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Transmitters, Texts, and Traditions: the Zoroastrian Priesthood from the Sasanian to the Early Islamic Period

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This dissertation examines the institutional framework of the Zoroastrian priesthood through its individual priests and their relationship with ruling authorities. Entitled “Transmitters, Texts, and Traditions: The Zoroastrian Priesthood from Late Antiquity to the Early Islamic Period,” it traces the survival and transformation of the priesthood across the divide of the Arab conquest of Iran, the period of transformation from Zoroastrianism as a state religion under the Sasanid kings to the gradual conversion of the population to Islam under Muslim rulers. Using primary sources in Arabic, Syriac, Armenian, and Greek alongside material culture and literary sources in Middle Persian, I study the priesthood through its interactions with others—including Christians and Muslims. The modern study of Zoroastrianism has typically meant the study of its texts. Although many of these were composed in their present form only in the ninth and tenth centuries CE, they are often taken to be representative of earlier religious thought and practice. Besides shifting the focus from texts to the priests who authored them, my research critically analyzes received narratives of continuity and also examines the mechanisms of the transmission of religious knowledge. I conceptualize the priesthood as the institution that is responsible for the preservation of Zoroastrian religious knowledge even until today, but which has never existed in isolation, and I demonstrate the contingency of the priesthood’s survival in the ninth and tenth centuries through the efforts
of Zoroastrian priests in dialogue with Muslim rulers and intellectuals and as part of Islamic society.

The dissertation consists of an Introduction, four chapters, and a brief Conclusion, followed by Appendices with tables and corollary discussions. Chapter 1 examines the Zoroastrian priesthood as it is represented in the Sasanian administrative corpus of seals and sealings, as well as the early post-Sasanian Ṭabarestān archive, to show the extent of late-Sasanian priestly bureaucracy and its evolution immediately following the end of Sasanian rule. In Chapter 2, I compare this view of the Sasanian priesthood to that found in contemporary literary sources in Syriac, Armenian, Greek, and Middle Persian to demonstrate the role and function of Sasanian-era Zoroastrian priests through their interactions with Christians and other religious groups as representatives of state authority. These two chapters offer a picture of the Zoroastrian priesthood in the late Sasanian period that is more complete and consistent than previous scholarship, which has only treated small topics or limited corpora of sources.

The full scope of the Zoroastrian priesthood, at the height of its power under the Sasanians, is then contrasted to the situation of Zoroastrian priests in the ninth through eleventh centuries in the final two chapters of the dissertation, when Zoroastrians are living under Muslim rule and the population has gradually converted to Islam. Chapter 3 analyzes Zoroastrian narratives of the past and their elaboration in the Middle Persian books composed in the ninth and tenth centuries. In this chapter I also critique modern scholarly conceptions of Zoroastrian priestly genealogy, and using contemporary Arabic sources I establish a new chronology for the priests of the early Islamic period. Chapter 4 situates the Zoroastrian priesthood in broader Islamic society, using a wide range of Arabic sources
to show the role of the Zoroastrian priests outside of the Zoroastrian community, as judge, scholar, sage, and advisor to Muslim rulers and intellectuals. My argument is that the institution of the Zoroastrian priesthood survives from antiquity through the patronage of Muslim rulers and moreover that this is accomplished through a deliberate process of reinvention and adaptation on the part of individual Zoroastrian priests of the ninth and tenth centuries. This process has parallels in the renegotiations of other religious minorities under Muslim rule, but also has implications for how we view the religious traditions which the Zoroastrian priesthood transmits—as the selective transmission of religious knowledge on the part of individuals seeking institutional authority from the Muslim state. My claims build upon the recent work of scholars who seek to contextualize Zoroastrian Middle Persian texts in the Islamic period, but my contribution is unique in its focus on the priesthood and its role in preserving the religion as we know it.
Transmitters, Texts, and Traditions:
The Zoroastrian Priesthood from the Sasanian to the Early Islamic Period

A Dissertation
Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School
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Doctor of Philosophy

By
Kayla Dang

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation examines the institution of the Zoroastrian priesthood through its individuals in order to understand its survival and transformation from the Sasanian period to the early Islamic period. The transformation of the priesthood was shaped by complex social, political, and cultural processes in the wake of the Arab conquest of Iran in the seventh century, which resulted in the collapse of many Sasanian institutions that relied on imperial patronage even while local populations adapted existing administrative structures to new political realities. Some transformations occurred gradually, as with the population’s gradual conversion to Islam in the following centuries. In this dissertation I ask in what ways the priesthood changed and in what ways it remained the same—and therefore, what religious traditions it preserved, and what it lost.

Two major issues are at stake in this study of the surviving Zoroastrian priesthood in the Islamic period: both the idea that the religion they preserved was somehow representative and/or a product of continuous transmission with that of the Sasanian past, and the related conception of the priesthood as a hereditary and conservative institution. Instead of assuming that the Zoroastrian Middle Persian texts that Zoroastrian priests wrote in the ninth and tenth centuries are a continuous tradition of the Sasanian past, I examine the ways in which the institution of the priesthood articulated its history and authority in

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1 An alternate term for this period is “post-Sasanian,” because for centuries after the death of the last Sasanid king the region was still not completely incorporated into the emerging Islamic caliphates—nor was the population completely converted to Islam. I use the term “early Islamic” in order to situate the Zoroastrian priesthood and its extant traditions in the social, political, and cultural contexts of Islamic society in the ninth and tenth centuries. Note that I use “Sasanid” to refer to the dynasty of kings, and “Sasanian” to refer to the historical period and aspects of its cultural context.
an Islamic context. To do so, I establish the status of Zoroastrian priests and the institution of the priesthood before the fall of the Sasanian empire and compare this situation to that of the priesthood after the Sasanian period.

A question that runs throughout the dissertation, and which I do not solve, is how this difference relates to the preservation of Zoroastrian religious knowledge and the any conception of “orthodoxy” that has been assumed for the religion presented in the ninth and tenth century Zoroastrian texts. My definition of orthodoxy is not precise, but rather is the impression of continuity with the past and the assumption of authority for any given tradition. I am less concerned with establishing orthodoxy and its definition than critiquing the impression of it and examining the mechanisms whereby that impression is articulated and maintained. Therefore, one of the concerns of this dissertation is with the relationship between religious specialists, such as Zoroastrian priests, and others who hold political authority. Because modern scholars so often refer to Sasanian Zoroastrianism as a “state religion,” I take a moment here to explore this perception of the Zoroastrian tradition, particularly with regard to the idea of the “orthodoxy” of that tradition and its legacy in the Islamic period. Then, I examine the concept of an “institution” as well as its relationship to the transmission of knowledge, or memory.

**Sasanian “State Religion”**

A number of recent articles have attempted to ascertain the ancient conception of Ērānšahr, literally “the land of the people of Ērān,” as both a geographical entity and an identity, and the self-designation of what we might call the Sasanian “state.”² Many other

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² E.g., Payne 2015 and 2017, who describes the Sasanian Ērānšahr or “Iran” as “a mythical-geographical entity that was the re-instantiation of the cosmically apposite political order that had
modern scholars use the terminology of the “Sasanian state” as well as Zoroastrianism as its “state religion,” or rely on an assumption of the strong relationship between the two. A representative example can be found in a volume called The Sasanian Era, which collects articles that represent a range of views on the relationship of the early Sasanian kings to the Zoroastrian religion. While nearly all of these scholars agree about the propaganda put forth by Ardaxšīr and his successor Šāpūr I as Mazda-worshippers (MP mazdēsn) and divinely sanctioned rulers, they differ slightly on the role of the Zoroastrian clergy in this relationship, as well as the development of Zoroastrian priestly institutions and hierarchies—and which sources provide the most historically accurate view.

For example, Philip Kreyenbroek asserts that the religious hierarchy was centralized by Kirdēr in the third century and takes a view that later ZMP, Arabic, and Persian sources accurately represent views of the early Sasanian kings. Touraj Daryaee says, following the tradition of later ZMP texts, that “the power of the Zoroastrian religious hierarchy and its important architect, Adurbād ī Mahrsapandān” really became centralized

3 For example, an entire chapter of Arthur Christensen’s classic L’Iran sous les Sassanides is entitled “Le Zoroastrisme religion d’état” (Christensen 1944: 141ff.).
4 Curtis & Stewart 2008.
5 Against these views see the contribution of James Howard-Johnston (2008), who focuses almost exclusively on the king, the aristocracy, and the military in his conception of the Sasanian state, with the Zoroastrian clergy a parallel but not integral part of Sasanian administration.
6 Kreyenbroek 2008. However, despite the attestation of Kirdēr’s accumulation of offices and his establishment of sacred fires, there is a large gap between the affairs of this third-century priest and the state of Zoroastrian priesthood at the end of the Sasanian priesthood in the sixth and seventh centuries. This gap can be filled, in one part, by examining the material evidence for the institutions of the Zoroastrian priesthood in the Sasanian period, and primarily with the large corpus of administrative seals and sealings from the late Sasanian period (Chapter 1 of this dissertation). Additionally, we should also pay close attention to literary sources from the Sasanian period that survive in a variety of languages and traditions—the focus of Chapter 2.
in the fourth century under Šāpūr II. Shaul Shaked takes a more nuanced and critical approach to the literary sources that have come down to us “through the channel of the Zoroastrian priesthood” and which promote many of the notions of kingship which we have applied to the early Sasanian period, seeing the relationship between kingship and religion as a constant tension rather than a given.

Other scholars have been more skeptical of the view of Zoroastrianism as a “state religion.” For instance, Wiesehöfer cautions against reading the later ZMP and Arabic accounts too literally. Instead, he states that their later context “should deter us from considering the picture of kingship and religion as brothers as anything but a late Zoroastrian design of an ideal state, which probably even emerged under Islamic influence.” I tend to agree with Wiesehöfer here, as well as his objection to the use of the term “Church” for semantic reasons that have more to do with Western Christian conceptions of religion. We cannot assume a complete union of “state” and “Church” in the Sasanian period. However, we must also appreciate the increasing bureaucratization and hierarchization of the Zoroastrian priesthood, as an instrument of Sasanian state power, particularly in the last century of Sasanian rule.

Touraj Daryaee and Khodadad Rezakhani, in an introduction to the world of Late Antique Iran, summarize the development of the “Zoroastrian church” from the fifth century, which “in unity with the Sasanian nobility, became the official religious profession of the government,” with more and more Zoroastrian clergy holding official positions within the administration of the kingdom. In their view, this state of affairs at the end of

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7 Daryaee 2008.
8 Shaked 2008.
9 Wiesehöfer 2001: 211.
the Sasanian period, “left a lasting impression on the minds of early Islamic historians, both Muslim and Zoroastrian, and by extension modern historians, imagining the whole of the Sasanian period as a period of ‘theocracy’ and dominance of a rigid Zoroastrian church.”¹⁰ There was clearly a rupture between the Sasanian and post-Sasanian, or Islamic period—one that was, if not immediate, was nevertheless devastating to the priesthood and the larger Zoroastrian community. So how do we draw a connection between the state of affairs before and after the Arab conquest? What are the mechanics of the survival of Zoroastrianism?

Kreyenbroek sees some agency in the later Zoroastrian priesthood for this depiction of Sasanian state religion and orthodoxy, summarizing the developments of the post-Sasanian period in the following manner:

The leadership of the Zoroastrian community came to rest in the hands of a group of priests who belonged to a single tradition. Members of this lineage were responsible for writing the Middle Persian religious books in the redactions known to us in the ninth and tenth centuries. Thus they defined the way the religion was passed on in the following centuries, creating the impression that Zoroastrianism had always been a more or less unified tradition, dominated by priests and largely orthopraatic in character…¹¹

The Sasanian past was written as it was remembered by priests and other historians, but only as they remembered it in a drastically different context after centuries of Islamic rule, with their own particular reasons for remembering as well as a new host of cultural, social, and political frameworks shaping the process of that remembrance.

Moreover, and as Kreyenbroek points out just after the passage quoted above, there is evidence that alternative Zoroastrian traditions existed, both in the Sasanian period and in the early Islamic period. The discrepancies between the cosmology presented in extant

¹¹ Kreyenbroek 2013: 17.
Zoroastrian Middle Persian works and that presented in other accounts, such as one by the fifth-century Armenian heresiographer Eznik Kołbacʿi, have long been noted by scholars. Meanwhile, the Sasanian-era “heresy” of Zurvanism seems to be mostly a scholarly construct, while Mazdakism represents an actual movement that gained immense popular support before it was suppressed by Kavād (r. 488–531), its one-time supporter, in the second half of his reign. Patricia Crone has explored the various “local Zoroastrianisms” and popular messianic movements that provided ideological bases for a series of revolts in the eighth and ninth centuries. The heterogeneity of Zoroastrianism should be further explored. The concern of this dissertation, however, is the impression of its orthodoxy.

I investigate the notion of Zoroastrianism as a state religion as characterized by the influence and authority of Zoroastrian priests and the impression of orthodoxy that is the legacy of the Zoroastrian priesthood. In other words, I am less concerned with actual beliefs and practices than the way that the authority of the priesthood is articulated by Zoroastrian priests in extant Middle Persian sources, as well as in contemporary sources. Therefore, although I do not offer an alternative to the terminology of “state religion,” nor am I interested in debating the anachronism of thinking about a “state” in Late Antiquity, I do intend to investigate the primary components of religious authority in Persia in late antiquity: the individuals who supported and promoted the king’s legitimacy as a ruler—who were in turn supported by him—and the roles and functions of these individuals within

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12 For Eznik’s work, see the translation by Blanchard & Young 1998; on Armenian Zoroastrianism, see Russell 1987.
13 See Shaked 1992; in contrast, for the classic treatment of Zurvānism, see Zaehner 1955.
14 Mazdakism had a long afterlife, however, in the Islamic period, where it appears in Arabic heresiographies in association with subsequent movements in Islam; see Wiesehöfer 2009, de Blois 2012, and Rezakhani 2015.
15 Crone 2012.
the hierarchies of Sasanian administration at large, as well as the transformation of those roles after the fall of the Sasanian kingdom and the transference of political authority to Muslim rulers. Thus, “state religion” is a provisional term used in an imprecise way in order to describe the relationship between religious authorities and political ones. And the equally imprecise notion of “orthodoxy” will be taken up again the final chapters of the dissertation, which study how Zoroastrians and Muslims of the early Islamic period viewed the legacy of Zoroastrianism and its contemporary priests.

Admittedly, to study the Zoroastrian priesthood in this way in the Sasanian period is to abstract them from their full social and political context—as members of the Sasanian aristocracy and in possession of hereditary titles and honors. However, it is also the best way to compare the Sasanian priesthood to its counterpart in the Islamic period, when much of that earlier social and political context was stripped away under Muslim rule and increasing conversion of Zoroastrians to Islam—when the new, Muslim rulers use a different paradigm to legitimize their authority, with their own competing conceptions of what that authority means and who had claims to it. It is in this new context of Muslim rule, in the ninth and tenth centuries during ongoing debates about the legitimacy of Muslim leadership, when the distinctions between Sunnī and Shīʿī (and other) factions were still coalescing, that Zoroastrian mōbeds committed their religious traditions to writing. The context of this remembrance must be taken into consideration. I turn now to the conception of the priesthood as an “institution” as well as its role of transmitting religious memory.
Institutions and Memory

The institution that is the focus of this dissertation is the Zoroastrian priesthood. Under examination are its activities in reproducing and legitimizing its own authority and structures in complex and changing social and political contexts. But I should begin by explaining what I mean by “institution.”

Richard Payne, in contextualizing hagiographical texts in the product of Christian institutions, defines “institutions” as “reproducible structures that have recognized roles for individuals and are granted the authority to communicate norms, symbols, and narratives to participants.”16 This definition relies on the sociological work of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, 17 as well as that of Mary Douglas, whose own simple definition of “institution” is that of a “legitimized social group.”18 Lapidus, in his work on Islamic societies, follows a similar definition:

An institution, whether an empire, a mode of economic exchange, a family, or a religious practice, is an activity carried out in a patterned relationship with other persons as defined and legitimized in the mental world of the participants. An institution encompasses at once an activity, a pattern of social relations, and a set of mental constructs.19

Similar to these scholars, I use the term “institution” in a meaning that encompasses both the social and cultural context of the structure or legitimized social group as well as the performative aspect of its nature, as an “activity” or something “reproducible.” Furthermore, I examine the relationship between an institution, its survival, and its

16 Payne 2015: 16, where Payne is emphasizing the institutional complexity of Sasanian society, particularly the relationship of Christians and Zoroastrians.
19 Lapidus 2012: 1, categorizing four basic types of institutions: familial, economic, cultural or religious, and political.
transmission of knowledge. Part of this last feature is the “memory” of an institution, which requires further explanation from cognitive and sociological theories of memory.

Any study of Zoroastrianism will reveal the importance of memory (and memorization) to this very ancient and still living religious tradition, primarily in the memorization and recitation of the sacred text of the Avesta—a text which has been recited orally in a liturgical setting for over 2,500 years in such a precise manner, passed from father to son, and only written down perhaps 1,500 years ago for the first time, that this early Indo-European language has been preserved relatively unchanged. However, the memorization of the Avesta and the conservatism of its recitation has led scholars to suppose, in my opinion, a higher level of authority for the Zoroastrian oral tradition more widely. Yet as reliable as we know oral traditions to be as a form of cultural and institutional memory, this reliability is usually tied to specific occasions of formal recitations, such as the daily recitation of the Zoroastrian liturgy of the Yasna, or the public performances of bards and poets. Concomitant to this tendency to view orality with such priority is the (mistaken) notion that Iranians were generally opposed to writing. The result is that assertions of orality have covered many historical gaps with an assumption of continuity that I believe can no longer be maintained without more critical examination.

For example, much of the religious literature which provides the scholarly understanding of Zoroastrianism (be it theology or cosmology or history or law) came to

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20 In the latter case, re-performance and composition in performance are part of this model, with no claims to precise repetition and preservation; on the Parthian minstrel, or gōsān, see Boyce 1957.

21 E.g., Huyse 2008: 142, who writes that “Iranians remained very skeptical about writing until the Islamic period,” or … This may have been true for religious specialists concerned with safeguarding their authority and their traditions, but there is plenty of evidence that writing was actually far more widespread in the Sasanian period; see van Bladel, “Written Middle Persian Literature under the Sasanids” (forthcoming).
be written down only in the ninth or tenth century CE. While it is probable that much of this literature, written in Middle Persian (also known as Pahlavi), records information and ideas from an earlier time, these texts cannot be taken as uncomplicated witnesses to Sasanian or older Zoroastrianism. However, it is only quite recently that scholarship has shifted to critically examine the Islamic context of the writing and redaction of some of the most important ZMP works (as I discuss in Chapters 3-4).

This dissertation attempts to add to these endeavors to contextualize the extant Zoroastrian tradition, and the priests responsible for preserving it, in the Islamic period. I do this by using a variety of sources from within the Zoroastrian tradition and outside it to compare the Zoroastrian priesthood as a Sasanian institution and—after the Arab conquest of Iran—as the remnants of that earlier institution. The theoretical underpinning of this study is a concern for the workings of memory in a society and in an institution, and how memory relates to history. Much of my thinking has been shaped by the cognitive theory of religion of scholars like Harvey Whitehouse, on the one hand, as well as the application of Maurice Halbwachs’ theory of cultural memory as developed by scholars like Jan Assmann, Aleida Assmann, and Astrid Erll, on the other. I will only briefly explore the latter here (memory studies) in summary of its premises.\textsuperscript{22} The concept of cultural memory, in its most basic form, asks us to think about how memory of the past really depends on the present and is contingent upon social and cultural frameworks. For my own work, this means paying attention to the contexts in which memories of the past, or “history” if you like, are written by Zoroastrian priests in the Islamic period—and the interplay of religion,

\textsuperscript{22} An excellent overview of memory studies appears in the first chapters of Erll 2011: 1-37, beginning with the foundational work of Maurice Halbwachs in the 1920s and the growth of the field in the 1980s; see, for example, Halbwachs 1925 (English trans. Coser 1992).
identity, society, and politics in that process. The concept of a religious tradition, as I conceive of it in this study, requires further explanation.

Harvey Whitehouse, in his *Modes of Religiosity*, sets out four principles of religious traditions as the objects of academic inquiry, 1) that they are materially constrained (and thus able to be studied and explained), 2) that religious phenomena are selected (from among possible and existing private and public representations), 3) that this selection is context dependent, and 4) that religious transmission is motivated by explicit concepts. Furthermore, he insists that a study of religion must be able to account for and identify the driving mechanisms of selection. Whitehouse is thus interested in cognitive explanations of religious traditions which account for memory, repetition, and particularly motivation, and where transmission is not a process of replication (e.g., of the memetic sort) but of “triggering” and adaptation in all the variability of human cognition and memory.

In this cognitive study of religion and its transmission, Whitehouse provides a model of two different modes of religiosity: doctrinal and imagistic. The doctrinal mode is characterized by highly routinized ritual action, “facilitating the storage of elaborate and conceptually complex religious teachings in semantic memory, but also activating implicit memory in the performance of most ritual procedures.” The imagistic mode, on the other hand, is characterized by arousing but infrequent practices, such as violent and/or traumatic initiation rituals, experiences of collective possession and altered states of consciousness, etc. that activate episodic memory. The characteristics of these modes are not meant to

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25 Whitehouse 2004: 65-66, where he links these features to “hierarchical, centralized institutional arrangements, expansionary potential, and dynamic leadership.”
26 Whitehouse 2004: 70.
provide categories of definition of religious traditions, but to highlight the patterns and conditions for different kinds of (successful) religious transmission—his model shows the marked tendencies of these different modes, or the coalescence of features, using for mapping modes of transmission and the cognitive processes of different religious movements.

The utility of Whitehouse’s model, for my project, is as a foundation for conceptualizing the Zoroastrian tradition in all of its complexity. For example, in the conceptualization of the doctrinal mode in the Zoroastrian tradition with respect to the idea of “orthodoxy” in its religious transmission, as well as an explanation of (authorized) innovation on the part of religious specialists. I use the terms “Zoroastrian” and “Zoroastrianism” throughout this dissertation, but this term is a placeholder for the complex and variable traditions (each in very specific contexts) included in the long history of people, beliefs, and practices which fall under that moniker. Just because we may identify something as “Zoroastrian” in that long history does not mean that we should reify or monolithize that tradition. There is no genetic or memetic replication which can account for the survival, persistence, and development of the tradition which we call Zoroastrianism. Instead, the tradition is materially constrained, selected, context dependent, and motivated by explicit concepts.

I also add to Whitehouse’s theoretical framework in that I focus on the Zoroastrian priesthood—both as an institution and as a body of individuals—as actors in the transmission of their religious traditions, in a specific context in the post-Sasanian period. I examine the priesthood’s relationship to state authorities across the centuries of upheaval
after the Arab conquest, contrasting their status and authority from the end of the Sasanian period into the period of Muslim rule and the population’s gradual conversion to Islam.

The Zoroastrian religion is not usually treated as the product of an institution. Rather, it has been considered (implicitly or explicitly) as something immaterial and immutable, even something living.\textsuperscript{27} This is a perfectly valid ethnographic approach to the study of modern Zoroastrians and their religion. It would even be acceptable to study ancient Zoroastrianism this way, if we had access to the thoughts, writings, and activities of ordinary Zoroastrians. But, for the most part, we do not. Instead, what we have from the Zoroastrian tradition itself are the writings of its priests. These cannot be taken as representative of “living Zoroastrianism,” past or present. Such writings are the writings of an educated elite, the religious specialists of the tradition. These are people we can study, and theirs is the institution which preserves and has preserved extant Zoroastrian traditions.\textsuperscript{28} If we want to trace the continuity of the Zoroastrian tradition in a tangible way, we must do it through the institution of the priesthood: its texts and the individuals who authored them. The emphasis has long been on the former. I choose to study the latter.\textsuperscript{29} Moreover, we must study them in their historical contexts. This means looking outside of the Zoroastrian sources themselves. We can study the priests not only through their own writings, but through the writings of others who interacted with them—both on the individual and institutional level.

The endurance of an institution relies on its material resources and perceived authority. While institutions can persist in isolation, as apparent holdouts or even relics of

\textsuperscript{27} E.g., Boyce 1992, (Zoroastrianism: Its Antiquity and Constant Vigour).
\textsuperscript{28} Both liturgical and exegetical; on the distinction, see the articles edited by Cantera 2012.
\textsuperscript{29} Following the criticism of de Jong (2016: 228-29) that the scholarly study of Zoroastrianism and its history has traditionally been one of its texts.
the past, often the commodities of resources and authority are tied to political patronage and thus require flexibility and adaptability on the part of the institution and its members, both within any given community and outside of it. The former narrative (of isolation) is often assumed for Zoroastrians in the Islamic period, as part of the history of decline of the community and its closing itself off from outsiders in order to survive. Indeed, many accounts and summaries of extant Zoroastrian Middle Persian texts attribute the writing of them as a response to and defense from worsening social conditions brought about by the conversion of many Zoroastrians to Islam, and the need to preserve religious knowledge before it could be completely lost. However, while this is certainly part of the history of Zoroastrianism, the full story is much more complex and much more a part of its Islamic social and political context than a reaction to it.

The greatest change, or event, in the history of the Zoroastrian priesthood was the Arab conquest of the Sasanian Persian kingdom in the mid-seventh century, and the resulting loss of institutional support for the priesthood as well as the gradual conversion of the populations of Iran and Iraq to Islam. This dissertation compares the institution of the priesthood at the end of the Sasanian period, the height of its institutional complexity and authority as a part of the Sasanian administrative bureaucracy (Chapters 1-2), to that of the priesthood in the early Islamic period, particularly the ninth and tenth centuries, when its members began to record and compose anew their religious traditions (Chapters 3-4).

First, I demonstrate the vast scope of the Sasanian priesthood and its civic power by analyzing the corpus of Sasanian administrative seals and sealings, in the first

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30 E.g., Daryaee 2018: 103.
comprehensive study of *magi* and other clerical administrations represented in them (Chapter 1). Then, I compare this picture to that of the Zoroastrian priesthood in contemporary literary sources (particularly in Syriac martyr acts) to further determine the role and function of the institution of the priesthood in the late Sasanian period (Chapter 2). Next, I examine narratives of the past composed by Zoroastrian priests in the ninth and tenth centuries, particularly for their comments on the history of the priesthood as an institution, and I highlight the ways in which these narratives were shaped by the social and political context of the priesthood in the ninth and tenth centuries (Chapters 3-4). Moreover, I clarify several scholarly misconceptions about the genealogy of these later priests and their descent from Sasanian-era priests (Chapter 3). Using a variety of Arabic sources, I also demonstrate the presence of the Zoroastrian *mōbed* in and as part of Islamic society in the role of a judge, scholar, sage, and advisor to Muslim rulers (Chapter 4).

Not only do I illustrate the drastic transformation of the Zoroastrian institution of the priesthood from the late Sasanian to the early Islamic period, I also analyze traditional narratives that view this transformation as one of continuity in the face of great loss. Instead, I demonstrate the role of individual priests in shaping these narratives of the past, particularly through their activity in and as part of Islamic society—in ways which have until now gone largely unnoticed.

**Notes on Transliteration and Terminology:**

This dissertation uses a variety of sources languages, but for the sake of consistency I follow the conventions of each language’s transliteration in a way in which each phoneme is represented by a single letter. For Middle Persian (also called Pahlavi), I
follow the transcription standards of D.N. MacKenzie,\textsuperscript{31} while also acknowledging the contributions of Philippe Gignoux to our interpretations of Iranian names.\textsuperscript{32} For Classical Armenian, I use the single-letter transliteration system used by Robert Thomson (c instead of ts, l instead of gh, etc.).\textsuperscript{33} For Syriac, I follow the system used by Wheeler Thackston, i.e., for Eastern Syriac pronunciation.\textsuperscript{34} For Arabic, I generally follow the transliteration system set out by the \textit{Encyclopaedia of Islam, Three} except that I maintain a single letter for each phoneme (e.g., t instead of th, ū instead of kh, ġ instead of dh, ş instead of sh, ġ instead of gh). For New Persian, I follow the transliteration system of \textit{Encyclopaedia Iranica} (although I Arabicize personal names).\textsuperscript{35} I do so to preserve similarities between the transliteration of Middle Persian, New Persian, Syriac, and Arabic, especially because this project features many borrowings between these languages.\textsuperscript{36} There are exceptions to these general principles, however, when I refer to terms that have been naturalized in English spelling (e.g., Baghdad, hadith, amir, and dhimma instead of Bağdād, hadīṯ, amīr, and ḍimma), or when I reproduce the spelling used by different scholars for particular names and/or toponyms.\textsuperscript{37}

Because the Zoroastrianism that I am studying in this dissertation is the Zoroastrianism of the Sasanian and early Islamic periods, I use conventional spellings for terms and people that reflect those periods. Thus, Zardušt and Ohrmazd (Middle Persian)

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\textsuperscript{31} As laid out in MacKenzie 1967 and 1971 (\textit{A Concise Pahlavi Dictionary}).
\textsuperscript{32} E.g., Gignoux 1986a and Gignoux et al. 2009 (both onomastica of Iranian names, in Syriac and inscription Middle Persian, respectively).
\textsuperscript{33} See Thomson 1998 (\textit{Introduction to Classical Armenian}).
\textsuperscript{34} See Thackston 1999 (\textit{Introduction to Syriac}).
\textsuperscript{35} E.g., the title of the Persian work \textit{Tārīḵ-e Ṭabarastān} (NP), but the author Ibn Isfandiyār (Ar.).
\textsuperscript{36} Similarly, see van Bladel 2009: xi-xii.
\textsuperscript{37} As with the names of Sasanian-era archaeological sites, which vary according to the nation of origin of the scholar as well as the modern location of the site (see note in Chapter 1).
instead of Zarathuštra and Ahura Mazdā (Avestan). I use “Zoroastrianism” as a placeholder for the long and complex history of the religion of the followers of Zarathuštra, who in the periods in question called themselves followers of the “good religion” (MP weh-dēn) or the “Mazda-worshipping religion” (MP mazdēsn-dēn). In later chapters, I also use the term “Magian” to denote the designation of these peoples in outside sources, such as Syriac (mgušā / (pl.) mgušē) and Arabic (al-majūs), where the original term for priests (MP mog < OP maguš) had been generalized to refer to the religious community as a whole as well as to their religious specialists. Additionally, I use “Sasanian” as a general term to refer to the period of Sasanian rule, and “Sasanid(s)” when referring to their kings or the dynasty.
Chapter 1: The Zoroastrian Priesthood in Sasanian Seals and Bullae

Zoroastrian religious officials’ participation in something like “state religion” in the sixth and seventh centuries is evident in the large number of extant administrative bullae that attest to a vast, hierarchized administrative system that employed *magi* alongside a range of holders of other religious titles. This corpus of seals and inscriptions are the focus of the current chapter, which assesses the notion of Zoroastrianism as a “state religion” under the Sasanid kings and establishes the status of the Zoroastrian priesthood at the end of the Sasanian period.

However, any conclusions we can make from the Sasanian seals and bullae must be compared to the literary record. The last decades have witnessed a movement in Iranian studies scholarship to replace the narrative historiography of Arthur Christensen, Theodor Nö尔deke, and others with new narratives that rank sources as follows: *primary* sources from the Sasanian period, i.e., material and documentary remains rather than literary ones, which are relegated to the category of *secondary* sources even when they are contemporary to the period in question; later literary sources like the Arabic chronicles upon which Christensen based his work are merely *tertiary* sources in this schema.38 My own project integrates the use of *all* of these sources for the study of the Zoroastrian priesthood, treating each type critically, and in particular reads Sasanian-era literary sources alongside material ones in order to understand the role and function of Zoroastrian priests in the Sasanian period. Together, the first two chapters establish the scope of the Zoroastrian priesthood as an

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38 The terminology used is that of Philippe Gignoux, from his conception of the hierarchy of sources for the study of the Sasanian period; see Gignoux 1979c and 1984b, taken up by Gyselen 2009 and 2019c. This hierarchy of sources will be discussed further in the introduction to Chapter 2.
administrative institution in the Sasanian period. This picture of the priesthood will then be compared to that of the early Islamic period, in the final two chapters of the dissertation.

This first chapter offers an introduction to Sasanian seals and sealing practices as well as a literature review that summarizes the state of the field and its current issues, including that of provenance, with a special emphasis on excavated archives. Then it examines the range of functions of the institution of the magi through the administrative bullae of the so-called “clerical” offices, discussing each administrative title in turn with respect to its presence in the sigillographic record. The final section of the chapter brings into the discussion the Šabarestān archive, a collection of documents early post-Sasanian period that may represent a continuation of Sasanian practices; alongside my analysis of the corpus of Sasanian administrative seals and bullae, I assess the implications of the Šabarestān archive for our understanding of Sasanian administrative practices more broadly and the role of the priesthood within them.

1. Introduction to Sasanian Seals and Sealing Practices

Sasanian stamp seals and their impressions on clay bullae survive in museum and private collections across the U.S., Europe, and the Middle East.39 Some have been excavated from legitimate archaeological expeditions.40 More have appeared in private...

39 Some of the major collections of seals and bullae include the catalogues of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris (Gignoux 1978), the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Brunner 1978 with corrections in Gignoux 1985), the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg (Borisoğ & Lukonin 1963), the British Museum (Bivar 1969, with corrections in Gignoux 1977), and even Yale’s Babylonian Collection and the collection of the Yale Art Gallery (Torrey 1932 and Gignoux & Gyselen 1987); there are many other smaller collections (both from museum and private collections) in various publications, some of which are gathered in Gignoux & Gyselen 1982 and 1987, and Gyselen 2007.

40 For example, at the sites of Qaṣr-e Abu Naṣr (modern Shiraz, Iran) and nearby Takht-e Sulaymān (the site of the Ādur-Gušnasp fire, one of the great Zoroastrian fires from antiquity; in the ancient province of Ādurbādāgān, now the Iranian province of Azerbaijan). Qaṣr-e Abu Naṣr...
collections or have been confiscated by Iranian authorities, the product of “clandestine” excavations.

Although the provenance of many of the objects in these collections is unknown, those excavated from Sasanian sites have been dated to the late sixth to early seventh century, and so these dates have been generalized for all of the extant material. Based on paleography and spelling conventions, it may eventually be possible to date other seals and sealings of unknown provenance more accurately. However, the generalized late-Sasanian date corresponds with the hypothesis that administrative seals did not appear before the reforms of Kawād I (r. 499–531) and Xusrō I (r. 531–79), through which much of the Sasanian administrative geography was reorganized. We shall also assume that most of this type of evidence comes from the late Sasanian period—at the height of the

(QAN) was excavated by a team from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in the 1930’s, and so half of the QAN collection of 505 sealings resides in New York while the other half was given to what is now the Iran Bāstān Museum in Tehran; see Frye 1973 (with corrections of his readings in Gignoux 1974 and 1985). Takht-e Sulaymān (TS) was excavated by a German team from 1958-1978, and the room in which most of the 241 bullae were found is thought to have been an office or archive used by scribes (Huff 2002); see Göbl 1976 (with additional material in Cereti & Bassiri 2016). There were smaller yields at the sites of Ak-Depe (in modern Turkmenistan) and at Turang Tepe and Tepe Kabūdān (both in the Iranian province of Gurgān); see Gubaev et al. 1996, Gyselen 1987, and Bayani 1972.

41 The late-Sasanian date of the seals and bullae support the hypothesis that administrative seals did not appear before the reforms of Kawād I (r. 499-531), after which much of the Sasanian administrative geography was reorganized; see Khosrowzadeh et al. 2020a: 22, and more generally Gyselen 2019a on Kawād’s reforms and the reorganization of Sasanian geography.

42 As suggested in Borisov & Lukonin 1963: 66-70. It was previously thought that seals could be dated based on a study of their forms (thus in early catalogues), but this is no longer the case; rather, some chronology may be determined by the material (e.g., onyx was more popular in early Sasanian period) or by the style of writing, but neither of these approaches offers a sure method (see summary of arguments in Gyselen 1993a: 32-33 / 62-64). More recently, Khosrowzadeh et al. 2020b discuss some of these issues and suggest that further comparison of excavated archives may elucidate the matter.

43 The work of Gyselen shows that the summaries of later Arabic narratives about these reforms is actually supported by the material evidence; see Gyselen 2019a, as well as 2001.
organization of the Sasanian administrative bureaucracy, and our last, best chance of reconstructing the role of the Sasanian priesthood in it.

In addition to a wealth of iconographic and material knowledge these seals and sealings offer for the study of the Sasanian period, the inscriptions on them preserve the names, titles, and geographic jurisdictions of various officials from the large administrative network of Sasanian Persia. So far, much of the study of the Sasanian seals has been focused on their contributions to our knowledge of Iranian philology and onomastics, on the one hand, and to Sasanian administrative geography, on the other. In the present study I build on such studies by examining a cross-section of the corpus of Sasanian seals and sealings to better understand the role of Zoroastrian religious officials in Sasanian administrative practices.

There are generally three types of seals: personal seals, official seals, and administrative seals. Personal seals are usually iconic, but can be either epigraphic or anepigraphic; thus, they frequently have an image or identifying device on them, without any inscription. Official seals are iconic and epigraphic, inscribed with the personal name of an official as well as his title and a toponym (or series of them) indicating his jurisdiction; these are often larger than personal seals, and their iconography is more elaborate. Administrative seals are aniconic but epigraphic, and they attest to various offices and their jurisdictions; these seals are formulaic, and seem to represent the office itself if not the office-holder—who may have been named in the contents of the document to which it was attached, if not through a secondary seal (personal or official). All three

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44 There is more work to be done analyzing the iconography of personal seals, especially on the question of the relationship between image, name, and office.

45 As described in the introductions of Gyselen 2019a and 2007.
types of seals might appear as impressions on the same bulla, or just one of them. When a bulla bears multiple seal impressions, however, they are called *co-signatories*. It is most common for a single administrative or official seal to appear on a bulla, with perhaps one other cosignatory seal impression, which is often from a personal seal; although there may be as many as twenty seal impressions on a single bulla, most of these cosignatories are from personal seals.

The following is an example of one bulla with two seal impressions, one from an administrative seal (top) and one from a personal seal (bottom):

![Figure 1: Bulla YPM BC 007466 / NBC 4490, Yale University (photo courtesy of Jon Beltz)](image)

The administrative seal (here of the *maguh* of the canton of Galūl in the province of Xusrō-šād-Kawād) is aniconic, while the cosignatory personal seal (reading the partial name of a Zoroastrian priest, Mihr-…, *mog*, son of Ādur-farrbay) is iconic, bearing a common image type of a male bust in profile.46

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46 For the name, see Frye 1960: 33, n. 8, emending the initial readings of Torrey 1932 and Herzfeld 1938 (fig. 13).
The present study examines the context of the hundreds of such seals and impressions of Zoroastrian priests, or magi (MP sg. mog), as well as to their related offices.\(^47\) While any number of sealings might appear on the same bulla, the personal seal of a mog—with few exceptions—appears only as a cosignatory to certain administrative offices, which have thus been termed “clerical” or “juridico-religious” administrations: the mōbed (“chief priest”), the driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar (“defender of the poor and judge”), and the maguh (possibly meaning the “council of the magi”). Each of these offices will be discussed in more detail below, in addition to the very concept of “clerical” administrations. First, however, I would like to address some of the difficulties of working with this material, before moving into a review of the existing scholarly literature.

Two main problems with the corpus of Sasanian administrative seals and bullae that must be acknowledged: establishing a context for discussing the objects and navigating the scholarship to do so at all. These two issues are related and even interdependent. Usually the documents or objects to which administrative sealings would have been attached do not survive because they were perishable. Provenance and stratigraphy are therefore crucial for providing any context beyond the content of a seal’s inscription and/or iconography. Archeological interest in Sasanian-era sites is growing, but publications are slow to materialize. In the meantime, there is still an implicit acceptance of looting by the continued publication of “private” collections (which appear without provenance and often without photographs). Archaeological context can inform us not only of where a seal or sealing was found (and thus where an office or official was exercising his authority, or how

\(^{47}\) I use the anglicized plural form “magi” (which is ultimately from the Greek rendering of an older Iranian form) for convenience, since the MP form is most commonly found in the singular (mog).
far the range of that authority extended), but what other sealings and objects it was found
with (establishing an archive and potentially a network of officials). In lieu of legitimate
excavation reports, the only context provided by an object is the object itself: the clay bulla
on which several sealings, both administrative and personal, might appear. Yet, due to
problems of access to the objects (or good images of them), even the full potential of this
kind of context has not yet been explored.

This is a field that for the last forty years has been led by a few individuals, who
alone have had access to certain collections and upon whose readings we must entirely
rely. This chapter, in part, acts as a guide to using the available secondary (in the sense of
modern scholarly) sources, for which I hope to clarify some of the conventions and
idiosyncrasies of the field; in addition, the Appendix I provides tables listing the relevant
collections, publications, and their abbreviations. First, I provide a literature review of
scholarship on Sasanian seals and bullae, including an overview of the different types of
extant collections, with an emphasis on excavated archives. Then, after a brief discussion
of the notion of “clerical” administrations, I examine each of the particular offices more
closely, particularly the administration known as the maguh, apparently the “office of the
magi.” A key part of these analyses is the incorporation of the Ṭabarestān archive, a cache
of recently published Middle Persian documents from the early post-Sasanian period (722–
759 CE) that have been preserved with administrative bullae still attached. Finally, I
summarize my findings and consider the role of the magi in Sasanian administration at
large.
2. Literature Review:

Since the late nineteenth century, many major museum collections of Sasanian seals and sealings have been published in individual catalogues. These museum collections are generally comprised of donations by private collectors and early orientalists. In both cases the provenance of these items is unknown. Some include the finds of excavations in Iran and surrounding regions. Other publications focus entirely on the materials excavated from specific archaeological sites, for example Richard Frye’s study of Qaṣr-e Abū Naṣr (QAN; see more on excavated sites below).

In addition to these museum collections and site-specific studies, several private collections of seals and sealings have also been published. Philippe Gignoux and Rika Gyselen, separately and in several joint publications, have published Sasanian seals and

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48 Thomas 1852 and Horn 1890 (British Museum, London); Chabouillet 1858 (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris); Horn & Steindorff 1891 (State Museum, Berlin); Delaporte 1920 and 1923 (Louvre, Paris); der Osten 1931 (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York); Torrey 1932 (Yale’s School of Fine Arts and the Babylonian Collections); Borisov & Lukonin 1963 (Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg); Vollenweider 1967 (Geneva Museum); Bivar 1969 (British Museum); Frye 1970a (Baghdad Museum); Brunner 1978 (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York). Other more recent, and smaller, collections have been described by Akbarzadeh et al. 2009 (Khoy Museum, West Azerbaijan province, Iran), Cereti & Bassiri 2016 (National Museum of Iran), and Niknami & Naderi 2016 (Bandar Abbas Museum of Iran). These collections have been added to Iranian museums after 1979, and are comprised of seals and bullae confiscated from smugglers trying to move them across the Iranian border to sell to private collectors abroad (see section below).

49 Casanova 1925 (Susa) and Delaporte 1920 (Susa, Louvre); Bayani 1972 (Tepe Kabūdān); Frye 1973 (Qaṣr-e Abū Naṣr); Göbl 1976 and Huff 1987 (Takht-e Sulaymān); Gyselen 1987 in Boucharlat & Lecomte 1987 (Tureng Tepe); Gubaev et al. 1996 (Ak-Depe).

50 An early example is de Clerq 1903; since then, several Iranian private collectors have self-published (e.g., Mochiri) or allowed scholars to view and study their collections: Frye 1968 and 1971, on the bullae and seals, respectively, in the collections of Mohsen Foroughi, in Tehran (MFT); the latter includes descriptions and images, but no decipherment of the inscriptions (for which, see Gignoux & Gyselen 1982). Other published private collections include those of Sayyed Yousof Nayeri (Frye 1969, Provasi 1975) and of the Rosens, in New York (Lerner & Skjærvø 1997). More recently, Agostini and Shaked 2018 published two seals of magi from a private collector in Tel Aviv who wished to remain anonymous (the seals had previously been in the private collection of Walter Bick in Canada).
bullae from various museum and private collections, developing their own dual system of
classification based on iconography, and also usually organized geographically (grouping
similar toponyms). Their method of publication was the standard in the field until more
modern typesetting technology allowed for the formatting of images within text (rather
than as plates in an appendix). This layout was used for Sasanian seals and sealings by
Akbarzadeh et al. 2009, and then Gyselen explicitly adopted their format for her subsequent
publications.

