



ČINWAD PUHL

ČINWAD PUHL (Av. *čīnuuatō pərətu-*), traditionally thought to mean “the bridge of the separator” but recently shown to be “the bridge of the accumulator/collector” (Kellens, with references to earlier translations), the name of a bridge that, according to a Mazdayasnian/Zoroastrian eschatological myth, leads from this world to the next and must be crossed by the souls of the departed (*Vd.* 19.29, 19.30). It is mentioned already in the Gathas (*Y.* 46.10, 46.11, 51.13). The bridge lies on the peak of the cosmic mountain Harburz (Alborz), called *Čagād ī Dāiti*, with one end in the south leading up to paradise; the other lies in the north, and below it, beneath the earth, lies hell (*Bundahišn*, TD₂, pp. 77.13-15, 199.10; *Dēnkard*, ed. Madan, p. 809.2-8, ed. Dresden, p. 60, tr. W. E. West, in *Pahlavi Texts IV*, SBE 37, p. 210; *Ardā Wirāz-nāmag*, ed. West and Haug, chap. 53.2-3; *Pahlavi Rivayat*, chap. 15.3; for Kirder’s inscription at Naqš-e Rostam, ll. 65-66, at Sar-e Mašhad, ll. 41-43, see Skjærvø, p. 285).

The bridge has the following epithets in the Avesta: “Mazda-created” (*mazda-δāta-*, *Vd.* 19.29, 19.36), “well-known from afar” (*dūraē.srūta*, *Wištāsp Yt.* 42; cf. Pahl. *dūr-nāmīg* in *Dēnkard*, p. 809.9), “strong” (*amauant-*, *Wištāsp Yt.* 42; cf. Pahl. *amāwand* in *Ardā Wirāz-nāmag* 4.7), “well protected” (*hu-pāta-*, *Wištāsp Yt.* 42), and “protected by righteousness” (*aša pāta-*, *Wištāsp Yt.* 42; see Avesta, tr. Darmesteter, II, p. 677). In the Pahlavi literature it is described as “high” (*buland*: *Mēnōg ī xrad*, ed. Anklesaria, 2.115), “fearful” (*sahmgen*, *Mēnōg ī xrad*, ed. Anklesaria, 2.115; *bīmgen*, *Mēnōg ī xrad*, ed. Anklesaria, 41.12), “protector of many” (*was pānāg*, *Ardā Wirāz-nāmag* 4.7), “created by Ohrmazd” (*Ohrmazd-dād*, *Ardā Wirāz-nāmag* 4.7), and “good” (*nēk*, *Dēnkard*, p. 809.10).



Two dogs guard the bridge, according to the *Vidēvdād* (13.9, 19.30), but only one, according to the *Bundahišn* (TD₂, p. 199.9), a belief also found in Indian literature and therefore presumably of Indo-Iranian date (see Boyce, *Stronghold*, pp. 145f.).

The bridge is said to be nine lances long and wide, although resembling a sharp sword (*Bundahišn*, TD₂, p. 199.7-8), a razor blade (*dār-ēw*; Kirdēr's inscription KNRm 65, KSM 41, see Skjærvø, p. 299 par. 21), or a razor blade "of many sides" (*dār-kirb ī was pahlūg*: *Dādestān ī dēnīg*, pt. 1, chap. 21.3, see Pavry, p. 94; Tafazzoli, 1970, pp. 89-91).

The crossing of the soul of the departed takes place three days after death, at the dawn of the fourth day. It proceeds toward the bridge, accompanied by a number of gods, such as Srōš, the good Way, and Wahrām, while it is menaced by various demons (*Mēnōg ī xrad* 2.115-16). In some texts it is primarily Srōš who has the task of guiding the soul to the bridge (*Bundahišn*, TD₂, p. 169.12-13; *Persian Rivayats* I, p. 148). At the entrance of the bridge there is a tribunal, over which Mihr presides in the company of Srōš and Rašn (*Mēnōg ī xrad* 2.118). According to another, probably later, tradition, the judges are Rašn, Aštād, and Zamyazd (*Bundahišn*, TD₂, pp. 37.12-14, 180.6-8; cf. also *Dēnkard*, ed. Madan, p. 809.9-12, where Aštād and Mihr are mentioned). The god Rašn weighs the good and the evil deeds of the soul with his spiritual balance (*Mēnōg ī xrad* 2.119-22; *Persian Rivayats* I, p. 148; cf. KSM and KNRm, Skjærvø, pp. 282, 296-97, pars. 15-17). If the deceased is righteous, his *dēn* appears to him as a beautiful maiden, who personifies his deeds in life and who, together with the other gods, helps him cross the bridge (*Vd.* 19.30; *Mēnōg ī xrad* 2.124; *Persian Rivayats*, p. 148.13ff.; inscription of Kirdēr, Skjærvø, *passim*). These gods are Srōš and Ādur (*Ardā Wirāz-nāmag* 5.1-2), or only Srōš (*Mēnōg ī xrad*, 2.124). Ādur is sometimes identified as Ādurfarnbag (*Bundahišn*, TD₂, p. 169.2-4) or as "the form of fire" (*ātaxš-kirb*: *Zādsprahm* 30.52). If the soul is wicked, his *dēn* appears as an ugly maiden, and the soul fails to cross the bridge and falls into hell. When the righteous soul wishes to cross the bridge, it becomes thirty-seven poles (*nāy*) wide (*Dādestān ī dēnīg*, pt. 1, chap. 21.5), equal to nine lances (*Dēnkard*, p. 809.2-8; *Zand ī Xwurdag Abestāg*, ed. Dhabhar, pp. 258.22-259.5) or one *frasang* (*Mēnōg ī xrad* 2.123). For the wicked it becomes narrow like a razor blade (*Dādestān ī dēnīg*, pt. 1, chap. 21.5; *Dēnkard*, p. 809.2-8; *Zand ī Xwurdag Abestāg*, pp. 258.22-259.5). For the righteous soul the crossing is very pleasant, and he walks across the bridge "well-wishingly and free from sorrow" (*appār-čēh*) on the precious skin of the



stoat (**kākomēn pōst*) in the green, beautiful, and very fragrant spring time (*Dādestān ī dēnīg*, pt. 1, chap. 21.6). When the wicked soul, on the other hand, steps onto the bridge, he falls into hell because of his coarseness (*dabrīh*; see Tafazoli, 1972, pp. 270-73) and sharpness. His crossing is very unpleasant, as if walking through a stinking charnel house (*murdagestān*; *Dādestān ī dēnīg*, pt. I, chap. 21.8)

The *čīnwad puhl* is also called *čēh-widarg* (*Dēnkard*, ed. Madan, p. 66.15, ed. Dresden, p. 784.3, ed. Madan, p. 809.9; *Zādsprahm* 31.3; *Vd.* 18.6; *Bundahišn*, TD₂, p. 169.13), *čīnwar puhl* (probably a dialect form of *čīnwad*; *Bundahišn*, pp. 169.3, 180.6-7; cf. *Mēnōg ī xrad* 2.115, 41.12, 57.13, where *cnywl* stands for *čīnwar*; for a different view, see Nyberg, *Manual* II, p. 53, s.v. *cand-war*), and *čīnag puhl* (*Dēnkard*, ed. Madan, p. 809.4).

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