THE ZOROASTRIAN TEMPLE CULT OF FIRE IN ARCHAEOLOGY AND LITERATURE (I)

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Abbreviations

- AHM* : I. Gershevitch, *The Avestan Hymn to Mithra*, Cambridge, 1967.
AMI : *Archaeologische Mitteilungen aus Iran*
AN : *Ātash Nyāish*
ARW : *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*
 Boyce, *History* : M. Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism*, Vol. I, Leiden / Köln, 1975.
 Boyce, *Stronghold* : M. Boyce, *A Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism*, Oxford, 1977.
BSOAS : *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*.
 Christensen, *L'Iran* : A. Christensen, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*, 2nd ed., Copenhagen, 1944.
Dd. : *The Dāstān-i Dinik*, Part I, Pursishn I-XL, ed. Tahmuras Dinshaji Anklesaria, Bombay, undated.
DK. : *Denkard*
DKM : *The Complete Text of the Pahlavi Dīnkard*, under the supervision of Dhanjishah Meherjibhai Madan, Bombay, 1911.
ERE : *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. J. Hastings, Edinburgh, 1908–1926.
Gbd. : *Zand-Ākāsīh, Iranian or Greater Bundahishn*, ed. and tr., Behramgore T. Anklesaria, Bombay, 1956.
IJJ : *Indo-Iranian Journal*
JA : *Journal Asiatique*
JAOS : *Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JRAS : *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*
KnA : *Kārnāmak-i Artakshīr Pāpakān. The original Pahlavi text, with transliteration in Avesta characters, translations into English and Gujarati, and selections from the Shāh-nāmah*, Edalji Kersāspji Āntiā, Bombay, 1900.
 Modi, *CC* : J. J. Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees*, Bombay, 2nd. ed., 1937.
MHD : *Mādigān ī Hazār Dādistān*, ed. J. J. Modi, Bombay, 1901.
MX : *The Dīnā ī Mainū ī Khrat, or The Religious Decisions of the Spirit of Wisdom. The Pahlavi Text*, ed., Darab Dastur Peshotan Sanjana, Bombay, 1895.
Phl. Vd. : Behramgore T. Anklesaria, *Pahlavi Vendidad*, Bombay, 1949.
Rivāyats : Unvala; M. R. Unvala, *Dārāb Hormazyār's Rivāyat*, text, Bombay, 1922; Dhabhar; Bamanji N. Dhabhar. *The Persian Rivāyats of Hormazyar Framarz and others, Their version with introduction and notes*, Bombay, 1932.
SBE : F. Max Müller, ed., *The Sacred Books of the East*
 Schippmann, *Feuerheiligtümer*: K. Schippmann, *Die iranischen Feuerheiligtümer*, Berlin / New York, 1971.
ShE : “Shahrīhā ī Ērān”, Jamaspji Minocheherji Jamasparasana, ed., *The Pahlavi Texts*, Bombay, 1897.

- Shāhnāme* : A. G. Warner and E. Warner, *The Shāhnāma of Firdousī*, London, 1905.
SnS : *Shāyast la-Shāyast*, ed., M. B. Davar, Bombay, 1912.
SPA : A. U. Pope, ed., *A Survey of Persian Art*, London, 1938.
 Tabarī, Nöldeke : *Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden aus der arabischen Chronik des Tabarī*, tr. Theodor Nöldeke, Leiden, 1879.
Vd. : *Vendīdād*
WZ : Behramgore T. Anklesaria, *Vichitakiha-i Zatsparam*, with text and introduction. Bombay, 1964.
Y : *Yasna*
Yt. : *Yasht*
ZVY : *Zand-i Vohūman Yasn*, ed. by B. T. Anklesaria, Bombay, 1957.
 Zaehner, *Zurvan* : R. C. Zaehner, *Zurvan, a Zoroastrian Dilemma*, Oxford, 1955.

N. B. In the transcription of Avestan and other scripts, "sh" is used for "s", "ng" is used for "p", "th" is used for "θ".

I. Theological points of Zoroaster's faith with regard to fire

The main sources for knowledge of Zoroaster are his own prayer (the *Ahuna Vairyo*)⁽¹⁾ and his hymns (the *Gāthās*). From these it can be learnt that he was an Iranian, who probably lived in very ancient times, well before 1000 B. C.⁽²⁾ He reformed the ancient Indo-Iranian religion, according to a revelation sent to him by Ahura Mazdā. As the Iranians had not acquired the art of writing in those days, they transmitted Zoroaster's words orally in his own language from generation to generation. The *Gāthās* came to form seventeen sections (*hā's*) of the *Yasna* liturgy⁽³⁾, and thus were included in the *Avesta*, the Zoroastrian sacred book which was finally written down in the Avestan script during the Sasanian period. Thanks to the survival of these hymns, it is possible to a certain extent to trace Zoroaster's own thoughts directly.

The prophet's fundamental concepts were based on dualism, and he understood the existing world as a battlefield for the fight between two uncreated Beings, good and evil, Ahura Mazdā and his adversary, the Hostile Spirit, Angra Mainyu. 'In the beginning (there were) the two spirits ... the good and the evil in thought, word and deed' (*tā mainyū +paouruyē ... manahičā va-čahičā shyaothanōi hi vahyō akəmčā*, Y. 30.3). When 'these two spirits met, first they created life and non-life' (*tā hēm mainyū ... jasaētəm paourvīm dazdē gaēmčā ajyāitīmčā*, Y. 30.4). Thus Ahura Mazdā was comprehended to be the creator of life and of the whole world. The Creation of the world, described in detail in the Pahlavi *Bundahishn*,⁽⁴⁾ was carried out in seven stages; first the sky (*as-*

man-), made of stone; next water (*āp-*) and third the earth (*zam-*). Then plants (*urvarā-*) came and then animals, originating in the Uniquely-created Bull (*gāv aēvō.dāta-*). Sixth was Man, *Gayō.marətan-*, the primeval First Man. And lastly, both existing in itself and pervading and animating all Creation, fire (*ātar-*) was formed.

Each creation, it seems, was brought into being by, and was under the guardianship of, one of a group of great divine Beings, the seven *Aməsha Spəntas* (Bounteous Immortals). The sky was assigned to Xshathra (Dominion), water to Haurvatāt (Wholeness), the earth to Ārmaiti (Devotion), plants to Amərətāt (Life), animals to Vohu Manah (Good Thought), men to Spənta Mainyu (Bounteous Spirit), that is Ahura Mazdā himself, and fire to Asha (Righteousness).

The world, thus created by Ahura Mazdā, is controlled by *asha*, the principle of order and righteousness. *Asha/rta*⁽⁶⁾ is a very important concept for the Iranians and Indians. It was originally conceived as an 'impersonal force'⁽⁶⁾ and neuter principle, maintaining the regularity of the world. Everything in the world is subject to its fixed rule, from the movement of the sun, moon, stars and such things in nature to man's way of life, sacrificial procedures, and private and social morals. In other words, every aspect of the world is organised and exists through *asha/rta*..

It was Zoroaster, it seems, who first conceived of a divinity Asha, guardian of the principle *asha*, and placed him among the seven Aməsha Spəntas. As a divinity, Asha was the most often invoked of all by Zoroaster, but the concept of the still impersonal principle survived. Asha shows the 'righteous' way, not only at the universal level but also on the small-scale or inner level, that is social, moral and sacrificial. An *ashavan*⁽⁷⁾ is a man who follows the way shown by Asha and leads his life as it should be led if the hostile beings do not intervene. The Drug is a Being opposed to Asha, the pagan principle *drug* having been the negative to the principle *asha*, a force destructive to the world.

As we have seen in the Creation-myth, fire was held to be present in all creation, as well as existing as visible fire itself. The sky has the fiery sun, and the earth has many individual fires. Even water has a connection with fire,⁽⁸⁾ much more so all living things, men, animals and plants. To live means to have a life-force which animates the living things as they breathe and grow and change. This life-force is understood as fire. Fire blessed the one who

sacrificed to him, saying: 'may an active mind and active life be with you' (*upa thwā vərəzvaṭēa manō vərəzvaṭēa haxshōit anguha*, Y. 62.10).

Since life is controlled by the principle *asha* under the divinity Asha, and since the link between life and fire is clear, the relation of Asha/*asha* with fire is one of the most important concepts at the centre of Zoroaster's thought. He regarded fire as a constant reminder of Asha, saying as follows:

'Then to your fire, at the giving of reverence, truly as long as I shall be able, I shall think of Asha'

(*aṭ ā thwahmāi āthrē rātqm nāmanghō ashahyā mā, yavaṭ isāi, manyāi*, Y. 43.9). According to the *Gāthās*, 'the holiest spirit', that is Ahura Mazdā, the Creator of life, 'chose *asha* for himself' (*varatā ... ashəm mainyush spānīshō*, Y. 30.5). In this respect the trio of *asha*, Asha and fire stand obviously on the side of the Creator, Ahura Mazdā, in the Creation and in the continuance of its 'spēnta' nature.

The concept of a general last judgment may first have been apprehended by Zoroaster among mankind. He, as the prophet of a just and rational religion needed the doctrine of an ultimate reward for good deeds. Moreover, in his understanding of this world as the battlefield between two Spirits, good and evil, he prophesied the final victory of the good God, and needed a general judgment in order that people should be chosen for the kingdom of Ahura Mazdā. This concept of Doomsday must have been a very effective and impressive element in his preaching.

The selection of the righteous is to be made by the ordeal of passing through molten metal (*ayah xshusta*). For them, this will be only a pleasant path, but for the evil, it will give great pain and lead to destruction. The use of molten metal at this last ordeal is characteristic of Zoroastrianism, and fire then plays an important role too. As it is asked: 'what is the reward which you shall grant to two parties (i. e. *ashavan* and *drugvan*) by your blazing fire, Oh Masdā, by molten metal?' (*yqm *xshnūtəm rānōibyā dā thwā āthra suxrā mazdā ayanghā xshustā*, Y. 51.9), the relationship of fire with Doomsday is obvious. But there exists no image in the *Gāthās* of evil being burned directly by fire, or of fire purifying evil. The only implied physical work of the fire is that it melts the metal with its heat; and in Y. 51.9 the reference to fire seems less to physical fire than to fire as a symbol of the virtue by which men may be saved. 'The reward (will be) to the *ashavan*' (*savačā ashavabyō*, Y. 30.11), and the *ashavan* is the one 'who prepared the world (for salvation)' (*yōi im fērashēm *kərēnaon*

ahūm, Y. 30.9), and who is to live in the kingdom of Ahura Mazdā.

