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The contact of Arabia with ancient Iran started even before Islam, and there are definite traces of the presence of Iranian religious notions in the Qurʾān. Several points demonstrating this presence were listed by Alessandro Bausani (pp. 138 ff.), and the entire field of early Arabic literature has been surveyed by Ehsan Yarshater.

The body of Hadith contains evidence of various kinds for the contacts of the Islamic community in the early centuries of its history with Persians and Zoroastrian notions. The following paragraphs illustrate this by some examples, but as no monographic work on this subject has yet appeared, this article cannot claim to be a comprehensive study. It may be noted that no attempt is being made in this survey to distinguish between “genuine” Hadith material and the later accretions to the Hadith literature. The interest of treating this body of literature as a single undifferentiated bloc lies in the fact

that, even if it does not reflect the authentic words of the Prophet, at least it contains ideas and notions current in the first period of Islam, which were considered important enough to be given the seal of approval as being the words of the Prophet himself, or of his Companions, and in some cases of Imam ʿAli.

The Hadith contains quite a few quotations of Persian words and phrases. These are clearly differentiated from the numerous Persian loan words that entered classic Arabic and became part of the language. Some representative examples may be given: *hrš b'yd bwd wa-huwa be'l-fāresiya tafsirohu koll šayʾen qoddera yakun*, "*harča bāyad bovad*,it is in Persian, and its meaning is 'all that has been decreed will come about' " (Moḥammad b. Ḵa-laf, I, p. 345); *al-ʿenab do do wa'l-tamr yak yak* "grapes are [eaten] two by two, dates are [eaten] one by one" (ʿAli Qāri, p. 248, no. 305; also in Abu Ḥafṣ ʿOmar, p. 43, where other Persian expressions of the Prophet are quoted). In Ebn Ḥebbān's *Ketāb al-majruḥin* (I, p. 291), the Prophet is quoted as saying *nik nik tknyt* [the last word perhaps to be read: *to koni to*], which possibly means: "Well, you have done well, you." ʿOmar b. Moḥammad Mawseli also mentions the words *škmt drd* (you have bellyache) and *swr* (banquet) that, according to him, were spoken by the Prophet (IV/2, p. 269).

More interesting than these words for the topic of Iranian elements in the Hadith, but usually more difficult to pin down, are the various so-called Persian, that is to say (usually) Zoroastrian, customs and ideas, echoes of which exist in the Hadith literature. Such an echo or reminiscence can be expressed either by an Islamic adopt-ion of a Persian practice or by an explicit (or sometimes implicit) objection to and outright prohibition of such a practice. It may be remarked that the literary form of the Hadith itself, the ones consisting of short sayings quoting the Prophet's words, is akin to the collections of Persian *andarz* (q.v.)texts. Even though the Hadith was for some time at the beginning strictly oral in its mode of transmission, there should be nothing surprising in talking of its literary form as well. There are of course Jewish, Christian, and Manichean analogies to the words of a spiritual authority being communicated as material to be studied and followed, but the literary form of a com-position, written or oral, devoted to the maxims of a single authority is perhaps most closely reminiscent of the Sasanian treatises devoted to the memorable say- ings (*ayādgār*) of sages such as Bozorgmehr-e Boḵta-gān, Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān (qq.v.), or others. The term Hadith is literally akin to the notion of logion, used for the sayings of Jesus, but it also

corresponds to the notion of *wāzag* (saying, word), which is used for the collections of words transmitted on the authority of the great sages of Zoroastrianism. Judaism, in contrast, has no collections of the sayings pertaining to a single rabbi that might be compared to the Hadith. The chain of transmission attached to each individual maxim seems to be a Muslim novelty in this genre of literature.

