

**ABBOTT EVELYN, DUNCKER  
MAX**

**THE HISTORY OF  
ANTIQUITY, VOL.  
5 (OF 6)**

**Evelyn Abbott**  
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**The History of**  
**Antiquity, Vol. 5 (of 6)**

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# **Max Duncker**

## **The History of Antiquity, Vol. 5 (of 6)**

### **BOOK VII.**

#### **THE ARIANS OF EASTERN IRAN**

##### **CHAPTER I.**

###### **THE LAND AND THE TRIBES**

Between the valley of the Indus and the land of the Euphrates and Tigris, bounded on the south by the ocean and the Persian Gulf, on the north by the broad steppes which the Oxus and Jaxartes vainly attempt to fertilise, by the Caspian Sea and the valley of the Aras, lies the table-land of Iran. Rising to an average height of 4000 feet above the level of the sea, it forms an oblong, the length of which from east to west is something more than 1500 miles. The breadth in the east is about 1000 miles, but at the narrowest point, from the Caspian Sea to the Persian Gulf, it is not much more than 500 miles; while the western edge, reaching from the Persian Gulf to the mountains of Aderbeijan,

again extends over a distance of about 750 miles.

In this seclusion, neither penetrated by bays of the sea nor traversed by mighty rivers, the region exhibits a certain similarity to the highlands of Arabia. The centre of the Iranian land, like that of Arabia, is occupied by a great desert where only nomadic life is possible. But the soil of Iran is more diversified in regard to elevation and depression. The northern half of the land is higher than the southern, the centre is hollowed out in the form of a trough, so that in the east, at any rate, the waters from the inner slopes of the mountainous rim fall into the depression, and collect in fructifying lakes. The oases and fertile valleys are more numerous and extensive than in Arabia, and though the rivers of the inner table-land, like the streams of the northern edge, which flow to the north, are lost in the sand or end in unimportant lakes, they nevertheless render agriculture possible over wide tracts of country.

The northern side is more diversified and superior in formation to the south. The southern edge, which sinks down to the ocean, closely resembles Arabia in the climate and the nature of the country; the mountains of the north, on the other hand, exhibit green pastures and splendid forests where Arabia has nothing but bare peaks: in the Hindu Kush, and Elburz on the Caspian Sea, as well as in Aderbeijan, they rise into vast Alpine districts. The eastern edge, extending over a distance of 900 miles, rises like a steep wall out of the valley of the Indus; a few long and difficult passes lead from the Indus to the high

ground, which on the north commences with cold bare flats, and on the south with slopes still more desolate and barren, and at the same time intolerably hot. Only the terraces of the valley of the Cabul, which flows down into the Indus, allow a convenient exit towards the north, and present a soil to a great extent so fertile that three harvests can be reaped in the year. The western edge of Iran, on the other hand, is formed by parallel ridges running from the north-west to the south-east, between which, beside extensive mountain pastures, lie narrow and well-watered valleys. In the north-west the low-lying regions are rich in meadows and forest; while those between the abutting ridges of the western and southern edge are warm, and even hot, in climate, rich and luxuriant in vegetation.

On this table-land the heat is softened, though not entirely, by the elevation of the soil. After violent storms in the spring, no cloud darkens the sky from May to September; the atmosphere is peculiarly dry and clear, and through the fine air can be seen, bright and sharp, the outlines of the mountains and the whole country, while at night the star-lit sky almost replaces the light of day. The changes in temperature are sudden and severe. From cold, snow-covered terraces, 8000 feet in height, we suddenly descend to the glowing heat of the plains, lying barely 2000 feet above the sea. In the north-east oppressive heat alternates with great cold; the north suffers from a severe winter, with heavy falls of snow and icy storms, blowing over the Caspian Sea and the broad steppes; in the south the air is filled with the dust of

the desert, here extraordinarily fine, and the hot winds give the heaps of sand the appearance of changing waves, and roll masses of it to the sky.<sup>1</sup>

As far back as our information extends, we find the table-land of Iran occupied by a group of nations closely related to each other, and speaking dialects of the same language. On the edges of that great desert, which occupies the centre of the land, are tracts of pasture, and further inland, treeless steppes, which, however, are watered here and there by brackish pools, and produce a salt vegetation barely sufficient to provide buffaloes and camels with sustenance, until the soil becomes entirely barren. In the western part of these steppes wandered a pastoral people, whom Herodotus calls Sagartians. They were horsemen, but, according to the historian's statement, carried no weapons of attack beyond a dagger and a rope of twisted straps, at one end of which was a loop. In this they placed their confidence in battle; they threw it over men and horses, and so dragged them down and strangled them. In the inscriptions of the Achæmenids this nation is called *Açagarta*.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ritter, "Erdkunde," 7, 234-240; 8, 721.

<sup>2</sup> Herod. 1, 125; 7, 85; Lassen, "Z. D. M. G." 6, 55. Herodotus reckons the Paretaceni among the tribes of the Medes (1, 101); the Sagartians, whom he represents as armed partly like Persians, partly like Pactyans, with the Carmanians, he places among the Persians. Yet the nomad Sagartians seem rather to have had relations with the Medes than the Persians; for, according to the inscription of Behistun, a rebel obtains a following among the Sagartians by giving himself out to be a descendant of Cyaxares, the Median king. Ptolemy places the Sagartians in Media; cf. Plin. "Hist. Nat." 6, 29.

Close to the Indus, and beyond the bare, hot, treeless shores of the ocean, the southern part of the plain consists of sandy flats, in which nothing grows but prickly herbs and a few palms. The springs are a day's journey from each other, and often more. This region was possessed by a people whom Herodotus calls Sattagydæ, and the companions of Alexander of Macedonia, Gedrosians.<sup>3</sup> Among the nations of the East who were subject to them, the inscriptions of the Achæmenids mention the "*Thataghus*," which the Greeks understood as Sattagush and Gadrush. Neighbours of the Gandarians, who, as we know, dwelt on the right bank of the Indus down to the Cabul, the Gedrosians led a wandering, predatory life; under the Persian kings they were united into one satrapy with the Gandarians.<sup>4</sup> To the south of the Gedrosians, on the coast, there dwelt, according to the Greeks, a miserable race, eaters of fish and tortoises, who built their houses of the bones of whales thrown up by the sea. They wove their nets from the bark of palms, and their weapons were javelins hardened in the fire.<sup>5</sup> The edge on the south allows no streams of any size to flow to the sea, so that even to this day this coast presents only a few small fertile spots. About equally distant from the northern and southern edge of the table-land, to the east of the desert of the interior, lies a considerable lake, now called Hamun, but known to the Greeks as Areios. It forms the centre

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<sup>3</sup> Arrian, "Anab." 6, 22 ff.; "Ind." 25, 26; Curtius, 9, 10, 5.

<sup>4</sup> Behistun, 1, 6; Persep. 1, 17; Herod. 3, 91.

<sup>5</sup> Strabo, p. 711; Arrian, "Ind." 25, 26; "Anab." 6, 23.

of a cultivated district, though the storms from the west often drive the sand of the desert to its shores. This basin is formed by and receives important streams flowing from the inner slopes of the northern and eastern edge. From the southern spurs of the Hindu Kush comes the Hilmend, the Haetumat of the Avesta, *i. e.* rich in bridges, the Etymandros of the Greeks, which has a course of about 400 miles, and before falling into the lake is joined by the Arghandab. The Lora, which flows from the east, but further to the south, does not now reach the lake. From the north flow the Harut and Chashrud. Round this lake, and on the banks of the Hilmend, the Arghandab, and the Lora, lies a fruitful region; higher up the walls of the valleys are covered with forests, until towards the east the upper course of the rivers is enclosed by bare cliffs. On the shores of the Hamun, and in the valley of the Hilmend, dwelt a people whom the inscriptions of the Achæmenids call *Zaraka*, *i. e.* dwellers on the lake. A lake in Old Persian is *Daraya*; in the ancient language of the East, *Zarayanh*; in modern Persian, *Zareh*. Hence we understand why Herodotus calls this nation Sarangians, the later Greeks, Zarangians and Drangians. According to the Greeks the Zarakas were a warlike nation, armed with Median bows and spears, unsurpassed in battle on horseback; and a tribe of them which lived under good and equitable laws bore the name of Ariaçpians.<sup>6</sup> The ruins of cities and works of irrigation testify to the former prosperity of this region. East of the Zarakas, up the valley of the Arghandab,

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<sup>6</sup> Arrian, "Anab." 3, 27; Diod. 17, 81; Strabo, p. 724.

dwelt the Arachoti. In the inscriptions of the Achæmenids they are called *Harauvati*; in the Avesta, *Harahvaiti*, i. e. the rich in water. These names the Arachoti received from the river on which they were settled, the older name of which was Arachotus (*Sarasvati*).<sup>7</sup> Herodotus does not designate the Arachoti by this name derived from the river of their land, but by the tribal name of Pactyes; he tells us that they wore peculiar bows, daggers, and skins.<sup>8</sup> The Afghans, who in ancient times occupied the region from the Suleiman mountains on the east as far as the Arghandab on the west, Shorawak on the south, the Cabul and the range of the Sefid-Kuh on the north, and in the middle ages forced their way to Cabul and Peshawur, still call themselves Pashtun and Pakhtun, or Rohilo, *i. e.* mountaineers. They still speak their old rough mountain language, which is closely connected with the dialects of the Arian tribes on the Indus.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Vol. IV. p. 33.

<sup>8</sup> The city of Kapisakani, which Darius, according to the inscription of Behistun (3, 9, 1), conquered in the land of the Arachoti, is no doubt the Capissa of Pliny, in the district of Capissene; "Hist. Nat." 6, 25. Pliny speaks of the city and river of Cabul as belonging to the Arachoti. The inhabitants of the southern slope of the Hindu Kush are known to the Greeks as Paropanisadæ. The explanation of the name by Paropanisos (Paropamisus), Paropanishadha, given by Lassen, is quoted in Vol. IV. p. 21, *n.* 2. In the Babylonian text of the inscription of Behistun, the Gandaras of the Persian text are called Parupanisana. In the narrower sense the name denotes the south-western part of the range of the Hindu Kush, the group which forms the cradle of the Herirud and Hilmend, the modern Ghuristan, to the west of the plateau of Ghasna.

<sup>9</sup> Lassen, "Indische Alterthumskunde," 1, 428. Fr. Müller ("Ueber die Sprache der Afghanen") is of the opinion that the Afghan does not come between Indian and Persian, but belongs to the Iranian stem, and the Afghan has preserved the old Bactrian

Eastward of Elburz, the point where the northern edge of Iran again rises into a lofty range to the west (Demavend is more than 18,000 feet in height), and then sinks down to the Caspian Sea, lay the Hyrcanians. In the inscriptions of the Achæmenids their land is known as *Varkana*; the modern name is Jorjan. Here, according to the Greeks, the mountains were covered with forests of oaks, where swarms of wild bees had their hives; in the valleys vines and fig-trees flourished, and the soil down to the sea was so luxuriant that corn grew from the fallen grains without any special sowing.<sup>10</sup> The description is hardly exaggerated. The waters pouring from the heights and snow-fields of Elburz water the soil of the coast so thoroughly, that a tropical growth flourishes in Jorjan, Taberistan, and Ghilan, the luxuriance of which is assisted by the volcanic heat of the earth. The lagunes of the coast are succeeded by marsh forests; higher up are fields of rice and plantations of sugarcane, and beyond these fertile meadows, above which splendid forests of oaks, planes, and elms clothe the heights of Elburz. There is abundance of water fruits, figs and mulberries, olives and oranges, and the vigorous creepers of the vines run even to the summits of the trees.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, these favoured regions have a darker side. Frequent earthquakes disturb the soil; in the winter furious north winds blowing over

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relations of sound more faithfully than the Persian, and thus shows itself to be a direct descendant of the old eastern dialect of Iran. Trump proves that Afghan is an ancient independent language of strong Indian type. "Z. D. M. G." 21, 10 ff.

<sup>10</sup> Strabo, pp. 508, 514, 724; Plin. "Hist. Nat." 6, 29; Diod. 17, 75.

<sup>11</sup> Ritter, "Erdkunde," 8, 425 ff.

the Caspian rage along the walls of Elburz, and even on the outlying spurs the snow falls to the depth of several fathoms; the rain-clouds, hemmed in by the mountain ranges, often burst in water-spouts, which lay the land far and wide under water, and roll as torrents down the gorges; the marsh air blanches the inhabitants, while in the summer the hot and moist climate breeds deadly fever.

Further to the east, where the Caspian Sea ends and the mountains of Iran descend towards the desolate, pathless steppes of the Oxus, is a wild, hilly country. In the depressions, and there only, the region of the Parthians (*Parthava* in the inscriptions of the Achæmenids<sup>12</sup>) exhibits fruitful lands, and, further eastward still, agriculture is favoured by the long, narrow valley of the Areios (Herirud). Springing from the southern slope of the Hindu Kush, the river flows towards the west along the inner edge of the table-land, till it bursts through the northern barrier in order to lose itself in the sand of the steppes. In this valley

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<sup>12</sup> Isid. "Charac. Mans. Parth." 10-14. The Parthians rose with the Hyrcanians against Darius; Parthians and Hyrcanians formed one satrapy. The Parthians are the Pahlav of Moses of Khorene, the Pehlew of later writers. The mention of them in the inscriptions of Darius proves that they are not a later immigrant Scythian, *i. e.* non-Arian, nation, as Justin, Strabo, and others maintain. The cities which the inscription of Behistun mentions in Parthia (2, 95; 3, 4), Viçpauzatis and Patigrabana, we cannot fix more definitely; Ammian (23, 6) mentions Patigran in Media. Parthunisa, with the graves of the Parthian kings, mentioned in Isidorus, "which the Greeks call Nisæa," is Parthava-Niçaya, and must be sought for near the modern Nishapur. It must be the Niça which the Vendidad places between Mouru and Bakhdhi. Justi, "Beitrag," 2, 6 compares Isidorus' Βατζιγράβαν, ὃ ἐστὶ τελώνιον.

the district of the modern Herat, lay the Areians, who are called *Haraiva* in the inscriptions of the Persian kings. The name points to the possession of water. To the north of the Areians, in the valley of the Margos (now Murghab), which rises in the northern edge of the table-land, and flows to the north-west, where it also ends in the sands of the desert, in Margiana (Old Persian, Marghush; Bactrian, Mouru; modern Merv), lay the Margiani, in a well-cultivated region, rich in vineyards, with numerous cities and a large population. But the fertility only extends so far as the soil can be watered from the Margos and the neighbouring streams.

At the foot of the mountain barrier, towards the northern steppes, and on the edge of the steppes of the Oxus, to the north of the Hyrcanians, Parthians, and Margiani, in a land which only partially admits of agriculture, lay the Chorasmians, a people partly stationary and partly migratory – the *Uvarazmiya* of the Achæmenids, the *Hvairizem* of the Avesta. Further to the east, where the edge rises to the lofty Hindu Kush, there lies on its northern slope a favoured district in the region of the Upper Oxus. That river flows from the table-land of Pamire, which lies more than 15,000 feet above the sea, exactly at the point where the Hindu Kush abuts on the Belurdagh, the western edge of the central table-land. On the banks of the river, which flows in a north-westerly direction, extend broad mountain pastures, where support is found in the fresh mountain air for numerous herds of horses and sheep, and beneath the wooded hills are blooming

valleys. On these slopes of the Hindu Kush, the middle stage between the table-land and the deep plain of the Caspian Sea, lay the Bactrians – the *Bakhtri* of the Achæmenids, the *Bakhdhi* of the Avesta. Curtius, following the accounts of the companions of Alexander, tells us of the land of the Bactrians that it was much diversified in character; in one part were pastures, another was rich in beautiful fruit-trees and vines, and frequent springs watered the rich soil, on which corn was cultivated. These districts supported a large number of oxen and horses. Under the range of Paropanisos (*i. e.* on the slope of the Hindu Kush) lay the city of Bactra, on the river of the same name, which washed its walls. But a great part of the country was covered with waste tracts of sand. If the winds blew from the Caspian Sea, they swept the sand into high hills, under which not only did every trace of the road disappear, but travellers were at times overwhelmed; and, as if voyaging by sea, it was necessary to guide the course by the stars.<sup>13</sup> Strabo remarks, after Apollodorus of Artemita, that Bactria was the best part of East Iran (Ariana). In ancient times the Bactrians were hardly distinguished from nomads; but their land was extensive, and produced fruits of all kinds, with the exception of the vine. The fertility of the land enabled the Hellenic princes to make great conquests. Their cities were Bactra, traversed by the river of the same name, Darapsa, Aornus (*avarana*, *i. e.* protection), Kariata, and many others, and

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<sup>13</sup> Curt. 7, 4.

besides these cities, the Bactrians had citadels on lofty rocks.<sup>14</sup> According to Strabo, Bactra was also called Zariaspa, and Pliny asserts that at any rate in earlier times it was called by that name. In Arrian Zariaspa is the largest city of Bactria, while Ptolemy places Zariaspa to the north of Bactra, on the bank of the Oxus. Zariaspa means golden horse. A river might possibly be known by such a name, but hardly a city, unless it belonged to a tribe of the name of Zariaspians, and was inhabited by them. In fact Ptolemy places the tribe of the Zariaspians in his Zariaspa.<sup>15</sup>

The air on these north-western terraces of the Hindu Kush is warm, and the soil sufficiently vigorous, under irrigation, to produce rice and southern fruits. Eight leagues below the snow-fields of the mountains, which resist even the hottest months of the year, two good leagues to the north of the place where the Dehas, after forcing a passage through the last heights, reaches the plains, lies the city of Balkh, on the banks of that river. At this day it is a town only partially inhabited; but the ruins of the ancient city are said to cover a circuit of several leagues. The adjacent soil is now well cultivated; the fields are thickly planted with trees, and beside old water-courses, now dried up, and extensive ruins of yet older aqueducts, eighteen channels still convey their rills to fields under active cultivation.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Strabo, pp. 118, 516, 682; Arrian, "Anab." 3, 29. On Aornus, cf. Vol. IV. p. 395.

<sup>15</sup> Ptolem. 6, 11; 8, 7; Strabo, pp. 514, 516; Arrian, "Anab." 3, 29; 4, 1, 16, 22; Plin. "Hist. Nat." 6, 17, 18; Steph. Byz. *sub voc.* Firdusi mentions a hero Zarasp.

<sup>16</sup> Elphinstone, "Kabul," 2, 213, 214.

North of the Bactrians, beyond the Oxus, on the western slope of Belurdagh, in the valley of the Polytimetus (Zarefshan, *i. e.* strewing gold), which flows towards the Oxus from the east, but, instead of joining it, ends in Lake Dengiz, lay the Sogdiani of the Greeks, the *Suguda* of the Old Persian inscriptions, and *Çughdha* of the Avesta, in the region of the modern Sogd. As the Oxus in its upper course separates the Bactrians from the Sogdiani, the Jaxartes, further to the north, separates the latter from the Scyths. According to Strabo, the manners of the Bactrians and Sogdiani were similar, but the Bactrians were less rude.<sup>17</sup> Maracanda (Samarcand), the chief city of the Sogdiani, on the Polytimetus, is said to have had a circuit of 70 stades in the fourth century B.C. The soil is not without fertility, but the climate varies between great heat and severe cold.

Herodotus observes that the Bactrians, who carried bows of reed and short lances, closely resembled the northern Indians in armour, clothing, and mode of life, and then informs us that the Areians, Parthians, Sogdiani, and Chorasmians resembled the Bactrians. All these tribes of the east, according to the account of Herodotus, carried the Indian bow of reed; the Areians alone used the Median bow, which Herodotus states to have been in vogue not only among the Medes, but also among all the nations of Western Iran. He adds that in ancient times the Medes were called Areians by all men. Strabo uses the name Ariana for the land of all the nations of Iran, except that of the Medes and

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<sup>17</sup> Strabo, *loc. cit.*

Persians, *i. e.* for the whole eastern half of Iran.<sup>18</sup> In Diodorus also the nations of Eastern Iran are Arians.<sup>19</sup> The Avesta, which, as we shall show, belongs to the east of Iran, calls its native land *Airyao Dahvyu*, *i. e.* abode of the Airyas; or *Airyao Danhavo*, *i. e.* land of the Airyas, in contrast to the *Anairyao Danhavo*, *i. e.* the non-Arian lands.<sup>20</sup> In his inscriptions king Darius styles himself "a Persian, son of a Persian, an Arian (*ariya*) of an Arian tribe,"<sup>21</sup> and therefore the name must have held good of the west of Iran also, and have included all the nations of Iran, though afterwards it continued in use more especially for the tribes of the east. The inhabitants of the modern Persian kingdom call their kingdom by the general name of Iran. Iran is only the regular new Persian form of the old name, which in the west was pronounced Ariyana, and in the east Airyana.

