



ḲORRAMIS

ḲORRAMIS (Khorramis or Ḳorramdinis), adherents of a form of Iranian religion often identified as a survival or revival of the Zoroastrian heresy, Mazdakism.

Their name first appears in 118/736, when the Hāšemite missionary Ḳedāš was repudiated for having adopted *din al-Ḳorramiya* (Ṭabari, II, p. 1588). After the Hāšemite revolution the Ḳorramis are encountered as rebels under Sonbādh at Rayy in 137/755, under **Moqannaʿ** in Sogdia in ca. 158-163/775-80, under diverse other leaders in Gorgān in 162/778-9, 179/795-6, and 181/797-8, in the Jebāl in 162/778-9, 192/807-8, 212/827-8, and 218/833, and under **Bābak** in Azarbaijan in 201-22/816-37 (see Sadighi; Daniel). Other revolts are reported for the Jebāl and upper Mesopotamia under the caliph al-Wāteq (r. 842-47); and in 321/933 ʿAli b. Buya stormed some Ḳorrami fortresses in the Karaj region (Nezām al-Molk, chap. 47, par. 13; Michael the Syrian, IV, p. 542, tr., III, p. 109; Meskawayh, I, p. 278, tr., IV, p. 316; Ebn al-Aṭir, VIII, p. 269). There are also scattered reports on Ḳorrami communities down to the 12th and even the 13th centuries (ʿAwfi, p. 274).

They are invariably described as rural. They had no single overall organization or creed and seem to have differed from one locality to the next, but all are said to have believed in periodic and/or continuous incarnation or indwelling of the divine in man (*ḥolul, tanāsok*), reincarnation of the human spirit (*rajʿa, tanāsok al-arwāḥ*) in accordance with merit, and, at least in western Iran, in kindness to all living beings, sometimes coupled with abstention from meat-eating. The feature most commonly associated with



them is a practice denigrated as “sharing their womenfolk” (*ebāhat al-nesā*), to which *ebāhat al-māl* “sharing of property” is occasionally added. No writings by them are preserved, or even mentioned. The *Ketāb al-ḳorramiya* mentioned by Maqdesi (II, p. 20) was probably a book about them, perhaps, but hardly Abu Zayd Balkī’s chapter on them in his *ʿOyun al-masāʿel waʾl jawābāt* (Ebn al-Nadim, 406.7, tr. p. 817). But they did have learned men, and Muslims sometimes engaged in disputation with them (Abu Tammām, p. 77, tr., p. 76; Maqdesi, III, p. 122; Masʿudi, *Ketāb al-tanbih*, pp. 353 f.; Moqaddasi, pp. 398 f.).

RELATIONSHIP WITH MAZDAKISM

Though Ḳorramism and Mazdakism are undoubtedly related, the Ḳorramis are too widely attested to be the residue or a revival of a defeated sect. Their presence stretched from Isfahan northwards through the Zagros mountains to Qāšān, Qom, Rayy, Hamadān, Deylam, Azarbaijan, and upper Mesopotamia/Armenia, with particularly dense attestation in the Jebāl. Eastwards it ran through Gorgān to Khorasan, Ṭoḳārestān (including Balk and other parts of what is now Afghanistan), Sogdia (including the countryside around Bukhara, Samarqand, Keš and Nasaf), to Šāš, Ḳojand, Ilāq, Kāsān, and Farḡāna beyond the Jaxartes (Syr Darya). They were found from the mountain ranges of Anatolia to those of Tien Shan, far beyond the boundaries of the Sasanian empire. This suggests that we should see Ḳorramism as the religion of rural Iran, a Zoroastrian “low church” (Madelung, 1988, p. 3), from which the founders of Mazdakism emerged, rather than as a heresy which they founded. Pursued in local organizations such as that which *Bābak* took over in Azarbaijan, this “low church” will have functioned much like rural Sufism in later times and should not be envisaged as intrinsically rebellious. Its organized nature did however facilitate revolt when the Ḳorramis were politicized.

