



# HEDAYAT, SADEQ IV. TRANSLATIONS OF PAHLAVI TEXTS

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### iv. TRANSLATIONS OF PAHLAVI TEXTS

Sadeq Hedayat traveled to India in 1936 and stayed for less than two years while hoping to reside there permanently. In Bombay he began studying Middle Persian and some Pāzand with the Parsi scholar [Bahramgor Tahmuras Anklesaria](#). Hedayat's impression of this Parsi scholar is generally positive, considering him to be much more knowledgeable than some of his European colleagues (Bahārlu, p. 716). Hedayat attended Anklesaria's classes for two or three days a week (Bahārlu, in Hedayat, 1993, p. 708). Meanwhile, Anklesaria asked Hedayat to aid him in transcribing some Middle Persian texts into New Persian and to prepare a Middle Persian dictionary (Bahārlu, in Hedayat, 1993, p. 713; letter written by Hedayat to Minovi). This collaboration resulted in the translation of several Middle Persian texts into Persian. It should be noted, however, that most of these texts had already been translated by Anklesaria into English. They include *Gizistag Abālīš* (see [ABĀLĪŠ](#)), an account of a debate between a Zandig and the leader of the Zoroastrian community [Ādurfarnrbag ī Farroxzādān](#); *Šahrestānīhā ī Ērānšahr*, the longest surviving geographical text in Middle Persian; the apocalyptic text *Ayādgār ī jāmāspīg*; *Škand*



*gumānīg-wīzār*, a polemic against the doctrines and tenets of the Dahris, Manichaeism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam; *Kār-nāmag ī Ardašīr ī Pābagān*, a historical romance describing the career and life of the founder of the Sasanian dynasty; *Zand ī Wahman Yasn*, another apocalyptic text; and *Abar Madan ī Wahrām ī Warzāwand*, on the coming of the Zoroastrian Savior at the end of time.

Hedayat was the first Persian to translate these Middle Persian texts into New Persian. The quality of the translations is good for its time, and he also suggested some new readings. He consulted all the previous monographs on each Middle Persian text and critiqued them as well. For example, in his translation of the *Šahrestānihā ī Erānšahr* (passage 25), he rightly questions the translation of Markwart, who equated the *war ī tāzigān* with the Persian Gulf. His footnotes to the *Giziastag Abāliš* are important, sometimes surpassing those made by Chacha. However, all of his translations are based on previous works of B. T. Ankelsaria on *Abr Madan ī Wahrām ī Warzāwand*, *Kār-nāmag ī Ardašīr ī Pābagān*, *Zand ī Wahman Yasn*; H. Chacha on *Giziastag Abāliš*; J. Markwart on *Šahrestānihā ī Erānšahr*; G. Messina on *Ayādgār ī Zarērān*; and E. W. West on *Škand gumānīg-wīzār*.

Hedayat also wrote an article on the Middle Persian script (“Kaṭṭ-e Pahlavi wa alefbāye šawti,” *Soḡan* 2/8-9, 1945) and another one on the Sasanian art (“*Honar-e Sāsāni dar ġorfa-ye medālhā*,” *Soḡan* 3/5, 1946), as well as a French article entitled “La magie en Perse,” *Le Voile d’Isis*, no. 79, January 1926 (*Majmu’e-ye neveštēhā-ye parākanda-ye Šādeq Hedāyat*, 1344; Amir Kabir Publishers, 2nd ed.) In an obituary of Ankelsaria (*Soḡan* 2/5, 1945), Ebrāhim Pur Dāwud lauded Hedayat for his translations of Middle Persian, which made the texts accessible to Persian readers. It is clear that these Middle Persian texts were written by the Zoroastrian community for the most part in the early Islamic period, a fact which had a deep impact on Hedayat’s views on the Arabs and Islam in general. His preoccupation with these texts exacerbated the nationalist sentiments which are apparent in some of his novels. It is also possible to see parallel elements between the Zoroastrian apocalyptic vision of the end of the world and Hedayat’s end.



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## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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See v., below, under: Hedayat's translations from Pahlavi.