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Jong, A.F. de

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ALBERT DE JONG

In the preface to his 1974 *Manual of Pahlavi*, H.S. NYBERG professed himself "a champion of the rehabilitation of Pazand".<sup>2</sup> The exact meaning of these words is not entirely clear, but they seem to indicate that NYBERG considered Pāzand a worthwhile subject for Iranian philologists or linguists working on Middle Persian. The rehabilitation he thus envisioned never took place. In fact, the contribution of Pāzand data to NYBERG's own vocabulary of Middle Persian is rather limited. Traditionally, philologists have paid little attention to Pāzand and even less to the related phenomenon of "retranscribed" Pahlavi, that is to say texts written in Pahlavi script for which a Pāzand or Persian text served as a model. The existence of texts in "retranscribed" Pahlavi has been known to the world for a considerable time, because B. N. DHABHAR carefully explored their chief characteristics in the lengthy introduction to his edition of the *Zand ī xwurdag Abestāg* of 1927.<sup>3</sup> A painful reminder of the existence of such texts and the dangers they pose for the unprepared researcher came in 1974, with the publication of JÜRGEN HAMPEL's study of the Copenhagen Codex 27.<sup>4</sup> In 1992, finally, H. K. MIRZA again published a *facsimile* of that manuscript and again failed to notice the fact that it is not an original Pahlavi manuscript, but a Pahlavi reworking of a Pāzand original. MIRZA's claim that K27 is, in fact, one of the oldest Pahlavi manuscripts in existence and preserves genuine Pahlavi versions of texts otherwise only known in Pāzand is based on a number of arguments that merely show how important reflection on Pāzand and "retranscribed" Pahlavi can be, if only to save others from making painful mistakes.<sup>5</sup>

1 Abbreviations used: *PazT*, E. K. ANTIA: *Pāzend Texts*, Bombay 1909; *ZXA*, *Zand ī xwurdag Abestāg* (references to B. N. DHABHAR: *Zand-i Khūrtak Avistāk* [Pahlavi Text Series 3 (6)], Bombay 1927).

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3 DHABHAR: *Zand-i Khūrtak Avistāk*, 1–35.

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5 H. K. MIRZA: *The Copenhagen Manuscript K27*. Bombay 1992. MIRZA evidently had never seen HAMPEL's study of the text or any of the reviews mentioned above.

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## Pāzand and "retranscribed" Pahlavi: On the Philology and History of Late Zoroastrian Literature<sup>1</sup>

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In the preface to his 1974 *Manual of Pahlavi*, H.S. NYBERG professed himself "a champion of the rehabilitation of *Pazand*".<sup>2</sup> The exact meaning of these words is not entirely clear, but they seem to indicate that NYBERG considered Pāzand a worthwhile subject for Iranian philologists or linguists working on Middle Persian. The rehabilitation he thus envisioned never took place. In fact, the contribution of Pāzand data to NYBERG's own vocabulary of Middle Persian is rather limited. Traditionally, philologists have paid little attention to Pāzand and even less to the related phenomenon of "retranscribed" Pahlavi, that is to say texts written in Pahlavi script for which a Pāzand or Persian text served as a model. The existence of texts in "retranscribed" Pahlavi has been known to the world for a considerable time, because B. N. DHABHAR carefully explored their chief characteristics in the lengthy introduction to his edition of the *Zand ī xwurdag Abestāg* of 1927.<sup>3</sup> A painful reminder of the existence of such texts and the dangers they pose for the unprepared researcher came in 1974, with the publication of JÜRGEN HAMPEL's study of the Copenhagen Codex 27.<sup>4</sup> In 1992, finally, H. K. MIRZA again published a *facsimile* of that manuscript and again failed to notice the fact that it is not an original Pahlavi manuscript, but a Pahlavi reworking of a Pāzand original. MIRZA's claim that K27 is, in fact, one of the oldest Pahlavi manuscripts in existence and preserves genuine Pahlavi versions of texts otherwise only known in Pāzand is based on a number of arguments that merely show how important reflection on Pāzand and "retranscribed" Pahlavi can be, if only to save others from making painful mistakes.<sup>5</sup>

