



ASMUSSEN, JES PETER

ASMUSSEN, Jes Peter, scholar of Iranian studies (b. 2 November 1928, Aabenraa [Åbenrå], North Sleswig; d. 5 August 2002, Copenhagen). He is, after Arthur Christensen and Kaj Barr, the third great representative of the Danish school of Iranian studies, which in the 20th century made an essential contribution to the exploration of pre-Islamic Iranian cultural and political history. More than his predecessors, Asmussen took an interest in, and concentrated his work on, the entire range of religions in Iran from Zoroastrianism to Islam; but he mainly focused on Manicheism, the study of which was revolutionized during the 20th century under the impact of the discovery of a multitude of original sources. He also concentrated his work on Christianity in ancient Iran and Jewish Persian literature, an obvious option thanks to his previous theological training.

Two brief and almost identical biographical sketches and bibliographies outline Asmussen's life and scholarly career up to 1988: in J. Duchesne-Guillemin, P. Lecoq, and J. Kellens, eds., *Bio-Bibliographies de 134 savants*, Acta Iranica 20, Leiden, 1979, pp. 26-29; and (continued and enlarged) in W. Sundermann, J. Duchesne-Guillemin, and F. Vahman, eds., *Barg-e sabz. A Green Leaf. Papers in Honour of Professor Jes P. Asmussen*, Acta Iranica 28, Leiden, 1988, pp. XV-XXVII. A yet unpublished obituary for the Royal Academy of Copenhagen by Prof. Eduard Nielsen was made known to the author through the kindness of Dr. Bodil Hjerrild. A brief obituary by K. Rudolph appeared in 2002 in the *Sächsische Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, Jahrbuch 2001-2002*, pp. 519-20. The following biography and survey of his scholarly



works are mainly based on information from these sources.

Asmussen grew up in a Danish middle-class family of old south-Jutlandish stock. His father was an engineer. Jes Asmussen spent his childhood in the quasi-bilingual ambience of the Danish-German borderland, which gave him, next to his Danish native language a perfect command of German as an often used means of scientific communication. Having passed the Higher Grammar School in his hometown Aabenraa in 1948, he took up in that same year the study of theology (besides “Greenlandish”) at Copenhagen University. He finished his studies in 1954 as *candidatus theologiae* and completed his one-year military service as a chaplain in the Royal Danish Navy in Grønnedal in South-Greenland. His service gave him a good opportunity to practice the local Inuit language, which was to remain a part of his occupation as a University examiner and as a researcher (see his “Hammerich and Eskimology” in L. L. Hammerich and Edna Kenick, *A Picture Writing by Edna Kenick, Nunivak, Alaska*, Copenhagen 1977, pp. III-IV). In 1955, Asmussen married Ellen Anette Diderichsen, who, together with their three children Peter (now a well-known playwright), Birgitte, and Hans, always supported his work with understanding and sympathy.

From 1955 to 1960, while working as a schoolteacher at a Copenhagen orphanage, Asmussen took up Iranian studies with Kaj Barr. Asmussen himself tells that what aroused his interest in Iranian studies was a novel by Jack London he read during his holidays, the main figure of which was very fond of Omar Khayyam and kept quoting his quatrains. They pleased Asmussen, too, and so he decided to attend (as the only student!) a seminar on Khayyam by Kaj Barr. In consequence, he was won over for Iranian studies in all their aspects. Asmussen started an academic career in 1960 as an assistant professor. He completed his Iranological education by studies in Cambridge, London, Hamburg, and Tehran. Among his teachers abroad, Sir Harold W. Bailey, Annemarie von Gabain, and Walter B. Henning might be singled out. Asmussen obtained his doctoral degree in 1965 from Copenhagen University, and his dissertation was published as *Xuāstvānīft. Studies in Manichaeism* (Copenhagen 1965). He became Associate Professor in 1966 and Full Professor in 1967 after the retirement in 1966 of Kaj Barr. Asmussen kept the chair until his own retirement in 1998.