Some examples for practices and notions that refer to Persia, or are borrowed from Persia in the Hadith literature, or for which there is at least a strong probability of such a borrowing, are the following:

(A) The use of the Persian language became a subject for Prophetic maxims, some of which, as is often the case in the Hadith literature, lend support for the use of Persian while others express objection to its use. One explicit prohibition refers to writing a codex of the Qurʾān in Persian (Šaṭṭā Demyāṭi, I, p. 65; cf. Shaked, 1992, p. 148-49). We also read “When God wishes (to convey) something with softness in it, He reveals it to the angels in His presence in *dari* Persian; but when he wishes (to convey) something which has harshness in it, He reveals it in manifest Arabic,” and “when God is angry, He reveals His message in Arabic; when He is pleased, He reveals it in Persian” (Shaked, 1992, p. 149, with reference to sources).

(B) The prohibition to walk with one shoe is a clear case of an Iranian idea in the Hadith literature. It occurs in several places in Arabic literature (Hayṯami, V, p. 139; Ṭahāwi, II, pp. 141-43; Fākehi, fol. 507b; Maʿmar b. Rašid, fol. 143b; ʿIsā b. Jarrāḥ, *Jozʾ*, Ms. Chester Beatty 3495, fol. 34b; Badr-al-Din Zarkaši, p. 65; see also the material quoted in Goldziher, 1896-99, I, p. 49, n. 4). This injunction is formulated in very strong terms in the Zoroastrian books in Pahlavi (e.g., *Mēnōg ī xrad* 1.37; *Šāyest nē šāyest* 4.12; *Bundahišn*, TD, 183.8; *Pahlavi Rivāyat* 11.2; *Ardā Wirāz-nāmag* 25.3). The prohibition in Persia and Islam has caused some confusion and misunderstanding among scholars (for a discussion of the scholarly literature see Shaked, 1992, p. 151 and n. 45). Its occurrence in both cultures, however, leaves no room for doubt that what is meant is literally that one should strictly avoid walking with one shoe, and it seems likely that in the Iranian tradition this was associated with the practice of the demons. An echo of this is found in the Arabic expression which describes walking with one shoe “the clothing fashion of Satan” (Goldziher, 1896-99, I, p. 50).

(C) The Islamic tradition forbids one to urinate while standing; one place,

where several traditions for and against this practice are quoted, is in Badr-al-Din Zarkaši (pp. 86-87), but the theme is widespread in the Hadith literature. The same injunction is found stressed in Zoroastrian literature (e.g., *Pahlavi Rivāyat* 11.3; *Ardā Wīrāz-nāmag* 25.3; *Mēnōg ī xrad* 2.37; for comments on this see *Ardā Wīrāz-nāmag*, p. 253, and Williams's edition of the *Pahlavi Rivāyat* II, p. 144; cf. Shaked, 1992, p. 152). Ebn Qotayba Dinavari (III, p. 221) mentions this as a Persian custom. The same idea is also attested in the Jewish Talmudic literature (Babylonian Talmud, *Berakhot*, 40a), and it is possible, although not entirely certain, that this is a Persian custom that was borrowed by both the Jewish and the Muslim traditions.

(D) There are several places in Arabic literature where the prohibition to show too much grief after the passing away of a close relative is expressed. The reason given is that this hampers the dead person's passage to the next world. This is discussed by Goldziher (1900, p. 129) and Louis Gray, (p. 169), but it has received the most exhaustive treatment by Fritz Meier, (pp. 207-29), who considers a Zoroastrian connection but is not entirely convinced that this is a case of direct influence. The Islamic idea is paralleled by a similar notion attested in Zoroastrianism (cf. *Ardā Wīrāz-nāmag* 16.7-10, and further evidence in Meier's article, pp. 219 ff.). In Zoroastrianism this sentiment is part of the general notion that gloom and despondency are demonic sentiments, and that one should avoid, as far as possible, feeling sad and dejected (references in Shaked, 1992, p. 144, n. 12; cf. also the remarks of Goldziher, 1900, p. 129).