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What I intend to discuss here is not so much the benefits these late Zoroastrian texts can have for the development of Iranian philology, for their contribution to that discipline will be very modest indeed, but the question of what these texts reveal about the textual transmission of Zoroastrian traditions, particularly in India, for that is where the majority of texts were produced. We can define the interest of these texts for philologists and historians of religions by giving a straightforward example of how they seem to work. In the Pāzand *Petūt ī xwad*, the prayer for repentance of one's own sins, we find the stunning words *paravāema mähəstiš*, where the Pahlavi version gives the opening words of the confession of faith (*franāmam māzdēsnih*).<sup>6</sup> Clearly, the scribe of the Pāzand version, working on a Pahlavi model, read the two words in question letter by letter and made a rather spectacular false analysis of them.<sup>7</sup> For the average philologist, this is where the interest of such a text ends; it is pointless to speculate on the forms in the Pāzand texts, because the only thing they represent are the faulty readings of a not particularly talented scribe. For historians of Zoroastrianism, however, this is where the interest might begin: how is it possible that a Zoroastrian priest could miss these two words, the opening words of one of the most important texts of his own faith (the *Fravarānē*), occurring in one of the most popular ritual texts (the *Petūt*)? Before we attempt an answer to this question, however, I would like to recall the chief characteristics of Pāzand and retranscribed Pahlavi.

## Pāzand

The conventional interpretation of the Middle Persian word *pāzand*<sup>8</sup> as "the Pahlavi commentaries on the scriptures (*zand*), transcribed in Avestan letters",<sup>9</sup> is rather inaccurate and anachronistic for its use in Pahlavi texts. The word is,

6 For the Pāzand text, cf. *PazT.* 1479; for the Pahlavi version, cf. ZXA 79.2, and J. P. ASMUSSEN: *X'āstvānift. Studies in Manichaeism*. Copenhagen 1965 (*Acta Theologica Danica* 7), 91.

7 Instead of reading *pln'm-(y)m m'zdysnyx*, he read the letters *plw'(y)m mxstyš*.

8 The etymology of the word has not yet been established satisfactorily. Several suggestions have been made; J. C. TAVADIA (*Die mittelpersische Sprache und Literatur der Zarathustrier*, Leipzig 1956 [*Iranische Texte und Hilfsbücher* 2], 25) compares Avestan *pati-zan-*, "to recognize," and is followed in this by a number of scholars (usually referring to Avestan *\*pati-zaintī-*, a word that is actually attested, albeit in a quite different meaning; see H. K. MIRZA: *Outlines of Parsi History*. Bombay 1974, 283). M. BOYCE (*Zoroastrians. Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*. London 21984, 169) attributes the practice to Neryosangh and suggests the words *pa zand*, "by interpretation". To add yet another attempt, I believe the long *ā* in the first syllable suggests a connection with Avestan *āzainti-* which is known from the compound *maṭ.āzainti-*, "together with the commentary", and specifically refers to a commentary on sacred texts. One could suggest that *maṭ.āzainti-* itself is the origin of the word or think of a word like *\*apa.āzaintī*.

9 Thus D. N. MACKENZIE: *A Concise Pahlavi Dictionary*. London etc. 21986, s. v.

actually, barely attested in Pahlavi texts; the only passage I am aware of is *Zand ī Wahman Yasn* 4.67:

*ēdōn guft ohrmazd ō spitāmān zarduxšt kū be xwāh<sup>10</sup> ud warm be kun, pad zand ud pāzand wizārišn be čāš, ō hērbēdān ud hāwīštān gōw ud pad gēhān frāz gōwēnd.*

"Ahura Mazda said to Spitama Zarathustra: 'Recite this and memorize it, teach its explanation by Zand and Pāzand,<sup>11</sup> tell it to the *hērbēds* and students, so that they shall tell it around the world.'"

In this passage, Pāzand clearly does not refer to a transcribed Pahlavi text in Avestan letters, but to an exegetical tool in the understanding of the Avesta, a commentary. This is also how it is presented by virtually all authors from the Islamic period, who habitually present the Zoroastrian revealed traditions as a triad: Avesta, Zand, and Pāzand. In such presentations, the Avesta most often – as required by the tradition – is presented as the *ipsissima verba* of Ahura Mazdā to Zarathustra, and the Zand and the Pāzand are mentioned as translations and commentaries of the Avestan texts. Where they are specified by Muslim authors, Zand is most often identified as *tafsīr* (the exegetical commentary on the Qur'ān) and Pāzand as either *šarḥ* (explanation) or *ta'wīl* (allegorical exegesis).<sup>12</sup>

There can be little doubt that this is the original meaning of the word, and that the word did not originally refer to a system of writing. This, however, is not really