Unlike the founders of Mazdakism, the Ḳorramis do not seem to have subscribed to revolutionary ideas regarding women and property, but they certainly had practices offensive to the Muslims. Reconstructing these practices is mostly impossible. Some reports seem to relate women being lent out one way or the other, to guests, priests, or other men, in displays of generosity or with a view to obtaining a blessing or good offspring; others may refer to fraternal polyandry, documented for Ṭoḳārestān and other parts of Afghanistan (and well beyond, into India and Tibet), in Chinese sources, in Biruni (*Hend*, p. 52; tr., I, p. 108), and now also in Bactrian documents of the fourth and the eighth centuries CE (Sims-Williams, nos. A, X, Y). Fraternal

polyandry is a system whereby brothers inherit the property of their parents without dividing it up, cultivate it in common, and share a wife, whose sons will jointly take over the family property in their turn. The system allows the property to pass intact from one generation to the next and is attested above all in mountainous areas where the land is poor. It is in some sense quite true that women and property are shared in polyandrous societies, but not in the sense that they are free for all to use as they please. An Indian high court judge who reported on fraternal polyandry in north India in the 1950s called it “a sort of family communism in wives ... a joint family both in property and wives” (Peter, p. 83). It would seem to have been this family communism which Zarādošt of Fasā and Mazdak elevated into a utopian vision: all members of the Sasanian kingdom had to behave *as if* they were brothers. Explaining how communist ideas could have developed in Iran has long been a problem, and it has generated some far-fetched theories of influence from the Greek-speaking world (cf. Crone, 1991, p. 28), but they are hardly necessary.

DIVINE INCARNATION (*HOLUL*)

The idea of the same divine being appearing in different incarnations is attested in the *Bahrām Yašt* (Yt. 14; cf. Yt. 8.13, 16, 20; see [BAHRĀM \[Vərəθrayna\]](#)), but something close to the Korrami conception is first attested in the Book of Elchasai, composed around 116 CE in “Parthia,” that is, Mesopotamia under Parthian rule, by a Jewish Baptist and perhaps a follower of Christianity. The book itself is lost, but the idea that the same divine being appears time and again, putting on different bodies, was shared by the Baptist followers of Elchasai in lower Iraq, the Elchasaite Baptists in Rome, where the book had been brought by a Greek-speaking Syrian, and by diverse Baptist readers of the book in Palestine, including the Ebionites and Nazoreans, from whom it went into the Pseudo-Clementines (Luttikhuisen, modified by Merkelbach and Cirillo). In Palestine, the doctrine was understood conservatively: only Adam and Christ, the first and the last, were genuine incarnations; in between, the divine being only appeared to the patriarchs (cf. Gieschen, pp. 208 f.). But the Elchasaite baptists, from whom Mani broke away, seem to have been understood all of them as incarnations, and Mani himself certainly did. To him, the Buddha, Zoroaster, and Jesus were divine beings who had come “without a body” to take up abode in human beings; he himself had become “one spirit in one body” with the Paraclete, and all apostles were incarnations of the pre-existing “Apostle of Light,” who “puts on the saints as



his garments.” All were really a single spirit (Cirillo, pp. 50-52; Lieu, pp. 236, 242, 246; Gardner and Lieu, p. 75; Gardner, p. 132).

The Korramis envisaged the incarnation of the divine now as periodic and now as continuous. Moqanna’ held God’s spirit to have taken up abode in messengers (*rosol*) at long intervals, starting with Adam and running via the founders of religions, including Moḥammad, to Moqanna’ himself, the Mahdi (q.v.). The Korramis of the west similarly believed in “the change of the name and the body, claiming that all the messengers, with their diverse laws and religions, come into possession of a single spirit” (Maqdesi, IV, p. 30; cf. *Clementine Homilies*, III, p. 20). But more commonly we hear of the divinity as inherent in a continuous chain of community leaders (imams). A Rāvandi (on whom, see below) executed before the Hāšemite (also known as Abbasid) revolution, for example, held that the spirit which had been in Jesus had entered ‘Ali and passed from him via other imams to the Abbasid Ebrāhim al-Emām, so that all the imams were gods (Ṭabari, III, p. 418). Either way, the divinity was envisaged now as light (e.g., Nawbakṭi, p. 29; Qomi, no. 80) and now as spirit, sometimes identified as the holy spirit (e.g., Ps.-Nāše’, par. 56). These conceptions should perhaps be related to the Iranian concept of *xʷarənah* (see FARR[AH]), the divine light and spiritual force which is shared by Ahura Mazdā, Zoroaster, the legendary and historical kings, and the future saviors.

