Published: December 15, 2004
Last Updated: February 1, 2016

HISTORIOGRAPHY IX. PAHLAVI PERIOD (2)

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SPECIFIC TOPICS

This article has for its subject a survey of contributions in the fields of chronology, calendar systems and related topics, religious history, and cultural continuity from pre-Islamic to the Islamic period, and a survey of the ultra-nationalistic current in historical writings in the Pahlavi period.

(a) Contributions of Taqizadeh to chronology, calendar systems, and related matters. Of the historians of the Pahlavi period, the most outstanding in terms of original research and contribution, analytical skills, and international recognition is Sayyed Ḥasan Taqizāda (Taqizadeh, q.v.; 1878-1969), and this in spite of the fact that much of his time during his long career was spent in active politics and, as a result, he is best known outside academic world as one of the prominent leaders of the Constitutional Revolution (q.v.) and as a statesman of dis-tinction. The major fields of his studies were chronology and calendar systems, Manicheism, and Sasanian history; but the scope of his research interests included also Zoroastrian history, history of Persian literature and thought, Islamic history, biography, pre-Islamic Arabian history, and the Constitutional Movement. W. B. Henning, the renowned Iranologist,

calls Taqizadeh “universally regarded as the leading authority in all matters of Oriental chronology” (“The Dates of Mani’s Life,” *Asia Major*, 1957, p. 106).

In the field of Iranian chronology, the major problem that had confronted the scholars who occupied themselves with it was the contradictory statements about time-reckoning and calendar systems in both Zoroastrian and Islamic sources. Taqizadeh in a number of articles, published mostly in *BSOS*, and in his two books on the subject, *Gāhšomāri dar Iran-e qadim* (Time reckoning in ancient Persia, Tehran, 1937) and *Old Iranian Calendars* (London, 1938), passes in review the opinions of major scholars who had studied the subject, among them Gibert, Bailly, Drouin, West, Gutschmid, Markwart, and Cavaingnac, showing that their conclusions were hardly satisfactory, even though the latter two came closer than others, in his opinion, to the truth (for a brief summary of his critique of the above scholars see *Old Iranian Calendars*, pp. 5-10).

It must be noted that the elucidation of the chronology of Iranian calendars is a rather complicated issue and requires not only extensive research, but also the relevant astronomical aspects of the subject, which Taqizadeh possessed thanks to his earlier training. He presented a comprehensive account of Iranian calendars in pre-Islamic and Islamic Persia, shedding light at the same time on many obscure or controversial issues in the history of Zoroastrianism, Manicheism, and the Sasanian dynasty, among other subjects (see CALENDARS i.).

Among his many findings, perhaps the most important was his determination of calendar reforms during the Achaemenid rule. Early in the 6th century B.C.E., in the reign of Darius I, the Babylonian luno-solar calendar which had been current in southern and western Persia was abandoned for the simpler Egyptian system of time-reckoning based on a vague year of 365 days, with the month of Day or winter solstice as the beginning of the year. This calendar was also apparently adopted by the Zoroastrian clergy, replacing the complicated Old Avestan calendar based on *gāhanbār*s (q.v.) or religious festivals. However, since this vague year was 6 hours and some 13 minutes short of the astronomical year, each year receded by some 11 days compared to the sidereal year, and the religious festivals could not be kept in place. Therefore, a second reform was needed; and this took place, according to Taqizadeh, not in 510-505 B.C.E. during the reign of Darius I, as West had proposed, or 493-486 B.C.E. as Markwart had concluded, but in or about 441 B.C.E. in the reign of Artaxerxes I. The beginning of the year was moved to the vernal equinox, and an intercalation of one month every 120 years (or 116 years) was instituted.

The reform, according to Taqizadeh, was adopted by both the state and the Zoroastrian church, either simultaneously or one after the other. Important conclusions are derived from the date of this reform. It meant that the majority of the people in the south and west of Iran were Zoroastrian by this date, and the Achaemenid state had found it necessary to adopt that religion. It also showed why Artaxerxes I is praised in Zoroastrian writings, whereas the names of Cyrus and Darius I appear nowhere in these writings.