As the personification of 'order' in the Ahura-created world, Asha represents moral righteousness or the way of righteous living, and accordingly establishes the standard by which men are judged. The relationship of Asha and fire with the judgment is also clear in the next verses:

'Then, Oh, Ahura! we long for your strong fire, through Asha, most swift and powerful, to be the visible help to the faithful, but, Oh, Mazdā! to the hostile, the manifest violence of the turning of the hand'

(*aṭ tōi atrēm ahurā aojōnghvantēm ashā usmahī asishtām āmavantām stōi repantē cithrā.avanghām aṭ mazdā daibishyantē zastāishtāish dārashtā.aēnanghām*, Y. 34.4).

Therefore the reason why Zoroaster sometimes mentioned only fire in connection with Doomsday might have been that fire alone was enough to remind his followers of the image, already formed in their minds, of the last day.

Fire was usually given very physical epithets by Zoroaster, as if he had real fire in his thoughts. The word fire (*ātar*) appears eight times in the *Gāthās*, each time in connection with the 'Selection', except once, when it is the fire which reminds the faithful of Asha at the time of prayer (Y. 43.9), and once, when it is fire as the protector against the violence of evil. The most concrete statement is that the 'Selections' will be made 'by the heat of your fire, strong by Asha' (*thwahyā garēmā āthrō ashā.aojanghō*, Y. 43.4); but *suxra-* (red or blazing) is the most frequently used epithet (Y. 31.19, Y. 51.9), apart from *thwa-* 'your', that is, Ahura Mazdā's. This epithet suitably describes real fire. It is possible to say that *āmavant* 'strong' (Y. 34.4) and *aojahvant-* 'powerful' (ibid.) appear to describe the force of the fire, but they may also imply an allusion to Asha, as there is another epithet *asha.aojah-* 'strong by Asha' (Y. 43.4). *Asishta-* 'swift' or 'promised' (Y. 34.4) may suggest the image of the fire at the time of the 'Selection'.

But it is sometimes misleading to interpret the words of Zoroaster literally, because he was a prophet and he sometimes preached through metaphor, as G. G. Cameron has demonstrated.⁽⁹⁾ In the following verses fire is perhaps to be understood as a sort of moral power to oppose the wickedness of the Drug and the *drugvant*:

'Whom, Oh Mazdā! should one appoint as a protector to one like me, when a follower of the Drug seeks to lay hold on me for violence, (none) other than your fire and mind? By the deeds of the two, Asha will come

to maturity, Oh Ahura!’

(*kəm nā mazdā mavaitē pāyūm dadāt hyat mā drəgvā didarəshatā aēnanghē anyēm thwahrāt +āthrasčā mananghasčā yaydē shyaothanāish ashēm thraoshtā ahurā*, Y. 46.7).

Here Zoroaster may be emphasising that moral power and a good mind are indeed the real support given by Asha, together with Vohu Manah, against evil. In this way, the epithet *suxra-* ‘red’ or ‘blazing’, may be taken as implying the energy of righteousness — that is, as suggesting visually vital power or powerful energy.

Zoroaster’s descriptions of fire presumably have their basis in Indo-Iraian traditions of veneration of fire—a veneration which has parallels almost everywhere in the world. This phenomenon is due mainly to the importance of fire in human life. The functions of fire in daily life may range as follows: as a house fire, it cooks food and provides warmth and light for the family. It can also be used as a weapon against physical enemies, such as wolves, and was thought to drive off supernatural evil beings in the same way. Further, the beauty of its burning flame can give delight. In sacrifice, fire fills a very important role, for the offering of the sacrificial victim is usually connected in some way with fire. Fire’s use as a destroyer of impurity was also widespread.

In the case of the Indo-Iranians, veneration of fire was ardently practised towards the actual house fire, that is, the fire on the hearth. As A. B. Keith said: ‘The burning flame is the present deity.’⁽¹⁰⁾ and the anthropomorphization of the fire was hardly seen among Indo-Europeans in early times. The hearth fire, perpetually burning, was considered to be a centre of the house, and offerings were made to it daily, with special rites monthly, seasonally and yearly.

In India Agni, the fire god, was considered to be the god of the house, the guest and the head of the house. Of the three fires, *Gārhapatya* (belonging to the house head), *Āhavanīya* (eastern) and *Dakṣina* (western), which were essential for special sacrifices, only the *Gārhapatya* was continually maintained even while there was no sacrifice. Hestia, goddess of the Hearth, was also the centre of daily life in Greece.⁽¹¹⁾ When a wedding was held, the bride’s mother carried embers from her own hearth fire to her daughter’s new home.⁽¹²⁾ Further, on a larger scale, the altar for Hestia was placed in the Prytaneum (the city hall or palace) in all Greek cities, and was considered to be the city centre. When the Greeks colonized a new town, the fire of Hestia of their

mother-city was divided and a part carried to their new home.⁽¹³⁾

In India Agni was particularly venerated because of the importance of his role at the sacrifice. In the *Rg Veda*, about one fifth of all the hymns are dedicated to Agni, and only Indra receives more. Agni carried the essence of the offering to the gods and through this function he was regarded as a priest or messenger. In Iran, fire had not the obviously twofold aspects of fire in the Indian cult, that is, fire as an object to be venerated for itself, and fire as a means of conveying offerings to other divinities, by consuming them. In the Iranian tradition, as far as it is known, nothing is ever placed on fire that does not contribute to its own maintenance and worship. The function of fire at the sacrifice is not to consume a part of the flesh on behalf of the gods, but, by cooking it (without direct contact) to release its odour for them to enjoy. This was essentially a task of the hearth fire in Indo-Iranian tradition, a tradition which survives in Zoroastrianism, as is evident from the passage in the prayer to fire, which states that 'the fire of Ahura Mazdā ... cooks the day meal and the night meal' (*ātarsh mazdā ahurahe ... +hampačaiti xshāfnīmča sūrimča*, A. N. 13).

As a physical phenomenon, the fire was also related to the sun. And since the sun's movement is in accord with universal order, that is, *asha*, the link between the fire and *asha* is thus reaffirmed. This connection is vividly expressed in *Yasna Haptanghāiti* (Y. 35–41) which is linguistically almost as old as the *Gāthās*:

'Then we devote to you, the most beautiful shape of shapes, Oh Mazdā Ahura! these lights (here, and) that highest of the high ones, which is called the sun'

(*staēshtqm at tōi kəhrpām kəhrpām āvaēdaymahī, mazdā ahurā, imā raočā barə-zishtəm barəzimanqm avat, yāt hvarē zvāčī*, Y. 36.6)

The expression 'these lights here' can be interpreted as fires on the earth, and thus makes the parallel with the sun, the fire in the sky.

To return to Zoroaster's own thoughts, although it is obvious that fire had an unique position in his doctrine and observance, nevertheless it was only one of the things which he venerated, and Asha was only one of the great Aməsha Spəntas. In the confession, the *Fravarāne* (Y. 12), there is no word referring to fire. Furthermore, there is no reference to the existence of a fire temple or to a consecrated fire in his *Gāthās*. Therefore, the 'fire-worshipping religion' is not an adequate definition of the faith preached by Zoroaster.

II. Development of the temple cult under the Achaemenians and a consideration of the material remains

Information about the Achaemenians in history is not abundant, and what there is does not include any detailed statements about the religion and customs of those days. Therefore if we want to know about the nature of the fire cult then, and how it was performed, we have to search through the scanty sources very carefully. Firstly, there are several significant figures carved on seals, and on royal tombs and monuments. Secondly, we can consider what is reported of Persian customs by classical writers. Thirdly, we have excavations, some of which have yielded relevant remains.

Originally, it is evident, the Indo-Iranian peoples had no temples or fixed places of worship, and, as we have seen, Zoroaster himself said nothing in his *Gāthās* about fire in temples. Nor is there any clear reference to the existence of temples even in the later *Avesta*. Herodotus, who was a contemporary of the early Achaemenians, said of the Persians in his *Histories* (I. 131): 'It is not their custom to make and set up statues and temples and altars'. Strabo made a similar observation, though he wrote about five centuries later. 'The Persians do not erect statues or altars, but offer sacrifice on a high place, regarding the heavens as Zeus' (Strabo, 15.3.13).

According to Cicero, Xerxes (486–465 B. C.), the fourth Achaemenian king 'thought it sacrilege to keep the gods whose home is the whole universe shut up within walls', and 'ordered the Athenian temples to be burned' (*De Republica*, 3.9.14). Cicero referred also to 'sacred statues in human form; a custom which the Persians considered wicked' (*ibid.*). Xerxes faithfully followed his father, Darius I (522–486 B. C.) in his manner of rule, and made his tomb beside his father's in the rocks of Naqsh-i Rostam, and had engraved above it the same reliefs as Darius. Therefore it is unlikely that he had a different religion or different observances, from his father.

Cyrus the Great, the actual founder of the dynasty, built his palace at Pasargadae. This site had been excavated since 1928, but no remains have been identified with certainty as temples, although there is a heavily damaged building, now known as the Zindan-i Suleiman, which some scholars have considered to be a religious one. The characteristics of the Zindan, together with its counterpart at Naqsh-i Rostam, the Ka'ba-i Zardusht, are; one, that

both are massive stone constructions without windows; two, that they have only one room, with one entrance; three, that they have similar tent-shaped roofs.⁽¹⁴⁾ D. Stronach, the excavator of the Zindan, considers them as religious buildings, on the basis of their likeness to the Urartian tower temple.⁽¹⁵⁾ Some others have identified them as tombs, recalling the similarity in construction with the tomb of Cyrus in Pasargadae, and this seems more likely. Besides, these buildings seem quite unpractical as temples, and even D. Stronach admitted that the Zindan cannot be considered as an *āyadan*, a type of religious construction said to have been destroyed by Gaumata,⁽¹⁶⁾ because the Zindan 'remained substantially intact after 522 B. C.'⁽¹⁷⁾

During the Achaemenian period, according to Herodotus, sacrifices to *Yazatas* (divine beings)⁽¹⁸⁾ were performed very simply.