We remember that the ruling nation of India called themselves Arya, and this name compared with Airya and Ariya shows us that the nations of Iran assumed the same title with very little difference. Among the Greeks Ariya and Airya became Areioi and Arioï, and the name of the land, Ariyana and Airyana, became Ariana. We have learnt the meaning of the names Aryas, Ariyas, Airyas; they signify "the noble or ruling people" (IV.

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<sup>18</sup> Herod. 7, 62; Strabo (pp. 516, 517, 724) includes in Ariana, Gedrosia, Arachosia, Drangiana, Paropanisus, Aria, Parthia, and Caramania. Cf. Pausan. 2, 3, 8.

<sup>19</sup> Diod. 1, 94. Damascius ("De Primis Principiis," p. 384) speaks of the Μάγγοι δὲ καὶ πᾶν τὸ ἄριον γένος.

<sup>20</sup> "Vendid." 19, 132; "Mihr Yasht," 4, 13; "Tistar Yasht," 9, 56, 60.

<sup>21</sup> Naksh-i-Rustem, a., 14.

8). Much the same is the sense of the name Artæans,<sup>22</sup> which, according to the assertion of Herodotus, was the title by which the Persians called themselves; it signifies "the exalted," or "mighty." The Persians may have assumed it after they became the ruling people in Iran and Hither Asia.

These distinctions show us that the Aryas whom we found on the Indus and in the Panjab, and who forced their way from thence to the conquest and colonisation of the valley of the Ganges, and then extended their dominion over the Deccan, and imported their religion and their civilisation into those wide regions, were closely connected with the group of nations which occupied the table-land of Iran. It is obvious that this relationship was most strictly maintained and most strongly marked where the intercourse between the neighbouring nations was most lively, *i. e.* among the nations of Eastern Iran. The conclusion drawn from the common title of the two nations on the west and east of the Indus, and from the statements of Herodotus about the manners of the eastern and the name of the western nations of Iran, is confirmed by the examination of the existing remnants of the ancient languages of Iran, whether spoken in the east or the west. This evidence derived from the names and the language is confirmed yet further by the coincidence in certain traits of religion and worship.

We are not in a position to fix the place from which and the time when the Arian tribes entered the table-land of Iran and

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<sup>22</sup> Herod. 7, 61. Cf. Steph. Byz. Ἀρταῖα.

peopled it. That Iran was not their native country is clear from the divergence of the Arian stock from the common stem of the Indo-Europeans (IV. 4). Still less can we decide whether the Arians found an older population already settled in Iran. So far as the ancient monuments of east and west allow us to form an opinion, there exist no elements of an alien language from which we could deduce the existence of an earlier population, which the Arians conquered. Yet we cannot deny that tribes of an alien origin and character were settled on the western spurs of the mountain wall of Iran, in the north no less than in the south.<sup>23</sup> The foreign elements which the later forms of the language of Iran have adopted are due to the influence which the Semitic neighbours of the Arians on the west, and the dominion of the Arabs, exercised on Iran. As to the direction in which the Arians entered Iran, we can only conclude, from their close relationship to the Arians of India, that they peopled the east of Iran before the west. If the Arians of India came into the Panjab, as we assumed, soon after 2000 B.C., the Arians of Iran entered the eastern part of that country at a date certainly not later. According to the list of dynasties furnished by Berosus, the Arians about 2500 B.C. were not only settled in Iran, but already possessed the western part of the country. He represents the Medes as conquering Babylonia in 2458 B.C., and from this date down to 2224 B.C. mentions eight Median kings as ruling

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<sup>23</sup> On the tribe of the Brahuīs in the south-east, on this side of the Indus, cf. Vol. IV. p. 10.

over Babylon (I. 241, 247).

In spite of their cruel treatment, the nucleus of the ancient Arian population of Iran has not succumbed to the alien dynasties, the Seleucids, Arabs, and Mongols who have invaded the land since the fall of the Achæmenids; and the ancient territory has been maintained, with some losses, even against the incursions and immigrations of the Sacæ, Yuëchis, and Turkish hordes. As in the vast regions of the Indus and the Ganges, so in Iran the ancient language still lives on the lips of the modern population. Yet the changes have been great. Under the Arsacids the Old Persian passed into Middle Persian, which at a later time was known by the name of the Parthians, the tribe at that time supreme in Persia. Pahlav and Pehlevi mean Parthian, and, as applied to language, the language of the Parthians, *i. e.* of the Parthian era.<sup>24</sup> In the west this older Middle Persian grew up out of the Old Persian, in the east out of the Old Bactrian. In the latest period of the dominion of the Sassanids, the recent Middle Persian or Parsee took the place of Pehlevi. When the kingdom of the Sassanids succumbed to the Arabs, and Arabic became the language of the ruling people in Iran, the reaction which took place in the eastern districts of the country against the dominion of the Abbasids brought about the formation of the new Persian,

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<sup>24</sup> Haug, "The book of Arda Viraf," p. xxv. Mordtmann has shown on the coins of the Arsacids and Sassanids the stages between the older forms and the language of Firdusi; "Z. D. M. G." 4, 84 ff., 8, 9 ff. On the forms of the Old Bactrian on the coins of the Græco-Bactrian and Indo-Scythian princes: Lassen, "Indische Alterthum." 22, 834 ff. Spiegel, "Parsigrammatik," s. 116 ff.

which was finally completed when the national reaction broke out in the beginning of the eleventh century of our era. Beginning from Merv, Balkh, and Sejestan (the ancient Haetumat), that rising found its strongest point in Ghasna and Cabul. It did not preserve the religion, but it saved the language, nationality, and independence of Iran. The change from the Middle Persian to the modern began with the north-eastern dialects; in the south-east the Afghans and Belucheas still speak in ancient forms, closely akin to the dialects of the peasants of the Panjab. To this day the greater part of the entire population of Iran consists of the descendants of the Arians, in spite of all the distress and ruin which the land has suffered,<sup>25</sup> though the residuum of foreign elements is larger here than beyond the Indus, especially in the north-west, in Aderbeijan, and above all in Bactria and Sogdiana, in the north-east. The descendants of the Arians are still recognised by the formation of their bodies, which appeared so striking to Western nations in antiquity – the slender growth, the semicircular, united eyebrows, and the yellow skin, which becomes browner towards the east. The Persians and Afghans still possess a sound judgment, a keen intelligence, and lively sense of poetry – characteristics which, as we saw, belonged in a pre-eminent degree to the Arians of India.

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<sup>25</sup> It has been recently proved that the inhabitants of the mountain country between Cabul and Herat, the Aimaks and Hazares, speak Persian.

## CHAPTER II.

# THE KINGDOM OF THE BACTRIANS

Among the ruins of the residence of the kings of Asshur at Chalah, on the confluence of the Greater Zab and the Tigris, was discovered the obelisk which Shalmanesar II., who reigned from 859 to 823 B.C. over Assyria, erected in memory of his successes. In the tribute offered to him we find the rhinoceros, the elephant, the humped ox, and the camel with two humps (II. 320). This species of camel and the yak are found in Bactria, on the southern edge of the Caspian Sea, and in Tartary, and we afterwards find elephants in the possession of the rulers of Bactria.<sup>26</sup> Hence, in order to obtain these animals for tribute, the armies of Shalmanesar must have advanced as far as the eastern tribes of the Iranian table-land. From the inscriptions of Tiglath Pileasar II., it is clear that he advanced along the same table-land as far as the Hilmend and the Arachoti, if not as far as Bactria. Among the lands subjugated in 745 B.C., he enumerates Nisaa, Zikruti, and Arakuttu. In Nisaa we cannot mistake Nisæa in the east of Media (p. 31). The Zikruti were no doubt the Sagartians of Herodotus, the Açagarta of the old Persian inscriptions.<sup>27</sup> Arakuttu represents in a Semitic form the name of the Arachoti,

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<sup>26</sup> Polyb. fragm. 34 f.; below, p. 26.

<sup>27</sup> Above, p. 6; Vol. III. p. 3, "Zikruti in rugged Media I added to the land of Assyria;" *ib.* p. 4.

the Harauvati of the Achæmenids (p. 8). So far as we can at present judge from inscriptions, the successors of Tiglath Pileasar did not carry their campaigns further to the east of Iran, and we can assert with certainty of both the sovereigns who raised the power of Assyria to its summit, Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal (681-626 B.C.), that they made no conquests in this direction.

If the inscriptions of the Assyrians leave us in almost total darkness about Bactria, the Medo-Persian epic poetry can give us full information about the country. When Ninus, king of Assyria, had subjugated all the nations of Asia as far as the Nile and the Tanais, he made an attempt upon Bactria, but without success. The entrance into the land was difficult, the number of warriors great, and they knew how to fight bravely. Then Ninus collected an army of two millions of soldiers, which was opposed by Oxyartes, the king of the Bactrians, with 400,000 men. When the Assyrian army came in detachments out of the passes, Oxyartes attacked and drove them back into the mountains with the loss of 100,000 men. The army of Ninus then combined, outnumbered and overcame the Bactrians, and scattered them into their cities, which Ninus took with little trouble. But Bactra, where was the palace of the kings, was large and well supplied, and had a very strong citadel in a high position, while the city extended over the plain. It resisted for a long time, till Semiramis ascended the citadel, and Ninus was enabled to take possession of the treasures of gold and silver which were in Bactra. At a later time Semiramis collected her vast army for the invasion of India in

Bactria, and returned to Bactra after she had been defeated on the Indus, and had lost two-thirds of her army (II. 10). Such are the descriptions given by the epic poetry of the Medes and Persians, in the account of the rise of Assyria and subjugation of Bactria. The Bactrians are again brought forward in the narrative of the overthrow of Assyria, which was the proper theme of these poems. When Sardanapalus has already thrice defeated the Medes and Babylonians, a strong force comes to his assistance from Bactria. The leader of the Medes determines to attack this first, if it would not join in the contest for freedom against Assyria. The Bactrians joined the Medes, the power of Assyria was broken, and Nineveh destroyed (III. 253).

From these poems it follows that in the first half of the sixth century B.C., in which the Medo-Persian epic attained its original form, the tradition, or at any rate the opinion, existed among the minstrels of Media that a powerful kingdom and large metropolis once existed in Bactria, the situation of which is correctly described. This kingdom possessed a strong citadel and abundant treasures, and could put in the field a large army of brave warriors. Without such a conception they could not represent the first attack of the Assyrians on Bactria as a failure, the second as successful only after considerable time and trouble had been spent, and the conquest as the last and greatest achievement of Ninus, the mightiest sovereign of Assyria, which he only performed with the aid of Semiramis.

The inscriptions of the Assyrians have already informed us

that no dominion of Assyria over Eastern Iran existed in the earliest period of the kingdom; on the contrary, even when her power was at the highest Assyria could only carry on temporary excursions into that region. The western part of the country was first trodden by the armies of Shalmanesar II.; his inscriptions mention tribute of the Medes, and from the inscriptions of his successors it is distinctly clear that only the nations of Western Iran were tributary dependants of the kings of Asshur from the period of Tiglath Pileasar, *i. e.* from the middle of the eighth century B.C., till the period of Phraortes and Cyaxares of Media, *i. e.* till the middle of the seventh century B.C.<sup>28</sup>

The conquests of Cyrus, who overthrew the power of the Medes, founded the Persian empire, and extended it to the east, would give us more accurate information about Eastern Iran if connected accounts of these were in existence. Herodotus contents himself with stating that Cyrus, after subjugating the Lydians, determined to march against the Bactrians and Sacæ. He conquered all the nations of Upper Asia, one after the other, without omitting any.<sup>29</sup> Ctesias relates that the Bactrians after a doubtful battle submitted voluntarily to Cyrus. According to the account of Xenophon, the Hyrcanians, Cadusians, and Sacæ joined Cyrus, and in the fragments of Nicolaus also the Hyrcanians, Parthians, and "the other nations" passed over to Cyrus immediately after the conquest of the Medes. However

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<sup>28</sup> Vol. III. p. 77.

<sup>29</sup> Herod. 1, 153, 177, 201, 204.

this may be, there is no doubt that the east of Iran was subject to Cyrus. He marched through the land of the Arachoti, entered into relations with the Ariaçpas (p. 8), and subjugated the Gandarians on the south of the Cabul. He is also said to have imposed tribute on the Açvakas to the north of the river (IV. 384). The Sogdiani, in any case, were his vassals. On a stream which flows into the Jaxartes he built a fortress called by his own name, known to the Greeks as Cyresbata (*ultima Cyra*, or with others Cyropolis), *i. e.* the furthest Cyrus. The walls and citadels were strong and spacious, and in the neighbourhood were six other citadels.<sup>30</sup> The value placed by Cyrus on the regions of Eastern Iran is not only clear from these fortresses, but may be deduced from the statement that his second son Bardya, whom the Greeks call Smerdis, was intrusted with the government of Bactria, if indeed the statement is genuine.<sup>31</sup>

The nations and condition of Eastern Iran can be ascertained more clearly from the inscriptions of Darius. According to his inscription at Behistun, his empire in that direction comprised the Parthians, Sarangians, Areians, Chorasmians, Bactrians, Sogdiani, Gandarii, Sattagydæ, Arachoti, and Sacæ; and to these the Idhus, *i. e.* the Indians on the right bank of the upper course of the Indus, are added in the inscriptions of Persepolis and Naksh-i-Rustem.<sup>32</sup> Further information is preserved by Herodotus with

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<sup>30</sup> Strabo, p. 517; Arrian, "Anab." 4, 23; Plin. "H. N." 6, 18; Ptolem. 6, 12.

<sup>31</sup> Ctes. fragm. Pers. c. 12.

<sup>32</sup> Behist. 1, 6; Persep. 25; Naksh-i-Rustem, 12-14.

respect to the tribute imposed by Darius on these nations. As these statements are undoubtedly derived from Persian tribute lists, they serve to throw a side light on the state of civilisation existing in the east of Iran at the division of the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. The Sarangians, who, as we have seen (p. 7), inhabited the fertile land round Lake Areios (Hamun), together with the Sagartians and some neighbouring nations on the south, paid yearly 600 Babylonian talents into the treasury of the king. The Areians (Haraivas), Parthians, Sogdiani, and Chorasmians, who formed the sixteenth satrapy of the Persian empire, had to pay 300 talents; the Gedrosians and Gandarians together paid 170 talents; the Caspiani (*i. e.* no doubt, the Tapurians and other tribes on the southern shore of the Caspian Sea) and the Sacæ, who traversed the steppes of the Oxus, *i. e.* the fifteenth satrapy, paid 250 talents; and the Bactrians, the twelfth satrapy of the empire, paid 360 talents.<sup>33</sup> These sums, which do not include the whole of the burdens of the provinces, but are only the land taxes which they had to pay, – in addition, tolls were levied and contributions in kind to the court of the king and the satraps, as well as for the maintenance of the army, – show that at the time of Darius agriculture and wealth had proceeded far beyond the earliest stages in the eastern districts of Iran. The Babylonian silver talent amounts to more than 2000 thalers (6000 shillings).<sup>34</sup> If a sum of more than 1,200,000 thalers (£180,000)

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<sup>33</sup> Herod. 3, 91, 92.

<sup>34</sup> Vol. I. p. 285. The amount is about 2096 thalers.

could be raised every year in land tax from the districts round Lake Hamun, extensive though they were, and 720,000 thalers (£108,000) in a similar manner from the land of the Bactrians, the gardens, fields, and pastures of these regions must have been considerable in breadth, and of great fertility.

Beyond this indication of the state of the civilisation in these districts, we learn but little of their fortunes under the dominion of the Persians. Darius (521-485 B.C.) informs us, at the beginning of his reign, that his father Hystaspes (Vistaçpa), his viceroy in Persia, the native land of the kingdom, and with him Vivana the Persian, the satrap of Arachosia, and Dadarshis the Persian, the satrap of Bactria, had quelled the rebellions of the Parthians, Hyrcanians, and Margiani; that the Mede Takhmaçpada had conquered the rebellious Sagartians, and captured their leader, Chitratakhma, whom he, Darius, had crucified at Arbela. The army of the second Pseudo-Smerdis, which attempted to gain possession of Arachosia, Vivana had defeated at the fortress of Kapisakani, in Arachosia, and the leaders, with their chief associates, had been captured in the fortress of Arsada and put to death. Hystaspes had slain 6560 men of the Parthians and Hyrcanians, and taken 4182 of them captives. Dadarshis had subjugated the Mardians by slaying 4203 of them in battle, and taking 6562 of them captive.<sup>35</sup> Xerxes, the successor of Darius, successively intrusted two of his brothers, Masistes and then Hystaspes, with the government

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<sup>35</sup> Behist. 2, 14-16; 3, 10-12.

of Bactria.<sup>36</sup> In the great campaign against Hellas, the Bactrians, like all the other nations of the kingdom, had to furnish their contingent; and when Mardonius had to select the best troops in the army in Hellas, in order to winter with them in Thessaly, he retained, besides the Persians and Medes, the infantry and cavalry of the Bactrians, Sacæ, and Indians.<sup>37</sup> The Bactrians, under their viceroy Hystaspes, revolted against Artaxerxes, the brother of Hystaspes. The first battle was not decisive; in the second Artaxerxes conquered, "because the wind blew in the face of the Bactrians," and subjugated the land.<sup>38</sup> To the army of Darius III. with which he met the Macedonians in Assyria, the Bactrians contributed 30,000 cavalry; and in the battle of Arbela they fought with the Arachoti on the left wing. Accompanied by Bactrian horsemen, Darius escaped from the field of battle to Media, and sought afterwards to maintain his position in their country. The Caspian gates, the pass of Damaghan, were gained, when the satrap of Bactria got possession of the king, and put him to death before he reached Bactria. The satrap hoped to establish an independent power there,<sup>39</sup> but without success. Though Alexander at first overcame the Bactrians, who were astonished at his rapid approach, he soon found a stubborn resistance in Sogdiana and Bactria, which occupied him for two

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<sup>36</sup> Herod. 7, 64, 82; 9, 113.

<sup>37</sup> Herod. 8, 93.

<sup>38</sup> Diod. 11, 69; Ctes. Pers. ecl. 31.

<sup>39</sup> Arrian, "Anab." 3, 21.

years.<sup>40</sup> Not till then could he make his preparations in Bactria for the invasion of India, and collect at Bactra the army intended for the subjugation of that country, in order to pass over the Hindu Kush into the valley of the Cabul.

In the contests which the successors of Alexander carried on for the supremacy after his death, the valley of the Euphrates and Tigris, and the table-land of Iran, finally fell to the lot of Seleucus. But in the middle of the third century (256 B.C.), Arsaces in Parthia and the satrap Diodotus in Bactria rebelled against the second successor, Antiochus Theos. The descendants of Arsaces not only succeeded in maintaining their independence against the Seleucids, in spite of severe reverses, but Mithridates I., the sixth Arsacid (174-136 B.C.), united all Iran under his dominion. The Greeks lost their supremacy, and Iran again became subject to native princes.

Meanwhile Diodotus had founded an independent supremacy in Bactria. His son, of the same name, was succeeded by Euthydemus, against whom, towards the year 200 B.C., Antiochus III. marched, in order to force Bactria to submission. Euthydemus was defeated at the river Areios (p. 10), and fled to Zariaspa. By the surrender of his elephants he obtained an established recognition from Antiochus. Demetrius and Eucratides, the successors of Euthydemus (after 180 B.C.), extended the sphere of their dominion to the east over the land on the Cabul to the Indus. The kingdom of Chandragupta,

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<sup>40</sup> Arrian, *loc. cit.* 3, 29.

Vindusara, and Açoka, which, as we know, included the east of Iran, and has left us inscriptions at Peshawur (IV. 525), fell to pieces under Açoka's grandsons. Apollodorus of Artemita told us above that the fertility of the Bactrian soil enabled the Greek rulers to make important conquests (p. 12); he informs us that Eucratides founded the city of Eucratideia in Bactria, and subjugated a thousand cities in India. We may assume that Bactria under these princes was not merely powerful, but prosperous. According to the statement of Justin, a thousand cities were at that time enumerated in Bactria,<sup>41</sup> and we possess satisfactory evidence that these rulers and their courts, and the Greek settlements which Alexander founded in the distant East, were able permanently to establish the style and art of Hellas. The coins of these princes, who are designated in Greek as "kings," "great," "invincible," rival the best work which proceeded from Greek mints. The faces present the heads of the princes, in characteristic and individual portraits; the reverses exhibit Heracles, Athena, Apollo with a crown of rays, the Dioscuri on horseback, lance in hand. But by degrees the national types of the East are again employed on these coins. The reverse presents the galloping horse, the animal of Bactria, the elephant, and the humped ox.<sup>42</sup> The head of Demetrius, who first

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<sup>41</sup> Justin. 41, 4.

