured with the Arabic tongue at the confounding of tongues, and they were also seven brothers: ‘Ad, Ṭamūd, Ṣuḥār, Ṭasm, Jadīs, Jāsim, and Wabār. ‘Ad migrated with those who followed him until he settled in the land of Yaman. Ṭamūd son of Iram settled in what lies between the Ḥijāz unto al-Šām. Ṭasm son of Iram alighted in ‘Umān and Baḥrayn. Jadīs son of Iram alighted in Yamāma. Ṣuḥār alighted in what is between Ṭā‘if as far as the two mountains of Ṭayya. Jāsim settled in what is between the Sanctuary as far as Safawān, and Wabār son of Iram settled in what is behind Raml in the country that is known as Wabār.

For Dīnawarī, the first to leave Babel were the sons of Japheth.¹²⁸ The progeny of Shem (ultimate origin of the Arabs) under the leadership of Iram went last. Ya‘rub, ‘Ubayd Ibn Šarya’s ancestor of the Arabs is not mentioned. We can see that there is not a whiff of pro-Arab sentiment whatsoever. But where is the pro-Iranian stance that we might have expected? Note that Dīnawarī

127. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 4: l. 12 to p. 5: l. 12.

128. Incidentally, the equivalent passage in the *Nihāya* agrees that Japheth and his sons were the first to leave Babel (NĪHĀYA, p. 18).

places this story of the confounding of tongues in the reign of Jamm, the Iranian culture hero par excellence, also called Jamšēd. As we read before, this king established the institution of monarchy, set up its emblems, and introduced the festival of Naw-Rūz.¹²⁹ So by implication, Iranian monarchy and civilisation were in full swing before the Arabs had differentiated themselves from the sons of Noah and entered history. Dīnawarī's assumption of Iranian dominance is firm but gentlemanly; Ibn Šārya's brusque announcement of Arab supremacy smacks of the southerly and the boorish. From this contrast we can infer Dīnawarī's entire outlook on Iranian history, and assume that he will always portray Iranians as superior to Arabs.

But Dīnawarī's dim view of Arabs should not be mistaken for what we should call racism or bigotry. Nor is it appropriate to construe Dīnawarī's *šū'ūbīyya* tendencies as a form of nationalism: it would be grossly anachronistic and misleading to do so. Dīnawarī's view was more complex than mere ethnic boosterism, for he ascribes a common origin to both Arabs and Persians, as both are descended (he says) from Shem, through his son Arphaxad, whom Dīnawarī identifies as Jamm.¹³⁰ So Dīnawarī affirms a kinship between Persians and Arabs, a common 'Semitic' origin. The obvious inaccuracy of this claim aside, it is impossible to say for certain whether Dīnawarī would have drawn the ingenious conclusion, as Ibn Qutayba did, that Arabic-speaking Persians were entitled to be called 'Arabs' by virtue of descent from Shem.¹³¹ But this seems unlikely. Dīnawarī appears to mention this common origin only to put emphasis on Iranian monarchy and nobility, as all Persian kings and nobles are descended from Jamm, or Arphaxad.¹³² Dīnawarī is therefore a forerunner of Mas'ūdī who, almost a century after him, affirmed mon-

129. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 4: l. 9–11. On the connexion between Jamm (or Jamšēd), the Naw-Rūz festival, and other cultural achievements, see BOGOLYUBOV 2006.

130. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 9: l. 10–11:

ومن ولد ارفخشذ جميع العرب، ومنهم ايضا ملوك العجم واشرافهم من اهل العراق وغيرهم...

131. LECOMTE 1965, p. 347–348.

132. Cf. POURSHARIATI 2010, p. 254.

archy and potent government as the peculiar achievements of Iran.¹³³ But Dīnawarī's genealogy may also have entitled Arabs, by virtue of collateral descent, to inherit Iranian monarchy, or at least to share it with Persians¹³⁴ — an idea which brings us back to the increasingly cosmopolitan Muslim world of Dīnawarī's time, and the rise of Iranian dynasties...

Finally, the place of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* within the *šū'ūbīyya* debate may be illustrated once again by contrasting Dīnawarī's history with the work of Ibn Qutayba, his almost exact contemporary. Ibn Qutayba's *Kitāb al-Ma'ārif* deals, in part, with the ancient history of Iran also. Ibn Qutayba does so very briefly in a series of sparse biographies of Persian kings, paying little attention to pre-Sasanian times.¹³⁵ Ibn Qutayba's cursory treatment of Iranian history is probably inseparable from his vehement opposition to Iranian *šū'ūbīyya* tendencies — an opposition which was expressed in his treatise on Arab supremacy, which survives only in fragments. In his so-called *Kitāb al-'Arab*, Ibn Qutayba is supposed to have compared the merits of Persians and Arabs, and (though he himself was a Persian) he decided strongly in favour of Arabs, and pronounced *šū'ūbīyya* partisans to be the dregs of the Iranian lower classes.¹³⁶

Could it be that, by establishing the primacy of Iranian culture and monarchy, Dīnawarī was, in a subtle way, responding to the views of Ibn Šārya and Ibn Qutayba, whose works he read with disapproval? It is tempting to think so.

133. MAS'ŪDĪ 1, p. 311; KHALIDI 1975, p. 92.

134. Cf. PEACOCK 2012, p. 62.

135. IBN QUTAYBA, p. 402–427. This section is called *Mulūk al-'Ajam*, and its pre-Sasanian portion is only slightly more than two pages in length.

136. MOTTAHEDEH 1976, p. 180–181; LECOMTE 1965, p. 343–359.

B. THE SOURCES OF *AL-AḤBĀR AL-ṬIWĀL*

Introduction

The title of Dīnawarī's history can be rendered variously in English, but *Kitāb al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* is probably best construed as 'The Book of Long Narratives', or maybe 'The Book of Long Stories'.¹³⁷ What does the title mean? We have already noted that Dīnawarī eschewed the *isnād*, and thereby avoided curtailing and interrupting longer historical anecdotes. The title *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* might therefore be understood as a straightforward description of Dīnawarī's work: no unwieldy *isnāds*; no cutting up of longer narratives; the long narratives themselves are presented.

But there is another possibility. The title seems to imply that Dīnawarī's sources were originally of great length and that he abridged or condensed them, perhaps both. The author himself seems to declare something to this effect, when he writes that his work is 'abridged from biographies; limited for the sake of economy'.¹³⁸ If we take this phrase literally, we are probably justified in expecting abridgement or compression at almost all times in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*. There is some evidence for this, but (for the most part) Dīnawarī leaves us guessing as to what has been removed and when. Furthermore, unless a similar passage can be found in another history, it is usually unclear whether Dīnawarī has removed something altogether or whether he has simply found a more economical way of phrasing it. There are, however, a few direct implications that Dīnawarī has left something out. The author closes his section on the hero Rustam, for instance, with the remark that 'the Persians tell many stories about this'.¹³⁹ When discussing 'Amrū Ibn

137. Cheddadi calls it 'longs récits' or 'longues histoires' (CHEDDADI 2004, p. 91).

138. DĪNĀWARĪ, p. 2: l. 14:

مختصرا من السير مقتصرا على الاقتصاد.

139. DĪNĀWARĪ, p. 28: l. 12:

فيقول العجم في ذلك قولا كثيرا.

‘Adī, Dīnawarī notes that ‘there is a story about him’,¹⁴⁰ and moves on; likewise with Ḍayzan and Marya (the Ġassān prince and the queen of Mesopotamia, respectively), Dīnawarī remarks simply that ‘there is a famous story about them’.¹⁴¹ In other instances anecdotes simply break off abruptly, as in the narrative of Anūš Zād’s rebellion,¹⁴² and a new topic is taken up.

Browne has given us an idea of the manner in which Dīnawarī pruned his sources and the extent to which this was done. His brief study and lengthy summary of the contents of the anonymous *Nihāyat al-ʿIrāq fī Aḥbār al-Furs wa’l-ʿArab*, a work similar in many ways to *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*, includes a six-page excerpt from Dīnawarī’s text.¹⁴³ The passage in question is the story of Rustam’s combat with Isfandiyār — incidentally a passage which the *Nihāya* attributes probably erroneously to Ibn Muqaffāʿ.¹⁴⁴ Apart from Dīnawarī’s removal of the epithet ‘infidel’ from the name of Zoroaster, which we find in the *Nihāya*, the sentences which Dīnawarī has transcribed are word for word what we find in the *Nihāya* — a suggestion that the *Nihāya* and *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* have a source in common, from which Dīnawarī has omitted much. Browne illustrated this fact by putting in italics all that is found in both Dīnawarī and the *Nihāya*, and there is relatively little in italics. Dīnawarī draws a veil over the combat between Rustam and Isfandiyād (as he calls

140. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 56: l. 13:

وله حديث .

141. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 56: l. 16:

وكان له ولها حديث مشهور .

142. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 72: l. 18–19:

وقد أخذ ابنه انوش زاذ اسيرا وانتهى فيه الى ما امر به . . .

143. BROWNE 1900, p. 206–211.

144. For the passage in question in the modern edition of the *Nihāya*, see NĪHĀYA, p. 82–86. The tale begins thus (NĪHĀYA, p. 82):

قال عبد الله بن المقفع، الخ .

him) — a passage amounting to nearly three pages in Browne’s article — and merely alludes to these details by noting that ‘the Persians tell many stories about this’.¹⁴⁵ Though in principle it may be overbold to generalise from Browne’s treatment of the combat of Rustam and Isfandiyād, it allows us to infer that Dīnawarī busied himself mainly, but perhaps not exclusively, with abridgement — in this case, abridgement of the source common to *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* and the *Nihāya*. Nevertheless, apart from the removal of the epithet ‘infidel’ from the name of Zoroaster, which was clearly unhistorical and intrusive in any case, Dīnawarī did not alter the general sense of his source here.¹⁴⁶

The structure of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* is neither a stark series of dull biographies, nor an immense compendium of annals in *annus hegirae* format.¹⁴⁷ It is rather a continuous narrative which goes forward with almost no interruption as there are few *isnāds* and no headings. Individual historical sources which Dīnawarī used can be fished out only with great difficulty, if at all. Dīnawarī enthusiasts would be eternally grateful to know which books were in his personal library, as such knowledge would give us a clear idea of Dīnawarī’s intellectual formation and interests, and it

145. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 28: l. 12:

فيقول العجم في ذلك قولاً كثيراً.

146. Browne’s 112 year old article (BROWNE 1900) is one of the few contexts in which the befuddling relationship between *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* and the *Nihāya* has been examined in a practical manner. Little has been written on the topic, and to do it justice would require another doctoral thesis at least. It is probable that the *Nihāya* shares many of its sources with *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* — much the same relationship, perhaps as that between Ṭabarī’s *Annals* and the mysterious *Codex Sprenger 30* (on which see RUBIN 2005). It is unlikely that the *Nihāya* itself was Dīnawarī’s source. The date of the *Nihāya* is disputed. Comparison with the *Nihāya* is, on occasion, useful in determining what Dīnawarī’s sources may have been, but this is not always the case. For other opinions on the *Nihāya*, see GRIGNASCHI 1973.

147. Wherever possible Dīnawarī related events to the regnal years of Iranian kings, and even the life of Muḥammad, the founder of Islam, is presented in this fashion. In fact, Dīnawarī invokes the *annus hegirae* only towards the end of his history of the Sasanian dynasty (POURSHARIATI 2010, p. 205).

might shed light on his historical method. But we cannot reconstruct Dīnawarī's library at all, and the sources of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* can, in many cases, only be guessed at.

This state of affairs militates strongly against any but the broadest and most general discussion of Dīnawarī's sources. This is not, however, a very serious problem, since modern treatment of sources in Muslim historiography does not proceed with the confidence typical of nineteenth century *Quellenforschung*.¹⁴⁸ It is no longer believed, for instance, that Muslim historians were slavish compilers who refused to think for themselves — an appraisal which justified the search for, and isolation of, texts supposedly copied *verbatim*. It is now recognised that ninth- and tenth-century Muslim historians impressed their own vision upon the texts that they used. They did this not only by arranging pre-existing historical notices (*aḥbār*), but also by breaking them up, rephrasing them, or by composing them anew.¹⁴⁹ Even Ṭabarī, who claims not to have done so, must have impressed his own vision and style upon his sources to some degree, else his grand history would not have been as coherent and unified as it is. We can say with confidence that even Ṭabarī's *Annals* are much more than simply a collection of excerpts from other texts. The same is certainly true of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*, in which Dīnawarī obviously exercised his talent at composition.

Another important objection to *Quellenforschung* is that many sources used by Muslim historians may well have been anonymous, or of doubtful authorship. Many examples might be chosen to show this, but let us dwell on Ṭabarī's *isnāds* in his Sasanian chapters, since they have been well-studied and are germane to the present topic. The only cited author in Ṭabarī's Sasanian passages is Hišām Ibn Muḥammad, who furnished for the most part details on events in

148. JACKSON BONNER 2011, p. 27.

149. This is not a mere conjecture. The discovery of a manuscript of Sayf Ibn 'Umar's history, whose work was previously known to survive only in fragments in other sources, shows that the 'excerpts' made from it plainly broke up a continuous narrative (ROBINSON 2003, p. 36). But reading only the fragments, one does not get this impression at all: one does not get the impression that his work was uniform and continuous. So Robinson infers a trend to simplify and break up continuous narratives.

Arabia. In every other instance material is not attributed to anyone at all. Take Ṭabarī's account of the reign of Pērōz, for instance. This is a good place to begin such a discussion because Nöldeke founded his *Hudāynāma* hypothesis on an analysis of this story and its attribution.¹⁵⁰ At the beginning of his account of Pērōz' reign, Ṭabarī attributes his information to Hišām Ibn Muḥammad.¹⁵¹ Not long thereafter, new data is ascribed to 'someone else' apart from Hišām.¹⁵² Next, a notice on the Hephthalites (invoked under the anachronistic name of 'Turks') is attributed to 'a certain person knowledgeable about Persian history'.¹⁵³ So, apart from Hišām Ibn Muḥammad, Ṭabarī's sources of Sasanian history do not seem as discrete as many believe.¹⁵⁴ If Ṭabarī had really known the names of the authors of his sources, it is strange that he did not mention them in this context: this would not be the sort of work that would have won much approval from Ṭabarī's fellow jurists and historians, and it is seemingly out of step with Ṭabarī's professed mission *to cite his sources exactly as he found them*. What Ṭabarī did here only really makes

150. The 'Bericht vom Untergang des Pêrôz' was extracted and copied from Ibn Qutayba's *Uyūn al-Aḥbār* for Nöldeke by the illustrious Baron von Rosen (NÖLDEKE 1879, p. xxi with note 2), so that he might compare it to the same story in other, similar sources. Nöldeke's surprising conclusion was that Ibn Qutayba's source for the episode in question 'kann füglich nur das Werk des Ibn Moqaffa' sein'.

151. ṬABARĪ, p. 872: l. 17. For a very brief discussion of Ṭabarī's use of Hišām, see ZAKERI 2008, p. 35–36.

152. ṬABARĪ, p. 873: l. 13.

153. ṬABARĪ, p. 878: l. 3–4.

154. *Contra* YAR-SHATER 1983, p. 361; *Contra* DURI 1983, p. 69–71. Ṭabarī's supposed superiority over all other sources of the *Hudāynāma* tradition likewise disintegrates when his Sasanian passages are examined (DURI 1983, p. 69–71). Received objection to Dīnawarī and habitual preference for Ṭabarī assume, but do not prove, not only that Ṭabarī's sources are reliable, but also that they are somehow discrete and retrievable (JACKSON BONNER 2011, p. 30). Indeed, Ṭabarī makes an impression of being very serious and generally trustworthy, but this does not mean anything in particular about the sources of his Sasanian chapters. Finally, the state of affairs observed above refutes Howard-Johnston's assumption that Ṭabarī's Sasanian chapters are based on only one source (HOWARD-JOHNSTON 2008, p. 80).

sense if most of his sources of Sasanian history were anonymous — something which is by no means impossible or unrealistic.¹⁵⁵

If old-fashioned *Quellenforschung* is no longer *en vogue*, and Dīnawarī has reworked his material in order to put his own stamp on it, and some sources may not even have had identifiable authors, how can we hope to proceed? If we want an idea of what Dīnawarī's sources were, we must probe *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* for material differing by subject, presentation, and outlook in search of homogeneous portions of it which can be attributed to individual sources. Specific sources can sometimes be identified with certainty, but often we can only guess at a text, an author, or a genre. The result of such an investigation must therefore be considered conjectural in many instances, as the historian's subjective judgment shapes his conclusions; and even when a source has been surely identified, the extent of Dīnawarī's use of it must remain doubtful.¹⁵⁶ So we ought to be wary of asserting anything too vehemently. We cannot pretend that we can catch a glimpse of *all* Dīnawarī's sources; so we should limit ourselves to discussing what is either obvious or highly probable.

Accordingly the ensuing discussion deals with: I. sources mentioned by Dīnawarī; II. sources of Sasanian dynastic history and the *Hudāynāma* tradition — this includes a subsection focusing more specifically on *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*; III. sources which deal with Iranian history, but not with Sasanian dynastic history; and IV. speculative sources.

155. The state of affairs described above fits well with Robinson's observation that the idea of a book with fixed contents and fixed authorship developed slowly in Muslim historiography (ROBINSON 2003, p. 37).

156. Cf. HOWARD-JOHNSTON 2010B, p. 80.

I. Sources Mentioned by Dīnawarī

We can be certain only of what Dīnawarī himself mentions in the pre-Islamic portion of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*. Apart from Quranic quotations scattered here and there, we find direct references to Ibn Muqaffa';¹⁵⁷ 'Abd Allāh Ibn Ṣāmit;¹⁵⁸ Ibn Kawis Namarī¹⁵⁹ and Ibn Šarya¹⁶⁰ who provide two very brief notices on pre-Islamic Arabia; Aswad Ibn Ġifar, a poet;¹⁶¹ Ibn 'Abbās, a geographer;¹⁶² Farazdaq, a poet;¹⁶³ and 'Umr Ibn Kalṭūm, another poet.¹⁶⁴ Part of Dīnawarī's story of Solomon and Balqīs was apparently transmitted orally.¹⁶⁵

In his pre-Islamic chapters Dīnawarī gives no other specific references, though he begins with trite invocation of the writings of 'folk learned in the most ancient histories',¹⁶⁶ and alludes

157. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 9: l. 4. For a brief description of Ibn Muqaffa' see LATHAM 1997; for a treatment of Ibn Muqaffa's role as a translator during the so-called Abbasid Revolution, see ARJOMAND 1994. For his biography, see SOURDEL 1954.

158. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 21: l. 2. What follows is a very curious anecdote about the arrival of Ibn Ṣāmit at the court of a Byzantine emperor, who is presumably (given the surrounding circumstances) meant to be Heraclius (Cf. POURSHARIATI 2010, p. 258; YÜCESOY 2007, p. 142).

159. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 9: l. 18–19. I have struggled without success to identify this writer.

160. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 10: l. 1

161. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 18: l. 3.

162. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 38: l. 11–12.

163. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 55: l. 8.

164. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 55: l. 15–16.

165. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 22: l. 15–16:

وهذا حديث منتشر قد حملته الرواة.

166. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 3: l. 2–3:

وجدتُ فيما كتب اهل العلم بالاخبار الأولى.

vaguely to ‘one of the Qays poets’.¹⁶⁷ When Islamic history is in full swing, Dīnawarī invokes Ša‘bī, Aṣma‘ī, Hišām Kalbī, and Hayṭam Ibn ‘Adī,¹⁶⁸ but these have little or no bearing on Dīnawarī’s pre-Islamic passages.

Of the foregoing references those to Ibn Šarya and Ibn Muqaffa‘ are of greatest interest to the historian of Sasanian Iran. Not withstanding the reputations of Ibn Kawis al-Namarī, Ibn ‘Abbās, Aswad Ibn Ġifar, Farazdaq, and ‘Umr b. Kaltūm, Dīnawarī has lifted from them anecdotes which are of no value to the historian of pre-Islamic Iran.

Ibn Šarya

Ibn Šarya, who was mentioned above briefly, is the putative author of *Aḥbār ‘Ubayd*, an account of a nocturnal dialogue between the caliph Mu‘āwiya and the author, dealing with the history, poetry, and genealogy of Yemen.¹⁶⁹ If the text is indeed what it purports to be, we must situate its composition before the death of Mu‘āwiya in about 680 — a dating, favoured by Crosby, but which I find very difficult to accept.¹⁷⁰ In any case *Aḥbār ‘Ubayd* was redacted a final time by a certain person with the *nisba* Barqī (d. 863) at some point in the first half of the ninth century.¹⁷¹

167. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 42: l. 6–7:

يقول شاعر من شعراء قيس ...

168. BOSWORTH 1985.

169. CROSBY 2007, p. 1–3. For a summary of the contents of *Aḥbār ‘Ubayd*, see CROSBY 2007, p. 15–43.

170. CROSBY 2007, p. 51–59.

171. AḤBĀR ‘UBAYD, p. 213: l. 4:

حدثنا عبيد بن شربة الجرهمي عن البرقي، الخ.

On حدثنا and questions as to whom it refers, see CROSBY 2007, p. 52.

Whether or not the text really is what it purports to be, there is no question that much pre-Islamic Yemenite tradition has been preserved in it.

But strangely, *Aḥbār ʿUbayd* shows some knowledge of Persian mythical history. Examination of Ibn Šarya’s treatment of the legend of Šammar shows this: the author situates Šammar’s adventures ‘in the reign of king Kayqā’ūs,’¹⁷² clearly the Kayqāwūs of Persian epic tradition. This dating happens to be at odds with Dīnawarī’s placement of the same events in the reign of Buštāsif.¹⁷³ But that is not the significant point: Ibn Šarya’s dating means that, in the early eighth century A.D. and perhaps before, at least one author of non-Iranian heritage had attempted to date events in Arabian history by situating them within Persian royal history of the heroic age. *Aḥbār ʿUbayd* exhibits this tendency in embryonic form. In *Kūtāb al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*, dating historical events in reference to Persian royal history is fully developed.

In the above discussion of his *Šuʿūbiyya* tendencies, we have already seen how Dīnawarī seems to have been at variance with claims of Arab supremacy, of which *Aḥbār ʿUbayd* is full. But this tendency seems not to have stopped Dīnawarī from referring to legends which originated in *Aḥbār ʿUbayd*. Dīnawarī’s Yemenite genealogies and deeds of rulers such as Ifrīqīs and Abraha Ḍū Manār,¹⁷⁴ the legends of ʿĀd and Ṭamūd,¹⁷⁵ the tale of Solomon and Balqīs,¹⁷⁶ and the legend of Šammar¹⁷⁷ probably go back ultimately to *Aḥbār ʿUbayd*, for it was in this text that such stories first appeared in writing.

I72. AḤBĀR ʿUBAYD, p. 341: l. 18–19.

I73. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 26.

I74. AḤBĀR ʿUBAYD, p. 396–411; p. 425–483.

I75. AḤBĀR ʿUBAYD, p. 325–356; p. 367–396.

I76. AḤBĀR ʿUBAYD, p. 411: l. 12 to p. 425: l. 14.

I77. AḤBĀR ʿUBAYD, p. 431: l. 17 to p. 433: l. 6.

Nevertheless, Dīnawarī's reference to Ibn Šarya (a brief remark about Ya'rub son of Qaḥṭān) came to him at second hand.¹⁷⁸ So Dīnawarī must have been acquainted with *Aḥbār 'Ubayd* through the work of another author — an unsurprising possibility, as *Aḥbār 'Ubayd* was referenced by writers such as Abū Ḥātim al-Sijistānī (d. 809), Jāḥiẓ, and Ibn Qutayba.¹⁷⁹ Perhaps because he found his pre-Islamic Yemenite information at second hand, Dīnawarī had no compunction about reworking it to suit his needs. Dīnawarī's genealogies of the descendants of Noah, for instance, cannot have been lifted directly from *Aḥbār 'Ubayd*. To take but a single example, Dīnawarī traces the lineage of all Iranians back to Noah's son Shem, whom he calls Sām, but according to Ibn Šarya Persians are descended from Japheth.¹⁸⁰ Here Dīnawarī must have drawn on another source which cannot be identified, or altered the genealogy of his own accord.

Ibn Muqaffa'

Dīnawarī is the earliest identifiable author to make reference to Ibn Muqaffa' in connexion with Persian history. Nöldeke may or may not have been aware of this fact, but he made no mention of it.¹⁸¹ Dīnawarī connects Ibn Muqaffa' to an indictment of the belief of ignorant pagans, according to which Jamšēd (the Iranian culture hero *par excellence*) was one and the same man as the biblical Solomon. Ibn Muqaffa' refutes this false claim by reference to chronology. Here is Dīnawarī's reference to Ibn Muqaffa':¹⁸²

178. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 10: l. 1–2:

وذكر عن ابن الشَّيرِية انه قال كان الذى خرج اليها يعرب بن قحطان في ولده وكان اكبرهم سنًا واعظمهم قدرا.

179. CROSBY 2007, p. 8–9.

180. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 3: l. 14 to p. 4: l. 19; Cf. AḤBĀR 'UBAYD, p. 321: l. 10–11.

181. We should have expected to find such a reference in his *Einleitung* (NÖLDEKE 1879, p. xiv–xxviii).

182. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 15: l. 4.

It is related that Ibnu'l-Muqaffa' said: 'ignorant Persians allege and they that have no knowledge [say] that king Jamm was Sulaymān son of Dāwūd, but this an error, for between Sulaymān and Jamm there were more than three thousand years.' It is said that Numrūd son of Kan'ān was the Pharaoh of Ibrāhīm from among the sons of Jamm and was paternal-cousin to Āzar son of Tāriḥ, father of Ibrāhīm, namely Ibrāhīm son of Āzar son of Tāriḥ son of Nāhūr son of Ar'ū son of Šālah son of Arfaḥšād, whom the Iranians call Īrān. And among the sons of Arfaḥšād are all the Arabs, and among them also are the kings of Fārs, and their nobility are among the folk of 'Irāq and others apart from them.

What does this invocation of Ibn Muqaffa' mean? It seems clear that in Ibn Muqaffa's day (the early eighth century) the practice of identifying figures in Iranian mythical history with those of the Bible was well established, and that Ibn Muqaffa' clearly felt (at least in the context of his quotation and perhaps in others as well) that such identifications were wrong and in need of correction; and that Dīnawarī found his reference to Ibn Muqaffa' *second hand*, else he would not have written 'it is related that Ibn Muqaffa' said', and so forth — a fact which implies that Ibn Muqaffa's work was already embedded in other texts in Dīnawarī's day. As Dīnawarī does not allude to another author, the work in which he found the reference to Ibn Muqaffa' may have been anonymous. So it seems that Ibn Muqaffa' was not the first author to have put Iranian history into Arabic, as is sometimes thought,¹⁸³ nor was his the only version of Iranian mythology, nor in there any reason to believe that his was the best, nor even the most complete, account of it.¹⁸⁴

183. See, for instance, PEACOCK 2012, p. 61 and CAMERON 1969–1970, p. 113.

184. A similar, but nevertheless significantly different, passage is also found in the *Nihāya*: 'Some ignorant Persians, and those who have no knowledge of genealogy, allege that Jamm was Sulaymān son of Dāwūd (the blessing of God be upon him): an invention and a lie! Between Jamm and Sulaymān is a [long space of] time and [many] ages' (NIHĀYA, p. 18). A brief explanation for the confusion, involving Djinn's and Sulaymān's power over the wind, birds, and wild beasts, then follows. But in that text, the passage is attributed to a certain Ayyūb Ibn Qirriya. Grignaschi uncritically assumes that both attributions cannot be right, and that 'il faudra préférer le témoignage de la *Nihāya*' (GRIGNASCHI 1973, p. 118: n. 4). This is irrational, as it is by no means inconceivable that two different scholars arrived at the same conclusion independant of one another — a much more plausible suggestion, given the very great difference

But what text *is* Dīnawarī referring to in connexion with Ibn Muqaffaʿ? Is it the long-lost *Hudāynāma*,¹⁸⁵ usually assumed to be a dynastic history of Iran? Dīnawarī's reference to Ibn Muqaffaʿ seems too meagre to decide the question once and for all. Nevertheless, it seems unlikely that a dynastic history of Iran produced by the Sasanians themselves would have included the identification of Iranian mythical kings with Biblical figures. So I suspect that, if Ibn Muqaffaʿ' s reference to erroneous identification of Jamm and Solomon does go back to his translation of the *Hudāynāma*, it was probably a gloss or comment added by the translator himself in reference to other, inferior translations in which such identifications were made.¹⁸⁶

So it seems that a link between Dīnawarī and the *Hudāynāma* of Ibn Muqaffaʿ is *possible* but not beyond doubt. But if Ibn Muqaffaʿ' s *Hudāynāma* is not the source of Iranian history in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*, what is? To examine this question, we need to go back to the beginning of Nöldeke's *Hudāynāma* hypothesis, and this is the subject of the following section.

II. Sources of Sasanian Dynastic History and the *Hudāynāma* Tradition

The *Fihrist* of Ibn Nadīm mentions something called *The Book of the Hudāynāma in the Form of Biographies*, and it is listed first among translations made 'from the books of the Persians' by a certain Ibn Muqaffaʿ, a fastidious young man of refined manners, of noble Persian stock, and reputed equally for the excellence of his Arabic, for his charm and wit, and for his overbearing arrog-

in wording, sentence structure, and content between *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* and the *Nihāya*. (The Arabic word which I have rendered as 'Persian' is *ʿajam* in both cases.) I suspect that we have evidence in this connexion that *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* and the *Nihāya* have not influenced one another directly, but rather have a source in common.

185. For the most recent discussions of the mysterious *Hudāynāma* see HOWARD-JOHNSTON 2010B, p. 341–343 and JACKSON BONNER 2011, p. 19–28.

186. If we can judge from the claim attributed to Ḥamza Iṣfahānī by Balʿamī, whereby a certain Ibn Šahūya (another author of the *Hudāynāma* tradition) identified the Avestan Gayumart with the Biblical Adam, Ibn Muqaffaʿ' s gloss may well be a response to his translation (BALʿAMĪ, p. x; ḤAMZA, p. 14). For a brief discussion of this claim, see ZAKERI 2008, p. 21.

ance.¹⁸⁷ But the *Fihrist* does not tell us anything about this book. Ḥamza Iṣfahānī, writing in the tenth century explains that the *Hudāynāma* was ‘the book that, when translated from Persian into Arabic was called *The Book of the History of the Kings of Persia*’.¹⁸⁸ So it seems that *Hudāynāma* was the Persian title of a book, put into Arabic by Ibn Muqaffa‘, which probably dealt with the lives of the kings of Iran.

But we know that there was not only one book under this name. Ḥamza Iṣfahānī refers to the scholar Mūsā Ibn Kisrawī, who claims to have looked carefully at several versions of the *Hudāynāma* and found that they were all different, a state of affairs which he explains by reason of translation. This is what Mūsā wrote:¹⁸⁹

Verily I looked in the book called *Hudāynāma* (this is the book that, when translated from Persian into Arabic, was called *The Book of the History of the Kings of Persia*. I looked again and again in the copies of this book and I examined them carefully. I found that they were different, so that not two copies among them were in agreement, and this doubtful condition of things was because of the translation of this book from language to language.

It is important to grasp precisely what Mūsā Ibn Kisrawī meant, because we shall have occasion later to return to what he wrote. Mūsā was clearly aware of several different translations of the *Hudāynāma*. Likewise, a certain Bahrām Ibn Mardānšāh, whom Ḥamza identifies as a mobad, is

187. Fihrist, p. 132:

كتاب خدانامه في سير .

See LATHAM 1997 and ARJOMAND 1994.

188. ḤAMZA, p. 17.

189. ḤAMZA, p. 16–17:

اني نظرت في الكتاب المسمى خدای نامه وهو الكتاب الذي لما نقل من الفارسية الى العربية سمي كتاب تاريخ ملوك الفرس فكررت النظر في نسخ هذا الكتاب وبحثها بحث استقصاء فوجدتها مختلفة حتى لم اظفر منها بنسختين متفقتين وذلك لاشتباه الامر كان على الناقلين لهذا الكتاب من لسان الى لسان .

cited as having collected more than twenty copies of the *Hudāynāma* which he then describes using various different terms.¹⁹⁰ Dīnawarī's reference to Ibn Muqaffā' seems to prove that Ibn Muqaffā' himself was aware of more than one version of Iranian mythical history, so perhaps the state of affairs described by Mūsā and Bahrām goes back to the eighth century when Ibn Muqaffā' was active. It also seems clear that there were portions of the *Hudāynāma* which Ibn Muqaffā' and other translators had omitted from their Arabic versions. Proof of this is that one of Ḥamza's chapters is called *Some Stories which are found in Hudāynāma, but are not narrated by Ibn Muqaffā' or Ibn Jahm*,¹⁹¹ a heading followed by fables and elements from an Arabic translation of the Avesta.

In light of the preceding evidence, Nöldeke's famous *Hudāynāma* hypothesis cannot stand. This is to say that we cannot, in good faith, entertain either that Ibn Muqaffā's was the *only* translation from which all Arabic histories of Iran are derived, or that his was the *best* such translation among many.¹⁹² Ḥamza clearly means that there was more than one translation of the *Hudāynāma*, no two of which were quite the same — and this on the warrant of two scholars' testi-

190. ḤAMZA, p. 24:

قال بهرام الموبذ انى جمعت نيما وعشرين نسخة من الكتاب المسمى خدا نامه .

As for Bahrām's descriptions of these versions, Rubin judged the best work on this topic to be that of von Rosen, who wrote in Russian. Having no Russian, I depend on Rubin's summary of Rosen's work (RUBIN 2006, p. 17). Ḥamza, he says, regarded the works of Ibn Muqaffā', Ibn Jahm, and Ibn Šahūya as 'plain and straightforward translations', which he calls *naql*. The works of Muhammad Ibn Bahrām Ibn Maṭyār Iṣbahānī and Hišām Ibn Qāsim Iṣbahānī, however, used the putative *Hudāynāma* as their 'core', but external material was added. These Ḥamza called *naql aw jam'*. The work attributed to Bahrām Mardānšāh was called *iṣlah*, 'an edited reworking of material from various sources'. Rosen surmised that Ibn Kisrāwī's work, omitted from Ḥamza's list by scribal error, was described as *iṣlah* also. For another interpretation of Rosen's work, see ZAKERI 2008, p. 30–34.

191. ḤAMZA, p. 6:

حكاية جمل ما في خداى نامه لم يحكها ابن المقفع ولا ابن الجهم

Ibn Jahm seems to have been another translator in the same league as Ibn Muqaffā'.

192. NÖLDEKE 1879, p. xxii.

mony, one of whom was a Zoroastrian cleric and probably a trustworthy authority on the subject. So discussion on Ibn Muqaffa' and the *Hudāynāma* could very well come to an end once and for all now.

Summarising our findings on the foregoing line of reasoning, we can draw the following conclusions. Works called *Hudāynāma* were collections of biographies of kings of Iran, which had been translated into Arabic from Persian. Precisely which kings' reigns were covered, and in what manner, is not known. Ibn Muqaffa' and Ibn Jahm are two identifiable translators, amongst others surely, but their work has perished. By the tenth century there were many different books in circulation under the name of *Hudāynāma*. This much we can claim to know with reasonable certainty about the *Hudāynāma* — based on reputable sources that mention it.

But let us look closely at Nöldeke's chain of reasoning which brought the *Hudāynāma* to scholarly attention in the first place.¹⁹³ Nöldeke firmly believed that the *Hudāynāma* (or as he called it *Choddānāme*) was an official, dynastic chronicle, telling all Iranian history from the beginning of time onwards. This document was originally compiled under Īsraw I (after many centuries perhaps of oral transmission), later enlarged under Yazdgard III, and now lost. The late sixth-century Roman historian Agathias of Myrina (d. c. 582) seems to offer evidence that such a document really existed, because he wrote an excursus on Sasanian history, which was excerpted (as he claims) from something which was called 'the Royal Annals'.¹⁹⁴ Nöldeke believed this excerpt to be substantially the same as what is found in later Arabic and Persian texts. In the fullness of time, this official dynastic chronicle came to be translated into Arabic in the eighth century by Ibn Muqaffa', a Muslim convert (he stresses) of doubtful sincerity. This translation has been lost, but Nöldeke believed that all Arabic histories of Iran are founded on it, and notably that Firdawsī's *Šāhnāma* is derived from the *Hudāynāma* by way of collateral transmission. Finally,

193. NÖLDEKE 1879, p. xiv-xxviii.

194. Βασιλικὰ ἀπομνημονεύματα (AGATHIAS, IV.30). 'Annals' is a feeble translation of ἀπομνημονεύματα, which is the very word that Xenophon used for his work which we call *The Memorabilia*. Nevertheless, I have followed Cameron and retained it (CAMERON 1969–1970).

Ṭabarī's *Annals* and Firdawsī's *Šāhnāma* reflect this lost chronicle better than all other available sources. So runs Nöldeke's theory.

The Ibn Muqaffa' connexion simply does not withstand scrutiny. It may fairly be said that Nöldeke's link between the Ibn Muqaffa' translation and Ṭabarī's account of Persian history is assumed and not proven.¹⁹⁵ Nöldeke believed he saw a connection between the Sasanian passages in Ṭabarī's *Annals* and those in *Kitāb al-Ma'ārif* of Ibn Qutayba. But these two works *do not mention Ibn Muqaffa' at all*. The elusive translator happens to be mentioned, however, in another of Ibn Qutayba's works, *ʿUyūn al-Aḥbār* — a coincidence which Nöldeke thought good enough to link the Iranian portion of *Kitāb al-Ma'ārif* with Ibn Muqaffa'. But this does not make much sense, because not even *ʿUyūn al-Aḥbār* attributes any Persian history to Ibn Muqaffa'.¹⁹⁶ Moreover, Ibn Qutayba's chapter on Persian history was lifted from *The Books of the Biographies of the Iranians*,¹⁹⁷ a phrase which occurs nowhere in Ṭabarī's *Annals*, and the *Fihrist* and Ḥamza clearly state that Ibn Muqaffa's translation was called either *The Book of the Hudāynāma in the Form of Biographies* or *The Book of the History of the Kings of Persia*. How can we explain these differences if all scholars involved knew that they were making reference to a single work by Ibn Muqaffa'? The simplest answer is: we cannot make sense of them, because they were *not* referring to one and the same document and there is no solid evidence that Ibn Muqaffa' was involved.

Accordingly, hereinafter, unless implying the Ibn Muqaffa' translation, I shall not refer to 'the *Hudāynāma*', but rather to 'the *Hudāynāma* tradition'.¹⁹⁸ The expression is deliberately vague, and it refers to the entire body of texts supposedly linked in one way or another with an Iranian

195. GREENWOOD 2002, p. 329.

196. RUBIN 2005, p. 67–69.

197. IBN QUTAYBA, p. 652: l. 2:

قرأت في كتب سير العجم...

198. Cf. JACKSON BONNER 2011, p. 19–20.

royal history. This body of texts includes, but may well not be limited to, Sebeos' *History of Xosrov*, the anonymous *History to 682*, Theophilus' chronicle, the *Chronicle of Seert*, the *Annals of Eutychius*, and material from the *Hudāynāma* tradition appears in the work of Dīnawarī, Ibn Qutayba, Ya'qūbī, Ṭabarī, Mas'ūdī, Ḥamza Iṣfahānī, Bal'amī, Ṭa'alībī, Bīrūnī, and Firdawsī.¹⁹⁹

Now, if there was not a single collection of Persian royal biographies translated by Ibn Muqaffa' lying behind all texts of the *Hudāynāma* tradition, we must consider the possibility that there were many such texts by many authors. In this connexion we need look no further than the *Šāhnāma*. For the notion of a variety of different texts feeding into the *Hudāynāma* tradition is born out clearly by investigation of Firdawsī's sources. These have generally been isolated not from an examination of the *Šāhnāma* itself, but rather from one of the two introductions that are often included in the poem's manuscripts.²⁰⁰ Nöldeke's judgement was based on the younger, fifteenth-century introduction: the so-called *Baysonğur Introduction*.²⁰¹ A translation (says Nöldeke) of a document written in Pahlavi under the reign of Yazdgard III by a dihqān called Dānišvar is said to have been prepared by a team of scholars in the tenth century. The Middle Persian document was in turn based on an earlier work, supposedly written under the reign of Ḥusraw I. This team, commissioned by Abū Maṣṣūr 'Abd Razzāq Ibn 'Abd Faruḥ, governor of Tūs during the first twenty years of Firdawsī's life, prepared what has come to be called the Prose *Šāhnāma*.

This account, though superficially plausible, is probably not true. The Baysonğur Introduction is too young to be preferred to the other, much older, introduction to the *Šāhnāma*, wherein no process of translation is mentioned and the resultant 'Prose *Šāhnāma*' is said to be a

199. HOWARD-JOHNSTON 2010B, p. 341–342.

200. A notable exception is Christensen's work on Mazdak, in which that author attempted to prove that a document, which he called the *Mazdakāmagh*, lies behind Firdawsī's couplets on Mazdakite doctrine (CHRISTENSEN 1925, p. 65–66).

201. NÖLDEKE 1879, p. xxiii.

compilation of many Pahlavi books.²⁰² ‘Abd Razzāq is said to have commanded his minister to assemble owners of books, sages, and ‘men of experience’,

and by his orders, his servant Abū Maṣṣūr Ma‘marī compiled the book: he sent a person to various towns of Ḥurāsān and brought wise men therefrom, such as Šāj son of Ḥurāsānī from Hirāt; Yazdān-dād son of Šāpūr from Sīstān; Māhōy Ḥwaršēd son of Bahrām from Nišāpūr; Šādān son of Burzīn from Tūs. He brought all the four and set them down to produce those books of the kings...²⁰³

The absence of any mention of translation does not, of course, mean that none took place, but the significant point in the older introduction to the *Šāhnāma* is that Firdawsī’s work was based on many Middle Persian sources.²⁰⁴

Prose texts of the *Ḥudāynāma* tradition bear witness to multiple divergent accounts of Sasanian royal history also. Nowhere is this more clear than in Ṭabarī’s *Annals*, where more than one treatment of certain aspects of a single king’s reign are often presented side by side. A well-studied case in point are Ṭabarī’s two accounts of Ḥusraw I’s reign, one of which includes a detailed discussion of that king’s economic and military reforms and one of which does not.²⁰⁵ An almost identical structure of parallel narratives is found elsewhere: for the so-called *Codex Sprenger*

202. Minorsky’s English translation of the older introduction is found in ŠĀHNĀMA PREFACE, p. 166–179.

203. I have modified Minorsky’s translation, chiefly for the sake of accommodating Persian names to my system of transliteration (ŠĀHNĀMA PREFACE, p. 168–169). Cf. Rubin’s comments on the older introduction: ‘...the main task was here of making (namely compiling) a book, rather than translating it (in which case the words to be used should have been *az zabān...ba zabān gardānīdan*, as elsewhere in the introduction)’ (RUBIN 2006, p. 20).

204. Cf. JACKSON BONNER 2011, p. 36–37: an overview of the various sections in Firdawsī’s canto on Ḥusraw I suggests multiple sources.

205. RUBIN 2005, *passim*; JACKSON BONNER 2011, p. 22; p. 72–73

30 deals with Sasanian history in the same way. Apart from articles by Zakeri and Rubin,²⁰⁶ no modern scholarship that I know of has been devoted to the *Codex*. Its date of publication is not known, though Rubin's preliminary investigation of the text has shown that none of the sources quoted in it are later than the ninth century of our era. But more importantly, Rubin has demonstrated that at least one of the sources of the *Codex* is clearly nothing like Nöldeke's *Hudāynāma*, for the anonymous author of the *Codex* claims to have used what he found in the 'writing of the mobad, the herbeds of the Magi, and those who are versed in their traditions, in their customs and in their names'.²⁰⁷ Nevertheless, the similarities between the *Codex Sprenger 30* and Ṭabarī's work were apparently so striking to Nöldeke, that he felt able to use the *Codex* almost as another manuscript of Ṭabarī's *Annals*.²⁰⁸

Finally, it is worthwhile to mention that the mysterious *Nihāya* attributes a fair amount of Sasanian and mythical Persian history to Ibn Muqaffa', and we find four references to a book biographies of Persian kings.²⁰⁹ Though Grignaschi's inference that the *Nihāya* is based on a for-

206. ZAKERI 2008, p. 33–34; RUBIN 2005.

207. My translation. This portion of the *Codex Sprenger 30* is quoted in GRIGNASCHI 1973, p. 130: n. 1:

فاستعملنا في ذلك ما وجدناه عند الموبد وهرابذة المجوس المتأدبين بأحاديثهم وسيرهم وأسمائهم.

Grignaschi preferred to read *أسمارهم* ('their debates') instead of *أسمائهم* ('their names'). Either way, we are far from received notions of what the putative *Hudāynāma* was like.

208. NÖLDEKE 1879, p. x. Does this mean that Ṭabarī used the same individual sources or the same document in which multiple accounts were imbedded? Rubin thinks that this is unlikely: the two texts differ considerably in many cases, and are probably not founded on the same material. Be this as it may, parallel narratives of Sasanian history, such as we find in Ṭabarī and in the *Codex*, prove that more than one account of that period was available to our authors, and if Rubin's analysis is right the mysterious *Hudāynāma*, if it was used at all, could only have been one source among many.

209. BROWNE 1900, p. 196; NIHĀYA, p. 85, 89, 110, 203, 208, 212, 213, 277, 328, 336:

قال عبد الله بن المقفّع، الخ

gery which he calls ‘Pseudo Ibn al-Muqaffa’ is impossible to prove, the *Nihāya*’s references are almost certainly not genuine.²¹⁰ Evidence in the *Fihrist* allows us to doubt the *Nihāya*’s attribution of the combat of Rustam and Isfandiyād to Ibn Muqaffa’. For a certain Jabala Ibn Sālīm is known to have translated a work called ‘the book of Rustam and Isfandiyār’,²¹¹ and the anonymous author of the *Nihāya* may well have lifted his account from this source and attributed it to Ibn Muqaffa’ in order to add prestige to his book.²¹² The legends of Alexander the Great, further-

Invocations of biographies are found in: NIHĀYA, p. 82:

قال عبد الله بن المقفّع وجدت في كتاب العجم حرب رستم و اسفنديار، الخ

(the battle of Rustam and Isfandiyār follows);

NIHĀYA, p. 159:

قال عبد الله بن المقفّع قرأت في كتب سير الملوك من العجم، الخ

(a notice about the end of the Parthian dynasty follows);

NIHĀYA, p. 216:

قال ابن المقفّع وجدت في كتاب سِير الملوك، الخ

(he throne speech of the Sasanian king Narsā follows); and

NIHĀYA, p. 326:

قال ابن المقفّع وجدت في كتاب سِير الملوك العجم، الخ

(Husraw I’s Roman war of 540 and the revolt of Anūš Zād follow).

210. On doubtful attributions to Ibn Muqaffa’, see GRIGNASCHI 1973, p. 115–136; Cf. BROWNE 1900, p. 195–200. Grignaschi’s inference about the document attributed to Pseudo-Ibn Muqaffa’ implies that this text was a Syrian chronicle which came to be translated into Pahlavi and thence into Arabic (GRIGNASCHI 1973, p. 128–136). This inference is interesting, but difficult to follow and impossible to prove.

211. FIHRIST, p. 364.

212. GRIGNASCHI 1973, p. 118–119.

more, are attributed to Ibn Muqaffaʿ whose work could not possibly be the source of stories which attribute to Alexander a lineage among the Iranian heroes of old.²¹³ What we should note, however, is that the *Nihāya* clearly distinguishes between these collections of biographies and another work (or possibly more than one other work) which was also attributed to Ibn Muqaffaʿ and which also dealt with Persian royal history. Furthermore, the *Nihāya* makes no mention of Ibn Muqaffaʿ after the reign of Husraw I²¹⁴ — a state of affairs which may suggest that the author or redactor of the *Nihāya* had reason to believe that Ibn Muqaffaʿ’*s* *Hudāynāma* was did not cover the whole of Sasanian history. So it seems that even in the case of *Nihāya* we are faced with a multiplicity of texts within the *Hudāynāma* tradition, and citations of Ibn Muqaffaʿ are doubtful.

To sum up the argument so far: the *Hudāynāma* tradition is founded on a variety of documents put into Arabic by several scholars amongst whom Ibn Muqaffaʿ was not the first to do so, nor did his translation include all available texts, nor did it cover all Sasanian history. That one or more of these texts was an official Sasanian dynastic chronicle is very doubtful.

Dīnawarī’s Account of Sasanian History

We cannot claim that all Dīnawarī’s passages on Iranian royal history are founded on Ibn Muqaffaʿ’*s* Arabic translation of an official Middle Persian chronicle. To do so, as Nöldeke did, is in fact misleading. There were many accounts of Persian dynastic history available in Dīnawarī’s time, each slightly different, perhaps with varying emphasis or evincing a certain bias. We cannot gloss over this fact by attributing all Persian history in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* to a single source, for such is clearly not the case.

As did Ṭabarī and others, Dīnawarī combined different accounts of Sasanian dynastic history. Despite Dīnawarī’s efforts to harmonise his narrative, individual sources have on occa-

213. NĪHĀYA, p. 110; GRIGNASCHI 1973, p. 96–104.

214. The story of Bahrām Čōbīn’s doings among the Turks is introduced simply with the phrase ‘he said’, as is the murder of Bindūya and revolt of Bistām (NĪHĀYA, p. 383; 390).

sion left obvious traces. We can see this clearly in Dīnawarī's account of the reign of Ardašīr I, and those of Yazdgard II, Hurmazd III, Pērōz, and Balāš. Only in the reign of Ardašīr, however, can a specific source be named.

The Reign of Ardašīr I

Most of Dīnawarī's information on the reign of Ardašīr I goes back ultimately to the so-called *Kārnāmag-ī Ardaxšērī Pābagān*, a rather fanciful account of that king's reign (involving portents, soothsayers, and a monster) composed in Middle Persian. The original text seems to have been redacted several times, the last time no earlier than 706 according to Grenet, and as the Byzantine historian Agathias presents an account of Ardašīr's origins which can be understood as a parody of what is found in this text, we might infer that details in the *Kārnāmag* go back at least to the sixth century.²¹⁵ Multiple redactions are to be inferred from the fact that the *Kārnāmag* clearly consists of a blend of different stages of the Middle Persian language.

Based on the data available (notices in Cassius Dio and Herodian, Armenian chronicles, coins, and rock inscriptions of Ardašīr I and Šāpūr I) it is possible to construct a reasonably good biography of Ardašīr.²¹⁶ With such useful data to hand, the *Kārnāmag*, alas, adds nothing to our knowledge of Ardašīr's reign, for it lacks the sort of historical detail that we should wish it to have. Nothing is said, for instance, of Ardašīr's campaigns against Alexander Severus, nor of Arabian matters apart from a brief allusion to the people of 'Umān,²¹⁷ nor of Ardašīr's conquests in central Asia. His attacking Armenia *may* be alluded to by that land's inclusion in a list of countries

215. AGATHIAS, II.27 (Cf. Cameron 1969–1970, p. 109); KĀRNĀMAG, p. 27–29. The date of the redaction of the Middle Persian *Kārnāmag* that has come down to us can be determined by the use of the Turkish title *tegin* in the text — a title which was unknown before 706 (KĀRNĀMAG, p. 45).

216. WIESEHÖFER 1987.

217. KĀRNĀMAG, VII.12.

to the north of Iran.²¹⁸ Artabān V, the last Parthian king, is presented merely as a regional prince. The taking of Media is invoked as the conquest of ‘the pastures of the Kurds’.²¹⁹ The fateful battle of Hormizdagān is mentioned in only one sentence.²²⁰ Finally, the *Kārnāmag* makes no reference to Ardašīr’s founding of Ctesiphon — surely one of the most important events in Sasanian, to say nothing of Near Eastern, history.

Much has been purged from the Middle Persian *Kārnāmag* in Dīnawarī’s account of Ardašīr’s reign. *Al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* includes no reference to Pābag’s portentous dream about Sāsān’s royal lineage.²²¹ Ardašīr’s birth and youth are not described, nor is his relationship with Artabān delineated at all.²²² Dīnawarī mentions nothing about Ardašīr’s sojourn at the Parthian court, and his relationship with Artabān’s favorite concubine, who induces Ardašīr to take the kingdom for himself, is missing from *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*.²²³ Likewise, we hear nothing of the ensuing chase and

218. KĀRNĀMAG, VII.12.

219. KĀRNĀMAG, V. Grenet reminds us that, in pre-Islamic times, the word ‘Kurd’ did not mean what it means to-day. It was often used to describe any kind of mountain-dwelling people (KĀRNĀMAG, p. 31).

220. KĀRNĀMAG, V.13.

221. KĀRNĀMAG, I.

222. KĀRNĀMAG, II. Ardašīr was born, and Pābag adopted him, and Ardašīr grew up instructed in all aristocratic pursuits (KĀRNĀMAG, II.1–4). Artabān heard of Ardašīr and sent a letter to Pābag, summoning Ardašīr to his court, and Pābag obeyed (KĀRNĀMAG, II.5–8). Ardašīr distinguished himself well in polo and hunting (KĀRNĀMAG, II.9–12). A hunting party with the son of Artabān, and the disagreement which ensued after the son of Artabān took credit for Ardašīr’s impressive killing of an onager (KĀRNĀMAG, II.13–30).

223. KĀRNĀMAG, III. Having seen Ardašīr one day, the concubine fell in love with him, and took to running off to see him whilst Artabān slept (KĀRNĀMAG, III.1–3). One day, Artabān decided to consult his astrologers on the state of the world’s kingdoms (Kārnāmag, III.4). The chief astrologer’s response for tells the coming of a new king: ‘*pādixšāy-ēw <ī> nōg ō paydagīh āyēd, ud was sarxwadāy ōzanēd, ud gēhān abāz [ō] ē-xwadāyīh āwarēd*’ (KĀRNĀMAG, III.6). There is another similar prophecy, seemingly predicting the doom of Artabān, to the effect that whoever flees from his sovering within three days shall come upon greatness and monarchy (KĀRNĀMAG, III.7). The prophecies were then transmitted to Ardašīr by the girl. The girl then motivates him to flee. The

conflict between Artabān and Ardašīr.²²⁴ Ardašīr's dealings with the 'Kurds' (who may represent simply mountain-dwelling tribes, as opposed to real Kurds), and his victory over a monstrous dragon and its master Haftowād are not in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*. These notices appear in the *Šāhnāma*,²²⁵ and it is likely that they were in Dīnawarī's source also.

Matter's take a turn for the worse, when we discover that Dīnawarī's notices which *do* go back to the *Kārnāmag* have been badly mangled. In *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* Ardašīr's battle against Artabān (the battle of Hormizdagān) is fought between Ardašīr and a mysterious man called Farruhān, whom Dīnawarī identifies as 'the last of the descendants of Ardawān'.²²⁶ This may be a conflation of the real battle of Hormizdagān with Ardašīr's victory over Mihrag son of Anōšagzād, which is found in the *Kārnāmag* and the *Šāhnāma*.²²⁷

The *Kārnāmag*'s story involving Ardašīr, his unnamed chief priest, and Artabān's daughter has mutated into Dīnawarī's notice involving Ardašīr, his vizier, and Farruhān's niece. In both accounts, Ardašīr orders his deputy (either a vizier or a priest) to execute a woman of royal Parthian heritage, who is discovered to be pregnant. The vizier (or priest) then pretends to carry

girl makes all sorts of preparations, and they flee (KĀRNĀMAG, III.8–20).

224. KĀRNĀMAG, III.V. There are more oracular utterances in this section. As Ardašīr and his girlfriend passed through a village, some old women recognised him and called out: '*kū ma tars, Ardaxšēr ī Kay ī Pābagān ī az tōhmag ī Sāsān, nāf ī Dārā šāh, čē rast hē az har wad, kas-ē tō nē tuwān griflan, u-t xwadāyīh ī Ērānšahr was sāl abāyēd kardan*' (KĀRNĀMAG, III.19) Whilst in pursuit of Ardašīr Artabān enquires of a *dastūr* on the road whether he has seen the fugitive. His response proclaims that the royal glory has come to Ardašīr: '*Ardaxšēr xwarrah ī Kayān awiš rasīd, pad ēč čārag griflan nē tuwān*' (KĀRNĀMAG, IV.24)

225. Pābak's dream about Sāsān, and the birth of Ardašīr (AŠKĀNĪĀN, l. 99–213); the concubine, whom Firdawsī says was a slave-girl named Gulnār, who fell in love with Ardašīr and induced him to flee (AŠKĀNĪĀN, l. 214–276); the pursuit of Ardavān (AŠKĀNĪĀN, l. 277–456); Ardašīr's battles with the Kurds (AŠKĀNĪĀN, l. 457–516); and the story of Haftvād (AŠKĀNĪĀN, l. 517–787) are narrated at length in the *Šāhnāma*.

226. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 44: l. 6–14. Dīnawarī calls the place of battle 'Hormuzdajān'.

227. AŠKĀNĪĀN, VIII; Firdawsī calls this man Mihrag-i Nūš Zād (ARDAŠĪR, l. 171–295).

out the order, but hides the woman who in time gives birth to the next king of the Sasanian dynasty, called Šābuhr and Sābūr in the *Kārnāmag* and *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* respectively.²²⁸ Dīnawarī names the vizier Abarsām, and adds the curious detail that, after hiding the woman, he castrated himself, put the severed member in a box, sealed it, and gave it to Ardašīr for safekeeping — a detail described far more vividly, and with surprising refinement, in the *Šāhnāma*.²²⁹ The birth of Šābuhr / Sābūr is eventually revealed in both texts, and Ardašīr adopts him as his son and heir. In *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* and the *Šāhnāma*, the shrivelled member is revealed as an incontrovertible proof that the vizier has told the truth about the young man.

Further confusion has occurred in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*'s exposition of the meeting of Sābūr and Ardašīr. This episode in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* has clearly been lifted from the *Kārnāmag*'s account of the meeting between Hormazd (Sābūr's son) and Ardašīr. In both texts the occasion is a polo

228. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 44: l. 18 to p. 45: l. 12. In the *Kārnāmag*, the daughter of Artabān is induced for some reason to poison Ardašīr. He is saved from eating it by a prodigy and the cat and dog in his house ate it instead, and died. The chief priest advised Ardašīr to kill the girl. It is discovered, however, that she is pregnant (KĀRNĀMAG, X.13–14). Ardašīr resolves to kill her anyway. Nevertheless, the priest took her away, unbeknownst to Ardašīr, and hid her, and the priest's wife looked after her. The woman eventually gave birth to Šābuhr and raised him until he reached the age of seven (KĀRNĀMAG, X.17).

229. ARDAŠĪR, l. 67–72:

به خانه شد و خایه پست	برو داغ و دارو نهاد و بیست
به خایه نمک بر پراگنده زود	به حقه درآگند برسان دود
هم اندر زمن حقه را مهر کرد	بیامد خروشان و رخساره زرد
چو آمد بنزدیک تخت بلند	همان حقه بنهاد با مهر بند
چنین گفت با شاه کین زینهار	سپارد به گنجور خود شهریار
نیشته بر آن حقه تاریخ آن	پدیدار کردن پی و بیخ آن.

This is perhaps the most elegant description of self-castration in world literature.

match in which the young man (Dīnawarī's Sābūr and the *Kārnāmag*'s Hormazd) distinguishes himself. A stray ball lands beside Ardašīr and only Sābūr or Hormazd has the courage to approach the king and retrieve it.²³⁰ Dīnawarī adds that Ardašīr deliberately brought this about as a test for young Sābūr. The *Kārnāmag* implies that it was destined to happen.²³¹ Firdawsī's treatment of the same meeting is similar to that of Dīnawarī.²³²

Though the *Kārnāmag* is at the foundation of Dīnawarī's treatment of Ardašīr's reign, Dīnawarī seems to have consulted a rather garbled version of it. Dīnawarī himself is unlikely to have been responsible for the conflation and confusion which just has been observed, but he may have removed most, if not all, of the details that are peculiar to the original *Kārnāmag*. In Grenet's view, if we can judge from the account of Ardašīr's reign in Ṭabarī's *Annals* and the *Šāhnāma*, it seems that more than one later redaction of the *Kārnāmag* was available.²³³ We can also adduce the elaborate version of the story in the *Kārnāmag* which was known to Armenian historian Moses Xorenac'i.²³⁴ So whatever redaction of the *Kārnāmag* Dīnawarī had before him, it was one of many

230. KĀRNĀMAG, XIV; DĪNAWARĪ, p. 45: l. 14 to p. 46: l. 17. In the *Kārnāmag*, Hormizd is born to Šābuhr and a girl whom he met whilst hunting (KĀRNĀMAG, XIII.21–22). She is identified as the daughter of Mihrag son of Anōšagzād, whom Ardašīr killed. Though Ardašīr had hoped to kill her also, her nurse hid her until she came of age (KĀRNĀMAG, XII.8–9). Dīnawarī provides no similar story.

231. *Abāyēd būdan rāy, ēk az awēšān čawgān ō gōy zad, ud gōy *ō kanār ī Ardaxšēr ōbast* (KĀRNĀMAG, XIV.6).

232. In the *Šāhnāma*, the incident involving the polo ball is a test for young Šāpūr brought about by a slave at Ardašīr's behest (ARDAŠĪR, l. 124–126).

233. Ṭabarī's account transforms the dragon and its master into a wicked king called *Abtanbūd* who received divine adoration (ṬABARĪ, p. 817: l. 4–5), and in the *Šāhnāma* the dragon has become a worm of ever-increasing size which dies not by poison, as in the *Kārnāmag*, but by being covered in molten lead (Cf. KĀRNĀMAG, p. 34).

234. Moses seems to be aware of Pābag's dream and astrological portents, which are familiar from the Middle Persian *Kārnāmag*, but his allusions to fire that emanated from Sāsān, stories involving a billy goat and various other animals including a she-goat, an eagle, and a crow, are unattested elsewhere (XORENAC'I, II.70 (p. 206–207)). Cf. THOMSON 1978, p. 217: n. 6.

mutant versions of it — a state of affairs which should remind us of Mūsā Ibn Kisrawī's appraisal of the state of the *Hudāynāma* tradition in his day.²³⁵

The foregoing investigation means that we must search in vain for any great historical insight within Dīnawarī's account of Ardašīr's reign. It also shows the extent to which the *Kārnāmag*'s Zoroastrian themes have been twisted out of recognition, or purged altogether, in later sources of the Islamic era. Dīnawarī has removed all prophecies and references to Zoroastrian deities, and Ardašīr's chief hierophant has been made into a vizier, perhaps so as to make the story palatable to a Muslim audience. Surprisingly, however, Firdawsī has retained a good deal of these things. If we generalise from such observations to other elements of presumably genuine Sasanian provenance within Dīnawarī's notices derived from the *Hudāynāma* tradition, we will be justified in suspecting that such material has been heavily doctored and purged of authentic Zoroastrian content.

It is impossible to say for certain whence Dīnawarī derived the accretions in his account of the reign of Ardašīr that do not go back to the *Kārnāmag*. The origin of the story involving Abarsām's unmaning himself, which Firdawsī also reports, may remain forever mysterious. It may in fact go back to an oral tradition. Some reasonably secure inferences, however, may be ventured about Dīnawarī's allegation that Ardašīr and his vizier Abarsām converted to Christianity which is found also in the *Nihāya*.²³⁶ This subject is taken up below. Finally, we should note in passing that the *Kārnāmag* confirms Dīnawarī's repeated notices that the eponymous ancestor of the Sasanian dynasty was a shepherd.²³⁷ This claim therefore has a long history behind it, and may represent anti-Sasanian propaganda of Parthian origin.

235. ḤAMZA, p. 16–17.

236. NIHĀYA, p. 185–186.

237. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 29–30; p. 105–110; KĀRNĀMAG, I. See also NÖLDEKE 1879, p. 478–487 with note 3 on p. 481.

The Reign of Yazdgard II to Balāš

The sources which can be detected in Dīnawarī's treatment of Yazdgard II, Hurmazd III, Pērōz, and Balāš fall into three main groups. Lurking somewhere behind the reigns of these kings in *al-Ḥbār al-Ṭwāl* there seem to be: a non-Zoroastrian source; a source in which the Hephthalites are called *Hayātīla*; a source which refers to the Hephthalites as Turks.

In the context of the reigns of Yazdgard II, Hurmazd III, Pērōz, and Balāš, Dīnawarī drops certain hints which allow us to infer that one of the sources for this period was not of Orthodox Zoroastrian, Iranian origin. Dīnawarī includes a harsh criticism of Pērōz, whom he calls 'a king of limited ability', most of whose words and deeds amounted to nothing.²³⁸ This recalls the criticisms of Pērōz found in Agathias, Pseudo-Joshua, and Armenian historians, which Cameron has noted.²³⁹ Take the Armenian *History* of Łazar P'arpec'i, for example. Łazar reports a denunciation of king Pērōz put into the mouth of one Zarmihr Hazarawuxt:²⁴⁰

['Pērōz] merely acted as tyrant', he said, 'and at his own whim; without regard for anyone's person or consulting anyone, he did whatever he wanted and despotically carried out his own wishes. The result of his neglecting his advisors was the destruction and downfall not only of himself but of all the land of the Aryans'

238. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 60: l. 15–16:

قالوا وكان فيروز ملكا محدودا وكان جلّ قوله وفعله فيما لا يُجدى عليه نفعه .

239. CAMERON 1969–1970, p. 113; 153.

240. Որ բռնութեամբ միայն, ասէր, ըստ կամի, և թէ բնաւ համարելով ինչ զոր և կամ խորհելով ընդ ումեք առնէր՝ զոր ինչ և կամէր առնէր, և բռնաւոր համաւորութեամբ զործէր զինչ և կամէր: Որոց ելք անհարց զոր նորա իմաստիցն՝ ոչ միայն մորա անձինն, այլ ընդհանուր աշխարհին Արեաց բերին զկործանումն և զբեկումն (ŁAZAR, p. 158: l. 30–34). I have modified Thomson's translation slightly (Cf. THOMSON 1991, p. 217)

Dīnawarī's attitude to Pērōz here is clearly part of a constellation of Christian polemic against that king, and does not go back to an official Sasanian source.

In this connexion it is hard to know what to make of Dīnawarī's laconic treatments of the reigns of Yazdgard II and Balāš. We could perhaps read a great deal into Dīnawarī's silence, as he cites no criticism of Balāš, whom a portion of the Iranian nobility deposed and blinded, probably in reaction to his granting official tolerance of Armenian Christianity. Conversely, the absence of any historical notices in the reign of Yazdgard II may amount to a sort of *damnatio memoriae*, as this king was a violent persecutor of Christians, and remains an object of invincible hatred amongst Armenians to this day. A source of Christian origin seems a reasonable inference in this context.

The source which invokes the Hephthalites under the arabicised *Hayāḥila* probably goes back to an official Sasanian account of Pērōz' reign. This hypothetical, official source makes itself felt in another description of Pērōz, in which he is praised for his good management of a famine and his prudence in suspending taxes for a certain period of time.²⁴¹ This source was also plainly hostile to Hurmazd III,²⁴² whom Pērōz dethroned, and we may infer on this account that it was composed in its original form not long after the events that it describes, possibly under the influence of Pērōz' own propaganda. That the term *Hayāḥila* is preserved, and not changed to 'Turk' suggests that this source was not redacted after the mid 560s under the influence of Turkish dominance on the Asiatic steppe after their defeat of the Hephthalites.

The source referring to the Hephthalites as 'Turks' may also go back to a document written during the reign of the Sasanian dynasty, composed or redacted *after* the mid 560s. It seems to have been preoccupied chiefly with the exploits of the magante whom Dīnawarī calls Šūḥar of the illustrious Qārin family. So the original document may have been something akin to a family

241. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 60: l. 20 to p. 61: l. 7.

242. The army of Hephthalite mercenaries are said to have seen that Pērōz had told the truth about his brother's bad character (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 60: l. 13–14).

history of the Qārins or an encomium to a distinguished member of that family. This putative source seems to lie behind the portions of Ṭabarī's *Annals* and the *Šāhnāma* which also deal with this magnate. If we can generalise from the relevant passages about Sūhrā of Sūfrāy (as he is called in Ṭabarī's *Annals* and the *Šāhnāma* respectively), the source in question had a pronounced epic quality to it. This is most obvious in Firdawsī's description of Sūfrāy's killing the Hephthalite king with a single arrow — a feat to which Ṭabarī also alludes.²⁴³ Dīnawarī's equally fabulous account of Šūhar's war of revenge against the Hephthalites (in which the miraculous bowshot occurred) probably belongs to the same source also.²⁴⁴

This source must also be the origin of the outlandish claims about Sūfrāy which crop up in Firdawsī's narrative of Bahrām Čōbīn's rebellion — a context in which they seem very much out of place. In a speech put into the mouth of the rebel's sister (whom Firdawsī calls Gurdīya), Sūfrāy is portrayed as one who had every right to rule instead of Qubād, by whom he was killed unjustly. Sūfrāy's murder (says Gurdīya) was precipitated by the 'chatter of persons of bad lineage', and the folk of the kingdom reacted by putting Qubād in prison and giving the kingdom to Zarmihr son of Sūfrāy²⁴⁵ — obvious references to Qubād's confinement as a punishment for his devotion to Mazdakism, and deliverance from prison by loyal nobleman.²⁴⁶ What we read in the *Šāhnāma* in this connexion must represent the fullest and latest development of the legends to do with Šūhar (to return to Dīnawarī's name for him), and the Qārīn family.

The foregoing discussion is obviously highly inferential. It has shown simply that *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* shows evidence that at least three sources dealing with the reign of Yazdgard II to that of Pērōz were combined at some point. Either Dīnawarī himself is responsible for the combination

243. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 13: l. 11–12, ṬABARĪ, p. 992: l. 12 to p. 993: l. 1.

244. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 61: l. 11 *et seqq.* Cf. ṬABARĪ, p. 873: l. 10–12, ṬABARĪ, l. 13-p. 877: l. 3, ṬABARĪ, p. 878: l. 3-p.880: l. 15, and PĒRŌZ, l. 36–155.

245. Gurdīya's speech is found in HURMAZD, l. 1618–1669.

246. The history of the bewildering period in question is discussed below the first case study.

nology is computed ‘unto this the fifteenth year of Ḥusraw, son of Hurmazd, in which he destroyed Dara’.²⁵¹ The original, longer source from which the list was extracted was therefore written in 604 or 605, but must have been based on yet earlier documents. The full source is lost, and further speculation on its nature is therefore fruitless until more evidence comes to light. Nevertheless, the comment about the destruction of Dara must give us some idea of the contents.

Such a source seems to lie behind Agathias’ and Procopius’ dynastic histories of Iran. Agathias’ Persian excursus has been better studied than Procopius’ passages on Iranian history, so it is best to begin with Agathias, even though he wrote later than Procopius. Agathias’ Persian excursus does *not* go back to a royal Sasanian archive as Nöldeke believed, but rather to a Sasanian dynastic history written from a Christian perspective, most likely in Syriac,²⁵² and this despite

ܡܕܢܚܐ ܕܡܕܢܚܐ

251. BOOK OF THE BEE, p. ܡܕܢܚܐ:

ܡܕܢܚܐ ܕܡܕܢܚܐ ܡܕܢܚܐ ܕܡܕܢܚܐ ܡܕܢܚܐ ܕܡܕܢܚܐ ܡܕܢܚܐ ܕܡܕܢܚܐ

252. GREENWOOD 2002, p. 332. *Contra* Nöldeke who felt that Agathias’ Persian passages ‘stimmen...im Ganzen zu unserer arabisch-persischen Überlieferung’ (NÖLDEKE 1879, p. xvi).

a certain reflection of Iranian chronology.²⁵³ Here is the proof:²⁵⁴ Yazdgard I, who is called ‘the sinful’ in Dīnawarī and other sources,²⁵⁵ and who was hated by the Zoroastrian clergy for his clemency to Christians, is portrayed by Agathias as a virtuous monarch; likewise Balāš, whom the Zoroastrian clergy hated for his tolerance of Armenian Christianity, is called ‘gentle and mild’; conversely Agathias shows a violent bias against Pērōz, typical of Christian authors such as Pseudo-Joshua the Stylite, Łazar of P‘arpec‘i, Moses Kałankatwac‘i, Kirakos of Gandzakec‘i, and John Catholicos.

253. Agathias’ bad reckoning of the duration of the Parthian dynasty, found also in later Muslim historians, suggests the influence of Sasanian chronology. Agathias reports that the Parthian Empire lasted only 270 years, but the real duration of the dynasty was nearly twice that span. All Muslim historians report roughly the same figure, reckoning the years of the Parthian dynasty as either 260 or 266. Ṭabarī, for instance, gives the Parthians 260 years, though Nöldeke amended this figure to 266, bringing it in line with the other historians (See the apparatus in ṬABARĪ, p. 706). In any case, this error seems to have been a deliberate falsification and a piece of propaganda invented by the Sasanians themselves. Taqizadeh suggests in this connexion the Parthian chronology was deliberately shortened so as to ‘belittle the overthrown house [of the Arsacids]’, and ‘make that period one of anarchy, with petty princes in the different provinces with no important record of them’ (TAQIZADEH 1937, p. 138). Other explanations are possible, though not as plausible. The explanation expounded by Yar-Shater (YAR-SHATER 1983 p. 387) is probably the most credible alternative to what is outlined above. The Parthians adopted the Seleucid Era, but forgot its origin and confounded it with the coming of Zoroaster. Accordingly, the first Sasanian king is said to have reign 538 years after the appearance of the prophet. The date of Zoroaster was traditionally reckoned as 258 years before Alexander the Great. The 14 years of Alexander’s reign were then added to this date and the result (272) was subtracted from 538, and a mere 266 years were left for the Parthians. This explanation, though relatively straightforward, does not elucidate why subsequent Persian tradition lost almost all recollection of the Arsacid dynasty. Later Persian and Arabic tradition in fact lost nearly all recollection of the Parthians, and we may adduce in this connexion the total absence of the Arsacids from the *Šāhnāma* (TAQIZADEH 1937, p. 139), and the fact that the Arabic treatments, which are decidedly meagre, call them ‘petty kings’ (ṬABARĪ, p. 706: l. 10; DĪNAWARĪ, p. 43: l. 10).

254. I follow CAMERON 1969–1970, p. 113; 153.

255. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 53: l. 8–9:

...يزدجرد الذي يُلقَّب بالاثيم وكان غليظاً سيئ الخلق، الخ

Similarly, a Christian and probably Syriac source can be detected in Procopius' summary of Persian history. The evidence for this is: a favorable portrayal of Yazdgard I,²⁵⁶ much the same as what is found in Agathias; and the fanciful story of Pērōz' pearl earring, which recalls the Syriac *Hymn of the Pearl*.²⁵⁷

A good deal of such Christian material has crept into the *Hudāynāma* tradition. How else can we explain the two distinct traditions in Ṭabarī's account of Hurmazd IV's reign, one popular and Christian, the other noble and Zoroastrian?²⁵⁸ How else can we explain why Ṭabarī and Firdawsī are so sympathetic to Balāš, a king who was deposed and blinded in the wake of his granting tolerance to Armenian Christianity? Ṭabarī says that Balāš always conducted himself in a laudable manner, and Firdawsī calls him 'benevolent' — terms which recall description of him

256. PROCOPIUS, I.ii.8–10.

257. The common element in both stories is a quest for a pearl guarded by a terrible monster (PROCOPIUS, I.iv.14–31; FERREIRA 2002, *passim*, but especially p. 41: ll. 12–13). The Syrian story is the prototype for all other similar tales. The hymn, as we have it, is a Manichaean or Gnostic allegory, probably composed in the first century of our era, but the theme of a quest for a pearl may well be much older (FERREIRA 2002, p. 2–5).

258. WOOD (FORTHCOMING). Christian praise of Hurmazd is probably founded on his rejection of a petition from certain Zoroastrian hierophants urging the persecution of Christians (ṬABARĪ, p. 990: l. 19 to p. 991: l. 6). In Ṭabarī's narrative this comes in the context of a host of social engineering measures taken by Hurmazd which infuriated his nobility (ṬABARĪ, p. 990: ll. 14–19). Hurmazd dismissed many nobles from the court, killed 13,600 men among the learned (or perhaps hieratic) classes and nobility, many nobles were stripped of their ranks, and Hurmazd denied supplies to his cavalry. We are told confidently that Hurmazd aimed to win over the lower classes. This led Christensen to observe that 'dans les sources la sympathie et l'antipathie sont entremêlées d'une façon singulière qui montre, que les premiers remaniements arabes du Khvadhāynāmagh ont été composés de traditions diverses dont une reflète le sentiment populaire et l'autre la tendance qui prévalait dans les cercles de la noblesse et du clergé' (CHRISTENSEN 1944, p. 441). The same idea is endorsed in FRYE 1983.

in Pseudo-Joshua, Łazar P'arpec'i, and Agathias.²⁵⁹ It is impossible to imagine such descriptions coming from an official Sasanian royal history.

Wood, who has noted this Christian strain also, has written about what he calls the ‘Christian reception’ of the *Hudāyynāma*. He has noticed that within the *Hudāyynāma* tradition Christian material seems to be interspersed throughout Sasanian royal history, and concentrated from the reign of Hurmazd IV onward.²⁶⁰ This state of affairs may suggest that material of genuine Sasanian provenance within the *Hudāyynāma* tradition was at times lacunary, petering out at the end of the reign of Ḥusraw Anūšarwān. Foreign sources, whether the book of Bahrām Čōbīn, Syriac Christian dynastic histories of Iran, or fables of Arabian origin, were then summoned up to fill in the missing reigns. This in turn would mean that Nöldeke assumed wrongly that the Sasanian royal history was redacted a final time under Yazdgard III.

This Syriac and Christian strain within the *Hudāyynāma* tradition, and its imprints on *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*, should not be asserted for their own sake. Accordingly we should reject Grignaschi's convoluted and unprovable contention (which Rubin has refuted) that Ibn Muqaffa's *Hudāyynāma* is accessible only in one of Ṭabarī's narratives, the *Codex Sprenger 30*, Ibn Qutayba, and Eutychius, and that all other texts within the *Hudāyynāma* tradition are grounded in a lost Syriac

259. TABARĪ, p. 883: l. 3–8:

لم يزل بلاش حسن السيرة.

For Firdawsī's description of Balāš, see BALĀŠ, l. 23:

بلاش جوان را بود نيك خواه .

PSEUDO-JOSHUA, p. 15: l. 15:

ಮಾಹಿತಿ ಕುರಿತು, ಕುರಿತು, ಕುರಿತು

And Łazar's description of Balāš: առն բաբերարի և հեղոյ (ŁAZAR, p. 157:l. 27).

260. WOOD (FORTHCOMING).

chronicle which Grignaschi calls ‘Pseudo-Ibn Muqaffa’.²⁶¹ It is quite futile to assume that the Syriac strain can be traced to a single, identifiable source, real or imaginary. All that we can assert with confidence is that this influence has left its mark in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* and other sources of *Hudāynāma* tradition. The presence of this strain, though, adds weight to the idea that what has come down to us in the *Hudāynāma* tradition is a blend of various elements, many of which were probably combined very early on, and thus transmitted so many times and for so long that their original character was lost and forgotten.²⁶²

Trying to make sense of the migration of indigenous Sasanian material into later Arabic and Persian texts is a difficult task, which does not admit of the kind of simple solution that would have pleased Nöldeke.²⁶³ The foregoing discussion has shown that there never was a single Arabic text founded on an official Sasanian source, and that a veritable farrago of different texts, whose coverage was sometimes patchy, lies behind *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* and other sources of the *Hudāynāma* tradition. One of these texts *may* be the work of Ibn Muqaffa’, but there is no way to know and it is pointless to guess. With the passage of time, the *Hudāynāma* tradition itself surely underwent a process of evolution, with some original features being removed and many accretions added. Free-standing novels, romances, and legends dealing with Sasanian certainly existed and these gave rise cross-pollination of the tradition also.²⁶⁴ Some of these are discussed in the following section.

261. RUBIN 2008, p. 58 with n. 69; GRIGNASCHI 1973, p. 115–136. In light of the foregoing discussion, trying to decide which parts of the supposed *Hudāynāma* ‘étaient vraiment dues à la plume d’Ibn-al-Muqaffa’ (GRIGNASCHI 1973, p. 124) seems quite impossible.

262. On the possible early disappearance of Ibn Muqaffa’s *Hudāynāma* see LECOMTE 1965, p. 484.

263. Cf. ZAKERI 2008, p. 40.

264. Cf. GRIGNASCHI 1973, p. 104.

III. *Sources of Iranian History Which Do Not Deal With Sasanian Dynastic History*

We are forced to speculate further as to what Dīnawarī's non-Sasanian sources were. This is a dangerous activity, and inferences must never be taken for firmly established facts, especially in light of modern notions of Islamic historiography discussed above. Nevertheless, Dīnawarī's use of three unmentioned sources can be inferred with near certainty. These are the history pre-Islamic Arabia by Ibn Ishāq transmitted on the authority of Ibn Hišām and Ibn Ḥumayd; the Alexander Romance translated into Arabic from Syriac or Middle Persian; and the book of Bahrām Čōbīn, a translation into Arabic from a Pahlavi original by Jabala Ibn Sālim.

Ibn Ishāq

Dīnawarī's use of traditions attributed to Ibn Ishāq seems clear because Ṭabarī's pre-Islamic Arabian passages are substantially the same as Dīnawarī's, and Ṭabarī regularly ascribes the information to Ibn Ishāq. A telling example is the account of Ḥusraw I's conquest of Yemen, the details of which are the same in both Ṭabarī's *Annals* and *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*. Ṭabarī begins his narrative of the conquest by ascribing it to Ibn Ishāq.²⁶⁵ Furthermore, Ṭabarī ends this passage by reaffirming that Ibn Ishāq was his source, transmitted on the authority of Ibn Ḥumayd.²⁶⁶ So it stands to reason that Dīnawarī may have used Ibn Ishāq's history also. It is probably also safe to assume that Dīnawarī found Ibn Ishāq's work embedded in one of the authors mentioned by Ṭabarī. Much Dīnawarī's Yemenite material came from Ibn Šaryā's *Aḥbār 'Ubayd*, as has already been shown. There must have been some overlap between *Aḥbār 'Ubayd* and Ibn Ishāq's pre-Islamic

265. ṬABARĪ, p. 945: l. 14:

قال ابن اسحاق . . .

266. ṬABARĪ, p. 950: l. 3–5:

فهذا ما حدثنا به ابن حميد عن سلمة عن ابن اسحاق من امر حميد والحشبة وملكهم وتوجيه كسرى من وجه لحرب الحبشة

Arabian history, and it would be pointless, and perhaps impossible, to try to prise the two apart in every such instance.

Ibn Ishāq was born at Medina in 704 into a family which had already produced two historians.²⁶⁷ His education began in his home town and was first directed by his family and the surviving companions of the prophet Muḥammad, but Ibn Ishāq eventually moved to Alexandria to study under Yazīd Ibn Ḥabīb. He probably travelled throughout Iraq and Iran before settling in the end at Baghdad. So Ibn Ishāq's good reputation rests on his having been in close contact from a young age with Muḥammad's associates, his first-rate education, and his cosmopolitan background.²⁶⁸ Ibn Ishāq's work is known to have been used by Ibn Hišām and Ibn Ḥumayd, for it is through these latter writers that Ṭabarī refers to Ibn Ishāq.

Now, Ibn Ishāq himself ascribes his information on Yemen to a certain Wahb Ibn Munabbih (d. 728), a Yemenite *qāḍī* who was born at an unknown date in the early seventh century. It may well be that Wahb Ibn Munabbih who is responsible for some of the Yemenite material in Ibn Šarya's *Aḥbār 'Ubayd* and pre-Islamic Arabian material. But Ibn Munnabih is also considered major figure of the *Isrā'īliyyāt* genre, which dealt with Jewish religious tradition derived from the Old Testament.²⁶⁹ So we may be better justified in tracing Dīnawarī's notices dealing with the history of Israel though Ibn Ishāq or Ibn Šarya to Ibn Munabbih. This identification is probable, but by no means certain, and as the *Isrā'īliyyāt* genre has no direct relevance to Sasanian history, we need not dwell on it.

Dīnawarī's material going back to Ibn Ishāq and beyond had a clear agenda similar to that of *Aḥbār 'Ubayd*. This was to glorify Yemen's past and to portray the exploits of its kings, es-

267. CHEDDADI 2004, p. 171–174.

268. Howard-Johnston has recently reaffirmed confidence in Ibn Ishāq's material on sixth-century Arabia, the rise of Islam, and the life of Muḥammad (HOWARD JOHNSTON 2010B, p. 396–418).

269. DE PRÉMARE 2005. On the origin of the term *Isrā'īliyyāt*, and its first use by Mas'ūdī, see TOTTOLI 1999, p. 194.

pecially those of Tubba‘ Abū Karib As‘ad, as a prefiguration of the expansion of Islam.²⁷⁰ But, as Howard-Johnston has shown, Ibn Ishāq’s work has also transmitted a good mixture of material dealing the transformation of the Ḥimyarite kingdom of Yemen into an Aethiopian protectorate, and the reduction of Yemen to a Iranian province under Ḥusraw I. Ibn Ishāq has reproduced: the polemical Christian version of the seizure of power in Yemen by Ḍū Nuwās and his determination to impose Judaism by force upon the inhabitants of Najran; a narrative on the punitive expedition on Mecca led by Abraha (Aethiopian viceroy in Yemen) in 552 because a Meccan had defecated in the new cathedral built by Abraha in Ṣan‘ā; and a fanciful account of the expedition sent by Ḥusraw I to conquer Yemen, led by a certain Wahriz.²⁷¹ These events appear in *Al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* also, and are of immediate relevance to Sasanian history.

The reader of Dīnawarī’s text shall note that the story of the reduction of Yemen comes *before* the main narrative of Ḥusraw I’s reign.²⁷² Dīnawarī’s placement of this important event is odd, because Yemen fell to Iran towards the end of Ḥusraw’s life and reign. We ought not infer gross chronological sloppiness on the part of Dīnawarī, for he was clearly aware, at least in broad outline, of the real sequence of events in Sasanian history.²⁷³ That Dīnawarī made no attempt to bring his narrative into line with real chronology shows that he summarised his source in this context exactly as he found it.

This takes on an interesting twist when we contrast the narrative of the conquest of Yemen with that of the rest of Ḥusraw I’s reign. The conquest of Yemen is told from an Arabian

270. RUBIN 1995, p. 62.

271. HOWARD-JOHNSTON 2010B, p. 396–418.

272. Ḥusraw’s conquest of Yemen is found in DĪNAWARĪ, p. 64: l. 17 to p. 66: l. 9, and this is followed immediately by the reign of Qubād. The reign of Ḥusraw I begins in earnest at DĪNAWARĪ, p. 69: l. 7.

273. A reference in the Yemen narrative to ‘Kisrā son of Qubād’ proves that Dīnawarī knew which reign came first (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 65: l. 9).

perspective, and (I strongly suspect) that of the Christian Laḥm.²⁷⁴ This is very much in line with other narratives about Yemen which Dīnawarī scatters throughout his text, most notably the story of the gigantic fire that Ḍū Nuwās worshipped and certain Jews’ disliking of it,²⁷⁵ as well as that of the desecration of the church at Ṣan‘a,²⁷⁶ which also go back to Ibn Ishāq and his sources and which also evince a Christian character.

It seems that details lifted from Ibn Ishāq’s history, or from another source which drew on that history, were needed to plug a gap in the *Hudāynāma* tradition. In other words, by the time of Dīnawarī’s writing, Iranian tradition had lost all traces of Ḥusraw’s conquest of Yemen — a supposition which is corroborated by Ṭabarī’s ascription of substantially the same narrative to Ibn Ishāq,²⁷⁷ and by the absence of any such a narrative from Firdawsī’s *Šāhnāma*.