'When about to sacrifice they neither build altars nor kindle fire, ... to whomsoever of the gods a man will sacrifice, he leads the beast to an open space and then calls on the god, himself wearing a crown on his cap, of myrtle for choice. He then cuts the victim limb from limb into portions, and having boiled the flesh spreads the softest grass, trefoil by choice, and places all of it on this. When he has so disposed it a Magian comes near and chants over it the song of the birth of the gods, as the Persian tradition relates it; for no sacrifice can be offered without a Magian. Then after a little while the sacrificer carries away the flesh and uses it as he pleases' (Herodotus, I. 132).

Fire was obviously used to cook the flesh on these occasions,⁽¹⁹⁾ but was not necessarily ignited for each sacrifice. It is more likely that each fire was made from embers brought from a house-fire, such as was maintained perpetually in each house. The setting for the sacrifice was evidently very simple, as Herodotus describes it. Therefore there was no need of a specially appointed place, nor of an altar to hold ever-burning fire. To sacrifice in the open was probably traditional for the Indo-Iranians, who were originally nomads. In India also the sacrifice usually took place in the open.

However, at the beginning of the Achaemenian period when several centuries had already passed since Iranians had settled in Persia, a few fixed sanctuaries are known to have existed. For example, it is reported of the sanctuary at Zela⁽²⁰⁾ that in the sixth century B. C., 'heaping up a mound of earth over a certain rock in the plain, (the Persian generals) completed it in the form of a hill, and erected on it a wall, and established the temple of Anaitis and the

gods who share her altar — Omanus and Anadatus, Persian deities' (Strabo, 11.8.4). It does not appear from this passage that there were buildings at this sanctuary, but at least there was a fixed place dedicated to the cult.

Furthermore, two stone plinths (Pl. 1) were found at the western end of the enclosure at Pasargadae, the palace of Cyrus the Great (Fig. 1). These are isolated from the other buildings of the site, and are placed in the open.⁽²¹⁾ They are similar in size⁽²²⁾ and material (limestone), but are not so alike in shape that they can be called twins. The southern one is set on two steps on the top of a large square base, which makes it a three-stepped structure. This plinth is attached to an eight-stepped stair (Fig. 2). The northern one is a

Fig. 2 Plan of the South Plinth; *ibid.*, 25, fig. 5.

Fig. 3 Plan of the North Plinth; *ibid.*, 26, fig. 6.

more simple cubic shape, and appears never to have had steps up to it like the southern one (Fig. 3). The plinths must surely have been used for religious ceremonies, although we do not know of what kind.⁽²³⁾

D. Stronach, the excavator of these remains, considers them to be fire altars, and to demonstrate 'the high antiquity of the fire altar plinth and the equally long tradition behind the use of twin altars.'⁽²⁴⁾ The word 'fire altar' is, however, misleading in this case. We may be able to accept the idea that at least one of the plinths bore fire at the time of a particular ceremony, as we can see on the rock-reliefs on the tombs in Naqsh-e Rostam and Persepolis. We also know that the Persians sacrificed in the open air, from the information of Herodotus.⁽²⁵⁾ but we do not know which of the monuments actually bore the fire or both, or if they were really altars or just plinths, to bear another portable altar. Certainly they could not have held ever-burning fire, because it would have been unsafe and impractical to maintain ever-burning fires in the open. Therefore these plinths do not prove that Herodotus was wrong when he wrote about the Persian practice not 'to make and set up statues and temples and altars'.⁽²⁶⁾ We can only assume from these monuments that the kings appointed this special place for their occasional sacrifices in order to make the cult more dignified, and it seems likely that the practice of having an ever-burning fire in a consecrated place was not yet known to the early Achaemenians, and that they still restricted the fire cult to the simple Indo-Iranian custom

of maintaining an ever-burning hearth fire in each house.

The cult of the hearth fire must have been universal. Xenophon, a Greek general, who was employed by Cyrus the Younger (+401 B.C.) when he revolted against his brother Artaxerxes II (404–359 B.C.), was fairly well acquainted with Persian customs, and wrote of them in the *Cyropaedia*. In this he said that 'when Cyrus (the Great) had gone home and prayed to ancestral Hestia, ancestral Zeus, and the rest of the gods, he set out upon his expedition, (I. 6.1.). Further, 'Cyrus sacrificed first to Hestia, then to sovereign Zeus, and then to any other god that the magi suggested' (3.5.57). The reason why Xenophon spoke of the Hearth instead of the fire upon it would be the similarity of the Persian cult of the house fire to the Greek cult of Hestia, goddess of the Hearth.⁽²⁷⁾

An ever-burning fire in a temple is different from a domestic fire in four respects. Firstly, it is never put out. Secondly, it is kept in a especially appointed and consecrated place. Thirdly, it is itself consecrated and never used for practical purposes. Lastly, it is tended by a priest or priests.

The fire temple seems to have existed from the time of the later Achae-menians; but before we go into this matter, we need to consider the fire altar. Several fire altars are featured on seals of the period. The seals of those days were either cylinder seals or stamp seals; and their main function, according to P. Ackerman,⁽²⁸⁾ was to 'protect either the object or document sealed, or the owner, from malign supernatural influences', and, besides, to 'identify ownership' or 'to verify authenticity as a substitute for or supplement to a signature'. The altars shown on seals may be classified in three groups. Those of the first group resemble a sort of plinth (Pl. 2–6), rectangular in shape, and with panels cut in the side. Those of the second group are pillar-shaped, with two or three symmetrical steps at top and base (Pl. 7–13). Those of the third group consist of a slender shaft (Pl. 14). We shall examine them one by one.

The first type of altar seems to have been made of stone or brick. On the top of the plinth there is an ornament like battlements in step shape. The fire is shown between these battlements. The plinth reaches in height to about the human waist. No actual altars of this shape have been found. Their distinctive feature is the 'battlement' on the top. This is too big and impressive to be just an ornament, and perhaps represents a large stylised bowl which accommodated the fire and ash, and was placed temporarily or permanently in position. It is very important to have a sufficient amount of hot ash beneath

a fire in order to sustain it and prevent it being extinguished. The apparent flame on altars of the plinth type is very narrow and small compared with the massiveness of the altar itself.

It is worth noting here that this type of altar is seen only on seals. For most seals of this period, the owner and find-place cannot be identified. But those seals discovered at Persepolis (Pl. 4-6) were owned by kings or their ministers and officials, and were used on official documents. As has been noted above, seals used on official documents may be assumed to have declared the authority of the royal family, or that delegated by the king. Therefore the altars engraved on seals may well have been closely connected with the royal family. If this is so, their size may be to confer dignity, and the flame could be that of the *zaothra* (fat-offering) burning on the fire for kings could afford to offer the *zaothra* every day and claim special merit from it.⁽²⁹⁾

In continuing this examination, we find that this type of fire altar is always shown flanked by two men on the court style seals.⁽³⁰⁾ Both wear Persian-style clothes with wide sleeves and long skirts, and a tiara of fluted cylinder shape which looks like a crown, and was worn by kings and nobles.⁽³¹⁾ This is very similar to the garb of Darius I, as he is shown in the relief above his tomb at Naqsh-e Rostam (Pl. 15). The men on the seals carry bows and an arrow-case, but not a sword or the *barsman* (sacred twigs)⁽³²⁾, which are indispensable for the cult. They do not cover their mouths. Both raise their right hands in respect or prayer, and sometimes they are shown with lotus flowers in their hands. They may possibly be priests, but we usually see the priests of this period wearing the Median headdress. Besides, the bow and arrow-case are more appropriate to king than priest.

The priesthood in Achaemenian times seems to have been hereditary in the Median tribe of the magi. Certainly 'Median' clothes were the proper garments for the priests (Pl. 16, 17).⁽³³⁾ They also wore a sword at their belts, and the reason for this is easily understood. In Persia priests themselves performed the blood sacrifice, and Herodotus recorded (1. 140) that 'the Magians kill with their own hand anything but a dog or a man'. It is said also that Cyrus the Great sacrificed a victim to the Hearth, Zeus and then to certain other gods, 'as the magi suggested' (Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, 7.57). To divide up the carcass was the duty of the priest, who therefore had to carry a sword or a knife with him for that purpose.

The two men shown on the seals with this type of altar would therefore

not be priests. It seems more probable that figures facing each other across the fire altar, wearing the same clothes and performing the same action, were the king and his heir.⁽³⁴⁾ or the king and his father, thus representing together the line of royal descent. This is the more likely since this type of altar, with its dignified appearance, and for the reasons given above, is probably to be identified as the dynastic one. The size of the altars shows that they would not have been moved; but must have been fixed in a certain place, to which the king and other participants would have gone to perform the due rites; and the fire which they bore was probably not used for any practical purposes (such as to give light or warmth, or to cook food). The origin of the dynastic fire was presumably the royal hearth fire; but it came to symbolise the life of the dynasty and then that of the nation represented by the king. So the dynastic fire may be taken as the symbolic centre of the nation, and thus as the representative of the homeland.

There is a seal, found in the surface-layer of the Treasure House of Persepolis, which depicts a man on horse-back facing what appears to be an altar of this type, in simplified shape (Pl. 18); but the expected flame is not depicted between the two projections on its top. However, if the fire on such an altar was considered as the symbolic representative of the nation, it is possible that the altar itself, as the place on which it was set, could stand for one of the residences of the dynasty. So this seal may perhaps show a warrior or a king returning home, or to his homeland. An altar of this type is also seen later in a temple-relief found at Dura-Europos (Pl. 19).⁽³⁵⁾ Dura-Europos was a cosmopolitan city which flourished in Seleucid and Arsacid times, where many different cultures and nations co-existed. Neither the temple nor the altar in the relief were Zoroastrian, and fruits are shown being offered beside the fire on the altar. But the design, which shows a god (or man) on camel-back, letting his shoulder-cloth blow in the wind, and advancing towards the altar.⁽³⁶⁾ is similar to the above-mentioned seal of Persepolis. But except for this, not one trace of this type of altar has been found after Achaemenian times.⁽³⁷⁾

Like the hearth fire, which was extinguished on the death of the head of the house, the dynastic fire was put out at the death of the king, and lit again at the time of the next accession. According to Diodorus, at the time of the death of Hephaestion, one of Alexander's favourite friends, Alexander 'proclaimed to all the peoples of Asia that they should sedulously quench what the Persians call the sacred fire, until such time as the funeral should be ended.