10 This word requires a short comment. In his edition (*The Zand ī Wahman Yasn. A Zoroastrian Apocalypse*. Roma 1995 [Serie Orientale Roma 75], *ad locum*), C. G. CERETI suggests a rather heavy emendation to \**xwān* (KRYTWN). Of the three manuscripts which have the text, DH f. 235v, line 2 clearly reads YYPLHWN; K 20, f. 135v, line 7, is difficult to read, but seems to give YYPLHWN; K 43, F. 269v, ll. 12–13 also gives YYPLHWN. The verb intended clearly is *xwastan* (YPLHWN-tñ). The Parsi learned tradition usually reads this word as SPLHWN and transcribes *xwāndan*, perceiving a connection with the Aramaic root SPR, "to write" (B. N. DHABHAR: *Pahlavi Yasna and Visperad*. Bombay 1949, Glossary p. 119 [*safarūntan*], with references; D. D. KAPADIA: *Glossary of Pahlavi Vendidad*. Bombay 1953, 135). The word was discussed at length by C. BARTHOLOMAE: *Zur Kenntnis der miteliranischen Mundarten II* (SB Heidelberg, Phil-Hist. Kl. 1917.11, Heidelberg 1917, 25–36), who demonstrated the fact that YYPLHWN and YPLHWN are interchangeable, and that they are to be read as *xwastan*. The meaning of *xwastan* given by MACKENZIE (*Concise Pahlavi Dictionary*, 96), is "tread, trample; thresh". For almost all passages referred to by BARTHOLOMAE, however, that meaning is unsuitable, for they usually refer to a certain stage in the learning of Avestan texts. F. M. KOTWAL (*The Supplementary Texts to the Šāyest nē-Šāyest*. København 1969, 183 [no. 1038]), lists the word in the meaning "study, learn by heart", which is also suitable here.

11 CERETI's translation of *wizārišn be čāš* as "teach the redemption" makes little sense. Cf. SH. SHAKED: "Esoteric Trends in Zoroastrianism." In: *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities* 3 (1969), 175–221, p. 192, n. 46 (reprinted in IDEM: *From Zoroastrian Iran to Islam. Studies in Religious History and Cultural Contacts*. Aldershot 1995, nr. I).

12 Some relevant passages are mentioned and discussed by SHAKED: "Esoteric Trends", 188–189. This division of Zoroastrian revealed texts is also occasionally found in Zoroastrian Persian literature, such as the second *Ulamā-ye Islām*, for which cf. B. N. DHABHAR: *The Persian Rivayats of Hormazyar Framarz and Others. Their Version with Introduction and Notes*. Bombay 1932, 454; 456.

helpful in establishing what the *Pāzand* originally may have been, since no text survives which terms itself the “Zand and Pāzand” of an Avestan text. When exactly the term *pāzand* came to refer to Pahlavi written in Avestan script is unknown, but whatever the problems of the original meaning of the term, the word eventually came to refer to the custom of transcribing the highly ambiguous and difficult Pahlavi texts into the unambiguous Avestan script. Whereas the cursive Pahlavi script is very unsuitable for the rendering of any Iranian language, the Avestan alphabet – with its multitude of vowels and consonants – is evidently too much for the writing of Middle Persian. In the process of transcribing Middle Persian texts into the Avestan alphabet, some irregularities crept in, which have given Pāzand an individual flavour. Many of these are philologically insignificant, but some aspects of Pāzand have turned out to be of some philological importance. These have most recently been discussed in depth by GILBERT LAZARD.<sup>13</sup> The only problem is the question of ambiguity. Several of the remarkable forms of words found in Pāzand can be explained satisfactorily in a number of ways and thus give us no more than a series of *non sequiturs* from which we cannot extract much meaning (cf. the discussion of *andā*, below).

1. There are a few dialect words that have been found in Pāzand. The best known of these are the verbal forms *bahōt* and *šahōt* for *bawēd* and *šawēd*. These forms are also known from Judeo-Persian (*š'hyd*) and the *Qor'ān-e Qods*.<sup>14</sup> A more puzzling example could be Pāzand *andā* for Middle Persian *tā*. This has often been perceived as a genuine form and that may be correct;<sup>15</sup> its existence may also be due to the graphic form of the preposition in Pahlavi script (OD, which can be read as *nd*), or to a secondary and false “archaic” reconstruction of the word *tā* on the example of the pair *dar* and *andar*.<sup>16</sup> Another example of a development that is difficult to classify is the common transition from *ēdōn* (NP *īdūn*) to *īdīn* or *īdīn*.<sup>17</sup>

13 G. LAZARD: “Pehlevi, Pazend et Persan.” In: IDEM: *La formation de la langue persane*. Paris 1995 (Travaux et mémoires de l’Institut d’études iraniennes 1), 133–40; several of LAZARD’s other articles in this volume are also relevant for his understanding of Pāzand.