The sudden prominence of the idea of divine incarnation in 2nd/8th-century Iran reflects the fact that large numbers of Iranians had been recruited into Muslim armies, and thus into Muslim society, by the Hāšemiya in Khorasan and by ‘Abd-Allāh b. Mo‘āwiya in western Iran. The recruits seem regularly to have cast the leaders of their new religious community as divine. Many of them seceded however, when, as repeatedly happened, the man to whom they owed their presence in Muslim society was killed. The first waves of secession came already before the revolution, triggered by the execution of Ƙedāš in 118/736 and by the killing of ‘Abd-Allāh b. Mo‘āwiya in Abu Moslem’s jail in Herat in 131/748-9. When Abu Moslem was himself killed in 137/755, more extensive waves of secession followed, initially among his own by now unemployed troops, eventually further afield, among people uprooted by the revolution or adversely affected by the massive upheavals that followed. In all three cases the secessionists cast the victim as the true imam (and/or prophet), to reconstitute themselves as separate communities under leaders of their own. They continued to trace the imamate from Moḥammad: the leadership of

the community had passed to ‘Ali, Ebn al-Ḥanafiya, and Abu Hāšem, who bequeathed it to ‘Abd-Allāh b. Mo‘āwiya (according to the Janāḥiya and Ḥāreṭiya/Ḥarbiya) or to a member of the Abbasid family (according to former members of the Hāšemiya), from whom it has passed to Ƙedāš (according to the Ƙedāšiya) or Abu Moslem (according to the Moslemiya). Their imams thereafter were usually Iranians and never Hāšemites (Ps.-Nāše’, par. 52). By the 12th century, the Ƙorramis in Azarbaijan had extended the imamate chain back in time to include the Persian kings and taken to calling themselves Pārsis. They had also become ‘Alid Shi‘ites: God had manifested himself in Moḥammad, ‘Ali, and Salmān al-Fārsi, and their two current leaders were in the position of Moḥammad and ‘Ali, the light manifesting itself now in three persons and now in one or two (Madelung, 1988, pp. 9-12).

In Iraq, too, the murder of Abu Moslem severely tested the loyalties of the Korāsānis, but here the so-called Rāvandiya reacted by casting al-Manšur as the Mahdi, the full manifestation of God introducing the heavenly realm, justifying his killing of Abu Moslem (cast as his prophet) on the grounds that his will was inscrutable (he killed his prophets and messengers as he wished; Nawbakṭi, p. 47). If he wanted to make the mountains move, they would move, they said, and if he wanted them to pray with their backs to the *qebḷa*, they too would obey (Balāḍori, III, p. 235; cf. Ebn al-Moqaffa’, par. 12). The spirit of Adam had taken up abode in one of the caliph’s officers, Oṭmān b. Nahik; and another, Hayṭam b. Mo‘āwiya, was a manifestation of Gabriel. The Rāvandiya sold their possessions and jumped naked or dressed in silken clothes (presumably those of the people of paradise; cf. Qor’ān 18:31) from walls and other high places in Iraq and Syria, thinking they would fly to heaven, or that they had become angels (Ṭabari, III, pp. 129 f., 418; Balāḍori, III, pp. 235 f.; Azdi, p. 173; Theophanes AM 6250). Like Moqanna’ and some followers of Ebn Mo‘āwiya, they thought in terms of seven eras (see [dawr](#)), but they construed the eras with reference to imams rather than seven messengers or seven Adams (Ebn al-Jawzi, VIII, pp. 29 f.; cf. Ps.-Nāše’, par. 58). The episode is variously set in 136, 137, 139, 140, 141, or 142, but more than one may have been involved, for in 141-42 it was the caliph’s son, that is, al-Mahdi, rather than al-Manšur himself that the Rāvandiya deified (Theophanes AM 6252; for the Basran episode mentioned there, cf. Dinavāri, p. 380).

Moqanna’ was among those who remained in Abbasid service after Abu Moslem’s murder, in Marv, where he turned rebellious some time after the downfall of his employer, ‘Abd al-Jabbār, in 141/758. The sources on his



message do not mention the imamate, and it is probably by confusion with the Moslemiyya that they include Abu Moslem in his sequence of messengers, making Moqanna' himself the Mahdi, the eighth rather than the seventh (Crone, forthcoming; cf. Ebn Dā'i Rāzi, p. 179), though Moqanna' may well have deified Abu Moslem in another prophetic capacity, or as king (cf. Ta'ālebi, no. 14). There is no reference to the imamate in the earliest source on **Bābak** either, apparently because the Korrami cult organization he led was still wholly non-Islamic. Bābak succeeded Jāvidān b. Şahrak as leader on the ground that the latter's spirit had passed into him (Ebn al-Nadim, 407.11, 17; tr., II, pp. 820 f.; Ṭabari, III, p. 1015), and identified himself as "the spirit of the prophets" (Abu'l-Ma'āli, p. 62), presumably meaning that the holy spirit which had moved the prophets of the past, including Jāvidān, was now active in him. Unlike early Christian prophets, Bābak was not simply a passive instrument like a lyre or flute through which the holy spirit would speak from time to time (cf. Aune, pp. 204, 315 f.). Rather, it dwelled in him permanently, rendering him divine (Abu'l-Ma'āli, p. 62; Ebn al-Nadim, 406.10; tr., II, p. 818). He was not the Mahdi, however, and he did not wear a veil; rather he was a community leader. A full incarnation of the deity had appeared in the Mesopotamia/Armenia region around the same time. His followers are described among the Korramis as pagans and "Magians in their cult," suggesting that they venerated fire; but they were also Christians of sorts, for their long-awaited king called himself the holy spirit and Christ, as well as the Mahdi. He was held to be divine and, like Moqanna', wore a veil. After his death and that of a successor, his followers accepted Bābak as their leader (Michael Syr., IV, pp. 508 f.; tr., III, pp. 50-52; *Chron. 1234*, pp. 25 ff.; tr., pp. 17-19; Bar Hebraeus, p. 131, all from Dionysius of Tell-Maḥrē (a chronicle written in 774 CE under the name Dionysius, a monk from Tell-Maḥrē in Mesopotamia).