This was the custom of the Persians when their kings died' (Diodorus Siculus, 17.114.4). Since this proclamation was made to 'all the peoples of Asia', the fire in question was probably the hearth fire in each house; and the custom referred to shows that the royal fire was treated as a leader of all the hearth fires, as the king was of the people. In other words, the royal fire was the symbol of the Achaemenian dynasty and the empire. That is why after the fall of the Achaemenians, each local king maintained a dynastic fire as the symbol of his authority,⁽³⁸⁾ and why in Sasanian times the dynastic fire became the main symbol of the Sasanian kings. The royal fire being thus not only a private centre for the royal family, but also a public and symbolic one for their subjects, it resembled in this respect the ever-burning fire consecrated in a temple, which developed later.

Let us then go on to the second type of altar; the pillar-shaped one with stepped top. The material seems to be stone or brick, as with the first type, but in some examples the slenderness of the centre pillar makes it possible that metal was used. Pillar-altars are to be seen on the tomb-reliefs at Naqsh-e Rostam and Persepolis (Pl. 15, 20, 21);⁽³⁹⁾ and down to modern times this has remained the usual type of Zoroastrian fire-altar. Therefore it can be called the standard type.

The prototype of this altar seems to have existed in ancient times. A cylinder seal (Pl. 22), found at Persepolis and belonging to the Assyrian era, shows an altar of this type in front of a seated god. The oldest surviving altar of this kind known in Iran is that found in a windowless tower-like ruin at Nūsh-e Jān Tepe, near Hamadan (Fig. 4).⁽⁴⁰⁾ This building (Pl. 23) was the oldest on the site and has been assigned to the eighth century B. C. In its east corner was found a mud-brick altar covered with fine white plaster (Pl. 24, 25). It had a four-stepped top, in which there was a shallow depression which seemed to have held fire. D. Stronach, the excavator, says that 'it is difficult to imagine that such a shallow bowl was designed to harbour a permanent fire.'⁽⁴¹⁾ Therefore 'the Nūsh-e Jān altar may provide the first evidence that the early fires of Media were not permanent but were rekindled for each ceremony.'⁽⁴²⁾

We do not know what D. Stronach meant by 'the early fires of Media', but at least he was not suggesting that this was a Zoroastrian fire-altar, for he then held the time of Zoroaster to have been about 650 B. C. (The time of Zoroaster is not strictly relevant at the moment, but it is likely that it was more ancient, sometime before 1000 B. C.)⁽⁴³⁾ Another reason for not regarding

Fig. 4 A vertical perspective of the interior of the temple at Tepe Nūsh-i Jān; M. Roaf and D. Stronach, "Tepe Nūsh-i Jān, 1970: Second Interim Report", *Iran*, 1973, 133, fig. 2.

this altar as a fire-altar is that it was surrounded by a protecting wall, which 'would have made obvious difficulties for anyone engaged in tending fire.'⁽⁴⁴⁾

All the characteristics of this altar and the building in which it stood suggest that this ruin cannot be identified as a Zoroastrian fire temple; nor is there anything particular to link it with Zoroastrian traditions except the shape of the altar, and the similarity of the use of a blind window here and in the Zindan at Pasargadae and the Ka'ba at Naqsh-i Rostam. (The actual meaning or importance of this blind window is still not understood.) Consequently all that we can tentatively accept is that in ancient Media there were temples in which some use was made of fire, but that the fire was not ever-burning.

It should also be mentioned here that in Achaemenian times many Elamites and Babylonians, who were not Zoroastrians, are known to have occupied important positions in the government, and they observed their own beliefs. Therefore not all Achaemenian seals are necessarily Zoroastrian in character. And the use of fire in the cult was not exclusive to Zoroastrianism. Many

other religions actually made use of fire in some way in their cult. For example, a cylinder seal (Pl. 26) dated to 500–400 B. C., shows a bare-headed worshipper with *barsman* or a rod, and a god wearing something similar to Persian clothes with a circular object in his hand. Behind him there seems to be a fire-altar with a strange object on the top. W. H. Ward suggests that this 'looks like a great eye',⁽⁴⁵⁾ but it is not known what sort of ritual or religion is connected with this particular scene. In any case the rather rough manner in which this seal is engraved shows that this was not produced in the court style.⁽⁴⁶⁾ which can be distinguished by the severely mannered treatment of face and dress. So it is very possible that this seal was not that of the king or one of his ministers, but belonged to some non-Zoroastrian official.

In the case of another Babylonian seal (Pl. 27), non-Zoroastrian features are very interestingly represented together with Persian ones. On this we can see both a Babylonian priest performing a ritual act, which is quite similar to that depicted on genuine Babylonian seals, and a king in Persian dress fighting with two lions, which is a characteristic Persian motif. Persians were tolerant not only of the religion of foreigners but also of foreign customs generally. Herodotus commented (I. 135): 'They wear the Median dress, because they think it is finer than their own, and for war they don the Egyptian breastplate'.

Another seal (Pl. 28) in the Ashmolean Museum, also dated to between 500 and 400 B. C., might provoke controversy about the Zoroastrian cult. This shows a fire-altar flanked by two men in Persian clothes, each with something circular in his hand. Moreover, there seems to be a horned animal, perhaps a small deer, hanging head downward in the flame on the altar. Traditionally the Zoroastrians never made burnt offerings, for the defilement of fire with dead bodies was strictly forbidden.⁽⁴⁷⁾ If flesh is being burnt on the fire in this ritual, and the animal is not merely symbolic, then this ritual cannot have been Zoroastrian. The circular objects in the men's hands remind us of a previously mentioned seal (Pl. 26), but their use or meaning in the cult are unknown. As the Ashmolean seal was purchased in Egypt and is not in the court style, it probably represents a local ritual, performed in Persian manner.

Of the third type of altar there is not much to be said. This slender-shafted altar has not been found on any archaeological site, but is greatly in evidence on Babylonian and Assyrian seals (Pl. 29–33). Although this type is not represented in any Zoroastrian scenes, some altar of the standard type (Pl. 7, 11–14), with three-stepped top and base, have a very slender stem, which

may have been made of metal, perhaps through the influence of such alien altars. This point is still quite uncertain, but at least a portable metal altar is reported to have been used by Achaemenian Persians. The army of Darius III (335–330 B. C.), in its campaign against Alexander the Great, carried a fire upon 'a silver altar (*argenteis altaribus*)' (Curtius Rufus, 3.3.9) at the head of its march. As we do not know what this altar looked like, the possibility of the use of a slender-shafted metal altar by Zoroastrians remains uncertain, but such an altar could not have been used to hold ever-burning fire, as the bowl was too small to contain enough ashes to keep the fire burning safely for a long time. In addition Xenophon reported, perhaps anachronistically, that when the fire was carried by the army of Cyrus the Great, it was carried 'in a great *esxaras*' (*Cyropaedia*, 8.3.12). The word '*esxaras*' means 'brazier' rather than 'altar', so the 'silver altar' of Darius III may in fact have been some sort of brazier or portable vessel.

Now that we have discussed the altars represented on seals, it is possible to state that the second type of altar, having become the standard one, was that used in rituals, because whenever the figure of a priest with *barsman*, wearing Median clothes and performing rites, is found on a seal, the altar is always of this type (Pl. 7–9). If a man, even not in Median dress, has *barsman* in his hand, he can be identified as a priest performing rituals (Pl. 10, 11). Especially on the Seal of Datam(es) (Pl. 8, 9), known from impressions on clay at Persepolis, it is very clear that two priests were engaged in cultic acts, preparing the *haoma*-offering with mortar and pestle before fire on such an altar. Therefore, when the temple cult was introduced to Zoroastrianism, this type of altar was probably the one that was used to hold ever-burning fire.

The establishing of the temple-cult of fire was an act which caused people to call Zoroastrians fire-worshippers. In other words, it was not reasonable to characterize Zoroastrians as fire-worshippers only before they adopted the cult of worshipping perpetually burning fires publicly in temples. In the fragment of Xanthus, who was contemporary with Artaxerxes I (465–423 B. C.), we have one of the oldest surviving Greek sources concerning Persia; and he says only that 'the Persians claim that it was from him (Zoroaster) they derived the rule against burning dead bodies or defiling fire in any other way, and that after this rule had been followed for a long time they finally established it as a custom' (Xanthus, in Müller, I. frag. 19). Herodotus referred to fire together with other things such as the sun, the moon, earth, water and winds,

Fig. 5 Plan of the temple at Susa; Schippmann, *Feuerheiligtümer*, 267, fig. 38. 6,

as being the object of Persian worship. The first writer who gives Zoroastrians a name which particularly connects them with the cult of fire is Strabo (15.3.15), who calls them 'fire-kindlers (pyraethi).' This bears out the assumption that there were no fire temples before the time of Herodotus.

There are, however, two reasons for believing that a temple cult was adopted in Zoroastrianism at some time during the Achaemenian period. Firstly, there is the excavation of the remains of a temple at Susa, one of the Achaemenian capitals, which displayed a ground-plan (Fig. 5) very similar to those of later fire temples, although there are no remains which indicate that this was itself a fire temple. Secondly, it is known from Strabo and Pausanias that a number of fire temples flourished in Asia Minor in the Parthian period. If the introduction of the temple cult of fire into Zoroastrianism in Persia had taken place after the conquest of Alexander the Great, it could not have been disseminated far into Asia Minor, where the Greeks ruled. In other words, it is more likely that a new movement had begun earlier during the time of the Achaemenians, while that dynasty ruled over Asia Minor. There is also evidence from what had been the east of their dominions, Bactria, that a temple-cult of fire existed there, to be adapted in due course by the Kushans.