14 LAZARD: “Pehlevi, Pazend et Persan”, *passim*; cf. also IDEM: “Lumières nouvelles sur la formation de la langue persane: une traduction du Coran en persan et ses affinités avec le judéo-persan.” In: SH. SHAKED and A. NETZER (eds.): *Irano-Judaica II*. Jerusalem 1990, 184–98 (repr. in LAZARD: *Formation*, 107–21).

15 For a discussion of the word, cf. N. SIMS-WILLIAMS: “Notes on Sogdian Palaeography.” In: *BSOAS* 38 (1975), 132–9, pp. 138–9.

16 I find the latter reconstruction more likely than the others. Something more must be said on the subject, however. The fact that the preposition begins with a /d/ in Manichaean Middle Persian (*d'*) suggests an etymology of the word that cannot begin with a /t/ (something like \**yatā*, as suggested by D. N. MACKENZIE: “Notes on the Transcription of Pahlavi.” In: *BSOAS* 30 [1967], 17–29, p. 27).

17 In his recent dissertation (*Studies in Zoroastrian Exegesis: Zand*; Diss. Hebrew University 1998), DAN SHAPIRA has drawn attention to the shift from /ū/ to /ī/, which he considers “typical for Zoroastrian priests of Fārs”. The shift from /ū/ to /ī/ can be observed in a number of Persian dialects, but, so far, a regular and datable shift has not been established, as LUDWIG PAUL has reminded me.



In view of the difficulties in the transmission of Pāzand, any search for dialect traits in these texts must be confined to such different words or forms, to differences in morphology or syntax. Differences in phonology in the Pāzand texts can rarely, if ever, be judged with sound linguistic criteria. There are many phonological oddities in Pāzand, which are partly responsible for the great difficulties one sometimes experiences in deciphering these texts, but they probably reflect some other aspects of the "language," mainly the interference of Avestan, of Persian, and of Indo-Aryan languages.

2. One of the strange aspects of Pāzand is the preference scribes seem to have had for giving Pahlavi words of Avestan origin, and quite a number of Pahlavi words without an Avestan origin, in their (frequently wrong) Avestan spelling. Typical examples are *patita* (Av. *paitita*-; Phl. *petīt*); the triad *dušmata*, *dužhūxta*, *dužhuuarašta* (Av. *dušmata*-, *dužūxta*-, *dušhuuarašta*-; Phl. *dušmat*, *dušhūxt*, *dušxwaršt*); the triad *humata*, *hūxta*, *huuarašta* (Av. *humata*-; *hūxta*-; *huuarašta*-; Phl. *humat*; *hūxt*; *huwaršt*); *mainiiauuqnī* for *mēnōgīg* (cf. Av. *mainiiauuu*-); *aməšāspənt* for Phl. *amahraspand* (etc.) (Av. *aməša*- *spənta*-); *ašāhī* for Phl. *ablāyih* (cf. Av. *aša*- etc.); *ganā mainiio* for Phl. *ganāg mēnōg* (no Avestan equivalent, but cf. Av. *mainiio*-); *zaraθuštra* for Phl. *Zardu(x)št* (Av. *zaraθuštra*-); *paorīiō.ṭkaēšān* for Phl. *pōryōtkēšān* (Av. *paorīiō.ṭkaēša*-); *x<sup>v</sup>aētunōdaθa* for Phl. *xwēdōdah* (Av. *x<sup>v</sup>aētunadaθa*-); *rapiθβan* for Phl. *rapihwin* (Av. *rapiθβina*-).

3. The influence of Indo-Aryan languages (principally Gujarati, and perhaps Sanskrit as a learned language) should, of course, be expected, since many of the manuscripts were produced in Indo-Aryan surroundings by scribes whose mother tongue was Gujarati. Given the irregularities in Pāzand texts in general, it is difficult to be certain in most cases. The great profusion of *svrabhakti*-vowels, for instance (such as *haravista* for *harwisp*; *pahiləm* for *pahlom*; *maragarzān* for *margarzān*; *pa nqmī čista* for *pad nāmčist*; *mihir* for *mih*; *hibir* for *hix* etc.) may be explained in terms of the breaking up of consonant clusters unknown to Gujarati, but other explanations, based on the transition from a defective consonantal alphabet to an alphabet with an enormous variety of vowels, are also conceivable. There are, of course, also a large number of words with vowels missing.

A very likely case of Gujarati interference can be observed in the substitution of "long vowel + n" by "long vowel + m." This can be observed particularly in ms. H<sub>3</sub> of the *Rasm-hā-ye behdīnān*, a Persian text in Avestan script, where we find such forms as *anīrām* (*anīrān*); *mahitarām* (*mehtarān*); *dar īm* (*dar īn*); *dar qm* (*dar ān*); and *zanām* (*zanān*).<sup>18</sup> These, in all likelihood, reflect the nasalised long vowels (vowel + *anusvāra*) of Gujarati.