The Korramis are reported to have believed in continuous prophecy (Abu 'Isā in Ebn al-Malāḥemi, p. 584; Biruni in Fück, p. 80; Maqdesi, III, p. 8, IV, p. 30). It is not easy to tell whether they held that there could be prophets such as Adam, Jesus, or Moḥammad in the future or that the sequence of divine community leaders (prophets, spirit-bearers, and the like in Christian parlance, imams in Muslim parlance) would continue forever. They may not have distinguished sharply between the two, the key difference being rather between such figures and the final, full incarnations of the divine, the Christ or Mahdi, with whom the material world, or the current cycle, would come to an end.

Some 50 years after Bābak's death, Bābak had come to be identified as a descendant of Abu Moslem, implying that his followers now thought in terms of the imamate (Dinavari, p. 397). Thereafter the Moslemi nature of the Korramis in Azarbaijan and elsewhere in western Iran is well attested (see, e.g., Mas'udi, *Moruj al-dahab* IV, par. 2398).

The sources regularly use the term *tanāsok* for periodic and continuous incarnation of the divine, but no reincarnation was involved. The divine spirit was normally envisaged as taking up abode in adult human beings (for Jesus as an exception, see Maqdesi, III, p. 122). Moqanna's followers held God's spirit to have entered Moḥammad in the encounter described in Qor'an 53:3-10 (Abu Tammām, p. 76; tr., p. 75). Others claimed that the divinity had passed, in a form visible to 'Ā'eša, from Moḥammad to 'Ali, who had ingested it (Ps.-Nāše', par. 56); and Bābak was an adult when Jāviḍān's spirit passed into him. Another term for periodic incarnation is *qalb*, explained in connection with the Kēdāšiya as the belief that God can change (*yaqliba*) Himself from one shape (*ṣura*) to another and clothe himself in different visible forms (*manāzir*). In support of this, the Kēdāšiya would adduce the ability of a lesser being such as Gabriel to do the same, as recorded in Hadith. Here Gabriel merely appears in the guise of known or unknown people, however (Ps.-Nāše', par. 49). In the Korrami conception the deity did not merely simulate a body or create one for itself; rather it entered a person with an identity of his own. We also hear of *zanādeqa'l-našārā*, "dualist/quasi-Manichaeans Christians," who held that the spirit in Jesus was the spirit of God, from the essence of God (*ruḥ Allāh min dāt Allāh*), explaining that God would enter a human being when He wished to convey His commands and speak human language (Ebn Ḥanbal, p. 19).

REINCARNATION

According to Euboulos (date uncertain), quoted by Porphyry (d. ca. 305), the Magi practiced various degrees of vegetarianism, because "it is the belief of them all that metempsychosis is of the first importance." Porphyry also refers to a certain Pallas, who probably wrote under Hadrian (d. 138) and who explained the Mithraic habit of giving animal names to initiates as an allegory of human souls, which, they (the Magi) said, "put on all kinds of bodies" (Porphyry, IV, 16). Both reincarnation and non-violence to animals reappear in [Manicheism](#). Mani is usually assumed to have picked up the doctrine of reincarnation from Buddhism in India or alternatively from the Greeks (Heinrichs, pp. 97 ff.; Bryder, pp. 488 f.; cf. Biruni, *Hend*, p. 27; tr., I, pp. 54 f.), but he only traveled to India after having formed his system, and his closely