Although the early works must still be consulted, many of their readings of
inscriptions have been corrected in later articles, mostly by Philippe Gignoux and Rika
Gyselen—especially with the former’s work on Iranian onomastics. In addition, a few of
the private collections described by Gignoux and Gyselen (often without photographs) now

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51 A summary of the iconographic types in this two-part numbering system can be found in
Gyselen 1995: 143 n. 156. Such catalogues of private collections include Gignoux 1975b and
Gignoux & Gyselen 1978 (Pirouzan Collection), Gignoux & Gyselen 1977 (Azizbeglu
Collection), Gignoux & Gyselen 1979 and 1981 (M.I. Mochiri Collection), Gignoux & Gyselen
1982 (different private collections, including the seals of Mohsen Foroughi, previously published
without inscriptions by Frye 1971); Gyselen 2002 and 2007 (Ahmad Saeedi Collection). The
following are their publications of museum collections: Gignoux 1978a (Bibliothèque Nationale),
Gignoux 1979b (State Museun, Tibilisi); Gignoux & Gyselen 1987 (a number of different small
museum and private collections), Gignoux & Gyselen 1988 (Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore),

52 This is especially true for viewing images of the objects, because many of them have since
deteriorated or have subsequently been lost by museum: I am currently trying to locate the bullae
formerly in Yale’s School of Fine Arts collection, as described by Torrey in 1932, but I have been
informed through private communication by Lisa Brody, a curator at the Yale University Art
Gallery, that although at least one item number can be found on their online catalogue, the actual
objects have been lost or misplaced in storage (!).

53 Thus, Bivar’s 1969 catalogue of seals in the British Museum has many emended readings in
Gignoux 1977, as well as new additions in Gyselen 2012d; Brunner’s 1978 catalogue of seals in
the Metropolitan Museum of Art has many readings corrected by Gignoux 1986a. In addition are
these other emendations by Gignoux and/or Gyselen: Frye 1968 and 1971 (Collection of Mohsen
Foroughi) revised by Gignoux & Gyselen 1982, Frye 1973 (Qaṣr-e Abū Naṣr) revised by
Gignoux 1984 (QAN IBT) and 1985 (QAN MMA), Gropp 1974 (American Numismatic Society)
revised by Gignoux 1975a, Horn & Steindorff 1891 (State Museum, Berlin) revised by Gyselen
2016.
belong in part to museum collections, with more recent catalogues and photographs. For example, part of the private collection of the collector C. Kevorkian is now in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris (BNP); and Akbarzadeh et alii have shown that much of the private collection of bullae previously owned by Mochiri in Tehran (MOT) has made its way into the archaeological museum in Khoy, West Azerbaijan province, Iran.

The research of Rika Gyselen, in the many and various publications noted above, must be the starting point for any analysis of the Sasanian-era seals and sealings and the administrative geography they demonstrate. Her 1989 La Géographie administrative de l’empire sassanide: Les témoignages sigillographiques presents each known office and discusses its function and the attested toponyms for its jurisdiction, and provides a typological exposition of each, citing all the publications of seals and sealings known at that time. Every publication on seals and sealings since 1989 has referred to Gyselen’s work, and while each adds new information to our knowledge of toponyms and the function of offices, no comprehensive study has attempted to replace it until 2019, when Gyselen published a new edition of her 1989 work: La Géographie administrative de l’empire sassanide: Les témoignages épigraphiques en moyen-perse. Nearly three times the length of the 1989 edition, this 2019 volume is indispensable for any study of Sasanian administrative seals and Sasanian geography. However, despite Gyselen’s comprehensive

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54 The Kevorkian collection is described in Gignoux & Gyselen 1987 and 1989 (without photographs), but part of it was sold to the Bibliothèque Nationale in 1983; Rika Gyselen includes these additions, now with photographs, in her contribution to the BNP catalogue of Sasanian seals and sealings (Gyselen 1993a), which is actually the first volume of this two-part catalogue—although it was published years after the second volume (Gignoux 1978), due to the death of the main curator of the collection and general delays.
56 Gyselen 1989a.
57 Gyselen 2019a.
appendices of Sasanian administrative seals and sealings, one must still consult the original publications of each collection in order to find information about the personal seal impressions included as cosignatories on the administrative bullae. In other words, Gyselen is primarily concerned with administrative divisions of the empire and the hierarchy of its offices, with one of her most significant contributions being her study of the *spāhbeds* and the division of the Persian kingdom into quadrants.\(^{58}\)

The other scholar who has shaped the study of Sasanian sigillography is Philippe Gignoux. The readings of Gignoux’s onomasticon of Iranian names in Middle Persian inscriptions—whether from seals and seal impressions or monumental inscriptions—now dominate the field.\(^{59}\) Indeed, some inscriptions from private or otherwise unpublished collections appear *only* in Gignoux’s onomastic works, with unclear references to a particular item’s location or accession number.\(^{60}\) Gignoux has published several articles on the formulae of the seal inscriptions and their development over time,\(^{61}\) as well as several more on the scope and function of the Sasanian-era Zoroastrian priesthood—using both insessional evidence and literary sources (primarily in Syriac). Gignoux’s students have

\(^{58}\) Gyselen 2001; also see Gyselen 2008.

\(^{59}\) Gignoux 1986a, with a supplement published in Gignoux 2003. Gignoux’s vast contributions to the field have been reviewed by Gyselen 2011 and Huyse 2011.

\(^{60}\) Although I include the unpublished items in my total counts, I have excluded them from the tables in Appendix 1; they are relatively few in number. Most of the abbreviations can be found in the beginning of his onomastic works (Gignoux 1986a and 2003). However, Gignoux’s citation methods and abbreviations change from one publication to another, so it has been difficult to correctly match the readings from his onomastica with those in other published works. Moreover, his readings of the same inscriptions are not always the same between these two sets of works; therefore, I try to use the reading from his most recent publications (which does not always match what he published previously in the onomastica).

contributed to this topic as well, particularly with Florence Jullien and Christelle Jullien’s publications on Sasanian geography through toponyms found in Syriac works.\footnote{Particularly Jullien C. 2004, 2007, 2009 and Jullien F. 2004; to these must be added the joint publication of Gignoux, Jullien, and Jullien on Iranian names in Syriac literature (Gignoux et al. 2009 = GJJ).}

In addition to these catalogues, onomastica, and geographic works, there have been several studies of Sasanian sealing practices more generally. However, many of these studies are based on literary accounts and focus on matters of trade or taxation.\footnote{Including Gropp 1974, Frye 1977, Lukonin 1983, Lerner & Skjaervø 1997, and Ritter 2009; Gyselen 2007 offers a broad overview of the topic, using specific examples from the Ahmad Saeedi collection.} It is difficult to say how and to what extent Sasanian religious officials were involved in these processes. Maria Macuch focuses on the use of seals specifically in Sasanian jurisprudence, relying on Zoroastrian Middle Persian texts like the Mādayān ī Hazār Dādestān (MHD), or the “Book of a Thousand Judgments.”\footnote{Macuch 1993 and 1997; also see Perikhanian 1997. Now scholars tend to refer to this work simply as Hazār Dādestān, but I have kept the old abbreviation of MHD as a more recognizable shorthand.} Others explore Islamic-era sealing practices as a continuation of Sasanian ones.\footnote{Gignoux & Kalus 1982 and Khan 2007.} The more recent discovery and publication of the Ţabarestān archive, which includes four documents with maguh administrative bullae attached, has not yet become a part of these studies, although it is sure to have major implications for our understanding of this office and of the continuity of Sasanian administrative practices after the fall of the Sasanid dynasty.\footnote{These will be discussed in more detail below.} Some of the seventh-century Pahlavi Archive housed at Berkeley also retain their attached bullae, although these bear no administrative seals.\footnote{The Pahlavi Archive at Berkeley is a collection of 390 bullae and 260 manuscripts in Middle Persian from the late seventh century to the eighth century. It was donated to the Bancroft Library in 2001 and 2002 (with some related documents also housed in Berlin), and subsequent radio-carbon dating confirms the intra-textual evidence for the documents’ early post-Sasanian}
While most of the catalogues discuss sealing practices generally in their introduction, they usually focus on the iconography of the seals, and are organized according to image type, material, or shape. Alternatively, more recent scholarship tends to give an overview of each different office or title that appears in the seals and bullae, and much of the emphasis is on the geographic information gleaned from these objects, e.g., how the Sasanian kingdom was divided into administrative units, which officials operated where, and how each city or village ranked in the larger scheme of political and practical administration. The magi only appear on personal seals, and therefore they are often excluded from publications of Sasanian administrative seals and sealings—despite their existence side-by-side on the same bullae and as part of the same archives. Although everyone acknowledges the role played by Zoroastrian religious specialists in Sasanian administration, there is usually an attempt to separate secular and religious offices in both function and practice, as well as in extant scholarship.

Gyselen, in addition to her treatment of each title and office in many of her other publications, has written separate articles devoted to the Ohrmazd-mōbed\(^{68}\) and the maguh\(^{69}\), as well as one on the magi in Sasanian seals and sealings\(^{70}\). She summarizes the imagery, types of seals, and inscriptions attributed to magi, here on the seals or impressions dating. This collection includes 308 unattached bullae and 82 that are attached to manuscripts (Azarpay 2006). As far as I know, none of these bullae bear administrative sealings, and only personal (anepigraphic) sealings; they have not been published separately, although images of attached bullae appear throughout the recent publications on the documents, which nonetheless they contribute to our knowledge of post-Sasanian sealing practices—likely a continuation of Sasanian practices. On this archive, see Azarpay et al. 2003, Gignoux 2004b and 2008, Weber 2008 and 2012, and various other publications by Gignoux and Weber on these documents.

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\(^{68}\) Gyselen 1989b.

\(^{69}\) Gyselen 2015.

\(^{70}\) Gyselen 1995, where it appears within a collected volume on Iranian religion in honor of Philippe Gignoux.
of a *mog, mōbed, or maguh*, and includes the images as well as an appendix of all the seals and sealings consulted in her study. However, Gyselen’s criteria for inclusion are quite strict, and do not permit partial or reconstructed readings of *mog*—despite the rather regular formula for this title, which allows it to be inferred even when the script is unclear. \(^{71}\) In addition, this study, which was published in 1995, does not include the several subsequent publications or corrections of earlier readings. Furthermore, in all of these publications, Gyselen was less interested in the relationship between the co-signatory impressions found on bullae than in the onomastic and geographic value of the inscriptions. Similarly, a recent article by Agostini and Shaked examines two seals of Zoroastrian magi from a private collector in Tel Aviv—which, although interesting, are without provenience and therefore offer little beyond their onomastic and iconographic value. \(^{72}\)

The purpose of the early catalogues is different from that of more recent scholarship. Both Frye and Göbl, working on the caches of bullae excavated from Qaṣr-e Abū Naṣr (QAN) and Takht-e Sulaymān (TS), respectively, are characterized by the art historical approach of classifying types of seals and iconography, rather than reading each impression or bulla as a document itself—with cosignatories and potential geographic relationships. Thus, both of their comprehensive studies of the QAN and TS bullae offer readings of the inscriptions separately from descriptions of iconography, and connecting the cosignatories of a single bulla takes a lot maneuvering between tables and concordances. Gignoux, however, in revising the work of Frye in particular, began to read the various impressions on a single seal together, rather than as inscriptions detached from

\(^{71}\) The inscriptions almost always appear in the form of *X î mog î Y-ān* […ZY mgw ZY …’n], a pattern which will be discussed in more detail below.

\(^{72}\) Agostini & Shaked 2018.
their context. Nonetheless, the remarkable contributions of all of this scholarship cannot be ignored.

More recent publications by Gyselen and others on Sasanian administrative seals and sealings discovered have made an effort to present bullae as complete objects (listing all the decipherable impressions together). However, beyond a few cursory remarks none of the works cited above make an effort to analyze the cosignatories on bullae, either with respect to the different administrative seals which the accompany or within the geographic context provided by the extant toponyms. This is partly what this next section of the chapter will address, building upon the foundational work of Gyselen and others.

Now that there are a handful of excavated collections, with more published in the last decade, it is also possible to evaluate particular archives of bullae—both in terms of each archive’s composition and in comparison to other archives. After the analyses of each clerical office in the corpus as a whole, I will go into more detail on each of the archives individually, with special emphasis on the recently published Ṭabarestān archive. First, I give an overview of the archives that I have classified as excavated, confiscated, or in the hands of private collectors.

2.1 Excavated Collections

Of particular interest to the current study are those collections excavated from known archaeological sites. These are collections which have clear provenance, and as such they not only have a known find site, but based on the stratigraphy of the excavation

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73 Gignoux 1974 and 1985. However, because Gignoux still relies on Frye’s study of the QAN bullae, he includes no images and very little description, so one must still refer to Frye.
74 E.g., Akbarzadeh et al. 2009, which formats high quality images within the text of the paper (rather than as plates in an appendix) as part of the presentation of each object.
they can be more certainly dated—if, indeed, the site was properly excavated and not the victim of “clandestine” archaeology. These latter confiscated archives will be discussed next. First, I will introduce the handful of authorized excavations, primarily in modern Iran and Turkmenistan, undertaken by scholars and published in academic journals. The metadata from these collections, considered later in the chapter, provides an actual context for the scope and activity of their priestly cosignatories, although in this last regard there is still much to be explored. The majority of the recently published scholarship on excavated collections focuses primarily on the material’s contributions to our understanding of Sasanian administrative geography.

For the most part, each excavated collection of bullae was discovered within one or two rooms at the find site, and thus they are all considered “archives” despite the loss of the documents or objects to which they were originally attached. In some cases, the rooms were burned and only the scattering of clay bullae remain. In others, such as at Dvin, the remains of sacks were also found, suggesting that the bullae were attached to goods and wares; although Dvin did not turn up any bullae from Sasanian clerical offices, the site might still offer clues to the use and function of the bullae under study in this paper.75

The collections I discuss in this chapter have been the product of excavations from the early twentieth century through the previous decade. They range in location from Fārs region, the heart of the Sasanian kingdom, to the more remote provinces of Ādurbādagān

75 Lukonin 1983: 742-43 writes, “more than one hundred bullae were found in a store-room together with the remains of many sacks for wares on which some of them were applied,” and also mentions a sealing from Fārs (Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah), as well as sealings with Arabic inscriptions. I omit this collection from the present study because the bullae and inscriptions have not been published completely (see Kalantarian 1996 for a summary, particularly of iconography, as well as a few images).
and Gurgān—spanning modern geographic borders from Iran to Turkmenistan (see the following map).\textsuperscript{76}

![Figure 2: Sasanian-era excavations with clerical administrative bullae](image)

In recent publications, each corpus of administrative sealings is examined as a whole and described as an “archive” of varying types. For example, the finds of Tol-e Qaleh Seyfābād (TQS) appear to be from a local “provincial archive,” and those at Qaṣr-e Abū Naṣr (QAN) represent a more widespread “regional archive,” while those at Tappe

\textsuperscript{76} Unless otherwise noted, all of the maps in this dissertation were made by myself, through Google Earth and ArcGIS. A quick note on the transliteration of the names of these sites: I have mostly kept to the form commonly used in publications for each archive, without attempting to standardize the spelling of them. The differences in spelling depend on the country in which the excavation occurred and which sponsored or published the excavation.
Bardnakoon (TB) comprise an “interregional archive.” The comparison of these three archives, all discovered in southern Iran, is summarized by Khosrowzadeh, Norouzi, Gyselen, and Habibi, who add that the concentration of administrative seals in each corpus is “quite different,” representing 9% of the total at QAN, 19% at TQS, and only 4% at TB. The differing concentration of administrative bullae, they suggest, is due to their different quality of archive—as regional, provincial, and interregional ones. However, it is difficult to say more than this without knowing the functions of these archives, what kinds of objects or documents they authorized, or whether or not they are even representative of universal Sasanian administrative practices. Regardless, we can draw some conclusions from them.

For instance, the composition of the Takht-e Sulaymān (TS) archive is quite different even from the three mentioned above (TQS, QAN, and TB). The latter three are all located in Fārs and appear to be from sites that operated as administrative centers at fortified locations. Takht-e Sulaymān, however, is the site of one of the most sacred fires of the Zoroastrian religion: the Ādur Gušnasp fire. This Sasanian cult site was a pilgrimage location as well as an important site for rituals, with a royal palace; its archives reflect the presence of Zoroastrian priests (and particularly the mōbed in charge of the site) more strongly than do TQS, QAN, and TB.

All of these archives and more will be discussed individually after the overview of the corpus as a whole and the analyses of each clerical office. As excavated archives, their contribution to our understanding of the administrative geography and hierarchy cannot be

77 Khosrowzadeh et al. 2020b: 87-89.
understated. Other collections, however, have also added to our knowledge of the corpus, despite their lack of provenance. These will be introduced next.

2.2 Confiscated “Archives”

More recently, the Iranian government has made an effort to crack down on the smuggling of material culture out of Iran. Several new collections, particularly of bullae, which were excavated “clandestinely” or belonged to private collectors have now made their way into national and regional museums in Iran.78 Such collections, usually confiscated in batches from smugglers trying to move them across the Iranian border to sell to private collectors abroad, might represent finds from one specific site (and so can be read as small archives), but it is impossible to know this for certain without clear provenance for these objects.

Examples of these confiscated archives include the Takiya-e Mo‘āven al-Molk museum in Kermānšāh province (TMK) now houses 49 bullae that were confiscated from a smuggler in 2004 in Sahneh, a town of that province; these bullae contain the administrative sealings of several civil officials, including one for the ōstāndār of Nīsā and 5 for āmārgars of various regions, as well as the sealings of two spāhbeds.79 Additionally, the Mehrābād Collection at the National Museum of Iran (IBT) are bullae confiscated from smugglers at the old international airport in Tehran; included are three inscribed bullae, which all bear administrative seals (two maguh and one driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar).

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78 For example, the Khoy Museum, West Azerbaijan province, Iran (Akbarzadeh et al. 2009), the National Museum of Iran (Cereti & Bassiri 2016), and Bandar Abbas Museum of Iran (Niknami & Naderi 2016).

79 See Cereti et al. 2011; on the disputed location of Nīsā, which is only attested in a few other sealings, all of the ōstāndār, see Gyselen 2019a: 163.
for the region of Dēlān, which can possibly be identified with the region south of the Caspian Sea known as Daylām.\textsuperscript{80}

A particularly large hoard was found in 2012, when a collection of over 800 bullae were confiscated in Bandar Ċamir, Iran on their way to the UAE; this collection now resides at the Bandar Abbas Museum of Iran.\textsuperscript{81} Unfortunately, the provenance of this large collection will likely remain unknown. There do not appear to be any magi in the surviving inscriptions of these sealings, so perhaps—if they are from a single site—they represent a different kind of administrative archive than what is known from other sites.

2.3 A Private Collection: The Ṭabarestān Archive

The Ṭabarestān Archive is cache of around thirty documents on parchment and cloth dated to the first century of the post-Yazdgird era (PYE), or the mid-seventh to mid-eighth centuries AD, that pertain to legal disputes and their documentation in Ṭabarestān.\textsuperscript{82} Although the term “archive” is used to describe this collection of documents, there is no proof that they belong to a single, unified archive of documents. The exact provenance of this collection is unknown, as it belongs to a private collector who made (most of) them available for study but provided no other information as to their origins.\textsuperscript{83} Nevertheless, most (if not all of the documents) relate to the legal affairs of the inhabitants of a particular

\textsuperscript{80} Akbarzadeh & Daryaee 2012. The toponym Dēlān (and its tentative location) is discussed below in more detail, in relation to the Ṭabarestān archive.

\textsuperscript{81} Niknami & Naderi 2016.

\textsuperscript{82} The documents record dates according to the post-Yazdgird era [AD 631 + 20], ranging from 71 PYE to 107 PYE [=722–758 AD], i.e., during the reigns of the local rulers Farroxān (60–72 PYE), Dād-Burz-Mihr (79–88 PYE), and Xwaršēd (89–109 PYE).

\textsuperscript{83} According to Gignoux 2012: 30, the collector generously provided him with photographs and allowed him to publish the documents, but evidently wished to remain anonymous; two of the documents (numbered Tab. 9 and Tab. 29) have not been made available for study, for unclear reasons. Gyselen 2019b comments that her studies of the bullae are from photographs, and that high quality images are not available for all of the documents and their sealings.
village named *Aspgurd*, which was evidently in a canton (MP *tasōg*) of Ṭabarestān called Dēl ī Dēlān, in the larger region of Parišwārgar on the southern shores of the Caspian Sea.\(^8^4\) Many of the documents still have bullae attached to them, including four which bear administrative seal impressions for the “clerical” office of the *maguh* in Dēl ī Dēlān as well as that of Āmūl-ud-Danbāwand, which was also considered part of the Parišwārgar region.

![Map of Parišwārgar](image)

**Figure 3:** Map of Parišwārgar (from Gyselen 2019a: 172-73)

The Ṭabarestān archive is important for showing not only the operation of post-Sasanian jurisprudence and the role of “clerical” officials within it, but also the continuation of institutions after the fall of the Sasanid dynasty. The documents include letters and court records that touch on matters of inheritance, land production evaluations and leaseholding agreements, loan contracts, and cases of defamation, and they feature the recurring names of land owners (sg. *dehgān*), scribes (sg. *dibīr*), and other local officials.

For example, several of these documents feature an *hērbed* named Farroxabzūd who

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\(^8^4\) On the toponym now read as *Aspgurd*, see note above. According to Gyselen 2019a: 66, the region along the southern coast of the Caspian Sea, known as Parišwārgar, included Ṭabarestān (comprised of Gēlān and Dēlān) to the west and Āmūl and Danbāwand to the east. Thus, Weber 2017 and Gyselen 2019a think that Dēl ī Dēlān is synonymous with Daylām. Rezakhani 2020, noting that Ṭabarestān traditionally extended further to the east, suggests that both Aspgurd (as *Haspin-raz*) and Dēl ī Dēlān might be found in a more eastern part of the modern Iranian province of Māzandarān.
presides over legal hearings (MP gōw) in Aspgurd in 86–87 PYE, while other documents are the correspondence of a certain Windād-Xwaršēd, rad of all of Parišwārgar. Then there are the documents with attached bullae that attest to the continuation of the office of the maguh in the post-Sasanian period; three of these, which bear the sealing of the maguh of Dēl ī Dēlān, will be considered in more detail below.

The contents of these documents were first published by Philippe Gignoux in 2012, while Rika Gyselen examined the bullae and their seal inscriptions. Subsequently, Dieter Weber and Maria Macuch offered new and significantly improved interpretations of most of these documents, taking into account their juridical context. Because of limited access to this archive, the fragmentary nature of its publication, and the lack of knowledge about its provenance, there is as yet no comprehensive study of the archive as a whole. Nor has there yet been an attempt to study the relationship between the bullae and the contents of

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85 Tab. 1AB, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6AB, 7AB, 8AB, 10; see Weber 2016a and Macuch 2016, as well as Gignoux 2012.
86 Windād-Xwaršēd, the rad of Parišwārgar, appears as a correspondent in three documents (Tab. 11, 22, and 28) dating from 81-107 PYE. He also appears to be the highest-ranking official in the entire archive, although only one of these documents bears a bulla with the seal impression of the maguh (Tab. 28, dated 107 PYE).
87 For the documents, see Gignoux 2012 (Tab. 1-8, 10, 12, 14, 21, 22, 26, 28), Gignoux 2014 (Tab. 11, 13, 15-20, 23, 27), and Gignoux 2016 (Tab. 24, 25). For the bullae, Gignoux offered preliminary comments in Gignoux 2012, with closer study by Gyselen 2012a and 2012b, with analysis of the material aspects of the documents-cum-bullae in Gyselen 2019b.
88 Weber 2016a and Macuch 2016 (Tab. 1-8, 10), Weber 2016b (Tab. 12, 26), Weber 2017 and Macuch 2017 (Tab. 13-15, 17, 18, 23), Weber 2019 and Macuch 2019 (Tab. 21, 22, 24), and Weber 2020 and Macuch 2020 (Tab. 11, 27, 28). Thus, most of Gignoux’s original readings have now been improved, except for four of the documents, for which he was only able to offer partial and provisional readings: Tab. 16, 19, 20, and 25.
89 All of the publications of the Ţabarestān documents and bullae (by Gignoux, Gyselen, Weber, and Macuch) have been published in the Res Orientales series, beginning in 2012 and continuing until the most recent volume in 2020. However, the divergent readings and accompanying low-quality images have made comprehensive study of the documents challenging; and the problem of their provenance has evidently made other scholars reluctant to publish on them. Gyselen herself (2019b: 152) says that she has been working from photographs made by the collector—with high resolution photographs for only fifteen of the documents and their bullae: Tab. 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28.
the documents, beyond Rika Gyselen’s initial, provisional attempt—which was based on
the earliest readings of Gignoux and therefore necessitates re-evaluation. More recently
in 2019, Gyselen published a more complete study of the material aspects of the bullae and
documents; she asserts that one cannot study the conceptual aspects of the bullae
until all of the documents have been read and/or reinterpreted from Gignoux’s initial
readings. However, I think some preliminary analyses can be made, and I will attempt
this below after the overview of the corpus of Sasanian seals and sealings.

3. Terminology

This section discusses the terminology related to Sasanian administrative bullae
through its formulae, titles, and toponyms. Following this brief introduction, I turn to the
composition of the corpus of Sasanian seals and sealings, with particular attention to the
magi and their associated offices both in the corpus at large and within individual
archives.

The geographic terms found in the corpus of Sasanian seals and bullae are limited
but have been supplemented by contemporary literary sources—although these are often
imprecise in nature. As new materials are discovered and old finds are reexamined, our
knowledge of the geographic divisions of the Sasanian period has grown. For instance, the
Middle Persian term kust [kwst'] literally means “side” and indicates a more specific
location of a general region by providing its “direction,” but is now also understood to differentiate administrative divisions of a restructured province, as in the case of Māh-kust-ī-Nēmāwand and Māh-kust-ī-Wastān (both a part of Māh, or ancient Media), or of Hamadān-kust-ī-Abhar (formerly Abhar) and Hamadān-kust-ī-šahrestān (formerly Hamadān). Additionally, tasōg was formerly understood as a “quarter” of a larger area—usually known as a rōstag—but has more recently been interpreted as a district in its own right, and which Gyselen translates as “canton,” as a division of a province. However, “province” is a scholarly term that has no direct equivalent in the corpus of Sasanian seals and bullae, where the attested MP šahr can indicate a “region” much larger than the administrative unit which Gyselen has designated as “province.” Thus, Šīrāz was a city but also a “canton” of Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah, which itself was a “province” that was a part of the larger Sasanian administrative “region” of Pārs, which also included the provinces of Bišāpūr and Staxr.

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92 See Gyselen 2019a, who provides a more detailed overview of Middle Persian geographic terms in her introduction (pp. 8-12), as well as 2019c, which examines literary administrative terminology in the Šahrestānīhā ī Ērānšahr and other sources (and pg. 164, where she discusses this particular example as an administrative reform).

93 This is the administrative terminology in French most recently used by Gyselen and others in reference to the corpus of Sasanian seals and sealings (e.g., Gyselen 2019a, Khosrowzadeh et al. 2020b). However, Gyselen notes that the literary use of these terms in Middle Persian (and contemporary Syriac) sources is often more ambiguous than her schema would allow; see Gyselen 2019a: 3-12 and Gyselen 2019c: 165ff, where she refers to MP šahr as “province” in its literary use (which was replaced by ōstān in the Umayyad period), kustag as a more generic term for the larger “region,” and rōstāg as a smaller “canton,” citing a passage from the Wizīdagīhā ī Zādspram (WZ 23.5). Throughout this chapter and the next I will keep to Gyselen’s tripartite structure of canton, province, region; however, where possible I will note ambiguities in the literary use of geographic terms (especially in Chapter 2).
Some toponyms are still uncertain, while others have been reassessed. I have recorded the original identifications and tried to accord them with scholarly consensus, noting more recent opinions and debates where possible. Many of these readings and identifications are tentative and rely on the suggestions of only a handful of scholars most familiar with the material. Moreover, their opinions can differ considerably. For instance, the toponym known as Askenrōd ['skyn lw] from several administrative sealings of the maguh in the province of Hamadān⁹⁴ can no longer be associated with the toponym featured in the Ṭabarestān documents, which was originally read as Askenrad ['skynlt'], a village in the region of Dēl ī Dēlān (possibly ancient Daylam); the name of this village has subsequently been reinterpreted as *Haspīn-raz [hspynlc'] and then *Aspgurd ['spgwlt'], and its suggested location in the Daylam region has also been contested.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ ASC I/176, ASC I/177, ASC I/178 (see Gyselen 2012c) and BML ZR 07, BML ZR 11 (Gyselen 2012d): Askēnrōd maguh Hamadān-kūst-ī-ṣahrestān [center: 'skynlwty mgwh / edge: 'ḥmt' n kwsyt ZY štldstn], i.e., “the office of the magi of Askēnrōd, in (the province of) Hamadān-kust-ī-ṣahrestān;” on the province name, see Gyselen 2019a: 101-02.

⁹⁵ Rezakhani 2020 discusses the evolution of this identification: Gignoux originally interpreted the name of the family of the letter writer Farrox-abzūd as Sarw ī Sarān from the village of Askēnrad (e.g., Tab.14, dūdag ī Sarw ī Sarān az Askēnrad deh; Gignoux 2012: 68); he then later emended the first part to tasōg ī Dēl ī Dēlān—based on administrative sealings of the maguh of
The transliteration of Middle Persian varies in even recent publications, but here I try to maintain the conventions of MacKenzie’s *A Concise Pahlavi Dictionary* while also acknowledging Gignoux’s contributions to our interpretations of Iranian names. For the most part, I use Gignoux’s interpretations, or more recent suggestions by scholars working with these materials. However, there is one area in which Gignoux has been uncritically accepted and which I would like to discuss further. Before examining the notion of “clerical” offices to which I alluded above, I will first introduce the patronymic formula.

### 3.1 The Patronymic Formula

The Middle Persian patronym is recognizable by its ending in the patronymic suffix (MP -ān). P.O. Skjærvø describes the suffix -ān not only as an oblique marker or a patronymic (i.e., an adjective formed from the name of one’s father), but also as a general adjectival suffix. Similarly, Durkin-Meisterernst classifies the suffixes -agān and -ān as

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Dēl i Dēlān on bullae attached to Tabarestān documents no. 14, 24, and 28—meaning a location for the village of Askēnrad in the quarter of (the region of) Dēl i Dēlān. Weber corrected Gignoux’ reading of Askēnrad ['skynl'] to *Haspīn-raz* [hspynlc'] and suggests an identification of Dēlān with the region of Daylam, on the border of the Caspian Sea (Weber 2016a: 124). Similarly, Gyselen places the administrative district of Dēlān in western Tabarestān, just east of Gēlān, and offers her interpretation of tasōg not as a “quarter” of a larger region but as a descriptive term of the administrative “district” of Dēl i Dēlān (Gyselen 2019: 66). However, others oppose the equivalency of Dēlān with Daylam. For example, Rezahani argues for a location further east in Tabarestān: after correcting Weber’s reading from [hspynlc'] to [spywlc'], he suggests possible correspondences with the modern villages of Esperez / Sefīd-rez in the highlands of the Savādkūh region of ancient Tabarestān (SW part of the modern province of Māzandarān), based on a connection to the history of spāhbeds in this location and in the Tabarestān documents. Although the exact location of the toponyms is unknown, Weber has more recently reanalyzed the toponym *Haspīn-raz* as *Aspgurd* ['spgwlτ'] (Weber 2020: 175), which is how we will render it in this dissertation.

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97 Skjærvø 2009: 262, where he explains “-ān forms adjectives denoting appurtenance, especially filiation: ardašir-ān ‘son of Ardashir,’ razm i vištāsp-ān ‘the battle fought by Wistāsp’; the expanded form -ag-ān commonly denotes ‘son of’: šābuhr-ag-ān ‘son of Shabuhr’ (also the name of the book Mani presented to king Šābuhr); pābagān is ambiguous, ‘son of Pāb/Pābag.’”
patronymics. The Middle Persian patronymic “formula” consists of a two-part name, with the second part ending in the patronymic suffix –ān [ʾn]: thus, the pattern of X ī Y-ān (“X, the son of Y”). The two names are linked by the Middle Persian ī [ZY / y], a particle which links attributes to their antecedent (among other things).

The patronymic formula appears in a special form in the Sasanian seal inscriptions of magi, where the pattern X ī Y-ān has the title of the priest inserted in the middle, resulting in the formula X ī mog ī Y-ān, meaning “X the mog, son of Y.” As far as I can tell, the first scholar to refer to this “formula” in inscripational Middle Persian was Philippe Gignoux, when he corrected Richard Frye’s original readings of the Qaṣr-e Abū Naṣr sealings. Where Frye had read possible place-names (toponyms or the names of fire-temples), Gignoux asserts that the inscriptions follow a well-known formula of “nom propre + ZY mgw ZY + patronyme;” his footnote gives another example but no reference, presumably because the formula is so well-known (“bien connu”). Gignoux remains unquestioned in his correction of Frye’s toponyms as patronyms, and the reading of the patronymic formula has been accepted ever since.

I would like to examine the patronymic formula in comparative corpora of inscripational material culture and in documentary and literary sources. The patronymic suffix -ān can also be found in Sogdian seal inscriptions from Bactria, dated from the fourth

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98 Durkin-Meisterernst 2014: 158 (§ 302) and 162 (§ 312.1.a).
99 Note that MP ī is the precursor of the New Persian (-e), and so it is sometimes called ezafe. Also, the MP suffix –ān can denote the oblique plural.
101 The formula is introduced in Gignoux’ reading of QAN 5, as “Veh-dād, mage, fils de Yazdvard,” i.e., Weh-dād ī mog ī Yazdgird; the other example which Gignoux cites is from a seal at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, which reads the name Ādur-Farrbay ī mog ī Frazagān, followed by the phrase abastān (M 6599 = BNP 40.B.01 / 03.14).
102 For example, Agostini & Shaked 2018 cite Gyselen 1995: 124, 126 on the patronymic formula as a common feature of Sasanian seals.
through eighth century, although unlike the *mog*-inscriptions of Sasanian administrative seals the patronym only follows an individual’s name (and never a title).\textsuperscript{103} Patronyms ending in [ʾn] / -ān appear in the late Sasanian-era (sixth- to seventh-century) Middle Persian cursive writing of the ostraca of Turkmenistan, in the formula of *X ī Y-ān*—but not in all instances.\textsuperscript{104} Unfortunately, none of these formulae include the names of magi; however, there is one partial name of a *rad*, which is a judicial authority, from an ostracon found at Ak-depe, as “…the son of Ābān, the *rad*” (*…pus Ābān rad*).\textsuperscript{105} The *rad* is not attested in the extant corpus of Sasanian seals and sealings, although it commonly appears in literary sources from the Sasanian period; therefore, this official will be discussed in Chapter 2.

When it comes to the magi in the corpus of Sasanian seals and sealings, not all of the names attested actually use a patronymic form. Of the over 500 attested instances that I have collected, most of the them (59%) have a patronym as the second name element, but around 10% do not—while the remaining third (31%) either do not have a second name element at all, or the final letters of it are illegible. Moreover, there are very few repeated patronyms across the corpus, if that is what they are. I will discuss the implications of this more below in the section on magi and in the conclusion of the chapter. However, another explanation may work for the naming formula in Sasanian magi seals, one that may be

\textsuperscript{103} Lerner & Sims-Williams 2011: 56-57; the Sogdian form is written -ανο. The most common formula in these Bactrian seal inscriptions is [the individual name + patronym] or [individual name + title]. There is only one instance of [individual name + patronym + title] among these inscriptions, and no instances of [individual name + title + patronym].

\textsuperscript{104} Nikitin 1992.

\textsuperscript{105} […BRH ’p’n lt…], where it appears in a fragmentary draft of a letter or dedicational inscription, according to Nikitin 1992: 125-27. Note that in this instance, Ābān is a fixed form, although technically a theophoric patronym (from āb “water,” and ending in the suffix -ān). Although Nikitin interprets the word spelled [BRH] as meaning “son,” it could also be the name *Pus*, as is attested in several seal inscriptions of this period (see Gignoux 1986, no. 782).
closer to Frye’s original assumptions about the second element naming a toponym or fire temple (see above). After all, fire temple endowments and the surrounding village were often made in the name of a family.

Arabic sources provide support for Frye’s interpretation of the naming formula. For example, al-Ṭabarî (d. 923) explains that Mihr-Narseh, the famous wuzurg-framādār of the fifth century, founded several estates and fire temples, including three in the vicinity of Abruwān (?), one for each of his sons: Zarāwandādhān for his son Zarāwandādh (Zurwān-dād), Kārdādhān for his son Kārdādhān, and Mājushnasfān for his son Mājushnas. Al-Ṭabarî also informs his readers that in his own time these estates, with their gardens and fire temples, were still in excellent condition and had remained continuously in the hands of Mihr-Narseh’s descendants, whom he says “are well known till today.”

Thus the –ān suffix can be shown to have indicated a place and fire-temple associated with a particular family, as part of their pious foundation which was passed on through generations. This broadens our interpretation of the –ān suffix not merely as a patronymic or marker of clan affiliation (as with the Mihrān), but as one available to more than just the “son of” so-and-so, and potentially tied to a specific place—named after an individual as a dedication of an endowment that would have been kept up by his descendants.

Moreover, alternatives to Gignoux’s interpretation of the patronymic formula exist in other Sasanian and early post-Sasanian sources. Perhaps a version particular to documentary sources appears in the Ṭabarestān archive. The name of the complainant of Tab. 22, dated PYE 104 [=756 AD], is given as Burzēn-Pērōz, the scribe, son of

106 Taʾrīḥ, ed. de Goeje, I-2.870-71 (trans. Bosworth, V.105). Bosworth’s n. 271 avoids the use of the term “patronymic” but says that the -ān ending was originally a genitive plural ending but which here “demonstrate connections with their founders or developers.”
Farroxgušasp (Burzēn-Pērôz [ī] dibīr ī Farroxgušasp pus).

This post-Sasanian Middle Persian document does not use a patronymic (i.e., Farroxgušaspān), but explicitly uses the word for “son” (MP pus) after the name of the scribe’s father.

In fact, in nearly every instance of naming in these documents there appears a formula quite different from that of the inscriptive administrative one (i.e., proper name + ZY + title + ZY + patronym). Instead, both individuals and family collectives are most frequently named by the formula mardān ī X nām, meaning both “the man X by name” or “the men X by name,” and in which the plural mardān is used for both expressions, regardless of whether the name is in its patronymic form. Sometimes a patrilineal relationship is further incorporated into this naming formula, but in the form of ī Y pus, or “the son of Y.” The presence of the formula mardān ī X nām throughout the Ţabarestān archive as well as (infrequent) use of the patronymic (-ān)

107 suggests that any preference may have been personal to the particular scribe. However, all of these instances look different from the “formula” postulated for the Sasanian seals and bullae.

107 For the text, translation, and commentary, see Weber 2019 and Macuch 2019 (as well as the initial reading of Gignoux 2012).

108 Similarly, Tab. 23, dated PYE 104 [=755/5 AD], names the scribe Yōdmardān, son of Dēlzād (dibīr Yōdmardān ī Dēlzād pus). Although Yōdmardān [ywdmltʾn] is technically a patronymic form ending in -ān, context suggests that it is a fixed form no longer acting as a patronym: a different Yōdmardān appears in Tab. 28, where he is listed along with the names of other dehgans (none of them patronyms) who act as witnesses in the stūrīh case.

109 For example, Tab. 24 uses both Ohrmazdān and Farrox-Xusrōyān as patronyms, the former as part of the official title and name of King Yazdgird, and the latter as the only true patronymic within a longer list of families and lineages which make use of the alternative phrasing of mardān ī X nām; see Weber 2019 and Macuch 2019, as well as the original publication of Gignoux 2016. Tab. 23 uses what appears to be a patronymic (with no preceding ezāfe) in the name “Dēlxwaštī, the scribe, son of Yōdmard, son of Dēlzād” (Dēlxwaštī ī dibīr Yōdmardān ī Dēlzād pus); see Weber 2017 and Macuch 2017a, as well as Gignoux 2014. However, elsewhere (Tab. 28) the name Yōdmardān appears on its own and thus seems to be a fixed form rather than a true patronymic; see Weber 2020 and Macuch 2020, as well as Gignoux 2012.

110 The reluctance in the Ţabarestān documents to use the patronymic (-ān) might also reflect the diglossia of the region. For example, several of these documents, including Tab. 24 (see Weber 2019 and Macuch 2019), dated to 103 PYE [=754 AD], which details the re-evaluation of crop
Even if we accept the well-attested use of Gignoux’s patronymic formula as it is used in late-Sasanian administrative inscriptions, it is unclear that it carries the same function in post-Sasanian Zoroastrian Middle Persian literary sources, in which it is used far less regularly. This is significant for the history of the Zoroastrian priesthood, since assumptions about the patronymic formula have made a mess about the interpretation of priestly genealogies in the ninth and tenth centuries, as I will show in Chapter 3. The previous discussion has introduced some room for doubt and an opening for other possible interpretations of the formula, but more research is needed on this topic. For now, I have accepted the reading of the patronymic formula in Sasanian seal inscriptions of the magi—and will do so until a better explanation can be found. Next, I turn to the magi themselves and their related administrative offices.

3.2 “Civil” and “Clerical” Offices

In several publications, Rika Gyselen has made a distinction between sealings from “civil” administrative offices and “clerical” or “juridico-religious” ones. The main criterion for distinguishing the “civil” and the “juridico-religious” administrations is that the

yields after an earthquake, repeatedly use the phrase mardān ī X(-ān) nām (both with and without the patronymic suffix -ān) to mean “the sons of X,” or literally “the men X by name,” to indicate the family members and descendants of a particular family lineage. This document is one written by an official who presides over the jurisdiction which he calls “the law of the Syrian quarter in Ṭabarestān” (MP dādestān ēyōnīh tasōg ī Sūrīgān ī abar Taburestān). Weber at least understands this to mean the region inhabited by Syriac-speaking Christians of the Church of the East. Perhaps the Middle Persian phrasing mardān ī X nām is a calque or equivalent to the Syriac expression bnay X (“sons of X”) to indicate family or tribal affiliation.  

In longer genealogical lists in the ZMP texts, the patronymic suffix -ān commonly appears without a preceding ezafe (ī), or the ezafe (ī) alone links a son’s name to a father’s (which commonly appears without the patronymic suffix). The irregularity or inconsistency of the expression of genealogy in ZMP texts, coupled with the assumed and unquestioned belief in the fixed nature of the patronymic suffix as known primarily from late-Sasanian seals and sealings, has led to a confusion of interpretations of genealogical relationships among the post-Sasanian priests attested in ZMP literature.
personal seals of *magi* appear as cosignatories only on the sealings of the latter.\footnote{Gyselen 2007: 36; “civil” and “clerical” administrations are discussed further in Gyselen 2007: 37-44 and 44-45.} Within the “civil” administration Gyselen includes the *šahrab*, the *āmārgar*, the *ōstāndār*, the *naxwār*, and the *spāhbed*, while the “clerical” or “juridico-religious” comprises the offices of the *mōbed*, the *driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar* and the *maguh*.\footnote{Other scholars continue to assume this distinction, with a recent publication grouping “juridico-religious” administrations (e.g., the *maguh* and the *driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar*) apart from “civil” ones (e.g., *šahrab* and *ōstāndār*), e.g., Khosrowzadeh et al. 2020b: 89.}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Civil Administrations</th>
<th>Clerical Administrations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>āmārgar</em></td>
<td><em>mōbed</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>naxwār</em></td>
<td><em>driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>ōstāndār</em></td>
<td><em>maguh</em></td>
</tr>
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<td><em>šahrab</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>spāhbed</em></td>
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This dissertation focuses on the offices or administrations which Gyselen terms “clerical,” and which I also call “religious.” However, there are several caveats to keep in mind. The two categories above do not comprise all of the offices attested in the material record, but merely those best attested. A handful of less frequently occurring additions to this list will be considered in due course, including the *dādwar*, the *handarzbed* and the *mowān-handarzbed*. Moreover, there are inconsistencies between the material and literary record. First, many priestly titles and/or offices are known from literary sources for which no seals are attested—for example, the *rad* and the *mōbedān mōbed*. Secondly, the most widespread clerical administration in the corpus of seals and sealings, the *maguh*, is not mentioned anywhere in extant literary sources by that name. Other titles, such as the *Ohrmazd-mōbed*, are so infrequently attested that it is difficult to say whether they...
represent an administrative office or an honorary title, much less what their actual function was.

Furthermore, while distinction between civil and clerical administrations is useful as an analytical tool, it should not contribute to an imagined dichotomy between civil and clerical that is informed by modern secularism. For example, Gyselen categorizes civil and clerical seals in the regional archives of Qaṣr-e Abū Naṣr, Takht-e Sulaymān, Tepe Kabūdān, and Tureng Tepe (all excavated collections) and the Ahmad Saeedi collection (a private collection which may represent a distinct archive), even while describing the “same provincial profile” shared by all of these sites: they all provide evidence of both types of administrations (civil and clerical). In other words, it is rare for an excavated collection to bear only civil or only clerical seals. They usually appear together. Furthermore, there are exceptions to the dichotomy of clerical and civil administrations found in bullae published after Gyselen’s study of the Ahmad Saeedi collection. For example, a bulla from the Khoy collection bears the impressions of a šahrab and āmārgār (both of which are categorized as “civil” administrations) along with a mog as a cosignatory (who is supposed to signal a “clerical” administration). Perhaps this is the exception that proves the rule.

