

# A Seventeenth-Century Prose Abridgment of the *Shahnamah* Produced by a Zoroastrian Priest<sup>1</sup>

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*This is a most excellent booke & not to be gotten here amongst them. I got it from our worthy President, M<sup>r</sup> Aungier. The learned Herbud was very loath I should part with it before he had taken a copy of it, but it could not be done, our ships being soe near y<sup>e</sup> departure.*

## Introduction

The above note appears on the flyleaf of a prose abridgment of the *Shahnamah* completed in 1671 at Navsari, India, currently preserved in the British Library (Reg.16.B.14).<sup>2</sup> At the top of the flyleaf, the title

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<sup>1</sup>I am delighted and honored to offer this article as a humble contribution to a volume that celebrates someone who introduced me to the world of medieval Persian manuscripts.

<sup>2</sup>Charles Rieu, *Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in the British Museum*, 3 vols. (London: British Museum, 1879–83), 2:541. The numbers in parentheses refer to the current manuscript

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کتاب شاهنامه نشر (*The Book of Prose Shahnamah*) is written, seemingly by the same hand that wrote the main text, followed by “*Shahnamah-yi mussur* [sic]: *A Chronicle of All of the Kings of the Persees*.”<sup>3</sup>

The “Herbud” (or *hirbad*, Zoroastrian priest), who was not happy to part with the manuscript, must have been the author, who introduces himself in his introduction to the work as a “lowly servant from Fars” (بندۀ حقیر اهل فارس)<sup>4</sup> and gives his name in the colophon as Khurshid son of Isfandiyar, a resident of the village of Navsari in India.<sup>5</sup> We know Khurshid was a Zoroastrian priest, as he signed another manuscript, which he copied in 1678, as “Hirbad Khurshid son of Isfandiyar son of Rustam.”<sup>6</sup> As stated in his introduction, Khurshid undertook the task of putting the *Shahnamah* into prose at the request of Captain Mr. Aungier (کپیتان مستر انجن), whom he glorifies with such lofty titles as “the lord of the English” (خداوند انگریزان), “the foremost of [his] peers” (زبده الاقران), “a man of wealth for the poor” (مایه مفلسان), and “the essence of the Christians” (خلاصه عیسویان).<sup>7</sup> He further explains that Mr. Aungier wished to have an abridgment of the *Shahnamah* in prose, so that it would be easier for him to read and listen to Firdausi’s work, and so that he could understand it better.<sup>8</sup>

Gerald Aungier was the president of the East India Company Factory at Surat from 1669 until his death in 1677. Although he was instrumental in making Bombay the official seat of rule of the East India Company, little is known about his background. The date of his birth is unknown,

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shelf-mark. I would like to thank Ursula Sims-Williams, who drew my attention to this manuscript.

<sup>3</sup>Khurshid son of Isfandiyar, *Shahnamah*, 1671, MS Reg.16.B.14, Thomas Hyde Collection, British Library, London, fol. 1a. Another word is written before the title, but it seems to have been crossed out. It is illegible but looks like تمام (all) or بنام (in the name of).

<sup>4</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fol. 2b. All translations are mine unless otherwise stated.

<sup>5</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fol. 118a: کاتب الحروف من بندۀ خورشید ولد اسفندیار، ساکن قصبه نوساری.

<sup>6</sup>Rieu, *Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts*, 1:48. See the conclusion to this paper for more on this manuscript.

<sup>7</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fol. 2b.

<sup>8</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fols. 2b–3a: آن خداوند انگریزان، زبده الاقران و مایه مفلسان، خلاصه عیسویان، صاحب ثانی الزمان انگریزان انگریز کپیتان مستر انجن به بندۀ فقیر حقیر اهل فارس فرمودند که این شاهنامه [الف] نظم خواندن موافق طبع دماغ من خوش نیاید و از دماغ بی دماغ گردد و چندان دماغ سیرت خوش نداریم که این را خواندن توانیم. اگر این را نشر مختصر سازید بهتر است که خواندن و شنودن توانیم و جای فهمیدگی نیز در کار شود.

and it has been surmised that he was from Anger in France. His ancestors, who must have been Protestants, had fled to England following the religious massacres of 1562–72. He had probably come to India as a well-educated young man in the service of the East India Company, and gradually risen in rank until he had achieved the highest position and become the governor of Bombay.<sup>9</sup>

It appears that Aungier gave the prose *Shahnamah* that Khurshid had abridged for him to an Englishman who wrote the abovementioned note on its flyleaf and shipped it to the English orientalist Thomas Hyde (1636–1703), who is known as the first scholar who attempted to write a comprehensive account of Zoroastrianism.<sup>10</sup> Hyde, who never traveled to India, had developed a network of travelers and officials working for the East India Company, who bought books and manuscripts for him. We know the names of some of his contacts, but no name or date accompanies the note on the manuscript under discussion.<sup>11</sup> The manuscript safely reached Hyde, as he quoted it in his account about Zoroaster in *Historia religionis veterum Persarum (The History of the Religion of Ancient Persia)* and referred to it as *rarissimus liber* (rare book).<sup>12</sup>

Khurshid's work was transcribed by Sir William Ouseley (1767–1842) in 1797. In his transcription of the abovementioned note on the flyleaf, Ouseley read "Herbud" as "Herbert" and commented that the person who sent the manuscript to Hyde was probably Reverend Henry Lord (1563–ca. 1641).<sup>13</sup> But Lord had passed away long before Khurshid's

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<sup>9</sup>For more information about Mr. Aungier and his work in India, see James Douglas, *Bombay and Western India: A Series of Stray Papers*, 2 vols. (London: S. Low, Marston, 1893), 1:72–100.

<sup>10</sup>On Thomas Hyde, see A. V. Williams, "Hyde, Thomas," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 2012, iranicaonline.org/articles/hyde.

<sup>11</sup>For the names of some of his contacts, see Ursula Sims-Williams, "Zoroastrian Manuscripts in the British Library," in *The Transmission of the Avesta*, ed. Alberto Cantera, *Iranica* 20, ed. Maria Macuch (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012), 173–94. Reference on pp. 175–76.

<sup>12</sup>Thomas Hyde, *Historia religionis veterum Persarum, eorumque magorum* (Oxford: E Theatro Sheldoniano, 1700), 319–25.

<sup>13</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, transcribed by William Ouseley, 1797, Or. 14366, British Library, London, fol. 1a. An incomplete transcription of the manuscript (fols. 1b–95b) along with an English translation of the text was also produced by Rev. J. Haddon Hindley on paper watermarked

abridgment of the *Shahnamah* was completed. The reason Ouseley associated “Herbert” with Henry Lord is that the famous English traveler Sir Thomas Herbert (1606–82) had referred to Lord in his accounts about Zoroastrians in India in his travelogue.<sup>14</sup> Henry Lord had lived in India for a number of years and published *The Religion of the Parsees* in 1630 based on his personal observations and the help of an English-speaking Parsi.<sup>15</sup>

Ouseley, however, was not impressed with Khurshid’s abridgment and wrote that Hyde had probably commented on it before comparing it to the “original” *Shahnamah*.<sup>16</sup> In Ouseley’s opinion, the abridgment was not “performed judiciously,” as the author “omitted many important circumstances” and “introduced some stories from authors later than Firdausi.” He further commented that the abridgment may have some value, “but such an outline of the *Sháh náme* as would satisfy me, must be the work of an [sic] European.”<sup>17</sup> Ouseley, however, did not specify which “important circumstances” were omitted, nor did he mention which stories were taken from later authors or who the later authors were.

To assess Khurshid’s abridgment of Firdausi’s *Shahnamah* and to know precisely what he summarized, omitted from, and added to it, we need to know which *Shahnamah* manuscript(s) he used for his abridgment, but that is not feasible today. Remarkably, most of the interpolations in Khurshid’s abridgment come from the Zoroastrian sources, but since

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1812. This transcript is preserved at the British Library as well. See Rieu, *Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts*, 2:541 (Add. 6938).

<sup>14</sup>Sir Thomas Herbert, *Sir Thomas Herbert, Bart.: Travels in Africa, Persia, and Asia the Great; Some Years Travels into Africa and Asia the Great, Especially Describing the Famous Empires of Persia and Hindustan, as Also Divers Other Kingdoms in the Oriental Indies, 1627-30, the 1677 Version*, ed. John Anthony Butler, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies Series 427 (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2012), lxxiv.

<sup>15</sup>Sarah Stewart, Ursula Sims-Williams, and Alan Williams, “Journey and Settlement,” in *The Everlasting Flame: Zoroastrianism in History and Imagination*, ed. Sarah Stewart (London: I. B. Tauris, 2013), 164–73. Reference on p. 172.

<sup>16</sup>Sir William Ouseley, *Travels in Various Countries of the East, More Particularly Persia*, vol. 2 (London: Rodwell and Martin, 1821), 541.

<sup>17</sup>Ouseley, *Travels*, 541.

we do not know the manuscript(s) that he used for his abridgment, we cannot know whether the interpolations were made by him or already existed in the manuscript(s) that he used. As I have shown in a previous study, Zoroastrians did make efforts to produce “correct” versions of the history of ancient Persian kings.<sup>18</sup> Bearing in mind that the manuscript(s) that Khurshid used might have already contained Zoroastrian interpolations, I have consistently referred to him as the interpolator in this paper.

When summarizing an account, Khurshid often mentions that he has made the long story short “not to give a headache to the reader,”<sup>19</sup> but he does not often inform the reader when he interpolates into Firdausi’s work. We might assume that he did not work with a manuscript(s) of the *Shahnamah* and produced the abridgment from memory, so some of his omissions and interpolations were unintentional. But many of his sentences are so close to the verses of Firdausi’s *Shahnamah* that the difference between the two is just a matter of word order.<sup>20</sup> Khurshid also ends his summary of the first few accounts (up to the account about Faridun) by citing the same verses that end the same accounts in the *Shahnamah*.<sup>21</sup> So unless he had memorized the *Shahnamah*, it is unlikely that he relied solely on memory.

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<sup>18</sup>Nasrin Askari, “A Unique Episode from the *Kārnamag ī Ardašīr ī Pābagān* in a Nineteenth-Century Illustrated Indian Manuscript of the *Shāhnāmah*,” in “Pre-Islamic Iranian Literary Heritage,” ed. Enrico G. Raffaelli, special issue, *Iranian Studies* 45 (2012): 203–16.

<sup>19</sup>For some examples, see fol. 27b, where he summarizes the love story of Zal and Rudaba, fols. 48b and 57b, where he summarizes parts of the story of Rustam and Suhrab, and fol. 63b, where he summarizes the long story of Kaykhusrau and Afrasiyab.

<sup>20</sup>For example, cf. Firdausi, *Shahnamah*, 1:25, line 63: *شدند از دد و دام دیوان ستوه*; and Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fol. 4b: *از دد و دام دیوان ستوه شدند*. Examples like this abound in Khurshid’s abridgment, although they are more evident in the earlier parts of his work. For the complete bibliographical information of the *Shahnamah* edition used for this study, see the appendix.

<sup>21</sup>Cf. Firdausi, *Shahnamah*, 1:25, lines 69–70, and Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fol. 4b; Firdausi, *Shahnamah*, 1:31, line 24, and Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fol. 5a; Firdausi, *Shahnamah*, 1:37, line 47, and Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fol. 5b; Firdausi, *Shahnamah*, 1:52, line 194, and Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fols. 7b–8a; Firdausi, *Shahnamah*, 1:85, lines 495–96, and Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fol. 16a; and Firdausi, *Shahnamah*, 1:157, line 1068 and note 15, and Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fol. 22a.