18 The manuscript can be found in facsimile in H. JUNKER: *Der wissbegierige Sohn. Ein mittelpersischer Text über das Kustik*. Leipzig 1959 (Iranische Texte und Hilfsbücher 3), plates 2-8.

A dubious case, discussed most recently by GILBERT LAZARD,<sup>19</sup> is the transition from initial or intervocalic /w/ to /gw/. This is very common in Pāzand, where we find *gunah* or *guh* for *weh*; *ardagunahišt* for *ardwahišt*; *gāuš* for *wēš*, etc. It is also common in Parsi Sanskrit, for instance in expressions such as *ardagvahišta gvāja* for *ardwahišt wāz*. The transformation of the deity *Wād* to *Gowād* (gw'd) is also confined to Parsi materials. An Indo-Aryan influence presents itself as a possibility, although it is true to say that the shift is not typical of any Indo-Aryan language. The main problem in claiming such an influence is the fact that the same development is also found in certainly non-Indo-Aryan transformations of (Middle) Persian. We find examples in names and words from the West of Iran (for instance *Gwahišt-āzād* and *Guštāsp*), from Judeo-Persian (*gwškwftn*, "to blossom", Phl. *wiškuftan*), from Balōcī (*gwād*) and from Persian itself (*goḏārdan*; *gozīdan* etc.).

4. Pāzand is also heavily influenced by New Persian. This should come as no surprise, given the late date of most of the texts. Typically Persian forms abound in Pāzand texts, including many examples of Arabic loanwords. It may be worth pointing out again that the Avestan script was also used to write New Persian. This is clearly the case with the *Rasm-bā-ye Behdīnān* and the *Pāzand Rivāyat*. For this purpose, the Pahlavi letter 𐬀 (for /l/) was imported into the already rich Avestan alphabet, and the long ā is consistently used to indicate the presence of an 'ayin (as in *bāt* for *ba'd* and *tāβīt* for *ta'vīd*). Persian features in texts that do transcribe a Pahlavi original are, for example, words such as *gunāh*, *jan*, *dastūr*, and the use of *flān* (Arabic *fulān*) for "so-and-so".

5. Most importantly, perhaps, the Pāzand texts belong, without exception, to the written culture of Zoroastrianism. Many texts show that they have been transcribed from a written Pahlavi example. This is, of course, immediately evident from the transcriptions of ideograms one finds every now and then (words such as *yazibām* [*yazam*];<sup>20</sup> *mām* [*abar*]; or *yun* [*ōh*]). The example of Pāzand *paravāema māhastiš* for *franāmam māzdēsnih* has been given above. Other examples are the ubiquitous *haravista* for *harwisp* and the rendering of the Pahlavi ending *-ih* as *-iš*. All these forms have their origin in the outward appearance of their written Pahlavi forms, and not in the way these Pahlavi forms were read or (ever) pronounced.

19 "Lumières nouvelles", 185; "Pehlevi, Pazend et Persan", 136.

20 This form occurs, for instance, in PāzT. 188.20–21: *x<sup>v</sup>aršāt uruuat.aspa yazibām-huuarā.xšaētəm amāšəm raēm auruuat.aspəm yaz[amaide]*. The Avestan phrase is from Yt. 6.1, but the preceding Pāzand is from PhlY. 16.4 (*xwaršēd ī arwandāsp yazom*), with the ideogram *YDBHWN-m* read as *yzb'n-m*, which (with the regular interplay of *ān* and *q* in Pāzand) results in *yazibām*. It was not so recognized, for instance, by MIRZA: *Kopenhagen Manuscript K* 27, 89. The same form (with the correct explanation) occurs in the Oxford Parsi-Persian glossary published by E. SACHAU (*Neue Beiträge zur Kenntniss der zoroastrischen Litteratur*. Wien 1871 [separatum from the *Sitzungsberichte der phil.-hist. Classe der kais. Akademie der Wissenschaften* 1871], p. 50, l. 2): *yzb'm ya'nī yazam*.