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115 It is difficult to make absolute statements when the material record is so fragment, but as far as I can tell there is only a single instance in which an excavated cache of Sasanian-era bullae did not contain any clerical administrative bullae: 411 bullae, each with a single sealing (except for three which bear multiple sealings), were discovered in 2001 and 2002 at the site known as Kafir Kala (“Fortress of the Infidels”), 12 kilometers south of the city center of Samarkand in Uzbekistan. Of these 411 bullae, 69 bear an inscription—some in Bactrian, Sogdian, and Middle Persian—but most were considered illegible by the authors; see the preliminary report in Cereti & Cazzoli 2005, who summarize the findings of the Russian excavations and provide a few images of the bullae. One aniconic sealing (no. 241 / Fig. 34) bears the toponym Ray [Id] in the center and is likely from an administrative seal.
116 Khoy 1, whose mog is named Māhōg ī mog ī Farroxān; see Akbarzadeh et al. 2009: 27-28, who identify this bulla with one from the Mochiri collection (MOT 5), as depicted in Mochiri 1977, fig. 1373.
However, it is more likely that the division of the role and function of religious and civil officials was more fluid than our terminology suggests. The distinction between civil and clerical can remain only as a heuristic—and only until a better model can be supplied. For this, we must look to the literary record to supplement the material one.

Literary sources in Middle Persian, Syriac, Armenian, Georgian, Arabic, Greek, and Latin depict the overlapping roles of “civil” and “clerical” officials, as will be discussed in the following chapter.¹¹⁷ This includes the public performance of religious rituals by so-called “civil” officials, as well as the collaboration of religious or “clerical” officials with civil administrations. Based on the Syriac _Persian Martyr Acts_ (PMA), Gignoux has suggested a hierarchy of Zoroastrian religious offices in the Sasanian period.¹¹⁸ In this model, the _mōbedān mōbed_ is the chief religious official, supervising each provincial _mōbed, rad_, and _dādwar_, with magi operating on a more local level. However, the _mōbedān mōbed_, a title that was evidently a late-Sasanian development, does not appear in the extant corpus of Sasanian seals and sealings, which date to the last centuries of Sasanian rule. This title will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2 (as well as in Appendix 2).

Zoroastrian literary texts also hint at the mixing of civil and clerical offices in the Sasanian hierarchy. The Middle Persian text of the _Sūr saxwan_ (“The Banquet Speech”), which was perhaps written in the sixth or seventh century, provides the following court hierarchy with the king at the top:¹¹⁹

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¹¹⁷ See Purwins 2019 for an overview of noble ranks and terminology in a variety of these sources, particularly in comparison to those of the Roman Empire; he does not, however, discuss any of the religious or “clerical” offices.
¹¹⁸ Gignoux 1982 and 1983a.
¹¹⁹ Translated by Daryaee 2007, where he gives the tentative date based upon the text’s post-dating the reforms of Xusrō I. However, the text is preserved only in the codex MK, whose
1. šāhān šāh “king of kings”
2. pus ī wāspuhr ī šāhān “princes of the blood”
3. wuzurg-framādar “great commander”
4. spāhbed “general”
5. šahr dādwarān “judges of the empire”
6. mowān-andarzbed “counsellor of magi”
7. hazārbed “ciliarch”
8. drōn-yaz “performer of drōn ceremony”

This text does not mention the mōbedān mōbed, who is otherwise considered the highest Zoroastrian official, but it does place the mowān-andarzbed (“counsellor of magi”) as well as the high-ranking judicial official known as the šahr-dādwar (“judge of the empire”) in the middle of this list, with the drōn-yaz, evidently a ritual specialist (“performer of drōn ceremony”), at the bottom. Compare later Arabic chronicles that transmit Persian traditions. These place the mōbedān mōbed second only to the king in his authority, or alternatively just below his wazīr. Regardless of the specific ranks of these court titles (assuming such a hierarchy was fixed at any given time), the mixing of “civil” and “clerical” offices in these lists further suggests that the distinction between them is primarily a modern, academic one.

Nevertheless, this chapter focuses on the seals and sealings of Zoroastrian priests, or magi, and their associated titles, offices, and regional jurisdictions, in order to discern the role of magi in late-Sasanian administration and test the notion of Zoroastrianism as a “state religion.” The following overview of Sasanian Zoroastrian religious offices and their titles is based upon Gyselen’s foundational La Géographie administrative de l’empire

earliest colophon is dated to the late tenth century; therefore, we might more comfortably say that it predates the tenth century and reflects knowledge of the late Sasanian past. 

al-Masūdī (d. 956), Tanbih (ed. de Goeje, 103); there are five ranks, with the mōbad in the highest position, and above the wuzarā’.

al-Masūdī (d. 956), Murūj al-dahab (ed. Pellat, I.287); here there are seven ranks instituted by Ardašīr, with the mōbadān below the wuzarā’. 
sasanide, which was first published in 1989 and was recently updated with a new edition in 2019. In addition to focusing on the “clerical” or religious offices, I supplement the data from Sasanian seals and sealings with evidence and context from the literary record, particularly contemporary Sasanian-era literary sources. Thus, the overview serves to complement the following chapter, which deals with these literary sources more directly.

4. Clerical Administrations in the Sasanian Seals and Sealings

Overview of database:

I begin with an overview of the extant corpus of Sasanian seals and sealings relating to magi and the so-called “clerical” offices. I have collected this information into a database that currently comprises over 1,100 entries of individual instances of the personal seals or seal impressions of magi, the official seals and seal impressions of mōbeds, and the administrative seals and seal impressions of the offices of the maguh, the mōbed, the dādwar, the drijōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar.\(^\text{122}\) I also include the administrative seals and impressions of the office of the handarzbed, or “counsellor,” for its association with the mowān-handarzbed, or “counsellor of the magi,” a title which appears on two seal impressions from Qaṣr-e Abū Naṣr.\(^\text{123}\)

Of the over 1,100 items in this database, 251 are from seals and 928 are from seal impressions (on hundreds of distinct bullae). There are duplicates of many sealings, especially within the same excavated collections (i.e., those from one particular and provenanced find site). I have included each instance as a separate line item in order to

\(^{122}\) The total of published seals and bullae is of course much higher, but I have focused my data collection on those related to the so-called “clerical” offices and to the magi more generally.

\(^{123}\) QAN 73 and QAN 74, the latter held at the MMA; this bulla is discussed further below.
show the full distribution of attestations. The complete database includes the published transliterations as well as notes on the iconography and (links to) images of each item, when available, either from online museum catalogues or excerpted from print publications. Several items in the database are only attested in the onomastica published by Philippe Gignoux (and are not published elsewhere)—I have not excluded these instances from my totals, but they do not feature in the following analyses. I have, however, included a few other items which are not yet published but which I have personally examined; these are bullae which belong to the Yale Babylonian Collection.

At the current tally, 563 of the entries are the personal seals or sealings of a mog, 444 are the administrative seals or sealings of the maguh, and 59 are the official or administrative seals or seal impressions of a mōbed. As for the last “clerical” office, there are 71 entries for the administrative seals and seal impressions of the driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar. Many, but not all, of the bullae which bear clerical administrative seal impressions also bear the impression of a mog as a cosignatory. Some bullae have no administrative seal impressions (at least, none that are legible); some have only the impression of the personal seal of a mog (with or without mog cosignatories). The

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124 Unlike Gyselen’s 1995 appendix, I have included every published attestation—no matter how tentative the reading; uncertain reconstructions are marked with either (?) or [].
125 Some of the Yale collection was previously published either by C.C. Torrey (1932, with grainy or incomplete photographs), or by Gignoux & Gyselen 1987 (including one seal of a mog); however, there are items that have been added to the Yale Babylonian Collection since these scholars last studied them. I am grateful to Agnete Lassen, the Associate Curator of the Yale Babylonian Collection, for facilitating access to these items, and to my colleague Jon Beltz, for spending time with me in the YBC and photographing the items. I hope to publish these newer acquisitions in future.
126 In her 1995 study, Gyselen includes a total of only 344 items pertaining to the mog, mōbed, and maguh combined. My current numbers show the immense progress in this field, as well as the number of recent and significant publications of material.
The next sections break down this information further, focusing on each administration individually before discussing the magi sealings as a group. My goal in these analyses is to look all of the objects together and to read the extant bullae as documents in their own right—even though the documents to which they were once attached no longer survive. I have also cast a wide net, including even tentative and reconstructed readings, in order to see if larger patterns would emerge. The administrative offices are discussed in the following order:

4.1 mowān-handarzbed
4.2 dādwar and driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar
4.3 mōbed
4.4 maguh
4.5 mog
The bulk of my analysis is on the most numerous types of seals and bullae: those of the maguh and the mog. In the concluding sections of the chapter, the office of the maguh will then be discussed in the context of the Ṭabarestān archive, before ending with a summary of the corpus and general conclusions.

4.1 The mowān-handarzbed

Gyselen 2019a: 282-83 (handarzbed)

MP mowān-handarzbed [mgwn ḥndlcpt']
Syr. mowān-handarzbed [mwndrzbd]
Arm. mogac' anderjapet / movan (h)anderjapet

Although the handarzbed, or “counsellor,” on its own is not considered a “clerical” administration—since it never appears on a bulla with a mog as a cosignatory—we include it in the discussion here because of the attestation, in both the corpus of Sasanian administrative sealings and in Sasanian-era literary sources, of an office called mowān-handarzbed, or “counsellor of the magi.” Documentary evidence from the early post-Sasanian period also attests to a dar-handarzbed, or “counsellor of the court.” Each of these offices will be treated here, although the relationship between them is uncertain.

The handarzbed [hndlcpt'] itself appears less frequently in the extant corpus of Sasanian seals and sealings than the other administrative offices discussed in this chapter: there are only 17 sealings—attesting to two provincial administrations, Staxr and Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah—and a single seal, which attests to another provincial administration, this time of Spahān. The paucity of material evidence for the handarzbed may be explained by the small number of individuals holding this special office, and/or by the fragmentary nature of the corpus and the limits of archaeological excavations. All of the bullae bearing handarzbed sealings came from two excavations: Qaṣr-e Abū Naṣr (13 for the handarzbed
of Ardaxšīr-Xvarrah) and Dehqade-ye Eqlid (2 for the handarzbed of Staxr). Both of these find sites are in the modern province of Fārs. Additionally, both sites as well as the attested toponyms on the sealings found there, Ardaxšīr-Xvarrah and Staxr, were also part of the Sasanian administrative region (šahr) of Pārs.

The topographic distribution of these sealings (all of QAN sealings being for the provincial jurisdiction of Ardaxšīr-Xvarrah and all of the DE sealings being for the provincial jurisdiction of Staxr) suggests the regional nature of these archives as well as the local, but provincial, jurisdiction of the handarzbed.

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127 DE 2 and 3; see Cereti & Bassiri 2016.
It is unclear if *mowān-handarzbed*, or “counsellor of the magi,” is a personal title or an administrative office. Gyselen treats it under the heading of the *handarzbed* as a title on a “personal” seal and therefore does not include it in in her appendices. However, as she herself points out, the *mowān-handarzbed* appears in the Middle Persian *Sūr saxwan* (“the banquet speech”) just beneath the *šahr dādwarān* (“judges of the empire,” a title to be discussed below) and so reflects a high office of some kind. The title also appears in the *MHD*, where someone named Weh-Panāh as the *mowān-handarzbed* who resolves a loan-dispute, with a written statement called a *nibištak*. Additionally, the *MHD* records that someone named Dād-Farrox ī Dād-Hormizd holds the office of *mowān-handarzbed* under Xusrō I (r. 531–79) and renders decisions about the transfer of substitute successorship (*stūrīh*) and the trusteeship of a fire altar. In the latter example, the *mowān-handarzbed* seems to be upholding the legal decision of Burzag, the *mōbed* of Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah, which may suggest that the rank of *mowān-handarzbed* held more authority than that of *mōbed*, or offered the ability to appeal previous legal decisions. Elsewhere, the *MHD* refers to a *mowān-handarzbed* allowing or permitting (*frāz padīrift*) the legal decision and written statement (*nibištak*) of the *mōbed* of Staxr.

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129 Summarized in Daryaee 2000; see above.
131 *MHD* A15.12-15, as just Dād-Farrox the *mowān-handarzbed*; see Perikhanian 1997: 274-75.
132 *MHD* A37.11-12; see Perikhanian 1997: 314-15. Many of these *MHD* examples are discussed by Gignoux in relation to the title of *mowān-handarzbed* (1986b: 105-08).
133 *MHD* 98.1-5; see Macuch 1993: 587, 591 and Perikhanian 1997: 222-23. Macuch seems to think that the authority cited here, Pusanweh ī Āzādmard, is himself the *mōbed* of Staxr; this individual appears throughout the *MHD* but is nowhere else referred to as a *mōbed*, so I am more hesitant to make this connection.
Interestingly, the two toponyms mentioned in the MHD references to the mowān-handarzbed are, apart from the single seal that attests to the handarzbed of Spahān, the same two attested in as the jurisdictions of the handarzbed in extant Sasanian bullae: Staxr and Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah, both provinces in the larger region of Pārs. As I mentioned above, the two Staxr bullae were found at Dehqade-ye Eqlid, while all of the Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah bullae were all excavated from Qaṣr-e Abu Naṣr—where the single mowān-handarzbed sealing was also discovered (see below). In each case, the find site is nearby the location of attested toponym, suggesting that the handarzbed’s authority only extended to his own province. However, it is unclear if this was true for the mowān-handarzbed.

The title of mowān-handarzbed appears in other, non-Zoroastrian Sasanian-era literary sources as well. The fifth-century Syriac martyr act known as the History of Karkā d-bēt Slōk refers to a grouping of three Magian officials whom king Yazdgird II (r. 438–57) sends to Karkā, including a mow(ān)-handarzbed named Tahm-Yazdgird. The Syriac author even glosses this title as “the officiator of Magianism” (Syr. mṭakksānā da-mgušutā). The Armenian rendering, movan anderjapet, appears in the fifth-century Armenian History of Łazar P’arpets’i as an official sent by the Persian king along with two other “civil” officials in order to interrogate and execute Armenian Christian priests who

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134 A seal from the Louvre of (=ATs30); see Gyselen 1993 (as 00.15) and Herzelfeld 1938 (fig.4).
135 AMS II.519, [mwndrbd]; see Ciancaglini 2008: 203-04. In the narrative, according to my translation, the mowān-handarzbed, who is from Nisibis, is to be accompanied to Karkā d-bēt Slōk by “the sṛōśāwarz-rad from the region of Arzun, whose name was Ādur-Frazgird, and the dastwarān-rad from Adiabene and Bēt Garmai, whose (family) name was Surēn.” The sṛōśāwarz-rad appears to be an otherwise unknown religious title or office perhaps related to the divinity Šrōš, who is associated with legal contracts; see Ciancaglini 2008: 227, citing the personal communication of Philippe Gignoux. The last title has been reconstructed as dastwarhamdād (or perhaps an abbreviation of *dastwar-hamdādestān), “the judge who makes juridical decisions;” see see Ciancaglini 2008: 153, citing Khurshudian 1998: 94 and Hoffmann 1880: 51. However, I suggest (the otherwise unattested) reading of [dstb ḳrd], emended from the obviously corrupted [dstbḥmd], for dastwarān-rad, meaning something like “judge over the authorities,” as a parallel to the title of sṛōśāwarz-rad.
were being held in custody in Nēw-Šāpūr after the Armenian revolt of 451; the accompanying officials are the “chief-steward” (Arm. ambarapet) Vehdenšapuh and the “the royal steward” (Arm. maypetn ark’uni) Ėnikan, characterized as “under the authority of the mōbedān mōbed” (i Jeremiah movpetan-movpeti). Here the movan anderjapet is unnamed and seems less authoritative than these other officials, who take the lead in the judicial process, and the movpetan movpet is not further mentioned by Łazar. However, all of these references suggest a position near to that of the mōbedān mōbed and at the direct disposal of the king himself.

The range of this mowān-handarzbed’s legal jurisdiction seems to have been wide-ranging, from settling financial disputes to determining cases of apostasy. As already noted, the QAN collection includes two sealings from the official seal of one mowān-handarzbed named Narseh, depicted below. This Narseh is the single attestation of the mowān-handarzbed in the extant corpus of Sasanian seals and sealings. There is no geographic information accompanying this bulla, other than its find-site being Qaṣr-e Abū Naṣr, a Sasanian-era fort near Šīrāz in Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah; but the literary examples show that this official was a court position which oversaw matters all over the Sasanian kingdom.

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136 Łazar, ed. Tiflis 1904: 88; Thomson 1991: 135 translates the phrase as “under the authority of the chief-mōbed.” It is unclear whether this statement qualifies only the last official (the movan anderjapet) or all three of them. However, these officials appear together several times by name (ed. Tiflis 1904: 88, 87, 102), and as a group they are also called a “tribunal” (Arm. atean; ed. Tiflis 1904: 97ff), under the leadership of the ambarapet Vehdenšapuh.

137 QAN 73 and 74, appearing in Frye 1973 as inscription D103; reading emended by Gignoux 1985 as [ . . y ZY] mgw ZY nrsh’n ZY mgwny hndl(c)pṭy], but it is Gyselen who interprets the title as mowān-handarzbed (see Gyselen 2008, seal 11).
Perhaps another related title is the *dar-handarzbed* [BBʾ hndlcptʾ], or “court counsellor,” which is a Middle Persian title that appears in nine different documents of the early post-Sasanian “Pahlavi Archive” at Berkeley.\(^\text{138}\) The Armenian *History of Vardan* written by Elišē in the sixth century names three officials that are closest to the king: the *movpetan-movpet*, the *dar-andarjapet* and the *mec-hazarapet* (with *mec* meaning “great”).\(^\text{139}\) However, because of the lack of association of the *dar-handarzbed* with magi and other clerical offices in documentary sources, I will not discuss this title further here beyond providing references in the footnotes.\(^\text{140}\)

\(^{138}\) Berkeley no. 20, 40, 58, 67, 78, 90, 101, 211R, and 217; see especially Berk. 20 and Berk. 67 (for the title in the plural form, the former dated to the year 40 and the latter to the year 16, i.e., of Yazdgird; Gignoux 2008: 834-37 and Gignoux 2004b: 45), Berk. 40 (addressed from the *dar-handarzbed* to a certain Mihr; Gignoux 2004b: 45), Berk. 101 (addressed from the *dar-handarzbed* to a certain Windād-Burzmihr, and concerning the sale of property / *xwāstag*; Gignoux 2004b: 45), and Berk. 217 (where the title is preceded by the epithet *hamē-farroxtar*, “evermore more glorious;” this document is dated to year 11, i.e., of Yazdgird). Weber 2012 reads the PYE calendar for these documents, e.g., year 11 + 651 = 662 AD.


\(^{140}\) Cereti & Bassiri 2018: 12 also note its presence on several seal impressions, citing Gyselen 2008. Whereas Gignoux (2004b: 43ff) translates *dar-handarzbed* as “Conseiller de la Cour,” Weber opts for “chief chamberlain.” Others prefer the interpretation of “tax-collector,” stressing the continuity between the Sasanian and early Islamic *kharāj* or “land tax” system; e.g., Azarpay (in Azarpay et al. 2003: 22, with n. 34, citing Shaked and Khurshudian as quoted by Gignoux 2004b: 44). On the *kharāj*, see Weber’s contribution to the same article (pp. 27-29).
4.2 The dādwar, the šahr-dādwar, and the drivōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar

Gyselen 2019a: 262-63; 266-68

MP  dādwar [dʾtwbl] and drivōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar [dlgwšʾn yʾtkgwb W dʾtwbl]
Arm.  datavor and jatagov amenayn zrkelocʾ

This section briefly discusses the titles or offices of dādwar and šahr-dādwar before treating the clerical office of the drivōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar. The basic title dādwar means “judge” or “administrator of justice, lawgiver,” more literally “bearer of law,” as the historical MP spelling [dʾtwbl] shows: compare Old Iranian *dāta-barā- and Armenian datavor. The office of dādwar is attested only on four Sasanian administrative bullae, all with the same provincial jurisdiction: Māh-kust-i-Wastān.141

![Figure 8: Map of dādwar in Sasanian administrative bullae, by province](image)

Elsewhere in inscriptional Middle Persian, the dādwar appears in a third-century monumental inscription of Šāpūr I as well as the fourth-century inscription of Šāpur II at

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141 See Gyselen 2019a (ATb204, ATb206, ATb207, ATb301), from bullae MFT 23, MFT 24, MFT 22, and Khoy 31 (formerly MOT 13); for the MFT sealings see Frye 1968, emended by Gignoux & Gyselen 1987, and for Khoy 31 / MOT 13 see Akbarzadeh et al. 2009. Additionally, a dādwar of Ray may be attested on bulla BNP 10.3 (Gignoux 1978), but it is not discussed by Gyselen—possibly because of its strange spelling, which Gignoux records as [YDHwbʾl]. I think it is more likely that Gignoux was mistaken in rendering the title as dādwar.
In Sasanian-literary sources, the *datavor* appears in Armenian histories in association with religious officials,\(^{143}\) and recurs throughout the *MHD* as a judge in legal cases.\(^{144}\) A specific passage from the *MHD* will be discussed in more detail in the following section on the *driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar*.

In the third century, Kirdēr names himself the *hamšahr-mōbed-ud-dādwar*, or the “chief priest and judge of the entire realm.”\(^{145}\) However, no similar title appears in extant MP seals and sealings, nor in any other MP inscription. However, a version of Kirdēr’s title does appear in two late-Sasanian ZMP texts: the *Sūr saxwan* (“The Banquet Speech”) and the *MHD*. In the former’s list of court offices, the “supreme judges of the realm” (*šahr-dādwarān* [štr d’ twbl’ n]) are offered libations after the *spāhbeds* (“generals”).\(^{146}\) The *MHD* passage cites the authority of a certain Farroxān ī Zarduštān, who is called *šahr dādwarān dādwar*, or “the judge of judges of the land,” on the matter of fire temple deed.\(^{147}\) Thus, in all of the extant Zoroastrian and official Sasanian material, the title seems variable. In contrast, the PMA attest to an official called the *šahr-dādwar* [šhrd(d)wyr] and even name the office-holders: a *šahr-dādwar* named Māh-Burzēn is an important official in the martyr’s trial in the fifth-century *Life of Pethion*, while a *šahr-dādwar* named Ādur-Farrah appears in the sixth-century *Life of Mār Abā* alongside the *rad* of Pārs.\(^{148}\)

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\(^{142}\) ŠKZ 35 names a certain Sāsān as a *dādwar* during the reign of Šāpūr I, and ŠPs-II names Jawēd-Šāpūr as *dādwar of Kāwul (?)* during the reign of Šāpūr II; cited by Gyselen 2019a: 262.

\(^{143}\) E.g., the *Epic Histories* of P’awstos (III.14, 21; IV.13, 53; V.4, 43; see Garsoian 1989: 520-21).

\(^{144}\) The references are too numerous to record here; see Perikhanian 1997: 352 and Macuch 1993; also see Shaki 1993 for more references.

\(^{145}\) KKZ, cited by Gyselen 2019a: 263.

\(^{146}\) See discussion above, as well as translation of Daryae 2007 (with citations).

\(^{147}\) *MHD* 110.5-6, where his opinion is cited on the matter of moving a sacred fire for the purpose of making repairs or improvements, and his “deed” (*jadag*) was “sealed on both sides” (*dōwardān āwišt*); see Macuch 1993: 652, 660 and Perikhanian 1997: 244-45.

\(^{148}\) AMS II.622 and *Histoire* 228 // Jullien §13 (respectively).
Abā, someone named Qardagh (MP Kārdāg) is called both āyēnbed and šahr-dādwar in the royal court.\footnote{Histoire 259 // Jullien §32; this is not the same Qardagh who is the hero of the Legend of Mār Qardagh, who was supposed to have lived during the reign of Šāpūr II (r. 309–79), for which see Walker 2006.}

The longer title driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar is usually translated as “intercessor and judge of the poor,”\footnote{Following Gignoux, in various publications; also see de Menasce 1963 and Garsoïan 1981.} although more recently Gyselen has adopted “defender of the poor and judge” as a hybrid title reflecting two distinct offices, which could conceivably exist separately: “defender of the poor” (driyōšān-jādaggōw) and “judge” (dādwar).\footnote{Gyselen 2019a: 266.}

On its own, jādaggōw, or “advocate,” appears throughout the MHD as well as in the post-Sasanian documents from Ṭabarestān as term for a legal representative in a court case. In the latter corpus, the jādaggōw is supposed to represent a defendant (MP pasēmāl) in an official hearing (MP gōw) before a hērbed.\footnote{E.g., Tab. 3B, 6B, 7B, 8A, dated to 86-87 PYE [=737-39 AD], is part of a related cache of court records on hearings before the authority of the hērbed Farrox-Abzūd in the quarter of Dēl ī Dēlān and the village of Haspīn-raz; see Weber 2016a and Macuch 2016, as well as the original publication by Gignoux 2012.} The jatagov also appears in Armenian literature, for example twice in P‘awstos’ Epic Histories: once simply as jatagov (“advocate”)\footnote{IV.8} and once as the full title jatagov amenay nzrkeloc’ (“defender of all the destitute”).\footnote{IV.3; see Garsoïan’s translation, as well as her index entry on jatagov with full references (Garsoïan 1989: 534). Also see Garsoïan 1981 and Shaked 1975: 213-16.}

Whereas the dādwar appears in only a handful of seal impressions (5), the driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar is attested on numerous sealings (71), comprising nineteen distinct provincial jurisdictions: Abaršahr, Ādurbādagān, Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah, Bīşāpūr, Dēlān, Ėrān-xwarrah-Šāpūr, Gay, Gēlān, Gurgān, Hamadān, Māsabadān, Nōd-Ardaxšīragān, Ohrmazd-
Ardaxšīr, Ray, Šahr-pādār-Pērōz (tentatively), Staxr, Wālaxšfarr, Weh-Ardaxšīr, and Xusrō-šād-Kawād. 155 Thus, the *driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar* appears to have superseded the office of *dādwar*, at least in number and geographic spread.

![Cluster map of *driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar* in Sasanian administrative bullae, by province](image)

Furthermore, it is evident that there was no overlapping jurisdiction of the *dādwar* and the *driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar*: extant Sasanian sealings show only the *dādwar* of Māh-kust-ī-Wastān, which is not a region attested for the jurisdiction of the *driyōšān-

155 See above section, with note.
The title of *mōbed* appears on both official and administrative seals of the Sasanian period, although the latter is far more common in the extant material record.\(^{157}\) There are

\(^{156}\) For a possible (but unlikely) reading for a *dādwar* of Ray on a single sealing (BNP 10.3), see note above.

\(^{157}\) There are a few sealing inscriptions in which the title of *mōbed* has been read but which fall into neither category (neither official nor administrative), but the inscriptions for these are all fragmentary and the readings are so tentative that it is likely they are from the personal seals of magi [mgw ZY] rather than *mōbeds* [mgwpt].
four extant “official seals” of mōbeds, which bear the personal name and title of the mōbed as well as the toponym indicating his jurisdiction. These are larger than regular personal seals, and also oval-shaped as opposed to the circular shape usual for most personal seals; like other official seals, their iconography is also far more elaborate than personal seals.

All four of the extant mōbed official seals (comprised of one sealing and three actual seals) depict a male bust in profile wearing the headgear known as the kulāf, and are decorated also with a “monogram” in the headgear.\(^{158}\)

![Figure 10: Four official seals of mōbeds (drawings from Gyselen 2019a: 286)](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OTs3 = BNP 20.B.01 / 03.17</th>
<th>OTTs2 = EL 884 / ME 06</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weh-Šāpūr, mōbed of Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah [wydšwpwrk ZY’ rthšr-GDH mgwpt]</td>
<td>Pābag, mōbed of Xusrō-šād-Ohrmazd [p pky ZY hwsl[wd š t] whrmz(d mg)wpt]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTb10 = IBT 1b (Susa Exc. 1907.770)</td>
<td>OTs4 = IKB I.2578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mardbūd, mōbed of Ērān-xwarrah-Šāpūr [mlhwt ZY (’yl n GDH šwpwltly) mgwpt]</td>
<td>Bāffarag, mōbed of Mēšān [b pky ZY myšwn mgwpt]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{158}\) The title on OTs2 was originally read by Gyselen as šahrab [(št)rp] instead of mōbed [(mg)wpt] (e.g., Gyselen 2008), and confusingly still appears that way in her transliteration, if not her transcription, of the title (see Gyselen 2019a: 447). The name on OTs4 is read by Gyselen as Pūbig (Gyselen 2019: 286) and as Bāffarag (2019a: 448), the latter being Gignoux’s reading (1986, no. 180). Gyselen records OTb10 as referring to IBT 14 or Susa Exc. 1910, however, based on the images and labels provided by Akbarzadeh & Daryaee 2012, I think this is a mistake and should be corrected to IBT 1 or Susa Exc. 1907.770; on this bulla, see below in section on driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar.
It is thought that these monograms might be abbreviations of names—and at least for one of these mōbeds, that might be the case—but they have not been completely deciphered.\footnote{Gyselen 2017 shows that the name of Pābag, mōbed of Xusrō-šād-Ohrmazd, is abbreviated in the monogram on his kulāf. Additionally, I note that the monogram in OTb10 looks like it resembles an -m-, which may stand for the name of its possessor Mardbād.}

To this group of four we might also add two sealings in private collections which appear to be from the same official seal of a mōbed named Ādur-weh:\footnote{[ʾtwrwyd [ZY] mgwpt]: ASC III/38 and MFT 62; see Gyselen 2007 and Frye 1968 (as Frye no. 42; emendation in Gignoux & Gyselen 1987). Gignoux mentions a mōbed of Hamadān with the patronym Dādēnān, but as this reference only appears in his onomasticon and is not published elsewhere, I have excluded it from my tally (Gignoux 2003, Suppl. 90; cited as BML 134981). There are a handful of other sealings that possibly mention mōbeds, but their readings are tentative and their iconography and shape—when images are accessible—appear nothing like the official seals of mōbeds discussed here.}

![Figure 11: Two sealings from the same official seal of Ādur-weh the mōbed](image)

Gyselen does not include these official seals in her tally because their inscriptions do not include a toponym; however, they resemble the size and shape of the other official seals, above, and so should be included even if they do not add to our knowledge of Sasanian administrative geography. They each bear the same image, with the same monogram in the kulāf of the mōbed—a monogram similar to others of the official mōbed seals, above. It is possible that the original seal resides in another private collection and may one day be rediscovered.
Another official seal should be discussed here: that of the *Ohrmazd-mōbed*. This is a title claimed by the third-century priest Kirdēr, before assuming even higher titles.\(^{161}\) One of the Qaṣr-e Abū Naṣr sealings was originally read by Frye as that of an official which he interpreted as the *Ohrmazd-mōbed*.\(^{162}\) Gyselen confirmed Frye’s reading of *mōbed* based on his drawings and notes; unfortunately, this bulla has been lost.\(^ {163}\) However, Gyselen still identifies QAN 1 as a sealing of the *Ohrmazd-mōbed* because of the similarity of its iconography to a bulla that she personally consulted at the British Museum, whose inscription she interprets as *Ādur-F(arrbay)-bōxt Ohrmazd-mōbed*.\(^ {164}\) According to Gyselen, both of these sealings show the bearded figure with a distinctive feature that she supposed to be indicative of this particular office: the presence of three (left, QAN 1) or two (right, BML unedit.) circular ornaments along the border of his *kulāf*, which are absent from the iconography of the other official seals of the *mōbed*. However, these two bullae (QAN 1 and BML uned.) are the only attestations of this title in the extant corpus of Sasanian seals and sealings. The readings are tentative and the objects inaccessible.

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\(^{161}\) KKZ, where Kirdēr is granted this title under Šāpūr I (r. 241–72) and Ohrmazd / Hormizd I (r. 272–73).

\(^{162}\) Presumably QAN 1, with its inscription notated by Frye as D1; the bulla does not appear to have had any other cosignatories.

\(^{163}\) Gyselen 1989a: 159 (b3) includes a full description, but states that she did not consult the object personally, as this QAN bulla was not found in either the MET or IBT collections of the QAN artifacts.

\(^{164}\) Gyselen 1989a: 158 (b2 / pl. III-b2), cited as BML no. 134980 (unedit.); also see 1989b.
There may be one reference to this title (or office) in extant literary sources from the Sasanian period, in the “historical” account of the Zoroastrian religion presented in Book IV of the *Dēnkard*: here, in a passage possibly preserved from the late Sasanian period, “his present majesty” Xusrō I (r. 531–79) designates the Ohrmazd-mōbed as the one most knowledgeable in the spiritual realm (MP mēnōy-wēnišnīh).\(^{165}\) Additionally, one of the late ninth-century letters of the priest Manušēîhr does use the expressions “the priests of Ohrmazd” (MP Ohrmazd mowbedān) and “the priesthood of Ohrmazd” (MP Ohrmazd mowbedīh).\(^{166}\) However, he seems to be speaking in an abstract sense about the duties of the priesthood. Therefore, the exact nature of this title or office— if that is what it was— remains a mystery.

In contrast to the (6) official seals of mōbeds discussed above are the administrative seals of mōbeds; like other Sasanian administrative seals, they are only epigraphic (and aniconic), bearing the name of the office and the toponym for the region of jurisdiction—in this case the province. There are 47 administrative mōbed sealings attesting to only seven

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\(^{165}\) *Dēn.* IV.4.22 (=*DkM* 414); see ed. and trans. in Shaki 1981.

\(^{166}\) *NM* I.4.10-11, 15.
different provincial jurisdictions: Abaršahr (4), Abhar / Hamadān-kust-ī-Abhar (3), Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah (1), Erān-xwarrah-Šāpūr (5), kadag-ī-Ādur-ī-Gušnasp (25), Kōmiš (1), and Māh-kust-ī-Nēmāwand (8). Combining the toponyms from the official seals with those of the administrative sealings, the mōbed appears with the following provincial jurisdictions.\textsuperscript{167}

Table 1: Provincial Administrations of mōbeds in Official and Administrative Seals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Official Seal</th>
<th>Administrative Seal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abaršahr</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abhar / Hamadān-kust-ī-Abhar</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erān-xwarrah-Šāpūr</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kadag-ī-Ādur-ī-Gušnasp</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(the Ādur-Gušnasp fire complex)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kōmiš</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Māh-kust-ī-Nēmāwand</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mēšān (Mesene)</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xusrō-Šād-Ohrmazd</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to inscriptive evidence in the corpus of Sasanian seals and bullae, there is a reference to a mōbed in a late Sasanian ostracon discovered in Erk-kala (Merv) in Turkmenistan, which might be from a draft of a legal document; however, the text is too fragmentary to be certain if this is a real individual or a hypothetical one.\textsuperscript{168}

\textsuperscript{168} The fragment describes taking a false oath, asserting that a mōbed should not lie (\textit{gumānīg dād war mōbed be druxtan nē abāyēd}); it also uses the term for a regular priest (MP \textit{mogmard}) later in the passage. For this ostracon, see Lukonin 1992: 104-05, who suggests that the fragment, from a broken jar, is either a school text or a draft of a legal document.
The late Sasanian *MHD* tells us that *mōbeds* were appointed by the king,\(^{169}\) and further informs us about various legal decisions made by *mōbeds*, even naming a four of them. Burzag is named as the *mōbed* of Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah, and he rules in cases about the transfer of a substitute successorship (*stūrīh*)\(^{170}\) and the trusteeship of a fire temple,\(^{171}\) as well as a case about an accessory murder charge.\(^{172}\) The *MHD* names another *mōbed* of...

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\(^{169}\) *MHD* A14.11-12, “it is necessary that, from this, henceforth *mōbeds* be appointed, and they are appointed by the command of the king of kings” (*ahāyist az ūd kerd ūrōn mowbedān gumārd u-šān pad framān i šāhān šāh gumārd*); adapted from Perikhanian 1997: 272-73.

\(^{170}\) *MHD* 99.17-100.5; see Macuch 1993: 621 and Perikhanian 1997: 226-27.

\(^{171}\) *MHD* A37.11-12; see Perikhanian 1997: 314-15.

\(^{172}\) *MHD* 97.3-7, although with no mention of Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah; see Macuch 1993: 586 and Perikhanian 1997: 220-21.
Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah, a certain Māh-Ādur-Frāy-Gušnasp, in a ruling about the verification of a personal seal on a legal document and again in relationship to the endowment and maintenance of the Rām-Šāpūr fire. Meanwhile, Zardušt as the mōbed of Bišāpūr, in association with the precedent of supplying a copy (hampaččēn) of a legal “brief” or “write” (frawardag) to the judge (dādwar), another passage refers to a written statement (nibištag) of the mōbed of Staxr.

While the provincial administration of the mōbed of Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah is attested in one official seal and one administrative one, neither the mōbed of Bišāpūr nor that of Staxr appears in the extant material corpus. Instead, the seals and sealings only attest to the provincial administrations of the driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar of Bišāpūr and Staxr, as well as the handarzbed of Staxr, along with several maguh administrations at the level of the canton for each of these provinces. This is not the only discrepancy between the material corpus and the literary one.

The MHD records that Frāy-Zardušt, the mōbed of Ohrmazd-Ardaxšīr, in the twenty-sixth year of the reign of Xusrō II [= 616 AD], in response to his receipt of the “investigative record” (pursišn-nāmag) that had been drawn up by the local official in Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah and sent to him, sends his legal decision back in the same pursišn-

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176 MHD 98.1-5; see Macuch 1993: 587, 591 and Perikhanian 1997: 222-23. See note above, in section on mowān-handarzbed. Macuch seems to think that the authority cited here, Pusanweh ī Āzādmard, is himself the mōbed of Staxr; this individual appears throughout the MHD but is nowhere else referred to as a mōbed, so I am more hesitant to make this connection.
177 BNP 3.17 (the seal of Weh-Šāpūr) and QAN 165 (MMA 36.30.94), both discussed above.
178 See further on this term in Chapter 2, where it appears in the Syriac text of the Life of Mār Abā.
nāmag now sealed with the seal of the mōbed of Ohrmazd-Ardaxšīr (pad-iz muhr ī Ohrmazd-ardaxšahr mōbed) to the city of Gór in Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah. The corpus of Sasanian seals and sealings attests to numerous clerical officials for the provincial jurisdiction of Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah, a province in Fārs, including the offices of the mōbed, the driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādar, and the handarzbed, along with maguh administrations for the cantons of Gór, Rawīyān, and Šīrāz. Most of these bullae were found at the site of Qaṣr-e Abū Naṣr (to be discussed below). Perhaps Frāy-Zardušt was in correspondence with the office of the maguh of Gór, which in this account seems to have been represented by someone with the title of ōstīgān (“trusted servant”). However, there are no extant seals or sealings of a mōbed of Ohrmazd-Ardaxšīr, a province in Xūzestān. Instead, we have only the sealings of a driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar and a šahrab for that provincial jurisdiction, as well as one for a maguh administration.

Table 2: Mōbeds in the MHD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jurisdiction</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Reign</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah</td>
<td>mōbed</td>
<td>MHD 97.6, 100.4, A37.9</td>
<td>Burzag</td>
<td>Xusrō I (r. 531–79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah</td>
<td>mōbed</td>
<td>MHD 95.15-96.3, 99.3-8</td>
<td>Māh-Ādur-Frāy-Gušnasp</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staxr</td>
<td>mōbed</td>
<td>MHD 98.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bišāpūr</td>
<td>mōbed</td>
<td>MHD 93.4</td>
<td>Zardušt</td>
<td>Xusrō II (r. 591–628)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohrmazd-Ardaxšīr</td>
<td>mōbed</td>
<td>MHD 100.8-9</td>
<td>Frāy-Zardušt</td>
<td>Xusrō II (r. 591–628)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

179 MHD 100.8-9; see Perikhanian 1997: 226-227 and Macuch 1993: 621, 633.
180 Meaning “firm, reliable.” In the MHD passage, the term appears as the abstract ōstīgānīh, or “trusteeship,” of a certain Māh-Ādur of Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah. On the ōstīgān and its connection to the Syriac term šarrirā, see Chapter 2 in the section on the Life of Mār Abā.
181 TB B47-12a; see Khosrowzadeh et al. 2020b for this partial reading by Gyselen, in which the name of the canton is illegible.
The *MHD* therefore supplements our knowledge of *môbed* provincial jurisdictions, adding Ohrmazd-Ardaxšīr, as well as Bišāpūr and Staxr, to the list gathered from material sources. Another explanation is that the *môbeds* of Ohrmazd-Ardaxšīr, Bišāpūr, and Staxr customarily used the administrative seal of the *driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar* instead of that of the *môbed*. The connection between these two offices will be discussed in the next section.

If we look further to the literary record, however, including Syriac and Armenian sources from the Sasanian period as well as late-Sasanian Zoroastrian Middle Persian texts, we can include several more provinces for the jurisdiction of particular *môbeds*—however, the toponyms correspond to Christian ecclesiastical divisions rather than Sasanian administrative ones. It is possible to map these onto known Middle Persian toponyms, but they do not always correspond to the administrative divisions that are so clearly evident in the material corpus. For example, the terminology “*môbed* of Bêth Huzâyê” might indicate that this priest’s jurisdiction was largely within the equivalent Xūzestān region, which included the province of Ėrān-xwarrah-Šāpūr (for which *môbed* seals are attested).  

These literary texts also mention several priests with the title of *môbedān môbed*, the highest of chief priests, but since this office is not attested in the corpus of Sasanian seals and bullae, I leave its discussion for the following chapter on Sasanian-era literary sources. For now, I merely note that contemporary literary texts refer in several instances to the seal of the *môbedān môbed*, despite the absence of any such examples from the extant material record.  

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182 E.g., *AMS* II.233-41, in the *Martyrdom of Martha*, who was martyred under Šāpūr II at Karkād-Ledan, which roughly corresponds with Ėrān-xwarrah-Šāpūr.  
183 E.g., *MHD* A38.7, referring to “the same copy of the testament sealed with the seal of the *môbedān môbed*” (*ham ayādgār hampaččēn ī pad-iz muhr ī môbedān môbed*). The Syriac *Life of
course of the last centuries of Sasanian rule, making it quite reasonable that no instances of the seal of the mōbedān mōbed have yet been found—particularly if they only placed their seal on certain documents. All of this will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.\(^\text{184}\)

Gyselen does not credit some of the literary references to mōbeds, particularly the Syriac martyr acts, dismissing them as “très anecdotiques.”\(^\text{185}\) As the following chapter will discuss, I prefer to distinguish between early and later martyr acts, with the latter being more historically reliable. However, Appendix 2 includes geographic references to Zoroastrian mōbeds even in more legendary works and spurious narratives. On the one hand, such incidental information is possibly accurate, and these officials would have been familiar to the audience of these texts; on the other hand, such information does not necessarily equate to historical accuracy, since it might merely be providing verisimilitude, or the “effect of the real” to its audience. These problems will be addressed in more detail in the next chapter. However, the aim of these chapters is to be more comprehensive (and perhaps less selective), in order to establish the widest geographic scope of priestly administrative offices. More selective analysis can come later.

**Corollary: The mōbed and the drīvōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar**

We have already seen the association between mōbed and dādwar (“judge”) in one of the titles claimed by the third-century high priest Kirdēr: hamšahr-mōbed-ud-dādwar, or the “chief priest and judge of the entire realm.”\(^\text{186}\) A passage in the late-Sasanian *MHD*

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\(^\text{184}\) See Appendix 2 for a discussion of when the office of mōbedān mōbed was instituted (not before the mid-fifth century).

\(^\text{185}\) Gyselen 2019a: 287.

\(^\text{186}\) KKZ, cited by Gyselen 2019a: 263.
informs us about the origins of the office of the *driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar* and its association with the *mōbeds* of Pārs:

*MHD* 1.93.3-4, 4-9:

*dādwar az frawardag ham-paččēn ōh dād rāyēnišn ī zardušt bīsāpūr mōbed pad xīr ī ātāxš kerd paydāg. ēk ēn kā muhr ī pad kār-framān dāštān ān ī mōbedān ud āmārgarān frādom pad frāmān ī kavad ī pērôzān ud ān ī dādvarān frādom pad frāmān ī xusrō ī kavadān ka muhr ī mōbedān ī Pārs kand mōbed nē pad nām ī mōbedīh bē pad nām ī driyōšān jādaggōwīh swānd nibišt ud pad ān čim abar muhr ī ham-gōnag kand estēd.*

A copy of a document is given out by a *dādwar*, as is evident from the action of Zardušt, the *mōbed* of Bišāpūr, for the temple treasury. In addition, the following: the official seal of the *mōbeds* and *āmārgars* was first introduced at the order of Kavad, son of Pērōz, and the official seal of the *dādwar* at the order of Xusrō, son of Kavad. When the seal of the *mōbeds* of Pārs was cut, the *mōbed* was inscribed not with the name of the office of *mōbed* but with the name of the office of the *driyōšān jādaggōw*. And for this reason, this it was stamped on similar seal(s).187

Although this passage refers only to the *driyōšān-jādaggōw* and not the complete title of *driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar* that appears in Sasanian administrative seals, this is the only reference within the *MHD*—and indeed in any Zoroastrian literary source—to any title resembling the *driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar*. The authors states that Kawād instituted the seals of the *mōbed* and *āmārgar*, while Xusrō I instituted the seal of the *dādwar*. A later literary source in Arabic suggests that Xusrō I (r. 531-79) instituted the office of the *driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar*.188 This is not quite what the *MHD* says on the matter; it says that the *mōbeds* of Pārs, instead of inscribing the title of *mōbed* on their seals, wrote the title of *driyōšān-jādaggōw*—a title that, the author explains, was generalized to other seals as well.189 It is possible that a *dādwar* was not an official title.