related doctrine of non-violence went far beyond anything found in Buddhism in that it extended to plants, trees, air, earth, and even stones. Thus, the Indian influence would have had to come from Jains. The possibility of Jain influence has in fact been aired (see Fynes; Gardner; Deeg and Gardner), but although the coincidences are striking, both Indian and Greek inspiration would seem unnecessary in that Mani's views on reincarnation and non-violence were intimately connected with his conception of the world as a mixture of light and darkness. In this conception, light (divinity) was present in everything in this world and circulated thanks to natural processes, and everything endowed with light was live, sentient, and could feel pain. In the opinion of Šahrastāni (p. 133; tr., I, p. 511), all nations, including the Zoroastrians, had groups who believed in reincarnation. Abu Ḥātem Rāzi (*Ketāb al-eṣlāḥ*, p. 159) claims that Mazdak, a Zoroastrian priest, believed in it, and Abu 'Isā al-Warrāq implies the same: according to him, Mazdak permitted the killing of opponents on the grounds that it would liberate their spirits from their harmful bodies, that is, save them from bad reincarnations (Ebn al-Malāḥemi, 584.4; cf. Šahrastāni, p. 193, tr., I, p. 663; 'Abd-al-Jabbār, V, p. 65; tr. Monnot, p. 237). All the Korramis are said to have believed in reincarnation (Ps.-Nāše', pars. 57 f.; Šahrastāni, p. 185, tr., I, p. 641), probably including the Rāvandiya (Ebn Qotayba, p. 227), though Baḡdādi did not think so (255.6).

Practically all further details come from an account relating to the followers of 'Abd-Allāh b. Mo'āwiya, though it is also cited with reference to other groups (Ps.-Nāše', pars. 57 f.; Nawbakṭi, pp. 32-34, 35-37; Qomi, nos. 93, 97 f.; Abu Ḥātem Rāzi, pp. 308-10; Ebn Dā'i Rāzi, pp. 87 ff.; Freitag, pp. 9 ff.). The sectarians denied the resurrection, insisting that there was no world other than this one or, as they also put it, that the resurrection consisted in the spirit leaving the body for another body or form (*qālab*, *ṣura*). Bodies were like clothes that got worn out or houses one moved out of, and only the spirit was rewarded or punished. Obedient spirits would be moved into pure bodies of beautiful shapes for pleasurable lives and, according to some, continue to move up in the ranks of goodness, purity, and pleasure until they became angels and acquired pure bodies of light, while disobedient spirits would move into impure and ugly bodies of dogs, monkeys, pigs, serpents, dung beetles, scorpions, and the like, to be tormented forever. Some associated reincarnation with cycles: God had created seven Adams, corresponding to seven eras; each Adam would initiate an era of 50,000 years, at the end of which the righteous would be raised to the first heaven as angels while the rest would be placed below the earth. The ants, scarabs, and dung beetles that

crawled around in people's houses were nations that God had destroyed in the past. At the end of every era, those who had already been saved or damned would move further up or down to the next heaven or earth. When all the seven eras were over, religious worship would come to an end. They also had doctrines about the "shadows," presumably along the lines known from the later *Ketāb al-haft wa'l-ažella* attributed to al-Mofazzal b. 'Omar al-Jo'fi (Halm, pp. 24 ff.), though this book differs in being Gnostic in character and focused on 'Ali. Some operated with different cycles, claiming that believers would assume human bodies for periods of 10,000 years followed by 1,000 years in animal bodies, in the best form in both cases, whereas unbelievers would spend 10,000 years in animal bodies of the worst kind, followed by 1,000 years as miserable humans such as tanners and sweepers. The alternations were meant as tests, and apparently these cycles would go on forever: there is no reference to release, whether individual or collective (cf. their eternalism in Aš'ari, pp. 6, 46). Some believers in reincarnation claimed to recognize each other from one period to the next, typologically rather than individually, as the people who had been with Noah in the Ark, who had followed the other prophets in their time, and who had been the Companions of Moḥammad (*ṣaḥāba*). They would take their names, claiming that their spirit was in them (similarly Ebn Qotayba, p. 227). Some called themselves *al-ḥawāriyun* among themselves (Baḡdādi, p. 236).

The Ḳorrami term for reincarnation was *raj'a* (Nawbakṭi, pp. 33, 37; Qomi, no. 98) and they would adduce verses 6:38; 29:64; 32:26; 35:24; 82:8, 84:19 and 95:4-6 in support of it. The poet Koṭayyer 'Azza believed in *tanāsok al-arwāḥ* and *raj'a*, probably meaning the same, and Sayyed al-Ḥemyari held that it was possible to be reincarnated as an animal (Abu'l-Faraj Eṣfahāni, VIII, p. 243; IX, pp. 4, 17-19; cf. Wellhausen, p. 93). Much later we learn that Mardāvij, the 4th/10th century military adventurer from Gilān, claimed to have the spirit of Solomon in him (Ebn al-Aṭir, VIII, p. 298, year 323). Like other Ḳorramis, he was both himself and somebody else.

