



DADESTAN Ī MENOG Ī XRAD

DĀDESTĀN Ī MĒNŌG Ī XRAD (Judgments of the Spirit of Wisdom), a Zoroastrian Pahlavi book in sixty-three chapters (a preamble and sixty-two questions and answers), in which a symbolic character called Dānāg (lit., “knowing, wise”) poses questions to the personified Spirit of Wisdom (Mēnōg ī xrad), who is extolled in the preamble and identified in two places (2.95, 57.4) with innate wisdom (*āsn xrad*). The book, like most Pahlavi books, is based on oral tradition and has no known author. According to the preamble, Dānāg, searching for truth, traveled to many countries, associated himself with many savants, and learned about various opinions and beliefs. When he discovered the virtue of *xrad* (1.51) the Spirit of Wisdom appeared to him to answer his questions. This story is similar to those in the chapter “Borzūya-ye ṭabīb” in *Kalīla wa Demna*, the preamble to *Škand-gumānīg wizār* (1.35ff.), and *Abar xēm ud xrad ī farrox mard*, a Pahlavi poem in praise of *xrad* (*Pahlavi Texts*, ed. Jamasp-Asana, pp. 165-66; Tavadia; Tafazzoli, 1972, pp. 215-17).

The book belongs to the genre of *andarz* (advice) literature, containing mostly practical wisdom (chaps. 2.1-110, 16.20-63 [on the benefits of drinking wine moderately and the harmful effects of overindulging in it], 20, 33, 39, 50, 51, 54, 55, 59, 60), although advice on religious questions is by no means lacking. For example, there are passages on keeping quiet while eating (2.33-34); on not walking without wearing the sacred girdle (*kostī*) and undershirt (*sodra*; 2.35-36); on not walking with only one shoe on (2.37-38); on not urinating in a standing position (2.39-40); on *gāhānbār* and *hamāg-dēn* ceremonies (4.5); on libation (*zōhr*) and the *yasna* ceremony (*yazišn*; 5.13); on not burying the dead



(6.9); on marriage with next of kin (*xwēdōdah*) and trusteeship (*stūrīh*; 36); on belief in dualism (42); on praying three times a day and repentance before the sun, the moon, and fire (53); on belief in Ohrmazd as the creator and in the destructiveness of Ahreman (see [ahriman](#)) and belief in **stōš* (the fourth morning after death), resurrection, and the Final Body (*tan ī pasēn*; 63). The first chapter, which is also the longest (110 pars.), deals in detail with the question of what happens to people after death and the separation of soul from body.

In some chapters religious and practical advice is mixed (e.g., chaps. 36-37). There are also passages that contain mythical material and allusions to ancient Iranian legends (e.g., 2.95, 21.25, 27, 61, 62) and brief passages on cosmology (9, 44.8-15, on the sky, earth, and water; 49 on stars; 56 on mountains and seas; 57 on clouds, the Alborz mountain, etc.).

The emphasis placed in this book on refraining from the material world and concentration on the spiritual world (e.g., 2.98-103) and references to the significance of fate, predestination, and the role of the stars in the destiny of man (8.17-21, 24, 38.5, 47.7, 51) have led some scholars to believe that *Mēnōg ī xrad* reveals Zurvanite influences and to brand it as a semi-Zurvanite work (Zaehner, pp. 117, 181, 206). The book is, however, free of specifically Zurvanite ideas, for example, claims that Ohrmazd and Ahreman were of the same origin, and references to Zurvanite myths known from other sources. Such features as small regard for the material world and concentration on spiritual matters, as well as submission to fate, must be considered characteristic of the *andarz* literature, to which *Mēnōg ī xrad* really belongs (Boyce, "Middle Persian Literature," p. 53).