Since some of the Zoroastrian accounts in Khurshid's abridgment are found only in later Zoroastrian sources produced in New Persian, the interpolations in his abridgment can be regarded as a valuable earlier source of Zoroastrian literature in New Persian. Khurshid's abridgment also provides an important source for the study of the reception of the *Shahnamah*, especially on the part of Zoroastrians, in India. In his recent study of the reception of the *Shahnamah* in India, Charles Melville has drawn attention to the remarkable popularity and currency achieved by a prosimetric abridgment of the *Shahnamah* called the *Tarikh-i Dilgusha-yi Shamshir-khani* (*Shamshir Khan's Delightful History*), produced in 1653 for Shamshir Khan, the governor of Ghazna (1650–59).<sup>22</sup> A close comparison between copies of the *Tarikh-i Dilgusha*, which according to Melville show significant variations,<sup>23</sup> and Khurshid's abridgment might reveal interesting results on the reception of the *Shahnamah* among different communities in India.

Khurshid's non-illustrated manuscript contains 118 folios (10½ x 6½ in.), each page containing 19 lines (4¼ in. long) written in a clear nastaliq. At the end of the manuscript, Khurshid provides the date for the completion of his work as the fifteenth day of the month of Shahrivar of the year 1040 from the reign of Yazdgird (1671 AD).<sup>24</sup> To provide an overview of what the work contains, I have included an appendix with a list of headings and subheadings in the abridgment, and the corresponding headings and subheadings in Jalal Khaliqi Mutlaq's edition of the *Shahnamah*, marking the relevant page numbers in both works. The appendix shows, for example, that the account about Burzu (Barzu), introduced as the grandson of Rustam, is included and covered in eighteen pages (70a–79a).<sup>25</sup> The appendix also demonstrates that about

<sup>22</sup>Charles Melville, "The *Shahnameh* in India: *Tarikh-i Dilgusha-yi Shamshirkhani*," in *The Layered Heart: Essays on Persian Poetry; A Celebration in Honor of Dick Davis*, ed. A. A. Seyed-Ghorab (Washington, DC: Mage, 2019), 411–41.

<sup>23</sup>Melville, "Shahnameh in India," 439.

<sup>24</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fol. 118a:

به روز دی به مهر به ماه مبارک شهر یور سال اور هزار و چهلیم از شاهنشاه یزدگردی

<sup>25</sup>Since the story of Burzu appears frequently as an interpolation in the *Shahnamah* manuscripts, especially in India, I have not considered it as Khurshid's interpolation and therefore have not discussed it. For information on the interpolation of the account about Burzu in the *Shahnamah*

80 percent of Khurshid's abridgment concerns the so-called mythical and heroic parts of the *Shahnamah*: the reign of the Sasanian kings, generally known as the historical part of the *Shahnamah*, begins on folio 97b, and the manuscript contains 118 folios.

Since the limited scope of the present paper does not allow for a detailed analysis of the entire text of Khurshid's abridgment, in what follows, I draw attention to Khurshid's major interpolations into Firdausi's *Shahnamah* and highlight the main differences between the two works. Khurshid's minor interpolations, such as his sporadic use of Zoroastrian terms and short references to Zoroastrian concepts, are not discussed here, nor are his omissions and summaries of the *Shahnamah* narratives, even though they are all important in understanding his intention and approach in summarizing Firdausi's work. So I have discussed only the parts of his text that either have no correspondence in Firdausi's *Shahnamah* or considerably differ from the *Shahnamah* narrative. A critical edition of Khurshid's work would be a better place to analyze in detail the entire text of the abridgment and to demonstrate how a Zoroastrian priest introduced his ancestral tradition to an Englishman.

### **Introduction to the *Shahnamah***

Unlike Firdausi's introduction, which consists of several sections—including the praise of God, the praise of wisdom, a few words on God's creations, the praise of the Prophet Muhammad and his son-in-law and cousin, 'Ali b. Abi Talib, a few words on how the *Shahnamah* was compiled, a few words about the poet Daqiqi, a few words about a kind friend who provided the prose *Shahnamah* to Firdausi, the praise of the generous man who supported Firdausi in the initial years of his composition of the *Shahnamah*, and finally, the praise of the Ghaznavid

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manuscripts, see Gabrielle van den Berg, "The *Barzunama* in the Berlin *Shahnama* Manuscripts," in *Shahnama Studies*, 1, ed. Charles Melville, Pembroke Papers 5 (Cambridge: Centre of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, University of Cambridge, 2006), 97–114; and Gabrielle van den Berg, "Two 17<sup>th</sup>-Century Prose Renditions of the *Barzunāme*: The Story of Barzu, Son of Sohrāb, in the *Ehyā' al-muluk* and in the *Tārīkh-e Shamsīrkhāni*," in *International Shahnāme Conference: The Second Millennium; Conference Volume*, ed. Forogh Hashabeiky (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 2014), 135–50.

sultan Mahmud<sup>26</sup>—Khurshid’s introduction consists of only two sections. In the first section, he praises God for creating the world, and like Firdausi, he asserts that humans can neither understand nor praise God as He truly deserves.<sup>27</sup> In the second section, Khurshid states that Firdausi composed the *Shahnamah* in 65,000 verses but not everyone enjoys reading poetry. So, continues Khurshid, Mr. Aungier, who did not enjoy the *Shahnamah* in verse, asked him to write an abridged version of it in prose, so that he could read, listen to, and understand it. At the end of his introduction, Khurshid expresses hope for receiving a reward from Mr. Aungier and asks God and the Amishasfands (Zoroastrian divine entities)<sup>28</sup> for help in summarizing the wondrous and strange (عجیب و غریب) accounts about the ancient kings of Persia.

### Gayūmart/Kayūmars’s Reign<sup>29</sup>

Gayūmart was the first king in the world, as stated in the account about his reign in the *Shahnamah*.<sup>30</sup> According to the Zoroastrian tradition, however, Gayūmart was the prototype of all human beings.<sup>31</sup> Khurshid introduces him as the first man and adds that God made him the first king. When introducing Kayūmars, Khurshid also mentions *adam*, but he uses the word in the meaning of “human,” not in reference to Adam:

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<sup>26</sup>Firdausi, *Shahnamah*, 1:4–18.

<sup>27</sup>Cf. Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fols. 1b–2b, and Firdausi, *Shahnamah*, 1:3–4, lines 1–15.

<sup>28</sup>For more on the Amishasfands, see the section titled Kaykavus’s Reign in the present article.

<sup>29</sup>This name appears in different spellings, not only in the manuscripts of the *Shahnamah*, but also in other Persian and Arabic historical sources. “Gayūmart” is how Khaliqi-Mutlaq edited it, and “Kayūmars” is how Khurshid wrote it.

<sup>30</sup>Firdausi, *Shahnamah*, 1:21, line 5.

<sup>31</sup>For a comprehensive study of the accounts about Gayūmart in the Avestan, Middle Persian, Arabic, and Persian sources, see Arthur Christensen, *Les types du premier homme et du premier roi dans l’histoire légendaire des Iraniens*, Archives d’études orientales 14, 2 vols. (Stockholm: P. A. Norstedt, 1918), 1:9–105. For a Persian translation of Christensen’s work with additional notes based on new findings, and corrections of the translation of primary sources, see Zhala Amuzgar and Ahmad Tafazzuli, trans., *Nimuna-ha-yi nukhustin insan va nukhustin shahriyār dar tarikh-i afsana-ha-yi iraniyan*, 2nd ed. 2 vols. in 1 (Tehran: Chishma, 1383/2004), 11–130. See also Mansour Shaki, “Gayōmart,” in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 2012, [iranicaonline.org/articles/gayomart](http://iranicaonline.org/articles/gayomart); and Carlo G. Cereti, “Gayōmard (Article 2),” in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 2015, [iranicaonline.org/articles/gayomard](http://iranicaonline.org/articles/gayomard).



وقتی که آدم را خدای عز و جل بیافرید و پیدا کرد نخستین کیومرث را آفرید و پادشاهی به او داد.

When God, may He be honoured and glorified, created human [adam] and brought him into being, He first created Kayūmars and gave him kingship.<sup>32</sup>

It must be noted, however, that although Gayūmart is not introduced as the first man in the account about his reign in the *Shahnamah*, he is referred to as the first man elsewhere in the work.<sup>33</sup>

چو از خاک تا جانور بنده کرد      نخستین گیومرث را زنده کرد

When God enslaved [all creation] from the earth to animals,  
He first gave life to Gayūmart.<sup>34</sup>

The account about Gayūmart as the first king, not the first man, was not modified by Firdausi to make it appropriate for a Muslim audience, nor was the modification made by translators of ancient Persian histories in the early Islamic era. Rather, as opined by modern scholars, the difference already existed in the chronicles produced during the Sasanian era (224–651 AD), and that is what caused the incongruities in later historical works including the *Shahnamah*.<sup>35</sup>

### Jamshid's Reign

Khurshid's account about Jamshid closely corresponds with Firdausi's account, but he adds an introduction to it, which presents Jamshid as a Zoroastrian prophet:

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<sup>32</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fol. 3a.

<sup>33</sup>On Gayūmart as the first man in the *Shahnamah*, see Jalal Khalaqi Mutlaq, "Shahnama va mauzu' -i nukhustin insan," *Iran Nameh*, no. 2 (1984): 223–28. Reference on pp. 223–24.

<sup>34</sup>Firdausi, *Shahnamah*, 8:89, line 1167.

<sup>35</sup>On the incongruous reports about Gayūmart, see Jalal Khalaqi Mutlaq, "Abu 'Ali Balkhi," in *Danishnama-yi Iran va Islam*, 10 vols. (Tehran: Bungah-i tarjuma va nashr-i kitab, 1357/1979), 8:1074–75; and on the complex problem of the sources of ancient Persian history, see Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila, *Khwadāy-nāmag: The Middle Persian Book of Kings*, Studies in Persian Cultural History 14 (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

نخست آن که دروازهٔ مرگ بیست. تا هفتصد سال بر کسی مرگ و بیماری نبود. پس سروش فرشته از درگاه خداوند جهان پیغام آورد و گفت که چرا خاموش نشستهای؟ ایزد به افزونی می فرماید که ترا من پیغامبر این جهان کردم و پیغمبری بر تو ارزانی داشتم، که نشان پیغمبری آنست که صدره و کشتی بیوش و همه کس را بیوشان. جمشید چون این بشنید از ایزد تعالی قبول کرد. پس دادار جهاندار او را نور آنچه‌ان بخشید که وقتی که از کوه البرز آمدی خلق الله چنان پنداشتی که در جهان دو آفتاب برآمده است. نور آفتاب و نور جمشید یکجا نمودی. کس ندانستی که این آفتاب است و آن جمشید است. همه کس تصور کردی که آفتابست.

The first thing [that Jamshid did] was to close the gate of death. For seven hundred years, no illness or death was upon anyone. Then the angel Surush brought a message from the threshold of the Creator of the world and said, “Why are you sitting silent? The Lord of Abundance says, ‘I made you prophet in this world and gave you prophethood. Wear the *sadra and kushti*<sup>36</sup> as a sign of [your] prophethood and have everyone wear them.’” When Jamshid heard this, he accepted it from God the Most High. Then, God gave him such [glowing] light that when he descended from Mount Alburz, people thought two suns had risen in the world. The sunlight and Jamshid’s light seemed as one. No one could tell that this one is the sun and the other one is Jamshid. Everybody thought that it was [just] the sun.<sup>37</sup>

Different sections of the above description of Jamshid are found in various Middle Persian sources, but the entire passage closely corresponds to the verses of a Persian poem composed in about the sixteenth century.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>36</sup>*Sadra* is a white shirt and *kushti*, or *kusti*, is a belt that Zoroastrians have to wear.

<sup>37</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fol. 6a.