Why does the *Hudāynāma* tradition have no recollection of the taking of Yemen? This question is not hard to answer. After Ḥusraw I’s reduction of Yemen, his successors maintained Iranian authority in that region only with great difficulty.²⁷⁸ Despite all efforts to the contrary Yemen became a virtually independent principality in which authority was hereditary. Simply put, Iran’s sway over Yemen was of short duration, and its occupation by the forces of Ḥusraw I must have appeared in the long run to have been a failure. This is why the *Hudāynāma* tradition does not remember the reduction of Yemen. But the conquest must not have seemed a failure during Ḥusraw’s reign, when the taking of Yemen was a great blow to Roman prestige. This means that

274. Ḍū Nuwās approaches the Roman Emperor, called simply Qayṣar here, and begs help against the turbulent Aethiopians. The Emperor refuses on the ground that the Aethiopians are fellow Christians, and this forces Ḍū Nuwās to turn to Nu‘mān son of Mundīr, king of Ḥīra, who (a Christian of a different confession) introduces him to Ḥusraw at a yearly audience (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 65).

275. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 62: l. 13 *et seqq.*

276. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 63: l. 8–17.

277. ṬABARĪ, p. 945: l. 14.

278. RUBIN (FORTHCOMING), p. 65–66.

the account of Ḥusraw's life and times, which Dīnawarī found in the *Ḥudāynāma* tradition, was probably not composed during that king's reign.

Finally, it should be observed that Ibn Ishāq, or another source which he used, had clearly combined historical traditions from both Yemen and Iran. Dīnawarī himself was not responsible for this combination — an inference corroborated by Ṭabarī's substantially similar passages. Ibn Qutayba's laconic summary of the conquest of Yemen is clearly grounded in the same source also, but Ibn Qutayba explicitly attributes these passages (as we have seen above) to *Kitāb Siyar al-ʿAjam*, which Nöldeke assumed on no sound warrant to have been lifted directly from Ibn Muqaffa's translation of the *Ḥudāynāma*. This means that in the mid-eighth century, when Ibn Ishāq was writing, and perhaps even much earlier in time of Wahb Ibn Munabbih or a another author of the same era, a part of pre-Islamic Arabian history was combined with historical notices of Iranian origin.²⁷⁹ It is difficult to comment on the significance of this, but it *may* imply a ransacking of the *Ḥudāynāma* tradition as early as the eighth century, which may have contributed to confusion and misattribution of sources. It may also amount to yet another reason why Nöldeke was wrong to assume that Ibn Qutayba's Sasanian passages could only have been grounded in Ibn Muqaffa's translation of the *Ḥudāynāma*.

The Alexander Romance

The Alexander Romance, falsely attributed to Greek historian Callisthenes (fl. fourth century B.C.), is the origin of most mythical stories about Alexander the Great which we find in eastern sources.²⁸⁰ The romance, based not on historical sources but rather on fanciful accounts of Alexander's life, took its original shape, probably at Alexandria in Egypt, between the third century B.C. and the third century A.D., after which the Greek text was put into Latin in the fourth cen-

279. RUBIN 2008, p. 57–58: n. 66. This is very much in step with what has been inferred above in connexion with Ibn Muqaffa's gloss on the erroneous identification of Jamm with Solomon.

280. HANAWAY 1998A, p. 609–612; SOUTHGATE 1977, p. 278–279.

tury A.D. At roughly the same time, the romance was put into Syriac — a translation which was based, as Nöldeke argued convincingly, on a Middle Persian translation of the Greek original.²⁸¹ If this is true, the translator of the romance into Middle Persian did not share the negative view of Alexander which is found in Zoroastrian priestly tradition.²⁸²

When the romance was put into Middle Persian, the character of Alexander seems, so to speak, to have been ‘orientalised’. The evidence for this is that Alexander is given an Iranian lineage and ancestry in texts derived from this recension by way of an Arabic version of the Syriac translation from Middle Persian.²⁸³ *Al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* is clearly one of these texts. It is, moreover, one of the earliest Muslim histories to include material from this romance.²⁸⁴

Dīnawarī begins by citing the two conflicting stories about Alexander’s birth and ancestry alluded to above.²⁸⁵ The first he ascribes to Persian tradition, according to which Alexander was the son of Darius son of Bahman and Philip of Macedon’s daughter. Dīnawarī ascribes the second to a Greek tradition which holds that Alexander was the son of Philip of Macedon. This is

281. NÖLDEKE 1890, p. 11–17. His argument is based chiefly on word-choice and grammar in the Syriac Alexander romance. For instance, the use of the plural of second person to address one man, which occurs more than once in the Syriac version, smacks of a Persian original (NÖLDEKE 1890, p. 15).

282. SHAYEGAN 2011, p. 295–296, p. 302–307; SOUTHGATE 1977, p. 279. The Zoroastrian tradition accuses Alexander of burning the Avesta and the Zand, the Zoroastrian holy books.

283. HANAWAY 1998A, p. 609–612.

284. Other such texts are the *Nihāya*, Ṭabarī’s *Annals*, and the *Šāhnāma*, amongst many others. The *Nihāya*, as we have seen, falsely attributes the Alexander story to Ibn Muqaffa’ (NIHĀYA, p. 110). The significance of this is of little consequence as far as our understanding of the history of Sasanian Iran is concerned, so we need not dwell on it too long. Furthermore, detailed comparison between Dīnawarī’s account of Alexander and those of the *Šāhnāma* and the *Nihāya* would require a lengthy exposition, which would take us well beyond the bounds of this thesis — an wearying and pointless digression into the world of myth and fancy. Nevertheless, Dīnawarī’s inclusion of the material going back to the Alexander Romance must tell us something about him and his reason for writing *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*.

285. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 37: l. 17 *et seqq.*

one of the few instances in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* in which Dīnawarī has laid two conflicting stories side by side.

It seems clear that Dīnawarī favours the Iranian tradition over the Greek one. This can be inferred not only from Dīnawarī's generally pro-Iranian outlook, but also from the rest of his discussion of Alexander the Great. To see this we must look at Ṭabarī's *Annals*, where these stories also occur, but where there is a significant difference in the Persian tradition concerning the etymology of Alexander's name. In explaining it, both Dīnawarī and Ṭabarī invoke a malodorous mother, whose foul smell was removed by means of an aromatic plant called *sandar*. Ṭabarī explains the name as *Halī-Sandarūs*, because Alexander's mother was named Halī (probably a corruption of the Greek name 'Helen'). Note that the name even includes a Greek case-ending. Dīnawarī, however, explains Alexander's name as *Āl-Sandar*, because *Āl* is supposedly the Persian word for 'strong'. Though both etymologies are equally wrong and equally fanciful, Dīnawarī has probably reported the earliest folk etymology of Alexander's name. We can therefore assume that the name 'Alexander', in whatever form it appeared, was not intelligible to the audience at which Dīnawarī's source was aimed. But the most significant aspect of Dīnawarī's etymology of Alexander's name is that it makes the origin of the name Iranian.

After presenting these two different traditions, Dīnawarī launches into Alexander's dealings with the philosopher Aristotle, who has been transformed into a monotheist sage.²⁸⁶ The wise man successfully convinces Alexander of the oneness of God, and the young man then goes about sending an invitation to monotheism throughout the world, announcing himself as a prophet. The outbreak of war with Iran is connected with Alexander's prophetic mission, for his epistolary invitation to belief in one God enrages the Achaemenian king, Darius. In response, Darius raises the matter of the annual tribute (paid in golden eggs) which had fallen into abeyance. War breaks out. Victory went to neither side until two men of Hamadān kill Darius. Alexander speaks

286. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 33: l. 2 to p. 34: l. 6.

to the dying king, and Darius urges him to take to wife his daughter Roxana and to carry on the Iranian monarchy.

Roughly the same narrative is found in Ṭabarī's *Annals*, but for one significant difference. Whereas Ṭabarī makes Alexander innocent of Darius' murder, Dīnawarī says explicitly that Alexander bribed the two men of Hamadan and induced them to kill the king.²⁸⁷ It is hard to determine what this means, but it may imply that Dīnawarī knew of another tradition, more hostile to Alexander, and blended part of it with his otherwise favorable narrative. If so, this tradition may go back to Zoroastrian opprobrious and derogatory opinions on Alexander.

Alexander's conquests follow. We read of Alexander's conquest of India by beating the king Fūr in a wrestling match; his conquest of the Sudan and Arabia; and his pilgrimage to Mecca.²⁸⁸ At this point, Dīnawarī includes a brief geographical excursus attributed to Ibn 'Abbās.²⁸⁹ Next we hear of Alexander's correspondance with Qindāqa, queen of the Mağrib, and his unsuccessful attempt to conquer her lands.²⁹⁰ In this connexion Dīnawarī notes that there are 'other stories' about Alexander and this queen, which he does not report.²⁹¹ Dīnawarī winds down his notice of Alexander with a report of his journey to Firgāna, whence he travelled to Jerusalem via Iran.²⁹² Before Alexander's death at Jerusalem, Dīnawarī claims that, on Aristotle's

287. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 34: l. 18–19.

288. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 36: l. 2–12.

289. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 36: l. 12. The use of the names 'Khazar' and 'Slav' may give us some idea of when this source (that of Ibn 'Abbās) was redacted.

290. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 37: l. 2 to p. 38: l. 2.

291. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 38: l. 18.

292. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 39: l. 19 to p. 40: l. 11.

advice, he divided his realm amongst certain regional princes. Dīnawarī ends these passages with a list of cities founded by Alexander.²⁹³

As Doulfikar-Aerts has noted, Dīnawarī's account omits much that was found in the Arabic Pseudo-Callisthenes. We hear nothing of the founding of Alexandria, Alexander's illness, a prophecy that he would die under a golden sky and an iron floor, Alexander's letter of consolation to his mother, and the funeral sentences for Alexander given by certain philosophers.²⁹⁴ Dīnawarī does not even so much as allude to them, though (as Doulfikar-Aerts stresses) they are found in almost all other Arabic writers who wrote about Alexander, most notably in the *Nihāya* which is otherwise similar to *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* in this connexion.²⁹⁵

Though most of what Dīnawarī wrote about Alexander seems to go back to the Arabic translation of Pseudo-Callisthenes' Alexander Romance,²⁹⁶ Alexander's adventures involving Gog and Magog, and his journey to the dark regions of the far north should be traced to a different origin.²⁹⁷ Doulfikar-Aerts links these elements with what she calls the 'Ḍū'l-Qarnayn tradition'. No single, original source can be identified in this connexion. We can only point to a cluster of references in works attributed to Ka'b Ibn Aḥbār, Ibn 'Abbās, Wahb Ibn Munabbih, and Hišām Ibn Muḥammad which seem to have picked up traditions foreign to the Alexander Romance.²⁹⁸ Doulfikar-Aerts breaks these down into the story of Gog and Magog, Alexander's journey to the land of darkness, his coming upon the so-called River of Sand, his search for the water of life, and a trip to the valley of gems. Many of these themes became quite popular in Muslim tradition,

293. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 40: l. 6–10.

294. DOULFIKAR-AERTS 2010, p. 21.

295. DOULFIKAR-AERTS 2010, p. 22–34.

296. Cf. Doulfikar-Aerts' reconstruction of the contents of the Arabic translation of Pseudo-Callisthenes (DOULFIKAR-AERTS 2010, p. 13–20).

297. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 39: l. 7–18.

298. DOULFIKAR-AERTS 2010, p. 135–188.

and Nizāmī's *Iskandarnāma* is a case in point.²⁹⁹ No text apart from the *Nihāya* includes all these elements.³⁰⁰

Though he was surely aware of it, Dīnawarī omits most of the Ḍū'l-Qarnayn tradition. Strangely, though, Dīnawarī mentions the mysterious River of Sand but connects it not with Alexander but with Yāsir Yan'ām, a pre-Islamic Yemenite ruler whose adventures brought him to the Mağrib.³⁰¹ If this displacement does not go back to Dīnawarī's source, we can infer that he felt free to edit, transpose, and rework the Ḍū'l-Qarnayn tradition as he saw fit.

Dīnawarī was probably interested in tales of Alexander because they made the Macedonian hero a Persian. This in turn was important for Dīnawarī because it meant that Alexander's conquest of Iran did not interrupt Iranian dynastic history, which had been founded by king Jamm in the deep past. Similarly, Alexander's preaching of monotheism (under the benign influence of Aristotle) can be understood to mean that the belief in one God brought to Iran by the victorious Arabs was not an innovation. For Dīnawarī the first preacher of monotheism in Iranian history is Alexander the Great — not Muḥammad.

The favorable reception of Alexander, to which *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* bears witness, coexisted with a Zoroastrian tradition that was invincibly hostile to him. This suggests that Alexander's allegedly Iranian heritage does not have its origin in a Sasanian tradition. Could it be that the idea of a Persian Alexander goes back to Arsacid propaganda which, as Tacitus reports,³⁰² claimed for that dynasty both an Achaemenid *and* a Macedonian heritage? It is tempting to think so.

299. HANAWAY 1998B.

300. NIHĀYA, p. 110–158.

301. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 25.

302. SHAYEGAN 2011, p. 306. Tacitus seems to strengthen this notion (SHAYEGAN 2011, p. 293–295). The judicious historian claimed in his *Annals* that Artabān II wished to reclaim the old boundaries of both the Persian and Macedonian empires: *simul ac veteres Persorum ac Macedonium terminos, seque invasurum possessa primum Cyro et post Alexandro per vaniloquentiam ac minas iaciebat* (TACITUS, *ANNALS*, 6.31).

Real historical knowledge of Alexander the Great came only very recently to Iran.³⁰³ This means that Dīnawarī and his audience probably had little difficulty in accepting the contents of the Alexander Romance as true. Though Dīnawarī's treatment of Alexander is devoid of historical value, it reveals much about Iranian identity and self-image.

The Book of Bahrām Čōbīn

Dīnawarī's use of a source dealing with the life and exploits of Bahrām Čōbīn was posited first by Nöldeke.³⁰⁴ Material from this source seems to have been quarried to flesh out the reigns of Hurmazd IV and Ḥusraw I during which one of the most memorable events was the revolt of Bahrām Čōbīn. Dīnawarī's dependency on an identifiable text is clear because of the similarity of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*'s portrayal of the revolt of Bahrām Čōbīn with the same story as it appears in other sources of the *Hudāynāma* tradition.

The *Fihrist* mentions something called *The Book of Bahrām Šūbīn*,³⁰⁵ and in his *Murūj al-Dahab* Mas'ūdī seems to ascribe his passages on Bahrām to this very source.³⁰⁶ Though it is likely that this text was used by Dīnawarī, Firdawsī, and Bal'amī also, the truth is that no other author mentions it, and Bal'amī ascribes his Bahrām material to something called 'the book of Persian his-

303. HANAWAY 1990, p. 95.

304. NÖLDEKE 1879, p. 474–478.

305. FIHRIST, p. 364:

كتاب بهرام شوس، ترجمة جبلة بن سالم.

As Nöldeke pointed out, شوس is an easy graphical corruption of شوبين (NÖLDEKE 1879, p. 474).

306. MAS'ŪDĪ 1, p. 318:

للفُرس كتاب مُفرد في اخبار بهرام جوبين وما كان من مكايده ببلاد الترك حين سار اليا، الخ.

tory'.³⁰⁷ This means that we must refrain from asserting too strongly, as Nöldeke did, the link between Jabala Ibn Sālim's Bahrām book and Dīnawarī's *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*. But I think the link is probable enough to merit a detailed discussion of it among Dīnawarī's sources. It also means that there is no justification whatsoever for referring to this source as the 'Romance of Bahrām Čōbīn',³⁰⁸ as though this title were attested somewhere, for the *Fihrist* and Mas'ūdī call their Bahrām sources *Kitāb Bahrām Šūbīn* and *Kitāb fī Aḥbār Bahrām Jūbīn* respectively.

Nothing whatever is known about the life of Jabala Ibn Sālim, save that he is described as 'the scribe of Hišām'³⁰⁹ (whom Nöldeke wrongly identified with the historian Hišām Kalbī) and that he translated things from Persian into Arabic. Apart from Bal'amī's vague reference to a book of Persian history, no other source of the Bahrām story is known and no other translators are mentioned anywhere. So as far as we know there was a single Arabic translation of one, original Pahlavi work devoted to the life and exploits of Bahrām Čōbīn, and Jabala Ibn Sālim was the translator. Whoever Jabala Ibn Sālim was, his translation seems to have become popular, for the Bahrām book seems to have been used also by Firdawsī, Mas'ūdī, Bal'amī, and the anonymous author of the *Nihāyat al-Irab*. The few sentences which Ṭabarī devotes to Bahrām's rebellion may have been extracted from it also, perhaps at more than one remove. But it was Dīnawarī who was first to use this romance as an historical source, and nearly all subsequent authors writing on the same topic followed suit.

This source, in so far as it is reflected in Dīnawarī and other authors, seems to have been preoccupied with Sasanian legitimacy. The original author seems to have had an ambivalent at-

307. Bal'amī says simply: 'Mohammed ben-Djarir n'a pas donné l'histoire de Bahrām-Tchoubīn en entier. Je l'ai trouvée plus complète dans le livre de l'histoire de Perse. Je vais la rapporter d'après ce livre' (BAL'AMĪ, p. 311).

308. Cf. CHRISTENSEN 1907, where the book is referred to under this title.

309. FHRIST, p. 305:

جبله بن سالم، كاتب هشام. وقد مضى ذكره، وكان ناقلاً إلى العربي من الفرس.

titude to Bahrām Čōbīn, a rebel who was not of the royal line, and whose exploits, though daring and manly, came to a bad end.³¹⁰ The author's partiality to the Sasanian dynasty is clear: Dīnawarī makes Bahrām disclaim all royal blood, and puts into the mouth of an anonymous old woman a disparaging speech against non-Sasanian pretenders.³¹¹

At what audience was the romance directed? It was probably written for an audience of noblemen, or members of the class called *vuzurgān*.³¹² The main evidence for this is Bahrām's reading *Katīla wa Dimna*, a book of fables representing advice for princes.³¹³ Rubin has suggested in this connexion that carefully veiled lessons on the delicate relationship between nobility and monarch might have been a subtext in the Bahrām romance. There is probably a good deal of truth in this. But reference to a high-fallutin' book is a sign not only that the target audience was literate and well to do, but also that the Bahrām book was committed to writing at an early stage in its evolution.

We should probably date the original Pahlavi work as soon after Bahrām's death and as near as possible to Ḥusraw II's restoration. Ḥusraw's first acclamation was on 27 June 590 and Bahrām seized power not long thereafter during the festival known as *Maidhyoi-zaremaya* in early August.³¹⁴ It was in this same year that Ḥusraw fled Iran, sought military aid from the Roman emperor Maurice, defeated Bahrām, and was restored to power. So, at the earliest, the Pahlavi

310. RUBIN 2004, p. 237; CZEGLÉDY 1958, p. 25.

311. On Bahrām's lack of royal blood see DĪNAWARĪ, p. 83: l. 12–14:

فلما التقوا ارسل الى بهرام ان انضم اليّ حتى املكك على ايران شهر واجعلك اخصّ الناس بي .

The woman addresses a disguised Bahrām (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 98: l. 21 to p. 99: l. 1):

جاهل احمق يدعى الملك وليس من اهل بيت المملكة .

312. RUBIN 2004, p. 245.

313. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 89: l. 5–10; RUBIN 2004, p. 238, 265.

314. TYLER-SMITH 2004, p. 36–37.

Bahrām book must have been written in late 590 or early 591. This dating is corroborated by the clear agenda of the author of the Bahrām book: to bolster the Sasanian claim to the throne, specifically that of Ḥusraw II, and to take the wind out of Bahrām’s partisans — perhaps even to deflate still-circulating, rebellious propaganda. These goals would have grown less important as Ḥusraw II’s rule became more firmly established, and would have become meaningless after the dynasty fell forever in 651. And the book, since it includes Bahrām’s death, cannot have been written until the pretender was dead.

The Pahlavi source on which the Bahrām book was based should be thought of as a swiftly executed, thorough discrediting of the rebel, presented in a manner comprehensible to the class at which it was aimed, and written when memory of the events was still fresh. But it was not base or mean-spirited, for it was a noble composition full of aristocratic sentiment. To ensure credibility and the appearance of accuracy, the story was also laden with incidental detail, had a huge cast of players, and ranged widely over the Iranian world.

What was this pro-Bahrām propaganda that was in need of deflation? It is tempting to infer that it was something akin to Czeglédy’s putative ‘Bahrām apocalypse’ — a highly tendentious text predicting the end of the Sasanian dynasty at the hands of a pretender, perhaps composed by the religious leadership of Bahrām’s rebel movement.³¹⁵ Whatever this text was like cannot be known for certain, as it has not survived. But a residue of Bahrām-related apocalypticism can still be found in some of the Zoroastrian scriptures that have come down to us. The *Bahman Yašt* and the *Bundahišn* portray the arrival of a pretender towards the end of the Sasanian era — the texts call him Vahrām, and clearly make him a descendant of the ancient Kayān kings.³¹⁶ But the *Žāmāsp Nāmak*, which is far more vivid and detailed, offers something of a pro-

315. CZEGLÉDY 1958, p. 33–41.

316. BAHMAN YAŠT, III.1–39. On the pretender’s name, we have the following: ‘...it is said — some have said among the Hindus — “is born a prince (kaī); it is his father, a prince of the Kayān race, approaches the women, and a religious prince is born to him; he calls *his* name Vâhrām the Vargâvand,” some have said Shahpûr’ (BAHMAN YAŠT, III.14). The *Bundahišn* describes Turkish inroads into Iran, a year-long rule of the Iranian Empire by the Romans, whereafter ‘one will-

Sasanian twist. This text makes the pretender come from Hurāsān: he seizes power, but then is ousted by foreigners, and disappears. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given Hurmazd IV's unpopularity, the author of this story calls the deposed Sasanian king 'deaf and blind'.³¹⁷ And the rebel's successor (says the *Žāmāsp Nāmak*) is called 'the victorious king', or *aḫarvēz xvatāy* in Middle Persian — a probable reference to Hūsrāw II, who took the surname Abarwēz. But in this text, the pretender is by no means royal, for he is called 'an insignificant and obscure man'.

As far as the Bahrām book is concerned, there is not enough evidence to allow anything but the most tentative conclusions, and all arguments based on lost sources are perforce highly inferential. Nevertheless, we should take seriously Czedlédy's idea of the apocalyptic tradition surrounding Bahrām Čōbīn. On the strength of this idea and the observations on the Zoroastrian texts above, we might also suggest that pro-Bahrām and pro-Sasanian propaganda were produced and distributed throughout Iran at the same time as the Pahlavi Bahrām book was written. It is tempting to infer also that the story within the *Žāmāsp Nāmak*, because of its pro-Sasanian bent, may well be the germ of the Pahlavi Bahrām book.

What did Dīnawarī do with the Arabic Bahrām book? He used it as though it were any other historical source. Unsurprisingly, romantic and epic features abound in this portion of *al-Aḫbār al-Ṭiwāl*. The story of Bahrām's revolt is clearly placed in the context of the epic cycles of the Kayanid heroes of ancient Iran. When Bahrām goes off to fight the Turks, for instance, he choose twelve thousand men, all of whom were over forty, and his surprising selection is defended by comparison to conflicts between Rustam and Qābūs, Isfandyāđ and Arjās, and Jūdarz

come from *the* frontiers of Kāvulistān, with whom *there will be* glory, also of *the* royal family, *whom they*-will-name Kay Vaharām; and all men will-return with him, and *he*-will-rule even-over Hindustān, Arūm, and Turkastān, *over all the* frontiers', etc. (BUNDAHIŠN, XXXII.27).

317. ZĀMĀSP NĀMAK, §58–59: 'Then will arise in the land of Khorasan an insignificant and obscure man who will go forth in great power, and with him many men and horses, and sharp lances, and the land will be made his own by violence and dominion. He himself in the midst of his dominion will fail and pass out of sight' (ZĀMĀSP NĀMAK, p. 581); and §90: 'he will send...a message to the king of Patasxvārgar, saying: Why do you support that king, deaf and blind?' (ZĀMĀSP NĀMAK, p. 584).

and Sīyāwuš: for in each case the Iranian hero took with him twelve thousand men against a much larger foreign force.³¹⁸ Ṭabarī was probably aware of the same tradition, but reports only the figure of twelve thousand men and stresses that they were mature,³¹⁹ and we find no reference to the heroes of old. Firdawsī's testimony in this connexion is the same as Dīnawarī's,³²⁰ but the same references to ancient heroes recur throughout his canto on Hurmazd IV almost as a refrain or chorus.³²¹ It is impossible to say whether Dīnawarī has condensed repeated invocations of ancient heroes into a single reference, or whether Firdawsī has multiplied only one. But in any case, Dīnawarī's reference raises his account of Bahrām's life to an epic level, and recalls the reader to the prehistoric introduction of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* in which the heroes of Iran are mentioned successively.

318. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 82.

319. ṬABARĪ, p. 992: l. 6–7. The men were

من الكهول دون الشباب .

320. HURMAZD, l. 455–464.

321. HURMAZD, l. 319–323:

شنیدستی آن داستان بزرگ	که ارجاسپ آن پر زیان پیر گرگ
به گشتاسپ و لهراسپ از بهر دین	چه بد کرد خود با سواران چین
چه آمد ز شمار بر شهر بلخ	که شد زندگان بر آن بوم تلخ
چنین تا کشاده شد اسفندیار	همی بود هر گونه یی کارزار
ز مهتر به سال ار چه من مهترم	ازو هم به اندیشه برنگذر

Bahrām brings up the same ideas when questioned by Hurmazd about his choice of me (HURMAZD, l. 483–504). When urging her brother Bahrām to action, Gurdīya mentions the same persons and themes (HURMAZD, l. 1618–1669).

Perhaps the most striking epic feature of the original Bahrām book was the account of the death of the Turkish king. In this connexion, Dīnawarī's treatment is spare and we can see the result of his editing. Ṭabarī reports that Bahrām slew the ḥāqān with a single arrow. This shot, says Ṭabarī went down in Iranian lore together with the splendid bowmanship of other famous archers: Āriš, the mighty bowman mentioned in Zoroastrian scripture, whose name seems to be corrupt in most Arabic sources, and Sūhrā, who supposedly took revenge on the Hephthalites in the wake of Pērōz' defeat.³²² Firdawsī makes no mention of ancient heroes here, but rather describes Bahrām's shot in terms worthy of Vergil.³²³ It is therefore surprising that Dīnawarī dis-

322. ṬABARĪ, p. 992: l. 12 to p. 993: l. 1:

وقيل انّ الرمي في ملك العجم كان لثلاثة نفر منها رمية اششياطين بين منوشهر وفراسيات ومنها رمية سوخرا في الترك ومنها رمية بهرام هذه.

Āriš is mentioned in Yašt 8.IV.6 under the Avestan name 'Erekshô khshviwi-ishu', which Darmesteter construes as 'Ereksha à la flèche rapide' (ZEND-AVESTA, p. 415 with note 24). Ṭabarī's *Araš.šiyātīn* is clearly a corruption of the Pahlavi *Arish Shwātīr*, as Darmesteter transliterates it. In his prehistoric introduction, Dīnawarī shows that he was indeed aware of this mythical person and credits him with teaching men archery, but turns his name into 'Arasnās' (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 13: l. 11–12):

... آرسناس الذي كان منوشهر امره بتعليم الناس الرمي بنشاب، الخ.

Strangely, Darmesteter notes in connexion with Āriš that 'L'usurpateur Bahrām Chôbîna, un des derniers héros sassanides, prétendait être son descendant' (ZEND-AVESTA, p. 416, n. 24 continued from the previous page). I do not know where Darmesteter came across this datum.

323. We can almost hear the twang of the bow and the whistling arrow in the harsh sounds of š, č and ħ which Firdawsī repeats (HURMAZD, l. 892–897):

خدنکی گزین کرد پیکان چن آب	نهاده برو چار پر عقاب!
بماند چاچی کمان را به دست	به چرم گوزن اندر آورد شست!
چو چپ راست کرد و خم آورد راست	خروش از خم چرخ چاچی بخاست!
چو سوفارش آمد بنزدیک گوش	ز شاخ گوزنام برآمد خروش!
چو بوسید پیکان سر انگشت اوی	گذر کرد از مهره ی پشت اوی!

patches the Turkish king so laconically. The ḥāqān (says Dīnawarī) leaves his position atop a hill above the battlefield and takes to his chariot, but Bahrām shoots and kills him, and the Turks are routed.³²⁴ Mention of Āriš, the Avestan hero, whom Dīnawarī calls ‘Arsnās’, and other heroes comes in the context of Ḥusraw II’s flight to Roman territory.³²⁵

By comparison to Firdawsī’s treatment, who seems to have preserved more of the Bahrām book than anyone else apart, perhaps, from Bal‘amī,³²⁶ we can probably get a sense of what Dīnawarī has omitted from it. Dīnawarī makes no mention of Mihrān Sitād’s prophecy, uttered whilst on the point of death, that a certain Bahrām Čōbīn would come for the overthrow of the Turks.³²⁷ There is no mention that Hurmazd gives Bahrām the dragon-emblazoned banner of the ancient hero Rustam.³²⁸ Likewise absent is Bahrām’s discouraging nightmare, sent by a

سر ساوه آمد به خاک اندرون به زیر اندرش خاک شد جوی خون!

324. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 84: l. 1–2:

فلما رأى الملك ذلك دعا بمركبه واستبان لبهرام فرماه بنشابة نفذته فخر صريعاً وانهمز الاتراك.

325. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 92: l. 2–8.

326. I follow the Warners who prepared a brief comparison between the contents of the *Šāhnāma* and Bal‘amī’s *Ta’rīḥ*, which they call ‘the Persian Tabarī’ (WARNER / WARNER 1923, v. VIII, p. 73–77).

327. The prophecy was supposedly given to Mihrān Sitād by a Turkish astrologer when he went to collect Anūšīrvān’s bride (HURMAZD, l. 370–383). The continuity between these two episodes seems to imply that epic cycles involving the Mihrān family existed long before Firdawsī composed the *Šāhnāma*. Apart from Bahrām himself, more members of the Mihrān family participate in the drama. For instance, Bahrām requests a certain Mihrān to accompany him and his men (HURMAZD, l. 525–529). Mihrān is instructed to keep a record of those who fight. If this can be taken seriously, do we have a clue as to who wrote the Bahrām book in the first place? The prophecy declared, the ancient man dies immediately (HURMAZD, l. 393):

بگفت این و جانش برآمد ز تن

328. HURMAZD, l. 512–514.

malevolent Turkish sorcerer.³²⁹ We do not hear of the Turkish king Sāva's wizards' casting terrible spells which fill the air with fire and trouble the Iranians in battle,³³⁰ nor do we find in Dīnawarī anything resembling Firdawsī's fanciful description of the many arrows shot in the battle between Bahrām and the Turks.³³¹ There is nothing about the astrologer who tells Bahrām to rest on Wednesday.³³² Nor does Dīnawarī narrate Bahrām's garden party, held on Wednesday instead of fighting, which the Turks promptly surrounded.³³³ Firdawsī makes Bahrām go hunting with Īzad Gušasp and Yal Sīna, and the three meet a mysterious girl who prophesies that Bahrām shall be king of Iran.³³⁴ This vignette was probably composed under the influence of the legend of Bahrām Gōr's hunting with the girl Āzāda,³³⁵ and Dīnawarī fittingly excised it. The passionate speech by Gurdīya, Bahrām's sister and probable wife, who likens Bahrām to many heroes of old, is likewise omitted.³³⁶ Dīnawarī makes no mention of Bahrām's feasting and merri-

329. He dreams that the Turks will win, and having heard the dream, the spy Ḥurrād Barzīn tries to discourage Bahrām from fighting (HURMAZD, l. 791–800). The sorcerer is eventually captured and killed (HURMAZD, l. 923–934)

330. HURMAZD, l. 838:

همه جادوان جادوی ساختند همی در هوا آتش انداختند.

331. HURMAZD, l. 873:

به پیش اندرون تیر باران گرفت کمان را چن ابر بهاران گرفت.

332. HURMAZD, l. 1050–1052.

333. HURMAZD, l. 1052–1069.

334. HURMAZD, l. 1415 *et seqq.* The girl's prophecy (HURMAZD, l. 1449–1450):

از آن زن چو برگشت بهرام گفت که با تاج تو مشتری باد جفت
بدو گفت پیروز باش – زن – همیشه شکبیا دل و رای زن...

335. Cf. YAZDGARD-I BAZAGAR, l. 146 *et seqq.*

336. HURMAZD, l. 1560 *et seqq.*

ment on the eve of his rebellion,³³⁷ and all epistolary exchange, a frequent occurrence in the *Šāh-nāma*, so perhaps not a feature of the Bahram book, is absent from Dīnawarī's treatment of Bahrām's rebellion. In general Dīnawarī seems to have omitted episodes of no historical significance, and which in Firdawsī's version tend to slow down the action.³³⁸

We might assume that Dīnawarī has done his best to cut through all the fancy embedded in the book of Bahrām Čōbīn and present only those details that satisfied his sense of probability. Despite his heavy editing, much remains, and an impressive cast of players marches by. We meet of course Bahrām son of Jušnas, surnamed Šūbīn in Arabic, Hurmazd's governor of the border of Āzarbāyjān and Armenia,³³⁹ and eventual usurper; we hear of the Turkish king's son and successor Yaltikīn,³⁴⁰ a far more plausibly Turkish name or title than Ṭabarī's 'Barmuḍa';³⁴¹ we meet Yazdān Jušnas, Hurmazd's chief vizier, who poisons the king's mind against Bahrām Čōbīn;³⁴² amongst Bahrām's followers are Hurmazd Jurābzīn and Yazdak the scribe, who encourage Bahrām to rebel;³⁴³ and Bindūya and Biṣṭām, maternal uncles of Ḥusraw II, play much the same

337. After much discussion in preparation for the insurrection, Bahrām calls for music and entertainment, asking for a recitation of 'The Seven Tables', and then wishing to hear the lay of Isfandiyār and how he went to 'The Brazen Castle' (HURMAZD, l. 1691–1700).

338. Comparison with Bal'āmī's account of Bahrām's life and exploits shows that an even longer version of Bahrām book may have been available to that author. Though it may be superficially plausible that Firdawsī cut out all details which are found only in Bal'āmī, this does not tally with Firdawsī's self-imposed mandate to versify the texts that he had before him without expurgation or alteration. We should infer rather that Bal'āmī was aware of a longer redaction of the Bahrām book. Though very interesting in itself, this topic is quite unrelated to the present investigation.

339. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 81: l. 20-p. 82: l. 1. Dīnawarī spells it 'Šūbīn', and Ṭabarī 'Jūbīn' — two different attempts to render the sounds of Pahlavi in Arabic.

340. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 84: l. 3–4. This name will be discussed later.

341. ṬABARĪ, p. 993.

342. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 85: l. 1.

343. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 85: l. 4 *et seqq.*

role in Dīnawarī as they do elsewhere;³⁴⁴ Bahrām’s chief commanders seem to have been Mardān Sīna Ruwaydaštī on his right wing, and Yazdān Jušnas son of Ḥalabān on his left;³⁴⁵ most of Ḥusraw II’s men defect to Bahrām save his two uncles, Hurmazd Jurābzīn, who is here identified as holding the rank of Nuḥārjān, Sābūr son of Abarkān, Yazdak the scribe, Bād son of Fīrūz, Sharwīn son of Kāmjar, Kurdī son of Bahrām Jušnas, brother to Bahrām Šarwīn.³⁴⁶ Dīnawarī also mentions the Armenian general Mušēl Mamikonean, and the young Theodosius, son of the late emperor Maurice.³⁴⁷

The sheer number of persons involved in Dīnawarī’s treatment of Bahrām’s rebellion might, if found in another source, inspire us to take the account for serious history. But it is impossible to identify most of the men involved. Perhaps the best we can say is that the number of names suggests the scale of the problem posed by Bahrām’s rebellion. Few of the characters appear in other sources. Apart from Bahrām himself, Ḥusraw’s uncles (Bindūya and Bištām) are the only characters here who also appear in Ṭabarī’s *Annals*. Some of them, however, appear in the *Šāhnāma*. Bindūya and Bištām, of course, play prominent roles in Firdawsī’s poem, and amongst the other names given are those of Bahrām’s commanders: Yal Sīna, Īzad Gušasp, and Bandā Gušasp.³⁴⁸ The first two men’s names seem to answer to Dīnawarī’s Mardān Sīna and Yazdān Jušnas, but the third is absent from *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*. Their roles in the army, however, are totally different in the *Šāhnāma*: Firdawsī makes Yal Sīna rouse the troops, and Īzad Gušasp looks after the baggage train. It is easy to conceive of reasons why personal names might be corrupted when taken from Middle to New Persian (possibly *via* Arabic), but it is hard to see why there are differ-

344. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 86: l. 13.

345. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 89: l. 9–10.

346. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 90: l. 5–9.

347. I refer to the first appearance of the names: Mušēl (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 94: l. 7; SEBEOS, p. 81: l. 6–7); Theodosius (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 96: l. 11; SEBEOS, p. 106: l. 17; THEOPHYLACT, VIII.4.10).

348. HURMAZD, l. 640–644.

ent roles attached to the men in Bahrām's army. The involvement of Mušēš Mamikonean and the young Theodosius in the crushing of Bahrām's revolt and Ḥusraw II's bid for the throne are, of course, noticed (albeit somewhat differently) by Sebeos and Theophylact. Theodosius is little more than a name in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*, but Dīnawarī has included some interesting details on Mušēš which are discussed below in the case studies.

Dīnawarī's notices on the rebellion of Biṣṭām, which followed not long after the death of Bahrām Čōbīn probably also go back to the Bahrām book. Such was the opinion of Nöldeke who observed that the tone of Dīnawarī's narrative of both rebellions is the same, and the same persons are involved in both episodes.³⁴⁹ That Dīnawarī's narrative of Biṣṭām's rebellion does *not* begin with *qālū* (or any similar transitional word or phrase) strengthens this inference. The same theme of Sasanian legitimacy is also to the fore here. Dīnawarī's account of Biṣṭām's rebellion is the longest available treatment of it, and this makes *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* a very important source for the reign of Ḥusraw II. It is unfortunate that other narratives of this revolt in other sources are so meagre that the historian is often forced to take Dīnawarī's account at face value.³⁵⁰

It is probable the Pahlavi source of the Bahrām book was written early in the 590s, and there is good reason to situate its composition very close to Ḥusraw II's restoration. But the date at which the narrative of Biṣṭām's rebellion was composed must be later than that at which the Bahrām book was written. This can be inferred from the fact that Biṣṭām's insurrection broke out after Bahrām's defeat and flight, and that it lasted ten years. The evidence of Biṣṭām's coins, which bear regnal years going up to ten, makes this clear.³⁵¹ The revolt of Biṣṭām and its place in Sasanian history is discussed below in its own section, where questions of chronology are discussed in greater detail. By way of inference, it is probable that the story of Biṣṭām was worked

349. NÖLDEKE 1879, p. 478.

350. NÖLDEKE 1879, p. 478–487.

351. PARUCK 1976, p. 113.

into a later redaction of the Bahrām book at the beginning of the seventh century, when his rebellion ended.

IV. *Speculative Sources*

We can only guess at what Dīnawarī's other sources were. It is, however, probably futile to try to prise apart the rest of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* in the hopes of discovering all other documents that lie behind it, for Dīnawarī has covered his tracks too well. There is nevertheless a handful of curious notices in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* which we cannot pass over without comment. These fall into two broad categories: Christian legends or apocrypha, and classical references. Toward the end of the discussion of the *Hudāynāma* tradition above, the subject of Christianised dynastic histories of Iran was broached. What is at stake *here* is not narratives of kings' reigns ordered chronologically, but rather much shorter tales and other accretions. Legends and apocrypha of Christian origin are clearly visible in the anecdotes concerning Ardašīr's alleged conversion to Christianity; in the revolt of Anūš Zād; and in certain details in Dīnawarī's account of Ḥusraw II's reign.

The Conversion of Ardašīr I to Christianity

The first clearly discernable appearance of this strain is Dīnawarī's notice about the arrival of one of Christ's apostles to the court of Ardašīr I and the ensuing story about the interaction between the apostle and Ardašīr's vizier Abarsām.³⁵² By way of speculation, I suggested in my MPhil thesis that this story may be a mutant version of the apostolic mission of Addai to king Abgar of Edessa, a story which first appeared in Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, and was subsequently put into Syriac.³⁵³ If the Addai legend is lurking behind this curious anecdote in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* it probably

352. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 46: l. 18 to p. 47: l. 3. See also SCHILLING 2008, p. 89–112.

353. EUSEBIUS, I.xiii.1–10; HOWARD 1981, p. 10 *et seqq.*

crept in through a Christian, most likely, Syriac source.³⁵⁴ Alternatively, as Wood argues, the story may be a ‘calque’ on the arrival of the prophet Mānī at the Sasanian court under Šāpūr I. If this is true, it may imply a Christianianisation of earlier Manichaean legends.³⁵⁵ In either case, the Christian character of the story is clear. Pourshariati is tempted to connect the story with the ‘substantial Christian community’ at Dīnavar, where an East Syrian monastery is known to have existed.³⁵⁶ So a Christian source seems a reasonable inference.

Dīnawarī also includes a curious digression bolted onto the story of Bahrām Čōbīn’s rebellion in the reign of Hurmazd IV which is plainly related to the earlier story about the conversion of Ardašīr. The cry of the rebels was ‘Hurmazd is not king; Yazdān Jušnas is not vizier!’³⁵⁷ — which Dīnawarī justifies with a surprising explanation. He links the phrase to a revolt against Ardašīr I provoked by that king’s conversion to Christianity.³⁵⁸ Ardašīr’s vizier, who is called Yazdān here, is supposed to have converted also, for both he and the king had been won over by one of Christ’s apostles.

This story is clearly related to the account of the apostolic mission to Ardašīr’s court. But in the earlier story, Ardašīr’s vizier is called Abarsām, not Yazdān. This difference suggests that Dīnawarī did not make up the second anecdote himself, but rather copied it as he found it, retaining the aberrant name. The difference of names is probably also a sign that the two ‘versions’ of the story (if that is the right word) do not, ultimately, come from the same place. If they were

354. JACKSON BONNER 2011, p. 33.

355. WOOD (FORTHCOMING).

356. POURSHARIATI 2010, p. 207.

357. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 85: l. 16–17.

358. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 85: l. 17–20:

وكانت قصّة أوّلی خوارجهم ان اردشير بابكان كان صار اليه بعض الحواريين فاستجاب له ودخل في دين المسيح صلّى الله عليه وكان في عصره وشايعة الى ذلك وزيره يزدان فغضب العجم لذلك وهمّوا بخلع اردشير حتى اظهر لهم الرجوع عمّا همّ به .

initially found in the same document, it is hard to imagine why they were not made congruent at some stage.

What can we infer from this? First, at least two different versions of an apocryphal visit of a Christian apostle were in circulation. Second, Dīnawarī had before him a much longer story, whose conclusion he merely hints at: the conversion of Ardašīr and his vizier to Christianity provoked a revolt. In this earlier revolt the rallying cry was presumably ‘Ardašīr is not king, Abarsām is not vizier!’

But Dīnawarī seems not to have reported the whole story. Dīnawarī’s mysterious account seems to have been lifted from the same source that the anonymous writer of the the *Nihāyat al-Irab* used also.³⁵⁹ Though Dīnawarī’s account is not *identical* to what is found in the *Nihāya*, the two accounts of the conversion of Ardašīr have enough in common to impute a common source. This original source upon which both authors drew, and which Dīnawarī abridged heavily, seems to have dealt with with the christening of Zoroastrian motifs. Nevertheless, this putative Christian source seems at some point to have undergone a certain ‘Islamification’, to coin a word, if we can judge by the *Nihāya*’s emphasis on the unity of God and the fact that the apostle identifies himself as ‘an apostle of the apostle of God, Jesus son of Mary’.³⁶⁰

According to Avestan legend the conversion of Guštasp to the religion of Zoroaster was inspired by the prophet’s healing of the king’s horse.³⁶¹ Likewise, in the *Nihāya*, the conversion of Ardašīr I to Christianity follows the apostle’s revival of Ardašīr’s horse which had lately died.³⁶²

359. NIHĀYA, p. 185–186.

360. NIHĀYA, p. 185:

فَأَخْبِرْهُ أَنَّهُ رَسُولُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ عِيسَى بْنُ مَرْيَمَ إِلَى أَرْدَشِيرَ، لِيَدْعُوهُ إِلَى التَّوْحِيدِ .

361. SCHILLING 2008, p. 107; I owe this reference to Dr Philip Wood, and I am grateful to Dr Christelle Jullien for sending me a copy of it.

362. NIHĀYA, p. 186, which begins with an utterance by the apostle:

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ عِيسَى بْنِ مَرْيَمَ رُوحَكَ وَكَلِمَتَكَ الْإِحْيَاءُ هَذَا الدَّابَّةُ كَمَا ابْتَدَأْتَ خَلْقَهَا وَلَمْ تَكْ شَيْئًا . وَ تَكَلَّمُوا جَمِيعًا بِذَلِكَ، فَقَامَ الْمَرْكَبُ عَلَى

Dīnawarī does not include the part about the dead horse — perhaps he found it absurd, irrelevant, or too Zoroastrian for comfort — but it was almost certainly in his source.

The Revolt of Anūš Zāđ

Another Christian reimagining of Sasanian history is Dīnawarī's account of the revolt of Ḥusraw I's son Anūš Zāđ. Dīnawarī was the first historian, at least that we know of, to have worked the story of Anūš Zāđ into his history. Though the same story appears in the *Nihāya* (whose date remains controversial) in almost exactly the same form as we find it in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*,³⁶³ other historians such as Ṭabarī seem not to have known of it. This must tell us something about Dīnawarī and breadth of his reading. The source of this account was almost certainly of Christian origin, and was probably written originally in Syriac.³⁶⁴

We should begin with the historical background: Procopius' notice of the same rebellion proves that Dīnawarī's narrative, though clearly incomplete, is broadly speaking true.³⁶⁵ Firdawsī's narrative of the same events is probably derived, perhaps at more than one remove, from the same source on which Dīnawarī's narrative is founded. This inference allows us to see what Dīnawarī left out of his history by looking at the same story as it appears in the *Šāhnāma* — it also allows us to see what the original source of Anūš Zāđ's rebellion was like.

In an article which went to press before my *cahier* came out, but which was published after it (both of which were derived from my MPhil thesis), I suggested that the source lying behind Dīnawarī's and Firdawsī's Anūš Zāđ narratives was a romance telling the story of Christian mar-

رجليه ينفذ ناصيته.

363. NIHĀYA, p. 326–328; Cf. BROWNE 1900, p. 231.

364. JACKSON BONNER 2011, p. 59–70.

365. PROCOPIUS II.xxiv.8; VIII.x.17–22.

tyr of royal blood;³⁶⁶ in my *cahier* I preferred to call it an *Acta Martyris*. But neither view can be said to be more realistic or right than the other, and we might now prefer to classify it under the broader title of ‘hagiography’. There was, as Walker has recently observed, a fair amount of Syriac hagiography dealing with Persian martyrs, some of which dealt with royal and aristocratic Christians, and which reflected the tropes and motifs of the Iranian epic tradition: *The History of the Heroic Deeds of Mar Qardagh* is a case in point.³⁶⁷ So the putative ‘hagiography’ of Anūš Zād would fit into a well-established genre.

Questions of genre aside, the story of Anūš Zād probably comes from a source preoccupied chiefly with the revolt which he led, probably composed in Syriac (the *lingua franca* of Iranian Christians), and only written into the *Hudāynāma* tradition by way of a later Arabic translation.³⁶⁸ Given this story’s absence from other Arabic prose histories apart from the *Nihāya*, Dīnawarī may well have found the Anūš Zād text separate from his sources on Sasanian history and written it into the narrative himself. Dīnawarī’s use of the book of Bahrām Čōbīn may be a parallel case, as he seems to have been the first author to incorporate material from this text into a universal history.

Nevertheless, we must take account of the fact that the *Nihāya* appears to attribute the Anūš Zād story to Ibn Muqaffaʿ. The *Nihāya*’s treatment of Ḥusraw’s invasion of Roman territory begins with an attribution to that scholar, who is supposed to have found his account of that invasion ‘in the book of the biographies of the kings of Iran’, and the particle *anna* introduces what has presumably been lifted from what Ibn Muqaffaʿ translated.³⁶⁹ The section on Anūš Zād,

366. JACKSON BONNER 2012.

367. WALKER 2006, p. 19–69. On this text’s relation to the Iranian epic tradition, see WALKER 2006, p. 121–163.

368. This source found its way into both *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* and the *Šāhnāma*, but, as we have seen, Dīnawarī does not narrate the entire episode.

369. NIHĀYA, p. 324:

which follows, begins with the same particle.³⁷⁰ This is plainly meant to resume the earlier phrase attributed to Ibn Muqaffaʿ, and imply that he found the story of Anūš Zāḏ in the same book. Though it is possible that Ibn Muqaffaʿ redacted an Arabic translation of the Syriac hagiography of Anūš Zāḏ, there is simply no way to know for sure. But it is impossible to take seriously the claim that the *Nihāya*’s story of Anūš Zāḏ originated in the *Hudāynāma* which Ibn Muqaffaʿ is supposed to have translated.

That the Anūš Zāḏ source was of Christian origin is clear in Firdawsī’s use of it in the *Šāhnāma*. It is full of Christian imagery, the narrator is sympathetic to Anūš Zāḏ, who dies a martyr for the Christian faith, and Syrian ecclesiastical vocabulary abounds.³⁷¹ Familial strife between mixed Zoroastrian and Christian families is also a well-attested theme in Syriac hagiography.³⁷² But the most convincing evidence that the source was of Christian origin is probably the emphasis-

قال عبد الله المقفّع: أنّي وجدت في كتاب سير ملوك العجم، أنّ كسرى، الخ

370. NIHĀYA, p. 326:

و أنّ، الخ

371. Other Syrian ecclesiastical terms appearing in this episode are given in Arabic transliteration: *jāṭalīq* (catholicus) and *biṭrīq* (patriarch) (همه جاثليقان و بطريق روم, NÖŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 895), and *suquf* (سقف, NÖŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 963). These are clearly Arabicised forms of the Syriac *qatūlīqā* (or *qatlīqā*), *pātaryarqā*, and *afesqūfā*, recognisable by the change of the Syriac *q* and *p* to *j* and *b*, and so forth, in Arabic. *Sukūbā* (bishop) (سكوبا, NÖŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 957) seems to be derived from *afesqūfā* also. However, the fact that these terms have been arabicised suggests that the source had not been translated into Pahlavi — an observation which refutes Nöldeke’s claim that Firdawsī used no Arabic sources (NÖLDEKE 1879, p. xxiii). Cf. also PIGULEVSKAJA 1963, p. 227, where the author commented on this passage. Pigulevskaja’s notion, however, that the phrase جاثليقان و بطريق روم (which in her edition lacked the conjunction و) can only refer to Mar Aba is an utterly incredible conjecture. The text of the *Šāhnāma* known to Nöldeke apparently included a certain ‘Šammās’ who was in Anūš Zāḏ’s army. Nöldeke judged this to be the Syriac *šamša*, or ‘deacon’ (NÖLDEKE 1879, p. 470), but did not look into the matter further. I do not find this name in Khāleghī-Motlagh’s edition.

372. WALKER 2006, p. 228–235.

most entertaining part of Anūš Zād's revolt is not in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*. Why, we may ask, did Dīnawarī remove the conclusion? To answer this question we should compare Dīnawarī's account with that of Firdawsī. If we assume that the source used by these two authors was substantially the same, it seems fair that the conclusion of the narrative was exactly, or almost exactly, as we find it in the *Šāhnāma*.

Certain details of the conclusion to the Anūš Zād rebellion would have raised problems for Dīnawarī. The anti-Christian speech which Firdawsī puts into the mouth of one of the Iranian warriors sent to oppose Anūš Zād is an inflammatory attack not on the Christian religion, but rather on Christ himself.³⁷⁷ The speech is redolent of Zoroastrian anti-Christian invective, such as we find reported in Armenian sources,³⁷⁸ and we need not doubt its authenticity. Iranian Christians would have been familiar with such rhetoric, and so the presence of Zoroastrian polemic in

377. An old man calls out to Anūš Zād, and amongst many threats and boasts utters what is surely an orthodox Zoroastrian attack on Christianity (NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 908–910):

مسیح فریبنده خود کشته شد چن از دین یزدان سرش کشته شد
 ز دین آوران دین آنکس مجوی کجا خود را ندانست روی
 اگر فر یزدان برو تافتی جهود اندرو راه کی یافتی .

The whole battle is narrated in NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 888–980. Nūš Zād responds to the ‘dotard airhead’ (ای پیر فرتوت سر ز باد), but to no avail (NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 927).

378. The letter of Mihrnerseh, who is called Վզուրկ հրամատար էրան եւ Անէրան, addressed to ‘Greater Armenia’, quoted in Efiše’s *History* (Efiše, p. 24–27), proves that the Zoroastrian hatred of Christianity was organised by the highest orders of church and government, and lists several theological grievances, and the mere humanity of Christ is strongly asserted. Efiše reports elsewhere that the torture, crucifixion, death, and burial of Christ infuriated Yazdgard II (Efiše, p. 12: l. 20 to p. 13: l. 1–2), presumably because these indignities were unfit for one who was believed to be a god. The letter of Husrav II to Heraclius, quoted in Sebeos (SEBEOS, p. 123), is accordingly explicit in ascribing imposture to Christ, who died an ignominious death at the hands of the Jews: զի Քրիստոսն այն, որ զանձն իւր ոչ կարաց ասարեցուցանել ի Հրէիցն, այլ սպանին կախեալ զփայտէ, etc. (SEBEOS, p. 123: l. 30–31).

the *Šāhnāma* does not mean, as some might be tempted to believe, that Firdawsī's source of the Anūš Zād story was a Zoroastrian one composed in Middle Persian.³⁷⁹ But in any case this speech, and especially its implication that Christ was crucified by the Jews, would have struck a Muslim audience as a great blasphemy.³⁸⁰ The public and maudlin display of grief when Anūš Zād's body is returned to his mother³⁸¹ must have seemed no better than idolatry. The *Šāhnāma*,

379. *Contra* PIGULEVSKAJA 1963, p. 225; *contra* NÖLDEKE 1879, p. 469.

380. The Quran, of course, denies that the Jews crucified Jesus (ما قتلوه وما صلبوه), and stresses that 'God took him up to himself' (بل رفعه الله اليه) (QURAN, 4:157–158).

381. NÖŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 965–973:

نماند ایچ ترسا دو رخ ناشخود	مسیحی به شهر اندرون هرك بود
که بودند، یکسر شدند انجمن	خروش آمد از شهر و از مرد و زن
دل و دیده ی شاه نوشین روان	تن شهریار دلیر و جوان
سه فرسنگ بر دست بگذاشت	به تابوتش از جای بر داشتند
به خاک اندر آمد سر و افسرش	چن آگاه شد زان سخن مادرش
برو انجمن گشته بازارگاه	ز پرده برهنه بیامد به راه
جهانی همه خاک بر سر زدند	سرآپرده بی گردش اندر زدند
ز باد آمد و ناگهان شد به باد	به خاکش سپردند و شد نوش زاد
ز درد دل شاه بریان شدند.	همه گندشاپور گریان شدند

finally, clearly depicts Anūš Zāḏ as a Christian martyr³⁸² — another potential offence to Muslim sensibilities. It seems unlikely that Firdawsī would have supplied any of these features himself.

Firdawsī's task was to glorify the reigns of the kings of Iran for the entertainment of the Ghaznavid nobility, and he achieved this by versifying his sources faithfully without expurgation.³⁸³ So he was free to versify the Anūš Zāḏ story in full. If Dīnawarī's readers were clerics and theologians, they would have looked with suspicion on a text too heavily laden with pre-Islamic tales cherished by a subjugated but still active religious minority. The insults to Christ would also have been problematic for such an audience. Dīnawarī's audience of literary men and bureaucrats, who wished to be edified by tales of the pre-Islamic heyday of Iran, the full story of Anūš Zāḏ's rebellion would have amounted to a long, pointless, and potentially awkward, digression.

382. The prince is mortally wounded by a stray arrow (به گرد اندرون خسته شد نوش زاد) (NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 940)), and on the point of death, Nūš Zād calls for a bishop to whom he confesses his sins (NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 943):

بنالید و گریان سقف را بخواند سخن هرچ بودش به دل در براند .

He repents of the trouble he has wrought, and asks for a horseman to be sent to his mother to announce his death (NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 944–946). Nūš Zād is then found dead, his head in the embrace of a 'Christian bishop' (NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 957):

ورا کشته دیدند و افگند خوار سکوبا رومی سرش بر کنار .

Rām Barzīn comes upon this pathetic scene, and asks of the bishop Anūš Zāḏ's final wishes, which are then communicated faithfully. The bishop then compares Anūš Zāḏ to Christ (NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 963–964):

به رسم مسیحا کنون مادرش کفن سازد و گور و هم چادرش
کنون جان او با مسیحا یکی ست همان ست کین کشته بر دار نیست .

383. Cf. OMIDSALAR 2006–2007.

Details in Ḥusraw II's Reign

There is almost certainly a Christian source embedded in Dīnawarī's account of Ḥusraw II's Roman war. In his examination of the historical sources for this war, Howard-Johnston observed a link between Ṭabarī's *Annals* and the seventh-century *Chronicle of Ḥūzistān*.³⁸⁴ The chief point of interest is that both texts mention that, during the Persian sack of Jerusalem, the Christians of that city hid the true cross from in a vegetable garden. The source common to both texts was (in Wood's view) used by Ṭabarī to plug a gap in Sasanian royal history, but the supposedly official account had run dry.³⁸⁵ If this reasoning be sound, we must also assume that the same Christian source is lurking behind *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*, since Dīnawarī also mentions that the cross was hidden in a vegetable garden.³⁸⁶ It may have been this or a similar source which included the account of Ḥusraw II's sojourn in a Christian monastery whilst on his way to Roman territory,³⁸⁷ which is analysed in the case studies.



Why should pause now, as ask what is the significance of these Christian elements hidden in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*? To answer this question is probably connected with the political situation toward the end of the Sasanian dynasty. Wood has shown that Ḥusraw II's restoration involved the deliberate 'cooption' of the Nestorian catholicos by the new king. Ḥusraw used Šabr'išō, whom he himself appointed, as his main diplomatic channel with the Romans and 'allowed him access to

384. HOWARD-JOHNSTON 2010B, p. 128–135; CHRONICLE OF ḤŪZISTĀN.

385. WOOD (FORTHCOMING).

386. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 111: l. 1–3:

فَعَذَّبَهُ حَتَّى دَلَّهَ عَلَى الْخَشَبَةِ الَّتِي تَزْعُمُ النَّصَارَى أَنَّ الْمَسِيحَ صَلَّبَ إِلَيْهَا وَكَانَتْ مَدْفُونَةً فِي مَوْضِعٍ قَدْ زُرِعَ فَوْقَهَا الرِّيحَانِ.

387. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 91–94.

the kind of legitimacy as a Christian ruler...that was employed by a Roman emperor'.³⁸⁸ The presence of Christian material blended into the *Hudāynāma* tradition may confirm that Ḥusraw II's propaganda was well-received by the Christians of Iran.

Taken at face value, reference to the true cross and Ḥusraw's stay at a monastery, as well as the notices of the apostle's visit, Ardašīr's conversion to Christianity, and the ensuing revolt are of variable historical value. They are, nevertheless not without precedent or parallel in oriental history. We can adduce, for instance, the rumour, diffused throughout the Christian east, and reported by Sebeos and lodged in the *Chronicle of Seert*, that Ḥusraw himself had both converted to Christianity at the end of his life, and been given Christian burial.³⁸⁹ Qubād's vision of an image of Christ on the eve of his taking of Amida — also found in the *Chronicle of Seert* — is another case in point.³⁹⁰

Pourshariati may well be right in observing that the story of the apostle and Ardašīr I 'throws an interesting light on the potential importance that Dīnawarī assigned to what seems to have been a substantial Christian community of Dīnavar'.³⁹¹ But this raises more questions than answers. Was it this community that brought such stories to Dīnawarī's attention, while he was living there? Might it have been a compendium of Syrian Christian apocrypha? How much apo-

388. WOOD (FORTHCOMING).

389. Եւ ի ժամ վախճանին ծագեալ փայլակնացեալ զնովաւ լոյս աստուածային Բանին (SEBEOS, p. 69: l. 26–27), and Ḥusraw then makes a profession of his faith (SEBEOS, p. 69: l. 27–31), and is baptised by the Catholicos of Iran (Էրան կաթողիկոս) (SEBEOS, p. 70: l. 2). A few days before his death, հաղորդեցաւ կենդանարար մարմնոյ և արեանն Տեառն (SEBEOS, p. 70: l. 4–5). Finally, when Ḥusraw died, բարձեալ զմարմին նորա քրիստոնէիցն տարեալ էդին ի շիրիմս թագաւորացն (SEBEOS, p. 70: l. 8–9). Similarly, the *Chronicle of Seert* says that the Ḥusraw's Christian subjects, whom he had carried off from Antioch and resettled, assembled with candles and incense to honour his dead body (CHRONICLE OF SEERT I, p. 197).

390. Christ appeared to Qubād in a dream and promised him that he would take the city of Amida. Entering the city on the following day, Qubād recognised the image of Christ in one of that city's churches (CHRONICLE OF SEERT I, p. 132–133).

391. POURSHARIATI 2010, p. 207.

cryptal Christian literature pertaining to Sasanian royal history existed? How did this literature find its way into Arabic? How much of this literature was Dīnawarī aware of, but left out of his history? Why did Dīnawarī decide to include *this* story? These and other questions shall never be answered.

The sources from which these Christian elements were drawn were of the lowest quality and they cannot have come from an official ecclesiastical chronicle. So gross a chronological error as dating the mission of a Christian apostle to the reign of Ardašīr I would hardly have been tolerated in a document sanctioned by the government of the Iranian church, for instance. Moreover, the chronology of the Bible, which we can presume to have been well-known at least at the higher levels of the church, would have militated against the error. So Dīnawarī's apocrypha are at best popular stories perhaps transmitted orally until written down — possibly, if Pourshariati's inference above be right, by someone affiliated to the monastic community in Dīnavar. For this reason, I strongly doubt that these apocrypha fall into the same category as Syriac Christian continuations of the the *Hudāynāma* tradition, and therefore a document similar to the *Chronicle of Seert* is unlikely to lie behind Dīnawarī's Christian apocrypha. If my inference of popular stories is right, this shows that Wood's notion of the 'christianisation of the Sasanian past' was felt even at the lowest level of Iranian Christian society.³⁹²

Classical References

Dīnawarī's main classical references are presented in the context of certain conquests of Yemenite ruler Abraha Ibn Miṭṭāṭ. By way of background, Abraha's conquests are supposedly contemporaneous with the Hebrew Exodus, so the events in question were, even in Dīnawarī's time, remote and probably recognised as more than a little fanciful. Here is the passage in question:³⁹³

392. WOOD (FORTHCOMING).

393. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 15: l. 1–11.

They say: verily Abraha made ready and went with many men into the land of al-Mağrib, and left his kingdom in the charge of his son Ifrīqīs. He went deep into the land of Sudan and they accorded him obedience. He passed through their land, and even came upon a people among men whose eyes and mouths are in their chests. It is said that they are among the progeny of Nūḥ, upon whom be peace, at whom God was angry. [Abraha] changed their customs, and they accorded him obedience. He went back and passed through a people among men called al-Nasnās, among whom the men and the women have half a head, half a face, one eye, half a body, one hand, and one leg. They hop about faster than the running of a racing horse, and they wander in the thickets which are on the shore of the sea behind heaps of sand, that is to say the sands of the country of Yemen.

This passage is clearly of no historical value, and its geography and chronology are rather confused. But it is nevertheless of great interest. The people ‘whose eyes and mouths are in their chests’ recall Pliny’s Blemmyes, a people said to inhabit a part of Africa south of Egypt, and Pliny’s description of this people is the same as what we find in Dīnawarī.³⁹⁴ Though it is hard to know what to make of the people with half a head and so forth, the reference to hopping about on one foot can also be traced to Pliny. The Monocoli (also called Sciapodes) are said to have had only one foot and to have practiced the same form of bizarre locomotion mentioned by Dīnawarī.³⁹⁵ These connexions seems certain. Very doubtful, however, is the origin of Dīnawarī’s ‘Nasnās’, but it could perhaps be Herodotus’ ‘Nasamones’, whose attributes are altogether different but for the fact that they live by the seashore.³⁹⁶ Similarly, Dīnawarī’s short reference to Alexander’s encounter with a people of red skin, who copulate only during a certain three days in

394. *Blemmyis traduntur capita abesse, ore et oculis pectore adfixis* (PLINY, *N.H.*, V.viii.46). Compare this to DĪNAWARĪ, p. 15: l. 3–4:

أمة من الناس اعينهم وافواههم في صدورهم.

For more on Pliny’s *Natural History* in this connexion see BEAGON 2005, p. 152–155.

395. ...*idem hominum genus qui Monocoli vocarentur singulis cruribus mirae pernicitatis ad saltum, eosdem Sciapodas vocari, quod in maiori aestu humi iacentes resupini umbra se pedum protegant* (PLINY, *N.H.*, VII.ii.23). Dīnawarī, of course, does not mention that these creatures can use their feet as shades. Pliny’s source was Ctesias, as he says.

396. *Νασαμῶνες...δι τὸ ξέρος καταλείποντες ἐπὶ τῇ θαλάσῃ τὰ πρόβατα ἀναβαίνουνσι ἐς Ἄγγιλα*

the year³⁹⁷ is somewhat reminiscent of Herodotus' ethnographic description of Scythians and the peoples who dwell near them,³⁹⁸ and may go back to the same putative source. If there is any truth to these links with Herodotus, the source in which these this classical ethnography appeared in Arabic may have been something of a miscellany, and a confused one at that.

Where would Dīnawarī have come accross such material? This is not an easy question to answer. But it is not difficult to believe that certain classical ethnographic references, whether descended directly from Pliny and Herodotus or through a series of intermediate writers, were put into Arabic at some point before the ninth century. But it seems very curious indeed that these relics of classical ethnography are found in a plainly fictitious story about a king of pre-Islamic Yemen, though a reminiscence of Herodotus in the context of Alexander's adventures is less surprising. So another way of addressing the problem would be to ask whether Dīnawarī combined the two different traditions himself, or found them already woven together. Since the combined Arabic and classical tradition seems to appear only in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* it may well be that Dīnawarī is responsible for the coincidence. This would make Dīnawarī extraordinarily well-read. But we would still wonder why Dīnawarī felt the need to make a scarcely credible story even more odd. If Dīnawarī found these two traditions in a single source, this may indicate the efforts of an Arabic writer to add prestige to pre-Islamic Arabian fables by integrating them into the classical heritage. In either case the implications for Cheddadi's thesis on the Muslim appropriation of classical history are manifold³⁹⁹ — but quite unrelated to the present work.

χῶρον (HERODOTUS, IV.171). This possible identification is, admittedly, something of a stretch.

397. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 39: l. 13–18.

398. HERODOTUS, IV.23–26.

399. CHEDDADI 2004.

Remarks

The foregoing is only a glimpse of Dīnawarī's sources. I cannot claim to have unveiled the whole scholarly infrastructure that lies beneath *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*. But enough of it has been revealed to allow seven general observations about Dīnawarī and his work.

Dīnawarī had no compunction about altering his sources of pre-Islamic Arabian history to suit his own ideas of Iranian supremacy. This is especially clear in what Dīnawarī has done to traditions that go back to Ibn Šarya.

Ibn Muqaffa's *Hudāynāma* was one among many translations dealing with Sasanian royal history. It was probably incomplete, its coverage of Sasanian history petering out after the reign of Ḥusraw I. If this text is the source of some of Dīnawarī's Sasanian history (a doubtful possibility, but a possibility nonetheless), he consulted it at second hand.

Dīnawarī's Sasanian passages are founded on many different sources. The character and quality of these sources suggests that some of them were not official Sasanian sources, and some of them were of Christian origin.

The hagiography of Anūš Zād, Ibn Hišām's account of Ḥusraw I's conquest of Yemen, the book of Bahrām Čōbīn, and possibly other works, were used to fill in gaps in Sasanian dynastic history.

Data from the sole identifiable Sasanian source consulted by Dīnawarī, the *Kārnāmag-ī Ardašēr-ī Pābagān*, have been badly deformed. It is unlikely, but not impossible, that Dīnawarī himself is responsible for emptying this source of all authentic Zoroastrian content, for compressing it heavily, and for confounding many of the original characters. Alternatively Dīnawarī may have consulted one of many mangled versions of it — perhaps the result of bad textual or oral transmission. In either case, Dīnawarī made no attempt to criticise or verify his source, nor did he compare different versions of it.

Classical references, which seem out of place in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*, are unparalleled in other Muslim histories. We may never know how Dīnawarī came across them or why he chose to include them in his narrative. They attest, perhaps, the breadth of Dīnawarī's reading.

Dīnawarī's reference to an oral source is a sign that much of his material may have reached him in this fashion. All subsequent investigators of Dīnawarī's sources must be open to this possibility.



At first glance, these conclusions do not inspire confidence. For we can detect no sign of the kind of source that would normally shed new light on the history of the Sasanian era. There are only the slightest hints of an court chronicle in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*, not a whiff of military dispatches, no population statistics, no meaningful economic data, and there are very few dates. Is it any wonder that historians ignored *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* in favour of Ṭabarī's *Annals*?

It is indeed surprising. For Ṭabarī's sources for Sasanian history are no better than Dīnawarī's in most cases. Moreover, there are significant portions of Sasanian history which Ṭabarī does not narrate but which are found in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*. The alleged conversion of Ardašīr I to Christianity, the revolt of Anūš Zād, and the revolt and insurgency of Biṣṭām receive no treatment whatsoever in Ṭabarī's *Annals*, and the history of the revolt of Bahrām Čōbīn, which Dīnawarī narrates fully, is touched on only briefly by Ṭabarī. This is not to mention the many small details or variations which are unique to *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*.⁴⁰⁰ We can therefore claim that *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* is one of the most interesting Arabic prose histories of Sasanian Iran that have come down to us.

400. 'Dīnawarī...berührt sich in dem betreffenden Abschnitten seiner Chronik zehr mit Ṭabarī, hat aber auch viel eignes' (NÖLDEKE 1879, p. xxv–xxvi).

But the question on the historian's mind will be whether *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* is a trustworthy source of Sasanian history. The only reliable way to test the worth of a source is to compare it to other sources of known value. This is the subject of the next section.

C. EIGHT CASE STUDIES

Preamble

Before delving into specific elements of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*, we should take account of the full contents of Dīnawarī's history. *Al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* begins with an overview of the generations of mankind from Adam to Noah. Thereafter Dīnawarī introduces Iranian mythic history into the genealogies of Ham, Shem, and Japheth familiar from the Hebrew Bible. Most notably, Shem is identified with Īrān, ancestor of the Iranians, and his son Arphaxad is none other than Jamm, Iranian culture-hero and founder of monarchy. Īrān's homeland between Jūḥā and Mawṣil, called 'Īrān-Šahr', is introduced as the geographical focus of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*. The descendants of Noah's other sons and their wanderings after the confusing of tongues at Babel explain the origins of the Turks, Slavs, Khazars, the Chinese, Egyptians, Aethiopians, Arabs, Hephthalites, and others. All men spoke Syriac originally.

Dīnawarī then turns to Yemen, and narrates the story of Ḍaḥḥāk, to whom a Yemenite genealogy is attributed. Ḍaḥḥāk is the quintessential evil king: he is addicted to sorcery and astrology and two snakes grow from his shoulders and cease not to torment him unless fed on the brains of men. Two men who escape the predations of Ḍaḥḥāk flee to the mountains: Dīnawarī identifies these men as the ancestors of the Kurds. Ḍaḥḥāk's rule over Iran (to be understood, perhaps as an antetype of the Arab conquest of the seventh century) comes to an end when Farīdūn (whom Dīnawarī identifies with Nimrod) binds him in chains and confines him within the mountain of Damāwand.

The preaching of the prophet Hūd to the Yemenites is touched on briefly. Farīdūn sends his cousin Qaḥṭān to populate South Arabia — perhaps foreshadowing the conquest of Yemen by Ḥusraw I. A short account of the story of Ṭamūd follows. Farīdūn's rule begins to deteriorate. As he is much given to astrology, Farīdūn surrounds himself with staregazers, one of whom is Āzar, father of Abraham. Dīnawarī then relates Biblical stories of Lot, Sarah, and Abraham. Next follow more Yemenite mythic history, including the origins of the Laḥm, as do stories of the

fire-worshipping ʿĪdū Nuwās, his conversion to Judaism, his spreading of that religion by the sword, and the eventual intervention of Abraha. These stories culminate in Abraha's abortive siege of Mecca and Ḥusraw I's conquest of Yemen.

The preaching of Zoroaster, the reigns of David and Solomon, the building of the Jewish temple, and the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnosor are narrated, and a long section is devoted to the legendary adventures of Alexander the Great. These culminate in a short discussion of the diadochs who inherited Alexander's conquests, and the rise of Ardašīr follows. Dīnawarī includes only the scantest allusion to the Parthian dynasty by mentioning Artabān V.

Dīnawarī's exposition of the reign of the Sasanians forms about a quarter of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*. Very brief allusions to Jesus and Muḥammad fail to slow down or interrupt the narrative. Occasional digressions into South Arabian history are, however, interspersed throughout the reigns of the Sasanian kings. So it may be fairly said that Dīnawarī has begun to 'phase out' mythology as his narrative goes forward. Nevertheless, this Sasanian section is largely devoid of real history until the reign of Pērōz onwards: so it is on this period that my case studies have been based.

Dīnawarī's Sasanian portion of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* is followed by a narrative of the Arab conquest of Iran — I have not translated this part, nor what comes after it. Next come the reign of ʿUṭmān, the bayʿa with ʿAlī, the battles of the Camel and Ṣiffīn, and the Ḥārīj. Major uprisings and rebellions which troubled the Umayyads, the death of Ḥasān, the affair of Ḥusayn and Karbalā, the revolt of ʿAbd Allāh Ibn Zubayr, the rebellions of Muḥtar and Ibn Ašʿat, and the downfall of the Umayyad dynasty. The rise of the Abbasids follows and Dīnawarī's history of that dynasty is carried down to the reign of Muʿtaṣim (d. 842). The revolt led by Bābak is a high point in this section.

What follows is an examination of a specific portion of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*'s exposition of Sasanian history. Eight case studies focus on episodes of high importance in Eurasian history during Late Antiquity. Episodes were chosen not only because they are important in their own right, but also because they occur at points in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* when Dīnawarī's narrative becomes

comparatively fuller and when plainly fantastical elements are at a lower concentration. It would do no good, for instance, to dwell on the historical value of the much-garbled reign of Ardašīr I (which has already been touched on above), or the all too brief accounts of the reigns Šāpūr I to Yazdgard II, most of whom are passed over with little or no serious comment.⁴⁰¹ But from the rule of Pērōz onward, kings' reigns are narrated at greater length and there are fewer anecdotes of an obviously Herodotean character. Historical detail is more plentiful from the reign of Pērōz onward, with the notable exception of Ḥusraw II's Roman war of 603 and what follows it — a period narrated with such brevity in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* that it is not a subject fit for a case study.⁴⁰² Finally, external controls such as textual sources and physical evidence, to which notices in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* may be compared, are more plentiful from the reign of Pērōz onward. These were the factors that guided selection of the case studies.

Accordingly, seven episodes occurring between the years 457 and 600 are examined: I. the political state of Iran after the downfall of Pērōz in battle against the Hephthalites; II. Mazdakism; III. the reforms of Ḥusraw I; IV. the war of 540–562; V. the insurrection of Anūš Zād son of Ḥusraw I; VI. the rise of the Turks and the extinction of the Hephthalite empire; VII. the reign of Hurmazd V and the revolt of his general Bahrām Čōbīn; VIII. the revolt of Bištām, uncle to Ḥusraw II. Careful examination of Dīnawarī's notices connected with these episodes shows that they contain much that is indeed historical.

The main thing that preoccupies a person who interests himself in Sasanian Iran must be *what happened* during the reign of that dynasty in Iran and in the regions surrounding it. To report what happened in any way, whether by writing a series of royal biographies or by narrating the principle events of each reign, is to write the *history* of Sasanian Iran. But a good historian is never a mere chronicler who traces lightly the fluid surface of the past; nor should the historian follow

401. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 44–60.

402. It must be one of the historian's chief disappointments that Dīnawarī, a talented and vivid writer, passed lightly over one of the most impressive scenes in human history, and Ṭabarī, an author with no taste for style, dwelt on it with dull prolixity.

his sources blindly. Historical sources must be tested against one another and against criteria of probability. If history is to be considered worthy to be believed, the historian must try to verify his sources and determine whether what is written is true.

Most modern historians would be likely to privilege what they might call ‘documentary’ history, which is ideally based on archival material. But such material is not available in the context of Sasanian history. Instead we can rely only on those notices in our greatly imperfect texts (such as *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*) which can be verified externally.

Though the historian must be free to reject any notice which defies reason or which does not satisfy his sense of probability (no matter how well attested that notice may be), he is *likely* to have discovered the truth when he finds that two or more texts, which have not influenced one another and which do not have sources in common, report identical or similar notices or adduce similar or complementary causes for one and the same event. The same applies to archaeological corroboration for a literary source.

The principle sources to which I compare *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* were products of the cultures that abutted Iran on the west: eight Roman sources (six written in Greek, one in Latin, and one in Syriac), and six Armenian.⁴⁰³ All but two sources (both Armenian) were written within a generation or two of the period under scrutiny (A.D. 457–600) and are authoritative historical sources. Six can be enrolled in the highest grade of classicising history: these shall be presented first, in chronological order, with brief evaluations; next, what may be called chronicles, written close to the events covered; finally, three later reworkings of earlier Armenian history.

403. I am very grateful to my supervisor, Mr James Howard-Johnston, for having given me the material which follows in the next twelve paragraphs. He supplied biographical and bibliographical material which my examiners had recommended for inclusion — and this at an extremely tense time in Canadian politics whilst I was Senior Policy Advisor to Jason Kenney, Minister of Employment and Social Development. It would have been impossible for me to gather the basic information, grounded in scholarly references, about the historians whom I cite, without the help of my supervisor.

AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS (d. c. 393) was a native Greek-speaker, born as it seems at Antioch. He wrote in Latin, probably because it was the language of most of his sources, and it was the chief tongue of most of his intended readers. He had direct experience of warfare as a young man, for he had served on the staff of a senior general in the field in the east. The classicist must lament the loss of the early books of his *Res Gestae* which reached back to A.D. 96, but we are grateful that what has survived of it presents a detailed account of politics and warfare in the years 353 to 378. Ammianus was well connected and well informed, and beneath the polished linguistic surface of his history lies a great mass of solid and trustworthy material.⁴⁰⁴ Though this source falls outside the chronological ambit of the investigation that follows, there is some useful comparative material which may apply to a later age.⁴⁰⁵

Ammianus' successors preferred to write in Greek. Those from the fifth century are of little use in the evaluation of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*, since they survive only in fragments. But there is a great deal of comparative material to be quarried from a group of four classicising historians who flourished in the sixth and early seventh centuries.

PROCOPIUS served on the staff of Justinian's general Belisarius in northern Syria, in Africa, and in Italy. His *History of the Wars* is based largely on his own knowledge of operations when he was present, and on information drawn from others (either orally or in writing) when he was not. Procopius' most detailed coverage ranges from A.D. 530 to 552: it may be myopic in places, but on the whole it is reliable. Each of the three theatres of war in which he was involved is prefaced with background material. Procopius' first book dealing with the Persian war of 528 to 532 begins with an introduction reaching back into the reign of Pērōz (459–484).⁴⁰⁶

404. It is to be lamented, however, that Ammianus' geographical digression on the Sasanian empire is based mainly on older, Hellenistic material, and is therefore of no value to the historian of Sasanian Iran.

405. MATTHEWS 1989.

406. CAMERON 1985; GREATREX 1998.

Procopius' work was highly regarded by historians of the following generation. AGATHIAS, originally from Myrina in Asia Minor, went to Egypt to study law and pursued a career as a successful lawyer and *littérateur* in Constantinople. He wrote a continuation of Procopius' work and completed his campaign histories. His *Historiae* (written in the 570s in the reign of Justin II and possibly continuing into the reign of Tiberius) present an impressively detailed account of military operations and associated events in Italy as the war reached a climax with the intervention of the Franks in 553. His treatment of the *dénouement* of the Roman and Persian war in Lazica of 552–558 is similarly copious and vivid. In classicising style, Agathias focuses on warfare, but does not ignore domestic Roman politics as well as the chief episodes in the internal history of the Laz. Agathias was a bookish man who did not venture far from the Constantinopolitan metropolis, depended upon official records, military dispatches, and political reports. Such were his cardinal sources, so that his history abounds in first-rate material.⁴⁰⁷

It is much harder to evaluate a history of Persian and Roman relations in the reign of Justin II written by THEOPHANES OF BYZANTIUM, a contemporary or nearly so of Agathias, since it is known only through a summary included by the patriarch Photius in his *Bibliotheca*. Its coverage begins with the opening of Roman and Turkish negotiations in 568 and goes down to the end of the Roman-Persian war 577/8, if calculated from 567/8 or 582 if computed from the outbreak of fighting on a large scale in 573. Theophanes' history may well have been part of the classicising tradition of Procopius, and he seems to have duplicated much of the material presented in greater detail by Menander Protector. Persia naturally featured prominently in Theophanes' work, but apart from a few minor details on the Hephthalites, the only useful information provided deals with the Iranian reduction of Yemen.⁴⁰⁸

Official documentary material may be extracted in large quantities from the works of the last two members of the Procopian school of history. MENANDER PROTECTOR, a metropolitan fig-

407. CAMERON 1970.

408. PHOTIUS, p. 76–79; TREADGOLD 2007, p. 290–293.

ure trained as a lawyer and with a position at court, was well placed to use official archives when he composed his history in reign of the emperor Maurice (582–602). He carried Agathias' continuation of Procopius' history down to the year 582, making good use of diplomatic reports and summaries of negotiations. His work, alas, does not survive in full, and we may judge it only on the warrant of the many fragments that have come down to us in the diplomatic volumes of a tenth-century Byzantine historical compendium. Some of these fragments are long and gravid with historical information. Roman and Persian relations are Menander's focus in the build-up to war in the 560s and after the outbreak of fighting in 573.⁴⁰⁹ Menander is a very important source for the history of the fall of the Hephthalites and the rise of the Turks.

Documentary material is likewise an important part of the *Historiae* of THEOPHYLACT SIMOCATTA, the third and last continuator of Procopius. Theophylact was an Egyptian lawyer, as was Agathias, and he held high office in the reign of the emperor Heraclius (610–641). His documentary evidence came through intermediary texts: two of these were laudatory biographies of senior generals whose dispatches had served as primary sources. The objects of these putative encomia were the emperor Heraclius' father (also called Heraclius) who had served in the east in the 580s, and Priscus who had become a chief senatorial ally of the partizans of Heraclius towards the end of reign of Phocas (602–610). Other sources exploited by Theophylact for the Persian part of his history were of a more literary cast — but are nevertheless trustworthy. His chief sources in this connexion were the lost history of John of Epiphaneia who covered the approach to war and its beginning, and very probably a version of Sasanian dynastic history.⁴¹⁰

ŁAZAR P'ARPEC'I must be rated as one of the the finest chroniclers in any language. Two fifth-century Armenian rebellions against Persian rule were his theme. These were in 450–451 and 482–484, the second of which Łazar himself had lived though. He was therefore well acquainted not only with the chief players in Armenian high politics, but also with the role of

409. See the introduction in MENANDER PROTECTOR.

410. WHITBY 1988.

churchmen in bolstering resistance and with the institutions of Persian government and its chief dignitaries. Łazar had access to a wide range of reliable sources, both written and oral, from which he composed a coherent and gripping narrative of events, which was redolent of the atmosphere of the times.⁴¹¹

Łazar's treatment of history is complimented by the chronicle PSEUDO-JOSHUA THE STYLITE, who approached the history of the late fifth and early sixth century from the perspective of northern Syria. The title of the work is misleading, for it contains very little religious or hagiographical material and includes much that was drawn directly or indirectly from official Roman sources, chiefly the detailed accounts of military operations undertaken in 503 and 504. This dispatch-based narrative is supplemented by other material gathered by the anonymous author who was contemporary with the events that he described. The history presented is precise and accurate: far superior to the impressionistic vignettes of Procopius' excursus on past Roman and Persian relations.⁴¹²

The 'universal history' was a literary production characteristic of Late Antiquity after the triumph of Christianity. Such works began at Creation, blended together the biblical and classical accounts of the remote past, and carried the narrative down to the time of writing. A notable example of this genre was written by JOHN MALALAS in the middle of the sixth century. Like Ammianus, he came from Antioch, but his career was spent in the civil administration, first in his home town, and then in Constantinople. This led to access to official documents from which was extracted much of his material on the reigns of Justin I (A.D. 518–527) and Justinian (527–565).⁴¹³

411. THOMSON 1991.

412. TROMBLEY / WATT 2000.

413. JEFFREYS / CROKE / SCOTT 1990; AGUSTA-BOULAROT / BEAUCAMP / BERNARDI / CAIRE 2004–2006.

The fourth of the chronicles cited in this thesis is by far the most important. This is the Armenian history attributed to SEBEOS. The author was a churchman with access to the archives of the Catholicosate at Dvin. He composed a history of Armenia and the menacing world around it from about 570 to the time of writing in the 650s, and an update was added in 661. Husrav II is the principal, malign figure who is made responsible for the destruction of the old world order. There is a solid documentary foundation to this history, and it has a clear chronological framework.⁴¹⁴

Far less value should be ascribed to two of the three Armenian works written well after the events that they narrate. The *History of Vardan and the Armenian War* focuses on the first of the fifth-century Armenian rebellions against Sasanian rule already alluded to above. This work transforms what must have been originally a politically-motivated uprising led by a party of aristocrats into a ferocious inflammation of Christian feeling on the part of the whole Armenian people which terminated in a heroic but doomed battle. The history purports to have been written by EĒIŠE, a contemporary participant, but it has been shown to date from the second half of the sixth century: a time when the sense of Armenian identity had been heightened by external threats.⁴¹⁵ A longer interval separates composition of the *History of Armenia* by MOSES XORENAC'Ī from the last event covered (around 480). Like EĒiše, the putative author, Moses, lived in the middle of the fifth century and was a pupil of Maštoc', creator of the Armenian alphabet. The text has been shown, however, to date from the second half of the eighth century, to be thoroughly mendacious, and to have been written under the patronage of the much-lauded Bagratuni family.⁴¹⁶ The third of these later works, MOSES KAĒANKATWAC'Ī's *History of Caucasian Albania*,⁴¹⁷ was probably composed in the second half of the tenth century. Like Malalas and Moses Xoren-

414. THOMSON / HOWARD-JOHNSTON 1999.

415. THOMSON 1982.

416. THOMSON 1978.

417. The author of this work is also known as Moses Dasxuranc'Ī.

ac'i, Kaṭankatwac'i goes back to the beginning of time, focusing his attention on his home region of Aṭuank'. The historical matter solidifies itself and becomes more useful when the author has reached late antiquity, and its quality peaks in a rich four-part account of seventh-century events: a useful augment to the material offered by Sebeos.⁴¹⁸

The means of verification that I use is to compare notices in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭwāl* to what is found in these and a handfull of other, more minor sources⁴¹⁹ which describe the same events. The result of such comparison may appear to be incoherent trivia or farraginous minutiae, in which the uninitiated see a random and multifarious particularity, and a fanatic beholds the workings of the Deity.⁴²⁰ But it is possible to find order and regularity in small details, and a historian can use these to form a more subtle and nuanced narrative.⁴²¹

Many of the notices which belong, or may be construed as belonging, to the *Ḥudāynāma* tradition may go back to an original Sasanian text. Where I suspect that this is the case, I have tried to distinguish between sober and straightforward sources connected with the Sasanian bureaucracy, which I have called 'official', and sources which aggrandise the king and the nobility (probably connected directly with the royal court), which I call 'propaganda'.⁴²² This is an imperfect distinction, and is probably artificial, but I think that it is a useful one. The historian's subjective judgement may lead him to see sources in a manner peculiar to himself, and others may see the *Ḥudāynāma* tradition differently...