(E) The idea of the heavenly ascent of the Prophet, the *meʿrāj*,an important theme in the Islamic traditional literature, has been shown (see Blochet, 1899) to have close Iranian parallels in the book *Ardā Wīrāz-nāmag*. We now know that the importance of this theme in Sasanian Zoroastrianism goes much deeper and wider, for the discovery of Kirdēr's inscriptions showed that heavenly journeys in order to obtain visions of the other world and to propagate the truths that can be deducted from them were a major religious preoccupation of the early Sasanian period. A contemporary Jewish parallel exists to this phenomenon, in the form of the *Hekhalot* literature (some brief remarks in Shaked, 1994, pp. 49 f.), which are also concentrated on visions of the superior worlds undertaken by a few selected individuals. It is possible here again to think of an Iranian idea that might have found echoes in different milieus. Since early Islam was also open to Jewish ideas, it cannot be excluded that we have here a double channel of transmission of ideas into

Islam, through both Zoroastrian and Jewish traditions, the latter itself perhaps carrying some Zoroastrian ideas. A telling detail is the name of the celestial mount of Moḥammad, Borāq, in the story of his *meʿrāj*. It is of Persian origin, derived probably from **barāg* or *bārag* "a riding beast, mount" (New Pers. *bāra*), but used in Arabic exclusively for the proper name of the animal in this particular story (cf. Blochet, 1899, p. 213). It may be noted that the descriptions of the heavenly ascent of the Prophet remain somewhat isolated in Islamic literature until a similar theme is taken up by the early mystics, who experienced other-worldly journeys and visions of the beyond. Among the earliest ones are Abu Yazid Besṭāmi (d. 234/848 or 261/875, see BESṬĀMĪ, BĀYAZĪD) and Abu ʿAbd-Allāh Moḥammad b. Ḵafif (d. 371/982), and it may not be a pure accident that both of them were of Iranian extraction (ʿAṭṭār, pp. 202-7; Daylami, pp. 190-91). The visionary literature in Persia, Islam, and Judaism, has been connected by several scholars with the phenomenon of Shamanism.

(F) The precise counting of the weight of merit accrued by the performance of individual good deeds is typical of the Zoroastrian texts and of several sayings attributed to the Prophet in the Hadith, and the tendency to use certain model numbers, such as 33 or other numbers based on multiplication of 3 (Darmesteter, I, p. 13, n. 36; Mālek b. Anas, *al-Mowaṭṭaʾ* I, p. 81, Boḵāri, *Fażāʾel al-aṣḥāb*, no. 10, and Abu Ṭāleb Makki, *Qut al-qolub* I, p. 83, apud Goldziher, 1900, pp. 130-33).

(G) The imposition of five daily prayers in Islam has been shown by Goldziher (1900, pp. 132-33) to be a development due to Zoroastrian influence.

(H) Ignaz Goldziher, (1900, pp. 145-46) argued that the choice of Friday as a special day, but not a day of rest, is due to the influence of Zoroastrian polemics against the idea of the Jews that God needed a rest after the creation of the world. This seems questionable, as the Zoroastrian polemics are only attestedin Mardān-Farrox ī Ōhrmazddādān's *Škand gumānīg wizār*,a composition of the post-period. It may, however, be speculated that the sixth day of the week, that is, Friday, acquired a special place under the influence of the Iranian view of six, nine or twelve millennia, all multiples of three, which constitute the full chronology of the world's existence, up to and including eschatology. There is, however, no evidence from Zoroastrian sources for a special dignity given to the sixth day, and it should be remarked that the idea of a week as it is observed in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam is absent from Zoroastrianism (see HAFTA).

(I) The Hadith literature insists on the use of a tooth-pick, called in Arabic *meswāk* or *sewāk* (a word which is probably derived ultimately from an unattested Middle Persian word **sawāg*), as a great virtue to which several religious advantages are attributed: It was a tradition of the prophets (*men sonan al-morsalin*), enrages Satan, the value of a prayer when preceded by the rubbing of the teeth with a tooth-pick is greatly enhanced, and the burden of a dying person is made lighter when the teeth are cleaned with this instrument (Yaʿqubi, *taʾrik*ò II, p. 121; Goldziher, 1900, pp. 133-35). This is an equally important Zoroastrian practice of purity. The instrument with which it is associated is called *dandān-frašn* or *dandān-frēš* in the Pahlavi sources (see *Šāyest nē šāyest* 10.20, 12.13, with the editor's notes, where further references are given; *Dādestān ī dēnīg,purs.* 39.6; *Pahlavi Texts*, ed. Jamasp-Asana, pp. 123 f., secs. 18-19; some further material is in Shaked, 1992, p. 149, n. 35).