## Retranscribed Pahlavi

1. The texts written in retranscribed Pahlavi are the result of the opposite movement: for these texts, the Pāzand text was the original. It is not always easy to recognize a "retranscribed" text from an ordinary late or corrupt Pahlavi text. The texts are most easily recognized when they carelessly reproduce Pāzand readings. A clear example of this are the mysterious words *pšwcyxl 'nd' pšwcyxl pēš yadšqn andar* in the *Pahlavi Petūt*.<sup>21</sup> This phrase not only transcribes the Pāzand words that have so far defied explanation (*pəšō.čihir andā pəšō.čihar yaššq andar*), but also the common words *andā* (Phl. *tā*) and *yadšqn* (Phl. *ī-šān*), the latter even in Avestan script.

Several characteristics of late Pahlavi literature are common to both ordinary and retranscribed texts, such as the confusion between the endings *-īg* and *-ih*, and between the words *kē*, *ka*, and *kū*. More typical of retranscribed texts is the use of the ending *-ad* (written *-d*) instead of *-ēd* for the third person singular present.

2. A further characteristic that should be discussed is the handling of ideograms. Ideograms are not uncommon in retranscribed texts. On the contrary, in these texts we frequently find ideograms that are never used in "normal" Pahlavi texts and seem to have been lifted from the *Frahang ī Pahlawīg*. An example from the first *Pahlavi Petūt* (ZXA 55.14) is SWBLA for *ummēd*, "hope". This, again, is not exclusive for retranscribed texts, but distinctive of late Pahlavi; suspect examples from a possibly non-retranscribed text from the ZXA are the ideograms NWLA and NYLYA for *ātaxš*, "fire" (ZXA 163.1), and DYBA for *gurg*, "wolf." Equally characteristic of all late Pahlavi documents is the use of ideograms as bearers of a certain sequence of sounds rather than a meaning. Thus, in the first *Pahlavi Petūt*, we find QDMyk for *abārīg*, in the second *Pahlavi Petūt*, the strange cluster KSPMN (ZXA 72.14) in all likelihood is to be read *arz-iz* and may be a failed *arziz* (which also occurs earlier); the ideogram BBA (*dar*, in the meaning "door; palace" etc.) is often used for the Persian preposition *dar*, "in". We can also compare ZXA 56.10: *BYN-c plm'n = andarz-framān* (!); ZXA 67.6: *SLYA MNW-š = wad-kēš*.

3. Very characteristic of retranscribed Pahlavi, furthermore, is the deficit of "standard" Pahlavi orthography for many words. With the exception of the ideograms and the very common words, many words were transcribed into Pahlavi strictly on the basis of how they sound, rather than on the archaizing spelling which has been the norm in "standard" Pahlavi. In other (more) cases, pseudo-archaizing spellings are introduced for words on patterns of other, similar sounding, words. The number of confusing forms in these texts is therefore at times considerable. Pseudo-forms, such as *'wzdysn* for a non-existing *uzdēs* (the actual word is *uzdēs*, "idol", usually written *'wzdys*; the retranscribed form is evidently based

21 ZXA 55, l. 21-2.

on *m'zdyšn*); *xsl*, *xydl* (?), *xsxl* etc. for *hixr*; may give a flavour of what to expect. Clearly Persian forms are also very common; one can think of words such as *dīgar* for "another", *čiyōnān* (*cygwn'n*, NP *čonān*) for "thus"; *abar xwāstan* (!) for "to rise"; *handēšag* for "thought"; and *drōy* for "lie".

## History

In his recent discussion of the subject, GILBERT LAZARD has argued that Pāzand reflects the living tradition of pronunciation among the Zoroastrians who left Iran for India.<sup>22</sup> Even if one accepts this as a likely background to the tiny number of dialect words to have been preserved in Pāzand, as a general statement it is difficult to uphold. It is possible that a detailed scrutiny of the earliest and best manuscripts in Pāzand (a Herculean task, at any rate) will reveal such traces of local pronunciation, but the bulk of all Pāzand texts shows too much interference from different languages and writing traditions to substantiate such a thesis.

Pāzand texts and retranscribed Pahlavi texts, however, bring up a number of highly important historical questions and may give us some clues as to the development of Zoroastrian traditions in the late medieval and early modern periods. The common interpretation of these data and texts makes use of a paradigm of degeneration. After the coming of Islam and the migration of a large section of Iranian Zoroastrians to India, it is argued, knowledge of the relevant languages and scripts disappeared rapidly; this caused an enormous break-up in the tradition.<sup>23</sup> It is often difficult to deny that this pattern of degeneration can be seen at work in the history of Zoroastrian manuscripts. At the same time, however, such an interpretation seems a bit unbalanced. There is an undeniable difference in textual quality in the many Zoroastrian manuscripts (as there is in manuscripts in any language), but it seems reasonable to require more and better evidence before we can seriously entertain the notion of intellectual weakness of generations of priests as the main interpretative tool of Zoroastrian philology or history. It would be pointless to deny that a poor comprehension of the texts has influenced the state of many manuscripts, but there are other aspects that have contributed to the general appearance and quality of late Zoroastrian texts and it is certainly worthwhile to highlight these.