418. See the introduction in DASXURANC'I; HOWARD-JOHNSTON 2010B, p. 103–128.

419. These sources which I have called 'minor' tend to furnish small notices or incidental details, not a general narrative or chronological framework. The use of such sources is always justified and explained in context herein after.

420. Islam, for example, sees the vicissitudes of history as the working out of the divine plan upon the world, in especial the operation of God's wrath upon unbelievers (QURAN 20:128; 22:45–46; 40:21).

421. JACKSON BONNER 2012, p. 56.

422. But I might also have used the word 'publicity'.

I. THE POLITICAL STATE OF IRAN AFTER THE DOWNFALL OF PĒRŌZ

Introduction

The fall of Pērōz in battle against the Hephthalites touched off more than a decade of political chaos. The Iranian army had been annihilated and the king had fallen in battle. Iran lost control over the terrestrial silk trade, was compelled to pay an ignominious tribute to the Hephthalites, and was forced to come to terms with the Armenian rebel movement of 482–484 led by Vardan Mamikonean.⁴²³ Under the reign of Balāš, who succeeded Pērōz, Iran granted the free exercise of the Christian religion, and all Armenian fire temples were demolished. Thus the fifth century ended with a series disturbing blows to the Sasanian state and to the prestige of the monarch and clergy.

In his narrative of the reign of Pērōz, Dīnawarī introduces the figure of Šūḡar. He was a magnate of the house of Qārin, to whom Pērōz supposedly entrusted the kingdom whilst on campaign against the Hephthalites.⁴²⁴ During the reign of Balāš, it was Šūḡar who supposedly led a war of revenge against the Hephthalites after the death of Pērōz. He is said to have chosen Qubād as a sort of puppet king,⁴²⁵ but after five years Qubād had Šūḡar killed by Sābūr Rāzī of the Mihrān family. According to Dīnawarī, Šūḡar had a son called Zarmihr who was subsequently in Qubād's service, helped him escape from prison, and fled with him to the Hephthalites.⁴²⁶

Comparison of Dīnawarī's account of Šūḡar's career to other sources of the *Hudāynāma* shows that he has transmitted a native Iranian tradition about Šūḡar which is, for the most part,

423. JACKSON BONNER 2011, p. 103.

424. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 61: l. 11.

425. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 62: l. 13; p. 66: l. 11.

426. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 67: l. 6.

common to Ṭabarī and Firdawsī. It is possible that this tradition on the Qārins goes back ultimately to a family history — something on which we may only speculate, and this probably fruitlessly. But in any case, comparison to literary sources external to the *Hudāynāma* tradition (chiefly the Armenian history of Łazar P‘arpec‘i and Procopius’ *Wars*) shows that Dīnawarī’s account is a gross deformation of historical reality.

Analysis

The period from Pērōz’ defeat to the middle of Balāš’s reign is best delineated by Armenian historian, Łazar P‘arpec‘i. In the wake of Pērōz’ shocking defeat, says Łazar, a certain Iranian nobleman and general hastened to Iran and summoned a council for the election of a new king. This magnate was called Zarmihr, and he bore the title Hazarawuxt.⁴²⁷ Weakness of the royal house can be inferred from what follows in Łazar’s *History*. Łazar suggests that it was Zarmihr who chose Balāš, and in his account Zarmihr totally eclipses his sovereign.⁴²⁸ Of course we must

427. Ջարմհիր Հազարաւուխտ (ŁAZAR, p. 118: l. 23) is the man’s name and title. He is identified as a Persian commander in Georgia during an outbreak of trouble stirred up by king Vaxt‘ang. Hearing of Pērōz’ death, Zarmihr rushes to the Iranian court: եւ հասեալ ի դուռն ժողովէին առ նմա մնացորդք Արեաց աւագանւոյն (ŁAZAR, p. 157: l. 22).

428. Łazar implies that Zarmihr was at the head of the group of nobles who chose the new king: եւ ժողովեալք ամենեքան առ Վաղարշ՝ սկսանէր խօսել Հազարաւուխտ և յայտնել նմա զխորհեալսն ամենեցուն (ŁAZAR, p. 157: l. 27–29). We can gauge Zarmihr’s strength by the fact that the election is described as unanimous: հաստատէին միարանութեամբ զիրսն ի վերայ Վաղարշու (ŁAZAR, p. 157: l. 25–26), and the persistence of Zarmihr’s power must be inferred.

doubt the authenticity of the speeches put into the mouth of Zarmihr,⁴²⁹ but through them Łazar establishes the power of this Iranian magnate beyond serious doubt.

Łazar also *hints* at a growing rivalry between Zarmihr and another potentate called Mihran Šapuh. Pērōz is said to have given written orders to Zarmihr, who transmitted instructions to Šapuh to go to Georgia and kill, capture, or expell king Vaxt‘ang. On the second day of Balāš’s reign, furthermore, Zarmihr takes the floor in a royal council and urges the necessity of restoring Armenia to the empire, difficult and dangerous task as Mihran Šapuh admits.⁴³⁰ Zarmihr then persuades Balāš to send Mihran Šapuh into Armenia to deal with Vahan’s rebel movement. Łazar’s rhetorical exaggerations of Armenian martial valour aside, we get the impression that these two Iranian magnates were initially in mutual cooperation, perhaps a coalition of power behind the throne. But we seem to have evidence here that Zarmihr was attempting to consolidate his own power by sending away from the court a potential rival whom he deliberately sent on a life-threatening mission.

Łazar’s view is the view from Armenia. It is selective and biased in favour of Christian preoccupations. Furthermore, it is only by virtue of their interest in Armenia that the contest between Zarmihr and Mihran Šapuh has been noticed at all. Nevertheless, Łazar’s *History* is the fullest account of the period in question and we should take it seriously. We should try, furthermore, to read our later Persian and Arabic sources in the light of Łazar’s testimony. This is especially necessary, because the careers of Zarmihr and Mihran Šapuh, whatever their real nature, seem to have left an impression in the *Hudāynāma* tradition.

429. Zarmihr’s exhortation to elect a new king, is followed by a speech in which he condemns Pērōz and gives sententious advice to Balāš (ŁAZAR, p. 157: l. 30 to p. 158: l. 6). On the second day of Balāš’s reign, Zarmihr takes the floor again, first expressing a dim view of Pērōz, and second urging the necessity of returning Armenia to the empire (ŁAZAR, p. 158: l. 11–23). All that Zarmihr says receives Balāš’s obedient approbation.

430. ŁAZAR, p. 158: l. 25 *et seqq.*

So let us return to the *Hudāynāma* tradition and Dīnawarī. All later Persian and Arabic accounts of Sasanian Iran report that the dominant figure of the later fifth and early sixth century Iran was a man whose name is some variation of Dīnawarī's Šūḥar. He is called 'Sūḥrā' by Ṭabarī, and 'Sūfrā' and sometimes 'Sūfrāy' by Firdawsī, and these variations which suggest a common source.⁴³¹ Ṭabarī gives us the man's full lineage which reaches far into the mythical past.⁴³² He was of the noble Qārin house, one of the most powerful families of Arsacid extraction.⁴³³ Ṭabarī and Firdawsī inform us that he was originally from Šīrāz and held the rank of marzbān of Sijistān (which Firdawsī breaks down into Zābulistān, Bust, Ġaznīn, and Kābulistān).⁴³⁴

431. I refer to the first appearance of the man's name (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 62: l. 5; ṬABARĪ, p. 872: l. 17; PĒRŌZ, l. 46):

شوخر؛ سوخرا؛ سوفرا.

432. ṬABARĪ, p. 887: l. 20 to p. 878: l. 3:

سوخرا بن ویسابور ابن زهان بن نرسی بن ویسابور بن قارن بن کردوان بن ابید بن اوبید بن تیروییه بن کردنک بن ناور بن طوس بن نودکا بن منشو بن نودر بن منشهر.

433. NÖLDEKE 1879, p. 127: n. 2.

434. BALĀŠ, l. 25–26:

جهانديده از شهر شیراز بود سپهبد دل و گردن افراز بود

هم او مرزبان بود به زاولستان به بست و به غزنین و کاولستان

ṬABARĪ, p. 873: l. 8–9:

...رجل من اهل فارس يقال له سوخرا من اهل شیراز وکان فیهم عظیمما.

ṬABARĪ, p. 878: l. 3–4:

کان بسجستان رجل من اهل کورة اردشیر خرّة من الاعاجم ذو علم وبأس ویطش يقال له سوخرا.

The full extent of this magnate's power in the wake of Pērōz' death is manifest in Dīnawarī and implied elsewhere. Dīnawarī claims that it was Šūḥar who chose Qubād as king after Pērōz.⁴³⁵ Ṭabarī and Firdawsī's accounts, without saying so explicitly, amount to the same thing, as Sūḥrā or Sūfrā is clearly the power behind the throne in the reign of Balāš and Qubād,⁴³⁶ and this tradition is perhaps the origin of the doubtful claims that Pērōz had left the kingdom in his charge.⁴³⁷

The similarity between Zarmihr and Šūḥar / Sūḥrā / Sūfrā is obvious. This resemblance is so striking that Nöldeke, Christensen, and Bosworth have concluded that Zarmihr and Šūḥar are one and the same man. This identification seems straightforward enough, but matters take a maddening turn: Dīnawarī and Ṭabarī claim that Sūḥrā had a son named Zarmihr (the very name found in Łazar's history) and that it was Zarmihr who rescued Qubād from gaol and accompanied Qubād on his flight to the Hephthalites.⁴³⁸ Dīnawarī and Ṭabarī suggest that both

435. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 62: l. 13:

فجعل شوخر الملك من بعده لاخته قباد بن فيروز .

436. ṬABARĪ, p. 883: ll. 1–3:

فلما عقد التاج لبلاش على رأسه اجتمع اليه العظماء والاشراف فهنّوه ودعا له وسألوه ان يكافئ سوخرا بما كان منه فخصّه واكرمه وحياه .

PĒRŌZ, l. 45–46:

بلاش از بر تخت بنشست شاد که کهتر پس بود با فرّ و داد

یکی پارسی بود نامدار[!] که خواندی ورا سوфра شهریار

The mark of exclamation, which Khaleghi-Motlagh has added, should perhaps be deleted.

437. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 61: l. 11; ṬABARĪ, p. 878: l. 5–7; PĒRŌZ, l. 47.

438. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 67: l. 6–7:

ثم خرج في خمس نفر من ثقاته فيهم زَرْمِهْر ابن شوخر نحو الهياطلة .

ṬABARĪ, p. 883: l. 14:

father and son were succesively in Qubād's service, and this despite Qubād's execution of the father.⁴³⁹ Ṭabarī further suggests that, in gratitude for Zarmihr's assistance, Sūhrā was given high honours, and his son assisted Qubād in his return to the throne after his renunciation of Mazdakism.⁴⁴⁰

What has happened to this character in our sources? Has the *Hudāynāma* tradition divided a single character into two, as Nöldeke seems to have suggested?⁴⁴¹ This is a fair proposal, but it raises more questions that it answers. The conflation of several personages into one is easy to imagine and easy to explain: perhaps they had similar names to begin with; perhaps they did similar things. But the division of one man into two suggests profound confusion at the level of the transmission of the text in which he originally appeared.⁴⁴² Nevertheless, Łazar's account of Zarmihr's career must be allowed to stand as it is: if there is any trouble about who Zarmihr and Šūhar are, it is in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* and other sources of the *Hudāynāma* tradition.

But the sources of the *Hudāynāma* tradition are, to all appearances, not confused at all, as they report unanimously that Sūhrā's son was Zarmihr. A simple solution is to turn Dīnawarī's account on its head and conclude that Šūhar was the son of Zarmihr, not the other way around.

صار الى خاقان...ومعه جماعة يسيرة ممن شايعه على الشخوص متنگرين وفيهم زرمهر بن سوخرا.

ṬABARĪ, p. 886: l. 13–16:

فلما رأى ذلك زرمهر بن سوخرا خرج بمن شايعه من الاشراف باذلا نفسه فقتل من المزداكية ناسا كثيرا واعاد قباد الى ملكه وطرح اخاه جاماسب.

439. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 62: l. 9–20; ṬABARĪ, p. 885: l. 5–16.

440. ṬABARĪ, p. 884: l. 18 to p. 885: l. 1:

فلما صار الى المدائن واستوسق له امر الملك خص سوخرا وفوض اليه امره وشكر له ما كان من خدمة ابنه اياه.

441. NÖLDEKE 1879, p. 140: n. 2.

442. The character in question may have had a bewilderingly long series of names or epithets which somehow became detached from one another, or the text in which he appeared may be based on mangled oral traditions...

We can infer then that the confusion of father and son goes back to the earliest stages of the tradition lying at the bottom of the *Hudāynāma* sources.

Explaining Šūḥar as the son of Zarmihr seems to reconcile the Persian and Arabic sources neatly with the more trustworthy Łazar, but the problems have only begun. The career of a certain high-ranking Persian, whom Procopius calls Seoses, has much in common with the career of Zarmihr in the oriental accounts. Like Dīnawarī's and Ṭabarī's Zarmihr, Seoses rescues Qubād from prison, is rewarded with a unique rank, and is unexpectedly executed in later life.⁴⁴³ Seoses' execution in the 520s⁴⁴⁴ militates against any identification of him with Łazar's Zarmihr, unless we attribute to Zarmihr not only prodigious longevity but also uncommon vigour and influence in extreme old age. Nevertheless, in Dīnawarī and Ṭabarī, the execution of Šūḥar-Sūḥrā is carried out by a certain Šāpūr of Ray, scion of the august Mihrān family, marzbān of Bābil and generalissimo of all Iran — a name which puts us in mind of Łazar's 'Mihran Šapuh'.⁴⁴⁵ The two characters are clearly of the same lineage, as the family name Mihran shows, but they cannot be the same person for the same reason that Zarmihr and Sūḥrā cannot be same person. By ano-

443. ἦν δέ τις τῶν ἐν Πέρσαις λογίμων Σεόσης ὄνομα (PROCOPIUS, I.vi.3). Qubād's rescue and escape is found in PROCOPIUS, I.iv.3–9. After Qubād's return to power, Seoses was elevated to the ranks of 'adastrasdaran salanes', which implies that the holder of it δύνεται...ἐπὶ ἀρχαῖς τε ὁμοῦ καὶ στρατιώταις ἄπασιν ἐφεστῶτα (PROCOPIUS, I.vi.18). His murder, which occurred in 519, was the result of widespread slander and his overbearing arrogance (PROCOPIUS, I.vi.31–33).

444. The execution was, according to Procopius, masterminded by a certain Mebodes who slandered Seoses. Though Christensen is right in dismissing any identification of Mebodes with Sābūr Rāzī, we should accept Procopius' credible testimony that Mebodes led the way in bringing Seoses down. Procopius' account does not, in any case, contradict the consensu of Dīnawarī and Ṭabarī, wherein Qubād connived at, and Sābūr Rāzī executed, the murder of Sūḥrā. For the dating see BÖRM 2007, p. 323: n. 1.

445. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 66: l. 14–20; ṬABARĪ, p. 885: l. 5–16. We should probably link this figure with the Šapuh i Mihran mentioned in Łazar's *History*. It was he whom Zarmihr Hazarawuxt stationed in Georgia: և զՇապուհին ի Միհրաւն տոհմէն անդէն յաշխարհիին Նայոց թոզուլ գնդաւ մարզբաւն (ŁAZAR, p. 146: l. 14–15).

logy to Sūhrā and Zarmihr, it is tempting to infer that the Sābūr of Rāzī and Mihran Šāpuh were father and son one way or the other, but we cannot for lack of evidence.

How can we make sense of the foregoing observations? The picture of a feud takes shape between two noble houses, the Qārīn and the Mihrān, stretching over two generations from the late fifth to the mid sixth century.⁴⁴⁶ There is nothing surprising about the existence such a feud, and it is understandable that the details have been much abridged and horribly garbled. Nevertheless, it seems not to have been the only such contest noticed in the *Hudāynāma* tradition. Firdawsī reports a struggle between the vizier Mahbūd and the chamberlain Zarvān, which issued in the slander and execution of the former in the reign of Ḥusraw I.⁴⁴⁷ This feud has nothing to do with the one involving Sūhrā. It seems rather that Firdawsī has picked up the same story as Procopius' account of the conflict between Mebodes and Zaberganes,⁴⁴⁸ whose names seem to answer to Mahbūd and Zarvān rather well. The placement of the incident in the reign of Ḥusraw and the similarity of names suffices to prove this, and there is no real possibility of confusion with the incident involving Mebodes and Seoses. This state of affairs allows us the observation that Iran's internal problems, which began in the late fifth century with the death of Pērōz, not only worsened but also multiplied well into the sixth.

If we allow the identification of Sūhrā and Seoses to stand, we are left with the picture of a highly influential magnate, son of a similarly powerful father, who bestrode the Iranian scene for several decades. But the picture is hazy, and becomes increasingly opaque as Šūhar's career advances. The consensus of our Arabic and Persian sources suggests, but does not specify, a no-

446. Cf. POURSHARIATI 2008, p. 70–81.

447. NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, I. 1573–1716.

448. PROCOPIUS, I.xxiii.25–29. Zaberganes and Mebodes were not on good terms. Ḥusraw ordered Zaberganes to summon Mebodes. Finding Mebodes marshalling his army, Zaberganes returned to Ḥusraw and insisted that Mebodes was unwilling to come. Ḥusraw was furious and Mebodes was summoned to the palace and put to death.

bleman cut down for arrogating to himself too much power. This was surely part of the reason for his fall, but it must be a gross oversimplification.

If we are right in identifying Šūhar with Procopius' Seoses, we seem to have a much fuller picture of this man's later career and downfall. Procopius claims that Seoses thwarted Qubād's proposed adoption of Ḥusraw by emperor Justin. In a deliberate effort to scupper a peace process and the adoption of Ḥusraw, Seoses brought up the Roman seizure of Lazica, alleging that this territory had been taken from Persia by force.⁴⁴⁹ Thereafter, a certain Mebodes, undoubtedly another noble, begins to slander Seoses, insisting that he had undermined the Iranian position deliberately, and that he had conspired somehow with Hypatius, one of the Roman envoys.⁴⁵⁰ Furthermore, Seoses' new and unheard of rank was irksome to many Persians, and he was said to have conducted himself with a degree of arrognace greater than that of anyone else.⁴⁵¹ But the most alarming charge against Seoses was heresy, which consisted of the worship of newfangled divinities and the burial his dead wife.⁴⁵² Perhaps the charges of heresy and gross arrogance were trumped up in the charged climate of the Mazdakite scare, perhaps as is more likely Seoses was an avowed Mazdakite, but at the very least the picture of Seoses which emerges from Procopius is that of an influential peer of the realm whose political aims were wholly out of step with those of the ruler, and who was brought down by his equals.

Zarmihr must also have been sympathetic to Hephthalite interests, else he would not have supported the rule of Qubād who had spent his boyhood as a hostage at the Hephthalite

449. PROCOPIUS, I.xi.28–30.

450. *Μετὰ δὲ Μεβόδης μὲν τὸν διέβαλλε Καβάδης, ὥς δὲ ἐξεπίτηδες, οὗ οἱ ἐπιτεταγμένον πρὸς τοῦ δεσπότου, τὸν Λαζικῆς λόγον προΐει, τὴν εἰρήνην ἐκκρούων Ὑπατίῳ τε κοινολογησάμενος πρότερον,* and other enemies brought different slanders (PROCOPIUS, I.xi.31).

451. Procopius claims that arrogance was *ξυμφυῆς* in high-ranking Persians, but (he continues) *ἐν...τῷ Σέόσῃ καὶ αὐτοὶ ᾤοντο ὑπερφυῶς εἰς τὰ μάλιστα τὸ πάθος ἀκμάσαι* (PROCOPIUS, I.xi. 33)!

452. *καίνα...δαίμονια σέβειν* was the first charge; *τὴν γυναῖκα θάψαι* the second, and this though *γῆ κρύπτειν ποτὲ τὰ τῶν νεκρῶν σώματα* was forbidden (PROCOPIUS I.xi.35).

court. Seoses (or Šūḥar son of Zarmihr, if my identification be right) must have inherited the cause of his father: Seoses rescued Qubād from prison and fled with him to the Hephthalite court, a move which does not make sense unless he was somehow pro-Hephthalite. We should therefore take seriously Börm's suggestion that the failed adoption of Ḥusraw represents an internal power struggle between a pro-Hephthalite party led by Seoses and a Romanophil faction led by Mebodes.⁴⁵³

But if all this was indeed the case, it is plain that Procopius had only the dimmest understanding of political affairs within Iran — a fact which is not altogether surprising, since any information regarding such a contest would have been carefully controlled and guarded by all parties involved. Moreover, if we allow Procopius' testimony to stand, Seoses (if he really was an exponent of the Hephthalite cause) seems to have been remarkably close to one of the Roman ambassadors, whom he managed to win over somehow. We cannot be sure how Seoses influenced Roman interests,⁴⁵⁴ but those of the Hephthalites, if they were at work here as Börm suggests, are obvious. The Hephthalites would surely have done anything to prevent a Roman and Persian alliance, which, if ever directed against them, would have meant the ruin of their steppe empire.

Procopius places the execution of Seoses in the 520s, probably towards the end of that decade, but the chronology of our other sources is terribly confused. Dīnawarī, Ṭabarī, and Firdawsī declare or imply that Qubād was enthroned as a very young man: perhaps aged fifteen

453. For the proposed adoption, see PROCOPIOUS, I.xi.6. For Börm's theory, see BÖRM 2004, p. 320.

454. Seoses must have succeeded in persuading Hypatius that any alliance between Rome and Persia, which the proposed adoption should bring about, would be disadvantageous for Rome, or at least less advantageous, than maintaining the *status quo*. Perhaps Seoses played on the fears represented in the speech which Procopius put into the mouth of Proclus, who argues that the young Ḥusraw would have inherited the Roman Empire (PROCOPIOUS, I.xi.13–18)? Or did he present some foreknowledge of trouble in the Transcaucasus?

or sixteen as Dīnawarī and Firdawsī have it.⁴⁵⁵ Nevertheless, Dīnawarī's claim that Šūhrā was killed five years into Qubād's reign is implausible, and we should prefer Firdawsī's claim that the murder occurred after twenty three years of rule.⁴⁵⁶ Bearing in mind that Qubād died in 531, having ruled since 488, we can see that he could not have come to power aged fifteen or sixteen. Qubād's age in Dīnawarī and Firdawsī is therefore fifteen or fourteen years too young. Nevertheless, Firdawsī claims that Qubād's reign was forty years long (nearly the right length of forty three years) — an egregious chronological error which the poet made no effort to conceal or reconcile with the alleged age of Qubād at his accession. This suggests deliberate doctoring by the original redactor of the source lying behind Dīnawarī and Firdawsī: Qubād was made fifteen or sixteen years younger than he actually was, perhaps in order to excuse both the tutelage of Šūhar and Qubād's patronage of Mazdakism. Firdawsī's claim that Qubād was sixteen at his accession can be safely ignored, since it is clear that the poet was acquainted, albeit three years out, with a figure approaching the real length of Qubād's reign. We cannot expect exact chronological agreement among our sources, but if we restore the missing fifteen years to Dīnawarī and assume that the source common to him and Firdawsī dated the fall of Šūhar-Sūfrā from the beginning of Qubād's second reign in 501 / 502 — bald conjecture, admittedly, but it seems to explain a good deal — we are much nearer the date given by Procopius. These inferences make good chronologic-

455. DĪNĀWARĪ, p. 66: l. 9–10:

قالوا وكان قباز عند ما افضى اليه الملك حدث السن من ابتاء خمس عشرة سنة.

QUBĀD, l. 23:

جوان بود و سالش سه پنج و یکی ز شاهی ورا بهره بود اندکی.

456. QUBĀD, l. 26–27:

نه موبد بد اورا نه فرمان و رای جهان پر ز داستوری سوفرای
چنین بود تا بیست و سه ساله گشت به جام اندرون باده چون لاله گشت.

al sense of Ṭabarī's placement of Sūhrā's fall 'when most of Qubād's days were passed'⁴⁵⁷ — surely the scholar's own interjection as it occurs in no other source.

Excursus: Qubād's War of 502

Dīnawarī's treatment of this war is remarkable meagre, and *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* adds nothing to the best accounts of this conflict, the *Histories* of Pseudo-Joshua the Stylite and Procopius. This is especially disappointing, as the war of 502 marks a turning point in Roman and Sasanian relations, and greater insight into the Sasanian side of things would have been most welcome. At best, we can say that *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* offers a small glimpse into the domestic Iranian portrayal of the conflict, which seems to have emphasised the payment of tribute and the forced submission of cities.

The two powers had fought constantly since the establishment of Sasanian power in the third century, and two Roman emperors, Valerian and Julian, had died at the hands of the Persians. But in 387 durable peace was established, and the catalyst was the appearance of Altaic nomads on the Eurasian steppe.⁴⁵⁸ The defence of the Caucasus, through which these nomads were liable to migrate, was of mutual benefit. Throughout the fifth century relations between Rome and Persia were undisturbed by warfare, and this despite Yazdgard II's declaration of war in 439. Peace was reaffirmed on the condition that no new forts be built in frontier areas. Iranian affairs in the rest of the fifth century were dominated both by an attempt to bring Armenia under Persian influence, and by efforts to contain the Hephthalite nomads who had recently arrived in Bactria. Both projects failed, and at the beginning of the sixth century Iran returned to a policy of aggressive militarism in the west.

457. ṬABARĪ, p. 885: l. 7–15.

458. HOWARD-JOHNSTON 2008, p. 80.

The war, says Procopius, was supposedly triggered by Anatasius' refusal to pay tribute to Qubād.⁴⁵⁹ But this was simply the occasion, not the cause, of hostilities, and we should not infer that Persia attacked because she needed money.⁴⁶⁰ I have already conjectured that this war was provoked by an anti-Roman, pro-Hephthalite, Mazdakite political faction at the Persian court. That the war was anti-Roman needs no further justification; that it was Mazdakite hinges on the identification of Seoses, the principal 'hawk' on the Persian side, as a votary of that sect; that it was pro-Hephthalite rests on two pieces of circumstantial evidence. First, Persian warfare in the west would have been unthinkable without Hephthalite backing. Such a military operation would have left few troops in eastern Iran, but warfare proceeded irrespective: Qubād must have had good reason to trust that the Hephthalites, though clearly in a position of advantage, would have left his eastern territories alone. We can infer, therefore, some kind of agreement between Persians and Hephthalites on the eve of war. Second, we know that Hephthalites fought on the Persian side. Procopius' story about the attempts of Hephthalite troops on the life of a holy man proves this, as does his account of the eight hundred Hephthalites encountered by Roman generals Patricius and Areobindus.⁴⁶¹ We cannot, of course, be sure how many Hephthalites there were in total: Turan's contribution may have been a token one. But we might infer that the Hephthalite contribution was calculated in some measure to make up for the lack of manpower after Pērōz' ignominious defeat. Hephthalite high command, in any case, would naturally have wanted to supervise any major military undertaking of a tributary state.

What did the Hephthalites and their partners at the Iranian court stand to gain from conflict with Rome? Many Persians, whether pro-Hephthalite or otherwise, must have thought mainly of vindicating Iranian honour after Pērōz' downfall — and it had always been easier to win against Rome than in the east. But the Hephthalite court must also have been looking to

459. PROCOPIUS I.vii.1-7.

460. GREATREX 1998, p. 90.

461. PROCOPIUS, I.vii.8-11; I.viii.13.

their own survival. Iran, they must have known, would not remain tributary for ever: tribute money, and more importantly public opinion, would eventually run dry. The belligerency of Pērōz, who had attacked the Hephthalites at least twice without success, was not forgotten, and the Hephthalites had more pressing problems to the north. Any long-term diversion of Iranian foreign policy away from Central Asia would allow the Hephthalites to deal with an increasingly unstable hinterland — increasingly unstable because of the disintegrating Rouran khaganate and the rise of Turkish power...

In some ways the war was a great success. Tribute was extracted from New Rome, parts of Armenia were annexed to Iran, and Theodosiopolis and Amida were taken.⁴⁶² Unsurprisingly, Dīnawarī and the *Hudāynāma* tradition emphasise the forced submission of cities, though the full details are missing. Dīnawarī mistakenly includes, besides Amida, Martyropolis which was never actually captured,⁴⁶³ and Ṭabarī lists only Amida.⁴⁶⁴ Both sources emphasise the taking of many prisoners from Amida, and Qubād's construction of a new city for them.⁴⁶⁵ This, combined with a reunification of many of Qubād's previously refractory subjects, must have proven a great boost to Iranian prestige, and the Romans, at the beginning of the war at least, had been thoroughly worsted. The bellicose Mazdakite party must have felt vindicated also. But this war was the first in a series of increasingly violent and destructive conflicts. Warfare was to continue, albeit with some important gaps, throughout the sixth century, and the building of forts — the ancient equivalent of an arms race — began again in the Near East.⁴⁶⁶ The Hephthalites, if my surmise be

462. See GREATREX 1998, p. 78–118 for a discussion of the facts.

463. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 68.

464. ṬABARĪ, p. 887: l. 19.

465. The city has four names: Abarqubād (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 68: l. 14); Rām Qubād or Barqubād (ṬABARĪ, p. 887: l. 20 to p. 888: l. 1). Procopius does not mention the deportations and new city.

466. Most notably, the Roman construction of the fortress at Dara (GREATREX 1998, p. 117).

right, had succeeded in turning Iranian attention westward, and it was only towards the end of the sixth century, when Turkish power crossed the Jaxartes river, that Iran looked east again.

Remarks

The Qārīn-Mihrān family feud delineated above has been noticed and discussed by Pourshariati.⁴⁶⁷ But, although she is right in observing that this inter-generational struggle had become proverbial throughout Iran,⁴⁶⁸ she draws no real conclusions about it. To be fair to Pourshariati, there may be no great conclusions to draw as far as the history of Iran is concerned: perhaps all we can do is to note that dynastic troubles and strife within the nobility were touched off by the fall of Pērōz and the annihilation of the Iranian military. Dīnawarī has picked up a few small, garbled details of these troubles. We may wish to remark, however, that this portrait of feuding noble houses of Parthian origin must make nonsense of Pourshariati's implication that such families constituted a 'confederacy'.

Perhaps the most serious implications of the foregoing analysis are on the level of historiography. The late fifth and early sixth century is one of the few periods of Sasanian history, for which we can test the reliability of sources of the *Hudāynāma* tradition by consulting foreign literary sources which evince an interest in the politics of the Iranian court. Comparison with the histories of Łazar and Procopius shows that a seemingly straightforward series of events in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* is based on sources that had been badly deformed at an early stage of transmission. For the period in question (A.D. 484–502), *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* (and for that matter all of the *Hudāynāma* tradition) does not inspire confidence and we should be wary of using it without the corrective of foreign sources. In fact, a judicious historian may prefer not to use it at all.

467. POURSHARIATI 2008, p. 74–81.

468. ṬABARĪ, p. 885.

II. MAZDAKISM

Introduction

The Mazdakite heresy has attracted more attention than any other aspect of Sasanian history. The very notion of a religious leader who subverted the Iranian class-system and championed the cause of the poor and disadvantaged was bound to make many people take notice. Furthermore, the Mazdakite sect has frequently been described as ‘communist’, and scholars (Klíma and Pigulevskaja for instance) who languished on the wrong side of the iron curtain were understandably obsessed by it.⁴⁶⁹ But anachronistic analogies — especially those involving modern ideologies retrojected into the deep past — are often more bewildering than helpful, and we should avoid them. I should like to begin afresh by attempting to answer one, simple question: what do we really know about Mazdakism and the problems it caused?

The answer is perhaps disappointing. The Persian and Arabic consensus of a heresy arising from Qubād, which involved holding women and property in common, receives some corroboration from older and nearly contemporary sources, but the picture is very different from that in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* and the *Hudāynāma* tradition. Pseudo-Joshua is the first to notice Qubād's heresy: he claims that Qubād *reestablished* 'an abominable magian sect', called 'the Zarāduštaqān', which advocated wife-sharing and communal intercourse.⁴⁷⁰ Unrest among mountain-dwelling and Arab tribes combined with a noble plot to kill him forced Qubād to flee immediately to the

469. Klíma went out of his way to see in Mazdakism a kind of Marxist revolution (KLÍMA 1957, p. 196; 297). Pigulevskaja seems to have argued that the Mazdakite 'revolt' was the result of a break-up of land-holding communes under pressure from feudalising landlords (PIGULEVSKAJA 1963, p. 105; 209).

470. The reference is to Anastasius' refusal to pay tribute (PSEUDO-JOSHUA, p. 16: 19–22):

10. **התאמה:** המועדון יתאם את פעילותו עם המועדון המקומי, ויבצע את כל הפעולות הנדרשות להגשמת מטרותיו.

On the high worth of this text as an historical source for the period A.D. 494–506, see TROMBLEY / WATT 2000, p. xxx–xxxvii.

ferent epochs, none of which she has subjected to serious scrutiny. This leads her to infer potential links between Mazdakite wife-sharing and certain practices of the Massagetae as expounded in one of Herodotus' ethnographic excursions, whilst at the same time pleading for the survival of allegedly Mazdakite vegetarianism and pacifism in the so-called Ḥurramī sect of the twelfth century.⁴⁷⁷ We need to restrict ourselves, as best we can, to sources *contemporary* with the events in question if we wish to determine the nature of Mazdakism.

So far the best attempt at making sense of the troubles outlined above is that of Wiesehöfer. There were, he says, two major crackdowns on Mazdakism. The first of these liquidated the Mazdakite leadership in 528–529, and the second crushed the popular movement somewhat later.⁴⁷⁸ This explains the silence of Christian authors in the reign of Qubād: there was simply nothing to report as far as disruptive upheavals were concerned. Procopius, furthermore, seems to offer evidence of the 528–529 purge in his account of the fall of Seoses.⁴⁷⁹ But Wiesehöfer's position allows us to overcome only part of the problem: we are left, on the one hand, with an absence of incontrovertible evidence for the existence of Mazdak; and on the other, we may still fairly doubt the severity of the damage allegedly wrought by the 'popular movement'. The existence of Mazdak must, I think, always remain doubtful, but it is not a serious problem. More alarming is the dubious evidence for 'popular' uprising, the social damage wrought by it, and its subsequent purge.

Pseudo-Joshua and Ṭabarī, who is alone in the *Ḥudāynāma* tradition in this connexion, trace Qubād's heresy to common source. Pseudo-Joshua calls the original sect the 'Zarāduštaqān', and Ṭabarī grounds the heresy in a certain Zarādušt son of Ḥurrakān.⁴⁸⁰ A common tradition is clearly responsible for this seemingly unimportant detail. If Mazdak were truly the

477. CRONE 1991, p. 25–26.

478. WIESEHÖFER 2009, p. 403–404.

479. PROCOPIUS, I.xi.32–37; WIESEHÖFER 2009, p. 402.

480. ṬABARĪ, p. 893: l. 8.

chief exponent of Zarādušt's heresy in Qubād's reign, it is alarming that Pseudo-Joshua was not aware of his existence. Even more shocking is Mazdak's absence from Procopius, who is otherwise interested in goings-on at the Persian court, and who reports many a seemingly trivial anecdote. It will be objected, of course, that Procopius was not interested in religion (at least not as much as other things) and therefore, even if he had heard of Mazdak, he would not have thought it important to write about him and his belief-system. Such an objection, however, ignores the fact that Procopius viewed Qubād's heresy simply as a matter of law: he could easily have inserted a brief digression on Mazdak as exponent of social and legal innovation, if he had wanted to do so.⁴⁸¹

As for Agathias, questions about the authenticity of his purported extract from the Persian royal annals, and whether or not those annals mentioned Mazdak, are irrelevant. Agathias was writing well towards the end of the sixth century — ample time for him to have heard of Mazdak had rumours of him been floating around the Levant, and how could reports have failed to circulate though a porous Iranian and Roman frontier if the calamities associated with Mazdak and his heresy were as bad as later sources say? Agathias, who relishes correcting Procopius, would surely not have failed to fill in an embarrassing gap in his predecessor's work, had he known the missing information. Finally, Malalas and Theophanes describe two especially violent crackdowns on a group who should probably be identified as Mazdakites,⁴⁸² but both sources call the heretics 'manichaeans', and neither mentions the name of Mazdak.

In my opinion, Mazdak's role in the spread of Qubād's heresy has been greatly exaggerated. But I do not go as far as Gaube, who drew on the same data rehearsed above, and argued that Mazdak never existed, but was rather invented as a scapegoat to occlude Qubād's chief role

481. CAMERON 1969–1970, p. 154–159. It is connexion it is interesting to note that Pseudo-Joshua may provide slim evidence that Mazdakism did indeed rest on some sort of legal innovation. See note 442 above.

482. MALALAS, XVIII.30; THEOPHANES, p. 259.

in the propagation of heresy.⁴⁸³ Could the propagation of heresy be convincingly blamed on a man who never existed? In any case, we seem forced to choose between the silence of contemporary Christian historians and the loquacity of the more remote *Hudāynāma* tradition.

Precisely what was taking place in Iran in the late fifth and early sixth century may never be known. But surely we can explain the silence of contemporary witnesses if we assume that Mazdakism was not as serious or destructive as later sources suggest. This is not to say that Mazdakites did not aim to reform the social order in some way, but rather that their efforts were neither successful nor particularly disruptive.

This brings us to the ‘popular movement’. There was no serious, general unrest in Iran connected with Mazdakism. Yes, the *Hudāynāma* sources — especially Ṭabarī and Firdawsī — say that there was, and it is generally believed that this unrest aimed at undercutting the power of the nobility and overthrowing the Sasanian class system, but we must reject these claims.⁴⁸⁴ First, the sources, eager to portray Ḥusraw I as the saviour of Iran, are obviously tendentious, and liable to exaggerate the severity and extent of the problem which he is supposed to have solved. Second, Qubād’s war with the Romans in 502 simply could not have taken place if Iran was in such a ‘great calamity’ as Ṭabarī suggests.⁴⁸⁵ Had the nobles been totally alienated by the heretic king, and had the class system disintegrated at Qubād’s behest, noone would have tolerated his rule a second time, much less gone to war for him.⁴⁸⁶ The same surely goes for the war of 518–527. Third, whatever Ḥusraw I’s reforms to do with orphans and women were meant to achieve, they cannot have been addressing a ruined or confused class-system. Ṭabarī — our only source for

483. GAUBE 1982, p. 116–180.

484. *Contra* CRONE 1991, p. 30.

485. ṬABARĪ, p. 893: l. 18:

شمل الناس بلاء عظيم.

For the chaos and anarchy attributed to the Mazdakites, see WIESEHÖFER 2009, p. 395–397.

486. WIESEHÖFER 2009, p. 401–402.

this development — reports that Ḥusraw took into his care ‘noble children whose guardians had died’, and that he married ‘women from noble houses’ to husbands ‘equal to them’.⁴⁸⁷ This presupposes that the nobility had not been eradicated but rather expanded, and if noble children lingered and men were found who were *equal* to noble women, we must assume that Ḥusraw’s task was simply to integrate these people into a structure which *still existed*. Ḥusraw, furthermore, seems to have achieved this relatively simply, without any of the trouble suggested by Crone.⁴⁸⁸ Fourth, the evidence of seals proves not only that the class system was still intact at the time of the Arab conquest of Iran, but also that the same noble houses held the same positions which they had always done both before and after Mazdakism is supposed to have disrupted Iranian society.⁴⁸⁹

In light of the foregoing discussion, we may well ask ourselves, what was the real nature of the Mazdakite movement? Discussion and analysis of what Mazdak actually preached, or what his eponymous sectaries stood for spiritually, may well be interesting in some way,⁴⁹⁰ but a discussion of Mazdakite doctrine adds little to our knowledge of Sasanian political history. Instead we should explore Wiesehöfer’s thesis — grounded on the work of Börm — whereby Mazdakism was bound up with a pro-Hephthalite, anti-Roman party, led initially by Zarmihr, which put Qubād on the throne.⁴⁹¹ The faction that overthrew Qubād after ten years of rule, and enthroned Jāmāsp, might be construed as anti-Hephthalite, pro-Roman, and orthodox Zoroastrian. But the pacific, orthodox party was not long victorious: Qubād’s return to power in 501–502, orchestrated by Seoses (or Sūhrā if my identification be right) and the Hephthalites, began with a fierce

487. ṬABARĪ, p. 897: l. 11–13.

488. CRONE 1991, p. 25.

489. GYSELEN 2008, p. 109.

490. The latest discussion of the doctrines of the sect is WIESEHÖFER 2009, p. 397–400.

491. WIESEHÖFER 2008, pp. 400–406.

and unexpected war with New Rome.⁴⁹² The timing of this war (it is coincident with Qubād's return to power), and its target (New Rome) allow us the startling inference that it was planned and ordered by the Hephthalites and the party sympathetic to them at the Persian court.

Precisely what all this had to do with Mazdakism is not altogether clear. We can be fairly confident only that the pro-Hephthalite, anti-Roman cause was championed by persons who also happened to be Mazdakites. But do we need to explain this link in any great detail? If some reason must be found, we can say that a portion of Iranian society recognised a need for drastic reform, and radical ideas pertaining to foreign policy, the social order, and religion coalesced into a 'hawkish' religious ideology. There is no reason to doubt that Mazdakism advocated wife-sharing and holding goods in common, but it is impossible to say how these ideas advanced Mazdakite political and military goals. Mazdakism should not be thought of as a sort of sixth-century hippie movement, but should rather take on the lineaments of American neo-conservatism.⁴⁹³ Some of these ideas, such as Mazdakism, may well have been knocking around the Iranian scene for some time. But it was in the last decades of the fifth century — when the Iranian state had suffered the massive shocks of military defeat in the east and ideological retreat by coming to terms with the Armenian rebel movement in the west — that those radical ideas began to come together. Mazdak, whatever his true identity or role, must have been but one of many real or would-be reformers.⁴⁹⁴

492. For the outbreak of this war see GREATREX 1998, p. 76–78.

493. *Contra* CRONE 1991, p. 26.

494. I extrapolate from Wieschöfer: 'Just how receptive these times were for religious-ethical renewal can be seen in the appearance of other new religious groups during the same time as well, such as the Gnostic Borborites under Pērōz, the Canteans and Dosteans under Pērōz and Walakhsh' (WIESEHÖFER 2009, p. 394–395).

Analysis

What does *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* contribute to our understanding of Mazdakism? Dīnawarī's account of Ḥusraw's reign proper begins with the killing of the heresiarch Mazdak. The source from which Dīnawarī derived his information must have shown clearly that Mazdak was alive in the reign of Ḥusraw I, when (says Dīnawarī) he was hunted down and killed. By comparison Ṭabarī's account is ambiguous, for he says only that 'Mazdakite chiefs' were beheaded in Ḥusraw's reign and makes no mention of the heresiarch himself.⁴⁹⁵ Dīnawarī's claim may be corroborated by the testimony of Malalas and Theophanes if we assume that their references to Manichaeans really mean Mazdakites.

Christensen observed that, among the many available narratives of Mazdak's demise, Dīnawarī's account is closest to what he calls the 'Pahlavi' tradition.⁴⁹⁶ This bears some rehashing, because it is not entirely clear what this means. What Christensen was probably driving at is this: Dīnawarī's placement of the death of Mazdak seems to be consistent with that of the *Bundahišn*. Here is the relevant extract from that text:⁴⁹⁷

During the reign of Kawād, Mazdak, son of Bāmdād, appeared and laid down the law of Mazdakism. Kawād was deceived and led astray. He ordered that wife, children, and property be held in common and be shared. He discontinued the Mazdayasnian Tradition until the blessed Husrōy (Ḥusraw), son of Kawād, came of age, killed Mazdak, re-established the Mazdayasnian Tradition, and pushed back the Khiyonians (Chionites), who were making incursions into Iran, closed the passes and made Iran free from fear.

Al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl has preserved the 'official' version of Mazdak's demise — in other words the version put about by Ḥusraw's regime itself. Both passages in the *Bundahišn* and *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*

495. ṬABARĪ, p. 897: l. 1–2.

496. CHRISTENSEN 1925, p. 43.

497. BUNDAHIŠN, XXXIII.19. The quotation is modified from Skjærvø's modern translation of the passage in question (ZOROASTRIANISM, p. 121).

may be too short to allow us to determine what the official story of Mazdak's demise was, apart from the fact that he was killed immediately after Ḥusraw came to the throne.

As tempting as it is, we cannot infer that Dīnawarī lifted his account from the *Bundahišn* itself, though it is conceivable that he had read it, or heard about it, at some point in his life — especially since his family had converted only recently from Zoroastrianism. The main reason for this is that there is the discrepancy in Mazdak's second name. The *Bundahišn* gives Mazdak the surname Bāmdād, but Dīnawarī calls him Mazdak son of Māzayyār.⁴⁹⁸ Māzayyār may be the same as what is spelt defectively as *m.d.r.y.h.* in Ṭabarī's *Annals* and also used as an epithet of Mazdak.⁴⁹⁹ Christensen and the Altheim-Stiehl duo identified *m.d.r.y.h.* respectively as Māḍarāyā in Iraq and Murgāb in eastern Iran,⁵⁰⁰ and concluded that Mazdak originated in one of these places. But if Māzayyār is a toponym, how did Dīnawarī come to construe it as the name of Mazdak's father? If 'Māzayyār' can be explained as a graphical corruption of 'Bāmdād' (as is far from unlikely), we may be able to allay some of our doubts.⁵⁰¹

Dīnawarī has transmitted the orthodox party-line concerning Mazdakism, and other sources of the *Hudāynāma* tradition have not. This must make us think of Nöldeke's efforts to discover an official Sasanian history within later Arabic and Persian histories. For here, we are clearly at the main nerve of Ḥusraw's propaganda machine. But this astonishing fact can do nothing to boost our confidence in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*, for we cannot determine whether or not

498. DĪNĀWARĪ, p. 69: l. 8:

مزدك بن مازيار .

Cf. JACKSON BONNER 2011, p. 31, where I foolishly neglected to reference Dīnawarī's text aright.

499. ṬABARĪ, p. 893; Cf. CRONE 1991, p. 25.

500. CHRISTENSEN 1925, p. 100; ALTHEIM / STIEHL 1954, p. 200.

501. Such a corruption may reflect the sort of problems within the *Hudāynāma* tradition to which Mūsā Ibn Kisrāwī is said to have referred (ḤAMZA, p. 6–7).

Mazdak ever existed, nor does the influence of his supposed sectaries seem to have been especially destructive.

Remarks

That Ḥusraw's rise to the throne and consolidation of power was attended with purges and massacres is clear, as we have seen, in the testimonies of Malalas, Theophanes, and Procopius. That a quasi-communist heresiarch was the special object of Ḥusraw's wrath is by no means unlikely — any authoritarian regime needs a scapegoat — but in this connexion in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* we are dealing with Sasanian propaganda, not with dispassionate historiography. This means that we cannot use *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* to reconstruct the history of Mazdakism. We can use it only to gauge the Ḥusraw regime's attitude to aberrant religious and political culture which grew up during the reign of Qubād.

III. THE REFORMS OF 𐬵𐬀𐬎𐬎 I

Introduction

No general treatment of Sasanian history would be complete without a discussion of the reforms of 𐬵𐬀𐬎𐬎 I. 𐬵𐬀𐬎𐬎' s reforms have been considered a high point in his reign, when Iran recovered from the convulsions of the Mazdakite uprising, and when the monarchy became more centralised than ever before. The Iranian state, it has been argued, also abandoned payment of taxes in kind for payment in specie, and established for the first time in its history a standing army.⁵⁰² Such claims are all doubtful, albeit to varying degrees, for almost nothing is known about the state of Iranian finances and military affairs *before* the reform was executed. In fact the only discussion of the previous state of things available to us is embedded in treatments of 𐬵𐬀𐬎𐬎' s reforms, and this makes inferences very difficult. Discussion of the tax reform, for instance, does not allow us to decide whether a market or a planned economy prevailed in Iran, nor do we read of anything but a land tax and a poll tax. But there must have been others: customs duties, for instance, surely existed. The life of the court, with its banquets, hunts, and other expensive diversions, must have required a great deal of money, but our sources do not discuss this. They speak only of the importance of funding the military.

Despite the deficiencies of all sources of the *Hudāynāma* tradition, it is easy to make too much of 𐬵𐬀𐬎𐬎' s innovations, and the financial reforms have received more attention, it seems, than any other aspect of his reign apart from the subdual of the Mazdakites. This is chiefly because the revised taxation system was adopted by the caliphate, because it bears some superficial similarity to the financial innovations of Diocletian, as expounded by Altheim and Stiehl, and because it is reminiscent of certain developments in Syria in the fifth century.⁵⁰³ Nevertheless, the

502. See, for instance, RUBIN 2000, p. 655.

503. On the Sasanian tax system and the Caliphate, see Morony 1982; for comparison between it and Diocletian' s *indictio* and *jugatio* see ALTHEIM / STIEHL 1957, p. 41 — their ingenuity has not attracted many adherents (*Cf.* HOWARD-JOHNSTON 1995, p. 215 with note 127); for

importance of the tax reform is usually exaggerated,⁵⁰⁴ and this study makes no attempt to plead for its importance.

Analysis of Ḥusraw's innovations is made more difficult by the absence of foreign sources. The contemporary testimonies of Procopius and Agathias do not mention any project of reform. We have, therefore, no external controls on what the Persian and Arabic sources say. Ṭabarī's account tends to be the foundation of modern treatments of Ḥusraw's reforms,⁵⁰⁵ but Rubin has successfully demonstrated the importance and utility of other sources, chief amongst which he ranks the *Šāhnāma*.⁵⁰⁶

Ṭabarī's account of Ḥusraw I's reign is presented in two distinct narratives which cover roughly the same topics. It is strange that only Ṭabarī's second narrative mentions those innovations.⁵⁰⁷ This was a problem for Nöldeke: the assumed superiority of Ṭabarī's first narrative cannot be squared with its omission of Ḥusraw's reforms — an omission paralleled, incidentally, by two other authors within the *Ḥudāynāma* tradition: Eutychius and Ibn Qutayba.⁵⁰⁸ However we choose to explain this — whether by positing two different recensions of Ibn Muqaffā's *Ḥudāyn-*

developments in Syria, see GARIBOLDI 2006, p. 195.

504. Perhaps the wildest exaggeration is that of Prof. Crone, who makes the reform the *cause*, and not the result, of the Mazdakite uprising (CRONE 1991, p. 34). But we should prefer the sounder judgement of Howard-Johnston: 'The reforms should...be seen as an important episode in the domestic history of the Sasanian empire, but not as entailing a fundamental restructuring of the fiscal or governmental system' (HOWARD-JOHNSTON 1995, p. 215).

505. HOWARD-JOHNSTON 1995, p. 234.

506. RUBIN 1995, *passim*.

507. Ṭabarī's first narrative, though, together with Eutychius and Ibn Qutayba, who also omit Ḥusraw's reforms (IBN QUTAYBA; EUTYCHIUS), has been traditionally linked to Ibn Muqaffā's *Ḥudāynāma*. This omission led to Rubin's unprovable conjecture that Ṭabarī's first narrative (and the sources related to it) were founded on 'an epitomized version' of Ibn Muqaffā's work (RUBIN 1995, p. 254; p. 265).

508. IBN QUTAYBA; EUTYCHIUS.

āma, or by insisting that all accounts of Ḥusraw's reforms, apart from the *Sīra*, are grounded in the forgery which Grignaschi calls 'Pseudo Ibn Muqaffa',⁵⁰⁹ or by some other more realistic theory — the general congruence of Dīnawarī and the *Šāhnāma* suggests that the omission from Ṭabarī's first narrative is probably insignificant as far as the general picture of the reform is concerned.⁵¹⁰

509. GRIGNASCHI 1971, p. 119.

510. Nevertheless, the important question must be asked: in what source *did* the discussion of Ḥusraw's reforms originate? Our sources' synoptic view inspires confidence in the quality of the data, and suggests a common origin. Rubin found this congruence all the more impressive, because he believed that the accounts in question were probably *not* grounded in the same material (RUBIN 1995, p. 254; p. 254–266). But this seems to be exactly what our sources do not imply: the differences among Dīnawarī, Ṭabarī, and Firdawsī, are not really significant, as we shall see, and can be explained by divergent interpretations of the same source and by compression of its data by Dīnawarī and Firdawsī. Further clues come from the common silence of Ṭabarī's first narrative, Eutychius, and Ibn Qutayba. Deliberate exclusion of the reforms seems unlikely, especially since Ṭabarī's second narrative includes them, and we might rather infer that treatment of the tax reform originated outside the *Ḥudāynāma* tradition. This would explain why the discussion of the reforms in Ṭabarī, Dīnawarī and the *Šāhnāma* is so different from the rest of the text surrounding it: it is the only financial element within the entire *Ḥudāynāma* tradition, and the level of detail is not congruous with the rest of Ṭabarī, Dīnawarī, and Firdawsī. Might the tax reform, perhaps together with a discussion of Ḥusraw's quadripartition of the empire, have originated in the original, longer redaction of the *Sīra*? If there is an official source behind this text, as seems likely, it is hard to believe that these reforms were not included in it.

One noteworthy similarity between Ṭabarī's narrative of the reforms and the *Sīra* can be adduced to build the case for the conjecture advanced above. The *Sīra*'s frequent use of direct speech and the first person has already been noted as a distinctive feature of that text. Ṭabarī who usually couches his narrative in the third person, begins his discussion of the reform with uncharacteristic direct speech by Ḥusraw (ṬABARĪ, p. 960: l. 18). Furthermore, the reasons for executing the reforms, given in the same speech, invoke 'our frontiers', 'our border', and ensuring that 'we have money stored up in our treasuries', and so forth (ṬABARĪ, p. 961: l. 1–4). The presentation and style of this speech seem out of step with the rest of Ṭabarī, but they are consistent with the *Sīra*. The speech and the details of the tax reform must have come from the same text, which, as I suggest, was the original, longer *Sīra*: Ṭabarī, or perhaps his source, condensed the details but left the speech untouched. Accordingly, we must assume either that Dīnawarī did not use the original *Sīra*, or that he reworked it beyond recognition.

Given the state of the evidence, the link between the *Sīra* and Ṭabarī's treatment of Ḥus-

For the most part, Dīnawarī's passages on these reforms leave much to be desired: his discussion of the poll and land taxes differs only a little from that of Ṭabarī, he does not mention Ḥusraw's crackdown on corruption, which is treated in detail in the *Sīrat Ānūšīrwān*, nor does he discuss the introduction of nomads into the Iranian army.⁵¹¹ Nevertheless, we cannot pass over Dīnawarī's notices without comment.

The Poll and Land Taxes

Dīnawarī notes that the poll tax, called the *jizya*, was levied on four classes, and the nobility, marzbāns, knights, scribes, and any one in the service of the king were exempted: no one, he continues, was compelled to pay if he had not attained twenty years, or if he had passed fifty.⁵¹² Ṭabarī includes those details, and adds that this tax had previously been a fixed sum,⁵¹³ and that the new tax was set at twelve, eight, six, and four dirhams, in accordance with status.⁵¹⁴ Though this tax may well have been fair, as it was probably proportional to wealth, its payment amount-

raw's reforms seems as good as any other possible inference, but it is impossible to prove. Nor is it easy to explain why the full *Sīra* is nowhere attested. But further speculation may be fruitful in any case: if the earlier half of the *Sīra* was already reflected in the source that underlies all accounts of the tax reform, this might explain why Ibn Miskawayh excerpted only the later portions, which dealt not with the initial implementation of the reforms, but with the curbing of abuse. In any case, this suggestion is at least more plausible than Grignaschi's claim that *all* accounts of Ḥusraw's reforms — save that of the *Sīra* — are forgeries.

511. JACKSON BONNER 2011, p. 71–88.

512. First the capitation or poll tax, as this is the simplest element of the fiscal reform. There is only the slightest hint of this tax in the *Sīra* (SĪRAT ĀNŪŠĪRWĀN, p. 20), and the *Šāhnāma* only mentions it in passing without comment or emphasis (NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 87). Dīnawarī and Ṭabarī both mention it, but the latter's discussion is fuller (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 73: 2–5; ṬABARĪ, p. 963: l. 9–14).

513. ṬABARĪ, p. 960: l. 10:

شيأ معلوما

514. ṬABARĪ, p. 963: l. 11–12:

ted to an acknowledgement of inferiority, and this new method of taxation was probably meant to reinforce the Iranian class system, which the Mazdakite disorders had disturbed but not destroyed.⁵¹⁵

اثني عشر درهما وثمانية وستة واربعة كقدر اكثر الرجل واقلاله.

515. GARIBOLDI 2006, p.162. The Iranian noble houses were by no means eradicated by the Mazdakite upheaval. Sasanian seals show that ‘the great families continued to play a predominant role during the late Sasanian period, one which they were still playing when the Arabs arrived’, etc. (GYSELEN 2008, p. 109). Some of Ḥusraw’s reforms point to the same thing. Ḥusraw resolved to take into his own care ‘children whose wards had died’ (عِيَال ذَوِي الْحِسَاب الَّذِينَ مَاتَ) (TABARĪ, p. 897, l. 11–12). Ṭabarī also claims that women of noble houses (مِنْ بَيْوَاتِ الْأَشْرَافِ) were married to husbands (أَكْأَهْنَ) ‘equal to themselves’ (TABARĪ, p. 897, l. 13.). If noble children lingered, and men were found equal in status to noble women, we must believe that the class system, though perhaps disrupted, was not obliterated.

Apart from objections raised by Grignaschi,⁵¹⁶ the details of the land tax are not disputed, and Dīnawarī, Ṭabarī, and Firdawsī offer basically the same description.⁵¹⁷ Taxes which had formerly been paid in kind, were to be paid in money. Each *jarīb* of land planted with trefoil and clover was taxed at seven dirhams, every four Persian date palms per *jarīb* were taxed at one dirham, and the same amount was levied on every six foreign date palms, and on every six olive trees, per *jarīb*. Dīnawarī adds the important point that taxation also varied with the degree of cultivation and proximity to cities — his only contribution to our knowledge of Ḥusraw's reforms. The *reasons* for this reform are less clear, and require further discussion.

Before addressing ourselves to questions regarding the purpose of the reforms, let us eliminate what they were probably *not* meant to achieve. First, Ḥusraw's innovations seem to have

516. The synoptic view of Ṭabarī, Dīnawarī, and the *Šāhnāma* appears to be challenged by the *Sīra*. Grignaschi believed that this text's portrait of Ḥusraw's fiscal reform contradicted that of the Arabic historians and Firdawsī. His conclusion is grounded in an analysis of the terminology in the *Sīra*: the new land tax is called *muqāṭa'a*, which implies a fixed rate tax on land, irrespective of what is grown on it (GRIGNASCHI 1971, p. 97). The word *muqāṭa'a*, however, is paired with *ta'dīl*, and the phrase *al-ta'dīl wa 'l-muqāṭa'a* (التعديل والمقاطعة): see Grignaschi's transcription of the relevant parts of the *Sīra* in Appendix A in GRIGNASCHI 1971, p. 132), as Grignaschi points out, admits of two meanings. One possible construal is 'to apportion the taxes with justice and establish a fixed levy' ('ripartire con giustizia i tributi e stabilire un canone fisso' (GRIGNASCHI 1971, p. 95)); another is 'to determine the taxes and establish a fixed levy' ('determinare i tributi e stabilire un canone fisso' (GRIGNASCHI 1971, p. 96). There may be no reason to assume that this Arabic phrase implies anything specific (RUBIN 1995, p. 267), but while Grignaschi rightly admits that the first construal is compatible with Ṭabarī, Dīnawarī and Firdawsī, he nevertheless rejects it, on the grounds that the *Hudāynāma* tradition was corrupted by learned Persians of the *šū'ūbiyya* movement ('i dotti persiani della šū'ūbiya') (GRIGNASCHI 1971, p. 119). Grignaschi's dismissal of the *Hudāynāma* tradition quite obviously begs the question, as Rubin points out, but it also does nothing to boost the credibility of the *Sīra*. As Rubin suggests, *al-ta'dīl wa 'l-muqāṭa'a* is probably a rendering of a difficult Pahlavi term (RUBIN 1995, p. 278), and its meaning does indeed require explanation, but Grignaschi's insistence on an aberrant interpretation is not convincing. We should prefer to construe this in a manner consistent with the rest of the available tradition.

517. RUBIN 1995, p. 236–238; ṬABARĪ, p. 960: l. 7 to p. 963: l. 14; DĪNAWARĪ, p. 72: l. 19 to p. 73: l. 16; NÖŠĪN-RAVĀN 1987, l. 70 *et seqq.*

had nothing to do with the redevelopment or encouragement of agriculture.⁵¹⁸ Firdawsī alleges a famine in the reign of Qubād at the outbreak of the Mazdakite disorders,⁵¹⁹ but there is no evidence in any source that Iran’s agricultural infrastructure had collapsed and was in need of restoration. Dispossessed farmers *may* have been restored to their lands, as Rubin suggests,⁵²⁰ but there is no solid evidence of a wholesale failure of the agricultural industry before or during the reign of Ḥusraw. More importantly, however, Dīnawarī implies that Ḥusraw’s reform of the land tax *increased* the cost of better and more cultivated land, and Ṭabarī’s notice regarding the different cost of various crops amounts to the same thing. We cannot, therefore, infer that Ḥusraw’s tax reform encouraged farming. It seems, in fact, that Ḥusraw was aware that his tax reform offered no incentive to cultivate land, as, according to Firdawsī, the punishment for not doing so was an especially violent death.⁵²¹ Second, this reform does not represent a fundamental shift from a barter to

518. *Contra* RUBIN 1995, p. 254. Rubin’s claim that Ḥusraw’s tax reform involved a rehabilitation of a damaged agricultural infrastructure is based on a single line in the *Šāhnāma* (NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 106):

همه روی گیتی پر از داد کرد به هر جای ویرانی آباد کرد،

which he may have construed wrongly. The line in question probably refers to the reconstruction of ruined settlements, not to the cultivation of desert places. *can* ویرانی mean ‘deserted’, but the basic meaning is ‘ruined’, and likewise آباد means primarily ‘settled’, or ‘inhabited’, and not necessarily ‘cultivated’.

519. QUBĀD, l. 215 *et seqq.*

520. RUBIN 1995, p. 254; p. 291.

521. NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 151–153:

که ویران بود بوم در برّمن	نتابد بر سایه ی فرّمن
کسی را که باشد برین پایکار	اگر گیرد این کار دشخوار خوار
کنم زنده بر دار چای که هست	اگر سرفراز ست و گر زیردست.

a monetised economy.⁵²² Ṭabarī, of course, mentions that the land tax had originally been paid in kind, but this does not mean that money had not been used for other transactions. Persian and Arabic sources are, as we have observed, silent on this topic, but to insist on a barter economy before Ḥusraw's tax reform is to render nearly all Sasanian achievements, especially international trade, incomprehensible.⁵²³ Third, the tax reform was not introduced gradually.⁵²⁴ The suggestion of incremental introduction of a new tax is impossible to take seriously in almost any context. But an organised bureaucracy capable of a cadastral survey of the entire Iranian empire would not have dragged its feet in putting the new taxes into action. Rubin adduces the testimony of the *Sīra* in this connexion. But the evidence of this text does *not* refer to the incremental application of the new land tax, but rather to a step-by-step campaign against corruption *after* the tax reform had taken effect.⁵²⁵ Ample notice may well have been given to all concerned, but the implementation of the new tax must have been swift and complete.

As far as positive reasons for the reform are concerned, Dīnawarī and Firdawsī do not offer us anything. But Ṭabarī and the *Sīra* offer the roughly same explanation. Ṭabarī mentions only the military advantage of accumulating a surplus of wealth: in case of emergency, such as a breach of the frontier, a new levy would not be necessary.⁵²⁶ The *Sīra* connects the reforms to the

522. *Contra* RUBIN 2000, p. 254–255.

523. HOWARD-JOHNSTON 1995, p. 211–212.

524. *Contra* RUBIN 2006, p. 279.

525. The reforms were probably in place by 540, in time for the war with New Rome, and the *Sīra*'s earliest notice relative to the crackdown is 559 (GARIBOLDI 2006, p. 194).

526. ṬABARĪ, p. 961: l. 1–5. Breach of the frontier is in fact the only example given (ṬABARĪ, p. 961, l. 1–2):

ما لو اتانا عن ثغر من ثغورنا او طرف من اطرافنا فتنق .

strength of the military more generally,⁵²⁷ but also alludes to the advantage of a cash surplus.⁵²⁸ We can well imagine how oppressive sudden and unexpected levies would be for the peasantry: a fixed rate of taxation, a regular and predictable income, and a cash surplus would facilitate funding the military without harming the populace.

Husraw's tax reform was followed by a campaign against corruption in the provinces. Dīnawarī does not mention it, and the *Sīra* is our only source for it. The *Sīra* is concerned not with details of the implementation of the tax reform in the first place,⁵²⁹ but rather with controlling corrupt officials⁵³⁰ *after* the implementation of the reform, and the main type of corruption seems to have been embezzlement.⁵³¹ We find implications, furthermore, that taxes were levied on the dead and on young children.⁵³²

The vagueness of the *Sīra*, reminiscent of official propaganda, prevents us from determining exactly what other forms of corruption may have been involved. That embezzlement was one

527. 'Les paysans et les contribuables du *kharāj* constitue les mains des guerriers et des soldats, ils font leur force. A leur tour, les guerriers constituent les mains des *ahl al-kharāj* et font leur force...ils sont comme deux mains qui s'entraident, comme deux pieds venant l'un au secours de l'autre' (SĪRAT ĀNŪŠĪRWĀN, p. 26–27).

528. 'A part d'autres avantages, de telles mesures rehaussent le décor, enrichissent les sujets et, en cas de besoin, permettent au souverain de leur demander ce qui lui est nécessaire' (SĪRAT ĀNŪŠĪRWĀN, p. 18).

529. 'J'ai constaté un si grand désordre que je n'ai pas cru pouvoir y apporter remède, sinon en rétablissant la justice et en fixant l'impôt de chaque pays, de chaque contrée, de chaque canton, et de chaque homme' (SĪRAT ĀNŪŠĪRWĀN, p. 18). This is all we are told about the initiation of the reform.

530. RUBIN 1995, p. 277.

531. The provincial governors were apparently collecting and keeping more than their share, and judges (presumably Zoroastrian clerics) were appointed to oversee the payment of taxes and to issue receipts (SĪRAT ĀNŪŠĪRWĀN, p. 18).

532. 'J'ai décidé...qu'on devait remettre l'impôt des morts et ne pas exiger l'impôts des jeunes qui n'avaient pas atteint l'âge de payer [la capitation]' (SĪRAT ĀNŪŠĪRWĀN, p. 18).

of the greatest problems seems clear, but the *Sīra* hints that there were others. In Ḥusraw's twenty-eighth regnal year, 559, each mobad in charge of certain jurisdictions was required to submit a report on the condition of the peasantry, focusing both on the humiliations and the equitable acts that had been visited on them.⁵³³ Assemblies of taxpayers were convoked before local dignitaries,⁵³⁴ and Ḥusraw sent 'trustworthy persons' to try to arrange assemblies of the peasants and the upper classes.⁵³⁵ What were these bodies meant to achieve? The *Sīra* is extremely vague: Ḥusraw requests merely that they report all business to him truthfully.⁵³⁶

Any invocation of the Sasanian class system is bound to trigger thoughts of Mazdakism, the doctrine by which the heresiarch 'incited the lower classes against the upper'.⁵³⁷ This is, of course, nowhere mentioned in the *Sīra*. One might also be tempted to link the economic plight of the Iranian underclass to Crone's claim that Ḥusraw's reforms provoked the Mazdakite revolt.⁵³⁸ The *Sīra* made no appearance in Crone's argument, despite its being very much germane to her

533. SĪRAT ĀNŪŠĪRWĀN, p. 20.

534. These assemblies were held in the presence 'du chef, du juge, du scribe, et de l'*amīn*' (SĪRAT ĀNŪŠĪRWĀN, p. 20). The last rank is of doubtful meaning (SĪRAT ĀNŪŠĪRWĀN, p. 37 with note 49).

535. Grignaschi's translation suggests that Ḥusraw desired 'l'union entre les gouverneurs et les paysans, les humbles et les nobles' (SĪRAT ĀNŪŠĪRWĀN, p. 20–21). This is misleading as the Arabic suggests merely that various classes met together in one place. Ḥusraw gave orders to his governors (GRIGNASCHI 1971, p. 132):

ليجمعوا بينهم وبين اهل ارضيهم وبين وضيعهم وشريفهم.

536. 'Je les ai chargés de nous rapporter toutes les affaires conformément à la vérité et à la sincérité, dans les termes mêmes dans lesquels ces affaires leur avaient été présentées' (SĪRAT ĀNŪŠĪRWĀN, p. 21).

537. Ṭabarī tells us that Mazdak (ṬABARĪ, p. 894: l. 15):

حصّ...السفلة على العلية.

538. CRONE 1991.

point, as it deals more directly with the oppression of the peasantry than perhaps any other source. The grievances to which the *Sīra* dimly alludes, however, do not remind us of a mass movement, nor can they be linked in any straightforward way to Mazdakism. The absence of even a *reminiscence* of Mazdakism from the *Sīra*, which is otherwise interested in certain theological aberrations,⁵³⁹ is surprising. We can recall the *Sīra*'s fragmentary nature, we can stress a selectivity in what is reported in it, but it is as though the Mazdakite disturbance, whatever its original nature, had been long forgotten.

Quadripartition and Reorganisation of the Iranian Army

Following Ḥusraw's tax reform, Ṭabarī and Firdawsī include a troop inspection, conducted by a man named Bābak. It is as though a significant change in military organisation were the reform's ultimate purpose.⁵⁴⁰ It is unreasonable to infer, however, that Ḥusraw created the first standing army in Iranian history,⁵⁴¹ as previous Sasanian military success cannot be explained if we do so. The *Šāhnāma* suggests a project of active recruitment,⁵⁴² and we might infer more frequent

539. SĪRAT ĀNŪŠĪRWĀN, p. 16–17.

540. Ṭabarī and Firdawsī include basically the same story. This is the episode about Bābak, who in Dīnawarī and in Ṭabarī is a scribe, but in Firdawsī is a mobad (DĪNAWĀRĪ, p. 73: l. 20 to p. 75: l. 9; ṬABARĪ 1893, p. 963: l. 12 to p. 965: l. 5; NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 180–292). Dīnawarī's treatment does not proceed immediately from the tax reform to Bābak's inspection: a brief discussion of Ḥusraw's patronage of philosophy and science, and his vizier Buzurjmīhr is introduced. (DĪNAWĀRĪ, p. 73: l. 18–20).

541. *Contra* RUBIN 1995, p. 291.

542. Rubin's suggestion (RUBIN 1995, p. 289–291) that Ḥusraw created a standing army is based on a speech put into the mouth of Ḥusraw that makes the king complain of the difficulty in amassing treasure for levying troops without somehow oppressing the peasantry — a difficulty which he solves by adding troops drawn from the nobility, and funded by the crown. Ḥusraw expresses the problem (NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, ll. 238–240):

...آرم ز هر سو سپاه بخواهم ز هر کشوری رزم خواه

musters and inspections also. Dīnawarī includes basically the same story, but does not proceed immediately from the tax reform to Bābak's inspection: a brief discussion of Ḥusraw's patronage of philosophy and science, and his vizier Buzurjmihr is introduced. This may indicate that Dīnawarī interrupted his account of the reforms by inserting a digression on Buzurjmihr, or that his accounts of Ḥusraw's reforms and Bābak's inspection come from two different sources.

Command of the army was surely facilitated by Ḥusraw's quadripartition of the empire, but our sources do not suggest how. Our sources' description of this development is woefully confused. Ṭabarī's treatment is, nevertheless, the most credible among these. Whereas there had been one supreme commander of the army, whom Ṭabarī calls the *šbahbaḍa*, an arabicised form of the Persian *spāhbad* (general), Ḥusraw 'divided this office and rank' among four men.⁵⁴³ Each

نگردد سپاه انجمن جز به گنج به بی مردی آید هم از گنج رنج
اگر بد به درویش خواهد رسید ازین آرزو دل بیاید برید .

He describes the letter, circulated throughout his kingdom, wherein he invited the nobles to send their sons to be trained for the army (NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 242–248). Ḥusraw declares his success (NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 252–253):

کنون لاجرم روی گیتی به مرد بیاراستم تا کی آید نبرد
مرا ساز و لشکر ز شاهان پیش فزون ست و هم دانش و رای پیش .

Surely this measure does not indicate the radical change suggested by Rubin, but merely, as Ḥusraw himself remarks, that the Iranian army was bigger and better than ever before.

543. ṬABARĪ, p. 894: l. 6:

قَرَقَ كَسْرَى هَذِهِ الْوَلَايَةِ وَالْمَرْتَبَةِ بَيْنَ أَرْبَعَةِ أَصْبَهَبِذِينَ.

Ṭabarī's word *اصبهذه* is an Arabicised form of the Middle Persian *spāh-pat*, which means literally 'overseer of the army,' but 'general' is the usual translation (NYBERG 1974, p. 177). This is roughly how Ṭabarī defines it, saying (ṬABARĪ, p. 894, l. 5):

كان يلي الاصبهذه وهي الرئاسة على الجنوب

general oversaw a region of the empire, which was, as our sources agree, partitioned in quarters. No sources agree on the areas included within the quarters, and Dīnawarī, Ṭabarī, and Firdawsī give them different names.⁵⁴⁴ There is, furthermore, an alarming disagreement over whether this was a military measure at all: neither Dīnawarī, nor Firdawsī, nor the *Sīrat Ānūšīrwān* use the term *spāhbad*, and Dīnawarī claims that Ḥusraw appointed over each quarter of the empire not a general, but rather ‘a trustworthy man’.⁵⁴⁵

544. The east (says Ṭabarī) included Ḥurāsān and its adjoining regions. The west must have the territories bordering on the Roman Empire, though Ṭabarī does not say so. That there was an اصبيد المغرب is all that we are told Ṭabarī, p. 894, l. 7-8). The south, or *nīmruž* (Ṭabarī, p. 894, l. 8) as Ṭabarī calls it in Persian, was the land of Yemen. The north was Ādarbayjān and its surrounding regions, which Ṭabarī calls ‘the land of the Ḥazar’ (NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 9). Firdawsī retains the four-fold division (NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN 1987, l. 70). but the territories listed are not the same. Qum and Ispahān are confounded with Āzarbāyjān and Armenia, which are much further north (NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 72–74). Pārs and Ahvāz are grouped with the ‘marches of the Khazars’, but the two regions are not near one another, and Firdawsī may also include Bactria here (NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 75):

سيوم پارس و اهواز و مرز خزر ز خاور و را بود تا باختر.

The second hemistich is somewhat confusing as خاور can mean either ‘east’ or ‘west’, and the meanings of باختر include ‘east’, ‘west’, and ‘Bactria’. In the latter case, I think ‘Bactria’ is the most obvious choice, and the sense of the hemistich would be that one extremity of this quarter is in the west and the other is Bactria. Firdawsī makes no mention of Yemen, and Irāq and ‘the land of Rūm’ are his final quarter (NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 76). We must dismiss the recurrence of the ‘land of the Khazars’, as it is an anachronism. Firdawsī and Ṭabarī probably mean nothing more than the Caucasus or the lands to the north of it. Furthermore, Firdawsī’s claim that Rome was included in Ḥusraw’s reforms cannot be right. Nevertheless, Rome did pay tribute to Iran in the reign of Ḥusraw, and the *Šāhnāma* seems to preserve a piece of Sasanian propaganda, exaggerating the tributary condition of a rival power. Dīnawarī gives each quarter an ordinal number, and then describes its contents (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 69: l. 11–16). The first quarter was Ḥurāsān and Sistān and Kirmān; the second was Isfahān, Qumm, Jabal, Ādarbāyjān and Armenia; the third was Fārs, Ahwāz down to Baḥrayn; the fourth was ‘Irāq unto the border with the kingdom of Rūm. Even when manifest errors are removed, a confused geography remains. Only the four-fold division is common to the three sources.

545. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 69: l. 12:

This is a grave deficiency in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*. It is also odd, since Dīnawarī knew and used the term *spāhbad*, which he renders as *iṣḥabad*, when referring to events in the reign of Bahrām V (421–439): Dīnawarī mentions a certain ‘Biṣṭām Iṣḥabad of the Sawād whose rank was called Hazāraft’.⁵⁴⁶ Here we can see first hand just how deformed the *Hudāynāma* tradition can be, for Gyselen has found the same name, title, and jurisdiction on a seal of the sixth century.⁵⁴⁷ If Gyselen’s sixth-century seal is to be linked to Dīnawarī’s fourth- and fifth-century Biṣṭām, we must infer anachronism in Dīnawarī’s source or on the part of Dīnawarī himself, as the reign of Yazdgard I was 399–420. Gyselen suggested that such confusion may indeed be the case, but there also may have simply been more than one man named Biṣṭām in the same family and the rank of Hazāraft may well have been hereditary. But the rank of *spāhbad* was simply not used before Ḥusraw I’s reforms — so the passage is problematic no matter who this Biṣṭām was. Accordingly, Pourshariati claims that Dīnawarī transferred ‘events pertaining to Khusrow II’s reign to those occurring in the aftermath of Yazdgard I’, and equates Dīnawarī’s Biṣṭām with Ḥusraw II’s uncle of the same name, and ‘Fīrak whose rank was called Mihrān’ (who is mentioned in the same passage) with a man whom she calls ‘Pīrag-i Sharvarāz’, one of Ḥusraw II’s top generals.⁵⁴⁸ These identifications seem over-ingenious. But if they are true, then the chronological confusion introduced into the *Hudāynāma* tradition by Dīnawarī or his source is even worse than Gyselen suggests.

The reality of Ḥusraw’s quartering of the empire is established by both sigillography and Armenian and Persian geographical works. Seals whose inscriptions include a personal name followed by one of the cardinal points and title *spāhbad*⁵⁴⁹ prove both that the quadripartition actu-

وَلَّى كُلَّ رُبْعٍ رَجُلًا مِنْ ثِقَاتِهِ.

546. DĪNĀWARĪ, p. 57: l. 3–4. Cf. MORONY 1982, p. 3.

547. GYSELEN 2001, p. 22

548. POURSHARIATI 2002, p. 109–110.

549. GYSELEN 2001, p. 12; GYSELEN 2008, *passim*.

ally happened, and (contrary to what Dīnawarī might have us believe) that it was a military development. The *Geography* of Ananias of Širak is the earliest textual evidence for the quadripartition, as it was composed in the middle decades of the seventh century.⁵⁵⁰ In this text, the four quarters are named after the cardinal points.⁵⁵¹ Similar testimony is offered by the *Šahrestānīhā-i-Ērān*, a geographical treatise composed in Pahlavi during the reign of the caliph Maṣṣūr (A.D. 712–775).⁵⁵² To summarise the places which each text situates within each *kust* (such seems to have been the technical term for the division) would require a lengthy exposition, but the fact is that the contents of each *kust* are radically different in each source. This may be a sign that the system was refined over time, or possibly an indication that certain authors filled in the *kusts* based on their own knowledge or conjecture. Dīnawarī, Ṭabarī, and Firdawsī may have suspected this and may have deliberately simplified their own accounts.

It is unfortunate that Dīnawarī and other authors do not explain what the quadripartition was meant to do. Modern authors tend to misunderstand it also. First, Gyselen’s suggestion that the jurisdiction of each *spāhbad* was deliberately vague⁵⁵³ should perhaps be modified. The cities and towns must have been carefully delineated, otherwise the system would have caused more

550. Hewsen believes that the work was composed by Ananias himself, who lived c. 610–685 (ANANIAS, p. 12). Ananias probably had at his disposal geographical data reflecting the arrangements made in the Roman-Persian treaty of 591.

551. *K’usti Xarbaran* (the west), *K’usti Nmroj* (the south), *K’usti Xorasan* (the east), and *K’usti Kapkoh* (the north, but literally ‘the Caucasus’) (ANANIAS, p. 72).

552. This caliph is clearly mentioned under his name Abū Ja‘far, and the Middle Persian phrase *ī pad pērōzīh āwišt* may translate his title ‘Maṣṣūr’ (DE JONG 2008, p. 55–57). This text definitely includes later interpolations, but Markwart insists that it is founded on versions of the Middle Persian epic romances *older* than those used by Daqīqī and Firdawsī. This is adduced on the grounds that the *Šahrestānīhā-i-Ērān* does not represent the Turanians as ‘Turks’, the unhistorical appellation by which they are known in the *Šāhnāma*. In the *Šahrestānīhā-i-Ērān*, the four quarters are named *Kust ī Xvarāsān* (the East), *kust ī Xvarbarān* (the west), *kust ī Nēmroc* (the south), and *kust ī Āturpātākān* (the north) (MARKWART / MESSINA 1931, p. 5). For a newer edition of the *Šahrestānīhā-i-Ērān*, see DARYAEE 2002.

553. ‘...if the duty of a general was first and foremost to lead his soldiers to war, rather than to administer a territory, the question of the exact boundary between ‘Eastern Side’ and ‘Western

problems than it was meant to solve. Second, Pourshariati has judged that the *kust* system was ‘yet another attempt at undercutting the powers of the nobility’.⁵⁵⁴ This judgement misses the point. Iran had often been forced to fight on two fronts, in the west with New Rome and in the east with the Hephthalites, and armies were frequently recalled from one front to another. The new system of four *spāhbad*s would have allowed a swift and coordinated response to attacks in multiple theatres of war.

Remarks

Apart from a single reference to the proximity of farmland to cities, Dīnawarī’s discussion of Ḥusraw I’s reforms does not offer us anything useful. Furthermore, his presentation of Ḥusraw’s quadripartition fails to identify it as a military reform, and is therefore misleading. This state of affairs must be the result of heavy editing and compression on Dīnawarī’s part, for it is unlikely that he deliberately misrepresented his source. Dīnawarī’s confusion over the title *spāhbad* is liable to discredit him in the eyes of historians, for it suggests that Dīnawarī did not care about producing an accurate history of Ḥusraw’s reforms. Dīnawarī was perhaps more interested in describing in a general way the bureaucratic strength of the Sasanian state under Ḥusraw I. Many Persians surely believed (to a great extent rightly) that Abbasid administrative geography had its origins in the Sasanian state:⁵⁵⁵ Dīnawarī’s treatment of Ḥusraw’s innovations probably aimed to satisfy this belief and nothing more. Historians would be best advised to rely on written testimony from earlier sources such as the *Geography* of Ananias of Širak, and the incontrovertible proof of sigillography.

Side’ loses its importance’ (GYSELEN 2001, p. 15–16).

554. POURSHARIATI 2008, p. 95.

555. This is to be inferred from the continuity of Abbasid administrative geography with that of Sasanian Iran (DARYAEE 2003; MORONY 1982).

IV. THE ROMAN AND PERSIAN WAR OF 540–562

Introduction

Dīnawarī's treatment of the outbreak of the war of 540–562 is meagre. He makes no reference to the Eternal Peace, nor does he offer even the mearest hint of the 'Armenian Question'. Ḥusraw I's campaigns in Syria are presented vaguely and without great emphasis apart from the taking of Antioch and its memorable aftermath. We would have been grateful for even the smallest mention of Ḥusraw's war in Lazica, but Dīnawarī (and with him all authors of the *Hudāynāma* tradition) are silent on this point, covering petering out after about 545 when the Levantine theatre of operations was shut down. Procopius and Agathias must remain our best sources for this war. But the study of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*'s exposition of the conflict is nevertheless useful, for allows us insight into Sasanian attitudes to the war with New Rome, and a window into the domestic portrayal of this conflict at the Iranian court.

Analysis

Sasanian propaganda clearly blamed the Roman emperor for the outbreak of war. Dīnawarī, Ṭabarī, and the *Šāhnāma* are unanimous: the Romanophil Saracens attacked Ḥusraw's Laḥm vassal Mundīr.⁵⁵⁶ The *Sīra*, without discussing Saracen affairs, ascribes the outbreak of war to Justini-

556. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 70: l. 3–8:

قالوا وان خالد بن جبلة الغسانی غزا النعمان بن المنذر... فقتل من اصحاب المنذر مقتلة عظيمة واشتاق ابل المنذر وخيله.

ṬABARĪ, p. 958: l. 16–17:

فاغار خالد بن جبلة على حيز المنذر فقتل من اصحابه مقتلة عظيمة و غنم امولا من امواله.

In the *Šāhnāma* the complaints are put into the mouth of Mundīr, who addresses himself to Ḥusraw (NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 436–440):

an's perfidy,⁵⁵⁷ and we can well infer that much the same scenario is implied. Procopius, perhaps unsurprisingly, presents exactly the opposite story: Ḥusraw is said to have commanded Mundir to 'assist in the invention' of a reason for breaking the truce, and a conflict over boundary lines was concocted.⁵⁵⁸

But this was not the only stimulus to conflict. Procopius offers evidence that New Rome was bent on projecting power into the Caucasus and neighbouring regions in the face of considerable opposition. Complaints of the Armenians are said to have urged Ḥusraw to action,⁵⁵⁹ and their harangue before the Persian king, which we find in Procopius, though probably an invention, surely represents real grievances. The passages of Procopius in question here have recently been examined minutely: as Williams observed, Procopius' account of the embassies is difficult to square with his claim that Ḥusraw was the unprovoked aggressor in the war of 540.⁵⁶⁰ And so it may be that Dīnawarī's source was right to assign the outbreak of the war to Justinian's vassal, his attack on Iran's clients being part of a larger Roman project of unfriendly tinkering in sensitive areas of their frontier with Iran. This would make sense of Procopius' claim (put into the mouth

نگه دار و پشت دلیران توی	... اگر شاه ایران توی
به دشت سواران سواری کنند	چرا رومیان شهریار کنند
سزد گر سرافراز بی سر بود	اگر شاه بر تخت قیصر بود
ببیند ز ما نیز فریاد خواه	چو دستور باشد گرانمایه شاه
بیابند جوش نیاید به کار ...	سواران دشتی چو رومی سوار

557. SĪRAT ĀNŪŠĪRWĀN, p. 15.

558. Ὁ Χοσρόης...κοινολογησάμενος...Ἀλαμουνδάρῳ ἐκέλευεν αὐτὸν ξυμπορίζεσθαι πολέμου αἰτίας. Ὁ δὲ Ἀρέξας ἐπικαλέσας ὅτι αὐτὸν περὶ γῆς ὁρίων βιάζοιτο ἐς χεῖρας τε αὐτῷ ἐν σπονδαῖς ἦλθε καὶ γῆν τὴν Ῥωμαίων ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ σκῆψει καταδεῖν ἤρξατο (PROCOPIUS, II.i.1–3).

559. PROCOPIUS, II.iii.34–53.

560. WILLIAMS 2010, p. 31–36.

of Armenian ambassadors to Husrav) that Justinian had attempted to pervert the loyalty of Munder, and incite the Huns (presumably those in the Caucasus) to attack Iran.⁵⁶¹ But we hear of no other reasons in eastern sources.

It is not difficult to imagine that Armenians, discontented with Roman rule for the reasons given by Procopius, would side with Iran. Much the same may be said for the Laz. Procopius claims that Justinian's interventions were a major source of discontent in Lazica,⁵⁶² and that the imposition of Christianity infuriated the votaries of Zoroaster, and the presence of the Roman army⁵⁶³ in the wake of Gourgen's flight⁵⁶⁴ was intolerable. Procopius also accuses two very unpopular generals, Peter and John Tzibus, whose appalling conduct eroded Lazian loyalty to Rome.⁵⁶⁵ If any of this is true, none of it is reflected in eastern sources. In fact, very little of the Great Game that had grown up between the two powers is mentioned in Persian and Arabic sources. No attempt is made to understand the broader picture of great power relations: only the contest played out in Arabia receives attention, but even this is meagre. Our oriental sources allege either

561. PROCOPIUS, II.iii.47.

562. BRAUND 1994, p. 290.

563. *σπρσχιῶται Ῥωμzίων ἐπιχωρίζειν ἤρξαντο, οἷς δὲ βάρβαροι οὔτοι ἤχθοντο* (PROCOPIUS, II.xv.6).