Asmussen’s teaching program included Old, Middle, and New Persian (both classical and modern, and Judeo-Persian), Avestan, Kurdish, Armenian, Hebrew, Aramaic, and, in addition to these languages and literatures, Iranian



religions, extending his teaching beyond the university sphere. Worth mentioning are lessons he was privileged to give at the royal court, following an invitation by the queen of Denmark. He also accepted invitations to lecture at many European and Asian universities, including Tehran. Asmussen became a member and even a leading member of many scientific societies in Denmark and abroad (see Sundermann et al., ed., 1988, p. XV). Lund University in Sweden bestowed on him an honorary doctorate, and the Sächsische Akademie der Wissenschaften of Leipzig in the former German Democratic Republic (GDR) elected him as a corresponding member. Two honors which pleased him in particular were his election as a member of the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters (1973) and his appointment as Knight of Dannebrog (first grade; 1983).

Not only did Jes Asmussen teach in Copenhagen and abroad, he also often invited scholars to give lectures at his institute. The persons invited were of course well qualified to present new results of their research work, but it was also Asmussen's intention to give scholars from the then socialist countries of Eastern Europe a chance to visit liberal Denmark and get access to the results of Western scholarship. Thanks to these meritorious and generous initiatives, many colleagues from the Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and above all from the former GDR (the writer of these lines included) were able to enjoy the hospitality of a most noble-minded man and a wonderful country. It is hardly imaginable that a man like Jes Asmussen could have enemies at all. Yet it was so, and, paradoxically, just because of his desire to bridge conflicting intentions and to please and reconcile opponents. This could not always be achieved, and it brought him in one case the lifelong, undue hostility of a colleague, from which he seriously suffered.

Asmussen's favorite scholarly pursuits were studies on religious subjects and on problems of popular literature (epigrammatic poetry, *Wandersprüche*, etc.), and it is in this field that he has mainly contributed to the progress of Oriental and religious studies. What he preferred even more, however, were text editions, because, as he once told the author of this entry, in the case of editions a statement is more likely to be plainly right or wrong than it could possibly be as a result of research into open problems of our science with highly theoretical consequences. Asmussen's monographs and articles were well researched throughout. His familiarity with an enormous bulk of literature in practically all relevant scholarly languages was impressive. His results were, commonly, detailed confirmations of convincing results reached



already by other scholars. This was not so for want of creative fantasy or productive criticism, but because Asmussen had no ambition at all to question or outdo the merits of esteemed earlier scholars by proving them wrong.

The size of Asmussen's list of publications is enormous. Already the bibliography of the Festschrift *A Green Leaf*, dedicated to him by 54 scholars on his 60th birthday in November 1988, noted 19 monographs, 79 articles on Oriental and religious matters, contributions to six encyclopedias, and other writings (see below). The number of his publications decreased and came to a standstill in the following years, mainly in consequence of an eye-disease, which increasingly hampered his scholarly work. His last project, a Danish translation of the Byzantine Greek anthology of natural history and lore, the *Physiologos*, could not be finished.

After Professor Asmussen's retirement in 1998, it grieved him considerably that his chair remained vacant; but he still attended meetings and scholarly events of his Academy and his University as long as he could. He bore a last series of diseases, which led to his death, with admirable patience and confidence. His funeral on 10 August 2002 in Copenhagen's Marmorkirken gave Denmark and its capital, as well as guests from abroad, the chance to say *farvel* to a famous personality of Copenhagen's cultural life and a much missed colleague and friend. In what follows, Asmussen's contribution to Iranian and religious and philological studies shall be evaluated, and some of his main studies shall be discussed.

Manichean studies. Asmussen gave up-to-date overviews of the Manichean doctrine, its founder, and its church organization in many languages (see his "Manichsismen," in *Illustreret Religionshistorie* III, Copenhagen, 1968, pp. 293-302; "Manichaeism," in *Historia Religionum* I, Leiden, 1969, pp. 580-610; "Der Manichäismus," in *Handbuch der Religionsgeschichte* III, Göttingen, 1975, pp. 337-58). He justly underlined the essential unity of the divine world and—as a peculiarity of this religion—the rigor of the Manichean concept of sin. This observation may have paved the way towards his work *Xuāstvānīft*, Asmussen's most important contribution to Manichean studies and certainly his greatest scholarly achievement. The author reedited in a nearly definitive way (additions were given by P. Zieme, "Beiträge zur Erforschung des Xvastvānīft," *MIO* 12, 1966, pp. 351-60) the Old Turkish confessional form for the laypeople and gave some additional Iranian texts in translation. He discussed the problem of the origin of the Manichean confessional formularies (not of the confessional practice!). His convincing, negative answer is: neither



