



MAS'UDI VII. THE PSEUDO- AḲBĀR AL-ZAMĀN

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Mas'udi's major work on history was called *Aḳbār al-zamān*. A work under this title has been published, but it is far too abbreviated and far too divergent in style from the *Moruj* and the *Tanbih* to be considered authentic. Its author may nevertheless have had access to now-lost works by Mas'udi. The brief section on the Persians repeats the usual claims about their origin and mentions the major dynasties and kings. It makes a now-garbled reference to "the kings of Khorasan, such as the Sogdians, and others defeated by the Ašrusaniya and the B*rjān [?], namely the people of Daylam, Jabāl, L*d, the Kurds, the Š*mās, and Transoxania," saying that most of these peoples were ruled by *patricii* (*baṭāreqa*), that they worshipped fire, and that they became Magians (*majus*). The Magian religion began when a demon appeared to Ardašir and promised to teach him useful knowledge if he would marry his own mother, which he did. Persians also allow sibling marriage, which dates back to Adam. In fire temples, kings would scatter sulphur and orpiment (*zarnik*) to cause spontaneous combustion. Worshippers would sit on a chair while holding a pestle (*dastaj*) and a stone mortar (*hāwan*) filled with water; they would churn the water violently, "as if punishing it," to show their fealty to the fire. Despite making these odd claims, the compiler of the pseudo-*Aḳbār al-zamān* declares that people everywhere concede the superiority of the Persians in "statecraft, hegemony, the arts of war, fine cuisine (or subtle colors, *daqiq al-alwān*; see



VI.D. above) and the composition of dishes, medicine, clothing, public works, *savoir-vivre* (*waḏ' al-ašyā' mawāzahā*), chanting (*tartil*), oratory (*keṭābh*), intelligence, perfect cleanliness and appearance, and royal gravitas, in all of which the precedence is theirs” (pseudo-*Aḳbār al-zamān*, pp. 100-102).

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