



## DATES AND DATING

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**DATES AND DATING** in Old and Middle Iranian. The only dating formulas preserved in an Old Iranian language are those found in Old Persian in the Bīsoṭūn inscriptions of **Darius I**. They have a ponderous air, suggesting a chronicle addressed to posterity, rather than a system meant for everyday use. No year is mentioned in them, and, though the months are named (see *EIr.* IV, p. 659 table 20), the days are generally indicated only by numerals. For example, “on the ninth of Garmapada” is written *garmapadahyā māhyā IX raučabiš θakatā āha avaθā . . .*, that is, “in the month (locative) of Garmapada (genitive) 9 days (instrumental plural as general, here nominative plural) were gone past (nominative plural feminine), then. . . .” Only the thirtieth and last day of a month is referred to as such, for example, *θūravāharahyā māhyā jiyamnam patiy* “in the month of Thuravahara, at the end” (see Kent, *Old Persian*, pp. 203, s.v. *māha-*, 205, s.v. *raucah-*, for references only). By contrast, the formulas used in the translation of the inscriptions into Aramaic, the language of administrative correspondence in the Achaemenid empire, are simple, as in *b 27 lḫbt* “on the 27(th) in Tebeth” (Greenfield and Porten, pp. 24 ff.).

By the time of the earliest dated Middle Iranian documents, the Parthian ostraca from Nisa of the 1st century B.C.E., the Zoroastrian (so-called Avestan) calendar was in use (see *EIr.* IV, pp. 660-61 tables 21-23). On most of these ostraca no more than a year (of the Arsacid era) is indicated, for example, *ŠNT IC XX XX X III III III* = *\*sard 159* “year 159” (i.e., 89 B.C.E.). On the other hand, some have month and day but no year, and a very few are dated in full, for



example, *ŠNT IC XX XX XX X III III YRḤ' prwrtyn YWM' srwš* = \*sard 176, *māh Frawartīn, rōč Srōš* “year 176 (i.e., 72 B.C.E.), (first) month Frawardīn, (seventeenth) day Srōš” (see D'yakonov and Livshits, p. 147, Nov. 100 + Nov. 91). The same form is found in a Parthian parchment sale contract from *Avroman*: *ŠNT IIIC YRḤ' 'rwtt* = \*sard 300 *māh arwatāt* “year 300, (third) month (H)arwatāt” (i.e., January-February 53 C.E.; Henning, “Mitteliranisch,” p. 29). In the only surviving dated Parthian inscription, actually of the Sasanian period, the month appears before the year, as in the accompanying Middle Persian version: *YRḤ' (Pers. BYRḤ) prwrtyn ŠNT XX XX X IIIIIII* “(first) month Frawardīn, year 58” (i.e., 266 C.E.; see Back, p. 378, ŠVŠ 1). The same is true of the later Middle Persian inscriptions at Persepolis, for example, *BYRḤ tyr QDM ŠNT X IIIIIII YWM 'whrmzdy* “(fourth) month Tīr in year 18 (of Šāpūr II, i.e., 327 C.E.), (first) day Ohrmazd” (Back, p. 495, ŠPs II), and of several inscriptions from the walls of the synagogue at Dura-Europos, like *BYRḤ prwrtyn QDM ŠNT 15 WYWM lšnw* “(first) month Frawardīn in year 15, and (eighteenth) day Rašn” (see Geiger, pp. 300 ff.). Similar formulas are found in late Middle Persian documents, particularly ostraca of the 6th century from Persia and papyri from Egypt, the latter datable to the short Sasanian occupation from 618 to 629 C.E. On most only a day is mentioned, as in *YWM tyl, YWM gwš* “(thirteenth) day Tīr,” “(fourteenth) day Gōš,” and the like, or month and day, as in *BYRḤ spndrmt YWM 'lt'* “(twelfth) month Spandarmad, (twenty-fifth) day Ard” (Papyrus Heidelberg Pahl., unpublished). The same pattern was followed in Book Pahlavi texts of the Islamic period, the colophons of manuscripts being dated according to the Yazdegerdī era, as in *BYN YWM Y 'whrmzd MN BYRḤ spndrmt ŠNT Y IIII IIII C XX XX XX pnc 'HL MN ŠNT Y XX (Y) 'L(H) bg yzdkrt MLK'n MLK' Y štryd'l'n* “on the (first) day Ohrmazd of the (twelfth) month Spandarmad, year 865 after the year 20 of his late majesty Yazdegerd, king of kings, son of Šāhriār” (*Dēnkard* 949.10-11).