<sup>38</sup>For the descriptions of Jamshid in the Avestan, Middle Persian, and Persian Zoroastrian sources, see Christensen, *Les types du premier homme*, 11–77; and Amuzgar and Tafazzuli, *Nimuna-ha-yi nukhustin insan*, 297–386. Christensen provides the poem in French translation. See his *Les types du premier homme*, 66–70. For the poem in Persian, see Friedrich Spiegel, *Einleitung in die traditionellen Schriften der Parsen*, vol. 2, *Die traditionelle Literatur der Parsen in ihrem Zusammenhange mit den angränzenden Literaturen dargestellt* (Leipzig: W. Engelmann, 1860), 327–28; and Amuzgar and Tafazzuli, *Nimuna-ha-yi nukhustin insan*, 371–76. Here are the verses that closely correspond to Khurshid’s passage (the numbers refer to the verse numbers):

None of the above descriptions of Jamshid are provided in Firdausi's *Shahnamah*. The only occasion in the *Shahnamah* where Jamshid is directly associated with religion is where he boasts of possessing both kingship and priesthood:

منم گفتم با قره ایزدی      همم شهر یاری و هم موبدی

He [Jamshid] said, "I possess the divine glory,  
I possess both kingship and priesthood."<sup>39</sup>

### Nauzar's and Zau's Reigns

According to Firdausi's *Shahnamah*, Afrasiyab, the king of Turan, kills the Persian king Nauzar and takes over his throne. In their efforts to get rid of Afrasiyab, the Persian generals ask Zau, son of Tahmasp, to be their king and leader in the war against Afrasiyab. Zau accepts, and the troops of Iran and Turan engage in war. However, because of a severe drought, the two sides stay on the battlefield for eight months without a day of serious fighting. Eventually, the two sides decide to make peace and define a border between Turan and Iran. As soon as they make peace and return home, it starts to rain and water flows from all springs.<sup>40</sup>

According to Khurshid's account, when Afrasiyab kills Nauzar, he takes over his throne and reigns in Iran for twelve years. The last seven years of his reign in Iran, however, see the country suffer a severe drought, and famine prevails everywhere. Afrasiyab invites all astrologers (*munajjiman*) and sages (*danayan*) and seeks their advice. All sages and Zoroastrian priests (*dasturan*) tell Afrasiyab that if he goes away from the city and stops at a distance of a bowshot, it will start raining.

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۴ بیامد به نزدیکش آنکه سروش /// چنین گفت کای شاه با رای و هوش  
۵ بفرمایدت اورمزد خدا /// که تازه (تو) کن رسم دین مرا  
۷ میان را به صدره و کستی ببند /// کزو دیو و ابلیس گردد نژد  
۱۰ به پیغمبری از بهشت برین /// سروش آورد این نشانی دین  
۱۱ ز مینو سروش آورد این پیام /// که کستی و صدره ورا کرد نام  
۲۶ چو او بازگشت از سوی آسمان /// بیامد به البرز کوه گران  
۲۷ چو کردند خلقان به گردون نگاه /// عجائب بدیدند آن روز راه  
۲۸ به گردون بدیدند دو آفتاب /// که هر دو برآورد سر در شتاب

<sup>39</sup>Firdausi, *Shahnamah*, 1:41, line 8.

<sup>40</sup>Firdausi, *Shahnamah*, 1:316-29.

Afrasiyab is also told that the condition for it to rain is that they shoot the arrow and he follows it until the arrow hits the ground. Afrasiyab swears to do so, assuming that an arrow will not travel very far. The sages and Zoroastrian priests pray to God, asking for help to remove Afrasiyab from Iran. On the day of Tir (the thirteenth day) of the month of Tir (the first month of summer), they shoot an arrow in the name of God, and Afrasiyab and his army follow it. God helps, and the arrow lands at the border of Turan. Afrasiyab regrets having sworn to go away that far. Having managed to remove Afrasiyab from Iran, the Iranians make Zau, son of Tahmasp, their king.

At the end of his account, Khurshid comments that since then, the sages and Zoroastrian priests celebrate that day and call it the festival (*jashn*) of *Tir mah u Tir ruz*.<sup>41</sup> The thirteenth day of the first month of summer is celebrated by the Parsis to this day and is known by the same name.

The Avesta (Yasht 8.6) makes a brief reference to the mythical archer Ǝrəxša “of the swiftest arrow/having the swiftest arrow among the Aryans” (Middle Persian: *Ēraš*, New Persian: *Arash*), who shot an arrow from the mythical Mount Airyō.xšaθa to Mount Xʻanvant, and variations of the account related by Khurshid are found in the histories of ancient Persian kings written by early Muslim writers.<sup>42</sup> However, Khurshid’s version of this account is different from what is related in these early sources and closely corresponds with an account recorded in a collection of communications, known as *rivayat*, that contains responses from the Zoroastrian priests in Iran to the questions of the Zoroastrian community in India on a wide range of topics related to the practical and ritual aspects of their religion.<sup>43</sup> The correspondence between the two communities, which started in the fifteenth century and continued until the eighteenth century, was gradually collected, thematically

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<sup>41</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fols. 32a–b.

<sup>42</sup>For the different versions of the account, see Ahmad Tafazzoli, “Āraš, i., In Older Literature,” in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 2011, [iranicaonline.org/articles/aras-avestan-erexsa](http://iranicaonline.org/articles/aras-avestan-erexsa).

<sup>43</sup>An English translation along with the Persian text of this account is provided in Ervad Bamanji Nusserwanji Dhabhar, *The Persian Rivayats of Hormazyar Framarz and Others: Their Version with Introduction and Notes* (Bombay: K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, 1932), 342–43 and 343n1 respectively.

organized, and compiled into separate volumes. The collection that contains a similar account about the festival of Tir mah u Tir ruz was compiled by Hurmazdyar son of Faramarz in 1012–23 of the Yazdgirdi calendar (1643–54 AD)—that is, about two to three decades before Khurshid abridged the *Shahnamah*.<sup>44</sup> The account in Hurmazdyar’s collection also contains an explanation of the rituals performed on the festival of Tir mah u Tir ruz.

### **Kaykavus’s Reign**

According to Firdausi’s *Shahnamah*, Rostam and several great Iranian champions are having a feast, when Giv suggests that they all go hunting in Turan. Everybody agrees, and the next day, the champions leave for Turan. They enjoy themselves for a week, hunting, eating, and drinking in the plains of Turan. When Afrasiyab learns that Iranian champions are in Turan all by themselves, he decides to seize the opportunity and capture them, so that he can then attack Iran and kill the Persian king Kaykavus, who would be defenseless without his champions. Thus, Afrasiyab and a huge army shortly arrive on the hunting field and attack the Iranian champions. Firdausi provides a detailed description of the numerous battles fought between Afrasiyab’s army and the Iranian champions. Eventually, the champions win and Afrasiyab flees. Rostam, the greatest Iranian champion, follows Afrasiyab and tries to catch him using his (Rostam’s) lasso, but Afrasiyab escapes. The champions write to Kaykavus about their victory and continue hunting for two more weeks before returning to the palace.<sup>45</sup>

According to Khurshid’s account, Afrasiyab was a sorcerer and knew a spell which enabled him to visit Ahriman in hell. In one of his visits, Afrasiyab asks Ahriman how he can defeat the Iranians. Ahriman tells Afrasiyab that he can prevail over them if he avoids fighting against them for a while, even if the Iranians initiate war. Ahriman then urges

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<sup>44</sup>Hamid-Riza Dalvand, “Rivayat-i farsi-i zartushti,” in *Dam mazan ta bishnavi zan aftab: Jashn-nama-yi ustad duktur Muhammad-Taqi Rashid Muhassil*, ed. Mahdi ‘Alayi (Tehran: Pazhuhishgah-i ‘ulum-i insani va mutali‘at-i farhangi, 1394/2015), 177–233. Reference on p. 222.

<sup>45</sup>Firdausi, *Shahnamah*, 2:103–15.

Afrasiyab to avoid war with the Iranians for seven years. Ahriman also gives Afrasiyab a lion cub, a wolf pup, and a bear cub, and asks him to feed them with milk and wear them in his belt all the time during the seven years. Afrasiyab follows Ahriman's instructions, but when he realizes that the seven greatest Iranian champions have come to Turan all by themselves, he cannot resist the urge to seize the opportunity to kill them all. He gathers an army of fifty thousand men and arrives on the hunting field. When God sees such a huge army on the way to attack the seven men, He asks the angels to go to their aid. Thus, the Amishasfands come forward one by one and declare what they can do to help the seven champions.<sup>46</sup>

The introduction of the Amishasfands serves as a tool in this account to teach an important Zoroastrian doctrine, known as the doctrine of Heptad. In Zoroastrianism, *Amishasfand* (lit., holy/bounteous immortal, Avestan: *Aməša Spənta*, Middle Persian: *Amešāspand*, [*A mahraspand*]) refers to the seven greatest Zoroastrian divine entities, including the Zoroastrian supreme God, Ohrmazd; sometimes, Ohrmazd is not included, and the name refers to the other six greatest Zoroastrian divine entities. The Amishasfands, who are of one essence with Ohrmazd, aid Him in overcoming Ahriman, who constantly seeks to destroy Ohrmazd's good creation. To help Ohrmazd, each of the seven Amishasfands protects one of the seven creations that make up the world of good creation: Ohrmazd protects the just man, Bahman guards the cattle/good animals, Ardibihisht keeps the fire, Shahrivar watches over metals, Isfandarmad is the guardian of the earth, Khurdat protects the waters, and Murdad defends the plants.<sup>47</sup>

As related in Khurshid's account, the Amishasfands declare that they will help the Iranian champions according to the roles defined for them in the doctrine of Heptad. So Bahman, who protects the cattle/good

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<sup>46</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fols. 46b–47b.

<sup>47</sup>For more on this doctrine, see Mary Boyce, *Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices* (London: Routledge, 2001), 21–27; Mary Boyce, "Aməšaspənta," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 2011, [iranicaonline.org/articles/amesa-spenta-beneficent-divinity](http://iranicaonline.org/articles/amesa-spenta-beneficent-divinity); and Philip G. Kreyenbroek, "On Spenta Mainyu's Role in the Zoroastrian Cosmogony," in "Iranian Studies in Honor of A. D. H. Bivar," special issue, *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* n.s. 7 (1993): 97–103.

animals, offers to strengthen the horses of the champions and weaken the horses of the Turks. Ardibihisht offers to intensify the fire of the champions and cool the fire of their enemies. Shahrvivar offers to sharpen the swords and weaponry of the champions and dull the swords of the Turks. Isfandarmad offers to make the ground under the horses of the champions so even that they can run as fast as the wind, and make the ground under the horses of their adversaries so uneven that their horses will fall. Khurdad and Murdad offer to quench the thirst and satisfy the hunger of the champions, and make the Turks extremely thirsty and hungry. And God (*dadar*) says that He will support them (*pusht-i ishan ra nigah daram*).<sup>48</sup>

Khurshid does not provide Firdausi's detailed descriptions of the champions' battles, and informs the reader that he has summarized that part.<sup>49</sup> Thus, he briefly relates that the seven champions defeated the huge army, and Rustam chased Afrasiyab, who was running for his life. Khurshid ends his account with an episode that is not found in the *Shahnamah*: When Rustam reaches Afrasiyab, he grabs his belt and lifts him off his horse. While Afrasiyab is held up in the air by Rustam, his belt opens and he manages to escape. Rustam does not notice that Afrasiyab has fled, because the belt, which contains the three animals, still feels heavy. Upon realizing that the weight is from the belt, Rustam tears it up to know why it feels so heavy. As soon as the belt is broken, the three animals jump out, but Rustam is quick to kill them.<sup>50</sup>

Afrasiyab goes to Ahriman and asks for another chance to defeat the Iranians, but Ahriman cannot help him anymore, because Afrasiyab did not keep his promise of avoiding war with the Iranians. Deeply remorseful and disappointed to learn that he can no longer prevail over the Iranians, Afrasiyab leaves, and the story ends. The champions, on the other hand, continue hunting for another week and return home on the eighth day.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fol. 47b.