a Christian nor a Zoroastrian origin is imaginable. In Central Asia, the Manicheans imitated Buddhist confessional forms as they are attested in the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa-sūtra* and in the *Prātimokṣa* literature (*Xuāstvānīft*, pp. 217, 254-55, 261, n. 20). This positive result of his research has been disputed. H.-J. Klimkeit (“Manichäische und buddhistische Beichtformeln aus Turfan. Beobachtungen zur Beziehung zwischen Gnosis und Mahāyāna,” *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* 29, 1977, pp. 193-228), opted for influence of the Manichean on the Buddhist confessional literature, of the *Xwāstvānīft* on the Old Turkish–Buddhist *Kšanti qılmaq* texts, the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa-sūtra*, and the *Prātimokṣa* literature. Klimkeit’s essential arguments were refuted, however, by P. Zieme (*Die Stabreimtexte der Uiguren von Turfan und Dunhuang*, Budapest, 1991, pp. 206-12). Cl. Weber (*Buddhistische Beichten in Indien und bei den Uiguren*, Wiesbaden, 1999, pp. 123-52) prudently envisages the possibility of a mutual influence of Buddhist and Manichean confessional texts in Central Asia. Perhaps one cannot go any further. The problem competently presented by Asmussen is still a calculation with many unknown quantities. In any case, Asmussen’s *Xuāstvānīft* is a storehouse of information on almost any topic of Manichean studies. This would be even more evident if the work had been accompanied by an adequate index. Asmussen’s *Xuāstvānīft* should not be read without his entry “Beichte” (confession) in the *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* (V, Berlin and New York, 1980, pp. 411-41), in which the institution of confession is put into a worldwide anthropological framework; and due reference is made to the confessional practice of the Jainas and in old Mesopotamia. The author’s opinion on the Manichean practice and its origins is confirmed and actualized.

The other big problem of Manichean studies discussed by Asmussen is the role of Manicheism as a transmitter of literary motifs and works from east to west and west to east. In his often quoted article “Der Manichäismus als Vermittler literarischen Gutes” (*Temenos* 2, 1966, pp. 5-21), he gives a good survey of pre-Manichean literary motifs adopted by the Manicheans (from the *New Testament*, the *Shepherd of Hermas*, *Aesopos* and his *Vita*, and the *Pañcatantra* [*Kalila wa Dimna*]). A detailed discussion is put forth on the spread of the *Barlaam and Joasaph* legend and its development from its Buddhist sources to a Christian legend. The author argues in favor of Manichean mediation but concedes that this is the “most likely but not the only explanation” (*ibid.*, p. 15). Asmussen’s arguments are indeed convincing. A problem remains, however: the form of the name, which has an *ā* (like Pahlavi *Bōdāsp*) in the second syllable in its western forms but an *i* according to the Manichean spellings,



which stay closer to Sanskrit *Bodhisattva*.

Asmussen returned to the problem of what he explained as basic components of the Manichean doctrine—the principle of identity, now explained as the impersonality of the redeemed divine particles, and the rigor of the concept of personal responsibility and sin—which he discussed in his small but profound article “Nogle grundproblemer i den manikšiske soteriologi” (Some basic problems in Manichean soteriology; in *Religion och Bibel* 37, 1978, pp. 14-21). The components are explained as contradictory attempts to rationally explain evil and salvation, and the author aptly ends with the words: “The rigor and merciless logic of the Manichean doctrine of salvation is in some of its lines of thought without parallel in the history of religions. So Manicheism is great in its inconsequences.”