564. PROCOPIUS, I.xii.4.

565. For the crimes of John Tzibus, see PROCOPIUS, II.xv.9–11. Peter seems to have set up a monopoly that had a disastrous effect of the economy (PROCOPIUS, II.xv.6; 8).

a letter from Mundir to Husraw,⁵⁶⁶ or a personal interview,⁵⁶⁷ in which the Persian king is urged to induce Caesar to punish his refractory vassal.

Husraw's assistance to Mundir is emphasised because the anecdote suggests an honourable beginning to the war. This theme takes a religious turn in the *Šāhnāma*. According to Firdawsī, military action was not immediate. Instead Husraw proceeded directly to Ādar-bāyjān,⁵⁶⁸ the heartland of the Zoroastrian religion, where certain rites were performed within the fire temple there. In this connexion, it is probably significant that the fire temple in Ādar-bāyjān was dedicated to Adur-Gušnāsp, tutelary god of war.⁵⁶⁹ Firdawsī's description implies that Husraw's prayers for victory⁵⁷⁰ involved a *written* Avesta which was recited by a mobad.⁵⁷¹ Hus-

566. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 70: l. 8–11:

فكتب المنذر الى انوشروان يخبره بما ارتكب منه خالد بن جبلة فكتب كسرى الى قيصر ان يأمر خالدا بقيادة المنذر وما قتل من اصحابه ورد ما اخذ من امواله.

The salient portion of Firdawsī's version of Mundir's communication is in NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 436–440.

567. In his second narrative, Ṭabarī makes Mundir approach Husraw and demand that he write to Justinian, so that he might punish the offending Arab, force him to return the booty taken, and pay the 'wergeld' (دية) for the Arabs whom he had killed (ṬABARĪ, p. 959: l. 5).

568. NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 522:

پس پشت و پیش اندر آزادگان بشد تیغ تا آذرآبادگان.

569. NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 124.

570. NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 530.

571. NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 524–526:

ز دستور پاکیزه برسم بجست دو رخ را به آب دو دیده بشست

به باژ اندر آمد به آتشکده نهادند کرسی به زر آزده

raw's attack on New Rome appears as something of a holy obligation, for which the blessing of Heaven was sought.

Two foreign notices seem to shed more light on Ḥusraw's ritual. First, we have Ammianus' claim that Šāpūr, according to Persian custom, took auspices before crossing the Tigris to make war on the Romans.⁵⁷² The ritual described in the *Šāhnāma* probably involved such auspices, and the Avesta may have been used for a kind of bibliomancy. Second, we have Procopius' notice regarding an 'oracle' in Ādarbāyjān, consulted on all important matters, to which Ḥusraw repaired before invading the Near East.⁵⁷³ There is no explicit statement that this was Ḥusraw's reason for going to Ādarbāyjān, but the suggestion is strong, and Procopius' report of the oracle would otherwise seem to have no purpose. Firdawsī, therefore, has accurately reported Ḥusraw's location and activities in Ādarbāyjān. Finally, we might infer that Ḥusraw's sacrifices and prayers

نهاده برو نامه ی زنده و است به آواز بر خواند موبد درست.

The priests rend their shirts and grandees cast jewels and mutter praises (NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 527–528). Exactly when the writing and codification of the Avesta happened is a vexed question that cannot be addressed fully in the present work. Suffice it to say, though, that the *Šīra* also assumes a written Avesta in the reign of Ḥusraw. At one point in his reign, Ḥusraw was attacked by an assassin (SĪRAT ĀNŪŠĪRWĀN, pp. 16–17), who was a votary of a fanatical sect possessed of 'a book and a revelation' (کتابا و کلاما) (SĪRAT ĀNŪŠĪRWĀN, p. 29, n. 5). If these were known to differ in some way from the orthodox revelation, and the *Šīra* implies that they were, we must infer that the Avesta had been committed to writing in or before the reign of Ḥusraw I. This accords with a ninth-century tradition, endorsed by Boyce, that Ḥusraw I ordered the writing of the Avesta (BOYCE 1979, p. 135).

572. The Romans were waiting, *tardante trans Tigridem rege, dum moveri permetterent sacra* (AMMIANUS, xxi.13.2), which in the event were unfavourable (AMMIANUS, xxi.13.8).

573. τὸ μέγα πυρεῖον ἐνταῦθα [*sc. Ἀδαρβιγάνων*] ἐστίν, ὃ σέβονται Πέρσαι θεῶν μάλιστα. ὃν δὲ τὸ πῦρ ἄσβεστον φυλάσσοντες μάγοι τὰ τε ἄλλα ἐς τὸ ἀκριβὲς ἐξοσιοῦνται καὶ μαντεῖα ἐς τῶν πραγμάτων τὰ μέγιστα χροῶνται (PROCOPIUS, II.xxiv.2).

to the sun and other divinities, performed at Seleucia, reported by Procopius,⁵⁷⁴ represent a thanksgiving after the success of the holy obligation undertaken in the temple of Adur-Gušnāsp.

Ḥusraw I's invasion of Roman territory follows the ritual. We can get a sense of the Sasanian perception of the war by noting the difference between the oriental accounts of the invasion and the narrative of Procopius. Ṭabarī and Dīnawarī are clear: in his progress towards Antioch, Ḥusraw *conquered* many cities and the Roman fortress at Dara.⁵⁷⁵ Firdawsī goes even further, adding that cities which he names Sūrāb, Ārāyiš-i-Rūm, and Qālīnīyūs were not merely plundered but levelled with the ground, and every living thing within Ārāyiš-i-Rūm was destroyed.⁵⁷⁶ In any case these lists of cities captured or plundered are uncorroborated by Procopius' detailed treatment.⁵⁷⁷ It seems therefore that Sasanian propaganda exaggerated the subordinate

574. ὁ Χοσρόης ἐς Σελεύκειαν...ἦλθεν...θύσας τε τῷ ἡλίῳ καὶ οἷσιν ἄλλοις ἐβούλετο, πολλά τε ἐπιθειάσας ὀπίσω ἀπέλκυνεν (PROCOPIUS, II.xi.1).

575. Ṭabarī's first narrative notices only the taking of Antioch (ṬABARĪ, p. 898: l. 5–6):

...سار نحو انطاكية بعد سنين من ملكه وكان فيها عظماء جنود قيصر فافتتحها.

His second narrative is fuller (ṬABARĪ, p. 959: l. 9–12):

فاخذ مدينة دارا ومدينة الرهاء ومدينة منبج ومدينة قنسرین ومدينة حلب ومدينة انطاكية وكانت افضل مدينة بالشام ومدينة فامية ومدينة حمص ومدنا كثيرة متاخمة لهذه المدائن.

Dīnawarī's list of conquered places omits Apamea and Hims, but is otherwise the same (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 71: l. 12–14):

فاحتوى على مدينة دارا ومدينة الرها ومدينة قنسرین ومدينة منبج ومدينة حلب حتى انتهى الى انطاكية فاخذها.

576. NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 607:

یکی تاجور خود به لشکر نماند بر آن بوم و برخاک و خاور نماند.

Surely this was an outrage that not even Procopius would have concealed. Firdawsī's entire treatment of this episode is found in NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 589– 660. The names of the cities mentioned seem to be corruptions of Sura, Hierapolis, and Callinicum.

577. Procopius mentions that tribute was paid by Sura, though Ḥusraw sacked it regardless

status of any city or state that paid tribute to Iran. Apart from Antioch, it did not matter to the Persians which cities were involved, so long as their forced submission was emphasised. It was probably because of the tribute paid that even Rome itself was depicted as an Iranian province in the *Šāhnāma*⁵⁷⁸ — surely a piece of propaganda which Firdawsī recycled.

Ḥusraw's reduction of the fortress at Dara — a long-standing source of Persian annoyance — occurred towards the end of Ḥusraw's reign. But Dīnawarī is unambiguous in placing his event much earlier. This must be a piece of propaganda directed not at New Rome but at Iran. Reports of Ḥusraw's conquest of this fortress would have increased his domestic prestige greatly, and added to the perceived glory of his reign. Unsurprisingly Ḥusraw's degenerate son, Hurmazd IV, is described as returning Dara to the Romans, effectively undoing one of his father's greatest achievements.⁵⁷⁹ Questions about the source of this claim (whether the Book of Bahrām Čōbīn, or the propaganda of Ḥusraw II) cannot be pursued here. It will suffice here to note a point of perhaps more than minor importance. The placement of the reduction of Dara in the war of 540 can only have been written under the influence of Ḥusraw's later war of 572. The official Sasanian account of Ḥusraw's reign must therefore have been written towards the end of the sixth century — if this is indeed what lies behind Dīnawarī's notice. Agathias' excerpt from the Persian *Royal Annals* includes very little on Ḥusraw I's reign, and this silence would tend to support my last inference.

Matters surrounding the Roman tribute help to clarify two difficult passages in Ṭabarī. First, Ṭabarī's treatment of the war draws to a close with a statement that Justinian was forced to

(PROCOPIUS, II.v.13–27), by Sergiopolis, though payment was deferred by a year (Procopius, II.v.29–33), by Hierapolis (PROCOPIUS, II.vi.21–25), and by Beroea, which was also attacked savagely (PROCOPIUS, II.vii.4–13). The siege of Antioch follows (PROCOPIUS, II.viii–ix).

578. This line appears in the context of Ḥusraw's quadripartition (NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, I. 76):

چهارم عراق آمد و بوم روم.

579. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 81: l. 12–14; l. 16–17.

pay a massive sum to buy the freedom of ‘the rest of the towns of Syria and Egypt’.⁵⁸⁰ Egypt, of course, was untouched by this war, and this seeming anachronism suggested to Bosworth that the campaigns of Ḥusraw II, which did involve Egypt, were confounded with those of Ḥusraw I.⁵⁸¹ Ṭabarī, though, may have actually preserved a piece of Iranian propaganda, whereby the Roman tribute was represented as preventing Ḥusraw’s threatened advance deeper into Roman territory. The Sasanian dynasty probably laid claim to Egypt on the grounds that it had belonged to the Achaemenids.⁵⁸² It is not, therefore, necessary to infer that a reference to Egypt is out of context in a treatment of Ḥusraw’s first war with New Rome, and we need not infer an elementary mistake on Ṭabarī’s part in order to explain its inclusion here. In any case, the rest of Ṭabarī’s treatment in this connexion proves that he was not confused about which ruler and which war he was dealing with. Second, Ṭabarī’s final notice⁵⁸³ on this war, though it is not explicit, must deal with the armistice of 545, which shut down the front in the Near East, and by virtue of which the Romans agreed to an annual payment.⁵⁸⁴ The same story is reported by Dīnawarī and Firdawsī.

Dīnawarī also records the fixed annual payment, but does not say how much it was, and adds that a certain Šarwīn Dastabāy and Ḥurrīn, his slave, were appointed not only to oversee it, but also to live with ‘the king of Rome’.⁵⁸⁵ These two men cannot be identified. Nevertheless it is hard to believe that they are totally fictional. These men must have been mentioned in Dīnawarī’s source for a reason, and their names must have been recognisable to the audience at

580. ṬABARĪ, p. 960: l. 3–4:

وَأَمَّا سَائِرُ مَدَنِ الشَّامِ وَمِصْرَ فَإِنَّ يَخْطِئَانِوَسَ ابْتِاعَهَا مِنْ كَسْرَى بِأَمْوَالٍ عَظِيمَةٍ حَمَلَهَا إِلَيْهِ.

581. BOSWORTH 1999, p. 255: n. 617.

582. On the Sasanians’ succession to Achaemenid rule see DIGNAS / WINTER 2007, p. 56–62.

583. An agreement was reached, whereby Ḥusraw agreed not to attack Roman territory, and Justinian agreed to an annual payment, but no amount is specified (ṬABARĪ, p. 960: l. 5–7).

584. PROCOPIUS, II.xxviii.3–11.

585. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 71: l. 2–6.

whom Dīnawarī's source was aimed. But this cannot have been the case for Dīnawarī's own audience: Dīnawarī must have retained the names for the sake of visible detail and the appearance of truth. Speculation on this matter cannot go much further.

The idea of Iranian overseers of the Roman tribute is not inconceivable. But if there be any truth to the claim that Šarwīn and Ḥurrīn lived with the Roman emperor, we might be tempted to infer some kind of permanent legation at the Roman court. If such a legation were ever established, it was not mentioned (at least to my knowledge) in any Roman sources.

Similarly doubtful is Firdawsī's notice of Caesar's embassy, led by an unidentifiable person called Mihrās,⁵⁸⁶ sent to bestow tribute which is valued rather absurdly at ten ox-hides full of dinars.⁵⁸⁷ Such notices must be discarded in favour of Procopius' more thorough testimony, but they do give some hints that the Roman tribute was according to Iranian perception surrounded with an official and ceremonious aura.

Excursus: The Taking of Antioch

Ḥusraw's taking of Antioch was a massive blow to Roman prestige, and seems to have been the highlight of the 540 war. All sources report Ḥusraw's conquest in nearly the same way, though Procopius' treatment is best. There are, however, some noteworthy differences in details of the aftermath of the city's capture and the deportation of its people to a new city near Ctesiphon. Firdawsī calls Ḥusraw's second Antioch *Žēb-i-Ḥusraw*,⁵⁸⁸ a name which sounds eerily like Dīn-

586. NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 714.

587. NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 729:

نهادند بر روم بر یاز و ساو پراگنده دینار ده چرم گاو.

588. NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 681:

زیب خسرو.

awarī's *Ṣabr-Husrū*⁵⁸⁹ — another sign of a common source that was unfortunately misread in this case. Ṭabarī, of course, calls it *al-Rūmiyya*,⁵⁹⁰ and this (as has already been noted above) probably descends from another tradition.

All of our sources — even Procopius who calls it *Husraw's Antioch*⁵⁹¹ — report the name differently. Sebeos reports what was probably the true name of the new city, *Veh Anjatok* ‘Xosrov’ *Ḥusraw's Better Antioch*, but adds that it was also called *Šahastan-i Nok-noy*.⁵⁹² How can we explain these differences? The appellations preserved by Dīnawarī, Ṭabarī, and Firdawsī are probably epithets. *Ṣabr-Husrū* and *Ṣeb-i-Husraw* both mean something like ‘Ḥusraw's ornament’, and ‘Roman town’ (as Ṭabarī has it) is an appropriate short-hand or nickname for a Persian city populated by imported Christians. Sebeos himself was aware of two different names for this city, and many more may have been in circulation.

All narratives apart from Dīnawarī report that the captives deported to the new city were well provided for.⁵⁹³ Unlike Ṭabarī and Dīnawarī, Firdawsī and Procopius does not mention that

589. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 71: l. 17:

زبر خسرو.

590. ṬABARĪ, p. 898: l. 9; p. 959: l. 16:

الرومية.

591. Ἀντιόχειον...τὴν Χοσροῦ (PROCOPIUS, II.xiv.1).

592. Վեհ Անջատոք Խոսրով, գոր անուանեալ Շահաստան-ի Նոկ-նոյ կոչեն (SEBEOS, p. 69: l. 23–24).

593. Ḥusraw provided them with a bath, an hippodrome, along with *ταῖς ἄλλαις τρυφαῖς*, as well as charioteers and musicians (PROCOPIUS, II.xiv.1–2). The citizens were provisioned by Ḥusraw at the public expense (...*δημοσίᾳ τοὺς Ἀντιοχέας...ἐσίστιζεν*) (PROCOPIUS, I.xiv.3). Ṭabarī mentions the allocation of stipends (ṬABARĪ 1893, p. 959: l. 19):

واجرى على السبي الذين نقلهم من انطاكية الى الرومية الارزاق .

Firdawsī is unusually laconic (NÖŠĪN-RAVĀN 1987, l. 687):

that the New was an exact copy of the Old Antioch.⁵⁹⁴ All sources apart from Procopius make the overseer of the city a Christian, though each reports his name differently. Firdawsī does not name him,⁵⁹⁵ Dīnawarī calls him Yazdfanā,⁵⁹⁶ and Ṭabarī calls him Barāz⁵⁹⁷ — both unlikely names for a Christian. As far as Procopius is concerned, there was no overseer of New Antioch: Ḥusraw is said to have thought it right that the Antiochenes be called royal subjects, ‘that they be subject to no authorities but the king alone’.⁵⁹⁸

Perhaps Procopius omitted the critical fact in order to avoid embarrassing Justinian, or perhaps his information was deficient and this comment is merely an extrapolation. But it is difficult to take Ṭabarī and Dīnawarī seriously. If they are right, and there *was* a Christian overseer of the New Antioch, who was this man? Would Ḥusraw have risked importing a large community of Christians (presumably now greatly disgruntled) and put a high-ranking Persian at the head of them? Perhaps this mysterious man was, in reality, little more than what we would call a mayor.

بیخشید بر هر کسی خواسته.

Dīnawarī is silent.

594. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 70: p. 15–17; ṬABARĪ, p. 898: l. 6–9; p. 959: l. 15. There is no direct mention of this identity in the *Šāhnāma*, but there is an anecdote about a man who missed the mulberry bush that had stood outside his house before his capture. Ḥusraw is said to have given him a new tree (NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 691–692). Procopius has nothing to say on this matter.

595. NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 693:

یکی مرد ترسا گزین کرد شاه بدو داد فرمان و گنج و کلاه

596. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 71: l. 1:

یزدفنا.

597. ṬABARĪ, p. 960: l. 2:

براز.

598. ...ὥστε τῶν ἀρχόντων οὐδενὶ ὑποχειρίους εἶναι ἢ βασιλεῖ μόνῳ (PROCOPIUS, II.xiv.3).

Perhaps reports of the installation of a royalist bishop were exaggerated or misunderstood. In any case, the sources of the *Hudāynāma* tradition seem to raise, in this connexion at least, more questions than they answer.

Remarks

The *Hudāynāma* tradition was clearly not interested in a blow-by-blow portrayal of the war that began in 540. This tradition did, however, make an effort (however incomplete) to explain why the war broke out in the first place.⁵⁹⁹ But on the whole the *Hudāynāma* tradition was interested in effects and results, and its chief aim was to depict Iran as stronger, more aggressive, and more successful than New Rome, and Ḥusraw as superior to Justinian. This state of affairs raises questions about Iranian self-image and ideology of state. If royal prestige was tied to belligerency and humiliating the Romans, then the taking of Antioch is perhaps the greatest achievement of the House of Sāsān before the conquests of Ḥusraw II, and it is not surprising that this event receives heavy emphasis in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* and the rest of the *Hudāynāma* tradition. Finally, it is worth reinforcing that Dīnawarī's anachronistic mention of the conquest of Dara means that his source cannot have been written earlier than 572.

599. *Contra* JACKSON BONNER 2011, p. 57.

V. THE INSURRECTION OF ANŪŠ ZĀḌ

Introduction

The revolt against Ḥusraw I, led by his Christian son, Anūš Zāḍ broke out in the midst of the Roman war of 540. The revolt was not crowned with success, and Anūš Zāḍ never replaced his father on the throne. Amongst all Arabic prose histories of Sasanian Iran, Dīnawarī's account of the revolt of Anūš Zāḍ is not only the earliest that has come down to us, but it is also the fullest. In this connexion Dīnawarī's contribution to our knowledge of Sasanian history is outclassed only by Firdawsī, who offers by far the longest account of the revolt of Anūš Zāḍ within the *Hudāynāma* tradition. Only one foreign source has picked up details of the rebellion, and this is Procopius' *Wars*. Comparative analysis of the accounts of Dīnawarī, Firdawsī, and Procopius is the basis of the following investigation.

Analysis

In the midst of war with New Rome, Ḥusraw and supposedly his entire army came down with the plague in 543, and retired either to Āzarbāyjān,⁶⁰⁰ as Procopius suggests, or to Ḥimṣ,⁶⁰¹ as Dīnawarī claims. This difference is only of minor significance. Nevertheless, Procopius' placement of Ḥusraw further north should probably be preferred, as Āzarbāyjān was likely to have been untouched by the plague, and his testimony is contemporary to the events in question. Pro-

600. *Ἐπύγχανε δὲ ὁ Χοσρόης ἐξ Ἀσσυρίων ἐς χωρίον Ἀδαρβιγάνων ἦκων* (PROCOPIUS, II.xxiv.1). Procopius does not state explicitly that Ḥusraw went to Āzarbāyjān in order to recover his health, but, although the rumour of his illness is reported *after* his journey northward, it is clear that he was infected whilst in the Levant and that the disease left him whilst in Āzarbāyjān.

601. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 71: l. 7–8:

فمال الى مدينة حمص فاقام بها في جنوده الى ان تماثل.

copius, Dīnawarī, and the *Šāhnāma* report that whilst Ḥusraw was ill, his son rebelled and made a bid for the throne.⁶⁰²

Procopius proves that the revolt of Ḥusraw's son actually happened. The *Bellum Persicum* merely introduces it,⁶⁰³ and the full story is narrated in the *Bellum Gothicum*. Procopius calls Ḥusraw's eldest son 'Anasozadus', which clearly answers to Dīnawarī's 'Anūš Zād' and Firdawsī's 'Nūš Zād'.⁶⁰⁴ He was exiled by his father, for many transgressions, chief amongst which was philandering with his father's wives.⁶⁰⁵ Hearing of his father's illness, Anasozadus raised up a revolt, which Ḥusraw's general 'Phabrizus' crushed: Anasozadus is taken captive and his eyelids are disfigured.⁶⁰⁶ So runs Procopius' account.

Though we may well praise Procopius' treatment of the revolt for its sobriety and accuracy, his presentation creates a strange chronological difficulty. The *Bellum Persicum* places the revolt in the midst of Ḥusraw's war with New Rome in about 543,⁶⁰⁷ but the *Bellum Gothicum* makes it happen in about 550, the final year of the five-year truce agreed in 545.⁶⁰⁸ This discrepancy led Börm to suggest, not without some hesitation, that there were in fact two revolts.⁶⁰⁹ But this is an inadequate explanation for what has happened. The chronological problem will be addressed be-

602. This insurrection is mentioned in passing in CHRISTENSEN 1944, p. 383, but the author offers no serious discussion.

603. The intelligence is that Ḥusraw's son *τυράννιδι ἐπιζέμενον ἐπαναστήναι* (PROCOPIUS, II.xxiv.8), and this is all that we are told in the *Bellum Persicum*.

604. *τῶν γάρ οἱ παίδων ὁ πρεσβύτατος Ἀναςώζαδος ὄνομα* (PROCOPIUS, VIII.x.8).

605. The son was punished *φυγῇ*, because *ἄλλα τε πολλὰ τῇ ἐς τὴν δίαιταν παρανομία ἐξαμαρτῶν καὶ ταῖς γυνάξιν τοῦ πατρὸς ὀκνήσει ὀυδεμία ἐνὴν συνιῶν* (PROCOPIUS, VIII.x.8).

606. PROCOPIUS, VIII.x.17–22.

607. PROCOPIUS, II.xxiv.1.

608. PROCOPIUS, VIII.xi.1.

609. BÖRM 2007, p. 127.

low, but for now it suffices to observe that Procopius makes no suggestion that he is describing two different revolts, and Dīnawarī and Firdawsī report only one.

In both sources (which must go back to the same source, as we have seen) we are clearly dealing with a highly elaborate, and clearly tendentious, story. Some might be tempted to infer, as Nöldeke and Börm have done, that the epical quality of Anūš Zād's insurrection was added by later authors, and that the account of his martyrdom was a poetic fantasy generated by Firdawsī.⁶¹⁰ An examination of the contents of the *Šāhnāma*'s treatment of the revolt, however, will show that Firdawsī did not invent the story's conclusion. This is not by any means to suggest that the revolt of Anūš Zād, as narrated in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* and the *Šāhnāma*, is as sober an account as that of Procopius. On the contrary, we are indeed faced with a decorative version of history, but the story's dramatic features were already mature and fully developed in the source used by Dīnawarī and Firdawsī.

A review of Dīnawarī's and Firdawsī's treatments suffices to show that the original source of Anūš Zād rebellion had an epical quality, but the narrative is not wholly implausible. Ḥusraw's son Anūš Zād (both Dīnawarī and Firdawsī agree) was born to a Christian mother, who had refused to become a Magian.⁶¹¹ Though Dīnawarī says at first that Anūš Zād *differed* from his father

610. 'Der tragische Ausgang im Šāhnāme ist durch das poetische Bedürfniss gefordert, aber natürlich unhistorisch' (NÖLDEKE 1879, p. 473). It is indeed unhistorical, but it was not invented by Firdawsī.

611. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 71: l. 9:

كانت امه نصرانيّة.

DĪNAWARĪ, p. 71: l. 10–11:

كان كسرى معجبا بها وارادها على ترك النصرانيّة والدخول في المجوشيّة.

Her refusal is expressed by the verb ابست (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 71: l. 11). Says Firdawsī (NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 748–751):

زنی داشت پرمایه شاه به بالای سرو و به دیدار ماه...

in religion and later implies that he was a Christian, Firdawsī declared emphatically that the young rebel was a follower of Christ.⁶¹² The youth had been confined to gaol in Jundīsāpūr,⁶¹³ but when news of Ḥusraw's illness reached him, Anūš Zāḏ escaped, recruited an army of Christians, threw his father's deputies out of Ahwāz, and began preparations to march on Ctesiphon.⁶¹⁴ Apart from mentioning the capture of Anūš Zāḏ and the restoration of Ḥusraw's dominions,⁶¹⁵

به دین مسیحا بر آن ماه روی ...

یکی کودک آمدش خورشید چهر ز ناهید تابنده بر سپهر

ورا نامور خواندی نوش زاد...

612. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 71: l. 12:

خالف اباه فی الدیانة.

NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 753–755:

چو دوزخ بدانست و راه بهشت	عزیر و مسیح و ره زردهشت
دو رخ را به آب مسیحا بشست	نیامد همی زند و استش درست
ز دین پدر کیش مادر گرفت	زمانه بدو مانده اندر شگفت.

613. NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 756–758:

چنان تنگ دل گشت ازو شهریار	که از گل نیامد جزاز خار بار
در کاج و فرخنده ایوان اوی	ببستند و کردند زندان اوی
نشستن و گهش گندشاپور بود	از ایران و از باختر دور بود.

614. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 71: l. 12–17.

615. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 72: l. 18–19:

وقد أخذ ابنه انوش زاذ اسیرا وانتهی فیہ الی ما امر به .

Dīnawarī does not explain how this insurrection was dealt with. The rest of the episode is narrated only by Firdawsī.

Many were involved in Anūš Zād's rebellion. For Firdawsī, the insurrection begins when the Christian prince frees the madmen imprisoned at Gundīšāpūr, and all Christians — even prelates — flock to his banner.⁶¹⁶ Some of the nobility were apparently also involved — such, at least, is implied by Ḥusraw's command to kill the implicated nobles. The dissidents may well have been very numerous, but it is difficult to believe that the rebel's army numbered thirty thousand men: this may be an error for three thousand, which we find as a variant reading.⁶¹⁷

A line which Khāleghī-Motlagh deleted on no easily discernible grounds makes the mother of Nūš Zād (as Firdawsī calls him) the financier of the rebellion.⁶¹⁸ This claim is curiously reminiscent of Procopius' report that Anasozadus had taken to bed some of Ḥusraw's wives, and a

616. NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 784–788:

کسی کو ز بند خرد جسته بود	به زندان نوشین روان بسته بود
ز زندان ها بند ها بر گرفت	همه شهر ازو دست بر سر گرفت
به شهر اندرون هرک ترسا بدند	اگر جاثلیق ار سکوبا بدند
بسی انجمن کرد بر خویشتن	سواران گردنکش تیغ زن
فراز آمدندش تنی سی هزار	همه نیزه دار از کارزار

In the first hemistich of the final line, we must suspect that the number 30 000 (سی هزار) is a mistake for 3 000 (سه هزار), perhaps a more realistic number. There is a variant that supports this, and it should, I think, be preferred.

617. NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 872–874. This command is also found in Dīnawarī; likewise the notion that any one that curses Nūš Zād curses Ḥusraw also (NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 878–879).

618. This line appears among Khāleghī-Motlagh's notes (NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, p. 149: n. 7):

بسی داد مادر ورا خواسته	که از شاه بد گنجش آراسته.
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rebellious alliance between mother and son might well have provided grounds for such slander. It is also congruent with a theme in Syriac hagiography, whereby mothers of Christian sons born to Zoroastrian fathers are more sympathetic to the child than to the father.⁶¹⁹

News of the insurrection reaches Ḥusraw, who then writes a doleful letter to his lieutenant at Ctesiphon, Rām Barzīn,⁶²⁰ whose name may or may not answer to Procopius's 'Phabrizus'. Much of this is familiar from Dīnawarī's account, though he does not name the deputy. Ḥusraw expresses his rage,⁶²¹ and expounds a rather dim view of Christians,⁶²² who are said to be cowardly, but there is nothing about 'turning the other cheek' as in Dīnawarī.⁶²³ Ḥusraw's suspicion that his son had formed an alliance with the Roman emperor, unique to Firdawsī,⁶²⁴ is not true,

619. WALKER 2006, p. 235–239.

620. NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 793–800.

621. NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 817:

و دیگر که از مرگ شاهان داد نگیرد کسی یاد جز بد نژاد.

622. NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 822:

چنین بود خود در خود کیش اوی سزاوار جان بد اندیش اوی؛

NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 823:

کیش فرزندان ما پاک نیست؛

NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 862–863:

چنین ست کیش مسیحا که دم زنی تیز و گردد کسی زو دژم

نه پروای رای مسیحا بود به فرجام خصمش چلیبیا بود.

623. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 72: l. 7–8:

كيف تبقى النصارى وفي دينهم ان الرجل منهم ان لطم خده الايسر امكن من الايمن.

624. NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 836–837:

despite representing a realistic fear.⁶²⁵ The king urges his lieutenant not to kill Anūš Zāḏ, who is rather to be captured,⁶²⁶ and held in the palace and treated with respect and generosity, but the nobles that follow Anūš Zāḏ, as we have already observed, are to be put to death.⁶²⁷ The end of the story, found only in Firdawsī, involves a battle between the armies of Anūš Zāḏ and Rām Barzīn, and the rebel dies the death of a Christian martyr, and is buried accordingly.

Apart from Anūš Zāḏ's martyrdom, which seems rather fanciful, the details rehearsed above are not in themselves unbelievable, nor do they actually *contradict* Procopius' account. Procopius, however, neglects to mention that Anūš Zāḏ was a Christian. But Procopius is not the only author to have omitted elements of the story. Dīnawarī ends his account abruptly, after Ḥusraw's letter to this deputy is quoted. Ṭabarī fails to mention the story at all. In short, every source apart from the *Šāhnāma* lacks important details or omits the story altogether. Why is the coverage of this revolt so uneven, especially in Dīnawarī and Firdawsī, whose accounts are grounded in the same source?

I have already speculated on why Dīnawarī omitted parts of the Anūš Zāḏ story. But the truth is that we may never know why Dīnawarī's account of it is incomplete. The silence and confusion of Procopius are perhaps easier to explain. Reports of the revolt came to Procopius from the highest levels of the Armenian church and from a Christian advisor to Ḥusraw, and this by a somewhat circuitous route.⁶²⁸ It seems fair to infer that the Christianity of Anūš Zāḏ was the

و زان نامه کز قیصر آمد به روی همی آب تیره در آمد به جوی

از آن کوهم آواز و هم کیش اوست گمانند قیصر به تن خویش اوست.

625. *Contra* PIGULEVSKAJA 1963, p. 226.

626. NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 843:

بگرفتنش بهتر ز کشتن بود مگرش از گنه باز کشتن بود.

627. NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 872–874.

628. Procopius claims that his information on Ḥusraw's illness and Anūš Zāḏ's rebellion was communicated to the Armenian general Valerian by a secret envoy who heard the story from the

reason why these officials, and *Christian* officials at that, transmitted the rumours. Anūš Zād's faith, we should infer, is not an invention or inference of a later time which was woven into the *Hudāynāma* tradition. It is difficult to imagine why this detail would have been made up, but it is not hard to see why Procopius would have concealed it. If Justinian had heard of the insurrection, he took no action, and this must have proved an embarrassment; but if word of the rebellion had *not* reached him, to be informed of it too late would have infuriated the emperor. Procopius had good reason to reduce the story, in his *Bellum Persicum* at least, to the bare facts and minimise the detail that was likely to give offence.

The situation is different in Procopius' *Bellum Gothicum*, where the revolt is given fuller treatment. The story reached him, once again, from a Christian: this time Ḥusraw's physician Tribunus,⁶²⁹ and this fact also allows us the inference that Anūš Zād's Christianity was the point of interest. Nevertheless, the faith of Anūš Zād is still missing. We have already noted that the story has also been dislodged from its proper context and moved seven years later. Furthermore, the book in which we find this longer treatment is the eighth in Procopius' *History*, separated from the first mention of Anūš Zād's revolt by five volumes. This temporal and spatial displacement may have been the result of sheer carelessness, occasioned by the arrival of new and perhaps startling information long after Procopius had written his treatment of the war in the Levant. But this is unlikely: Procopius must have known the full story from the beginning, and his delay in reporting the revolt signifies a hesitance to reveal sensitive information. The chronological error is likely to have been deliberate. Procopius moved the revolt to 550, when it would have been impossible for Justinian to take advantage of it: the Goths had taken Rome, Italy demanded intense military action, and warfare raged in Lazica. Roman support for a Persian coup would have been impossible at this time.

brother of the Bishop of Dvin (PROCOPIUS, II.xxiv.8).

629. This physician was sent to Ḥusraw by Justinian (PROCOPIUS, VIII.10–16).

Gariboldi, in a personal communication to me in February of 2012, claimed that I had neglected the work of Pigulevskaja in my discussion of the revolt of Anūš Zāḏ in my *cahier*. I am pleased to respond here. Pigulevskaja was either a doctrinaire communist, who read her own convictions on the class struggle back into Sasanian history, or was forced by zealous apparatchiks to respect the party-line as a result of her working at the University of Leningrad in the 1950s. To be fair to Pigulevskaja, the conditions under which she worked must have been very difficult for all but the most ardent Marxists. Whatever her motives, Pigulevskaja managed to torture Sasanian history into conformity with Marxist views, and the sheer amount of Communist historical nostrums implicit her analysis of the revolt of Anūš Zāḏ suffices to put the modern reader off it altogether.⁶³⁰ In my view, Pigulevskaja's analysis of the revolt of Anūš Zāḏ illustrates the danger of hijacking historiography to expound a political or social ideology.

The Soviet party-line aside, Pigulevskaja's treatment of the revolt is riddled with errors and all manner of sloppiness. *Al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*, for instance, cannot have been finished 'au plus tard vers 920', as she claims, for the simple reason that Dīnawarī died before the end of the ninth century.⁶³¹ Her erroneous dating of the insurrection (550–551) altogether ignores the testimony of Procopius' *Bellum Persicum*, *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*, and the *Šāhnāma* which rightly situate the revolt during Ḥusraw I's Roman war of 540. Pigulevskaja failed to notice the chronological problem introduced by Procopius' *Bellum Gothicum*, or at least made no comment on it. Her dating of the revolt is apparently based on the assumption that a certain uproar in Ḥūzistān in 550–551 which required the intervention of Mar Aba (the catholicos of Iran) was the insurrection of Anūš Zāḏ itself.⁶³² Now, if there really had been such an uprising in Ḥūzistān at that time, as terrible as the

630. PIGULEVSKAJA 1963, p. 221–228. This is to say nothing of the great mass of Marxist claptrap that pervades the rest of her book.

631. PIGULEVSKAJA 1963, p. 221.

632. This was first *suggested* because Mar Aba was a converted Zoroastrian who rose to the catholicosate and earned Ḥusraw I's favour (GUILLAUMONT 1969–1970, p. 44–48). The source in question is MAR ABA, p. 206–274, on the good historical value of which see PEETERS 1946.

construed to mean ‘Mazdakite’.⁶³⁷ But this is a very weak proof, as Ibn Aṭīr probably inserted that epithet of his own accord, and it makes nonsense out of Procopius’ circumstantial evidence, and Firdawsī’s clear statements, that Anūš Zāḏ was a Christian.

Remarks

In reality the insurrection of Anūš Zāḏ must have been simply yet another attempted *coup* by the king’s son at a weak point in his reign. But this *coup* was perceived differently because the pretender was Christian. This is why the story was a fit topic for a hagiography. The severity of the revolt can be gauged from Procopius’ efforts to obscure its date and to hide the fact that the pretender was Christian.

Dīnawarī’s presentation of the revolt of Anūš Zāḏ is unique in Arabic prose histories, and may reflect the author’s fascination with armed insurrection. Accordingly historians must take account of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* in writing the history of Ḥusraw I’s Roman war of 540 and the domestic state of Iran at the same time. Procopius *Wars* cannot be neglected either. But Firdawsī offers what is clearly the fullest account of the revolt of Anūš Zāḏ, and so in this connexion the *Šāhnāma* must rank high in the historian’s estimation. Similarly, accounts of Anūš Zāḏ’s revolt in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* and the *Šāhnāma* are both founded on a Syriac hagiography immortalising a Christian martyr of royal blood — but the *Šāhnāma* reflects the contents of this source better.

fact that Dīnawarī and Firdawsī mention knights as well as members of the lower classes in the context of Anūš Zāḏ’s revolt ‘change entièrement le caractère de l’insurrection du Khouzistan’ (PIGULEVSKAJA 1963, p. 225). On the warrant of this slim testimony, the character of the insurrection took on the lineaments of a communist uprising.

637. PIGULEVSKAJA 1963, p. 225.

VI. THE RISE OF THE TURKS AND THE EXTINCTION OF THE HEPHTHALITE EMPIRE

Introduction

Dīnawarī offers a very brief notice on the downfall of the Hephthalites, which we might be tempted to ignore when faced with Ṭabarī's much longer treatment of the same event. But this would be a mistake, for *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* is paradoxically one of the most important literary sources for the Hephthalites' fall and the concomitant rise of the Turks, as it allows us a glimpse of Ḥusraw I's propaganda concerning the event in question.⁶³⁸

To show this, we must begin with the preliminary work on the other sources done by Widengren, who compares the accounts of Ibn Aṭīr, Ṭa'ālibī, Eutychius, Bal'amī, Mas'ūdī, the anonymous *Nihāyat al-Irab*, Mirḥond, *Majmal al-Tawāriḥ*, and the *Fārsnāma*.⁶³⁹ Following Widengren, we can exclude three accounts from consideration immediately: Mas'ūdī, Bal'amī, and the *Fārsnāma* make the unbelievable claim that Ḥusraw conquered the Turkish empire, China, India, and Tibet. Other accounts require more serious scrutiny. Ṭabarī's first narrative introduces the leader of the Turks, Sinjibū ḥāqān, who is positively identified as the killer of the Hephthalite king. We find, however, no mention of an alliance between Sinjibū and Ḥusraw: but we do meet the strange notion that the Turkish ḥāqān took possession of Hephthalite territories, 'save what Ḥusraw had conquered'. Later, having won over several tribes, Sinjibū leads his menacing force towards Iran in the region of Šūl, and demands tribute. Some of the ḥāqān's forces threatened Gurgān also. Ḥusraw does not respond to the threat of this two-pronged invasion, but the ḥāqān retreats, overawed by the Iranian frontier defences. This account is followed by Ibn Aṭīr. Ṭabarī's second narrative is more elaborate. Ḥusraw himself leads an expedition of revenge against the Hephthalites. A marriage alliance with the ḥāqān had *already* been contracted, and this is cited as the basis for Ḥusraw's inviting the ḥāqān to march against the Hephthalites also.

638. JACKSON BONNER 2011, p. 89–101.

639. WIDENGREN 1952, p. 69–94.

In this account, Ḥusraw himself kills the Hephthalite king, reaches Balḥ, and ‘what lies beyond it’, quarters his troops in Firgāna, and returns home through Ḥurasan. This account is found also in Eutychius, Bal‘amī, Mas‘ūdī, and Ṭa‘ālibī. One of Ṭabarī’s earlier notices is usually connected with the foregoing narratives: Ḥusraw is said to have restored to his empire the territories of Sind, Bust, Ruḥḥaj, Zābulistān, and perhaps also Dardistān and Kābulistān.⁶⁴⁰ The same, as Widengren points out, is repeated by Ibn Aṭīr and Ṭa‘ālibī.

It is only by comparison to Dīnawarī who also adds Čagānīyān but omits Sind and Bust, that we learn that these territories had belonged to the Hephthalites — a fact which cannot be inferred from Ṭabarī’s testimony as we have it, though the two authors would appear to have used much the same source. There is, however, no suggestion in Ṭabarī’s *Annals* that these lands were recovered by military conquest, but Dīnawarī’s account is unambiguous in alleging that Ḥusraw *conquered* Hephthalite territory.⁶⁴¹ Dīnawarī’s treatment is echoed by Mirḥond, *Nihāyat al-Irab*, *Majmal al-Tawārīḥ*, and Ṭa‘ālibī, whose testimony is much later than that of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*.

Analysis

The account of the fall of the Hephthalites common to Dīnawarī and Ṭabarī seems to have alleged that Ḥusraw I was responsible for their demise. But, as Widengren observed, Ṭabarī presents a series of different narratives dealing with the fall of the Hephthalites, examination of which force us to doubt the reliability of Ṭabarī’s sources and therefore that of Dīnawarī’s

640. ṬABARĪ, p. 894: l. 10–13:

ارتجع...السند وبست والرخج وزابلستان وطخارستان ودرستان وكابلستان

641. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 69: l. 15–17:

ووجه الجيوش الى بلاد الهياطلة وافتتح تخارستان زابلستان كابلستان والصغانيان .

The critical word is ارتجع (ṬABARĪ, p. 894: l. 10), simply the transitive verb ‘he returned’. Here the operative verb is افتتح (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 69: l. 16), ‘he conquered’, ‘he captured’, etc.

sources also. We are clearly faced with a series of increasingly elaborate notices and sometimes contradictory versions of events. There is, for instance, an obvious contrast between Ḥusraw's passive role in Ṭabarī's first narrative, in which the Turkish ḥāqān is the hero, and Ḥusraw's more vigorous presence in Ṭabarī's second narrative, in which the ḥāqān is passive. The difficulty embedded in Ṭabarī's first narrative seems to amplify the problem: how can Ḥusraw have conquered *some* Hephthalite lands, amongst *all* those conquered by the ḥāqān? The phrase 'apart from what Ḥusraw had conquered' would appear to be an after-thought, which disrupts an otherwise straightforward description of the ḥāqān's conquests. Accordingly, Grignaschi condemns the offending clause as totally contradictory to what precedes it.⁶⁴² By way of explanation, we might infer that Ṭabarī inserted the phrase in anticipation of his second narrative, in which Ḥusraw vanquishes the Hephthalite king. Such exaggerations are unlikely to reflect Ḥusraw's own propaganda. Though Ḥusraw would probably have sought glory wherever possible, the exaggerations of Ṭabarī's second narrative — together with the absurd claims of Bal'amī, Mas'ūdī and the *Fārsnāma* — were probably added to the *Hudāynāma* tradition later.

When we have stripped away the unfortunate clause of Ṭabarī's first, and the impossible exaggerations of his second narrative, we still seem to be left with a residue of several different stories, which have been heavily pruned and compressed, though some embellishment remains. Moreover, the Turkish defeat of the Hephthalites and the ḥāqān's demand for tribute and threat of war on Iran's borders have been conflated but were probably two distinct episodes, whose true relationship has been forgotten. The ḥāqān's march on Iran, furthermore, sounds like pure hyperbole, especially given the allegation of one hundred and ten thousand Turkish soldiers.⁶⁴³ If it ever really occurred, the military demonstration led by Hurmazd, as described by Dīnawarī, should probably be understood as a move to drive the Turks from the Iranian frontier.

642. GRIGNASCHI 1985, p. 243.

643. ṬABARĪ, p. 896: l. 1–2:

اقبل في مائة الف وعشرة آلاف مقاتل

It is likely that Dīnawarī's testimony represents Ḥusraw I's domestic propaganda concerning the extinction of the Hephthalite empire. Other more elaborate accounts, such as those in Ṭabarī's *Annals* and the other sources discussed by Widengren, probably represent later embellishment of that propaganda. In comparison to other sources Dīnawarī's testimony appears to be almost the exact opposite of the truth. This is to say that Ḥusraw probably did *not* take any major military action against the Hephthalites, but rather left such operations to the Turks. The true state of affairs, adumbrated by Ḥusraw's passivity in Ṭabarī's *Annals*, can be observed clearly in the *Šāhnāma*,⁶⁴⁴ and is corroborated by comparison to other sources external to the *Hudāyynāma* tradition.

The real state of affairs to which Ḥusraw's propaganda responded was the swift rise of Turkish power on the Asiatic steppe, and the instability of the hinterland to the northeast of Iran which this entailed. Turkish supremacy in the Asiatic steppe came with their defeat of the Rouran in 552.⁶⁴⁵ Thereafter the Turkish advance towards Transoxiana was very rapid. The Zhou dynastic annals of 555 describe the Turkish empire as stretching from the Gulf of Liao-tung in the east to the Aral Sea, or possibly even the Caspian, and northwards from the Chinese border for 'five or six thousand *li*'.⁶⁴⁶ Firdawsī claims that Turkish dominion had reached the region of Čăč on the further side of the river that he calls 'Gul-Zarrayūn', and now extended from the bor-

644. Widengren failed to notice the uniqueness Firdawsī's treatment, which (as will be made clear below) is independent of the other sources that he analysed (GRIGNASCHI 1985, p. 235)

645. 'Im 1. Monat des 1. Jahres (552) des Kaisers Fei-ti der West-Wei schickte T'u-men Truppen zum Angriff gegen die Ju-ju. Die Ju-ju wurden nördlich von Huai-huang schwer geschlagen' (CHINESE ANNALS, p. 7). For a recent discussion of the Turkish *Machtergreifung* see HOWARD-JOHNSTON 2010, p. 46–48.

646. The ḥāqān whom the Annals called Sse-kin (also known as Mu-han) added much territory to the Turkish Empire: 'Mittels seiner Macht unterwarf er alle Staaten außerhalb der chinesischen Grenze, ein Gebiet, daß sich von Westen des Liao-Meers (Golf von Liao-tung) im Osten, bis zum West-meer im Westen, zehntausend li, und vom Norden fünf-oder sechstausend li, erstreckte' (CHINESE ANNALS, p. 8). The so-called Western Sea might refer to either the Aral or the Caspian, but Liu believes it is the latter (CHINESE ANNALS, p. 495 with n. 41). The Chinese li is a unit of distance approximately equal to a quarter of a mile..

ders of China to the banks of the river Jayhūn — implying that Transoxiana was in Turkish hands.⁶⁴⁷ This southward expansion cannot have happened later than 558, when the last Hephthalite embassy was dispatched to the Chinese court.⁶⁴⁸ Turkish power did not include Sogdiana, for it belonged to the Hephthalites. The Turkish army, Firdawsī tells us, assembled at and marched from a place called Qujqārbāšī. The word is Turkish for ‘Ram’s Head’, and may denote a mountain or hill that gave its name to the circumjacent region. Monchi-Zadeh identifies it with Tarāz,⁶⁴⁹ which was surely familiar to Firdawsī’s Ġaznavid audience.

The empire of the Hephthalites, Firdawsī tells us, included all Sogdiana as far as the Oxus.⁶⁵⁰ The Hephthalite camp was at Buḥārā (where the Turks attack them), and they are said to draw their troops from Balḥ, Šignān, Āmūy, Zam, Ḥutlān, Tirmiz, and Vēsa-Gird.⁶⁵¹ These

647. NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 1760:

به گل زریون بود از آن روی چاچ

خاقان چین (NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 1758) is the subject of this sentence. The same is mentioned in one of Ḥusraw’s speeches (NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 1856):

نشسته ست خاقان بدان روی چاچ

The ḥāqān’s tributary peoples range (NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 1759):

همان تالاب رود جیحون ز چین

648. ZHOU ANNALS, p. 345. Liu has included no direct notices of the Hephthalites in his work

649. MONCHI-ZADEH 1975, p. 221 with note 4.

650. This is inferred from the travels of the Turkish ambassador from Turkish territory to Iran. He passes through the lands of the Hephthalites — a dangerous undertaking (NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 1774–1775):

گذر مردرا سوی هیتال بود همه ره پراز تیغ گول پال بود

ز سغد اندرون تا به جیحون سپاه کشیده رده پیش هیتال شاه

651. NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 1800:

cities suggest that the centre of the Hephthalite Empire was in either eastern Bactria or Tuḥāristān. Much the same thing may be suggested by Dīnawarī's and Ṭabarī's list of territories restored to Iran by Ḥusraw, already discussed above. Though it is unlikely that Ḥusraw actually recovered all places mentioned, these lands from Sind to Ṣigānīyān must have been part of the Hephthalite Empire at its fullest extent. Procopius claims that the Hephthalite capital was Gorgo, a place which cannot be identified, but it was actually at Balḥ, as Chinese sources suggest.⁶⁵² Hephthalite fortifications along the Zaraḥsān river, the so-called Wall of Kanpirak, seem to mark the northwestern frontier of their empire in Sogdiana.⁶⁵³ Two Hephthalite castles have been found, one in the Oxus Delta at Kuyuk-Kala, the other at Barak-Tam to the southeast of the Aral Sea, but no major Hephthalite settlements so far west have been identified.⁶⁵⁴ Modern archaeology, however, suggests that the Hephthalite Empire extended much further to the north and east than the authors of the *Ḥudāynāma* tradition seem to acknowledge. Litvinskij believes that the Hephthalites held sway over the modern regions of Karašahr, Urumqi, Kašgar, and Ḥotan, and bases himself on the work of several Russian archaeologists.⁶⁵⁵ His claim, however, that the Hephthalites had taken Turfan in 479 is probably mistaken: a recent excavation at Turfan alleged no 'non-Chinese influence' in the region from the fourth to the sixth centuries.⁶⁵⁶ If Litvinskij is otherwise right, we can fix Urumqi as the northernmost, and Karašahr as the east-

بخارا پراز گرد و گوپال بود که لشکرگه شاه هیتال بود

The battle at Buḥārā is described in NŌŠIN-RAVĀN, l. 1801–1813.

652. PROCOPIUS, I.iii.2; ZHOU ANNALS, p. 340.

653. GRENET 2002, p. 213.

654. For Kuyuk-Kala see FRUMKIN 1970, p. 99. For Barak-Tam see FRUMKIN 1970, p. 104. Frumkin's book is an exhaustive summary of all contemporary Soviet archaeological work in Central Asia. Not having any Russian, I am unable to consult the relevant work of Tolstov (1948), and Nerazik and Rapoport (1959) cited and summarised by Frumkin.

655. LITVINSKIJ 1998, p. 104.

656. JUHL 1999. Han Chinese culture predominated in Turfan, and 'if there were societies in the region adhering to other sets of cultural values, these are not to be found in the

ernmost, extremities of the Hepthalite empire, and Gandhara and Kashmir, as its southernmost parts, which he believes to have been added to the empire in 509.

The places mentioned by Litvinskij are omitted by the *Hudāynāma* authors altogether: had they been included in the Persian and Arabic sources, we should have been astonished at their accuracy. Nevertheless, Dīnawarī, Ṭabarī, and Firdawsī do not attribute to the Hepthalites any territory which did not actually belong to them.

The foregoing geographical details suggest that the Turkish and Hepthalite frontiers were dangerously close, and that conflict was inevitable. A glance at a map of Central Asia will show that the two Empires were, for the most part, separated by the T'ien Shan and Altai mountain ranges. The Hepthalite position at Urumqi in Dzungaria had no natural defence against an attack launched from the Altai Mountains directly to the north, but it was in Sogdiana, where the Jaxartes river was the only natural frontier, that the Hepthalites were most vulnerable. We can therefore take seriously Firdawsī's claims that the decisive battle took place at Buḥārā, and that the Hepthalite Empire relinquished all Sogdiana.⁶⁵⁷ More doubtful, but not impossible, is Firdawsī's claim that, in the aftermath of the war a new king, whom he calls Faḡānīš, was appointed as a client of Iran.⁶⁵⁸

archaeological records' (JUHL 1999, p. 56).

657. NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 1800 *et seqq.*

658. NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 1826–1829:

نداریم ما تابِ خاقانِ چین	گذر کرد باید به ایران زمین
گرایدونک فرمان برد غاتقر	ببندد به فرمان کسری کمر،
سپارد بدو شهر هیتال را	فرامش کند گرز و گوپال را،
وگرنه خود از یخمه ی خوشنواز	گزینیم جنگ آوری سر فراز

This is part of a speech put into the mouths of certain Hepthalite nobles.

As far as Firdawsī is concerned, Ḥusraw has no direct involvement in the Turkish and Hephthalite war.⁶⁵⁹ So Ḥusraw's relationship with the Turks before the war must have been chiefly diplomatic: he may well have encouraged Turkish aggression, and may have assisted the Turks with financial support and military intelligence, but there is no good evidence that the Persians attacked the Hephthalites also. Nevertheless, Ḥusraw *claimed* that he did, and it is this piece of propaganda that has come down to us in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*. This state of affairs is corroborated in the *History* of Menander Protector who reports that both a Persian and a Turkish embassy boasted before the Roman Emperor that their respective nations had crushed the Hephthalites.⁶⁶⁰ Menander makes the Emperor Justin interrogate the Turkish ambassador (who arrived at Constantinople in 568), as though he were testing the Persian claim, which Justin clearly does not believe.⁶⁶¹ We know that Justin disbelieves the Persians because an alliance is formed with the Turks based on the truth of *their* claim. We might therefore suggest that the origin of the Persian boast is deliberate disinformation directed at New Rome. This may help to explain the confusion in the *Ḥudāynāma* tradition that surrounds the territories which Ḥusraw is said to have acquired, as the Turks may well have ceded some former Hephthalite lands to Iran.⁶⁶² Finally, Likewise, Silzabul, the Turkish ḥāqān, mentions earlier in Menander's *History* that the war against the

659. Firdawsī, however, mentions a marriage alliance between Ḥusraw and the ḥāqān, to which Dīnawarī also alludes in the context of Hurmazd IV's reign. There is, nevertheless, no suggestion that this alliance had a military component.

660. The Persian ambassador boast of Ḥusraw *ὅτι τῶν Ἐφθαλιτῶν κατεστρέψατο δύναμιν* (MENANDER PROTECTOR, Frag 6.1: 207–208). But the Turks *ἔλεξαν ὡς παρεστήσαντο καὶ Ἐφθαλίτας μέχρι καὶ ἐς φόρου ἀπαγωγὴν* (MENANDER PROTECTOR, Frag. 10.1: 73–74).

661. The interrogation is found in MENANDER PROTECTOR, Frag 10.1: 68–95. See also Blockley's note in MENANDER PROTECTOR, p. 263: n. 121.

662. Howard-Johnston suggests that Iran was 'offered a swathe of territory in western and southern Bactria together with a long tongue of land extending through Arachosia to the Indus plain' (HOWARD-JOHNSTON 2010A, p. 47). This territorial concession seems to be based on Menander Protector (MENANDER PROTECTOR, Frag. 4.2–3), but we should probably doubt it if it is based on Persian disinformation, as I have suggested above.

Hephthalites was entirely his own undertaking, and Menander does not correct or contradict him.⁶⁶³

On the strength of the foregoing inferences, we can provide a definitive answer to a particularly difficult question: what is the date of the downfall of the Hephthalite Empire? Stein's conjecture that it must have occurred immediately after 557, in the wake of the Roman armistice, is founded on the assumption that Ḥusraw himself *attacked* the Hephthalites.⁶⁶⁴ If the interpretation above be right, Stein's dating cannot stand. Relying on the evidence in Menander's *History*, I am inclined to put the battle at Buḥārā and fall of the Hephthalites in either 563 or 564 for the following reasons. Silzabul's furious boast that he will smite the Avars after his war with the Hephthalites is probably a reaction to the 562 Avar embassy to Justinian,⁶⁶⁵ and not a response to earlier, less significant contact in 557. We may infer, therefore, that the Turkish war on the Hephthalites — whenever it had begun — was still raging in the early 560s. But it cannot have lasted long past 563: a Turkish ambassador announces to the Romans in 568, as we have seen, that his nation had, by that date, *already* subjugated the Hephthalites.⁶⁶⁶

Remarks

Once again has Dīnawarī transmitted Sasanian propaganda — this time it is Ḥusraw I's portrayal of the fall of the Hephthalites. Though we cannot discount its effect on a domestic Iranian

663. *Καὶ ἡνίκα* (the hāqān boasts) *μοι ὁ κατὰ τῶν Ἐφθαλιτῶν διανυσθήσεται πόλεμος, ἐπιθήσομαι καὶ Ἀβάροις καὶ τὰς ἐμὰς ἡκιστα φευξοῦνται δυνάμεις. τὰυτα λέγεται ἐπικόμψαντα τὸν Σιλζίβουλον ἔχουσθαι τῆς Ἐφθαλίτας ὁρμῆς* (MENANDER PROTECTOR, Frag. 4.2: 7–11).

664. STEIN 1949, p. 518: n. 1.

665. For the embassy see MENANDER PROTECTOR, Frag. 5.4: 1ff. Stein prefers an the earlier dating 'vers 561', but Blockley suggests 562 (STEIN 1949, p. 543; MENANDER PROTECTOR, p. 253: n. 26).

666. This embassy is said to have taken place in the fourth year of Justin's reign (MENANDER PROTECTOR, Frag. 10.1: 1).

audience, Ḥusraw I's taking credit for the fall of Hephthalite power was directed chiefly at New Rome. This claim was made to gain strategic advantage at the negotiating table, to intimidate the Romans, and perhaps to prevent a Roman-Turkish alliance. This is to be inferred from what a Persian ambassador is reported to have said to the emperor Justin II.

Dīnawarī's notice on the extinction of the Hephthalite empire is too meagre to allow us any firm inferences on the source in which Ḥusraw I's propaganda may have originated. Firdawsī, alas, provides no help. The *Šāhnāma* is by far the best eastern source on the fall of the Hephthalites and rise of the Turks: but the source that lies beneath it is plainly very different from that underlying *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*. The high worth of the *Šāhnāma* may surprise some, but future research on the rise of Turkish power cannot ignore it.

VII. THE REIGN OF HURMAZD IV AND THE REVOLT OF BAHRĀM ČÖBĪN

Introduction

Despite strategic victories, including the reduction of Yemen whereby the Romans were totally outflanked, Ḥusraw I's reign did not end well. Roman emperor Justin II ceased to pay tribute to Iran and enflamed an uprising in Armenia in 572. In the war that followed, an aged Ḥusraw took the field himself and captured Dara. But victory was short-lived: though Ḥusraw destroyed Sebaste and Melitene in 576, much of his host perished when the Romans pursued them across the Euphrates. Rome and Iran began to negotiate the terms of peace in 577, but Ḥusraw died in 579. His son Hurmazd IV was an unworthy successor who persecuted his nobility; who returned to a policy of aggressive warfare against Rome; and who showed ingratitude to his top general.

Hurmazd's general, Bahrām Čöbīn, raised the standard of revolt — a revolt which was ultimately unsuccessful and which culminated in a palace *coup* to kill Hurmazd IV and enthrone his son Ḥusraw II. This *coup* was masterminded by young Ḥusraw's two uncles, Bindūya and Biṣṭām. The dynastic and civil strife let loose during Hurmazd IV's reign must have put heavy strain on the Iranian social order, and corroded the prestige of the House of Sāsān. It is no wonder that the relevant sources are at times greatly confused.

The history of Hurmazd IV's troubled reign, the revolt of Bahrām Čöbīn, and the rise to power of Ḥusraw II can be reconstructed on the warrant of notices in the works of Theophylact Simocatta and Sebeos, along with a handful of details furnished by the *Chronicle to A.D. 1234* and the *Chronicle of Ḥūzistān*. What follows is a comparison between *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* and these sources.

The Beginning of Hurmazd IV's Reign

Despite the impressive length of Dīnawarī's treatment of Hurmazd's reign, very little of this king's life was remembered in the *Ḥudāynāma* tradition. In *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*, material from the

Bahrām book has been made to fill the gap. One of the first notices in the reign of Hurmazd IV is that he was his mother was the Turkish queen, or ḥātūn. There is, however, no good reason to believe this. Nevertheless, we cannot simply dismiss it off hand, for reasons which shall become clear.

It is likely that this slur on Hurmazd's origin goes back both to the earliest version of the Bahrām book. Hurmazd's Turkishness can be seen as a piece of propaganda spread in order to make the rebellion of Bahrām Čōbīn seem justified: hence the anti-Turkish rallying cry of the rebels, hence the attribution of evil qualities inherited by Hurmazd from his Turkish ancestors,⁶⁶⁷ and hence Firdawsī's emphasis on Bahrām's superior claim to the throne of Iran.⁶⁶⁸ So is the prophecy put into the mouth of Mihrān-Sitād, who predicts that Hurmazd will be a bad king whose realm will be attacked and that Bahrām Čōbīn will come to the rescue.⁶⁶⁹

But the slur was also useful in the *coup* which enthroned Ḥusraw II. The leaders of this *coup*, Bindūya and Biṣṭām, are repeatedly identified as Ḥusraw's maternal uncles, and are therefore full-blooded Iranians: they had good reason to stress or exaggerate the foreignness of Hurmazd.

Dīnawarī's claim that Hurmazd was half Turk is grounded in a tradition of a marriage alliance between Ḥusraw I and the Turkish ḥāqān. We find reports of this alliance, sometimes mere allusions in other sources. Ṭabarī, for instance, tells us that Hurmazd was the product of Ḥusraw I and the great ḥāqān's daughter, and implies a marriage alliance.⁶⁷⁰ Firdawsī says the same thing, but also includes in his canto on the reign of Ḥusraw I a long-winded and fanciful de-

667. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 87: l. 18–19; ṬABARĪ: p. 988: l. 14; p. 990: l. 13; HURMAZD, l. 1676.

668. The moving speech which Firdawsī ascribes to Bahrām's sister, whom he calls Gurdīya, is a case in point (HURMAZD, l. 1618–1669).

669. HURMAZD, l. 370–393.

670. ṬABARĪ, p. 988: l. 14–15.

scription of the contraction of this marriage alliance, and a certain Mihrān Sitād's journey to the ḥāqān to collect Ḥusraw's bride.⁶⁷¹

Firdawsī offers the fullest treatment of the alleged alliance. It will be useful to rehearse the details of Firdawsī's account, in order to show how and why it is wrong. Friction between Iran and the Turks was caused (says Firdawsī) by the proximity of the two empires in the wake of the Hephthalite downfall.⁶⁷² A council of war is alleged, in which Ḥusraw's magnates discourage war against the Turks.⁶⁷³ Ḥusraw ignores his ministers' fears, and resolves to move against the ḥāqān, who in turn hear of this plan, and offers to pay tribute so as to avoid war.⁶⁷⁴ This leads to the alliance between Ḥusraw and the ḥāqān, who offers one of his daughters in marriage to the Persian king.⁶⁷⁵ Leaving aside the obviously phantastical story of Mihrān-Sitād's experience at the court

671. NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 2062–2284.

672. This is suggested in a speech put into the mouth of one of Ḥusraw's ministers (NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 1863 *et seqq.*).

673. Warfare in the East, they say, would expose Iran to attack from New Rome in the West (NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 1880–1883):

اگر شاه سوی خراسان شود	ازین پادشاهی هراسان شود
هرانگه که بی شاه بینند بوم	زمان تا زمان لشکرآید ز روم
از ایرانیان باز خواهد کین	نماند برو بوم ایران زمین

674. NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 1943–1946:

که از رزم باز جز رنج نیست	به از بر پرآگندن گنج نیست
ز دینار پوشش نیاید نه خورد	نه گسترده روزنگ و نبرد
بدو امنی باید و خوردنی	همان پوشش و نغز گسترده
هرآنکس که از بد هراسان شود	درم خوار گیرد ین آسان شود

675. NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 2062–2065:

of the ḥāqān,⁶⁷⁶ we read that, upon the conclusion of the alliance, the ḥāqān evacuated Sogdiana, Samarqand, and Čāč, and withdrew to Quijārbāšī, and Ḥusraw installed marzbāns in the vacant territory.⁶⁷⁷

Firdawsī's narrative seems straightforward enough, and (apart from the ballyhoo about Mihrān-Sitād) is superficially believable. But close examination shows that it is problematic. How did a marriage alliance, by virtue of which the ḥāqān gave up his daughter to the Persian king, persuade the Turks to cede all of Sogdiana and Čagānīyān to Iran? Grignaschi explains the marriage alliance as a massive boost the ḥāqān's prestige,⁶⁷⁸ but this cannot be true. The Turks had indeed been vassals of the Rouran until 552, as Grignaschi rightly observes, but Turkish stock rose by virtue of a marriage alliance with the Chinese Emperor and their increasing involvement in the silk trade. Following the defeat of the Hephthalites, the threat of Turkish expansion into Iran through Gurgān or Šūl, as Ṭabarī alludes, meant that the Turks were in a position of advantage and were well poised to demand tribute from Iran. The Turks may well have been raiding Northern Iran at this time as well. A marriage alliance, whereby the Turkish ḥāqān made

چنین گفت خاقان که ابن ست راه که مردم فرستیم نزدیک شاه
به اندیشه در کار پیشی کنیم بسازیم و با شاه خویشی کنیم
پس پرده ی ما بسی دخترست که بر تارک بانوان افسرست
یکی را به نام شهنشه کنیم ز کار وی اندیشه کوتاه کنیم

676. NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 2152–2252.

677. NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 2282–2284:

بپرداخت سغد و سمرقند و چاچ به قجقارباشی فرستاد تاج
ازین شهر ها چون برفت آن سپاه همی مرزبان فرستاد شاه

678. SĪRAT ĀNŪŠARWĀN, p. 20.

himself a vassal to the Persian king in the wake of his rapid and astonishing success is difficult to understand.

There is no compelling reason to connect this marriage alliance with the Great ḥāqān, whom Muslim sources call Sinjībū and Menander calls Silzabulus. Nor would it make sense to connect it to the notice in the *Sīrat Ānūšīrwān* according to which four Turkish tribes submitted to Ḥusraw early in 568, when fifty thousand warriors ‘avec leurs femmes, leurs fils et leurs serviteurs’ were admitted on Ḥusraw’s authority by the Marzbān of the Gate of Šūl, and a military inspection followed not long thereafter.⁶⁷⁹ The Turks were divided into seven groups, and Ḥusraw gave estates and wages to the Turkish chieftains. A marriage alliance between Ḥusraw and these Turks is therefore a tempting inference, but it is attended by problems. Not only does the *Sīra* omit any mention of such a union, but the Turks who came to Iran in 568 did not have a single leader.⁶⁸⁰ The evidence does not support the inference of a marriage alliance in this context.

The silence of contemporary, or nearly contemporary sources, gives us even better reasons to reject claims of this marriage alliance altogether. The union is nowhere mentioned by Menander, or at least not in the fragments that have come down to us, nor is it included in Chinese dynastic annals, which are otherwise interested in Turkish marriage alliances, even when hostile powers are involved.⁶⁸¹ It is not even mentioned in the *History of the Caucasian Albanians*, where we would have expected to find it. In this latter text Ḥusraw II addresses himself to the

679. SĪRAT ĀNŪŠARWĀN, p. 23–24.

680. ‘Chacun de ces peuples avait un roi’ (SĪRAT ĀNŪŠARWĀN, p. 23).

681. Between 554 and 556, for instance, the Turkish chief, whom the Chinese called Sse-kin, is said to have promised his daughter to Emperor T’ai-tsu of the northern Tschou; upon the untimely death of T’ai-tsu, another of Sse-kin’s daughters was promised to his successor Emperor Kao-tsu, but this alliance was prevented by the Emperor of the northern T’si, who contracted a marriage alliance with Sse-kin (CHINESE ANNALS, p. 11).

king of the Turks, alleging close, familial ties between his house and that nation:⁶⁸² if he were the grandson of one of the Turkish ḥāqāns, why does he not say so?

Finally, in connexion with the downfall of the Hephthalites, Dīnawarī mentions that Ḥusraw I sent Hurmazd with an army against the Turkish ḥāqān, whose advance into Iran was thereby halted.⁶⁸³ If Hurmazd were the product of a Persian and Turkish marriage alliance, he cannot have been born *before* that alliance was contracted. This error goes back to the source common to Dīnawarī and Ṭabarī. It seems that Ṭabarī recognised this problem and supplied of his own accord the important claim that Hurmazd was born to Ḥusraw and the ḥāqān's daughter long before the Hephthalite war.⁶⁸⁴ But Ṭabarī's gloss should, I think, be rejected. Dīnawarī's notice of Hurmazd's military demonstration should be allowed to stand as it is, and we should conclude that Hurmazd was not in any way Turkish.

Why, then, we may well ask, do we find Hurmazd accused of being part Turk? If he was not actually Turkish how could this slander have gained any traction? There may have been, as Shahbazi suggests, some misunderstanding of a union between Ḥusraw I and a Khazar princess.⁶⁸⁵ But the most realistic testimony in this connexion is that of Sebeos. In part of his *History* under the heading *Royal History of the Persians*, Sebeos makes Hurmazd the son of the ḥāqān of the

682. KAŁANKATWAC'Ī, p. 143: 14–18. Ḥusraw II observes only that he and the ḥāqān were allied through their sons and daughters (ուստերօք և դստերօք ընդ միմեանս պատուաստեալ էաք ինամուրթիւն) (Cf. Dowsett's translation in DASXURANC'Ī, p. 88).

683. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 69: l. 17 to p. 70: l. 3:

وان ملك الترك سَنَجِبُوْ خاقان جمع اليه اهل المملكة واستعدّ وسار نحو ارض خراسان حتى غلب على الشاش وفرغانة وسمرقند وكشّ ونَسَفَ وانتهى الى بُخارى وبلغ ذلك كسرى فعقد لابنه هرمز الذي ملك من بعده على جيش كثيف ووجهه المحاربة خاقان التركيّ فسار حتى اذا قرب منه خَلَّى ما كان غلب عليه ولحق ببلاده فكتب كسرى الى ابنه هرمز بالانصراف.

684. ṬABARĪ, p. 899: l. 3–4:

ثم سار بعد ذلك الى الهياطلة مطالباً بوتر فيروز جدّه وقد كان انوشروان صاهر خاقان قبل ذلك، الخ.

685. SHAHBAZI 2004, p. 466.

Hephthalites.⁶⁸⁶ There is nothing implausible about this, and we should take it seriously. Qubād himself took a Hephthalite princess for a wife, and the Hephthalite thralldom of Iran lasted until the mid 560s when the Turks overthrew them. Though we have no written evidence of Iranian and Hephthalite relations in Ḥusraw’s reign, whatever arrangement was reached under Qubād probably continued, and some manner of peaceful alliance should be inferred. Otherwise Ḥusraw would not have had a free hand to prosecute his western war of 540–545.

Iran’s Peril and the Rise of Bahrām

It is hard to say why reports on the reign of Hurmazd are so exiguous. We can be sure only that, if a detailed native tradition existed, it has been almost entirely displaced by the Bahrām book. But what is perhaps more distressing is that one important passage, which seems to have some truth lurking behind it, has been severely doctored. The portion in question is Dīnawarī’s claim that Iran was surrounded by attackers and his narrative of Hurmazd’s response to the peril.

First, Dīnawarī’s description of the problem: the indolent Hurmazd, says Dīnawarī, spent most of his time away from the capital, summering in Māh and wintering in the Sawād, whilst enemies surround his kingdom.⁶⁸⁷ It is in this connexion that we meet the memorable description of Hurmazd’s dominions, which are surrounded by enemies ‘like a bowstring on the two curved ends of the bow’.⁶⁸⁸ Iran was attacked on three sides: in the east by the Turks; in the west by New

686. Որմիզդ...որոյ մայր իւր դուտը էր խաբանայ մեծի արքային թետալացոց, կին Խոսրովայ (SEBEOS, p. 72: l. 29 to p. 73: l. 1).

687. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 81: l. 8–11:

وكان اكثر دهره غائبا عن الدائن اما بالسواد متشتتيا واما بالماه متصيفا فلما كانت سنة احدى عشرة من ملكه حذق به الاعداء من كل وجه فاكتفوه اكتفاف الوتر سبتي القوس .

688. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 81: l. 8–11; Cf. ṬABARĪ, p. 991: l. 15, where the phrase occurs also. The phrase is memorable, but the imagery is obscure to me.

Rome; in the north by the ‘Khazars’.⁶⁸⁹ Hurmazd’s reaction to this dire state of affairs was to cede territory to Rome,⁶⁹⁰ and raise up a resistance to ‘the Khazars’ in Armenia and Āzarbāyjān, quickly expelling them.⁶⁹¹ We are given to understand that these measures were taken in order to deal more effectively with the Turks, and without further ado we are plunged headlong into the story of Bahrām Čōbīn’s revolt.

The grim circumstances which Dīnawarī records did not occur in the reign of Hurmazd IV.⁶⁹² But similar dangers surrounded Iran in the reign of his father Ḥusraw I. In the years 572–573 Iran was set upon from east and west by a Roman and Turkish alliance, and there was an uprising in Persarmenia. This grim state of affairs, needless to say, receives no analysis or com-

689. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 81: l. 11–15.

690. Mayyāfāriqīn, Dārā, and Nuṣaybīn were demanded and handed over (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 81: l. 12–14; l. 16–17). These are supposedly cities which Ḥusraw I has wrested from New Rome (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 81: l. 16).

691. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 81: l. 17–19.

692. Ṭabarī and Firdawsī include more errors. On the authority of Hishām Ṭabarī reports that the Turks marched against Hurmazd. Ṭabarī ascribes more fanciful reports to ‘other authorities’: in Hurmazd’s eleventh regnal year 300,000 Turks led by a certain Šāba, marched against Iran, halting at Bādġīs and Hirāt; and that New Rome attacked with 80,000 men; and that Khazars in huge numbers moved towards the *Bāb al-Abwāb*; and that the Arabs ‘in a mighty host’ encamped on the Euphrates and raided Mesopotamia (ṬABARĪ, p. 991: l. 7–14). Not uncharacteristically, Firdawsī includes much the same data, but adds a certain element of exaggeration (HURMAZD, l. 275–337). The Turks attack from the east, led by Sāva (HURMAZD, l. 276) in command of a host 400,000 strong. The Romans, who number one hundred thousand, attack in the west, demanding the return of the cities which had been taken (as it is alleged) by Ḥusraw Anūšarwān (HURMAZD, l. 287–288). The Khazars marched against Iran in a countless host which stretched from Armenia to the gate of Ardabīl (HURMAZD, l. 291). Finally, the Arabs, commanded by two men called ‘Abbās and ‘Amr are encamped on the Euphrates (HURMAZD, l. 293–295). It may be worth stressing that Dīnawarī omits the wholly erroneous claim that Arabs were encamped ‘in a vast host’ on the Euphrates and raided Mesopotamia. Second, Dīnawarī has avoided naming the Turkish ḥāqān, and has thereby obviated confounding Sāva with Sizabul / Istemi as Ṭabarī and Firdawsī have done. Third, Dīnawarī has offered no numbers, and has not expanded the size of the foreign armies beyond a realistic measure. This state of affairs suggests that reports of Iran’s peril grew increasingly elaborate with time.

ment in Dīnawarī's *History*. Apart from chronological displacement, Dīnawarī's only obvious error probably originates in the source which he used: the transformation of the Armenian uprising into a nebulous threat from the 'Khazars', the most serious northern opponents of the caliphate in the 680s, was probably done to make the story more comprehensible to a later audience.

Why was Iran's darkest hour moved from 572–573 to Hurmazd's reign? The passage of time and the transition of Iranian dynastic history from Pahlavi to Arabic (and thence, in Firdawsī's case, to New Persian) may explain the change somewhat,⁶⁹³ but such a drastic change suggests deliberate alteration. I suggest that the chronological displacement arose because Iran's troubles constitute the beginning of the original book of Bahrām Čōbīn. There is historical corroboration for this. Theophylact Simmoccata's *History* confirms that Bahrām was active in Ḥusraw I's military operations in the 570s: Bahrām was involved in the campaign which saw the reduction of Dara,⁶⁹⁴ and he went with Ḥusraw into Armenia, where he distinguished himself in combat.⁶⁹⁵ It would not be surprising if the earliest introduction to Bahrām Čōbīn in Iranian literature began with his military achievements under Ḥusraw I.

But something else has happened. All that befell Bahrām in the years between his generalship under Ḥusraw and his rebellion under Hurmazd IV had been excluded from the Bahrām book. This can be inferred from the silence of Dīnawarī and Firdawsī. Perhaps Bahrām was involved in Ḥusraw's disastrous withdrawal from Roman Armenia in 576,⁶⁹⁶ and remained inactive for several years afterwards. In any case, warfare in Mesopotamia after 576 was limited to frontier raids, and despite a Persian attack on Edessa in Osrhoene in 581, operations from 582 to 587 consisted only of attritional warfare. If Bahrām remained active in any of these conflicts,

693. HOWARD-JOHNSTON 2010A, p. 51.

694. THEOPHYLACT, III.8.10.

695. ὁ μὲν οὖν Βαράμ ἐκβαλὼν ἄμα Χοσρόη, τῷ βρεσβύτῃ, καὶ ἐς τὰς Ἀρμενίας αὐτάς, καὶ κατὰ τοὺς πολέμους ἐπιφανέστατος γεγονώς, στρατηγὸς [οὗ] μετ' οὐ πολὺ καὶ τοῦ Περσικοῦ χειροτονεῖται ἀξιοσύματος (THEOPHYLACT, III.18.11).

696. HOWARD-JOHNSTON 2010A, p. 55.

there would have been little to report. It should not be surprising that Bahrām's glorious rise at the end of the 580s was made to follow his earlier military achievements immediately. This change could only make sense if the problems at the end of Ḥusraw I's reign were moved into the reign of Hurmazd IV.

Bahrām's Victory Over the Turks

Hurmazd sent Bahrām against the Turks, Iran's most dangerous enemy, and his exploits delivered Iran from danger and won him great renown. Though Dīnawarī's source, the Bahrām book, surrounded the battle with a cloud of portents and supernatural occurrences, some credible details are presented.

Before the battle, the two opponents meet to parlay. The ḥāqān offers in grandiloquent terms to make Bahrām king of Īrān-Šahr.⁶⁹⁷ Bahrām refuses, indicating — and this is most surprising — that he is not of the Persian royal house.⁶⁹⁸ Of course, there is nothing like this in Ṭabarī's *Annals*, nor does the ḥāqān's overture meet with a similar answer in the *Šāhnāma*.⁶⁹⁹ But

697. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 83: l. 12–14:

فلما التقوا ارسل الى بهرام ان انضم اليّ حتى املكك على ايران شهر واجعلك اخصّ الناس بي .

698. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 83: l. 11–13. Bahrām's answer is (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 83: l. 14–15):

كيف تملكني الى ايران شهر وانما ملكها لاهل بيت فينا لا تجوز ان يعدوهم الى غيرهم .

699. HURMAZD, l. 729–733:

بپرهیز ازین جنگ و پیش من آی	نمانم که مانی زمانی به پای
ترا کدخایی و دختر دهم	همان ارجمندی و اختر دهم!
بیابی بنزدیکِ ما مهتری	شوی بی نیاز از بدِ کھتری!
چو کشته شود شاه ایران به جنگ	ترا آید آن تاج و تختش به چنگ!

the meaning of Dīnawarī's text here is the same as what we find in the *Šāhnāma* in another context. In a council of war Gurdīya, Bahrām's sister, urges him not to take the Iranian throne because, she stresses, he is not of royal lineage⁷⁰⁰ — further evidence of the Bahrām book's preoccupation with Sasanian legitimacy.

War begins, says Dīnawarī, because Bahrām refused the ḥāqān's offer. Bahrām's battle with the Turks proceeds, and the Turks are defeated. The Turkish empire is shaken, the ḥāqān's son (whom Dīnawarī calls Yaltikīn) is appointed in place of his father, and a truce is negotiated.⁷⁰¹ Together with their armies, Bahrām and Yaltikīn meet on the banks of the river Balḥ near Tirmiz, and a herald transmits messages between them. Dīnawarī does not tell us any details of the full agreement reached: he mentions only that Yaltikīn surrendered. Ṭabarī and Firdawsī add that the ḥāqān's son and successor fled to a castle, and there Bahrām besieged him and forced him to surrender.⁷⁰² Dīnawarī omits this part of the story and presses on.

It is interesting to note that Dīnawarī (following his source most likely) confounds these Turks with the Hephthalites who killed Pērōz: this is how Bahrām justifies making war on the Turks.⁷⁰³ This detail is not found in any other source. Why, we may ask, is Bahrām saying this, if Iran had already taken revenge on the Hephthalites and crushed them in cooperation with the Turks? This statement of Bahrām's may, in a round about way, support my argument that Ḥusraw I *did not* attack the Hephthalites in the 560s.

Bahrām's response, which follows, has nothing to do with dynastic legitimacy as in Dīnawarī.

700. HURMAZD, l. 1618–1669. Cf. POURSHARIATI 2008, p. 122–130; p. 397–414.

701. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 84: l. 2–16.

702. ṬABARĪ, p. 993; HURMAZD, l. 1108 *et seqq.*

703. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 84: l. 7–8:

وارسل بهرام اليه انكم معاشر الخاقانية قتلتم ملكنا فيروز فاهدنا دمه .

The treaty concluded, Yaltikīn (together with his ‘tarḥāns’ and grandees)⁷⁰⁴ was escorted to Ctesiphon, where he was well received by Hurmazd, and then sent home. These details may be used to supplement the accounts of Theophylact and Sebeos.

Bahrām’s Humiliation and Rebellion

Dīnawarī and Firdawsī ascribe the outbreak of Bahrām’s rebellion to a humiliating gesture on the part of Hurmazd. Bahrām sends a good deal of Turkish booty to Ctesiphon, but Hurmazd’s vizier Yazdān Jušnas (whom Firdawsī calls Āyīn Gušasp) suggests to the king, in carefully veiled language, that Bahrām has kept most of the treasure for himself.⁷⁰⁵ Sebeos preserves much the same comment about booty taken from the Turks — but there is no mention of a slandering vizier.⁷⁰⁶ The booty, moreover, had been distributed throughout Bahrām’s army, says Sebeos, so when the king’s forces came to retrieve it, Bahrām’s army massacred them.⁷⁰⁷ When the king’s mind has been poisoned against Bahrām, he sends him the humiliating present of a woman’s necklace, a woman’s belt, and a spindle.⁷⁰⁸ Firdawsī makes the gifts a woman’s robe, a distaff, some cotton, and a woman’s shirt of some kind.⁷⁰⁹

704. I am interested by the use of the plural of *tarḥān* (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 84: l. 12). It suggests something about Dīnawarī’s source and his own and his audience’s knowledge of Turkish.

705. In Dīnawarī the memorable phrase is (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 85: l. 2):

ایها الملك ما كان اعظم المائدة التي منها هذه اللقمة.

In Firdawsī we find much the same thing in HURMAZD, l. 1314).

706. SEBEOS, p. 73: l. 29 to p. 74: l. 10. Hurmazd is made to remark to himself: Ընթրիքն առաւ մեծագոյն, և զնշանն ի պատռոյս ճանաչեմ. բայց յայնչափ սաստիկ գանձուցն ոչ էր արժան այնչափ հասանել յարքունիս (SEBEOS, p. 74: l. 8–10) — much the same idea that we find in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭwāl*.

707. SEBEOS, p. 74: l. 11–21.

708. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 85: l. 1–17.

709. HURMAZD, l. 1378–1381. Firdawsī tells us that, the better to insult Bahrām, Hurmazd sent

Needless to say, the the Bahrām book was wrong about the outbreak of this revolt. Theophylact confirms that Hurmazd sent female attire to Bahrām ‘as a prize for ignominy’.⁷¹⁰ But this had nothing to do with the aftermath of the Turkish war: the humiliation was punishment for Bahrām’s defeat by the Romans in Suania in 589.⁷¹¹ Not only does Dīnawarī omit all mention of this conflict in the north-west, but he followed his source by placing the outbreak of the rebellion much further east — according to Dīnawarī, Bahrām sets out from Hirāt toward Ray. Sebeos seems to have moved Bahrām’s war against the Mazk‘ut‘k‘, properly a people of the Caucasus, to the Trans-Oxus, but does not mention his defeat and humiliation.⁷¹² This suggests that the obvious doctoring goes back to the source used by Sebeos. Theophylact confirms that the revolt began in earnest at Nisibis, where (as observed above) Chubriadanes was killed savagely. But Theophylact gives us no other details: he tells us only that Bahrām and other rebels swore ‘strict oaths’ to depose Hurmazd,⁷¹³ and the rebellion gathers momentum. Before moving to Ray which Bahrām uses as his base, his men spread about the rallying cry: ‘Hurmazd is not king; Yazdān Jušnas is not vizier!’⁷¹⁴ Dīnawarī explains this slogan with reference to the story about the conversion to Christianity of Ardashir I and his vizier — a story which has already been discussed.

the gifts with a lower-class messenger (HURMAZD, l. 1382).

710. THEOPHYLACT, III.8.1.

711. THEOPHYLACT, III.7.7–19.

712. SEBEOS, p. 73; This reference is to be identified with Bahrām’s earlier campaigns in Suania (See also HOWARD-JOHNSTON 1999, p. 168).

713. THEOPHYLACT, IV.1.6.

714. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 85: l. 16–17.

*The Movement to Put Ĥusraw II on the Throne,
the Flight of Ĥusraw II, and the Death of Hurmazd*

In Dīnawarī's account of Hurmazd's reign, we find little evidence that Bahrām intended to make himself king of Iran. His advance from Balḥ to Ray, and thence to Ctesiphon had, according to Dīnawarī, the singular goal of replacing Hurmazd with his young son Ĥusraw. This notion, and much of what follows in Dīnawarī are fictions grounded in the Bahrām book, designed to maintain the prestige of the main character.

Sebeos makes it quite clear that Bahrām meant to take the throne immediately thereafter and 'annihilate the Sasanian dynasty'.⁷¹⁵ At Ray, Dīnawarī tells us, Bahrām began to strike coins bearing the image of Ĥusraw II, and these were distributed throughout Ctesiphon.⁷¹⁶ This same detail is found in the *Šāhnāma* also,⁷¹⁷ but not in Ṭabarī.

We might accept that Bahrām's minting of coins was a ruse calculated to 'cast suspicion on Ĥusraw'.⁷¹⁸ But there are reasons to reject Dīnawarī's testimony altogether: many of Bahrām's own coins survive, and it is obvious that he wished to make himself king. In any case, Bahrām seems to have had nothing to do with the *coup* to enthrone Ĥusraw II. Sebeos testimony makes it clear that the plot to remove Hurmazd from power was orchestrated by a faction of the nobility lead by Bindūya and Bisṭām, Ĥusraw's maternal uncles.⁷¹⁹ Dīnawarī implies the same thing, but

715. ...և բարձցեն զտունն Սասանական, և հաստատեցեն զՎահրամ յաթոռ թագաւորութեանն (SEBEOS, p. 74: l. 19–20)

716. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 86: l. 6–9.

717. HURMAZD, l. 1713:

بسازد و آرايشی نو کنند درم مهر بر نام خسرو کنند .

718. HOWARD-JOHNSTON 1999, p. 169.

719. SEBEOS, p. 75: l. 1–3.

his claim that Bindūya and Biṣṭām were both somehow ‘let out of gaol’,⁷²⁰ is not true. Sebeos⁷²¹ and Theophylact⁷²² make Biṣṭām get Bindūya out of prison so that he might lead the rebellion, and we should take this testimony seriously.

If the story of Bahrām’s striking of coins in Ḥusraw II’s name be doubtful, how can we explain its origin in the Bahrām book and its presence in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*? We can safely assume that the story of Bahrām’s striking coins in Ḥusraw II’s name was invented, as Tyler-Smith suggests, by ‘later writers’ to explain the difference between earlier and later issues of that king’s own coinage.⁷²³ But we can elaborate further. The salient difference in the coin issues is the appearance of Ḥusraw’s crown — a distinction separating, as it seems, Ḥusraw’s earlier, short reign and his much longer restoration. The first crown is simple and unadorned; the second bears the wings of Verethragna, the genius of victory. Ḥusraw was a young man when he came to power, and we might infer that the first issue of coins was struck under supervision of Ḥusraw’s two uncles. His later coins might then represent assertion of his own royal authority under Roman guidance. If this is true, we can infer that the story of Bahrām’s striking Ḥusraw’s coins was invented to explain the earlier, less impressive issue struck in reality by Ḥusraw’s uncles.