<sup>49</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fol. 48a.

<sup>50</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fol. 48a.

<sup>51</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fols. 48a–b.

A similar version of this account was put into verse by Anushirvan son of Marzban of Ravar (near Kerman in southeastern Iran). He was a Zoroastrian priest and a prolific writer and poet, most of whose dated works were produced around 1620 to 1630.<sup>52</sup> Besides Anushirvan's poem, a slightly different prose version of Khurshid's account, which does not contain the section about the Amishasfands, is recorded in the abovementioned collection of Hurmazdyar's *rivayat*.<sup>53</sup>

It is notable that Khurshid attributes his account to the authors of *Siyar-i muluk* (اخبار کنندگان سیر ملوک),<sup>54</sup> a generic title given to the Arabic translations of ancient Persian histories in the early Islamic era. His account, however, is not found in the extant works by early Muslim historians who wrote the history of ancient Persian kings. If his account was truly reported in one of the histories of ancient Persia, that history must have originated in the histories written by Zoroastrian priests, who related their accounts based on Zoroastrian myths. Although it may seem unlikely that Khurshid had access to the contents of early Persian chronicles, Mahmoud Omidasalar's study of two Zoroastrian works that were produced after the fifteenth century demonstrates that they contain excerpts from works that must have been written before the twelfth century as evidenced by their linguistic style.<sup>55</sup> In other words, the Zoroastrian priests in the fifteenth century had access to works that were produced in Persian prior to the twelfth century. Even if Khurshid did not have direct access to these early sources, he could have learned about their contents through his education as a Zoroastrian priest.

<sup>52</sup>For the poem in Persian, see Ervad Manockji Rustamji Unvala, ed., *Dârâb Hormazyâr's rivâyat*, 2 vols. (Bombay: British India Press, 1922), 2:210–13. On Anushirvan and his other works, see Zhala Amuzgar, "Adabiyat-i zartushti bi zaban-i farsi: Asar-i manzum," *Majalla-yi danishkada-yi adabiyat va 'ulum-i insani-i Danishgah-i Tehran*, no. 1 (1348/1969): 185–90. For a study of the Zoroastrian version of the account in comparison to its variant in the *Shahnamah*, see Arash Akbari-Mafakhir and Ruqayya Shaybanifar, "Rivayat-shinasi-i dastan-i haftgurdan bar paya-yi rivayat-i Anushirvan-i Marzban and Abu al-Qasim Firdausi," *Pazhuhish-nama-yi zaban va adab-i farsi (Gauhar-i guya)*, no. 2 (1389/2010): 103–24.

<sup>53</sup>Dhabhar, *Persian Rivayats*, 581.

<sup>54</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fol. 46b.

<sup>55</sup>Mahmoud Omidasalar, "Qidmat-i nisbi-i barkhi az mutun-i farsi-i maujud dar rivayat-i zardushti," in *Si-u-du maqala dar naqd va tashih-i mutun-i adabi*, ed. Mahmoud Omidasalar (Tehran: Bunyad-i Mauqafat-i duktur Mahmud Afshar, 1389/2010), 493–509.



## Gushtasp's Reign

According to the *Shahnamah*, when Zoroaster invites King Gushtasp to the new faith, Gushtasp and everyone at his court, who seem to show no resistance, accept Zoroaster's invitation. Gushtasp then builds fire temples and promotes the Good Religion. He plants a heavenly cypress tree at the gate of a fire temple in Kashmar and inscribes on its trunk that he has converted to the Good Religion, taking the tree as a testimony for his new faith. After a few years, the cypress tree grows extremely large. Next to the tree, Gushtasp builds a magnificent palace, made purely of gold and silver, and paints Jamshid's and Faridun's images on its walls. He also sends missionaries around the world to promote the new faith.<sup>56</sup>

Khurshid's account about Gushtasp's conversion is different from what is related in the *Shahnamah* and corresponds with the accounts in Zoroastrian sources. Since variants of different parts of Khurshid's account appear in the sources from different eras, a summary of the account is provided here, to show which part of the account appears in which sources, and also to demonstrate that all parts of the account were known in the seventeenth century.

According to Khurshid's account, when Gushtasp becomes king, Zoroaster comes to his court and invites him to the new faith. Zoroaster shows the scriptures Avesta and Zand to Gushtasp, and tells him that God wants him to wear *sadra* and *kushti* and promote the new faith.<sup>57</sup> Zoroaster's invitation and Gushtasp's conversion are mentioned in the *Denkard* and the *Guzidaha-yi Zadsparam*, both of which are Middle Persian sources compiled in the ninth century based on the Avesta and other Zoroastrian works.<sup>58</sup> The account is also mentioned in the *Pahlavi Rivāyat*, probably compiled in the tenth century, also based on the Avesta and other Zoroastrian sources.<sup>59</sup> Zoroaster's presentation

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<sup>56</sup>Firdausi, *Shahnamah*, 5:79–84.

<sup>57</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fols. 84b–85a.

<sup>58</sup>*Denkard*, bk. 7, chaps. 4.63 and 4.66; *Denkard*, bk. 7, chap. 5.6; *Denkard*, bk. 5, chap. 2.11; and *Guzidaha-yi Zadsparam*, chap. 24.6; as cited in Zhala Amuzgar and Ahmad Tafazzoli, ed. and trans., *Ustura-yi zindigi-i Zartusht*, 3rd ed. (Tehran: Chishma, 1375/1996), 95, 96, 103, 111, and 142 respectively.

<sup>59</sup>Ervand Bamanji Nasarvanji Dhabhar, *The Pahlavi Rivāyat Accompanying the Dādistān ī Dīnik* (Bombay: Trustees of the Parsee Punchayat Funds and Properties, 1913), 138.7.

of the Avesta and Zand to Gushtasp is described in the *Zaratusht-nama*, a legendary biography of Zoroaster in Persian verse composed in the tenth or thirteenth century.<sup>60</sup> According to the *Vijarkard-i dini*, a late (possibly nineteenth-century) Middle Persian work, Zoroaster presented the Avesta, the holy fire of Burzin Mihr, and a cypress tree to Gushtasp when he went to his court to invite him to the new faith.<sup>61</sup>

Khurshid continues by relating that Gushtasp asks Zoroaster to prove the authenticity of his divine mission. To perform a miracle, Zoroaster plants a cypress tree in front of Gushtasp's palace, and it grows extremely large in just a few days.<sup>62</sup> The abovementioned Zoroastrian priest-poet, Anushirvan son of Marzban, wrote a short poem about the miraculous cypress that Zoroaster planted and related that it became a huge tree in seven years.<sup>63</sup> According to the *Vijarkard-i dini*, on every leaf of the cypress tree that Zoroaster had planted, the commandment "O, Gushtāsp, accept the religion" was inscribed.<sup>64</sup>

According to Khurshid's account, Gushtasp is convinced of the authenticity of the new faith and converts. Zoroaster then participates in debates with the sages at Gushtasp's court and prevails, but his triumph turns the sages against him. Thus, the sages conspire and accuse Zoroaster of sorcery. Consequently, Gushtasp sends Zoroaster to jail.<sup>65</sup> The conspiracy against Zoroaster and his imprisonment are mentioned

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<sup>60</sup>Zartusht-i Bahram-i Pazhdū, *Zaratusht-nama*, ed. Muhammad Dabirsiyaqi (Tehran: 1338/1959), 54–57. This work is often attributed to the thirteenth-century Zartusht son of Bahram son of Pazhdū, but Christian Rempis has shown that it was composed by a certain Kaykavus between 970 and 978 AD in Ray. See Christian Rempis, "Qui est l'auteur du Zartusht-Nāmeḥ?," in *Mélanges d'orientalisme offerts à Henri Massé à l'occasion de son 75ème anniversaire* (Tehran: Publications of Tehran University, 1963), 337–442. Although Rempis's argument is sound, the linguistic style of the extant work cannot belong to the tenth century. See Amuzgar and Tafazzuli, *Ustura-yi zindigi-i Zartusht*, 52–53. The title of the work, according to one of its verses, is *Maulud-i Zartusht* (*The Nativity of Zoroaster*), and Zartusht son of Bahram seems to have just copied the work.

<sup>61</sup>The author and date of this work, of which only a few copies are available, are unknown, but the style of its Middle Persian language suggests that it was written in the nineteenth century. See Amuzgar and Tafazzuli, *Ustura-yi zindigi-i Zartusht*, 52 and 160.

<sup>62</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fol. 85a.

<sup>63</sup>Unvala, *Dārāb Hormazyār š rivāyat*, 2:213.

<sup>64</sup>As cited in Amuzgar and Tafazzuli, *Ustura-yi zindigi-i Zartusht*, 160.

<sup>65</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fols. 85a–b.

in the *Denkard*, and the *Zaratusht-nama* provides a detailed description of the debates.<sup>66</sup> According to the *Zaratusht-nama*, however, the debates take place before Zoroaster reveals the new faith to Gushtasp. The author of the *Zaratusht-nama* relates that Zoroaster read the Avesta and Zand to Gushtasp and made him interested in the scriptures. That is why the sages accused Zoroaster of sorcery.<sup>67</sup>

Khurshid then describes how Gushtasp's favorite horse is afflicted with a strange disease and its four legs crumple into its stomach. Nobody can cure the horse until Zoroaster hears about it in the jail and asks the prison guard to tell Gushtasp that he can help. Zoroaster is thus released from prison and brought to the court. Upon his examination of the horse, Zoroaster sets a condition for curing each leg. The first condition is that Gushtasp accept the new faith. He does, and the first leg is cured. The second condition is that Gushtasp's sons Isfandiyar and Pashutan accept the new faith and promote it. They do, and the second leg is cured too. The third condition is that Katayun, Isfandiyar's mother, converts. She does, and the horse's third leg is cured. Finally, the fourth condition is that the person who helped the sages accuse Zoroaster of sorcery confess that he was bribed by the sages. Upon that person's confession, the horse's fourth leg is cured as well. Thus, Zoroaster becomes a close companion of Gushtasp.<sup>68</sup> A reference to this miracle of Zoroaster is made in the *Denkard*, and the full account is provided in the *Zaratusht-nama*.<sup>69</sup> The Muslim author Shahrastani (d. 1154), who wrote a work on ancient religions, also briefly refers to this account as a miracle attributed to Zoroaster.<sup>70</sup>

Khurshid's final account about Zoroaster's miracles concerns four things that Gushtasp wishes to have: a view of his place in heaven,

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<sup>66</sup>*Denkard*, bk. 7, chaps. 4.64–65, as cited in Amuzgar and Tafazzuli, *Ustura-yi zindigi-i Zartusht*, 95–96; and Zartusht, *Zaratusht-nama*, 49–54.

<sup>67</sup>Zartusht, *Zaratusht-nama*, 54–57.

<sup>68</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fols. 85b–87a.

<sup>69</sup>*Denkard*, bk. 7, chap. 4.70, as cited in Amuzgar and Tafazzuli, *Ustura-yi zindigi-i Zartusht*, 97; and Zartusht, *Zaratusht-nama*, 61–72.