<sup>42</sup> As was shown in Vol. IV. p. 278, the Vishnu Purana represents the sacrificial horse of Pushpamitra, who sat on the throne of Magadha between 178 and 142 B.C. (Vol. IV. p. 550), to have been carried off by an army of Yavanas on the right bank of the Indus, and then restored. The dominion of the Græco-Bactrian princes in the

conquered territory in India, and that of some of his descendants, is covered by a helmet adorned with the tusks and trunk of an elephant. Besides the round, numbers of rectangular coins have also been found, from which we can discover the native traditional form of the Bactrian coinage. After the reign of Eucratides these rectangular coins present on one side Greek inscriptions, which are repeated in other characters on the reverse. To the inscriptions of king Açoka at Kapur-i-Giri, and to these coins, together with those of the Græco-Indian kings, and some later coins belonging to the Arsacids and the Indo-Scythian princes, we owe the information that the east of Iran possessed a peculiar alphabet and mode of writing, while the Medes and Persians of the west borrowed their earliest letters from the Assyrio-Babylonian cuneiform writing, and afterwards, from about the fourth century B.C., adopted the cursive character of the Aramæans.

Although, as we may conclude from these indications, the Greek sovereigns of Bactria resolved to pay a certain respect to the civilisation of their subjects, their kingdom was short-lived. The nations of the steppes of the Oxus, themselves under pressure, began to advance to the south (after 160 B.C.); in the west the Parthians rose into power. Mithridates I. of Parthia incorporated Bactria in his kingdom about 140 B.C., and Bactria subsequently became a part of the Parthian empire. Heliocles, the son of Eucratides, was thus limited to the land of the Cabul

and Indus, but on the borders of India the power and influence of the Greeks remained unbroken. Greek captains – Menander, and after him Apollodotus, who had previously no doubt been subject to the Bactrians – issued from the southern slope of the Hindu Kush in the last decades of the second century B.C., and conquered the land of the Indus as far as the mouth of the river, and the Panjab. They advanced to the Yamuna, and reduced Surashtra (Guzerat) and Cashmere to dependence. Even at the end of the first century B.C. coins of these princes were current on the coast of Surashtra, and they are still found on the banks of the Yamuna.<sup>43</sup>

On the western coast of India, from the Gulf of Cambay to Bombay, we find from one hundred to one hundred and fifty thousand families whose ancestors migrated thither from Iran. The tradition among them is, that at the time when the Arabs, after conquering Iran and becoming sovereigns there, persecuted and eradicated the old religion, faithful adherents of the creed fled to the mountains of Kerman. Driven from these by the Arabs (in Kerman and Yezd a few hundred families are still found who maintain the ancient faith<sup>44</sup>), they retired to the island of Hormuz

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<sup>43</sup> Strabo, p. 516. I need not prove that Ἰωμάνης must be read here for Ἰσάμιος, or that Σαραόστου παραλία is Surashtra; cf. Wilson, "Ariana antiq." p. 281. Apollodotus, Apaladata on the Arian legends of his coins, is no doubt the Bhagadatta of the Mahabharata, just as the Dattamitra there mentioned is Demetrius; Vol. IV. p. 80, *n*. Among the Indians Menander appears in the form Milinda.

<sup>44</sup> In the year 1843 there were about 1000 Guebre families in Yezd, and a hundred in Kerman. Westergaard, "Avesta," 1, 21: the persecution of 1848 considerably reduced

(a small island close by the southern coast, at the entrance to the Persian Gulf). From hence they migrated to Din (on the coast of Guzerat), and then passed over to the opposite shore. In the neighbourhood of Bombay and in the south of India inscriptions have been found which prove that these settlers reached the coast in the tenth century of our era.<sup>45</sup> At the present time their descendants form a considerable part of the population of Surat, Bombay, and Ahmadabad; they call themselves, after their ancient home, Parsees, and speak the later Middle Persian (the Parsee, p. 17). Their worship and life they regulate by the rules given in certain scriptures which they brought with them from their ancient home. These are fragments of a much larger whole, part of a book of law, and a collection of sacrificial songs and prayers. The Parsees no longer speak or understand the language of these scriptures (the Avesta), and even the priests, who use them every day, ascertain the meaning through an accompanying translation into the later language.

That these scriptures arose in the east of Iran is clear from the language of the Avesta. It exhibits a close relationship with the forms of the Veda and Sanskrit, the ancient language of the Arians in India. If, on the other hand, we compare the language of the Avesta with the ancient language of Western Iran as we possess it in the inscriptions of the Achæmenids, we find that both are merely different dialects of one language, but they

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their numbers.

<sup>45</sup> Haug, "Pahlavi-Pazand Glossary," pp. 80, 81.

differ in such a manner that the language of the inscriptions of Darius and Xerxes is less closely connected with Sanskrit than the language of the Avesta. This language then we may regard as the ancient speech of Eastern Iran, and this assumption is raised into evidence by the contents of the Avesta. These prove that the Avesta arose in the east of Iran, with even greater certainty than the songs of the Rigveda prove that that collection arose in the land of the Indus and the Panjab. The Avesta entirely ignores the west of Iran. No mention is made of Ecbatana and Pasargadæ, the abode of the Median and the Persian kings, though they reigned over the whole of Iran and Hither Asia; nor even of the nations of the west, the Medes and Persians. It speaks of the land of the seven streams, *i. e.* India (IV. 12), and the heat which prevails in that land;<sup>46</sup> it mentions the beautiful Harahvaiti (Arachosia) and Haetumat (afterwards Sejestan<sup>47</sup>): the latter is extolled as a beaming, glowing, brilliant country.<sup>48</sup> The knowledge of the Avesta is most accurate in the north-east. Here we find Airyana Vaeja, *i. e.* home or canton of the Airyas,<sup>49</sup> Çughdha (Sogdiana),

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<sup>46</sup> "Vendid." 1, 73-76.

<sup>47</sup> "Vendid." 1, 46.

<sup>48</sup> "Vendid." 19, 130; 1, 50.

<sup>49</sup> Burnouf, "Jour. Asiat." 1845, pp. 287, 288. It seems to me doubtful whether we should look for Airyana Vaeja on the sources of the Oxus. The statement in the Bundelesh that Airyana Vaeja was situated beside Atropatene is, however, of very little weight against the fact that the Arians of East Iran are nearest to the Arians of India. I shall return to this point below. The remark in Stephanus, "Ἀριωνία, a nation among the Cadusians," would be of some importance if it were taken from Apollodorus of Artemita, and not from the grammarian of that name. The district of Arran on the

Bakhdhi (Baktra), Mouru (Margiana, Merv<sup>50</sup>), Niça, between Bakhdhi and Mouru, Haraeva (Haraiva in the inscriptions; Herat, the land of the Areians), and Vehrkana, *i. e.* land of wolves (Hyrcania).<sup>51</sup> The furthest point known to the west is Ragha in Media, which, according to the Avesta, consists of three citadels or tribes.<sup>52</sup> These statements carry us very distinctly to the east of Iran, the region from Ragha to the Indus. Mouru is "the high," "the holy," and Bakhdhi's "high banner" is extolled. In this way this city was no doubt marked out as the seat of an important dominion, the centre of a kingdom.

If we might assume that in these fragments of the sacred books of the Parsees we have not only the ancient language, but also the ancient religion of Eastern Iran before us, we might also hope that we should meet in them with remnants of the tradition, with native accounts of the fortunes of the country, enabling us to supplement the scanty information which we could glean from the inscriptions of the Assyrians and Darius, and the accounts of Western writers. Leaving out of sight for the present the question, At what period did these writings come into existence? we may collect what we can find in them on the early history of Iran.

In the Avesta the god Haoma says, Vivanghana was the first who crushed out the juice of the Haoma. As a reward there was

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Kur may possibly be meant.

<sup>50</sup> "Vendid." 1, 14-18.

<sup>51</sup> "Vendid." 1, 30, 42.

<sup>52</sup> "Vendid." 1, 60.

born to him the brilliant Yima, the lord of the nations, the most famous of all who have seen the sun. While Yima Kshaeta (Yima the king) reigned there was neither cold nor excessive heat, neither age nor death, nor envy, caused by the evil spirits: fathers and sons equally had the vigour of men of fifty years. Yima caused the means of support for mankind to be inexhaustible; he liberated the waters and trees from drought, and the herds from death.<sup>53</sup> In an invocation to the goddess Ardviçura, the giver of water, to whom Yima sacrifices a hundred horses, a thousand oxen, and ten thousand head of small cattle on Hukairya, the summit of the divine mountain, he prays, "Grant to me, Saviour Ardviçura, that I may be the sovereign of all lands, that I may carry away from the Daevas (the evil spirits) increase and health, fodder and herds, joy and glory." To the goddess Ashi vanguhi, Yima also offers a prayer "that he may bring food and flocks to the creatures of Mazda, and immortality, and may remove hunger and thirst, age and death, the hot wind and the cold from the creatures of Mazda for a thousand years." And the morning wind, Vayu, is entreated that "Yima may be the most merciful of all creatures, and that under his dominion he may make cattle and mankind immortal, that the waters and trees may never dry up and wither." In the fragments of the book of the law in the Avesta, Zarathrustra inquires of Auramazda to whom he (the god) had first revealed the true doctrine. Auramazda answers, "I spoke first with Yima, the excellent one. I said to him, Yima,

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<sup>53</sup> "Yaçna," 9, 4.

thou beautiful son of Vivanghana, be thou the preacher and bearer of my doctrine. But Yima answered, I am not fitted to be the preacher of the doctrine. Then I, Auramazda, spoke and said, If thou wilt not obey me, Yima, to be the bearer of my law, yet make my world fruitful; be the keeper of my earthly creatures, their protector and lord. And Yima, the excellent one, answered, I will cause thy creatures to prosper and increase; I will be the keeper, protector, and lord of them. Therefore I, Auramazda, gave to him two instruments, a golden staff and an ox goad adorned with gold, and three hundred years passed by. And the land was full of herds and beasts of draught, of men, and dogs, and birds, and red flaming fires. And there was no more any room for the flocks, and men, and beasts of draught. Then I warned Yima: O Yima, excellent one, son of Vivanghana, there is no more any room for the herds, and beasts of draught, and men. And Yima went forth to meet the stars and the path of the sun (*i. e.* towards the east). He struck with the golden staff upon the earth, and smote it with the goad, and said, Çpenta Armaiti (O holy earth), arise, part thyself asunder, thou bearer of animals and of men. And Yima pushed the earth asunder so that it was a third part greater than before. Then the flocks found a home, the beasts of draught, and men, according to their wish and desire." Again three hundred years passed, and there was no more any room for herds, beasts, and men; and at Auramazda's command Yima again caused the earth to stretch asunder, and it became two-thirds greater than before; and after another three

hundred years Yima caused the earth to become as large again as before.<sup>54</sup> Then a thousand years passed, and Auramazda said to Yima, "Bitter cold and sharp frost will fall upon the earth, and the snow will lie deep on the summits of the mountains and in the clefts of the valleys. Make an enclosure (*vara*) of the length of a horse's course on each of the four sides. Bring into it a stock of herds and beasts of draught, of men and dogs, and birds and red flaming fires, and make the enclosure to be a dwelling for men and a stall for the cattle. Carry water thither, and build houses and tombs, and a fortification and palisade round about, and drive them with the golden staff into the citadel, and shut to the door. And Yima made a citadel of the length of a horse's course. Thither he brought a stock of all men and women who were the tallest, best, and most beautiful of earth, and a brood of all animals which were largest, best, and most beautiful, and the seeds of all fruits and growths which were best and most beautiful. And he provided that a pair were ever together. There was no evil speaking there, nor strife, nor injury, nor deception, nor meanness; nothing crooked, no mal-formation of teeth, no crippled form, nor any other of the signs which are the signs of Angromainyu. In this enclosure which Yima made men lived the happiest life. A year was a day, and every forty years two children, a male and a female, were born from each pair of

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<sup>54</sup> "Vendid." 2, 1-21, after Karl Geldner's translation. [Cf. Darmesteter's translation in M. Müller's 'Sacred Books of the East,' Vol. IV.]

human creatures, and so also of each kind of animal."<sup>55</sup>

In an invocation in the Avesta we are told that the bright gleaming majesty in the form of the bird Varaghna had passed from Yima when he began to love lying speech. Yima fell terrified to earth, and Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, seized the majesty. When it passed a second time from Yima, Thraetaona seized it, and when it passed a third time, Kereçaça seized it.

The second who crushed the juice of the Haoma was Athwya. Hence there was born to him a son, Thraetaona, in the land of Varena. The evil spirit Angromainyu had created a wicked being, "with three heads, three throats, six eyes, and a thousand strengths" – the Azhi dahaka, *i. e.* the biting serpent, which swallowed horses and men, and threatened to desolate the world. But Thraetaona sacrificed a hundred horses to Ardviçura, a thousand oxen, and ten thousand head of small cattle, and called on the goddess, and with bound bundle of rods, on Vayu on his golden throne, with golden footstool and golden canopy, to grant that he might smite the strong Druj, which Angromainyu had created as the strongest to bring death upon the pure world; and he overcame the monster, because Verethraghna was with him, the most victorious of mortals.<sup>56</sup> And Thraetaona obtained the splendour of the dominion when it departed a second time from Yima. In the prayers of the Avesta, Thraetaona, who has slain

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<sup>55</sup> "Vendid." 2, 21-43.

<sup>56</sup> "Aban Yasht," 9; "Farvardin Yasht," 131; "Bahram Yasht," 40; "Ram Yasht," 23.

the great serpent, is invoked as helper against the "pain which is caused by the serpent," against fever and sickness.<sup>57</sup>

The third who crushed the juice of the Haoma for the sacrifice was Thrīta, of the race of Çama. Thrīta was the first who by skill in medicine kept back sickness and death from the bodies of men. He wished for means to withstand the pains, the sickness, the death, the hot and cold fever which Angromainyu had created for the bodies of men. "Then I, Auramazda, caused healing plants to grow by hundreds, by thousands, by tens of thousands around the one Gaokerena." And in reward for his offering of Haoma two sons were born to Thrīta – Urvakshaya, who put in order the law, and Kereçaça (i. e. having slim horses), the youth of beautiful form, the bearer of the weapon Gaeçu.<sup>58</sup> Kereçaça smote the poisonous green serpent Çruvara, on which flowed poison to the thickness of a thumb, and it swallowed men and horses. Afterwards, after he had sacrificed to Ardviçura on the shore of Lake Piçano (i. e., no doubt, in the valley of Pishin in Sejestan), he smote the giant Gandarewa, who dwelt in Lake Vourukasha, and the descendants of the nine robbers, and Çnavidhaka, who had attempted to overcome Auramazda and Angromainyu. And when his brother Urvakshaya had been slain by Hitaça, Kereçaça besought the wind, who works on high, to grant to him to slay Hitaça in revenge for the death of his brother. And he conquered him, and yoked him to his chariot.

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<sup>57</sup> "Farvardin Yasht," 131 ff.

<sup>58</sup> "Yaçna," 9, 30; "Vendid." 20, 11 ff.

When for the third time the majesty departed from Yima, Kereçaçpa seized it, the strongest of men after Zarathrustra. In the prayers of the Avesta, Kereçaçpa's help is invoked against robbers and hostile hosts.<sup>59</sup>

Yima, Thraetaona, Kereçaçpa, and the forms which are genealogically connected with them, Vivanghana, Athwya, Çama, Thrita, and Urvakshaya, are collected by the Avesta under the name *Paradhata*, i. e. those who first exercised dominion.<sup>60</sup> Indications in our fragments show that other names were also included in them. Thraetaona's son was Airyu, and Airyu's son was Manuschithra.<sup>61</sup> These most ancient sovereigns were followed by a second group, whose distinguishing mark is the surname *Kava*. The first of these Kavas, whom the Avesta mentions merely as the wearer of the divine majesty, is Kava Kavata.<sup>62</sup> He is succeeded by the agile, brilliant Kava Uça, who sacrifices to Ardvîçura on Mount Erezifya in order to obtain the dominion over all lands, over Daevas and men, wizards and Pairikas, and this favour the goddess granted him. After Uça the royal majesty united itself, to use the phrase in the Avesta,

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<sup>59</sup> "Vendid." 20; "Yaçna," 9, 32, 39; "Ram Yasht," 7, 28; "Farvardin Yasht," 136; "Zamyad Yasht," 41 ff. According to the "Mainyo-i-Khard," Kereçaçpa, besides slaying the serpent Çruvar, slew the wolf Kapod, the water demon Gandarsi, the bird Kamak, and kept back much oppression from the world. West, "Mainyo-i-Khard," c. 27.

<sup>60</sup> Justi, "Handbuch," *s. voc.*

<sup>61</sup> "Farvardin Yasht," 131.

<sup>62</sup> "Farvardin Yasht," 132; "Zamyad Yasht," 71.

with the beautiful pure body of Kava Çyavarshana. He died by a violent death.<sup>63</sup> His son was Kava Huçrava, "the brave uniter of the Arian lands into one kingdom," as the Avesta tells us, which then goes on to relate that he was without sickness or death. He had to contend against the destructive Franghraçianas, the Turanians (*tura, tuirya*). He besought Ardviçura that it "might be granted to him to put an end to the long dimness, and bind the Franghraçianas in their abundance and pride." This prayer the goddess granted. Haoma himself desired "to bind the destructive, murderous Franghraçiana and carry him away as a captive of the king Huçrava, and that Kava Huçrava should slay him behind the lake Chaechaçta, the deep lake with broad waters."<sup>64</sup> Kava Huçrava was followed by king Aurvataçpa, the son of Naotara, the son of Manuschithra, the son of Airyu; and Aurvataçpa was succeeded by his son the strong and warlike Vistaçpa.<sup>65</sup> Of the twenty-nine sons of this king, the Avesta mentions the strong Çpentodata, and informs us that Frashaostra and his brother Jamaçpa, of the race of Hvova, were men of importance with the king. Like Huçrava, Vistaçpa had to contend with a Turanian, Arejataçpa, *i. e.* the winner of horses, who sacrificed to Ardviçura in order to obtain the victory over Kava Vistaçpa and the warrior on horseback, Zarivairi

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<sup>63</sup> "Gosh Yasht," 18; "Ashi Yasht," 38.

<sup>64</sup> "Aban Yasht," 49; "Gosh Yasht," 18; "Ashi Yasht," 38; "Afrin Zartusht," 7; "Zamyad Yasht," 77; "Ram Yasht," 32.

<sup>65</sup> "Aban Yasht," 76, 98; "Ashi Yasht," 46; "Farvardin Yasht," 102; "Ram Yasht," 36.

(the brother of Vistasp). The goddess heard him not, but heard Vistasp when he sacrificed to her behind the water of Frazdana, in order to overcome the hostile Arejataspa, born of darkness, skilled in evil, who sought to smite the lands of the Arians.<sup>66</sup> But Zarathrustra, the son of Pourushaspa, of the race of Haechataspa, sacrificed to Ardvisura that he might unite with the mighty Vistasp, the son of Aurvataspa, and to Drvaspa, "that he might unite with Hutaoca, and she might impress on his memory the good law."<sup>67</sup> Zarathrustra proclaimed a new law, the law of Auramazda. The heroes and kings before him were known in the Avesta by the name *Paoiryotkaesha*, i. e. the men of the earliest custom, the earliest law.

These are all the traits and pictures of the antiquity of East Iran, of any importance, which can be gathered from the remaining fragments of the Avesta. Of the antiquity and genuineness of the narrative there is no doubt. The close relationship and coincidence which they exhibit with the form and views of the Veda are proved on both sides. As we saw, the Veda distinguishes the sacrificers and sages of the ancient time, the earlier time, and the present (IV. 29.) The god Haoma is the well-known god Soma of the Arians in India, the variation in the name being due to the change of sounds which distinguishes the

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<sup>66</sup> "Aban Yasht," 109, 117; "Farvardin Yasht," 38; "Gosh Yasht," 29, 30; "Ashi Yasht," 50, 81; "Zamyad Yasht," 87.

<sup>67</sup> "Aban Yasht," 104-106; "Farvardin Yasht," 142; "Gosh Yasht," 26; "Ram Yasht," 36.

Old Bactrian from the language of the Veda. Here, as there, he is the sacrificial libation, and at the same time the god who pours the libation, and is its power. The great heroes Yima, Thraetaona, Kereçaçpa and Zarathrustra were born to their fathers as a reward for offering the libation of Soma. King Yima (Yima Kshaeta) in the Avesta is no other than the Yama (Yama Rajan) of the Veda. Yama is the son of Vivasvat, the brilliant, the shining, the giver of light; and in the Avesta Yima is the son of Vivanghana. In the Veda he is the assembler of the people, the first king, the first mortal who shows to men the way which leads from the depths to the height of heaven; who first experiences death, but returns into heaven as the son of the god of light, where he gathers round him the brave and pious for new life in imperishable joy (IV. 61). Yima is also the assembler of men, the first king; he rules with the golden staff; he founds the religious worship, a merit which in the Veda belongs to Manu. Under Yima the earth is filled with red-glowing fires; he worships Vayu and Ardviçura. He is the representative of the golden age; in his reign there is neither heat nor cold, age nor death, hate nor strife; and his dominion continues a thousand years. It was the first happy period of the world, which men passed under the dominion of the son of the god of light. At what an elevation Yima must have been placed in the oldest form of the mythus of East Iran is clear from the fact that creative acts and the triple extension of the earth are ascribed to him. After the close of this golden period, winter comes upon the earth, heat and cold, strife, sickness, and death. The happy

life of the golden age only continues within certain limits, in the enclosure of Yima, where he carries on the blessed and immortal life with selected men, trees, animals, and food. Here Yima is to live till the end of all things, when his companions will again people the earth. As in this garden of Yima the sun, moon, and stars shine together,<sup>68</sup> it must be sought in the sky, or at any rate on the bright, divine mountain Hukairya, where there is neither night nor gloom, and which is at the same time described as Yima's place of sacrifice.