Taqizadeh's compact introduction to his book *Mani wa din-e u* (Mani and his religion, with A. Afšār-e Širāzi, Tehran, 1937)is one of the most comprehensive and reliable accounts of Manichean religion, followed by an exhaustive citation of all the texts in Arabic and Persian relevant to Manicheism. He also discussed Manichean dates, including the date of Mani's death, in his articles. Among other contributions of Taqizadeh may be mentioned his long and solid article on Ferdowsi and the *Šāh-nāma* published as a supplement to *Kāveh,* no. 20, 15 October 1920, which has served together with T. Nöldeke's *Das iranische Nationalepos*, as the basis of subsequent research on the subject. His article on the life, beliefs, and works of Naṣer-e Ḵosrowwas published as an introduction to his *Divān* (Tehran, 1928). Other studies include: "Naurūz" (*Yādgār* 4/3, 1948, pp. 52-66); "Tawajjoh-e Iranian dar gozašta be ṭebb o aṭebbā" (Attention of Persians in the past to medicine and physicians, *Yādgār* 5/6-7, pp. 9-22); "Ṣābeʿin" (*MDAT* 11/1, pp. 19-27). His lecture about an overview of the Persian Constitutional Revolution (*Šamma'i az tāriḵ-e awā'el-e enqelāb-e mašrutiyaṭ-e Iran,* Tehran, 1960) is a valuable contribution from a participant and eyewitness with a sharp, critical mind of a historian and reformist. Fifteen of his English, French, and German articles were translated into Persian by Aḥmad Ārām with Kaykāvus Jahāndāri and published together with five of his Persian articles as *Bist maqāla-ye Taqizadeh* (1st ed., Tehran, 1962).

(b) Contributions of Purdawud to religious and cultural history. Ebrāhim Pur(e)dāwud (Purdawud, 1885-1968), pioneer of studies in religious and cultural history in Iran, is primarily known as the translator into Persian of the Avesta, the holy scripture of the Zoroastrians, and a scholar and advocate of ancient Iranian language and culture. Few scholars have had a greater impact on awakening the Persian consciousness about ancient Iranian heritage and religion (see E. Yarshater, *MDAOE* 16/5-6, 1968). Purdāwud's translation of the Avesta is not a simple one; it is a translation with copious annotations and essays about various parts of the Avesta, Zoroastrian deities, Amәša Spәntas (q.v.), various locations and personal names mentioned in the

Avesta, the life of Zoroaster and his patron Goštāsp (q.v.), mythological and legendary figures of Iranian traditional history (such as Gayomarṯ, Hušang, Jamšid, Żaḥḥāk, Faridun, Iraj, Tur, Manučehr, Lohrāsb, Esfandiār, Homā, Dārā, etc.), a number of Zoroastrian writings in languages other than Avestan, and other subjects related to Zoroastrianism. Furthermore, Purdawud took it upon himself to elucidate and explain many cultural aspects of ancient Iranian life such as festivals, calendar, armor, fire temples as well as Zoroastrian history, the migration of the Parsis to India, plants, animals, and kindred topics. Therefore, he can be considered a cultural historian, focusing mostly on the religious, mythological, and legendary history of pre-Islamic Iran and its material culture.

It should be noted that Purdawud, unlike some scholars or pseudo-scholars whose statements about ancient Iran and its standing are vitiated by misplaced nationalistic fervor and unfounded assumptions, is a reliable scholar; and his translation of the Avesta, which follows Bartholomae's (q.v.) philological method and results, is a sound one. His essays and annotations are based on the study of the works of prominent Iranologists such as Darmesteter (q.v.), Spiegel (q.v.), Marquart (q.v.), Meillet (q.v.), Justi (q.v.), and the like. His profound sympathy for the pre-Islamic culture of Persia, Zoroastrian religion, and heroes of the ancient history of Iran tend to perhaps depict a rosier picture of the Iranian past than is warranted by the facts. Nonetheless, his nationalistic tendencies pale in comparison to the wild claims made by some others regarding the significance and contributions of the Persian nation and do not make him deviate from the path of methodical and trustworthy scholarship.