Be this as it may, the emergent picture of Iran at the end of the 580s is one of almost complete chaos and confusion. It is not surprising that all accounts of it in are disappointing. We have evidence of at least two revolts: one led by Bahrām at Nisibis, and the other led by Ḥusraw’s

720. DĪNAWĀRĪ, p. 87: l. 16–17.

721. Արդ՝ կասն զի մայր շապիոյ դուստր ասպարապետին այնորիկ, որ էր նախարար տանն Պարթևաց, որք մեռեալ էին, քոյր Վնդոյի և Վստամայ. և ինքն Վնդոյ էր այր իմաստուն և խորհրտական և որտի արիագոյն՝ խորհուրդ արարեալ լուծանել զնա և առնել իրեանց առաջնորդ և զործոյն գլխաւոր (SEBEOS, p. 75: l. 4–8).

722. ἡμέρα δὲ τρίτη, καὶ Βινδόην τὸν δέσμον, τὸν Ἀσπαβέδου μὲν υἱόν, πρὸς γένος δὲ συνημμένον Χοσρόη, τῷ Περσῶν βασιλεῖ, ἐν χεροπέδαις τὴν ἐρχτὴν ἐνοικῶντα καὶ ὑπὸ Ορμίσδου ἐκτὴν ποινηλατούμενον ὁ Βεστάμ, ὃς ἀδελφὸς τούτου ἐτύγχανε ὦν, τῆς φρουρᾶς ὑπεξῆγεν, ὑπόντος οὐδενὸς τοῦ κωλύοντος (THEOPHYLACT, IV.3.5).

723. TYLER-SMITH 2004, p. 43–44. The principal difference is the style of Ḥusraw II’s crown.

uncles, which broke out within the palace. But apart from Dīnawarī's report about the embassy led by Yazdān Jušnas, sent to mollify Bahrām, Dīnawarī stops narrating Bahrām's rebellion and focuses on events as they unfolded within the palace.

Hurmazd, says Dīnawarī, was stripped of every royal accoutrement, and these were sent to Ḥusraw who, together with his two uncles, had fled to Āzarbāyjān.⁷²⁴ Ḥusraw is then made to arrive at Ctesiphon almost immediately after Hurmazd's deposition. This is somewhat more credible than Theophylact's claim that Ḥusraw fled immediately *after* his father was removed from the throne.⁷²⁵ Theophylact's account is surprising, because it makes Ḥusraw linger in Ctesiphon, exposing himself to danger while the *coup* unfolded. There is, moreover, a chronological problem in Theophylact's *History*. If Ḥusraw fled when Hurmazd was deposed and returned a mere nine days later, as Theophylact implies, Ḥusraw could not have reached Āzarbāyjān and returned to Ctesiphon in the allotted time, as the distance is about four hundred miles.⁷²⁶ Dīnawarī's earlier placement of Ḥusraw's flight — incidentally the same as Ṭabarī's — is more credible. But we still do not know whether Ḥusraw actually made it to Āzarbāyjān, nor is it at all clear when Hurmazd was killed. In any case, Theophylact is probably right in confining Bindoes and Bestam (as he calls them) to Ctesiphon. Ḥusraw's uncles probably did not escape with him: they must have stayed in the palace, managing the situation, and waiting for the right time to recall Ḥusraw to the capital.

Whatever the nature of Ḥusraw's business in Āzarbayjān, and whether it was actually achieved or not, his flight thither would have been an obvious *alibi* if and when Hurmazd was killed. It would have served three purposes: Ḥusraw's absence from the palace would have kept him out of danger; it would have allayed suspicions that he was implicated in his father's death; and it would have set the stage for a triumphant return to the capital — a spectacle inten-

724. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 86: l. 12–13; p. 88: l. 1–10.

725. THEOPHYLACT, IV.3.13.

726. WHITBY / WHITBY 1986, p. 106–107 with notes 13 and 14.

ded perhaps to overshadow the chaos and confusion that had gone before. All of this suggests planning and orchestration by Bindūya and Biṣṭām who masterminded the *coup*. Nevertheless, it is possible that Bahrām's acclamation as king and immediate march towards Ctesiphon cut short Ḥusraw's time in Āzarbayjān, or may in fact have prevented the completion of the journey altogether.

Dīnawarī's text, following the Bahrām book, excuses Ḥusraw II's involvement in his father's murder. This is probably true, as Sebeos (who had every reason to blacken Ḥusraw's character) makes no mentions of patricide. The Sasanian party line must have stressed Ḥusraw's innocence also. Dīnawarī implies that Ḥusraw was in Āzarbayjān at this time; but he does not tell us what he was doing there. No source apart from Firdawsī offers an explanation. Ḥusraw apparently gathered a large following in Āzarbayjān. Together he and his men swore an oath to carry the *coup* to the desired conclusion. Ādur Gushnāsp is invoked, and Ḥusraw declares that he has no fear of the devil.⁷²⁷ These details suggest that the oath was taken at the fire temple of Ādur Gushnāsp, god of war. If we take seriously Firdawsī's religious colouring, which may derive from the Bahrām book, it is tempting to infer that Ḥusraw's business in Āzarbayjān was much the same as that of his grandfather Ḥusraw I on the eve of his invasion of Roman territory.

Dīnawarī provides no clues at all as to when this *coup* took place. It is likely that the Bahrām book included no dates. Theophylact's testimony and numismatic evidence imply a date of 27 June 590 for Ḥusraw's acclamation as king, Bahrām's *Machtübernehmung* was coincident with

727. Ḥusraw says (HURMAZD, l. 1766–1768):

بیایند و سوگند های گران،	اگر پیش آذر گشسپ این سران
که پیمان من ز آن سپس نشکنند،	خورند و مرا یکسر ایمن کنند
نترسم ز پیگارِ آهرمنی	بباشم بدین مرز با ایمنی

the mid-Spring festival of *Maidhyoi-zaremaya* in early August 590.⁷²⁸ This gives a good idea when other surrounding events occurred also.

In Dīnawarī's narrative, Bahrām is now left at a loose end at Ray. Some pretext is needed to let him get on with his rebellion, and Dīnawarī supplies it. A private meeting between Ḥusraw and Hurmazd, who is now in confinement, issues in the son's promise to avenge the father and kill Bahrām Čobīn.⁷²⁹ What follows in Dīnawarī's narrative must represent Bahrām's own propaganda and the stated reason for his revolt. Bahrām hears of what has gone on, takes pity on Hurmazd, and resolves 'to kill Kisrā whom he had put in power by his own authority and to restore Hurmazd to his kingdom'.⁷³⁰ Ṭabarī and Firdawsī include no similar information.

The armies of Ḥusraw and Bahrām meet, as is familiar in other sources, at the Nahrawān canal. The location of this meeting makes Bahrām's alleged presence at Balḥ and Ray quite unrealistic: an eastward march from Nisibis would have brought him to the canal in short order, but if he had come from Ray it is difficult to understand why the Nahrawān canal would have been the place of meeting. A good deal of shouting passes from one to the other, and Bahrām invites Ḥusraw's men to desert to him,⁷³¹ and most do. Ḥusraw waits for Bahrām near the bridge of Jūdarz, hoping to shoot him, but succeeds only in unhorsing him.⁷³² Ḥusraw then goes straight to his father to seek advice, and is told to go to the Romans to get help from the emperor.⁷³³ Dīnawarī makes this Hurmazd's idea, as does Ṭabarī.⁷³⁴ But Ṭabarī makes Bindūya and Biṣṭām flee

728. TYLER-SMITH 2004.

729. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 88: l. 10–20.

730. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 89: l. 3–4.

731. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 89: l. 14 to p. 90: l. 5.

732. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 90: l. 9–18.

733. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 91: l. 1–5.

734. ṬABARĪ, p. 944: l. 1–17.

with Ḥusraw to Roman territory. Dīnawarī puts them in Ctesiphon and describes their killing of Hurmazd: they strangled him with his own turban.⁷³⁵

We should doubt the accuracy of Dīnawarī's account, and therefore that of the Bahrām book also. Sebeos reports that Ḥusraw was made king after Hurmazd was killed.⁷³⁶ But Dīnawarī and Theophylact seem to put Ḥusraw in Ctesiphon when his father was murdered. It is not clear which account should be preferred. Nevertheless, the events which followed Hurmazd's murder, which are supposed to have taken place at the Jūdarz bridge near Ctesiphon, are fabulous. Theophylact's account of the epistolary exchange between Bahrām and Ḥusraw, and the ensuing battle, is surely the best one available.⁷³⁷

Some confusion surrounds what came next. Hurmazd's uncles, together with Pherochanes' forces, may have burst into the palace and removed Hurmazd from the throne and imprisoned him, and beat him to death with clubs after a while, as Theophylact has it.⁷³⁸ Or Bindūya and Biṣṭām along with a faction of nobles seized Hurmazd in a hall of the palace and put out his eyes immediately and killed him.⁷³⁹ It is unclear which of these accounts ought to be preferred.

The extent to which the rest of Dīnawarī's account conforms with the truth is more difficult to determine. In general Ḥusraw's flight to Roman territory is confirmed by Theophylact and Sebeos.⁷⁴⁰ That Ḥusraw and his companions put down in a monastery near the city of Hīt on the Euphrates is by no means unbelievable, but this detail is unique to Dīnawarī. We can easily

735. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 91: l. 6–10.

736. SEBEOS, p. echoed by HURMAZD, l. 1902 *et seqq.*

737. THEOPHYLACT, IV.7.5–9.11.

738. THEOPHYLACT, IV.6.5; 7.3.

739. SEBEOS, p. 75: l. 13–18.

740. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 91: l. 10 to p. 93: l. 12; THEOPHYLACT, IV.9.11 *et seqq.*; SEBEOS, p. 75–76.

connect it, however, with Theophylact's mysterious claim that Ḥusraw converted to Christianity⁷⁴¹ — perhaps the substance of a rumour spread to ensure his favorable reception amongst Romans.

A feint of some kind may well have been used to deceive Bahrām son of Siyāwušān who had been sent to chase down and capture Ḥusraw. But we should probably doubt that Bindūya tricked Ḥusraw's pursuers by putting on Ḥusraw's clothes and standing on the monastery's terrace whilst they approached and Ḥusraw fled. We might accept, however, that Ḥusraw escaped and that Bindūya was captured by Bahrām son of Siyāwušān. Sebeos confirms that Ḥusraw left Ctesiphon,⁷⁴² but nothing else reported by Dīnawarī in this connexion can be corroborated.

If Dīnawarī can be trusted, Bahrām Čobīn's occupation of Ctesiphon saw the expulsion of all those loyal to Ḥusraw: Mušeł Mamikonean and a company of twenty thousand men left, and made for Ādarbayjān, seemingly a loyalist stronghold, where Mušeł was marzbān.⁷⁴³ Bahrām's propaganda seems to have focused on portraying Ḥusraw as a patricide — justification for his insurrection.⁷⁴⁴ This propaganda, we may infer, was then spread throughout the capital.

Bahrām Siyāwušān's failed mission to capture Ḥusraw ended in his confinement with Bindūya.⁷⁴⁵ This was surely meant to keep the two men out of the way as Bahrām Čobīn consolidated power. But the result, says Dīnawarī, was a plot to kill the rebel Bahrām Čobīn. Bahrām son of Siyāwušān let Bindūya out of prison and gave him a horse and some weapons. What follows is very difficult to take seriously. In preparation for killing Bahrām Čobīn, Bahrām son of Siyāwušān is said to have hidden a sword under his shirt; but, as he was dressing, he was seen by

741. THEOPHYLACT IV.10.2.

742. SEBEOS, p. 75: l. 19–22.

743. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 94.

744. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 94: l. 3–4.

745. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 94: l. 14 to p. 95: l. 10. Bindūya was in prison and Bahrām son of Siyāwušān was to watch over him

his wife, who happened to be the daughter of Bahrām Čobīn's sister. We must reject the story that the wife warned Bahrām Čobīn whose men struck Bahrām Siyāwušān with a polo mallets and thereby revealed the hidden sword — it may have been invented in order to embellish a story whose full details were not known. In any case, if there was a plot, it was found out somehow, and Bahrām son of Siyāwušān was killed. After initial confusion over which Bahrām had been died, Bindūya fled in secret to Ādarbayjān to join loyalist forces there under Mušet Mamikonean. Unsurprisingly, given the origin of the Bahrām book, we hear nothing of young Ḥusraw's offer to give Bahrām the second rank in the kingdom — a credible detail furnished by Sebeos.⁷⁴⁶

We rejoin Ḥusraw in his flight to Roman territory. After a day's travel, Ḥusraw encountered two Arabs who allowed him to stay with their tribe. It is difficult to believe the claim that Ḥusraw 'spoke Arabic well', but there is truth to Ḥusraw's interaction with Arabs during his flight as the *Chronicle to A.D. 1234* suggests. This Syriac chronicle makes the Ḥusraw interact chiefly with Abū Jafna Nu'mān son of Mundir,⁷⁴⁷ a Christian Arab with whom a relationship had already been established. Nu'mān was given letters to send to the emperor Maurice. This is far more plausible than Dīnawarī's claim that Ḥusraw dealt with Iyās son of Qabīša of the tribe of Tayy and Ḥālīd son of Jabala of the Ġassān, and that he met the emperor in person.⁷⁴⁸ Furthermore, we should probably reject Dīnawarī's claim that Ḥusraw put down at Yarmūk: the *Chronicle to A.D. 1234* situates him in Edessa, which is, superficially at least, more realistic.

Nevertheless, Theophylact presents a different, but perfectly credible account of things. Ḥusraw is said to have entered Roman territory near the forts Abbaron and Anathon, making for

746. SEBEOS, p. 77: l. 18 to p. 78: l. 9.

747. CHRONICLE TO 1234, p. 215: l. 26–29.

748. Setting out again, Ḥusraw reached Yarmūk, where he was supposedly met by Ḥālīd son of Jabala of the Ġassān who is said to have escorted Ḥusraw to 'Caesar' for a personal interview (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 95: l. 19 *et seqq.*). Dīnawarī's report of the meeting includes a dialogue between the Roman emperor, his bishops, and (as it seems) the patriarch of Constantinople.

the fortress of Circesium.⁷⁴⁹ There Ḥusraw put down, and dispatched his letter to the emperor. This letter was entrusted to a certain Probus who forwarded the document to a general named Comentiolus at Hierapolis, and he sent it on to Maurice at Constantinople. It is often dangerous to conflate sources into a single narrative which glosses over their differences. But in this case, the three accounts of Ḥusraw's flight, discussed above, probably emphasise different stages of one and the same journey up the Euphrates into Roman territory. With this in mind, it is by no means far-fetched to assume that Ḥusraw put down at a monastery at Hīt (as Dīnawarī says) then went on to Circesium (as we find in Theophylact), and finally to Edessa (as in the *Chronicle to A.D. 1234*). Sebeos' claim that Ḥusraw fled straight to Aleppo is almost certainly not true.⁷⁵⁰

I suspect that the Bahram book (and therefore *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*) and the *Chronicle to 1234* have picked up Ḥusraw's use of his Arab vassals as intermediaries. Ḥusraw probably made contact with the Ġassān, whom he sent on to make introductions for him at the monastery at Hīt and probably at the Roman fortress at Circesium also. The fact that the Ġassān were Christians is not without significance. The Bahrām book must have highlighted Ḥusraw's contact with the Ġassān so as to pander to high-ranking Sasanian Christians. In this connexion, Ḥusraw's use of Sabrīšō (the Nestorian catholicos) as his chief diplomatic officer in relations with the Romans, along with his political use of his Christian wife Šīrīn, are not without significance.⁷⁵¹

According to Dīnawarī, the treaty of peace that was signed is said to have included a marriage alliance involving Caesar's daughter Maryam, and his son Theodosius was given as a hostage. The Romans promised military support and the combined force went immediately to Armenia and Āzarbayjān. This may be Persian propaganda, for it is a gross oversimplification and misunderstanding of the real treaty, whose details are reported by Sebeos: the treaty involved major territorial concessions including Syria, and what Sebeos calls 'Aṛuestan' to the city of Nis-

749. THEOPHYLACT, IV.10.4–11. Incidentally, this is confirmed by the Ḥūzistān chronicle.

750. SEBEOS, p. 75: l. 32–33.

751. WOOD (FORTHCOMING). Cf. HOWARD-JOHNSTON 2010C.

ibis, Armenia (with a host of specifications) and most of Georgia.⁷⁵² All this amounted to Ḥusraw's acknowledgement of a certain 'political subordination' to Rome, but Iranian retention of Transcaucasian capitals of Dvin and Tp'khis avoided loss of face.⁷⁵³ The military force granted was commanded by John the Patrician (who was an Armenian), the general Narses (from Syria), and Muṣeḡ Mamikonean, whose role is rather vague in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*. It is to be noted that Dīnawarī's anachronistic inclusion of the young Theodosius is probably a misunderstanding of his later flight to Iranian territory after the murder of his father, the emperor Maurice.

Dīnawarī's narrative of the battle that ensued between Ḥusraw's Roman forces and those of Bahrām Čōbīn cannot be taken seriously.⁷⁵⁴ However, Bindūya's offers of amnesty to Bahrām's men, after four days of inconclusive fighting, fits well into Sebeos' narrative of the same events. Only four thousand men are said to have remained with Bahrām: this small force made for Central Asia.⁷⁵⁵ Dīnawarī's account of Bahrām's doings among the Turks belong to the genre of romance or fantasy, not to history. Nevertheless, a successful plot to assassinate Bahrām, sponsored by Ḥusraw and operated by Hurmazd Jurābzīn, seems to have been remembered and embellished. Less credible is Sebeos' claim that Bahrām fled to Balḡ 'and was killed there by the inhabitants'.⁷⁵⁶

752. SEBEOS, p. 76: l. 8–18. The territory was duly ceded after Bahrām's defeat (SEBEOS, p. 84).

753. HOWARD-JOHNSTON 1999, p. 171.

754. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 96: l. 15 to p. 98: l. 10. The most ridiculous elements among them are that Bahrām Čōbīn cut a Roman soldier in half with a single blow, and that Bahrām summoned Ḥusraw to single combat.

755. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 98: l. 1 to p. 104: l. 7.

756. SEBEOS, p. 80: l. 9–11.

Excursus: Personal Names in Dīnawarī's Treatment of Hurmazd IV's Reign

In my introduction to this thesis, I made reference to the plethora of names that Dīnawarī offers in his treatment of the reign of Hurmazd IV. What follows is a highly speculative discussion of those names. I set out to determine whether any of the persons mentioned by Dīnawarī also appear in sources unrelated to both the *Hudāynāma* tradition and the Bahrām book. What follows is the result of my efforts, whose highly speculative nature cannot be overstressed.

Parels and discrepancies in Dīnawarī and the *Šāhnāma* and other sources, as discussed briefly above, can do little to boost our confidence in Dīnawarī's material. Ideally we would find characters common to Dīnawarī and other historians nearer in time to Bahrām's rebellion, such as Sebeos and Theophylact Simocatta. Sebeos provides only Bahrām's name, given as Vahram Merhewandak, and those of Vndoy and Vstam, sons of a high-ranking *asparapet*, descended from a certain Anak, and uncles to Hūsrāw.⁷⁵⁷ Theophylact notices many more names: but apart from obvious identifications such as Theophylact's Baram, Hormisdas, Bindoes and Bestam, we are on shaky ground.

Theophylact does provide seemingly reliable names: Hurmazd's ill-fated envoy to Bahrām was Chubriadanes;⁷⁵⁸ Hurmazd's general is called Pherochanes,⁷⁵⁹ who was accompanied on campaign by a former prisoner named Zadespras;⁷⁶⁰ Pherochanes' top generals are called Zoarab and Sarames the Younger,⁷⁶¹ who, when Hurmazd sent him to arrest Bahrām, was

757. SEBEOS, p. 73: l. 5–6.

758. THEOPHYLACT, IV.1.4–5.

759. THEOPHYLACT, IV.2.2.

760. THEOPHYLACT, IV.2.3–4.

761. THEOPHYLACT, IV.3.1

crushed to death by an elephant.⁷⁶² Unfortunately these names bear almost no resemblance to those found in other sources.

If we cannot identify names, we must match men to deeds. Dīnawarī reports that at the height of Bahrām's rebellion Hurmazd dispatched his vizier Yazdān Jušnas to mollify Bahrām, and the vizier took with him an anonymous cousin.⁷⁶³ Something goes wrong, and Yazdān Jušnas suspects that his cousin is an assassin, and writes a letter to this effect to Hurmazd. The cousin discovers the letter, reads it, and kills Yazdān Jušnas. The cousin brings Yazdān's head to Bahrām, who reacts badly to it. Bahrām kills the cousin, and this, apparently, triggers the movement to put Ḥusraw Parvēz on the throne. Firdawsī, clearly drawing on the same story, includes the same information, but renames the vizier Āyīn Gušasp, and adds the detail that the anonymous man, whom he calls 'the fellow citizen', and who accompanied the vizier, had been released from prison for this purpose.⁷⁶⁴ I suggest that the truth behind this story is Theophylact's report that Pherochanes the general petitioned Hormazd for the release from prison of Zadespras, who then accompanied him on campaign against Bahrām.⁷⁶⁵ Zadespras eventually defects to Bahrām, and Pherochanes, having failed to win over the rebel, and having taken no military action, is murdered by his generals Zoarab and Sarames the Younger.⁷⁶⁶ If my suggestion is right, it is clear that the story has been mangled out of nearly all recognition.

If it be possible to identify Theophylact's Zadespras with the anonymous cousin in Dīnawarī and Firdawsī's 'fellow citizen', what does this tell us? Reviewing the aggregate picture of Zadespras in our sources, we probably have before us one of the noblemen whom Hurmazd put

762. THEOPHYLACT, III.8.10.

763. Dīnawarī, p. 86: l. 19 to p. 87: l. 15.

764. HURMAZD, l. 1791–1857.

765. ὁ μὲν οὖν Φεροχάνης ἡξίου τὸν βασιλέα Ζαδέσπραν, ὃν ἐν ἐρκτῇ δεδεμένον Ὁρμίσδας ἀπέθετο, τῶν δεσμῶν ἀφαιρέσῃναι καὶ συστρατεύειν αὐτῷ (THEOPHYLACT, IV.2.3–4).

766. THEOPHYLACT, IV.3.1.

in prison, and who is somehow related to one of Hurmazd's top generals or officials, whom this general brings on a mission to pacify a dangerous rebel. Zadespras' presence was, we can infer, useful to Hurmazd's overture to Bahrām. But releasing this man from prison and brining him before Bahrām makes little sense unless these two men had some prior connexion. Perhaps Zadespras, by reason of some friendly association or other with Bahrām, could be expected to play an important rôle in negotiations with the rebel. Or perhaps Hurmazd's envoy (whether Yazdān Jušnas the vizier, or Pherochanes the general) wanted Zadespras to feign defection to an old friend, and act as a spy. Whatever the arrangement was, it seems that it did not go as planned, and Bahrām's revolt proceeded. But the the Bahrām book covered up the truth. After Zadespras defected, as Theophylact says, Bahrām may have suspected Zadespras of treachery and killed him. To justify the killing of this man, who may well have been a friend of Bahrām, the story that we find in Dīnawarī was invented: the anonymous prisoner betrayed and killed the king's vizier, and then Bahrām killed the prisoner in revenge. The cover-up story was then blended with the killing of Pherochanes by his two generals — a possible counter-operation by Bahrām. This deformation of the truth probably represents an attempt to salvage Bahrām's reputation as a magnanimous hero.

We might venture another identification, even bolder than the last. Based on similarity of name alone I *suggest* that Dīnawarī's Hurmazd Jurābzīn (Firdawsī's Ḥurrād-i-Barzīn)⁷⁶⁷ is the same as Theophylact's Chubriadanes, the Persian commander at Nisibis.⁷⁶⁸ The variant spelling 'Ḥurābzīn', which we find in the Petrograd manuscript of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭūwāl*, would tend to support this identification. Dīnawarī makes this man a marzbān and Hurmazd's envoy to the Turks, whom he discourages from raiding Ḥurāsān.⁷⁶⁹ When Bahrām draws near Herāt, Jurābzīn goes

767. HURMAZD, l. 586:

خرّاد برزین

768. THEOPHYLACT, IV.1.4.

769. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 83: l. 5–8.

out to meet him, presumably to give him information about the Turkish enemy. But when the ḥāqān gets wind of this, he has Jurābzīn captured and imprisoned. Jurābzīn escapes again and this infuriates the ḥāqān, who determines to march against Bahrām. Firdawsī assigns a similar *rôle* to Ḥurrād-i-Barzīn, but adds that he is to take note of the size of the Turkish army and the value of its treasures⁷⁷⁰ — an implication that Ḥurrād-i-Barzīn was implicit in the slander against Bahrām, and on the eve of battle with the Turks, Ḥurrād-i-Barzīn tries without success to prevent Bahrām from fighting.⁷⁷¹ Unfortunately, nothing in Theophylact’s *History* bears any obvious resemblance to this story. We hear only that some of Bahrām’s men took control of Nisibis, and killed Chubriadanēs, whose severed head and limbs were sent to Hurmazd as ‘tokens of irreconcilable revolt’.⁷⁷²

If we accept my identification, and if we assume the accuracy of Theophylact’s account of Chubriadanēs’ death, a tentative inference presents itself. Chubriadanēs / Jurābzīn / Ḥurrād-i-Barzīn was probably a loyalist general who had no great role to play apart from simply defending, or attempting to defend, Hurmazd’s throne from attack. His murder at Nisibis served no purpose apart from signaling the beginning of Bahrām’s revolt. All memory of this heinous crime was blotted out from the Bahrām book, and Jurābzīn / Ḥurrād-i-Barzīn was made more actively malevolent than he really was.

Remarks

There was no marriage alliance between Ḥusraw I and a Turkish ḥāqān: but there was such an alliance between Iran and the Hephthalites, and Hurmazd IV was the product of it. Dīnawarī’s claim that Hurmazd was half Turk must be disregarded. Though Dīnawarī’s testimony cannot *replace* evidence offered by Theophylact and Sebeos, his account of Bahrām Čōbīn’s war on the

770. HURMAZD, l. 586–540.

771. HURMAZD, l. 791–800.

772. THEOPHYLACT, IV.1.5.

Turks and its aftermath can probably be taken seriously. Dīnawarī allows us to infer that the late ḥāqān's son (whom Dīnawarī calls Yaltikīn) assumed Turkish leadership as little more than a client king.⁷⁷³ Dīnawarī's report of Hurmazd IV's humiliating gesture, whereby he gave Bahrām Čōbīn womens clothes, is true. But it did not *cause* the revolt of Bahrām Čōbīn. Dīnawarī, following the Bahrām book, excuses Bahrām from making an overt bid for the throne, but we should prefer Sebeos' testimony whereby Bahrām sought openly to annihilate the House of Sāsān. The movement to put young Ḥusraw on the throne (orchestrated by his uncles Bindūya and Biṣṭām, gained momentum as Bahrām advanced on Ctesiphon. All sources evince a high level of confusion, occasioned perhaps by a wide variety of conflicting stories. Dīnawarī's timing of Ḥusraw's flight northward is more credible than other alternatives, and for this reason *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* cannot be ignored in future efforts to make sense of the history in question. It is difficult to take seriously Dīnawarī's allegation of a meeting between Hurmazd IV and young Ḥusraw which resulted in the latter's resolve to seek assistance from the Roman emperor. It is more likely that Hurmazd had been killed before Ḥusraw's flight. *Al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* seems to have picked up evidence of Ḥusraw II's use of Christian Arab clients as middlemen between himself and the Romans. We have clear evidence of a propaganda barrage whereby Ḥusraw II put it about that he had converted to Christianity as a means of gaining Roman favour. Ḥusraw's seeking asylum in a monastery at Hīt — which has been noticed only by Dīnawarī — must have been intended as proof of the sincerity of the young king's conversion. The exposition of Ḥusraw II's treaty with New Rome is best articulated by Sebeos, as is Ḥusraw's return to power. It is Dīnawarī, however, who offers the best treatment of death of Bahrām Čōbīn: he was killed by slave in a conspiracy operated by the Turkish queen and Hurmazd Jurābzīn, envoy of Ḥusraw II.

773. Dīnawarī's use of Yaltikīn (which sounds like a made-up Turkish title) and *tarḥān* (a real Turkish title) would have been familiar to Dīnawarī and his audience by reason of growing Turkish hegemony in the Abbasid caliphate when *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* was composed.

VIII. THE REVOLT OF BIṢṬĀM

Introduction

Dīnawarī begins his narrative of the revolt of Biṣṭām with the death of the rebel Bahrām Čōbīn, and Ḥusraw's execution of Bindūya.⁷⁷⁴ After ten years of biding his time, Ḥusraw resolved to revenge himself on his maternal uncles, who killed his father Hurmazd IV. Though the pretext given by Dīnawarī is difficult to believe literally,⁷⁷⁵ Ḥusraw began by summoning Bindūya before him in order to have him maimed in a public square.

As he bled to death, Bindūya is said to have taken to cursing Ḥusraw and the house of Sāsān which he calls perfidious. Ḥusraw responds by citing Bindūya's murder of his father — evidence of his own perfidy. The exchange may not be genuine, but it surely represents real tensions between some of the nobility and the reigning dynasty. Ḥusraw finished off Bindūya by having him stoned to death.

Ḥusraw then attempts to trick Biṣṭām into coming to him.⁷⁷⁶ But the plan failed, when a certain Mardān Bih Qahramān met Biṣṭām at the border of Qūmis and told him of Bindūya's death, and urged Biṣṭām to flee. So Biṣṭām returned to Daylam and his approach heartened the followers of Bahrām Čōbīn who remained there. Bahrām's successor, Mardān Sīna, received Biṣṭām and treated him well. It was Mardān Sīna and his companions who urged Biṣṭām to take command of Bahrām's rebel movement and take the throne from Ḥusraw. The speech that Dīn-

774. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 105: l. 10 *et seqq.*

775. Ḥusraw had made Bindūya treasurer. During a game of polo in which a certain Šīrzād son of Bahbūdān played well, Ḥusraw wrote to Bindūya commanding that the victorious sportsman be given four hundred thousand dirhams. Bindūya's predictable objection was the pretext for his murder (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 105: l. 14 to p. 106: l. 1).

776. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 106: l. 12–18.

awarī puts into the mouth of Mardān Sīna and his grandees stresses Biṣṭām's royal lineage by virtue of his descent from Bahman, elder brother to Sāsān:⁷⁷⁷

why is it that Kisrā laid claim to the kingdom from thee, whilst thou art son of Sābūr son of Ḥurbundād of the pure lineage of Bahman son of Isfandiyād? Verily ye are brothers to the house of Sāsān and partakers with them in the kingdom.

This almost certainly represents the rebels' anti-Sasanian propaganda. Bahrām's partisans give Kurdiya, whom Dīnawarī identifies as Bahrām's sister, to Biṣṭām as wife, and the rebels pledged allegiance to their new leader.⁷⁷⁸ Dīnawarī claims that Biṣṭām's army included one hundred thousand men. His first move was to take Dastabā as a forward base from which to raid the Jabal, Ḥulwān, Saymara, and Māsabadān, thereby driving out Ḥusraw's lieutenants and dihqāns.⁷⁷⁹

Dīnawarī includes an epistolary exchange which is unlikely to be genuine, but which once again represents the complaints of a disaffected nobility against the ruling dynasty. Biṣṭām's reponse is illustrative:⁷⁸⁰

Thy letter is come to me together with thy deceit that thou hast told me of and the guile that thou hast written. Die in thine anger and taste of the evil of thy deed, and know that thou art not more worthy of this power than I, but rather I am more worthy of it than thou, for I am the son of Dārā son of Dārā, who fought Iskandar, but ye (O son of Sāsān) took what was rightfully ours by force and craft. Your father Sāsān was only a shepherd, and if his father had known better he would not have kept the kingdom from him and given it to his daughter Ḥumānā.'

777. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 107: l. 1–4.

778. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 107: l. 11–12.

779. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 107: l. 15–17.

780. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 108: l. 3–8. The use of the second person singular pronoun to refer to Ḥusraw II is grammatically indefensible in Arabic and may be a sign of literal translation from Middle Persian. Or the pronoun may simply refer to the House of Sāsān as a whole.

Biṣṭām claims descent from the Achaemenian king Darius III, and summons up the anti-Sasani-an propaganda accoring to which Sāsān was a shepherd — a theme going back the *Kārnāmag* of Ardašīr, to which Dīnawarī alludes elsewhere in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*.⁷⁸¹

Ḥusraw supposedly sent against Biṣṭām three armies of twelve thousand men each, under the command of Sābūr son of Abarkān and Hurmazd Jurābzīn. This smacks of the Iranian epic tradition in which heroes regularly march against the foes of Iran with twelve thousand men, as Dīnawarī alludes elsewhere. But there is no reason to doubt that a battle took place at some point.

The outcome of the war was not decided after three days, says Dīnawarī. Ḥusraw conspired with a certain Kurdī, nephew to the late Bahrām, to convince Kurdīya to join Ḥusraw's side and to kill Biṣṭām. A letter sent by Ḥusraw to Kurdīya won her over to his plan. She slew Biṣṭām by making him drunk and stabbing him in his sleep.⁷⁸² She then fled to Ḥusraw who took her as wife. Finding him dead the next morning, Biṣṭām's followers dispersed. This was the end of Biṣṭām's revolt.

Analysis

Despite touches of the fanciful, we can probably trust Dīnawarī's account of Biṣṭām's revolt in general. For Dīnawarī's account is better than what we find in other sources. A much inferior contemporary account of the revolt seems to be embedded in the *Chronicle of Ḥūzistān*, a text composed around 652 but clearly based on earlier sources going back to the 590s.⁷⁸³ Here is the relevant passage:⁷⁸⁴

781. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 30: l. 2–6.

782. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 110: l. 1–3.

783. HOWARD-JOHNSTON 2010B, p. 128–129.

784. CHRONICLE OF ḤŪZISTĀN, p. 16: l. 19 to p. 17: l. 5:

If we are prepared to take Dīnawarī's narrative seriously on the ground that it is better than a contemporary witness recycled in a later document, it may be worthwhile to probe other sources for evidence to strengthen or correct this testimony. Two such sources are Sebeos' *History* and numismatics.

The revolt of Biṣṭām, which mutated quickly into an insurgency, is described by Sebeos (pages 94–98 in Abgaryan's edition). Sebeos begins by noting that Ḥusraw decided to revenge himself on all those implicated in the murder of his father Hurmazd IV, but he does not give any indication of the date at which Ḥusraw acted. Sebeos has clearly compressed the details of his source: Bindūya (whom he calls Vndoy) was simply arrested and killed; and though Sebeos is aware that a ruse was employed to lure Biṣṭām (whom he calls Vstam) to court, he says only that Biṣṭām was informed of it 'somehow' and fled to Gīlān, where he raised an army.⁷⁸⁵ This corroborates in broad outline with what we find in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭwāl*, but Dīnawarī's more detailed testimony is to be preferred.

Sebeos then gives us a very brief overview of raids launched by Biṣṭām's forces on the area surrounding Ray. This confirms Dīnawarī's claim that Dastabā, which is near Ray, was Biṣṭām's base, from which he made raids on certain territories in Media.⁷⁸⁶ The pitched battle which ensued saw his defeat at flight to Gīlān a second time.⁷⁸⁷ This was the beginning of Biṣṭām's insurgency. He went from Gīlān to 'the regions of the Parthians'⁷⁸⁸ in order to raise more troops. An Armenian garrison at Ispahan revolted and joined Biṣṭām.⁷⁸⁹ Strife in Amaṭ, Rōyean,

785. SEBEOS, p. 94: l. 27 to p. 95: l. 3. Sebeos' vague reference to Biṣṭām's flight: 'այլ ապստամբեալ անկանէր յամուր երկին Գեղայ' (SEBEOS, p. 95: l. 1–2).

786. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 107–108.

787. SEBEOS, p. 95: l. 4–15.

788. Երթայր ի կողմանս Պարթևաց (SEBEOS, p. 95: l. 13–14). This means the region surrounding Balḥ, therefore Bactria or Tuḥāristān.

789. SEBEOS, p. 96: l. 3–14.

Zrēčan, and Taparastan, principalities in Gurgān which Sebeos names, rose in revolt and were subdued again by Smbat Bagratuni, marzbān of Gurgān⁷⁹⁰. Sebeos does not connect these uprisings explicitly with Biṣṭām's insurrection, but it is probable that Biṣṭām and his forces stirred up trouble as they moved eastward. These details can be used to flesh out Dīnawarī's account of the revolt.

What follows is difficult, but not impossible, to reconcile with Dīnawarī's account. After an interval of time, says Sebeos, Biṣṭām seems to have set himself up as a regional strongman in the northeastern Iran.⁷⁹¹ This is to be inferred from Sebeos' claim that Biṣṭām went 'to the land of the Parthians', and subjugated two Kushan kings, whom Sebeos calls Šawk and Pariovk.⁷⁹² It is likely that one of these kings was a Hephthalite, and Sebeos' use of 'Kushan' may be some sort of anachronistic convention.⁷⁹³ Sebeos' account here shows signs of compression and confusion. Biṣṭām and his Central Asian allies are supposed to have attacked 'Asorestan', by which Sebeos must mean the metropolitan area of Ctesiphon.⁷⁹⁴ There is no other evidence that such an attack took place, and Sebeos may have meant rather that such an attack had been planned and was on the point of execution. In this connexion, it is worth noting that, according to Dīnawarī, Biṣṭām and his army reached Hamadān.⁷⁹⁵ It was there, says Dīnawarī, that Ḥusraw II's forces fought him — a perfectly credible detail.

790. SEBEOS, p. 96: l. 26–27.

791. Cf. NÖLDEKE 1879, p. 484.

792. SEBEOS, p. 97: l. 15–16.

793. HOWARD-JOHNSTON 1999, p. 187–188.

794. Եւ գումարալ զամենայն զարսն կողմանց Արևելից՝ դիմեաց գնաց յԱսորեստան զարու մեծաւ և հզար յոյժ, զի սպանցէ զԽոսրով և առցէ յինքն զթագաւորութիւն նորա (SEBEOS, p. 97: l. 16–19).

795. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 108–109.

Sebeos claims that Biṣṭām's Turkish ally Pariovk quickly turned on him and killed him by guile; and that Biṣṭām's baggage and goods, together with his wife, were seized and carried off.⁷⁹⁶ Though skirmishes followed in Komš as Biṣṭām's partisans scattered and fled, his revolt fizzled.⁷⁹⁷

That Biṣṭām was killed by Turkish strategem seems to be corroborated by the testimony of the *Chronicle of Hūzistān*, which (as we saw above) blames Biṣṭām's death on 'a certain Turk'. Nevertheless, it is strange that the apparent mastermind of the plot, king Pariovk, has been shorn of all distinguishing features (apart from his ethnicity) in the *Chronicle of Hūzistān*.

Perhaps more troubling is Dīnawarī's implication of Kurdīya in the plot that ended Biṣṭām's life and revolt. Kurdīya, sister and probable wife of Bahrām Čōbīn, married Biṣṭām, who thereby increased his prestige. In time Ḥusraw II entreated her to defect and kill Biṣṭām, and sent a letter to this effect with a messenger named Kurdī. In a move reminiscent of the apocryphal Judith's slaying of Holofernes, Kurdīya makes Biṣṭām drunk and stabs him in his sleep.⁷⁹⁸

The Bahrām book must have exaggerated Kurdīya's role in Biṣṭām's revolt by omitting nearly all other elements in the plot against Biṣṭām. She was surely involved somehow, else it is impossible to explain her appearance in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* and the *Šāhnāma*. The kernel of truth may be simply that she defected to the Sasanian side (either by dint of persuasion or of her own accord), and then betrayed Biṣṭām to his Turkish allies, who in turn had been perverted by Ḥusraw. In any case, her proximity to Biṣṭām would have made her not only an ideal assassin but also one to betray him to others. The absence of the Turks in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*, whose testimony is derived from Ḥusraw II's propaganda, is unsurprising. We might infer that Ḥusraw conspired with Pariovk and Kurdīya to kill Biṣṭām, but reserving all the credit for the Sasanian side the au-

796. Եւ ժամադիր լեալ զաւրացն իւրց Պարիովկին՝ ազդ առնէր նոցա փութանակի, և նոցա զհետ արշաւեալ հասանէին և կալեալ զկին Վստամայ և զամենայն աղիս և զկարասի նորա՝ դարձան փութանակի և գնացին (SEBEOS, p. 97: l. 30 to p. 98: l. 2).

797. SEBEOS, p. 98: l. 3–17.

798. DĪNĀWARĪ, p. 109–110.

thor of the Bahrām book reimagined Kurdīya, who became ʿHusraw’s wife, as a staunch legitimist. This would explain the origin of Kurdīya’s seemingly incongruous pro-Sasanian speech to Bahrām Čōbīn and his followers, which we find in the *Šāhnāma*.⁷⁹⁹

Coins struck by Biṣṭām suggest that his rebellion lasted ten years. For none of Biṣṭām’s coins bear a regnal year later than ten.⁸⁰⁰ So we may safely infer that Biṣṭām’s life and insurrection ended in that year. Biṣṭām’s revolt must have begun when that of Bahrām Čōbīn ended and ʿHusraw II returned to power. Bearing in mind that ʿHusraw was restored to the throne toward the end of the year 591, we have a chronological armature to work with. So Biṣṭām’s rebellion lasted from 591 to 600.

The testimony of Sebeos corroborates this chronology also.⁸⁰¹ Based on events surrounding Sebeos’ narrative of Biṣṭām’s revolt, we can situate Biṣṭām’s death in the first year of Smbat Bagratuni’s appointment as marzbān of Gurgān — the year 600, and ʿHusraw II’s tenth regnal year.⁸⁰² This chronology makes sense of Dīnawarī’s claim that ʿHusraw waited ten years before revenging himself on his uncles, a phrase which if understood literally cannot be true. Dīnawarī must have meant that ʿHusraw’s revenge on his uncles was complete in his tenth regnal year. This means that the outbreak of Biṣṭām’s first attack on Ctesiphon did not coincide with his assuming command of Bahrām’s rebel movement. Following Sebeos’ chronology we can situate Biṣṭām’s first armed attack in the same year as the memorable Vahewuni affair — 595.⁸⁰³

799. HURMAZD, l. 1618–1669.

800. For a discussion of Biṣṭām’s coins see PARUCK 1976, p. 112–113; *Cf.* also CHRISTENSEN 1944, p. 446.

801. HOWARD-JOHNSTON 1999, p. 179–180.

802. SEBEOS, p. 96.

803. The Vahewuni affair (narrated in SEBEOS, p. 86–90; 94) was essentially a Roman effort recruit Armenian soldiers. Sebeos interprets it as ‘a Machiavellian scheme to gut Armenia of man power’ (HOWARD-JOHNSTON 1999, p. 176). The troops who had been mobilised in Armenia at this time (spring of 595) fought against Biṣṭām and his rebels immediately thereafter.

Remarks

The revolt of Biṣṭām is Dīnawarī's finest hour as an historian. For on the strength of his narrative we can reconstruct the main events of the insurrection, its mutation into an insurgency, the propaganda used by the rebel, and many of the details of the plot to kill him. Sebeos and the *Chronicle of Ḥūzistān* fill in the rest.

But we cannot escape the fact that Dīnawarī's chronology is somewhat garbled. If we assume in this connexion that Dīnawarī faithfully copied his source (probably the end of the Bahrām book), then we are forced to believe that the source in question must have been redacted well after the events which it describes. No one who had lived through Ḥusraw II's flight, restoration, and revenge on his uncles would have believed that Ḥusraw did away with Bindūya and Biṣṭām in one and the same year. Perhaps Dīnawarī's garbled chronology can be blamed on Jabala Ibn Sālim, first redactor of the Bahrām book in Arabic.

Nöldeke refused to take Dīnawarī's chronology seriously, on the ground that a ten-year revolt would have drained the resources of the state to such a degree that Ḥusraw II's Roman war, which broke out soon afterwards, would not have been possible.⁸⁰⁴ But the testimony of Sebeos, and numismatic evidence, of which Nöldeke was perhaps unaware, shows that this chronology is basically trustworthy. Nevertheless, this does not mean that Biṣṭām was in open insurrection for ten years. His first battle with Sasanian forces must have occurred in 595 and the second one, which never occurred, must have been launched in 600. *Usque huc et non amplius.*

804. NÖLDEKE 1879, p. 435.

General Observations on Iranian History Arising from the Case Studies

Historians may often be in danger of falling victim to a sort of pointillism, whereby the minute and the specific receive more emphasis than the broad and the general. The foregoing case studies — the largest part of this thesis — focused on small but important moments in Sasanian and Eurasian history. These studies do not amount to a broad vision of history, and as a result it may be difficult for the non-specialist to make sense of my studies in the larger *tableau* of Late Antiquity. So what follows is a coherent exposition of Iranian history, mirroring in many ways the structure of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* itself and integrating the findings of my cases studies into the wide scene of Eurasian history.⁸⁰⁵



The successive monarchies of the Assyrians, the Lydians, the Medes, and the Babylonians ruled over Asia till Babylon fell to the arms of Cyrus the Great. The empire of Persia under the Achaemenid dynasty was resisted by the arms of the Greeks, and the battles of Thermopylae, Salamis, Plataea, and Mycale first checked and then halted the victorious advance of Iran into Europe by land and by sea. But the annihilation of the empire of Persia — the revenge of the Greeks — was operated by a Macedonian.

The irresistible march of Alexander the Great accomplished the ruin of Iran and, as it seemed at the time, the conquest of the world. The victory of Alexander cast a shadow over the Iranian mind, and the conqueror became at once an object of invincible hatred and undying admiration. Successive ages blamed him for the incineration of the Zoroastrian scriptures, but Al-

805. The reader should note that in the ensuing narrative gaps are filled in, much that would otherwise be prolix is made brief, and emphasis is placed on the role of the individual in history. I have also striven, as did Dīnawarī, to attain to a high literary idiom.

exander was also transformed (perhaps with less justice) into an Iranian king and votary of the one God, whose worship he diffused throughout the earth.

With the death of Alexander, the rule of Asia was entrusted to his general, Seleucus, and to his eponymous dynasty succeeded the formidable power of the Parthians.⁸⁰⁶ The westward march of the Parni, a people whose origins lay between the Oxus and Jaxartes rivers, ended at or near the Seleucid satrapy of Parthava. From this region did the Parni acquire the name 'Parthian', the appellation by which they became known to the Romans. In 247 BC, Aršak (known in the West as Arsaces I) was crowned king of the Parthians, and the Seleucid monarchy steadily lost ground to the Arsacid dynasty, to which that king had given his name.

Under the reign of Mihrdād I (*r. c.* 171–138 B.C.) Parthia became a great power. He and his successors won astonishing victories against the Seleucids, the Romans, and the Graeco-Bactrian kingdoms of the east, and faced down successive waves of nomadic invaders emerging from the Asiatic steppe. It was towards the end of his life and reign, in perhaps 141 B.C., that Mihrdād I had himself crowned king in Seleucia-Ctesiphon where he established his capital. The reign of his successor Mihrdād II (*r. c.* 123–88 B.C.) saw the signing of trade agreements with China and Rome in 115 B.C. and 96 B.C. respectively. These agreements gave political and diplomatic reality to what von Richtoffen called 'die Seidenstraße', or 'the silk route'.

Conflict between Rome and Parthia arose amidst political disorder. Armenia rose in revolt, a fratricidal struggle ensued between the sons of Phraates III (*r. c.* 70–57 B.C.), and a series of Parthian monarchs who are no more than names to us bespeaks internal trouble. In 55 B.C., Crassus (who had lately formed, with Pompey and Caesar, the first Triumvirate in 59 or 60 B.C.) rose to the governorship of Syria. Spurred on by ambition, and wishing perhaps to take advantage of Parthian political strife, Crassus invaded in 53 BC. His ignominious defeat at the battle of Carrhae, near the modern village of Alınbaşı in southern Turkey, might have furnished a cau-

806. In reconstructing Parthian history, I follow SHAHBAZI / SCHIPPMANN / ALRAM / BOYCE 2011, p. 525–546.

tionary lesson to all subsequent invaders of Mesopotamia. Parthian heavy cavalry, commanded by the young general Sūrēn smashed the Roman army, and Crassus and his son perished. But the great victory of Sūrēn was as fleeting as his short life. The King of Kings, Urud I, fearing a future rival, ordered the murder of his general who had not yet attained his thirtieth year.

Warfare hardly ceased between Rome and Parthia until the fall of the House of Aršak. Toward the end of the second century, the victorious advance of Roman emperor Alexander Severus achieved the decisive humiliation of Parthian prestige, and a succession crisis which began in 213 was an obvious symptom of that empire's irreversible decline. The rise of the House of Sāsān followed the waning of the Arsacid dynasty. The expansive power of Ardašīr I, first king of the Sasanian dynasty, was founded on a potent mixture of Zoroastrian orthodoxy and political leadership in the province of Fārs. The House of Sāsān advertised itself as the heir to Achaemenid rule, and power was projected outwards from the Sasanian centre at Iṣṭahr, not far from ancient Persepolis, until all Atropatene and the lowlands of Mesopotamia acknowledged the rule of Ardašīr. The defeat and death of both rival claimants to the Arsacid throne saw the end of all opposition to Sasanian rule, and in the middle of the second decade of the third century Ardašīr was crowned King of Kings at Ctesiphon, former capital of the Arsacids.

Throughout this memorable revolution, the muse of history was silent. Public commemoration surrounded the rise of Ardašīr with a cloud of mysterious portents some of which have come down to us in various versions of the so-called *Kārnāmag*. The divine mandate and legitimacy of the new regime received special emphasis, and Sāsān (ancestor of the eponymous dynasty) was proclaimed as a humble shepherd: a symbolic figure recalling both the nomadic past of Iran and the youth of Cyrus the Great.

The King of Kings extended his power throughout Iran, and reinvigorated the Parthian policy of aggressive warfare in the west.⁸⁰⁷ Prestige flowed to the new dynasty from successive

807. In reconstructing the early days of the Sasanian dynasty, I follow HOWARD-JOHNSTON 1995, p. 158–165.

campaigns against the Romans. Nisibis and Carrhae fell in 235 and in 240 Hatra was taken. Šāpūr I was a worthy heir to his warlike father, and the son of Ardašīr showed that the House of Sāsān was more than a match for Rome. He crushed the emperor Gordian's counteroffensive in 244; he destroyed the Roman field army at Barbalissus; Hierapolis and Antioch were delivered to fire and sword, and Šāpūr laid waste northern Syria in 253; and in 260 he defeated and captured the emperor Valerian near Edessa. Thereafter he crossed the Euphrates at Samosata and spread destruction though Cilicia, Cappadocia, and Syria. And Šāpūr's diplomacy removed Armenia and Iberia from the Roman sphere of influence.

The astonishing rise of the House of Sāsān and its dedication to warfare in the west might have taught the Romans to acknowledge a military equal. But three more invasions followed led by Carus, Galerius, and Julian, in 283, 298, and 363, two of which ended in disastrous defeat for the Romans. Military expenditure on a vast scale led to the construction of fortresses in northern Mesopotamia between 337–350 and 359–361: the Late Antique equivalent of an arms race. There was much diplomatic posturing in the Transcaucasus.

It was only in 387 that Rome and Iran came to be animated by a spirit of cooperation, and a phase of stable relations followed. Theodosius I agreed to the partition of Transcaucasia on terms that were highly unfavorable to the Romans, for most of Armenia, Iberia, and Albania went to Iran. Cooperation was founded on the mutual acknowledgement of the threat posed by nomad powers to the northeast of the great sedentary empires.

The Xiongnu, known in the west as Huns, sacked the Chinese capital Luoyang in 311, and imposed their authority throughout northern China.⁸⁰⁸ Chinese retaliation came a generation later and took the form of a war of extermination in 349.⁸⁰⁹ The Xiongnu fled Chinese wrath, and, displacing other Altaic and Indo-European tribes as they moved westward, appeared

808. The evidence for the identification of the Huns with the Xiongnu (Ancient Sogdian Letter 2) is presented and discussed in DE LA VAISSIÈRE 2005, p. 43–46.

809. GRAFF 2002, p. 54–63; BARFIELD 1989, p. 97–103. I owe these references to Mr James Howard-Johnston.

along Iran's frontier in Ḥurāsān and in what is now Ukraine in 350.⁸¹⁰ This led to the migration of the Greuthungi and Tervingi⁸¹¹ below the Danube into Roman territory. Roman resistance to settling these Germanic tribes within the empire provoked the Battle of Adrianople in 378 in which most of the Roman army was destroyed, and in which the emperor Valens perished. In the 440s the Romans were to face the Xiongnu under the leadership of Attila.

Mutual cooperation was assisted by the efforts of Anthemius (praetorian prefect at Constantinople) and Marutha (bishop of Sophanene in Armenia).⁸¹² Anthemius promoted a series of embassies from Yazdgard I (*r.* 399–421): these preserved good relations along the Roman and Iranian frontier and left the Romans a free hand to deal with trouble in the Balkans and in Isauria. The medical skill of Marutha, as it was said, cured the ailing son of Yazdgard, all treatments administered by Zoroastrians having failed. Close diplomatic ties followed, and agreement was reached on most points of contention. Notably, Christian churches in Iran were to be tolerated and protected, and the Romans reciprocated concerning their own Zoroastrian minorities — a token offer since Zoroastrians were not numerous in Roman territory. Defence of the Caucasus passes, though which nomads were likely to migrate, was to be funded equally by both powers.⁸¹³

But nomads posed a far greater threat to Iran than they did to Rome. For Iran's north-eastern frontier abutted the steppe directly, and had few natural defences.⁸¹⁴ And Hunnish raids on Iran in the last decade of the fourth century passed through the Caucasus and spread destruc-

810. HOWARD-JOHNSTON 2010A, p. 41–42.

811. These tribes are commonly known respectively as Ostrogoths and Visigoths.

812. I follow WILLIAMS / FRIELL 1999, p. 5–65.

813. Roman cooperation in this last matter was slow in coming, and it was perhaps to offset this that international trade was routed through Callinicum, Nisibis, and Artaxata — to Persian advantage.

814. HOWARD-JOHNSTON 2010, p. 42–43.

tion on both sides of the Persian and Roman frontier.⁸¹⁵ Aggression from the steppe continued into the fifth century until Bahrām V (r. 421–439) turned the tide in favour of Iran.⁸¹⁶ The centre of Xiongnu power had by the end of Bahrām V's reign shifted west, and new foes had appeared along Iran's frontier.

Not long after the era of mutual cooperation had begun, the Romans began to put strain on relations with Iran. The cause (or perhaps the principal symptom) of this change of mood was the pious dictatorship of the emperor's sister Pulcheria (d. 453) within the imperial household at Constantinople.⁸¹⁷ Iranian Christians grew restless, and their opposition to the Iranian régime (surely abetted by the orthodox malevolence of Pulcheria) was met by the wrath of the Zoroastrian hierarchy who demanded a royal crackdown. But Yazdgard I did not persecute his Christian subjects, and favoured a policy of conciliation. For this reason some texts of the *Hudāynāma* tradition preserve relics of Zoroastrian hatred of this king. Yahballaha I, bishop of Ctesiphon (his term in office was 415–420) was sent to Constantinople as an official envoy of the King of Kings. This attempt at mediation failed, for Pulcheria forced the unhappy ambassador to submit to a test of orthodoxy. At nearly the same time in 419 the Romans connived at the destruction of a fire-altar in Hūzistān, and the guilty Christians and the bishop who supervised their vandalism were put to death: such was the limit of Yazdgard's tolerance.

To the reign of Yazdgard I succeed Bahrām V (r. 421–438), a zealous and aggressive Zoroastrian king. It was he who unleashed upon the Christians of Iran the persecution that was much desired of the Zoroastrian clergy: the disinterment of the long-dead faithful (the substance

815. GREATREX / LIEU 2002, p. 17–19.

816. DE LA VAISSIÈRE 2005, p. 99–100. Dīnawarī mentions that Bahrām V was the first Sasanian king to confront the Turks (a gross anachronism) and describes an elaborate feint whereby the king of Iran frightened away the nomad power by attaching rock-filled animal skins to pack animals: the terrible noise which arose from the skins as the animals dragged them led to victory (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 58–59).

817. The emperor at the time was Theodosius II.

of his persecution) left a lasting impression upon Iranian Christians. Refugees fled to Constantinople. The Roman response was a double invasion of Iran through Persian Armenia and Mesopotamia, led respectively by the generals Anatolius and Ardaburius. Anatolius joined forces with the Armenian rebel movement which had lately irrupted with Roman backing. Arabs attacked Roman Syria, and here we may discern the influence of Iran. Ardaburius defeated a Persian army sent to oppose him, and besieged Nisibis, but the arrival of the Iranian host forced the Romans to raise the siege.

Once again the might of Tūrān recalled the Great Powers to a policy of cooperation. For warfare would surely have continued had not an army of Huns invaded Thrace in 422. Negotiations restored the *status quo ante*: construction of fortresses in the frontier region was halted; both sides agreed not to meddle with one another's Arab clients; and Rome agreed to end support for Armenian separatism. An important consequence of recent conflict was the prudent separation of the Iranian church from allegiance to the church of the Roman empire.

The next conflict, in 441, was an unexpected attack on Roman Armenia by Yazdgard II: a brazen violation of the last treaty. The King of Kings had hoped to take advantage of Roman distraction. Gaiseric had taken Carthage in 439 and Roman resources had been diverted to meet the Vandal threat in Africa with a vast armada launched in 441. It was not a pacific spirit, but rather the appearance of the Hephthalites along Iran's northeastern border that forced an early end to this conflict and restored cooperation.

In the reign of Pērōz (459–484) Iran faced down first the Kidarites and then the Hephthalites who replaced them along their northeastern border. The power of the nomad had come to be a decisive factor in Iranian politics, for it was with nomad assistance that Pērōz came to the throne in the first place, having defeated his brother Hurmazd III with the help of the Hephthalites. It was after the formation of this alliance that Qubād, the son of Pērōz, was sent to the Hephthalite court as a hostage. The Kidarites Pērōz vanquished; the Hephthalites were willing to

establish some sort of accomodation despite Iranian hostility. But Pērōz, wishing perhaps to win glory and maintain prestige, refused and went to war in 484.⁸¹⁸

To call the fall of Pērōz the Persian answer to the Battle of Adrianople would be to fail to grasp its true significance. The disastrous defeat of Iran saw the destruction of the Sasanian army, the death of the King of Kings, and the loss of Iranian influence over the silk trade.⁸¹⁹ Iran became tributary to the Hephthalites. Tensions in the Caucasus and the ruin of the Iranian army forced Iran to come to terms with the leadership of the 482–484 rebel movement in Armenia. A crisis of succession broke out, and the vacant throne came quickly to be dominated by a faction of the Iranian nobility.

The reign of Balāš, successor to Pērōz, was short and troubled. This unhappy man was not the son of Pērōz, but rather his brother. Though this might normally disqualify him from the succession, Qubād was younger than Balāš, and perhaps still a hostage among the Hephthalites. Balāš was therefore the right choice, elected by the nobles of Iran under the leadership of a mysterious nobleman. But this election was contested by Zareh, one of Pērōz' sons, and a fresh levy of Armenian troupes was needed to crush the ensuing rebellion.⁸²⁰ The *History of Łazar P'arpec'i* (our only source for this event) implies that this levy preceeded the pacification of Armenia, and if we be allowed to speculate, we may infer that the two events were almost simultaneous, and that the use of Armenian troops in a Persian civil war was one of the conditions on which the toleration of Christianity in Armenia was granted.

Nevertheless, restoring Armenia to Sasanian empire was advantageous for many reasons. Armenian troops, famed for being brave and hardy were a customary choice and their usefulness would have extended well beyond the crushing of a rebellion. A stable Armenia, on pacific terms with Iran, was key to the stability of the Caucasus in general and to Iranian interests there. Much

818. CHRISTENSEN 1944, p. 292–296.

819. JACKSON BONNER 2011, p. 99–100.

820. ŁAZAR, p. 171–172.

of this surely has to do with maintaining control over the Caspian and Alan Gates, controlled by the Iberian king Vaxt'ang, lest as his fearful behest the Caucasian Huns moved through them into Iran.⁸²¹ Armenia was also strategically important, as the Iranian army's most practical route into Roman territory was through that country. A war on two fronts would have been fatal to Iran at the close of the fifth century, and Iran required peace and stability in the west in order to focus on problems brought about by thralldom to the Hephthalites. These concessions to Armenia mark the first steps in a shift of Persian interest away from the Roman frontier in Mesopotamia towards the Transcaucasus.

The importance of the Hephthalite threat can be gauged from the generosity of Iran's concessions to Armenia. The chief demands of Vahan, leader of the Armenian rebels, which were granted immediately by Balāš, were the free exercise of the Christian religion and the demolition all fire temples.⁸²² But the toleration of Armenian Christianity — even if necessary, even if the Iranian nobility grudgingly approved of it — infuriated the Zoroastrian clergy, and many nobles looked with disgust on the abasement of Iran. Thus the fifth century drew to a close with a series of disturbing blows which degraded the House of Sāsān. But only the fall of Pērōz was noticed in the *Hudāynāma* tradition.

From the moment of Balāš's accession, power was in the hands of a magnate descended from the Parthian Qārin family, which had lately gained political mastery. His rise to power filled a void left by the death of Pērōz, and was attended by conflict with another aristocratic house, that of the Mihrān family. Zarmihr enthroned Balāš, and Qubād after him, and sent his Mihrānid opponent on a deadly mission in the Caucasus. It was under Zarmihr's ascendancy that Mazdakism took root — a militant ideology combining a programme for social change and aggressive militarism. Qubād himself may or may not have been a sincere Mazdakite: he may have

821. This can be inferred from that king's threat to send so many Huns against Iran that the Persian troops will not be able to face them (ŁAZAR, p. 118: l. 31–32).

822. ŁAZAR, p. 116.

been manipulated by the Mazdakite faction led by Zarmihr. But political and military machinery such as were needed to oppose the Mazdakite movement had ceased to function properly. Qubād's apparent endorsement of this ideology infuriated many nobles and Zoroastrian clergy who dethroned and imprisoned him. Qubād's escape, flight to the Hephthalite court, and return with Hephthalite reinforcements forced his brother Jāmāsp from the throne, and accomplished his return to power.

Iran's political problems, which had begun with the fall of Pērōz, had worsened under the dictatorship of the House of Qārin, another representative of which had aided Qubād's escape to the Hephthalites and his restoration. Trouble in Armenia flared up again, mountain-dwelling tribes of Iran revolted, Arabs raided southern Iran,⁸²³ and the furious revolutionary energy of Mazdakism and tension fomented by political strife needed an outlet. Qubād aimed to unite his splintering kingdom in a war with New Rome — a war sponsored by the Hephthalites in 502. The main achievement of this war, and the only one noticed in the *Hudāynāma* tradition, was the capture of Amida. Qubād might have had more success against his Roman foe, but a Hunnish invasion through the Caucasus in 505 or 506 necessitated an armistice of seven years.

Qubād's war achieved some measure of its intended purpose, for reform on a grand scale began in the interval of peace that followed. Caucasian defences were augmented, Iranian infrastructure was improved, and Qubād began the cadastral survey which his son and successor Ḥusraw I was to complete. We can infer that strife amongst the nobility had abated somewhat. Iranian bureaucracy was now potent enough to begin Qubād's project of reform, but incapable of finishing it in good time.

Towards the year 519 the question of succession arose, and Iranian political factions began manoeuvring once again. Qubād favoured his youngest son Ḥusraw over his eldest who was the favorite of the Mazdakite party, and his middle son was blind in one eye and therefore

823. CHRISTENSEN 1944, p. 347–350.

could not be king.⁸²⁴ The adoption of the Ḥusraw by the Roman emperor Justin, which Qubād proposed, might have strengthened the future king's position, but it would surely have encouraged a third influence at the Persian court, thereby disrupting the strife between the parties of Mazdakism and Zoroastrian orthodoxy. The adoption failed, undermined by the Iranian ambassador, a votary of Mazdakism and an Hephthalite sympathiser.⁸²⁵ A sudden crackdown, which has left a somewhat fanciful impression in the *Ḥudāynāma* tradition, saw the humiliation of the Qārīn family and the death of its patriarch, who may have been the prime mover in ensuring the failure of the proposed adoption. Wishing perhaps to appease or conciliate the orthodox Zoroastrian party, Qubād persecuted Christian Iberians — a move which triggered another war with New Rome in 527.

The reign of Ḥusraw I began with trouble, for factional strife had not abated, and the new king inherited the war begun by his father. Kāvūs, Ḥusraw's Mazdakite brother, rose in revolt with his party's backing in 532.⁸²⁶ The revolt was put down, and what remained of the Mazdakite leadership was exterminated in an extensive purge. Ḥusraw's own propaganda advertised him as the destroyer of the heresiarch Mazdak himself, and the renewer of Zoroastrian orthodoxy. Though part of the *Ḥudāynāma* tradition, in harmony with Zoroastrian scripture, preserves this claim, we may never know whether it is true.

Domestic stability required peace with New Rome, and the so-called Eternal Peace was ratified in the year 532, bringing an end to the conflict begun in 527. Both Ḥusraw and Roman emperor Justinian were eager for reform, and competition between the two powers continued as both monarchs recovered lost prestige and improved the machinery of government. Ḥusraw's tax reform stabilised a disrupted social order, and generated a surplus of cash adequate to the improved structure of the Iranian army. Command of the army was divided amongst four generals,

824. CHRISTENSEN 1944, p. 354.

825. *Contra* JACKSON BONNER 2011, p. 104

826. CHRISTENSEN 1944, p. 357.

to whom the government of a quarter of the empire was entrusted also. Part of Ḥusraw's project of reform may have involved the commission of a written account of Iranian history, reinvigorating the ideological strength of the House of Sāsān.⁸²⁷ Portions of this work may have come down to us in the *Ḥudāynāma* tradition.

Qubād's cadastral survey had revived the administrative capacity of the state. Ḥusraw's war with New Rome in 540 showed forth Iran's awesome military power. Control of the Near East was not the object of this war, for the Levantine campaign (which is reported selectively in the *Ḥudāynāma* tradition) was a feint to divert Roman attention from Ḥusraw's true goal. Possession of Lazica, a bridgehead in the Caucasus from which to menace Constantinople by sea, was the prime objective.⁸²⁸ Operations proceeded with astonishing success and the Romans were taken at unawares. But victory in Lazica was short-lived, for problems of supply led to the failure of this northern campaign, and all memory of warfare in Lazica was wiped from the page of Iranian history. The *Ḥudāynāma* tradition remembers nothing of it. Yet despite its untimely end due to an outbreak of the plague, Ḥusraw's success in the Levant was long remembered: the taking of Antioch and the resettling of its population was the highlight of this war. Warfare in the west was also animated by religion. Ḥusraw's supplication and auspices at the temple of Ādur-Gušnāsp in Āzarbāyjān hallowed the bellicose project and advertised the orthodoxy of Ḥusraw's renewal of Iran.

Despite overtures communicated by Armenian prelates, the revolt of Ḥusraw's son Anūš Zāđ in 543 was a Christian uprising in which the Romans were not involved. Poor intelligence or fear of wading into the morass of Iranian political life may explain Roman inaction. But the pitch and moment of this uprising can be gauged not only with reference to Christian fascination which transformed Anūš Zāđ into a martyr, but also by Armenian and Syriac mythologising which turned Ḥusraw himself into a Christian. The epic martyrdom of Anūš Zāđ became in the

827. HOWARD-JOHNSTON 2010B, p. 343.

828. HOWARD-JOHNSTON 2008, p. 80.

course of time a hagiography apt to fill the Christians of Iran with hope that a follower of Christ might one day sit upon the throne of Cyrus and Ardašīr. The preservation and transmission of this hagiography and its introduction in the *Hudāynāma* tradition may remain forever mysterious. But we may infer that Ḥusraw II, whose relationship with Christians was reputed to be close, encouraged the cult of a royal martyr and thereby drew Iranian Christians closer to the throne.

Ḥusraw I was much too preoccupied with the close of the war of 540–562 and an prolonged fight against domestic corruption to take any military action against the Hephthalites in the late 550s or early 560s.⁸²⁹ Iranian attention had been focused on the Caucasus since warfare in the Levant was brought in an abrupt end in 545, but it was about to shift again to Central Asia. Ḥusraw connived at a Turkish aggression, but Iranian troops were not involved, and Iranian interests, especially those involving the silk trade were uninfringed. An Iranian presence was established in some former Hephthalite principalities — perhaps territorial concessions for turning a blind eye — but it is difficult to determine which lands were ceded, if any were ceded at all. The destruction of the Hephthalite menace gave a massive boost to Iranian prestige, and domestic propaganda made Ḥusraw conqueror of Iran's greatest eastern rival. No less impressive was Ḥusraw's siphoning off four Turkish tribes, drawing them into Iran's sphere of influence, in the year 568 — the very moment when the ḥāqān sought to form a strategic alliance with New Rome.

Iranian seizure of Lazica was as much intended to outflank New Rome, as it was to gain strategic advantage. Ḥusraw achieved in the south what he failed to accomplish in the north, and the Iranian conquest of Yemen thoroughly outflanked New Rome. This memorable transaction was effaced from the *Hudāynāma* tradition, for victory in Yemen was short-lived and Ḥusraw's reign ended in a series of grim reverses. Roman emperor Justin ceased to pay tribute to Iran, and provoked an uprising in Armenia in 572.⁸³⁰ In the warfare that followed the aged Ḥusraw took to

829. *Contra* CHRISTENSEN 1944, p. 373.

830. CHRISTENSEN 1944, p. 374.

the field and captured the Roman fortress at Dara, while Justin sank into decrepitude and madness. Again was victory short-lived: though Ḥusraw destroyed Sebaste and Melitene in 576, much of his army perished when the Romans pursued them across the Euphrates.⁸³¹ In 577 Rome and Iran again attempted to return to a policy of cooperation by negotiating the terms of peace. But Ḥusraw died in 579 and his son and unworthy successor Hurmazd IV continued the war. Nothing of this sad downturn is noticed in the *Hudāynāma* tradition which portrays Ḥusraw's reign as uniformly glorious and successful — as it is remembered to this day.

But let us return to the year 572–573, when Iran was beset on all sides by a Turkish and Roman alliance. The *Hudāynāma* tradition, which is usually slack when it comes to chronology, is especially deficient at this moment in Iranian history. Perhaps to remove from the record of Ḥusraw's reign all that might have served to tarnish it, Iran's time of peril was shifted to the reign of Hurmazd IV, and the names of the enemies that threatened Iran were made familiar to a later audience. But for his conquest of the Roman fortress of Dara, Ḥusraw's response to this crisis (which included a military manoeuvre reminiscent of the Schlieffen plan) has gone unnoticed in the *Hudāynāma* tradition.⁸³² Instead, Iran's darkest hour set the scene for the rise of Bahrām Čōbīn, a noble rebel who cast a long shadow upon the history of Iran.

Bahrām Čōbīn had been a general during Ḥusraw's reign. He had participated in the campaign that achieved the conquest of Dara, and he had distinguished himself in combat in Armenia in the 570s, and he may have been involved in Ḥusraw's disastrous retreat from Roman Armenia in 576. Bahrām's star rose by reason of his victory over the Turks in the reign of Hurmazd IV in the year 588 or 589. The moment was right to strike the Turks hard, for they had

831. WHITBY 1988, p. 262–268.

832. HOWARD-JOHNSTON 2010A, p. 51–58. The best source for Ḥusraw's response is undoubtedly SEBEOS, p. 67–68.

been weakened by a succession crisis which had broken out in 581.⁸³³ Bahrām advanced deep into Turkish territory and emerged victorious, amassing a great amount of Turkish treasure.

The outbreak of the revolt of Bahrām Čōbīn was surely a response to Hurmazd's heavy-handed and disrespectful treatment of his nobility. The *Hudāynāma* tradition, in harmony with Theophylact and Sebeos, ascribe to Hurmazd a programme of social engineering and class-leveling in which many nobles were killed or imprisoned, and soldiers' pay was cut. The egalitarian nature of this project won approval from Hurmazd's Christian subjects. And so discontent must have been rife amongst aristocracy and army, and when the King of Kings attempted to confiscate the treasure which Bahrām had shared among his troops, armed insurrection followed. The Book of Bahrām Čōbīn was wrong about the outbreak of this revolt. The female attire which Hurmazd sent to Bahrām did not lead immediately to rebellion, for this prize for ignominy was awarded on the occasion of Bahrām's defeat in Suania in the late 580s. Bahrām's insurrection began in earnest at Nisibis with the execution of its garrison's commander, whom Theophylact calls Chubriadanēs.

The advance of Bahrām's rebellion was aided by propaganda and high pressure on loyalist forces. Hurmazd IV was son of Ḥusraw I's union with a Hephthalite princess and this provided sufficient ground on which to attempt to discredit him. And Bahrām's fitness for rule was bolstered by apocalyptic propaganda, whereby the pretender was portrayed as a saviour, a renewer of the good religion, and a restorer of Arsacid rule. Hurmazd was advertised as a Christianising foreigner.

Bahrām's occupation of Ctesiphon included the expulsion of all loyalist forces under the command of Mušeł Mamikonean. Having refused Bahrām's offer of the second rank in an Iranian kingdom ruled by the House of Mihrān, Mušeł and twenty thousand men left for Āzarbāyjān, where Mušeł was marzbān.⁸³⁴

833. HOWARD-JOHNSTON 2010A, p. 56.

834. SEBEOS, p. 77–78.

Efforts to conciliate Bahrām failed, and Hurmazd’s prestige crumbled under the force of the rebel’s inexorable advance on Ctesiphon. It was the nobility’s turn to express their disdain for Hurmazd’s rule, and to defend the throne from Bahrām’s ambition. The chaotic scene can be reconstructed only in broadest outline. Biṣṭām and Bindūya, maternal uncles to Hurmazd’s young son Ḥusraw, assumed leadership of a movement to remove Hurmazd from the throne. Bindūya had previously been in prison, and we may infer that he posed a threat to Hurmazd’s reign before. Bindūya’s release from prison by his brother led straightway to Hurmazd’s deposition and execution. Coins with the image of Ḥusraw were minted by the leadership of his supporters, and later propaganda blamed the striking of this money, which bore the image of an unimpressive crown, on Bahrām Čōbīn. Young Ḥusraw was proclaimed king in the year 590.

Hurmazd’s prestige had been abased chiefly by open conflict between his own forces and those of Bahrām not far from Nisibis, or perhaps at the Nahravān canal. Young Ḥusraw’s involvement in this conflict is very doubtful. Bahrām’s advance on Ctesiphon could not be halted, and the royal city fell to Bahrām in August of 590, and the usurper was crowned King of Kings during the festival of *Maidhyoi-zaremaya* — an event which must have been fodder for his apocalyptic propaganda. Bahrām’s possession of Ctesiphon forced Ḥusraw and his uncles to flee westward, and to seek assistance from New Rome. Flight to Āzarbāyjān, a Sasanian loyalist stronghold, had been meditated: escape thither was begun, but not achieved. The decision to seek the help of the emperor Maurice was taken by Ḥusraw’s uncles, not by Ḥusraw in consultation with his father, who had probably been killed by this time.

Ḥusraw II’s advance into Roman territory was accompanied by a well-orchestrated propaganda campaign. Christian Arab clients were employed as go-betweens and assisted in spreading the rumour that Ḥusraw had become a Christian. This eased Ḥusraw’s progress up the Euphrates and ensured a good welcome at a monastery at Hīt. Meetings were held with the Romans most likely at Edessa, and the treaty of peace which was signed by both parties forced Iran to relinquish much of the territory which Ḥusraw I had won in the war of 572. The Bahrām

book alleged a marriage alliance between Ḥusraw II and Maurice, but this is doubtful. New Rome and Iran returned once again to a policy of mutual cooperation.

Bahrām's forces were no match for the might of the combined Roman and Persian armies. But victory was not achieved without diplomatic manoeuvring by Bindūya. His offer of amnesty to those of Bahrām's partisans who would desert played a decisive role in winning the day for Ḥusraw II. Bahrām and his army, now greatly diminished, chose to flee to Central Asia rather than surrender or die fighting. Bahrām sought refuge among a people of Central Asia whom the Bahrām book identified as Turks. In time Ḥusraw and a nobleman called Hurmazz Jurābzīn devised a plot to kill the fugitive rebel.

With Bahrām's death, Ḥusraw II began to consolidate power. A propaganda campaign discredited the rebel whom Ḥusraw had vanquished. Ḥusraw's Sasanian heritage and royal legitimacy received heavy stress and Bahrām's apocalypticism was matched with equally potent religious imagery. Ḥusraw took the surname *Abarvēz*, 'the victorious', and struck new coins bearing the image of a crown adorned with the wings of victory.

But Ḥusraw II was plainly subordinate to the emperor Maurice, to whom he was bound by ties of gratitude, by his political weakness, and by his former vulnerability.⁸³⁵ Ḥusraw II would never be master of his own house so long as his uncles lived and exerted authority over him. Accusations of complicity in his father's murder must have hung over the early years of Ḥusraw II's rule. The young king's best recourse in silencing his accusers was to punish his guilty uncles. Accordingly Ḥusraw summoned Bindūya to Ctesiphon on some pretext or other. The best sources confirm that he was maimed and then either stoned or crucified. Then the head of Biṣṭām was brought to Ctesiphon and suspended from the neck of his unhappy son who, seated upon an ass, was borne about the city in disgrace: a dreadful warning to those who might thereafter rise in arms against the House of Sāsān.

835. HOWARD-JOHNSTON 2010A, p. 60.

But it was to no avail. Though Ḥusraw nearly succeeded in luring Biṣṭām to Ctesiphon also, word spread through noble circles and Biṣṭām was advised to flee perhaps to Gīlān or to Qūmis. Drawing on the remnants of Bahrām Čōbīn's forces, Biṣṭām fomented another, far more enduring rebellion.

Biṣṭām diffused propaganda aimed at discrediting the House of Sāsān, and fomented unrest throughout Iran. But his attempt at open rebellion failed in about 594, and thereafter his movement mutated into an insurgency directed from northeastern Iran whither he had fled. His partnership with two Central Asian kings (perhaps Turks, Hephthalites, or Kushans as Sebeos says) and his minting of coins are evidence of potent diplomatic and political capacity. In about the year 600, Biṣṭām prepared to march on Ctesiphon again, this time with the support of his Central Asian allies. Had he vanquished the House of Sāsān, he might have vindicated not only Bahrām's rebellion, but also the honour of his brother. It may also be that Biṣṭām's foreign auxiliaries supported him in the hopes of revenge for Iran's recent victories over Turan.

But overtures masterminded by Ḥusraw and Biṣṭām's wife Kurdīya (sister to Bahrām Čōbīn) convinced the Asiatic king Pariovk that supporting Biṣṭām was a mistake. Some sort of agreement may have been reached. Or might the Romans, who at that point maintained good relations with the nomads of Asia, have intervened on Ḥusraw's behalf? In any case king Pariovk and Kurdīya slew Biṣṭām, his revolt fizzled, and Ḥusraw took Kurdīya to wife. Ḥusraw's propaganda, which was preserved in the Book of Bahrām Čōbīn, reimagined Kurdīya as a Sasanian loyalist, who had ever tried to dissuade her brother from rebellion.

Triumphant over his domestic enemies and at peace with New Rome, Ḥusraw II might have lived out his days in peace. Or he might have taken active interest in the affairs of the Turks: for the ḥāqān Tardu, who had gained mastery over the western half of the Turkish empire and had made war on China, died in 602 after putting down a tribal revolt.⁸³⁶ But a mutiny in the Roman field army in the Balkans exploded into armed insurrection, the general Phocas

836. HOWARD-JOHNSTON 2010A, p. 60.

(portrayed as the vilest rebel that has ever lived) was acclaimed emperor, and the usurper's coronation at Constantinople was followed by the execution of the former emperor Maurice and five of his sons. The eldest son, Theodosius, is alleged (perhaps with good reason) to have escaped to Iranian territory and to have given Ḥusraw an irresistible pretext for war. The moment was propitious: Turkish power was for the moment quiescent, Narses (commander of a Roman field army in the east) refused to acknowledge the tyrant Phocas, and Ḥusraw was eager to defend the legacy of his greatest benefactor by making his son Theodosius emperor of the Romans.

The war that followed in 603 saw the advance of Ḥusraw's ambition from the repayment of a benefactor, to the demand of territorial concession, and finally to the extinction of the Roman empire.⁸³⁷ Ḥusraw II achieved more than any other Sasanian king, and his conquests rivalled those of Xerxes and Darius. But from his dreams of an Iranian empire stretching from the Hindukush to Constantinople and its hinterland, Ḥusraw awoke to the grim reality of a palace putsch provoked by the victorious advance of the new Roman emperor Heraclius. Ḥusraw was unseated on the night of 23 February 628 and was put to death four days later. Thereafter the irreversible and vertiginous decline of the House of Sāsān could not be halted.

The deadly struggle between the two great powers received cursory treatment in that part of the *Ḥudāynāma* tradition presented by Dīnawarī. But, much as an author such as Dīnawarī might have preferred to pass over an episode which ended in the utter abasement of Iran and the collapse of the Sasanian dynasty, the war could not be ignored altogether. For Muḥammad, the prophet of Islam, declared in the midst of this war:⁸³⁸

Rome hath been vanquished in a land nearby; but after their defeat shall they conquer in a few years. The power is God's before and after, and in that day the believers shall rejoice with the help of God who helpeth to victory whom he will and he is mighty and compassionate.

837. HOWARD-JOHNSTON 2010A, p. 61–67.

838. QURAN 30:1–5, my translation.

This is a sign that the prophet of Islam had no doubt about the significance of the war played out to the north of Arabia, and this *sūra* assured that later Muslim historians would take account of the last war of Antiquity, and tell the story of the dynasty ruined in its aftermath...

Excursus: Remarks on Pourshariati's Decline and Fall of the Sasanian Empire

Pourshariati argues for a decentralised Sasanian state and for a lingering sense of Parthian identity among aristocrats of Parthian descent. She believes that the Sasanian empire was a confederacy, of which the Persian and the Parthian were the chief ethnic or racial elements — a belief which is analogous to Toumanoff's view of the dynastic system of Armenia.⁸³⁹ Pourshariati would have us abandon the notion of a centralised Late Antique empire in favour of something that looks more like a feudal kingdom of mediaeval Europe.

Pourshariati's thesis offers an ingenious answer to a seemingly hard question: if the Sasanian empire really was as solid and centralised as has been traditionally believed, why was its demise so sudden and so permanent? Her answer is that Arab success was a direct consequence of the fractious political state of the Sasanian empire and that the loyalty of Parthian aristocrats had been too thoroughly undermined by successive attempts at centralisation for them to prop up a failing monarchy and military apparatus. Parthian noble families thus become the impresarios of the Arab conquest. There may well be some truth to this thesis, but it seems to assume that the Sasanian empire must have enjoyed some measure of centralisation to begin with.

It would certainly be a gross exaggeration indeed to think of Sasanian Iran along the lines of the Soviet Union or Napoleonic France. And so we may be grateful that Pourshariati has drawn attention away from the king and the royal court towards noble houses and non-metropolitan regions: Sasanian scholarship will benefit from investigating peripheral areas, and the prosopography on non-royal persons will add much to our knowledge. But on the whole Pourshariati's case is unconvincing. Examining *Decline and Fall of the Sasanian Dynasty* in minute detail is too great a task for this small excursus, so the two most important objections will be presented here.⁸⁴⁰

839. POURSHARIATI 2009; TOUMANOFF 1959.

840. In my critique of Pourshariati's book here, I follow DARYAEE 2010.

I. There can be no doubt that the Sasanians made great efforts to maintain an organised system of dynastic power. The minting of coins, the production of administrative seals, the dissemination of official propaganda and perhaps the composition of a royal history, the management of diplomatic ties with New Rome and other powers, the conduct of international trade, and the maintenance of prisons are all evidence of this. But there may be no greater proof of centralisation than the Sasanians' colossal investments in military infrastructure.⁸⁴¹ Moreover, we cannot ignore the fact that the House of Sāsān never once yielded power to another family. The disastrous insurrection of Bahrām Čōbīn (the only bid for the throne by a man who was not of the Sasanid line) gives us a just estimate of the potency of Sasanian rule.⁸⁴² Bahrām could not dislodge Ḥusraw II from the throne forever, and Iran more readily supported the rule of a Sasanian boy than that of an Arsacid man. This argues for a potent ideology of state and dynasty which did not fail to leave traces in the meagre quantity of Sasanian literature that has come down to us, such as the *Kārnāmag* of Ardašīr and *Bahman Yašt*, the *Bundahišn*, and the *Žāmāsp Nāmak*.

II. Though it is plain that certain families advertised their Parthian heritage on seals and bullas, there is no evidence that this amounted to some form of ethnic separatism. The Sasanians themselves, who came originally from Fārs, claimed authority neither by virtue of regional identity nor because of Persian ethnicity; for they claimed dominion over the whole Empire of the Aryans, or *Īrān-Šahr* as Dīnawarī himself calls it at the beginning of his history.⁸⁴³ This was an idea of universal monarchy which excluded only such peoples as were not Aryans. Needless to say it was an idea which included persons of Parthian extraction also. Now as far as that Parthian identity is concerned, it is noteworthy that the earliest inscriptions put up by Sasanian kings were, as a rule, composed in three languages: Middle Persian, Greek, and Parthian.⁸⁴⁴ We may infer

841. HOWARD-JOHNSTON 2012, p. 93–108.

842. *Contra* POURSHARIATI 2009, p. 122–127.

843. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 4.

844. Writing in Middle Persian and Parthian involved a complex and cumbersome system of ideograms and phonetic transcription of Iranian words in Aramaic letters. The use of Aramaic

then that the Parthian and Hellenistic identities lingered on in some form in the early days of the Sasanian empire. But after the end of the third century Parthian and Greek vanish altogether from inscriptions: even in traditionally Parthian areas, such as Ḥurāsān, the Parthian language is all but extinct after the third century. Given these facts, it is hard to imagine that a strong Parthian identity persisted until the Arab conquest of Iran.

Pourshariati's methodology is marred by far more serious flaws on the level of the use of sources.⁸⁴⁵ Sources of the *Ḥudāynāma* tradition, such as Dīnawarī and Ṭabarī, are received uncritically, and no effort is made to establish their value, nor to find out their relationship to one another. Texts of the *Ḥudāynāma* tradition (as I have shown) do not go back to a single official chronicle of Iranian history, and the evidence that such a document ever existed is very doubtful. But even if the reverse were true, it would not justify using many texts, whose origin is the same, to support and bolster one another's claims.

To take two examples of the perils of taking the *Ḥudāynāma* tradition at face-value, we can highlight Pourshariati's reception of Sūhrā's campaign against the Hephthalites to avenge the defeat of king Pērōz and her belief that Ḥusraw II married the daughter of the emperor Maurice.⁸⁴⁶ Both these episodes, which at first glance appear to defy commonsense, were thoroughly de-

was inherited from the Achaemenid bureaucracy, and its adaptation to two Indo-Aryan languages may well have evolved slowly, but its preservation and the use of ideograms (spelling out Semitic words but pronouncing Middle Persian or Parthian ones) can only have endured as a result of a policy of enforcement and the rigorous philological training of a class scribes and bureaucrats. Surely this is further evidence of the centralised power of the Sasanian state.

845. I follow GREATREX 2010 in my judgement here. For an exposition of Pourshariati's approach to her sources, see POURSHARIATI 2009, p. 10–18.

846. POURSHARIATI 2009, p. 75–77; 176.

bunked long ago by Christensen and Bosworth:⁸⁴⁷ two authorities whom Pourshariati is pleased to cite throughout her book, but of whom she takes no notice in these instances.