If the Indians have placed the old Arian legend of a golden age on earth in the days of Yima's reign, they have also, after their manner, depicted his heavenly kingdom with brighter colours, while among the Iranians this part of the legend is combined with the heavenly garden into which Yima receives the men he has selected as the best. Nevertheless, a reminiscence of Yima's garden has remained beyond the Indus in the story of the Uttara Kurus, who dwell beyond the holy mountains to the north.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> "Vendid." 2, 39, 40.

<sup>69</sup> Vol. IV. 21 *n.* Spiegel, "Avesta," 3, Einl. s. 58. The favourite comparison of the enclosure of Yima with the deluge of the Hebrews appears to me anything but apposite. Iran, and still more Bactria, is unsuited to give rise to the legend of a flood. Nor is there any question of the destruction of evil men (if there had been, Yima would have been the most guilty and the least deserving of pardon), but of the end of the golden age, as is shown in the Vendidad, the Yaçna, and the Yashts: the earth becomes more thickly peopled, men and animals do not grow old or die. If we must bring together things which have really no relation to each other, it would be more apposite to compare the paradise of the Hebrews. The reason for the end of the golden age is the guilt of Yima. [Cf. Kuenen, "Religion of Israel," 3, c. 9, E. T.]

The most striking variation from the common Arian myth in the Avesta is the statement that Yima is subordinate to a deity, Auramazda, of whom the Arians of India knew nothing. The old legend is thus brought within the sphere of new views, which must have exercised still further influence upon it. It is Auramazda who places in the hand of Yima the control, superintendence, and protection of animals and men. It is not through Yima's own desire, as was certainly the case in the old legend, but at Auramazda's bidding, that the enclosure is made, and the selected men, animals, and trees brought into it. The main reason for this change was the necessity of giving an answer to the question, Why did not the golden age continue? and if, long after Yima, Zarathrustra proclaimed a new and better law, why had not Auramazda revealed this law to the favoured Yima? In order to answer this riddle, the Avesta represents Auramazda as asking Yima to become "the preacher and bearer of his doctrine," and Yima refuses to accept this mission. Hence Yima becomes guilty of a fault, and a reason is given why the golden age, the thousand years of the reign of Yima, came to an end. Without the good doctrine, the invasion of evil spirits, and with them of heat and cold, sickness and death, strife and blight, could not be kept back from the earth. This trait of the guilt of Yima, which is entirely unknown to the earlier legend, is carried out still further. According to the prayer in the Avesta (p. 34) blessing and immortality continued in the kingdom of Yima, "till he began to love lying speech." When he had rejected Auramazda's law

he cannot himself resist the seduction of evil spirits. The first offence brings on the second, and this causes the triple loss of majesty, which at length ends in the fall and violent death of Yima, an incident already indicated in the Avesta.<sup>70</sup> How this form of the legend allowed the garden of Yima to be placed on the divine mountain, and whether the contradiction was removed or not, our fragments do not enable us to decide.

In the Veda it was Indra who had to contend against Vritra and Ahi, *i. e.* the serpents, and the black spirits, which desired to drink up the water of the sky and veil its light. In Iran, as we shall see, this office is transferred to other spirits, and also to Thraetaona. The Azhi dahaka of the Avesta is the Ahi of the Veda. Ahi and Azhi are the same word, with the same meaning; the addition *dahaka* refers to the destructive power of this demon. Verethraghna, *i. e.* the slayer of Vritra, stands in the Avesta at the side of Thraetaona in his struggle with Azhi (p. 35), and the morning wind supports him just as in the Veda the winds assist Indra against Ahi and Vritra. Among the Indians, Traitana is a spirit of the air, who dwells in the remotest regions of the sky, who hews off the head of a giant from his shoulders, and in the Veda, Trita, the son of Aptya, drinks the draught of Soma, in order to win strength for the slaying of Vritra; he slays the snake with three heads and seven tails; with his iron club he splits the hollows in the rock in which the demons have hidden the cows of

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<sup>70</sup> "Zamyad Yasht," 46.

the heaven (the rain clouds).<sup>71</sup> In the Veda, Aptya is the father of Trita; in the Avesta, Athwya is the father of Thraetaona. Of Trita, whom it represents as sprung from Çama, the Avesta declares that he was the first physician; in the Veda we are told of Trita he knew how to heal sickness as the gods had taken his sickness from him; that he bestowed long life.<sup>72</sup> The two figures of Trita and Traitana gradually unite in the Veda; in the Avesta, Thrita and Thraetaona remain separate persons. The Kereçaçpa of the Avesta seems to correspond to the Kriçaçva of the Indians, whom we first find in the Epos, where he is celebrated as a warlike Rishi.<sup>73</sup>

If the Paradhatas, Yima, Athwya, Thraetaona, Thrita, and Kereçaçpa in the original conception are spirits of the sky, if the monsters with which Thraetaona and Kereçaçpa struggle are not to be sought on earth but in the heavens, if in these dragons we find once more the cloud-serpents, against which Indra and his company have to contend – we do not at once set foot upon earth, when we come to the Kavanians. According to the later tradition of Iran, Kava Kavata was fetched from the divine mountain in order to reign over the country; two white falcons bring him a golden crown. The Rigveda mentions Kavya Uçanas, *i. e.* Uçanas, the son of Kavi, who brings the cows of the sky, *i. e.* the clouds, to

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<sup>71</sup> "Rigveda," 1, 158; 10, 8, 5.

<sup>72</sup> Westergaard in Weber's "Ind. Studien," 3, 413 ff., 426 ff. Kuhn combines Trita with Triton and Tritogeneia; Hofer's "Zeitschrift," 1, 276, 289.

<sup>73</sup> Haug, "Essays," pp. 235, 236.

the pasture.<sup>74</sup> In the Avesta, Kava Uça sacrifices not only to rule over the whole earth but also over the spirits. According to a later tradition this sovereign – now called Kai Kaus – causes beautiful castles to be built on the divine mountain by the demons, and is then carried by four eagles into heaven. Kava Huçrava, for whom in the Avesta the god Haoma contends, is without sickness and death (p. 37). In the later tradition, in which he is known as Kai Chosru, he begins a pilgrimage to heaven after conquering and slaying his opponent the Turanian Franghaçiana, like the sons of Pandu in the Mahabharata after their victory over the Kurus and their happy reign. Like them also, Kai Chosru climbs the mountains and disappears from his companions at a well. Against his command they seek him in the mountains, and are all buried in a great snow-storm. From the name Manuschithra (p. 37), *i. e.* scion of Manu, we may conclude that the twin brother of Yama, "father Manu," was not unknown to the Arians of Iran. But the genealogy in which the Avesta has preserved these names has no greater claims to historical value than the figures which have passed in review before us. Airyu is the son of Thraetaona; *i. e.* from the mightiest hero, the slayer of the great dragon, are sprung the sovereigns and the nation of the Airyas; the son of Airyu is Manuschithra; from whose son, Naotara, are derived the two last Kavas, Aurvataçpa and Vistaçpa.

If the coincidence of the forms from Yima to Kava Huçrava with the Veda is a proof of the antiquity and genuineness of the

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<sup>74</sup> Kuhn, "Beiträge," 4, 44; Haug, "Essays," pp. 235, 236.

tradition of the Avesta, the gain for history becomes less instead of greater. No one would take mythical persons for historical. Yet the style and form in which we find these traditional statements in the fragments of the Avesta supply certain guides for the lost history of Eastern Iran. The splendour of the royal majesty is so often and so distinctly brought into prominence, that the conclusion forces itself upon us, that the regions in which the Avesta arose, *i. e.* the north-east of Iran, must have been acquainted with a powerful and highly-respected monarchy. The ancient spirits of the sky are changed in the Avesta into mighty warriors and far-ruling kings, a circumstance in favour of the supposition that an empire once existed here, the image of which is reflected on prehistoric times. It is in Epic poems that the spirits of the first sky become heroes, and Epic poetry only arises in and follows on periods of war and conflict. The fact that the forms of the spirits thus changed into heroes by Epic song are turned into the forefathers of the kings and progenitors of the nation, further establishes the conclusion that a military monarchy must have been in existence here; only warlike princes could appear as the heirs of heroes. Moreover, the Avesta extols the high banner of Bakhdhi and speaks of the neighbouring regions as favoured; the later tradition of Iran marks out Bactria very clearly as the abode of Aurvataçpa and Vistaçpa; in the third century B.C. Bactria supplied its princes with means not merely to achieve their own independence, but to maintain it against the great kingdom of the Seleucids and to subjugate the land of the

Indus (p. 25 ff.); and if, in addition to these facts, we bear in mind the conceptions found in the Median poems of the great power of the kings of the Bactrians, their treasures in gold and silver, their fortified city, the conquest of which was the greatest achievement of Ninus – we may venture to assume that before the days of the Medes, *i. e.* before the year 650 B.C., there must have existed an important monarchy in the north-east of Iran.

With the assistance of the Avesta we may go a step further. We saw that Kava Huçrava no less than Vistaçpa is represented as fighting against the Turas or Tuiryas. Who were these enemies? In Old-Bactrian the word means the enemy, the oppressor. Strabo speaks of a region of Turuaia in the north of Parthia, towards the steppes of the Oxus.<sup>75</sup> In the later tradition of Iran the Turanians are the constant and most dangerous enemies of the kings of Bactria. The steppes of the Oxus and Jaxartes were inhabited by nations to whom the Persians gave the collective name of Sacæ, while the Greeks called them Scythians. They found but scanty pasture on the steppes, and it was natural that they should look with longing eyes on the more fertile regions of Bactria and Sogdiana. It has already been mentioned how careful Cyrus was to protect these countries, when he had conquered them, against the nations of the steppes. At a later time, from the middle of the second century B.C. downwards (p. 28), we have definite information of the pressure of these nations on Parthia, Margiana, and Bactria. When freed from the attacks of

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<sup>75</sup> Strabo, p. 517. [Τορτιούαν is a *v. l.* for Ταπυρίαν.]

the Seleucids on the west, the Arsacids had to defend the east of the kingdom. Phraates II. and Artabanus II. fell in battle against the nomads; Mithridates II. succeeded in protecting Parthia, but about the year 100 B.C. the Sacæ were able to force a way through Bactria. They possessed themselves of the best land in the east of Iran, the valleys of the Hilmend (p. 7), bequeathed their name to the country (Sikashtan, Sejestan), and from the valley of the Cabul extended their dominion beyond the Indus. The white Huns, or Yuëchis, followed the Sacæ; and they also reached the Indus. Is there any reason to doubt the Avesta that even before the Medes and Cyrus the princes of Bactria and Sogdiana were occupied with beating back the tribes of the steppes?

In ancient times, as Strabo tells us, the Bactrians and Sogdiani were little removed from wandering shepherds. The Avesta exhibits them in close connection with horses. The names compounded with *açpa* (horse) are common; Kereçaçpa, Aurvataçpa, Vistaçpa, Haechataçpa, Jamaçpa, Pourushaçpa. Of Zariaçpa and the Zariaçpians we have already spoken. The most important source of wealth must have consisted in horses, for which the mountains supplied ample pasture. The horse-sacrifice is the chief sacrifice of the Avesta. One hundred horses were equal to 1000 oxen, and 10,000 head of small cattle. We found that Bactria could furnish the last Darius with 30,000 cavalry, and the horse was the symbol of Bactria on the coins of the Greek princes of the land (p. 27).

From all these indications we may assume that when the Arians had settled in Margiana, Bactria, and Sogdiana, and agriculture became of importance beside the breeding of cattle, the necessity of protection against the migratory tribes of the endless plains stretching to the north, created among the Arians a warlike nobility who took upon themselves the duty of defence. The valley of the Zarefshan (Sogdiana), the terrace of Bactria, the region of Merv, became in the hands of the Arians advanced posts of civilisation in the desert. If Western Iran was protected in the north by the Alps of Aderbeijan and the Caspian Sea against attacks from that quarter, Eastern Iran lay open to the nomads of the steppes, and had nothing but arms to defend its cultivated lands. We have already seen that Bactria even in the sixth century had passed beyond the earliest stages of civilisation (p. 24). But even a less degree of prosperity was sufficient to excite the sons of the desert to invasion. Hence we may assume that the incursions and raids of the nomads of the steppes began with the increase of the flocks and the prosperity of agriculture in the valleys of Merv, Bactria, and Sogdiana. The increasing severity of these attacks compelled the Bactrian soldiery to collect their forces for more successful resistance, and to place the best warriors at the head of the community. Thus it was not by spontaneous development, but rather by the opposition to the nations of the steppes, that the north-east of Iran first outgrew the tribal life, and became transformed into a larger state. Of this kingdom Aurvataçpa and Vistaçpa became the rulers; in

the Avesta they are distinguished from the Paradhatas and from Kava Kavata, Kava Uça, and Kava Huçrava, by a new addition to the name and other peculiar traits, and form a third group. The progress of our investigation will show that the formation of this Bactrian kingdom cannot be placed later than 1100 B.C., the date of Vistäçpa must be put about 1000 B.C., and it was the successors of Vistäçpa who sent to Shalmanesar II. the tribute of camels with two humps, and yaks (about 850 B.C.), who found themselves menaced once more by the advances of Tiglath Pileasar II. to Arachosia in the year 745 B.C., and at length succumbed to Cyrus. We shall find that this kingdom was not without its warlike races and priestly families, that Zariaçpa and Bactria were the centres of it, and that the sovereigns attained despotic power. Yet the old warlike families must have preserved a certain importance under the monarchy, unless they regained it when lost under the viceroys of the Achæmenids. It was the chieftains of the Bactrians whom Alexander summoned to Zariaçpa, and who with the Sogdiani at their side took the lead in resistance. The most powerful of them stubbornly defended their rocky citadels against the Macedonians.

## CHAPTER III.

# THE SCRIPTURES OF IRAN. <sup>76</sup>

The statements of the Avesta concerning the ancient rulers of Eastern Iran were proved to be without historical value, yet we found in them an ancient and genuine tradition, the form of which allowed us to draw certain conclusions about the political condition of that region in a period for which we have no other records except the poetry of Western Iran. But what the Avesta tells us of the rulers of ancient days is of secondary importance for the book, which comprises the doctrines and ordinances of the faith proclaimed by Zarathrustra, and the rules of life which he is said to have laid down. May we assume that we possess these in a genuine and unaltered form in the Avesta, though they have only come down to us in fragments?

A book of the Parsees of India, which tells the story of their flight from their ancient home, relates that Iskander (Alexander of Macedon) burned the revealed scriptures, and the faithful were persecuted for 300 years. When Ardeshir (the first Sassanid) ascended the throne, the true faith was restored, under the superintendence of Arda Viraf. After this the true religion was again suspended till king Shapur (Shapur II.) rose and once more made the faith famous, and Aderbat Mahresfant girded his

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<sup>76</sup> [Cf. Darmesteter, "Zend-Avesta," Introduction, c. iii.]

loins in the good cause. The same account is given in the Book of Arda Viraf, also a book of the Parsees of India. From this we learn that the religion received by the pious Zarathrustra lasted for 300 years in purity. Then the evil one stirred up Iskander Rumi, so that he spread war and devastation over Iran, and slew the rulers of the land. The Avesta which was preserved at Stakhar Papakan (Persepolis), written on cow-skins with golden ink, he burned, and put to death many priests and judges, pillars of the faith, and spread hatred, strife, and confusion among the people of Iran. They had now no lord, guide, and high priest, who knew their religion; they were full of doubts and had different modes of belief and worship of various kinds, and different laws prevailed in the world till the time when Ardeshir came to the throne and listened to the words of the holy Arda Viraf and believed him. But after Ardeshir's death a schism broke out, and more than 40,000 souls fell away from the true faith, till the day when the holy Aderbat Mahresfant arose.<sup>77</sup> An older writing of the Parsees, the Dinkart (composed under the Sassanids), tells us, apparently on the ground of a proclamation of the Sassanid Chosru Parvez (590-627 A.D.) that king Vistasp of Bactria had commanded that all books which were written in the language of the Magians should be collected, in order that the faith of the worshippers of Auramazda might have some support, and all men were to go to Frashaostra (whom the Avesta mentions as a companion of Zarathrustra) to be instructed

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<sup>77</sup> Haug, "The Book of Arda Viraf," p. 142 ff.

in the faith. And Darai, the son of Darai (Darius Hystaspis is meant), commanded that two copies of the entire Avesta, precisely as Zarathrustra had received it from Auramazda, should be preserved, the one in the treasury at Shapikan, and the other in the city of scriptures. Then Valkosh (Vologeses), the descendant of Ashkan (Arsaces), gave orders that so much of the Avesta as had escaped destruction and the ravages of Iskander and the warriors of Rum, and existed in fragments or in oral tradition, should be sought out and brought from every city. And king Artakshatr (Ardeshir) summoned the Herbedh (*i. e.* the priest)<sup>78</sup> Tosar with the holy scriptures, which were scattered, to his residence, and when Tosar came he gave command to the other priests that everything, which differed from that which was now considered to be knowledge and wisdom, should be suppressed. The son of Artakshatr, Shapuhar (241-272 A.D.), the king of kings, gave command that all writings on medicine or astronomy or other subjects in Hindostan, Rum, and other lands, should be collected, and again united with the Avesta, and that an exact copy should be deposited in the treasury of Shapikan. Lastly Atropat (Aderbat) in the reign of Shapuhar (Shapur II, 309-379 A.D.), the son of Auharmazdi, purified the sayings of Zarathrustra and enumerated the Nosks (chapters) of the sacred scriptures.<sup>79</sup>

In the rivayats of the Parsees in India, *i. e.* in the collections

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<sup>78</sup> Herbedh is the old Bactrian *athrapaiti*.

<sup>79</sup> Haug, "Pahlavi-Pazand Glossary," p. 144, 146.

of the sayings of the priests on their doctrine, we find an enumeration of these sections of the scriptures. At each book this list notes how many chapters were re-discovered "after Alexander." According to this enumeration the scriptures of Iran consisted of twenty-one books.<sup>80</sup> The first book contained the songs of praise to the supreme spirits in 33 chapters; the second (22 chapters) treated of good works; the third (22 chapters) of the sacred word; the fourth (21 chapters) of the gods; the fifth (22 chapters) of the earth, of water, of trees, of wild animals; the sixth (35 chapters) of the heavens and the stars; the seventh (22 chapters) of pure and impure kinds of food, and of the celebration of the great festivals; the eighth (50 chapters) of the kings and priests, of pure and impure animals; the ninth (60 chapters) of the laws according to which the kings and judges were to give sentence; the tenth (60 chapters) of virtue and wisdom; the eleventh (60 chapters) of the reign and conversion of king Vistasp; the twelfth taught agriculture in 22 chapters, the planting of trees, the duty of the priests and laity, and treated of the orders; the thirteenth (60 chapters) was occupied with the sacred sciences, the teachers and pupils, and the miracles which Zarathrustra worked; the fourteenth book (22 chapters) spoke of the life of men from birth to death; the fifteenth (17 chapters) contained songs of praise; the sixteenth (54 chapters) laid down rules for what was permitted and what was not; the seventeenth (64 chapters) contained the doctrines

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<sup>80</sup> It is found in the so-called "Great Rivayat."

of medicine and astronomy; the eighteenth (65 chapters) the doctrine respecting animals and their treatment; the nineteenth (52 chapters) contained the civil and criminal law; the twentieth (22 chapters) the rubrics for the removal of impurity; the twenty-first gave in 30 chapters the history of creation.<sup>81</sup>

According to this list the scriptures of Iran must have been of very considerable extent. The Arabian author Masudi, who lived about the middle of the tenth century A.D., also puts the number of books at twenty-one. "Zartusht," he says, "gave the Parsees the book which is called the Avesta. It consisted of twenty-one sections, of which each amounted to 200 pages. This book was written in the character which Zartusht invented and which the Magians call the religious character, on 12,000 cow-hides, and these were kept together by bands of gold. It was composed in the old Persian language, which no one now understands."<sup>82</sup> From the list of the books and chapters it is clear that these writings comprised not only the religious doctrine and law, together with the rules for correct conversation, but also the rubrics for the liturgy and ritual. They were at the same time the code of criminal and civic law, and in them was deposited what was known of medicine and agriculture, and the sum total of the science of their authors.

Can we assume that writings of this importance, nature, and

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<sup>81</sup> Vullers, "Fragmente über die Religion Zoroasters," s. 15-42; Haug, "Essays," p. 125.