NON-VIOLENCE

As mentioned above, the Magi (according to Euboulos in Porphyry) who believed in reincarnation practiced varying degrees of vegetarianism. Vegetarianism and pacifism are also reported for *Kawād I*, the Sasanian king who adopted the utopia of Zarādošt of Fasā (Crone, 1991, p. 26). But though Bābak complained that the hands and breath of his prison-guard stank of meat (Ṭabari, III, p. 1228), he and his followers ate meat on a ritual occasion (Ebn al-



Nadim, 407.19; tr., II, p. 821) and he would hunt, too (Ṭabari, III, p. 225f). Of the Ḳorramis of western Iran in general, however, we are told that they believed in “acts of charity (*afʿāl al-ḳayr*) and refraining from killing and inflicting harm on souls” (Ebn al-Nadim, 406.4; tr., II, p. 817), and that they took great care to avoid bloodshed, except when they rebelled (Maqdesi, IV, p. 31; wrongly attributed to the Mobayyeẓa along with Moslemi beliefs in Abu Tammām, p. 78; tr., p. 77). They also disapproved of speaking ill of the adherents of other religions as long as they did not seek to inflict harm on oneself: all messengers were really the same, and the followers of all religions were right as long as they believed in requital after death (Maqdesi, IV, pp. 30 f.). To the Ḳorramis (now Pārsis) of 6th/12th-century Azarbaijan, bloodshed was one of the five deadly sins, as was hurting other people or anything living; even hammering a peg into the earth was forbidden lest it be hurt by it (Madelung, 1988, p. 10). Their dislike of bloodshed was not linked with asceticism. They revered wine and insisted on the lawfulness of all pleasures as long as they did not harm others (Maqdesi, IV, p. 31); the “old Mazdak” (i.e., Zarādošt of Fasā) had ordered them to partake of all pleasures (Ebn al-Nadim, 406.2; tr., II, p. 817).

Their doctrine of non-violence was not sufficiently prominent for the Muslims to have a name for it. They were also notoriously violent as rebels, and anything but charitable in their visions of revenge. But Maqdesi (IV, p. 31) found those he met in Māsabaḍān and Mehrejānqadaq to be extremely kind people.

COSMOLOGY, PAN-PSYCHISM

Abu ʿIsā had heard that the Ḳorramis believed light and darkness to have always existed and that the “Mazdaqiya” subscribed to a (Zoroastrian?) cosmological doctrine which had also influenced the Manicheans, to the effect that darkness was ignorant and blind and had swallowed some of the light by accident (Ebn al-Malāhemi, pp. 583 f., 598; cf. ʿAbd al-Jabbār, V, p. 16, cf. p. 64 f., tr. Monnot, pp. 163 f., 237; Šahrastāni, pp. 185, 192 f., tr., I, pp. 641, 663, turning the Mazdaqiya into Mazdak himself; and cosmology and cosmogeny i and iv). These Mazdaqiya seem to have been a subdivision of the Ḳorramis in (urban?) Iraq (Masʿudi, *Ketāb al-tanbih*, p. 353.ult.; Šahrastāni, p. 113, tr., I, p. 449). Maqdesi (I, p. 143) credits the Ḳorramis with the doctrine that everything began as light, probably by misunderstanding Abu ʿIsā, though there must in fact have been many Ḳorrami cosmologies. Qomi (no. 127) more broadly says that “most of their doctrines are those of the Zoroastrians.”

Some *Ḳorramis* held that the separation would come about accidentally (Šahrastāni, p. 193; tr., I, p. 663, replacing Abu 'Isā's Mazdaqīya with Mazdak; cf. Ebn al-Malāḥemi, pp. 583 f.). Others seem to have been eternalists (cf. above), and there were also *Ḳorramis* inclined towards Manicheism in unidentified respects (Ebn al-Malāḥemi, 584.1). Like the Manicheans, though in a more positive vein, they seem to have thought of light, the divine element, as all-pervasive. It is this idea, variously called animism, pan-psychism, or pantheism in the modern literature, that lies behind their belief in reincarnation, non-violence, and divine incarnation alike (cf. Šahrastāni, p. 133; tr., I, pp. 511 f.; Malaṭi, p. 17). Ultimately, it was the same light or spirit which manifested itself again and again in different forms and strengths, in humans, animals, and inanimate things alike, rendering all of them live and sentient. There was no sharp distinction between the divine, the human, and the animal worlds, or between past and present: just as the same divine being incarnated itself time and again, so the same people lived on again and again, in human or animal form. The fact that there are Indian analogues to the key *Ḳorrami* and Manichean doctrines (*avatāra*, *saṃsāra*, *ahiṃsā*) should probably be credited to the shared roots of Indian and Iranian religion rather than Indian influence.