Asmussen’s *Manichaeae Literature. Representative Texts Chiefly from Middle Persian and Parthian Writings* (but including also Old Turkish texts; Delmar, N.Y., 1975), is the first of a series of anthologies of Manichean literature which appeared in the following years. A general anthology was published in 1980 by A. Böhlig in collaboration with Asmussen, who again took responsibility for the Iranian and Old Turkish texts (see A. Böhlig and J. P. Asmussen, *Die Gnosis. Dritter Band Der Manichäismus*, Zurich and Munich, 1980). The most recent and comprehensive publication is Gherardo Gnoli, ed., *Il Manicheismo: Mani e il Manicheismo* (Milan, 2003-), of which the first volume has appeared so far.

Zoroastrianism, Achaemenid and Sasanian literature, Mithraism. Asmussen’s first monograph, written for his Danish readers, was a commented translation of the Achaemenid royal inscriptions in *Historiske tekster fra Achæmenidetiden* (Historical texts from the Achaemenid epoch; Copenhagen, 1960). Asmussen’s highly spirited and committed article “Die Verkündigung Zarathustras im Lichte der Religionsgeschichte” (*Temenos* 6, 1970, pp. 20-35; also published as the main part of his “Ideen und Begriffe der agrarischen Sphäre und ihre Bedeutung in der Verkündigung Zarathustras,” *Altorientalische Forschungen* 7, 1980, pp. 159-70), again touched on a main problem of Iranian studies. Unfortunately, it remained off the mainstream of modern Gatha studies, which are concerned with the question—not ignored by Asmussen either—whether Zoroaster may be regarded as the author of the Gathas, as the founder of the Zoroastrian religion, and as a historical person at all. Asmussen de facto sided with the defenders of the prophet’s historicity in every respect. However, Asmussen’s main concern was to explain the essence of Zoroaster’s message on the strength of ethnological parallels



(“Kulturmuster”) as a protest against the once ubiquitous idea that offering means killing in order to strengthen (“begräftigen”) life. Perhaps Asmussen’s theory would have met with more attention and approval if he had disclosed precise confirmation of his thesis in the text of the Gathas.

The problem of a possibly pre-Sasanian origin of Sasanian demonology gets a positive answer in “Some Remarks on Sasanian Demonology” (*Commémoration Cyrus. Hommage Universel I*, Acta Iranica 1, Leiden, 1974, pp. 236-41). This is of some consequence for the relation between Iran and Qumran and Zoroastrianism and Manicheism and allows the possibility of an influence on Jewish and Manichean demonology from the Iranian side.

The very learned and entertaining article “A Zoroastrian ‘De-Demonization’ in Judaeo-Persian” (in *Irano-Judaica I*, Jerusalem, 1982, pp. 111-21) shows how Avestan *pairikā* “witch” became New Persian *pari* “fairy, beauty” and Avestan *Būšiiqstā* “(demoness of) sloth,” a “healthy and good sleep” (and a “dream”)—New Persian *bušāsp*, *gušāsp*, etc. The long survival of the last term in Jewish (New) Persian is documented.

Asmussen’s interest in gnomic wisdom literature and its multicultural background led to his well-researched article “Einige Bemerkungen zur sasanidischen Handarz-Literatur” (*Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei* 368, 1971, pp. 269-76). The author elucidates the social ambience of and the confrontation with Christianity in the *handarz* texts and edits a thus far unknown piece of wisdom literature (MS. K 20, fol. 152r).

The brief contribution to *Handbuch der Religionsgeschichte* (III, Göttingen, 1975, pp. 301-8), “Der Mithraskult,” is a good survey of the long history of a prominent proto-Indian, Old Indian, and Old Iranian god, who finally became the redeeming divinity of a Roman secret cult. Its Iranian elements are duly underscored. The names of Cautes and Cautopates which “have not yet found their definite determination” (ibid., p. 306) have meanwhile been explained as Iranian names, too, by M. Schwartz (“Cautes and Cautopates, the Mithraic Torchbearers,” in *Mithraic Studies II*, ed. J. R. Hinnells, Manchester, 1975, pp. 406-23).