It is difficult to say exactly when the book was compiled, but references to the continuous wars of Persians with the Turks and the Byzantines, the complete absence of any reference to the Arabs or Islam, the similarity of the introduction to the chapter "Borzūya-e ṭabīb" in *Kalīla wa Demna*, and the style of the text reveal it to be a product of the late Sasanian period, probably the reign of Kōsrow I Anōšīravān (531-79; see, e.g., 21.25-26; West, 1871, pp. x-xi; Boyce, "Middle Persian Literature," p. 54).

Mēnōg ī xrad is written in a simple, readable style. The sentences are short and clear, with no discernible grammatical or lexical influence from classical Persian. The oldest known manuscript is K 43 (fols. 131-76; Royal Library, Copenhagen), copied in 1589; a few folios are missing (facs. ed., Christensen;



see [codices hafnienses](#)). Another manuscript, known as TD₂ (Bombay) lacks the colophon. According to T. D. Anklesaria, who collated it with K 43, it was copied at some time between 1726 and 1741 (see J. J. Modi, introduction to *Mēnōg ī xrad*, ed. Anklesaria, pp. 6-7). The manuscripts used by D. P. Sanjana are, in all probability, Pahlavi translations of the Pāzand version done in recent centuries and thus hardly of particular interest. The Pāzand version and the Sanskrit translation were both based on the Pahlavi text, most probably produced by Neryōsang in the 15th century. The oldest Pāzand-Sanskrit manuscript is L 19 (India Office library, London), which was copied at Navsari in Gujarat in 1520. There are also a few Persian translations of *Mēnōg ī xrad* in both versified and prose versions.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

J. Amouzgar, *Études sur la langue et la littérature mazdéenne en persan*, Ph.D. diss., Paris, 1967, pp. 50, 57, 67.

E. K. Antia, ed., *Pazand Texts*, Bombay, 1909, pp. 273-334.

A. Bausani, *Testi religiosi zoroastriani*, Catania, 1960 (tr. of *Mēnōg ī xrad*, pp. 73-178).

S. D. Bharucha, ed., *Collected Sanskrit Writings of the Parsis*, pt. III, *Mainyô-i Khard*, Bombay, 1912.

A. Bonšāhī, ed., *Minu Krad*, Pers. tr. H. Edulji, Bombay, 1317 Š./1938, pp. 1-80.

A. Christensen, ed., *The Pahlavi Codex K 43*, *Codices Avestici et Pahlavici Bibliothecae Universitatis Hafniensis* 5/1, Copenhagen, 1936.

Dânâk-u Mainyô-i Khrad. Pahlavi Pazand and Sanskrit Texts, ed. T. D. Anklesaria, n.p. (Bombay), 1913.

J. P. de Menasce, "Zoroastrian Pahlavi Writings," in *Camb. Hist. Iran* III/2, pp. 1166-95 (esp. p. 1182).



D. P. Sanjana, *The Dînâ ī Maînû ī Khrat*, Bombay, 1895.

Škand-gumānīg wizār, ed. J. de Menasce as *Une apologétique mazdéenne du IX^e siècle. Škand-Gumānik Vičār. La solution décisive des doutes. Texte pazand-pehlevi transcrit, traduit et commenté*, Fribourg, 1945.

A. Tafazzolī, *Vāza-nāma-ye mīnū-ye karad*, Tehran, 1348 Š./1969.

Idem, “Andarz ī Wehzād Farrox Pērōz,” *Stud. Ir.* 1/2, 1972, pp. 207-17.

Idem, tr., *Mīnū-ye karad*, Tehran, 1354 Š./1975; 2nd ed., Tehran, 1364 Š./1985.

J. Tavadia, “A Didactic Poem in Zoroastrian Pahlavi,” *Indo-Iranian Studies* 1, 1950, pp. 86-95.

E. W. West, *The Book of the Mainyo-I-Khard*, Stuttgart and London, 1871.

Idem, *Pahlavi Texts*, pt. III, SBE 24, Oxford, 1895.

Idem, in *Grundriss II*, p. 107.

R. C. Zaehner, *Zurvan. A Zoroastrian Dilemma*, Oxford, 1955.