When, then, was the temple cult of fire introduced into Zoroastrianism? From early Achaemenian days, the first known occurrence of religious changes

was during the reign of Artaxerxes II (404–359 B. C.). He was the first king to add in his inscriptions the names of Mithra and Anāhitā to that of Ahura Mazdā, which alone appears in the inscriptions of previous kings.⁽³⁸⁾ Mithra, primarily god of the covenant,⁽⁴⁹⁾ was associated with the sun and was one of the chief divine beings of the Indo-Iranians. He appears both in the *Vedas* and the *Avesta*, and was one of the three Ahuras⁽⁵⁰⁾ in the *Avesta*, together with Mazdā himself, and Apām Napāt (Son of the Waters). Apām Napāt is known as a water god in the *Vedas*, and is possibly to be identified with Varuṇa,⁽⁵¹⁾ who formed a pair with Mitra;⁽⁵²⁾ but in Iran his position seems to have been taken over in Achaemenian times by Anāhitā. No *Yasht* (hymn) to Apām Napāt survives, but the *yasht* to Arədvī sūrā Anāhitā remains and is many verses long. Arədvī Sūrā was the goddess of a mythical river which waters all the earth, and her true name was possibly *Harahvatī⁽⁵³⁾ (Sarasvatī in India). Because of her nature as river goddess, she could easily replace a water god. Yet there existed another divinity associated with water, namely Tishtriya (Sirius), the rain-bringer, to whom a *yasht* is dedicated. Therefore the reason for Arədvī Sūrā's attaining a position of such pre-eminence as one of the main triad of gods is probably to be sought in external influences, that is, her partial identification with an alien divinity, 'Anāhitā'.

When Artaxerxes II adopted 'Anāhitā' as one of the highest gods, mentioning her name in his inscriptions together with those of Ahura Mazdā and Mithra, he appears at the same time to have introduced the foreign cult of image worship; for Berossus, a Babylonian priest who lived in the third century B. C., wrote of the Persians as follows in the surviving part of his chronicle:

'It was not, however, till many ages had passed that they began to worship statues in human form; ... for this custom (to worship statues in human form) was introduced by Artaxerxes the son of Darius and father of Ochus, who was the first to set up the statue of Aphrodite Anaitis in Babylon, Susa and Ecbatana, and to enjoin this worship upon Persians and Bactrians, upon Damascus and Sardis.'⁽⁵⁴⁾

The only temple-ruins remaining from Achaemenian times, those at Susa, were attributed to the reign of Artaxerxes II for architectural reasons by their excavator, M. Dieulafoy.⁽⁵⁵⁾

Anāhitā/Anaitis was identified at times with Ishtar,⁽⁵⁶⁾ an old and very popular goddess of water and fertility in Mesopotamia, whose cult centred on the worship of her idol. She was also identified in Greece with Aphrodite,

who was distinctly associated with water. Though Herodotus (1. 131) mentioned that 'Aphrodite ... was called by the Persians Mitra', it seems very likely that he made a mistake in using the name 'Mithra' instead of 'Anāhitā'. As far as we can gather, the alien 'Anāhitā' was always represented by the statue of a goddess standing calmly. Once this imageworship was introduced in Iran, the cult of this goddess became very popular. Therefore the reason why, as Diodorus Siculus reports (5.63.1), 'when the Persians were the dominant power in Asia and were plundering all the temples of the Greeks, the precinct of Hemithea⁽⁵⁷⁾ was the sole shrine on which they did not lay hands', may have been the similarity of Hemithea as a healing goddess to Anāhitā. (Hemithea is linked with Apollo, as Anāhitā so often is with Mithra.)

The adoption of image-worship and the accompanying building of temples, must have caused strong reactions among orthodox Zoroastrians. Is it not possible to assume that they were led to place fire itself, the symbolic life-force of the creation of Ahura Mazdā, in the sanctuary of other temples, instead of an image, so as to keep its veneration at the centre of the cult, as enjoined by their prophet? Once it was adopted, the temple cult of fire became the focus of Zoroastrian worship. The temple fire was considered to be the most sacred of all, and the priests very carefully avoided any possibility that it should be defiled. The temple fire shared its public nature with the dynastic fire, which symbolized the nation through its ruler. Victory over an enemy, or over social and moral evils, or alien faiths, were all important to the existence of the nation, and the survival of its government and culture. For this reason, 'it seems likely that the first fires founded were those dedicated to Vərəthraghna, *yazata* of victory',⁽⁵⁸⁾ and that the highest rank of temple fire was then that which is called *Fire of Vərəthraghna*.

To sum up, the fire cults in Achaemenian times can be classified as follows: firstly, there was the cult of the house fire, which was wholly private and was performed by the head of the house, or his wife. Secondly, there was the cult of the dynastic fire, which probably developed from that of the royal house fire. Here the fire was probably no longer used for practical purposes, but was placed upon an altar, symbolizing the life of the dynasty and nation. Thirdly, there came into existence the temple cult of fire, which was possibly evolved under external influence, following the introduction of the image cult of Anāhitā by Artaxerxes II.

We should also make mention here of the open-air cult of fire. Herodotus'

report makes it very probable that the fire was kindled or brought out into the open for sacrificial purposes. And the scenes, possibly showing the cult of dynastic fire, on the reliefs of the tombs of Naqsh-i Rostam (Pl. 19–20) depicts the presence of the sun or the moon or both. Unless these are merely symbols, these rituals must have been held in the open. The solid materials of the fire altar and the plinths in Pasargadae suggest that some particular places were permanently appointed for special observances. At least there seems not to have existed yet the prohibition against allowing the sun's rays to fall upon fire.⁽⁵⁹⁾ Further, Curtius Rufus spoke of the army of Darius III advancing against Alexander the Great preceded by fire, saying also that 'it was an ancestral custom of the Persians not to begin a march before sunrise.' (Curtius Rufus, III. 3.8). No one knows how the silver altar, which he says held the fire, looked, but it is difficult to think of this as a closed vessel, since this fire must have been blazing high, so that the whole army could see it. The co-existence of fire and the sun is also referred to in *Yasna Haptanghāiti*.⁽⁶⁰⁾ Therefore the cult of fire in the open air need not be thought of as taking place only at night.

III. Evidence for the fire-cult from the Arsacid period

The conquest of Iran by Alexander the Great in 331 B. C. brought a new element into the cultural life of the country, mainly through the founding of Hellenic cities. The settlers — Macedonians and Greeks — introduced their own customs and practiced their own art and techniques, which greatly attracted Iranians as well as other conquered peoples. The tendency of the Greeks and Macedonians to identify their own gods with local gods provided the Iranians with a new iconography.

The fire temples of Iran, as well as the temples of Anāhitā, were evidently looted and damaged in the war of conquest by Alexander, and also by individual Seleucid kings. But the temple cult was by then firmly enough established to survive. There is a reference by Isidor of Charax to an eternal fire maintained in the town of Asask in Khorasan, where 'Arsaces' ascended the throne.⁽⁶¹⁾ The Parthians were devoted to the house of Arsaces.⁽⁶²⁾ and 'Arsaces' was adopted as a throne name by all the kings of this line.⁽⁶³⁾ Therefore this eternal fire was probably none other than their dynastic fire, maintained at the birth-

place of the dynasty. It is also noteworthy that even local princes under the suzerainty of the Arsacids maintained their own royal fires.⁽⁶⁴⁾ This must have meant a considerable increase in the number of sacred fires in the Parthian period. A general veneration of fire is moreover attested in the Ardacid era. At the terrace of the ruin of Masjid-i Sulaiman in Khuzistan, where there is burning of natural gas, many Arsacid coins were found, together with Sasanian ones. This suggests that 'it was visited as a place of pilgrimage already in Parthian times'.⁽⁶⁵⁾

In Persian literature the romantic epic *Viš and Rāmīn*, which was composed originally in the 'Pahlavi' language, according to its author, Fakhr ud-dīn Gurgānī,⁽⁶⁶⁾ is held to reflect the history of a branch of the Parthian ruling house.⁽⁶⁷⁾ In one incident in this epic, Moubad, king of Marv, before making a huge fire in front of which his queen, Viš, had to swear her innocence, 'presented innumerable gifts to the fire temple, such that one cannot number them one by one. Coin, royal gems, land, mills, and numerous gardens; fleet steeds of Tukhār, uncountable sheep and oxen. He brought some fire from the temple and heaped up a fire like a mountain on the field. He fed it generously with sandalwood and aloe, nursed it with camphor and musk'.⁽⁶⁸⁾ Later in the poem, when finally Viš and Rāmīn decided to rebel against the king, Viš asked Zard, the king's half-brother who was guarding her, on a pretext about a dream, to go 'to the fire temple, to light a fire to celebrate the happy turn of events'. And she said that 'by my presents I shall increase the fuel of the Fire, in nobility, purity, and peace'.⁽⁶⁹⁾ These remarks reflect the existence of the fire temple and its importance as a religious institution in Parthian times.

Moreover, according to Greek and Roman writers many fire temples existed and flourished in this period. Strabo wrote about fire temples in Cappadocia. He reports that he himself had seen the 'Pyraetheia, noteworthy enclosures' there. 'In the midst of these there is an altar (*bōmos*), on which there is a large quantity of ashes and where the Magi keep the fire ever burning. And there, entering daily, they make incantations for about an hour, holding before the fire their bundle of rods and wearing round their heads high turbans of felt, which reach down over their cheeks far enough to cover their lips' (15. 3.15). Similar observations are reported by Pausanias in the city of Hierocæsareia and Hypaepa in Lydia. 'In each sanctuary (*hieros*) is chamber, and in the chamber are ashes upon an altar. But the colour of these ashes is not the usual colour of ashes. Entering the chamber a magus piles dry wood upon

the altar; he first places a tiara upon his head and then sings to some god or other an invocation in a foreign tongue unintelligible to Greeks, reciting the invocation from a book' (5.27. 5-6). The cult as described by these two authors is very similar to the present day ceremony of (*ēsm*)-*bōy-dādan*, although the detail given by Pausanias of the reading of the prayers 'from a book' is of doubtful validity.

Strabo also spoke of 'the fountain of naphtha, and the fires and the temple of Anca' on the road between the city Demetrias and Sandracae in Mesopotamia (16.1.4). Isidor of Charax referred to the eternal fire in Asaak, as mentioned above. Furthermore, there were three most sacred fires burning in the Sasanian period, which were believed to have existed since very ancient times, and this means that they must have been at least as old as the Arsacid period. They were Ādur Burzēn Mihr, Ādur Farnbāg, and Ādur Gushnasp.

I shall examine here the tradition concerning the first of these three fires, Ādur Burzēn-Mihr, because this fire belonged to Parthia proper. It was believed to have existed since the Creation by Ohrmazd, in order to give help to the world,⁽⁷⁰⁾ and to have been established in its 'abode' (*mān*), or 'appointed place' (*dād-gāh*), on Mount Rēvand by king Vishtāsp in Zoroaster's life-time.⁽⁷¹⁾ Though this legend cannot be taken literally, it suggests at least the very high antiquity of this fire. Rēvand (Av. *Raēvant*) appears to have been a name for the mountain range to the north of the Nishapur plain, for Rēvand still remains as a district name there; but the actual site of this sacred fire is not identified yet. There are two possible sites: one is near a village called Burzīnān, in the district of Rēvand, which may have taken its name from Burzēn-Mihr. The other is the ruins on Mt. Mihr, five miles north from the village Mihr, to the west of Shāhrūd.⁽⁷²⁾ The fire presumably flourished even after the invasion of the Muslims, for it is referred to often in the *Shāhnāme*; but when it was extinguished is not yet known.