Christianity in Sasanian Iran and pre-Islamic Central Asia. The main merit of Asmussen’s studies in this field is a careful analysis of the biblical text tradition. His work has confirmed the thesis of Arthur Vööbus that the *Peshitta* is not a strict alternative to the preceding *Vetus Syra* versions but their revised



continuation preserving some characteristic *Vetus Syra* variants (*pace* F. C. Burkitt). Asmussen was able to prove that this observation is confirmed by Iranian texts (Christian and Manichean ones in Middle Persian, New Persian, Parthian, and Sogdian). To be mentioned are mainly: “Das Christentum in Iran und sein Verhältnis zum Zoroastrismus” (*Studia Theologica* 16, 1961, pp. 1-24, esp. pp. 22-24); “Iranische neutestamentliche Zitate und Texte und ihre textkritische Bedeutung” (*Altorientalische Forschungen* 2, 1975, pp. 79-92); “The Sogdian and Uigur-Turkish Christian Literature in Central Asia before the Real Rise of Islam: a Survey,” (in *Indological and Buddhist Studies. Volume in Honour of Professor J.W. de Jong on his Sixtieth Birthday*, Canberra, 1982, pp. 11-29). A good overview of the history of Christianity under the Arsacids and Sasanians and the rise of Nestorianism is given in “Christians in Iran” (in *Camb. Hist. Iran* 3[2], 1983, pp. 924-48).

Buddhist texts. The edition of *The Khotanese Bhadracaryādeśana*, (Copenhagen, 1961), is the first and last fruit of Asmussen’s Khotanese studies with Sir Harold Bailey.

Jewish Persian. More of Asmussen’s articles are devoted to the study of the Jewish Persian literature and language than he contributed to all the other Iranian topics which he treated; and one of his publications, *Studier i Jødisk-Persisk Litteratur* (Copenhagen 1970; English version: *Studies in Judeo-Persian Literature*, Leiden 1973), even if called an offprint, amounts to a monograph. In this area, more than anywhere else, he excelled in his favorite occupation of editing texts. The publication of a wealth of Jewish Persian works in the 20th century owes much to Asmussen. His keen-sighted experience in deciphering Persian texts in Hebrew script deserves admiration, even if his editorial technique is the most condensed one and provides anything but easy access to this kind of literature. Asmussen’s editions are not, as a rule, accompanied by translations, with the praiseworthy exception of the booklet quoted above. See, for example: “Judaeo-Persica IV” (*Acta Orientalia Havn.* 30, 1966, pp. 15-24), Psalms; “The List of Fruits in the Bundahišn” (in *W. B. Henning Memorial Volume*, London, 1970, pp. 14-19), including a second example of the *Alphabet of Ben Sira*; “Baba ben Lutf’s jüdisch-persisches Elija-Lied” (in *Festschrift für Wilhelm Eilers*, Wiesbaden, 1967, pp. 131-35); *Jewish-Persian Texts* (Wiesbaden, 1968, 47 pages); “Šihab, a Judeo-Persian Poet from Yazd” (in *Mémorial Jean de Menasce*, Louvain, 1974, pp. 415-18); “Jüdisch-Persische Hoseastücke” (in *Monumentum H.S. Nyberg I*, Leiden et al., 1975, pp. 15-18); together with H. H. Paper, *The Song of Songs in Judeo-Persian*, Copenhagen,