<sup>70</sup>Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Karim Shahrastani, *al-Milal va al-nihal*, ed. Muhammad Badran, 3rd ed. 2 vols. (Qum: al-Sharif al-Razi, 1364/1985), 1:283.

omniscience, immortality, and invincibility. Zoroaster tells Gushtasp that God will not fulfill all four wishes for one person, as it is only God who deserves to have all four attributes. So he recommends that Gushtasp wish each of the four things for a different person. Gushtasp wishes to see his own place in heaven and asks Zoroaster to fulfill the other three wishes for three other persons. Zoroaster performs a ritual to consecrate four things: wine, a rose, milk, and pomegranate seeds. He then gives the wine to Gushtasp, who upon drinking it falls asleep and sees his magnificent place in heaven. Zoroaster gives the rose to Jamasp, Gushtasp's adviser and high priest. Upon smelling the rose, Jamasp gains the knowledge of everything that has occurred or will occur in the world from the first day of creation to the Last Day. The milk and pomegranate seeds are given to Pashutan and Isfandiyar respectively. The former makes Pashutan immortal, and the latter make Isfandiyar invincible.<sup>71</sup> This account is related in the *Zaratusht-nama* but with some differences in the details.<sup>72</sup>

Khurshid continues his account about Zoroaster by stating that the new faith was promoted everywhere and everybody accepted it, except Arjasb, the king of China. Khurshid avoids the details of the wars with Arjasb, which are provided in the *Shahnamah*, "so as not to give a headache to the reader."<sup>73</sup> But he mentions that Gushtasp loses all his thirty-eight sons in wars with Arjasb, except for the immortal Pashutan and the invincible Isfandiyar. He also states that when Gushtasp is away from Balkh, his capital, to promote the new faith, Arjasb invades Balkh and kills Gushtasp's father along with eighty priests, Zoroaster among them.<sup>74</sup> Khurshid's brief account here corresponds with the *Shahnamah* narrative, but there is no mention of Zoroaster's death during Arjasb's raid on Balkh in the *Shahnamah*.<sup>75</sup> To my knowledge, none of the extant Zoroastrian sources that refer to Zoroaster's death suggest that his death occurred during the raid of Balkh.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>71</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fols. 87a–b.

<sup>72</sup>Zartusht, *Zaratusht-nama*, 72–74, lines 1102–28, 76–77, lines 1162–79.

<sup>73</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fol. 87b.

<sup>74</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fols. 87b–88a.

<sup>75</sup>Cf. Firdausi, *Shahnamah*, 5:183, lines 1114–19.

<sup>76</sup>Cf. *Denkard*, bk. 7, chap. 5.1; and *Guzidaha-yi Zadsparam*, chap. 25.5; as cited in Amuzgar

## Alexander's Reign

Khurshid devotes only one-and-a-half pages of his abridgment to the account about Alexander.<sup>77</sup> Although he begins his account by putting Alexander in a positive light by referring to his upholding of justice and making the realm prosperous—which corresponds with the *Shahnamah*—he adds that Alexander also wrecked the ancient religion and tradition of Iranians:

و آیین‌های ایران و کیش‌ها برطرف کرد و آیین کیش رومیان پیش نهاد  
و آن مذهب‌ها را روان کرد و دین زرتشت که در ایام شاه گشتاسب بود،  
آن دین بسیار حقیر شد.

He put an end to Iranian traditions and religions and brought in the traditions of the Romans and promoted those religions. And, the Zoroastrian religion, which was [practiced] during the reign of king Gushtasp was extremely humiliated.<sup>78</sup>

Khurshid introduces Alexander as someone who created many occult sciences and talismans (بسیار حکمت‌ها و طلسم‌ها ساخت) and names two examples of his talismanic inventions, one being a mirror, which

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and Tafazzuli, *Ustura-yi zindigi-i Zartusht*, 102 and 143 respectively; and Dhabhar, *Pahlavi Rivāyat*, 141.23–25. According to the Zoroastrian tradition, Zoroaster was murdered at the age of seventy-seven by someone named Tur-i Baradravush or Baradarvurish, but no details about the murder are provided. See Amuzgar and Tafazzuli, *Ustura-yi zindigi-i Zartusht*: 45. See also A. V. Williams Jackson, *Zoroaster: The Prophet of Ancient Iran* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1899), 124–32, where the author brings together the Greek and Latin legends as well as the early and late Zoroastrian traditions about Zoroaster's death. Interestingly, Jackson's remarks about the later Zoroastrian traditions are based mostly on Hyde's comments in *Historia*, which were drawn from Khurshid's *Shahnamah*, and two early editions of Firdausi's *Shahnamah*.

<sup>77</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fols. 97a–b.

<sup>78</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fol. 97a. For the portrayal of Alexander in Zoroastrian tradition, see Richard Stoneman, *Alexander the Great: A Life in Legend* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 41–44; and F. M. Kotwal and P. G. Kreyenbroek, "Alexander the Great, ii., In Zoroastrian Tradition," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 2011, [iranicaonline.org/articles/alexander-the-great-ii](http://iranicaonline.org/articles/alexander-the-great-ii). See also Richard Stoneman, Kyle Erickson, and Ian Netton, ed., *The Alexander Romance in Persia and the East*, Ancient Narrative 15 (Groningen, Netherlands: Barkhuis Publishing; Groningen University Library, 2012).

reflected everything that existed in both worlds, and the other, fireworks (*atash-bazi*) and firearms (*tufang, zanbura*).<sup>79</sup> There is no mention of these inventions in the *Shahnamah*, although the use of fire as an innovation in Alexander's war against Fur of India is described there.<sup>80</sup>

Khurshid briefly refers to Alexander's extensive land and sea journeys and his unsuccessful search for the Water of Life, and ends his account by stating that Alexander died after fourteen years of kingship and was buried in Alexandria, a city that he had built and named after himself.<sup>81</sup> The details of Alexander's journeys, his search for the Water of Life, and his death and burial in Alexandria are provided in the *Shahnamah*,<sup>82</sup> but Khurshid decided to omit them "so as not to give a headache to the reader."<sup>83</sup>

### Ardashir's and Shapur's Reigns

According to Khurshid, when Ardashir, the founder of the Sasanian Dynasty (224–651), becomes king, he puts an end to the customs and practices (*ayin*) introduced by Alexander and renovates the religion of Gushtasp. To remove any doubts about the authenticity of the renewed religion and to prove that it is the same religion as the one practiced under Gushtasp, Ardashir asks the Zoroastrian priests to perform miracles.<sup>84</sup> One of the miracles is that a Zoroastrian priest named Arda Viraf/Viraz (the righteous Viraf/Viraz) travels to the other world and returns after

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<sup>79</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fol. 97a.

<sup>80</sup>Firdausi, *Shahnamah*, 6:43–44, lines 550–69. In his *Iskandar-nama*, Nizami gives an account of the invention of the mirror by Alexander, but it is not described as a talismanic object that would show everything in both worlds. See Jamal al-Din Abu Muhammad Ilyas b. Yusuf Nizami, *Khamsa-yi Nizami*, ed. Samiya Basir Muzhdahi (Tehran: Dustan, 1383/2004), 773–74. For a review and analysis of varying descriptions of Alexander's mirror in the sources, see Mustafa Musavi, "Ayina-yi Sikandari," *Nashriya-yi danishkada-yi adabiyat va 'ulum-i insani-i danishgah-i Tabriz* 46 (1382/2003): 1–18. Amir Khusrau's *Ayina-i Iskandari* (*Mirror of Alexander*), composed in imitation of Nizami's *Iskandar-nama*, represents Alexander as a mirror for princes to look at and emulate. See Amir Khusrau Dihlavi, *Ayina-yi Iskandari*, ed. Jamal Mir Sayyiduf (Moscow: Idara-yi intisharat-i danish, shu'ba-yi adabiyat-i khavar, 1977).

<sup>81</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fol. 97b.

<sup>82</sup>Firdausi, *Shahnamah*, 6:48–123.

<sup>83</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fol. 97b.

<sup>84</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fol. 97b.

a week with the truths about heaven and hell—that is, with information on the practices that will take people to heaven or hell. According to Khurshid, although this miracle convinces many that the religion promoted by Ardashir is authentic, some eighty thousand people remain doubtful.<sup>85</sup> When Ardashir's son, Shapur, becomes king, he is informed that there are eighty thousand people who have doubts about the religion he is promoting. Thus, Shapur asks the sages and priests to remove people's doubts. One of the priests, named Azarbad-i Mahr Isfand, a descendant of Arda Viraf, volunteers to prove the authenticity of Arda Viraf's reports about heaven and hell by undergoing the ordeal of molten metal. He says that if he does not survive the ordeal, it means that the religion they practice is false. Khurshid relates that Azarbad undergoes the ordeal and is not harmed, so everyone is convinced of the authenticity of the religion promoted by Shapur.<sup>86</sup>

The above accounts about Ardashir and his son Shapur are not related in the *Shahnamah*, although an allusion is made to Ardashir's efforts in proving the authenticity of the faith he promoted through the symbolic tale of Haftvad's colossal worm and Ardashir's pouring of molten metal down its throat and killing it.<sup>87</sup>

According to the Zoroastrian apocalyptic text *Zand ī Wahman Yasn*, during the reign of Shapur, son of Ardashir, a Zoroastrian priest named Adurbad (Azarbad) would undergo the ordeal of molten metal, and his survival would prove the authenticity of the religion practiced under Shapur.<sup>88</sup> The Middle Persian work *Arda Viraf nama* (*The Book of Viraf the Righteous*), which recounts the journey of the righteous Viraf to the other world, refers to the ordeal of molten metal performed on

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<sup>85</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fol. 98b.

<sup>86</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fols. 98b–99a.

<sup>87</sup>On this tale and its analysis in the context of Zoroastrian tradition, see Nasrin Askari, *The Medieval Reception of the Shāhnāma as a Mirror for Princes*, Studies in Persian Cultural History 9 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 115–23. On the motif of molten metal in the tale, see Askari, *Medieval Reception*, 120–21.

<sup>88</sup>Carlo G. Cereti, ed. and trans., *The Zand ī Wahman Yasn: A Zoroastrian Apocalypse*, Serie Orientale Roma 75 (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1995), 152, chap. 3.25. Also mentioned in *Denkard*, bk. 4, as cited in Cereti, *Zand ī Wahman Yasn*, 183.

Adurbad i Mahrspandan (Azarbad-i Mahr Isfand), but not in connection with Shapur's reign.<sup>89</sup> There is no mention of Ardashir in the *Arda Viraf nama* either, but according to the extant New Persian versions of the work, which are available in both prose and verse, Ardashir, who wanted to ensure that the religion practiced under his reign was authentic, ordered that the most righteous man be selected for the task of traveling to the other world to confirm the authenticity of the religion, and Arda Viraf was selected.<sup>90</sup>

### Qubad's Reign

The most significant event in relation to Qubad's reign was the rise of the religious reformist Mazdak, whose ideas were fiercely opposed by Zoroastrian priests. Variants of the account about the socioreligious upheaval caused by Mazdak's reforms and the brutal suppression of the Mazdakites are reported by Muslim historians, but the most elaborate version is provided by the vizier Nizam al-Mulk (d. 1092 AD)—who served two Saljuq rulers, Alp Arslan (r. 1063–72) and Malikshah (r. 1072–92)—in his *Siyar al-muluk*.<sup>91</sup> Nizam al-Mulk's purpose in

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<sup>89</sup>Zhala Amuzgar, ed. and trans., *Ardavirafnama (Ardaviraznama)*, Ganjina-yi nivishtaha-yi irani 30 (Tehran: Mu'in and Institut Français de Recherche en Iran, 1382/2003), chap. 1, sec. 10. For an English translation of the work, see Fereyduun Vahman, ed. and trans., *Ardā Wirāz nāmāg: The Iranian "Divina Commedia,"* Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies Monograph Series 53 (Copenhagen: Curzon Press, 1986).