Purdawud was born in Rašt, Gilān, studied in his hometown and Tehran before going to Beirut and then to France to continue his studies. In the course of World War I he joined the circle of the Persian nationalists led by Sayyed Ḥasan Taqizadeh (q.v.) in Berlin. After a brief involvement with politics, he began to study in earnest the history and religion of ancient Iran. He traveled twice to India, where he was received with much affection by the Parsi leaders and scholars. Eventually, after nearly 30 years of living abroad, he returned to Persia in 1937, when he was appointed Professor of Ancient Languages and Cultures at the University of Tehran, a post he held until his retirement in the early 1960s. His annotated translation of the Avesta (except for the translation of the *Vendidād*, which has remained unpublished) consists of eight volumes, including a volume devoted to notes on the *Gāthā*s,published between 1926

and 1973, as follows: the *Gāthā*s (1st version, Bombay, 1926); The *Yašt*s, 2 vols. (Bombay, 1928-31); *Ḵorda Avesta*, (Bombay, 1931); the *Gāthā*s, (revised version, Tehran, 1952); *Yasnā*, vol I, (Bombay, 1933), vol. II (Tehran, 1958); *Yāddāšthā-ye Gāṭāhā* (Notes on the Gāthās, Tehran, 1957); *Vispared* (Tehran, 1964).

Purdawud was a hard worker, a prolific author, and a frequent lecturer. Several volumes of his essays, articles, and lectures have been published, including *Farhang-e Irān-e bāstān* (Ancient Iranian culture, Tehran, 1947), which consists of a series of articles including "Dasātir," "Āḏarkayvān," and a description of a number of animals; *Hormozd-nāma* (Tehran, 1952), consisting mostly of a discussion of plants and their history (it greatly benefited from Berthold Laufer's *Sino-Iranica* [Chicago, 1919]); *Ānāhitā* (Tehran, 1964), a collection of articles published in various journals including articles on the Maraghis of Rudbār in the Qazvin province, Ray and its history, Aḏargošnasb (the famous fire temple), and a long essay on the later history of the Sasanian dynasty and its fall; *Irānšāh*, about the migration of the Parsis to India (Bombay, 1925); *Ḵuzestān-e mā* (Our Ḵuzestān, Tehran, 1964), in response to ʿAbd-al-Nāṣer of Egypt's pronouncements regarding the province; *Zin-abzār* (Armor, Tehran, 1968), a collection of articles published earlier in the journal *Barrasihā-ye tāriḵi* about all the armor known to have been used in Iran with the exception of firearms.

He was honored with the publication of a festschrift upon his 60th birthday and received an honorary doctorate from the University of New Delhi in 1963 as well as a Tagore decoration from the Indian government in 1966; he was also honored by the Vatican. His life and work are the subject of at least two books: *Zamān o zendegi-e ostād Purdāwud* (The life and times of Prof. Purdawud) by ʿAli-Aṣḡar Moṣtafawi (Tehran, 1992), which includes a listing and review of Purdawud's corpus; and *Purdā-wud: Pažuhanda-ye ruzgār-e noḵost* (Purdawud: the researcher of ancient times) by Maḥmud Nikuya (Rašt, 1999).

Contributions of Moḥammadi and Moʿin to the study of cultural continuity. Contributions to the pre-Islamic history of Iran by Pirniā and others (see GENERAL SURVEY, above) helped develop a new historical consciousness in modern Iranian national memory. Yet, in the early Pahlavi period, it was a commonly held assumption that a measure of cultural disruption had occurred between the pre-Islamic era and the medieval Islamic period. In this historical construct, the formation of Iran's Islamic civilization was perceived as a fresh start in the early Islamic era which had ushered in a new religion,

government, social order, and language. It was only in the latter part of the Pahlavi era, in the 1930s-70s, that a number of Iranian scholars in the University of Tehran introduced the notion of cultural continuity between pre-Islamic and medieval Islamic Iran. They argued that this continuity was manifested in the influence of pre-Islamic cultural ideas and practices on the shaping of Islamic civilization, in general, and Iranian cultural spheres, in particular. In this context, Ebrāhim Purdāwud examined the influence of Zorastrianism and pre-Islamic culture (see above), Moḥammad Moḥammadi elaborated on Persian presence in the central province of the Islamic empire in its formative period, and Moḥammad Moʿin wrote on the influence of Mazdean ideas on recurrent motifs in classical Persian literature and mysticism.

Moḥammadi's life project, which began in the early 1940s with the publication of *Farhang-e Irāni piš az Es-lām wa āṯār-e ān dar tamaddon-e eslāmi wa adabiyāt-e ʿArabi* (Pre-Islamic Iranian culture and its manifestations in Islamic civilization and Arabic literature, Tehran, 1944, 1975; revised ed., 1995), was expanded during the 1970s-90s and presented in his five-volume, *Tāriḵ wa farhang-e Irān dar dawrān-e enteqāl az ʿaṣr-e Sāsāni be ʿaṣr-e Eslāmi* (Iranian history and culture in its transitional period from the Sasanian era to the Islamic period, Tehran, 1993, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2003).