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187 Transcription and translation adapted from Perikhian 1997: 215; for a critical edition (transliteration only), with German translation and commentary, see Macuch 1993: 593-604.


189 Shaki 1993 summarizes the discrepancies in this account from the *MHD*. 
but a *role* taken on by a religious official, usually a *mōbed*, as with the example of Zardušt, the *mōbed* of Bišāpūr.

This overlap of function is attested in literary sources from the Sasanian period. For example, Elišē also says that in the mid-fifth century, a *mogpet* was sent to Armenia as a “judge of the land” (*datawor ašxarhin*), a phrase perhaps meant to render the title *šahr-dādwar*.190 In the sixth-century Syriac Life of Mār Abā, the “chief of the magi” (Syr. *rabb mgušē*) is glossed with the Middle Persian borrowing *mōbedān mōbed*, named as Dād-Ohrmazd, and also described as a “judge” (Syr. *dayyānā*).191 As the *MHD* passage suggests, although there were different official seals bearing the titles of *mōbed*, *driyōšān-jādaggōw*, and *dādwar*, there was some overlap in the use of the seals as well as the function of these offices. The geographic distribution of toponyms attested in the seals and bullae of these officials further supports this suggestion.

Extant Sasanian sealings attest to provincial-level jurisdictions for the *driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar*, the *dādwar*, and the *mōbed*. I have already mentioned that the jurisdiction of the *dādwar* (attested only for Māh-kust-ī-Wastān) is unique from that of the *driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar*, but it also unique from that of the *mōbed*. Nine administrative sealings attest to the *mōbed* of Māh-kust-ī-Nēmāwand, but Gyselen understands this province to be a one separate from but adjacent to Māh-kust-ī-Wastān, and suggests that the larger region of Māh (or *Mād*, for ancient Media) was divided into

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191 *Histoire* 226, 229; later this same *mōbedān mōbed* is addressed as *rabb mgušē* (*Histoire* 232). F. Jullien translates *rabb mgušē* as “chef des mages” and takes it to always mean the *mōbedān mōbed*. The accuracy of this assumption will be assessed in the following chapter. Interestingly, there are as many as six different extant seals attributed to magi with the name *Dād-Ohrmazd* (DCP 20.13 / 2.5, DCP 20.40 / 3.32, FFJ 44, IKB 30.D.10, PIT 40.06 / 3.11, and Tel Aviv 2).
smaller administrative units after the reforms of Kawād in the fifth century.\footnote{Gyselen 2019a: 141-45.} Thus, the dādwar may have been the particular title of the official with juridical authority in the particular region of Māh-kust-ī-Wastān; the seal and title of the mōbed and the driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar were used in every other provincial administration.

Moreover, of the 26 total provinces attested as jurisdictions for the mōbed and the driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar, they share only three: Abaršahr, Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah, Ērān-xwarrah-Šāpūr.\footnote{We might also include what appears to be a sealing from the personal seal of a mōbed of Hamadān, the son of Dādēn (BML 134981); however, this sealing is not discussed by Gyselen 2019a, and in fact the name only appears in Gignoux’s updated onomasticon of Iranian names as a potential patronym (Gignoux 2003, Supp. 90).} All three of these provincial administrations appear on administrative sealings of the mōbed as well as those of the driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar;\footnote{For the mōbeds: four for Abaršahr (BNP 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5 = ATb1, ATb3, ATb4, ATb5); one for Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah (QAN 165 / MMA 36.30.94 = ATb95b); and five for Ērān-xwarrah-Šāpūr (BNP 4.1, 4.8, 4.12, 4.13, and MFT 6 = ATb10, ATb17, ATb21, ATb22, ATb345).} two of them also appear on mōbed official seals, which attest to the names of Weh-Šāpūr, mōbed of Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah and Mardbūd, mōbed of Ērān-xwarrah-Šāpūr.\footnote{BNP 20.B.1 / 3.17 and IBT 14; in Gyselen 2019a as OTs3 and OTb10. In this case, the former is an actual seal, rather than a sealing.} Beyond these three provinces, there is no overlap of provincial jurisdictions for the mōbed and the driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar in the surviving record. This suggests that these titles and offices were regionally specific (with the same kind of official called one thing in certain provinces, but another in other provinces), but might have, in practice, been relatively interchangeable—just as the MHD says about the mōbeds of Pārs putting the title driyōšān-jādaggōw on their official seals. As one scholar has put it, the driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-
dādwar may not have been an “independent office but a function assumed ex officio by the mage.” 196

Because many of the extant bullae which bear these sealings are without provenance, we need not necessarily assume that each province had both a mōbed and a driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar administration at once. 197 This may explain the absence of a seal or sealing for the mōbed of Ohrmazd-Ardaxšīr in the material record, despite the MHD reference to Frāy-Zardušt, the mōbed of Ohrmazd-Ardaxšīr; he may have used the administrative seal of the driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar for official business, one which is attested in the corpus of Sasanian sealings. Or, the lack of material evidence for the office of the mōbed of Ohrmazd-Ardaxšīr may simply be a gap in a fragmentary record.

For at least one of the provincial jurisdictions shared by both the driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar and the mōbed, there is evidence that both administrations operated at the same time: a single bulla excavated from Šūš (ancient Susa) bears both the administrative sealing of the driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar of Ėrān-xwarrah-Šāpūr and the official sealing of Mardbūd, the mōbed of Ėrān-xwarrah-Šāpūr:

Figure 14: IBT 1 / Susa 1907.770, with close-up of driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar administrative sealing and sealing from official seal of Mardbūd, mōbed of Ėrān-xwarrah-Šāpūr (images from Akbarzadeh & Daryaee 2012)

197 The Abaršahr seal and sealings are in several different private and museum collections; nearly all the Ėrān-xwarrah-Šāpūr sealings were excavated from Šūš (Susa) and now reside either in Paris (BNP) or in Tehran (IBT), but beyond the find site no other archaeological information is known.
This may suggest that the mōbed operated distinctly from the driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar—in which case, there are two separate sealings representing two separate officials and authorities. But note that this bulla bears the (iconic) official seal of the mōbed, and not an (aniconic) administrative one. In fact, no bulla bears the administrative sealings of both the mōbed and the driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar. The above example, then, may more strongly suggest that the mōbed Mardbūd was one and the same authority as the driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar of Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah—in which case, the official seal of the mōbed identifies him personally just as the administrative seal of the driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar represents his office.

If the latter explanation is true, this bulla is the single exception to the description in the MHD: that the mōbeds of Pārs put the title driyōšān-jādaggōw on their seals, implying that all the other mōbeds (including those of Ērān-xwarrah-Šāpūr, in the region of Xūzestān) kept the title mōbed and that they did so even while acting in concert with or as the office of the driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar.

The case of the third shared provincial jurisdiction, Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah, in the region of Pārs, will be considered next, after a summary of the overlap between these two officials. In the table below, the notation X is capitalized and marked in bold when the clerical administration for that province has a mog-cosignatory attested on its bullae: in this case, eight provinces for a total of 21 mog-cosignatories to the driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar, and four different provinces for a total of 24 mog-cosignatories to the mōbed. There are no
provinces for which mog-cosignatories are attested for both of these administrations, despite the four provincial jurisdictions shared between them.198

Table 3: Overlap of Provincial Administrations of Clerical Officials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>dādwar</th>
<th>driyōšān-ǰādaggōw-ud-dādwar</th>
<th>mōbed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abarāšahr</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abhar</td>
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<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ḥamadān-kust-ī-Abhar</td>
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<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ādurbādagān</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>Ėrān-xwarrah-Śāpūr</td>
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<td>X</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Gēlān</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Gurgān</td>
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<td>Hamadān</td>
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<td>(x)</td>
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</tr>
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<td>kadag-ī-Ādur-ī-Gušnaspat</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kōmiş</td>
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<td>x</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staxr</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walaxšfarr</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web-Ardaxšīr</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xusrō-šād-Kawād</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xusrō-šād-Ohrmazd</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three of the provincial jurisdictions in the above table are located within the larger administrative region (šahr) of Pārs: Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah, Bīşāpūr, and Staxr. Two of them (Bīşāpūr and Staxr) belong exclusively to the driyōšān-ǰādaggōw-ud-dādwar; no mōbed seals or sealings for these provinces have yet been discovered, either administrative or

198 Although bulla QAN 165 (MMA 36.30.94) does have two administrative sealings: one for the maguh of Gōr in Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah and one for the mōbed of Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah; there is also a third seal that appears to be a personal one, but it is fragmentary.
personal. If this lack of evidence is not just a gap in a large but fragmentary corpus, it might be explained by the MHD passage above: there are no mōbed seals for these provinces because any mōbeds of this region simply used that of the driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar for official business.

Only one of the above provincial jurisdictions in Pārs is shared by both the driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar and the mōbed: Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah, which features on both an administrative sealing and a personal seal of the mōbed as well as a handful of administrative sealings for the driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar. The existence of two different administrative seals for the province of Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah (one each for the driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar and the mōbed) suggests the existence of two different administrations within the same provincial jurisdiction.

However, it is conceivable that, at least in the province of Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah, in the region of Pārs, mōbed might be a title used on a personal or official seal, whereas driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar was used for the official administrative seal. All four of the driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar administrative sealings, as well as the single mōbed administrative sealing, come from the same excavation at Qaṣr-e Abū Naṣr (QAN).199 The reading of the mōbed sealing of this jurisdiction—unique in this archive and in fact the entire corpus of Sasanian seals and sealings—is partial and tentative, at best;200 if we disregard it, then all

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199 In fact, nearly all of the extant sealings for any administration pertaining to Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah come from the QAN excavation (including the maguh and handarzbed), with the exception of two seals which reside in private or museum collections (ASC 0.2, for the maguh of Rawīyān, a canton of Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah; BNP 3.17, for the mōbed of Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah) and a sealing (found at TQS and residing at the Bišāpūr Museum, possibly made from ASC 0.2).

200 QAN 165 (MMA 36.30.94) is a bulla which contains a sealing for the maguh of Gōr, Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah as well as a partial sealing from what appears to be another administrative seal, tentatively identified as the mōbed of Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah despite there being no comparanda; Frye 1973 reads inscription D199 as [(ʾ)ʾlt (h)št (l) GDH / (mgw ?) pty] but in fact finds this partial sealing similar enough to that of the driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar of Ardaxšīr-xwarrah (D207)
of the other evidence supports the suggestion that that the offices of the mōbed and driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar overlapped and may have been filled by the same individual, with different titles for his official administrative and personal seals. Moreover, the MHD refers to the dīwān ī mōbedān Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah, or “the archive of the mōbeds of Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah;” this suggests that as well as the archive providing textual sources for the late-Sasanian author of the MHD lawbook, Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah was an important locus of Zoroastrian legal authority.201 This may explain its unique status in the record of Sasanian seals and bullae.

4.4 The maguh

Gyselen 2019a: 289-300

MP maguh or mowūh [mgwḥ / mgwydy]

Sealings of the maguh [mgwh] comprise the majority of all total Sasanian administrative sealings, let alone those considered clerical administrations. They account for nearly 450 of the over 1,100 entries in my database of seals and sealings. However, the prevalence of this office in the material record had not clarified its function and meaning. The maguh is not explicitly attested in any extant literary sources. In fact, the maguh appears only on administrative seals and sealings of the late Sasanian and early post-Sasanian periods, on bullae where it is often, but not always, accompanied by a mog cosignatory. In this chapter, I will treat all of these seals and seal impressions as those of the “maguh,” which I translate as “the office of the magi.” However, there is considerable

\[\text{that he is not always able to discern between the two; the latter he reads [‘ltḥ štl GDH / dlgwš’ny y’tkgwby W d’twbly].}\]

\[\text{201 MHD A40.9-10 (}=8.86). There are several other references in the MHD to decrees and legal reforms in Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah during the reign of Xusrō I (r. 531–79) which require further study.}\]
uncertainty about correct rendering of the term, its meaning, and the function of this administration.

The precise nature of the office, if that is what it is, and the etymology of the term have been debated by scholars for nearly a century. What nearly everyone agrees on, however, is that there is some association with MP mog [mgw]. Herzfeld (1938) did not attempt to explain the term, but he was adamant about reading the final –h instead of Mordtmann and Horn’s reading of magū ZY (i.e., mog ī); Herzfeld simply pointed out that the final letters would have been a very unusual way of writing ZY, and so suggested a new reading of magūh.202 However, he did not explain what this new reading meant, and there several alternative readings were later offered. Maricq (1959) and Frye (1968) both suggested that it was an abbreviation: the former suggested the reconstruction mog-xānag [mgwh(ʾnk)] for “bureau des mages” (lit. “mog house”), while the latter read mog-xwadāy [mgwx(wdʾt)] for “chief mog” (lit. “lord mog”).203 For his part, Maricq was arguing against Unvala’s (1953) suggestion that the final –h was “perhaps a graphic sign for the stress on the preceding u (?).”204 In earlier publications, Frye had originally used the reading of mog ī [mgw ZY],205 and he did not explain his later interpretation of the term as mog-xwadāy [mgwx(wdʾt)]. These readings, however, have been abandoned in favor of ones similar to Herzfeld’s magūh, with various explanations for its form and meaning.

Gropp (1974) traces various other related words and derivatives of mgw- and explains the final –h of mgwh with the comparison of the development of the word “king” (MP šāh) from OP xšāyaḏiya-, where the OP –iya- ending is represented by –h in Middle

202 Herzfeld 1938, as magūkh; cited by Frye 1960: 3.
205 For instance, Frye 1960 reads [mgw ZY].
Thus he reconstructs an original *magūpiθya*- > *magūθya* > magūh, which he interprets as “the magi administration, an institution probably not differing much from the Parsee punchayet in Bombay,” later calling it “one of the basic economic systems of the Sasanian Empire.” Aside from the problematic comparison to the modern priestly institution in India, this interpretation of a “magi administration” overseeing the affairs of the magi, including the maintenance of fire temples on the local level, has generally been supported by subsequent scholars.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Philippe Gignoux regularly offered the translation of “bureau des mages” for the word he transliterated as [mgwh]. He later supplied the transcription of mog-vēh, which he continued to translate as “bureau des mages,” even while offering an alternative meaning of “mage savant, instuit.” Criticism by Sundermann (1989) and others led Gignoux to return to the idea of this being a local office or diocese, and thus a toponym, related to the function of a particular mog, and so Gignoux translates mog-vēh as “bureau de mages” (Gignoux 1987 and 1991).

Subsequent publications by other scholars regularly interpret the word as maguh, translating it as “council of the magi” (Gubaev et al. 1996) or “office of the moy” (Cereti & Bassiri 2016). Rika Gyselen has commented on her preference for Gignoux’s

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208 E.g., Gignoux 1974a; a note in his introduction to the catalogue of the Bibliotheque Nationale indicates his uncertainty at this point: “Mot pour lequel il n'existe pas encore d'explication très convaincante, sans doute une sorte d'abstrait formé sur mgw-?” (Gignoux 1978a: 6 n.7).
209 E.g., Gignoux 1985, also Gignoux & Gyselen 1987.
211 Sundermann 1989: 362, as part of his review of Gignoux & Gyselen 1987 (BSS).
212 In the English translation of Wiesehöfer’s history of ancient Persia, maguh is translated as “office of the Magi” (2001: 188).
abandoned “wise mog” interpretation, but the majority of her work, including the recent publication on the bullae attached to the eighth-century Tabarestan documents, follows the widely accepted treatment of the maguh as an administrative office tied to a local toponym which Gyselen characterizes as a “canton” of a larger province. In her more recent publications, Gyselen has either eschewed transcribing the word, instead sticking to the transliteration of [mgwh], or else offered—with no philological explanation—the transcription of mowūh as the name of this office. Now, mowūh seems to be the preferred transcription of the term, as provisional as it may be.

Other scholars see discrepancies in the formulae that mention the maguh, and thus postulate alternative readings. For example, Akbarzadeh et al. 2009 & 2010), in their study of the bullae at the Khoy Museum, draw a distinction between two different spellings of maguh in the extant seals to suggest that they were actually two different offices: the maguh [mgwh] and the mogwēd [mgwyd], the latter seeming to have a jurisdiction of the district of Huniyāg-Pērōz, although the exact location of this toponym is unknown. The authors also draw a parallel to a sealing with a similar spelling for the province of Staxr. Almost all of the other extant maguh [mgwh] seals indicate the name of the province as well as the

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213 Gyselen 2015.
215 Gyselen 2015.
216 Gyselen 2019a and 2019b; Sundermann 1989 reads mowīh.
217 Akbarzadeh et al. 2009: 15ff and Akbarzadeh et al. 2010: 16ff, where the bulla in question is Khoy 6 (formerly MOT 31 in Gignoux & Gyselen 1987, before it was re-sold on the antiquities market); this spelling with the same jurisdiction is also attested on the bullae PIT 14, PIT 15, and PIT 16, as well as two bullae formerly in the private collection of Kevorkian (designated KP in Gignoux & Gyselen 1987) but now at the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris (KP 9 / BNP 14.b.1 and KP 10 / BNP 14.b.2). All of these seal impressions, including Khoy 6 / MOT 31, are classified together by Gyselen 2019a as the same (under ATb26), as the mowūh of Huniyāg-Pērōz in an unknown province.
218 QAN 158a (= B89 in Gyselen 1989a = ATb89 in Gyselen 2019a), which Gyselen reads as the maguh of Marab (?) in the province of Staxr (marab mowūh staxr [mlby mgwydy stḥl]).
local district; the seal inscriptions of the mogwēd [mgwyd] of Huniyāg-Pērōz are the exception, to which the authors suggest a possible solution: that one not read mogwēd huniyāg pērōz [ḥwydʾk pylcwcy mgwyd] but mog gay huniyāg pērōz [ḥwydʾk pylcwcy mgw-gd], for the mog of (the province) of Gay, (in the district of) Huniyāg-Pērōz.\textsuperscript{219} Whatever the correct reading is, they are right to call these seal impressions “strikingly irregular” and “an unicum in Sasanian glyptics.”\textsuperscript{220}

Unfortunately, I am unable to resolve the issues of interpretation—a problem made even more curious by the lack of any attestation of this office (if that is truly what it is) in the extant literary record: the term maguh does not appear in any Zoroastrian text, nor in any other literary work—except, perhaps, indirectly. Florence Jullien, in her treatment of the Sasanian administrative toponyms appearing in the Syriac Life of Īšōʿsabran, suggests that the Syriac expression puhrā da-mgušē (“assembly of magi”) probably refers to the office of the maguh, which she defines as “un collectif à la tête d’une bourgade rurale.”\textsuperscript{221} A similar Syriac phrase appears often in the Syriac Persian Martyr Acts, however, the lack of uniformity in the expression may indicate a more informal institution than the maguh of the late-Sasanian administrative bullae.\textsuperscript{222}

\textsuperscript{219} Akbarzadeh et al. 2009: 15; as they point out, one would also have to read QAN 158a as “the mog of Marab, (in the province of) Gay and Staxr.”

\textsuperscript{220} Akbarzadeh et al. 2009: 15. In her more recent treatment of Sasanian administrative geography, Gyselen finds several criteria which may indicate a post-Sasanian chronology for some of the maguh seals, including the strange spelling of [mgwyd], as well as the presence of the word tasōg following and specifying the name of the canton, or the use of abar [QDM) following the province (2019a: 300).

\textsuperscript{221} Jullien F. 2004: 173, citing the Syriac text of Chabot 1897: 518-59.

\textsuperscript{222} For example, in the Life of Mār Ābā, a late sixth-century Syriac hagiography, the term for the Magian “assembly” is usually either kensā or knušyā da-mgušē; there, the “assembly” is presided over at times by the mōbedān mōbed and is the place where a legal trial is held and legal documents are served (some referred to with MP names, like pursišn-nāmag). This text and other similar ones will be discussed in the next chapter.
The term *maguh* appears only in administrative seals and sealings from the late-Sasanian and early post-Sasanian periods—the latter comprising a handful of bullae attached to documents of the mid-eighth-century Ṭabarestān archive. Gyselen hypothesizes that the local or regional administration of the *maguh* was under the jurisdiction of some other, higher official, such as the *driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar* or *mōbed*, but admits that there is no direct proof of this.\(^{223}\) Similarly, Wiesehöfer suggests that the *maguh*, which functioned on the level of the district, was a mediating authority for the offices of the *mōbed* or *driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar*, which both functioned on the provincial level.\(^{224}\) This is as good a guess as any, based on the hierarchy of administrative geography of the extant seals and bullae. However, a *maguh* sealing never appears on a bulla with any of these other offices, so it is difficult to say what the relationship between the offices might be—without the survival of the objects or documents to which the bullae were attached. Some of the documents of the Ṭabarestān archive do cite the authority or opinion of religious officials and judges (including a *rad* and *hērbed*);\(^{225}\) only one of these documents, addressed to a *rad*, is one to which a *maguh* seal is attached.\(^{226}\) Further study of the documents of the Ṭabarestān archive should reveal more about the office of the *maguh*. These unique documents will be discussed in more detail below, where, based on my own observations about the archive, I suggest that the post-Sasanian *maguh* can be understood as the *dādestān* (i.e., the “law” or “court”) of a regional jurisdiction.

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\(^{223}\) Gyselen 2019a: 297.

\(^{224}\) Wiesehöfer 2001: 188.

\(^{225}\) Tab. 11 involves the *rad* of Parištargar named Windād-Xwarṣēd (Gignoux 2014); Tab. 1A.2, 1B.1, and 8B.1 all involve the *hērbed* Farroxabzuūd (Gignoux 2012, Macuch 2016 and Weber 2016a).

\(^{226}\) Tab. 28 is addressed to an unnamed *rad* of Parištargar; see more on these documents below.
In any case, the large number of extant seals and sealings of the *maguh*, as well as the continuation of this office after the fall of the Sasanian kingdom, attest to its vital nature and importance of this office for local governance. The office of the *maguh* is widely attested in Sasanian-era seal inscriptions, appearing on 21 extant seals and in 423 sealings on extant bullae, pointing to a local jurisdiction at the level of a canton (*tasōg*) of a larger province.\(^{227}\) Each of the 21 extant seals is different, and represents a distinct canton. Some of the 423 sealings repeat the same seal impression and probably came from the same seal. Many of the extant seals and sealings are the single attestation of the canton inscribed thereon—and which would otherwise remain unknown. Altogether, the legible *maguh* seals and sealings provide evidence for over 100 different cantons in 40 different provinces, as shown in the following table:\(^{228}\)

**Table 4: Local Jurisdictions of the *Maguh* Administration, by Province**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Canton</th>
<th>Instances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Abaršahr (7)</td>
<td>Nēw-Šābuhr / <em>tasōg</em>-ī-Nēw-Šābuhr-ud-Ab…</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Asprāyēn</em> / <em>tasōg</em>-ī-<em>Asprāyēn</em>-ud-Wārsyāw</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Jām</em></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Abhar (1)</td>
<td>Saz</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ādurbādagān (2)</td>
<td>Ganzag-šahrestan</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Karkaran</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Āmūl-ud-Danbāwand (3)</td>
<td>Hūb</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah (32)</td>
<td>Šīrāz(^{229})</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rawīyān</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gör</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Bišāpūr (76)</td>
<td>Siyāg</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{227}\) In some instances, the MP term *tasōg* (which Gyselen renders as “canton”) is part of the toponym; in most instances, however, the cantonal aspect of this administrative unit is assumed from its being a part of a larger unit that Gyselen has termed a “province.”

\(^{228}\) This information is adapted from Gyselen 2019a, which I checked against my own database. The parentheses () after the province name indicates the total number of instances for which it is attested in extant seals and sealings. Cantons in *italics* represent those few toponyms attested on actual seals; the rest of the attestations are on sealings found on bullae.

\(^{229}\) A single sealing found at Susa attests to a *maguh* of Šīrāz without indicating the larger province (Exc. 1909/11, now at IBT; see Akbarzadeh & Daryaee 2012).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sardag</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abād-Šābūr</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarēz</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kāzerūn</td>
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<tr>
<td>Šīrhān</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Čišn</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negundarāspān</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dēlān (2)</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dēzān</td>
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<td>Šābūr</td>
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<td>Yarēz</td>
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<td>7. Dēlān (2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Ērān-āsān-kar-Kawād (2)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Ērān-winnārd-Kawād (1)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Ērān-xwarrah-Šābuhr (5)</td>
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<td>11. Ērān-xwarrah-Yazdgird (1)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Frāx-kar-Pērōz-kust-ī-šahrestān (2)</td>
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<td>13. Frāx-kar-Pērōz-kust-ī-Wad (6)</td>
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<td>14. Garm-Kermān (1)</td>
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<td>15. Gay (7)</td>
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<td>16. Gurgān (85)</td>
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<td>17. Hamadān-kust-ī-Abhar (6)</td>
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<td>18. Hamadān-kust-ī-shahrestān (11)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Īg / Gī (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. Xusrō-šād-Kawād (5)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. kadag-ī-Adur-Gušnasp (1)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Māh-kust-ī-Nēmāwand (26)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Frāward-ud-Gōrān</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nēmāwand</td>
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<td>Sāpūr-xwāst</td>
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<td>Frēzan-ud-Wēdand</td>
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<td>Ogööl</td>
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<td>Hunāg-Pērōz</td>
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<td>Abhar</td>
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<td>Parēgān</td>
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<td>Askēnröd</td>
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<td>Zar...</td>
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<td>Gālūl-ī-abardar</td>
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<td>Gālūl-ī-frōd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jāwag-abarwār</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frāward-ud-Gōrān</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sāpūr-xwāst</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Province Name</td>
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<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Māh-kust-ī-Wastān (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zar…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aswand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Marw-rōd (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Azādhiṣtag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>Māsabadān (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rēbnard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>Mēšūn (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Īrbar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>Nōd-Ardaxšīragān (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sarag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>Ray (83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rām-Pērōz-šahrestān</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hunān</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kōhag</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Parāg</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pārākōf</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bānān</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kadagānzān</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pakorānzdār</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sēwān</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Īst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>Rōyān (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nēmar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>Rōyān-ud-Zalēxān (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rōdūr</td>
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<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>Saraxs-ud-Abāward (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suhtan-ud-Tahvenjan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>Sard-Kermān (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Āmān</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>Staxr (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Māyēn</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>Šahr-rām-Pērōz (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Barestān</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.</td>
<td>Tūs (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wanānd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36.</td>
<td>Weh-Andiyōk-Șāpūr (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weh-Andiyōk-Șāpūr-šahrestān</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37.</td>
<td>Weh-Ardaxšīr (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weh-Ardaxšīr-šahrestān</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nahr-malk-ī-Walaxṣābād</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pērōz-Șāpūr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38.</td>
<td>Weh-Kawād (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frawaxt-ī-frōdar</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bābil</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Holwān-mayıagnag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39.</td>
<td>Zarang (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zarang-šahrestān / tasōg-ī-Zarang-šahrestān</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40.</td>
<td>[province illegible] (9)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arzestān</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dahōy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Huniyāg-Pērōz</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Kermardān</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rām-Kawād</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The precise location of many of the cantons is unknown. The following map shows the location of identified provinces that attest to maguh administrations, clustered by number of instances.\textsuperscript{230}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{map.png}
\caption{Cluster map of maguh in Sasanian administrative bullae, by province}
\end{figure}

The concentration of provincial administrations in Bişāpûr reflects archaeological excavation that unearthed a regional archive there (TQS): 59 sealings of the maguh of Ābād-Ṣāpūr, canton of Bişāpûr; The significant cluster of maguh sealings for the provinces of Ray and Gurgān reside in several museum and private collections, and probably each once represented a regional archive (similar to that of Bişāpûr at TQS) before clandestine excavations and the antiquities trade scattered them.\textsuperscript{231}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{230} Cf. recent maps of maguh administrations in Gyselen 2019a: 298 and Khosrowzadeh et al. 2020b: 940.
\textsuperscript{231} The Ray maguh sealings reside in France (BNP), Russia (EL), and Iran (Khoy), as well as in several private collections (ASC, JT, KP, MOT, MFT, PIT). Almost all of the Gurgān maguh sealings now reside in the Ahmed Saeedi collection (ASC), which has been partially published by Gyselen 2007 (she also includes unedited items in her 2019a appendices), where even she speculates that this collection may represent a regional archive (despite its lack of provenance); a
\end{flushleft}
Gyselen uses this data on the attested cantons of the *maguh* to extrapolate the total number of over 400 cantons for Sasanian administrative geography (based on the evidence from these sealings that there are at least 10 cantons per province); her point is less about the actual number of cantons than about the fragmentary nature of the extant material record—and the expectation of further significant finds to come.\footnote{Gyselen 2019a: 289-300.}

I mentioned that Gyselen suggests that the *maguh*, which operated on the local level of the canton, was under the provincial jurisdiction of the *mōbed*.\footnote{Gyselen 2019a: 297.} However, the gap in the extant corpus of Sasanian administrative seals and bullae would have to be large indeed for this to be the case, because the attested provincial jurisdictions of *mōbeds* cover only a fraction of the provinces in which the *maguh* is attested: just nine out of the forty *maguh* administrations that have been deciphered. The following map shows the geographic overlap of provincial administrations in extant seals and sealings for the *mōbed* and *maguh*. 

handful of other Gurgān sealings reside in museum (BML, BNP, IBT, Khoy) and private collections (MOT, PIT).
Figure 16: Overlap of jurisdictions of mōbed and maguh administrations, by province

We know that the material record is fragmentary. We also know that its geographic distribution is skewed, with certain provenanced finds from excavations comprising the bulk of the information represented above. Perhaps the material record will one day better represent the true scope of Sasanian administrative offices. On the other hand, maybe we need to reject some of our assumptions about the relationship of these offices. Excavated archives do not always contain both the sealings of mōbeds and maguh administrations, suggesting that they carried out different functions in Sasanian government and jurisprudence. For example, the QAN collection contains only one mōbed sealing yet has a number of different maguh sealings. Perhaps the maguh administration operated independently of the mōbed, at the local level of the canton; or perhaps the mōbed only became involved in certain kinds of cases or legal matters.
4.5 The *mog*

MP  *mog* [mgw] / (pl.) *mowān*
Arm.  *mog* / (pl.) *mogk’*
Geo.  *mogwi* / (pl.) *mogwi* \(^{234}\)
Gr.  *mágos* / (pl.) *mágoi*
Lat.  *magus* / (pl.) *magi*
Syr.  *mgušā* [mgwš’] / (pl.) *mgušē*
Ar.  *al-majūsī* (adj.) / *al-majūs* (coll.)

The *mog* is the most recognizable title of Zoroastrian priests of the Sasanian period. The term appears in a wide range of Sasanian-era literary sources in Greek, Latin, Syriac, Armenian, and Georgian, as well as Middle Persian.\(^ {235}\) The *mog* also features widely in the extant corpus of Sasanian seals and bullae, appearing on over 200 seals and over 300 different sealings, representing over 400 unique names. The title of *mog* appears in the material record exclusively in the form of personal seals and their sealings, identifiable by a formulaic inscription written around the outside of the seal in the pattern of \(X \ i \ mog \ i \ Y-ān\), for example *Anōšag-dād ī mog ī Mardbūdān*, meaning “Anōšag-dād the *mog*, son of Mardbūd.”\(^ {236}\)

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\(^{234}\) Rapp 2014 regularly translates this Georgian word as “*mowbed,*” but also gives the equivalent as “*magus*” for the singular and “*magi*” for the plural (2014: 140), which must be closer to the original meaning.

\(^{235}\) For the Middle Persian word and its origins, see Nyberg 1974 (under *magū*).

\(^{236}\) [‘nwškd’t Y (mgw) mrtbwt’n], where the reading of *mog* is tentative but likely, considering the existence of a duplicate sealing as well as the pattern of other such sealings; see the original publication of Frye 1973 (inscriptions D222 and D177), with the emendation of Gignoux 1985.
As in the above example, the center of the magi personal seals bears an identifying image, in this case a humped bull. There are various types of such images, ranging from animal to human (typically a male bust in profile) to monogram, with no discernable relationship (as far as I can tell) between image and name / patronym. Although I believe that there is much more to learn from the iconography of these seals, it is not the focus of the present study.\(^{237}\) Instead, I examine the magi and their relationship to the other so-called clerical administrations in the corpus of Sasanian seals and sealings.

Until now, the study of the magi seals sealings has mostly been limited to their contributions to Iranian onomastics.\(^ {238}\) No one has yet seriously attempted to assess the magi sealings as part of the Sasanian administration because, although they are numerous, they do not themselves bear any geographic information—at least, not when they are taken out of context. Sometimes the mog appears alone on a bulla or with other personal sealings; these instances are less useful for the present study. However, the personal sealing of a mog often, but not always, appears on bullae as a co-signatory to clerical office (hence Gyselen’s very definition of “clerical” or “juridico-religious” administration), as with the example of bulla QAN 171, introduced above. The coupling of a personal and administrative sealing on a bulla supplies geographic information to both, taking into consideration the toponym

\(^{237}\) A recent dissertation by Delphine Poinsot includes a section on magi seals as part of the larger analysis of all of the iconography present in Sasanian seals: Poinsot 2018, “Les animaux de la Perse: étude du corpus des sceaux et des bulles d'époque sassanide,” under the direction of Frantz Grenet, is not yet published online. My thanks to Jo Ann Scurlock, who drew my attention to this study. Gyselen has also offered some preliminary comments on the iconography of magi seals (Gyselen 1995), as well as a study of religious iconography in Sasanian seals more generally (Gyselen 1990). Additionally, based on her study of the Ahmed Saeedi collection, Gyselen does notice that the majority of mog seal impressions bear the same shape: “a flat surface arising from the use of a dome or flat bezel;” this leads Gyselen to hypothesize that different seal shapes reflect the different function or status of the owner of the seal (Gyselen 2007: 74).

\(^{238}\) See discussion of Gyselen 1995 above, in the literature review section.
attested on the administrative seal—as well as the find site, if it is known. Thus, in the case of bulla QAN 171, the *mog* Anōšag-dād, son of Mardbūd bears some connection to the *maguh* of Šīrāz, a canton of Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah, and both had some dealings at the nearby Sasanian-era fort at Qaṣr-e Abū Naṣr—where the bulla was excavated.

The exact relationship of a bulla’s cosignatories is uncertain: do the multiple sealings always represent multiple individuals or offices operating in different roles? In this case, the administrative or official seal would represent the authority under which a particular action was made or statement given, while other personal seals might represent witnesses to said action or statement. With the exception of the Ṭabarestān documents, no other extant bulla with a clerical sealing survives still attached to the document or object which it authorized. The Ṭabarestān documents and bullae will be considered as a special case below; for now, I note that although the Ṭabarestān bullae do not appear to contain the personal seal impressions of any magi, language within the Ṭabarestān documents points to the function of other cosignatories, suggesting that a legal decision could might have multiple witnesses among the landowners, elders, and officials of a village (see below). An alternative is that the administrative sealing might represent the office and its authority, while a personal seal might represent the individual holding that office. In either case, the toponym indicating the jurisdiction of the office would likely also indicate the geographic location of the individuals represented on the personal seals acting as cosignatories on any given bulla. This is the assumption under which I am operating for the present study.
The following map shows the concentration of *mog* cosignatories, organized according to the provincial administrative of the clerical office to which the *mog* is associated on each bulla:

Figure 18: Cluster map of *magi* as cosignatories in Sasanian administrative bullae, by province

As the map shows, magi appear as cosignatories in most of the provinces where the clerical administrative offices are attested, and most frequently wherever those offices also appear most numerous: in Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah, Ray, Gurgān, and at the temple complex of the Ādur Gušnasp fire. In the case of Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah and kadag-ī-Ādur-ī-Gušnasp, these were archives excavated from within the province attested on their sealings. The Gurgān sealings reside in a private collection, but may once have been just such a regional archive (albeit clandestinely excavated); the Ray sealings are scattered throughout museum and
private collections and so it is impossible to say whether they represent a regional archive or not.

The following section breaks this information down further, dividing the mog cosignatories according to their associated offices in the material record. In other words, the following analyzes the frequency and geographic spread of mog cosignatories appearing alongside sealings bearing the imprint of the administrative seals of the driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar and maguh, as well as that of the official and administrative seals of mōbeds. To reiterate: the mog appears as a cosignatory for all three of these “clerical” offices, with the maguh representing a local jurisdiction at the level of the canton, while the mōbed and driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar both appear to have had a provincial jurisdiction.
First, a *mog* appears as a cosignatory to a *mōbed* in 32 instances, representing 16 distinct *magi* by name and 5 provincial jurisdictions (or 5 *mōbeds*). Only four of these toponyms are legible, and correspond to the following provincial administrations: Abaršahr, Ėrān-xwarrah-Šāpūr, kadag-ī-Ādur-ī-Gušnasp, and Māh-kust-ī-Nēmāwand. Note that magi are cosignatories in four out of the nine attested and identifiable *mōbed* provincial administrations (see map above). In addition, a *mog* appears as a cosignatory to the administration of the *driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar* in 20 instances, representing 18 distinct *magi* by name and 6 different provincial jurisdictions. The *mog* is less represented in relation to this clerical administration than any other, with *magi* as cosignatories in only
6 of the 19 attested and identifiable *driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar* provincial administrations, as represented in the following map (below).

![Map](image)

**Figure 20:** Mog cosignatories to *driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar* administrations, by province

Finally, a *mog* appears as a cosignatory to the *maguh* administration in 89 instances, representing 57 distinct *magi* by name and 27 cantons of *maguh* jurisdictions (in 17 provinces). This means that *magi* are cosignatories in over a quarter of the over 100 attested and identifiable *maguh* administrations, as represented below.
Although some of the seals of magi are repeated in extant sealings, no individual "mog" appears as a cosignatory to more than one clerical administration. Furthermore, those names of magi which are repeated do so within the same provincial jurisdictions if not the same archive. Even considering the fragmentary nature of the corpus, this suggests to me that the "mog" sealing need not necessarily represent an interested party or witness to the document or object or decision, but might represent the personal seal of the individual associated with the specific clerical office. But without the documents or objects to which the bullae were originally attached, this remains a guess. In any case, the volume and distribution of magi cosignatories across the three clerical administrations of driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar, mōbed, and maguh as well as across their provincial and cantonal jurisdictions not only indicates but quantifies the importance of magi to the functioning of
Sasanian administration. The following table shows the provincial distribution of mog cosignatories across the three administrations:

**Table 5: Distribution of Mog-cosignatories to Clerical Administrations, by Province**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Cosignatory to drikōšān-jiadagōw-ud-dādwar</th>
<th>Cosignatory to mōbed</th>
<th>Cosignatory to maguh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abaršahr</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ādurbādagān</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Āmūl-ud-Danbāwand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bišāpūr</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dēlān</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ėrān-winnārd-Kawād</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ėrān-xwarrah-Sāpūr</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gurgān</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hamadān-kust-ī-Abhar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kadag-ī-Ādur-ī-Gušnasp</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Māh-kust-ī-Nēmāwand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Māsabadān</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ray</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saraxs-ud-Abāward</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staxr</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weh-Andiyōk-Šāpūr</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weh-Ardaxšīr</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Xusrō-šād-Kawād</td>
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</table>

The magi most often appear as cosignatories of the administrative office of the *maguh* and at the administrative level of the canton, however, they actually appear far more frequently on bullae without any administrative cosignatory at all: in nearly 180 instances. In some of these cases the other cosignatories are illegible, but I suspect that most of them represent instances in which magi authenticated goods or documents without the supervision or authority of any office other than the title of *mog* that they possessed. If we truly want to know what the magi were doing, and not just where, we must look to the literary record—in lieu of any discoveries of documents with bullae still attached that bear
mog sealings. The Ṭabarestān archive does preserve documents with attached bullae, although the sealings are not those of magi but of the administration of the maguh. The implications of this archive will be considered in more detail below. First, the following section examines excavated archives introduced above, especially when the personal sealings of magi have been published alongside those of the clerical administrations.

5. Clerical Administrations in the Archives

Earlier in the chapter, I introduced the scholarship on excavated, confiscated, and private archives (e.g., the Ṭabarestān archive). Now, I will go into more detail on each of these collections as they relate to the clerical offices discussed above.

While earlier publications of these archives (e.g., QAN and TS) emphasized the iconography of the seals—and did not yet treat each bulla as a document with multiple signatories—much of the focus of recent publications has been on the geographic knowledge they offer. So far, however, there has been little discussion of the personal seals and cosignatories associated with each of the administrations attested in the bullae of these archives. In some cases, this sigillographic information has not yet been published because the authors have prioritized the geographic information in the administrative seal inscriptions. The present study examines each archive more holistically, taking into account not only the regional and provincial jurisdictions associated with each administration, but also if and when those administrations have (extant or known) mog cosignatories—and when possible, who those cosignatories are.
The following subsections on the archives have been organized roughly geographically, in the following order:

5.1 Qaṣr-e Abū Naṣr (QAN)
5.2 Tol-e Qaleh Seyfābād (TQS)
5.3 Takht-e Sulaymān (TS)
5.4 Tappe Bardnakoon (TB)
5.5 Tureng Tepe (TT)
5.6 Tepe Kabūdān (TK)
5.7 Ak-Depe (AD)
5.8 The Taḵarestān Archive

5.1 Qaṣr-e Abū Naṣr (QAN)

Qaṣr-e Abū Naṣr (QAN), a late-Sasanian fortress near Šīrāz, was excavated in three seasons over the course of 1932-1935 by archaeologists from the Metropolitan Museum of Art.239 Half of the QAN collection resides in New York in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.239 The site has ruins going back to the Achaemenid period, and is nearby the sites of several important monumental inscriptions from the early Sasanian period, including Barm-e Delak. The presence of late Sasanian and early Islamic coinage shows that the site flourished from the sixth century.
Art (MMA), while the other half remains in Iran at the National Museum in Tehran, formerly known as Irān-e Bāstān (and therefore abbreviated as IBT). However, because the original excavators did not turn up anything “sensational” among the remains at QAN, no full report was ever published by them. Then, in 1973 Richard Frye and his colleagues published what he called a “rescue operation” of the available material, including the corpus of sealings, working from forty-year-old photographs and sketches. Donald Whitcomb later published a more in-depth treatment of the excavations of Qaṣr-e Abū Naṣr, calling his work a “deferred excavation,” as it took place in museums and among old reports.

Figure 23: Map of plain of Šīrāz and distribution of place names on sealings found at Qaṣr-i Abū Naṣr (from Whitcomb 1985: 14)

through eighth centuries—indeed the majority of the coins found at the site are of the Xusrō II type, with a few early Islamic coins bearing Arabic inscriptions. See a summary of the excavations on the website of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (MMA), by Chaves Yates 2018. Frye 1973, where in the preface Frye notes that at the time “few of the clay sealings from Qasr-i Abu Nasr in the Museum in Tehran could be located.” Although Frye is listed as the single author of the volume, Prudence Harper was responsible for most of the chapters on the QAN sealings, as well as their catalogue and indices; Frye interpreted the inscriptions of the sealings, many of which were subsequently corrected by Gignoux (in Gignoux 1974 and 1985). Whitcomb 1985.
All told, the bullae recovered from QAN number 505, of which 457 bear identifiable sealings. These bullae were discovered in two rooms of the fortress which had been destroyed by fire. In one room the bullae were found in a large pile, while in the other they were scattered all over the floor; this led Frye to speculate that in the first room the bullae had been removed from the objects to which they had been attached, “having served their purpose,” while in the second they were still attached to perishable merchandise or documents at the time they were burned.\(^{242}\) Other than a few objects recovered from these rooms (including a bronze tripod and a bronze picket stand), there are no other clues to the function of these bullae in the fortress. However, the unique destruction of these rooms—as the only two rooms to have been burned—may indicate a desire on the part of the inhabitants to destroy records and archives before leaving the fortress to invaders. Both rooms belong to the later phase of construction of the fortress, and their destruction in the early Islamic period makes sense as part of the abandonment of the fortress at that time.\(^{243}\) Unfortunately, the extant publications do not distinguish in which of the two rooms each bulla was found, so there is no way to determine the composition of each room’s archive, or whether they were related.\(^{244}\) I have circled the locations of the two burnt rooms in Whitcomb’s reconstructed map of the excavations, where you can see the distance between them:

\(^{242}\) Frye 1973: 15-18
\(^{244}\) Whitcomb 1985: 241 gives a table which lists descriptions of a few of the sealings and the room in which they were found, but he admits that based on extant records there is no way to correlate these with individual sealing drawings.
On these bullae are around 60 administrative sealings, 37 of which bear the seal of a maguh administration; 27 of these are for the maguh of the canton of Šīrāz in the province of Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah. In addition to two sealings of the maguh of Gōr in Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah—the provincial capital—the other seven deciphered maguh sealings attest to administrative cantons in the nearby provinces of Bišāpūr (2), Garm-Kermān (1), and Staxr (2).