We have to take into account, first and foremost, the highly complex multilingual background of Zoroastrian literature, which comes in five different languages (Avestan, Pahlavi, Persian, Sanskrit, and Gujarati), each in its own characteristic script, and in a bewildering variety of mixed forms; apart from Pāzand and so-called Pārsī (Middle Persian in Arabic script), Sanskrit written in the Persian alphabet and Pahlavi in Gujarati script are by no means exceptional.

22 LAZARD: "Pehlevi, Pazend et Persan", *passim*.

23 A mood aptly expressed in MACKENZIE's review of HAMPEL (see above, n. 4).

The reasons for writing or copying manuscripts were diverse. Commissioning a manuscript to be written, and writing a manuscript itself, were activities that were thought to bring great spiritual merit. Our main sources of information on the reasons for producing manuscripts come from the colophons, which have so far been surveyed only in a haphazard way.<sup>24</sup> Copyists indicate that they have written the manuscript for their own private use, for the benefit of their children, and, most often, to be used for recitation, teaching, and private reading. Copyists may indicate that their work is perfect, and frequently include a curse on those who steal it, or change its texts, but more frequently, they include several formulas asking the readers to correct their mistakes or to forgive them for the imperfections found in the manuscript. One such formula is *xwāhišnīg hom \*kū čiyōn bandag dar (BBA!) nibištān dastgāhīg nē dāšt hom, škastagīg ēn nibištāg rāy mu'āf (mw'p) framāyēnd*, something like "I wish that the defective state of this text will be forgiven, because I am not skilled in writing."<sup>25</sup>

An interesting case is provided by those texts that were unknown to the Parsis and were sent to them by their Iranian co-religionists. A famous example is the text of Yt. 13, which arrived together with some bunches of Hōm-twigs, which the Parsis could not procure in India.<sup>26</sup> One colophon of a manuscript of Yt. 13 adds that the Iranian copyist was asked by the Parsis who commissioned the text to "transcribe the *Frawardīn Yašt* from the Zand characters into Persian letters", to which the copyist adds that "it was very difficult".<sup>27</sup> This, and similar admissions of incompetence suggest that any particular manuscript can be a spontaneous transcription of a manuscript into a different script, that there were, in other words, no accepted methods or schools in the production of such hybrid texts. I shall return to this subject below, because I believe it is crucial.

As a partial substitute to the pattern of degeneration that has been observed by others, I would like to explore two patterns that seem to emerge from the study of Pāzand and retranscribed manuscripts; the first is a pattern of practical use and usefulness, the second one of learning. There are more aspects to these manuscripts that would merit some attention, such as secrecy or special spiritual powers attributed to the Avestan script, but they will be left for another occasion.

The pattern of practical use and usefulness emerges most clearly from the Pāzand texts. The vast majority of these are ritual texts. Pāzand transcriptions of theological texts exist,<sup>28</sup> of course, even of such highly inaccessible texts as the *Dēnkard*, but they are a clear minority. Most Pāzand manuscripts give ritual texts,

<sup>24</sup> The most important work is, of course, J.M. UNVALA: *Collection of Colophons of Manuscripts bearing on Zoroastrianism in some Libraries of Europe*. Bombay 1940.

<sup>25</sup> UNVALA: *Colophons*, nr. 37 on pp. 50–3.

<sup>26</sup> For the historical background, see BOYCE: *Zoroastrians*, 173; for the main text, cf. UNVALA: *Colophons*, nr. 130b on pp. 138–42.

<sup>27</sup> UNVALA: *Colophons*, nr. 40 on pp. 56–9.

<sup>28</sup> A Pāzand version of the *Bundahišn* was published recently in *facsimile* and translation by O. ČUNAKOVA: *Zoroastrijskie teksty*. Moskva 1997, 139–346.



especially those for the non-priestly rituals, as found in the Khorda Avesta. The purpose of these manuscripts is obvious: they were to be used, by priests and lay Zoroastrians, as private prayer books. The usage continues to the present day, with one significant development: today's pocket-size Khorda Avestas are printed in the Gujarati or Latin alphabets.