<sup>82</sup> Quatremère, "Journ. des Savants," 1840, p. 413.

extent existed in Iran before Alexander of Macedon overthrew the kingdom of the Achæmenids? Herodotus tells us that the Magians or priests of the Persians recited the theogony, *i. e.* long poems, at their sacrifices. The disciples of the sophist Prodicus are said to have asserted that they were in possession of writings of Zoroaster, who taught the Persians their religion.<sup>83</sup> Hermippus of Smyrna, who wrote in the second half of the third century B.C., and devoted especial attention to the religions of the east, stated that the Magians maintained two principles, a good and an evil deity; the one they called Zeus and Oromasdes, the other Hades and Areimanius.<sup>84</sup> Zoroaster, who founded the doctrine of the Magians, had composed twenty books, each of 100,000 lines, and Hermippus gave the contents of the various books and quoted regulations from them. Pliny tells us: "The doctrine of the Magians prevails to this day among a great part of the nations, and in the East is supreme over the king of kings" (*i. e.* the Arsacids); and vouches for Hermippus that he had written with great care about the Magians,<sup>85</sup> from whose work no doubt he quotes some particulars of the doctrine of Zoroaster. According to Zoroaster's rule the sowing of the fields should take place when the moon is in the sign of Taurus; and it was forbidden

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<sup>83</sup> Clemens Alex. "Strom." p. 598.

<sup>84</sup> Diogen. Laert. prooem. The corrupt passage in Athenæus (p. 478) is not a sufficient reason for refusing to accept Hermippus of Smyrna as the author of the treatise on the Magians. Pliny could not quote the Berytian Hermippus.

<sup>85</sup> Plin. "H. N." 30, 2.

to expose the person before the sun or moon, or to defile a man's shadow. Pliny also mentions the precious stones, of which Zoroaster had extolled the brilliance; the herbs, used by the Magians; and enumerates a number of remedies, which they applied. Finally, he speaks of the Nyktegertos, a herb growing in Gedrosia, which the Magians used when making vows.<sup>86</sup> Philo of Byblus quotes a passage, apparently from "the sacred collection of Zoroaster," on the nature of the deity, and assures us that the Persian Osthanes maintained the same in the Octateuch.<sup>87</sup> Plutarch gives us a short but accurate account of the system of Zoroaster; his contemporary Dio Chrysostom asserts that Zoroaster and the sons of the Magians had sung of the balance of Zeus and the constellation of the day in strains more sublime than those of Homer or Hesiod;<sup>88</sup> and Pausanias relates that at the kindling of the sacrificial fire the invocation was sung by the Magians from a book in a barbarous language wholly unintelligible to the Greeks.<sup>89</sup>

This evidence from the West confirms the existence of sacred writings in Iran after the time of Alexander, and also indicates that they existed previously to that date; it contradicts the story of their destruction by the Macedonians. The books must have been in existence when Hermippus could speak of their extent,

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<sup>86</sup> "H. N." 37, 49, 55, 58; 26, 9; 27, 35; 28, 19, 27; 29, 38; 21, 36.

<sup>87</sup> Philon. Bybl. fragm. 9, ed. Müller.

<sup>88</sup> Dio Chrysost, ed. Dind. 2, 60.

<sup>89</sup> Pausan. 5, 27, 3.

and quote rules from them; and writings of the kind must have been known when, in the days of Pausanias, the Magians could sing their invocations from a book. From other sources we are sufficiently informed that Alexander's efforts were not directed towards destroying the national character and traditional religion of the Persians. Arrian tells us that Magians no less than Greek soothsayers took part in their festivals.<sup>90</sup> Nor were the Seleucids more desirous than Alexander to effect the destruction of the Iranian nationality; just as the Ptolemies never attempted to set aside the Egyptian religion and life. Even if they had cherished such views, they were far from being strong enough to carry them out, for the Greek empire over Iran lasted in its integrity only eighty years. The Arsacids also, who recovered Iran from the Seleucids, were not averse to the Greek nation. They called themselves friends of the Hellenes, and not only was Greek spoken, but even the tragedies of Euripides were acted at their courts. The scanty remains of the monuments present us with echoes of Greek;<sup>91</sup> their coins, with few exceptions, bear Greek legends like those of the Bactrian princes whom they overcame. But though the influence of the Hellenic character continued under the Arsacids, and at the same time the Aramæan language and manners obtained even greater recognition than Hellenism

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<sup>90</sup> "Anab." 7, 11, 8.

<sup>91</sup> *E. g.* the bas-relief on Mount Behistun in the winged victory, which refers to the battle between Vardanes and Gotarzes, between 40 and 50 A.D. [Cf. Rawlinson, "Sixth Monarchy," p. 389, where a sketch of the relief is given.]

during their dominion, the reign of the Arsacids was a restoration and revivification of the Iranian nationality. According to the evidence of western writers the Magians together with the members of the royal race formed the council of the Arsacids.<sup>92</sup> Pliny has already told us that these princes obeyed the rules of the Magians, and we also find that they invoked Mithra as the Achæmenids had done, and "saluted the sun."<sup>93</sup> Like the Achæmenids, too, they would not permit their armies to fight by night, and we are told that in their time the greatest weight was given to the love of truth and fidelity, *i. e.* to the virtues which, according to Herodotus, the Persians of his time considered the most important, and on which the Avesta insists above all others.<sup>94</sup> We also learn from western writers that the founder of the kingdom (Arsaces I.) was a descendant of Phriapites (Friyapaiti), and with his brother Tiridates and five others he slew the satrap of Antiochus Theos, and drove out the Macedonians;<sup>95</sup> just as Darius with the six Persian princes overthrew the dominion of Gaumata; and the Arabs relate that the Arsacids trace back their stock to Çyavarshana, the son of Kava Uça, a story which cannot have been invented in Arabia.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Poseidonius in Strabo, p. 515; Justin, 42,1.

<sup>93</sup> Herodian, 4, 30.

<sup>94</sup> Plut. "Crassus," c. 29; "Anton." c. 47; Joseph. "Antiq." 18, 9, 3; Justin (12, 3), and Horace ("Ep." 1,2, 112), are of another opinion in regard to the latter point.

<sup>95</sup> Above, p. 26. Arrian, "Parth." 2, ed. Müller; Eunap. p. 222.

<sup>96</sup> Al Biruni in Droyson, "Hellenismus," 32, 372.

In the list of the Arsacids we also find the name Chosru (108-130 A.D.), the Kava Huçrava of the old legend (p. 37); on the coins we find a Vologeses and a Phraates before the fire-altar, the characteristic symbol of the ancient worship of Iran. Just as the old Arian character appears beside the Greek on the coins of the Greek princes of Bactria, the Greek character on the coins of the Arsacids gradually degenerates until at length it gives way to a new Iranian character and language. The tradition sketched in the Dinkart, as we have seen, represents the Arsacid Vologeses (which of the four princes of the name is meant is not clear)<sup>97</sup> as collecting what fragments remained of the holy scriptures in the memory of the priests. The burning of the scriptures by Alexander, as related in the books of the Parsees on their exodus and the Arda Viraf, is merely a transference to him of the conduct of the Moslems on their conquest of Iran. Of the continuance of the ancient religion of Iran under the Arsacids there can be no doubt, though it is true that along with it, in the Greek cities which Alexander and the Seleucids founded, and which were independent within their walls even under the Parthians, Hellenic rites were practised. In these cities Syrian modes of worship were also permitted, and the Aramaic language and culture found entrance into Iran.<sup>98</sup>

In the land of Persia, among the Persians whom Mithridates

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<sup>97</sup> Vologeses I. reigned 50-80 A.D.; Vologeses II. 130-149 A.D.; Vologeses III. and IV. 149-208 A.D.; the son of the fourth, also Vologeses, reigned beside Artabanus IV.

<sup>98</sup> Joseph. "Ant." 18, 9, 1; "Bell. Jud." Prooem. 1, 2; Ammian. Marcell. 23, 6.

I. subjugated to the dominion of the Arsacids, reminiscences of the ancient time, of the splendour and glory of the Achæmenids, were naturally more lively than in Parthia, which was formerly subject to the Persians, and now under the Arasacids stood at the head of Iran. In Persia, Artakshatr (Ardeshir), the son of Papaki, the grandson of Sassan, rebelled against king Artabanus IV. In three great battles the Persians contended with the Parthians; the latter were conquered, and Artabanus fell, and with him the kingdom of the Arsacids after a continuance of 476 years (225 A.D.). With the reign of Ardeshir began a more energetic restoration of Iran. He and his successors after him revered the memory of the Achæmenids, and strove to continue their achievements<sup>99</sup>. We again hear of seven houses, and seven princes who had the right to wear diadems beside the king, like the seven tribal princes of the old Persian kingdom;<sup>100</sup> we find the fire-altar before the tent of the Sassanids as well as the Achæmenids; and in the army of the Sassanids, no less than in that of Darius and Xerxes, was a troop of "immortals." Ardeshir, like the founder of the Persian empire, caused a portrait of himself on horseback to be cut in a rock-wall to the north-west of Persepolis (Naksh-i-Rustem) in remembrance of the achievements which established his kingdom – the rock on which 700 years before Darius had marked his tomb by a portrait and inscription. The inscription under this portrait (in the Pehlevi of

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<sup>99</sup> Ammian. Marcell. 17, 5.

<sup>100</sup> Nöldeke, "Tabari." s. 437.

East and West Iran, with a Greek translation) runs thus: "Portrait of the worshipper of Mazda, the god Artakshatr (Artaxares in the Greek), the king of kings of the Arians (of the kings of Airan, in the Pehlevi texts), the scion of the sky (*minu chitri*), the son of the god Papaki, the king."<sup>101</sup> Ardeshir's son, Shapur I. (241-272 A.D.), caused his victory over Valerian and his capture of the emperor to be recorded on the same rock; we see Shapur on horseback, and Valerian kneeling before him, a representation which recurs at the old Persian city of Darabgerd. At Naksh-i-Rejeb, between the rock-wall of Naksh-i-Rustem and Mount Nachmed, on which abutted Persepolis, the proud citadel of the Achæmenids, and in the grotto of Haiyabad, we find in the one case a portrait of Shapur, and in the other inscriptions which mention this ruler and king Varahran. At Kermanshah, on the western side of Mount Behistun, on the eastern side of which mountain Darius inscribed the proudest memorial of his achievements, we see king Ardeshir, and beneath him the corpse of Artabanus; behind the king is Mithra with the club which gave him victory, and before him Auramazda who presents the ring of empire to Ardeshir. Not far from this portrait Shapur II. (309-379 A.D.) caused a grotto to be excavated in the rock. In the sculpture of this cave we see the goddess Anahita, who presents to the king the ring of empire; at some distance are the hunting expeditions of the king; a second grotto close to this exhibits the

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<sup>101</sup> De Sacy, "Memoires de l'institut Cl. Hist." 2, 162-242. [Rawlinson, "Seventh Monarchy," p. 70, 606.]

pictures of king Auharmazdi II., the father of Shapur II., and of Shapur III. his second successor.<sup>102</sup>

Though the Sassanids sought to restore the kingdom of the Achæmenids, and immortalise their own achievements beside those of the early kings, the religious revival which they undertook was far more thorough than the political. In this direction they went further than the Achæmenids; they caused the forms which the old faith of Iran had retained and forced on the East, to be current throughout the whole kingdom. Agathias assures us that Ardeshir was eagerly devoted to the study of the doctrine of the Magians, who since his accession had gained an importance such as they never enjoyed before. The business of the State was decided upon their advice and predictions; they assisted individual persons in their private matters and suits at law, and the Persians did not regard anything as legal and right which was not confirmed by a Magian.<sup>103</sup> At the head of the Magians, we are told in another account coming from a western source, a Grand Magian was placed under the Sassanids,<sup>104</sup> and as a fact the Magians now received a thorough organisation. At the head of their caste was the High Magian (*Magupat*, *Mobedh*); and over all the High Magians was the Grand Magian (*Magupatan magupat*); to the Magians belonged the judicial power; and the Grand Magian performed the coronation of the

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<sup>102</sup> Rawlinson, *loc. cit.* p. 602, 607, 92 ff.

<sup>103</sup> Agathias, 2, 26.

<sup>104</sup> Sozomen, "H. Eccl." 2, 10, 12.

king. The Sassanids erected fire-temples in Persia no less than in Aderbeijan; their coins always exhibit the fire-altar, and as a rule two priests before it. They carried their genealogy beyond Sassan through Çpentodata (p. 38) to Vistaçpa of Bactria, who is now said to have established the seven princes; they call themselves by the names of the ancient heroes who met us in the Avesta; Kavadh (Kava Kavata) and Chosru (Kava Huçrava). While styling themselves the worshippers of Mazda (Auramazda) like the founders of their empire, they went so far as to assume the names of the gods of the Avesta; some even called themselves after Verethraghna (Varahran, Bahram), others Auharmazdi after Auramazda himself. The numerous Christians on the Euphrates and Tigris as well as in Armenia had to undergo severe persecutions; especially under Shapur II., Varahran V., and Yezdegerd II. (438-457 A.D.), whose viceroy declared to the Armenian Christians that the Dævas (Dews) of Ahriman had deceived them; it was not the good God who had created evil and death but the wicked spirit. Defection from the faith of Auramazda was punished with death. In the treaties of the years 422, 533, and 563 A.D. Theodosius II. and Justinian obtained the concession that the Christians in the kingdom of the Sassanids should not be compelled to conform to the rules of the Magians; they were to be at liberty to bury their dead,<sup>105</sup> whereas the doctrine of Zarathrustra required that the corpses should be exposed.

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<sup>105</sup> Menandri Protect. fragm. 11, ed. Müller.

As such was the attitude of the house of the Sassanids, we may believe the books of the Parsees that Ardeshir eagerly took in hand the revival of the true faith, and that he was assisted in this by competent Magians; by Arda Viraf, according to the book of the Exodus and of Arda Viraf (p. 50); according to the Dinkart, by the Herbedh Tosar. The book of Arda Viraf relates at length how he fell asleep in the assembly of priests before Ardeshir, and his soul was carried by the god Çraosha through heaven and hell. And when the Dinkart represents a standard of true religion as being set up under Ardeshir, there is no reason to doubt the statement. After the reign of Ardeshir, we are told in the Book of the Exodus, the true religion was again suspended, or, as the Book of Arda Viraf tells us, a schism arose. The cause of this division is sufficiently known from other sources. In the reign of Shapur I. (241-272 A.D.) a native of Ctesiphon, of the name of Mani, came forward with a new doctrine which attempted to mingle Chaldæan, Jewish, and Christian elements in the faith of Iran, and to resolve it into abstractions. He found numerous adherents.<sup>106</sup> Varahran II. (276-293 A.D.) allowed him to dispute with the Magians, and then put him to death. Under Shapur II., who succeeded his father Auharmazdi II. as a posthumous child (309-379 A.D.), in order to check Manicheism and the advance of Christianity, it was necessary to go back to the principles of the old faith, and to invigorate these by the collection and establishment of the sacred scriptures. We may therefore have

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<sup>106</sup> [Cf. Rawlinson, "Seventh Monarchy," p. 96 ff.]

the fullest confidence in accepting from these three books of the Parsees the facts that Shapur "made the sacred faith to be famous;" that Aderbat, whose work under Shapur is confirmed by Hamza of Isfahan, collected the scriptures, purified the sayings of Zarathrustra, and enumerated the chapters. It is on this redaction of the canon by Aderbat Mahresfant under Shapur II. that the list of the books and chapters rests, distinguishing what were originally in existence and what were then preserved. What was not discovered "after Alexander" means what was not discovered or not accepted at this redaction. Instead of the 815 chapters which the Avesta is said to have previously contained, the new canon amounted to only 348 chapters. That Aderbat was the founder of this canon is clear not only from the epithet which the books of the Parsees give him (Mahresfant, Old Bactrian Manthraçpenta, meaning "the sacred word,") but also from the confession of faith still in use among the Parsees: "I abide in the law which Zarathrustra taught to Vistaçpa, to Frashaostra, to Jamaçpa, and Çpentodata, which came in the succession of generations to Aderbat, who duly corrected and purified it."<sup>107</sup> It was shown above that the language of the sacred books thus again collected was that of Eastern Iran (p. 30). When Aderbat revised the canon it had long ceased to be spoken. But there were already translations of the sacred books into the later forms which the language of Iran had received in the time of the Parthians, or at any rate such translations were made after the revision of the

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<sup>107</sup> Spiegel, *Avesta*, 3, 214, 218, 219, 227.

canon.<sup>108</sup> Masudi informed us that the Avesta was composed in the old Persian language, which at that time (tenth century A.D.) was no longer understood. Ibn Haukal, who travelled in Persia in the same century, tells us: "In Fars three languages are in use; the Farsi, in which the inhabitants converse with each other; the Pehlevi, which was the language of the ancient Persians, and in which the Magians wrote their historical books, but which in our time is no longer understood by the inhabitants of Fars without a translation; and the Arabian."<sup>109</sup> When Aderbat revised the Avesta in the middle of the fourth century B.C., the Parsi (Farsi), *i. e.* the later Middle Persian, was still in formation; the older Middle Persian or Pehlevi was still intelligible, but translations of the Avesta into this language did not make clear to every one the meaning of the ancient language in which the scriptures were composed. In the time of the Parthian empire the old mode of writing was given up in the West as well as in the East of Iran, and exchanged for new methods. In the West a cuneiform character derived from the writing of Babylon and Assyria had been adopted; the East used the Arian alphabet. Under the Arsacids the Pehlevi became common. Like the old Persian cuneiform this is borrowed from a Semitic pattern. The chief city of the Parthians lay on the Tigris in the midst of a Semitic population. The cursive character of the Aramæans, as

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<sup>108</sup> Above, p. 17. On the date of these translations, Haug, "Pahlavi-Pazand Glossary," p. 147.

<sup>109</sup> Quatreinère, "Journal des Savants," 1840, p. 412.

we find it on the coins of the satraps of the Achæmenids of the fourth century B.C., with a few modifications, forms the base of the Pehlevi; and the earlier shapes of this character are seen in the coins of the Arsacids of the first century A.D. But it is not the character which forms the peculiar mark of Pehlevi. Along with the Aramaic letters the Parthians took the Aramaic vocabulary; they wrote the Aramaic word instead of the Persian, and to this they attached the termination or case-ending of the corresponding Persian word; the reader must understand Aramaic and substitute the Persian word for the Aramaic when reading.<sup>110</sup> Hence Pehlevi was in reality a secret mode of writing, intended exclusively for the learned, *i. e.* for the priests. It is a proof of the close connection between the priests of the East and West that this character, which arose in the West out of the contact with the Aramaic population on the Euphrates and Tigris, spread to the East also and was adopted by the scholars there. Nor was this all. The variations in the Eastern dialect brought about certain modifications in the forms of the letters, and thus there arose an Eastern alphabet of Pehlevi beside the Western alphabet. When Ardeshir destroyed the empire of the Parthians in the year 226 A.D. these two alphabets were in existence. The Eastern alphabet finally triumphed over the Western. It became the royal mode of writing, and as such was used on the coins. The letters in the manuscripts of the Pehlevi translation of the

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<sup>110</sup> Haug, "Pahlavi-Pazand Glossary," p. 120 ff.; 128 ff. West, "Pahlavi Texts," part 1. Introd. § 2.

Avesta in the possession of the Parsees agree throughout with the characters on the legends of the coins of the Sassanids about the year 600 A.D.<sup>111</sup> The characters also, in which the text of the Avesta is written in the manuscripts of the Parsees, belong to the later East-Pehlevi alphabet, which, owing to the greater wealth of the old Bactrian alphabet in sounds, especially in vowels, possesses a greater number of letters.<sup>112</sup> The coincidence of the letters in the manuscripts of the Parsees with those on the coins of the later Sassanids, proves beyond contradiction that although the oldest existing manuscripts belong to the fourteenth century of our era,<sup>113</sup> they are nevertheless true copies of the characters in which the Avesta was written in the last century of the empire of the Sassanids.

All that the Parsees of India now possess are some not very extensive remains of the revision of the sacred scriptures made in the reign of Shapur II. The existing part of the laws corresponds in the title, the divisions and their arrangements, with the twentieth book of the text (p. 52). It contains the rubrics for purification, for repelling and removing the evil spirits. The

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<sup>111</sup> Lepsius, "Zendalphabet, Abh. B. Akad." 1862, s. 338; Lenormant, "Sur l'alphabet Pehlevi Journ. Asiat. 1er." 6, 6, 180 ff.; Levy, "Beiträge Z. D. M. G.", 21, 459 ff. From Ardeshir down to Narses, *i. e.* from 226 to 302 A.D., the writing on the coins agrees with the West Pehlevi of the monuments of the Sassanids. From 302 to 600 A.D. the character on the coins is different. From 600 the writing on the coins agrees with the MSS. of the Parsees; Mordtmann, "Z. D. M. G." 8, 12 ff.

<sup>112</sup> Lepsius, *loc. cit.* s. 306.

