



ĒMĒD Ī AŠAWAHIŠTĀN

ĒMĒDĪ AŠAWAHIŠTĀN, RIVĀYATĪ (Exposition [of Zoroastrian doctrines] by Ēmēd, son of Ašawahišt), a major 10th-century Pahlavi work comprising forty-four questions (*pursišn*) put by a priest (*āsrōn*), Ādur Gušnasp, son of Mihr-ātaš, grandson of Ādur Gušnasp, to the saint (*hufraward*) Ēmēd, son of Ašawahišt, the high priest (*mōbedān mōbed*) of the Zoroastrian community, and his answers. *Rivāyat*, also an Arabo-Persian word meaning “narration, exposition, exegesis,” was used in post-Sasanian times by the Zoroastrian clergy for the Middle Persian *nigēz*. The present work is the fourth and last Pahlavi *Rivāyat* written by *mōbeds* in the Islamic period.

Ēmēd, was of a long line of leading *mōbeds*, descendant of Ādurbād ī Mahraspandān (q.v.), the most authoritative redactor and interpreter of the holy scriptures. He was a fifth-generation descendant of the renowned Ādurbād ī Farroxzadān (q.v.), the first redactor of the *Dēnkard*, a nephew of Manuščihr, the author of *Dādestān ī dēnīg* (q.v.), and the father of Ādurbād ī Ēmēdān, the last redactor of the *Dēnkard* (q.v.).

On the evidence of Mas‘ūdī, who states that at the time of writing the *Tanbīh* (345/956), ‘Nm’d Šrhst (read Ēmēd Ašawahišt) was the *mōbed* of the Persians in the provinces of Jebāl, ‘Erāq, and other Persian regions (p. 104; tr. B. Carra de Vaux, Paris, 1897, p. 149), the *Rivāyat* was written in the first half of the 10th century. This is supported by Ḥamza Ešfahānī (d. after 350/961), who had consulted the priest Omayd Ašwahist [sic] on the date of the palace Ayyān-e Kesrā (q.v.); (apud Yāqūt, *Boldān*, I, pp. 425-26).



The language of the *Rivāyat*, containing frequent Persianisms and corrupt syntax except for the set phrases adopted from the old texts, is typical of late post-Sasanian Middle Persian. Nevertheless, the text is lucid and expressive. It treats of various subjects concerning family law, different kinds of marriage, problems of purification, and the like, which had engaged the anxious minds of a community threatened by gradual perversion of its ancient traditions and the dwindling of its ranks by Muslim proselytization.

The *Rivāyat* has survived in a single manuscript (TD), belonging to Tahmuras Dinshah Anklesaria and copied by Frēdōn Marzbān Frēdōn Wahrām Bundār in the Yazdegerdi year 978/1629 (*Zādspram*, introd. p. 10). The text has been copied many times. One copy was dedicated to E. W. West and was originally preserved in the Royal Asiatic Society (London), but its whereabouts are now unknown. A second copy written for Dastur Erachji Sorabji Meherjirana is preserved in the Meherji Library at Nausari (Dhabhar, 1923a, F 24). The third, written twice, is housed in the Mulla Firoze Library in Bombay (Dhabhar, 1927, no. 51; see also de Menasce, 1985, p. 127).

The Pahlavi transcription and translation of the text with notes and amendments were prepared by B. T. Anklesaria in 1928; for various reasons the text remained unpublished during the lifetime of its editor. The first part of this work, comprising text and transcription, was published by the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute as *Rivāyat-i Hēmīt-i Ašavahištān* (Bombay, 1962). Many chapters of the *Rivāyat* have been studied and translated during recent decades. J. de Menasce surveyed the text and translated chapters 22, 24, 27-30 (1962, pp. 69-88), 1, 2, 5, 8, 18, 31, 44 (1964, pp. 35-42), and chapters 4, 19, 36, 42 (1967, pp. 220-30). K. M. Jamasp-Asa rendered chapters 13, 16 (1969), 32, 35, 38 (1972), 17 (1973), 40, 41 (1974), and 9-12, (1975, pp. 435-43). F. Kanga treated chapters 9, 10 (1971), and 40 (1975). And M. Shaki translated chapters 7, 23 (1983, pp. 45-52) and chapter 44 (1988, pp. 98-99). Some short passages were translated by Maria Macuch (1981) and by Mansour Shaki (1971). The *Rivāyat* was completely transcribed and translated into English by N. Safa-Isfahani as a doctoral dissertation at Columbia University and published in 1980. In spite of the expected misapprehensions of the difficult, and as yet generally ill-appraised legal passages, the work is quite helpful in many respects.

The *Rivāyat* devotes sixteen out of forty-four chapters to the all-important area of family law, dealing with questions of *stūrīh/čakarīh* (marriage by proxy; See ČAKAR; FAMILY LAW, ZOROASTRIANISM), inheritance, guardianship (*sālārīh*), and various particularities of next-of-kin marriage (*xwēdōdah*).



Fourteen chapters deal with purity laws, an especially delicate problem in Islamic times. The rest treats of proselytization, meritorious and charitable deeds, resurrection and the fate of the soul after death, and philosophical questions of freedom of the will and necessity.

See also: [ANDARZ](#); RIVĀYAT.

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