The provincial administration of the driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar is attested in 12 QAN sealings, for Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah (4), Bišāpūr (2), and Staxr (6)—overlapping with the provinces attested in the maguh sealings of QAN. Additionally, the QAN archive includes thirteen sealings of the handarzbed of Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah, as well as an
administrative sealing of the mōbed of Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah. The evidence of three recurring provincial administrations (Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah, Bišāpūr, and Staxr) suggests that the entire collection represents a “regional” archive reflecting the affairs of the province of Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah. Moreover, the prevalence of sealings for the maguh of Šīrāz in Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah suggests that the site of QAN itself might be identified with Sasanian Šīrāz, or at least closely associated with it.

In all, the QAN archives provides nearly all of the attested handarzbed sealings. The only other handarzbed administration attested in the entire corpus of Sasanian bullae is that of Staxr, appearing on two bullae supposedly found at Dehqade-ye Eqlid (DE) and now at the National Museum in Iran; while a Sasanian seal at the Louvre attests to the handarzbed of Spahān. Interestingly, the QAN collection also includes two sealings from the official seal of one mowān-handarzbed named Narseh, depicted below. This Narseh is the single attestation of the mowān-handarzbed in the extant corpus of Sasanian seals and sealings, although the title does appear in Sasanian-era literary sources (see discussion under handarzbed, above).

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See Ghasemi & Gyselen 2018: 180, who compare the QAN collection with that of TQS as a similarly local but “regional” archive, with TQS comprised of a majority of administrative maguh seals for the canton of Ābād-Šāpūr in Bišāpūr. Gyselen 2015 also calls the QAN bullae a regional archive, focusing on the number of maguh sealings therein.


DE 2 and 3, for which see Cereti & Bassiri 2016, where the find site is a suggestion by these authors.

Gyselen 2019a as ATs30; also see Gyselen 1993 (00.15) and Herzfeld 1938 (fig.4).

QAN 73 and 74, appearing in Frye 1973 as inscription D103; reading emended by Gignoux 1985, but it is Gyselen who interprets the title as mowān-handarzbed (see Gyselen 2008, seal 11).
Even more interestingly, the single administrative sealing of the office of the mōbed in the QAN archive, that of Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah, appears as a cosignatory to the maguh of Gōr, Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah.\textsuperscript{250} Evidently, although Qaşr-e Abū Naṣr was thought to have a fire altar (its “podium”), its bullae have a different composition from other such excavated archives—suggesting that was not a significant religious shrine, unlike the archive of Takht-e Sulaymān (TS) at the site of the sacred Ādur-Gušnasp fire, which contains 25 sealings of the mōbed administration of that shrine, many of them with magi cosignatories.\textsuperscript{251} The QAN archive contains at least 135 sealings of the personal seals of magi with as many as 76 distinct names, 20 as cosignatories to the office of the maguh, 5 as cosignatories to the driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar, and 5 as cosignatories to other magi. The absence of magi as mōbed cosignatories in the QAN archive thus likely provided authority in legal, rather than ritual, matters.

\textsuperscript{250} QAN 165 (MMA 36.30.94). In addition, there may be a single personal sealing of a mōbed in the collection of QAN bullae, for one Zurvān-Māh ī Arday-farrān ī mōbed, with a monogram—however, its reading is tentative and no image is available: QAN 204 (IBT), reading emended by Gignoux 1974.

\textsuperscript{251} I.e., the mōbed of kadag-ī-Ādur-ī-Gušnasp; see Göbl 1976 for inscription TS 703.
5.2 Tol-e Qaleh Seyfābād (TQS)

The site of Tol-e Qaleh Seyfābād in Kāzerūn, Fārs has been known as a Sasanian site since a report of clay objects discovered there was released in 2003; among those items were 27 bullae, each bearing 2 to 5 seal impressions. The site was not formally excavated until 2014, but that excavation revealed a cache of 371 Sasanian clay sealings, which have been interpreted by the Iranian excavators in consultation with Rika Gyselen. 75 of these

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252 A very general description, along with color images, is given by Barfi et al. 2013, who indicate that Daryacee intended to publish these bullae. I do not know the current status or location of these bullae—or even if they are included with the later TQS finds. These 27 bullae are also briefly discussed by Askari Chaverdi & Cereti 2013, who also draw a connection to a sealing found in NE Šīrāz at Baizā (?) (an administrative sealing of Bīşāpūr); the three bullae from Šīrāz are kept in the Library and National Documentation Center there, and also include one attesting the maguh of Ābād-Šāpūr, while another contains the administrative seal (of Bīşāpūr?) as well as the personal seal of a mog.

253 For a table of these administrative seals and preliminary conclusions about the implications of these finds for Sasanian administrative geography, see Ghasemi 2018 (in Persian) and Ghasemi & Gyselen 2018 (in French); see Ghasemi et al. 2020 for a summary of the archaeological report in English.
bear administrative sealings (from 9 distinct seals) and demonstrate different levels of the
administrative geography of Bīšāpūr: the regional jurisdiction of the āmārgār of Ardaxšīr-
Xwarrah, Bīšāpūr, and Nēw-Darāb, the provincial jurisdiction of Bīšāpūr for both the
šahrab and the driyōšān-jāđaggōw-ud-dādwar, as well as six different cantons of the
maguh administration (Ābād-Šāpūr, Hišn, Kāzerūn, Negundarāspān, and Yarēz in Bīšāpūr,
and Rawīgān in Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah). The presence of the administrative sealing of the
maguh of Ābād-Šāpūr on over 50 bullae suggests that this was the Sasanian-era name of
the site and the central administrative district of Bīšāpūr. Khosrowzadeh draws a parallel
from these sealings to those the administrative seal of the maguh at Tappe Bardnakoon, in
the Gay province in region of Spahān, to show the regional jurisdiction of these sites—
particularly as loci for priestly administrations. Tol-e Qaleh Seyfābād is situated at the
intersection of ancient roadways that connected Fārs to the Persian Gulf, Khūzestān,
Seleucia-Ctesiphon, and beyond.

Only the drawings of the administrative sealings have been published, without any
accompanying information about cosignatories (if there are any); but I would guess that
there are many more personal seals of magi as cosignatories to these administrative seals
that are yet to be deciphered.

254 The sealing of the driyōšān-jāđaggōw-ud-dādwar of Bīšāpūr is also attested at QAN (Frye’s
D194 = QAN IBT 3, and QAN 150; see Frye 1973 and Gignoux 1974) and from the
archaeological site of Bīšāpūr itself (see Curiel & Gyselen 1987, Plate V).
255 Three of these toponyms are unattested elsewhere, and this is the first Sasanian-era attestation
of the toponym Kāzerūn (Ghasemi et al. 2020: 281); the Ahmad Saeedi collection contains the
actual seal of the maguh of Rawīgān, Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah (ASC 00.2; see Gyselen 2007: 92-93).
256 Ghasemi et al. 2020: 282. It appears that this administrative seal (?) was somehow available to
Gyselen before the excavation of TQS—its inscription is discussed by her in a previous article
without any mention of the item’s provenance or location (Blet-Lemarquand et al. 2014: 11). This
is unfortunately all too common in this field.
257 Khosrowzadeh et al. 2020a: 227.
5.3 Takht-e Sulaymān (TS)

Takht-e Sulaymān, or “The Throne of Solomon,” is the medieval name for one of the most important cultic sites of the Sasanian period, the sacred Ādur-Gušnasp fire with its temple complex and thermal spring lake. It is located in the modern Iranian province of West Azerbaijan, atop an outcropping of limestone 60 meters above the valley below.²⁵⁸ The ancient Median and Parthian layers of the site were built up by the Sasanians into monumental architecture, probably during the reign of Xusrō I (r. 531–79), including a royal palace on the northern side of the lake that was connected to the temple complex, with its čahār-tāq, or fire temple.²⁵⁹ Although the site was destroyed at the end of the Sasanian period, possibly by the campaigns of Heraclius in 624–28, it continued to serve as a religious shrine into the Islamic period and was later rebuilt as a palace in the thirteenth century by the Persian Ilkhanids.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁸ Huff 2002.
²⁵⁹ Huff 2002 suggests, “According to find coins from the last years of reigns of Sasanian Kavād I (since 528) and his successor Ḵosrow I Anōširavān (531-79) in the layers above razed parts of the mud brick buildings, we may hypothetically presume that the process of architectural transformation began after the suppression of the Mazdakite movement about 528 C.E. and with the reestablishment of the Zoroastrian state church, which was carried out by Ḵosrow I, who was the crown prince at that time.”
²⁶⁰ Huff 2002 states that “during the Arab conquest, a peace treaty with the marzbān of Azerbaijan guaranteed religious integrity to the sanctuary and allowed the population of Šiz to dance undisturbed in their festivities” (citing al-Balāḏurī, Futūḥ al-buldān, ed. de Goeje 1866: 326). The Ilkhanid Abaqa built a palace at the site.
Excavations at Takht-e Sulaymān were carried out by archaeologists from the German Archaeological Institute together with the Iranian Antiquity Services over the course of 1959 to 1978; the 250 Sasanian bullae discovered up to 1976 published by Robert Göbl, and a handful of others discovered from 1976–1978 residing in the vaults of the National Museum of Iran were published more recently. Iranian archaeologists continued excavating after the Iranian Revolution; in the early 2000s Yousef Moradi supposedly discovered another 800 Sasanian bullae from the site, but these still await publication.263

261 Göbl 1976.
262 Cereti & Bassiri 2018.
263 This is according to a private communication from Almut Hintze, who plans to assist in their publication, and Aleksander Engeskaug, her student at SOAS; they also correct a note by Gyselen 2015: 90, who describes an unpublished archive of over 2000 bullae discovered at TS bullae (in reality, there are around 2000 sealings on the 800 bullae of Moradi). According to Cereti & Bassiri 2018: 10, Moradi’s finds from the later Ilkhanid part of the site now reside in the museum of Urumieh.
All of the bullae found by the German excavations came from a single room, called room Z, in the northern part of the complex, which Dietrich Huff suggests was a scribal room.²⁶⁴ As Huff asserts, “this was a room for scribes and an office and archive for acts of civil administration, duties of which the Sasanian clergy was in charge,” adding that the location of room Z, near the northern (public) entrance of the temple complex, is typical for such rooms with “civilian function.”²⁶⁵

The TS archive of over 250 Sasanian bullae bear close to 800 seal impressions. Many of these bullae are quite large, and contain as many as twenty different seal impressions. Among the bullae with administrative seal impressions, the majority are for clerical offices—which one might expect at such an important religious site. 25 of these bullae have sealings of the mōbed of “the Ādur-Gušnasp temple” (MP kadag-i-Ādur-i-Gušnasp). Working through Göbl’s appendices, 14 of the 25 mōbed bullae also contain the sealing of at least one mog cosignatory, and some have multiple magi cosignatories on the same bullae. In at least two instances, the same mog appears as a cosignatory twice to the same mōbed.²⁶⁶ The TS archive contains a high frequency of repeated cosignatories, with one mog appearing 17 times, and another 9 times. Altogether, there are 59 sealings of the personal seals of magi, with only 22 distinct names. This may suggest a narrow temporal window for this archive, when the office of the mōbed and his assistant magi were under the authority of the same few individuals; or it may suggest the particular nature of this archive, pertaining to the function of a handful of priests, whatever that may have been.

²⁶⁵ Huff 2002.
²⁶⁶ Frāy-Gušnasp, mog, son of Abarzard, whose seal includes an image of a humped bull, appears twice on TS 1963/76 and TS 1963/90 each, both of which also include the sealing of the mōbed of the shrine.
Until the publication of the post-1976 bullae, the TS collection of administrative bullae was understood to be mostly the sealings of the mōbed of the shrine and the magi cosignatories—with the exception of two sealings of the driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar of Weh-Ardaxšīr. The presence of this sealing, an outlier from an administration closer to the center of the Sasanian kingdom and the royal palaces there, seems further proof of the close relationship of the shrine to the royal administration. Now we can also add one bulla which bears the sealing of the local maguh administration, identified as the canton of Jāwag-abarwār in kadag-ī-Ādur-Gušnasp, with the latter evidently considered as a province in its own right in late Sasanian administrative geography. The civil administrations represented in the TS archive are for local jurisdictions: the framādār of kadag-ī-Ādur-Gušnasp and the šahrab of Ādurbādagān. This supports the interpretation of the TS bullae as representative of a local, or “provincial” archive—albeit of a different type and function than other excavated provincial archives, since TS was an important religious shrine as opposed to a fort.

5.4 Tappe Bardnakoon (TB)

This site in the central Zagros region (southwest of Isfahan, and northeast of Khūzestān) was very recently excavated (2017-2018) after its discovery in 2007. It is located in the modern district of Farsan, in the province of Čahārmahal va Bakhtiyari, Iran. Although the site has been the victim of “clandestine excavations,” i.e., looting, a corpus of 559 clay bullae and sealings have been found to date, nearly all from a single find spot.

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267 These are two different sealings, partially reconstructed: drawings TS 704 and 694, which correspond to TS 1963/96 and 1963/146 (=ATb110 and 107).
269 TS 1963/110 and TS 1963/37, where Ādurbādagān indicates a contiguous province (according to Gyselen 2019a: 31-32, 116-17).
The extant bullae include twenty-two administrative seal impressions, including those of the “juridico-religious” administrations, i.e., *driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar* (4) and the *maguh* (12), as well as other “civil” administrative sealings of the *ōstāndār*, *šahrab*, and *āmārgār*.271

The majority of the TB administrative sealings are for the *maguh*, including 6 for the *maguh* of Rawār-kust-ī-rōdbār, in the province of Gay—which is therefore thought to be the Sasanian-era canton in which the find site is located. As well as another *maguh* sealing for the canton of Karūn in Gay, there are also 3 sealings of the *driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar* of Gay. However, like Qaṣr-e Abu Naṣr (QAN), this archive also contains administrative sealings for another provincial jurisdictions, including one for the *driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar* of Ohrmazd-Ardaxšīr as well as two for the *maguh* of Arōzān in the

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270 For the excavation report (in English), see Khosrowzadeh et al. 2020a; the authors then published the administrative bullae (with Gyselen; Khosrowzadeh et al. 2020b), but publication of the rest of the bullae is still forthcoming.

271 Also as “juridical-religious” (Khosrowzadeh et al. 2020b: 84).
province of Īg, one for the *maguh* of Ohrmazd-Ardaxšīr and another for the *maguh* of Weh-Andiyōk-Šāpūr.

The civil administrations of the TB archive attest to other provinces and regions, such as Khūzestān and Spahān. Because of the wider geographic spread of the attested toponyms in the TB archive, the excavators conclude in their report that the site was an administrative center founded in the late Sasanian period that seemed to be a crossroads of regional activity, and thus represents an “interregional archive.”

The administrative seal impressions are the focus of current publications on Tappe Bardnakoon, with drawings and images mostly of these individual seal impressions only; however the preliminary report by the archaeologists does include a few photos of a handful of bullae, in which it is possible to discern the presence of cosignatory impressions from personal seals, including some with a monogram device, also called a *nišān* by the

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272 Khosrowzadeh et al. 2020b suggest this spelling of the toponyms [ʾlwɔʾn mgwh / ygy] which had formerly been read as Arnēdān in the province of Gī (e.g., Gyselen 2019a).
authors, as well as three seal impressions with the busts and names of magi as cosignatories:²⁷³

![Three magi cosignatories from TB bullae (from Khosrowzadeh et al. 2020a: 227, fig. 11)](image)

However, because the above appear in the original publication as isolated images, without the context of their bullae, it is unclear to which administrations these magi are cosignatories. I suspect more personal sealings of magi can be found as cosignatories to the clerical administrations on the TB bullae, and I await the publication of their images and inscriptions.

![Location of Tureng Tepe (TT), Ak Depe (AD), and Kirpicli](image)

²⁷³ Khosrowzadeh et al. 2020a, figs. 9 and 11.
5.5 Tureng Tepe (TT)

Tureng Tepe (TT) is the site of a Sasanian-era fort, located in the modern Iranian province of Golestan, near the border of Turkmenistan. The site was part of Sasanian Gurgan, as is reflected in the toponyms attested on the handful of administrative bullae found there; it continued to be inhabited into the eighth century, when a fire temple was built inside the fortifications. It was excavated by Jean Deshayes and a French team between 1960–1977, and again in 1980; Boucharlat and Lecomte published the Sasanian and Islamic-era findings, with a chapter by Rika Gyselen particularly on the one seal and five bullae found during excavations.

Four of these five bullae bear clerical administrative seal impressions: one for the driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar of Gurgan (with a mog cosignatory), two for the maguh of Xusrō-sād-Pērōz, Gurgan, and another for the maguh of an illegible toponym. The small size of this archive make it difficult to form any conclusions, but its composition affirms the pattern of local or “provincial” archives found in situ across the former Sasanian empire. Furthermore, a seal impression of the same driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar of Gurgan, identical to one found at Tureng Tepe, has been found at Kirpichli (further north in Turkmenistan, in the Ahal Region), showing both the range of that office and the integration of Sasanian Dehistan into Gurgan.

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275 Gyselen 1987. More recently, Cereti and Bassiri, in their short overview of Sasanian bullae at the National Museum in Iran (IBT) republished two of the Tureng Tepe bullae: one one which bears the impression of the driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar of Gurgan (TT 1282, or Gyselen’s no. 5), and offered their reading of an additional maguh sealing on bulla TT 944 / 73 (Gyselen’s no. 4), although no toponym is legible.
276 TT 1282, TT 784 and 884, and TT 944 / 73.
5.6 Tepe Kabūdān (TK)

Tepe Kabūdān is located east of the ancient city of Gurgān, in the modern province of Golestān, Iran. The find site, whose excavation was made in “uncontrolled conditions,” was first published by Bayani in 1972, with Gignoux and Gyselen subsequently correcting some of his readings in 1987. Akbarzadeh and Daryaee published these bullae again in 2012, along with others housed at the National Museum of Iran. According to these authors, the TK “archive” is thus comprised of twelve bullae, some with multiple impressions. Seven of these bear the impression of the administrative seal of the maguh of Warušag, Gurgān, two of which also bear the seal of a mog as a cosignatory; two bear the impression of the administrative seal of the driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar of Gurgān, one of which also has a mog cosignatory; two other Tepe Kabūdān bullae have the impression of the administrative seal of the šahrab (or “governor”) of Gurgān. The three magi cosignatories are all distinct in name and iconography.

278 Kiani 2002 briefly discusses the dispersal of Gurgān sealings (some of which reside in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris) from what was obviously a case of looting; the supposition that they all came from the same find spot, however, is conjectural. Here, I only include those sealings published by Bayani and later Gignoux & Gyselen 1987, which are now part of the collection of the National Museum of Iran (IBT).
279 Bayani 1972; Gignoux & Gyselen 1987.
280 Akbarzadeh & Daryaee 2012 (with color images); they do not offer readings for all of the inscriptions, and when they do translate them there are some mistakes, including the reading of mgwh as “priest” (in English, as well as mog in New Persian).
281 IBT 7 (TK 775), as well as IBT 9-12; IBT 8 (TK 777) and IBT 13 (TK 778) are the maguh bullae with mog cosignatories.
282 IBT 4 (Exc. 12.1915) and IBT 3 (TK 776), respectively.
283 TK 774 / IBT 6, and one with the accession number Exc. 14.6 (according to Akbarzadeh & Daryaee 2012).
The Tepe Kabūdān bullae thus represent a “provincial” archive, since all of the attested toponyms are from within Gurgān; however, the true scope of this archive may be larger than the IBT collection suggests (see note above).

Figure 32: Close-up view of locations of TK and TT

5.7 Ak-Depe (AD)

Ak-Depe, also known as Ak-Tepe, is a site in modern Turkmenistan near Ashgabat. It was excavated by Russian archaeologists from the Hermitage Museum over the course of 1963–1978, led by Gubaev. Although over 100 bullae from the late sixth to early seventh century were found there, only 39 were available at the time of their catalogue’s publication in 1996, and these were housed at the Turkemian Academy of Sciences in Ashgabat. Thus, the authors attempt to reconstruct some of the missing bullae from descriptions and drawings made by Lukonin from the original excavations.

The AD bullae were found across several different rooms and layers of the site, and so do not present a single archive in the way that, for example, those of Takht-e Sulaymān.

\[284\] Gubaev et al. 1996: 55, who say, “There is no point now in investigating why or how they disappeared during the years following the Ak-depe excavations.”
do (all being found in a single room). They also range from very small bullae with a single sealing to very large bullae with as many as twenty sealings; some have holes which were evidently left by cords attaching them to documents or goods which no longer survive.

The extant Ak-Depe bullae include 10 sealings from the maguh administration of Suhtan-ud-Tahvenjan, in the province of Saraxs-ud-Abāward.285 The site of Ak-Depe is near the modern city of Sarakhs, which is just over the border in Iran, and so again we see a “provincial” archive reflective of the local administrative jurisdictions—insofar as the AD bullae represent an “archive” at all, coming from disparate parts of the archaeological site and its excavations. However, the character of these administrative seals and offices is different from any other archive discovered so far.

In addition to the maguh sealings just mentioned, there is one seal impression from an official called the dibīr-ped or “chief-scribe.”286 This particular seal is aniconic, but names the official as Pērōz; on the bulla, there is a mog cosignatory from a personal seal which bears an image of a male bust wearing the kolāh. Unfortunately, this is one of the bullae which has been lost and is only known from Lukonin’s original description.287 Another irregularity in the AD bullae is the presence of 7 bullae bearing the seal impression of the personal (or official) seal of an official who names himself as the mog-ud-dibīr, or “priest and scribe,” and son of Frāyēn, and whose seal also bears an image that has been interpreted as the chariot of Mithra drawn by two horses:288

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285 AD 1-10, with an addition maguh sealing with an illegible but distinct toponym (AD 14).
286 AD 40.
287 According to Gubaev et al. 1996, corresponding to Lukonin’s no. 54.
288 AD 6-12; the name is read according to the interpretation of Gignoux 1986 (no. 171).
Five of these impressions appear on bullae alongside the *maguh* of Suhtan-ud-Tahvenjan—in place of the regular *mog*-cosignatories we see on other *maguh* administrative bullae.\(^{289}\)

I will comment further on the role of the *dibīr* in the late and post-Sasanian period below, so for now I merely point out the existence of these unique seal impressions in the corpus of extant Sasanian administrative bullae.\(^{290}\)

### 5.8 The Ṭabarestān Archive, Revisited

It is difficult to say to what extent the Ṭabarestān documents—from a region which resisted Arab control in the centuries following the conquest—represent Sasanian practices or reflect a later, local adaptation. In any case, they are the most important collection of documents that we have for attempting to understand the nature of the *maguh* administration as well as the process of Sasanian jurisprudence more generally.

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\(^{289}\) AD 6-10.

\(^{290}\) Another peculiarity associated with Ak-Depe is that an ostracon was found there bearing the partial name and title of a *rad*. Interestingly, the naming formula on this ostracon does *not* use the Middle Persian patronymic formula, but instead literally says “son of” (*pus Ābān rad*…); see Nikitin 1992: 125-27 and Gubaev 1979: 65.
I have already mentioned that four of the documents bear administrative seals (Tab. 14, 24, 25, 28). Three of these are from the seal of the maguh of the canton of Dēl ī Dēlān in the province of Ṭabarestān (Tab. 14, 24, 28), which I will mark in bold in the following analysis. This section explores the relationship of these documents’ bullae with their contents and offers some suggestions. I will consider the types of legal dispute contained in these documents, as well as their description of legal procedures and the names and titles of individuals involved in each dispute. These documents also describe the process of certification they undergo, which sometimes not only the sealing of the document but also the verification of the individuals’ seals and identities. But first, let us explore the legal matters treated in each document.

One (Tab. 14) deals with a case of defamation, or “falsehood and harm” (mihōxt ud rēš), wherein the false statement was made under oath and restitution (MP tāwān) is granted; another (Tab. 28) is concerned with establishing the legality of a woman’s inheritance from her husband via substitute successorship (stūrīh); while the last (Tab. 24) is a more complicated document that involves the transfer of the entitlement (dastwarīh) of crop yields on a group of olive trees, as well as their reassessment in a year following an earthquake. The substance of the falsehood alleged in Tab. 14 is unknown,

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291 The bullae on documents Tab. 14, 24, 28 (=bulla Tab. 1, 2, 3 in Gyselen 2019b and ATb902, ATb903, ATb904 in Gyselen 2019a); on the identification of this “canton” (MP tasōg), see Gyselen 2019a: 213-15. The fourth document (Tab. 25) apparently bears the seal of the maguh of Amul and Dumbawand; however, Tab. 25 has not yet been fully deciphered, and Gyselen omits its bulla from her most recent treatment of the material aspects of the documents-cum-bullae: doc. Tab. 25 = bulla Tab. 4 (image in Gyselen 2019b: 162) and as ATb901? in Gyselen 2019a). Note that all of the documents with administrative bullae are written on cloth (linen) as opposed to parchment, but there is no strict delineation of medium, with some other, unrelated documents of the archive also on cloth.

292 See Weber 2017: 141-44 and Macuch 2017: 177-79, the latter particularly for an explanation of the legal context of this type of claim in Sasanian law; also see Gignoux 2012: 68-71.

293 See Weber 2020: 176-81 and Macuch 2020: 199-209, as well as Gignoux 2012: 84-89

and there is nothing obvious in the subject matter of these documents that sets them apart from the rest. In fact, other documents that do concern very similar topics—e.g., Tab. 21 on a different case of defamation, or Tab. 11 on another complicated stūrīh claim, or Tab. 23 on a reassessment of crop yields of wheat—lack the maguh administrative seals. The documents with maguh bullae are neither the earliest nor the latest in the archive, but range from 93 PYE (Tab. 14) to 103 PYE (Tab. 24) to 107 PYE (Tab. 28), the latest year attested in the archive, and which correspond to 744, 755, and 758 A.D. Next, we examine the individuals involved in the disputes of Tab. 14, 24, and 28, as well as the officials adjudicating them.

Each (different) sender of Tab. 14, 24, and 28 introduces himself and his title or legal jurisdiction in a particular way that appears only in these three documents. The following examples demonstrate a type of formula that seems to have developed around an office overseeing judgments (dādestān) in Ṭabarestān:

Tab. 14.3-4
Burzēn-Pērōz: “…when I presided over judgement in the canton of Dēl ī Dēlān in Ṭabarestān…”
ka ēn tasōg ī Dēl ī Dēlān ī abar Taburestān dādestān būd hēm

Tab. 24.1-2
“Wanandpanāh who (presided) over judgement in the canton of Dēl ī Dēlān in Ṭabarestān (and) likewise the Law in the ‘Syrian quarter’ in Tabarestān in the villages”
Wanandpanāh kē tasōg ī Dēl ī Dēlān ī abar Taburestān dādestān čiyōnīh tasōg ī Sūrīgān ī abar Taburestān dādestān pad dehīhā

Tab. 28.2
Windād-Ohrmazd: “…when I presided over judgement in the canton of Dēl ī Dēlān in Ṭabarestān…”
ka ēn tasōg ī Dēl ī Dēlān ī abar Taburestān dādestān būd hēm

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295 Following the translation of Weber 2019: 106.
Tab. 28.24-25
Windād-Ohrmazd: “…(presiding) over (the canton of) Dēl i Dēlān in Tabarestān and the judgement likewise in the ‘Syrian quarter’ in Tabarestān and the judgement likewise in the villages…
(tasōg i) Dēl i Dēlān i abar Taburestān ud dādestān čiyōnīh tasōg i Sūrīgān i abar Taburestān ud dādestān čiyōnīh … ud dehīhā āgenēn

The sender of each document thus describes himself as being “in charge of” or “presiding over” (abar...būd hēm), the “judgment,” or “law,” or perhaps even “court” (dādestān) of his canton in Tabarestān.296 This phrasing runs parallel to other identificatory expressions in the Tabarestān documents, since it was customary for a document’s sender to introduce himself in just such a way, and comparison to other documents in the archive supports the reading of these passages as statements of legal jurisdiction.

The presence of this particular formula only in the three documents which also bear the seal impression of the office of the maguh on the attached bullae suggests that the two are related. Therefore, the maguh can be understood as the dādestān (i.e., the “law” or “court”) of a regional jurisdiction, which—at least in the autonomous region of Tabarestān and at least around one hundred years after the fall of the Sasanian kingdom—operated using the formal trappings and procedures of the late-Sasanian period. The maguh offered at least one avenue for legal recourse at this time.

296 For this reading of būd hēm [ŶHWNWt ÊJHWm], I follow Weber and Macuch, who correct Gignoux’ original reading for Tab. 14 of frēstād ēn [ŠDRWNt ZNH] and translation of “quand ce jugement du village de Sarw ī Sarān, celui-là dans le Tabaristān a été envoyé…” (Gignoux 2012: 68–69); for Tab. 28, Gignoux reads dādestān būd ēn [DYNŶHWNWt ZNH] (2012: 84). Weber (Tab. 14) translates the phrase as “when I (was) the Law of that district of Dēl ī Dēlān in Taburestān,” and offers no commentary beyond the comparanda of Tab. 28 (2017: 143). Macuch (Tab. 14) includes dādestān as a technical term in her glossary, translating abar Taburestān dādestān būd hēm as “I presided over judgement in Taburestān” (2017: 178); in her commentary to Tab. 14 she describes Burzēn-Pērōz as “the official in charge of jurisdiction in Tabarestān” (2017: 179). In their other publications on the archive, Macuch and Weber offer translations of “law” and “judgement” for this use of dādestān but do not make any further comment on the larger implications of the phrasing, nor do they draw any connection to the maguh sealings attached to these documents.
The Ṭabarestān documents also illustrate the role of the “scribe” (MP *dibīr*) in the local legal system and the village hierarchy. Tab. 13 (73 PYE) describes the *dibīr* Ādurōy as the adjudicator in the land evaluation dispute; the text of the document describes that he was charged with this task, and that it is his own seal upon the document, along with the *dehgans* represented in the case. Other scribes appear as plaintiffs: Yazd, the plaintiff in Tab. 1AB, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7AB, and 8AB (all dated 86-87 PYE), is named *dibīr* in Tab. 10A (87 PYE). It is possible that this is the same *Yazd* who appears as the plaintiff in Tab. 14 (93 PYE), who is named as Yazd, the son of Wazurgummēd, in Aspgurd. A *Wazurgummēd* is the addressee of Tab. 21 (104 PYE), where he is called “the keeper of the archives” (MP *zaydār*) of Aspgurd, and Wazurgummēd (or someone from his family) appears as a witness in the *stūrīh* case of Tab. 28 (107 PYE). If this Wazurgummēd and Yazd are related to each other, then their family also seems to be intimately connected to the legal affairs of Aspgurd.

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297 For Tab. 13, see Weber 2017 and Macuch 2017, also Gignoux 2014.
298 The reading *Wazurgummēd* [wcwl’wnyt], meaning “having great hope,” comes from Weber 2019: 94; previously the name was read as *Wazurgnimād* [wcwl’gnmt] (Weber 2017) and *Nazōrēz-Mihr* (Gignoux 2012). A *Wazurgummēd* also appears as a claimant and *dehgan* in Tab. 23 (104 PYE), and another is named in Tab. 25 (which has not yet been fully deciphered; see partial reading in Gignoux 2016). It is unclear what the relationship between all of these individuals are, but the chronology is complicated by Tab. 23 (104 PYE) which refers to an unnamed *zaydār* as recently deceased; if Wazurgummēd is intended in this reference, then he cannot be the same individual that appears in Tab. 25 (106 PYE) and *Tab. 28* (107 PYE), but perhaps it is someone from his family. In *Tab. 28* and elsewhere, the Ṭabarestān documents regularly use a plural naming formula which can be literally translated as “the men of *X* by name, the son of *Y*” (e.g., *mardān i Wazurgummēd nām Wahištwar pus*) which is regularly translated in the singular by Weber and Macuch; however, in *Tab. 28*, the name *Wazurgummēd* also appears several times on its own as a witness in the case.
Figure 34: Network of relationships in the Ṭabarestān documents
The chart above maps out some of the familial and legal relationship between the residents of Aspgurd. Note that Windād-Ohrmazd, the sender of Tab. 28, where he refers to himself as the dādestān of Dēl ī Dēlān and the Syrian quarter (see above), also appears as a creditor in the land dispute of Tab. 24 (103 PYE); another Windād-Ohrmazd is also the name of a tenant in Tab. 23 who has leased land for wheat production. The addressee of Tab. 28 is Windād-Xwarzēd, the rad of Parišwārgar, who sends Tab. 22 to Xradzād, who sends Tab. 21 to Wazurgummēd, and so on.

To return to the scribes of Aspgurd: Tab. 15, 18, and 27 (dated 94, 101, and 107 PYE) all concern the payments owed to a certain creditor named Farrox-Gušnasp, dibīr in Aspgurd; and Tab. 21 (104 PYE) introduces the same Farrox-Gušnasp, dibīr in Aspgurd, as a plaintiff in a case of defamation. From these examples, it appears that the scribes of Aspgurd command respect and have the means to take (and possibly authorize) legal action. For example, the sender of Tab. 14 (93 PYE), Burzēn-Pērōz, might be the same individual as the plaintiff in Tab. 22 (104 PYE), who is named Burzēn-Pērōz, son of Farrox-Gušnasp, and is also called dibīr (“scribe”) in Aspgurd.299

Here, I would like to bring a unique Sasanian seal back into the conversation: seven sealings on bullae excavated at Ak Depe (AD) bear the same seal impression from what appears to be the mog-ud-dibīr, or “the priest and scribe,” son of Frāyēn.300 Five of these bullae bear this seal impression as a cosignatory to the maguh of Suhtan-ud-Tahvenjan, (canton of the province of) Saraxs-ud-Abāward, which is thought to have been located SW

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299 For Tab. 22, see Weber 2019 and Macuch 2019, also Gignoux 2012.
300 AT 6-12, with AD 6 bearing the clearest impression, read […(s)p dpywr W mgw Y prʾtyn]; see Gubaev et a. 1996.
of Marw (in the region of Ak Depe itself, on the modern border of Iran and Turkmenistan).  

Figure 35: AD 6, with sealings of a mog-ud-dibīr and the maguh of Suhtan-ud-Tahvenjan in Saraxs-ud-Abāward

Perhaps these bullae from Ak Depe represent a transitional phase of late Sasanian legal administrative practices, in the border regions of the Persian kingdom, where the roles of the mog and dibīr have merged in service of the office of the maguh. Although the Ak Depe bullae also include three sealings of magi, they are not cosignatories to the maguh. One of these three bullae, however, was reported to have contained both the sealing of a mog and the sealing of a “chief scribe” (MP dibīr-ped); unfortunately, it has been lost and there are no surviving images.

In any case, the Ṭabarestān archive shows a local sample of jurisprudence based on Sasanian-era administrative expressions of authority, particularly through the presence of maguh administrative sealings on attached bullae but also through the titles of officials and norms of procedure. The complete publication of the archive’s documents and bullae will

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301 AD 6-10, although the maguh sealing can be found on ten total bullae (AD 1-10 = ATb 924-933 in Gyselen 2019a). On the toponym, read [šwḥtʾ n ṭhwynyʾ n mgwḥ / slhsy Wʾ pʾwlty], see Gubaev et al. 1996 and Gyselen 2019a: 193.

302 AD 40a reading …mog… [mgw] and AD40b reading Pērōz dibīr-ped [pylwec dpypʾt], according to Lukonin’s reading in Gubaev et al. 1996.
undoubtedly revise our opinions on Sasanian jurisprudence even further than they already have.

6. Conclusion to Chapter 1

Table 6: Summary of the Corpus of Sasanian Administrative Seals and Sealings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Total Number of Attestations</th>
<th>Number with (legible) Toponym</th>
<th>Number of mog-cosignatories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>handarzbed</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dādwar</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mōbed</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maguh</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>596</strong></td>
<td><strong>579</strong></td>
<td><strong>133</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above analyses of the clerical administrative offices and of their magi cosignatories in Sasanian bullae, summarized in the table above, should leave the impression of a vast religious bureaucracy serving judicial and notary functions. However, this is only a fragmentary picture hindered by obvious gaps in the material record. There are gaps in the material record when compared to Sasanian-era literary sources—for example, Christian Syriac texts. It is unclear what relationship there is between the administrative organization of the Sasanian kingdom and the ecclesiastical organization of the Christians living in it. Some of these gaps will be discussed in the next chapter on literary sources.

303 Philippe Gignoux has suggested that the ecclesiastical divisions of the Syriac Church of the East were at first modeled on the administrative divisions on the Sasanian kingdom, and that the jurisdiction of Zoroastrian priests and officials in the later martyr acts seems to reflect a contemporary mirroring of regional divisions (Gignoux 1980a: 197); also see C. Jullien 2004b and 2007 on the geographic contributions of the Sasanian-era Persian martyr acts.
There is another gap in the extant corpus, however, that must still be pointed out and that has significant implications for how we conceive of the Zoroastrian priesthood and its continuity after the Arab conquest. Among the regions that lack attestations of clerical administrations and mog cosignatories in the Sasanian period are Yazd and Sistān. These are the very regions known in the post-Sasanian period as centers of Zoroastrian worship and learning, along with Iṣfahān (represented by Sasanian Ray), and Kermān (which is perhaps indicated by the provincial toponyms Sard-Kermān and Garm-Kermān). Apart from these places, the geographic range of the extant corpus of Sasanian seals and sealings matches the extent of the Sasanian kingdom, so we may actually have a representative view even if it is a fragmentary one.

However, this gap in the material record suggests a major geographical shift in the concentration of the Zoroastrian priesthood. It is as yet unclear what significance this holds. The narrative of decline of the Zoroastrian priesthood in the Islamic period is one common both to Zoroastrian sources and modern scholarship. As the administrative function of the magi declined after the collapse of the Sasanian state, did the priesthood as a whole experience a shift in function, as well as geographic concentration? Or were the priests in these locations in the Sasanian period already doing something quite different from their administrative counterparts elsewhere?
The evidence of the Ṭabarestān archive offers a view of early post-Sasanian legal and administrative processes—where religious officials like the hērbed and rad, as well as the scribe and the official in charge of the dādestān are authority figures representing the maguh administration, but where other clerical officials known from the Sasanian administrative seals and bullae are entirely absent. Are these the post-Sasanian magi continuing their administrative role? Or did the Sasanian-era priesthood in Ṭabarestān (if it had ever been present there) disband and leave its administrative tasks to other officials? Did something similar happen across the Sasanian kingdom after the Arab conquest? Early Arabic conquest narratives refer to the hērbed in charge of a village who settles the conditions for its surrender.304 The references to Zoroastrian priests in Arabic sources and

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304 E.g., al-Balḍārī’s (d. 892) Futūḥ al-buldān, where it is the hērbed of Darabjird, in Fārs, who negotiates the settlement of capitulation on behalf of his community (ed. de Goeje, 648); al-
the fate of the priesthood in the Islamic period will be discussed further in the final two chapters of the dissertation.

It is possible that the priests in post-Sasanian Yazd, Kermān, Isfahān, and Sistān had always been in those regions—and that they were not of the same lineage, function, or titles as their Sasanian-era counterparts elsewhere in Persia. In other words, the surviving Zoroastrian priesthood of the post-Sasanian period was not necessarily the direct descendant of the Sasanian-era institution to which it claimed ties. It may be that the post-Sasanian priests descended from a portion of the priesthood which had a function in the Sasanian period distinct from the mobile administrative bureaucracy attested by the mog sealings analyzed in this chapter. If this is the case, then the Islamic-era priesthood’s claims of continuity with the Sasanian past should be reexamined, as well as the assumption of the representative nature of their brand of Zoroastrianism.

This line of inquiry will be taken up in the third and fourth chapters of the dissertation, when I examine the Islamic-era Zoroastrian priests in both Zoroastrian Middle Persian sources and in Muslim Arabic ones. The next chapter, however, attempts to complete the picture of the Sasanian-era priesthood as an administrative and legal institution—through the analysis of contemporary literary sources in Syriac, Armenian, Greek, and Middle Persian.

Ṭabarī (d. 923) includes a similar report about the ḥerbed of Iṣṭaḥr (ed. de Goeje, V.2696; cited by Kreyenbroek 1987a:153 n.16).
Chapter 2: Sasanian Literary Sources for the Study of the Zoroastrian Priesthood

Whereas the previous chapter of this dissertation collected attestations of Zoroastrian priests in extant Sasanian material culture, this chapter examines the Zoroastrian priesthood through literary sources from the Sasanian period. These sources include chronicles, histories, and martyr acts written by non-Zoroastrians living under Sasanian rule, and as such represent part of the heterogeneity of Sasanian society. This chapter focuses primarily on a group of texts known collectively as the Acts of the Persian Martyrs, or the Persian Martyr Acts, placing them alongside other contemporary literary sources and the corpus Sasanian seals and sealings discussed in the previous chapter. There are approximately 60 extant Persian Martyr Acts, henceforward referred to as PMA.305 These texts were mostly written in Syriac in the fifth through seventh centuries and describe the heroic martyrdoms of Persian Christians from as early as the fourth century during the reign of Šāpūr II (r. 309-379).306 The PMA contain views polemical towards the religious beliefs and practices of the ruling Zoroastrian elite, as well as a range of tropes that would have been familiar to audiences of Christian hagiography and martyrdom narratives. However, these texts are also some of the best contemporary witnesses to the functioning of the Sasanian state and its priestly bureaucracy, and should be viewed carefully alongside the material evidence discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation.

305 As in Becker 2020.
306 See the recent overview of Syriac hagiographical literature by Saint-Laurent 2018 (especially pp. 347-49 on Persian martyrs), as well as Sebastian Brock’s indispensable guide to the Acts of the Persian Martyrs in the appendix of one of his translations of these works (Brock 2008: 77-125). More recently, Becker 2020 discusses the “invention” of the Persian martyr acts as a category in medieval manuscripts; it is so far unclear what the full implications of the manuscript tradition are for our study of these texts.
To do so requires reviewing the methodological problems inherent in using these sources, as well as setting some ground rules.

We must contend with two historiographical issues. On the one hand, some scholars posit a proposed hierarchy of sources for the study of the Sasanian history. On the other hand, there are questions about the feasibility of using sources like martyr acts as historical sources at all. With regard to the first problem, Iranologists have long relied on literary sources in Greek, Latin, Syriac, Armenian, and particularly Arabic and Persian to reconstruct Sasanian history. With the continuing discovery of material remains from the Sasanian period, however, including the large corpus of seal inscriptions discussed in the previous chapter, scholars like Philippe Gignoux and Rika Gyselen have attempted to shift the paradigm of Sasanian historiography to prioritize these material sources instead of literary ones.

Philippe Gignoux thus suggested a classification of sources, hierarchized in the following categories: first and foremost the “primary” sources, including objects and inscriptions from the Sasanian period; then “secondary” sources, which are non-Persian literary texts contemporary to the Sasanian period; and finally “tertiary” sources, which are texts written after the Sasanian period, particularly the relatively plentiful Perso-Arabic historiography which has so dominated narratives of Sasanian history. According to

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307 E.g., Theodore Nöldeke’s 1879 translation of al-Ṭabarî’s account of Persian history, Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden, or Arthur Christensen’s 1936 L’Iran sous les Sassanides, which remains a classic.

308 See Gignoux 1984, reiterated by Gyselen 2009, who uses this paradigm to critique what she considers a misuse of sources in Parvaneh Pourshariati’s 2008 Decline and Fall of the Sasanian Empire. Also see Gyselen 2019c, where she reevaluates the utility of the early post-Sasanian Middle Persian text of the Şahrestānīhā ī Ērānšahr as a source for Sasanian administrative geography.
Gignoux and Gyselen, the literary sources (both secondary and tertiary) should serve to corroborate the evidence of the material (or primary) sources, not the other way around.

While I agree with Gignoux and Gyselen’s concerns and critiques, I think this categorization of primary / secondary / tertiary may be an over-correction (at least as read in the plainest terms). Rather, instead of positing three broad hierarchical categories, we should instead evaluate each source on its own merits, and consider the different kinds of information provided by the material and literary sources. Specific examples from the PMA demonstrate the role and function of Zoroastrian priests in much more vivid detail than the material corpus discussed in the previous chapter, and only by looking at these sources together can we can better reconstruct the picture of the Zoroastrian priesthood in antiquity.