The difference between Pāzand and Pahlavi ritual texts, of which the majority is retranscribed, is obvious from the start: the Pāzand texts always give all prayer formulas that precede the actual prayer, often in abbreviation. Retranscribed Pahlavi prayers usually give no more than the indication "*yaθā ahū vairiō five*" and then the text of the actual prayer. The same is true for the *nērangs* or *wāz*, short Avestan and Pāzand prayer formulas and incantations for protection or healing, which in written form may be used as amulets. The Pāzand versions are at least double the size of the Pahlavi versions.

If we can, therefore, understand the practical advantage of transcribing texts into a script that reproduces how the text should sound, the opposite movement, the retranscription of these texts into the ambiguous Pahlavi script, is less easy to understand. I would suggest that it is connected with an increasing antiquarian interest and the development of a learned priestly culture in the Parsi community. By the eighteenth century, and presumably a good deal earlier, Pahlavi no longer served any acute practical purpose. The body of traditions, which priests used as a source of authority to decide on important matters was for all practical purposes available in Persian, mainly in the *Sad dar* texts. Otherwise, authority was located in the Iranian community, the priests of which could be and were consulted on important questions. In the same period, however, and probably not much earlier, priests began to write texts in Pahlavi, by reworking Pāzand originals into that foreign script. The manuscripts suggest that they did not perceive Pahlavi as a separate language, but merely a system of writing, characterized mainly by the *uzwārišn*-system. As a guide to this system, they mined the information found in the *Frahang ī Pahlawīg*, of which a good number of copies were produced. Having thus created a new Pahlavi text, they proceeded to add large numbers of glosses, containing explanations of rulings and words in Persian in Pahlavi script.<sup>29</sup>

The mere existence of a text in Pahlavi script guaranteed its antiquity and sanctity with the first copyist of the manuscript. Manuscripts are invariably referred to as "ancient and reliable" and as being in the possession of famous priests. This is still echoed in Antia's editions of the *Pāzend Texts*; among the manuscripts he based himself on for that edition was one that was written by himself.<sup>30</sup>

This process resulted in texts such as the *Wizīrgard ī Dēnīg* and the majority of the *Zand ī xwurdag Abestāg*, texts that are either retranscribed or neo-Pahlavi.<sup>31</sup> Up

29 The prime example of this procedure is the second or larger *Pahlavi Petīt*, printed in ZXA, 61–78. I am working on a separate study of this text.

30 ANTIA: *Pāzend Texts*, vii.



to the twentieth century, new compositions in Pahlavi occasionally appeared. The latest example I know of is a laudatory poem for a Zoroastrian newspaper, the Pahlavi word for newspaper being—as one would expect—*rōz-nāmag*. With the exception of the twentieth-century examples, such compositions should not be considered mere "forgeries". To assume bad faith on the part of the authors of such texts bars the way to their proper understanding. In fact, any student of late Zoroastrian literature must bear in mind two things: Zoroastrians in general were uninterested in grammar and showed little awareness of the linguistic differences between Middle Persian and New Persian: the point of studying texts was their contents, not their wording and the crucial difference between the various "languages" were the writing systems. Secondly, the prestige of a manuscript depended on a number of factors which to us would seem irrelevant: their owner, for instance, or the usefulness of the texts they contained, not the talents of the scribe or the age of the manuscript. Any manuscript older than two generations qualified as an "old manuscript". Any manuscript in Pahlavi script could be considered an ancient text.

In view of these factors, I can give only some very unsatisfactory conclusions. We are very much in need of a world survey of Zoroastrian manuscripts<sup>32</sup> and an in-depth study of the colophons of all Zoroastrian manuscripts, before we can reasonably claim any philological use for Pāzand forms. There is no fixed system of Pāzandisation and any form that catches the eye may be no older than the manuscript in which it first appears; we cannot simply claim that interesting forms are genuine, because they resemble earlier dialectal forms in other texts. If we want to rehabilitate Pāzand with NYBERG, therefore, we must make use of what it has to offer: very little in the realm of philology, but a good deal for the history of Zoroastrian traditions. This is even more true of late Pahlavi Zoroastrian texts, the evidence of which should not be used for the development of the study of Middle Persian, but is crucial for the study of late medieval and early modern Zoroastrianism.

31 A strange example of neo-Pahlavi is the manuscript MU 29 (dated to 1842 CE), published in facsimile by K. M. JAMASP-ASA and M. NAWABI: *Ms. MU 29. Stories of Kersāsp, Tahmurasp & Jamshed, Gelsbab & Other Texts*. Shiraz 1976 (Pahlavi Codices and Iranian Researches 26).

32 Such a project is apparently carried out at the IsIAO in Rome (cf. C. G. CERETTI: "Zoroastrian Manuscripts belonging to the Bhandarkar Institute Collection, Pune." In: *East and West* 46 [1996], 441–52).