<sup>113</sup> Westergaard, "Avesta," 1, 4 ff.

title is the Vendîdad, or, in the older form, the Vidævodata, *i. e.* "given against the Dævas," or evil spirits. Obviously this book was regarded as the most important and valuable part of the law, and to this circumstance it owes its preservation. Besides this we have invocations and prayers, chiefly belonging to the liturgy. They form a considerable collection, known by the title of Yaçna, *i. e.* worship. The remainder of the 348 chapters was lost in the invasion of the Arabs into Iran, owing to their fanatical zeal for conversion.<sup>114</sup>

Though we were able to establish the fact that these fragments belonged in their language, their contents, and their written character to Eastern Iran, and the evidence of Western writers proved to us that at the time when Alexander of Macedon overthrew the kingdom of the Achæmenids, there were sacred scriptures of considerable extent in Iran – this does not enable us to decide the date of the origin of these scriptures. We have to inquire whether these writings were known in the West of Iran also, before the date of the Sassanids; whether the new collection and revision about the year 350 of our era was satisfied with faithfully representing the old condition of the

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<sup>114</sup> That the author or authors of the Bundeshesh, – for the work consists of a collection of fragments of various character, – had before them larger remains of the Avesta, or a commentary which included more than our fragments, may be conceded. The composition of the work cannot be placed before the time of the Arabs, for the whole period of the Sassanid empire is given, and even on an extended scale (p. 82), mention is made of the empire of the Arabs, and Arabian words occur. Cf. Justi, "Bundeshesh," p. ix. ff; cf. below, p. 73. [West, "Pahlavi Texts," 1, Introd. p. xci. ff].

scriptures, so far as it could be discovered, or whether it altered their contents; whether the influence exercised by Hellenic and Aramaic elements in the time of the Seleucids and Parthians – so obvious in the one case and so searching in the other – affected the contents of the Avesta.<sup>115</sup> This question cannot be set aside, because even under the Sassanids, in spite of their zeal for the Avesta and for Iran, these elements were not unknown. We are aware that Greek and Jewish schools flourished in Syria and Mesopotamia at the date of the Sassanids, that Chosru Nushirvan (531-578 A.D.) gave his protection to Damascius and the Platonists in his kingdom, and caused Greek works to be translated. However much other virtues, required in the Avesta, were extolled in this ruler, such as the foundation of fire-temples, and appointment of sacristans for them, the promotion of agriculture (no temple was to be without cultivated lands) and of marriages – nevertheless sects sprung up within the true religion. Even in official documents of the fifth century we find a certain deviation from the doctrine of the Avesta; under king Kavadh (488-453 A.D.), Mazdak, who proclaimed the community of goods and women, found adherents, and the Arabs speak of sects in Iran which opposed the teaching of the Magians.<sup>116</sup> They mention the Zarvanites, the Gayomarthians, and others, of whom the Zarvanites sought to derive the good and evil deity from some

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<sup>115</sup> On the Aramean sketch of the dialectic of Aristotle which was written for Ohoeru, cf. Renan, "Journ. Asiat." 1852, p. 311.

<sup>116</sup> [Cf. Rawlinson, *loc. cit.* 448 ff.; 342 ff.]

higher abstraction,<sup>117</sup> while the Gayomarthians represented the evil deity as proceeding from the thought of the good deity. Had conceptions of this kind, and other later views which we find in their doctrines, influence on the restoration of the canon? The fact that the sacred writings were composed in a language no longer current, when the canon was restored, is not a complete safeguard against changes and interpolations, for the priests at that time may have understood the language, and therefore may possibly have been able to compose in it.

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<sup>117</sup> "Sharastani," by Haarbrücker, 2, 284. The son of Mihr Narses is called Zarvandadh.

# CHAPTER IV.

## ZARATHRUSTRA AND THE DATE OF THE COMPOSITION OF THE AVESTA. <sup>118</sup>

The examination of the difficult questions, whether, from what period, and to what extent, the Avesta was known in Western Iran before the time of Alexander, when the book came into existence, whether its contents have come down uninjured from an ancient period, or whether it underwent alterations in the time of the Parthians and the Sassanids, will be best opened by collecting and testing the accounts which have been preserved in the West about Zarathrustra and his work. Herodotus does not mention him, but Xanthus the Lydian is said to have spoken of him, before the date of Herodotus. Plato describes Zoroaster as the founder of the doctrine of the Magians, and calls him a son of Oromazes.<sup>119</sup> With Hermodorus, a pupil of Plato, Zoroaster is a Persian, the first Magian.<sup>120</sup> Deinon concludes from the name that he was a worshipper of the stars. Hermippus of Smyrna speaks of him as a Bactrian, and is said to have described him

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<sup>118</sup> [Cf. Darmesteter, "Zend-Avesta," *Introduct.*, c. iv. § 40, and c. iii.]

<sup>119</sup> Plato. "Alcib. I." p. 122.

<sup>120</sup> Diog. Laert. prooem.

as a pupil of Azonakes (or Agonakes).<sup>121</sup> Diodorus informs us that Zoroaster gave out among the Arians that the good spirit had revealed to him the laws which he published.<sup>122</sup> Troguus Pompeius relates that Ninus finally carried on war with Zoroaster the king of the Bactrians, who discovered the art of the Magians, and inquired accurately into the primal forces of the world, and the movements of the stars; he was slain by Ninus.<sup>123</sup> Pliny observes that Zoroaster, the founder of the doctrine of the Magians, smiled on the day of his birth, and beat his head vigorously as a symbol of his wisdom; for thirty years he lived in the desert on cheese. Plutarch's account is that Zoroaster took no other food or drink all his life but milk, and like Lycurgus and Numa, he associated with the Divine Being.<sup>124</sup> Dio Chrysostom tells us that Zoroaster from his love for wisdom and justice lived remote from men in solitude on a mountain, which had been kindled by fire from above, and burned continuously, and when the king approached the mountain with his leading men to offer prayer to the god, Zoroaster came unharmed out of the fire, and bade them offer sacrifice for the god had visited the place. After this Zoroaster did not associate with all men, but only with those who were most adapted to receive the truth and converse with the

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<sup>121</sup> Plin. "H. N." 80, 2.

<sup>122</sup> 1, 94.

<sup>123</sup> Justin, 1, 1.

<sup>124</sup> "Numa," c. 4; "Quaest. Sympos." 4, 1. [The reading Ζωροάστρην is doubtful; cf. Wytttenbach.]

god, whom the Persians called Magians, *i. e.* those who have skill to serve the Divine Being.<sup>125</sup> Kephalion asserted that Zoroaster the Magian, the king of the Bactrians, fought with Semiramis and was vanquished by her.<sup>126</sup> Theon of Alexandria also speaks of the conflict between Semiramis and the Bactrian Zoroaster. Arnobius is aware of the battle of Ninus with Zoroaster and the Bactrians,<sup>127</sup> and in Eusebius Zoroaster, the Magian, the king of the Bactrians, fights against Ninus.<sup>128</sup> According to the treatise of Eubulus of Athens on Mithras, Porphyrius related that Zoroaster had consecrated a natural cave, in which were flowers and springs, in the neighbouring mountains of Persia, in honour of Mithra, the creator and father of all, and since that time the favour of the god had been sought in a cave.<sup>129</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus calls Zoroaster a Bactrian, and tells us that Hystaspes, the father of Darius, spread abroad the doctrine of the Magians.<sup>130</sup> Agathias remarks that the Persians of his time asserted that Zoroaster, or Zaradus, as they called him, who gave them their religious doctrine and law, the son of Oromasdes, lived at the time of Hystaspes; but they made the assertion in

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<sup>125</sup> Dio Chrys. 2, 60, ed. Dind.

<sup>126</sup> Euseb. "Chron." ed. Auch. p. 43; cf. Georg. Syncell. p. 167. Βάρου after Zoroaster should here be changed into Βάκτρον rather than Μάγου.

<sup>127</sup> Arnob. "Adv. Gent." 1, 5.

<sup>128</sup> Euseb. *loc. cit.* p. 35.

<sup>129</sup> Porphyr. "De antro nymph." c. 6.

<sup>130</sup> Ammian. Marcell. 23, 6.

such a manner that no man knew whether this Hystaspes was the father of Darius or some other of the name. But whatever the date of his life, he changed the earlier forms of worship, and was the discoverer of the doctrine of the Magians.<sup>131</sup> Suidas distinguishes between the Perso-Mede Zoroaster, the chief of the Magians, and the astronomer of the same name, an Assyrian, who lived at the time of Ninus.<sup>132</sup> In Syncellus, Zoroaster is the first of the eight Median kings, who, according to the statement of Berossus, reigned over Babylonia from 2458 to 2224 B.C.<sup>133</sup>

These statements do not amount to much. Yet we find the tradition maintained from the pupils of Plato down to Agathias, that Zoroaster founded the doctrine of the Magians; Diodorus, Plutarch, and Dio mention the intercourse of Zoroaster with the good spirit or the deity. Diodorus calls him an Arian, *i. e.* an inhabitant of Eastern Iran. Hermippus, Trogius Pompeius, Kephalion, Theon, Arnobius, and Eusebius speak of him as a Bactrian, and the king of the Bactrians, and represent him as fighting with Ninus or Semiramis, which is also asserted by Moses of Khorene.<sup>134</sup> Hence in the last two centuries B.C. it must have been known in the West that Zoroaster belonged to the East of Iran, and thus he was brought into connection with the most prominent fact known in the history of Bactria, the contest of the

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<sup>131</sup> Agathias, 2, 24.

<sup>132</sup> Suidas, Μάγοι, Ζωροάστρης.

<sup>133</sup> Above, p. 17. Georg. Sync. p. 78, 79. Vol. I. p. 241, 247.

<sup>134</sup> Yet with Moses Zoroaster is a Mede, I. p. 87.

Bactrians against Ninus and Semiramis. This story, as we said, comes from the Medo-Persian Epos, and moreover the Epos did not authorise this connection of Ninus and Zoroaster. The opponent of Ninus, who reigned over Bactria, was, according to Diodorus, Oxyartes or Exaortes (p. 20). The fact that Zoroaster was the most important name in the antiquity of Iran among western nations obviously induced Syncellus to put him at the head of the supposed ancient Median dynasty. If Zoroaster, as Pliny and Plutarch think, lived only on milk and cheese, and passed thirty years in the wilderness, these are merely traits taken from the lives of the Brahman ascetics. The story in Dio Chrysostom, that Zoroaster came unharmed from the fire, and the opposite statements of the Chronicle of Alexandria and of Suidas, that he brought down fire from heaven and was consumed by it, or struck by lightning, contain traits which have obviously sprung from the importance which the doctrine of Zoroaster and the Magians ascribe to the worship of fire, and from the division between the fire of lightning and earthly fire, of which we shall speak below. The narrative of Eubulus is founded on the mysteries of Mithra, which came into the West in the first century B.C.<sup>135</sup> These mysteries are due to the confusion of the Mithra of the Iranians with the sun-god of the Syrians; the mystæ were consecrated in caves, or in places called caves, and there underwent their probation. As the god of light and the soul Mithra slays in the cave, that is in the world of gloom and matter,

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<sup>135</sup> Plut. "Pomp." c. 24.

the bull which is the symbol of matter, as opposed to light, in its creative power, and conveys the soul, the side of man akin to light, out of the gloom of matter through the heaven of the fixed stars, and then through the heaven of the planets, to the light.<sup>136</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus and Agathias have better information about Zoroaster. They are aware that he stands in some relation to Hystaspes. Ammianus, though he expressly describes Zoroaster as a Bactrian, puts Hystaspes the well-known father of Darius, as the supporter of the doctrine of the Magians, in the place of the Vistaspā of the Avesta, who opens a wide path for the teaching of Zoroaster; Agathias, on the other hand, expresses himself with greater circumspectness; he cannot decide whether the father of Darius or some other Hystaspes is meant.

The result is this: Before the time of Alexander of Macedon, at the latest in the first half of the fourth century B.C., the Greeks were aware that Zoroaster had founded the doctrine of the Magians; in the last centuries B.C. and onwards it was known that he belonged to Bactria and Eastern Iran; but it was not till the fourth century A.D. that he was known to have lived under king Hystaspes; at any rate we have no older evidence on this point.

Much more recent in date, and of far less value, is the information derived from the East, with the exception of the Avesta, on Zarathrustra. It does not go back beyond the period of the Arabian empire over Iran. The Bundelesh, written in

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<sup>136</sup> Cf. Von Gutschmid, "Die Sage vom heiligen Georg;" Sächsische Gesellschaft d. W., 1861, s. 175.

this period (p. 65, *n.* 3), contains a genealogy, which carries Zarathrustra's origin beyond Pourushaḥpa and Haechataḥpa, from whom, according to the Avesta, he was sprung (p. 38), through twelve generations to Manuschithra (Minocher). In the Avesta, the soul of the pure Manuschithra, the son of Airyu, is invoked;<sup>137</sup> it has been observed above that the national genealogy in Iran placed Thraetaona, and not Manu, at the head; Airyu, the son of Thraetaona, was the proper progenitor of the Airyas. With the name Manuschithra, *i. e.* scion of Manu, who is now the son of Airyu, this table passed back into the old Arian conception of the father Manu (p. 44). In the Avesta, Zarathrustra is connected by his father, the fourth sacrificer of the Haoma, with the old sacrificers; and by deriving his family from Manuschithra the Bundesh places him in the closest relation to the progenitors of the Airyas. For the rest this book has little to say about the life of Zoroaster. It informs us that the house of Pourushaḥpa lay on a hill on the river Daraja, a river which we cannot identify;<sup>138</sup> the Bundesh places it in Airyana Vaeja (Airanvij), in a district which we must place in the high region of the Hindu Kush, on the sources of the Oxus (p. 31, *n.* 2), though the Bundesh informs us that "it lay by the side of Atropatene." According to another passage in the book, Airyana Vaeja lay near the garden of Yima and Cashmere. In a third passage the garden of Yima, which we are

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<sup>137</sup> "Farvardin Yasht," 131.

<sup>138</sup> C. 20 in Justi, [c. 20; § 32 West]; cf. "Vend." 19, 15.

compelled by unmistakable indications in the Avesta, to seek on the divine mountain, lies in the centre of Iran, under Mount Damkan.<sup>139</sup> Atropatene, as a name for the Alpine land in the north-west of Iran (now Aderbeijan), came into use in the time of the Greek empire; at any rate we cannot trace it earlier.<sup>140</sup> *Athrapaiti* means "lord of fire"; *athrapata*, "one protected by fire"; in the remote mountains of this district the old fire-worship was preserved with peculiar zeal under the Seleucids; from the time of Ardeshir the Sassanids venerated the fire-temple Adar Guçasp (near Takht-i-Soliman), which lay in this region, above all others, and this was the reason why in the time of the Arabs it was thought that Airyana Vaeja must be sought there.<sup>141</sup> In any case it is impossible, out of regard to the Bundelesh and even later statements of the Moslem period, to place Zarathustra in the north-west of Iran in order to represent him as a foreigner, reforming the religion of the north-east, when the Avesta, which distinctly places him in the east and puts him among the sacrificers and heroes of the east and rulers of Bactria, together with the older and more important evidence of the West, is on the opposite side.

The "Book of Zartusht," one of the most recent books of the Parsees (it dates from the thirteenth century of our era), can only

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<sup>139</sup> C. 30, cf. above, p. 40. [C. 29, § 14, West.]

<sup>140</sup> Strabo, p. 515, derives it from Atropates, whom Alexander made satrap there.

<sup>141</sup> Still less important than the Bundelesh is the gloss on "Vend." 1, 60. "Many say that Zartusht was from Rak in Atropatan." Ragma is not in Atropatene.

tell us of the marvellous preservation of Zarathrustra and the miracles which he wrought. The first miracle recorded in it is the fact that Zoroaster smiled at his birth. But the wicked king Duransarun sought to murder the newly-born child in his cradle. His arm is paralysed, and he cannot strike the blow home. Then the evil spirits steal the child, kindle a great fire in the desert, and throw him into it. But he sleeps peacefully in the fire, and his mother recovers him without injury. A herd of cattle are about to trample him on a narrow path, when the largest one stands over and protects him, till the herd have passed by. In a similar manner he is preserved when a pair of wild horses are driven over him. Even the wolves will not eat him. When he has reached his thirtieth year these trials are over, and Zarathrustra emigrates with his followers. On reaching Iran the good spirit Vohu mano appeared and conducted him to Auramazda. He had to pass over a fiery mountain, but the fire did not singe a hair; molten metal was poured on his breast, and he felt it not; his entrails were removed and then replaced without injury to him. Auramazda gave him the Avesta and commanded him to go to king Vistaçpa (now Kai Gushtaçp) to Balkh, and proclaim it to him. In Balkh Zoroaster overcame the sages of the king in argument, but they maligned him before their master as a wizard, and he was put in prison. Then the feet of the king's horse were drawn up into its belly, and the king bade Zarathrustra heal his horse. He required the king to believe in him and his doctrine; and when the king had acknowledged the new faith, one of the horse's feet was

restored to it. Zarathrustra further demanded that Vistasp's son Çpentodata (Isfendyar) should consecrate himself to the defence of the new faith, that the king's consort should adopt the law, and those who maligned him should be punished. When these three requests had been complied with, the horse recovered all its four feet. After this Vistasp did nothing without the advice of Zarathrustra, and built fire-altars and fire-temples. And Zarathrustra showed the king the place he would one day occupy in heaven, and made Çpentodata invulnerable.<sup>142</sup>

Hence from the Bundeshesh we obtain no more than the genealogical tree of Zarathrustra, which though characteristic for the place allotted to him, is without historical value; and from the Zartusht Nameh, Sharastani, and Mirkhond, which repeat some miracles more or less similar to those quoted, we gather nothing beyond certain traits: the smiling at birth, the fiery mountain, the preservation of Zarathrustra in the fire, which Pliny and Dio Chrysostom had already made known to us, and which belong to the ancient tradition of Iran. In the miracles which take place by means of oxen and horses, we can merely recognise the ancient and close relation of the Arians in Iran to these animals, a relation which has already been remarked (p. 46). We might perhaps add that Firdusi represents Zarathrustra, whom he puts beside Vistasp, as having been killed at a fire in Balkh when the city was captured by Turanians. The intercourse of Zarathrustra with Auramazda was known to Western writers, as we saw, at a far

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<sup>142</sup> Spiegel, "Eran," 1, 684 ff.

earlier date.

If we can hardly glean anything worth notice from these accounts about Zarathrustra's life and work, we may perhaps gain some information about his date. The evidence of Ammianus Marcellinus and Agathias, when they represent him as a contemporary of Hystaspes, in whom we recognise Vistasp of Bactria, carries us no further than the Avesta, which places him in the closest relation to this prince (p. 38), because his date is equally uncertain. Trogus Pompeius, Kephalion, Theon, and Eusebius make Zarathrustra an opponent and therefore a contemporary of Ninus and Semiramis. But as neither Semiramis nor Ninus ruled over Asshur, and they are to be regarded as the personification of the rise of the power and dominion of that country (II. 23), we must substitute for this king and queen the ruler or rulers of Asshur of whom it is certain that their campaigns reached the east of Iran. We found that so far as we can at present judge from the monuments it was only Shalmanesar II. who received tribute from the Eastern lands, and that the armies of Tiglath Pilezar II. trod the soil of Arachosia (p. 19). If we could assume that the contests of Ninus and Semiramis have taken the place of the achievements of these rulers in the East of Iran, the date of Vistasp and Zarathrustra would have to be placed between 860 and 740 B.C. But this supposition is really without any basis.

The more ancient statements of the Greeks carry us much further back than the reasoning of Trogus Pompeius and his

successors. If we set Pliny aside, who asserts "that the kind of Magism established by Zoroaster was many years older than that taught by Moses," Hermippus of Smyrna puts Zoroaster 5000 years before the Trojan war. Even before Hermippus, Theopompus of Chios, and Hermodorus, the pupil of Plato, had ascribed the same date to him. Eudoxus of Cnidus, the contemporary of Plato, placed him still higher; he thought that Zoroaster lived 6000 years before the death of Plato. According to Pliny, Aristotle ascribed to him the same antiquity, and, as we learn from Diogenes Laertius, maintained that the Magians were older than the Egyptians. And even in the fifth century B.C., Xanthus the Lydian is said to have written that from the time when Zoroaster lived to the march of Xerxes against Hellas a period of 6000 years had elapsed.<sup>143</sup>

Through these statements there runs, beyond all doubt, a system, the knowledge of which began in the fifth century B.C. among the Greeks and continued beyond the time of Alexander. Whether we take 5000 years before the Trojan war, or 6000 years before Plato's death, we are equally brought back into the seventh millennium B.C. If the later statements of the West, which make Zoroaster a contemporary of Ninus and Semiramis, are the results of combining the most prominent name in Bactria with the conquest of Bactria by the founder of the Assyrian power,

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<sup>143</sup> Plin. "H. N." 30, 2. Diogen. Laert. prooem. The different readings of 500 years in Suidas and 600 in Diogenes, as compared with 5000 and 6000 in the other MSS., can hardly be maintained against the uniform evidence of other witnesses.

as related in the Medo-Persian Epos, the fixing of Zoroaster's date so many thousand years previously must have been taken by the Greeks from the Persians. In these dates we seem to be dealing with certain cyclic periods. We learn from Theopompus of Chios, that according to the doctrine of the Magians, one of the two gods Oromazdes and Areimanius would reign and the other be subject for 3000 years; for another 3000 years they would be in conflict, and one destroy the works of the other, until at length Areimanius would succumb and men become happy.<sup>144</sup> From this we may with certainty conclude that periods of 3000 years were in use among the priests of Iran to denote certain spaces of time, and that these cycles form the base of the statements of the older Greeks, if we can prove the use of such periods in the Avesta or in the books of the Parsees.