<sup>90</sup>For a critical edition of *Arda Virafnama* in Persian prose, see Dariush Kargar, ed., *Ardāy-Virāf Nāma: Iranian Conceptions of the Other World*, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Studia Iranica Upsaliensia 14 (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 2009), 3–66 (Persian text). The version in Persian verse was composed by Zartusht son of Bahram son of Pazhdū, the thirteenth-century poet to whom the abovementioned legendary biography of Zoroaster is attributed. See Zartusht-i Bahram-i Pazhdū, *Ardavirafnama ya bihisht u duzakh dar ayin-i mazdyasni*, ed. Rahim 'Afifi (Mashhad: Chapkhana-yi Danishgah, 1342/1963). Another versified version of the work was produced by Kavus son of Fariburz of Navsar, probably in 1502. See Supplément persan 46 in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris. The length of the versified versions differs across manuscripts. For a study of the influence of the *Shahnamah* on an extended version of the work, see Olga Yastrebova, "The Influence of the *Shahnamah* in the Extended Version of the Arday Virafnama by Zartusht Bahram," in *Shahnama Studies, 2: The Reception of Firdausi's Shahnama*, ed. Charles Melville and Gabrielle van den Berg, Studies in Persian Cultural History 4 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 79–100.

<sup>91</sup>Nizam al-Mulk, *Siyar al-muluk (Siyasat-nama)*, ed. Hubert Darke, Majmu'a-yi mutun-i farsi 8



relating the account was to warn the Saljuq rulers against “heresy” and how it undermines both the “orthodox” religion and kingship. In 1616, the abovementioned Zoroastrian priest–poet, Anushirvan son of Marzban, produced a versified version of this account, which is similar to what is related in *Siyar al-muluk*.<sup>92</sup> It has been opined that the account in Nizam al-Mulk’s work and other Islamic sources must have been taken from the now-lost Middle Persian work *Mazdak-nama*, which was translated into Arabic by Ibn al-Muqaffa’ (ca. 720–ca. 756).<sup>93</sup> What is related by Firdausi, however, differs in most parts from all other available sources.<sup>94</sup> Khurshid’s summary of the account about Mazdak corresponds less with the *Shahnamah* and more with other sources, especially with Anushirvan’s versified version of the account.<sup>95</sup> Being a priest from Fars, Khurshid probably knew the story of Mazdak as part of his ancestral tradition, but he could have also seen Anushirvan’s poem, as Anushirvan mentions in his work that, in 1627, he sent a copy of his poem to India along with his answers to the questions of Zoroastrians in India.<sup>96</sup>

Khurshid’s brief account about Mazdak is all that he covers for Qubad’s reign. According to his summary, a seditious man named Mazdak, claiming to be a prophet sent by God, invites Qubad to a new religion.

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(Tehran: Bungalow-i tarjuma va nashr-i kitab, 1340/1962), 239–59; and Nizam al-Mulk, *The Book of Government or Rules for Kings: The Siyar al-Mulūk or Siyasat-nama of Nizam al-Mulk*, trans. Hubert Darke, 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 2002), 190–206. For a comprehensive study of Mazdak and an analysis of the available sources about his movement, see Ehsan Yarshater, “Mazdakism,” in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 3, pts. 1–2, *The Seleucid, Parthian and Sasanian Periods*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 991–1024. See also Patricia Crone, “Kavād’s Heresy and Mazdak’s Revolt,” *Iran* 29 (1991): 21–42.

<sup>92</sup>Unvala, *Dārāb Hormazyār’s rivāyat*, 2:214–30. For a more recent edition of the poem, see Rahim Riza-zada Malik, “*Mazdak-nama*: Matn-i farsi-i mansur va manzum-i mutarjam az pahlavi,” *Nama-yi anjuman*, supplement 4 (1385/2006): 93–118.

<sup>93</sup>Yarshater, “Mazdakism,” 994.

<sup>94</sup>On the differences between the accounts about Mazdak in the *Shahnamah* and the reports of early Muslim historians, see Muhammad Tahiri and Muhammad Sani Mu’mini, “Barrasi-i tafavut-i sakhitari-i dastan-i Mazdak dar *Shahnama-yi* Firdausi ba digar manabi’-i tarikhi,” *Pazhuhishnama-yi zaban u adab-i farsi (Gauhar-i guya)*, no. 2 (1389/2010): 59–76.

<sup>95</sup>Cf. Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fols. 106b–107b; Firdausi, *Shahnamah*, 7:69–81; and Malik, “*Mazdak-nama*,” 93–118.

<sup>96</sup>Malik, “*Mazdak-nama*,” 117–18, lines 603–15.

Qubad asks for a miracle that would prove the authenticity of Mazdak's religion, and Mazdak suggests that the king and his courtiers accompany him to the fire temple, so that they can all hear the fire confirming the truth of Mazdak's words. Qubad and everyone at the court like that suggestion. So Mazdak digs a tunnel that connects the basement of his house to the basement of the fire temple, and instructs one of his servants to go and sit beneath the fire and confirm everything that he hears from him when he brings Qubad and his men to the fire temple to hear the fire's testimony. Mazdak succeeds in convincing the king, and thirty thousand people convert to the new faith following the conversion of Qubad.<sup>97</sup> In the *Shahnamah*, however, Mazdak is not introduced as a false prophet. Rather, he is an eloquent man whose great knowledge and wisdom impress Qubad, so he becomes the chief minister and treasurer.<sup>98</sup>

According to Khurshid, Qubad's son Anushirvan does not convert and tries to convince his father that Mazdak is a liar, but Qubad does not listen. So Anushirvan and a Zoroastrian priest named Yunan investigate the matter and manage to get Mazdak's servant to reveal the secret about the talking fire. Anushirvan then pretends that he has converted to Mazdak's religion and asks his father for permission to invite Mazdak and his followers to a banquet held in their honor in a garden. Qubad is delighted and permits Anushirvan to honor Mazdak and his followers in the garden. Thus, Anushirvan invites all Mazdakites and then prepares the garden by digging thirty thousand holes in it. As the Mazdakites arrive and are led to the garden, he has them planted like trees with their heads down in the holes and their feet up in the air. Mazdak, who is the last guest to arrive, is planted like his followers too. Anushirvan then explains everything to his father, who regrets having trusted Mazdak. Qubad repents and dies shortly after, leaving the throne to Anushirvan.<sup>99</sup>

According to the *Shahnamah*, Anushirvan, who opposed Mazdak's reforms, invites a Zoroastrian priest to the court to debate with Mazdak

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<sup>97</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fols. 106b–107a.

<sup>98</sup>Firdausi, *Shahnamah*, 7:69, lines 212–14.

<sup>99</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fols. 107a–108a.

and reveal before the king and all courtiers the detriments of Mazdak's ideas. The Zoroastrian priest prevails, and the furious Qubad hands Mazdak over to Anushirvan to punish him.<sup>100</sup> The story of inviting the Mazdakites to the garden and planting them like trees is included in the *Shahnamah*, but Mazdak is hanged after he has been shown the garden.<sup>101</sup> Also, there is no mention of Qubad's repentance in the *Shahnamah*, although it is stated that he felt ashamed for a while.<sup>102</sup> And according to the *Shahnamah*, Qubad lives for forty years after the brutal suppression of Mazdak and his followers.<sup>103</sup>

### Anushirvan's Reign

According to the *Shahnamah*, Anushirvan begins his reign as a just king who maintains peace and prosperity in his realm. According to Khurshid, however, injustice and oppression become widespread at the beginning of Anushirvan's reign. Khurshid does not provide the details and simply states that it is a long story, so in order not to give a headache to the reader, he will summarize it.<sup>104</sup> The "summary" begins with the well-known anecdote about Anushirvan and the owls in a ruined village, which is not in the *Shahnamah*. Khurshid does not acknowledge his source, but the earliest known version of this story is related in Nizami's (1141–1209) *Makhzan al-asrar*. According to it, Anushirvan's wise minister interprets for the king the conversation between two owls sitting on the ruins of a village, one of whom was telling the other one that given Anushirvan's injustice, soon there will be many ruined villages for owls to enjoy. Feeling ashamed of how he is viewed by animals, Anushirvan swears on the spot to redress the wrongs and turn his kingdom into a prosperous realm.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>100</sup>Firdausi, *Shahnamah*, 7:76–79.

<sup>101</sup>Firdausi, *Shahnamah*, 7:79–80, lines 341–52.

<sup>102</sup>Firdausi, *Shahnamah*, 7:80, line 354: همی بود یا شرم چندی قباد.

<sup>103</sup>Firdausi, *Shahnamah*, 7:80–81, lines 353–55.

<sup>104</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fol. 108a:

چون روزی قباد از دنیا وفات یافت و پسر او نوشیروان کسرا به جای پدر بر تخت زرین بنشست و تاج شاهی بر سر نهاد و، ظلم او را بیدادی در جهان پیدا شد و ستم به هر جا روا گشت، پس چنین روایت کنند این قصه دور او را درازست، اما مختصر نمایم تا خواننده را در دسر نیفزاید.

<sup>105</sup>Cf. Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fols. 108a–b, and Nizami, *Khamasa*, 54–57. This account is often

Khurshid proceeds to describe Anushirvan's measures in redressing the wrongs, which are not found in Nizami's account. Anushirvan's first measure is to send great amounts of gold from his treasury to all villages in his kingdom. Anushirvan then hangs a bell in his bedroom, leaving the end of the bell rope in the middle of the bazaar, so that people can ring the bell any time and directly notify the king if they have any grievances to be heard. Khurshid also relates an account about a cow who rings Anushirvan's bell to seek justice, because her calf was trampled by the crown prince's horse. According to Khurshid, Anushirvan orders that his own son be punished in retaliation.<sup>106</sup> A similar anecdote is related in Nizam al-Mulk's *Siyar al-muluk*, in which a donkey abused by its owner rings Anushirvan's bell to seek justice.<sup>107</sup>

None of the above accounts are found in Firdausi's *Shahnamah*. The only story in Khurshid's abridgment that corresponds—albeit with slight differences—with the account about Anushirvan in the *Shahnamah* is the well-known story of the shoemaker who wanted his son to become a scribe—that is, to move up from the class of artisans to the class of scribes—and Anushirvan's not allowing it, because of the strict rule of prohibition of movements between social classes.<sup>108</sup>

Khurshid also comments that the Prophet Muhammad thanked God when he learned that he had been born during the reign of the just king Anushirvan—a saying that is often attributed to the Prophet by early Muslim writers.<sup>109</sup> At the end of his account, and following a few counsels from Anushirvan's testament to his son Hurmuz, Khurshid states that Anushirvan concocts a drug for himself to prevent his body from

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illustrated in the manuscripts of Nizami's work. For an example, see Or. 12208, fol. 13b (1595, India) in the British Library, London.

<sup>106</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fols. 108b–109b.

<sup>107</sup>Nizam al-Mulk, *Siyar al-muluk*, 50–52; and Nizam al-Mulk, *Book of Government*, 40–41.

<sup>108</sup>Cf. Firdausi, *Shahnamah*, 7:435–44, and Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fols. 109b–110b.

<sup>109</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fol. 110b. For the attribution of the saying to the Prophet Muhammad, see, for example, Abu al-Ma'ali Nasrullah Munshi, *Tarjuma-yi Kalila va Dimna*, ed. Mujtaba Minuvi Tihrani (Tehran: Intisharat-i Danishgah-i Tihiran, 1345/1966), 19; and Abu Mansur 'Abd al-Malik b. Muhammad b. Isma'il Tha'alibi, *Ghurur akhbar muluk al-furs wa siyarihim: Histoire des rois des Perses*, ed. and trans. Hermann Zotenberg (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1900; repr., Amsterdam: Academic Publishers Associated, 1979), 605–6.

decaying after death. Thus, continues Khurshid, Anushirvan appears as a sleeping person after his death and continues to be so until the Resurrection.<sup>110</sup> None of these statements about Anushirvan are found in the *Shahnamah*.