There was also a sacred fire in Tūs in Khorasan, which was believed to have been established by Farēdūn (Av. *Thraētaona*).⁽⁷³⁾ Another fire in the west of Parthia was that at Qūmis. Mas'ūdī says that 'on raconte qu'Alexandre, s'en empara, conserva ce feu et ne l'éteignit pas'.⁽⁷⁴⁾ Therefore this fire must have existed before the conquest by Alexander. Thus we know that there were several sacred fires of the first rank established in Parthia proper during the Arsacid period, and that at least one of them, and probably more, existed there before that epoch. As these fires had been greatly venerated,

even the anti-Parthian campaign by the early Sasanians could not bring about their neglect.

The only remains of a Parthian fire temple as yet identified with fair certainty are those of one on the Kūh-i Khwāja, a flattopped hill rising by the Hāmūn lake in Seistan.⁽⁷⁶⁾ The Hāmūn lake has been identified with the Lake *Kāṣaoya*, referred to several times in the *Avesta*.⁽⁷⁶⁾ The region of Seistan seems to occupy a special position in the history of Zoroastrianism, and particular claims were made to link it with Zoroaster.⁽⁷⁷⁾ In Parthian times Seistan was under the suzerainty of the Arsacids, and was governed by the Sūrēn, one of the great Parthian families.⁽⁷⁸⁾

The earliest temple on the Kūh-i Khwāja appears to belong to the second-first centuries B. C., but this seems to have been rebuilt and extended later in the Parthian period. The ground-plan of the first temple (Fig. 6) appears to have been similar to that of the Achaemenian temple excavated at Susa (Fig. 5), shows the temple to have consisted of a large square hall with a smaller antechamber, in which were four free-standing columns, making a square. A stone fire altar of a standard type, having three steps above and below its shaft, was found in the Sasanian ruins (Pl. 34). It is dated in the first century B. C. by E. Herzfeld,⁽⁷⁹⁾ and is probably the oldest surviving Zoroastrian altar.

There are several other temple remains, among which the ruins of site IV in Shahr-i Qūmis in Parthia are interesting. Shahr-i Qūmis has been identified by J. Hansman with Hecatompylos, once a capital of the Arsacids.⁽⁸⁰⁾

The ground plan of site IV (Fig. 7) is similar to that of the temple of Tepe Nūsh-i Jān, discussed in the previous chapter, and the building was carefully filled with shale and sealed and abandoned in the first century B. C., though we do not know the reason for this action. (The temple at Nūsh-i Jān was treated in the same way.) In one of its rooms 'a small plinth of plastered mud bricks supports a shallow fire bowl, 13 cm in diameter', and 'the walls behind and

Fig. 6 Plan of the Parthian temple at Kūh-i Xwāja; *ibid.*, 66, fig. 10.

Fig. 7 Plan of the site IV at Shahr-i Qūmis; J. Hansman and D. Stronach, "Excavations at Shahr-i Qūmis, 1971", *JRAS*, 1974, 9, fig. 1.

above the bowl show signs of burning'.⁽⁸¹⁾ 'The situation of the altar or fire bowl, in one of the corners of Room 5 at Site IV, hardly accords, however, with what we should expect for a sacred fire, for, while priests would surely need to have unimpaired access to such a fire, the bowl at Site IV could be reached only by climbing through a metre-high window set within the secondary wall there'.⁽⁸²⁾ However, the resemblance of the plan and situation to that of the Tepe Nūsh-i Jān temple shows the strong continuity of old Iranian tradition in the Parthian period.

Of a similar date, and comparable as a large religious shrine, the Kushān remains at Surkh Kotal in Afghanistan (Fig. 8) display an artistic blend which D. Schlumberger, their excavator, has called 'Graeco-Iranian', and which has evident connections with the 'art of Gandhara'.⁽⁸³⁾ In the small sanctuary attached to the main temple was found a great bench-altar (Pl. 35), a sort of platform with figures of two large birds on the front. Because of the destruction of the upper part, the birds' heads are missing. As the sanctuary contained a large amount of ashes, this altar may well have borne an ever-burning fire.

Fig. 8 Plan of the temple at Surkh Kotal: Schippmann, *op. cit.*, 494, fig. 81.

However, both the ground plan of the building and the shape of the altar differ from known Zoroastrian examples, therefore it is not safe to assume that this was a Zoroastrian temple. Nevertheless, it seems to show the influence of the Zoroastrian temple cult of fire, established under the Achaemenians, on the eclectic faith of the Kushans.

The influence of the fire cult can also be seen on the plinths of statues of the Buddha or Bodhisattva in Gandhara art. There the people pray before a fire altar which appears to be of a Zoroastrian type (Pl. 36–41). These altars were probably made of stone, and had a large bowl to hold the fire. The same type of altar is also shown in front of a venerated person in carvings (Pl. 42–43); and it is depicted on a Kushan seal (Pl. 44) which had four faces showing Shiva, two unidentified figures, Heracles, and 'a prince in Indo-Scythian dress with forward-pointing helmet, sacrificing over altar'.⁽⁸⁴⁾ This latter scene is a very popular design on the obverse of Kushan coins (Pl. 45–46). The similarity of these fire altars to Zoroastrian ones sheds light on the influence of the Zoroastrian temple cult of fire in these areas during the Arsacid period.

Pars, the homeland of the Achaemenians, was governed in this period by vassals first of the Seleucids and then the Arsacids, who issued coins with Aramaic legends, and who are known only by these, so that their origins and history remain obscure. There are four series of such coins, three of which bear designs which are of interest for the fire cult.

The first set of coins were issued in a period covering the third century to

the middle of the second century B. C.; and in this period rulers bearing the title *fratarāka* (governor)⁽⁸⁵⁾ are known, named Bagadates I, Oborzoz, Artaxerxes I and Autophradates. The obverse of the coins shows the profile of the king, wearing a 'Median' hood and diadem.⁽⁸⁶⁾ On the reverse of the first issue of Bagadates I (Pl. 47), the '*fratarāka*' himself is shown seated on a chair with a long stick in his right hand, wearing a Median gown. In front of him is a standard with four tassels. On the next issue by the same governor (Pl. 48), he appears standing in front of a tower-like object, very similar to the Ka'ba-i Zardusht at Naqsh-i Rostam,⁽⁸⁷⁾ below the Achaemenian royal tombs. This object has, however, three small projections on its top. On later issues it is surmounted by a pair of horn-like or stepped projections, something like battlements (Pl. 49–50). The governor wears 'Median' clothes, as he did on the previous one, and raises his right hand in a gesture of respect.

The problem lies in the nature of the object before which he stands. This is usually considered to be either a fire altar or a fire temple.⁽⁸⁸⁾ Firstly we shall examine whether it can be identified as a fire altar. The object appears to be taller than the king and this is abnormally large for an altar. It is true that a huge fire altar appears on the reverse of coins in the middle of the reign of Ardashir I, the founder of the Sasanian dynasty (+A. D. 240), but the nature of the two dynasties is very different. The Sasanians possessed a vast empire and sought to unite its peoples under their single authority, both in politics and religion. However, it is improbable that the '*Fratarākas*', who bore the title 'governor' only, ever hoped to re-unite the whole of Iran under Persian rule, and so they are unlikely to have laid visual claim to great political authority or religious leadership. Even if each of the three battlement-like projections on the object in question were an altar, one would further have to explain why three small altars should be set upon a huge one. In addition, and more cogently, there seems to be no fire upon this object. The top part cannot itself represent the natural shape of a flame. It is improbable that a fire altar would be venerated without the fire, for the object of Zoroastrian cult is the fire itself, and not the altar,⁽⁸⁹⁾ Thus it is unlikely on every count that this object is a fire altar.

The other suggestion is that it is a fire temple. According to Strabo, the fire temples of Parthian days were forms of enclosure (*sēkos*)⁽⁹⁰⁾ and it is likely therefore that they had a flat plan, rather than being tall tower-like buildings. Moreover, the objects depicted on the coins seem to have a huge heavy door

and blank sides without anything which could represent windows. Further, even if this were a fire temple, there would be no reason for the king to do homage to it from outside, and not to go in to pray. A fire temple cannot itself be an object of worship. Therefore the identification of the object as a fire temple is also unlikely.

The question then remains, what could it be? That the king raises his hand in respect suggests the possibility that this was in some way at least the source of his authority, secular or religious. The justification for a king's authority in that period probably depended mainly on a link with the Achaemenians, either by blood or by the orthodoxy of his faith. It is known that Persian princes named their sons with Achaemenian kings' names, that is Darius or Artaxerxes, and maintained their own royal fire. The relief on the tomb of Qiz-qapan in Kurdistan⁽⁹¹⁾ is an instance of the upholding of the Zoroastrian tradition by local princes (Fig. 9). Here are depicted two men, wearing 'Median' clothes and flanking the fire altar. Both have bows in their left hands and are raising their right hands upward. Their mouths are covered in a similar manner to figures depicted on the gold fragments of the Oxus Treasure (Pl. 17) and the relief from Bünyan (Pl. 16).

In the light of these considerations the object on the coins may represent the Ka'ba-i Zardusht, which seems to have been accepted generally as the symbol of the Achaemenians at Naqsh-e Rostam (as would be the probable

Fig. 9 Tomb relief at Quz-i qapān; C. J. Edmonds, "A tomb in Kurdistan", *Iraq*, 1934, 186, fig. 2.

reason for Shāpur I later setting his inscription on its base). This building may have been connected with the Fravashi cult. The *fravashi* was the immortal element of living things, and the soul of the dead was also called *fravashi*. To make statues of their ancestors and relatives, and to keep them in a special place, was a part of general Zoroastrian observance under the Arsacids.⁽⁹²⁾ Buildings such as the 'Square Hall' at Nisa.⁽⁹³⁾ and the shrine at Shami.⁽⁹⁴⁾ were presumably devoted to the Fravashi cult. The *Fratarākas* may have placed the Ka'ba-i Zardusht on their coins so as to claim the *fravashis* of the Achaemenian kings as those of their own ancestors. This seems to be the most plausible explanation at the moment.