Pourshariati's use of Western sources is even less trustworthy. Pourshariati regularly quotes classicising historians of Late Antiquity at great length (albeit in translation), and it may fairly be said that she knows what the sources say. But the *meaning* of these sources often escapes her. I shall limit myself to one especially telling example of this. When Ḥusraw II is about to flee to avoid Bahrām Čōbīn's advance upon Ctesiphon and to seek help, Theophylact Simocatta reports that the young king

entrusted the reins of his flight to the supreme God; after looking up to heaven, and turning his thoughts to the Creator, disregarding the false gods and placing none of his hope in Mithras...and by changing faith he also changed fortune toward the better.⁸⁴⁸

Pourshariati quotes this passage and italicises most of it so as to draw attention to what she feels to be evidence of 'religious antagonism' between the House of Sāsān and the Parthian rebel Bahrām Čōbīn. But this is not at all what the passage is about. Theophylact is really implying that Ḥusraw II converted to Christianity whilst on his way to seek help from the Roman empire. Rumour of his conversion seem to have influenced some sources of the *Ḥudāynāma* tradition (as I have shown), and Theophylact has preserved the first mention of it.

847. CHRISTENSEN 1944, p. 276; BOSWORTH 1999, p. 312: n. 729. There is no truth to the claim about Ḥusraw; but it is not impossible that the story of Sūhrā may contain a kernel of truth in that reports of a diplomatic mission may have been exaggerated.

848. *τοιγαροῦν κομιδῇ ἐπικαλῶς ἀνατίθησι τῷ ἐπὶ πάντων Θεῷ τὰς ἡνίκας ἀποδράσεως· ἔις τε τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀποβλέψας καὶ τοῦ δημιουργοῦ εἰς ἔννοιαν γεγονώς, ἀγνώμονων τε τὸν ἐπιπλάστους Θεοῦς, τῷ τε Μίτρη μὴδέν τι τῆς ἐλπίδος προσεγγεγάρμενος...καὶ τὴν πίστιν μεταβαλλόμενος μεταβάλλει καὶ τὴν τύχην πρὸς δεξιότητα* (THEOPHYLACT, IV.10.1). Pourshariati quotes, abridges, and misspells the Whitby translation (WHITBY / WHITBY 1986, p. 116). She mistakenly writes 'reigns' instead of 'reins' (POURSHARIATI 2009, p. 404).

Though Pourshariati's book is thought-provoking, and though it draws our attention to topics little studied in Sasanian history so far, her general thesis is unlikely to prove especially influential in the long term.

Nevertheless, there are certain useful features of *Decline and Fall of the Sasanian Empire*. Pourshariati has contributed to a collective effort to emancipate Sasanian history from subordination to both Late Antique and early Islamic history. And so Sasanian history can now be considered a field of study in its own right. But the book's best feature is that Pourshariati's oriental literary sources are quoted at great length, and so the reader may see for himself what Pourshariati's sources really say. This is no small advance in a field which suffers from a dearth of translations of, and commentaries on, cardinal texts. In my view, all future treatments of Sasanian Iran must follow suit — at least until general knowledge of the sources rises to the level which scholars of Classical texts take for granted.⁸⁴⁹

849. I give this development a good three hundred years at least.

D. CONCLUSION

The findings of this thesis fall into two categories: conclusions on the nature of indigenous Iranian historiography, and conclusions on Dīnawarī's *Kitāb al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*. These will be summarised separately.

Iranian Historiography

The term 'Hudāynāma tradition' is a shorthand convenient for referring to a collection of Persian and Arabic texts which deal with Iranian pre-Islamic history in basically the same fashion. But I find no evidence that anything like Theodor Nöldeke's *Chodāināme* (as he called it) ever really existed. This is to say that there is clearly a great variety of texts lurking behind the *Hudāynāma* tradition, the origin and identity of many of them may remain unknown forever, and I find no unambiguous evidence for an officially-sponsored royal chronicle.

There are, however, snippets of what sounds like Sasanian propaganda within the *Hudāynāma* tradition, and these crop up from time to time in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*. Though the original propaganda itself probably came through official channels, this does not mean that the propaganda reached authors such as Dīnawarī through an Arabic translation of a state-sanctioned dynastic history of Iran, as Nöldeke imagined. We might rather infer that relics of Sasanian propaganda, which had been transmitted through rumour and hearsay, came to be scattered throughout texts of diverse provenance written at social levels below that of the royal court.

Now, some of the sources feeding into the *Hudāynāma* tradition are plainly of Christian origin, and this is most clearly apparent in Dīnawarī's *Kitāb al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*. We can therefore infer with reasonable certainty that Iranian Christians had reimagined Sasanian history in a manner congruent with their faith. The earliest evidence for such a christening of Sasanian history is, I believe, Agathias' excursus on Iranian history. Far from bolstering Nöldeke's argument, Agathias' excursus evinces a Christian bias and is at times hostile to the House of Sāsān. Agathias misrepresented the origin of his excursus so as to make it seem more credible to his audience, and perhaps to out do his predecessor Procopius. The second piece of evidence for such a Christian

source is the lost text lying behind the Sasanian king list in Solomon of Basra's *Book of the Bee*. Elements belonging to this Christianisation of Sasanian history included the conversion of Ardašīr I to Christianity, Qubād's vision of Christ, the conversion of Ḥusraw I, Ḥusraw II's refuge in a monastery and conversion to Christianity, the hiding of the True Cross in a vegetable garden, and perhaps many other stories also. All but Qubād's vision of Christ, and the conversion of Ḥusraw I (which are unique to the *Chronicle of Seert* and Sebeos *History*) crop up explicitly or implicitly in *Kūṭāb al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*.

The writing of royal history by Iranian Christian, which I have inferred, may have arisen out of a need to give structure to ecclesiastical history, and so events may have been arranged according to the regnal years of Sasanian kings. A good example of what I mean may be the *Chronicle of Seert* in which ecclesiastical history is interspersed with Sasanian dynastic history. Such texts would have found their way into Arabic during the Abbasid translation movement. Free-standing works such as the *Kāmāmag* of Ardašīr, the hagiography of Anūš Zād, and the *Book of Bahrām Čōbīn*, and possibly even a history of the Qārīn family, were put into Arabic one by one and may have been used by various authors to augment the core of the *Ḥudāynāma* tradition.⁸⁵⁰ If this be true, Dīnawarī appears to have been the first author to do this.

Without veering off into the realm of fantasy, we might speculate that Christian reimaginings of Iranian history, composed probably in Syriac, formed the main structure of the *Ḥudāynāma* tradition. This text would probably have taken the form of biographies, such as we find in all texts of the *Ḥudāynāma* tradition, and as Ḥamza Iṣfahānī and Bahrām the mobad describe their documents called *Ḥudāynāma*.

850. What I cannot explain is how or why a Christian reimagining of Sasanian history, augmented with free-standing stories, came to be called *Ḥudāynāma* — an arabicised form of a hypothetical New Persian phrase **Ḥwadāy-nāma*, or 'Lord Book', which seems an unlikely title for a Syriac Christian text. Could it have been invented by an early translator or compiler so as to add credibility to his work?

My speculations on the Christian core of the *Hudāynāma* tradition are highly conjectural. I do not wish to assert them too vehemently, nor do I wish to appear to be pleading for a watered-down version of Grignaschi's Pseudo-Ibn Muqaffa' theory. However we choose to explain the presence of Christian elements within the *Hudāynāma* tradition, we are forced to admit that we *cannot* trust any aspect of the *Hudāynāma* tradition without subjecting it heavy scrutiny. Comparison to other texts of known value has shown that, although the *Hudāynāma* tradition offers occasional insight into Sasanian history, it is mostly unreliable.

This should have profound consequences for the study of Sasanian history, as it is currently practised in the Anglo-Saxon world. As interesting as they are, Pourshariati's findings in her *Decline and Fall of the Sasanian Empire*,⁸⁵¹ for instance, cannot stand, for the Persian and Arabic texts upon which they are based cannot be trusted. Though textual sources of all kinds can and should be studied repeatedly for their own sake, it has long been recognised by continental scholars such as Gyselen and Gignoux that the future of Sasanian history probably lies in the study of archaeology and material culture.⁸⁵²

In my study of the *Hudāynāma* tradition, I found myself seriously asking whether there was any real historiography of Sasanian Iran at all. Some scholars would probably be loath to admit that Iranian Zoroastrians did not write what we would recognise as history, and they might explain the proverbial lack of primary literary sources for Sasanian history by imagining successive cataclysmic destructions of Persian libraries and record houses. But other civilisations got on perfectly well without writing what we would recognise as history: India and Sogdiana come to mind. So why not Sasanian Iran also? But instead of inferring simply that Sasanians did not write history, I wish to explain *why* this may have been the case. I suspect that reasons may be found in the nature of the Sasanian state propaganda and the culture of its dominant religion.

851. POURSHARIATI 2008.

852. Cf. GYSELEN 2009.

First, Sasanian propaganda. With the hindsight of nearly twenty centuries, the modern historian can discern in the history of the Arsacids the main themes of Sasanian history. Some of these were mentioned in the foregoing section. Aggressive warfare in the west, confrontation with nomads of Central Asia, and conflict between king and nobleman — these three themes were to be repeated again and again throughout the history of the House of Sāsān. But royal propaganda succeeded in effacing all memory of the Arsacid dynasty, and obliterated ancient precedents for the western campaigns of Šāpūr I, Anūšīrvān, and Parvēz, for the warfare of Bahrām V and Pērōz against the power of Tūrān, and for the revolts of Bahrām Čōbīn and Biṣṭām. We may surmise that Sasanian propaganda removed not only all remembrance of the Arsacids but also stifled the growth of a consciousness of history, whose like had long been known in the West and which had been so carefully nurtured in Armenia with the advent of Christianity. Knowledge of Arsacid history might have furnished the House of Sāsān with a framework through which to understand its own past. But it was not history, but rather the epic, the Herodotean, the Rabelaisian that redounded to the glory of the reigning dynasty.

Second, to see how the Zoroastrian religion may have halted the growth of Iranian historiography, it will be good to compare Sasanian Iran to Late Antique Armenia — two civilisations similar in language, manners, and culture.⁸⁵³

The writing of history began in Armenia soon after the invention of the alphabet, and the earliest use of the new letters, to say nothing of their invention itself, was the province of churchmen, who used the alphabet to evangelise Armenia.⁸⁵⁴ The alphabet itself was the invention of a holy man, Mesrop Maštoc' (d. c. 430), now a saint of the Armenian church. As far as can be determined on scant evidence, it seems that the earliest Armenian liturgies were conducted in either Greek or Syriac. Scripture was declaimed in one of these languages and then translated extempore into Armenian. The first version of the Armenian Bible grew out of this tradition: it was a

853. HOWARD-JOHNSTON 1999, p. xiii.

854. In my judgements on Armenian historiography, I follow MAHÉ 1992, p. 125–131.

free translation, justified by the doctrines of Eusebius of Emesa's *Commentary on the Octateuch* and grounded in the Antiochene school of exegesis. But a second, more literal translation of the Bible followed the Ephesian Synod of 431, and connected with the Alexandrine school of exegesis. At this point Armenian understanding of history reached maturity. The exegetical school of Alexandria led Armenians to view scripture above all as a book of history that relates the mighty deeds of God for the creation of the world and the salvation of men. Not surprisingly, Koriun, the first Armenian historian was also one of the translators in Maštoc's circle, and the preface to his *Life of Maštoc*⁸⁵⁵ proves that the Bible was treated as an historical text in which God is the main character. If such an interpretation be accepted, the work of the Christian historian is merely to extend the work of the sacred historian by adducing new demonstrations of the working out of divine grace in the world. This is what Armenian historians did.

But the Zoroastrian religion saw history as a great struggle between two rival gods.⁸⁵⁵ The outcome of this warfare was perhaps doubtful, for the role of the individual was to take a side in this conflict, and his armaments were good thoughts, good words, and good deeds. Is it any surprise then that the *Hudāynāma* tradition furnishes not a system by which to understand the nature of the divine, human, and mundane affairs, but rather moral lessons and good examples to guide the faithful through life and to keep chaos at bay?

For a glimpse of what the native Iranian concept of history was like, we need look no further than the *Kāmāmag* of Ardašīr. This text purports to document the rise of the Sasanian dynasty's founder, but it is far from what we would call history: we need only compare it to the real events in question, as I have done, to see why. Much the same may be said for later Sasanian propaganda buried within *Kitāb al-Aḥbār al-Ṭwāl*.

855. DE BLOIS 2000, p. 3–7.

Abū Ḥanīfa Aḥmad ibn Dāwud ibn Wanand Dīnawarī was the first Muslim historian of Iran. He was a gentleman scholar who excelled in many fields and who wrote in a simple, elegant style. He was extraordinarily well-read and had at his disposal a great mass of source material for his history of Iran, *Kitāb al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*. Some of these may have come to him in digests or compendia, or perhaps also in monographs of various lengths. But no single text formed the basis of his chapters on Iran before the coming of Islam, for Dīnawarī presents a synthesis of oral reports, romance, pre-Islamic Arabian fable, relics of Sasanian propaganda, classical reference, and Christian hagiography and legends. He wove these, perhaps along with other sources which cannot be identified, into a coherent and harmonious narrative intended to impress and delight, and perhaps to instruct, the reader. His narrative was unfettered by the conventions of Islamic religious writing and legal proof texts which thereafter became normal in historical writing. Dīnawarī did not analyse or criticise his material, and he was prepared to reshape his sources (when necessary) to suit his singular goal. This was unambiguously to put Iran at the centre of world history.

The most important intellectual debate of Dīnawarī's age was the *šū'ūbīyya* controversy which weighed the relative merits of Arab high culture with the achievements of other Muslim peoples. Dīnawarī's history of Iran must have been like a petrol bomb hurled into a raging bonfire. It would not have taken much reading between the lines to perceive Dīnawarī's beliefs in Iranian supremacy and his lack of regard for Arab culture — though it must be said that Dīnawarī's writing in this connexion is always gentlemanly. To prove his point Dīnawarī reimagined nearly every great historical, religious, and mythical figure as an Iranian. It is as though, for Dīnawarī, all world history — even biblical history — is an epiphenomenon of Iranian magnificence.

The splendour of Iran was Dīnawarī's main theme, and so his treatment of history tended to obscure (until it was impossible to conceal) all weaknesses and failings of the Iranian nation — particularly those of the House of Sāsān. Part of this is surely due to the nature of the material that Dīnawarī had before him, but part of it is also to be explained by Dīnawarī's editing and condensing of it. Dīnawarī presentation of Sasanian history could only go so far, and many an

anecdote has been, as it were, domesticated for a Muslim audience, and purged of much authentic Zoroastrian content.

Dīnawarī's *Kitāb al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* is a text that can be read for pleasure. This was clearly Dīnawarī's intention. In subjecting it to criticism — sometimes of a very harsh kind — I fear I may have done Dīnawarī a disservice in demonstrating that his history is of varying quality and of doubtful value to the modern historian of Late Antiquity. But this judgement depends greatly on the criterion by which we evaluate an historian: by the standards of the Age of Reason, or our own age of Heroic Materialism, no oriental historian can pass muster. The same is surely true even of the best of classical historians. So perhaps I should end by judging Dīnawarī on his own terms.

Did Dīnawarī succeed in writing an elegant history of Iran? Bearing in mind the neglect of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*, the historian may find this question difficult to answer in the affirmative. But *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* was the first history of its kind, and for this alone Dīnawarī deserves a place of honour among Muslim historians, as do Herodotus and Koriun within their own nations. Or it may be that Dīnawarī's day is not yet come, and that a generation of Iranians yet to be born, may, in the midst of great upheaval, reflect on the ancient glories of their nation as Dīnawarī did. But *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* is unlikely to serve as a model or guide to such reflection for the sole reason that it was written in Arabic. Dīnawarī's immortal fame might have been assured had he written his history in Persian, so that Iranians of a later age might read it, and draw strength from it in prosecuting the *šū'ūbīyya* controversy (which has scarcely abated) in its modern form. And so if he is thought of at all, Dīnawarī will rather be remembered as a worthy forerunner of Firdawsī; for the one stands at the beginning, the other at the end, of Iranian historiography of the *Hudāynāma* tradition.

E. APPENDIX: THE BOOK OF LONG HISTORIES

Wherein is a record of the kings of the earth from Adam, upon whom be peace, unto the end of the reign of Yazdajird son of Šahryār son of Kīsrā Abarwīz, and a record of the kings of Qaḥtān that ruled, and the kings of Rūm and the kings of the Turks in every epoch and age, and a record of imams and caliphs and wars such as the battle of Qādisīyya, and the conquests of ‘Irāq, and the extinction of the Empire of Iran, and the Battle of the Camel and Siffīn, and the battle of Nahrawān, and the killing of Ḥusayn son of ‘Alī, (upon the two be peace); and the sedition of Ibn Zūbayr, and the rebellion of the Azrāqites and their wars and their battles; and the story of Muḥtār son of Abu ‘Ubayd, and his tale, and the reason for his rebellion, and the rebellion of ‘Abdu’l-Raḥmān son of Aṣ‘at against al-Ḥajjāj, and what was between the two; and a record of the caliphate of ‘Abdu’l-Malik and al-Walīd Ibn ‘Abdu’l-Malik and ‘Umar Ibn ‘Abdū’l-‘Azīz unto the extinction of the dominion of the sons of Umayya; and notice of the empire of the ‘Abbāsids, and the story of Abū Muslim unto the caliphate of al-Manṣūr and his building of the city of Baḡdād and the days of the caliphs after him unto the extinction of the rule of Muḥammad al-Amīn, and an account of al-Ma’mūn unto the end of the days of al-Mu’taṣim; and a notice of Bābak, and his wars and his battles: condensed from biographies, abridged for the sake of economy.

In the Name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful

Saith Abū Ḥanīfa Aḥmad Ibn Dāwūd al-Dīnawarī, may God have mercy upon him:

I found in what the wise wrote in the earliest stories that the abode of Ādam⁸⁵⁶ (upon whom be peace), was the Sanctuary,⁸⁵⁷ and his sons were many in the time of Mīhlīl⁸⁵⁸ son of

856. *i.e.*, Adam (GENESIS 2: 19).

857. *i.e.*, the Ḥaram at Mecca.

858. *i.e.*, Mehalaleel (GENESIS 5: 12).

Qīnān⁸⁵⁹ son of Anūs⁸⁶⁰ son of Šīt⁸⁶¹ son of Ādam; and he was chief of the sons of Ādam in his age, and he undertook command of them; and thus were his fathers unto Ādam (upon whom be peace). Strife arose among them in the lands and Mīhlīl separated them in the directions of the four winds. He favoured the sons of Šīt with the best land and settled them in ‘Irāq.

[Idrīs and Nūḥ]

The first prophet after Šīt was Idrīs,⁸⁶² and his name was Aḥnūḥ⁸⁶³ son of Yarad⁸⁶⁴ son of Mīhlīl, and he is called Idrīs because of his manifold learning. Then God sent Nūḥ⁸⁶⁵ (upon whom be peace) unto the folk of his age, and his abode was in the land of ‘Irāq, and he was Nūḥ son of Lamak⁸⁶⁶ son of Mitūšīlah.⁸⁶⁷ But they denied him, and God drowned them, but rescued Nūḥ and them that were with him in the ship. The ship alighted, and its repose was upon the peak of

859. *i.e.*, Cainan (GENESIS 5: 5).

860. *i.e.*, Enos (GENESIS 5: 6). Pourshariati believes that Dīnawarī has ‘thoroughly Persianized’ this name by spelling it as ‘Anūs’ (POURSHARIATI 2010, p. 253 note 2), but the form of this name might rather reflect an Aramaic spelling.

861. *i.e.*, Seth (GENESIS 4: 25).

862. Idrīs is mentioned in the Quran (19: 56–57; 21: 85–86), but the passages in question give no clue as to his identity. The origin of his identification with the Biblical patriarch Enoch (as we find in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*) is not at all clear. Dīnawarī’s explanation of ‘Idrīs’ supposes falsely that the word is derived from the Arabic root *d-r-s*, from which are derived words related to learning and study. Nevertheless, this false etymology preserves the meaning of *idrīs* in Greek, which may reveal something about the origin of this name in Arabic.

863. *i.e.*, Enoch (GENESIS 5: 22–29).

864. *i.e.*, Jared (GENESIS 5: 18–20).

865. *i.e.*, Noah (GENESIS 6–9). Nūḥ is mentioned many times in the Quran, most notably in *Sūrat Nūḥ* (QURAN 71).

866. *i.e.*, Lamech (GENESIS 5: 12–25).

867. *i.e.*, Methuselah (GENESIS 5: 21–27).

Jūdī,⁸⁶⁸ the mountain of Baqardā and Bāzabdā in the land of al-Jazīra.⁸⁶⁹ When Nūḥ died, he appointed his son Sām⁸⁷⁰ as his successor, and he was the first who [p. 4] consolidated power. After Sām, Jamm son of Wīwanjahān⁸⁷¹ son of Īrān (namely Arfaḥšad⁸⁷² son of Sām son of Nūḥ) set up the beacon of monarchy. God made barren all them that were rescued with Nūḥ in the ship save his three sons Sām, Ḥām⁸⁷³ and Yāfiṭ.⁸⁷⁴

They say: Nūḥ had a fourth son whose name was Yām who was drowned, having no offspring; but as for the three others, all of them had offspring.

They say: Sām was he that was entrusted with command of the sons of Nūḥ after him, and he would pass the winter in the land of Jawḥā,⁸⁷⁵ and the summer in Mawṣil, and his road was in Mabdāh and his departure unto the bank of the Dijla⁸⁷⁶ was from the eastern side, and it is called for that reason ‘Sām-Rāh’,⁸⁷⁷ and he is the one whom the Persians call Īrān. He had settled

868. This mountain is mentioned in the Quran (11: 44).

869. I have chosen to construe *ard al-jazīra* (and also simply *al-jazīra*) as ‘al-Jazīra’ throughout this translation. The term refers specifically to northern Mesopotamia. ‘Baqardā and Bāzabdā’ are two mountains which face one another on the east and west sides of the Tigris (DAMĠĀNĪ A.H. 1354, p. 26: n. 1).

870. *i.e.*, Shem (GENESIS 5: 32).

871. This is a corruption of the Avestan *Vīuuayhant*, epithet of Jamm (also called Jamšīd), meaning ‘the one who shines far and wide’ (SKÆJRVÖ 2008). The presence of the epithet here shows that Dīnawarī and his audience were aware of Avestan mythology.

872. *i.e.*, Arphaxad (GENESIS 10: 22; 24).

873. *i.e.*, Ham (GENESIS 9: 20–27).

874. *i.e.*, Japheth (GENESIS 5: 32).

875. According to Damġānī, Jawḥā is to be identified with modern-day Baghdad (DAMĠĀNĪ A.H. 1354, p. 26: n. 2).

876. *i.e.*, the Tigris river.

877. *Sām Rāh* is Persian for ‘Sām’s road’.

the land of ‘Irāq and had set it aside for himself, and it was called ‘Īrān-Šahr’.⁸⁷⁸ And his son Šālah⁸⁷⁹ rose to power after him, and when death was upon him he entrusted command to the son of his brother Jamm son of Wīwanjahān son of Arfaḥšaḏ. He established the foundation of monarchy, made firm its pillars, set up its tokens, and adopted the day of Nayrūz⁸⁸⁰ as a festival.

[The Confounding of Tongues]

They say: in the time of Jamm tongues were confounded in Bābil⁸⁸¹ — this was because the progeny of Nūḥ had multiplied there and [Bābil] was burdened of them. The speech of all men had been the Syrian language, namely the language of Nūḥ, but at the beginning of that day their tongues became muddled, expressions changed, and they were convulsed one to another, and every group of them spoke in the tongue which their descendants speak unto this day. They went out from the land of Bābil, and each group became separated in a particular direction. The first that went out from among them were the sons of Yāfiṭ son of Nūḥ, and they were seven brothers: Turk, Ḥazar, Šaqlāb, Tārīs, Mansak, Kamārā, and Šīn.⁸⁸² They took what lay between the east and the north. Then [p. 5] the sons of Ḥām son of Nūḥ left after them, and they were also seven brothers: Sind, Hind, Zanj, Qibṭ, Ḥabaš, Nūba, and Kan‘ān. And they took what lay between the south and the west. And the sons of Sām son of Nūḥ dwelt with their cousin Jamm the king in the land of Bābil notwithstanding the change of their expressions.

878. *Īrān-Šahr* is Persian for ‘empire of Iran’.

879. *i.e.*, Salah (GENESIS 10: 24).

880. *i.e.*, Nawrūz, the Zoroastrian festival of the new year. See BOYCE 2009.

881. *i.e.*, Babel.

882. The identities of these people are not clear in all cases. Turk, Ḥazar, Šaqlāb, and Šīn are to be associated with the Turks, Khazars, Slavs, and Chinese. But to whom may Tārīs, Mansak, Kamārā be linked?

[The Semites]

Sām son of Nūḥ had five sons: Iram, who was the eldest of them by a year, Arfaḥšād, ‘Ālam, Yafar, and Aswar. The sons of Iram were favoured with the Arabic tongue at the confounding of tongues, and they were also seven brothers: ‘Ad, Ṭamūd, Ṣuḥār, Ṭasm, Jadīs, Jāsim, and Wabār. ‘Ad migrated with those who followed him until he settled in the land of Yaman. Ṭamūd son of Iram settled in what lies between the Ḥijāz unto al-Šām.⁸⁸³ Ṭasm son of Iram alighted in ‘Umān and Baḥrayn. Jadīs son of Iram alighted in Yamāma. Ṣuḥār alighted in what is between Ṭā’if as far as the two mountains of Ṭayya. Jāsim settled in what is between the Sanctuary as far as Safawān, and Wabār son of Iram settled in what is behind Raml in the country that is known as Wabār.

They say: these first Arabs died out to the last man. They say also: when these went out, the hearts of the remaining sons of Nūḥ were moved to go out from Bābil: Ḥurāsān son of ‘Ālam son of Sām went out and adopted Ḥurāsān as a plot of land. Fārs son of Aswar son of Sām, Rūm son of Yafar son of Sām, Armīn son of Nawraj son of Sām (who was master of Armīniyya), Kirmān son of Tāraḥ son of Sām, and Hayṭāl son of ‘Ālam son of Sām (whose sons are across the river of Balḥ which is called the country of the Hayṭāls) and every man among them settled, together with his offspring, [p. 6] in the land which is named after him and which is ascribed to him.⁸⁸⁴ Only the sons of Arfaḥšād son of Sām remained with king Jamm in the land of Bābil.

883. *i.e.*, Greater Syria.

884. This passage is a good example of how Dīnawarī has introduced non-Biblical persons into the genealogies of Genesis, to which they were originally unknown, but who nevertheless came to play an important role in Muslim history in later times. Ḥurāsān, Fārs, Rūm, Armīn Kirmān, Hayṭāl are of course not really personal names, but are here construed as such to explain the origin of certain toponyms and ethnicities. It is odd, though, that only Armīn and Hayṭāl correspond to the names real ethnic groups, *viz.*, the Armenians and the Hephthalites, whose territories are fairly clearly defined; Ḥurāsān, Fārs and Kirmān and are likewise well defined areas, but being found in Iran are not associated with different ethnicities; Rūm, however, is extremely vague and is used to refer to the city of Rome, its empire, all of Europe, the Byzantine empire, the ancient Greeks and Macedonians, and the area now called Asia Minor. It is likely in this case that Europe or Asia Minor is meant. Whether Dīnawarī himself, or one or more of his sources, is responsible for this grafting of foreign traditions onto the narrative of Genesis, it is difficult to tell.

They say: when ‘Ād became numerous in Yaman, they grew haughty and became insolent, and over them ruled Šadīd son of ‘Imlīq⁸⁸⁵ son of ‘Ād son of Iram son of Sām son of Nūḥ. He dispatched to the sons of Sām the son of his brother, namely Ḍaḥḥāk son of ‘Ulwān son of ‘Imlīq son of ‘Ād, whom the Persians call Baywarāsif.⁸⁸⁶ He went to the land of Bābil. King Jamm fled from him. Ḍaḥḥāk searched for him until he caught him up, and he seized him and sawed him with a saw and took possession of his kingdom. He that was sent [by Ḍaḥḥāk] against the sons of Ḥām son of Nūḥ was his cousin Walīd son of Rayyān son of ‘Ād son of Iram. Their king in that day was Mišr son of Qibṭ son of Ḥām who occupied the land of Egypt.⁸⁸⁷ Walīd son of Rayyān went to him and then killed him and took possession of his kingdom. Among the offspring of Walīd son of Rayyān was Rayyān son of Walīd ‘Azīz Mišr, master of Yūsuf⁸⁸⁸ (upon whom be the blessing of God and peace). Among the offspring of the two of them was Walīd son of Mas‘ab, Pharaoh in the time of Mūsā,⁸⁸⁹ the blessings of God be upon him. Jālūt the Giant whom Dāwūd the prophet (the blessings of God be upon him) killed, was one of the sons of Walīd son of Rayyān. He that Šadīd son of ‘Imlīq sent to the sons of Yāfiṭ son of Nūḥ was the son of his brother Ġānam son of ‘Ilwān brother of Ḍaḥḥāk son of ‘Ulwān.

The king of the descendants of Yāfiṭ son of Nūḥ in that day was Firāsyāb son of Tūḍil son of Turk son of Yāfiṭ son of Nūḥ. He conquered his kingdom also and took possession of his land.

885. *i.e.*, Amalek who was a chief of one of the tribes of Edom (GENESIS 36:16), whose descendants are associated in the Hebrew Bible and in later Jewish tradition with treachery and wickedness for opposing Israel’s coming out of Egypt (EXODUS 17:8–16). Dīnawarī makes Amalek an ancestor of the Yamanite Arabs.

886. *Ḍaḥḥāk* is an Arabicised form of the Avestan *ai dahāka* the Parthian *aḏdahāg*, and the Middle Persian *azdahāg*, names which are connected with Indo-Iranian words for ‘dragon’; the epithet *Baywarāsif* represents the Middle Persian *bēwarasp*, meaning ‘with ten thousand horses’ (SKJAERVØ / KHALEGI-MOTLAGH / RUSSELL 1987, p. 191–205). The form of the name Ḍaḥḥāk can be explained as putting emphasis on this malevolent king’s Arab ancestry, and his rule over Īrān may be construed as an antetype of the Arab overthrow of the Sasanian dynasty.

887. I have chosen to construe *arḍ mišr* as ‘Egypt’ throughout. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the king Mišr son of Qibṭ son of Ḥām bears in Arabic the same name as that of his country.

888. *i.e.*, Joseph.

889. *i.e.*, Moses.

And among the sons of Ġānam son of ‘Ulwān, was (as it is said) Fūr, the king of Hind, whom Iskandar⁸⁹⁰ killed in hand to hand combat. And it is said: Rustam the mighty was among the sons of Ġānam.

[Ḍaḥḥāk]

They say: verily Ḍaḥḥāk, whom the Iranians call [p. 7] Baywarāsif, after his victory over king Jamm and his murder of him and [after] he was secure in his rule and at peace, took to gathering to himself sorcerers from the distant lands of his kingdom. He studied sorcery until he made himself master in it, he built the city of Bābil, made it four parasangs by four parasangs in size, filled it with armies of giants, and called it Ḥūb. He treated the sons of Arfaḥšad harshly. There grew in his shoulders two cracks in the form of two snakes which would torment him, with the result that he fed them the brains of men and they calmed down.

They say: every day he brought four stout men, and they were slaughtered and their brains were taken, and the two snakes were fed with them. He had a vizier from among his folk, and he put in charge of his ministry a man from the sons of Arfaḥšad, who was called Armiyāyil.⁸⁹¹ When he⁸⁹² brought the men to be slaughtered, he spared the life of two of them, and put in their stead two rams. And he ordered the two men to go where there would be no trace of them. They went into the mountains, and they stayed in them and did not come near vil-laged or cities. It is said that they were the origin of the Kurds.⁸⁹³

890. *i.e.*, Alexander the Great.

891. ‘Armiyāyil’ seems to render the Middle Persian name ‘Armāyēl’, which means ‘the Aramaean’ and appears to have a Georgian ethnic suffix—details first noticed by Markwart (MARKWART / MESSINA 1931, p. 68). Others authors such as Ṭabarī and Maṣ‘ūdī include variants of the Ḍaḥḥāk story, but Dīnawarī is the first and only historian to mention Armiyāyil by name (ASMUSSEN 1986, p. 413). According to Firdawsī’s *Šāhnāma*, Armāyil (as he is called there) and his companion Garmāyil (who does not appear in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭuwal*) are said to be Ḍaḥḥāk’s cooks (for Firdawsī’s version of the story, see Ḍaḥḥāk, l. 1–41).

892. *i.e.*, Armiyāyil.

893. On the appearance of the Kurds in pre-Islamic Iran, see LIMBERT 1968, p. 41–51.

[The Mission of Hūd]

And there reigned after Šadīd son of ‘Imlīq his brother Šaddād son of ‘Imlīq son of ‘Ād son of Iram. He was insolent and acted tyrannically, so God sent to him Hūd (peace be upon him), an apostle, and he was from the pure-bred of his folk and from their nobles, and he was Hūd son of Ḥālīd son of Ḥulūd son of al-‘Īs son of ‘Imlīq son of ‘Ād. But Šaddād did not heed him, and so he⁸⁹⁴ destroyed him, and whoever disbelieved in him from among ‘Ād, just as God (be he blessed and exalted) hath already told in his book, and it is a story most veracious.⁸⁹⁵ He says: there grew up in that time Ġābar son of Šālah son of Arfaḥšād son of Sām [p. 8] son of Nūḥ, and there was born unto him Fālaḡ son of Ġābar. Then was born unto him after that Qaḥṭān⁸⁹⁶ son of Ġābar. He says: Qaḥṭān was only named for his putting an end to drought, and his liberality and open-handedness. Then was born to him Lām son of Ġābar. And he was the most worshipful of the folk of his age, and the scriptures of Ādam, Šīt, and Nūḥ came to him and he studied them and he learnt them. Then verily Ḍaḥḥāk Baywarāsif sought him⁸⁹⁷ out, that he might seduce him away from his religion. But he fled from him with his folk and his sons from the city of Bābil until he settled in the badlands belonging to the land of Rūm. His tomb is there and it is said that the place of his tomb is known even now.

894. *i.e.*, God.

895. Allusions to the story of Hūd and his dealings with the people of ‘Ād are found in the Quran (11: 50–57; 46: 24–25).

896. Qaḥṭān is to be identified with Joktan (GENESIS 10: 25), who according to Dīnawarī was ancestor of the Southern Arabs.

897. *i.e.*, Lām.

[Numrūd]

They say: when God destroyed ‘Ād together with Šaddād the support of ʔaḥḥāk grew weak, and his authority weakened. The sons of Arfaḥšaḍ son of Sām ventured out against him, and the plague came upon his army and the giants that were with him. But he went forth to seek his brother Ġānam son of ‘Ulwān, whom Šadīd made king over the sons of Yāfiṭ, and he besought help from him for his plight. The sons of Arfaḥšaḍ son of Sām took advantage of his having gone away, and they sent word to Numrūd⁸⁹⁸ son of Kan‘ān son of Jamm the king. He and his father were hiding in the expanse of ʔaḥḥāk’s kingdom in the mountain of Dunbāwand. He came to them and they⁸⁹⁹ appointed him⁹⁰⁰ king over them. And he lorded it over those in the land of Bābil among the folk of the house of ʔaḥḥāk, and then he killed them all together and took possession of the kingdom of ʔaḥḥāk. [News of] this reached ʔaḥḥāk and he headed toward him, but Numrūd defeated him and struck him upon the nape of the neck with a sharp mace.⁹⁰¹ He felled him and bound him with a shackle, and took him to a cave in the mountain of Dunbāwand. He put him in it and sealed it. Numrūd’s rule was strengthened and consolidated. Now, he is the one that the Persians call Farīdūn.⁹⁰²

898. *i.e.*, Nimrod (GENESIS 10: 6). Strangley, Dīnawarī’s genealogy of Nimrod is different from what is found in Genesis and is not reflected in any other source. Dīnawarī makes Nimrod the son of Kan‘ān son of Jamm, but in the Bible he is son of Cush son of Ham. Ṭabarī’s genealogy of Nimrod, however, is exactly as it appears in the Old Testament (ṬABARĪ, p. 319).

899. *i.e.*, the sons of Arfaḥšaḍ.

900. *i.e.*, Numrūd.

901. *gurz*: the Persian word for ‘mace’.

902. This identification of Numrūd with Farīdūn (Avestan *Θραētaona*; Middle Persian *Frēdōn*) is peculiar to Dīnawarī. It is difficult to tell what this identification may mean, for Nimrod is a figure of diverse character in later Jewish, Christian, and Muslim thought, and many incompatible traditions grew up round him. Nevertheless, Moses Xorenac’i associates Farīdūn and ʔaḥḥāk with Nimrod also. His discussion of ʔaḥḥāk, whom he calls *Biurasp Aždahak*, is situated explicitly ‘in the time of Nimrod’, whose Armenian name is *Nebrot* (XORENAC’I, I.32). It is tempting to think that Moses Xorenac’i and Dīnawarī have picked up the same tradition of combining Iranian and Biblical history — but at different stages of its development.

They say: when Hūd (the blessing of God be upon him) died, the sons of Iram son of Sām assembled [p. 9] from the quarters of the earth, and they appointed as king Marṭad son of Šad-dād. This was at the beginning of the reign of Numrūd son of Kan‘ān. Numrūd attacked them at the end of his reign, as their might had grown weak, and he had power over them. They say: Fālaḡ and Qaḥṭān were brothers and they were sons of Ġābar. Fālaḡ was the grandfather of Ibrāhīm⁹⁰³ (the blessing of God be upon him and peace), but as for Qaḥṭān, he was father of Yaman.

It is related that Ibnu’l-Muqaffa‘ said: ‘ignorant Iranians allege and they that have no knowledge [say] that king Jamm was Sulaymān son of Dāwūd,⁹⁰⁴ but this an error, for between⁹⁰⁵ Sulaymān and Jamm there were more than three thousand years.’ It is said that Numrūd son of Kan‘ān was the Pharaoh of Ibrāhīm from among the sons of Jamm and was paternal-cousin to Āzar son of Tāriḥ, father of Ibrāhīm, namely Ibrāhīm son of Āzar son of Tāriḥ son of Nāhūr son of Ar‘ū son of Šālah son of Arfaḥšād, whom the Iranians call Īrān. And among the sons of Arfaḥšād are all the Arabs, and among them also are the kings of Fārs, and their nobility are among the folk of ‘Irāq and others apart from them.

[Qaḥṭān]

They say: when ‘Ād died out from the land of Yaman and went extinct (this being in the age of Numrūd son of Kan‘ān), Numrūd bestowed it upon his cousin, Qaḥṭān son of Ġābar. He went to it together with his sons in order to settle in it, though in it [there was] a small remnant of ‘Ād that had faith in Hūd (upon whom be peace). Qaḥṭān dwelt near them there. It was not long until they died out and went extinct, and the land was made over to Qaḥṭān. And it is said that

903. *i.e.*, Abraham (GENESIS 17:5). Dīnawarī has made Abraham an Iranian by virtue of his descent from Arphaxad, who is identified with Jamm.

904. *i.e.*, Solomon son of David.

905. DĪNAWARĪ, p. 9: l. 6. We should prefer to amend *بين* to *بين*.

Ya‘rub son of Qaḥṭān went there after the death of his father. He went to it with his brothers and children and settled it. The mother of Ya‘rub was a woman from ‘Ād; she was not the mother of his brothers. So he spoke in the tongue of his mother, and it is related on the authority of Ibn al-Kayyis al-Namarī that he said that Qaḥṭān married a woman of the ‘Amālīq⁹⁰⁶ and she gave birth to Ya‘rub, Jurhum, al-Mu‘tamar, al-Mutalammis, ‘Āsim, Manī‘, al-Qutāmī, ‘Āsī, and Ḥimyar. They all spoke in the tongue of their mother, in Arabic. Qaḥṭān thrived [p. 10] in the age of Numrūd. It is related on the authority of Ibn Šariya that he said: ‘it was Ya‘rub son of Qaḥṭān that went forth together with his sons, and he was the greatest of them in years and the most mighty in power.’

[Ṭamūd]

They say: verily Ṭamūd stopped the disbelief in God and haughtiness to him practiced by ‘Ād. So Allah sent unto them Šāliḥ, a prophet. He was dignified among their aristocracy and highly regarded among their nobility. He summoned them to the unity of God, but they received it not, and they paid no heed, and God (be he exalted and glorified) destroyed them, as he set forth in his book⁹⁰⁷ and it is a most truthful tale. It is said that there were five hundred years between the destruction of ‘Ād and the destruction of Ṭamūd, and this was in the age of Ibrāhīm (upon whom be peace).

[Ibrāhīm]

At the end of the rule of Numrūd, whom the Persians call Farīdūn, Numrūd was tyrannical and haughty, and was devoted to the science of the stars, and imported stargazers from the far-flung reaches of the earth and favoured them with riches, and chose seven men from the folk of his

906. ‘Imālīq’ is the pl. of ‘Imlīq’. It could be construed as ‘Amalekites’.

907. The Quran alludes to the preaching of Šāliḥ against Ṭamūd (7:73–74).

house and called them the Kawahbārūn. He made them managers of his affairs and empowered each man among them with an individual task. Āzar father of Ibrāhīm was one of the seven that he chose, and he meted out to him the east and the west. Among the business of the progenitor of Ibrāhīm was [determining] what the [heavenly] signs might tell. The first to believe in Ibrāhīm was Sāra his wife and she was among the most beautiful of the folk of her age. Lūṭ was the son of his sister. Ibrāhīm, together with his father, stayed as long as God willed,⁹⁰⁸ and then went forth as an emigrant to him,⁹⁰⁹ and Sarah went forth with him. The father of Lūṭ was from the folk of the city of Sadūm,⁹¹⁰ and his mother was the daughter of Āzar. He had only just gone to Bābil to visit his grandfather Āzar, and he believed in Ibrāhīm, and he dwelt with him in Bābil, helping him with his affairs. When Ibrāhīm, upon whom be peace, went forth as an emigrant, Lūṭ went forth with him, and he caught up with his father and the folk of his house in Sadūm (which is between the land of Urdun⁹¹¹ [p. 11] and the border of the land of the Arabs), and Ibrāhīm went until he came to the land of Egypt.

[Jurhum and al-Mu‘tamar]

They say: verily the sons of Qaḥṭān multiplied in the land of Yaman, and covetousness and envy arose between them. The sons of Ya‘rub son of Qaḥṭān rallied against the sons of Jurhum son of Qaḥṭān and the sons of Mu‘tamar son of Qaḥṭān, and they banished them from Yaman and his land. Jurhum went towards the Sanctuary, and the Banū Mu‘tamar went towards the Ḥijāz, and the chief of Jurhum was Mudād son of ‘Imrū son of ‘Abd Allāh son of Jurhum son of Qaḥṭān, and they wanted to settle the Sanctuary but the ‘Imālīq stopped them from it. They fought, and Jurhum took the Sanctuary from them by conquest, and banished them from it, and Jurhum

908. The idea is that they remained there for an unknown, and perhaps indefinite, period of time.

909. *i.e.*, to Lūṭ.

910. *i.e.*, Sodom.

911. *i.e.*, Jordan.

settled in the Sanctuary. When they dwelt in it, word of this reached the Banū Mu‘tamar son of Qaḥṭān, and they approached from the land of the Ḥijāz until they reached the Sanctuary, and they asked Jurhum for habitation with them, but Jurhum (being the chief of the Banū Mu‘tamar, Samayda‘ son of ‘Imrū son of Qanṭūr son of Mu‘tamar son of Qanṭūr son of Mu‘tamar son of Qaḥṭān) refused them. The two parties challenged one another to battle, and in this their battle was called ‘the two creaks’, ‘the stoves’, ‘the chargers’, and ‘dishonour’, because in it the Banū Mu‘tamar was dishonoured and Samayda‘ was killed, and the victory went to Jurhum.

They say: Numrūd had three sons: Īraj, Salm, and Ṭūs. His kingdom passed to Īraj, and he set Salm over the sons of Ḥām, and Ṭūs over the sons of Yāfiṭ. His two brothers envied Īraj since his father favoured him with power excluding them, though he was younger in years than they. The two grew insolent towards him, and slew him. The kingdom went to the son of his son, Manūšīhr son of Īraj, and he turned away from his two sons Salm and Ṭūs. Then he died, and Manūšīhr son of Īraj ruled. In the age of Manūšīhr, Qaḥṭān multiplied in the land of Yaman, and they chose as king over themselves Saba son of Yašjub, [his] name being Saba ‘Abd Šams.

[Isma‘īl]

They say: in this age Isma‘īl⁹¹² son of [p. 12] Ibrāhīm (upon the two be peace) died, and he left three sons: Qayḍar son of Isma‘īl, Nābat son of Isma‘īl (namely he that was superintendant in charge of Mecca and the Sanctuary after Ibrāhīm), and Madyan son of Isma‘īl (namely he that went to the land of Madyan⁹¹³ and settled it, and among whose sons was Šu‘ayb⁹¹⁴ the prophet—upon whom be peace—and to whose folk he was sent). They say: when Bānat son of Isma‘īl died, Jurhum conquered the House [of the Ka‘ba] and the Sanctuary. Qayḍar son of Isma‘īl went

912. *i.e.*, Ishmael (GENESIS 16:3).

913. *i.e.*, Midian (GENESIS 37:28).

914. Šu‘ayb is commonly identified with Jethro (EXODUS 2:18).

forth with his folk and possessions pursuing the track of the camel train all over Kāẓima and Ġamr Ġū Kinda and the Two Ša‘tams, and what borders these two lands, until his descendants multiplied and they predominated in the whole land of Tihāma, the Ḥijāz, and Najd. Saba son of Yašjub son of Ya‘rub son of Qaḥṭān ruled the land of Yaman during the reign of Manūših̄r for one hundred and twenty years. Then he died and his son Ḥimyar son of Saba reigned after him, and he made his son Kahlān vizier of Ḥimyar.

[Firāsyāb]

They say: when the reign of Manūših̄r attained one hundred and twenty years, Firāsyāb⁹¹⁵ son of Fāyiš son of Nūḍasif son of Turk son of Yāfiṭ son of Nūḥ marched against him, and this was when Ḥimyar ruled the land of Yaman. His journey was from the direction of the east together with all the sons of Yāfiṭ son of Nūḥ until he ended up in the land of Bābil, and Manūših̄r went forth against him with his army. All Manūših̄r’s forces were scattered, and Firāsyāb followed after Manūših̄r until he overtook him. He killed him, took his kingdom, and sat upon his throne. He abased the descendants of Arfaḥšād, and threw down the castles that were in the land of Bābil, ruined the springs in it, and he flooded the rivers that were there, and men thirsted [p. 13] with vehement thirst, and the folk of Īrān-Šahr in his reign were in great tribulation.

[Zāb]

But when nine years of the reign of Firāsyāb were complete there appeared in the land of Fārs Zāb son of Būdakān son of Manūših̄r son of Iraj son of Numrūd. He deposed Firāsyāb, and called [them] to himself, and all sons of Sām were favourably disposed to him because of the trouble that had taken hold of them in the reign of Firāsyāb. He marched against Firāsyāb until

915. Firāsyāb (or Avestan *Frāprasyan*; Middle Persian *Frāsiyāw*, *Frāsiyāk*, or *Frangrāsiyāk*) is the mythical enemy of Iran *par excellence* (YAR-SHATER 1984, p. 570–576). Dīnawarī gives him Turkish heritage, which is of course an anachronism, but nevertheless consistent with later identifications of Tūrān with the Turks.

he deposed him from the kingdom, and betook himself to the cities and the castles which Firāsyāb had destroyed, and he restored their structures and dug the rivers and canals that he had flooded, and put to rights everything that Firāsyāb had destroyed. He dug in ‘Irāq enormous rivers which he named ‘the Zāb’, whose names he derived from his own name, and they are the Upper Zāb and the Middle Zāb and the Lesser Zāb. He built the city of al-‘Atīqa and called it ‘Madā’in’.⁹¹⁶ Then he went after Firāsyāb (he was in Ḥurāsān with his troops and his armies) and Firāsyāb advanced against him. They met, and there drew nigh Arasnās,⁹¹⁷ whom Manūšīhr had ordered to teach men to shoot with arrows, and he strung his bow and aimed the arrows. He went forward and drew near Firāsyāb. When he was able, he shot an arrow which struck his heart, and he fell to the ground dead. The sons of Yāfiṭ went away when their king was killed, and they even went back to their land. Zāb attained many wounds, and he died of them after the destruction of Firāsyāb after a month. In that year Ḥimyar son of Saba died also.

[Kayqubād]

They say: the kingdom of al-Walīd son of Mus‘ab, Pharaoh of Mūsā, upon whom be peace, was over the whole land of the sons of Ḥām, namely the kingdom which is known as the kingdom of Miṣr son of Ḥām. They say: when Yūsuf son of Ya‘qūb⁹¹⁸ died, while his brothers were in the land of Egypt. [p. 14] There his progeny remained, and they multiplied in it. In the time of Mūsā they were six hundred thousand men. The king of Yaman at the time of Mūsā was Miṭṭāṭ son of ‘Imrū son of Himyar son of Saba. The king in the land of Bābil was Kayqubād son of Zāb. Miṭṭāṭ was nicknamed ‘the Featherer’, because he put feathers on his bow and profited by them. The kings of all lands owed allegiance to Kayqubād, and they revered him with tribute. He had three

916. *Madā’in* in Arabic. The significance of al-‘Atīqa (‘the ancient’) is not clear.

917. This Arasnās is undoubtedly the same as *Erekhsō*, the mighty bowman mentioned in Yašt 8.IV.6 (ZEND-AVESTA, p. 415 with note 24). Cf. Ṭabarī, p. 992: l. 12 to p. 993: l. 1. The Avestan name *Erekhsō* would have come into Pahlavi as *Āriš*, and from this we can infer that Dīnawarī’s spelling of it is corrupt.

918. *i.e.*, Joseph son of Jacob (GENESIS 37:1–11).

sons: Qābūs, namely he that ruled after him; and Kayānibah, namely he that was the grandfather of Luhrāsif who was king after Sulaymān son of Dāwūd (upon whom be peace); and Qayūs, namely the grandfather of the Ašġān,⁹¹⁹ who were kings of Jabal⁹²⁰ in the age of the the Regional Princes and in the age of the departure of Mūsā son of ‘Imrān from Egypt, fleeing from Pharaoh, until he came to the land of Madyan, and he dwelt with Šu‘ayb.⁹²¹ He rewarded him for his three pilgrimages, as God (his praise be glorified) relates in the reasonable book. Then he went forth from Šu‘ayb when the time came, and he went with his people and they were under his authority. God was generous to him in his speech and his prophetic mission, which he hath narrated for us in his book.⁹²² He departed to Šu‘ayb and his folk went to him, and proceeded until he conveyed the revelation of his Lord. In the same age Šu‘ayb was sent to his folk. God narrates in his book [a few stories] about them.⁹²³

[Abraha]

They say: then there reigned over the land of Yaman Abraha son of Miḥtāt, namely Abraha Ḍū’l-Manār, who is called so because he commanded the building of a lighthouse, with flaming light upon it in the night, that his armies might be guided by it. Mūsā son of ‘Imrān (upon whom be peace) died, and Yūša‘ son of Nūn⁹²⁴ after him took command of the Banū Isrā’īl. He went out with the children of Israel from Mišr into the land of al-Šām and he settled them in Falašūn. [p. 15]

919. *i.e.*, the Arsacids.

920. *i.e.*, Media, or Persian ‘Irāq.

921. Šu‘ayb is often identified with the Biblical Jethro (Genesis 2: 18). The truth of this identification is disputed.

922. *Sūrat al-Qaṣaṣ* (QURAN 28).

923. See *Sūrat al-Šu‘arā* (QURAN 26).

924. *i.e.*, Joshua son of Nun (NUMBERS 3:16).

They say: verily Abraha made ready and went with many men into the land of the west, and left his kingdom in the charge of his son Ifrīqīs. He went deep into the land of Sūdān and they accorded him obedience. He passed through their land, and even came upon a people among men whose eyes and mouths are in their chests. It is said that they are among the progeny of Nūḥ, upon whom be peace, at whom God was angry. He⁹²⁵ changed their customs, and they accorded him obedience. He went back and passed through a people among men called al-Nas-nās, among whom the men and the women have half a head, half a face, one eye, half a body, one hand, and one leg. They hop about faster than the running of a racing horse, and they wander in the thickets which are on the shore of the sea behind heaps of sand, that is to say the sands of the country of Yaman. He asked of them, and he was informed that they were a people from the sons of Wabār son of Īram son of Sām son of Nūḥ.

[Kaykāwus son of Kayqubād]

They say: the king of Īrān in the age of Abraha son of Miṭṭāṭ was Kaykāwus son of Kayqubād, and he was harsh on the powerful and merciful on the weak. He was victorious and praiseworthy until he thought up a vain idea whereby he thought to go up to heaven. He was possessor of the casket and the eagles.⁹²⁶ He begrudged his son Sīyāwuš, though he had no son apart from him. He wished to kill him, but Sīyāwuš fled from him and attached himself to the king of the Turks and took up residence with him in a comfortable dwelling. He⁹²⁷ tried him and tested him and saw his intellect, his learning, his bravery, and his intrepidity. He entrusted him with rule. When the people of the king's house saw this, they envied him and feared that he might take the kingdom from them. Those mighty in lineage put him down [p. 16] before the king, so much so that

925. *i.e.*, Abraha.

926. This refers to Kaykāwus' flying chair, borne in the air by eagles, the full story of which is narrated in the *Šāhnāma*.

927. *i.e.*, the king of the Turks, Afrāsyāb. Cf. ṬABARĪ, p. 600–601.

he attacked him and killed him. He⁹²⁸ married his sister and she was pregnant by him. He wanted to rip open her belly because of the foetus. But Abaryān⁹²⁹ the vizier besought him for her sake and for her son, that he not kill her without any crime. He said to him: ‘take her to yourself. If she gives birth, kill her child.’ She was with him until she gave birth to a boy, and he was Kayḥusraw who ruled after him. He took him from the city and had him suckled among the Kurds that dwell in the mountians, and he grew up among them.⁹³⁰ He⁹³¹ said unto the king: ‘She brought forth a girl, and I have killed her.’ He⁹³² believed him.

[Kayḥusraw]

Verily the folk of Fārs hated Kaykāwus on account of the tyranny, recalcitrance, and haughtiness that he showed unto God. They plotted his deposition. This was noised abroad until it reached the mother of the boy, and when he reached seventeen years, she dispatched a messenger into the folk of Fārs to inform them of the murder of Sīyāwuš. The lad commanded that they choose a man among their worthies called Zaw.⁹³³ They sent him to Abaryān the vizier to take care of the lad, and he stood before him and disclosed to him what the folk of Fārs had agreed to. He surrendered the boy to him, and he bore him upon the horse of his father Sīyāwuš who had come to him from ‘Irāq. Zaw went to him hiding by day and travelling by night until he came to the great river Jayḥūn,⁹³⁴ namely the river of Balḥ, and he crossed it by swimming on his horse. He

928. *i.e.*, the Turkish king.

929. This is the reading of the Leiden manuscript. St Petersburg has Barāyān. Ṭabarī called him Fīrān.

930. A curious detail which seems to be peculiar to Dīnawarī.

931. *i.e.*, Abaryān.

932. *i.e.*, Kaykāwus.

933. ‘Zaw’ is an Arabicised form of the Persian name ‘Zāb’.

934. *i.e.*, the river Oxus.

proceeded with him until he brought him to the court of the king. They dethroned Kaykāwus, and chose the boy as king and called him Kayḥusraw⁹³⁵, and bestowed obedience on him. He commanded that his father be imprisoned. He remained [p. 17] imprisoned until he perished.

[Ifriqīs]

They say: Kayḥusraw ruled and Ifriqīs son of Abraha ruled in one and the same age, and that Ifriqīs made ready, making for the west until he reached the land of Ṭanja and Andalus. He saw a spacious country and built there a city and called it Ifriqīya, whose name he derived from his own name, and he brought inhabitants into it, and it is the city wherein dwell the ruler of that country and its grandees. Then he went back to his homeland. In that age there grew up Ma‘add son of ‘Adnān, and in it the sons of Iram went extinct from the whole land of the Arabs, save remnants of [the tribes] Ṭasm and Jadīs who remain in ‘Umān and Baḥrayn and Yamāma.

When Ifriqīs son of Abraha died, there ruled his son Ḍū Jayšān son of Ifriqīs. He prepared for raiding Kayḥusraw king of Fārs, and he gathered his forces and went until he halted in Najrān. There were in ‘Umān, Najrān, and Yamāma many persons of the sons of Ṭasm and Jadīs, the two sons of Iram son of Sām, and they belonged to the Full-Blooded Arabs,⁹³⁶ and their king was a man from the lineage of Ṭasm called ‘Imliqā. He was oppressive and tyrannical, and his haughtiness went as far as commanding that a woman from the lineage of Jadīs could not be given to her husband unless they brought him to her. They went on thus for a long while, but verily a man from the lineage of Jadīs took in marriage ‘Ufayra daughter of Ġifār sister of Aswad son of Ġifār ‘Aẓīm Jadīs and her master. When they wanted to lead her into the bridal chamber, she was taken first to the king and he deflowered her, and then he released her. She went forth to

935. Dīnawarī does not identify Kayḥusraw was any biblical figure. But Sebeos does. Reporting a legend about the relics of the prophet Daniel (which were kept in the Persian treasury at Susa), Sebeos claims that, whereas Christians called it the body of Daniel, Persians referred to it as that of Kayḥusraw (SEBEOS, p. 85: l. 27–30). Could it be that the identification of Iranian heros with biblical figures was a tradition established long before Dīnawarī wrote his history?

936. *Al-‘arab al-‘āriba* in Arabic.

her people in her blood, lifting up her garments from her pudendum and she spoke... *there follow three line of unattributed poetry* [p. 18].

Jadīs was furious at this, and they carried off ‘Imlīqā and killed him at a moment of inadvertance... *there follow two lines of poetry attributed to Aswad son of Ġifār*...

They destroyed the tribe of Ṭasm and none escaped from them, save one man called Riyāḥ son of Murra. Verily he departed on his own way until he came to Ḍū Jayšān, and he was encamped with his army at Najrān. He came before him, and then spoke... *there follow four lines of poetry*.

The king said: ‘How many [days] are between us and between them?’ He said: ‘Three.’ But those in his presence said: ‘He lieth, O king! Between thee and between the people are twenty nights.’ He commanded his army to march towards Yamāma, and in his march and in the story of al-Zarqā, al-A‘šā spoke after this in a long age... *there follows three lines of poetry* [p. 19].

He went to Jadīs and extirpated them, and then travelled towards ‘Irāq making for Kayḥusraw, and Kayḥusraw marched against him. They met, Ḍū Jayšān was killed, and his host was scattered. Yaman chose as king his son al-Find Ḍū’l-Ad‘ār, or he was rather nicknamed Ḍū al-Ad‘ār because of men’s fear of him. But he had no care apart from avenging his father.

He said: Yamāma and Baḥrayn remained after the death of Jadīs without anyone in them until Rabī‘a multiplied and spread out and became dispersed in the countries. ‘Anaza son of Asad son of Rabī‘a went, investigating places of rain, whilst ‘Abd al-‘Uzzā son of ‘Imrū al-‘Anazī went before them until he captured Yamāma. He beheld a broad country, date palms, and castles; and behold there was an old man seated under the palms, who declaimed in the *rajaz* metre... *one line of poetry follows*.

‘Abd al-‘Uzzā said unto him: ‘who art thou, O elder?’ He said: ‘I am from Hizzān [tribe], the fellow lions, Ḍū Jayšān hath raided us, the king that is master of Yamān. Murrān was active therein, but no one remains in it but me, and I am Lafān.’⁹³⁷

‘Abd al-‘Uzzā said: ‘And who is Hazzān?’ He said: ‘Hazzān son of Ṭasm, brother of al-Nuhā and al-Ḥazm and son of Šajā‘ the master.’ ‘Abd al-‘Uzzā stayed there for a few days, but then he had had enough of where he was, and he went away travelling until he reached Baḥrayn. He beheld countries more extensive than Yamāma, and in it those of the sons of Kahlān who had settled in it, when they fled from the Vehement Flood.⁹³⁸ He stayed among them. The Banū Ḥanīfa went on that road, following the places of rain and ‘Ubayd son of Yarbū‘ led them, for he was their lord. He settled near it. A lad travelled to him one day, until he intruded into Yamāma. He saw palms [p. 20] and the countryside, and behold some dates had been scattered below the palms. He took one of them and offered it to ‘Ubayd, and he ate of it. He said: ‘by thy father verily this food is good!’ He went away until he came to Yamāma and goaded his horse and he halted at three houses and three gardens and called that place Ḥajr, and it is to-day the citadel of Yamāma and the regions nearby and its market place, and the Banū Ḥanīfa became known for what ‘Ubayd son of Yarbū‘ achieved. They went until they came to Yamāma and dwelt in it, and their descendants are there to-day.

[Dāwūd]

He said: Dāwūd the prophet (upon whom be peace) was in the age of al-Find ḏū’l-Ad‘ār, and the king of Īrān was Kayḥusraw son of Sīyawuṣ, and he was ruler of the Banū Isrā’īl, who had become weak. The peoples around them were attacking them, and killing [them] and taking

937. The man is speaking in rhymed prose in Arabic, which I dare not imitate in English.

938. *Sayl al-‘Arim* in Arabic. This refers to a storm flood which destroyed the dam of Ma‘rib in ancient South Arabia c. A.D. 450–451.

[them] prisoner. They went to their prophet Šu‘ayb,⁹³⁹ and they said: ‘send us a king; and we shall fight in the way of God!’ He chose Ṭālūt⁹⁴⁰ as king over them, and he was of the tribe of Yūsuf (may God bless him) and he was the king in the land of Yahūdā.⁹⁴¹ In those days Jālūt the giant, from the sons of ‘Ād, still existed. He went to attack the children of Israel with his army. Ṭālūt gathered the Banū Isrā‘īl to do battle with him. They passed by the river, from which Ṭālūt prevented them from drinking, but they [all] drank of it save three hundred and seventeen men, the number of the folk of Badr with the prophet of God, upon whom be blessings and peace. Dāwūd the prophet was at that time a young man. When the two companies fought in battle, Dāwūd (upon whom be peace) put a stone in his sling-shot, and then twisted it, and flung it, and struck Jālūt between the eyes. His spirit was in it. The Banū Isrā‘īl routed his army and plundered their possessions, and the Banū Isrā‘īl decided therefore to make Dāwūd king (may God bless him) and to depose Ṭālūt, because they were pleased with him. Dāwūd was of the tribe of Yahūdā son of Ya‘qūb.⁹⁴²

They say: [p. 21] the king of Rūm in that age was Daqīnūs, he of the young companions of the cave. It is related from ‘Abd Allāh Ibn Šāmit; he says: ‘Abū Bakr the Veracious (may God be pleased with him) sent me to the king of Rūm in the year in which he became caliph, to call him to Islam or summon him to war.’ He said: ‘I went until I arrived at Qusṭanṭīniyya,⁹⁴³ and the Great One of Rūm summoned me, and we went in before him. We sat and we did not make an act of submission, and then we asked about the things pertaining to Islam. Then we went away from there quickly. Then he called to us on another day, and he called a servant to himself. He spoke to him about something. He went away and brought to him a reliquary in which were

939. Sic, though the prophet Šamwīl (Samuel) is clearly meant (DAMGĀNĪ A.H. 1354, p. 42: n. 26).

940. i.e., Saul (1 SAMUEL 9: 1–2).

941. i.e., Judaea.

942. i.e., Judah son of Jacob (GENESIS 35: 23).

943. i.e., Constantinople.

many boxes and upon each box was a small door. He opened one of its doors and took out a black cloth on which was a bright picture like the image of a comely man with a halo of the moon on the night of power. He said: 'do ye recognise this?' We said: 'no.' He said: 'This is our lord Ādam, upon whom be peace.' Then he returned it to its place. He opened another door, and took out a black cloth on which was a white picture like unto the image of an old man of handsome countenance in whose face was a frown like the image of one sorrowing and pained. He said: 'know ye aught of this?' We said: 'No.' He said: 'This is Nūḥ.' Then he opened another door, and took out a black cloth on which was a white picture like unto the image of our prophet Muḥammad, blessings and peace be upon him and upon all the prophets. When we looked upon it, we wept. He said: 'what is this to you?' We said: 'this is a picture of our prophet Muḥammad, upon whom be the blessing of God and peace.' He said: 'is it in your religion that it is an image of your prophet?' We said: 'yes: there is a picture of our prophet: it is as though we see him alive.' He folded it and put it back, and he said: 'but it is the last of the boxes, and I want to know what ye have.' Then he opened the other door, and took out of it a black cloth on which was a white image of the most handsome of men and resembling our prophet Muḥammad, upon whom be the blessing of God and peace, then he said: 'This is Ibrāhīm.' Then he opened another box and took out the picture of a tawny man [p. 22] like unto the image of the one sorrowing and ruminating, then he said: 'this is Mūsā son of 'Imrān.' Then he opened another door, and took out a picture of a man who had two tresses, as though his face were the halo of the moon. Then he said: 'this is Dāwūd.' Then he opened another box, and he took out the picture of a handsome man upon a horse, who had two wings. Then he said: 'this is Sulaymān, and this wind carries him.' Then he opened another box, and he took out a picture of a boy of handsome face, in whose hand was a stick, and upon him a shirt of wool. Then he said: 'this is 'Īsā,⁹⁴⁴ the spirit of God and his word.' Then he said: 'verily this picture came to Iskandar and he bequeathed it to the kings after him until it passed to me.'⁹⁴⁵

944. *i.e.*, Jesus.

945. This curious anecdote seems to represent Islam as the culmination of several prophetic messages uttered to

They say: Verily ʿĪl-Adʿār went out with his army seeking to avenge his father ʿĪl-Jayšān who went to the land of Fārs and made war on Kayḥusraw and was killed in battle. ʿĪl-Adʿār died on the road before he attained what he wanted. Yaman chose as king over them Hadhād son of Šuraḥbīl son of ʿImrū son of Mālik son of al-Rāʾiš. Hadhād is surnamed ʿĪl-Šarḥ. He commanded that the body of ʿĪl-Adʿār be carried and brought back to his people in the land of Yaman. He commanded that it be buried at Šanʿā in the graveyard of the kings.

They say: Hadhād married the daughter of the king of the Jann in the land of Yaman. She bore him Balqīs.⁹⁴⁶ This is a [well] diffused story, which hath been transmitted by reciters. They say: when she was thirty years old, death came to Hadhād. The chiefs of Ḥimyar assembled, and he said: ‘O tribe, verily I have put men to the test, and I have tried the folk of vision and intelligence, but I have not seen the like of Balqīs, therefore I entrust her with rule over you in order to manage the kingdom for you, until the son of my brother, Yāsar Yanʿam son of ʿImrū, come of age.’ They were pleased with this, and Balqīs ruled.

[Sulaymān]

At the beginning of her⁹⁴⁷ reign Dāwūd (upon whom be peace) died, [p. 23] and Sulaymān inherited his kingdom. All of this was in the age of Kayḥusraw son of Siyāwuš. When Sulaymān reigned, he went from the land of al-Šām to the land of ʿIrāq with his folk and his treasury. He reached Ḥurāsān and put down at the city Balḥ, for he had built it before this, and Sulaymān carried on until he halted in ʿIrāq. Sulaymān’s halting in the land of ʿIrāq reached Kayḥusraw and the greatness of his power, and fright filled him and sorrow permeated him and consumed

mankind from Adam to Jesus. It is perhaps implied that the images are to be inherited by the envoy of ʿAbū Bakr (YÜCESOY 2007, p. 142), though it may be noteworthy that Dīnawarī does not say so explicitly.

946. QURAN 27: 28–44. Dīnawarī, in harmony with Muslim tradition, identifies Balqīs with the Queen of Sheba (Cf. 1 KINGS 10: 1 *et seqq.*).

947. *i.e.*, Balqīs.

him. It was but a little while before he died, and when Sulaymān went out of ‘Irāq to Marw, and then from there to Balḥ. Then he went from Balḥ to the lands of the Turk, and he went deep into them, and passed through it into Šīn.⁹⁴⁸ Then he turned from the place where the sun rises to the shore of the sea until he came to Qandahār, and from there he went to Mukrān and Kirmān. Then he passed through them until he came to the land of Fārs, and he halted there a few days. Then he went from there to Kaskar. Then he returned to al-Šām. He came to Tadmur, his residence. They say: there was found [written] on a rock at Kaskar: ‘we set out at sunrise from the land of Fārs, and behold! we are in the land of Kaskar. There is no power alike to that of our lord; we go to our homelands from the land of Tadmur.’

Dāwūd (upon whom be peace) had begun the building of the temple of the Holy House, but he died before its achievement. Sulaymān finished it, and completed the building of the city of Īliyā,⁹⁴⁹ for his father had begun it before him.⁹⁵⁰ He built its temple, a building whose like men had not seen. The radiance of its gleaming lamps shone in the gloom of the dark night, because of the multitude of jewels and gold that he had put on it.⁹⁵¹ The day whereon he finished it he made thereof a yearly festival, and there was no more splendid, festival day in the land, nor one of greater [p. 24] gravity than it, nor one of more beauteous appearance. The temple remained

948. *i.e.*, China.

949. *i.e.*, Jerusalem. Dīnawarī’s ‘Īliyā’ is none other than the Latin ‘Aelia’, the name of the Roman colony built on the ruins of Jerusalem by Hadrian after the memorable destruction of that city in A.D. 70.

950. *Cf.* Solomon’s speech in 1 KINGS 8: 12–21 and 2 CHRONICLES 6: 1–11, especially ‘...the Lord said to David my father, Forasmuch as it was in thine heart to build an house for my name, thou didst well in that it was in thine heart; notwithstanding, thou shalt not build the house; but thy son, who shall come forth from out of thy loins...’ (2 CHRONICLES 6: 8–9).

951. *Cf.* the Biblical account, in which the only similar notice is: ‘and for the house he made windows of narrow lights’ (1 KINGS 6: 4).

as Sulaymān built it until Buḥt Naṣṣar⁹⁵² attacked the Holy House and destroyed it and demolished the temple and took what gold and silver and jewels were in it, and moved them to ʿIrāq.

They say: Sulaymān was generous with food. He would slaughter at lunchtime in the kitchen one thousand bulls and twenty thousand sheep.⁹⁵³ They say: when Sulaymān was finished with the building of the temple of Īlīyā, he made ready to go forth against Tihāma, making for the House of God, the Sanctuary, and he walked round it, hung a cloth on it, sacrificed before it, and stayed there seven days. Then he went to Ṣanʿā, and he sought for the bird, but he saw not the hoopoe (it was from his story and the story of the mistress of Saba, namely Balqīs, which God tells, who is blessed and exalted, in his book) until he married her. He built in the land of Yaman three castles, the like of which man had not seen. They were Salḥīn, Baynūn, Ġumdān. Sulaymān went back to al-Šām. He visited her every month, and stayed with her three days.

[They say] that he attacked the land of the Mağrib, Andalus, Ṭanja, Faranja, and Ifrīqiya and the surrounding regions of the land of the Banū Kanʿān son of Ham son of Nūḥ.⁹⁵⁴ Over them ruled the tyrant ʿĀt, the great one of the kingdom, and he⁹⁵⁵ called him to belief in God and to putting off idolatry. He rose up against him and killed him, and took one of his daughters who was the most beautiful among men and took her as a concubine. She made a most pleasant impression on him. He returned to Syria and commanded that a palace be built for her and he put her inside it together with her nurse and her servants. Whenever Sulaymān went into her he found her weeping sorrowfully. That disturbed his love for her and his pleasure in her. She was

952. *i.e.*, Nebuchadnezzar II who sacked Jerusalem in 597 B.C., destroying the Jewish temple, and carrying off most of the city's inhabitants.

953. Solomon was indeed famed for indulgent and lavish living (2 CHRONICLES 9: 13–28; 1 KINGS 10: 14–29), but Dīnawarī's claims about his eating are a gross exaggeration of the Biblical account: 'and Solomon's provision for one day was thirty measures of fine flour, and threescore measures of meal, ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, and an hundred sheep, beside harts, and roebucks, and fallowdeer, and fatted fowl' (1 KINGS 4: 22–23).

954. The alleged conquests of Solomon are, of course, unhistorical.

955. *i.e.*, Sulaymān.

the woman whom Sulaymān acquired amongst the spoil of his kingdom.⁹⁵⁶ The extinction of his reign, and the removal of his power and riches was when this woman took her father's image into his⁹⁵⁷ palace and worshipped it in secret from Sulaymān. But her taking the image was by the knowledge [p. 25] and permission of Sulaymān). Thus he wanted her to be calm when she saw him, and to be glad.

It is said that in the remotest parts of the lands of the Mağrib Sulaymān built a city of copper in the desert of Andalus. He put in it some of his treasures. They say that 'Abd al-Malik son of Marwān wrote to his vicegerent in the land of the Mağrib, Mūsā son of Nuṣayr, (and he was one of the sons of al-ʿAjam,⁹⁵⁸ though his allegiance was turbulent) commanding him to go to this city so that he might learn of it, and he gave him written orders. Verily Mūsā son of Nuṣayr went thither, and went back as far as Qayruwān. He wrote with news to 'Abd al-Malik and described the city and what he encountered on his journey thither and what he saw on his march towards it.

[Arḥabʿam]

They say: when Sulaymān died, there came to power after him Arḥabʿam⁹⁵⁹ son of Sulaymān. The Banū Isrāʾīl became scattered, and their power weakened.⁹⁶⁰ They remained thus until Buḥt Naṣṣar (namely Būḥt Narsā of the Iranians) came to the Holy House and destroyed it.

956. *i.e.*, the kingdom of ʿĀt.

957. *i.e.*, Sulaymān.

958. *i.e.*, he was Iranian.

959. *i.e.*, Rehoboam, who succeeded Solomon, but not for long. He was replaced quickly by Jeroboam (1 KINGS 11: 26).

960. A somewhat cursory and anachronistic reference to the Jewish diaspora and Babylonian captivity.

They say: there arose as king in Yaman after Balqīs Yāsir Yan‘am son of ‘Imrū son of Šarḥabīl son of ‘Imrū, and he was son of the brother of al-Hadhād. He was called Yāsir Yan‘am because of his generosity to his people.

They say: verily Yāsir Yan‘am prepared an attack on the land of the Mağrib and he even reached the River of Sand,⁹⁶¹ which no king before him had reached. He wanted to go across it, but there was no ford because sand, as they said, flowed in it as water flows. He camped on the bank of it, and he raised up an idol upon it. He wrote on its forehead, saying ‘there is no way through; depart!’ He went back to his lands.

[The Destruction of Īlīyā]

They say: when Sulaymān son of Dāwūd died, grandees and nobles of Fārs gathered, in order to chose a man from the progeny of Kayqubād the king, so that they might make him king over themselves, and their choice was fixed upon [p. 26] Luhrāsif son of Kaymīs son of Kayānibah son of Kayqubād the king. They chose him as king over themselves. Verily Luhrāsif entrusted his cousin Buḥt Naṣṣar⁹⁶² son of Kāmjar son of Kayānibah son of Kayqubād with twelve thousand men from his forces and commanded him to go to al-Šām and to wage war upon Arḥab‘am son of Sulaymān. The victory went to him, for he killed as many as he could of the grandees of the Banū Isrā‘īl, and he destroyed the city of Īlīyā. Buḥt Naṣṣar went until he came to al-Šām, and he attacked it, and he wrought-havoc, and he put to flight the kings of al-Šām from it. Arḥab‘am fled from the Holy House and arrived in Faliṣṭīn and died there. Buḥt Naṣṣar advanced until he came to the city of the Holy House. He went into it, without preventing anyone [from doing the same]. He put the children of Israel to the sword and took prisoner the sons of the kings and grandees and destroyed the city of Īlīyā. He did not leave within it a single house standing. He pulled down the temple and carried off what gold, silver, and jewels were in it, and carried off the

961. *Wādī al-Raml* in Arabic.

962. Dīnawarī has transformed Nebuchadnezzar II into an Iranian.

chair of Sulaymān, and went back to ‘Irāq. Among the prisoners was Ḍānyāl⁹⁶³ the prophet, upon whom be peace. He went and he came to Luhrāsif the king, who was dwelling at Sūs. Ḍānyāl died with him at Sūs.

[Kings of Iran and Yaman]

They say: when death came to Luhrāsif kingship reposed upon his son Buštāsif.⁹⁶⁴ In that age died Yāsir Yan‘am, master of Yaman, and there came to power after him Šammar son of Ifrīqīs son of Abraha son of al-Rā‘iš. He, they say, it was that went to Šīn and destroyed the city of Samarqand, and they say that the vizier of the lord of Šīn deceived him and this was because he commanded the king to cut off his nose and kill him. But the mutilated man went to Šammar and told him that he [p. 27] gave counsel to his master (namely the king of Šīn) and commanded him to be kind to Šammar and to accord him obedience and tribute, but he⁹⁶⁵ was angry at him and mutilated him. Verily he went to Šammar to show him the weakness of the lord of Šīn as recompense for what he had done to him. But Šammar was misled by this and asked about [his] counsel, and he said: ‘between thee and him is a desert which can be crossed in three days and its origin is near it. Take water for three days and go until I come upon him with thee from nearby, and you will seize his land and take it peacefully, together with his people and possessions.’ He did this. He went with him through the desert which was not far away. When they had gone three days, and when the water ran out and they saw no road sign and they came not to any water, they said to him: ‘where is that place that thou toldest us of?’ He told him that he had deceived him, and he preserved the folk of his house guard by himself, for he had known that he would kill him. He said: ‘I have already destroyed thee and I have done what thou hast done. Neither thou

963. *i.e.*, Daniel (DANIEL 1: 6 *et seqq.*).

964. Buštāsif is an Arabicised spelling of a name rendered *Vištāspa* in Avestan and Old Persian, *Hystaspes* in Greek, *Wištāsp* in Middle Persian and *Goštāsp* in New Persian (SHAHBAZI 2002).

965. *i.e.*, the king of Šīn (China).

nor he that followeth thee have any desire for life.’ Šammar put his hauberk under his head and took up an iron shield that was with him above his head hiding himself from the sun with it. They say: the stargazers had said to him: ‘Thou shalt die between two hills of iron’, and he died between his hauberk and his shield—thirsting. Not one remained of his army, but they [all] perished, and we have heard of this story in another tale of Šammar.⁹⁶⁶

[The Preaching of Zarādušt]

They say: Zarādušt,⁹⁶⁷ who was lord of the Magi, went to Buštāsif the king. He said: ‘I am God’s apostle to thee.’ He gave him the book that is in the hands of the Magi, and Buštāsif believed him, and yielded his allegiance to the faith of Zarādušt.⁹⁶⁸ The folk of his kingdom harkened unto him and answered him with hearing and obedience. Rustum the Mighty⁹⁶⁹ was his⁹⁷⁰ viceroy in Sijistān and Hurāsān and he was a giant of towering stature, of vehement strength, of huge body, and he was of the lineage of Kayqubād the king. When news of Buštāsif’s entry into Magianism and his forsaking the faith of his fathers reached him, he was wroth thereat with a vehement wrath, and said: ‘He hath forsaken the faith of our fathers, the faith that they bequeathed of yore, and inclined unto a new faith!’ Then he gathered the folk of Sijistān and persuaded them to depose Buštāsif, and they raised up an insurrection for him. Buštāsif summoned his son Isfandiyād who was the strongest of the folk of his age, and he said to him: ‘O my son! Verily the kingdom will pass to thee soon, and all thine affairs shall be not aright except thou kill Rustum: thou knowest his strength and power, and thou art his like in strength and power. Choose from the army

966. Dīnawarī is clearly aware of more than one story about Šammar.

967. *i.e.*, Zoroaster.

968. Various traditions grew up round king Buštāsif: unlike Firdawsī, Dīnawarī seems *not* to have drawn on traditions portraying him as a bad king.

969. *i.e.*, the Iranian hero, whose name is usually spelt ‘Rustam’ in English.

970. *i.e.*, Buštāsif.

what thou wilt, then march against him!’ Isfandiyāḏ chose from the army of his father twelve thousand men from the knights of Īrān, and marched against Rustum, and Rustum marched against him. The two met between the countries of Sijistān and Ḥurāsān. Isfandiyāḏ called for the release of the armies from the fight, and that each of the two of them do single combat with the other, whichever of the two kills the other shall take possession of his companions. Rustum was glad at this and promised it to him, and swore it. The two armies halted opposite one another, and each one of the two went forth to the other. They fought between the two lines, and about this the Iranians tell many a tale, except that Rustum was he that killed Isfandiyāḏ, and his army returned to his father Buštāsif. They acquainted him with the calamity of his son Isfandiyāḏ. Grief overcame him and wasted him. He took ill from this and died, and the kingdom passed to the son of his son, Bahman son of Isfandiyāḏ. They say: when Rustum returned to his abode in the land of Sijistān it was not long ere he perished.

[The Rule of Abū Mālik son of Šammar]

They say: verily the folk of Yaman, when news of the demise of Šammar and his army in the land of Šīn reached them, they gathered and made king over themselves Abū Mālik son of Šammar, and it was he that al-Aʿšā commemorates in his verse... *one line of poetry follows* [p. 29]. It was he that they say perished in the extreme darkness that is in the region of the north,⁹⁷¹ and he was buried in a part of it.

They say: this was the man whom news of the the expedition of Ḍūʿl-Qarnayn⁹⁷² reached, and he extracted from it many a jewel and prepared himself seeking entry thereto. But the land of Rūm blocked the way thither, and he passed through it until he came to the region of dark-

971. This probably refers to some region north of the Black Sea.

972. Ḍūʿl-Qarnayn is usually assumed to refer to Alexander the Great.

ness. He was ready to invade it, but he died before he could have gone in and was buried in a part of it. They that were with him returned to the land of Yaman.

[Bahman]

They say: there reigned Bahman son of Isfandyāđ. He ordered that the remainder of them that were in captivity, whom Buht Naššar had taken prisoner among the children of Israel, return to their home lands in the land of al-Šām.⁹⁷³ Before the kingdom came to him, he had married Irāht, daughter of Sāmil son of Arḥab‘am son of Sulaymān son of Dāwūd. Zuwibīl, the brother of his wife, ruled the land of al-Šām.⁹⁷⁴ He⁹⁷⁵ commanded him⁹⁷⁶ to go forth with him together with those who remained in captivity and to help in rebuilding Īlīyā, and he settled them in it, as they contine [to dwell there]. He sent back the throne of Sulaymān and he put it up in its place. Zuwibīl went forth thus until he arrived with them at Īlīyā and he helped in the rebuilding of it, and he rebuilt the temple. Bahman returned to Sijistān and killed those of the sons of Rustum that had power over it and the folk of his house and he laid waste his town.

They say: Bahman had gone into of the faith of the children of Israel but forsook it afterwards and returned to Magianism. He married his daughter Ḥumānā and she was the most beautiful of the folk of her age.⁹⁷⁷ Death overtook him while she was pregnant by him and he

973. This is clearly a reference to the freeing of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity. Bahman is the New Persian for *Vohu Manu*, throne name of Artaxerxes II. Ezra, or the writer of the scripture which bears his name, calls the king who freed the Jews ‘Artaxerxes’ (Ezra 7–10), but there is some scholarly doubt as to whether Ezra means Artaxerxes the first or the second. Dīnawarī implies that the second king of this name is meant.

974. *i.e.*, Zerubbabel. He was governor of the Persian province of Judah, and grandson of Jehoiachim the second last king of that country (HAGGAI 1: 1). He led the first group of Jews out of captivity in the first year of Cyrus’ reign. He layed the foundation of the second temple in the following year.

975. *i.e.*, Bahman.

976. *i.e.*, Zuwibīl.

977. Much of the original story is missing here. Artaxerxes II (Bahman) married the biblical Esther, whose daughter was Ḥumānā. The fuller story is found in Ṭabarī. If we are to understand that Sāsān was the son of

commanded that the crown be put upon her belly and intimated to the grandees of the folk of the kingdom that they must obey her authority until what was in her womb be brought forth; and if it were a boy he commanded them to put the rule into her hands until he grew up, attaining and reaching thirty years, and that the kingdom be entrusted to him.

They say: Sāsān son of Bahman in that day was a man of insight, intelligence, good manners, and grace. He was [p. 30] father to the kings of Fārs among the Kīsrās,⁹⁷⁸ and for this reason they are called ‘the Sasanians’. Men had no doubt that the kingdom should pass to him after his father, and when his father made the kingdom over to his daughter Ḥumānā, he was scornful with vehement scorn and went away. He acquired livestock and went with the Kurds to the mountain, in which he dwelt by himself.⁹⁷⁹ He withdrew from the capital in anger at his father’s thoughtlessness to him.

They say: and so unto this day the progeny of Sāsān are reviled for keeping livestock.⁹⁸⁰ Ḥumānā reigned, and when her pregnancy was done she gave birth to a boy, and he was Dārā son of Bahman. Then verily she prepared herself for an attack on the land of Rūm. She went until she penetrated the land of Rūm and the king of Rūm went against her with his army. They met and they fought, and victory went to Ḥumānā. She slaughtered, she took captives, she took booty, and she went away. She carried with her two builders from among the builders of Rūm. They built for her in the land of Fārs three aywāns,⁹⁸¹ one of which is in the midst of the city

Bahman and Esther’s daughter Ḥumānā, this would make the Sasanians Jewish by heredity!

978. ‘The Kīsrās’, sometimes put into English as ‘the Chosroes’ is the collective name for the kings of the Sasanian dynasty.

979. This is obviously quite fabulous.

980. It is difficult to explain this slur on the descendants of Sāsān. It may well go back anti-Sasanian propaganda put about by the Parthians at the time of Ardašīr’s rise, or to hostility directed at the ruling dynasty on the part of the nobility under the Sasanian monarchy. Both possibilities may be true. In this connexion it is worth pointing out that the same criticism (*viz.*, that Sāsān was a shepherd) is made against the Sasanian dynasty by the leadership of Bīstām’s revolt against Ḥusraw II (DĪNAWĀRĪ, p. 105–110). See also NOLDEKE 1879, p. 478–487 with note 3 on p. 481).

981. *Aywān*: an arabicised form of the Middle/New Persian *eywān*, a word descendant ultimately from the Old

Iṣṭaḥr, the second upon the road⁹⁸² which goes from Iṣṭaḥr to Ḥurāsān, and the third upon the road of Dārābjird two parasangs from Iṣṭaḥr. When thirty years came to her son Dārā, she gathered grandees of the kingdom and summoned her son Dārā and set him upon the throne of the kingdom, invested him with the crown and endowed him with authority.

[The Reign of Tubbaʿ]

They say: when Abū Mālīk perished in the region of darkness, the nobles of the folk of Yaman gathered and they entrusted with rule over themselves Tubbaʿ al-Aqrān (he was called Tubbaʿ al-Aqrān because of his valour), though it had been said that he was really Tubbaʿ al-Aqrān. All this is said. When he reigned, he readied himself, wishing to attack Ṣīn, to avenge his father and grandfather. He went there and passed by Samarqand, which was in ruins. He ordered its rebuilding and helped it. Then he travelled through the desert until he came to the country of Tubbat.⁹⁸³ He saw a wide place, whose waters were pure, and with good pasture. He built there a city and settled therein thirty [p. 31] thousand men of his companions. They are the Tubbaʿiyyūn, whose dress to this day is the dress of Arabs, and whose appearance is the appearance of Arabs. Then he went to the land of Ṣīn. He slaughtered, and laid waste the city of the king, and it is a ruin to this day. Then he returned and went back to Yaman, and his rule lasted to the rule of Iskandar and rule went from him. thereafter. He went as described [elsewhere]. They say: in this age there came into existence al-Naḍar son of Kināna.

Persian *apadāna*, which signifies a large, hypostyle hall. In this case it may mean simply ‘palace’.