### Hurmuz's and Khusrau Parviz's Reigns

Khurshid's accounts about the reigns of Hurmuz and his son Khusrau Parviz do not correspond with the *Shahnamah* narrative. He begins by stating that the story is too long and that Nizami has provided the details in his *Khusrau u Shirin*; therefore, he will give just a brief account of it "so as not to give a headache to the reader."<sup>111</sup> Although Khurshid provides two separate rubrics for the reigns of these two kings, and his rubrics correspond with those provided in the *Shahnamah*, his account about Hurmuz actually corresponds with the beginning of Nizami's story of *Khusrau u Shirin*, where Hurmuz's crown prince, Khusrau, is introduced.<sup>112</sup> The only part of Khurshid's account that corresponds with Firdausi's narrative is the end of the story of Khusrau, where Shiruya proposes to Shirin and Shirin commits suicide by Khusrau's grave.<sup>113</sup>

### Azarm-dukht's Reign

Firdausi describes Azarm-dukht's reign in just eleven verses, stating that she is of royal descent, that she pledges to be a just ruler and punish anyone who disobeys her and deviates from the way of wisdom, and that she reigns for four months before passing away.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>110</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fols. 110b–111a.

<sup>111</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fol. 112b:

قصه این و شرح این همه در خسرو [و] شیرین شعر ملا نظامی رحمة الله علیه آمده و [شرح حال او همه یک‌یک بیان کرده است و شرح این دور و دراز است که طولی بی‌نهایت دارد. اکنون اندکی مختصر بیان نموده شود تا خواننده را در دسر نیفزاید.

<sup>112</sup>Cf. Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fols. 111a–112a, and Nizami, *Khamsa*, 131–34. Khurshid's account differs from Nizami's in details. For example, whereas in Nizami's account Khusrau is pardoned by Hurmuz for his misconduct, according to Khurshid's version of the same account, Khusrau is expelled from the capital as a punishment for his misconduct. Cf. Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fol. 111b, and Nizami, *Khamsa*, 133.

<sup>113</sup>Cf. Firdausi, *Shahnamah*, 8:364–73, and Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fols. 114a–b.

<sup>114</sup>Firdausi, *Shahnamah*, 8:399–400.

According to Khurshid's narrative, when fortune turns against Persian kingship, no male heir is left to the throne, and therefore, kingship is given to a princess named Azram-dukht.

Khurshid then relates that 'Umar-i Khattab, whom he introduces as the king of Arabs (*padshah-i 'Arab*), decides to take over the Persian kingdom (*mulk-i 'ajam*) when he learns that a woman reigns there, but suddenly, Azarm-dukht dies, and the Persians have to find a prince to succeed her.<sup>115</sup> Khurshid states that the prince is Yazdgird, the last king of Persia, and gives an account of his reign next. But according to the *Shahnamah*, Azarm-dukht is succeeded by Farrukhzad, and it is Farrukhzad that Yazdgird succeeds.

### **Yazdgird's Reign**

Khurshid's brief account about Yazdgird's reign concerns only his escape from the invading Arabs and his murder at the mill where he had taken refuge. The account does correspond with what is found in the *Shahnamah*, but a slight deviation from the *Shahnamah* narrative bestows some dignity to the slain king. According to the *Shahnamah*, the miller kills the king by the order of Mahuy, the margrave (*marzban*) of Marv, who was looking for Yazdgird in the region.<sup>116</sup> But according to Khurshid's account, when Yazdgird's hiding place is revealed, Yazdgird himself asks the miller to kill him, so that he will not be killed by the enemy. The miller, who cannot bring himself to kill the king, weeps and laments but eventually fulfills the king's wish unwillingly.<sup>117</sup>

### **Khurshid's Conclusion**

To bring his prose abridgment of the *Shahnamah* to an end, Khurshid provides an account about the reign of 'Umar, the second successor to the Prophet Muhammad, in Iran. He relates that 'Umar murders many Persian princes but spares one because he feels affection for him. 'Umar asks that prince to wish for something, and the prince wishes for a ruined village in Iran. Puzzled by that request, 'Umar orders that a ruined village

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<sup>115</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fol. 115b.

<sup>116</sup>Firdausi, *Shahnamah*, 8:465–66.

<sup>117</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fol. 116b.

be given to the prince, but his men cannot find any such village in the entire realm. In response to 'Umar's question of why he made such an unusual request, the prince says that he just wanted to show that his ancestors maintained their kingdom's prosperity by upholding justice, and that 'Umar too should uphold justice to keep the realm as prosperous as when he conquered it.<sup>118</sup>

A detailed version of the account about 'Umar and the Persian prince is found in a poem composed by Zartusht son of Bahram son of Pazhdu.<sup>119</sup> In the poem, the prince tells 'Umar that the prosperity and destruction of a realm are the responsibility of the ruler.<sup>120</sup> The prince then portends all the calamities that will befall Iran during the Arabs' reign and names the subsequent rulers who will take over from the Arabs—that is, the Turks—up to the thirteenth century, which is the poet's own lifetime. The prince asserts that neither the Arabs nor the Turks can make Iran as prosperous as when it was ruled by Persian kings, and heralds the rise of a Persian king, named Bahram, who will eventually bring peace and prosperity back to Iran.<sup>121</sup>

Khurshid concludes his work with thirty-seven verses, composed by him, which repeat the reason already mentioned in his introduction for producing the work. In his poem, he describes that Mr. Aungier was very pleased with the work and rewarded him with a robe of honor (*khil 'at*) and pearls and jewels scattered over his head (*nisar*).<sup>122</sup> This hyperbolic description of his reward was obviously his polite way of asking (*husn-i talab*) for a generous reward. He further states that since Mr. Aungier was so satisfied with the result, he (Khurshid) asked him for one hundred rupees to spend on his daughter's dowry, and Mr. Aungier immediately obliged.<sup>123</sup> This statement is reminiscent of Nizami

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<sup>118</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fols. 118b–119b.

<sup>119</sup>Several copies of the poem are available in different manuscripts. For a copy dated 995 Yazdgridi/1035 AH/1626 AD, see Unvala, *Dârâb Hormazyâr's rivâyât*, 2:244–59. For locations of the other copies, see Hamid-Riza Dalvand, "Mutun-i tarikh-i-zartushtiyân bi farsi," *Mazdak-nama* 6 (n.d.): 18–80, [www.mazdaknameh.ir/Books/Mazdaknameh6](http://www.mazdaknameh.ir/Books/Mazdaknameh6). Reference on pp. 40–41.

<sup>120</sup>Unvala, *Dârâb Hormazyâr's rivâyât*, 2:244.

<sup>121</sup>Unvala, *Dârâb Hormazyâr's rivâyât*, 2:244–59.

<sup>122</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fol. 118a.

<sup>123</sup>Khurshid, *Shahnamah*, fol. 118a.

Aruzi's words (written ca. 1155 AD), where he mentions that Firdausi composed the *Shahnamah* and dedicated it to Mahmud in the hopes of securing the financial means for buying a dowry for his daughter.<sup>124</sup>

## Conclusion

Khurshid's interpolations into Firdausi's *Shahnamah*, as well as his omissions and summaries of the work, demonstrate that he was not as much interested in providing a history of ancient Persian kings as he was in introducing Zoroastrian traditions. His extremely brief accounts about the reign of Sasanian monarchs are good evidence of Khurshid's greater interest in Zoroastrian myths than historical accounts. To understand Khurshid's true purpose in producing a Zoroastrian version of the *Shahnamah*, the entire text of his work should be studied, not only in comparison with Firdausi's *Shahnamah* and Zoroastrian literature, but also in view of the other manuscripts that he copied for his English masters.

We know of at least two more manuscripts that Khurshid produced. One is the abovementioned *Arda Viraf nama*, which he copied in both the Avestan and Persian scripts and completed on 6 Bahman 1047 Yazdgirdi (1678 AD). This manuscript too was sent to Thomas Hyde and is currently preserved in the British Library (Reg.16.B.2). According to its catalogue description, this manuscript was written by the same hand that copied the *Zaratusht-nama*, a legendary account about the life of Zoroaster, also preserved in the British Library (Reg.16.B.8).<sup>125</sup> That *Zaratusht-nama*, which does not include the name of its scribe and date of its completion, belonged to Hyde as well. If the catalogue description of the scribe's hand is accurate, Khurshid must have copied another manuscript with Zoroastrian contents for his English masters without introducing himself.

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<sup>124</sup>Ahmad b. 'Umar b. 'Ali Nizami 'Aruzi Samarqandi, *Chahar maqala*, ed. Muhammad Qazvini (Cairo: 1327/1948); Ahmad b. 'Umar b. 'Ali Nizami 'Aruzi Samarqandi, *Chahar maqala*, ed. Muhammad Mu' in (Tehran: Zavvar, 1333/1954), 75; and Nizami 'Aruzi, *Revised Translation of Chahār Maqāla ("Four Discourses") of Nizāmi-i-'Arūdi of Samarqand*, trans. Edward G. Browne, E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Series, vol. 11, pt. 2 (London: Luzac, 1921), 54.

<sup>125</sup>Rieu, *Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts*, 1:47.



Khurshid also produced a copy of Ziya al-Din Nakhshabi's (d. 1350 AD) *Tuti-nama* (*The Tales of a Parrot*) at Aungier's request. This manuscript too ended up in Hyde's collection and is now in the British Library (Reg.16.B.12).<sup>126</sup> Khurshid completed this manuscript in 1039 Yazdgirdi (1670 AD), a year before the completion of his prose *Shahnamah*. *Tuti-nama*, according to Nakhshabi's introduction, is a rewrite in simple prose of an obscure, prolix Persian translation of fifty-two tales, originally written in the language of Indians (اصطلاح هندوی).<sup>127</sup> Since the other manuscripts that Khurshid produced contain Zoroastrian contents, it is curious that he copied Nakhshabi's *Tuti-nama*, the main theme of which is women's guiles. Khurshid's copy of the *Tuti-nama* was not consulted for the critical edition of the work published in 1993,<sup>128</sup> and I was not able to see the manuscript at the time of conducting research for the present paper. Given the Zoroastrian contents of the other manuscripts that Khurshid produced, a thorough examination of his copy of the *Tuti-nama* might reveal interesting results. We do know that, by the late eighteenth century, the *Tuti-nama* had turned into a textbook for English officers who were learning Persian.<sup>129</sup> So we may presume that the reason Aungier asked for this work was simply for the purpose of practicing the Persian language. But the fact that it was requested by Aungier, copied by a Zoroastrian priest, and sent to Hyde calls for investigating its possible connection to the Zoroastrian tradition.

A close examination of the historical, social, and religious contexts in which Khurshid's manuscripts were produced would also help to explain his unacknowledged Zoroastrian interpolations into his abridgment of the *Shahnamah*. According to a note written on the flyleaf of a

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<sup>126</sup>Rieu, *Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts*, 2:753.

<sup>127</sup>Ziya al-Din Nakhshabi, *Tuti-nama*, ed. Fathullah Mujtaba'i and Ghulam 'Ali Arya (Tehran: Manuchihri, 1372/1993), 4–5.

<sup>128</sup>Nakhshabi, *Tuti-nama*, xxi–xxii.

<sup>129</sup>Pegah Shahbaz, "Persian *Monshi*, Persian Jones: English Translations of Sa'di's Golestān from the Late Eighteenth to the Mid-Nineteenth Centuries," *Iranian Studies* 52 (2019): 739–60. Reference on p. 745. For some early European translations of it, see Rieu, *Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts*, 2:753. The *Tuti-nama* also was, and still is, a major textbook for students of Persian in Saint Petersburg.