In the fragments of the Avesta which have come down to us we find invocations addressed to the "time without beginning," "the time that rules the long periods."<sup>145</sup> But the fact that Yima's reign is fixed at 1000 years shows that the priests of Iran reckoned by long periods, and other expressions in the Avesta (p. 33) prove that triple multiplications were in use,<sup>146</sup> which agrees with the periods given by Theopompus. If, therefore, the Greeks of the fifth and fourth century B.C. relate that Zarathrustra lived about 6000 years before their time, a system must by that time have

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<sup>144</sup> Plut. "De Isid." c. 47.

<sup>145</sup> "Vend." 19, 33; Spiegel, "Avesta," 3, 9, 201, 206.

<sup>146</sup> "Ashi Yasht," 17; "Vend." 2, 20 ff.

been current among the priests of Iran in which two cycles of 3000 years were supposed to have elapsed since the time of the prophet, and the third cycle had commenced. A book of the Parsees, the *Mainyo-i-Khard*, which appears to have been written towards the close of the empire of the Sassanids,<sup>147</sup> tells us that Angromainyu made a compact with Auramazda for 9000 winters, and when these winters were past, Angromainyu would be destroyed, and the creation and all creatures would be as Auramazda had made them.<sup>148</sup> The *Bundehesh* also speaks of a similar compact, but divides the years in a different manner. All time consists of 12,000 years. In the first 3000 Auramazda reigned alone with the creatures which he had created in an invisible manner; for the first 3000 of the next 9000 everything went according to the will of Auramazda; for the second 3000 the will of Auramazda was crossed by that of Angromainyu, but for the last 3000 Angromainyu will be powerless. The *Bundehesh* goes into yet further detail in these matters: in the first 3000 years the heavenly creation was secure from attack; in the next 3000 Gayo maretan and the ox, *i. e.* the first man and the first bull, came into existence. After these 6000 years the enemy arose and slew the first man and the first bull. The reign of Yima is placed by the *Bundehesh* in the first millennium of the new period, but this reign extends only to 716 years, the first 284 years of the thousand being filled with creatures prior

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<sup>147</sup> West, "*Mainyo-i-Khard*," p. x.

<sup>148</sup> West, *loc. cit.* c. 8.

to Yima. The second millennium of the period is occupied with the reign of Thraetaona, Manuschithra, Kava Kavata, Uça, Huçrava, and Aurvataçpa, and the early part of the reign of Kava Vistaçpa, whose thirtieth year coincides with the end of the second millennium.<sup>149</sup> At the beginning of the third millennium, *i. e.* a thousand years after the death of Yima, Zarathrustra appears; and the period of more successful opposition to the evil spirits begins. According to the more ancient conception, which may still be plainly traced in the Avesta, the world began with the happy age of Yima; it is owing to later views formed within priestly circles that earlier creatures such as the first man and first bull are placed before this period; but it will be shown below that these views existed when the Avesta was written down. A later book of the Parsees, the *Sad-der-Bundehesh*, puts the period of the conflict between the good and evil deity at 6000 years, and places Zarathrustra exactly in the middle of it; he was created 3000 years after the period of Gayo maretan, and 3000 years before his own resurrection.<sup>150</sup> Hence it is clear that the formation of these cycles rose among the priests of Iran from the necessity of limiting the period of the old and new law, and of conflict between the good and evil spirits, and the desire to fix the date of the more successful repulse of evil which came in with Zarathrustra. The abbreviation of the period of Yima shows us that the cycles in the *Bundehesh* do not

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<sup>149</sup> Justi, "Bundehesh," c. 1, 3, 34. [Cf. West's commentary on c. 34.]

<sup>150</sup> Spiegel, "Eran," 1, 507.

throughout agree with those of the Avesta. But it is sufficient to establish the fact that periods of 3000 years were in use, and that Zarathrustra appeared at the beginning of a new millennium, in order to understand that the Persians could speak to the Greeks of millenniums in this sense, and of one or two cycles which had elapsed since Zarathrustra's time.

The idea and tendency of such a scheme for the history of the world are easily understood: these periods of 3000 years, which can be increased or diminished without alteration of the sense, have only a dogmatic value. We cannot obtain from them any chronological date for the appearance of Zarathrustra, nor can we obtain such a date by the attempt to go back from the chronological statements in recent Parsee works to the older periods. We may leave unnoticed the assertion in the book of Arda Viraf that the true faith had existed in purity for 300 years down to the time that Alexander came into Iran (p. 50), which would thus bring Zarathrustra into the seventh century B.C. The Bundelesh allows 460 years for the reigns of the Sassanids, 246 for the Askanids, *i. e.* the Arsacids, 16 for Alexander, before whom come Darai the son of Darai with 14 years, Darai Chirazatan with 12, Huma (a queen) with 30, Vohumano with 112, and Vistacpa with 90, – all subsequent to the appearance of Zarathrustra.<sup>151</sup> According to this, 996 years elapsed between Zarathrustra and the fall of the Sassanids, and he would thus, if we reckon from the battle of Nahavend (640 A.D.), be placed in

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<sup>151</sup> Justi, "Bundelesh," c. 34.

the year 356 B.C., in the reign of Artaxerxes Ochus. But even if we alter the incorrect items in the text of the Bundelesh in accordance with our better knowledge, we do not arrive at any result which is even apparently certain. The dominion of the Sassanids, down to the date of the battle, did not last 460 but only 414 years; on the other hand, the Arsacids reigned for 476 years, not for 264.<sup>152</sup> The empire of Alexander, if we add the reigns of the Seleucidæ to his own, occupied 80 years instead of 14, and if in the place of the 26 years of the two Darais of the Bundelesh, who represent the kingdom of the ancient Achæmenids, we put the old Persian kingdom with 229 years, and add to these items the numbers given in the Bundelesh for Huma, Vohumano, and Vistaçpa, after the appearance of Zarathrustra, which amount to 232 years, Zarathrustra would have commenced his work 1431 years before the battle of Nahavend, *i. e.* in the year 791 B.C. But who can guarantee that Cyrus, the Persian, overthrew the empire of the Medes in the year when Huma, the supposed daughter of Vohumano, died; or that Huma reigned for 30 years? How could Vohumano, the grandson of Vistaçpa, and son of Çpentodata (p. 38), have reigned 112 years, and Vistaçpa himself 90 years after the appearance of Zarathrustra? Huma is not merely a doubtful person, she is altogether fictitious. She is said to have been the mother of Darai Chirazatan, *i. e.* Darius I., and to have been called Shamirain, *i. e.* Semiramis, but her brother was the first

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<sup>152</sup> If the rise of Arsaces is put in the year 250 B.C. It makes no difference in the total if we choose the year 248 B.C. for the beginning of the Arsacids.

Sassan, the ancestor of the Sassanids. As the later Arabs and Persians, including Firdousi, are no better informed,<sup>153</sup> we see clearly that the remembrance of the Achæmenids had almost entirely died out at the time when these writings were composed; only the name of Darius remained, and an attempt was made to connect this name with Vistāṣpa by two fictitious names, Vohumano, *i. e.* the good spirit, and Huma. Besides Vistāṣpa's son Çpentodata (Isfendyar) and Hutaōça, the wife of Vistāṣpa, the Avesta mentions a woman, "the pure Huma,"<sup>154</sup> out of whom this queen must have been formed. It is clear that the tradition of the East, like the Avesta, broke off in the generation after Vistāṣpa, and that in the Arabian period only the names Darai and Iskander could be placed between Vistāṣpa and the Arsacids.

We must attempt to reach the goal by another path. I have already shown what was the condition of the sacred scriptures in Iran at the date of Alexander and the Seleucids (p. 55). Even before Hermippus of Smyrna, Aristotle had taught that the Magians considered that to be the best in the first instance which was first created, and maintained two principles, a good and evil deity, Oromazdes and Areimanius.<sup>155</sup> Theopompus mentioned both these deities and the strife between them, and when he adds that there would one day be a time when the dead would rise again, and men would be immortal and able to withstand

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<sup>153</sup> Blau, "Z. D. M. G." 18, 686. Von Gutschmid, *ibid.*

<sup>154</sup> "Farvardin Yasht," 139.

<sup>155</sup> Aristot. "Metaph." 13, 4. Diogen. Laert. prooem.

everything by their prayers – that after the victory of Oromazdes men would be happy and need no longer any sustenance, and would cast no shadow<sup>156</sup>– it will be seen below how definitely and exactly the doctrine of the Avesta is here reproduced. Hermodorus mentions a series of teachers, who succeeded the first teacher of the Magians, the "Persian Zoroaster," down to the campaign of Alexander of Macedon.<sup>157</sup> With Eudoxus of Cnidus Zoroaster was the founder of the most beneficent wisdom; the pupils of Prodicus claimed to be acquainted with the writings of Zoroaster (p. 53). Plato calls him the son of Oromazdes, and adds that the heir to the throne was instructed in Magism as well as in the duty of being true during the whole of his life.<sup>158</sup> The importance which the Avesta ascribes to truthfulness will become clear hereafter. If the Greeks of the fourth century could speak of Zoroaster as the teacher of the Persians, and put him in the closest relation with Auramazda, if they could reproduce correctly the names of the good and evil spirits and the main doctrines of the Avesta, it is an inevitable conclusion that the religion of Zarathrustra must have prevailed in the kingdom of the Achæmenids.

This result is confirmed by all the further information which we obtain from the Greeks. In Plutarch the last Darius calls on an eunuch, "to tell the truth in reverence for the great light

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<sup>156</sup> Theopom. Fragm. 71, 72, ed. Müller.

<sup>157</sup> Diogen. Laert. proem., cf. Suidas, Μάγοι.

<sup>158</sup> "Alcib. I." p. 121.

of Mithra"; the eunuch replies that the king has no reason to accuse the evil spirit, and entreats "Lord Oromazdes," "that he may cause the light of the king to shine again."<sup>159</sup> Artaxerxes II. was informed by his mother Parysatis that the Persians had received the law which distinguished good and evil from god. He swears "by Mithra," and Plutarch tells us how some related that when Darius, the eldest son of Artaxerxes, who sought his life, was slain, Artaxerxes went into the court of the palace and cried aloud to the Persians: "Rejoice, ye Persians, and tell it to others, that the great Oromazdes has executed judgment on those who imagined crime and wickedness."<sup>160</sup> In Plutarch, Artaxerxes I. says to Themistocles: "May Areimanius ever implant such a disposition in my enemies that they may drive from themselves their best and bravest men."<sup>161</sup> According to Deinon the Magians prophesied with branches in their hands, sacrificed under the open sky, and looked on fire and water as the only symbols of the divinity.<sup>162</sup> Xenophon represents Cyrus as praising the gods and sacrificing to them every morning according to the instructions of the Magians.<sup>163</sup> Though Herodotus does not mention either the name of Zarathrustra or of Auramazda, what he says of the rites of the Medes and Persians agrees exactly with the rules

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<sup>159</sup> Plut. "Alex." c. 30.

<sup>160</sup> Plut. "Artax." c. 4, 23, 29.

<sup>161</sup> "Themistocl." c. 28.

<sup>162</sup> Dinon, Fragm. 9, ed. Müller.

<sup>163</sup> "Cyri Instit." 8, 1, 21.

given in the Avesta. "Temples, images, and altars," he says, "are not erected by the Persians, because, as it seems to me, they do not believe like the Hellenes that the gods have the form and nature of men. They call the whole circle of heaven Zeus, and offer sacrifice to him after ascending the summits of mountains. Besides Zeus they have from ancient days sacrificed to the sun, the moon, the earth, water, winds, and fire, which among the Persians is a deity:<sup>164</sup> the winds they also charm by songs. When offering sacrifice they build no altar and kindle no fire, nor pour libations, nor make any use of flutes, or cakes, or barley meal. If any one wishes to offer sacrifice he brings the victim to an open space, and calls on the god, after crowning his tiara with branches of myrtle. After cutting the animal in pieces, and cooking the flesh, he spreads out the most delicate grass, chiefly trefoil, and lays the flesh upon it. The Magian who stands by sings the theogony over it, for such, according to the Persians, is the nature of the prayer. After some time, the person who has made the sacrifice carries the flesh away and uses it for a feast. The Magians, in whose control is the worship by sacrifice, make it a great object to kill ants, serpents, and other creeping winged things: dogs and men only do they spare. No Persian may pollute a river, nor even wash in it, nor will they allow any one else to do so, for they have a great reverence for rivers. The bodies of the dead may not be burned; it is said indeed that the corpse of a Persian cannot be buried till it has been torn by a dog or a

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<sup>164</sup> Herod. 3, 16.

bird, and among the Magians this is an acknowledged practice. It is a meritorious act among the Persians to have many children, and he who can show the most receives gifts each year from the king. Each man celebrates the day on which he was born above all other days. What may not be done, may not be spoken of amongst the Persians: the most shameful action is lying, and the next to this is borrowing, for the reason that a man who has debts is generally compelled to lie. Any one afflicted by the itch or the leprosy may not come into the cities or mix with other Persians; and it is believed that such persons have sinned against the sun-god. Lepers from foreign lands are driven out of the country." When Xerxes came to the Hellespont, and was about to cross the bridge, Herodotus represents him as praying to the sun-god, pouring libations from a golden cup, and throwing it with a golden goblet and a Persian sword into the sea.<sup>165</sup> We shall see hereafter to what a degree the killing of noxious animals, the reverence for rivers, the expulsion of lepers, the delight in life and the increase of life, the exposing of dead bodies, and singing of the theogony at sacrifices, correspond to the rules and doctrines of the Avesta. In one point only is Herodotus mistaken: he states that the Persians worshipped a female deity called Mithra.

From this array of witnesses belonging to the West it follows that the doctrines of the Avesta, and the religion of Zarathrustra, were current among the Persians and in Western Iran at any rate after the beginning of the fifth century B.C., and they

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<sup>165</sup> Herod. 1, 101, 131-140; 7, 40, 43, 113, 191; 3, 84.

must therefore have been in existence in Eastern Iran at a still earlier date. The inscriptions of the Achæmenids prove that the doctrine of the Avesta was maintained among the Persians with even greater clearness and for a period more ancient. Artaxerxes Ochus prays to Auramazda, Anahita, and Mithra for their protection, and in like manner Artaxerxes Mnemon prays to Auramazda and Mithra. In the inscriptions on Mount Behistun, Darius I., the son of Hystaspes, styles Auramazda "the greatest of the gods" (*mathista baganam*). Besides Auramazda, "the rest of the gods" are repeatedly mentioned, and denoted by the name Baga. Of Auramazda, Darius and Xerxes say in their inscriptions: "A great god is Auramazda; he has created the heaven and the earth; he has created man and all that is good for men." After crushing in the beginning of his reign the rebellion of nearly all the lands which Cyrus had reduced, Darius repeatedly records his thanks: "that Auramazda had granted him assistance; that his army had been victorious by the grace of Auramazda." He and his successors acknowledge that they have received their throne and their kingdom from Auramazda; by his grace they are kings.<sup>166</sup> The reason why Auramazda has assisted him Darius finds in the fact that he has not been a "liar," and has committed no sin. He entreats Auramazda to protect the land against the invasion of hostile armies, against blight, and "the lie" (*drauga*). He asserts that "the lie" caused the provinces which had revolted to be rebellious, and declares that the land of Persia,

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<sup>166</sup> Inscription of Darius at Elvend in Spiegel, "Keilinschriften," s. 45, 47.

which Auramazda has granted to him, which is beautiful, rich in horses, and well populated, has no fear of enemies owing to Auramazda's grace, and his own. He commends his inscription at Behistun to the protection of his successors, with the words: "If thou destroyest not this tablet then may Auramazda be thy friend; may thy descendants be numerous, and thy life be long, and whatsoever thou undertakest, may Auramazda cause it to succeed. But if thou destroyest it, may Auramazda smite thee, and thy house perish; and whatever thou doest, may Auramazda render it of no effect."<sup>167</sup> On his tomb Darius says: "What I have done I have done by the grace of Auramazda. O man, this is the prayer of Auramazda; think no evil, leave not the right way, sin not." The inscriptions of Xerxes regularly end with the invocation: "May Auramazda protect me, with all the gods; me, my kingdom, and my work."

As we shall see, the fundamental principle of the religion of Zarathrustra is that a supreme god stands over all gods, and to him is ascribed the work of creation. In entire belief in the power of this supreme deity, whom the Achæmenids invoke by the name which is given to him in the Avesta, "who has created heaven and earth and all that is good for men," Darius ascribes to Auramazda victory in battles, the power of granting or refusing success to the king's undertakings, of protecting the land against hostile invasions, blight, and lies. To those who live according to his commands he grants long life and numerous descendants.

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<sup>167</sup> Behistun, 4, 73-80; 56-61; Persop.

The rebellion of the provinces is with Darius the work of the lie, the lie of him who had given himself out to be the son of Cyrus, and the lie of those who had claimed to be the descendants of Nebuchadnezzar and Cyaxares. We have already observed what "the lie" meant in the Avesta. In the same spirit – the spirit of the principal rules of the Avesta – Darius adjures his Persians to think no evil, and not to leave the right path.

Nicolaus of Damascus assures us that the Persians were acquainted with the sayings of Zoroaster. He and others relate that Cyrus or his father was called Atradates, *i. e.* given by fire,<sup>168</sup> and that he had given to the Areians (p. 11), who provided his famished army with sustenance, the honourable title of Orosangians, *i. e.* *Huverezànha* (benefactors). It is in harmony with the doctrine of the Avesta that Cyrus should be represented by such a descent or name as the gift and nursling of fire, and we shall see with what emphasis the Avesta marks and distinguishes good thoughts, words, and actions. From these facts and the inscriptions of Darius there can be no doubt that Zarathrustra's doctrine was current among the Persians at the time of Cyrus. But if it was in force in the West of Iran in the sixth century B.C. the fact that Herodotus, in his account of the period during which the Medes obtained the dominion, down to the time of Cyrus, speaks of no change in religion, either among the Persians or the Medes, is evidence that this religion existed at any rate before the time of Phraortes. The statement found in Herodotus that

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<sup>168</sup> Strabo, p. 719; Nicol. Damasc. fragm. 66, ed. Müller.

Deioces had forbidden any one to spit in his presence, reminds us of the rules of the Avesta, by which no one was allowed to approach the sacred fire and gods with uncovered mouth, and on the sculptures of Persepolis the bearer of the fan stands with covered mouth beside Darius. The seven walls which Herodotus represents Deioces as building round Ecbatana, the seven tribes of the Persians, remind us of the seven girdles of the earth in the Avesta; the king of the Persians surrounded by the six tribal princes is the symbol of Auramazda and the six gods who are about him.

Hence we may assume that the doctrine of Zarathrustra had reached the West of Iran at the time when Phraortes united the tribes of the Medes (about 650 B.C.), and was known among the Medes when they were still living under their tribal chiefs and paid tribute to Asshur, or, in case of refusal, were attacked by the Assyrian armies, which, as we ascertained from the inscriptions of the kings of Asshur, was the case from the time of Tiglath Pileasar II. to the time of Assurbanipal, *i. e.* from the middle of the eighth to the middle of the seventh century B.C. A statement in Herodotus seems to lead us still further back. He calls the Magians a race or tribe of the Medes. According to his narrative this tribe was in existence in the time of Deioces, *i. e.* about the year 700 B.C. Herodotus could only speak of the Magians as a tribe or family when they had become an hereditary order. At that time, therefore, there must have been among the Medes a priesthood who perpetuated in their families their worship

by sacrifice, their doctrine and wisdom, as well as their social importance. Like all Greeks, Herodotus ascribes the discharge of the religious functions among the Persians and Medes to the Magians, and we find that what Herodotus quotes of their rites agrees with the rules of the Avesta. The rise and separation of a peculiar order of priests, their more or less sharply marked distinction from the remaining orders, can never be the work of a short space of time, and such separation can only take place when the worship of the gods requires a knowledge which is not easily accessible or obtainable, when doctrine has obtained a place by the side of belief, when ritual has become developed, and particular duties and rules are prescribed for the life of the priests. When the worship of the gods requires the use of long and definite prayers, the knowledge of complicated usages, on which depends the effect of the sacrifices, and the observation of numerous rules of purification, – such knowledge is only perpetuated in families of hierophants or priests, or in schools which take the place of such families. The formation of a distinct hereditary order on such grounds can hardly have occupied less than a century from the time when the doctrine, on which it is formed, was introduced. Hence we may assume that the doctrine known as Zarathrustra's reached the Medes before the year 750 B.C., *i. e.* before the date of Tiglath Pileasar II. of Assyria.