The second methodological problem, that of the questionable historicity of literary sources like the PMA, will be addressed fully in the next section of the chapter. There I explain my theoretical approach and introduces the PMA as a group, examining the literary aspects of the genre in which they participate and taking seriously the critique of their historical utility. There are many common themes in the martyr acts, including the interference or meddling of the magi—the Zoroastrian priests always at the side of the Persian King of Kings—as well as religious disputations either with the king himself or with one of his priestly advisors. However, these martyr acts occupy a special place in Christian hagiography, because although they emulate the Western hagiographical tradition of the greater Roman empire, they are the products of a different political and cultural context—they deal with a different sort of religious persecution and a different set of religious controversies.
The main body of this chapter then reexamines the PMA as historical sources for the study of Sasanian Zoroastrianism, selecting certain later martyr acts as some of the more historically reliable and analyzing them individually for their contributions to our understanding of Sasanian administrative practices and the role of Zoroastrian priests and other officials in the Sasanian judiciary.

1. Methodology: Hagiography is not Historiography

The narrative turn, or linguistic turn, of literary studies treats hagiographical writing, and martyrdom accounts in particular, as a form of social discourse with the goal of constructing a community of believers. 309 With regard to the historicity of hagiographical sources, particularly those written by persecuted Christian communities living under Persian rule, there is a considerable amount of scholarship arguing that such texts are not historical sources at all—at least not in a way that would be useful to the study of Sasanian history writ large. This is the opinion shared by Saint-Laurent and Becker, with the latter writing of the PMA, “Instead of treating our sources as direct reflections of their historical environments, we should take deeper interest in the kind of textual, imaginative landscapes they establish and how those landscapes correspond in certain ways.”310 Thus, martyrdom accounts tell us more about how Christian communities imagined themselves than about the actual political, social, or religious context which they claim to depict. This narrative approach has also been applied to Eastern Syriac works written in the Sasanian

309 For example, see Castelli 2004, on the generative quality of social, or collective, memory on the part of early Christians; Campany 2009 applies these principles to medieval Chinese hagiography; Gross 2020: 149-50 gives an overview of recent scholarship, citing Castelli as well as Boyarin 1999, Moss 2010, and Leemans 2005.

period and later, in studies by scholars like Kyle Smith, Richard Payne, and Joel Walker that examine the transformation and construction of Christian identity under Sasanian rule.\textsuperscript{311}

This transformative literary interpretation of hagiography developed in reaction to earlier readings which either treated these texts as historical documents outright, or else mined them for historical details without regard for their narrative qualities. For example, already before twentieth century, the PMA were noted as a source of knowledge about Zoroastrianism.\textsuperscript{312} But according to a particular brand of Syriac studies, it seems that neither martyr acts nor ecclesiastical histories could be useful for the study of actual Sasanian Zoroastrianism, because they offer polemical accounts of Zoroastrianism as a foreign or oppressive religion. However, the divergence of these two approaches—the narrative and the historical interpretation—has more recently been tempered by scholars of Iranian studies and Eastern Christianity, who have been more inclined to accept some aspects of historicity from these texts, particularly with regard to the incidental information they impart about Sasanian administrative titles and procedures.\textsuperscript{313}

The literary interpretation of hagiographical texts was primarily borne out of studies of Western Christian texts, where the genre developed in contexts specific to the Roman Empire and the development of Christianity there.\textsuperscript{314} Although Eastern Christian martyr

\textsuperscript{311} E.g., Smith 2016, Payne 2015, and Walker 2006. The latter includes a short history of modern scholarship on the PMA, which were relatively neglected in Syriac studies until his treatment of the \textit{Life of Mār Qardagh} (see Walker 2006: 113-15).

\textsuperscript{312} Nöldeke 1893 translates selections of the martyr acts for their polemics about Zoroastrianism, although he considers them recycled from earlier Christian sources and not authentic witnesses; Gray 1914 sees the Syriac sources as offering testimony about a popular, polytheistic “Iranism,” as distinct from the Zoroastrianism known from the Avesta and Zoroastrian Middle Persian books or even the Zurvānism known from other polemical works.

\textsuperscript{313} E.g., Christelle Jullien, Florence Jullien, and Adam Becker (each discussed below).

\textsuperscript{314} Also see Rapp 2010 on hagiography as a monastic genre, in \textit{Unclassical Tradition}. 
acts share many conventions of this genre, they were written in an entirely different context by Christian communities with different concerns than their Western counterparts. The audience of the PMA was also different than that of Western martyr acts, and consisted of Persian Christians, including many Zoroastrian converts, living under Sasanian rule and taking part in a shared culture. For example, although Geoffrey Herman strongly supports the position that martyrological texts are pedagogical ones, to be read in the context of Christian identity formation, he also historicizes them by contrasting those written within a Sasanian context with those written in a Roman one, favoring the former as more representative of Persian Christian experience.315

The PMA require a theoretical and methodological approach distinct from that taken with Western hagiography or hagiography more generally. Although the various authors of the PMA were participating in a well-known genre, Simcha Gross demonstrates that they also developed a recognizable genre of their own with a distinct set of narrative features and motifs, which were variously employed by authors modeling their compositions on this tradition both within and outside of the Persian empire.316 Many of the PMA were also translated from Syriac into Greek, Armenian, and Sogdian in the medieval period, in distinct contexts and with important differences that deserve further attention.317 Furthermore, although the grouping of all of the PMA texts has come to be known under a collective title, Adam Becker has shown that this grouping is an artificial one. He demonstrates that the medieval manuscripts did not always group these texts together, and in fact, the later martyr acts that I will discuss only appear in manuscripts of

315 Herman 2021.
316 Gross 2020. Also see Wiessner 1969, who noted the appropriation of Persian epic motifs in the Life of Mār Qardagh; Wiessner’s work is cited and discussed further by Walker 2006.
317 See, for example, my note below on the Armenian “translation” of the Life of Grigor.
the eleventh to thirteenth centuries (at the earliest), and from copyists of the Eastern Syrian church.\footnote{E.g., Ms. Brit.Lib. 7,200, acquired from “Chaldeans” in Ottoman Iraq, and the (now lost) Ms. Diyarbakır 96, originally from the Mār Pethion church in Diyarbakır, which survives as a nineteenth-century copy in Berlin (Ms. Berlin or. Oct. 1256-7); see Becker 2020: 139-41.}

Thus, even the texts named collectively under the umbrella of *Persian Martyr Acts* should not all be treated equally. They should be carefully considered on their individual merits as historical sources for particular kinds of historical information and with attention to the literary aspects of these narratives. Some of the PMA, particularly those set during the end of Sasanian rule (several of which were written shortly after the events they narrate) deserve closer attention than has been paid thus far. Although these martyr acts make use of some of the same narrative elements as other PMA, they also contain a striking amount of “incidental” information about the workings of Sasanian administrative and judicial practices, particularly at the hands of Zoroastrian religious officials.

My approach accepts the critiques of the “narrative turn” of historical criticism, recognizing that texts like the PMA are primarily narratives that serve as *lieux de mémoire*, or “sites of memory,” for the constructive process of remembering the past that is always contingent upon the present and the social frameworks of the community which receives, repeats, and celebrates these martyr narratives—often in physical spaces dedicated to the cult of the saint in question, as part of annual festivals that preserve and re-enact these memories.\footnote{As discussed in the introduction of the dissertation, following Pierre Nora’s use of *lieux de mémoire*.} Roland Barthes describes the “reality effect,” or “the effect of the real,” in the details and descriptions of literary narratives, in which “the significance of the insignificance” is “to make the reader believe the truth of the illusion that was
being constructed.” As Elizabeth Clark has asserted with regards to Barthes’ theory and applied to such texts as early Christian hagiography, we are not dealing with history so much as the representation of it. Geoffrey Herman’s study of two fifth-century PMA under Yazdgird I employs similar language about the narrative features in Syriac hagiography that create either the illusion or reflection of reality.

However, even Clark finds a positive answer to her particular dilemma about the collateral damage of such an approach: the annihilation of the female subject from such narratives. For, as she says, “Has, then, ‘the lady vanished’? If this question means, Can we recover her pure and simple from texts? my answer is no. But that is not the last word: she leaves her traces, through whose exploration, as they are imbedded in a larger social-linguistic framework, she lives on.” Just as Clark is unable to find the “real” woman in early Christian texts, I cannot claim to find the “real” Zoroastrian priest in the Persian Martyr Acts. However, if the goal is to reconstruct social values, and social and political processes, then the “reality effect” should make us inclined to trust the PMA’s representation of juridical processes and vocabulary incidental to the narrative elements of the account—the juridical logic of these accounts is sound, even if the names and statements of individual Zoroastrian priests are not. Therefore, while I do not advocate for uncritical historical acceptance of literary texts like the PMA, I do think there can be a

322 Herman 2021, citing Flavia Ruani’s use of the term “literary objects” and building upon the theory of Roland Barthes (Ruani 2021).
324 Clark 1998 cites the work of Gabrielle Spiegel for studying the “social logic” of a narrative text, inclusive of “theological logic;” I similarly see “juridical logic” at work in the PMA.
nuanced approach to a particular group of Syriac sources that are the focus of this chapter. To dismiss their historicity entirely is an over-correction.

The present chapter reevaluates the historical value of certain Persian Martyr Acts for the study of Zoroastrianism and the Zoroastrian priesthood. Thus, I build upon the work of Philippe Gignoux, Christelle Jullien, and Florence Jullien, who read eastern Syriac texts as historical sources, taking their narrative qualities into consideration without dismissing them altogether. A similar approach has long been applied by Rabbinic studies scholars, who use incidental information from the complicated sources that comprise the Talmud and Mishnah to reconstruct the social networks of the rabbis. These scholars demonstrate that it is possible to balance the historicity of the witness to Sasanian jurisprudence and Zoroastrian belief and practice within these sources, on the one hand, with a careful reading of religious polemics in the context of hagiographical program of the particular text or author (when known), on the other. Fortunately, there are criteria by which to examine the rather varied set of sources known as the PMA.

Essentially, the later the martyr act the more historically reliable it tends to be. Following Paul Devos, Christelle Jullien distinguishes three categories and chronological periods for the PMA:

1. *the most historically reliable*
2. *less reliable narrative and panegyric passions*
3. *the romantic passions*

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326 See, for example, Catherine Hezser, *Social Structure of the Rabbinic Movement in Roman Palestine* (1997). This approach has even been applied to the networks of authorities cited in late-Sasanian Zoroastrian texts (for which, see Secunda 2012).

The first category, *the most historically reliable*, is the latest one, chronologically speaking. It includes, for example, the martyrs under Xusrō I (r. 531–79) and Xusrō II (r. 590–628), when the hagiographical narrators are themselves often witnesses of the events they relate and the protagonists are former Zoroastrians who are persecuted for their conversion to Christianity. These acts include the *Lives* of the Catholicos Mār Abā, the military commander Grigor (Pirān-Gušnasp), the courtier Yazd-bōzēd, the young Širin, Golindus, the notables Giwargis (Mihr-Māh-Gušnasp) and Ģōs'ı̂ sa fran (Māh-anōš), and the soldier Anastasius (Mōgundat). PMA of the second category, of *less reliable narratives*, occur mostly under Yazdgird II (r. 438–57). These include the *History of the Martyrs of Karkā d-Bēt Slōk*, and the *Lives* of Ādur-Hormizd, Anahid and Pethion—also known as the Pethion Cycle. The final category, *the romantic passions*, are the least historically reliable of the PMA and also the earliest, primarily referring to those accounts set during the reign of Šāpūr II (r. 309–79) but written long after the events in question. These acts include the *Lives* of Simeon Bar Ṣabba’ē, Tarbo, Pusai and Martha.

While much of the criticism of the PMA as historical sources is warranted, this critique particularly applies to the earliest acts set during the reign of Šāpūr II, and perhaps even through the reign of Yazdgird II. These acts were sometimes written centuries after the events they narrate, and with fantastical detail. Careful reading is required on a case-by-case basis for all of these martyr acts, but generally the later acts, which are set during the reigns of Xusrō I and Xusrō II, are written by witnesses of the events in question and should not be summarily dismissed as valuable sources for the study of the Sasanian period. These are the texts that Becker designates as “high Sasanian” texts, noting that they “contain an abundance of what look like authentic details of Sasanian political, military,
They were written mostly in the sixth and seventh centuries, in some cases shortly after the events they narrate. Furthermore, we know the identity of the authors of at least two of the later PMA: the *Life of Giwargis* (d. 615) was written by Babai the Great (d. 628), while the *Life of Īšōʿsabran* (d. 619) was written by the catholicos Īšōʿyabh III (d. 657), both authors of other extant works. Contemporality does not necessarily indicate historical reliability, but an examination of the later martyr acts does reveal a level of detail and attention to matters of Sasanian jurisprudence that should be explored further. Even the illusory narrative effect of these details cannot diminish their significance as a reflection of a social and political framework shared by Christians and Zoroastrians under Persian rule—and the juridical processes that applied to them all.

A good example of a subtler approach to the PMA can be seen in Florence Jullien’s recent translation of a cycle of martyr acts under Xusrō I (r. 531–79), where she acknowledges that they are a special witness to the Syriac-speaking Persian Christian community of the time but also assumes their historical utility on a number of points incidental to the narrative, namely their contribution to the study of Sasanian history (and particularly the Roman-Persian conflicts), the titles of administrative and religious officials, the hierarchy of the Zoroastrian clergy, the description and vocabulary of juridical procedures, and that they corroborate our knowledge of well-known Zoroastrian practices and ceremonies.329

Similarly, Christelle Jullien, in her overview of the *Acts of the Persian Martyrs*, acknowledges the political and religious context of these acts as well as their recurring themes and their position within Christian hagiographical literature more broadly speaking.

\[328\] Becker 2020: 123, under the symbol ε throughout the article.
\[329\] F. Jullien 2015: II.xxiii-xxv,
Here, she unequivocally states that the historical usefulness of these sources no longer needs to be demonstrated, and identifies at least seven areas where they contribute to our understanding of the Sasanian period:  

1. the titles of civil or religious functions
2. the personal names of individual officials who appear in multiple accounts
3. matters of judicial practice
4. the functioning of prisons
5. the religious history of the pre-Islamic period
6. the social history of Persian society—in which Christians fully participated
7. Iranian onomastics

Some of this information fills gaps in our knowledge, while some can be corroborated by contemporary and later sources. Philippe Gignoux has provided important studies of these Syriac sources, particularly their contributions to Middle Persian onomastics and our understanding of Sasanian Zoroastrianism. Rika Gyselen and Christelle Jullien have studied the toponyms appearing in Syriac sources, comparing them with Middle Persian inscriptions of the Sasanian period to produce a more complete picture of Sasanian administrative geography. Finally, Claudia Ciancaglini has gathered the considerable list of Middle Persian words attested in Syriac sources. The current chapter builds upon their and others’ work to offer a more targeted study of the Zoroastrian priesthood in the Sasanian period, including the names and titles of its office-holders, the geographic scope of their jurisdictions, and their role in Sasanian jurisprudence.

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331 Gignoux et al. 2009.
334 Ciancaglini 2008.
The martyr acts which will be analyzed in this chapter are largely limited to the later, and seemingly more historically reliable, PMA—predominantly those written in Syriac, but also including references to contemporary hagiography and historiography in Syriac, Armenian, Georgian, Latin, and Greek. These include the Lives of a handful of martyrs under Xusrō I and Xusrō II: Yazd-bōzēd (d. 533), Grigor (d. 542), and Yazd-Panāh (d. 542), as well as the Life of Mār Abā, the catholicos who lived most of his term of office in imprisonment until his death in 552, and finally the Life of Giwargis (d. 615). All of these martyrdom accounts were written soon after the deaths of these martyrs.

I will also discuss one cycle of martyr acts that is considered less historically reliable: the Pethion Cycle, which records the related martyrdoms of Pethion in 446/7, along with his student Anahid and her father Ādur-Hormizd—the latter a former Zoroastrian mōbed. This text exemplifies the Zoroastrian milieu of the PMA and their Persian Christian audiences, and also demonstrates how even such a polemical text can be useful for studying Sasanian Zoroastrianism. Note that the later dates of these fifth- through seventh-century martyr acts, most of which were written shortly after the events in question, make them contemporary sources to the late-Sasanian material culture discussed in the previous chapter, which has been dated to the late sixth and early seventh centuries.

Before discussing each martyr act, however, I will first give an overview of the contents of the later PMA, including the plethora of borrowed Middle Persian words they contain—and which collectively reflect the depth of knowledge of Zoroastrian belief and practice that can be found in this corpus of texts. Some of this knowledge of

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335 There are several hundred Iranian loanwords attested in Syriac literature of the fourth through seventh centuries. Because of the long history of interaction between speakers of Syriac and other Semitic languages with speakers of Iranian languages, these loanwords entered Syriac at different points in history and from different Iranian dialects; many of these loanwords are productive,
Zoroastrianism is recycled polemic, but many of the following attestations are unique in Syriac literature—and some have no extant attestation in Middle Persian. After this introduction and overview, individual martyr acts will be analyzed in more detail in their narrative context, focusing on their contributions to our knowledge of the functioning of the religious bureaucracy in Sasanian administration.

2. The Sasanian Priesthood in the Persian Martyr Acts

The following table gives an overview of the specific texts considered part of Jullien’s “most historically reliable” category or Becker’s “high Sasanian” martyr acts, listed in chronological order according to the martyr’s death date. These late-Sasanian PMA include martyrdom accounts and hagiographies written in Syriac, Sogdian, Armenian, Georgian, Latin, and Greek. The texts in bold will be discussed at length in their respective sections below.

*Under Yazdgird II (r. 438–457)*
1. Ādur-Hormizd and Anahid, d. 446 [Syriac]
2. Pethion, d. 446/7 [Syriac / Sogdian]

*Under Xusrō I Anuširwān (r. 531–79)*
1. Grigor (Pirān-Gušnasp), d. 542 [Syriac]
2. Yazd-Panāh, d. 542 [Syriac]
3. Mār Abā, catholicos 540-552 [Syriac]337
4. Yazd-bōzēd, d. 553 [Armenian]
5. Širīn, d. 559 [Greek]

though others retained a fixed form. Claudia Ciancaglini gives a full treatment of this subject in her *Iranian Loanwords in Syriac* (2008), so I have selected only the terms and titles relevant to the present study—with the addition and clarification of a few words which Ciancaglini either omits or misconstrues.

336 For a complete list of the PMA, with references, see the appendix in Brock 2008.
337 Brock 2011: 268 says that the *Life of Mār Abā* and the *Life of Grigor / Pirān-Gušnasp* were originally written in Middle Persian and then translated into Syriac; I am not sure upon what evidence he bases this assertion, but both texts allude to the Syriac-Persian bilingualism of the Sasanian kingdom.
Under Xusrō II Parwēz (r. 591–628)

1. Golinduch, d. 591 [Greek / Georgian]
2. Giwargis (Mihr-Māh-Gušnasp), d. 615 [Syriac]
3. Anastasius (Mogundād), d. 628 [Latin / Greek]
4. Išo Sabran (Māh-Anōš), d. <630 [Syriac]
5. Evstafi (Gwrobandak), d. ? [Georgian]
6. Nathanial, bishop of Syārazur, d. 610 [Syriac]
7. Kristina (Yazdōy), d. ? [Syriac]

There are several recurring (but not necessarily ahistorical) motifs common to many of the PMA, which include but are not limited to the following:338

1. a common dating formula (either the year of the Greeks or the regnal year of the king)
2. the martyr’s training in the teachings / recitation / “murmuring” of Zoroastrians from childhood
3. the high status of the Zoroastrian convert or his/her family
4. the martyr’s adoption of a Christian name
5. the martyr’s rejection of Zoroastrian ritual / belief / practice
6. the martyr’s disputation with religious officials
7. the martyr’s torture by specific means / death with miraculous event

Many of the PMA contain most or all of these elements, while some go into further detail about the martyr’s rejection of Zoroastrianism—usually at the moment of their conversion, and often in a public setting. The disputation often serves to highlight the intellectual prowess of the martyr and the utter astonishment of the Zoroastrians, or “Magians” (Syr. mgušē) at their own defeat.339 Some subsequently accept of the greatness of the Christian

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338 Gross 2020 outlines several of these motifs, which he calls the “window dressing” of the PMA, in order to show the process by which one Syriac martyr act was reshaped by a medieval composer from a Western source into this recognizable genre. Importantly, Becker 2020 notes that many of the more stereotypical polemical texts were collected in manuscripts (some of which are extant) before the composition of some of the later martyr acts in question. The Persian martyr act was a well-established genre by the sixth century.

339 I use the term “Zoroastrian” throughout the dissertation to refer generally to the religious tradition, although this term was not one commonly used by “Zoroastrians” for much of their history. However, I also use “Magian” to denote specific usages in Syriac and Arabic sources, reflecting historical perceptions contemporary to these sources; although many scholars translate Syriac mgušē and Arabic al-majūs as “Zoroastrians,” it is unclear whether these terms applied generally to adherents of the faith or to their religious specialists, or priests (and I tend to think the latter).
martyr and Christianity in general. A recurring theme in the conversion of the martyr is the inversion of Magian ritual or its transformation into a Christian practice: for example in one martyrdom account, the would-be martyr rejects the Zoroastrian meal-time prayer (MP ṭawz / wāzag) and says a Christian prayer over the Zoroastrian bread offering (MP ṭrōn), perhaps in imitation of the Eucharist, while his close-kin marriage with his sister becomes a celibate and spiritual fraternity in Christ and the catalyst for his complete acceptance of Christianity.\textsuperscript{340} Other martyrs refuse to perform the yašt, hold the barsom twigs, or to follow Zoroastrian purity laws about menstruation. Some of these motifs are common in several PMA, with varying degrees of polemic in their depiction.\textsuperscript{341} The repetition of these motifs in the martyr narratives does not necessarily mean that they are fictive, although it is true that they probably reveal more about the perception of Zoroastrianism rather than its actual practice.

However, they do tell us that the Persian martyr acts were texts written for audiences familiar with—or even participating in—Magian customs, where Christians and Zoroastrians shared a “cosmopolitan” Persian culture.\textsuperscript{342} Persian Christians lived alongside Zoroastrians, often converting from Zoroastrianism to Christianity—and sometimes continuing to practice certain Zoroastrian customs, like close-kin marriage and the mealtime prayer, much to the concern of Christian authorities.\textsuperscript{343} Persian Christians also

\textsuperscript{340} See the Life of Mihr-Māh-Gušnasp / Giwargis (Histoire 416-571; summary in Hoffmann: 1880a: 91-115).
\textsuperscript{341} Walker 2006: 119 gives some nuance, saying, “The Qardagh legend’s depiction of “Magian” customs, while polemical, lacks the kind of cruder distortions that became common in the post-Sasanian martyr legends.”
\textsuperscript{342} On the “cosmopolitanism” of Sasanian Iran, see Payne 2016.
\textsuperscript{343} See Hutter 2003 for his remarks on the shared “Iranian cultural behavior” of Christians and Zoroastrians, as well as the increased desire on the part of Christian authorities to eradicate “Zoroastrianized” Christian practices like the meal-time prayer and close-kin marriage, which evidently continued among Christian converts into the sixth century.
translated Christian literature into Middle Persian, as is evident from the existence of a fragmentary Middle Persian Psalter that was found in Turfan. In dialogue with Sasanian Zoroastrian legal statutes such as those found in the MHD, Eastern Christian legal compendia were also written in Middle Persian and later translated into Syriac. The PMA were not just produced within Sasanian Persia, they are themselves Sasanian sources. If we accept the premise that the PMA are Sasanian sources, we can evaluate the narrative elements as such while also accepting some of the more incidental information as well as genuine instances of inter-religious knowledge. Furthermore, the PMA can be compared to other contemporary literary sources in Syriac, Armenian, Latin, and Greek, as well as with the corpus of Sasanian Middle Persian administrative seals and sealings discussed in the previous chapter.

From the later PMA, a picture of late-Sasanian bureaucracy and jurisprudence begins to emerge: the king, the center of authority, delegates and acts through his officials in an extensive and hierarchical network of religious and civic bureaucracy, which extends from the (traveling) royal court to the highest regional or provincial officials and then down to lesser local authorities. At the top of the religious hierarchy is the mōbedān mōbed, the chief of all chief priests, who is sometimes (but not always) called in Syriac the rabb mgušē (“chief of the Magians”), while below him is the provincial mōbed (Syr. mawhpāṭā),

344 See Durkin-Meisterernst 2006, also Gignoux 2002 for more references.
345 E.g., the late eighth-century lawbook of Īšōʾ bōkht, which survives in Syriac and Arabic translations (for the Syriac edition, see Sachau 1914); also see the seventh- to eighth-century lawbook of Šemʿon, metropolitan of Rev-Ardaxšīr, which was translated into Syriac ca. 800 (see Brock 1999-2000: 94-95).
346 In Ciancaglini’s glossary of Iranian loanwords, [rb mgwšʾ] simply redirects to [mwbdʾn mwbd] (2008:253). Here, she cites Philippe’s Gignoux for the assertion that the two terms are equivalent, with the latter relying primarily on examples from the Life of Mār Abā, which will be discussed below (see Gignoux 1983a: 196-97). Earlier PMA written before the sixth century also use a variation of the Syriac expressions rēš da-mgušā (“chief of the Magians”) and rēša d-
who might also be given the honorific of “great mōbed” (Syr. mawhpāṭā rabbā). In fact, one of the mostly frequently appearing Sasanian officials in Syriac martyrdom accounts is the mawhpāṭā, or mōbed, who confronts and disputes with the Christian martyrs in formal trials and theological debates. Then there are the provincial rad (MP for a “judge” or “authority”) and other local “judges” (Syr. dayyānē).

Although the general outline of this hierarchy has been pointed out by scholars like Philippe Gignoux using Syriac PMA, my analysis particularly of the Life of Mār Abā will demonstrate more nuances to the way this hierarchy worked in practice. It is also noteworthy that the list of officials above differs greatly from the titles actually attested in the corpus of Sasanian administrative seals and bullae, where the mōbedān mōbed does not appear at all (in known examples). Only the mōbed is attested in that corpus so far. Meanwhile, the rad and other officials with MP titles attested in the PMA, such as the šahr-dādwār, do not appear in the Sasanian administrative seal inscriptions. I will show that the literary corpus of the PMA largely corroborates the provincial jurisdictions of the mōbed attested in the material record (as discussed in Chapter 1). However, the relationship of the

mawhpāṭē (“chief of the mōbeds”), but it is not clear if these are equivalent terms to mōbedān mōbed (or whether that office yet existed). See the discussion in Appendix 2.

347 The MP title mōbedān mōbed is modeled on the formula sāhān sāh, “king of kings,” in which the oblique plural (with suffix –ān) is followed by the singular form of the noun. The title mōbed already means “chief priest,” from early MP magupat (lit. “chief magus”). The Old Iranian suffix *-pati (“chief”) appears in Syriac as [-pt / -pt] in Old Iranian loanwords, but as [-bd / -byd] in Middle Persian loan words: thus, the two Syriac forms mawhpāṭā and mōbed [mwhpṭ / mwbd] for MP mōbed [mgwpt], where the former spelling mawhpāṭā [mwhpṭ ] is from early MP magupat (“chief priest”), while the latter mōbed [mwbd] was borrowed from the later MP form mōbed. This is an example of a loanword “doublet,” i.e., a term borrowed into Syriac at two different times, from two different historical strata of Persian or from two related Iranian languages. Both Syriac forms can be found in the same text interchangeably, although mōbed usually only appears in the formulaic title for the chief of all Zoroastrian priests, the mōbedān mōbed. On this borrowing, see Ciancaglini 2008: 57-58, 202-03. Specific references to this title and other religious officials in the PMA can be found in the table in Appendix 2.

other offices that are attested only in the PMA or other literary sources—as well as, for example, the offices of the *driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar* and the *maguh* that are attested in Sasanian seal inscriptions and do *not* appear in the PMA—is a more complicated problem that will also be taken up in the course of the following analysis.

The PMA reflect specific customs and protocols of the royal court and particular aspects Sasanian jurisprudence, including the role of religious / judicial officials—as well as Middle Persian court titles and religious offices not attested elsewhere. This type of information includes the formality of court protocols, the regional jurisdictions of lesser officials and their assistance to higher officials in central court settings, as well as specific legal terms and protocols. Additionally, the narratives of the PMA attest to the interweaving functions of civic and religious officials in practice in the Sasanian administration, which speaks against the distinctions made by scholars dealing primarily with material culture.\(^{349}\)

The following sections examine the later PMA, focusing on their contributions to our knowledge of the Sasanian Zoroastrian priesthood as well as providing a summary of the Middle Persian terminology that can be found in each.\(^{350}\) The conclusion summarizes these findings in relation to the administrative picture of the Zoroastrian priesthood as known from the material sources—establishing a more complete picture of the Sasanian

\(^{349}\) For example, a distinction between “civil” and “clerical” administrations has been made by Rika Gyselen in her studies of Sasanian seals and sealings (e.g., Gyselen 2007). This is discussed in more detail in the previous chapter of the dissertation.

\(^{350}\) The Appendices to Chapter 2 provide tables and references for Middle Persian loanwords (Table 4) and titles of Zoroastrian officials (Tables 5 and 6) attested in the later PMA discussed in this chapter, as well as a synoptic view of *mōbedān mōbeds* attested in extant Sasanian-era and later literary sources (Table 7).
priesthood in anticipation of the drastically different image we will find in the Islamic period, as discussed in the final chapters of the dissertation.

2.1. The *Pethion Cycle*: Establishing a Zoroastrian Milieu

2.2. The Military Martyrdoms: Zoroastrianism as a Civic Religion
   2.2.a. Grigor / Pirān-Gušnasp (d. 542)
   2.2.b. Yazd-bōzēd (d. 542)
   2.2.c. Yazd-Panāh (d. 542)

2.3. The *Life of Mār Abā* (d. 552): Sasanian Jurisprudence at Work
   2.3.a. Titles of officials
   2.3.b. The administrative hierarchy
   2.3.c. Legal terminology and the constraints of Sasanian legal practice

2.4. The *Life of Giwargis* (d. 615): Bilingualism and Writing in Legal Practice

2.1 The *Pethion Cycle*: Establishing a Zoroastrian Milieu

The *Life of Ādur-Hormizd and Anahid* is part of a larger cycle of martyr acts under Yazdgird II (r. 438-57) which includes the *Life of Pethion*, with all three martyred in the same year (446/7).⁵⁵¹ Although this cycle of martyr acts, collectively known as the *Pethion Cycle*, is set earlier than the others that I will discuss in this chapter—and indeed, Jullien classifies it among the second tier, or less historically reliable Syriac martyr acts⁵⁵²—it contains enough detailed knowledge about Zoroastrian belief and practice that is worth comparing to the later martyr acts.⁵⁵³ Aside from a single, common legal term in Middle Persian (*nibištag*), the narratives of these martyrs’ lives offer little in the way of Sasanian

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⁵⁵¹ *AMS* II.559-603, 604-31; partial translation in Brock & Ashbrook-Harvey 1987. A Sogdian version of the martyrdom of Pethion survives in fragmentary form, but apart from a handful of references to the magi and other officials, most of the Zoroastrian aspects are either reconstructed or missing completely—for instance, the long dialogues of the disputation are not extant in the Sogdian version, perhaps an accident of the manuscript’s survival, unless this lack is intentional and reflective of the concerns of an audience outside of Sasanian Zoroastrian influence; for the Sogdian text and translation, see Sims-Williams 1985: 31-68.

⁵⁵² C. Jullien 2012: 129; see above.

⁵⁵³ As already noted by Nöldeke 1893.
jurisprudence, but they serve to establish the Zoroastrian milieu familiar to their Christian audience.

The *Pethion Cycle* begins with Yazdēn, the son of Mihryār, who as a youth flees his Magian school\(^{354}\) to become an ascetic Christian hermit and thus starts a sequence of events that lead to the conversions not only of himself but also his brother Dād-Gušnasp and the main protagonists in these martyr acts: Pethion, Anahid, and Ādur-Hormizd. Yazdēn converts his nephew Pethion to Christianity, who converts a young girl named Anahid who has been brought to him for healing, who sets the example for the conversion of her father, Ādur-Hormizd, who was himself a Zoroastrian mōbed (Syr. mawhpāṭā) in Balašfarr in the region of Bēth Madāyē (corresponding to Walaxšfarr, near Ḥulwān, in the province of Mād).\(^{355}\) In fact, Yazdēn and Pethion preach and heal in all the land around them, which included Māsabadān, Bēth Dārāyē, and (Bēth) Mādāyē.\(^{356}\)

These narratives contain the usual element of religious disputation between the martyr and a high-ranking Zoroastrian official, but they differ from earlier martyr acts in that they go beyond recycled and generic information about Magians and their worship of the sun (a common theme in acts set under the reign of Šāpūr II) to include more detailed knowledge of Magian belief and practice.

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\(^{354}\) *AMS* II.561, where it is called *bēt mgūšē* and *bēt yullphānā da-mgūšē*.

\(^{355}\) *AMS* II.560 describes Mihryār as being from Balašfarr [blšfr], specifically from a village named Dāwin [dwyn] in a district named Dēnawar [dynhwr]; *AMS* II.565 states that Ādur-Hormizd was a mawhpāṭā in Balašfarr, though originally from Bišāpūr. Gyselen 2019a: 142 points out that Balašfarr had been a diocese of the Church of the East since the synod of 424, and suggests a number of correspondences by the time of the sixth century between the ecclesiastical geography of this region with the Sasanian administrative geography.

\(^{356}\) *AMS* II.564.
These texts also bear a certain verisimilitude in their use of titles and offices. In addition to naming two different mōbeds, the Pethion Cycle includes frequently appearing MP borrowings for official titles, such as rad (another priestly title, usually translated as “judge”), āyēnbed (“master of ceremonies”), and dehgān (the “landed gentry” of a region). The text refers to another uncertain (religious?) title that appears to combine Syriac and MP terminology: the rabbā tkēšān, or “chief of teachers.”

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357 AMS II.584, Syr. [dyhqʾ] for MP dehgān / dehīgān (NP / Arabic dehqān), meaning the “landed gentry” of the region, with the deh-meaning “land”; on the loanword in Syriac, see Ciancaglini 2008: 148, and for the history of the term, see Tafazzoli 1994 (EIr, “Dehqān”). For the other titles, see the table and references in the appendix.

358 AMS II.589.7, Syr. [rbʾ dyṣqšn]. This Syriac term is not treated by Ciancaglini 2008, but Bedjan (n. 4) glosses it as nāmōsā d-bārōyā, or “law of the creator.” Brock & Ashbrook-Harvey 1987: 90 translate the term as “head Desqeshan,” and their n.45 offers the following suggestion: “Evidently a religious title; possibly the second element represents kēsh, ‘dogma.’” However, I suggest reading a combined Syriac / Middle Persian title rabbā tkēšān, perhaps meaning “chief of teachers,” or “chief of judges.” The second, Middle Persian part of this phrase is not from MP kēsh but from an older form: Av. ṭkaēša-, as in the known Syriac borrowing [pwryqyšyh] rendering MP pōryō-tkēših, “ancient teachings” of the Zoroastrian religion (see this MP term below, in Life of Giwargis). The different spelling of this form in Syriac here may be explained by its use.
also uses the MP legal term *nibištāg*, meaning a “document; deposition,” as a gloss on the Syriac term *qātārsis* (from Gr. καθαίρεσις, “deposition”). In the narrative, the *mawhpāṭā* Ādur-Hormizd orders a *nibištāg* to be drawn up against Pethion in order to bring charges against him for converting Ādur-Hormizd’s daughter Anahid from Magianism.³⁵⁹

Several factors make the utility of the *Pethion Cycle* as a source for Sasanian Zoroastrianism more tenuous than some of the later PMA which will be discussed next, but we should not completely discount it. The following table provides a list of the extensive Middle Persian terminology related to religious concepts included in these three Syriac martyr acts—the level of which cannot be matched by any other of the PMA before or after this fifth-century cycle of texts. Many of the Middle Persian words below appear only in this text (marked in **bold**), out of all of the extant Syriac corpus (to my knowledge). Some of these terms have been reconstructed based on our best guesses, either because there is no extant Middle Persian attestation (e.g., *drust-āxēz*) or because the form or spelling is not one common in extant Middle Persian sources. Ciancaglini discusses most of the following in her treatment of Iranian loanwords in Syriac.³⁶⁰ However, I have noted a few more that she does not include (marked with a †).

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³⁵⁹ *AMS* II.569: “And he [the *mawhpāṭā*] commanded that his [i.e., Pethion’s] *qātārsis* be made, i.e., the *nibištāg*,” Syr. [*nbišt*] for MP *nibištāg*, meaning any “written (document),” but with a specific legal meaning of “sentence, deposition,” and used in this passage as a gloss on the Syriac *qātārsis*, itself a Greek loanword (καθαίρεσις) meaning “deposition, removal from office;” see Ciancaglini 2008: 211-12. The MP term *nibištāg* appears several times in the late-Sasanian lawbook known as the *Mādayān Ḥazār Dādestān* or *MHD*; see Perikhanian 1997: 375 (*MHD* 92.4.6, 97.6.7, 98.2, A15.12).

³⁶⁰ Ciancaglini 2008 (s.v.); I omit the citations here for the sake of brevity.
Table 1: Middle Persian Words in the Pethion Cycle relating to Zoroastrianism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MP word</th>
<th>Syriac spelling</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>AMS citation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>abestāg</td>
<td>[ʾbstg]</td>
<td>the Avesta</td>
<td>II.576, 579, 580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ahlomōg</td>
<td>[ʾhrmhwg]</td>
<td>heretic</td>
<td>II.579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahreman†</td>
<td>[ʾhrmn]</td>
<td>Ahreman (the foul spirit)</td>
<td>II.578, 579, 594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>āmurdāzēn</td>
<td>[ʾmhzrys]</td>
<td>veneration, worship; mercy</td>
<td>II.604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahman†</td>
<td>[bhmn]</td>
<td>Zoroastrian deity of “Good Thought”</td>
<td>II.577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>barsom</td>
<td>[bwrsmʾ]</td>
<td>ritual twigs</td>
<td>II.572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dēn</td>
<td>[dyn]</td>
<td>religion</td>
<td>II.576, 604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drōn</td>
<td>[drwn]</td>
<td>consecrated bread</td>
<td>II.589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drust-āxēz</td>
<td>[b-drwsthyd]</td>
<td>having whole resurrection</td>
<td>II.576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>frašōkar</td>
<td>[pršwqr]</td>
<td>the renewer</td>
<td>II.577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gētīy</td>
<td>[gtyh]</td>
<td>the material world</td>
<td>II.576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hormizd†</td>
<td>[hwrmzd]</td>
<td>Hormizd / Ohrmazd (the wise lord)</td>
<td>II.577-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kišwarān</td>
<td>[b-kwrn]</td>
<td>the climes</td>
<td>II.577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nask</td>
<td>[nsk]</td>
<td>a section of the Avesta</td>
<td>II.580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pādixšāy†</td>
<td>[ʾpʾthšʾ(d)]</td>
<td>ruler</td>
<td>II.576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xwēdōdahīh</td>
<td>[kwṭwwdtyh]</td>
<td>next-of-kin marriage</td>
<td>II.578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>šnūman</td>
<td>[šnwmn]</td>
<td>propitiation / invocation</td>
<td>II.579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*tkešān†</td>
<td>[dyṣqšn]</td>
<td>(dogmatic) teachings</td>
<td>II.589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wahišt</td>
<td>[bhšt]</td>
<td>paradise, or “the best” (existence)</td>
<td>II.576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yašt</td>
<td>[yšt]</td>
<td>prayer, worship; the Yasna liturgy</td>
<td>II.589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zurwān</td>
<td>[zrwn]</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>II.577</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the Pethion Cycle, there are also allusions to specific Magian religious concepts and practices, including the thirty divinities by which the days are named. There is also perhaps a Syriac calque of a citation formula known from Zoroastrian Middle Persian texts: during the disputation between Ādur-Frazgird and Ādur-Hormizd, the former begins a statement with the Syriac phrase *men abestāg dilan nahhirāʾit idiʿ d...* This phrase means “because from our Avesta it is clearly known that...” It can be compared to a frequently occurring Zoroastrian statement which introduces religious teachings: in Middle Persian...

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361 AMS II.577, in which Ādur-Hormizd criticizes “those elements (esuksē, Gr. στοιχεῖον / pl. στοιχεία) which are called part of the house of Ohrmazd and Bahman by you—the thirty gods and the children of gods, who do good and do evil.” These are the thirty divinities (Av. yazata-, MP yazdān) which give their names to the days, known from Zoroastrian sources as well as other Syriac polemical texts.

362 AMS II.576.
Persian texts the formula usually appears as ēn-iz paydāg kū, which translates to “this, too, is evident that,” but often includes the preceding phrase pad abestāg (“in the Avesta”) or pad dēn (“in the religion”). From the prepositional phrase (MP pad abestāg / Syr. men abestāg) to the introduction of the subordinate clause (MP kū / Syr. d-), the similarity is striking and suggests real knowledge of Middle Persian and Zoroastrian exegetical practice.

Scholars have debated whether dialogues and disputations like those appearing in the Pethion Cycle truly represent the beliefs of late-Sasanian Zoroastrians, or whether such accounts are misrepresented through the medium of Christian polemic and/or recycled from earlier heresiographical treatises—and therefore neither contemporary nor relevant to a late-Sasanian context. However, examined as a whole, this dialogue—and the longer narrative of Life of Ādur-Hormizd and Anahid, and indeed the whole of the Pethion Cycle—demonstrate the author’s high-level of familiarity with Magian religious customs and specific terminology. Although the polemical nature of the narrative should not be ignored—with most of the words given above appearing in a debate between a mōbed convert to Christianity and another Magian who is described as the most learned in his religion—neither can we overlook the contribution of this Christian text, and others like it, to the study of Sasanian Zoroastrianism. Rather than dismissing these disputation narratives outright, we should examine them more closely to determine their historical

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363 For example, many passages from the Life of Ādur-Hormizd and Anahid have been excerpted and discussed in the context of religious polemic and the Christian heresiographical tradition, with much of the emphasis on Zurvānism as a so-called heresy of Sasanian Zoroastrianism: e.g., Nöldeke 1893: 34-38, translating only selected passages corresponding to AMS II. 576-579, 592; Bidez & Cumont 1938: ii.107-11, quote from Nöleke’s translation corresponding to AMS II.577, 592; these selections are further excerpted by Zaeheur 1955: 434-37. There is no complete published translation of this martyr act in its entirety.
value. The *Pethion Cycle* is a product of a Zoroastrian milieu just as much as a Christian one. It is a Sasanian text.

### 2.2 The Military Martyrdoms: Zoroastrianism as a Civic Religion

Another cycle of related martyrdoms is set against the backdrop of renewed conflict between the Persians and the Romans during the reign of Xusrō I, when the apostasy of prominent Zoroastrian officials—who play a political, military, and religious role in their communities—is seen as a threat to Persian royal authority. Grigor (Pirān-Gušnasb), also known as Gregory the Commander, and Yazd-Panāh (both d. 542) are just two examples, but they inspired other imitators in Persia and beyond, including another Persian military officer in Armenia, Yazd-bōzēd / Izbozeta (d. 533), whose *Life* is extant in Armenian and Georgian, and whose martyrdom is recorded in a contemporary Greek epigram. The later martyr act of Anastasius (Mogun-dād) (d. 628), which survives in Latin and Greek, may also be included in this group of military martyrdoms, or at least was modeled on them.

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364 Their martyr acts can be found in Bedjan’s *Histoire* 347-94 and 394-415, as well as the recent edition and translation of Florence Jullien (2015a: I.43-72 and I.73-87); because Jullien numbers her edition according to the manuscript folios, I have chosen to retain the numbering of Bedjan’s edition, which remains more accessible, followed by Jullien’s corresponding paragraph number (in the format of *Histoire* # // Jullien §#). The inter-relatedness of these martyrs is explicit in the *Life of Yazd-Panāh*, where the titular martyr and the Magian officials interrogating him explicitly cite Grigor’s example: if Yazd-Panāh will not recant, they threaten, then he will be put to death just like Grigor; additionally, after Yazd-Panāh’s death, a fellow Christian named Ābrōdag, from the city of Weh-Ardāxšir, removes his body to Seleucia-Ctesiphon so that it can rest with that of Mār Grigor the martyr (*Histoire* 394-5, 410-11 // Jullien §1, 10); Ābrōdag also appears as a prominent Persian noble in the *Life of Mār Abā*, where he directly challenges the mōbedān mōbed / rabb mgušē in the defense of his fellow Christians (*Histoire* 232 // Jullien §15).

365 See references below.

366 Originally a cavalryman from Ray and the son of a *mog* (Gr. mágos / μάγος), Anastasius converted to Christianity when he saw the True Cross, then deserted the Persian army, and was baptized in Jerusalem before eventually returning to Persia for his martyrdom. This martyr act, unlike other PMA, was originally written in Greek, and translated into Latin already before 668; Gross 2020 suggests that it is another reworked martyr narrative with merely the “window dressing” of the PMA. For the text and translation, see Flusin 1992.
Although these martyrdom accounts participate in the wider genre of Christian hagiography, with the martyrs themselves often traveling from Persia to the Roman empire (as in the case of Grigor and Anastasius) or to Armenia (as with Yazd-bōzēd), and use many motifs common to it, they also reveal plausibly accurate information about the beliefs and practices of late-Sasanian Zoroastrians and about the civic function of Sasanian religious officials.