In literary texts of Manichean origin, in both Parthian and Middle Persian, a more elaborate expression of dates is found; it is reminiscent of the Old Persian style, owing to the use of the word *saxt* “passed” (corresponding to Old Pers. *θakata-*). Various forms occur. For example, the date of the crucifixion of Jesus, with the name of the month “translated” from the Syriac Nisan, is given in Parthian as *pd myhr m'h pd sxt cfrds* “in the (seventh) month Mihr, on the fourteen(th) day passed” (*Mir. Man.* III, p. 882 p 20-21). The time of Mani's death appears as *pd sxt cwhrm m'h šhryywr pd dwšmbt 'wd jm'n ywnds* “on the fourth (day) passed, (sixth) month Šahrewar, on Monday and (at) the hour eleven” (*Mir. Man.* III, p. 864 d 57-58) and as *pd cfr sxt šhryywr m'h šhrywr rwc*



*dwšmbt 'wd 'ywnds jm'n* “on the four(th day) passed, month Šahrewar, day Šahrewar, Monday and the hour eleven” (*Mir. Man.* III, p. 861c 23 ff.). In one Middle Persian text the festival of Greater Tīragān is referred to both as *pd h'n rwc 'y ch'rdh sxt* “on that day fourteen passed” and as *pd ch'rdh rwc 'y tyrm'* “on day fourteen of Tīr month” (M 16; Boyce, *Reader*, pp. 183-84 dn 2).

Documents from Topraq-qal'a in K̄vārazm from the 2nd or 3rd century C.E. (the era is still uncertain) and later ossuary inscriptions from Toq-qal'a, probably of the 8th century, are dated similarly to the earliest Parthian examples. Only the Aramaic ideograms differ slightly, for example, *BŠNT VII C VI YRH' βrwrtn BYWM βrwrtn* “year 706, (first) month Frawardīn, (nineteenth) day Frawardīn” (Toq-qal'a, no. 25; Henning, 1965; Livshits, 1968).

From the earliest records in Sogdian (beginning of the 4th century C.E.) to the latest (10th century C.E.) a form of the word \**syty* appears in dating formulas. In the Ancient Letters *krt ZNH δykh kδ X-myk m'xw kδ X IIIII sxth* “made this letter when (it was) the 10th month, when the 15(th day) passed” (AL IV) and *np'xšt ZNH δykh pr 'tδrtyk YRH' pr X syth* “written this letter in the third month, on the 10(th day) passed” (AL III) occur (see Reichelt, “Glossar,” p. 53, s.v. *syty*). One Buddhist text is dated according to the Central Asian twelve-year animal cycle (*EIr.* IV, p. 667 table 33) *pr myw srδ wxwšw-my m'xy pncδs sytyh* “in the tiger year, in the sixth month, on the fifteen(th day) passed” (Benveniste, p. 113 P8.166). This locative form of the word is spelled phonetically in a Manichean text (S 40), *1 syty' . . . 15 syty'* “on the 1(st day) passed . . . on the 15(th)” and so on (Henning, 1937, p. 134, s.v. *syty'*), as in a Christian text (C 2) *\*xwšmyq syty' knwn 'hry m'xy* “on the sixth (day) passed in the month Latter Kanon,” but also *xwšmyq sydy' cn m'x nw' nysn m'xy* “on the sixth (day) passed from the new moon in the month Nisan.” It also occurs as accusative singular feminine *qw knwn 'hry m'x \*pwn, nwmyq syt'* “until the month Latter Kanon, the ninth (day) passed” (Sims-Williams, p. 225, s.v. *syty*). The latest form of the word occurs as *m'kr srδ wxšmyk m'xy XX syδ'* “year of the monkey, the sixth month, the 20(th day) passed” (Pelliot Chinois 2782; Sims-Williams and Hamilton, p. 39). When dating by the regnal years of local rulers the Sogdians used another style, however. For example, one Buddhist text is dated *'wyn βyy βyp'wr x'y 'nkwyn X III III-myk srδy 'z pr n'k srδy 'prtm y m'xyh* “it was in the 16th year of the lord the Son of Heaven K'ai-nygywan (=728 C.E.), in the year of the dragon, in the first month” (MacKenzie, I, p. 10, Intox. 34-35). Similar formulations are found in several of the documents from Mount Mug, in which the Sogdian names of the months and days are also used



(*EIr.* IV, p. 665 tables 27-28), as in *trxwn MLK' X srδ 'z m'xy msβwyyicy myδ 'sm'n rwc* “it was the year 10 of King Tarkhun, in the (tenth) month Masvoghich, (twenty-seventh) day Asman-roch” (i.e., 25 March 710 C.E.; Livshits, 1962, pp. 21-22 Nov. 3- 4, R 1). The word *'z*, understood as “was,” may originally have been part of an expression *\*sarδ-āz* for “year” (Gershevitch, pp. 200 ff.).

In Khotanese Saka dates are generally expressed in numerals, though the months are often named (*EIr.* IV, p. 667 table 32). With cardinal numbers, as in *salī (?) māst[ä] 8 haḍā 27* “year ? month 8, day 27” (Or. 9268, 1 b 1; Bailey, II, p. 13) or *salī 21 māšta rarūya haḍā-t-ū jsa 18* “year 21, month Raruya (second summer month), day 18 from them” (Hedin 4.1; Bailey, IV, pp. 23, 74-75). A day expressed by an ordinal appears in the genitive-dative singular, as in *skarihveri māsti didye haḍai* “in the month Skarhvāra on the third day” (Hedin 6.18; Bailey, IV, pp. 25, 80). The word *haḍāa-* “day” originally meant, in all likelihood, “passed” (see Bailey, *Dictionary*, p. 447), a striking parallel to the idiom found in the other languages mentioned above.

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