ANTINOMIANISM

The *Ḳorramis* were notorious for not living by Islamic law. Their villages had no mosques, and if they did, only for outsiders, and although they (or some of them) would teach their children the Qor'ān, they did not pray, observe the dietary taboos of Islam, or perform ablutions according to Islamic precepts; and they married only among themselves (Moqaddasi, pp. 398 f.; Eṣṭakri, p. 203; Baḡdādi, p. 252; Abu Tammām, p. 77, tr., p. 76). But they had their own norms, for which they would consult their imams, and purity was of the utmost importance to them (Maqdesi, IV, p. 31). They argued their way out of Islamic law by interpreting it allegorically, holding the commands and prohibitions to stand for persons or activities one should seek out or avoid; or they said that the (literal meaning of) the law did not apply to those who knew the imam (Abu Tammām, p. 77, tr., p. 76; Ps-Nāše', pars. 48 f., 59). Since the entire community knew the imam, this was presumably a way of legitimating an ancestral way of life rather than antinomian behavior by perfected individuals, though the tone in which it is reported often suggests the latter. The *Ḳorramis* undoubtedly saw themselves as the only saved, however. As the only people of Paradise they were free to take the women, children, and



property of other Muslims when the apocalypse came (and they rebelled), but it does not follow that they, or the perfected among them, were free to take what they wanted at all times, let alone among themselves (it is misrepresented as a doctrine of Mazdakite sharing in Biruni's reporting on Moqanna'). The *Ḳedāšiya* are credited with extreme hostility to outsiders even when they were unable to rebel; they interpreted *jihād* (see [ISLAM IN IRAN xi. JIHAD IN ISLAM](#)) as meaning killing opponents by assassination, strangling, crushing, or poisoning, probably meaning that even such methods were allowed rather than that such methods were ritually prescribed; their property could be taken, and a fifth had to be given to the imam, as if it were booty taken in war (Ps.-Nāšē', par. 49). How far the sense of being the only elect spilled over in a sense that individuals could reach a state of such perfections that they were above the law, even their own, under normal conditions is hard to say. Some may have held that they could become angels, divine beings, or people of Paradise in the here and now, and the possibility that "transgressive sacrality" was a feature of some communities cannot be ruled out. One account of Rāvandi practice in the east (Ṭabari, III, p. 418) could refer to sexual rituals used in Buddhist (or Šaivite, cf. Škoda) Tantrism. Maqdesi (IV, p. 31) confirms that some *Ḳorramis* endorsed the sharing of womenfolk (*ebāḥat al-nesā'*), with the women's consent, but does not tell us what it consisted in. The Pārsis of 6th/12th-century Azarbaijan were strictly monogamous and forbade both divorce and the purchase of slaves. Yet they held that women were like a well that anyone could drink from (Madelung, 1988, p. 10). Did they mean that adultery was not a sin, or that women could be given to holy men for blessing, or, on the contrary, that since women were common to all, they had to be distributed equally, so that nobody could have more than one? It is impossible to tell.

NOMENCLATURE AND SUBDIVISIONS

We do not know what the *Ḳorramis* were called before the coming of Islam, but *Ḳorramdin* "adherent of the joyous religion" is a term coined on the model of *Behdin* "adherent of the good religion," that is, Zoroastrianism, and could be a self-designation. The heresiographers usually relate the name to the scandalous sexual practices of the *Ḳorramis*, but if the name had been coined with reference to them, a more offensive term than "joyous" would surely have been chosen. However this may be, when the sources speak of *Ḳorramis*, it is usually the Moslemiya that they have in mind, usually those of the Zāgros and Alborz mountains or Azarbaijan, but occasionally also those of eastern