2.2.a. The *Life of Grigor* (d. 542)

Pirān-Gušnasp, who would later take the Christian name Grigor after his baptism, was a Magian from the Parthian noble house of Mīhrān from Ray. He was an official overseeing the border regions of the north, with thousands of cavalry under his command. In addition to this position of military command, Pirān-Gušnasp was also supposed to perform specific ritual functions on behalf of the community, including a public performance of the *yašt*, or *Yasna* ritual—which instead becomes the scene of his public rejection of Zoroastrianism and his conversion to Christianity. In fact, the prestige

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367 *Histoire* 350 // Jullien §3, *men rāziqāyê men ţōhmā d-bēt mehrān*, i.e., “from the people of Ray, from the lineage of the house of Mīhrān” with Pirān-Gušnasp further designated as one of the “magnates” of the king (Syr. *rawrbānē* equivalent to MP *wuzurgān*).

368 *Histoire* 350-51 // Jullien §3. Although the exact location of the toponyms of Gurzānāyē and Arānāyē (Syr. *atrā d-gwrznyʾ w-ʾrnyʾ*) is uncertain, they are clearly in the north—and therefore easily supported by Grigor’s Mīhrānid base in Ray. *Gurzānāyē* may refer to Gurgān, but appears to be a distinct toponym; Gyselen 2019a: 93-95 does not make a connection between the two. C. Jullien 2007: 90 suggests the ethnonym “gens de Gurzān,” also citing a similar reference to this doublet in the *Life of Mār Abā* (*Histoire* 227.15), but her entry on the toponym “Aran” does not list this passage from the *Life of Grigor*. Also see C. Jullien 2004: 144, who identifies “Aran / Ardān” with Caucasian Albania, following Gyselen 2002: 130, and Gyselen 1989: 81—who attests to the presence of this region on the royal inscriptions of Šāpūr I and Wahrām II, as well as to the offices *āmārgar* and *zarrbed* for this toponym on extant Sasanian administrative seals. Gyselen 2019a: 38-39 does not draw a connection between Ardān / Arān with the *Life of Grigor*, while Payne 2015: 51 merely says that Gregory (Pirān-Gušnasp) was a field commander in the Caucasus region.

369 *Histoire* 354-55 / Jullien §6; also see Panaino 2006. The *yašt*, or “prayer,” is a Middle Persian term for the daily ritual and liturgy (Av. *yasna*) in which priests recite the Avesta alongside ritual
and importance of Pirān-Gušnasp’s role as a Magian is what accounts for his persecution after his conversion: other Magians in the court of the king are upset that such a high official from such a prominent family should cease to perform these functions, and they demand repercussions from the king.\(^{370}\) Just as the public inversion of Zoroastrian ritual at the point of conversion is a common theme in the PMA, so too is the scheming of the magi. However, their criticism of Pirān-Gušnasp’s dereliction of his duties—and the consequences for Sasanian society—seem to be quite real. There was an important public, or civic, aspect to the role of prominent mgušē which evidently included leading the people into the feast as well as performing their rituals.

The *Life of Grigor* contains only two specifically Magian religious terms: in addition to the aforementioned reference to the *yašt*, we are told that it was to be performed at a specific Magian festival for the dead called *Frawardīgān*.\(^{371}\) Both terms appear in other contemporary Greek works, and may reflect a general level of Christian knowledge of Magian religious ritual—both among Persian Christians and their coreligionists in the Roman empire.\(^{372}\) However, the passage from the *Life of Grigor* offers other important actions for the promotion of the material world in the ongoing cosmic battle between good and evil. Today, the *yasnu* liturgy is performed only inside a particular type of fire temple, and only by particular priests who have been ritually purified. But perhaps this was not always the case. We can learn more about Sasanian-era practices by taking the above reference seriously. Here, a Persian magnate from a noble house holds military command and is also supposed to perform—or assist in the performance of—specific ritual functions on behalf of the community of Magians in a public setting.

\(^{370}\) *Histoire* 362 // Jullien §10; the king responds to these accusations by taking away Pirān-Gušnasp’s wealth and authority and imprisoning him.

\(^{371}\) *Histoire* 351 // Jullien §3; the Syriac narrative uses the MP name for the festival, *Frawardīgān*, the ten-day festival for the spirits of the dead (MP *fraward*, from the Av. *frauaši*, which is the “soul” or “spirit” of the righteous). On the Syriac loanword [prwrdygnʾ], see Ciancaglini 2008: 238, citing Hoffmann 1880a: 79 (= *Histoire* 351).

\(^{372}\) For example, the *yašt* (Gr. ίαστον) appears in the extant Greek *Life of Širin*, another Persian Christian martyr, and as with Grigor serves as the setting of her conversion to Christianity; see Panaino 2006: 169-71. Menander Protector informs us in his *History* that the people of Nisibis (ca. 565) were celebrating the ten-day festival called φρουρδίγαν (MP *Frawardīgān*) and thus
information about the Zoroastrian calendar, providing evidence of a Sasanian-era reform that returned the Frawardīgān festival to the days preceding the vernal equinox, from which it had gradually migrated.\(^{373}\) Thus, despite denigrating Frawardīgān as a festival performed for Satan, the Life of Grigor / Pirān-Gušnasp preserves a unique corroboration for a Sasanian Zoroastrian calendrical reform known from other sources.\(^{374}\)

This text also contains borrowed MP words for official titles, such as the mawhpāṭā rabbā, who is also simply called mawhpāṭā, and the rad, who are both described as being from or having the jurisdiction of Bēth Aramāyē.\(^{375}\) This corresponds to the Sasanian administrative region of Asūrestān, in which the capital of Seleucia-Ctesiphon was located. The non-specificity of the toponym of Bēth Aramāyē, however, suggests that the author merely wanted to convey that these officials served the king and traveled with him. I will discuss this toponym more in the section on the Life of Yazd-Panāh.

In the end, although much of the Life of Grigor is panegyrical, with less historical narrative, it still provides important context for the shared religious and military functions of border officials, as well as the public performance of Magian rituals as part of the proper functioning of the Sasanian state.

could not receive the Greek embassy for the duration of the festival (fragment 9.1); see Blockley 1985: 98-99, with n. 102. Menander also glosses the festival in Greek as ἱεραμεία, which according to LSJ was a “rite by which ghosts were called up and questioned.”

\(^{373}\) Frawardīgān traditionally occurred at the end of the calendar year in the month of Frawardin, just before the “New Year” festival (MP nōg-rōz, NP nowrūz). However, since the ancient liturgical calendar, based on 365 days, had gradually moved out of sync with the seasons, a Sasanian reform circa 500 CE moved the New Year festival to the month of Ādhar (as alluded to in this very text) and the Frawardīgān festival thus to the end of the preceding month of Ābān, bringing them both back in line with the vernal equinox. On this calendar reform, specifically citing this Persian martyr act, see de Blois 1996: 47.

\(^{374}\) E.g., al-Bīrūnī’s (d. 1048), al-Āṯār al-bāqiya; see de Blois 1996.

\(^{375}\) Histoire 369 // Jullien §14.
2.2.b. The *Life of Yazd-bōzēd* (d. 542)

This life survives in Armenian and Georgian. According to the Armenian text, before his conversion Yazd-bōzēd (or Arm. *Yiztbuzit*) was a *mog* named Maxoš from Bišāpūr who had been instructed in Magianism from his childhood. He enters the Persian army and becomes inspired by Grigor’s example to convert to Christianity. When he travels to Armenia as part of his military duties, he clashes with a prominent local *mog* in Dvin.

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376 *BHO* 433 and 434; for the Armenian edition, see Ališan 1874: II.124-30, with an English translation by Conybeare 1894: 257-71. Peeters thinks there was a Syriac original behind these translations, which he discusses in the context of the fragmentary but similar narrative of a “Yazd-bōzēd” in the Syriac manuscript BL Add. 17216 (see Peeters 1931). According to Brock, however, this is not the same Yazd-bōzēd as the martyr under discussion (2008: 84). Becker similarly states that the extant Armenian life of Yazd-bōzēd does not come from a Syriac original (2020: 142). As for the Greek references: the sixth-century Greek historian Menander the Protector devotes an epigram to a Persian mágos (μάγος) named Isbozētēs who converted to Christianity and was martyred, and—like the Armenian *Life of Yazd-bōzēd*—the Greek epigram describes a fire which engulfs the martyr’s city until it is extinguished by the power of Christ; this epigram survives in the tenth-century compilation known as the *Greek Anthology*, i.101 (ed. and trans. Paton 2014: 64-65).

377 Ališan 1874: II.124, as *Beršapuh*, and specifically from a village named *K’unarastan*. I interpret the toponym as Bišāpūr here, but it could be Pērōz-Šāpūr instead, which was known in Greek as *Βηρσαβῶρα*.
named Xusrō-Pērōz, who was also a tax-collector or accountant (Arm. *hamakar*, for MP *āmārgar*)—and just as with Grigor, this confrontation occurs during a communal Magian festival in the fire temple, although this time it is during the festival of Mihragān.378 After his conversion to Christianity becomes publicly known at this festival, Yazd-bōzēd suffers several interrogations by local officials in Armenia before the *mōbed* (Arm. *mogpet*) of Ray arrives to pass a final judgment under royal command.379 The Armenian account is full of Persian titles and a few religious terms and concepts, including a reference to the Magian religion as “the light-bearing (or luminous) religion” (Arm. *lusawor den-n*), as well as a description of Magians (Arm. *mogk’ / mogue’*) performing recitations in the fire temple of Dvin.380

This martyr act demonstrates the blurring of “clerical” and “civil” administrative roles (as with the tax-collector *mog* of Dvin), as well as the hierarchy of officials and the subordination of Armenian Zoroastrian priests under the jurisdiction of the *mōbed* of Ray. Significantly, it also attests to the continued presence of Zoroastrian priests and fire temples in Armenia under a Persian *mōbed*’s jurisdiction—a hundred years after the Armenian revolt of 451, which was valorized in contemporary Armenian historiography as a great Christian victory over Persian Zoroastrianism. Moreover, the existence of this particular Persian martyr act in the Armenian language, specifically linked to a Syriac martyr cycle (that of Grigor / Pirān-Gušnasp), suggests points of contact between the Armenian Christians and the Church of the East that should be explored further. However, more

378 Ališan 1874: II.125, as *Mehakan*.
379 Ališan 1874: II.127, as the province (*gavar*) of Řēo. Later in the text (II.128), the ethnonym meaning “from Ray” (*Ražik*) is used to describe another Christian martyr who is tried along with Yazd-bōzēd. For the identification of Řēo with Ray, see Hewsen 1992: 235 with n. 14.
380 Ališan 1874: II.128, 125 (respectively).
research needs to be done on this martyr act, which does not have an (extant) Syriac original, and other Armenian translations of Syriac martyr acts.\textsuperscript{381}

For example, the \textit{Life of Grigor} (Pirān-Gušnasp) also survives in an Armenian version under the title “Grigor the Persian” (\textit{BHO} 354, ed. Ter-Mkrtč’ean 1901). However, it a paraphrase or wholly different text which bears considerable differences from the Syriac original, including the martyr’s Magian name as Manuščihr (Arm. Manačihr) instead of Pirān-Gušnasp, as well as frequent references to Grigor as “Grigorios,” his conversion in the land of Georgia (Arm. Vrač ec aškarh), his persecution by the marzbān of that region before being sent to the court of the Persian king and his mōbed, and the dating formula which places these events during the fifteenth year of Xusrō II [= 604/5] rather than 517–42 (during the reigns of Kavad and Xusrō I) as the Syriac text records. Rather than thinking about this and other Armenian (and Georgian) texts as “translations,” the local contexts and translators must also be considered.

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2.2.c. The Life of Yazd-Panāh (d. 542)

Now we return to another Syriac example: the Life of Yazd-Panāh, a Middle Persian name which is translated as “God, his refuge.” Like Grigor (Pirān-Gušnasp), the martyr Yazd-Panāh (d. 542) was an important Sasanian official. However, his role and status among the Magians of the southern regions seems to have been of a more religious nature even than that of Pirān-Gušnasp. Yazd-Panāh is from a region known as a stronghold of Zoroastrianism from the Achaemenid period: the city of Šūš (ancient Susa), near Karkā-d-Ledān (also known as Ėrān-Xwarrah-Śāpūr), in the region of Bēth Hūzāyē.

Because he is a prominent local religious official (“a chief and judge,” Syr. rēšā w-dayyānā) there, Yazd-Panāh’s conversion to Christianity sparks an internal crisis in this community of Magians, who gather to debate and discuss which “religion” (Syr. deḥltā) is true. The Magian chief priest of that region (Syr. mawḥpāṭā rabbā) comes to dispute these matters with him, even offering Yazd-Panāh the position of chief priest after him, saying, “You would become mōbed after me in this land (atrā).” Later, Yazd-Panāh is transferred from Bēth Hūzāyē to Bēth Aramāyē, and brought first to the capital of Seleucia-Ctesiphon then to the nearby city of Pērōz-Śāpūr, where the king is currently stationed with his armies. There, both the mōbedān mōbed himself as well as the mawḥpāṭā of Bēth Aramāyē arrive to put Yazd-Panāh on trial. Like the mawḥpāṭā of Bēth Hūzāyē, they

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382 The Syriac gloss, alāhā bēt gōseh, is correct (Histoire 395 // Jullien §1).
383 Nearby Sasanian Ėrān-Xwarrah-Śāpūr.
384 Histoire 395-98 // Jullien §1-3. Becker 2009 uses the martyrdom accounts of Grigor (as “Gregory”) and Yazd-Panāh to explore the semantic range of deḥltā and how it functions as a communal marker for the Christians of the sixth century.
385 Histoire 398 // Jullien §2, tehwā mawḥpāṭā bātār dil b-atrā hānā.
386 Histoire 400-02 // Jullien §4-5.
also offer incentive for Yazd-Panâh to return to his former religion, saying that the king has commanded that he would become a mawhpāṭā rabbā of all the land (b-kollāh ar‘ā).  

![Map of toponyms related to the Life of Yazd-Panâh](image)

**Figure 40**: Map of toponyms related to the *Life of Yazd-Panâh*

Reading the *Life of Yazd-Panâh* in light of the corpus of Sasanian seals and sealings, the Syriac term *atrā* probably means “province” more specifically, in the sense that Gyselen intends in her work on the administrative geography of Sasanian Persia—i.e., not equivalent to the larger “region” indicated by MP šahr. Moreover, we know from this corpus that Šūš was a canton of the province of Ērān-Xwarrah-Šāpūr, which was part of the larger region of Xūzestān (Syr. Bēth Hūzāyē). There are, in fact, four bullae that were found at Susa that bear inscriptions indicating the office of the *maguh* of Šūš-ī-ēr-kar, a canton of Ērān-Xwarrah-Šāpūr, which itself was part of the larger region of Hūzestān (Syr. Bēth Hūzāyē); all four of these bullae also bear the personal sealing of a *mog*, each with

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387 *Histoire* 402 // Jullien §5.
388 As defined by C. Jullien 2004: 142 as well.
389 Gyselen 2019a: 72-73 equates Šūš-ī-ēr-kar with Susa, and assumes it to be the provincial capital of the province (šahr) of Ērān-Xwarrah-Šāpūr.
Another bulla found at Susa attests to the *maguh* of another canton of Ērān-Xwarrah-Šāpūr named Mānestān-ī-mar, whose exact location is unknown. In addition to these *maguh* bullae, the Susa excavations also provided bullae with the administrative seals of the clerical offices of the *mōbed* and *driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwār* of Ērān-Xwarrah-Šāpūr, as well as the civil offices of the ēwēnbed and āmārgar of Ērān-Xwarrah-Šāpūr. In the total corpus of seals and sealings there are five *mōbed* administrative sealings for the provincial jurisdiction of Ērān-Xwarrah-Šāpūr, of which three have *mog* cosignatories on their bullae. There is one additional official seal of Mardbūd, the *mōbed* of Ērān-Xwarrah-Šāpūr, which appears on the same bulla as the single administrative sealing of the *driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwār* of Ērān-Xwarrah-Šāpūr.

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390 BNP 4.6, 4.9, 4.11, and 15.3 (=ATb15).
391 BNP 4.14 (=ATb23).
392 See Gyselen 2019a: 71ff for all of these sealings; the ones we know to have been excavated from Susa are split between the BNP and IBT collections.
393 BNP 4.1, 4.8, 4.12, 4.13, and MFT 6.
394 BNP 4.8, 4.12, and MFT 6.
395 IBT 1; this bulla is also discussed in Chapter 1.
The existence of all of these bullae seem to confirm the description of Šūš in the *Life of Yazd-Panāh* as “a village near Karkhā d-Ledān…where many Magians live, who are renowned for that heretical learning,” i.e., of Zoroastrianism.396 The prominence of Šūš in the province of Ėrān-Xwarrah-Šāpūr might also contextualize the strong Magian reaction against Yazd-Panāh’s conversion to Christianity.

This *Life* further sheds light on the hierarchies of religious officials, as well as their technical use in *Syriac*. The word for “Magian” (*mgušē*) in this *Life* and that of Grigor (Pirān-Gušnasp) seems to indicate not any adherent of the Zoroastrian religion (as it is often translated), but learned Zoroastrians who hold official government positions: thus Pirān-Gušnasp is a military commander as well as leader of the civic religious festival, and Yazd-Panāh is leader and judge, as part of a community of Magians in Šūš. He first faces the local judicial authorities in Bēth Hūzāyē, but is later brought to the court of the king to undergo trial before the highest officials in the land: the *mōbedān mōbed*. Here the actual MP term has been borrowed into Syriac, and is glossed as “the chief of the Magians and a

certain great mōbed" (rēšā da-mgušē w-mawhpāṭā ḥad rabbā), i.e., one of that rank who has been elevated to become the leader of them all.397 The king’s offer to Yazd-Panāh, made through the mōbedān mōbed, is that the martyr could become the next mawhpāṭā rabbā of all the land (see quote above); this must mean he is being offered the position of mōbedān mōbed, or at least the chance to work up through the ranks of magi to become “the chief of the Magians and a certain great mōbed” (rēšā da-mgušē w-mawhpāṭā ḥad rabbā), as the mōbedān mōbed himself has just been described.

Relying on examples like these from the Life of Yazd-Panāh, Gignoux considers the mawhpāṭā rabbā as an intermediary official in a rank of its own above the provincial mawhpāṭā but below the mōbedān mōbed. He uses the language of a college of grand mōbeds surrounding the mōbedān mōbed, similar to the metropolitans in the hierarchy of the Church of the East, and even suggests an unattested Middle Persian equivalent of the title: wuzurg mōbed.398 However, in the Life of Grigor it seems as if mawhpāṭā rabbā and mawhpāṭā are used interchangeably, always appearing in the same passage and referring to the same individual.399 Moreover, I find distinctly provincial jurisdictions even for these mawhpāṭē rabbē—of course, usually in support of the mōbedān mōbed and working for him. For example, the mawhpāṭā rabbā that disputes with Yazd-Panāh in Bēth Ḥuzāyē

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397 Histoire 401 // Jullien §5. It is possible that the text refers to three individuals instead of two— with the phrase w-mawhpāṭā ḥad rabbā a new person rather than the continuation of the gloss on mōbedān mōbed; the punctuation in the edition by F. Jullien suggests the reading of three, which is also presented by Gignoux 1983a: 197. Regardless, the mawhpāṭā of Bēth Aramāyē is certainly not the mōbedān mōbed here. Moreover, later in the narrative God punishes two mōbeds for their part in the death of the martyr: the first (just called mawhpāṭā) is thrown from his horse and dies, while the second (referred to as the mawhpāṭā of Bēth Aramāyē) was removed from office and never heard from again; Histoire 411 / Jullien §11.

398 Gignoux 1983a: 198-99; also see 1983b: 257-59, where he translates mawhpāṭā rabbā as “Groß-mōbad.” This distinction also appears in Wiesehöfer 2001: 176, 187.

399 Histoire 368, 369, 380 // Jullien §14, 22.
(mentioned above) was likely the mōbed of Ērān-Xwarrah-Šāpūr known from the corpus of Sasanian seals and sealings.\(^{400}\) Then, in Pērōz-Śāpur at the court of the king, the mawhpāṭā of Bēth Ārāmāyē attends the mōbedān mōbed and is secondary to him.\(^ {401}\) There is no need to invent another Middle Persian title or office to explain this hierarchy.

We should place higher trust the administrative geography that is presented in the corpus of Sasanian administrative seals and sealings, which has been outlined in Gyselen’s most recent publications.\(^ {402}\) As discussed in the previous chapter, this corpus demonstrates that the jurisdiction of the mōbed is always at the provincial level. This does not always come across in the PMA. For example, in both the Life of Grigor and the Life of Yazd-Panāh, officials are described as being from Bēth Aramāyē and Bēth Hūzāyē. The equivalent of Bēth Aramāyē in Middle Persian administrative geography is the greater region (MP šahr) Asūrestān, just as the equivalent of Bēth Hūzāyē is Xūzestān. Yet this level of jurisdiction never appears on the seal inscriptions of mōbeds or any other clerical office, which instead only attest to provinces.\(^ {403}\) In fact, the only province within Asūrestān for which a mōbed administration is attested in extant material culture is that of Xusrō-śād-Ohrmazd.\(^ {404}\) The corpus of Sasanian sealings also attests to the office of the maguh of Pērōz-Śāpūr, as a canton of Weh-Ardaxšīr, which was also part of the larger administrative region of Asūrestān.\(^ {405}\) It is possible that there was a mōbed administration for the province

\(^{400}\) However, it would be a stretch to identify this individual as the mōbed Mardbūd known from his official sealing bulla IBT 1, and I make no such claims here.

\(^{401}\) Histoire 401 // Jullien §5.

\(^{402}\) E.g., 2019a.

\(^{403}\) An exception may be the official seal of Bāffarag, the mōbed of Mēšūn (IKB I.2578)—which became a šahr in the late Sasanian period after the administrative reforms of Kavadh and Xusrō I; see Gyselen 2019a: 157-58 (citing OTs4).

\(^{404}\) Appearing on two seals: EL 884 / ME 6 (=OTs2) and BNP.s 1.09 (=ATs6), respectively.

\(^{405}\) MFT 47 (=ATb262), with a mog cosignatory.
of Weh-Ardaxšīr as well—whom we may identify with the \textit{mawhpāṭā} of Bēth Aramāyē who arrives to Pērōz-Šāpūr with the \textit{mōbedān mōbed}.\footnote{Histoire 401 // Jullien §5.} However, this hypothetical \textit{mōbed} is not actually attested in the extant material corpus, which only attests to a \textit{driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar} of that province.\footnote{TS 1963/96; discussed below in the section on the \textit{Life of Mār Abā}.}

While these discrepancies between corpora may be due to their fragmentary nature, it is also likely that the Syriac authors are simply using geographic divisions and clerical titles familiar to his non-administrative and/or Christian audience, rather than the specific Sasanian administrative provincial toponyms—some of which had just been introduced during the administrative reforms of Kavadh (r. 488–96, 498–531) and Xusrō I (r. 531–79).\footnote{On these reforms as reflected in Sasanian administrative seals and sealings, see Gyselen 2019a.} Yet other PMA do make more specific descriptions of the geographic jurisdictions of officials. I will further clarify the structure of the Zoroastrian religious hierarchy in my discussion of the \textit{Life of Mār Abā}, below.

Close study of the \textit{Life of Yazd-Panāh} also demonstrates the procedures of Sasanian jurisprudence. For example, Yazd-Panāh is first imprisoned locally in Bēth Ḥuzāyē, and is then (after the death of Grigor, who is Yazd-Panāh’s inspiration for conversion) brought to the capital of Seleucia-Ctesiphon in order to face trial before the king.\footnote{Histoire 400 // Jullien §4.} However, because of the hostilities with the Romans, the king and his armies are not in Seleucia-Ctesiphon, but in in Pērōz-Šāpūr, and so Yazd-Panāh is brought there instead, and the Magians officials summon him to their assembly to put him on trial and to persuade Yazd-Panāh to recant his Christianity. The Magians leave Pērōz-Šāpur after the interrogation and return
to the cities of Seleucia-Ctesiphon accompanied by soldiers, stopping on the way at a village named Taymā to kill him.\textsuperscript{410} The king—wherever he may be—was the central arbiter of justice in cases involving prominent Persians, but executions seem always to have been carried out just outside of Seleucia-Ctesiphon.

2.3 The \textit{Life of Mār Abā} (d. 552): Sasanian Jurisprudence at Work

Abā, another Zoroastrian convert to Christianity, became the catholicos of the Church of the East from 540 until his death in 552, although most of that time was spent in imprisonment in Ādurbādagān (Azerbaijan) due to his conflicts with important Magians. The \textit{Life of Mār Abā} includes several interesting details about Zoroastrian and Christian practices in the sixth century, but it also makes use of many specific names and titles of religious officials, often glossing them for the Syriac reader.\textsuperscript{411} Some of these details are incidental to the action of the narrative, but they do more than add a sense of verisimilitude for the audience of this work. Beyond the onomastic and philological value of these references, they also provide incidental information about the functions of these individuals in their various offices, as well as the hierarchy of the Sasanian administrative officials in practice. The following analysis delves more deeply into the contributions of the \textit{Life of Mār Abā} to our understanding of Sasanian jurisprudence, as reflected in three categories: the titles of officials (III.3.a.), the hierarchy of religious officials (III.3.b.) and legal terminology and the constraints of Sasanian legal practice (III.3.c.).

\textsuperscript{410} \textit{Histoire} 407-10 // Jullien §8-9.

\textsuperscript{411} A version of Abā’s \textit{Life} is included in the later Arabic \textit{Chronicle of Seert}, with some interesting changes—including accounts of Abā debating with a Magian (\textit{al-majūsī}) and walking through fire with him (as part of an ordeal), after which the Magian is baptized by Abā and gives him land to build a school, as well as Abā participating in a disputation with the \textit{mōbedān mōbed} himself before the Persian king (part II, fasc. 1, pp. 164-70); see Wood 2013.
2.3.a. Titles of officials

Middle Persian words for official titles abound in this Life, and they contribute to our understanding of Sasanian jurisprudence and the hierarchy of religious officials. Examples of religious officials in the Life of Mār Abā include references to two different individuals named as mōbedān mōbed, the highest Magian official of the late Sasanian period: Dād-Hormizd (ca. 540) and Āzād-sad (ca. 547/8).412 We can conclude that the latter succeeded the former in this office. A series of other civil and religious officials are involved in the accusations against Abā in Pārs as well as his later imprisonment in Ādurbādagān, including a šahr-dādwar (“judge of the empire”) and the rad of Pārs,413 and later, both the rad and the mawhpāṭā of Bēt Aramāyē.414 At several other points in the narrative, a mawhpāṭā of regional jurisdiction in Ādurbādagān (and below the authority of the mōbedān mōbed) is mentioned anonymously.415 Other titles in the Life of Mār Abā include arzbed,416 āmārgar,417 and āyēnbed (“master of ceremonies”),418 as well as lesser-

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412 Histoire 226ff, 259 // Jullien §12ff, 32. This first mōbedān mōbed is also called rabb mgušē, and he interrogates Abā and is instrumental in his imprisonment in Ādurbādagān. The second mōbedān mōbed is only named at Histoire 259 // Jullien §32, when he interrogates Abā at the royal court after the catholicos has fled his imprisonment to seek sanctuary there (ca. 547). The passage of seven years could have seen the transfer of office from Dād-Hormizd to Āzād-sad.


414 Histoire 233, 235 // Jullien §16-17. Contra Gignoux, who understands the same individual as holding both offices, with the function of the rad exercised by the mōbed in this case (1983a: 201). However, the singular verb (qām) is probably just attracted to the first subject (rad); other verbs in the passage are plural, indicating the presence of more than one individual.

415 E.g., Histoire 250 // Jullien §26 (of Ādurbādagān), and 259-61, 271 // Jullien §32-33, 40 (as a subordinate to the mōbedān mōbed).

416 Histoire 210, 216 // Jullien §1, 5; Syr. [ʾrzbd] for MP arzbed / *(e)rāzbed, “secretary” or lit. “master of secrets;” see Ciancaglini 2008: 117, against other scholars’ interpretation of this term either as a corruption of hazārbed (“leader of a thousand”) or argbed (“inspector of revenue”), also citing AMS II.131.14, 154.16 (History of Šem’on bar Šabba e).


418 Histoire 242, 255, 259 // Jullien §21, 29, 32; see note below.
or otherwise unknown MP titles such as the *pasānīg* (“the porter”),\(^{419}\) and the *mardbed* (“prison-guard”).\(^{420}\)

![Figure 43: (left) bulla attesting the *drivyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar* of Ādurbādagān (image from Gignoux 1978); (right) Map 1 of toponyms related to the *Life of Mār Abā*](image)

Most of the toponyms mentioned as the jurisdiction of officials are larger regions of Sasanian administration: Ādurbādagān, Pārs, and Asūrestān (Bēth Aramāyē). As such,\(^{420}\)

\(^{419}\) *Histoire* 230, 266 // Jullien §14, 36; see note below.

\(^{420}\) *Histoire* 257 // Jullien §31, Syr. [mlbd] for MP *mard-bed*, lit. “chief-man” but which in usage seems to indicate a prison guard; see Ciancaglini 2008: 206, with reference to a *hapax* in a third-century MP ostracan from Dura-Europos as well as *Histoire* 257.10.11 (*Life of Mār Abā*). Ciancaglini rejects Payne-Smith’s suggestion that this word is a corruption of *mōbed*, and cites Khurshudian 1998: 142, 292 for a suggested meaning of “Rechnungsführer.” In the fifth-century *History of the Armenians* of Šarjar P’arpets’i, the term *mardpet* has an unclear meaning but is used in context as a military leader, particularly of one of the three divisions of the army raised by Vardan Mamikonean against the Persians in 451 (ed. Tiflis 1904: 64, 71; trans. Thomson 1991: 105, 115); later someone from the *mardpetakan gund* is sent as an envoy from the Armenians to the Persians (ed. Tiflis 1904: 162; trans. Hoyland 1991: 222). In her translation of the *Epic Histories* of P’awtos, Garsoian notes the debate about the etymology of this term, but tentatively translates it as “grand chamberlain,” noting the fourth-century *hayr-mardpet* as “a royal official who supervised and controlled all the royal fortresses, and the treasure they contained;” she also notes the military associations of the *mardpet* in the fifth century, particularly as an office held by the Arcruni house (Garsoian 1989: 542-43)
they do not appear on the sealings of Sasanian clerical officials. However, there is one exception: Ādurbādagān. Although Ādurbādagān seems to have begun as a larger administrative region, by the sixth century it was evidently a province—with Ganzak as its provincial capital. Indeed, two bullae in private collections attests to the *maguh* of Ganzak-šahrestān, (as a canton of) Ādurbādagān, \(^{421}\) as well as the *maguh* of Karkarān, (canton of) Ādurbādagān. \(^{422}\) A single bulla in the Bibliothèque Nationale, from an unknown location, attests to a *driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar* of Ādurbādagān, along with a *mog*-cosignatory. \(^{423}\) A development of the sixth century, however, was the designation of the shrine of the Ādur-Gušnasp fire as its own administrative unit, a province contiguous to but separate from Ādurbādagān. \(^{424}\) This is what I will discuss next.

Hundreds of late-Sasanian administrative sealings have been found at Takht-e Sulaymān (TS), the modern name of the site of the late-Sasanian temple complex of the sacred Ādur-Gušnasp fire. The finds at Takht-e Sulaymān include twenty-five bullae which bear the administrative sealing of the *mōbed* of the shrine of the Ādur-Gušnasp fire (*kadag-ī-Ādurī-Gušnasp*), fourteen of which also bear the personal seal impressions of *mog*-cosignatories. One of these bulla, TS 1963/76, bears four impressions from three different *mog* personal seals along with the *mōbed* sealing. \(^{425}\) Additionally, a single TS bulla attests to a *maguh* administration of Jāwag-abarwār as a separate canton of *kadag-ī-Ādur-Gušnasp*. \(^{426}\) Also found at Takht-e Sulaymān are two sealings of the *driyōšān-jādaggōw-

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\(^{421}\) MFT 2 (=ATb355).
\(^{422}\) MOT 1 (=ATb267).
\(^{423}\) BNP 2.1 (=ATb3), whose *mog*-cosignatory is named Ādur-Farrbay i mog i Mād-Ādur-Gušnasp.
\(^{424}\) See Gyselen 2019a: 31-32.
\(^{425}\) See Gyselen 2019a: 1116-17.
\(^{426}\) TS 8, published separately from the rest of the archive by Cereti & Bassiri 2016; see Gyselen 2019a: 116-17 (=ATb946).
ud-dādwar of Weh-Ardaxšīr, a province closer to the royal capital, suggesting a close connection between the site and the central Sasanian administration.427

These extraordinary finds, in the context of the larger temple complex, demonstrate the importance of the site in the late Sasanian period—even if the material record does not indicate what these officials were doing, and what documents or objects these bullae were authenticating. The reputation of Ādurbādagān even merits a description by the author of the Life of Mār Abā.

The author of the Life of Mār Abā describes the place of Abā’s imprisonment as being in the “province” (atrā) of Ādurbādagān in a district (rustqā) dark with paganism that was called *Parišwāgar428 in a village called Serš,429 “which was the mother and nursemaid of all Magianism.”430 He then goes on to describe the murmurings of the magi

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427 TS 1963/96 and 1963/146 (=ATb110 and 107); discussed in Chapter 1.
428 Syr. [prhrwr], vocalized by Bedjan as Prāhrāwar; C. Jullien 2007: 94-95 identifies this district as the corrupted spelling of Parišwāgar, following Braun 1915: 204, who suggested it corresponds to Armenian “Parchar” (i.e., Paršar; Gr. Παροφάρης, Παραχοάθρας).
429 Syr. [srš], but possibly a corruption of the MP toponym Šīz, the ancient name for the site of the Ādur-Gušnap fire that was derived from the name of the mythical Lake Čečast (Av. Čaēčasta-), which was associated with the lake atop the plateau of the site in question.
430 Histoire 239-40 // Jullien §20, mawldānitā wa-mrabyānitā d-kollāh mgušutā.
and the importance of the region as a site of Magian learning, which he calls, in a common polemical characterization of Zoroastrianism, “the foolish murmuring of Zardušt, son of Spitamān,” a reference to the recitation of the Avesta. How does this description fit with what we know about the region from the material record?

Figure 45: Map 2 of toponyms related to the *Life of Mār Abā*

According to Gyselen, by the late Sasanian and early post-Sasanian period, Parišwārgar should be understood as the larger region just east of Ādurbādagān on the southern coast of the Caspian Sea, comprising Ţabarestān in the west and Āmūl and

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431 *Histoire* 240 // Jullien §20, *retnā d-bedeh d-Zārdušt ba-Spidṭahmān*. On other similar characterizations of Zardušt’s murmuring, see van Bladel 2017a.
Danbāwand in the east. But if we understand the Syriac passage (which Gyselen does not discuss) correctly, the author indicates that Parišvärgar was included in the broader region of Ādurbādagān. As a narrative function, the importance of the site helps to explain why Abā is imprisoned there, in the hands of Dādēn, the rad of Ādurbādagān. But it is clear that Abā’s presence in Ādurbādagān is supposed to have increased the importance of this region, since Magians come from all over to dispute with the catholicos in his imprisonment. However, it is likely that Magians were already coming to Ādurbādagān in great numbers because of the importance of the shrine of the Ādur-Gušnasp fire, one of the three great sacred fires of the Zoroastrians in antiquity. In fact, archaeological evidence from the site suggests that a royal palace was built during the reign of Xusrō I (r. 531–79), perhaps during the lifetime of Abā himself (d. 552) and the events related in the extant narrative of his Life. It is not surprising that the Syriac author of the Life of Mār Abā, like other PMA writers, does not use the same terminology and toponyms known from Sasanian administrative seals—where, remember, no rad is ever attested—but the general sense of the passage and the officials mentioned support the material evidence about the importance of Ādurbādagān in the reign of Xusrō I.

I have mentioned that other officials from the Life of Mār Abā are described as being from Pārs and Bēth Aramāyē, including the šahr-dādwār and rad of Pārs as well as the mawhpātā of Bēth Aramāyē; I discussed the latter region, equivalent to Asūrestān, in the sections on Grigor and Yazd-Pānāh (above). As for the former, according to the corpus of Sasanian seals and sealings, the administrative region (or šahr) of Pārs included the

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432 2019a: 172-73.  
433 Histoire 245 // Jullien §22.  
434 On the date of the construction of the royal palace and fire temple structure at TS, see Huff 2002, who suggests the early part of Xusrō I’s reign.
provinces of Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah, Bišāpūr, and Staxr, which are attested on a number of clerical administrative seals: for Ardaxšīr-Xwarrah and Staxr, the offices of the driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar, mōbed, and handarzbed (all at the provincial level) and the maguḥ (at the level of the canton); for Bišāpūr, the offices of the driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar and the maguḥ.\footnote{See further on these toponyms in Chapter 1.} It is possible that the šahr-dādwar (“judge of the empire”) of Pārs in the \textit{Life of Mār Abā} may be identified with the office of driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar of either of these provinces, but the relationship between the two titles is so far unclear—as is the relationship of the rad with any of the aforementioned administrative officials from the material corpus.\footnote{For the šahr-dādwar and rad of Pārs, see \textit{Histoire} 228-29 // Jullien §13. \textit{Histoire} 229-30 // Jullien §13. Although Abā says he is happy to defend himself to the Magians, he will only answer to the authority of the Persian king and his court, saying, “But only if the king commands, when others are also with you, will I make a statement” (bram ellā en b-puqdānā da-mlek malkē kad hāweyn amkon āp men hrēnā w-haydēn mpanē-nā petgāmā); here the “statement” (petgāmā) appears to refer to a legal term for a formal answer to the charges against him.}

2.3.b. The hierarchy of religious officials

The \textit{Life of Mār Abā} offers a tantalizing narrative description of Sasanian legal procedures that supplements information gleaned from the material record and Sasanian legal texts like the \textit{MHD}, as well as other Syriac PMA. In the \textit{Life of Mār Abā}, formal legal procedures are meticulously followed. For example, after spending days in the Magian assembly, Abā demands a formal trial before the king and all the court.\footnote{Histoire 229-30 // Jullien §13. Although Abā says he is happy to defend himself to the Magians, he will only answer to the authority of the Persian king and his court, saying, “But only if the king commands, when others are also with you, will I make a statement” (bram ellā en b-puqdānā da-mlek malkē kad hāweyn amkon āp men hrēnā w-haydēn mpanē-nā petgāmā); here the “statement” (petgāmā) appears to refer to a legal term for a formal answer to the charges against him.} The king then hands Abā into the custody of a court official called the pasānīqā (MP pasānīg “porter”), who is described as the “executioner” (MP rōzbān), so that he could make his statement to
the móbedān móbed and to the mgušē who were accusing him. The author of the Life of Mār Abā presents a picture of the Sasanian court that is regulated fairly by judicial principles—even if the foundation of those principles is not the Christian faith.

The king was the highest judicial authority in Sasanian Persia, but even he had checks on his power, or a willingness to respect the administrative authority of the nobles upon whom his power relied—and in the light of Christian polemic against Magianism, the king appears more benevolent than his scheming advisors. Thus, in the Life of Mār Abā, as in other narratives of the PMA, the accusations and judicial proceedings are usually brought about by the instigation of the magi (Syr. mgušē). At various points the king either washes his hands of these matters, letting legal matters take their course, or he chooses to exert his executive authority—sometimes against the wishes of the magi, and

438 Histoire 230 // Jullien §14, Syr. [psnyq’ drwspn], pasānīqā d-rōsbān. On the meaning of “porter,” see the recent article by Gippert 2018, who using comparative linguistics determines that the MP term pasānīg cannot mean “courtier,” and cites examples from Georgian to show the association with the figure of the executioner (here rōzbān). Later in the Life of Mār Abā, the pasānīg is sent by the King to relay his final decision about Abā’s impending death, further suggesting this office’s association with formal court proceedings, if not specific matters of imprisonment and execution (Histoire 264-66 // Jullien §35-36); he may also be the same official called the šarrireh jādaggōw (Histoire 264 // Jullien §34) and/or the Ohrmazd-mōbed (Histoire 252-54 // Jullien §27-28); see discussion below. On the alternative reading of pasānīg darwaz-pan, cf. Ciancaglini 2008: 235, citing Shaked, in which the first element (pasānīg) means “courtier” and the second (*darwāz-pān) is reconstructed to mean “door-keeper.” Peeters (“Observations sur la Vie syriaque de Mar Aba,” pp. 140-41) had already suggested for the second word a reading of d-rōzbān, as an allotrope for the MP borrowing meaning “executioner” (usually spelled [rzbn]). Braun’s summary (pp. 198, n.2) notes Labourt’s suggestion of “Gefängnisdirektor.”

439 Histoire 227 // Jullien §12. The king hears the complaints of the magi against Abā just after his election as catholicos, but “he did not accept their slander…and left the matter in their hands” (lā qabbleh l-mēkal-ṣahrhon…šabqeh la-ṣbutā b-idayhon), going off to northern Armenia to wage war.

440 At one point, when the magi want to put another Christian noble on trial, they are unable to because the king has conveniently sent him out of the city on official business (Histoire 233 // Jullien §15); the author of the Life of Mār Abā says that this is because the king wanted “to cool their anger” (ak d-nešhe l-hemmathom). And although the móbedān móbed and all the Magians demand Abā’s death after the first formal trial before the king, nothing comes of this judgment at this point in the narrative (Histoire 232 // Jullien §14).
sometimes he is all but powerless against the formal legal procedures set in motion.\textsuperscript{441} Even when the king is directly involved in judicial proceedings, he often acts or speaks through intermediaries—as part of the intricacies of court life and a demonstration of the king’s authority. These intermediaries might be particular Magian religious officials, such as provincial \textit{mōbeds}, or officials tied more closely to the court of the king.\textsuperscript{442}

Below the king, the \textit{mōbedān mōbed} was the supreme authority in judicial and religious matters, but even he had to respect established judicial procedures and chains of authority, and could only rule on particular charges. From the \textit{Life of Mār Abā}, it appears that, in the preliminary proceedings leading up to the actual trial of the accused, only other Magian officials could be summoned before the \textit{mōbedān mōbed} to give testimony. And here the councils of the meddling magi reveal more than just a polemical stereotype, as they demonstrate the formality of the underlying legal procedures. The \textit{mōbedān mōbed} does address Abā directly during the general assemblies of the Magians (Syr. \textit{kenšā} / \textit{knešhon} or \textit{knušyā} / \textit{knušayhon}), to which Abā is regularly summoned in order to dispute

\textsuperscript{441} E.g., \textit{Histoire} 239-41 // Jullien §20. Here the king opposes the imprisonment of Abā, but the Magians have already moved against the catholicos with formal legal documents called \textit{pursıšn-nāmag} (discussed below); they hand him over to the regional jurisdiction of the \textit{rad} of Ādurbādagān for his imprisonment.

\textsuperscript{442} The latter is often referred to in Syriac as \textit{šarrirā} or \textit{šarrirēh (malkā)}, meaning “loyal servant” but often having a specific role in the proceedings of formal audiences and judiciary matters; thus, \textit{šarrirā} is sometimes uses in apposition for a previously named individual—for example, the notable Darmāgān who acts as the king’s intermediary in the \textit{Life of Giwargis}, who is called both \textit{haw šarrirā d-malkā} and \textit{haw šallījā d-malkā} throughout the text (beginning \textit{Histoire} 522) and even appears as the martyr’s executioner (\textit{Histoire} 540ff). In addition, in the \textit{Life of Mār Abā}, the \textit{Ohrmazd-jādaggōw} named Farrox-dād is referred to as \textit{šarrirā} (\textit{Histoire} 264 // Jullien §35) and possibly also as \textit{pasānīg} or “porter” (\textit{Histoire} 266 // Jullien §36). Macuch links this Syriac use of \textit{šarrirā} to a MP term in the \textit{MHD}, where a \textit{pursıšn-nāmag} is drawn up under the \textit{ōstīgānīh} (“trusteeship?”) of a certain Māh-Ādur in Ardaxšir-Xwarrah, pointing out that the later \textit{Frahang ī Pahlawīg} (“Glossary of Pahlavi”), which lists ideograms (also called Aramaeograms, meaning a word written in its Aramaic form but read in its Middle Persian pronunciation) and their equivalents in Middle Persian, says that the ideogram ŠLLʾ (\textit{šarr[i]rā}) means \textit{ōstīgān}; Macuch 1993: 632-33, citing \textit{FiP} XIII.10 (originally edited by Nyberg and later published by Utas 1988: 83).
with the Magians. However, this highest Magian official only does so after the formal charges have been brought by at least two other Magian officials. In one instance, the *rabb mgušē*, whom Abā later addresses as *mōbedān mōbed*, speaks to Abā only after the testimony of the *šahr-dādwar* Ādur-Farah and the *rad* of Pārs. He next addresses Abā after accusations are brought against the catholicos by both the *rad* and the *mawhpāṭā* of Bēth Aramāyē. The *mōbedān mōbed* does not, however, address Abā when the *mawḥpāṭā* of Bēth Aramāyē accuses him of interfering in the legal disputes which Christians had brought to Magian officials and of dismissing official documents sealed by the *mōbedān mōbed* himself.