982. Dīnawarī may well refer to the great Ḥurāsān road built by Darius III.

983. *i.e.*, Tibet.

[Dārā]

They say: verily Dārā⁹⁸⁴ son of Bahman, when he ruled, prepared an attack on the land of Rūm with his army. He marched until he penetrated their land, and there went out against him Faylafūs,⁹⁸⁵ the king of Rūm, with his army. They met and fought, and the victory went to Dārā, and Faylafūs made peace with him on the condition of tribute and payment to him every year, and its amount was an hundred thousand eggs of gold, each egg weighing forty *mitqāls*. He married his daughter and then returned to Fārs. When Dārā finished his twenty second year of rule, death came to him, and he favoured his son Dārā son of Dārā with rule, and it was he that was known as Dārāyūs,⁹⁸⁶ who contended with Iskandar. When rule came to Dārā son of Dārā he acted as a tyrant, shewed haughtiness, and was arrogant. A copy of his letters for his lieutenant was: ‘From Dārā son of Dārā who shineth for the folk of his kingdom as the sun unto So-and-so.’ He was the great ruler of many armies, in whose age there were no kings who did not abase themselves to him with obedience and who revered him with tribute.

[Iskandar]

Iskandar⁹⁸⁷ was born. The learned differ about his lineage. As for the folk of Fārs, they narrate that he was not the son of Faylafūs, but was rather the son of his daughter, and that his father was Dārā son of Bahman. They say: this was because when Dārā son of Bahman attacked the land of Rūm, Faylafūs (king of Rūm) made peace with him on condition of tribute, and Darius asked for the hand of his daughter, and after her marriage to him [p. 32] he took her into his homeland. When he wanted to lie with her, he found a smell coming from her, and he had an

984. *i.e.*, Darius II.

985. *i.e.*, Philip of Macedon.

986. *i.e.*, Darius III.

987. *i.e.*, Alexander the Great.

aversion to it and sent her to the ward of his womenfolk and commanded her to employ a remedy against this smell. The ward treated her with a herb that is called *sandar* and some of its odour went from it [into her]. Darius summoned her and found coming from her the odour of *sandar*, and he said: ‘*āl sandar*’ which is to say ‘*sandar* is strong’, *āl* being the word in the Persian tongue by which ‘strong’ is meant.⁹⁸⁸ He went into her and she became pregnant by him, but his heart liked her not because of that odour which was in her, and he returned her to her father Faylafūs. She bore Iskandar, and derived a name for him from the name of that plant she was treated with, according to what she heard Dārā say on the night he went into her. Iskandar grew up as an sensible, refined, and intelligent boy, and his grandfather Faylafūs entrusted him with all his power when he saw his resolution and precision. When death came to Faylafūs he made the kingdom over to him and he inspired the grandees of the kingdom to hear and obey him. When Iskandar ruled he had no zeal for anything but for the kingdom of his father Dārā son of Bahman. He went to his brother Dārā son of Dārā and fought him for his kingdom.

As for the learned men of Rūm they reject this story and say that he was son of Faylafūs, truly his offspring, and that he (when Faylafūs died and the kingdom passed to Iskandar) had nothing to do with Dārā son of Dārā by reason of this tribute which his father had paid to him. Dārā son of Dārā wrote to him, ordering him to take this tribute and to inform him as to the nature of the agreement on it that was between his father and him. Iskandar wrote to him: ‘verily the hen which laid those eggs is dead.’ Dārā was angry at this, and he swore that he himself would surely attack the land of Rūm and even destroy it. But Iskandar took no heed of this, and attached no importance to it. Iskandar was also an astonishing tyrant, for he was extremely insolent [p. 33] and haughty at the beginning of his reign.

There was in the land of Rūm one of the virtuous men of the age, who was a wise philosopher called Arṣṭāṭālīs.⁹⁸⁹ He affirmed the unity of God, and believed in him without assigning

988. There is no truth to this etymology whatsoever.

989. *i.e.*, Aristotle.

anything to him as a partner. When news of the insolence of Iskandar and his crudeness and the misfortune of his life reached him, he drew near the land of Rūm from the uttermost part of the earth until he came to Iskandar's city. He entered it, and with him were his patricians and the heads of the folk of his kingdom. He came and stood before him without revering him, and he said: 'O exalted tyrant! Except thou fear thy Lord that made thee and doeth good and is gracious unto thee, and except thou take warning from the tyrants that were before thee, how God destroyed them, when their thanksgiving to him diminished and their tyranny grew severe' [and so forth] in a long exhortation. When Iskandar heard this he was wroth with vehement wrath and was troubled by it. Then he ordered his imprisonment, so that he made him a warning for the folk of his kingdom. Then verily Iskandar bethought himself of the matter and pondered his speech⁹⁹⁰ touching the good thing that God wanted for him, and it made an impression in his soul and this changed his heart. It filled him with emptiness. He gave heed and hearkened unto his exhortation, parable, and admonition, and he knew that what he said was the truth, and that what is worshipped apart from God is vain. He was attentive and answered the truth and his certitude was sound. He said to this worshipper [of God]:⁹⁹¹ 'verily I answer thee, that thou requirest me to take wisdom from thy learning and be illumined with the light of thy knowledge.' He said to him: 'if thou wish this, stop thy following of oppression and tyranny and the commission of forbidden things'. Iskandar approved of this and promised it. He gathered the folk of his kingdom and the chieftains of his hosts, and said to them: 'know that unto this day we have worshipped idols, which avail us nothing, nor do they harm us. I command you, and if ye refuse not my command, I shall satisfy you with that worship of God which satisfieth my soul, [God who] is alone and hath no partner, and I command the putting down of what we worshipped apart from him.' They said in their assembly: 'we receive [p. 34] thy voice and we know that what thou hast said is the truth, and we believe in thy God and our God.' When the intention of [his] distinguished men turned out well for him and their way was made right for him and they made it conform

990. *i.e.*, the speech of Arstātālīs.

991. *i.e.*, Arstātālīs.

with the truth, he commanded that it be made known to the people that ‘we have commanded that idols which we had worshipped be broken, whether ye think that they do good or do harm, and let what happened to them be put away from you, and know ye that in violation of my command and the worship of anything apart from God, no man shall have forbearance from me, for he is the god that hath made us all.’

Then he commanded the distribution of the book concerning this unto the east of the earth and the west of it, that men should be dealt with in accordance with their acceptance or refusal. His messengers went away with his book dealing with this to the kings of the earth. When his book came to Dārā son of Dārā, he was wroth at this with vehement wrath, and he wrote to him: ‘From Dārā son of Dārā who shineth as the sun upon the folk of his kingdom unto Iskandar son of Faylafūs; that there had been between us Faylafūs an agreement and a truce involving a levy which had not ceased to be paid to us throughout the days of his life. If this my letter is come to thee, then I shall surely know what hath made thee late, and I shall have experience of thee and the nature of thy rule. Then I shall not accept thine excuse. Peace.’

When his letter came to Iskandar, his army gathered unto him and he went forth, making his way to the land of ‘Irāq. News of this reached Dārā son of Dārā, and he fortified his treasures, his harem and his children in the castle at Hamadān, which was one of his buildings. Then he met Iskandar going forth in haste, and he fought him in many battles. But Iskandar found not what he had hoped for, nor any thing among them; then verily he went in secret to two men of the folk of Hamadān who were among his knights and the distinguished [men] of his bodyguard. He gave them what they desired, for they were greedy, and they double-crossed Dārā. They came to him from behind when Iskandar’s battle line was drawn up one day, and they murdered him and he fell to the ground, and the hosts of Dārā were scattered. Iskandar drew near until he stopped above Dārā [p. 35] lying on the ground. He knelt down and put his head upon his bosom, for there was still the spark of life in it, and he felt regret for him. He said: ‘O my brother, if thou hadst not harmed by thine accident I should have left thee alone with thy kingdom: tell me what thou wishest, and be not burdened by it!’ Said Dārā: ‘explain to me how I was yesterday and how I am to-day. Am I not he whom kings feared, and to whom they submitted in obedience

and who revered me with tribute, and behold I am this day laid low alone and far from the numerous host and the great power.’ Said Iskandar: ‘O my brother! Verily the fates fear not a king because of his host, nor do they despise a poor man because of his neediness; indeed the world doth ever end and run out quickly.’ Said Dārā: ‘I have come to know that every thing is at God’s behest and his strength, and all things are the same to him, and I am thy testator to them that come after from my folk and progeny, and I ask thee to take to wife Rūšanak, my daughter, for she is the consolation of my eye and the fruit of my heart.’ Said Iskandar: ‘I shall surely do this. But tell me who did this to thee, that I may have vengeance upon him.’ But Dārā made no answer to this, for his tongue stopped thereafter and then he died. Iskandar commanded that two murderers be crucified over the grave of Dārā. The two said: ‘O king! Saidst thou not that thou shouldest raise our stature in the thine army?’ Said he: ‘I have now done it.’ Then he commanded that the two be stoned until they died. Then he wrote to the mother of Dārā and his women in consolation (and they were at the city Hamadān), and he wrote to his mother (and she was at Iskandariyya), that she go to the land of Bābil and prepare Rūšanak, daughter of Dārā, with the best of adornments and send her to him to the land of Fārs. She did this.

[Iskandar’s Conquests]

Then Iskandar went towards Fūr,⁹⁹² the king of India, and the two met on the border of the land of Hind. Verily Iskandar summoned Fūr to a wrestling match, instead of letting the two groups fight one another. Fūr took advantage of it, for he was a man tall, great, and strong, and he saw Iskandar as small and slender. He wrestled [p. 36] with him, but the dust arose from Fūr who was slain, and his forces capitulated to him, and he accepted their surrender.

He marched until he went into the land of Sudan, and saw men black as ravens, nude and barefoot, who roam about in thickets, and eat of the fruit there. If they undergo dearth or drought some of them eat one another. He went by them until he came to the sea and cut across

992. *i.e.*, Porus.

to the shore of Aden from the land of Yaman, and Tubba‘ al-Aqran, king of Yaman, marched against him. He submitted to him with obedience and he granted tribute, and he brought him into the city Ṣan‘ā. He let him stay there and gave him some of the gifts of Yaman, and he stayed one month. Then he went to Tihāma and to them that dwell in Mecca (in that day, the tribe of Ḥuzā‘a, who had conquered it). Naḍar son of Kanāna visited him, and Iskandar said to him: ‘why is it that this tribe of Ḥuzā‘a is in this sanctuary?’ Then he took the Ḥuzā‘a out of Makka and dedicated it to Naḍar and to the sons of his father. Iskandar made the pilgrimage to the House of God, the Sanctuary, and he favoured among the offspring of Ma‘add son of ‘Adnān (the inhabitants of the Sanctuary) with blessing and kindness. Then he crossed the sea from Judda on his way to the countries of the west.

It is narrated on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbās that Nūḥ (upon whom be peace) divided the earth among his three sons. He favoured Sām with the middle of the earth which the five rivers water, the Euphrates, the Tigris, Sarus, Jayḥūn, and Faysūn, namely the river of Balḥ. He gave to Ḥām what is behind the Nile unto the source of the western wind. He gave to Yāfiṭ what is behind the river Faysūn unto the source of the eastern wind.

They say: the land was four and twenty thousand parasangs, and the lands of the Turks are three thousand parasangs from this, and the land of the Ḥazar is three thousand parasangs, and the land of Ṣīn one thousand parasangs, and the land of India and Sind, and Aethiopia, and the rest of the Sudan six thousand parasangs, and the land of Rūm three thousand parasangs, and the land of the the Slavs three thousand parasangs, and the land of , namely Egypt and what is behind it (such as Africa, Ṭanja, [p. 37] Faranja and Andalus) three thousand parasangs, and the Arabian peninsula and what is near it, one thousand parasangs.

They say: News of the rule of Qindāqa⁹⁹³ (queen of the Mağrib) her seven countries, the fertility of her land, and the magnitude of her kingdom reached Iskandar. He heard that her city was four parasangs and the size of a single stone in its wall was sixty cubits. He was told of the

993. *i.e.*, Candace.

condition of Qindāqa, her intellect and her resolve, and wrote to her: ‘from Iskandar son of Faylafūs, the king who hath dominion over the kings of the earth, unto Qindāqa the blacks queen. But hereafter: surely the booty that God hath given me from the countries hath reached thee, and the abundance and spoil that he hath given me. If thou hear and obey and believe in God and put down the idols⁹⁹⁴ which thou worshippedst apart from Gods, and bring me a portion of tax, I shall accept from thee and I shall leave thee alone, and I shall depart from thy land. But if thou refuse this, I shall march against thee, for there is no power but in God.’

She wrote to him: ‘he that entrusted thee with what thou hast written goeth beyond thy hubris, and thine astonishment in thyself. If thou wish to march, then march: thou shalt taste from me other than what thou hast tasted from others. Peace.’ When the answer to his writing arrived, he sent to her the king of Egypt (for he was obedient to him), so that he should call her to obedience and warn her about the nature of disobedience. He marched against her with a hundred men of his élite, but he found not what he wanted from her. He went back to Iskandar and informed him. Iskandar made ready to march against her, and he proceeded with his forces until he arrived at the city Qayruwān, and it is one month from Miṣr. He conquered it with man-gonels. Then he went against Qindāqa. There are stories and reports about him and her. He made her contract an agreement and treaty of peace, without approaching her or anything in her kingdom. Then he went from there, making for the darkness in the north until he went into it. He went [p. 38] a goodly distance. Then he turned back so that he travelled to the borders of the land of Rūm. There he built two cities, one of which is called Qāfūniya, and the other Sūriya.

Then he considered passing into the land of the east, and his viziers said to him: ‘how can it be possible for thee to pass into the place where the sun sets in this manner, and without this green sea in which thou had not put a ship, because its water is like pus and no one can bear the stench of its wind?’ He said: ‘marching is inevitable, and let no one be left behind.’ They said: ‘we shall be with thee wherever thou goest.’ He went all the way through the land of Rūm heading

994. lit. ‘partners’.

toward the place of the rising sun. Then he went by them into the land of the Şaqlāb,⁹⁹⁵ and they yielded obedience to him. He passed by them to the land of the Ḥazar and they submitted to him. He passed by them to the land of the Turk and they submitted to him. He travelled in their land until he reached the wasteland that is between them and the land of Şīn. He rode through it and went so that when drew near the land of Şīn, he asked a vizier (called Faynāwus) to sit in his throne room, and commanded him to call him by his name, and he was called Faynāwus. The king proceeded straightway until he came to him. When he came before him, he said: ‘who art thou?’ He said: ‘I am the messenger of Iskandar who hath power over the kings of the earth.’ He said: ‘whither followest thou him?’ He said: ‘Unto the borders of thy land.’ He said: ‘why did he send thee?’ He said: ‘he sent me to enlighten thee, and I have decided to confirm thee in thy land and offer good things to thee, for I refuse to slay thee and waste thy land. If thou art ignorant of what I say, ask it of Dārā son of Dārā, king of Īrān-Šahr, whether there was on the earth a king greater in rule than he or greater in martial might or stronger in power; and [how] it came to him and [how] it was forced from him, and [how] his kingdom was stolen from him; and ask of Fūr, king of India, what his power lead to!’ Said the king of Şīn: [p. 39] ‘O Faynāwus, verily the authority of this man hath won over me and the conquest and victory that I have achieved. I was am under his guidance. Go before him and ask him for treaty and reconciliation for the sake of peace. Inform him that I owe him hearing and obedience and the payment of annual tribute. He hath no need to enter my land.’ Then he sent him his crown and some of the gifts of his land: sable, ermin, beaver pelts, Chinese silk, Indian swords, Chinese saddles, musk, amber, golden and silver bowls, hauberks, gauntlets, and eggs.

[Yājūj and Mājūj]

Iskandar took possession of [all] this and went back to his army, and avoided the land of Şīn, and went to the people whose story God (be his praise exalted) hath told. They say ‘O Ďū’l-Qarnayn,

995. *i.e.*, the Slavs.

verily Yājūj and Mājūj⁹⁹⁶ are corruptors in the land.⁹⁹⁷ The story and report of it also includes the barrier which God tells about in his book.⁹⁹⁸ He asked them about the species of this people. They said: ‘We are called Who is nearer to us than them?’ As for what this means, we do not know. They are Yājūj and Mājūj and Tāwīl and Tārīs and Mansak and Kumārā.

When he finished building the barrier between them and that people, he went away from them. He came to a people among men who were red of colour and reddish brown of skin, whose men were separated from the women, and did not gather together except on three days in the year. If someone among them wishes to copulate, they can do it only in those three days. If a woman gives birth to a boy and weans him she pushes him away to his father in those three days, and if it is female they shut her up with her.

He travelled from them and went until he came to Firgāna, and he saw a people who were beautiful and shapely, and they yielded obedience to him. He went from Firgāna to Samargand, and put down there and stayed for a month. [p. 40] Then he went and travelled to Buḥārā, and went as far as the Great River,⁹⁹⁹ which he crossed in boats to the city Āmūya, which is Āmul in Ḥurāsān. Then he went through the badlands until he went out into the land that had been overrun by water, and he went across swampy grounds and steppes. He commanded that this water be dammed up away from it so that the land became dry. He built a city there and settled inhabitants in it, and made districts, villages, and fortresses for it, and called it Marḥiyānūs, which is the city Marw, which is also called Maylānūs. Then he passed through Nīšāpūr and Ṭūs, until he ended up at Ray which did not exist in those days, for it was built after that in the reign of Fayrūz son of Yazdajird son of Bahrām Jūr. Then he went from there to Jabal

996. *i.e.*, Gog and Magog (EZEKIEL 38–39; REVELATION 20: 8).

997. QURAN 18: 94.

998. QURAN 18: 83–98.

999. *i.e.*, the Jayḥūn, or Oxus, river.

and Ḥulwān, and even came to ‘Irāq. He put down in the city of ‘Atīqa which is called Madā’in. He stayed for a year. Then he made for al-Šām, until he came to Īlīyā.

[The Regional Princes]

When he rested there, he said to his teacher Arṣṭāṭālīs: ‘verily I have made the folk of the earth one, by killing their kings and taking their countries and taking their possessions. But I fear that they will join forces against the folk of my land after me and kill them and exterminate them because of their resentment of me. I think that I shall send word to each noble and high-born and whoever is among their folk of rank in every land, and to every son of kings, and kill them.’ His teacher said to him: ‘this is not the opinion of the folk of righteousness and faith, nevertheless if thou killest the sons of kings and the folk of nobility and rank, men shall conceive against thee and against the folk of thy land a vehement hatred after thee. But if thou sendest to the sons of kings and the folk of rank and gather them before thee, and crown them with crowns, and make each man among them king over a region and country, verily thou shalt preoccupy them with this in mutual competition in rule and each one of them will covet what [p. 41] the other hath instead of the destruction of thy land. Power will be bestowed among them and their business shall be their own.’ Iskandar accepted this from him and did it, and they were those who are called the Regional Princes.

Then Iskandar died at Īlīyā, having reigned for thirty years and having roamed the earth for twenty-four years. He stayed at Iskandarīyya for three years at the beginning of his rule, and in Syria for three years upon his return. He was placed in a coffin of gold and carried to Iskandarīyya. He built twenty-two cities called Iskandarīyya in the land of Egypt and the city of Najrān in the land of the Arabs, and the city of Marw in the land of Ḥusrāsān, and the city of Jay in the land of Iṣbahān, and a city on the coast of the sea called Ṣaydūd, and a city in the land of

India caled Jarwīn, and a city in the land of Šīn called Faranīya,¹⁰⁰⁰ and the rest of them are in the land of Rūm.

They say: when Iskandar died, each man among those whom he had made king guarded his own domain and fought wars. But no man conquered another save in knowledge and manners, writing to one another with questions. If the one asked answered aright what the questioner had brought him, and if one of them wronged another or subtracted from his domain, they would all blame him for it. If he persisted, they would assemble for war against him, and they were called for this reason the Regional Princes.

[The Kings of Yaman]

They relate that four kings whom the prophet cursed (blessings and peace be upon him), and he cursed their sister Abḍa‘a [also], when they began to move the black stone to Šan‘ā so that they might cut off the Pilgrimage of the Arabs from the House of the Sanctuary to Šan‘ā. Because of this they betook themselves to Makka and the Kināna tribe gathered unto Fihir son of Mālik son of Naḍar. He met them and slaughtered them, and one of Fihir’s sons was killed, called Ḥārīt, without offspring, and he killed three of the four of the four kings and the fourth was taken prisoner, [p. 42] and he remained a prisoner with Fihir son of Mālik until he died. As for Abḍa‘a, it was she who was called al-‘Anqafir. She reigned after her brothers and was very wicked in her living. She chose men freely, and whoever appealed to her she summoned to herself and he would lie with her, noone being able to deny her. She caught sight of a youth from the Qays tribe, and he appealed to her and she summoned him to herself and he lay with her and impregnated her with two boys in the womb. She called one of them Sahl and the other ‘Awf....*there follow two lines of poetry attributed to one of the Qays poets...*

1000. Or Qaranīya, apparently, as we find in another manuscript.

They say: dū'l-Šanātir was king of 'Ans and Yuḥāyir, and he had a huge kingdom and a great army, and he ruled over 'Umān, Baḥrayn, Yamāma, and the shores of the sea.

[Ardawān]

They say: among the Regional Princes in the land of Īrān there was no king with greater kingdom or greater army than Ardawān son of Ašah son of Ašgān king of Jabal, who possessed Māhān, Māsabadān, Mihr-Janqadaq, and Ḥulwān. But as for the rest of the kings each man among them possessed one country and one city. When a king died his son or his friend came to power after him. All the Regional Princes were pleased with Ardawān king of Jabal in his generosity, because of Iskandar's favour to him apart from them in the superiority of his kingdom. His abode was the city of Nihāwand the ancient. They say: in that age the Messiah 'Īsā son of Maryam (upon whom be peace) was sent.

[As'ad son of 'Imrū]

They say: As'ad son of 'Imrū son of Rabī'a son of Mālīk son of Šubaḥ son of [p. 43] 'Abd Allāh son of Zayd son of Yāsir Yan'am was king after Sulaymān son of Dāwūd, may God bless him. When he was born and grew up, he was disgusted by the theft [perpetrated] by the tribes of the offspring of Kahlān son of Šubaḥ son of Yašjib son of Ya'rub, king of Ḥimyar. He was their king and in their age. Himyar gathered to himself an army, and this was after the chiefs ruled in the land of Yaman. There were seven kings who inherited the kingdom for two hundred and fifty years. He marched against the kingdom of Hamadān, made war on it, and he was victorious over it. Then he marched against the kingdom of 'Anas and Yuhāyir, and he dealt with it thus,¹⁰⁰¹ and went to the kingdom of Kinda and obtained victory, and even gathered to himself the entire kingdom of Yaman.

1001. It is not at all clear what Dīnawarī means.

When the kingdom was gathered to As‘ad, he sent his cousin al-Qayṭūn son of Sa‘ad to Tihāma and the Ḥijāz and he made him king over them, and he settled at Yaṭrib. He acted outrageously and tyrannically, and he even commanded that women be not brought to their husband until they gave him priority over her. In this matter he followed the way of ‘Imlīq (king of Ṭasm) and Jadīs, until the daughter of Mālīk son of ‘Ajlān from Raḍā‘a was married. When they wanted to go with her to Qayṭūn, Mālīk son of ‘Ajlān hid with her in disguise. When he emptied the house [in search of] him, he ran to him with his sword and killed him, and they ran to his companions, and they were killed together. News of this reached As‘ad the king, and he went to them, and he put down at the city on a river that is called Bi‘r-Malik, and his famous story we have already recorded in another place.¹⁰⁰²

[‘Īsā]

They say: when God sent ‘Īsā¹⁰⁰³ son of Maryam and the Jews devoted themselves to killing him, and God took him up to himself, and they went to Yahyā son of Zakaryā¹⁰⁰⁴ and killed him, God made king over them one of the Regional Princes [p. 44] from the descendents of Buḥt Naṣṣar the first. He killed the children of Israel, and baseness and poverty were imposed upon them.

I002. Dīnawarī is referring to a geographical text which he wrote.

I003. *i.e.*, Jesus.

I004. *i.e.*, John the Baptist.

[Ardašīr]

They say: when two hundred and sixty six years had gone by for the Regional Princes, there arose Ardašīr son of Bābakān, and he was Ardašīr son of Bābak son of Sāsān the younger son of Fāfak son of Mahrīs son of Sāsān the elder son of Bahman the king son of Isfandyād son of Buštāsif.¹⁰⁰⁵ He arose in the city of Iṣṭahr and he gained the ascendancy in the restoration of the kingdom of Fārs to its rightful place. Wealth came to him. He continued to conquer and kill king after king and to take possession of what he had ruled, until he came to Farruḥān king of Jabal, who was the last king of the descendants of Ardawān. Ardašīr gave him written orders to enter into obedience to him. When his letter came to him, he was full of wrath, and he said to his messengers: ‘verily the son of Sāsān the shepherd is advanced in rank’, and he was ashamed but paid it no heed, and wrote to him, proposing: ‘let there be a meeting between me and thee in the wasteland of Hurmuzdajān at the end of the month Mihrmāh’. Ardašīr arrived in the place and Farruḥān appeared before him at the end of the month of Mihrājān. They fought and Ardašīr killed him and went immediately until he reached the city of Nihāwand. He put down at the castle of Farruḥān and stayed there a month. Then he went to Ray, then to Ḥurāsān, and he went not to a region but its king submitted to him in obedience. Then he went to Sijjīstān, then to Kirmān, and then he went to Fārs. He put down at the city of Iṣṭahr and stayed there a year. Then he went towards ‘Irāq. Those Party Kings that were in Ahwāz met him, and he fought them and killed them. Then he went so far as to bivouack in the area of present-day Madā’in,¹⁰⁰⁶ and he delineated the plans for it and had it built. When his rule become secure, he summoned to his court the daughter of Farruḥān’s brother whom he took from Farruḥān’s castle [p. 45] in Nihāwand. She was possessed of beauty and intelligence. When he came to her and asked her about her lineage and she informed him. He said to her: ‘Wert thou distressed when thou camest

1005. Ardašīr’s alleged descent from Bahman (whom Arjomand identifies with Artaxerxes II’s epithet *Vohu Manu*) represents Sasanian propaganda which put emphasis on the Zoroastrian orthodoxy of Ardašīr’s unified kingdom and his Archaemenid origin (ARJOMAND 1998). The same thing can be said of Ardašīr’s supposed descent from king Buštāsif, the first royal proselyte to the religion of Zoroaster.

1006. This is curious. If this had been copied directly from the source we can explain the use of ‘present day’.

to know me because I am the one to whom God granted a promise that God would give me victory over Farruḥān, that he would not spare anyone of his royal house?’ Then he called Abarsām¹⁰⁰⁷ his vizier and said: ‘be off with this girl and kill her!’ Abarsām took the girl by the hand and led her away to carry out the command about her. When she went out she said to Abarsām: ‘I have been pregnant for months.’ When she said this to him, he went with her to his abode and commanded her good treatment, and he said to Ardašīr: ‘I have killed her’, and they relate that he castrated himself and took his pudenda and put them in a chest and sealed it. He went to Ardašīr and asked him to command that the chest be given to someone whom he trusted for safe-keeping (for he would have need of it one day), and Ardašīr commanded that the chest be kept safe. Then the girl gave birth to a boy, the handsomest of all boys, and he was Sābūr son of Ardašīr who reigned after him and Ardašīr stayed in ‘Irāq for a year. Then he went to Mawṣul and he killed its king. Then he turned round and began to march, and he went to ‘Umān and Baḥrayn and Yamāma, and Sanatruq the king of Baḥrayn went against him. He made war on him and Ardašīr killed him, and he commanded that his city be destroyed.

They say that Abarsām went in to Ardašīr one day whilst he was sitting alone, deep in thought. He said: ‘O king, may God prolong thy life! Why do I see thee deep in sadness? May God grant thee thy wish! God hath returned to thee the kingdom of thy fathers! To-day art thou Šāhān-Šāh’. Said Ardašīr: ‘what afflicteth me is that I have gained mastery over the earth, and all kings have submitted to me, but I have no son who shall inherit my realm that I myself allot to him’. When Abarsām heard this he said to himself: ‘This is the time to reveal that Ašgān woman’. For five years had come upon her son. He¹⁰⁰⁸ said [p. 46]: ‘O king! Verily on the day whereon thou didst command me to kill that Ašgān woman, I entrusted to thee a sealed box,

1007. The name Abarsām is an Arabicised form of the Middle Persian *Apursām* (YAR-SHATER 1982). Though the stories that Dīnawarī associates with him are fanciful, it is very likely that Abarsām is the same man as Apursām who is mentioned on the Naqš-i Rostam inscription of Šāpūr I, who commissioned a list of dignitaries at the court of his father Ardašīr I. Unfortunately, this inscription does not mention Apursām’s rank, so Ṭabarī’s claim that Abarsām was Ardašīr’s *vuzurgfaramādār*, or chief minister, is unlikely to be true (on the title *vuzurgfaramādār* see NÖLDEKE 1879, p. 9: n. 2).

1008. *i.e.*, Abarsām.

which I might have need of one day', and he was moved to take it out. Ardašīr commanded that it be brought to him. He opened it and Ardašīr looked and indeed his private parts were there, which had dried at the bottom of the box. Ardašīr said to him: 'What is this?' He told him the news and informed him of the condition of the boy. Ardašīr rejoiced at this. Then said Ardašīr: 'Bring the boy to me and put him among an hundred boys of his age [?].' Abarsām did this. When he brought them before him, he¹⁰⁰⁹ looked at them one boy at a time, until, when he reached Sābūr, he saw the resemblance between himself and him, and his heart was moved; but he held himself back, without speaking to him. He commanded that a polo mallet be given to all the boys and that a ball be thrown to them in the field, that they play before him in front of the Aywān. He said to Abarsām: 'Bring it about that the ball falls down before me in the aywān'. He did this, and the ball fell upon his carpet. All these boys stopped at the door of the aywān, and none of them dared go in and retrieve the ball from before him except the boy. Verily he burst in from among them to his father and retrieved the ball from before him. When Ardašīr saw this he stretched forth his hand and received the boy and embraced him and kissed him. He ordered that he and his mother be brought to him, and he was Sābūr who reigned after him. He was favourable to Abarsām and allotted to him many fiefs, and he ordered that the picture of Abarsām be struck on dirhams and carpets until their reign be ended.¹⁰¹⁰

They say: in the reign of Ardašīr, God the most high sent 'Īsā (upon whom be peace) and they relate that he dispatched one of his disciples to Ardašīr, and he went to the city of Madā'in and stayed with Abarsām. When evening came, he lighted a lamp for himself, and he would pray throughout the night, and he read the gospel aloud. Abarsām asked him about his story and his religion [p. 47] and he told him that he was an apostle of the Messiah 'Īsā son of Maryam. Abarsām brought the news to Ardašīr and he summoned him, and he looked upon his manner

1009. *i.e.*, Ardašīr.

1010. There is no extant evidence that Abarsām's picture was struck on coins or carpets (*Cf.* ALRAM / GYSELEN 2003, p. 93–180).

and calmness and the old man showed him some of the signs about the Messiah. He did not remove himself from Ardašīr, and he was no longer stirred up for evil-living.

[Jirjīs]

They say: ‘in the time of the Party Kings there was a tale of Jirjīs and his coming to the king of Mawṣul, who was a tyrant and overbearing, a worshipper of idols. He induced men to their worship also. Jirjīs was from the folk of al-Jazīra, and what is told about him and about this king is as the reports go.

Ardašīr was he that had perfected the conduct of kings and regulated ranks, lived judiciously, and investigated small matters and his great ones, so that he put everything in its proper place, and he imposed a clear obligation upon kings. They imitated him and adhered to him and took delight in his protection and acting in accordance with him, and they made him their lesson, and he raised up leaders for them. He built six cities, amongst which were Madā’in in the land of Fārs, the city of Ardašīr Ḥurra, the city of Rām Ardašīr, the city of Hurmazdān Ardašīr, and they were the fortresses of Ahwāz, and the city of Astād Ardašīr, and they were Karḥ Maysān, and the city of Fūrān Ardašīr, and these were in Baḥrayn, and a city in Mawṣul which was called Ḥurrazād Ardašīr.

[Malikaykarib and Tubbaʿ]

They say: there ruled after Asʿad (the king of Yaman who dressed the kaʿba¹⁰¹¹ and made sacrifice before it and circumambulated it and enlarged it) the son of his uncle Malikaykarab, son of ʿImrū son of Mālīk son of Zayd son of Sahl son of ʿImrū son of Ḍūʿl-Adʿār, and he reigned for twenty [p. 48] years without moving his house, and without making raids as did the kings before him, which made him abstain from bloodshed. Then there reigned after him his son Tubbaʿ son

1011. This refers to covering the kaʿba with a large cloth, known as the *kiswa*.

of Malakaykarab, and he was the last Tubbaʿ, for there were three Tubbaʿs, the first of whom was Šammar Abū Karab who raided Šīn and laid waste the city of Samarqand, the second was Tubbaʿ Asʿad who made sacrifices to the Holy House and fastened to it a golden door, and the third was Tubbaʿ son of Malakaykarab. Apart from these three no kings of Yaman were named Tubbaʿ. This last Tubbaʿ was in the age of Sābūr son of Ardašīr and in the age of Hurmazd son of Sābūr. He was of great stature, a great ruler, and it was he that raided the land of India and killed its king, who was among the sons of Fūr, the king whom Iskandar killed. Then he went back to Yaman and died in the reign of Bahrām son of Hurmazd son of Sābūr son of Ardašīr. Then there reigned after Tubbaʿ his son Ḥassān son of Tubbaʿ son of Malakaykarab and it was he who raided the land of Fārs, as they relate. It was he that angered Ḥimyar by his many raids and the littleness of his position in the land of Yaman. He induced his brother ʿImrū son of Tubbaʿ to kill him in order to make him king over them. They all agreed with him in this apart from Ḍū Ruʿayn. Verily he refused this and did not join with the tribe in this. ʿImrū acted unjustly to his brother and killed him, and ruled after him, and went back with his tribe to Yaman. Sahar was put in power over them.

[Sābūr]

When Sābūr son of Ardašīr ruled, he raided the land of Rūm and conquered the city of Qālūqīya and the city of Qabadūqīya and massacred the enemy in Rūm. Then he returned to ʿIrāq, and he went to the land of Ahwāz to explore a place in which to build a city in which to settle the prisoners that he had come with from the land of Rūm. He built the city Junday-Sābūr, whose name in Ḥūzīya¹⁰¹² is *Nīlāt*, and [p. 49] they call its people *Nīlāb*. Sābūr had taken captive Al-yaryānūs,¹⁰¹³ successor to the lord of Rūm. He commanded the building of an aqueduct¹⁰¹⁴ upon

1012. *i.e.*, the language of Ḥūzistān.

1013. *i.e.*, Valerian, the Roman emperor captured in battle.

1014. The meaning of *qaṇṭara* is doubtful. It can mean an ‘arched bridge’, an ‘aqueduct’, or even a ‘dam’.

the river Tustar in order to empty it. The king of Rūm sent to it people from the land of Rūm and material, and he built it. When he was finished with it he set him free. In the age of Sābūr, Mānī¹⁰¹⁵ the heretic appeared, and he led the folk astray. Sābūr died before he vanquished him.

[Hurmazd I, Bahrām I, Bahrām II, Narsā]

Sābūr reigned twenty one years, and the kingdom went after him to his son Hurmuz¹⁰¹⁶ son of Sābūr. He took Mānī and commanded that his skin be flayed, and he stuffed it with straw, and he hung him from the gate of the city of Junday-Sābūr. It is to this day called ‘The Gate of Mānī’. He tracked down his followers and those who hearkened to him, and he killed them all. He reigned for thirty years.

The kingdom reposed upon his son Bahrām son of Hurmuz, and he reigned twenty seven years. Then reigned his son Bahrām son of Bahrām. Then reigned his son Narsā son of Bahrām son of Bahrām. He reigned seven years and died. His son Hurmazdān son of Narsā reigned, and he reigned seven years and died. He did not have a son to whom to pass the kingdom. But his wife had been pregnant for a month. He ordered the crown to be put upon her belly, and she suggested to the grandees of the folk of Fārs that they not choose for king any man until they see what is born to him; and if it be male to name him Sābūr and to put him in power over the kingdom, and to put him in charge of rearing him and he would have command of the kingdom until his¹⁰¹⁷ maturity; and if it be female to choose a man for themselves from the folk of his house. They chose him as king over them and the woman gave birth to a boy and they called him Sābūr, namely he that is nicknamed as Īw’l-Aktāf. When the two Hurmuzes died, it became known in the corners of the earth that the land of Fārs was without a king and that they had re-

1015. Mānī founded a dualist religion which came to be named after him — manichaeism. See SUNDERMANN 2009.

1016. *šīd*

1017. *i.e.*, the child.

course to a child in a cradle. They coveted the kingdom of Fārs, and a great [p. 50] host of the Arabs came from the region of Baḥrayn and Kāzima to Abaršahr and the coasts of Ardašīr-Ḥurrah. They made predatory incursions, and one of the kings of the Ġassān came into al-Jazīra with an huge host and even raided the Sawād. The kingdom of Fārs remained for a time without hindering the enemy due to the weakness of the kingdom's power. When the lad grew up, the first manifestation of his resoluteness was his being woken up suddenly in the night, whilst asleep in his palace in the city of Madā'in, by the din of folk because of their going to and fro on the bridge across the Tigris. He said: 'what is this din?' And he was informed. He said: 'let there be another bridge built for them, one of the two being for those that go, and the other being for those that come back'. They did it and they spread word of the perspicacity that he had shown despite his youth. When twenty five years came upon him he devoted himself wholly to the rule of the kingdom and the banishment of enemies from it. He readied himself and went to Abaršahr and drove away those Arabs that had come against it and he killed them with a most wicked slaughter, and he did likewise in al-Jazīra. He went against Ḍayzan the Ġassānī, and besieged him in the city that is one the shore of the river Euphrates, from what borders Raqqa. They relate that the daughter of Ḍayzan, whose name was Malayka, [sic] and they relate that her mother was Sābūr's aunt, Daḥtanūs, daughter of Narsā, and that Ḍayzan had taken her prisoner when he invaded the city of Madā'in. Malayka looked upon the army of Sābūr, whilst he was besieging her father and she saw Sābūr and she loved him. She wrote to him in order to lead him to her father's weak spot in order to have him marry her. Sābūr promised this to her. She did it and she made the guards of one the gates drunk on saffron wine until they slept, and she commanded that the door be opened. Sābūr and his army went in and took Ḍayzan and killed him. He tore out the shoulders [p. 51] of his companions and pierced them, as he did to those whom he had taken prisoner among the enemy. And thus he was called 'Ḍū'l-Aktāf'.¹⁰¹⁸ He lived up to what he had promised his daughter. Then he killed her by tying her to two horses making them run. The two clove her. He said to her: 'If thou art unrighteous to thy father, thou shalt be unrighteous to

1018. *i.e.*, 'Master of the Shoulders'.

me'. Sābūr commanded that the city of Anbar be built for him, and he called it Fayrūz-Sābūr, and its districts were one district. He built a city in Sūs, and it that which is beside the fortress that is called Sādāniyāl, wherein was the body of Dāniyāl,¹⁰¹⁹ upon whom be peace.

They say: they king of Rūm at this time was Mānūs.¹⁰²⁰ He believed as they report before the religion of the Christians took hold. When he reigned he made the folk of Rūm manifest the earlier [religion] and he ordered the burning of the gospel and the destruction of churches and the killing of bishops. When Sābūr killed Ḍayzan the Ġassānī, he was angry at this and he gathered all the Ġassān that were in Syria and advanced with them, an army of Rūm being with him, until he arrived in 'Irāq. Sābūr sent spies to bring him information about them. His spies came back to him and gave him different reports. He went out one night with thirty horsemen in order to watch the camp of Rūm, and twenty of them went ahead of him and Rūm took them. Al-Yūbiyānūs,¹⁰²¹ successor to the king and son of his uncle, went with them and asked them about their business and he threatened them with slaughter. One man among them went before him secretly from his companions. He said to him: 'Verily Sābūr is near thee; join forces with me, that I may bring thee to him as a prisoner, there being love and friendship between Al-Yūbiyānūs and Sābūr.' He wrote to Sābūr, pledging it solemnly. He went back. The king of Rūm went to the gate of the city of Madā'in, and Sābūr went out against him with his army [p. 52]. The Roman routed him and even reached the Jāzir canal, and the Roman took possession of the city of Madā'in without being able to take the palace by reason of its being invulnerable, and whoever was with him from Ḥumā. The men returned to Sābūr. He advanced to the army of Rūm and drove them from the city and he camped at the gate of it. The king of Rūm wrote to

1019. *sic.*, though the name was spelt Ḍānyāl earlier. The tomb of Daniel came to be surrounded by legend. In the reign of Ḥusraw II, the emperor Maurice requested the body of Daniel, which (stored in bronze container) had been kept in the treasury at Susa (SEBEOS, p. 85–86). The request was granted, but the holy man's body could not be taken from the city, for when it was carried out of the gate the city's springs dried up, and after going a distance of three stades the mules drawing the body halted and refused to go forward. News of this was brought to the emperor who allowed the body to be put back and kept where it had been.

1020. The emperor Julian the Apostate is meant. But how can we account for the name Mānūs?

1021. *i.e.*, Jovian.

him. While they were in this¹⁰²² behold a stray arrow came to the king of Rūm, while he was in his tent and his generals were about him. He was struck and he fell in the midst of the Romans in the place where they were, while the advance of their enemy was upon them. They entreated Al-Yūbiyānūs,¹⁰²³ saying ‘he shall make him king over them’. But he refused and said: ‘I cannot be king over a people which differs from me in my religion, for I belong to the religion of the Christians, but ye belong to the earlier religion of Rūm’. The bishops and grandees said to him: ‘verily we all belong to what ye¹⁰²⁴ belong to, but we had concealed this for fear of the king’. Al-Yūbiyānūs was made king over them and he wore the crown. Report of them reached Sābūr and he wrote to them: ‘Ye are come so far under my guidance and my strength; and I shall surely kill you in this your place by starvation and emaciation’. Al-Yūbiyānūs mustered [his forces] against Sābūr’s advance, because of the treaty that was between them. But the bishops and chiefs refused and he differed from them. He went to him, and Sābūr requited him in warning him on that night, and he made over to him Nuṣaybīn and its environs in compensation for what Rūm had destroyed of his kingdom and he wrote to him thus a document. This reached the folk of Nuṣaybīn. They went away from it sparing Nuṣaybīn, and disgusted at the choice of the Persians for king over them. Sābūr moved to it twenty two thousand from Iṣṭaḥr and settled them in it. Their progeny is there to this day. The Rūm returned to their land. When seventy two years had passed for Sābūr [p. 53], death was upon him. He gave authority after him to his son Sābūr son of Sābūr. When five years of his reign had finished, he went out hunting one day and he put down in a certain place and his tent was set up and he sat therein. A band of assassins approached one night and they cut the ropes of the tent and it fell upon him and he died.

1022. *i.e.*, in the tent, presumably.

1023. Here the name is apparently corrupt. The Leyden and Petrograd manuscripts say *al-B-r-r-mānūs*.

1024. *Sic!* A sign, perhaps, of translation from Middle Persian, though probably at more than one remove.

There reigned after him his son Bahrām son of Sābūr, and he was in power over Kirmān. When his father was killed he advanced and established himself in rule. When twenty three years of his rule were gone, he went forth one day hunting. He was shot with arrows and they struck him. When he sensed death, he bequeathed the kingdom to the son of his brother Yazdgard son of Sābūr son of Sābūr, and he was younger by a year than he, and he came to power after him, and it was he that was surnamed ‘the Sinful’. He was dark, of evil character; he did not compensate evil with good; he was generous going beyond a sin; he punished a small sin as he punished a great one, and no one had power over his speech by reason of his uncouthness and rudeness, except if his viziers were better, showing a kindly attitude and supporting one another. There was born to him Bahrām who was called Bahrām Jūr. He handed him over to Mundir father of Nu‘mān for his upbringing and Mundir went with Bahrām to Hira, for it was his abode, and Mundir chose for him wetnurses, and gave him a fine upbringing. When it was time for him to be educated, his father sent to him tutors from among the Persians, and Mundir presented to him tutors from among the Arabs. He organised the two groups of tutors and he finished among the them. He grew up a praiseworthy youth and he was proficient in manners and riding. He went forth intelligent, sensitive, good-looking and comely. Mundir allowed him to enjoy himself in sport and maidens. He rode horses of high breed, and singing girls rode behind him, entertaining and diverting him. He devoted himself fully to the hunt and the chase in this way. He was possessed of a careless and unstrained state of mind.

They say: when ‘Imrū son of Tubba’ killed his brother Ḥassān son of Tubba’ and the nobles of his tribe, [p. 54] the authority of the Ḥimyar decayed. A man from among them called Ṣuhbān son of Ḍū Ḥarb (he was not even from the folk of the king’s house) pounced upon ‘Imrū son of Tubba’ and killed him and took possession of the kingdom. He says:¹⁰²⁵ it was he that went to Tihāma to make war upon the descendants of Ma‘add son of ‘Adnān; and the reason for this

1025. If there is any truth to my inference concerning Dīnawarī’s source for pre-Islamic Arabian history, Dīnawarī may well be referring to Ibn Hišām here.

was that Ma‘add were oppressive and tyrannical when they expanded. They sent to Šuhbān asking him to make king over them a man who would strengthen their weakness, fearing hostility in wars. He sent to them Ḥārīt son of ‘Imrū’l-Kindī. He chose him for them because Ma‘add were his uncles of his mother, a woman from the Banū ‘Āmir son of Ša‘ša‘a. Ḥārīt went against them with his people and his offspring. When he settled among them he appointed his son Ḥujar son of ‘Imrū, namely son of ‘Imrū’l-Qays the poet, over Asad and Kināna, and he appointed his son Šarahbīl over Qays and Tamīm; and he appointed his son Ma‘dī Karib, and was the grandfather of Aš‘at son of Qays, and Rabī‘a. They stayed this way until Ḥārīt son of ‘Imrū died. Šuhbān settled everyone among them in his kingdom. They stayed this way not long; then the Banū Asad jumped upon their king, Ḥujar son of ‘Imrū. They killed him. When this reached Šuhbān, he dispatched to Muḍar ‘Imrū son of Nābil the Laḥm and to Rabī‘a Labīd son of Nu‘mān the Ġassānī and he sent along a man from Ḥimyar called ‘Awfā son of ‘Unuq al-Ḥīra. He commanded him to kill the Banū Asad with general slaughter. When this reached Asad and Kināna, they prepared themselves. When this reached him he went towards Suhbān, and Qays and Tamīm assembled, and brought out their king ‘Imrū son of Nābil for them. And he caught up with Šuhbān and the remnant of Ma‘addī Karib, grandfather of al-Aš‘at king over Rabī‘a. When the news of what Muḍar had done to his vassals reached Šuhbān, he swore that he would make war on Muḍar himself. This reached Muḍar and he assembled his nobles and they took counsel about the matter. [p. 55] They knew that they had no potency in their king save in Rabī‘a’s joining them. They sent delegations to Rabī‘a, amongst whom were ‘Awf son of Munqidh al-Tamīmī, and Suwayd son of ‘Imrū’l-Asad grandfather of ‘Abīd son of al-Abraš, and al-Aḥwaš son of Ja‘far al-‘Amarī, and ‘Udas son of Zayd al-Ḥanzalī. They went until they approached Rabī‘a and the chief of them was at that time Kulayb son of Rabī‘a al-Taḡlabī, namely Kulayb Wā’il. Then Rabī‘a answered [their request for] help. And they invested Kulayb with power and he came before their king Labīd son of Nu‘mān and he killed him. Then they assembled and marched, and the king met them in Sullān. They fought and all Yaman was defeated. *There follow two lines of poetry spoken by al-Farazdaq to Jarīr...*

The king went back to his country defeated, and stayed there a year. Then he made ready to resume the war. He went and Ma‘add assembled with Kulayb at their head and they decided unanimously at Ḥazāzā. Kulayb sent al-Suffāḥ son of ‘Imrū ahead of him and ordered him, when he met the tribe, to light a fire: a sign which he made between them. Al-Suffāḥ went one night until he came to the king’s camp at Ḥazāzā, and he lit the fire and Kulayb approached with his host towards the fire. Each one approached before the other. They fought and the king Ṣuhbān was slain and his host was scattered. *There follows a line of poetry attributed to ‘Amrū son of Kaltūm.*

When Ṣuhbān was killed, his murder made Ḥimyar humbler and weaker. Rabī‘a son of Naṣar the Laḥm grandfather of al-Nu‘mān son of Mundir gathered his tribe and those who owed him allegiance among the descendants of Kuhlān son of Saba. He was wroth at Ḥimyar the king. The land of Yaman gathered to him and he ruled it for a time, and he was Rabī‘a son of Naṣar son of al-Ḥarīṭ son of ‘Imrū son of Laḥm son of ‘Adī son of Marra son of Zayd [p. 56] son of Kahlān son of Saba son of Ya‘rab son of Qaḥṭān. When control of Yaman had been gathered unto Rabī‘a son of Naṣar, he saw in his sleep a dream which frightened him and he was afraid of it. He sent to Ṣiqq and Saūḥ, the seers, and he told them what he saw. They told him, in explaining it, the coming conquest of the black Africans over the land of Yaman, the Persian conquest after them, then the coming of the prophet, upon whom be peace. When he heard this he had fearsome forebodings within himself. He wished that his son and the nobles of his folk would leave the land of Yaman.

He sent his son ‘Amr to Yazdjird son of Sābūr (and it is said that this was in this time of Ḍū’l-Aktāf) and he settled him in Ḥīra. In those days Ḥīra was built. ‘Imrū joined with him, as did his brethren and the folk of his house. From there the family of Laḥm arrived at Ḥīra and they allied themselves with the [house of] Kisrā, and they gave them dominion over the Arabs. When he died there followed after him his son Jaḏīma son of ‘Imrū. Jaḏīma married his daughter from the son of his uncle ‘Adī son of Rabī‘a son of Naṣar. She gave birth by him to ‘Imrū son of ‘Adī whom the Jinn drove mad and about whom there is a story. Jaḏīma continued as king in Ḥūrnaq for a time until his soul summoned him to marry Māriya daughter of Zubbā the Ġassān,

and she was queen of al-Jazīra which she ruled after her uncle ʿDayzan whom Sābūr killed, and there is a famous story about him and her. She killed Jaḏīma, and then Qayṣar his protector killed her. When he died, there followed the son of his sister and the son of the son of his uncle ʿImrū son of ʿAddā, namely the grandfather of Nuʿmān son of Mundīr son of ʿAmrū son of ʿAddā son of Rabiʿa. They say: this was in the age of Yazdjird son of Sābūr son of Bahrām Jūr.

They say: in this age perished ʿAbd Manāf son of Quṣā, and there followed him in power his son Hišām son of ʿAbd Manāf. They say: Yazdjird the Sinful died, having reigned [p. 57] twenty one years and a half, and Bahrām Jūr was away from Ḥīra with Mundīr in Ḥūrnaq and the grandees of Fārs pledged that not one of the sons of Yazdjird would be king because of the evil-living that he showed to them (amongst them Biṣṭām Isbahbad of the Sawād whose rank was called Hazāraft, Yazd-Jušnas fāḏūsṭān of Zawābī, Fīrak whose rank was called Mihrān, Jūdarz scribe of the army, Jušnas-Āḏarbīš scribe of the ḥarāj, Fannā-Ḥusraw master of the alms-giving of the kingdom, and others apart from these from the folk of the nobility and the royal house). They assembled and chose a man from the lineage of Ardašīr son of Bābakān who was called Ḥusraw and they made him king over them.¹⁰²⁶ This reached Bahrām Jūr whilst he was with Mundīr, and Mundīr commanded Bahrām to go forth and to claim the heritage of his father, and he sent with him his son Nuʿmān. Bahrām went and even approached Madāʿin and put down near it with his woolen tents, his tents of hair cloth, and his domed tents. Nuʿmān continued to travel between him and between the grandees of Fārs and her nobles in order that he might go and come back to Bahrām. Bahrām took delight in their hope and imposed upon them justice and good conduct, and they gave him a free hand in the kingdom, and they heard and obeyed. Bahrām loved Mundīr and Nuʿmān and he was generous to them, and he repayed him generously for his upbringing and nursing, and he consigned to him all the land of the Arabs, and he sent him away to his residence from Ḥīra.

1026. This detail is found in no other source.

[Bahrām V]

When rule became stable for Bahrām, he preferred amusement to what was appropriate for him, with the result that his subjects blamed him, and those kings that surrounded him were envious of him. And he was the first to see the Turkish lord, for he arose with his host of Turks and even penetrated deep into Ḥurāsān [p. 58].¹⁰²⁷ He made raids therein and tidings of this reached Bahrām, and he quit the reckless behaviour in which he was engaged, and went straightway to his enemy. But he made clear that he was making for Āḍarbāyjān to hunt there and he made merry on his journey thither. He chose from among the horsemen of his company seven thousand men and he mounted them upon camels, avoiding horses. He appointed over his kingdom his brother Narsā. Then he went towards Āḍarbāyjān, and he commanded each man among his companions whom he had chosen to have with him a falcon and a dog. Men did not doubt that this his expedition would be put to flight by the enemy and submission to his kingdom [would follow]. The grandees and nobles assembled and they conferred amongst themselves. Their opinion settled on sending a deputation from among themselves to the ḥāqān, the Turkish lord, with treasure which they would send to him in order to dissuade him from despoiling the country. And it reached the ḥāqān that Bahrām had fled and that the folk of the kingdom had assembled in order to submit themselves to him. But he was deceived and had confidence in his forces. He stayed where he was expecting the embassy and treasure.

They say: verily Bahrām commanded seven thousand bulls to be slaughtered and their skins to be removed. He herded on with himself seven thousand yearling colts and he began to travel in the night, hiding by day, and he barred the way to Ṭabaristān and kept to the bank of the river and even went out to Jurjān, and then he went thence to Nasā, and thence to the city of Marw, where the ḥāqān had bivouacked in Kušmayhan, until suddenly Bahrām went from Marw to a way-station, the ḥāqān knowing nothing about these skins. They¹⁰²⁸ were blown up

1027. An anachronistic reference to the Kidarites and Hephthalites.

1028. *i.e.*, the skins.

and he put pebbles in them and they were dried. Then he hung them upon the necks of these colts until he drew near the ḥāqān's camp (their arrival was on the desert side six farsakhs from the city of Marw) and they left these colts alone in the night, and drove them from behind, and because of these [p. 59] skins and rocks that were on them and the galloping of the colts with them and their beating them with their hands, there arose noises more dreadful than a falling mountain or thunderbolts. The Turks heard these noises and feared them without knowing what they were and they began to think their number greater than their own. They ran away from their camp, and they went out in a cowardly fashion, with Bahrām in pursuit. The ḥāqān's mount fell upon the ḥāqān and Bahrām reached him and slew him with his hand and he plundered his camp and all the treasure that was in it. He took the ḥātūn, the ḥāqān's wife, and Bahrām sought revenge on the Turks all day and night, killing them and taking them prisoner and even went as far as Āmūya. Then he crossed the river Balḥ, following their trail, and when he came near the Turks submitted to him, and they asked him to build for them a barrier which would be known between him and between them, which they would not pass. He delimited for them a place far into their land, and he ordered a tower to be built there, and he made it the barrier. Then he went back to the abode of his kingdom, and he removed the ḥarāj from the folk for that year. He parcelled out among the weak and poor half what he had taken, and he parcelled out the other half amongst the army that was with him. Happiness prevailed over the folk of his kingdom, they delighted in gladness and rejoicing. The cost of a show horse in that day was twenty dirhams, and a basil crown was one dirham.

When twenty three years of rule had come to him, he went out hunting. A herd of wild asses came upon him, and he impelled his horse in pursuit of them. His horse brought him to the bank of a body of water and he plunged into it and drowned. This reached his mother and she went to that place and commanded that that lake be found. They drew out a mound of the pebbles and sand, but they did not find him. It was said that this place was a part of Māh which is called Dāy Marj; it was called by his mother because 'mother' [p. 60] in the Persian tongue is Dāy. It was a well-known Marj and this story is famous in the region. It is as they tell it in the

story there: a hole opened in the earth because of the water whose bottom could not be reached, and this was near marshlands and stagnant water.

When Bahrām perished they made his son Yazdjird son of Bahrām king. The life of his father went for seventeen years, and death came upon him, and he had two sons Fayrūz and Hurmazd, Fayrūz being older by one year. Hurmazd claimed the kingdom without his brother Fayrūz. Fayrūz fled and even reached the country of the Hephthalites, namely Tuḡaristān Ṣaḡāniyān, Kābulistān, and the lands that follow the Great River in what borders the land of Balḡ. He went before the king of this land and told him about the tyranny of his brother against him and his taking possession of the kingdom though he was younger than he by one year. He asked him to help him with an army so that he might take back the kingdom. He¹⁰²⁹ said: ‘I shall not answer what thou askest unless thou swear that thou art older than he by one year’. Fayrūz swore. He helped him with thirty thousand men on the condition that he make for him the frontier at Tirmid. Fayrūz went with the army, and there followed him most of the folk of his house. They saw that he had told the truth about the reign of Hurmazd because of the boorishness of Hurmazd and his evil ways. They made war on him so as to wrest the kingdom from him, and he pardoned his brother for his transgression and did not punish him for what he had done.

1029. *i.e.*, the Hephthalite king.

[Fayrūz]

They say: Fayrūz was a king of limited ability and most of what he said and did in what was of no use to him. Verily folk thirsted in his reign for seven years, and the rivers dried up, and the waters and springs were diminished, and the earth grew dry and the trees were desiccated. Beasts and birds died and flocks perished. And the water of the Tigris and Euphrates and the other rivers grew small. Fayrūz lifted the ḥarāj from the peasants and he wrote to his lieutenants to govern the folk expediently [p. 61], and he threatened them, that if one of them died of hunger he would take revenge on the lieutenant or the vicegerent for it. Prudently he governed the folk at these times wherein not one of the folk died of hunger. He called the people to [pay] the ḥarāj on open fields, and all the people went forth from among men, women, and youths. They prayed to God for rain and he gave them rain, and he sent rain and it returned the earth to its good state and the rivers flowed and springs gushed. Men came back to their good habits. God was with them in abundance and comfort and fertility.

Fayrūz built the city of Ray and he called it Rām Fayrūz and he caused to be built in Ādarbāyjān the city of Ardabīl, and he called it Bād Fayrūz. Then he prepared himself and made ready for attacking the Turks. He brought with him the Mobad and the rest of his viziers, and he carried with him his daughter Fayrūz-Duḥt, and he took with him many treasures and chattels.

He put in charge of his kingdom a man from among his grandees and viziers called Šūḥar whose rank was Qārīn. He¹⁰³⁰ went and even he crossed the tower that Bahrām had built between him and the Turks, and he destroyed it. He penetrated the their land. The king of the Turks at that time was Āḥšuwān ḥāqān. The king of the Turks sent to Fayrūz, telling him that he had gone too far and warning him of the consequence of his audacity. But heeded this not. The ḥāqān began to show disgust for war, and he delayed in order to prepare a trench whose depth in the earth was twenty cubits and whose breadth was ten cubits, and he made it wide between its two sides. He made it far from his frontier. Then he covered it with weak sticks and he lay reeds

1030. *i.e.*, Fayrūz.

over it and hid it with earth. Then Fayrūz went out to war and the hour [of death] came upon him. Then he suffered defeat. Fayrūz made for him and his army. The ḥāqān followed the highway that he had taken between his rear and the trench. Fayrūz went [forward] blindly and he and his army were ensnared in that trench and Aḥṣuwān and his tarḥāns turned to back him, and killed them with stones. And Aḥṣuwān took possession of Fayrūz' camp and his army and all chattels and womenfolk that were in it. He took the mūbad prisoner and he took Fayrūz-Duḥt , daughter of Fayrūz.

The remnants of the army fell to Šūḥar, and they told him of the misfortune of Fayrūz and his army. Šūḥar encouraged the men to seek to avenge their king, and all the men of the army and the folk of the country hastened to Šūḥar. He went with a great host and even penetrated deep into the country of the Turks. Aḥṣuwān was afraid to approach Šūḥar because of the size of his army and the number of it. He sent to him asking him for a treaty in order that he might send back the mūbad and Fayrūz-Duḥt and all prisoners in his possession and all that he had taken from Fayrūz' chattels and his treasures and his war engines. And Šūḥar granted him this. He took hold of it and returned to his country and land.

After Fayrūz, Balās son of Fayrūz was made king, and he ruled for four years. Then he died. And after him Šūḥar gave the kingdom to his brother Qubād son of Fayrūz.

[Ḍū Nuwās]

They say: in the reign of Qubād son of Fayrūz, Rabī'a son of Naṣr the Laḥmī died. He returned to Ḥimyar and he appointed over them Ḍū Nuwās, and his name was Zur'a son of Zayd son of Ka'b Kahf al-Zulm son of Zayd son of Sahl son of 'Amrū son of Qays son of al-Ġawṭ son of Jadār son of Qaṭan son of 'Arīb son of al-Rā'iš son of Ḥimyar son of Saba son of Yašjab son of Ya'rub son of Qaḥṭān. But he was called Ḍū Nuwās because of his forelock that dangled from his head.

They say: in the land of Yaman Ḍū Nuwās had a fire which he and his tribe worshipped. Tongues of flame went forth from that fire. The length of it reached three farsakhs and then it went back to its place. Then those jews that were in Yaman said to Ḍū Nuwās: ‘O king, verily thy worship of this fire is in vain. If thou worshippest in our religion we shall put out the fire if God chose, so that thou mayest know that thou art in danger from thy religion. He replied to them [by saying that] he would go into their religion if they should put out the fire. When the flame went forth, they brought out the Torah and opened it and began to read from it and the fire diminished until it reached the house that it was in. They continued to read the Torah until it died down and Ḍū Nuwās became a jew and he called the folk of his house to go into it also and whoever refused he killed. Then he went to the city Najrān to make the Christians there to become jews.

There was a tribe which adhered to the Christian religion which had not changed, and he called them to forsake their religion and enter judaism. But they refused. He ordered that their king, whose name was ‘Abd Allāh son of Tāmīr, be beheaded with a sword. Then it was put on the wall of the city and it was attached to it, and he made a furrow for trenches for those who remained, and he burnt them in them. They were the Companions of the Trench of whom God tells (be his name exalted) in the Quran. Daws Ḍū Ta‘labān escaped and went to the king of Rūm and informed him of what Ḍū Nuwās had done to the folk of his religion: killing bishops and burning the gospel and razing churches. He wrote to the Najāšī,¹⁰³¹ king of the Ḥabaša and sent Ariyāt with a great force and he sailed the sea until he got out on the shore of ‘Adan. Ḍū Nuwās went to him and attacked him and Ḍū Nuwās was killed. Ariyāt went into Ṣan‘a and the name of it was Ḍamār, but Ṣan‘a is the Aethiopian word, or ‘Fortified Stronghold’, and Ṣan‘a is called thus.

1031. *i.e.*, the Negus, title of the king of Aethiopia.

When Ariyāt was secure and he had killed the jews [p. 64] and ruled Yaman, treasure accrued to him. Whoever loves [these things] begins to grow fat on them. The Ḥabaša¹⁰³² were angry at this. They went to Abraha, father of Yaksūm (and he was one of their lieutenants), and they complained to him about what Ariyāt had done and they pledged allegiance to him. The Ḥabaša went away in their groups, one of whom was with Ariyāt and the other was with Abraha, and they stood in battle formation for war. But Abraha called him to single combat and he fought him and Ariyāt threw his spear against him. And it stuck in the face of Abraha and it split it. Because of this he was called ‘al-Ašram’ and Abraha struck Ariyāt with his sword on the base of his head and he killed him and the Ḥabaša joined him. He ruled them and the Najāšī set him up in authority over Yaman. And he stayed there for four years. He built churches in Ṣan‘ā, the like of which no one had seen. He announced in the whole land of Yaman that they should make a pilgrimage to it. But the Arabs hated this and a man from among the folk of Tihāma came one night and shat in it. When the folk came in the morning they looked upon the evil of evils in the church. And when Abraha said: ‘Who contemplated this deed?’ They said: ‘It could only have been one from the house that is in Makka who was angry when thou commandedst the pilgrimage to this church’. Abraha was wroth at this with vehement wrath and prepared himself to march on Makka to destroy the ka‘ba. He sent to the Najāšī and he furnished him with an elephant the size of a mountain who was called Maḥmūd. He went to Makka, and the matter was as God narrated in the *Sūrat al-Fīl*.

They say: when God destroyed Abraha, his son Yaksūm son of Abraha succeeded him in power in the kingdom of Yaman. He was more wicked than his father and more evil in his living. He stayed in Yaman twenty-nine years. Then he died. His brother Masrūq reigned after him, and he was worse than his brother and more wicked in his living.

1032. *i.e.*, the Aethiopians.

[Sayf son of Ḍū Yazan]

When [word of] this extended [p. 65] over the folk of Yaman, Sayf son of Ḍū Yazan the Ḥimyarī went forth from the progeny of of Ḍū Nuwās and even went to Qayṣar, and he was at Anṭākyā. He complained to him about what the blacks had done to them and asked him to help and to banish them from their land and to make the rule of Yaman his. Qayṣar said to him: ‘These belong to my religion and ye are worshippers of graven images, and I cannot let you triumph over them’. When he had given up hope he betook himself to Kisrā, and he approached Ḥīra which was under the control of Nu‘mān son of Mundīr and he complained to him about the matter and Nu‘mān said to him: ‘What was the reason for our grandfather Rabī‘a son of Naṣr’s going out from the land of Yaman to us, and our settling in this place, except for this thing? Draw near! For verily I have an audience every year with the king Kisrā son of Qubād. It hath drawn nigh, and when I go out I shall take thee with me, and I shall have thee announced and I shall intercede for thee to him about what thou purposest’. He did this, and had him announced and he interceded, And Kisrā dispatched (him) with a gathering of those who were in gaol. And he put in command over them a man among them called Wahriz son of Kāmjar, and he was a very old man [p. 65: l. 12], who was beyond one hundred years, and he was among the horsemen of Īrān and her braves and of the royal house and noble. And he had feared for his life, and Kisrā had locked him up. Wahriz went with his companions to al-Ubulla, and he sailed the sea from there and Sayf son of Ḍū Yazan was with him and they even went out on the shore at ‘Adan. The news reached Masrūq, and he went against them. When they advanced and met for battle Wahriz hastened to him with arrows and he shot at him and did not miss between the eyes, and it went out from the back of his neck and he fell dead and his army was routed. Wahriz went into Ṣan‘a and took over Yaman. He wrote to Kisrā about the conquest, and Kisrā wrote to him ordering him to kill all the blacks in Yaman and to make Sayf king over it and to come back to him. He did it.

Verily the remainder of the blacks which Sayf had spared and won over to his side [p. 66] ran away from him when riders attacked Sayf one day. And they were before him in his convoy, and they struck him with their spears until they killed him. And Kisrā sent Wahriz back to the

land of Yaman and commanded him not to leave any blacks in it, and not [even] those blacks who struck him, but to kill him. He stayed there for five years.

When death came to him he called for his bow and arrows. Then he said: ‘Come to me’. Then he reached for his bow and he shot, and he said: ‘See where my arrows are stopped and then build for me a sarcophagus and put me in it’. And his arrows stopped behind the church, and that place is called to this day ‘Grave of Wahriz’. Then Kisrā sent Bādān to the land of Yaman, and he remained king there until the rise of Islam.

[Qubāḏ]

They say: when the kingdom passed to Qubāḏ, he had passed one year beyond five and ten years, but he was of splendid intelligence, fragrant of soul, open handed, and profound. But he entrusted command of the kingdom to Šūḥar, and the people did not therefore take Qubāḏ seriously and they despised him on account of Šūḥar’s taking power instead of him. Qubāḏ had no regard for the kingdom for five years, but then he spurned this course and wrote to Sābūr Rāzī, who is from the sons of the most excellent Mihrān family, his governor in Bābil and Ḥuṭarnīya, that he come before him and bear him aid from his forces. When he came before him, he disclosed what was within himself, and enjoined upon him the murder of Šūḥar. Sābūr went unto Qubāḏ and found Šūḥar sitting with him, and he walked towards Qubāḏ passing by Šūḥar and taking no heed of Šūḥar until Sābūr threw a lasso round him, and the lasso alighted on his neck. Then he dragged him, until he brought him out of the hall, and this vexed him keenly. He consigned him to gaol, and then Qubāḏ commanded that he be killed.

When ten years of Qubāḏ reign had passed, there came to him a man of the folk of Iṣṭahr, [p. 67] who was called Mazdak. He called him to the religion of Mazdakism, and Qubāḏ inclined thereto. But the Persians were wroth at this with vehement wrath, and meditated the murder of Qubāḏ. He made excuse to them, but they received not his excuse, and they deposed

him from the kingdom and put him in gaol, and invested with power, and chose for their king, Jāmāsf son of Fayrūz, brother of Qubād.

Verily Qubād's sister went in secret to Qubād, and even compassed his going out by subterfuge.¹⁰³³ She abode there a while in hiding until he was safe from search. Then he went forth with five men whom he trusted (amongst whom was Zarmihr son of Šūḥar) towards the Hephthalites seeking aid from their king. He took the Ahwāz road and he alighted in Urmšīr. Then he went to a village on the border of Ahwāz and Iṣfahān and abode there disguised. His abode was with its dihqān. Qubād gazed upon his landlord's daughter, possessed of beauty, and she afflicted his heart. He said to Zarmihr son of Šūḥar: 'Verily I love this girl and she hath afflicted my heart; haste thee to her father and ask for her hand in marriage for me'. He did this, and Qubād sent to the girl with his sealing ring, and he made this her wedding gift, and she was loved and entered by him. Qubād had pleasure in her, and was glad in her with great gladness when he found her possessed of wisdom and beauty and learning and comeliness. He abode with her three days, and then enjoined upon her her own safekeeping, and set out until he came to the chief of Hephthalites. He complained to him of what his folk had done to him, and he asked him to bear him aid with an army so as to recover his kingdom. He granted this, and made this condition for them that he yield to him the realm of Šigāniyān, and he sent with him thirty thousand men.

He¹⁰³⁴ drew near with them, seeking his brother. He took the same road on which he had set out in the beginning, until he alighted at the town wherein he had coupled with that woman, and he put down with her father, and asked him about her. He told him that she had brought forth a boy. He her to come in before him with her son. She came in and with her was the boy. He was well pleased in him. He saw him, how much more handsome was he [p. 68] than other

1033. Dīnawarī merely alludes to the story of Qubād's escape from prison which is told more fully by Procopius (Procopius Liv.3–9). Procopius narrates the story of Qubād's Mr. Toad-style escape from prison by exchanging clothes with his wife, who came to visit him, and with the help of his friend Seoses. Agathias, writing a generation or so after Procopius, reports simply that Qubād was put in gaol and got out somehow — as though correcting Procopius (AGATHIAS, IV.28.3; CAMERON 1968, p. 154–159).

1034. *i.e.*, Qubād.

boys. He called him Kisrā, that is Kisrā Anušarwān, who was made king after him. He said to Zarmihr: ‘Go forth and ask for me of this man, the father of the girl, whether he hath nobility of old.’ He asked of him and he told him that they were of the progeny of Farīdūn the king, and he rejoiced at this. He ordered that the girl and her father be carried with him.

When he reached the city Madā’in the Persians blamed one another for what had happened, and they said: ‘Verily Qubād hath renounced for us the faith of Mazdak and he hath refrained from what had bothered us. We did not accept this from him [before] and confiscated his possessions, so we made peace with him [now]’. They went to him together, Jāmāsf his brother whom they had chosen as king being among them, and they made excuse to him, and he accepted this from them. He forgave his brother Jāmāsf and them, and he advanced. He went into the palace of the king, and there arrived the army with which he had advanced, and he was generous and favourable to them, and sent them back to their kingdom. He ordered that the girl be settled in the finest of his appartments.

Then verily Qubād made ready and marched with his forces to raid the land of Rūm, and he conquered the city Āmid and Mayyāfāriqīn, whose folk he took prisoner. He commanded, and there was built for them a city in what is between Fārs and Ahwāz, and he settled them therein. He called it Abarqubād, and it was an exalted astān. He made for it three ṭassūjes: one ṭassūj was Anbār, and within it were Hīt and ‘Ānāt, which Yazīd son of Mu‘āwīya annexed when he ruled al-Jazīra; one ṭassūj was Bādūrīyā, one ṭassūj was Maskin and the districts of the kūra of Middle Bihqubād and the Lesser Bihqubād, and he added to them eight ṭassūjes, to each kūra four ṭassūjes, namely the astāns. He divided the kūra of Iṣfahān into two kūras Jay division and Taymura division.

Qubād had [p. 69] many sons, among whom he preferred none more than Kisrā because of the gathering of noble qualities within him. But as for him,¹⁰³⁵ he was over-suspicious of any evil thought. Qubād did not praise him because of it and said to him on that day: ‘O my son,

1035. *i.e.*, Kisrā Anušarwān.

there are within thee traits that concern the whole of the kingdom, for thou art over-suspicious and that such thought, when misplaced, is a cause of trouble and liable to bring ruin'. Kistrā asked pardon of his father for what had afflicted his heart, and his soul was deemed good in his view.

[Kistrā Anūšarwān]

When king Qubād reached his forty-third [regnal] year, death was upon him, and he gave power to his son Kistrā, namely Anūšarwān. He was king after his father, and he ordered a search for Mazdak son of Māzayyār, who had made men believe in doing forbidden things, and by such baseness provoked the commission of sin, and facilitated the height of rapine and of injustice. And he was sought until found, and Anūšarwān ordered his murder and impaling, and the killing of whoever else had joined the sect.

Then Kistrā Anūšarwān split the kingdom into four quarters, and set over each quarter a trustworthy man. The first quarter was Ḥurāsān and Sijistān and Kirmān; the second was Iṣbahān, Qumm, Jabal, Ādarbayjān and Armīniyya; the third was Fārs and Ahwāz down to Baḥrayn; the fourth was 'Irāq unto the border with the Kingdom of Rūm. And among these four he extended to each man the utmost dignity and esteem.

And he sent his army into the country of the Hephthalites, and conquered Tuḥāristān, Zābulistān, Kābulistān, and Ṣigānīyān. The king of the Turks, Sinjibū ḥāqān, gathered unto himself the people of his kingdom and he prepared himself [for war].¹⁰³⁶ He went towards the

1036. Among all sources of the Ḥudāynāma tradition, it is only Firdawsī who offers an explanation for the outbreak of war. It was provoked, says the poet, by Hephthalite intelligence of a Turkish embassy to Iran. Fearing a Turkish and Persian alliance, Ġātfar, the Hephthalite king, orders the interception and murder of the Turkish ambassador (NŌŠĪN-RAVĀN, l. 1780–1782). A punitive expedition against the entire Hephthalite nation ensues. Population pressure, or simply the nomadic lifestyle, as we have already noted, may have made the southern expansion of the Turks inevitable. It is possible, however, that Hephthalite dominion in Sogdiana had prevented the Turks from using Sogdian merchants and entrepôts from selling silk in Persian markets. Such is implied in Photius' summary of the *History* of Theophanes of Byzantium. Since the defeat of Pērōz in 484, we are told, the Hephthalites had controlled the trading stations and ports involved in the Chinese silk trade: the Turks took over these entrepôts when they defeated the Hephthalites (PHOTIUS, Cod. 64: 26b). This is meagre material, but it does establish the

land of Ḥurāsān until he conquered Šāš, Fargāna, Samarqand, Kaš, and Nasaf, and he ended in Buḥārā. [p. 70] [News of] this reached Kistrā and he entrusted his son Hurmazd (who was king after him) with a copious army and sent him to fight the Turkish ḥāqān. He marched until he found himself near him,¹⁰³⁷ who abandoned what he had conquered, and returned to his country. Kistrā wrote to his son Hurmazd that he should return.

[The Roman War of 540]

The say also that Ḥālīd son of Jabala the Ġassānī made a raid on Nu‘mān son of Mundīr, namely Mundīr the second, for there were two Mundīrs and two Nu‘māns, as Mundīr the first was he whom Bahrām Jūr had put in power, but Mundīr the second was in the time of Kistrā An-ūsharwān, and they were Kistrā’s governors on the frontier of the land of the Arabs. And he¹⁰³⁸ killed some of the companions of Mundīr with great butchery, and he drove away the camels of Mundīr and his horses. And Mundīr wrote to Kistrā Anūsharwān telling him what Ḥālīd son of Jabala had perpetrated on him. And Kistrā wrote to Qayṣar that he should demand blood money from Ḥālīd [paid] to Mundīr for killing Ḥālīd’s companions, and to return what he had taken of his chattels. Qayṣar did not take note of his letter and Kistrā prepared himself for battle with him. He marched until he penetrated the lands of al-Jazīra, which were under Roman control at the

relevant link. The symbiosis of the Turks and Sogdians, furthermore, has been well proven by de la Vaissière—a relationship which the Turks seem to have inherited from the Rouran and earlier nomads (DE LA VAISSIÈRE 2004, p. 180–191). Sogdian management of the Turkish silk trade is suggested in the Zhou Annals (ECSEDY1968, p. 132; DE LA VAISSIÈRE 2004, p. 184), and proved by a notice in Menander (Menander 1985, Frag. 10.1: 3–4). Hephthalite control of Sogdiana since 509 had cut off communication between that region and China, and normal relations resumed immediately after the war in 564 (ENOKI 1959, p. 27; LITVINSKIY 1998, p. 104). Hephthalite power in Dzungaria was poised to menace important Sogdian bases in Gansu, but Hephthalite possession of Sogdiana itself meant that Sogdian trading connexions further south and west could not be exploited. The Chinese gave the Turks one hundred thousand rolls of silk, amongst other gifts, each year as tribute (CHINESE ANNALS, p. 13), and this commodity was useless unless it could be sold, and Iran was not only an important intermediary between the Turks and the Romans, but was also a customer: the Turks and Persians had good reason to wrest Sogdiana from Hephthalite control.

1037. *i.e.*, the ḥāqān.

1038. *i.e.*, Ḥālīd.

time and he took Dārā, and the city Edessa, and the city of Chalcis, and the city of Hierapolis, and the city of Aleppo, until he arrived in Antioch. He took it, as it was the greatest city in al-Šāms and al-Jazīra, and he took captive its people, the people of Antioch, and he carried them off to Iran [?]. He commanded that a city be built for them beside Madā'in, corresponding [exactly] to the construction of the city Antioch in its lanes and its streets and in its houses, for nothing was missing from it at all. He called it Zabir-Ḥusrū, and it is the city which is beside Madā'in, which is called al-Rūmīyya. Then the people were sent into it. And every man passed by a likeness of his house that was in his city of Antioch. He [p. 71] appointed over them a lieutenant to command them, a man from the Christians of Ahwāz, called Yazdfanā.

Qayṣar wrote to Kisrā asking for a peace treaty and the return of what he had taken for himself among those cities, on the condition that he should pay to him a fixed levy every year, for Kisrā hated being oppressive. And Kisrā accepted what Qayṣar had offered, and entrusted the annual collection and transmission thereof to Šarvīn Dastabāy. And he stayed there with the king of Rūm, and Ḥurrīn his famous slave (a victorious and brave horseman) was with him.

And when Kisrā began to leave the land of al-Šām, a severe disease came upon him. And he sought rest in the city Ḥimṣ. And he stayed in it with his army until he recovered. And Qayṣar began to gather his army to himself in order to withdraw.

They say that Kisrā Anūšarwān had a son who was called Anūš Zād,¹⁰³⁹ whose mother was a Christian of great beauty. And Kisrā had pleasure in her and wished that she should leave Christianity and enter Magianism, but she refused, and her son Anūš Zād inherited this from her, and he was at variance with his father in religion. And he became angry with him and ordered his imprisonment in the city Jundaysābūr. And when Kisrā attacked Syria, and news of his illness and location at Ĥimṣ reached Anūš Zād, he beguiled the people of the prison and sent messengers of his among the Christians of Jundaysābūr and the whole province of Ahwāz. And he had broken the prison, and he went forth and those Christians gathered round him. And he cast out his father's governors from the district of Ahwāz and possessed himself of their goods. He circulated a rumour about the death of his father and prepared himself to march towards 'Irāq. But his deputy in the city Madā'in wrote, giving him news of his son, and what he had done. But Kisrā wrote to him:

‘Send the armies against him, and seize him in battle: be cunning that thou mayest capture him! If fate come upon him that he be killed, [his] most despicable blood, and most wayward soul [have deserved it]. [p. 72] For the wise man knoweth that the purity of the world is not perfect and its pardon endureth not. For if there were any thing that were free of suspicion, then surely it would be the rain which giveth life to the unliving earth, or surely it would be the daylight which cometh to men that sleep, and lighteneth them that are blind. But despite this, how

1039. By analogy to Dīnawarī's spelling of the name Anūšarwān, we should have expected *Anūšazād, which would be more similar to Procopius' Anasōzados, the earliest attestation of the name (PROCOPIUS, VIII.x.8). The putative Anūšazād would be derived from the compound *Anōšag-zād, or something very similar, in Middle Persian. So why does Dīnawarī have Anūš Zād and not something different? I cannot explain how or why the form of the name has changed, but I can provide some observations which may be useful to others. It seems that two things have happened to the name Anūš Zād in Dīnawarī's history: the third syllable of the first element of the compound has disappeared, and (unlike the name Anūšarwān) the two elements appear as distinct words. Comparison to Firdawsī's spellings of Nūš Zād and Nūšīn Ravān may well be instructive somehow, but Firdawsī's changes were obviously motivated for the purpose of metre, something which we cannot infer in the case of Dīnawarī. In any case, I infer انوشزاد, or something rather like it, was the form of the name that originally appeared in Arabic. Guirgass notes that the Leyden and St Petersburg manuscripts of *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* often show the two elements of the name written very close together (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 71: n. c.), and this would tend to support my inference. The name may have been broken apart by a particularly pedantic scribe, possibly in later days under the influence of the name as it appears in the *Šāhnāma*.

much suffering is in the rain, and our keeping it away from buildings? And how much dread is in its floods and lightnings? And how much harm and corruption is in the noonday sun? Uproot the swarms with thy blade, and let not the great multitude of them affright thee, for their thorns remain no longer. How shall the Christians remain, when in their religion a man among them must offer his right cheek when his left cheek is struck? If Anūš Zāḏ and his followers surrender, do thou send back to their cells those among them that had been in prison, but without increasing their distress and dearth of food and clothing. But whoever among them was from the class of knights, do thou cut off his head, and allow not from thyself any mercy upon them. And whoever among them were baseborn and criminals, do thou kill them and take no heed of them. I have understood that thou hast mentioned about the punishments inflicted by thee upon the multitude who reviled Anūš Zāḏ publicly and [who] mentioned his mother [also]. For I know that they are possessed of a hidden malice and secret hostility, and they accomplished the abuse of Anūš Zāḏ on a pretext to slander us, and as a means to offend us. Thou hast done well in thy punishment of them. Permit no one to imitate what they say. Peace.’

When Kistrā recovered from his disease, and withdrew together with his army to the land of his dominion, his son Anūš Zāḏ had been taken prisoner, and it was unto Anūš Zāḏ as Kistrā had commanded.

They say: the Persian kings imposed a customary rate of taxation upon the crops of the lands, at a rate of a half, a third, a quarter, or fifth up to a tenth commensurate with the proximity of the estate to the cities, and according to the quantity of growth and yield. [p. 73] But Qubāḏ wished to overthrow this system and establish a ḥarāj,¹⁰⁴⁰ but he died before the cadastral survey was complete. But Kistrā Anūšarwān ordered its completion. He gave orders to the scribes, and they set forth and expressed in detail the levying and imposition of the jizya on [all] four social classes, but they exempted from it the nobility, the Marzbāns, the knights, and the scribes, and anyone in the service of the king. No one was compelled to pay who had not attained twenty

1040. *i.e.*, a fixed-rate of taxation.

years, or who had passed fifty years. And this imposition was written in three copies: one copy which Kīsrā's own diwān preserved, one copy which was dispatched to the tax office, and one copy which was presented to the magistrates in the countryside, in order that the tax-collectors might abstain from transgressing what was [written] in their copy. And he commanded that the ḥarāj be collected in three instalments. He called the place in which it was collected the Sarāy Samarra, and the explanation of this is 'the place of three installments', and it is the place which is known to-day as Šimarraj, and it hath also been said by way of explanation that it means 'the place of calculation', for 'calculation' is *šamarra* in Persian. This word, which is understood in the Persian language to this day, they call the *ḥarāj šimarraḥ* with the letter *šīn*, in order to mean 'calculation'.¹⁰⁴¹ The capitation tax was lifted from the poor and the chronically ill, and likewise was

IO4I. Guirgass points out in a textual note that *šamarra* ought to be *šumar* which would certainly be true in the modern Persian language. But leaving aside for the moment problems of vocalisation and spelling of Persian words using the Arabic alphabet, we should note that the etymologies cited by Dīnawarī raise several difficult questions. Dīnawarī draws on an established tradition in explaining *Sarāy Samarra* as 'the place of three installments'; for Dīnawarī's purposes *sarāy* simply means 'place' here, and *samarra* can be broken down into *sa marra*, an arabicism for *si marra*, meaning 'three installments'. Under the word *marra*, Dihkhuda's Persian dictionary cites Arab grammarian Jawaliqī (d. 1145) who traces the earliest attested use and meaning of this word to linguist Ibn Darid (d. 943) and historian Ibn Qutayba (d. 889) (DIHKHUDA 2009, s.v. مَرَّة). Dīnawarī may have borrowed his etymology from one or both of these scholars, but since Dīnawarī died about 895, Ibn Qutayba would be the more likely source, if this is indeed what happened. It may, however, be more likely that Ibn Qutayba borrowed the etymology from Dīnawarī—and it would not have been the first time Ibn Qutayba copied Dīnawarī. But the point is that all scholars concerned explain *marra* in the same way, and they all refer to the collection of the *ḥarāj* in three installments. So this etymology seems to have enjoyed a certain currency amongst linguists and historians after his time and perhaps a little before it, and Dīnawarī may well have invented it.

Nevertheless, I do not think that Dīnawarī's etymology is right. It has the ring of a folk-etymology, and this is reinforced by Dīnawarī's mention that *Sarāy Samarra*'s name in his own day is *Šimarraj*. It is easy to imagine *samarra*, or *si marra*, as a misunderstanding of *šimarraj* (clearly a word of Middle Persian origin which has been put into Arabic), which may have become unintelligible to most people before or during Dīnawarī's lifetime. To revisit the problem of writing Middle Persian in the Arabic alphabet, *šamarraj* should probably have been spelt *šamaraj*, as the word derived ultimately from the Middle Persian *ōšmārag*, meaning 'reckoning', from the verb *ōšmuran* or *ōšmārdan*, 'to reckon', or 'to count' (MACKENZIE 1950, p. 62).

What can we infer from this? First, it is significant that the word *šamarraj* appears without the long vowel *ō*, which we would expect in Middle Persian. This means that the original Pahlavi word *ōšmārag* (as it would have been written and pronounced in days of yore) appears in Dīnawarī's text in a form which is well on its way to becoming New Persian. So if there is a Pahlavi document lying behind this anecdote it was put into New Persian, at least in part, before being translated into Arabic. Second, Dīnawarī seems to suggest somewhat obliquely that *samarra* is a corruption of *šamarraj*. This is, I think, what Dīnawarī means by the use of the letter *šīn*. If the original, early New Persian name *Sarāy Šamarag* was corrupted into the Arabic *Sarāy Samarra*, the error must have crept in well before Dīnawarī wrote his history. Furthermore the confusion of letters probably did not occur early: the first translators of

the crop tax, and it was lifted from what misfortune had afflicted commensurate with the loss done to it. And Kisrā put in charge of all this a trusty group of just people who were to implement it and impose the tax upon people equitably.