1977); “Eine jüdisch-persische Version des Propheten Obadja” (*AAASHung.* 25, 1977 [1980], pp. 255-63); “Ein Bruchstück aus Jehuda Lari’s jüdisch-persischem Weisheitsbuch *Machzan al-pand*, ‘Schatzkammer der Belehrung’” (*Cahiers Ferdinand de Saussure* 41, 1987, pp. 21-26). Sometimes, Asmussen experimented with alternative editorial methods, putting bracketed interpretative notes into the text lines, which does not make easy reading either (e.g., “Eine jüdisch-persische Übersetzung des Ben Sira-Alphabets,” in *Studia Geo Widengren oblata* I, Leiden, 1972, pp.144-55). Asmussen’s student Bodil Hjerrild (Carlsen) contributed to his editorial work (see her “Jonah in Judeo-Persian,” in *Acta Iranica* 12, Leiden et al., 1977, pp. 13-26; and “Amos in Judeo-Persian,” in *Acta Iranica* 23, Leiden, 1984, pp. 73-112.) Asmussen also pointed out interesting or problematic words in Jewish Persian texts, often accompanied by etymological notes. See, for example: “Judaeo-Persica III” (*Acta Orientalia Havn.* 29, 1966, pp. 247-51), on *dw’r’n*, *nyšydn*, *pšxt*, *r’y’nydn*; “Some Remarks on the Zoroastrian Vocabulary of the Judeo-Persian Poet Šāhin-i Širāzi of the 14th Century” (in *Sir J. J. Zarhoshti Madressa Centenary Volume*, Bombay, 1967, pp. 137-43); “Iranica” (*Acta Orientalia Havn.* 31, 1968, pp. 9-20), on some rare words in Salmān of Sāva’s mathnawi *Jamšid o Kūršid*; “Jüdisch-persisch guyān [gwy’n], ‘Zelt’” (*Temenos* 5, 1969, pp. 17-21), attesting this form beside *by’n* for Jewish-Persian; “A Select List of Words from the Vatican Judaeo-Persian Pentateuch (Genesis)” (in *K. R. Cama Oriental Institute Golden Jubilee Volume*, Bombay, 1969, pp. 93-102); “Über die Wiedergabe geographischer und ethnischer Namen in einer jüdisch-persischen Jesaia-Version” (*Temenos* 10, 1974, pp. 5-9; English version in *Miscellanea in Honorem Ibrahim Purdavud*, Tehran 1976, pp. 2-6); “Das Verbum “leben” im Jüdisch-Persischen” (in *Monumentum Georg Morgenstierne* I, Leiden, 1981, pp. 8-11). Jewish Persian translations of problematic passages and words are presented in “Some Textual Problems in the Hebrew Bible and their Treatment in Judeo-Persian Versions” (in *Papers in Honour of Professor Mary Boyce* I, Leiden, 1985, pp. 1-7). Asmussen also gave a very useful survey entitled “Classical New Persian Literature in Jewish-Persian Versions” (in *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore* 8, 1968, pp. 44-53).

Islam. Asmussen regarded it as his duty to write on Islam, too, at least for the benefit of his Danish readers. To be singled out are his monograph *Islam. Verdens hovedreligioner* (Islam. The world’s main religions; Copenhagen 1981) and his useful anthology *Tekster til islam* (Texts on Islam; Copenhagen 1972).

Literary motifs. Asmussen took a great interest in the origin and spread of tales



and parables, and in the diversification of their motifs. They were for him not an end in themselves, however. He usually thematized them in order to illustrate the interaction of neighboring religions and other traditions. His entertainingly written, very learned article “Ein iranisches Wort, ein iranischer Spruch und eine iranische Märchenformel als Grundlage historischer Forschungen” (*Temenos* 3, 1968, pp. 7-18) is the best-known example. The word is Old Persian *uvāmaršiyuš* “to die one’s own death,” its meaning “to die a natural death,” not “to commit suicide,” is confirmed by New Persian examples. The saying is “Cast not your pearls before swine”; its Biblical and Iranian versions derive from a common source. The fairy tale formula is (in New Persian) *yeki bud yeki nabud*, literally “one was, one was not,” meaning “once upon a time,” which is explained as a wrong translation of Arabic *kāna mā kāna* “there was what there was.” In “‘Kamel’-‘Nadelör’ Matth. 19: 14, Mark. 10: 25, Luk. 18: 25” (in *Studia Grammatica. Festschrift für Helmut Humbach*, Munich 1986, pp. 1-10), Asmussen defended the reading “camel-eye of a needle” instead of “rope-eye of a needle” as the best attested variant in many languages. He dealt with the famous motif of “Lady World” in “‘Frau Welt’ eine orientalisches-europäische Beziehung” (in *Orientalia J. Duchesne-Guillemin emerito oblata*, Leiden 1984, pp. 35-39). Oriental parallels and antique origins of European literary motifs are pointed out in “Bemerkungen zum ‘Die Kraniche des Ibykus’-Motiv in der orientalischen Literatur” (in *Living Waters. Scandinavian Oriental Studies presented to Professor Dr. Frede Løkkegaard*, Copenhagen, 1990, pp. 25-30), and “Der Märchentypus ‘Der Mutter Tränen’ im religionsgeschichtlichen Zusammenhang” (in *Apocryphon Severini presented to Søren Giversen*, Aarhus, 1993, pp. 13-18).