A noted Arabist, Moḥammadi endeavored to demonstrate continued Persian presence and its marginalization in Arabic sources by deconstructing the process of Arabicization (*taʿrib*) of Persian personal names and geographical terms, and above all, by pointing to the biased historical presentation of Iranian affairs in Arabic sources. He believes that Arabicization concealed the depth and breadth of Persian presence in the formation of Islamic civilization. Furthermore, he maintains that while Arabicization of loanwords in Arabic is a common practice, the specific modes of *taʿrib* of Persian names and words, as well as the selective recording of historical events have largely contributed to the biased mode of historical writing of this critical period. (1) Arabicization of names of prominent Iranians who became dependent on an Arab tribe by assuming the legal status of *welāʾ* (*mawlā, ma-wāl*) erased a large number of prominent Iranians from the history of Persian presence in this period. This practice required all non-Arabs who aspired to membership in the Arab society to accept a patron from Arab tribes in the early Islamic period and adopt their names. Mo-ḥammadi suggests as a prime example of this practice the case of the well known theologian, Ḥasan Baṣri, whose assumed Arabic

name concealed his Iranian origin (1993, pp. 19-34). (2) Arabicization of a large number of geographical names of provinces, towns, roads, and rivers in the central province is also discussed in detail in volumes II and III of Moḥammadi's "History and Culture." (3) The most distorting mode of Arabicization, according to Moḥammadi, was the adoption of a systematic schema of neglect in recording the significant events transpiring in the transitional period. As a prime example of this neglect, he quotes the reference to the adoption of the Sasanian financial institutions and procedures by the Caliphate administration. This significant transference was merely referred to as a simple translation of *divān* of ʿErāq from Persian to Arabic, as reported in a narrative referring to the time of Ḥajjāj b. Yusof (1993, pp. 35-36).

Proceeding on this basis, Moḥammadi meticulously investigated a vast number of available published and unpublished material relevant to the early Islamic period in both Arabic and Persian to demonstrate the significance of Persian presence in the formation of Islamic civilization. In his pioneering work, *Farhang-e Irāni* . . . , first published in 1944, Moḥammadi highlights the impact of the legacy of the Sasanian administrative organizations on the administrative formation of the Islamic empire through the assistance of the Iranian lower nobility of scribes and heads of rural districts (see DABIR; DEHQĀN; he devoted vol. V of his "History and Culture" to the presence of the Sasanian administrative system in the caliphs' empire). He also elaborates on the impact of Arabic translation of Iranian works on ethics, philosophy, science, and medicine on the formation of Islamic civilization. In the final chapters of the same work, Moḥammadi also describes the influence of Persian literature on Arabic language and literature (he devoted vol. IV of his "History and Culture" to a detailed survey of this subject).

Moḥammadi's five-volume work consists of published and unpublished essays that were written over nearly half a century. These essays cover various topics concerning the transitional era of the 7th-11th centuries, when the Islamic civilization flowered under the influence of Iranian cultural elements. Moḥammadi's more important contributions are presented in volumes II and III of his "History and Culture of Iran," subtitled "The Heartlands of Iran" (*Del-e Irānšahr*), i.e., the central province of the Sasanian empire, covering the area of present-day Iraq that constituted the core of the medieval Islamic empire. These two volumes set forth a detailed discussion of a lively Persian cultural presence in this province during the critical period of cultural transition from the Sasanian era to the Islamic times. Given the centrality of this area in the

Islamic empire under the Abbasid Caliphate, Moḥamamdi underlines the fact that the central region in the medieval Islamic era was neither known as Iraq nor considered as an Arab land in which Arabic was spoken (II, p. 5). Criticizing the Arabicization of Persian geographical names, he skillfully illustrates how in the course of time Persian names of sub-provinces, towns, and roads in the central province were changed and distorted. Thus, in his survey of each of the twelve sub-provinces of this central region, Moḥammadi discovers Persian presence not only in geographical names but also in historical geography, land tax, irrigation system, and major historical events.

Moʿin, in his *Mazdeyasnā wa taʾṯir-e ān dar adab-e fārsi* (Mazdean influence on Persian literature; Tehran, 1947), traces the origin of a large number of themes in Persian literature in pre-Islamic religion and cultural elements. He surveys in particular the influence of Mazdean ideas on Ferdowsi's *Šāh-nāma*, Asadi's *Garšasp-nāma* (qq.v.), Faḵr-al-Din Gorgāni's (q.v.) *Vis o Rāmin*, Nāṣer-e Ḵosrow, Neẓāmi, Ḵāqāni, and Saʿdi. He also provides the reader with examples of the influence of Mazdean religious ideas on Sufi literature as shown in the poems of Sanāʾi, Awḥadi, ʿAṭṭār Rumi, and Ḥāfeẓ.