There had not yet been among the Persian kings a king who had gathered together the various disciplines of humanities and wisdom, nor one who had taken interest in science. But Kisrā approached the people of literature and knowledge, and he recognised their virtue. The greatest of the savants of his age was Buzurjmihr son of Baḥtakān,¹⁰⁴² and he was among the wise men of the Persians and one of their intelligent men. Kisrā preferred him over his vazīrs and scholars of his age.¹⁰⁴³

Middle and early New Persian works into Arabic must have known both languages well enough not to make such a basic error. I rather suspect that the confusion occurred after the Persian (of whatever era) had been put into Arabic, and that it happened as a result of transcribing the Arabic translation several times. All this means that, at least for this brief passage, Dīnawarī was working with *Hudāynāma* material which had already gone through more than one generation in both Persian and Arabic.

IO42. The surname of Buzurjmihr is corrupt in both the Leyden and St Petersburg manuscripts. Guirgass has restored البَحْتَكَانَ (al-Baḥtakān) from الْغُتْكَانَ (al-Ġutkān), which we find in a note (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 73: n. e). But this is a feeble restoration: we *know* that Buzurjmihr's patronymic in Middle Persian literature is Bōxtagān (His name is 'wuzurjmihr ī bōxtagān' (WC, p. 23)). It is easy to imagine that the careless movement of a pen could transform بخت into غت, especially if a heavy form of kufic script were used, so we need not worry too much about the change. What is significant here is that the real reading of the Leyden and St Petersburg manuscripts has preserved the *u* vowel of the patronymic, a reasonable approximation in Arabic of the sound of the Pahlavi name. Guirgass ought to have retained this vowel.

IO43. This is a very brief section, but it probably represents the heavy compression of a much larger series of notices and stories. This can be inferred from the mention of the famous vizier, Buzurjmihr, around whom a vast literature grew up in time. Buzurjmihr is mentioned often in the book *Kalila wa-Dimna*, which Dīnawarī was certainly familiar with (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 89: l. 5–10), and Dīnawarī's description of this savant recalls the Middle Persian tradition that Buzurjmihr was the wisest in Iran (WC, p. 24). So we can be sure that in this section Dīnawarī is reporting less than he knows. Unsurprisingly, Dīnawarī adds nothing to our knowledge of Ḥusraw's patronage of art and science. Perhaps he assumed that this topic was already well-known to his audience?

Finally, we should note that this section on Buzurjmihr follows Ḥusraw's reforms without interruption and flows without transition into the anecdote about Bābak son of Nihrawān, an anecdote of the lowest historical value (JACKSON BONNER 2011, p. 111). Dīnawarī does not use his signature phrase 'they say' followed by a form of the verb *kāna*, nor anything comparable. If my inferences about this and similar phrases be right, this suggests that all three portions here came from the same source.

And Kisrā put in charge [p. 74] of the war office one of the scribes, a man who was distinguished and renowned for intellect and ability, who was called Bābak son of Nihrawān. And he said to Kisrā:

‘O king! Verily thou hast invested me with command, by virtue of which thou shalt endure from me a measure of harshness in the matters touching military inspection every four months. Do thou take every manner of equipment in full and take account of what the instructors teach men in riding and shooting, and regard their excellence therein and their short-coming. Verily it is a means to good political order.’

Said Kisrā: ‘What is the best answer to him that speaketh, to participate with them in his favour, and the power of him that answereth then in repose? Verify thy saying’.

He commanded that a platform be built in a part of the field and he spread upon it magnificent carpets. Then he sat, and his herald called out: ‘Not one man among the fighting forces is to lag behind, but all must be present in the field’. They assembled. But he saw not Kisrā among them. He commanded that they go away. He did this on the second day, but he saw not Kisrā, and they went away. He called out on the third day: ‘O men, not one man of the fighting force may be absent, not even if he is honoured by possessing the crown and throne’. He showed to him neither exception nor partiality.

[Word of] this reached Kisrā, and he armed himself with armour. Then he rode and presented himself to Bābak. What a knight takes with him [is this]: a cataphract, a shirt, a haubergeon, a coat of plate-mail, a helmet, two vambraces, two cuisses, a lance, a shield, and a mace which he bound to his waist, and an axe, a sword, and a quiver in which were two bows and their two strings and thirty arrows, and two wound strings [p. 75] which the knight hangs behind on his helmet. Kisrā appeared before Bābak in full armour save the two strings which he lacked. Bābak did not pass over his name, and Kisrā remembered the two strings and he hung them from his helmet and he appeared before Bābak, and he passed by his name. He said: ‘To the lord of the brave warriors let four thousand and one dirhams be given!’ It was more than the [usual] wage of four thousand dirhams, for he gave Kisrā one dirham [more]. When Bābak rose

from his seat, he went forth to Kisrā and he said: ‘O king, thou didst receive my harshness, only because I wish nothing but equity and just requital, and the cutting off of privilege’.

Said Kisrā: ‘No one hath treated us harshly in thy providing for us or for the good condition of our realm, but we bore the harshness of it as a man endures the drinking of a loathsome medicine because of the benefit that he hopeth from it.’

They say that Kaskar was a small region. Kisrā Anūšarwān therefore added to it some of Bahurasīr province and Hurmizd province and the khurra and province of Maysān, and thus he enlarged it. And he made it into two districts: one district was Jundaysābūr and one district was Zandaward, and Bajūhāy province, and Ḥusrūmāh province. And he made for it six municipalities: one municipality was Madā’in, that is Madā’in and Ṭaysfūn the town that is on the Tigris three parasangs below Qibāb Ḥumayd, which is called in Nabataean Ṭaysfūnaj, and one district was Jāzir, and one district was Kalwādā, and one municipality was Nahr Būq, and one district was Jalūlā, and one district was Nahr al-Malik.¹⁰⁴⁴

[The Birth of Muḥammad]

The Apostle of God, upon whom be peace etc., was born at the end of Anūšarwān’s reign. He dwelt at Makka for forty years until he was sent on his prophetic mission. He lived through the

1044. It is difficult to know what to make of this passage. The administrative geography that appears in the *Hudāynāma* tradition seems terribly vague and badly mangled. Discussions of Ḥusraw’s quadripartition of his empire differ wildly in each source (JACKSON BONNER 2011, p. 89 with n. 270), and this passage of Dīnawarī’s may be considered a case in point. So we ought to be wary of taking seriously Dīnawarī’s discussion of Ḥusraw’s changes to administrative divisions — at least not without the warrant of administrative seals to back it up.

This passage is probably from the same source as all other Sasanian geographical notices in Dīnawarī. We find, for instance, lists of cities and fortresses and geographical tinkering attributed to Ardashir (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 47: l. 11–15), Šāpūr I (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 51: l. 4–6), Pērōz (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 61: l. 7–8), and Qubād (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 68: l. 13–19), and each time the level of detail increases. Be that as it may, it is important to note that, unlike the superficially similar passages attached to the reigns of Ardashir, Šāpūr I, and Pērōz, those found in the reigns of Qubād and Ḥusraw do not, for the most part, deal with the foundation of cities. Qubād is said to have built one city for prisoners carried off from Amida and Mayyāfāriqīn, but otherwise both he and Ḥusraw are said to have redrawn certain districts, municipalities, and provinces. Such details may well be relics of the famous cadastral survey begun by Qubād and finished by his son Ḥusraw, but we may never know for certain.

last seven years of the reign of Anūšarwān, [p. 76] and [all] nineteen years of the reign of Hurmazd son of Anūšarwān, and he was sent on his mission when sixteen years had passed from the reign of Kisrā Abarwīz. He dwelt in Makka during his prophethood (may God honour him and grant him peace and his kin) for thirteen years, and he migrated to Madīna, when nine and twenty years had passed from the rule of Abarwīz. He dwelt in Madīna for ten years, and he died (may God bless him and his family). His life (may God honour him and grant him peace) was three and sixty years.

[The End of Kisrā's Reign]

They say that jackals appeared in 'Irāq at the end of Anūšarwān's reign, and they fell upon it from the lands of the Turks, and men were distressed at this and marvelled at it. News of this reached Kisrā and he said to the mobad: 'My astonishment hath increased because of these beasts which plunder our land!' Said the mobad: 'it hath reached me, O king, according to what hath been passed down by the ancients that tyranny hath overcome justice in the land which the beasts plunder.' When he heard this he suspected the conduct of his viceroys and he sent to the remote parts of his kingdom thirteen men among his trusted counsellors who would not hide anything and who were disguised and unrecognised. They returned and acquainted him with the evil conduct of his viceroys, and this vexed him. He sent [word] to nine men among them who were noted for evil conduct, and their heads were chopped off. His viceroys then restrained themselves, and just conduct was their duty.¹⁰⁴⁵

1045. Nöldeke called this anecdote about jackals 'natürlich Unsinn' (Nöldeke 1879, p. 250–251 with n. 4). It is nevertheless worthy of comment, I think. In a somewhat offhand way, Nöldeke describes the story as having a 'buddhist tone'. He does not tell us why. The use of animals in moral tales will remind us, of course, of the *Kalila wa-Dimna* and the *Panchatantra*, on which the former is based. But it is not clear whether these stories have anything to do with Buddhism, and we would have been grateful had Nöldeke explained what he meant. In any case Nöldeke was probably right to recognise something foreign about this story. Jackals do not have much of a presence in Iranian literature or in the Zoroastrian religion, but they loom large in those of India, where this animal represent deceit, trickery, malevolence, and treachery. If there is anything to be inferred from this, it may be that simply that the story was composed under the influence of Indian literature which had begun to spread northwest in the wake of the downfall of the Hephthalite Empire in the mid to late 560s.

[Hurmazd IV]

Kisrā Anūšarwān had many sons, but they were all children of plebeians and bondwomen save his son Hurmazd¹⁰⁴⁶ son of Kisrā who reigned after him. Verily his mother was daughter of the ḥāqān of the Turks, and his grandmother was [the] ḥātūn, the queen. His father decided that he should rule after him, and he put spies upon him to bring him reports about him [i.e., Hurmazd]. What he wanted to hear was brought to him, and he wrote unto him a covenant, and the chief of their hierophants in their religion ratified it. When his rule completed eight and forty years, he died. When Anūšarwān died, his son Hurmazd [p. 77] son of Kisrā reigned.

[Hurmazd's Speech from the Throne]

Said he on the say he began to rule:¹⁰⁴⁷ 'Forebearnce is the pillar of rule, and intellect the pillar of religion, and friendliness the foundation of power, and sagacity the foundation of thought. O men! Verily God hath favoured us with rule and hath imbued you with humble veneration, and hath exalted our kingdom. He hath made you safe in it, and hath made us mighty and hath made you strong in our might; he hath invested us with government among you, and hath enjoined upon you obedience to our authority. Ye are divided two groups: one of them a strong folk

For historiographical purposes, comparison to Ṭabarī is instructive, for he reports the same anecdote (albeit with greater verbosity), but makes no mention of the number of corrupt officials and their execution and adds that the jackals portended the arrival of Turkish youths on the Persian border. So there is good reason to suspect that the Turks were mentioned in Dīnawarī's source also. Now, the juxtaposition of the Turks and an apparent crackdown on corruption recalls the *Sīrat Anūšīrwān*, for these two topics are discussed in detail in that text. But there is no demonstrable link between the *Sīra* and Dīnawarī's history. The presence of this fanciful story alluding to the appearance of Turks and Ḥusraw's campaign against corruption is probably little more than a dim recollection that the two events happened at almost the same time towards the end of Ḥusraw's reign.

1046. Two manuscripts call him H.r.m.z (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 76: n. b).

1047. Hurmazd's address from the throne on the day of his coronation is the longest portion of direct speech in *al-Aḥbār al-Ṭawāl*, as it runs to just over three pages in Guirgass' edition (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 77: l. 1 to p. 80: l. 6). The speech is little more than a series of gnomic utterances urging moderation and good conduct — which I have found exceedingly difficult to translate. But it is, alas, without much historical value. For our purposes here, the question is why Dīnawarī included it in his history which is supposed to be an *abridgement* of much longer sources? I suspect that this was done chiefly for dramatic effect and to arouse sympathy for a well-intentioned king who was killed unjustly by his nobles. If this true, it tells us something about Dīnawarī's personality and character.

and the other a weak, and the mighty among you ought never to devour the possessions of the weak, nor ought the weak among you in any wise dupe the strong, nor ought any one to long for harming the weak folk because of his own superiority, for herein is our kingdom's weakness. Surely all among the folk of weakness desireth not subjugation, for herein is the disintegration of that whose proper arrangement we desire, and the extinction of that whose firmness we have tried to establish, and the disappearance of that which we have tried to attain. Know ye, O men, that from our government cometh the attachment to the mighty because of their predominance, and the elevation of their rank and mercy upon the weak and defence of them, and preventing the powerful from oppressing them and acting tyrannically over them. Know ye, O men, that in our view your demands of us are our demands of you, and our demands of you are the cause of your demands of us, and that the burden of those things which ye put on us light upon us, and the lightness of what we take upon ourselves from you is heavy for your weakness from that with which we are conversant, and we know what maketh you weak, rather ye praise the good ordering of our rule over you, and the grace of our life among you, if ye cut yourselves off from what we forbid you to do and cleave to what we command you [to do].

O men! Distinguish between similitudes; do not poison piety with hypocrisy; high rank is not hypocrisy; doing evil is not courage; resoluteness is not tyranny; revenge is not the mercy of God; gentleness is not dreaded of death; [p. 78] insincere is not reverence for kinship [?]; anger is not impiety; purification is not doubt; weakness is not equality; a miracle is not high-mindedness; indolence is not habit; observing virtue is not abjectness and lowliness; good manners are not intelligence; sinfulness is not carelessness and trickery; treachery is not a necessity; chastity is not outward show; outward show is not devotion; shunning evil is not fear; caution is not timidity; greed is not effort; crime is not plunder; being prudent is not being niggardly; making things difficult for yourself and stinginess is not prudence; prodigality openhandedness; forgiveness is not prodigality; stubbornness is not ambition; nobility is not stubbornness.

Thus do not consider happiness as tolerance, or unhappiness to be deserved. Do not consider exalting and helping the undeserving to go forward to be something good, nor calumny to be humorous, nor indolence to be stability and consistency, nor stability to stupidity, nor gossip

to be a means to do anything, nor striving to be a means to an end. Do not think kindness to be weakness and impotence, nor calumny to be justice or revenge, nor nonsense to be eloquence, nor eloquence to be complicated. nor wishing to fulfill the desires of evil men to be thankfulness, nor flattery to be agreement, nor assisting tyranny to be self-control, nor showing off to be gentlemanliness, nor debauchery to be amusement, nor tyranny and oppression a means to achieve a goal, nor harsh speech to be honour, nor good thoughts to be going to be wasteful, nor seducing people to be benevolence, nor the seducer to be clever. Hypocrisy is not kindness. Think not that laziness is contemplation, nor that shame and bashfulness is fearfulness, nor that stupidity is power, nor that meddling in [other's] affairs is stability, nor that disobedience is self-protection, nor that jealousy and invidiousness is the essence of contentment. Think not that self-love is perfection, nor that carelessness is zeal, nor that rancour is noble or generous, nor that making things hard is caution, nor that tyranny is inescapable, nor that fear and timidity are caution, nor that manners are a tool. [p. 79]

Think not that nit-picking is sinfulness, nor seeking-a-position to be never-questioning-human-values, nor destiny to be an excuse for committing sin. Think not that that which is impossible is possible, nor that that which is possible is impossible.

In all ways avoid the inferior among the things which appear to be the same. Be steadfast in what requireth our help, for this your steadfastness in fulfilling our command endeth in your deliverance from our wrath. Your resignation from differing with us endeth in your remaining safe from our punishment.

The justice and righteousness which we try to achieve and ours and your moral soundness is this: ye all be together and equal with us, and soon ye shall know how we shall prevent the strong from being cruel to the weak. We ourselves shall take in charge the poor and destitute, and we shall seat the lowly in our own place, and we shall stop humble men who wish to attain an deserved position from having it, save them that have deserved it with good effort, trial, and intercession.

O men, know that we have separated our flail and sword, and we use them with patience and good method. He that is not thankful for what we gave him and who differeth with our command, and does what we have forbidden, we shall not forget to chasten our flock. With punishment and retribution upon them that differ from our command and upon them that are disobedient and refractory to our policy, and who strive for the vanishing of our rule, we shall make have retribution. Let none expect us to ignore this, nor let any wish kindness and clemency from our part, for we shall not be slack in doing and carrying out what God hath enjoined upon us. Accustom yourselves to two policies, prepare yourself for one of them.

Either be consistent in what is good for you, or be fearful for that wherein ye differ from us. Ye must take care of our empire and rule. Do not take lightly our threat and mination, and imagine not that our behaviour shall differ from what we have said. We wished to make you aware of our intention and policy [p. 80], for there shall be no turning a blind eye nor any reserve, and before all else we shall declare the matter clearly, so that no pretext or excuse remain. We shall behave toward the peasantry in a suitable and just manner. Ye also should choose submission and obedience, for it shall be the essence of friendship and stability, and trust ye the threats which I have uttered, and fear ye my threats and minations, and we shall ask of God that he keep you safe from the temptation of Satan and his sinfulness, and that he be kind to you in whatever bringeth you nearer to him and attaineth his favour. Peace.'

When the people heard this, the weak and the folk of lowliness rejoiced in it one to another, but this weakened the members of the upper class, and vexed them and they turned away from arrogance to the weak and from subjugating the folk of lowliness. Hurmazd strove assiduously for upright living, being zealous for the protection of the peasantry, being merciful to the poor and harsh to the mighty. [Report of] his justice and his striving for the truth hath been transmitted. He would go every year to the land of the two Māhs and therein pass the summer. On his journey thither he had commanded a herald, and he announced amidst his army that they be guarded against despoiling [fields] and against harming the Dihqāns. He put a trusty man in charge of seeking out and punishing transgression of his command. But his son Kistrā, who ruled after him and surnamed Abarwīz, was with him on his journey. One day, one of his

mounts strayed, and stopped in a field by his road and grazed therein and ruined it. The master of the field took this mount and drove it back to the overseer, but he could not punish Kisrā. He raised his matter with his father and he ordered that the horse's ear be cut and its tail be clipped; and his father imposed a fine to the measure of an hundred times the value of the damage done by the horse to that field. The overseer went out with this [instruction] from before the king, that he might execute the king's command. Kisrā sent a group of the Marzbāns and nobles [p. 81] unto the overseer with this, that they should ask him to change from this, paying a thousand fold more than the value of that which the mount ruined, because to cut the ear of the horse and to clip its tail was an evil omen. But the overseer made no answer to this, and commanded that the mount's ear be cut and its tail be clipped. Kisrā was made to pay for what had afflicted the master of the field just as all other men would have payed.¹⁰⁴⁸

[The Beginning of Hurmazd's Reign]

Hurmazd son of Kisrā had no concern nor avidity save for pacifying the lowly and dealing justly with them that were mighty, and in his reign the strong and the weak were equal. Hurmazd was victorious and successful, without wishing to attain a thing except he gave it, and no army was ever put to flight by him. For most of his time he was away from Madā'in, rather passing the winter in the Sawād and the summer in Māh.

But [when] eleven years [had passed] from his rule, enemies encircled him from every direction, and they encompassed him with the compassing of a string around the curvature of the

1048. Two anecdotes — of small historical value — involving Hurmazd's adherence to a rigid standard of were originally found in the *Hudāynāma* tradition. These have been preserved by Ṭabarī and Firdawsī. These are (1) Hurmazd's punishment of his son Ḥusraw, whose horse ruined part of a cultivated field (ṬABARĪ, p. 989: l. 1 to p. 990: l. 2; HURMAZD, l. 231–256), and (2) Hurmazd's punishment of a cavalry officer who stole a bunch of grapes from a vineyard (ṬABARĪ, p. 990: l. 2–11; HURMAZD, l. 257–274). Dīnawarī includes only the story about Ḥusraw II's destructive horse (DĪNAWARĪ, p. 80: l. 10 to p. 81: l. 5). Dīnawarī, Ṭabarī, and Firdawsī all mention in various ways that Hurmazd was merciful to the poor and harsh to the mighty. Similar reports about Hurmazd appear also in the *Ḥūzistān Chronicle* and the *History of Menander Protector*, but they are all either either plainly fictitious or too vague to be of much use to the historian. Such reports seem to go back to a Christian reinterpretation of Hurmazd's reign.

bow. As for the east, the Šāhānšāh of the Turks approached and even reached Hirat and drove away the viceroys of Hurmazd; as for the west the king of Rūm approached and even came within sight of Nuṣaybīn, demanding the return of Amida, Martyropolis, Dārā, and Nuṣaybīn. As for Armīniyya, the king of the Khazars approached and even penetrated Āzarbāyjān and spread rapine therein. When [word of] this reached Hurmazd, he began with Qayṣar and gave back to him the cities that his father had forced from him, and then asked for peace and a truce. Qayṣar granted this and went away. Then he¹⁰⁴⁹ wrote to his viceroys in Armīniyya and Āzarbāyjān and they gathered and put up a resistance to the lord of the Khazars until they expelled him from his land.¹⁰⁵⁰ When he was finished with all this, he turned his attention to the master of the Turks, who was the strongest of the enemies against him.

He wrote to Bahrām son of Bahrām Jušnas [p. 82], his viceroy on the border of Āzarbāyjān and Armīniyya (he that was surnamed Šūbīn), ordering him to go to him. It was not long before he came and allowed him to come before him: he raised up his seat, showed munificence and treated him well. He acquainted him with the matter that he wanted for him, namely sending him against the Šāhānšāh of the Turks. Bahrām hastened to obey him and followed his command. Hurmazd commanded that Bahrām be made ruler over store-houses of equipment and armour, and that the war office be made over to him, that he might choose who was pleasing to his eye. He brought Bahrām to the diwān, and [there] he gathered to himself the marzbāns and the nobles and chose twelve thousand men from among the knights among whom there was none but men who had passed the age of forty.

[Word of] this reached the king, and he said to him: ‘thou hast chosen only this number, but thou wishest to go with them against three hundred thousand men?’ Bahrām said: ‘knowest thou not, O King, that when Qābūs went and was gaoled in the castle of Māsafrā, Rustam went against him with twelve thousand troops and delivered him from the hands of two hundred thou-

1049. *i.e.*, Hurmazd.

1050. *i.e.*, Hurmazd’s land.

sand men; and that when Isfandyāđ went against Arjāsf to seek from him the bow-string which was his, there were with him twelve thousand men; and that Kayḡusraw sent Jūdarz to avenge his father Sīyāwuš with twelve thousand men, and he appeared against three hundred thousand men? Any army that vanquisheth not with twelve thousand men shall not ever vanquish any thing!’

When Bahrām departed with his army from Madā’in, the king took his leave and said to him: ‘Beware of covetousness, for covetousness shall be the downfall him that possesseth it, and it shall be destruction upon thee, for [that] is the end of him that desireth it; and take care that thou goest only to do battle, and if thou puttest down, do thou protect thine army thyself and restrain thy forces [p. 83] from destruction and ruin. Take care to decide, and even to reflect or not to reflect, until the folk of good counsel and reliability have deliberated.’

Then the king went away, and Bahrām went and took the Ahwāz road, and [word of] the army’s advance to battle reached the Turkish king. King Hurmazd had already sent to the Turkish king a man from among his marzbāns called Hurmazd-Jurābzīn, and he was among the wiliest of the Iranians, and, effecting a ruse, he charmed them powerfully. He¹⁰⁵¹ commanded that he inform him¹⁰⁵² that he was a messenger of the king, whom he had sent for his advisement and to stop his ruining the land of Ḥurāsān. When Hurmazd learnt that Bahrām had drawn near Hirat, he went forth at night and caught up with Bahrām. When [word of] the arrival of the army reached the king of the Turks, he said to the chief of his bodyguard: ‘hurry off and bring me this deceptive horseman.’ They sought him and found him. But he escaped in the middle of the night, and the ḡāqān went forth from the city of Hirat to meet him, and there were forty thousand men in his vanguard. When they met, he sent to Bahrām: ‘join me, that I may appoint thee king of Īrān-Šahr and make you the highest of my men.’ But Bahrām sent to him in return: ‘how canst thou appoint me king of Īrān-Šahr, when her kingdom belongeth to the folk of the noble

1051. *i.e.*, Hurmazd.

1052. *i.e.*, the Turkish ḡāqān.

house among us and is not permitted to pass from them to others. But come now, [and prepare] for war!’

The Turkish king was wroth at this and commanded that the trumpet of war be blown. The two divisions marched, and the Turkish king upon a throne of gold above a hill looked down upon the two divisions. When war broke out, Bahrām made for the hill with a hundred horse-men among the bravest of his army, and drove from him them that were round the king of the Turks [p. 84]. When the king saw this he called for his chariot, and came into view of Bahrām. He shot an arrow which went through him, and he fell down to the ground, and the Turks were routed. The Šāhānšāh had appointed his son Yaltikīn as successor to the kingdom, and when [word of] his father’s murder came to him, he mobilised the Turks and advanced with a vast number of Turks, and the remnants of the army joined him. The news came to Bahrām and he had been sent to the quarters of Ḥurāsān and many men gathered unto him. He went advancing toward Yaltikīn, and they met on the shore of the great river near which is near Tirmid̄, and each man of the two armies intimidated his opponent. A mediator went between them in peace and Bahrām sent to him: ‘ye are a company of the ḥāqānate that killed our king Fayrūz, and his blood is unavenged, and we accept peace from you, for thus they did to us.’ Yaltikīn answered him favourably about the peace treaty subject to Hurmazd the king. The two stayed in their places, and Bahrām wrote to Hurmazd with this [information].

Hurmazd wrote to him: ‘send me Yaltikīn in honour together with the elite of his tarḥāns and the grandees of his army’. He sent Yaltikīn to ‘Irāq, and when he came within sight of Madā’in, Hurmazd went forth to meet him. Each man of the two sides walked toward his opponent, and Hurmazd showed generosity to Yaltikīn, and he put him up in his palace. Each one among the two sides took a firm oath to his opponent in peace forever, and then he took his leave and went back to his kingdom.

When he penetrated deep into Ḥurāsān, Bahrām went to meet him with his army, and he went with him unto the border of his country, and Bahrām went back until he reached the city of Balḥ. He put down there and sent to king Hurmazd the booty that he had taken from the camp

of the Šāhānšāh. He sent him the golden throne, and what he sent to him reached him: three hundred camel loads. When the booty arrived to Hurmazd and it was spread before him [p. 85] and around him and behind him and the grandees of his Marzbāns, said Yazdān Jušnās the chief of the viziers: ‘what was the great board whence cometh this mouthful?’ This speech struck the heart of Hurmazd and he worried about the trustworthiness of Bahrām, and he suspected that the matter was as Yazdān Jušnās said. He saw how this saying would bring calamity, wars, and disaster, and, because of this, anger and wrath at Bahrām went into Hurmazd, what his excellent bravery had made him forget. He sent Bahrām the necklace and belt of a woman, together with a spindle, and he wrote to him: ‘prove to me that thou hast not sent me only a little booty from a great mass of it, else it was a transgression for me to exalt thee. I send thee a necklace that thou mayest put it on thy neck, and the belt of a woman. Gird thyself with it. As for the spindle, let it be in thy hand; for verily perfidy and ugratefulness are the attributes of women.’

When this reached Bahrām, he restrained his anger and knew that it had been brought to pass by slanderers. He put the necklace upon his neck and put the belt round his waist, and took the spindle in his hand. Then he called to the grandees among his companions and they came before him. Then he read to them the king’s letter to him. When his companions heard this they were aggrieved at the disposition of the king and they knew that he was not thankful to them for their excellent bravery, and they said: ‘we say as our ancestors said that rebelled against Ardašīr: “Ardašīr is not king, nor is Yazdān vizier”, and we say also “Huramazd is not king, nor is Yazdān Jušnās vizier”.’ The story of their rebellious ancestors was that a disciple travelled to Ardašīr Bābakān. He complied with him and entered the religion of Christ, may God bless him. It was in his age. His vizier Yazdān followed him in this, and the Iranians were wroth at this, and they were minded to depose Ardašīr until he showed an aversion to what he had contemplated, [p. 86] and they installed him as king.

The companions of Bahrām said to Bahrām: ‘dost thou agree with us in the deposition of Hurmazd and rebellion against him, or should we depose thee and appoint another as chief?’ When he saw their gathering for this reason, he answered them with grief, anxiety, and disgust.

There went forth from Bahrām's camp Hurmazd Jurābzīn and Yazdak the scribe until the two came to Madā'in and they acquainted Hurmazd with the news. Then Bahrām went with his army towards 'Irāq, to make war on Hurmazd the king, until he came to the city of Ray. He stayed there and took to minting coins with the image of Kistrā Abarwīz, the son of the king, and his face and name. He struck ten thousand dirhams and commanded that the dirhams be carried in secret until they arrived at Madā'in and were distributed into the hands of men. Word of this reached Hurmazd, and he did not doubt that his son Kistrā was trying to get hold of the kingdom, and this was because he commanded the minting of these coins and this was what Bahrām wanted him to do. The king contemplated killing his son Kistrā, but Kistrā fled from Madā'in at night towards Āzarbāyjān until he came there, and stayed there. The king called for Bindūya and Biṣṭām, and they were the two uncles of Kistrā, and he asked the two about Kistrā. They said: 'We have no knowledge of him', but he was suspicious of them and commanded their imprisonment.

Then verily the king gathered his counsellors and sought their advice, and they said: 'O king! Verily thou hastenest the reign of Bahrām, for we think that thou shouldest send to Bahrām Yazdān Jušnas, for Bahrām will not kill him if he go to him, and he shall make excuse to him and he shall repent of his error before him; it may be that thou canst mollify the soul of Bahrām, and bring him back to obedience. Thou shalt thus spare his blood.'

The king accepted this and sent Yazdān Jušnas the vizier. When he prepared for the journey, he sent to him [p. 87] his cousin who had been imprisoned in the king's prison for certain crimes, asking it as a boon from the king, and he took him out with him. Verily he¹⁰⁵³ had riches and helpful things. Yazdān Jušnas did this, and took him out with him. But when he went to the city of Hamadān, he was suspicious of his cousin by reason of this.¹⁰⁵⁴ He wrote a letter to the

1053. *i.e.*, the cousin.

1054. Dīnawarī's text is vague.

king that he would return him¹⁰⁵⁵ to him,¹⁰⁵⁶ that he should order his murder or send him back to his prison, and that he was a perfidious assassin. He said to him:¹⁰⁵⁷ ‘Verily I have written a letter to the king about many matters, so hastened the journey to the place whither thou goest, and tell noone about this. But the man was suspicious about this, and when he was away from Yazdān Jušnas he opened the letter and read it, and behold his death was [mentioned] in it. He returned to Yazdān Jušnas, while he was in private, and he beat him until he killed him, and he took his head and returned with it to Bahrām, who was at Rayy. He met him in his presence, and said: ‘This is the head of thine enemy Yazdān Jušnas, who slandered thee to the king and corrupted his heart against thee.’ Said Bahrām: ‘O wanton! Thou hast killed Yazdān Jušnas together with his nobility and generosity, for he had gone out toward me to beg me to accept his excuse for what he had done, and to make peace between me and the king.’ Then he¹⁰⁵⁸ ordered that his head be chopped off. News of the murder of Yazdān Jušnas reached the grandees, nobles, and Marzbāns at the court of the king, for he¹⁰⁵⁹ had been a grandee among them.

[The Plot to Depose Hurmazd]

Some of them went to others and resolved on deposing the king and enthroning his son Kistrā, and this was because Bindūya and Biṣṭām, Kistrā’s uncles, made this seem appealing to them and convinced them, though they were in prison. So they sent to the grandees: ‘Put your souls at ease from the son of the Turkish woman’, meaning the king Hurmazd, ‘for he killed our nobles and exterminated our chiefs, and this was because he was obsessed with the upper class because of

I055. *i.e.*, the cousin.

I056. *i.e.*, to the king.

I057. *i.e.*, to the mysterious cousin.

I058. *i.e.*, Bahrām.

I059. *i.e.*, Yazdān Jušnas.

their overbearing attitude to the folk of weakness, and he killed many among them.¹⁰⁶⁰ They reached an agreement on that day whereon they would assemble for this purpose. They proceeded [p. 88] all together until they freed Bindūya and Biṣṭām from the prison and all that were there also. Then they advanced to king Hurmazd and pulled him off his throne, and they took his crown, his belt, his sword, and his robe, and sent them to Kisrā, who was in Āzarbāyjān. When these came to him, he went forth, proceeding until he came to Madā'in and went into the Aywān. He gathered unto himself the grandees, and put an orator before them. Among what he said was: 'Fate beholdeth the passage of that which it had not conceived, and the reasons are different desires. Haughtiness shall be the downfall of folk [who partake of it], and he shall fail because of his pernicious desire, and he shall be resolute because of the weapons that have passed to him, but his soul wishes not for more than it. O men! Cleave unto that obedience to us and good

1060. Allusions to Hurmazd's crimes are rather vague in Dīnawarī and are found in the context of Bahrām's rebellion: Hurmazd is accused of killing off a good deal of the nobility. Firdawsī is less vague than Dīnawarī, but *more* implausible: Hurmazd killed off his father's ministers, six of whom are singled out by name: Īzād-Guṣāsp, Burzmihr, Māh-Āzar, Zarduhišt, Bahrām Āzarmihān, and Sīmāh-Barzīn (HURMAZD, l. 67–151). Firdawsī's laconic, but grossly hyperbolic statement about the extermination of courtiers is that not a single counsellor or mobad remained at court (HURMAZD, l. 226). Ṭabarī tells us bluntly that Hurmazd dismissed many nobles, killed 13,600 men among the learned (or perhaps hieratic) classes and the nobility (ṬABARĪ, p. 990: l. 14–15). Many nobles were imprisoned and stripped of their ranks. Hurmazd's aim, says Ṭabarī, was to win over the lower classes (ṬABARĪ, pp. 990: l. 15–17). At face value, Ṭabarī's charges against Hurmazd are the most detailed and this may inspire confidence. Nevertheless, the charge of exterminating vast numbers of the Iranian nobility is difficult to take seriously even in the context of traditional conflicts between king and aristocracy.

Dīnawarī has omitted the only complaint found in the *Hudāynāma* tradition that seems to have some truth to it. Ṭabarī reports that, although he provided for the bulk of his army, Hurmazd denied supplies to the cavalry (ṬABARĪ, p. 990: l. 17–18). A not dissimilar claim is made by Theophylact Simocatta: Hurmazd cut his troops' pay by one tenth, and exposed the forces to "great dangers" because he feared a revolt (THEOPHYLACT, III.16.13).

The complaints rehearsed in the *Hudāynāma* sources must represent the view of the Iranian noble and hieratic classes. These classes succeeded in denigrating Hurmazd so strongly that Ṭabarī, or perhaps Hishām b. Muḥammad his source, claimed that the ultimate ruin of Iran was Hurmazd's fault — that his misrule made God give the rule of the Persian empire to others (ṬABARĪ, p. 990: l. 18–19). But despite the upper classes' obviously successful smear campaign, not all Hurmazd's subjects can have held him in equal contempt. Hurmazd's sympathy with the lower classes, if it ever manifested itself in policy, must have won him some admirers. Christians, at least if the *Chronicle of Seert* can be trusted, seem to have had a high opinion of Hurmazd (CHRONICLE OF SEERT I, p. 196) — no doubt connected with his refusal to persecute Christianity and favouring of religious tolerance, as Ṭabarī reports (ṬABARĪ, p. 990: l. 19 to p. 991: l. 6).

counsel which bring you closer to us, and put far from you the transgression of our command and haughtiness over us. Verily we are for you a place of repose and refreshment.'

When the men of state dispersed from him, he began to walk until he went in to visit his father, who was in one of the castle's apartments. He kissed his hands and his feet, and said: 'O father! I wished not this thing [that hath happened] in thy life, nor should I [ever] desire it, but had I not accepted it, truly would it have gone from us and vanished from us unto another.' Said his father to him: 'Thou speakest the truth. I accept thine excuse. Take command then! Take it upon thyself! But have thou concern for me in mind.' He said: 'O father! What wouldst thou of me?' He said: 'Thou seest them that arranged my deposition from the throne and took the crown from my head and disdained me: they are such and such persons', and he named them. 'Hasten their murder, and accomplish for thy father his revenge upon them!'

Said Kistrā: 'This shall not ever be possible until God kill our enemy Bahrām and power be within our reach. But consider how I should destroy them, and take revenge for thee upon them.' His father was thus pleased [hearing] this from him, and Kistrā went forth from before him and sat in the council chamber [p. 89] of the kingdom.

There reached Bahrām [news of] what had happened while he was at Rayy, and what the matter was, and he was wroth with vehement wrath for Hurmazd's sake. Ardour for him and friendliness came upon him and hatred went from him. He marched with his army at a swift pace to kill Kistrā, and those whom he had put in command by his authority, and to put Hurmazd back into his kingdom. [Word of] his being away from Rayy reached Kistrā and what he had begun to do, but he hid this from his father and we went to meet Bahrām with his army. He sent a trusty man and commanded him to go to Bahrām's army in disguise and to observe his conduct and report back to him the nature of the matter. The man went.

Bahrām went to Hamadān and stayed among his army until he knew the whole matter, and then he returned to Kistrā and informed him that Bahrām was advancing: on his right side was Mardān Sīna al-Ruwaydaštī and on his left side was Yazd-Jušnas son of Ḥalabān. He informed him also that no one man in the army hoped to win over any of the peasantry by means

of love, and no one won them over; that when he bivouacked he called for the book of Kalīla and Dimna, and ceased not to be engrossed in it all the day long.

Kisrā said to his two uncles, Bindūya and Biṣṭām: ‘I never [before] feared Bahrām as I did in the hour when I was acquainted with his devotion to reading the Book of Kalīla and Dimna, for verily the *Book of Kalīla and Dimna* discloses to comprehension a counsel better than his counsel and more discrimination than his discrimination because of the advice and sagacity that are in it.’

Verily Kisrā and Bahrām met at the Nahrawān canal, and both armies stood opposite one another, and dug a trench for themselves. Then verily Bahrām built a bridge and went across to Kisrā. As the two groups faced each other down, Bahrām came suddenly and even appeared within sight of Kisrā’s ranks. Then he shouted at the top of his voice: ‘May evil befall you, kinsfolk of Īrān, because of the deposition of your king. O men! [p. 90] Return to your lord from what ye do now, and join me in your multitude, that I may return the empire to your kin after God hath sent down upon you his retribution!’

When the companions of Kisrā heard this, some said to others: ‘By God, Bahrām speaketh the truth, and verily the matter is perhaps as he saith. Onward! let us carry out what hath been commanded to us, and let us give a good answer to what Bahrām deemeth right!’

All together they went away and joined Bahrām. There remained with Kisrā only his two uncles Bindūya and Biṣṭām, Hurmazd Jurābzīn, the Nuḥārjān, Sābūr son of Abarkān, Yazdak, scribe of the army, Bād son of Fayrūz, Šarwīn son of Kāmjar, Kurdī son of Bahrām Jušnas, brother of Bahrām Šarwīn to his father and mother, and he was among Kisrā’s trusted men and friends. These [men] said to Kisrā: ‘O king! What dost thou? Look thou not upon all the men that have separated from thee and joined thine enemy!’ He went towards Madā’in and then when he came to the bridge of Jūdarz and turned round, behold there was Bahrām alone. The men who followed him had left, and then drew near him and his companions. Kisrā stopped on his way to the bridge and strung his bow, for he was a marksman. He put arrows in it, but feared to take aim and shoot at Bahrām. The arrow would not go in owing to the excellence of his

hauberk. He wished to take aim at his face, for he did not believe that he would shield himself with his buckler or bend his face down from his arrow. He shot at the brow of his horse and struck middle of it. The horse turned from the force of the blow, and then fell, and Bahrām remained on foot.

Kisrā went at the gallop all the way into Madā'in to go to his father, but did not tell him that Bahrām was aiming to make the kingdom over to him; rather he said to him: 'My companions all feel sympathy for him', and then said: 'What thinkest thou to be best?' He¹⁰⁶¹ said: [p. 91]: 'I advise thee to betake thyself to Qayṣar. He shall help and assist thee in order that thy kingdom return to thee.' Kisrā kissed the hands and legs of his father and took his leave and went towards the bridge with his companions. There were nine and he was the tenth. Some of them said to others that Bahrām had appeared at Madā'in on the following day and had made Hurmazd king; [that] he was king as though he had never ceased to be, [and that] Hurmazd had then written to Qayṣar and [that] 'he sent us to him' and [that] 'he will kill us all', and [that] 'Kisrā is not king as long as his father liveth'.

Bindūya and Biṣṭām, uncles to Kisrā said: 'We disdain you for this.' The two went to the barrier, and then they drew near and even went into the royal palace and went into the apartment where Hurmazd was. His entourage was occupied in weeping and wailing for the flight of Kisrā from his enemy. They put his turban round his neck and strangled him with it until he died.

[The Flight of Young Ḥusraw]

Then the two caught up with Kisrā, but did not tell him about this. They hastened at a swift gallop straightway for fear of a search, and on the next day they even drew near the city of Hīt and reached a convent of monks. They put down there. They¹⁰⁶² gave them barley bread, and they

1061. *i.e.*, Hurmazd.

1062. This must refer to the monks of the monastery.

moistened it with water and they ate it, and they brought them vinegar and they mingled it with water and they drank from it. Kistrā leant on his uncle Bisām, and he slept for the strength of the weariness that beset him. While they were thus a monk shouted from this convent: ‘O band, horsemen come to you from afar’, and this was because, when Bahrām had come to Madā’in and had come upon king Hurmazd dead, his wrath grew against Kistrā as did his rage, and he dispatched in search of him Bahrām son of Siyāwušān with a thousand riders on swift horses. When Kistrā and his companions beheld the horsemen they stood aghast and they despaired of themselves.

Bindūya said to Kistrā: ‘I shall deliver thee with all my might, and I shall expose myself to danger.’ Said Kistrā to him: [p. 92] ‘O uncle, truly thou if thou guardest me by thyself, whether thou be safe or be slain, thou shalt be rewarded with lasting renown and lofty rank. Ārasnās risked his life at the command of Manūšīhr, and he went to Firāsyāb king of the Turks (who was in the midst of his army) and shot him with an arrow and slew him, and he saved king Zāb from him and Manūšīhr had revenge, though he was killed, and he is renowned among men and the memory of him is grown. Jūdarz risked his life for Sābūr dū’l-Aktāf, when he was overseer of the kingdom, and he seized his dominion. Men envied him for this, and when Sābūr attained his rule over all his possessions, and they entrusted his rule to him.’

Bindūya said to him: ‘Put off thy cloak and belt, let go thy sword, and take off thy crown. Go with the remainder of thy companions. Go into the valley, and therein run quickly and call to me and the band.’ Kistrā did what he commanded and he went into the valley and he went with the remainder of his companions.

Bindūya took up the cloak of Kistrā and put in on and girt himself with his belt and he put the crown upon his head. Then said he to the monks: ‘A great company of men is upon you! Catch them up that those horsemen may turn away, for I am not without fear that they may kill you down to the last of you!’ They left the monastery all together, and they went out from the convent.

Bindūya went and came to the terrace of the convent and he locked the door upon him, whilst dressed in the raiment of Kistrā. He stood upon his two feet until he knew that the band had seen him. Then he went down to the convent and put off the clothing of Kistrā and donned his own clothing. Then he went back to the terrace of the convent, which the horsemen had surrounded, and he said: ‘O band, who is your commander?’ Bahrām son of Siyāwušān said: ‘I am their commander; what wilt thou, Bindūya?’ He said: ‘The king sends thee greeting.’ He said: ‘Verily we [p. 93] have only just alighted and we are weary, and we have no means to escape thee. Leave us as we are in the monastery this evening, so we may come out to thee and hasten with thee to Bahrām, so that his wishes concerning us be granted. Bahrām son of Siyāwušān said: ‘this shall be respected.’

Then Bindūya and the band surrounding the monastery put down. When they went in the evening Bindūya went again to the terrace of the monastery, and he said to Bahrām son of Siyāwušān: ‘Verily the king saith to thee this evening (as we have no wing in which there is a guard and ye have surrounded the monastery): “leave us this night, that we may rest, and trust us in this. We shall go in the morning and go out to thee, and we shall go with thee”.’

Said Bahrām: ‘May he have love and generosity.’ Then he commanded his companions to form two groups, one to sleep and another to keep watch.

When Bindūya came in the morning he opened the door and he went out to the band and he said: ‘Kistrā is gone from me since yesterday at this time, and even ye were swift as the wind ye shall not catch him up! What ye heard from me was a feint and a strategem.’

They trusted him not, and went into the monastery and they searched chamber after chamber, but Bahrām son of Siyāwušān was bewildered and could not think how to explain himself to Bahrām Šūbīn. He bore Bindūya back and travelled until he came to Bahrām Šūbīn and told him of the strategem which Bindūya had employed. Bahrām summoned him and said: ‘thou art not pleased with thy murder of king Hurmazd, so that thou didst redeem the sinful Kistrā? He escaped from me.’ Bindūya said: ‘As for my killing of Hurmazd, I make no excuse for it but tyranny and outrage and the killing of the nobles of Īrān and throwing arrows among them and

dividing their authority. As for my strategem in the rescue of my nephew Kisrā, there is no reproach upon me in this save that he was of my family.’ Said Bahrām: ‘He hath not stopped me from hastening thy murder, and I hope [p. 94] only for my victory over the sinful Kisrā. I shall kill him and I shall kill thee right after him. Then said he to Bahrām son of Siyāwušān: ‘Put him in prison with thee shackled, until I summon thee with him.’

Then verily Bahrām gathered to himself [an army from] all the sides of the kingdom, and he said: ‘Ye had known already what great sin Kisrā had committed in killing his father, and his flight as a fugitive: are ye pleased that this realm stands in need of rule until Šahryār son of Hurmazd reaches manhood and I shall entrust it to him?’ One party was pleased at this and one party refused it. Among them that refused was Mūsīl the Armīnī and he was among the greatest of the marzbāns. He said to Bahrām: ‘O iṣbahbad, it is not possible for thee to manage any of this whilst Kisrā is lord of the realm and its living inheritor’. Said Bahrām: ‘Whoever is not pleased, let him go away from Madā’in; and if I meet anyone who be not pleased remaining in Madā’in after three days, I shall cut off his head!’ And Mūsīl went away with those who were of his opinion. Their number was twenty thousand men. They went to Āzarbāyjān and they stayed there waiting expectantly for the approach of Kisrā from the land of Rūm and Bindūya remained in prison with Bahrām son of Siyāwušān.

Bahrām son of Siyāwušān was kind to him in food and drink in order thus to curry favour with him, because he thought that Kisrā would come back and take back the kingdom for himself. And so [?] when night covered him he took him out of his prison and bade him sit down with him at drink, and on that night Bindūya said to Bahrām: ‘O Bahrām verily what ye are involved in shall disappear and shall pass away because of the tyranny of Bahrām Šūbīn and his outrage.’ Said Bahrām: ‘Verily I know what thou sayest, and verily I am contemplating something.’ Said Bindūya: ‘And what is it?’ He said: ‘To-morrow I shall kill Bahrām Šūbīn, and men shall have respite of him, [p. 95] so that the realm may go back to its leader and family.’ Bindūya said: ‘As for thy opinion, set me free of my bonds and give me a mount and weapons.’ He did, and when in the morning Bahrām son of Siyāwušān came he put beneath his garment a hauberk

and he enfolded his sword within. His wife caught sight of this (she was the daughter of Bahrām Šūbīn's sister), and she was suspicious. She sent to Bahrām Šūbīn, telling him this.

Bahrām set out for Madā'in. No one of his companions went past him without striking him on the side with a polo mallet. When he¹⁰⁶³ heard the sound of the hauberk, he drew his sword, and struck him until he killed him, and he announced to the people in the square the death of Bahrām.

Bindūya thought that Bahrām Šūbīn had been slain, and he mounted his horse and rode to the square.¹⁰⁶⁴ [But] when he learnt that his companion had been slain, he went forth in disguise, travelling by night and hiding by day until he came to Āzarbāyjān. He stayed there with Mūsīl and his companions. When Kīsrā had been travelling from the convent for one day and one night two Arabs met them. They stopped before him and Kīsrā asked him (he spoke Arabic well) who he was. He told him that he was from the tribe of Ṭayy and that his name was Iyās son of Qabīṣa, and he said to him: 'Where is the tribe?' He said: 'Near'. He said: 'Is there a town nearby, for hunger is come upon us.' He said: 'Yes'. And they turned away from him towards the tribe. They put down there, and they sent their horses to pasture, and he stayed with them for a while, and he treated them well and gave them provisions. He went out with them when they went on the morrow, showing them the way, and even went with them three stages from the shore of the Euphrates. Then he returned, and Kīsrā went as far as Yarmuk. Ḥālīd son of Jabala, the Ġassanī, came to him. He treated him well and he sent horsemen with him, until he reached Qayṣar. He went before him, and he told him in secret about his plight and [p. 96] what had happened to him. He found him hopeful for his aid and assistance. His patriarch said to him: 'O king, thou knowest what befel thy fathers from such things since the time of Iskandar. The last thing that befel us was this man's grandfather's seizure of the cities of al-Šām which we still possess as an inheritance from our fathers for a thousand years. This man's father returned them to thee, as soon as thou took the advantage over his cavalry and men. Dismiss the group [of men]

1063. *i.e.*, Bahrām Šūbīn.

1064. Or, according to a different reading, he rode to Madā'in (Ctesiphon).

who busy themselves with one another. There shall be a great victory when the enemy are furious at one another.’

Qaysar said to the great bishop: ‘What sayest thou, our great one?’

He said: ‘Let not his failure come upon thee, if he had desired it, and the plan to help him shall be [as a treaty of] peace for thee forever.’

Said Qaysar: ‘Is it right for kings, if one seeketh protection with them, that they grant him not asylum?’

He¹⁰⁶⁵ brought an agreement and treaty of peace to Qaysar, and he took his daughter Maryam [p. 96: l. 11] as a wife. Then he entrusted his son Tiyādūs amongst the braves of his forces, amongst whom were ten men of the Hazārmardān, and he emboldened them with provisions and equipment, and he commanded them to march with them and to escort them for three days. Kistrā went with the army. They took hold of Armīniyya, and when they came to Āzarbāyjān, his uncle Banduya joined him along with Mūsīl the Armīnī [p. 96: l. 14], and his Marzbāns and the Marzbāns of Fārs.

News of this reached Bahrām Šübīn, and he went earnestly with his forces until he arrived at Āzarbāyjān. He bivouacked one parasang from the camp of Kistrā. Then they marched and a throne of gold for Kistrā and Tiyādūs was placed upon a hill, overlooking the two upon the people’s battlefield. When the two cavalries fought one another, a man of the Hazārmardān approached and even drew near Kistrā. He said: ‘Behold this [man], who hath taken thy kingdom from thee!’ Disdain overcame Kistrā because of his outrage against him. He was furious at it, but Bahrām Šübīn saw him and said: ‘He is [p. 97] master of the piebald horse, wearing a red turban,¹⁰⁶⁶ standing before his companions.’

1065. *i.e.*, Kistrā Abarwīz.

1066. The participle *mu’tajir* implies that one is wearing a turban in such a manner that the lower portion of it covers the lower part of the face.

The Roman went towards Bahrām Šūbīn. He called to him: ‘Up, to battle!’ Bahrām went to him. Each struck two blows in turn. The Roman sword did nothing to Bahrām because of the excellence of his hauberk, but Bahrām struck him on the top of his head whilst his helmet was upon it, and he clove the helmet in two, and the sword reached the Roman’s chest. He clove him and the two halves fell to the right and to the left.

Kisrā caught sight of this. He found it odd, and laughed. Tīyādūs was wroth, and he said: ‘Thou sawest one of my companions, helping [thee] with a thousand men, being slain and it made thee laugh, as though thou wert pleased at the slaughter of a Roman?’

Said Kisrā: ‘My laughter was not out of my happiness at his killing, but rather he rebuked me as thou didst hear, and I wished him to know him that had taken my kingdom from me, and from whom I fled to you, for it was his blow’.

The people fought for two days. When it was the third day Bahrām summoned Kisrā to single combat, but Kisrā was wary of doing it and Tīyādūs tried to prevent him, but Kisrā refused, and he went forth to Bahrām and they chased one another for an hour. Then Kisrā turned away, put to flight. But Bahrām resisted him and he cut him off him from his companions. Kisrā went towards a mountain and Bahrām shouted after him with sword in hand, saying ‘whither goest thou, degenerate?’ Kisrā gathered himself, and his people encouraged him to climb the mountain. When Bahrām saw Kisrā upon the summit of the mountain, he knew that he was victorious over him. He went back in haste, and Kisrā came down at length in order to go to his companions.

Then two sides formed battle lines on the fourth day, and they fought, and victory went to Kisrā. Bahrām went back with his army in retreat to his camp. Said Bindūya to Kisrā: ‘O king, verily the forces that are with Bahrām if they had no fear for themselves, they would have joined thee. Give me leave to grant them security with thee’. He gave him leave.

When Bindūya came the next day, he approached and stopped at the hill overlooking Bahrām’s camp. Then he asked at the top of his voice: ‘O men! Verily I am Bindūya, son of Sābūr, and Kisrā the king hath commanded me to offer you security; and whosoever among you

cometh to us this night, himself, his folk, and his possession shall be safe.’ Then he returned. When the night darkened upon the companions of Bahrām, they set out and made for the camp of Kisrā, but for the number of four thousand men. Verily they stayed with Bahrām. When Bahrām came in the morning, he saw his camp empty. He said: ‘Now is a good time to flee’, and he went back with his companions that had stayed with him, amongst whom were Mardān Sīna and Yazd-Jušnas, and they were among the horsemen of Īrān.

[The Flight of Bahrām]

Kisrā sent in search of him Sābūr son of Abarkān with ten thousand horsemen. He caught up with him, and Bahrām turned to him in the midst of his companions. They fought and Sābūr was routed, and Bahrām went his own way, and continued on his road to a village and he put down in it. Both he and Mardān Sīna and Yazd-Jušnas put down in the house of an old woman. They took food for themselves. They supped and ate, and the old woman was bounteous to him. They brought out drink, and Bahrām spoke to the old woman: ‘hast thou aught to drink from?’ She said: ‘I have a small gourd.’ And she gave it to them and they filled the gourd, and they began to drink from it. Then they brought out nuts, and they said to the old woman: ‘Hast thou aught to put the nuts in?’ And she gave them a winnow. They put the nuts in it. Bahrām ordered the woman to drink. Then he said to her: ‘What news hast thou, old woman?’ She said: ‘We have news that Kisrā has drawn near with his army to Rūm and Bahrām attacked him and beat him and took his kingdom from him.’ Said Bahrām: ‘What is thy saying about Bahrām?’ She said: ‘An ignorant, most foolish man who assumed the kingdom presumptuously, and not [p. 99] of the Royal House.’ Said Bahrām: ‘Why drink we this from a gourd, and eat from a winnow?’ It goes as a proverb among the Iranians whose saying it is.

Bahrām went until he came to Qūmis, and Qārin Jabalī Nihāwandī was there, and he was viceroy of Ḥurāsān, over its defences and its taxes, and [viceroy of] Gurgān—and he was an old man who was over one hundred [years old]—for he was in charge of this region because of Kisrā Anūšarwān. Then Hurmazd son of Kisrā confirmed him [in his position]. When command

came to Bahrām he¹⁰⁶⁷ acknowledged his authority in Īrān, and he was generous to him and confirmed him in his place. When Bahrām reached him, Qārīn sent his son with ten thousand horsemen, and they barred the way between Bahrām and the way forward. Bahrām sent to him: ‘What is this repayment from thee for my confirming thee in thy position?’

Qārīn sent to him: ‘Verily the obligation that is upon me to the kingdom of Kisrā, and the obligation to his fathers is greater than my obligation to thee, and it would be likewise for thee if thou hadst acknowledged [him], for it ennobled thee. But thou hast paid him back by putting off obedience to him, and thou hast set ablaze the kingdom of Īrān with fire and war, and thou canst at best fall back unsuccessful and spent. Thou hast filled up all the folk with chatter.’

Bahrām said to him: ‘The goat shall be worth two dirhams twice if it was a small she-goat. But if he is become senile and his teeth are fallen out, he is not worth the same [price], but [only] two dirhams. Thus [art] thou in thy senility and the decline of thy reason.’

When this letter reached Qārīn, he was wroth and went forth with three thousand riders and foot soldiers from his army and the two divisions advanced to war. When they met, the son of Qārīn was slain and his companions were put to flight and went from that region deep into the country of the Turks, betaking himself to the ḥāqān to seek protection with him and aid and guarding. [Word of] Bahrām’s approach reached the ḥāqān. He commanded his tarḥāns and they drew near him [p. 100] and he approached so as to come before the ḥāqān. He preserved him in the safety of his kingdom, and he said: ‘Verily I am come to thee, O king, seeking protection with thee from Kisrā and the folk of his house, so that thou mayest keep me and my companions safe.’

Said the ḥāqān to him: ‘Thou and thy companions shall have safety, consolation, and fellowship with me. Then he had a city built, and he built in the midst of it a palace, and he settled him in it and his companions [he settled] there [also], and he apportioned [goods] to them and

1067. *i.e.*, Qārīn.

favoured them with gifts. Bahrām came before the ḥāqān every day, and he sat with him in the council chamber of his brothers, and his distinguished close relatives.

The ḥāqān had a brother called Baġāwīr who was possessed of bravery at skill at riding. Bahrām saw him boasting in his discourse without fear of the king, and showing no respect to his council. Said he on that day to the ḥāqān: ‘O king! Verily I see thy brother boasting in speech and not showing respect to thy council, as he ought to respect the council of kings, and our pledge to kings [to the effect that] their brothers or sons shall not speak before them, save when they ask of him.’

Said the ḥāqān: ‘verily Baġāwīr has received glory in war and horsemanship, and he taketh pride in this in order to expect calamities from me, and he hideth [in his heart] envy for me and hostility.’

Said Bahrām to him: ‘wishest thou, O king, that I should put thee at ease from him.’ He said: ‘How?’ He said: ‘by slaying him.’

He said: ‘yes. Verily I shall allow this for thee on condition that there be no blame upon me for it.’

Said Bahrām: ‘there shall come from this nothing which shall bring disgrace to thee, nor fault.’

When they went in the morning on the next day, Baġāwīr sat and began to boast in his speech. Bahrām said to him: ‘O my brother, why givest thou not full due to the king, nor showest reverence for men, nor givest them honour?’

Said Baġāwīr to him: ‘what art thou? Thou art a fugitive and vagabond Persian!’

Bahrām said to him: ‘thinkest thou that thou hast attained success in horsemanship, wherein none is greater than I?’

Said Baġāwīr to him: ‘what sayest thou to a competition with me?’ I shall acquaint thee with thyself.’

Said [p. 101] Bahrām to him: ‘as for thee, I want this not. When I have mastery over thee, I shall not kill thee because of thy place in the kingdom.’

Said Baġāwīr: ‘but I, when I have mastery over thee, I shall kill thee. Come, let us go out to the desert!’

Said Bahrām: ‘unto justice then! The king hath said this, and there shall be no retaliation for me if I kill thee and no reproach from the king and his tarḥāns.’

He said: ‘yes.’

Saith the ḥāqān: ‘what is it to thee this man seeking help from us, [and] seeking refuge in our protection?’

Said Baġāwīr: ‘I summon him to combat!’

He said: ‘what manner of combat?’

He said: ‘let him stand before me, and I shall stand before him, twenty cubits distant, and I shall shoot at him, and he shall shoot at me, and whichever of us kills the other, there shall be no blame on him, and no blood price.’

Said the ḥāqān to him: ‘be merciful to thyself; thou hast not a mother.’

Said he he: ‘by God, let him do it, or I shall slay him before thee.’

Said he: ‘Thou only.’

Baġāwīr and Bahrām went forth with a number of tarḥāns to the desert, and the tarḥāns stood looking on, and Baġāwīr stood two hundred cubits away from Bahrām. Bahrām said to the tarḥāns: ‘There shall be no shame on me if I kill him. He hath wronged me, as ye see.’

They said: ‘there shall be no shame upon thee.’

Baġāwīr answered: ‘wilt thou begin, or shall I?’

Bahrām called to him: ‘begin thou! Shoot, for thou art covetous and tyrannical.’

Baġāwīr strung his bow and put an arrow to it. Then he drew so that he stretched it far and then shot it. He struck Bahrām below the navel in the midst of his belt and it went through

the belt and the armour and the rest of his clothes, even reaching the underskin of his back, and it stayed in him. Bahrām responded and pulled it out, and stood for a moment without putting his hand to his bow because of the strength of the pain that had hit him. Baḡāwīr thought that he had killed him, and he rode toward him. Bahrām called out: ‘return to thy place and stand before me, as I did for thee.’

He went back to his place and stood. Bahrām took out his bow and strung it, for he had not [yet] strung it [p. 102]. Then he put an arrow to it and drew it so that he brought it far back. Then he shot it and it struck Bahrām in the same place where the arrow had struck Bahrām in the midst of the belt and the armour, and it went through the belt and the armour and the rest of his clothes, and it went through the other side without any of the feathers going from it. Quickly Baḡāwīr fell dead.

[Word of this] this reached the ḥāqān and he said: ‘may God not not estrange him from others; I tried to hold him back from hubris but he refused.’ Then he proceeded to his tarḥāns and the folk of his house, and he said: ‘Surely I know one among you intended evil for Bahrām without being reprehensible. When Bahrām was alone with the ḥāqān, he thanked him for what he had done, and said: ‘verily thou hast put me at ease from one who desired my death in order to take possession of the kingdom apart from my progeny.’

Then he magnified honour for him and rank and land, and the power of Bahrām grew in the land of the Turks, and he acquired a square by the gate of his palace, and he got a retinue of slave girls, songstresses, and beasts, and he was among the folk most honoured by the ḥāqān.

[The Restoration of Ḥusraw and the Death of Bahrām]

Verily Kisrā, at the routing of Bahrām and his flight, honoured Tīyādūs, and those that were with him, and he gave them rewards and blessing, and he dismissed them to their country, and he put his uncle Bindūya in charge of the diwāns and the treasuries, and he carried out his orders throughout the whole kingdom, and he made his uncle Biṣṭām governor of Ḥurāsān, Qūmis,

Gurgān, and Ṭabaristān. He sent his viceroys to the four corners of the world, and he lifted half the ḥarāj from the people.

When [word of] the great power of the Bahrām with the ḥāqān reached Kisrā, and the vastness of his house in the land of the Turk, he feared that he would raise an army and renew his war. So he sent Hurmazd Jurābzīn to the ḥāqān, desiring to renew the treaty. He sent with him gifts and presents, and he commanded him to be so courteous to the ḥāqān that his heart might be estranged from Bahrām. Hurmazd Jurābzīn went and came before the ḥāqān, and with him was a letter from Kisrā, and Kisrā's gifts arrived to him [p. 103] and his courteous letter. The ḥāqān received them, and ordered a place [to stay] for him, in order that he might carry out the things that he needed. Hurmazd would go before the ḥāqān with the envoys of kings, and he would greet the king with a salute. Then he went on that day and saw him. He said: 'O king, verily I see that thou hast deemed Bahrām pure, and that thou hast made his house splendid; but our king¹⁰⁶⁸ did to him much more than thou hast done. But his recompense for it was that he unthroned him and wished to shed his blood, and he went forth against his son Kisrā, in order to cast him out of his kingdom. I doubt not that in the end he shall be treacherous and shall break his promise to thee. Beware of him, O king, lest he estrange thy kingdom from thee.'

When the ḥāqān heard this from him he was wroth with vehement wrath, and he said: 'Were it not that thou art an envoy and messenger, I would have prevented thy coming to me, for thou hast shown stupidity and thou hast shamed my brother and friend in my presence. Thou shalt surely not repeat this.'

Said Hurmazd Jurābzīn: 'But if this, O king, be thy counsel on it, I ask thee to hide me, or else [word of] it shall come to him and he shall kill me.'

And he said: 'It shall be thus for thee.'

Hurmazd went forth despairing of it and went in secret to his wife the ḥātūn (for among women dimwittedness and unbelief are favorable) and he went to her on that day, but did not

1068. *i.e.*, Hurmazd IV.

meet anyone with her, for fear of him. He said to her: ‘O queen, verily ye chose Bahrām and raised up above his power, without trusting that he would take your kingdom as he took it from Hurmazd our king,’ then he narrated to her what he did, and he said: ‘O queen, hadst thou forgotten his slaying of thine uncle the Šāhānšāh, and his taking hold of his throne and his treasure?’ He continued to recount this and [other] examples until hatred of Bahrām made an impression on her heart and fear of him [came] upon her husband and her children.

She said: ‘O woe! How could I have had dealings with him and how did he obtain his rank?’

He said: ‘the counsel is that [p. 104] thou shalt send someone to slay him, and thou shalt trust thy husband and thy son.’

She commanded one of her slaves, whom she trusted to assassinate him boldly. She said to him: ‘set off at once and go before Bahrām and murder him in secret, and return not to me unless thou hast finished with him.’ The slave set off to go into Bahrām’s house with a dagger in his keeping which he had hidden. That day was Wahrām Rūz.

They say: stargazers had said at his birth that his death would be on Wahrām Rūz, and he had not gone out that day from his house, nor had he made it known to any one but his trusty friends and elites. But the herald went in and informed him that a messenger of the kingdom was seeking leave [to enter], and he gave permission. He went in. Bahrām saluted him. He said: ‘verily the queen hath sent me to thee with a letter. Be thou along with me.’ They that were with Bahrām stood and they went out and the Turk came near him, for he was seeking to attack him. Then he drew his dagger and slit him open with it and went out. He mounted his horse and went away. The companions of Bahrām went in and came upon him bleeding and in his hand was a garment wherewith he dried the blood, and when they saw him in this condition they were astounded, and they said: ‘how didst thou call not to us? How did we not catch him?’ He said: ‘nay, a dog had been commanded to do something and went away.’

He said to them: ‘if [my] strength goeth, watchfulness will not suffice. I have appointed a successor, my brother Mardān-Sīna. Obey his command!’ He sent word to the ḥāqān informing

him about himself, and the ḥāqān went towards him in a transport of rage. He came upon him dead, and he buried him in a sarcophagus. He contemplated slaying the ḥātūn, but he was prevented from *doing* this by reason of the position of his sons [that he had had] by her.

Verily the companions of Bahrām quarelled amongst themselves, and they said: ‘what good have we amongst these [Turks]. There is no counsel but to go out from their land. Verily they are perfidious in promise, and ungrateful to good deeds. Let us depart into the country of Daylam, for it is near our land, and it shall be possible for us to take revenge on our kings who drove us away.’ They asked of the ḥāqān leave to return, and he granted it, [p. 105] and he treated them well. He encouraged them and escorted them to the border of his land.

There was with Bahrām his sister Kurdiya, and she was among the most beautiful women of Īrān and the most excellent of them in skill and the most perfect of them in noble character and the most skilled on them in riding. The companions of Bahrām went out and Kurdiya was at the head of them upon the horse of Bahrām, accoutred in his armour, until they came to the river Jayhūn, which is near Ḥurāsān. They crossed there. From them the tarḥāns went away. The companions of Bahrām took the shore of the river. Then they went down to Gurgan and followed the road to Ṭabaristān. Then they kept close to the shore of the sea until they came to the country of Daylam. The inhabitants asked them [to stay] with them in their country. They agreed to it, and they wrote a letter among them, [to the effect] that no one should do any damage to any one, and they gave promise of safety. They got food from towns villages and fertile fields. They worked with the men of Daylam in every matter.

[The Rebellion of Bisṭām]

When Bahrām was killed Kisrā saw that the kingdom was firmly his. He had no care apart from seeking to avenge his father Hurmazd, and he wished to begin with his two uncles Bindūya and Bisṭām, and he forget Bindūya’s assistance to him. Kisrā continued to act boldly towards the two for ten years. Verily he went out in the days of spring, as was his custom, making for al-Jabal, that he might spend the summer there. He put down at Ḥulwān, and Bindūya was with him. He

commanded that his tent be struck in the square, so that he might look upon the Marzbāns playing polo. He sat in that tent and saw Šīrzād son of Bahbūdān strike the ball, and he played well. Whatever he hit, he did well. Kīsrā said to him ‘zih suwār,’¹⁰⁶⁹ and the lieutenant enumerated his saying this a hundred times. He wrote to Bindūya with four hundred thousand dirhams (four thousand dirhams for each time). When the document arrived to Bindūya, he cast it away from his hand and said: ‘the treasury is not established for this waste.’ What he said reached Kīsrā, and he¹⁰⁷⁰ made this a pretext [p. 106] for pouncing upon him.

He ordered the chief guard to go to him and cut off his hands and feet. The chief guard went forward in order to carry out the order against him. Kīsrā ordered Bindūya to meet him, heading for the square. He ordered him to get off his horse and to cut his hands and his feet and to leave him, stranded where he was, bleeding. Bindūya began to insult Kīsrā and to insult his father and to mention the perfidy of the house of Sāsān and their breach of faith. He was saying all this to Kīsrā, and he¹⁰⁷¹ said to those of his viziers that were around him: ‘Bindūya claims that the folk of Sāsān is perfidious and faith-breaking, whilst he himself hath forgotten his [own] perfidy in the reign of our father, when he went to him with his brother Biṣṭām, and the two cast off the turban from his neck, and then strangled him with it cruelly and in hostility, in order thereby to get near me, as though he were not my father.’

Then he rode to the square, and passed by Bindūya, while he was on the open road, and he ordered the people to pelt him with stones, and they stoned him until he died. He said: ‘[Do] this until his sister comes’, [for] that is what he wanted from the entourage of Biṣṭām and his brother Bindūya.

Then he ordered the Scribe of Secrets to write to Biṣṭām to appoint a trusty successor over his work. He went forward, hurrying along, to investigate the matter with him. Biṣṭām did

1069. *i.e.*, ‘bravo, horseman!’

1070. *i.e.*, Kīsrā.

1071. *i.e.*, Kīsrā.

this, and he received the missive. When he arrived at the border of Qūmis, Mardān Bih Qahramān (whose brother was Bindūya) welcomed him. When he saw him from afar, he raised his voice in weeping and wailing. Biṣṭām said to him: ‘Go thou back!’ He told him of the murder of his brother. But he did not find his way into the land. He turned back to the companions that were in Daylam.

[Word of] Biṣṭām’s advance towards him reached Mardān-Sīna, chief of the companions of Bahrām. He rejoiced at it and went forth to receive him with all his companions because of Biṣṭām’s honour in Īrān and his importance. Then they went forward with him until they settled him in a beautiful house, and the nobles of that country rode to him. He gave them assurances of safety. Then [p. 107] verily Mardān-Sīna and the grandees said to Biṣṭām: ‘why is it that Kisrā laid claim to the kingdom from thee, whilst thou art son of Sābūr son of Ĥurbundād of the pure lineage of Bahman son of Isfandyād? Verily ye are brothers to the house of Sāsān and partakers with them in the kingdom. Come now! Let us pledge allegiance to thee and give thee Kurdiya as wife, sister of Bahrām. We have a golden throne which Bahrām had brought from Madā’in. Sit upon it and take it for thyself. The folk of thy house from the sons of Dārā son of Bahman shall flock to thee, and if thy bravery be potent and thine army great, thou shalt go to the perfidious Kisrā and make war upon him and seek to gain the kingdom. If thou be victorious, our wish and thine shall be fulfilled; and if thou art slain, thou art slain whilst taking a kingdom, and shalt win thereby glory and honour!’

When Biṣṭām heard this he heeded it, and gave approval to what they had set forth before him. They gave him Kurdiya as wife, and they sat him upon the golden throne, and they put the crown upon his head, and they pledged allegiance to him down to the last of them, and they hailed him as king. The nobles of the country followed him, and there flocked to him Gilan and Babr, and Taylasān and many peoples of the folk of his house from the region of ‘Irāq of those who had been fond of him and fond of his brother, so that he went forward with one hundred thousand men.

He went out to Dastabāy, and he stayed in it and sent forth raiding parties in the land of al-Jabal, and they even reached Ḥulwān and Saymara, and Māsabadān. Kistrā's viceroys fled and the dihqāns fortified themselves in fortresses and mountain tops. [Word of] this reached Kistrā and he stood aghast, and he knew that he had not taken full command by killing Bindūya; he had taken command by deceit. He wrote to Biṣṭām [to the effect] that 'word of thy march to sinful perfidy hath reached me; [as hath word of] the companions of the godless Bahrām and their dissembling to you what is right for thee. Then they bore thee along unto attacking the kingdom and creating disaster in it and corruption [p. 108], but thou knowest what I have in mind for thee, and what hath been as punishment for thee. Put off persisting in error and receive safety from me, without suffering the same savage murder as thy brother Banduya.'

Biṣṭām answered him thus: 'thy letter is come to me with thy deceit that thou hast told me of, and the guile that thou hast written. Die in thine anger and taste of the evil of thy deed, and know that thou art not more worthy of this power than I, but rather I am more worthy of it than thee, for I am the son of Dārā son of Dārā, who fought Iskandar, but ye (O son of Sāsān) took what was rightfully ours by force and craft. Your father Sāsān was only a shepherd, and if his father had known better he would not have kept the kingdom from him and given it to his daughter Ḥumānā.'

When his letter reached Kistrā, he knew that he desired it not, and dispatched against him three chiefs with three armies, each army having twelve thousand men in it. The first army went through, having at its head Sābūr son of Abarkān; then he added to it the second army, and at its head was Hurmazd Jurābzīn. When the three divisions of the army met with Biṣṭām, they went towards him and came to Hamadān. They stayed there, and he sent forth soldiers to the top of a steep road in order to prevent people from going up and getting through.

He said: 'put the armies in the foothills in a place called Qalūš', and they wrote to Kistrā telling him of this. Kistrā went out by himself with fifty thousand horsemen and he came to his army (they were bivouacked at Qalūš), and he stayed there with them for a while, and rested. Then he went to a district called Šawāh, and from there he went into Hamadān by the road in

which there are no mountains and no steep roads, until he reached the interior of Hamadān. The army was there. He dug a trench for himself, and Biṣṭām came against him with his army. They fought with a mighty slaughter [p. 109]. They fought for three days without anyone on either side suffering defeat. When Kistrā saw this, he said to Kurdī son of Bahrām Jušnas, brother to Bahrām Šūbīn (by his father and his mother), and he was among the most sincere of Kistrā's Marzbāns, and the strongest of them in affection for him, and the swiftest of them in obedience to him. He said: 'Thou hast seen what [condition] we are in because of the ferocity of this war, and I hope for repose from it by means of a subtle trick.'

He said: 'And what is it, O king?'

He said: 'Verily thy sister Kurdiya, wife of Biṣṭām, yearneth most certainly to return to her people and homeland, and I know that if she achieveth the murder of Biṣṭām, she shall be happily rid of him and glad of her keenness and boldness, which I have heard of. If she kill him she shall have from me the protection of God. I shall take her to wife and make her lady of my women, and I shall pass on the kingdom after me to her offspring, if I have any by her, and I shall put this in a letter. Send it to her, so that this shall be declared to her and what toucheth her shall be clear.'

Kurdī said to him: 'O king, write to her in thy letter what thou wishest, and know the truthfulness of thy speech therein, that I may dispatch it to her in a letter with my wife. Verily I put faith in her character in concealing the secret. Kistrā wrote to her to this effect, and gave her assurance, and Kurdī took the letter and dispatched it with his wife to Kurdiya. Biṣṭām had gone out to her with it, because of the strength of his love for her. When Kurdiya read Kistrā's letter, she knew his firmness and she told her secret to her nurses and trusty people, and he suggested to her that they look out expectantly to their home countries.'

Biṣṭām had nothing to do with the coming of women to Kurdiya, for he knew of a thousand women and their exchange of visits. When Biṣṭām had gone back to his abode that evening, where Kurdiya was, tired, for fatigue had attacked him [p. 110] due to the vehemence of the war, he called for food, and he partook of it. Then he called for drink. Kurdiya served the drink

unmixed, so that drunkenness overcame him and he slept. She went to his sword and put the edge of the sword on his breast and she pushed on it, so that it went out his back. Then she went out straightway and departed with her retinue and nurses. Her brother, accompanied by horsemen, stopped her on the road. When she reached him, she carried on with him, and she went in the baggage train.

When the companions of Biṣṭām went in the morning, and found him slain, they went away in flight toward the country of Daylam, and Kistrā sent Sābūr son of Abarkān with twenty thousand horsemen, and he commanded him to stay in Qazwīn. She was armed there, and she wished to go from the land of Daylam to his kingdom. Then he¹⁰⁷² gave Kurdiya in marriage and put her under his¹⁰⁷³ protection, and he went back to Madā'in and Kurdiya stayed in the midst of it in an exceedingly pleasant place. He thanked her for what she had done.

The dejection and desire for avenging his father's death that had been in Kistrā's soul went away, and his rule was secure. He was calm and he settled down.

[Ḥusraw II's Roman War]

They say: then verily the son of Qayṣar, the king of Rūm approached Kistrā Abarwīz and informed him that the patriarch of Rūm and his grandees had pounced upon his father Qayṣar and his brother Tīyādūs son of Qayṣar and they slew them together, and they appointed as king over them a man of their tribe called Kawkasān,¹⁰⁷⁴ and he recounted to him the calamity of his father and his brother before him. Abarwīz was wroth at it, and he dispatched with him three commanders, one of whom was Šahīn, with twenty four thousand men. They went deep into the land of Rūm, and he spread predatory incursions throughout it, until he reached the straits of Con-

I072. *i.e.*, Sābūr son of Abarkān.

I073. This refers to Kistrā.

I074. *i.e.*, Phocas.

stantinople, and he camped there. His other lieutenant was Būd, and he went towards the land of Egypt and made predatory incursions and created disorder and wasted [the land] until he came to Iskandarīyya. He conquered it by force, and went [p. 111] to the great church that is at Iskandarīyya, and he took its bishop and tortured him until he revealed the location of the wood whereon Christians say that Christ was crucified, and it had been buried in a place, above which basil had been planted.

The third commander was Šahryār.¹⁰⁷⁵ He went until he entered Syria, and he killed its people with brisk slaughter until he took all of it by force.

When the grandees of Rūm saw what had befallen them because of Kistrā, they foregathered and killed the man whom they had made king and they said: ‘Verily the like of this man besat not the kingdom’, and they chose for themselves the son of the uncle of the slain Qayṣar, who was called Hiraql, him that built the city Hiraql. This was the victory whereof God most high speaks in his book.

Verily Hiraql, whom Rūm chose as king, raised an army of the folk of his kingdom, and went against the commander that was encamped on the straights [of Constantinople], and he made war on him until he drove him out of the land of Rūm. Then he repaired to the one that was in the land of Egypt, and he drove him from it. Then he turned to Šahryār and drove him from Syria. Then all the armies arrived in al-Jazīra, and Heraql went towards them. He attacked them and routed them and they even retreated to Mawṣil. [Word of] this reached Kistrā and he went forth with his army towards Mawṣil, and his three commanders joined him. They went towards Hiraql, and they fought, and the Persians were routed. When Kistrā saw this he was wroth at the grandees of his army and his Marzbāns. He commanded that they be put into prison so that they be killed.

1075. This must be a corruption of the name ‘Šahrbarāz’ — شهریار and شهربراز could have been be confused easily, owing to the similar ductus in both names.

[The Deposition of Ḥusraw II]

When the folk of the kingdom saw this, they sent messages to one another and they resolved upon the deposition of Kisrā and the appointment of Šīrūya son of Kisrā as king. They unthroned him and made Šīrūya king, and imprisoned Kisrā in one of the chambers of the palace, and they put in charge of him Ḥīlūs, chief of the courageous men. This was in the ninth year of the prophet's migration (peace be upon him and upon his family and blessing). [p. 112] Verily Šīrūya commanded that his father be moved from the palace of the kingdom, and be imprisoned in the house of one of the Marzbāns called Harsafta. His head was veiled and he was borne on a horse of mean breed, and he betook himself on it to that place and was imprisoned there. Ḥīlūs was put in charge of him with five hundred brave troops.

Then verily the grandees of the kingdom went before Šīrūya, and they said 'it is not right that there be two kings over us; order the killing of thy father and take command alone, or we shall depose thee and give rule back to him as it was!'

This saying crushed Šīrūya, then he said: 'give me a day's delay.' Then he ordered Yazdān Jušnas chief of the secretaries charged with official correspondence,¹⁰⁷⁶ and he said to him: 'depart to our father and tell him, from our letter, that:

"Punishment that is visited upon thee from God is because of thine evil conduct. First, what thou didst to thy father Hurmazd; next, thy forbidding us the livelihood of thy children, and depriving us of land, and thine imprisonment of us in the palace as though it were a prison, and [thy shewing] neither mildness nor mercy; next, thine ingratitude to Qayṣar's kindness to thee and his assistance to thee, and thou didst not respect his son and his relations, inasmuch as they came to thee asking thee to return the wood of the cross which Šahīn had sent to thee from Iskandarīyya. Thou didst prevent them from [having] it, though thou hadst no need of it, nor entitlement to withhold it; next, didst thou not command the killing of thirty thousand men from among thy Marzbāns and grandees of thy knights because thou didst claim that they had been

1076. Cf. BOSWORTH 1999, p. 382: l. 948.

defeated by Rūm? Next, the great amount of possessions which thou didst pile up including goods and treasure in thy treasury from sudden rises in taxation with increasing severity: it is rather better for kings to fill their treasuries with what they take from enemy countries with the necks [p. 113] of horses and the points of lances, not with what they ask of their peasants; next, thy murder of Nu‘mān son of Mundīr and thy estranging the land of his kingdom from his offspring and the folk of his house to others, namely Iyās son of Qabīša al-Ṭayy. Thou didst not protect them as thy father protected him, from the upbringing of Bahrām Jūr thy grandfather, and his assistance after the kingdom went away from him and even returned it to him. All these are the offences which thou didst perpetrate and sins which thou didst commit, and God was not pleased with thee, and he punished thee for them”.’

Yazdān Jušnas went away and brought Šīrūya’s letter to Kisrā, without diminishing a word from it. Kisrā said to him: ‘[the letter] is come; behold [my] answer as I convey the letter. Say to Šīrūya the short-lived, the small, the gullible, of defective intellect:

“We bring thee answer to all that thou hast sent us without excuse in order to increase knowledge in thy ignorance. But we are pleased at what thou hast said about the killing of our father. Verily I was not acquainted with the plot hatched by the people to seize upon him. For thou knowest that, when my reign was secure, I spared no one that had taken part in unseating him or bringing about his murder, but killed them all. I finished this off with my two uncles Bindūya and Biṣṭām together with all them that were with them under my command. As for my depriving you¹⁰⁷⁷ of the livelihood of my sons, verily I separated you so that thou mightest learn manners, and I prevented thee from being involved in what concerned you not. Nevertheless I was not sparing in feeding you, nor in your expenses, nor in your clothes, nor in your good things, nor in your riding mounts. As for thee in particular, verily the stargazers ordained at thy birth the censure of our kingdom and the destruction of our power at thy hand. But we ordered not thy murder. Moreover Qarmīsiyā the king of India wrote to us informing us that at the end

1077. *Sic!* The second person plural probably refers to Ḥusraw II’s sons as a group.

of the thirty-ninth year of our reign this power would come to thee. We hid this book from thee together with our knowledge that [rule] should not come to thee [p. 114] save by our destruction. This book together with the prophecy of thy birth is with Šīrīn, our consort. If thou wishest, take them and read them until thy grief and ruin increase.

As for what thou hast recounted of my perfidy to Qayṣar's kindness by my taking away his son, the folk of his house, and the wood of the cross, O sobbing [child], greater than this wood are the thirty million [dirhams] that I spent on the men of Rūm who came with me and the million dirhams that I sent as a gift to Qayṣar, and likewise I accompanied his son Tīyādūs on his return to his kingdom. Am I niggardly who spent more than fifty million dirhams on them, whilst keeping the worthless wood? I kept it because of their obedience to it, and so that they should obey me in whatever I wish of them, because of the great strength of the wood among them.

But as for my wrath against Qayṣar and my seeking revenge on him, I killed a vast number of the Rūm.

As for thy saying to those marzbāns and the chief knights that I planned to kill, verily I took care of them for thirty years, I raised their pay, and I gave them gifts. I raised no grievance against them throughout my life save on that day whereon they became weak and become disobedient. But ask, thou awkward youth, the judges of this religion about [each man] who failed in helping his king and who refrained from making war on his enemies, and they shall tell thee that they deserve neither forgiveness nor mildheartness. As for thine upbraiding me about the gathering of treasure, that tax was not an innovation by me, for kings before me have always required it for the strength of the kingdom and as a glory for the ruler. Verily one of the kings of India wrote to my grandfather Anūšarwān: "the kingdom is like unto a flourishing garden around which is a sturdy wall and a strong door; if the wall be thrown down and the gates be broken, it shall not be safe for thee to pasture asses and cows in it." My door in the wall is the army and its gates are riches. Remember, thou simpleton, this wealth is a fortress for the kingdom and strength for the ruler, and a help against enemies, and glory amongst kings.

As for what thou hast claimed about my killing of Nu‘mān son of Mundīr and my putting an end to the rule of the people of ‘Amīn son of ‘Adī and giving it to Iyās son of Qabīša, verily Nu‘mān and the folk of his house agreed with the Arabs for they knew them. The kingdom’s tax dripped from us to them, and books had been put down about this for them. I killed him and appointed Arabs of the desert without his knowing anything of this.” Go to Šīrūya and tell him all this.’

Yazdān Jušnas communicated it without diminishing aught from it. Grief overtook Šīrūya. When on the morrow the grandees of the folk of the kingdom had gathered, they went before Šīrūya as they had done on the day before and he himself was afraid. He caused to be sent man after man of the Marzbāns to kill his father. But not one could approach him, until he sent a youth of them called Yazdak the scribe son of Mardān Šāh, Marzbān of Bābil and Ҳуҗarnīyya. When he came before him, he said: ‘Who art thou?’

He said: ‘I am the son of Mardān Šāh, Marzbān of Bābil and Ҳуҗarnīyya.’

Kisrā said to him: ‘Thou art master of my life, and this because I killed thy father unjustly.’ The lad struck him until he slew him.¹⁰⁷⁸ He returned to Šīrūya, and he told him [about it]. Šīrūya struck him on the face and tore out his hair and put him in prison. He returned to the grandees of the folk of the kingdom in order to put him inside a coffin. Then he went back and commanded that the boy that killed his father be killed.

In that year in which Šīrūya reigned the Apostle of God (peace be upon him and blessing) died and appointed Abū Bakr as his successor. Then Šīrūya, when rule went [p. 116] to his brothers — and they were twenty five men — and he cut off their heads for fear that they would deprive him of rule, but sickness and illness took hold of him so that he died. His reign was nine months.

1078. The death of Ҳusraw II happened on 28 February 628 (TYLER-SMITH 2004, p. 46–47).

After him Fārs chose as king for itself his son Šīrzād son of Šīrūya. But he was a boy and they put in charge of him a man to take care of him and to oversee the rule of the kingdom until he grew up.

When the killing of Kisrā reached Šahryār, who was near Rūm, he approached with his army and arrived at Madā'in. Šīrūya had died and his son Šīrzād had been made king. He was furious at this matter and went into Madā'in. He killed all that had abetted the murder of Kisrā and his deposition. He killed Šīrzād and his ward, and he took charge of the kingdom and called himself king. This was in the twenty second year of history.¹⁰⁷⁹

When the reign of Šahryār was finished, the disdain of the grandees of the folk of the kingdom grew because the kingdom had been entrusted to one who was not of the royal house. They pounced on him and killed him, and they made king over them Juwān Šīr son of Kisrā, and he was a child and his mother was Bahrām Šūbīn and he reigned for one year. Then he died and they chose to rule over them Būrān¹⁰⁸⁰ daughter of Kisrā and this was because Šīrūya had left no brothers, but had killed all of them save Juwān Šīr. Verily he was a child and moreover he was a weak ruler of Fārs and their affairs were weakened and their valour was broken.

Here Pourshariati's translation takes over (POURSHARIATI 2010, p. 261 et seqq.)

1079. A reference to the *Anno Hegirae* dating system.

1080. For a study of this queen and her short reign see PANAINO 2006.