The second series of the coins of Pars was issued around 150 to 100 B. C., in the reigns of Darius I and Autophradates II. One characteristic of this period is that these local rulers then called themselves 'shāh' (*MLK*'), but this cannot mean that they were independent. 'Shāh' was a general term used both for absolute rulers and for vassal-monarchs; and it is likely that these Persian princes were under Arsacid suzerainty by then. The main change in the coin design is the appearance of a bird upon the standard beside the main object — the putative ka'ba;⁽⁹⁵⁾ and after one issue by Darius I (Pl. 50), the standard appears as a mere pedestal, and the object is small and simplified (Pl. 51–52.) There is a winged figure above the projections of this building, which is similar to, but not so clearly drawn as, the Achaemenian winged disc. There is still no sign of fire upon the object.

The period of the third series of coins is around 100 B. C., and the names of Daruis II, Oxathres and Artaxerxes II appear on them. The rulers are shown in profile on the obverse of the coins, wearing Parthian headdress. On the reverse there is a fire altar. This fire altar is of a standard type, and comparatively narrow and small. There is a semicircular shape upon the fire altar which may be the mound of ashes, and there is a fire blazing above it (Pl. 53). Before it stands a king, wearing a long gown with the skirt tightened around the waist, and with the *barsom* in his hand. There is no information to explain this change of design upon the reverse of the coin. Parthia itself was on the move under and after Mithradates II (c. 124–89/87 B. C.), but the effect of this is likely to have been comparatively small upon the province of Pars, as far as can be determined. A possible explanation is rather that, as the memory of the Achaemenians faded, and the political force of their *fravashi*-cult diminished, the fire altar, more plainly a religious symbol, was used

instead to represent the royal house.

But the fire altar disappeared again after a short time. In the fourth period of the coinage of Pars, from the first century B. C. to the rise of the Sasanians, the names of only eight kings are known and the designs of their coins were all different. On the obverse of the coins there was always the profile of the king, but on the reverse were such designs as the king's face, or bust, or a flying bird, or a design such as the moon, stars and diadem.

In addition to those coins of the provincial rulers of Pars, there are many coins issued by the Arsacids themselves. The most general design was the king's face on the obverse and a male or female god's statue on the reverse, with a Greek legend. The practice of depicting a god's figure on the coin, and hence invoking the god's protection for the king, and asserting the king's religious authority, was evidently due to Greek influence, since the mints of the period were almost all in Greek cities.

Arsaces, the founder of the Arsacid dynasty, appears among the figures of gods, and this is interesting because it reflects the custom of venerating the ancestors of the Arsacids. But the interpretation of the god's figures needs some consideration. One problem is presented by the nature of Hellenic culture. The Macedonians and Greeks, as they colonised, tended to identify the local gods with their own gods, and so, among Zoroastrian *yazatas*, they identified Ahura Mazdā with Zeus, Mithra with Apollo-Helios-Hermes, and Vərəθrağhna with Heracles-Ares.⁽⁹⁶⁾ Conversely, the Iranians presumably regarded the representation of gods on the coins as those of Zoroastrian *yazatas* in Greek guise. That is, in Arsacid times, when Iranians saw Aphrodite they presumably thought of Anāhitā, when Zeus, of Ahura Mazdā. Once in the Arsacid period a king, Vologeses I (c. 50–76), set a fire altar on some of his bronze coin-issues (Pl. 54–55), possibly to invoke the protection of fire instead of that of a *yazata*. Vologeses I also introduced the Aramaic legends instead of Greek ones on his coins. Moreover, the name Vologeses is remembered as that of a king who initiated the compilation of the *Avesta* and the secondary religious works in Arsacid times,⁽⁹⁷⁾ though we do not know whether that Vologeses was Vologeses I or one of the other kings of the same name.

Finally, we have to mention a passage in the *Vendidad*, the Avestan *nask*, which was probably compiled in Parthian times. There (*Vd.* 8.81 ff.) the expression *dāityā- gātu-* ('appointed place') is first used for a fire sanctuary. All this cumulative evidence indicates that the temple cult of fire was firmly est-

ablished in Parthian times.

(To be continued)

Notes

- (1) Y. 27,13. This is one of the three most sacred prayers, and 'belongs to the *vača ěathru-shāmrūta* (words that are to be spoken four times)'. See H. Reichelt, *Avesta Reader, texts, notes, glossary and index*, Strassburg, 1911, 98. This prayer was believed to have been recited by Ahura Mazdā himself before the Creation of the material world (Y. 19.8-9).
- (2) See Boyce, *History*, 190: A. S. Shahbazi, 'The "traditional Date of Zoroaster" explained', *BSOAS*, 1977, 25-35.
- (3) They are Y. 28-34. 43-51, 53.
- (4) *GBd.* I.54.
- (5) In the *Vedas* it is called *ṛta*, and means mainly 'order' (of the universe and the sacrifice).
- (6) Boyce, *History*, 199.
- (7) *Ashavan*, 'possessor of *asha*' and *drugvant*, 'he who has the Drug's nature' are opposed.
- (8) Apām Napāt was closely linked with Agni in the *Vedas*, see L. H. Gray, "The Indo-Iranian deity Apām Napāt", *ARW*, 3, 1900, 18-51, and further, Boyce, *History*, 40-52.
- (9) G. G. Cameron, "Zoroaster the herdsman", *IJJ*, 10, 1967-68, 161-281.
- (10) A. B. Keith, *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishad*, Harvard, 1925, 625.
- (11) E. A. Gardner, "Altar" *ERE*, I, 343.
- (12) *Ibid.*
- (13) E. E. Sikes, "Hearth, Hearth-Gods (Greek)", *ERE*, VI, 563.
- (14) For details, see E. F. Schmidt, *Persepolis*, III, Chicago, 1970, 'The tower', 34-49, and for the Zindan, *Persepolis*, I, 1953, 23-24.
- (15) D. Stronach, "Uartian and Achaemenian Tower Temple", *JNES*, 1967, 278-288.
- (16) Darius, *Behistun*, I. 63, see R. G. Kent, *Old Persian Grammar, Texts, Lexicon*, New Haven, 2nd ed., 1953, 116, 120.
- (17) D. Stronach, *art. cit.*, 287.
- (18) 'one worthy of worship', see Boyce, *History*, 194-196.
- (19) The Greeks and Persians alike stewed the meat of the sacrifice, which might be performed in the open, far from ovens.
- (20) Zela is the place in Cappadocia where Cyrus' famous victory over the Sacae took place in the sixth century B. C. Although Strabo says that 'Pompey added considerable territory to it' and made it one of the cities which he organised after his overthrow of Mithridates' (Strabo, 11. 8.4.), Zela had an earlier existence.
- (21) Although they are situated within the oddly aligned enclosure wall, next to the Terraced Mound, both these are considered to be later constructions than the two plinths, see D. Stronach "Excavations at Pasargadae: Third Preliminary Report", *Iran*, III, 1965, 28.
- (22) The southern one is 2.16 m. high and 2.43 m. square, the northern one 2.10 m. high and 2.80 m. square.
- (23) As altars, several suggestions have been made as to the divinities to whom they were dedicated. A. T. Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire*, Chicago, 1948, 61, regards them as twin altars 'to the tribal divinities Anahita and Ahuramazda'. R. Ghirshman, *Persia, from the Origins to Alexander the Great*, tr. by S. Gilbert and J. Emmons, London, 1964, 228, assumes three altars to Ahuramazda, Mithra and Anahita, with another undiscovered altar elsewhere. A. Godard, "Les Monuments du Feu", *Athār-e Irān*, III, 1938, 67, considers them as altars to fire and water.
- (24) D. Stronach, *art. cit.*, 24.
- (25) *Loc. cit.*

- (26) *Ibid.*
- (27) Hestia was goddess of the Hearth and was usually not anthropomorphized in the Greek pantheon. In her temple fire was placed on a hearth in the centre instead of an image, see E. E. Sikes, *art. cit.*, 562–3.
- (28) “Sāsānian Seals”, in *SPA*, I, 784.
- (29) Thus in Sasanian times, Shapuhr I (A. D. 241–272) stated that he established fires at which sheep were to be sacrificed every day.
- (30) For definition of “the court style”, see J. Boardman, *Greek Gems and Finger Rings, Early Bronze Age to Late Classical*, London, 1970, 305.
- (31) Georgina Thompson, “Iranian dress in the Achaemenian Period”. *Iran*, III, 1965, 125.
- (32) *Barāsmān* (*barsom* in Pahlavi) could mean a bunch of twigs held by the priest, or the grass which was spread on the place for the sacrificial ritual.
- (33) “Median” clothes consisted of a loose tunic, tied round the waist, and trousers, and occasionally a mantle with long sleeves, worn loose upon the shoulders and also a felt hood which had long side-pieces that could cover the mouth. It is not certain who the figures shown here represent. As they hold *barāsmān* and cover their mouths, they are presumably performing some ritual act; but as long as the cult object is not seen, this is only speculative.
- (34) In some Sassanian coins the king and his heir, known by characteristic insignia, were depicted one on each side of the fire altar. See Chapter 4.
- (35) Dura-Europos was situated to the north-west of Baghdad on the right bank of the Euphrates. The site has been excavated by Yale University and the French Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres from 1922 onwards.
- (36) Ann Perkins, *The Art of Dura Europos*, Oxford, 1973, 98–100, interprets this scene as a god on a camel receiving the offerings on the altar.
- (37) E. Akurgal, *Die Kunst Anatoliens von Homer bis Alexander*, Berlin, 1961, 173–4, suggests that the remains from Bünyan (Pl. 16) is the one of a fire altar; but unfortunately the top part has been destroyed, so that this is uncertain.
- (38) M. Boyce, *The Letter of Tansar*, Rome, 1968, 47.
- (39) For more examples see Schmidt, *op. cit.*, III.
- (40) D. Stronach, “Tepe Nūsh-i Jān, 1970: Second Interim Report”, *Iran*, XI, 1973, 129–138.
- (41) *Ibid.*, 137.
- (42) *Ibid.*
- (43) Boyce, *History*, 190–191; A. Shapur Shahbazi, *art. cit.*
- (44) D. Stronach, *art. cit.*, 136, n. 18.
- (45) W. H. Ward, *Cylinders and other Ancient Oriental Seals in the Library of J. Pierpont Morgan*, New Haven, 1920, 118.
- (46) J. Boardman, *op. cit.*, 305.
- (47) Xanthus, in C. Müller, *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, I, Paris, 1885, 42, frag. 19. For the translation, W. S. Fox and R. E. K. Pemberth, *Passages in Greek and Latin Literature Relating to Zoroaster and Zoroastrianism*, K. R. Cama Oriental Institute Publication 4, Bombay, 1928, 1.
- (48) See R. C. Kent, *op. cit.*, 154–155.
- (49) Boyce, *History*, 24–27; Gershevitch, *AHM*, 26 ff.
- (50) *ahura* is equivalent to Vedic *asura*, and means “lord”. In the *Vedas*, the term *asuras* also became used of a groups of demonic spirits, but in the Avesta it continued to be used only for the highest divinities. See Boyce, *History*, 23–24.
- (51) *Ibid.*, 40–52.
- (52) *Ibid.*, 24–28.