Let us hold firmly to the facts that the worship of Auramazda was current among the Persians about the middle of the sixth century B.C., that the same worship was in force among the

Medes at least a century earlier, about 650 B.C., and that if an hereditary priesthood was in existence about this time among the Medes who performed and conducted the worship, the doctrine which this priesthood represented must have been adopted before the year 750 B.C. In this way we obtain a proof that the doctrine of Zarathrustra was not only in existence in the East of Iran about the year 800 B.C., but was the dominant creed there, and had force enough to penetrate to the West, and win over the neighbouring tribes of the Medes and Persians.

We cannot explain more exactly how the doctrine of Zarathrustra reached the nations of the West of Iran. Pliny, it is true, exclaims: "Who knows the Medes, who were taught by Zoroaster, Apusorus, and Zaratus, even by hearsay, for no memorials of them are left?"<sup>169</sup> According to this the religion of Zoroaster spread even in the West by the influence of eminent men among the Medes. But the date of the persons mentioned cannot be fixed, though Porphyry represents Pythagoras as going to the Chaldæans and Zabratius, by whom he was purified from the evil of his former life, and instructed as to the things from which the disciple should restrain himself, and about the nature and beginning of all things,<sup>170</sup> and this Zaratus or Zabratius may be intended for Zarathrustra himself. Hermodorus tells us that Zarathrustra had been followed by many Magians as teachers, one after the other, down to the time when Alexander marched

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<sup>169</sup> Plin. "H. N." 30, 2; 28, 19.

<sup>170</sup> "Vita Pythag." 12.

against Persia: these teachers were Osthanes, Astrampsyclus, Gobryas, and Pazates.<sup>171</sup> Others also assert that Zoroaster was followed "by Osthanes and Astrampsyclus."<sup>172</sup> Pliny observes that so far as he could discover, Osthanes who accompanied Xerxes in the war against the Hellenes, was the first who had written on the doctrine of the Magians. The second Osthanes, whom Alexander had received among his followers, had caused this religion to be of great importance. From the work of one of these two persons, Philo of Byblus quotes a passage – the work he calls the *Octateuch* – and Pliny notes down apparently some of the doctrines of the first Osthanes. If then there were men under the Achæmenids in the West of Iran who could write on the doctrine of Zarathrustra from the beginning of the fifth century B.C., we can without hesitation believe the statement that long before this time there were prophets and teachers of the doctrine among the Medes and the Persians.

Can we go beyond the result thus gained by our investigation? – that the doctrine of Zoroaster flourished in Eastern Iran about 800 B.C., and advanced towards the West from this period; may we assume that at this date it was already in possession of written monuments, and even that the fragments of the Avesta which still remain were in existence then? We must first answer the question whether the use of writing in Iran, especially in the East, goes back so far.

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<sup>171</sup> Diogen. Laert proœm.

<sup>172</sup> Suidas, Μάγοι.

According to the statements of Herodotus, the West of Iran was not only in possession of the art of writing by the year 700 B.C., but made considerable use of it. He tells us that Deioces required complaints to be sent in to him in writing, and gave out his decisions also in writing. If processes at law were conducted in writing in Media about the year 700 B.C., it cannot be surprising that Herodotus should also inform us that letters passed between Media and Persia about the year 560 B.C.<sup>173</sup> We learn from the Hebrew Scriptures that when Cyrus allowed the Jews, whom Nebuchadnezzar had removed to Babylon, to return to their homes, he gave his permission for the restoration of the temple in writing. This document was afterwards discovered in the archives of Ecbatana.<sup>174</sup> We know it for a fact that Darius I. gave his orders to the satraps in writing, and we are acquainted with the seal of Darius by which they were authenticated. The oldest inscriptions which have come down to us from the Achæmenids, not to mention a seal of Cyrus from Senkereh, belong, if not to Cyrus himself, to Darius, and begin about the last quarter of the sixth century B.C. It is the cuneiform writing of Assyria and Babylon which forms the basis of the writing in these inscriptions, but with considerable alterations. The highly complicated syllabarium of the Eastern Semites is reduced to a phonetic system; we might almost say to an alphabet of about 40 letters. A change of this kind can hardly

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<sup>173</sup> Herod. 1, 100, 124, 125.

<sup>174</sup> Ezra, c. v., vi.

have been made at one stroke. If it was after they entered into closer combination with Assyria, *i. e.* after their dependence on the king of Asshur, which began with the accession of Tiglath Pileasar II. (745 B.C.), that the Medes became acquainted with the Assyrian system of writing, this must have been completely mastered before it could be abbreviated and altered, as it was altered by the Medes, whose changes were adopted by the Persians. The cuneiform writing of Western Iran, as we find it in the inscriptions of Darius, can therefore hardly have been established before the year 600 B.C. However this may be, the facts mentioned prove that the writing of the Assyrians in the seventh century B.C. was not unknown in the West of Iran. This would therefore have passed into the East of Iran in its original or simplified form, either at some earlier period, or when the East came under the dominion of the Achæmenids. But it did not, and this is a plain proof that the East, when the cuneiform writing of the West came in that direction, was already in possession of another kind of writing. This Eastern mode of writing, the Arian, which rests on an entirely different basis from the cuneiform, is first known to us from coins and inscriptions of the third century B.C.; but it certainly would not have maintained its ground under the Achæmenids against the writing of the West, and of the rulers, magistrates, and dominant nation, unless it had been in vigorous use before, this period. We must therefore assume that the Arian character was in use in the East of Iran a considerable time before the date of Cyrus, and hence we have no reason to

deny the existence of it in that region in the eighth century B.C., since we must allow the neighbouring Arians of India to have been in possession of their written characters from the year 800 B.C. at the least (IV. 155).

If we may assume that the Arian character was in use in the East of Iran about the year 800 B.C., the prayers and sayings of Zarathrustra might have been written down about this date, and the doctrine might have passed on to the West supported by written documents. But the fact that the prayers might have been written down is in no way a proof that they were so written.

It is true that at first sight it seems that the part of the law which has come down to us (the Vendidad) leads to the conclusion that it was written down long before the Persians gained the dominion over Iran, and Media became a powerful state under Cyaxares. The book does not mention the name of the Persians or the Medes, of Ecbatana or Persepolis, while Bactria is spoken of as the seat of the empire; the most westerly district mentioned in the Vendidad is Ragma in Eastern Media.<sup>175</sup> If we add that the book reproaches certain districts in the East, the land of the Arachoti and others, with deviations from the doctrine of Zarathrustra, and that Ragma is indeed Zoroastrian but wavering in its fidelity, we may easily conclude that the Vendidad was written when the doctrine of Zarathrustra had not as yet thoroughly penetrated the East, and was still unknown in

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<sup>175</sup> The Niça of the Vendidad is the Eastern Niça, Parthorum Nisæa, not very far from Merv; above, p. 10, *n.* 1.

the West, when it had just reached, but had not yet completely conquered, the district of Ragha. The Medes were still dependent on Asshur, living separately according to their tribes, Ecbatana was not yet the centre and metropolis of Media, and the kingdom of Bactra was still in existence in the East. This points to a date about 750 B.C. as the time when this doctrine must have spread widely over Media; at any rate to a date before the rise of the Median power, *i. e.* before 650 B.C. This conclusion is not, however, absolutely certain. The silence of the Vendidad and of the Avesta generally on Ecbatana and Persepolis, the Medes and the Persians, can be explained in another though a more artificial manner. The nations and chief cities of the West were unknown to the tradition of Eastern Iran, and the royal abodes of the Medes and Persians were not consecrated by the action of Zarathrustra. In the accounts given by the Greeks of the worship of these nations, in spite of much agreement, points are found at variance with the rules of the Avesta, and as a fact certain distinctions did prevail. The doctrine had arisen in the East, and the priesthood there was in possession of the purer and more orthodox dogma. If Persia and Media did not follow this in all respects, it was convenient to be silent about the differences in the time of the Achæmenids, or if any one desired to brand them, to mark out the Median Ragha as the seat of heresy, rather than Pasargadæ or Persepolis. This explanation it is true is somewhat far fetched. The result that the religion known by the name of Zarathrustra had reached the Medes and Persians by the middle

of the eighth century B.C. is in no way weakened by it, though the assumption that at this period written documents of this doctrine were in existence, and that the book of the law of which we have fragments arose in the first half of the eighth century B.C., is rendered more doubtful if such a mode of interpretation is admitted.

The forms of language preserved in the Avesta have not survived with sufficient distinctness to assist us in fixing the time at which it was written down. As was shown above (p. 65), the manuscripts date from the later period of the Sassanids; they are written in the later East-Pehlevi character, and at a time when the old forms must have undergone changes owing to the language which had come into use in the mean time, and can in fact be proved to have undergone them. The old sounds are obviously modified and confounded,<sup>176</sup> so that the language of the Avesta, when compared with that of the inscriptions of the Achæmenids, exhibits forms less ancient and fixed, and indeed in some cases it is more recent than the language of the legends of the Græco-Bactrian coins (p. 27). Nor can any certain conclusions be drawn from the condition of political and social life shown in the Avesta. It is only the splendour of regal power in general, the old sacrificers, heroes, and kings that are extolled in it; a sacrificial prayer to Mithra speaks of the abode of the Arians, where "horse-guiding rulers govern noble troops;" for

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<sup>176</sup> Lepsius, "Ueber das ursprüngliche Zendalphabet," Abh. B. Akad. 1862, s. 298, 306, 381.

the rest we hear only of lords of villages, of tribes or cantons, and provinces, and of three orders into which the people are divided. The Vendidad, it is true, reckons by winters and nights, not by years and days; the amount of fines and punishments is computed in animals, goats, sheep, oxen, horses, or camels; and these facts point to an ancient period, but they may have been handed down by tradition. We also hear of the value of these animals and of money (*shaeta*).<sup>177</sup> This is the less surprising as the Vendidad speaks of palaces and pillars and various works of art, and mentions smelting-ovens and even ovens for making glass. We found that the Greek princes of Bactria struck square coins, which they would not have done if this had not been the traditional form in Bactria (p. 28). The Achæmenids did not strike coins of this kind, and this shape must therefore have come down from a period anterior to them. The frequent mention of the physician, on the other hand, ought not to be regarded as a proof of later composition, for we hear of the physician and his remedies in ancient poems of the Veda (IV. 35).

In regard to the antiquity of the Avesta, then, we can only build upon the simple facts that it cannot have been written down for the first time when the Buddhists found adherents in Bactria (IV. 542), or when the kingdom of the Greek princes arose in Bactria, or when the Seleucidæ and Alexander, before them, reigned over Iran. It has been proved that the Avesta was in existence before Alexander overthrew the kingdom of the

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<sup>177</sup> "Vendid." 4, 120; Astad Yasht, 1.

Achæmenids. The series of the successors of Zarathrustra, which western writers could trace backwards from this point – Osthanes II., Pazates, Gobryas, Osthanes I., Astrampsyclus, Apusodorus – plainly shows that even under the Achæmenids the West was seriously occupied with religious questions. As Osthanes I. had written on the doctrine of Zoroaster about the time of Xerxes (p. 92), it is at least more probable than not that the Avesta was already in existence at that time. If in the West there was a series, and as the Greeks point out, a continuous series, of priestly teachers, round whom naturally pupils and schools grew up, and after the beginning of the fifth century a theological literature, similar teachers and schools must have existed long before in the East, and this greatly strengthens the conclusion drawn from the contents of the Vendidad, that it must have been written down before the rise of the Medes. But for any more precise determination of the date of the Avesta between the two limits obtained – the year 750 B.C., *i. e.* the beginning of the formation of a priesthood in the West and the contemporary use of writing in the East, and the year 350 B.C. – we are confined wholly to internal evidence.

Scriptures of such extent as the Avesta is shown to have been, by the accounts of the Greeks and Arabs, and the list of contents (p. 51), and the existing fragments, could not have been written down at once or within a brief space of time. We saw (p. 33) that it set up a religious canon, which not only regulated the doctrine and the worship, the duties of priests and laity, but

also comprised the law, and in a word all the relations of life. A codification of this kind is only possible when belief and doctrine, culture and ritual, have arrived at fixed and complete formulæ, have been arranged in a system and developed, and the consequences bearing on life, morality, and law have been drawn from them by an active and influential priesthood. Hence before the Avesta was written down and collected there must have been a priestly order in the East, in the circles of which the doctrine and practice went through this developing, revising, and fixing process. Various sketches, lists of prayers for certain offerings, collections of rules belonging to this or that priesthood or school, must have been in existence, and combinations of the traditional material must have been made, before a canon comprising the whole wisdom of the priests, and far exceeding in extent the law of Manu, could have been compiled.

Among the existing invocations of the Avesta we find sacrificial prayers of a primitive character; but the greater part of the prayers and thanksgivings are without religious feeling or poetical power, and very far removed from the richness and abundance, the beauty and freshness of conception, which streams through the majority of the hymns of the Veda. There are not wanting *naïve* and poetical pieces which have obviously been handed down and preserved by their use at sacrifices, but these are frequently spoiled by later interpolations, and the form of the whole is generally dry and prosaic. We find but scanty relics of any vigorous conception of the gods, of a living

mythology; on the whole the mythical element is faded, and the sacrifice of animals thrown into the background. The greater part of the prayers receive their value from a certain system and completeness; the object is to bring forward all the characteristics of the deity to which they are addressed, and to invoke him by all his names. Thus laudations and epithets are repeated without end. A good many of the prayers are mere nomenclatures, and repeat the same forms in varying order. Besides this tendency, which is far removed from the original simplicity of religious meditation, a value is ascribed to the repetition of certain prayers. Some are to be said a hundred, or a thousand times. In the same way the liturgies are long and full of detail, and sometimes take the form of responses between the celebrant and the ministering priest; they are extremely careful to neglect none of the heavenly spirits or genii, or to injure them by omission, or treat them with less respect than others.

Beside the faded colours of the mythology, the decreasing importance of animal sacrifice, and the formalism of the prayers, we observe in the five Gathas, the invocations which alone have preserved the verse-measure, and present older forms of language than the rest, a tendency to speculation. Not only are the good and evil spirits combined under one head, as is always the case in the Avesta, but the Gathas attempt to resolve the contrast of the beneficial and harmful sides of nature, of the good and evil spirits, into the reciprocal play of two fundamental forces; they identify the prosperity and destruction of nature with

moral good and evil, and combine the one with truth, the other with falsehood. The good spirits are the truth, the evil are the lie. The life of appearance and of falsehood is distinguished from the true life, and the service of truth promises life not in this world only but in the next. It is in harmony with these tendencies to abstraction that, according to other passages of the Avesta, heaven is filled with a multitude of the most lifeless personifications of ideas and realities. Could the doctrine of a new religion in an early period come forward with such a spiritualised system, with such elevated moral demands, such abstract conceptions? Could prayers of such a kind have been composed or written down in a primitive age?

The existing fragment of the book of the law is composed in the form of a dialogue, and is for the most part filled with conversations which Zarathrustra carries on with Auramazda. Zarathrustra inquires what is to be done in certain cases against the evil spirits, the Daevas, on the commission of certain sins and impurities. What must be done when a woman is in labour, etc., or when any one has made himself impure by touching a corpse, or has slain a water-dog (otter)? Is the rain impure which has fallen on a corpse and then runs off from it, etc.? These questions Auramazda answers very precisely, and when it is a matter for expiation and purification, he fixes the number of stripes with the horse-whip or the whip of the sacred Çraosha (Çraosha-charana) which the penitent is to receive. It is a theory and practice of purity, on a level with the analogous rules in the laws of Manu,

and in some points even more subtle and casuistical. The offences have already been brought under definite categories, and in like manner the purifications and punishments fall into a number of distinct classes. Not only are expiations required for all sins and prescribed down to the minutest details, but the offences must also be repented of; certain formulæ of confession and repentance are prescribed.

We need not stop to prove that a book of laws in this form could not have been written down *à priori*. The rules for punishment and purification must have grown up in long practice, before they could be put in the mouth of the deity; difficulties and doubts must have been weighed before solutions could be proposed. The book contains the dialogues and inquiries which were held in the schools of the priests on questions of this kind, the practice which prevailed in the schools and the catechisation of the pupils. The answer is naturally placed in the mouth of Auramazda, for it was the answer which he once gave to the question when asked by Zarathrustra. The fragments of the Vendidad are a catechism, the result of the labour of the priestly schools, a system of rules and regulations which marks and postulates the same stage of development for Iran as was reached for the Indians on the Ganges by the law of Manu. Many periods in the religious life must have been passed through before the religious consciousness was no longer shocked by the fact that the supreme deity in person answered petty questions of ritual, and dictated in the most exact gradation and with regard to every

possible variety of circumstance, the number of stripes required for the criminals.

This faded mythology and formalised worship, these speculative attempts and casuistry of law, are accompanied by a completely-arranged scheme of certain abstract categories already established. Throughout the whole Avesta runs the division between this world and the next, between the corporeal and incorporeal world, truth and falsehood, and the triple distinction of thinking, speaking, and acting, of thought, word, and deed. And when we further consider that rewards are attached to the reading of sections of the Avesta, that the "long study" of the "thoughts of the pure man," "the excellent knowledge, thought, and conception" are praised and invoked as divine powers, no one will be inclined to see in the Avesta the product of *naïve* religious feeling, or the deposit of a priestly civilisation which is as yet in its early stages.

Still, if we wish to avoid making any false steps in the conclusions to be drawn from the nature of the Avesta about the time of its composition, we must bear in mind that it contains some conceptions which are the exact opposite of the characteristics just noticed. The myth of Yima, the form of Mithra, the descent of plants, prove older traits in the Avesta than we find in the Veda; the old gods still occupy a large space beside Auramazda and the abstract forms of heaven, and strict unity of system is not yet attained. We must remember also at what an early date the neighbours of Eastern Iran, the Arians of India,

arrived at meditation and abstraction; how quickly and entirely they allowed animal sacrifice to pass into the background; with what breadth and detail they developed the rules for purification; how numerous were the daily prayers and repetitions, before the religious feeling became weakened. In the Avesta the time without limit is frequently invoked; among the Indians the gods of light are even in the oldest hymns of the Veda the sons of Aditi, *i. e.* of the Eternal or the Infinite. And if the attitude of the Avesta is for the most part by far more flat and prosaic than that of the Veda, the Arians of Iran were of a more logical nature, and the glow of imagination which the land of the Ganges kindled in their kindred tribes did not exist in Iran. For this reason the consideration of the character of the Avesta can only lead us to the result that a period of several centuries must have elapsed between the rise of the religion named after Zarathrustra and the writing down of the Avesta; that lists of prayers and rubrics must have been in existence about the year 800 B.C.; that the extensive books which then formed the Avesta may have been written in the first half of the period, which we ascribed to them, extending from 750 to 350 B.C. In any case we can maintain that the Gathas were composed, and that the Avesta existed in its essential parts in the East of Iran, before Cyrus put the empire of the Persians in the place of the empire of the Medes, and all the various parts were collected together before the "Enlightened" began to preach on the Ganges, *i. e.* about the year 600 B.C.

We have already remarked the importance which the

Achæmenids ascribed to the possession of Bactria (p. 23); and we were able at any rate to guess at the civilisation of that district about the year 500 B.C., from the amount of the tribute imposed upon it by Darius. That the economic civilisation was not behind the material was shown by indications in the Avesta. The kingdom which grew up there, as we saw (p. 47), long before the days of the Medes, and in which about the year 800 B.C. the doctrine of Zarathrustra was current, succumbed to Cyrus, the great founder of the Persian empire. If we place the beginning of the doctrine of Zarathrustra, which first made its appearance there, before the middle of the ninth century B.C., at which time the armies of Shalmanesar II. reached the East of Iran, and assume that it came forward about 1000 B.C., we shall hardly place its rise too high. We remember that about this time occurred the great change in the religious conceptions of the Arians in India, the repression and degradation of the old gods by Brahman. It was an analogous development when the good and evil spirits of Bactria were combined into unities, and placed under leaders, when the chief of the deities of light was made the creator of the heaven and the earth, and surrounded with abstract forms, which contest the traditional place and honour of the old god. It is the same religious impulse, the desire to grasp the unity of the divine nature, the same line of combination that we observed in its beginning and progress in India, which comes to the surface in the doctrine of Zarathrustra. We have no reason to contest with the Avesta the fact that Vistasp ruled

over Bactria when this change took place, or that Zarathrustra, a man of the race of Haechataçpa, gave the impulse to the reform, and that the leading idea in it belongs to him. If Vistaçpa ruled over Bactria about the year 1000 B.C. the growth of the Bactrian monarchy must be placed at least a century before this time, *i. e.*

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