Zoroastrian manuscript that was sent to Hyde—which does not contain the name of the scribe—the Zoroastrian priest who wrote the manuscript worked at night, when everyone was asleep, as he did not dare to let his coreligionists know what he was doing.<sup>130</sup> Assuming that the *Shahnamah* manuscript(s) that Khurshid used for his abridgment did not contain Zoroastrian interpolations, and assuming that Khurshid did not intend to produce a “correct” version of the *Shahnamah*, we may presume that he incorporated Zoroastrian contents into his abridgment so that he could share secretly—under the cover of the *Shahnamah*—what he was not supposed to share with outsiders. As noted above, Khurshid does acknowledge Nizami and the anonymous authors of *Siyar-i muluk*, but he never refers to his Zoroastrian sources. If he was secretly sharing information in abridging the *Shahnamah*, he must have found a way to copy Zoroastrian works for outsiders openly by the time he copied the *Arda Virafnama* in 1678, as that is a Zoroastrian text and he clearly introduces himself as a Zoroastrian priest (*hirbad*), and even gives his full name, including his grandfather’s name Rustam (هیرید خورشید بن اسفندیار بن رستم).<sup>131</sup> And if he was the scribe of the abovementioned *Zaratusht-nama*, which does not carry the name of its scribe and date of its completion, he probably copied it at an early stage of his copying of Zoroastrian works for outsiders, when he preferred to remain anonymous.

A careful study of the text and context of the production of Khurshid’s abridgment of the *Shahnamah* would not only enhance our understanding of the *Shahnamah*’s reception by the Zoroastrian community in India, but would also shed light on the intellectual activities and interactions of the Zoroastrian community with Englishmen.

## Appendix

Khurshid son of Isfandiyar. *Shahnamah-yi nasr*. 1671. Manuscript. Thomas Hyde Collection. British Library. London. Shelf-mark no. Reg.16.B.14.

<sup>130</sup>Sims-Williams, “Zoroastrian Manuscripts,” 175.

<sup>131</sup>Rieu, *Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts*, 1:48.

[Abu al-Qasim Firdausi]. Abu'l-Qasem Ferdowsi. *Shahnamah*. Edited by Jalal Khaliqi Mutlaq (Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh). 8 vols. Vol. 6 edited by Jalal Khaliqi Mutlaq and Mahmud Umidsalar (Mahmoud Omidsalar). Vol. 7 edited by Jalal Khaliqi Mutlaq and Abu al-Fazl Khatibi (Abolfazl Khatibi). Persian Text Series, n.s., no. 1. New York: Bibliotheca Persica, 1987–2008. Repr. ed., Tehran: Markaz-i da'irat al-ma'arif-i buzurg-i islami, 1386/2007. Pagination is the same in both editions.

Vol.:P.	Firdausi's <i>Shahnamah</i>	Khurshid's <i>Shahnamah</i>	Folio
1:3	دیباچه	آغاز کتاب شاهنامه نثر	1b
1:21	پادشاهی گیومرت سی سال بود	پادشاهی کیومرث سی سال بود	3a
1:29	پادشاهی هوشنگ چهل سال بود	پادشاهی هوشنگ پسر سیامک چهل سال بود	4b
1:35	پادشاهی طهمورت سی سال بود	داستان پادشاهی طهمورث دیوبند پسر هوشنگ سی سال بود	5a
1:41	پادشاهی جمشید هفتصد سال بود	داستان پادشاهی جمشید هفتصدسال بود	5b
1:55	پادشاهی ضحاک تازی هزار سال بود	داستان پادشاهی ضحاک تازی هزار سال بود	8a
1:89	پادشاهی فریدون پانصد سال بود	داستان پادشاهی فریدون پانصد سال بود	16a
1:161	پادشاهی منوچهر صدویست سال بود	داستان پادشاهی منوچهر بن پشنگ صدویست سال بود	22a
1:164	- گفتار اندر داستان سام نریمان و زادن زال	- داستان سام نریمان با پسر خود زال زر	23a
1:221	- گفتار اندر آگاهی یافتن شاهمنوچهر از پیوند گرفتن زال با دختر مهرباب	- آغاز داستان زال زر با مهرباب کابلی که پادشاه کابل بود و عاشق شدن دختر مهرباب بر زال زر و کیفیت آن	26b
1:275	- کشتن رستم زال پیل سپید را (در پانوشت آمده)	- داستان اندر کشتن رستم پیل سفید را در کودکی و کیفیت آن	29a
1:285	پادشاهی نوذر هفت سال بود	داستان پادشاهی نوذر پسر منوچهر هفت سال بود و بیدادگر شدن او	31a

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1:327	پادشاهی زو طهماسب پنج سال بود	داستان پادشاهی زو بن طهماسب پنج سال بود	32b
1:329	پادشاهی کرشاسب زو نه سال بود (در پانوشته آمده)	داستان پادشاهی کرشاسب بن زو نه سال بود	34a
1:345	پادشاهی کیقباد صد سال بود	داستان پادشاهی کیقباد بن رخ صد و پنجاه سال بود	36a
2:3	پادشاهی کیکاوس صد و بیست سال بود	داستان پادشاهی کیکاوس صد و پنجاه سال بود و رفتن او به مازندران برای جنگ دیوان	36b
2:21	- گفتار اندر هفتخان رستم زال	- داستان رفتن رستم در راه هفتخان برای رهنابیدن کاوس را از بند دیو سفید و کیفیت آن	40a
2:103	- داستان رستم و هفت گردان در شکارگاه افراسیاب	- داستان اندر مهمانداری کردن رستم پهلوانان ایران را در خانه خود به زابلستان و کیفیت رفتن ایشان به نخچیرگاه افراسیاب برای شکار کردن و آگاه شدن افراسیاب را از آمدن ایشان و کیفیت جنگ نمودن	46b
2:118	- داستان رستم و سهراب	- داستان سهراب پسر رستم و کشتن رستم او را به طریق ناشناخت	48b
2:129	- گفتار اندر آمدن سهراب به ایران و رسیدن به دز سپید	- لشکر جمع کردن سهراب برای رفتن ایران و آگاه شدن افراسیاب را	51a
2:202	- داستان سیاوخش	- داستان سیاوخش پسر کاوس که با سوداوه زن کی کاوس دختر شاه هاماوران که با سیاوش مکر کرده آخرش سیاوش در آتش گذر کرد [د] بعد از آن افراسیاب او را کشت	59b
3:3	پادشاهی کیخسرو شست سال بود	داستان کیخسرو بن سیاوش و پادشاهی او شست سال بود که کینه پدر خود با افراسیاب گرفت که افراسیاب نیای او بود	63b
		داستان برزو پسر سهراب نبیره رستم که افراسیاب او را از سنکان برای جنگ رستم آورده بود کیفیت آن مختصر نوشته شد	70a

Vol.:P.	Firdausi's <i>Shahnamah</i>	Khurshid's <i>Shahnamah</i>	Folio
4:3	داستان رزم یازده رُخ	داستان یازده رخان یعنی یازده پهلوانان افراسیاب بر دست یازده پهلوانان کیخسرو کشته شدند	79a
5:3	پادشاهی لهراسب صدویست سال بود	داستان پادشاهی لهراسب صدویست سال بود	81a
5:75	پادشاهی گشتاسب صدویست سال بود	داستان پادشاهی گشتاسب صدویست سال بود	84b
5:471	پادشاهی بهمن شست سال بود	آغاز داستان پادشاهی بهمن بن اسفندیار صدویست سال بود	90a
5:487	پادشاهی همای چهارآزاد سی و دو سال بود	داستان همای زن بهمن و پادشاهی او سی سال بود	94a
5:515	پادشاهی داراب دوازده سال بود	داستان پادشاهی داراب بن بهمن دوازده سال بود	95a
5:529	پادشاهی دارا چهارده سال بود	داستان پادشاهی داران بن داراب چهارده سال بود	96a
6:3	پادشاهی اسکندر چهارده سال بود	داستان پادشاهی سکندر در ایران زمین چهارده سال بود	97a
6:133	پادشاهی ملوک طوایف دویست و هشتاد و سه سال بود		
6:193	پادشاهی اردشیر بابکان چهل و دو سال بود	داستان پادشاهی اردشیر بابکان چهل سال و دو ماه بود	97b
6:241	پادشاهی شاپور اردشیر سی سال بود	داستان پادشاهی شاپور بن اردشیر سی سال و دو ماه بود	98a
6:255	پادشاهی اورمزد شاپور یک سال و چهار ماه بود	داستان پادشاهی اورمزد بن شاپور پنج سال بود	99a
6:263	پادشاهی بهرام اورمزد سه سال و سه ماه بود	داستان پادشاهی بهرام بن اورمزد سه سال و سه ماه و سه روز بود	99b
6:269	پادشاهی بهرام پسر بهرام نوزده سال بود	پادشاهی بهرام بن بهرام نوزده سال بود	99b

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6:275	پادشاهی بهرام بهرامیان چهار ماه بود	داستان پادشاهی بهرام بهرامیان چهار ماه بود	100a
6:281	پادشاهی نرسی نه سال بود	داستان پادشاهی نرسی بن بهرامیان نه سال بود	100a
6:285	پادشاهی اورمزد نرسی نه سال بود	داستان پادشاهی اورمزد بن نرسی نه سال بود	100b
6:291	پادشاهی شاپور ذوالاکتاف هفتاد سال بود	داستان پادشاهی شاپور بن اورمزد پنجاه سال بود	100b
6:345	پادشاهی اردشیر نیکوکار ده سال بود	داستان پادشاهی اردشیر نیکوکار ده سال بود	101b
6:349	پادشاهی شاپور پسر شاپور پنج سال و چهار ماه بود	داستان پادشاهی شاپور بن شاپور پنج سال و چهار ماه بود	102a
6:355	پادشاهی بهرام پسر شاپور چهارده سال بود	داستان پادشاهی بهرام بن شاپور چهارده سال بود	102a
6:361	پادشاهی یزدگرد بزه گریست سال بود	داستان پادشاهی یزدگرد هفت سال بود و بیدادگر شدن او	102a
6:415	پادشاهی بهرام گور شصت سال بود	داستان پادشاهی بهرام گور شصت سال بود	103a
7:3	پادشاهی یزدگرد هشده سال بود	داستان پادشاهی یزدگرد بهرام دو سال بود	104b
7:9	پادشاهی هرمز یک سال بود	داستان پادشاهی اورمزد بن یزدگرد بیست و هفت سال بود	105a
7:15	پادشاهی پیروز بیست و هفت سال بود	داستان پادشاهی پیروز بن اورمزد نوزده سال بود	105b
7:31	پادشاهی بلاش پیروز چهار سال بود	داستان پادشاهی بلاش بن پیروز پنج سال بود	106a
7:51	پادشاهی قباد چهل سال بود	داستان پادشاهی قباد چهل سال بود	106b

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7:87	پادشاهی نوشین روان چهل و هشت سال بود	آغاز داستان پادشاهی نوشیروان عادل چهل سال بود	108a
7:465	پادشاهی هرمزد دوازده سال بود	داستان پادشاهی هرمز بن نوشیروان دوازده سال بود	111a
8:3	پادشاهی خسرو پرویز سی و هشت سال بود	داستان پادشاهی خسرو پرویز سی و هشت سال بود	112a
8:323	پادشاهی شیرویه هفت ماه بود	داستان پادشاهی شیرویه ستمکار هفت ماه بود	114b
8:377	پادشاهی اردشیر یک سال بود		
8:385	پادشاهی فرابین پنجاه روز بود		
8:393	پادشاهی بوران دخت شش ماه بود	داستان پادشاهی توران دخت که زن در اولاد پادشاه و از تخم ایشان بود بغیر از شاهزاده او را بر تخت بنشانند و شش ماه پادشاهی کرد	115a
8:399	پادشاهی آزرمدخت چهار ماه بود	داستان پادشاهی آزرمدخت چهار ماه بود	115b
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8:409	پادشاهی یزگرد بیست سال بود	داستان پادشاهی یزدگرد شهریار آخر ملوک عجم سی سال بود	115b
8:486	گفتار اندر تاریخ گفتن شاهنامه	ختم کتاب شاهنامه نثر	115b

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