Reviews. In Asmussen’s *Festschrift* of 1988 (pp. XXI-XXVI), 124 reviews are listed. Since it was his generous maxim that there is hardly any publication which does not contain something useful and worth reading, his reviews duly rendered the contents and the intent of the work to be “criticized” and underscored its merits rather than its faults.

Other publications. The above is but an excerpt of Asmussen’s long list of publications. It is the result of the restless work of a dutiful, productive researcher. His scholarly work he used to do at night. His work was his hobby, too. Yet he still found the time to practice other hobbies beside his iranological studies. For some time he composed and edited fairy tales in Danish rendering, a work in which his student Gudrun S. Jakobsdóttir took part. His



own contributions were *Den fromme stenhuggers gæstfrihed mod Herren* (The pious stonecutter's hospitality to the Lord; Ringkøbing, 1984), *Iranske eventyr og historier* (Iranian fairy tales and stories; n.p., 1984), *Persiske eventyr og historier* (Persian fairy tales and stories; n.p., 1987, and *Rejse i eventyr* (Journey into the fairy tale; n.p., 1990, in two fascicles). His other lifelong hobby was birdwatching. According to his *Festschrift* of 1988 (pp.XXVI-XXVII),he wrote no less than 14 articles on the birds of his Danish native land.

Asmussen's scholarly work is an exact image of his personality. It is the work of a cooperative and helpful, kind and mild, conscientious and modest, peaceful and circumspect, loyal and patriotic man, the work of an Iranist of the kind less militant in their opinions. As such, it well documented and augmented the results of research into much of Iranian studies that were reached at in the second half of the 20th century.

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Given in the text. A complete biographical list up to 1988 is to be found in Sundermann et al., eds., *A Green Leaf. Papers in Honour of Professor Jes P. Asmussen*, Acta Iranica 28, Leiden, 1988, pp. XVII-XXVII.

According to Bodil Hjerrild and Gudrun S. Jakobsdóttir, the following works by Asmussen are to be added: "Manichaeian Literature," in *Persian Literature*, Columbia Lectures on Iranian Studies 3, Costa Mesa, 1988.

"Bemerkungen zu einer "neuen" jüdisch-persischen Qohälät-Übersetzung," in *Études Irano-aryennes offerts à Gilbert Lazard*, Paris, 1989, pp. 1-4.

"Salman Rushdie-sagen" (The Salman Rushdie case), in *Semiramis. Tidsskrift om Orienten*, Copenhagen, 1990, pp. 13-24.

"Šimury in Judeo-Persian Translations of the Hebrew Bible," in *Iranica Varia: Papers in Honor of Professor Ehsan Yarshater*, Acta Iranica 30, Leiden, 1990, pp. 1-5.



“Irans Filologi,” in *Københavns Universitet, 1479-1979 VIII*, Copenhagen, 1992, pp. 675-94.

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“Jesus i Islam” (Jesus in Islam), in *Støtteselskabet for Pakistans Kirke, Årsskrift*, Denmark, 1994, pp. 3-29.

“Ein jüdisch-persisches Vokabularium zum Hohen Lied,” in *Memorial Volume of Otakar Klíma*, Iranian and Indo-European Studies, Prague, 1994, pp. 1-13.

With H. Dadkhan, “En jødisk-persisk Daniel apocalypse, en oversættelse af en apokryf Daniel tekst” (A Jewish-Persian Daniel apocalypse, a translation of an apocryphal Daniel text), in *Dansk Teologisk Tidsskrift*, 1998, pp. 199-215.

See also H. Dadkhan (with J. P. Asmussen as collaborator), “A Judeo-Persian Medical Manuscript,” *Acta Orientalia Havn* 55, 1994, pp. 37-41.

Asmussen also wrote several contributions to *Den Store Danske Encyklopædi* (The great Danish encyclopedia; Gyldendal, Denmark, up to 2001).

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