Iran (see, e.g., Balki in Ebn al-Nadim, 408.13; tr., p. 824). Ps.-Nāše' (probably [Ja'far b. Ḥarb](#)) identifies the *Ḳedāšiya* as the *Ḳorramis* in Khorasan, the *Moslemiya* as those of the *Jebāl*, clearly over-simplifying. In Khorasan they came to be known as the *Bāṭeniya* (Mas'udi, *Moruj al-dahab* VI, par. 2399). Ṭa'ālebi mentions “*Ḳosrawiya* and *Ḳorramiya*” in, perhaps, the *Bādġis* region (Houtsma, p. 35; tr., p. 33). But in the east we more commonly hear of “Whiteclothed ones” (*Mobayyeza*, *Sepid-jāmagān*), often identified as Moqanna's followers, though they existed before him and are found in areas far beyond those involved in his revolt (Gardizi, p. 273; Moqaddasi, p. 323; Neẓām-al-Molk, chap. 47.22; cf. Šahrastāni, p. 115; tr., I, pp. 454 f.). In Gorgān we hear of “Redclothed ones” (*Moḥammera*, *Sork-jāmagān*; Daniel, p. 147), a term also used to refer to the *Ḳorramis* of the west (e.g., Ebn al-Nadim, 405.ult.; tr., II, p. 817). We are not told what the differences between them were. Mas'udi uses the term *Moḥammera* to refer to a smaller group, distinguishing them from the “*Mazdaqiyya*, *Māhāniya*, and others” (*Ketāb al-tanbih*, 353.ult.). The *Māhāniya* were Iranianized Marcionites, that is, Christians of sorts (Ebn al-Malāḥemi, p. 589), as was clearly true of many *Ḳorramis* before they were Islamized. Mas'udi also divided the *Ḳorramis* into *Kuḍakiya* (or *Luḍakiya*), *Kuḍšahiya* (or *Luḍšahiya*), and others, placing them in the mountainous regions of western Iran with a wealth of place names, and more cursorily mentioning that they were also found in Khorasan and the rest of Iran (*Ketāb al-tanbih*, p. 353; cf. idem, *Moruj al-dahab* VI, par. 2399). Abu Ḥātem Rāzi (pp. 305 f.; Madelung, 1986, p. 65), on the other hand, says that they were known as *Kuḍakiya* and *Ḳorramiya* in the Isfahan region, as *Mazdakiya* and *Sonbādiya* in Rayy and elsewhere in the *Jebāl*, as *Moḥammera* in Dinavar and Nehāvand (al-Māhayn), and as *Dāqufiya* (or *Dafuliya*) in Azarbaijan (repeated, slightly differently, by Šahrastāni, p. 132; tr., I, p. 508). Again, we are not told about the differences between them. According to Abu Ḥātem Rāzi (p. 298), Ebn Mo'āwiya's followers, or at least the *Ḥāreṭiya*, were known as *Ḳorramdinis*, while Šahrastāni (p. 113; tr., I, p. 449) held all *Ḳorramis* to spring from them. They secured toleration through heavy payments to the ruler (Moqaddasi, p. 399; Ṭa'ālebi, p. 38).

LEGACY

Ḳorramism does not seem to have survived the Mongol invasions. In western Iran and Anatolia, however, belief in divine incarnation and human reincarnation reappeared along with varying degrees of pantheism in the heresies of the *Ḥorufis*, *Noḡtavis*, *Bektašis*, *Qezelbaš*, *Yazidis*, [Ahl-e Ḥaqq](#) and



others, filtered through Sufism (cf. Pirouzdjou; Babayan; Šafi'i-Kadkani, pp. 55 ff.). All three beliefs had appeared in Sufism already among the 3rd/9th century Mu'tazilite Sufis, including Aḥmad b. Ḥā'eṭ (or Kābet), who shared the pan-psychism of the Korramis and Manicheans: they held all animate beings and inanimate things, including stones, to be endowed with rationality, and they also believed in reincarnation (Jāhez, IV, p. 288; van Ess, III, pp. 430-45). Other Sufis believed in *ḥolul*, claiming that God could dwell in humans and wild animals, especially beautiful ones (Aš'ari, pp. 13 f.; Baḡdādi, p. 245; Maqdesi, V, p. 148), or that he might dwell in the entire world, animate or inanimate, which they called "the universal manifestation" (*al-zohur al-kolli*). To those who subscribed to this view, the idea of divine indwelling of the spirits by reincarnation (*ḥolul al-arwāḥ be'l-taraddod*) was unproblematic, as stated by Biruni (*Hend*, p. 29; tr., I, pp. 57 f.). The idea that women and property could be freely taken also reappears, both in Sufism and elsewhere (e.g. Malaṭi, p. 73f; Nasafi, p. 359; *Haftād o seh mellat*, nos. 27, 72). Evaluating such reports is notoriously problematic, but we do at least know from Ḥorufi sources that some Ḥorufis held themselves entitled to take everything in existence, believing that they were already in a Paradisical state and thus freed from the constraints of the law: the *'āref* could take whatever was within reach and should endeavor to obtain what was in the hands of others (Browne, pp. 75 f.). This is close to Moqanna's preaching in that the concern is with taking the property (and women?) of others, not with sharing within the community. All in all, the legacy of Korramism and other pan-psychist forms of Iranian religion in Islam seems to be much greater than that of Zoroastrianism as known from the Pahlavi books.

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