



GUMĒZIŠN

GUMĒZIŠN, a Middle Persian noun, spelled *gwmycšn* in Pahlavi and *gwmyzyšn* in Manichean script, meaning “mixing, mingling, mixture.” It is derived from the verb *gumēxtan*, *gumēz-* “to mix,” like the close synonym *gumēzagīh*, with which it alternates in use. It is used, for example, for the *gumēzišn ī āb andar zamīg* “the mingling of water within the earth” (which, the *Mēnōg ī xrad* 9.6 relates, is “like that of blood in the bodies of men”), and for sexual congress (the state of desire for which, *kāmagōmandīh ī abar gumēzišn*, is called “lust”; *Zādspram* 34.36). Similarly *gumēzagīh* “state of mixture” describes a short stage in the development of an embryo, between the initial “seed state” and that of a foetus, when the seed was supposed to change into blood (*Zādspram* 30.35; *Bundahišn* 15.9, tr. Ankelsaria, p. 141). Another abstract “state of mixture,” *gumēzišnīh*, is used for miscegenation (*Bundahišn* 14.39, 14a.2). The commonest meaning of all three nouns, however, in which they appear interchangeably throughout the *Bundahišn*, is a cosmological one. It is that of the present state of “Mixture” in the physical world of the creations of Ohrmazd and Ahriman.

In the first chapters of both cosmological treatises in Pahlavi, the *Bundahišn* (q.v.) and the *Wizīdagīhā ī Zādspram*, the generation of the world is described in terms of a “Great Year” of 12,000 years. This concept of twelve millennia corresponding to the twelve months of the calendar year, of Babylonian astronomical origin, was probably first introduced into Zoroastrianism by Zurvanites in the Achaemenian period and later found general credence. The later Pahlavi version of it is as follows: At first the realms of Ohrmazd and of



Ahriman existed in Infinite Time, Endless Light above and Endless Darkness below, separated by a Void. Then Ahriman caught sight of the Light and jealously attacked it. Seeing the superiority of Ohrmazd he then retired into Darkness (or, according to Zādspram, was at this stage already cast back by the holy words of Ohrmazd) and set about creating a horde of demons for his next onslaught. Meanwhile Ohrmazd, knowing in his omniscience that a fixed time for the conflict would be necessary, otherwise Ahriman would be able to make good his threat to seduce the creation of Ohrmazd, created the Finite Time of twelve thousand years. He also knew what instruments he would need to repel the attack of Ahriman and created his own creation in spiritual form. After three millennia Ahriman again rose with his hordes to the attack. Ohrmazd knew that, of the remaining nine thousand years, during the first three millennia his own will would prevail, in the second trimillennium the wills of both himself and Ahriman would be done, but that at the end of the last period of three millennia he would be able to render Ahriman powerless and introduce the Restoration (*frašagird*, Av. *frašō.kərəti*, q.v.) and the final infinite time. This remaining period of nine millennia he therefore offered to Ahriman as the time for their contest and Ahriman, in his ignorance, accepted. Ohrmazd then recited the *ahunwar* (q.v., the Avestan hymn *yaθā ahū wairyō*), whereupon Ahriman fell into a state of stupefaction for three millennia. In this time Ohrmazd materialized his own creation, essentially the sky, to enclose the battleground, water, the earth, plants, cattle, and mankind, supported by fire and the wind, but these creatures remained immobile in a state of permanent noon. Then Ahriman made his second onslaught (*ēbgat*, Av. *aiβi.gati*), on the material world, by piercing the lower sky and boring through the earth and polluting or killing all the primal creatures with which he came into contact. At this point the heavens were set in motion. The *Gumēzišn* thus began effectively at this middle point of Finite Time, and lasts for the remaining six thousand years. The word is, however, sometimes used loosely of the complete period of Finite Time.

Chapter 33 of the *Bundahišn* lists the various harms which befall Iran (*Ērānšahr*) in the course of the millennia of the *Gumēzišn*. From this account it emerges that the misrule of *Azdahāg/Aždahā* (q.v.) lasted throughout the second (i.e., eighth) millennium, until he was overthrown by *Frēdōn* (Av. *θraētaona*). In the third (ninth) millennium the main scourge was *Afrāsīāb* (q.v.). It ended with the reign of the Kayanian dynasty. Only with the beginning of the fourth (tenth) millennium did Zaratushtra receive the Mazdayasnian religion from Ohrmazd and begin to propagate it, with the



support of king Guš-tāsp (Av. *Wištāspa*). The present “millennium” is thus known as that of Zoroaster. (The reconciliation of this period of time with real chronology naturally causes unresolvable difficulties.) During the last three millennia a cycle of gains and losses for Iran is expected. At the end of each one a son of Zoroaster, born from his seed preserved in the lake *Kayānsay* (Av. *Kāsaoya*) will appear as savior. The fifth (eleventh) millennium is thus named after Ušēdar (Av. *Uxšyaṭ.ərəta*) and the last after *Ušēdarmāh* (Av. *Uxšyaṭ.nəmah*). At the end of the Finite Time the third son and final Saviour *Sōšāns* (Av. *saošyąs*, *Astuuat.ərəta*) will come and begin the work of Restoration. This is described in chapter 34 of the *Bundahišn*, on the resurrection of the dead, *ristāxēz*, the last judgment and the Final Body, *tan ī pasēn*. Clothed in this all mankind will then become immortal in eternal bliss. Ahriman and his demonic creation, powerless, will flee back into darkness and the mouth of hell will be sealed off.

That the concept of the present world as a “Mixture” of light and dark elements was general in the early Sasanian period is shown by the fact that the first attestation of the word *Gumēzišn* is in a Manichean cosmological text (M 98 I R 8 ff.), probably composed in Middle Persian by Mani himself. Although Mani’s cosmological myth differs considerably from the Zoroastrian, it is said here that the two “light chariots,” of the sun and moon gods, were made from the pairs of element, fire and light and wind and water respectively, “purified from the Mixture,” namely of Light swallowed by dark Matter.

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