- (53) *Ibid.*, 71.
- (54) Berossus, *Chronicon Chaldaea*, 3, quoted by Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus*, V.
- (55) Schippmann, *Feuerheiligtümer*. 273–274.
- (56) Ishtar was identified with many goddesses in the Middle East in ancient times. Her characters are also numerous, but primarily she was a water goddess and giver of life. See E. Dhorme, *Les Religions de Babylonie et d'Assyrie*, Paris, 1945.
- (57) Hemithea ("Half-goddess") was a daughter of Staphylus and Chrysothemis. On her origin see Diodorus Siculus, 5. 62–63. Her worship flourished in Cheronesus.
- (58) M. Boyce, "On the Zoroastrian Temple Cult of Fire", *JAOS*, 1973, 459.
- (59) Dhabhar, *Rivāyats*, 56.
- (60) See Chapter I.
- (61) *Parthian Stations*, tr. by W. H. Schoff, Philadelphia, 1914, 11. See further Schippmann, *Feuerheiligtümer*. 33–34.
- (62) Strabo, 16.1.28.
- (63) *Ibid.*, 15.1.36.
- (64) M. Boyce, tr., *The Letter of Tansar*, Roma, 1968, 47.
- (65) M. A. Stein, *Old Routes of Western Iran*, London, 1940, 162.
- (66) Fakhr ud-Dīn Gurgānī, *Vīs u Rāmīn*, tr. by G. Morrison, New York / London, 1972, xi.
- (67) "In fact, at no period of the long history of Iran did the material, and especially geographical conditions, correspond to those described in *Vīs u Rāmīn*, except at the time of Parthian dominion, under the rule of the Arsacid dynasty." V. F. Minorsky, "vīs-u-Rāmīn, a Parthian romance", *Iranica*, Tehran, 1964, 178.
- (68) Gurgānī, *op. cit.*, 134.
- (69) *Ibid.*, 337.
- (70) *GBd.*, 18.8.
- (71) *Ibid.*, 18.14.
- (72) A. V. W. Jackson, *From Constantinople to the Home of Omar Khayyam*, New York, 1911, 211–217. Schippmann, *Feuerheiligtümer*, 23–30.
- (73) Mas'ūdī, *Les Prairies d'or*, ed. by B. de Meynard and P. de Courteille, Vol. I, Paris, 1962, 1400. This fire was called "Azar Khirad (the fire of intellect)" in the *Dabistān or School of Manners*, Paris, 1843, Vol. I, 52.
- (74) *Ibid.*, 1401.
- (75) See E. Herzfeld, *Iran in the Ancient East-archaeological Studies Presented in the Lowell Lectures at Boston*, London, 1941; Schippmann, *Feuerheiligtümer*, 57–70.
- (76) This lake is believed to hold the seed of Zoroaster, from which are to be born the three *Saoshyants*, Saviours.
- (77) See "Wonders of Seistan", *The Pahlavi Texts*, ed. by Jamasp-Asana, Bombay, 1897, 25–26. For other allusions see A. V. W. Jackson, *Zoroaster, the Prophet of Ancient Iran*, New York, 1898, 45.
- (78) See Christensen, *L'Iran*, 103.
- (79) *op. cit.*, 301.
- (80) "The Problems of Qūmis", *JRAS*, 1968, 110–139.
- (81) J. Hansman and D. Stronach, "Excavations at Shahr-i Qūmis, 1971", *JRAS*, 1974, 10.
- (82) *Ibid.*, 17.
- (83) See his article, "The Excavations at Surkh Kotal and the Problem of Hellenism in Bactria and India", *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 47, 1963, 77–95.
- (84) J. M. Rosenfield, *The Dynastic Arts of the Kushans*, Los Angeles, 1967, 103.
- (85) This title is known from the Aramaic leged *prtrk'*.
- (86) Wearing a diadem as a symbol of kingship is presumably due to Greek influence. This custom continued to be practiced in Sasanian times as well. "Median" clothes consisted

of a loose tunic, tied round the waist, and trousers, and occasionally a mantle with long sleeves, worn loose upon the shoulders and also a felt hood which had long side-pieces that could cover the mouth.

- (87) See Chapter II, above.
- (88) See G. F. Hill, *Catalogue of Greek Coins in British Museum 28, Arabia Mesopotamia Persia*, London, 1922, 195–215; E. C. F. Babelon, *Traité de Monnaies Grecques et Romaines*, II-2, Paris, 1901, 33–71.
- (89) According to modern custom in Persia, when a new fire temple is built and the fire is moved to it, the old one is simply abandoned.
- (90) 15.3.15.
- (91) See C. J. Edmonds, "A tomb in Kurdistan", *Iraq*, I, 1934, 183–192.
- (92) See M. Boyce, "Iconoclasm among the Zoroastrians", in *Christianity, Judaism and Other Greco-Roman Cults, Studies for Morton Smith at Sixty*, ed. by J. Neusner, Part 4, Leiden, 1975, 101–103.
- (93) See G. A. Pugachenkova, "Architectural Monuments of Nisa", *Vestnik Drevnei Istorii*, 1951, 4, 185–199; cited in M. A. R. Colledge, *The Parthians, Ancient Peoples and Places*, London, 1967, 109.
- (94) See A. Stein, *op. cit.*, 325–326.
- (95) Birds were important in Zoroastrian mythology (for instance the Saēna bird in the *Avesta* and Pahlavi texts.)
- (96) See H. Waldman, *Die Kommagenischen Kulturreformen unter könig Mithradates I Kallinikos und seinen Sohne Angiochos I*, Leiden, 1973, 161–164; M. A. R. Colledge, *Parthian Art*, London, 1977, 83.
- (97) *DKM*, 412.3–415.3, transl. by R. C. Zaehner, *Zurvan*, 8.

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2. Cylinder seal; L. Delaporte, *Catalogue des Cylindres Orientaux et des Cachets Assyro-Babyloniens, Perses et Syrocappado-ciens de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris, 1910, Pl. XXVII, 401.
3. Cylinder seal in Boston Museum; Pope, *SPA*, IV, 123 F.
4. Clay label of the seal No. 57; E. F. Schmidt, *Persepolis*, II, Chicago, 1957, PT6 100, Pl. 13.
5. Clay label of the seal No. 22; *ibid.*, PT4 706, Pl. 7.
6. Clay label of the seal No. 23; *ibid.*, PT4 847, Pl. 7.
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8. Clay label of the seal No. 20, Seal of Datam(es); E. F. Schmidt, *op. cit.*, PT3 363, P. 7.
9. Clay label of the seal No. 20; *ibid.*, PT3 384, Pl. 7.
10. Stamp seal, British Museum 128849, The Trustees of the British Museum.
11. Cylinder seal; L. Delaporte, *op. cit.*, Pl. XXVII. 400.
12. Cone seal; W. H. Ward, "The Cylinder and Cone Seals in the Museum of the Hermitage, St. Petersburg", *Old Testament and Semitic Studies in Memory of William Rainey Harper*, ed., R. F. Harper, Vol. I, Chicago, 1908, 379, fig. 26.
13. Cylinder seal; C. H. Gordin, "Western Asiatic Seals in the Walters Art Gallery", *Iraq*, 1939, Pl. XIII, 108.
14. Cylinder seal; L. Spelcers, *Catalogue des Intailles et Empreintes Orientales des Musées Royaux du Cinquantenaire*, Supplément, Brussels, 1943, 179, 1496.
15. Tomb relief of Darius I; E. F. Schmidt, *Persepolis*, III, Chicago, 1970, Pl. 19.

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16. Plinth with carving from Bünyan; Ekren Akurgal, *Die Kunst Anatoliens von Homer bis Alexander*, Berlin, 1961, 173, Pl. 120.
17. Gold plaque; O. M. Dalton, *The Treasure of the Oxus*, 3rd ed., London, 1964, Pl. XIV, 48.
18. Cylinder seal; E. F. Schmidt, *Persepolis*, II, *op. cit.*, PT6 699, Pl. 15.
19. Bas-relief of camel-rider; Ann Perkins, *The art of Dura-Europos*, Oxford, 1973, Pl. 40.
20. Tomb relief of Xerxes; E. F. Schmidt, *Persepolis*, III, *op. cit.*, Pl. 40.
21. Tomb relief of Artaxerxes III; *ibid.*, Pl. 70.
22. Cylinder seal; E. F. Schmidt, *Persepolis*, II, *op. cit.*, PT5 791, Pl. 16.

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42. Stone relic; *ibid.*, Vol. I, 591, fig. 293.

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43. Stone relic; *ibid.*, Vol. 1, 591, fig. 294.
44. Cylinder; J. M. Rosenfield. *op. cit.*, Pl. XVI, 6.
45. Coin of Vāsudeva; *ibid.*, Pl. X, 208.
46. Coin of Hormizd; *ibid.*, Pl. XIII, 256.
47. Silver tetradrachm of Bagadates I; Pope, *SPA*, IV, 126 E.
48. Silver tetradrachm of Bagadates I; *ibid.*, 126 F.
49. Silver tetradrachm of Autophradates I; *ibid.*, 126 G.

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50. Silver tetradrachm of Darius I; *ibid.*, 126 H.
51. Silver drachm of Darius I; *ibid.*, 126 J.
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