Several practices enjoined or condemned in the Hadith can best be explained as a reaction against Persian customs or ideas. Here are some examples:

(J) A strong aversion is expressed with regard to dogs in some of the traditions attributed to the Prophet, to the point that it is recounted that the Prophet ordered to kill all the dogs of Medina, especially those with a dark color (references and other material in Goldziher, 1900, pp. 135-37). It is further reported, apparently in an effort to harmonize conflicting traditions, that the Prophet first ordered to kill all dogs, but then forbade the killing of dogs, and only warned against "a black, dark dog, with two dots over its eyes" (Jāḥeẓ, I, p. 292). Islamic commentators were at a loss to explain the source of this attitude, and in fact there are also expressions of fondness for dogs in the Islamic literature. There are even, as shown by Goldziher, reports of dogs being allowed into the mosques at the time of the Prophet (Goldziher, 1900, p. 136, with references). The negative attitude toward dogs is most probably a reaction to the favorable treatment of dogs in Zoroastrianism, where a dog is regarded as an animal with particularly good qualities and a special affinity with man (on the dignity of dogs in the Zoroastrian view, see Boyce, *Zoroastrianism* I, pp. 302-3; idem, 1977, passim; see also DOGS ii). The function of a dog is essential in the ritual surrounding death. A prominent part of that ritual requires that a dog, specifically one with two dots over its eyes, be brought to "look" at the corpse of a newly dead person (this is known in Zoroastrian ritual as *sagdid*); and it is said that this has the merit of driving away the demons from the corpse (*Šāyest nē šāyest* 2.1-3, 56, 63, 84-85; 10.10, 2-33; cf. Boyce, *Zoroastrianism* I, pp. 303-4; idem, 1977, pp. 140, 149, 151).

(K) There are Hadith traditions that forbid the killing of frogs (Zamaḵšari, IV, p. 441). In Zoroastrianism the killing of noxious creatures, called *xrafstar* (Av. *xrafstra-*), among which the frogs are considered to be the worst representatives of the demons, is thought to carry great merit (cf. Boyce, *Zoroastrianism* I, pp. 91-91, with reference to primary sources).

(L) There is a prohibition in the Hadith against the use of a Persian bow (Mottaqi Hendi, IV, pp. 213-14, nos. 1756-58), although other views are also mentioned.

(M) A prohibition to stay in a house where Persian luxuries are in sight is found in the Hadith (Aḥmad b. Moḥammad b. Ḥanbal, pp. 83, 85). This prohibition reflects an ascetic tendency that is found in the early period of Islam, and at the same time it indicates the association that must have existed in the minds of many Arabs in that period of fine ornaments and other luxuries with Iranian culture.

(N) There is an early injunction, attributed to the caliph ʿOmar b. al-Ḵaṭṭāb, against employing in prayer what is known as *raṭānat al-ʿajam*, a term which indicates praying in an indistinct manner, like the Persians (Ebn Tay-miyya, pp. 199-200). The term *raṭāna* was borrowed into Arabic from Syriac *reṭnā*, where it was also used to designate the Zoroastrian mode of praying (Greenfield, pp. 63-69; Shaked, 1992, p. 149).

(O) We also come across a prohibition to celebrate Nowruz and Mehragān, with the warning that those who celebrate them will be find themselves among the impious on the day of Resurrection (Ebn Taymiya, pp. 199-200).

This is not by any means an exhaustive list of the Iranian elements in the Hadith, but it may be taken to be representative of what may still be found in the vast Hadith literature.

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