The ultra-nationalist current. An influential, ultra-nationalist trend in Persian historical writings of this period was initiated and disseminated by Ḏabiḥ-Allāh Behruz (q.v.) and his disciples, including Moḥammad Moqaddam (whose passion for the purification of the Persian language made him change his name to Mahmad Moḡ-dam), and Ṣādeq Kiā, both professors at the University of Tehran, Aḥmad Ḥāmi, Aṣlān Ḡaffari, and ʿAli Ḥaṣuri. Behruz was a zealous advocate of the purification of the Persian language by purging it of its Arabic borrowings (see FARHANGESTĀN-E ZABĀN-E IRĀN). Adept at conspiracy theories, Behruz argued that the Persian nation had been the victim of a conspiracy perpetrated by the Western world from antiquity to the present, to prevent it from assuming its natural historical role as the world's supreme nation. He believed this Western conspiracy was responsible for spreading the "great historical lie" that Alexander the Great had actually conquered Persia (see his long introduction to Aṣlān Ḡaffari's *Qeṣṣa-ye Sekandar o Dārā* [The fable of Alexander and Dārā], Tehran, 1964, pp. ii-lxxiv; see also Aḥmad Ḥāmi, *Safar-e jangi-e Eskandar-e Maqduni be Irān wa Hendustān, bozorgtarin doruḡ-e tāriḵ ast* [Alexander's military expedition to Iran, the greatest lie in history], Tehran, 1975). He developed the idea that clandestine Manichean societies in one form or another had served as a most vicious and destructive force throughout Persian history. He attributed the Arab and Mongol conquests of

Persia in the 7th and 13th centuries respectively to these satanic Manichean societies. The main secret device used by Manichean conspirators, Behruz insisted, had been the frequent distortion of every calendar system to confuse and divert the course of history (Behruz, *Taqwim o tāriḵ dar Irān az raṣad-e Zartošt tā raṣad-e Ḵayyām, zamān-e Mehr o Māni* [Calendar and history in Iran . . .], Tehran, 1952, pp. 10-13; see also CONSPIRACY THEORIES). His preoccupation with calendar systems led Behruz to invent the "exact dates!" of Adam's fall from paradise, Noah's Flood, Ḏu'l-Qarnayn Akbar (the Great Bicornous), who according to him was a contemporary of the Prophet Ḵeżr and lived 1,500 years before Christ. He also determined the exact date of birth and death of Zoroaster on Monday 20 Rabiʿ I/6 Farvardin 2400 before Yazdgerdi calendar and 8 Rajab/1 Farvardin 2477 respectively. He considered Zoroaster to have been the first great astronomer of the world with an active observatory (*raṣad-ḵᵛāna*) in Sistān, by the help of which he founded the correct Iranian calendar (Behruz, *Taqwim o tāriḵ dar Irān*, pp. 88-93, 114-39).

The wild conjunctures embedded in the historical writings of Behruz and his acolytes found ready critics as soon as they were published and would hardly deserve a mention here had it not been for the impact they have had, nevertheless, on a large section of the reading public and, more specifically, on zealous nationalists. This can be attributed to two main factors. The first and more specific was Behruz's skill at mustering facts and figures to enhance his credibility as a scholar and lull or browbeat the reader into accepting the non sequitur conclusions which he conjured out of nowhere and unobtrusively slipped into the argument to bolster his warped vision of an idealized Iranian past. The second factor, which explains the durability of the popularity of these arguments, was the prevalent climate of opinion when nationalistic and chauvinistic ideas were very much in the air. The idea of a crestfallen master race in the cosmic grip of the forces of evil, which had usurped its rightful place in the world through their continuous conspiracies, was not hard to sell. (See also Hušang Etteḥād, "Ḏabiḥ Behruz," in idem, *Pažuhešgarān-e moʿāṣer* II, pp. 343-480; and criticism of Behruz's works by E. Yarshater, "Pažuhešgarān-e moʿāṣer," in *Rahāvard* 62, Winter 2003, pp. 266-68.)

Bibliography: Given in the text.