



DASTŪR

DASTŪR (Pahl. *dstwbl*, Man. Mid. Pers. *dstwr*, Man. Parth. *dstbr*, Pāzand and NPers. *dastūr*, all < OIr. **dasta-bara*-(?), the first element of which seems to be cognate with Av. *dąstvā*- “dogma, doctrine” < *dąh*-, *OIr. *dans*- “to teach”; cf. Man. Pers. *dastan* “powerful,” Man. Parth. *dast* “capable, able,” NPers. *dast* “power, ability,” and Dastān, the name of Zāl, father of Rostam, in all likelihood also signifying “powerful”; for the etymology of *dastwar*, see Bailey, *Zoroastrian Problems*, p. 160 n. 5; idem, 1945, p. 8; Bartholomae, p. 26; Darmesteter, I, p. 115; Horn, *Etymologie*, p. 126; Hübschmann, *Persische Studien*, p. 63; Nyberg, *Manual*, II, p. 59; Perikhanian, pp. 445-48).

In Middle Persian. In the Sasanian period *dastwar* had a wide range of meanings, primarily denoting “one in authority, having power.” It was most often a generic term referring to Zoroastrian spiritual authorities. It was qualified as *dēn āgāh* “well versed in religious matters” (cf. *dādwar* “judge,” described as *dād āgāh* “well versed in the law”), and *dastwar ī dēn āgāh* was thus an appellation for high-ranking theologians and jurists (in conformity with the concept of *dēn* “religion,”), to whom members of the community turned for authoritative advice or decisions. For example, Wehšābuhr, *mōbedān mōbed* “high priest” in the reign of Kōsrow I Anōšīravān (531-79), was styled *dastwar ī Ādurbāygān* when summoned to the inquisitorial tribunal convened to try Mazdak (*Zand ī Wahman Yašt*, chap. 2). The famous sage, seer, vizier, and counselor of Guštāsp bore the title *dastwar Jāmās’p* (Gathic Av. *dājāmāspa*-; *Pahlavi Yasna and Visperad*, p. 205); it also occurs in *Mardbūd ī mōbedān mōbed . . . ud abārīg dastwarān ī mad ēstād hēnd* “Mardbūd, the high



priest . . . and the other religious leaders who were present there” (*Mādayān*, pt. 2, p. 39). In the common phrase *pēšēnīgān dastwarān* the term refers to “the ancient fathers of the faith, that is, *pōryōtkēšān*,” and the contemporary *dastwarān ēdōn guft* is to be translated “the eminent jurists/ theologians have so maintained.”

The term *dastwar* is also applied to leaders of evil, that is, non-Zoroastrian, religions: *awēšān dēw dastwar hēnd kēšān druwandīh dēn* “those whose religion is unrighteousness are religious dignitaries representing the demon” (*Pahlavi Yasna and Visperad*, pp. 214-15).

Dastwar occurs in legal texts in the sense of “authorized, legal representative; legal adviser or expert” (see *Dar ī dastwar* “Chapter on the legal representative,” in *Mādayān*, pt. 1, p. 5; Perikhanian, p. 14). It is only in this specialized sense that the term designates a distinct juridical office and *dastwarīh* “authorization” a specific function. According to the *Madayān* (pt. 1, p. 6), the *dastwar* is invested with legal power (*dastwarīh*), appears in the law court in the capacity of legal representative (*pad dastwarīh andar ēstēd*), and accordingly pleads one’s cause as a lawyer (*dastwarīh ud rāyēnišn ī dādestān kardan*; *Mādayān*, pt. 1, p. 6).

By extension *dastwar* has the sense of “authentic canon, doctrine, dogma,” as in the expressions *har čē az wizand ud āšuftagīh ī Aleksandar . . . pad dastwar mānd ēstēd* “Whatever (of the Avesta and Zand) had survived the havoc and disruption of Alexander . . . and remained authoritative” and *Tansar abar mad ān ī *ēwar frāz padīrift ud abārīg az dastwar hišt* “Tansar assumed command; he selected those that were trustworthy and left the rest out of the canon” (*Dēnkard*, ed. Madan, pt. 1, p. 412; Shaki, p. 118). The term also signifies “authority,” as in *dēn pad dastwar dār* “regard the religion as your authority” (*Pahlavi Yasna and Visperad*, p. 202) and *axw ī xwēš pad dastwar kunēd* “hold your conscience as your authority” (*Dēnkard*, ed. Madan, pt. 2, p. 528). Through development of this sense the word *dastwarīh* came to mean “judgment; authoritative decision; permission,” as attested in *pad rāst dastwarīh ī Tansar* “on the just judgment of Tansar” (*Dēnkard*, ed. Madan, pt. 1, p. 413) and *pad dastwarīh ī pid* “by the father’s permission.”

In New Persian. In the Islamic period *dastūr* occurs in the Pāzand text of *Škand-gumānīg wizār* (tr. J. de Menasce, chap. 15.91): *Pāwlōs yašq dastūr* “Paul, their religious leader.” Although some of the original meanings of the word were retained in this period, the semantic range was increasingly widened to



convey different meanings at different times. The Zoroastrian Parsis have employed *dastūr* as the title of a high priest superior to the *mōbed* (Sorūšiān, p. 77), and *dastūrān dastūr* or its New Persian form *dastūr-e dastūrān* “high priest” has replaced the earlier *pēšōbāy* “pontiff,” itself adopted in the first centuries of Islam for the Sasanian *mōbedān mōbed* “high priest” (Boyce, *Zoroastrianism I*, p. 164).

The term *dastūr* has been used in profane senses in secular Persian literature. It signifies “prime minister; minister; governmental counselor,” the temporal equivalent of Sasanian spiritual dignitaries, and is commonly used in the sense of “command; instruction; obligation; (moral) precept; draft” or “program; model; formulary or recipe, hence prescription.” At present it means “rule, regulation, code of law; grammar (*dastūr-e zabān*, lit., “rules of language”); order of the day; procedure of a committee meeting (*dastūr-e jalsa*).” In classical and literary style *dastūrī*, continuing Mid. Pers. *dastwarīh*, and also usually *dastūr* mean “permission.” Obsolete meanings include “keeping one’s word, promise”; “something given by the vendor free of charge in addition to what is sold”; “customs, tax”; “foundation, pillar”; “master copy, copy”; “bolt of the door.”

Dastūr was borrowed in classical Arabic as *dostūr* (pl. *dasātīr*), with a variety of meanings, mainly “army pay list; leave; formulary.” In modern Arabic *dostūr* refers to a “constitution, statute, regulation.” In colloquial Arabic *dastūr* denotes “permission.”

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