In other parts of the *Life of Mār Abā*, the *mōbedān mōbed* acts through intermediaries like the *mawhpāṭā* (MP *mōbed*) of a particular province. Similarly,
outside of Persia proper, the mōbedān mōbed might work through the agency or with the cooperation of other “civil” officials. For example, the fifth-century Armenian History of Łazar Parp’ets’i says that the Persian king sent his “chief-steward” (Arm. ambarapet) Vehdenšapuh along with “the royal steward” (Arm. maypetn ark’uni) and the “counsellor of the magi” (Arm. movan anderjapet for MP mowān-handarzbed) to the Armenian Christian priests imprisoned in Nēw-Šāpūr after the failed Armenian revolt of 451. Łazar says that they were sent “by the hand of the mōbedān mōbed” (Arm. i jeṙ anē movpetan-movpeti), and later these three form a tribunal (Arm. atean) who interrogate and execute these Armenian priests and martyrs, in a manner similar to that depicted in the Syriac PMA. Such a practice of delegating both freed the mōbedān mōbed from menial tasks and also respected the regional authority of civil officials and those of the rank of mōbed.

The Life of Mār Abā affirms what we know about the office of the mōbed from the material record of Sasanian seals and bullae, namely that he was an official associated with the jurisdiction of a particular province. However, the literary narrative adds color to this picture, demonstrating the mōbed’s position as subordinate to the mōbedān mōbed but of considerable authority within his own provincial jurisdiction. Thus, when Peter of Gurgān brings decrees that force Abā’s abdication (ktibātā d-makprānutā, see below) to Ādurbādagān from the rabb mgušē by the order of the Persian king, he first presents them to the mōbed, or mawhpāṭā, of that region.

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449 Ed. Tiflis 1904: 88; Thomson 1998: 135 translates the phrase as “under the authority of the chief-mobed.” It is unclear whether this statement qualifies only the last official (the movan anderjapet) or all three of them, and the movpetan movpet is not mentioned by Łazar again.
450 Ed. Tiflis 1904: 97ff.
Further down the chain of official hierarchy is the *rad*. Although this official appears frequently in ZMP texts, and the *MHD* even refers to the existence of the seal (MP *muhr*) of the *rad* on par with that of the *mōbed*, the *rad* is an official thus far unattested in the corpus of Sasanian seals and sealings.\(^{451}\) In the PMA, the *rad* is secondary official, sent on the authority of a higher office and/or working in concert with another official.

In the *Life of Mār Abā*, the first accusations against Abā are brought by two magnates of the Magians, the šahr-đādwār Ādur-Farrah and the *rad* of Pārs; here the *rad* is secondary to the higher office of the šahr-đādwār, but his testimony about Abā’s actions in Pārs reflects his regional authority there.\(^{452}\) The next set of formal accusations are brought jointly by the *rad* and the mawhpāṭā of Bēth Aramāyē.\(^{453}\) Similarly, in the *Life of Giwargis*, the martyr has a religious disputation with the *rad*, who is also simply called *mgušā* (“a Magian”), but who seems to act as a leader or representative of the Magian assembly.\(^{454}\) This role of the *rad* is perhaps affirmed by the late sixth- or early seventh-century Syriac *Life of Mār Agwin*, which uses a MP borrowing for what seems like a fixed compound title of “the *rad* and the magi” (MP *rad ud mowān*, Syr. [rd wmw(d)wn]).\(^{455}\)

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451 *MHD* A.18.15-19; see translation in Perikhanian 1997: 281. My thanks to Jamie O’Connell for drawing my attention to this passage.


453 *Histoire* 235 // Jullien §17. They accuse Abā of abrogating the Magian marriage customs that were still practiced by Christians at this time; see Hutter 2003 (who considers this a reference to close-kin marriage) and Payne 2015: 93-126 (who instead reads these practices as substitute successorship, MP *stūrīh*).

454 *Histoire* 528-31. It is possible that the *rad*, who is twice referred to as “the one who was appointed over them” (*am haw d-šalīt-wā ʿalayhon*), is the same *šarrirā / šallīṭā d-malkā* mentioned throughout the text who is named as Darmāgan earlier in the narrative (*Histoire* 522); however, the folio which details the beginning of this disputation is missing from the manuscript upon which Bedjan based his edition.

455 Ciancaglini 2008: 252, citing *AMS* III.470.8 and the personal communication of Philippe Gignoux. The hagiographical text in which this term appears is the *Life of Mār Awgin*, a later written tradition about the legendary fourth-century founder of the first monastic communities in Persia. On the later date of the *Life of Mār Awgin*, and its late-Sasanian context, see Payne 2011: 100, following Dyakonov.
These examples show the dependency of the rad on other Magians and officials as well as his own judicial authority in a local context.

In the *Life of Mār Abā*, the rad of Ādurbādagān, named Dādēn, appears to have held a considerable amount of power both within his province, the home of an important site of Magian worship and pilgrimage, and in the court.\(^{456}\) This rad is the only one named by the author of the *Life of Mār Abā*. Although the office of the rad is secondary to the mawhpāṭā, in this instance the āyēnbed follows the commands of the rad and works closely with him in the transfer of custody from the king’s court at the capital to the regional jurisdiction of provincial officials.\(^{457}\) Similarly, the rad of Ādurbādagān works closely with the lords of the region (ʾam māraw d-attrā) to persuade Abā to return to Magianism during his imprisonment, suggesting the rad’s own authority and influence over them.\(^{458}\)

Lastly, the dayyānā (Syr. for “judge”) is also common in the PMA as a specific Magian official as well as a general term for the role of Magian authorities as judges.\(^{459}\) If the dayyānā does not also hold a higher office (e.g., that of mōbedān mōbed), he seems to operate on the local level of the village or city, as with the husband of a local woman whom Abā exorcises during his imprisonment.\(^{460}\)

From these examples, a picture of late-Sasanian bureaucracy and jurisprudence begins to emerge: the king, the center of authority, delegates and acts through his officials

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\(^{456}\) See discussion above.

\(^{457}\) E.g., *Histoire* 242 // Jullien §21, where on the authority of the mōbedān mōbed, the rad of Ādurbādagān (who has been summoned to court) hands Abā over to the āyēnbed and the lictors (Syr. gzirā, pl. gzirāyē); later, after Abā has taken sanctuary in the court of the king, the magi plot to bring him into custody again, sending the rad (presumably of Ādurbadagān) and the āyēnbed to arrest him in secret (*Histoire* 255 // Jullien §29).

\(^{458}\) *Histoire* 245 // Jullien §22.

\(^{459}\) See Gignoux 1980a: 261, n. 23.

\(^{460}\) *Histoire* 246-47 // Jullien §23.
in an extensive and hierarchical network of religious and civic bureaucracy, which extends from the (traveling) royal court to the highest regional or provincial officials and then down to lesser local authorities.

Figure 46: Model of religious hierarchy, according to later PMA

At the top of the hierarchy is the king, then his *mōbedān mōbed*, who is sometimes called by his MP title and sometimes (but not always) referred to in Syriac sometimes as *rabb mgusē* or *rēšā da-mgušē* (“chief of the Magians”); below him are the provincial *mōbeds* (Syr. *mawhpāṭē*), who are sometimes designated as “great” (*mawhpāṭā rabbā*), then the *šahr-dādwar* (if he is not the same rank as the *mōbed*), followed by the provincial *rads* (MP “judges”), and local village *dayyānē* (Syr. “judges”).
As I noted above, this is not a new picture, nor is this depiction of the king’s authority novel. Several scholars have noted these hierarchies, with some distinctions (as with Gignoux’s supposition of an intermediary rank of *mawhpāṭā rabbā*) and differences.\(^461\) I will compare these hierarchies in the conclusion, below. What the Syriac PMA demonstrate are the various nuances in the official hierarchy of religious authority, and what it looked like in practice.

These Syriac PMA complement and affirm the evidence of the material record of Sasanian administrative seals and bullae (such as the provincial jurisdiction of *mōbeds*) even when the toponyms reflect Christian ecclesiastical divisions rather than Sasanian administrative ones.\(^462\) Texts like the *Life of Mār Abā* also add to our knowledge about other Sasanian officials that are *not* mentioned in the inscriptive corpus, and even some that do not appear in Zoroastrian literary sources either.

For instance, another apparently highly placed official that is attested *only* in the Syriac *Life of Mār Abā* is the *Ohrmazd-ǰādaggōw* ("advocate of Ohrmazd"). When the catholicos flees his imprisonment in Ādurbādagān to seek sanctuary at the royal court, the king sends this "advocate," named Farrox-dād, to act as his intermediary. He speaks to Abā on behalf of the king, and then brings back Abā’s reply.\(^463\) The title *Ohrmazd-ǰādaggōw* may simply be part of the proper name of the office-holder (i.e., the advocate named “Ohrmazd”),\(^464\) or else indicate a specific judicial office on the pattern of *Ohrmazd-mōbed*.

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\(^{461}\) See note above in section on the *Life of Yazd-Panāh*. Also see Gignoux 1983a: 261, who reads the three offices of *šahr-dādwar, rad*, and *dayyānā* in a hierarchical order.

\(^{462}\) See previous chapter for specific provinces mentioned, as well as my discussion of *mōbedān mōbed* in Appendix 2.

\(^{463}\) *Histoire* 252-54 // Jullien §27-28.

\(^{464}\) His name is given as Farrox-dād, but this title follows immediately after and may perhaps be read as “Farrox-dād (i) Ohrmazd, the *ǰādaggōw*,” with Ohrmazd as his father’s name or another element to his compound name. There is further contextual support for separating the components
a title tentatively attested in inscriptional Middle Persian from the Sasanian period. A short while later in the *Life of Mār Abā*, this same individual is referred to in two different ways: once as šarrireh jādaggōw, which can be translated as “his loyal servant, the advocate,” i.e. the king’s loyal servant; and once as pasānīg, or “the porter.” In the latter reference, the pasānīg is sent by the king to relay his final decision about Abā’s impending death, further suggesting this office’s association with imprisonment and execution, as well as the role of advocate and intermediary.

Although the exact title of Ohrmazd-jādaggōw is not found elsewhere in contemporary material or literary sources, the related title driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar, translated as “intercessor of the poor and judge,” is an office commonly found in Sasanian administrative seals and bullae associated with several different provincial administrations and often appearing with magi as cosignatories—which is why Gyselen classifies it as a

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465 It appears as a title of the third-century Zoroastrian priest Kerdīr, as well as in two administrative sealings from the late-Sasanian period (both with uncertain readings); see Gyselen 1989b as well as the discussion in the previous chapter.

466 *Histoire* 264, Syr. [šryrh dzʾdgw]. Bedjan does not vowel the first d- as a relative, but instead vocalizes the word as dēzādāgō(w). This Syriac loanword is not treated by Ciancaglini 2008. Braun 1915: 215 translates šarrirā as “Kommissär” and supplies the name “Farruchdād Hōrmizd” in parentheses (i.e. the name of the original mōbedān mōbed from earlier in the narrative), leaving DZ DGW un-transliterated and un-translated; however, not only does there seem to be a new mōbedān mōbed at this point in the narrative (named Āzād-sad: *Histoire* 259), but evidence from other martyr acts suggests that the šarrirā was a particular “trustee” or “loyal servant” of the king, distinct from these high religious offices, and one who often carried out executions; see note above on the association of the šarrirā with the MP title ōstīgān.

467 *Histoire* 266 // Jullien §36. This pasānīg is earlier glossed as “executioner” (MP rōzbān) at *Histoire* 230 // Jullien §14 (see note above).
“clerical” administration. Similar versions of the title also appear in other contemporary literary sources. The component jādaggōw, or “advocate,” appears on its own throughout the MHD as well as in the post-Sasanian documents from Šabarestān, as term for a legal representative in a court case. In the latter corpus, the jādaggōw is appointed to represent a defendant (MP pasēmāl) in an official hearing (MP gōw) before an hērbed.

The role of the Ohrmazd-jādaggōw, however, evidently played an important role in the juridical procedures of the Sasanian royal court.

2.3.c. Legal terminology and the constraints of Sasanian legal practice

Several legal terms appear in the Life of Mār Abā, both in Syriac and in Middle Persian borrowings. For example, Abā promises to make a formal “statement” (Syr. petgāmā) defending himself from accusations against him, but only if the king commands him to do so. Then, in the course of the judicial actions taken against Abā, the text uses two different Middle Persian terms for legal documents: the bōxt-nāmag (“deed of acquittal”) and the pursišn-nāmag (“investigative record”). While the latter appears

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468 On the administrative office of the driyōšān jādaggōw ud dādwar, see Gyselen 2019a: 262-63; 266-68 and 1989a: 31-33, as well as the preceding chapter of the dissertation.
469 For example, a similar title is also attested in Armenian as an epithet of the fourth-century catholicos Nersēs I: jatagov amenaym zrkeloc’, or “defender of all the destitute” (P’awstos, Buzandaran IV.3); the single component jatagov (“advocate”) also appears in this text (IV.8). See Garsoian’s translation, as well as her index entry on jatagow with full references (Garsoian 1989: 534); also see Garsoian 1981 and Shaked 1975: 213-16.
470 See discussion in previous chapter.
473 Histoire 238-39, Syr. [pwrššnnmg] for MP pursišn-nāmag, a compound whose first part means a “questioning, investigation” with the second meaning a “writing.” On the Syriac loan, see Ciancaglini 2008: 229, who notes that this loanword also appears in Talmudic Aramaic as the proceedings of a judicial inquiry.
in the late-Sasanian legal compendium known as the Mādayān ī Hazār Dādestān ("Book of a Thousand Judgments," or MHD), where it appears as a record of court proceedings, or charges, that are formally transferred between provinces and officials.\textsuperscript{474} The former is a technical legal term otherwise unattested in Zoroastrian Middle Persian.\textsuperscript{475}

The first MP term, the "deed of acquittal" (MP bōxt-nāmag), appears as part of an accusation made by a mōbed against Mār Abā: the mōbed of Bēt Arāmāyē claims that the catholicos Abā has been upending the Sasanian legal system and usurping the judicial authority of Magian officials by refusing to abide by the legal decisions of the highest judicial/religious official in the land, i.e., ignoring the bōxt-nāmag sealed by the mōbedān mōbed.\textsuperscript{476} The narrator of the Life of Mār Abā makes it clear that Abā has only been taking legal matters into his own hands when the litigants are Christians; this aspect of his actions does not seem to mitigate the situation for the Magian officials.

The second type of document, the "investigative record" (MP pursišn-nāmag), is a type of document drawn up by the Magians as a threat against Abā if he will not comply with their demands to continue to allow Christian converts to practice specific Magian customs; thus, it might also be translated here as a "written accusation" leading to more formal court proceedings. The customs under scrutiny included substitute successorship (MP stūrīh) and the partaking of Magian "meat of the murmur," the latter referring to the

\textsuperscript{474} In the MHD, this expression appears in the phrase pursišn-nāmag kardan / rādēnīdan, meaning "to draw up, or keep, the record of court procedure." See Macuch 1993: 621, 633, who translates pursišn-nāmag as "Untersuchungsprotokoll" and "Verhörprotokoll," meaning the "investigative record" or "interrogation record." Also see Perikhanian 1997: 382, who notes the presence of this loanword in Armenian (p’ursiš) as "court procedure, trial" (e.g. Elišē’s History).

\textsuperscript{475} Although the exact term bōxt-nāmag does not appear in the MHD, this specific legal use of the MP verb bōz- / bōxtan ("to free, cancel, dissolve") has been recognized in this meaning of "to be acquitted, to win a case;" see Perikhanian 1997: 345, with references.

\textsuperscript{476} Histoire 234 // Jullien §16, saggiʾē krestyānē d-it-waw lhon dinēʾ am ḫādē bōktnāmag b-ḥātmā d-mōbedān mōbed...
recital of the Zoroastrian mealtime blessing (known in MP as taking the wāz) and the eating of Zoroastrian sacrificial meat.\textsuperscript{477} The Magians only make this legal threat to Abā after the Persian king has repeatedly refused to take his own action against Abā. Presumably, the pursišn-nāmag holds legal authority which they can enforce without the king’s explicit approval. When Abā refuses to comply, the Magians formally seal the pursišn-nāmag against him to imprison him. The king then overturns this order and registers his dissent against the Magian’s actions.\textsuperscript{478} However, the Magians still contrive to imprison Abā, handing him over to the regional jurisdiction of the rad of Ādurbādagān for the duration of his imprisonment.\textsuperscript{479}

Later in the Life of Mār Abā, the authority of these magi is tested when they receive other legal documents from the king and the Zoroastrian high priest (Syr. rabb mgušē). After seven years’ imprisonment in Ādurbādagān, Abā has made a name for himself and even gained the respect of the Magians of the region.\textsuperscript{480} Then, Peter of Gurgān (a Christian who apostatized to Magianism) brings “decrees of renunciation” (ktibātā d-makprānutā) from the rabb mgušē which had been written up by order of the king; these documents threaten to imprison all of the bishops, priests, and deacons which Abā had ordained—unless he resigned from his office.\textsuperscript{481} The local mōbed of Ādurbādagān seems reluctant to enforce this threat yet also bound by bureaucratic red tape.\textsuperscript{482} He claims to lack the

\textsuperscript{477} Histoire 238 // Jullien §19, Syr. w-besrā da-mgiš ’alaw lā kālē-.tt la-krestyānē men d-ne’klun; this practice has been discussed above.
\textsuperscript{478} Histoire 239 // Jullien §20 (pqad mlek malkē d-lā netasr), where the king sides with other Christians at the court who make an outcry at the actions of the magi. The fact that the magi still contrive to imprison Abā suggests the limits of the king’s power (or the impression of it).
\textsuperscript{479} Histoire 239-40 // Jullien §20.
\textsuperscript{480} Histoire 249 // Jullien, §25.
\textsuperscript{481} Histoire 249-49 // Jullien §22-25.
\textsuperscript{482} Here the Syriac text reads the borrowed MP mōbedān, which is actually a plural and usually only appears in Syriac as part of the formulaic title mōbedān mōbed; both Bedjan and Jullien
authority to summon Peter of Gurgān as a witness against Abā, saying, “I have no power
to question him” (lā šallit-nā d-abʾēw). This suggests that the mōbed’s authority is
subordinate to the rabb mgušē and the usual procedures of Sasanian jurisprudence.

These examples demonstrate, in a concrete way, the influence and constraints of
the magi and their judicial power. They try several times to obstruct Abā’s mission, using
several different legal means and arguments, as well as trying to kill him in secret. The
king either stands back as an impartial observer to these legal proceedings, or actively
obstructs the plots of the magi. Matters finally come to a head when, after seven years of
imprisonment in Ādurbādagān, Abā flees to the court of the king and—in one possible
reading of an obscure passage of the text—“takes sanctuary” (Syr. lbak harpedqā) and
makes a formal appeal to the king for his judgment in the matter. At this point, Abā’s
supply the second part of this formula, although it is missing from the text. The MP borrowing of
mōbed in the singular is attested elsewhere in Syriac, but it would be unusual for the plural
mōbedān to be borrowed as a stand-alone reference to multiple mōbeds. In the Life of Abā, apart
from this instance and another a few lines later, the forms mōbed / mōbedān only appear in the
title mōbedān mōbed. Previously in this same passage rabb mgušē was used to refer to the highest
Zoroastrian authority and mawhpāṭā was used to refer to the local chief priest, so it is unclear
whether here mōbed(ān) is differentiated and refers to the highest office of mōbedān mōbed, or,
as also makes sense in the context of the passage, refers to the local mawhpāṭā of Ādurbādagān
which was most recently cited. I have chosen the latter interpretation, because I think it makes
more sense in the context of the passage.

483 Histoire 250 // Jullien §26; after this statement, however, the Magian magnates persuade Peter
to come to their assembly anyway.
484 Syr. [hrpdq’] perhaps reflecting a borrowing from Parthian *frapāšak (compare Armenian
hrapārak), a “(public) place,” and so perhaps meaning “to take refuge” or “hold a tribunal” in a
public setting; see Ciancaglini 2008: 165-66 on the disputed meaning and origin of this loanword,
which also appears in the History of Šemʾon bar Šabbā’e as [hrpdq’ / hpzdq’] (AMS II.176.2). In
corrected reading of [hrtpq’] and translates the term as “prefect” (of the king); however, in the
context of the Life of Mār Abā, the term clearly indicates a physical place—especially when it is
used again in the following section in the phrase “he departed from the harpedqā” (wa-šanni men
hrpdq’) (Histoire 254 // Jullien §28). Jullien 2015a: 30 retains the spelling of “harpedqā” and
suggests a connection to the Zoroastrian center of religious learning known in MP as
hērbedēstān, citing Jullien 2015b; however, this does not make sense in a legal context.
485 Histoire 252-52 // Jullien §27.
actions seem to supersede the authority of the Magian officials. The king, acting through his appointed legal advocate, the *Ohrmazd-jādaggōw*, hears Abā’s case. In the end, it is only the king’s authority which matters. He forgives Abā of all the charges against him except his apostasy, and even then he defers to the judgment of the *mōbedān mōbed*, if he should bring him to trial. The king sends Abā home, only for the Magians to arrest him the following day. He dies in prison sometime later.

Abā’s position as a convert and as the highest Christian cleric in Persia makes his *Life* an important source for our study of Sasanian administrative Zoroastrianism and urges us to seriously consider shifting our view of Sasanian Persia to one of a more integrated cultural and religious milieu in which both Persian Christians and Zoroastrians shared. It also offers a unique perspective on Sasanian jurisprudence and court procedure, involving both “civic” and “religious” officials and how the nuances of their hierarchy played out in practice.

2.4. The *Life of Giwargis* (d. 615): Bilingualism and Writing in Legal Practice

In many ways, the *Life of Giwargis / Mihr-Māh Gušnaspa*, which includes that of his sister, Hazārōy (both d. 615), represents a typical East Syrian hagiography in that it incorporates so many of the tropes and characteristics not only of hagiographical writing in general, but also displays the particular features of Persian Christianity in the late Sasanian period. This *Life* is also extraordinary because it was explicitly written by a known historical figure, Babai the Great (d. 628), abbot of the monastery of Mt. Izla and (in cooperation with Mār Abā) unofficial head of the Church of the East during the vacancy

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487 *Histoire* 416-571.
of the catholicosate from 603/4–628. The *Life of Giwargis* was written by Babai shortly after the death of Giwargis (d. 615) in the 620s. Babai certainly had his own agenda in writing the *Life of Giwargis*, but the programmatic and polemical approach of the author does not diminish from the richness of this text as a contemporary commentary on late-Sasanian culture, particularly its court procedures and protocols, as well as Magian religious practices.

Middle Persian words for official titles that appear in the *Life of Giwargis* include *mawhpāṭā*, *rad*, *ōstāndār*, and *drustabed*, along with lesser known titles or ranks, such as *xwānaway* and *padixšar*. MP terminology related to religious concepts in this

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488 In a long introduction, Babai describes the context of writing this particular saint’s life and gives a full bibliography of his other hagiographical endeavors going back 33 years and culminating in the current work, the *Life of Giwargis*. The impressive lineage of his hagiographical subjects puts Giwargis in the excellent company of other monastic heroes and martyrs: including the forefathers of the Syrian monastic tradition and the founders of the community on Mt. Izla. On Mār Babai’s literary contributions, see Renink 1999: 172 n.11, citing Chediath 1982; also see discussion of the text below. Walker 2010 gives a partial translation of Babai’s introduction, but he does not identify all of Babai’s hagiographical subjects—instead assuming them all to be figures from the sixth-seventh centuries.

489 *Histoire* 528-31.

490 *Histoire* 435, where the *ōstāndār* of Nisibis is Mihr-Māh-Gušnasp’s father, named Babai.

491 *Histoire* 522, Syr. [drstbd] for MP *drustabed*, “chief physician,” here referring to Gabrial of Sinjar; on the loanword, see Ciancaglini 2008: 158.

492 *Histoire* 437, Syr. [kwnwy]; in this passage, the otherwise unattested MP term is a gloss on the Syriac phrase *mšamšānā d-pāturā d-malkā* (“the king’s table-servant”); cf. Hoffmann 1880a: 95, reading “Ḫwānowai,” with n. 843 which suggests the alternate NP reading of “Ḫwānwāne.” There is no entry for this term in Ciancaglini 2008.

493 *Histoire* 437. Previously, this term was understood as Syr. [prkšd] for MP *farroxšād*, a loanword comprised of two elements, the first being *farrox* (“fortunate, blessed”) and the second *šād* (“happy”). However, Philippe Gignoux (1983a: 193-95) suggested a reading of [pdkšr] instead, for MP *padixšar* [pštšly], a title known from the 3rd-century monumental inscriptions of the high priest Kerdīr and the king Narseh (r. 293-303). This title is usually translated as “honor” or “dignity,” but Gignoux suggests that it is a more precise and official honor.
Life include yašt, abestāg, barsom, wāzag, the drōn offering, and a particular Magian festival called the zamīn-rōz. Additionally, Babai refers (in Syriac) to close-kin marriage and Zoroastrian purity regulations concerning menstruating women. There are also two terms for the Zoroastrian religion that are not found elsewhere in Syriac literature—weh-dēnīh ("the good religion"), and pōryō-tkēshīh ("the ancient teachings")—and a MP term for the Christian religion, tarsāgīh. This account not only provides examples of written legal testimonies and the procedures for presenting them at

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494 Histoire 436.
495 Histoire 438.
496 Histoire 539; full passage quoted below.
497 Histoire 440 (quoted below), Syr. [wsqʾ] or wasqā for MP wāzag; Gignoux 1983a: 195 says that here the Syriac rendering clearly represents MP wāzag, “utterance, saying,” a variation of MP wāz (NP bāj), “word, saying,” as in the expression wāz dādan “to give the wāz” or wāz grīftan “to take the wāz,” as in the prayer before meals. On the tradition of this custom, as well as the ceremony of the drōn, see Boyce & Kotwal 1971a and 1971b. On the Syriac word (which can also mean “servant, slave,” especially in earlier texts), see Ciancaglini 2008: 167.
498 Histoire 440 (quoted below), Syr. [drwnʾ] for MP drōn, the bread offering that is part of the ritual sacrifice; cited with note above in overview and introduction. In this passage of the Life of Giwargis, the Magian drōn has been rejected by the martyr and reimagined as the Eucharistic offering of the bread and body of Christ (see discussion below).
499 Histoire 564, Syr. [zmydrwz] for MP zamīn-rōz, the “day of the land,” i.e., a feast day. This term is given as part of a gloss on the Persian month name Mihr-Māh (MP for “the month of Mihr,” i.e., the 7th month); this is the month of Giwargis’ martyrdom, and the narrator explains the divine providence here in the relationship to the martyr’s pagan name of Mihr-Māh-Gušnasp. On these loanwords, see Ciancaglini 2008: 174 and 202.
500 Histoire 449-452.
501 Histoire 524 and 526 Syr. [bhdnyh] for MP beh-dēnīh / weh-dēnīh, lit. “the good religion” and the most common way that Zoroastrians refer to their religion; on this loanword, see Ciancaglini 2008: 121.
502 Histoire 526, Syr. [pwryqyšyh] rendering MP pōryō-tkēshīh, the “ancient teachings” of the Zoroastrian religion. This is the abstract noun formed from pōryō- tkēs (Av. paoiryō.ṭkaēša-), which refers an ancient or original teacher of Zoroastrian doctrine; see Ciancaglini 2008: 229, who translates this term as “the pre-Zoroastrian religion of Persia.” However, the “ancient teachings” and “ancient teachers” continue to be cited by Zoroastrians from the Sasanian and post-Sasanian periods. Both this term and the above (weh-dēnīh) are discussed in more detail in the full chapter.
503 Histoire 525, Syr. [trsgh] for MP tarsāgīh, meaning “the (Christian) religion,” an abstract noun formed from the MP suffix –īh and MP tarsāg, “(God)-fearer,” a term for Christians, itself ultimately from MP tars “fear,” as an equivalent to the Syriac term for religion dehlā; see Hoffmann 1880a: 109, n. 978 who first offers this suggestion, and also Pines 1968 [cited by Becker 2009: 333]. This loanword is not discussed by Ciancaglini 2008.
court, it also indicates instances of Persian-Syriac bilingualism both within the narrative and on the part of the Life’s Christian audience.

A central episode of the Life of Giwargis is Babai’s account of the delegation to the Persian king’s court in 612, at which the Christians seek to have the king appoint a catholicos—amidst a bitter Christological controversy that divided the Christian community at that time.\(^{504}\) Despite the higher prestige of the other members of the delegation from the Mt. Izlā monastic community and its allies, it is the deacon Giwargis who becomes the spokesman for these Nestorians in Babai’s narrative—perhaps because of his Magian background and connections at court.\(^{505}\) Although Babai’s account primarily serves to establish the Nestorian communities’ orthodoxy, but also provides several details of Sasanian jurisprudence along the way, providing valuable insight into the workings of the Sasanian court, including the process of appealing to the king through his intermediaries.

For example, although Giwargis is the representative of the Christian delegation to the court, instead of speaking directly to the king in a formal audience he speaks to a certain individual named Farroxān.\(^{506}\) It is Farroxān who brings the initial petition before the king (i.e., that the bishops all be summoned to court) and becomes the intermediary for Giwargis and the rest of the Christians—much like the Ohrmazd-jādaggōw in the Life of Mār Abā

\(^{504}\) See Reinink 2009, also Reinink 1999 and Walker 2010 specifically on Babai’s Life of Giwargis.

\(^{505}\) Compare Babai’s account of the delegation to that preserved in the Synodicon Orientale (ed. Chabot, 585, 567).

\(^{506}\) Histoire 513, Syr. [prwkn]. Reinink 1999: 178 identifies Farroxān as Xusrō’s general Šahrbaraz, citing Braun, Nöldeke, Christensen, and Flusin. I do not think this is necessarily so, but that this Farroxān (a common patronym, or “son of Farrox”) is just another highly placed noble at court who acts as intermediary for Giwargis and the council of bishops, thus demonstrating the complexity of etiquette at the royal court. On this name in Syriac, see Gignoux et al. 2009 (GJJ no. 182b).
(see above). The similarity of the names of these intermediaries, Farrox-dād from the *Life of Mār Abā* and Farroxān from the *Life of Giwargis*, suggest the possibility that this was a position held within the same noble family.

It is Farroxān who oversees the ensuing disputation (Syr. *drāšā*), in which the delegation puts the tenets of their faith in writing to be brought before the king.\(^{507}\) The bishops gather, and then Mār Giwargis and Mār Ḥnān-Īšōʾ together write their creed.\(^{508}\) Importantly, they translate the creed from Syriac to Persian before bringing it to Farroxān, who then brings it to the king.\(^{509}\) Although there is certainly a narrative element to this account of *written* testimony and translation (which serves to emphasize the universal nature of Nestorian orthodoxy), it may still reflect an actual Sasanian-era procedure by which petitions and evidence could be formally submitted to the king for his judgment. It is also logical that such documents would be written in (Middle) Persian, which appears on royal inscriptions and administrative seals and sealings of the Sasanian period and served as an official language of the court and its bureaucracy.\(^{510}\)

\(^{507}\) *Histoire* 514.

\(^{508}\) *Histoire* 515, i.e., that there are two natures (*kyānē*) and the two hypostases (*qnōmē*) of the divinity and personhood of God which keep their properties in the one person (*parsōpā*) of Christ, the son of God. Reinink 1999: 180-81 suggests that this Ḥnān-Īšōʾ should get more credit for writing the confession of faith than Giwargis—whose importance at the council in 612 Babai has probably over-emphasized in this hagiography, whereas Ḥnān-Īšōʾ is named as the creed’s author in the *Synodicon Orientale*. Ḥnān-Īšōʾ was born into an Arab family in Hira, and he was in the service of the Lakhmid king Nuʾman ibn al-Mundhir (580-602), who converted to Christianity and was baptized by the Catholicos Sabrišōʾ (Reinink 1999: 182 n. 60).

\(^{509}\) *Histoire* 516: “And after they had brought forth their faith and their objections from the Syrian (language) to the Persian (language), with the exhortation of Mār Giwargis they gave it to Farroxān, and he brought it before the king” (*w-men bātar d-appquh l-haymānutā wa-lhon la-pkārē men suryāyā l-pārsāyā ba-hipiṭutā dileh d-mār Giwargis yahbuh l-Parukān w-a’lāh qdām malkā*).

\(^{510}\) The PMA attest to several instances of Syriac-Persian bilingualism, with the translation between the two not only serving a legal purpose but also a cultural or even theological one. See a short discussion of Syriac-Persian bilingualism in see F. Jullien 2015: II.xxxi-xxxii as well as Ciancaglini 2008: 19-20, the latter citing the *Lives* of Giwargis and Mār Abā. For example, in Giwargis’ final hour, as he hangs upside-down from the cross of his own crucifixion, he publicly
Soon the opponents of Giwargis begin to make trouble for him, bringing the Christian’s Magian background to the attention of the king. Perhaps if Giwargis had stayed in his hermit’s cell, the king would have left him alone, but once this high-profile apostate became a public figure, and his apostasy became a publicly accusation, the king must make an example of him.\(^{511}\) Interestingly, Giwargis gets a chance to defend himself—first through another intermediary official (Syr. šarrirā) and a written testimony.\(^{512}\) Giwargis is asked by this “loyal servant,” a notable named Darmākān, to write down his story of conversion for the king; this exchange is full of details which demonstrate Giwargis’ previous Magian background but which also show the level of knowledge of the Magian religion by the author and his audience.

First, the official asks Giwargis to write about why he abandoned the Magian religion, but he calls it by its common Middle Persian name: *weh-dēnīh* ("the good religion").\(^{513}\) Then the narrator, Babai, adds the following aside: “because by this false naming do the Magians call Magianism.”\(^{514}\) *Weh-dēnīh* is the name by which the Zoroastrian religion most frequently appears in Zoroastrian Middle Persian texts, but this testifies to conversion to Christianity, explicitly using the wood of the Cross to reject the Magian religion and its own ritual implement of the *barsom*: the wooden twigs used in the Zoroastrian *yasna* ritual. Giwargis makes this speech first in Syriac and then in Persian, his bilingualism demonstrating his role as a truly universal champion of Babai’s Nestorian Christian orthodoxy (*Histoire* 539-40); cf. trans. Ciancaglini 2008: 19 (citing the French translation of Gignoux 1980a: 202).

\(^{511}\) Similarly, Mār Abā is given the chance to return home and stick strictly to the business of being catholicos—not interfering with Magian practices or converting Magians to Christianity; it is Abā’s refusal to keep out of controversy that leads him to imprisonment (see above).

\(^{512}\) This official, who is named below, is variously called the “loyal servant” (šarrirā) of the king, or else his “official,” or “magistrate” (šallitā); Hoffmann 1880a: 109ff translates šarrirā as “Beamte” (“official”) or “Commissar.” In other PMA narratives, the šarrirā is the official who oversees the execution of the martyr, and is sometimes accompanied by an “executioner” as well. See notes above in section on Mār Abā for the relationship between the šarrirā and the legal document known as the *pursišn-nāmag*.

\(^{513}\) Syr. [byhdynyh]; see Ciancaglini 2008: 121.

\(^{514}\) *Histoire* 525.
is the single occurrence of the term in extant Syriac sources, to my knowledge. When Giwargis writes out his reply this term becomes a point of debate with the official, because Giwargis refuses to refer to the Magian religion in this way. Instead of using the more common (and overtly positive) term for the religion, *weh-dēnīh* (“good religion”), Giwargis instead chooses another (perhaps more neutral) term, *pōryō-tkēšīh* (“ancient teachings”). Although the latter is commonly used in extant ZMP sources, Giwargis’ use of it here is defiant—diminishing Magian teachings to mere patrimony instead of anything inherently “good.” Furthermore, the strong reaction of both the Christians and “pagans” near Giwargis demonstrates how offensive his use of *pōryō-tkēšīh* would have been in this context.\(^515\)

After a long imprisonment at the court, Giwargis is taken back to Māḥōzē and imprisoned in a fortress just outside the city.\(^516\) Then, the king commands the martyr to be crucified in a place either called “the Theban quarter” or “the straw market,”\(^517\) which was

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\(^515\) Giwargis’ recounting of his written testimony is followed by a gap in the manuscript, which resumes in the middle of a disputation between the martyr and an unnamed *rad* over the nature of the Magian God (*Histoire* 528-30). Much of this debate is familiar from similar examples in the Syriac *Acts of the Persian Martyrs*, with references to the Avesta and the convert soundly defeating the logic of the *rad* so that even he admits the great skill of the confessor. One peculiarity of this debate, however, is the *rad*’s use of Christian terminology to describe the fire as “of the same nature,” or even “consubstantial” with Ohrmazd (Syr. *bart kyānā*-̄i d-hormizd). In Babai’s narration, Giwargis’ orthodoxy and understanding of Christology is such that with it he is even able to outwit Magian theology. See the translation of this passage in Williams 1996: 52 from the German summary of Braun 1915 (which Williams does not acknowledge as a summary).

\(^516\) *Histoire* 536: “to a fortress which is called in Persian (*meštammah pārsāʾ it*) Gārōndāgān (Syr. [grwngdgn]) — in Syriac (*suryāʾ it*) called “Citadel of Kukkē / Kōkhē. —where they held him with great torments and harsh treatments lasting eight months.” This city, Syr. *aqrā d-kukkē*, also sometimes as *kawkā*, is “the name of the ancient city or the site later occupied by Seleucia and still in use ecclesiastically as the name of the Patriarchal See, also for the suburbs or district of Seleucia” (J. Payne-Smith pp. 208); thus, it is just outside Māḥōzē itself.

\(^517\) *Histoire* 537: *šuqā d-tabawnlāyē* [tbwnyʾ], which Hoffmann 1880a: 111 tentatively translates as “Markt der Hosenmacher,” based on a reading of [twbnyʾ]. Compare the account of Giwargis’ death as found in the so-called Guidi Chronicle, or Khūzestān Chronicle, also from the seventh century (ed. Guidi 1903: 23, with German translation by Nöldeke 1893: 21), which similarly says that the martyr was put to death in Weh-Ardaxšīr “in the middle of the straw market” (*b-mešʿ at*
also presumably just outside the capital—the usual place for these kinds of executions—under the authority of the official known as the šarrirā.\(^{518}\)

Due to high-profile and well-educated Magian converts to Christianity like Giwargis, the later PMA reflect more than just incidental or stereotypical knowledge of Magian beliefs and customs. Although the narrative of such acts must always be read in the context of its production and audience—and in the case of Giwargis, in the context of Babai’s Christological propaganda—we can also assume that the audience of this martyr act, like the other PMA, was one well-versed in Magian religious customs and legal practices. Many Magians converted to Christianity, after all.

3. Conclusion to Chapter 2

The Syriac Persian Martyr Acts and other literary texts in Syriac, Armenian, and Greek are, in fact, Sasanian sources, i.e., they were written within the kingdom of the Persians and can be used for the study of Sasanian history. In particular the later PMA are excellent sources for the study of Sasanian Zoroastrianism, demonstrating the role and function of Zoroastrian priests as agents of state authority and their interactions with broader Sasanian society, particularly Syriac-speaking Christians. As shown by scholars like Philippe Gignoux, Christelle Jullien, Richard Payne, and others, the polemical nature of these texts does not eliminate their value as historical sources, especially when we are not trying to reconstruct Zoroastrian belief and practice but the administrative workings of the Sasanian kingdom that appear in the contextual frame of the narrative. Therefore, I

\(^{\text{518}}\) Nöldeke 1893: 21 translates this location of Giwargis’ martyrdom as “mitten auf dem Häckselmarkt,” or “in the middle of the chaff-market.”

\(^{\text{518}}\) On this official, see note above.
analyzed these later martyr acts for what they reveal about the hierarchy of the Zoroastrian priesthood and the official workings of Magians within the Persian kingdom and in relation to Sasanian judicial authority. Additionally, I compared this emerging picture of Sasanian administrative Zoroastrianism with what is known from other contemporary literary sources as well as the existing material record of Sasanian-era seals and inscriptions.

Once we look past the polemical tropes and literary motifs of the genre, the impression of the priesthood left by the later PMA is one of a rigidly hierarchical and bureaucratic judiciary. Moreover, this was a priesthood concerned with its own authority and the maintenance of that authority in changing political circumstances—facing a growing Christian constituency with its own increasingly hierarchical and centralized but regionally distributed bureaucracy. It is no wonder that the apostasy of prominent Magian officials to Christianity caused the Zoroastrian priesthood such consternation, or that such famous cases of conversion were propagandized by the Persian Christians.

This conclusion attempts to summarize what we can learn from the later Persian Martyr Acts as historical sources for the study of the Zoroastrian priesthood and Sasanian jurisprudence. The examples discussed above corroborate data gleaned from material sources like the corpus of Sasanian administrative seals and bullae discussed in the previous chapter. For example, they illuminate the hierarchy of the religious bureaucracy—and demonstrate how this hierarchy worked in actual practice—as well as corroborate the regional jurisdictions of these officials as known from inscriptions in the material record. However, the PMA also fill in gaps left by material culture, either affirming Middle Persian titles, offices, and terms known from Zoroastrian Middle Persian and other contemporary literary sources, or else providing the single attestation of them in extant sources.
In discussing the *Life of Mār Abā*, I offered my own depiction of Zoroastrian religious and legal hierarchy as reflected in the later PMA, from the *mōbedān mōbed* down to the local judges (Syr. *dayyānē*). However, it differs somewhat from the hierarchies proposed by other scholars. Wikander integrated other offices into this hierarchy, based mostly on supposition, resulting in the following order of ranks: *mōbedān mōbed*, followed by the *mowān-handarzbed*, the *rad*, the *mōbed*, and then the *dastwar*. In my opinion, this is a synoptic view of the sources, rather than a critical one: not only are some of these offices too infrequently attested to be certain of their place in the hierarchy, but they conflate different types of priestly offices and confuse different priestly functions—which ranged from juridical to spiritual to educational, in the service of Sasanian administrative practices on a large scale, of local fire temples on a smaller scale, and of religious guidance on a personal level.

The extant sources have given us several different—and partial—views of a constantly changing picture of priestly bureaucracy, but one that reached its final form in the late Sasanian period, probably due to the administrative reforms of Xusrō I (r. 531–79). Thus, the picture illustrated in the PMA is one of official judicial authorities, but only those dealing with certain offenses, such as the apostasy of aristocratic Zoroastrians. This picture is descriptive of the legal process, including the names and regional or provincial jurisdictions of certain officials, as well as the titles and honors of other members of the king’s court. The corpus of administrative Sasanian seals and sealings offers us a fragmented view of the administrative apparatus of the late Sasanian kingdom, revealing a tantalizing glimpse of the organization and scope of this administration, as well as the prominence of religious officials within it. However, this picture lacks almost all contextual
information beyond the titles and names of these officials, and sometimes the geographic
boundaries of their jurisdiction. Late Sasanian Zoroastrian literary sources like the MHD
offer much more description of Sasanian jurisprudence, including information like titles,
offices, the names of some of important officials and their chronology, as well as detailed
legal opinions on a wide range of issues and even references to sealing practices. But the
picture available in these sources just as often fails to correspond with other corpora as
much as it corroborates details from them.

The picture of Sasanian juridico-religious administration I offered above, based on
the Life of Mār Abā, features some of the offices and titles that do not appear in the extant
corpus of Sasanian administrative seals and sealings—for example, the mōbedān mōbed
and the rad. Were these offices not actual offices of the late Sasanian administration, but
honors or specific functions of other titled religious officials? Also uncertain is how other
offices that are attested only in the corpus of Sasanian seals and bullae fit into the above
religious hierarchy. Literary sources like the Syriac PMA make no mention of the
administrative offices of the driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar (“the advocate of the poor and
judge”) or of the maguh (tentatively “the office of the magi”). How do we rectify the
discrepancies in these corpora? Should we assume the equivalence of the rad, in his role
as judge and important provincial official that is otherwise unattested in the administrative
corpus of seals and sealings, with the office of the driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar, which
held a provincial jurisdiction and is frequently attested in bullae with magi cosignatories?
If these are separate offices, how might we understand or visualize their relationship?
Alternatively, should the šahr-dādwar be considered as a literary equivalent of the office
of the driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar? Or, as discussed in Chapter 1, was there more
overlap between the *driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar* and the *mōbed*, whose administrative seals were perhaps used interchangeably? All three titles of the *šahr-dādwar*, the *rad*, and the *mōbed* appear as distinct authorities in the Syriac *Life of Mār Abā*, each with a regional jurisdiction; the *Pethion Cycle*, for its part, refers to a *šahr-dādwar*, a *rad*, and a *mgušā rabbā*. The exact nature of each office, and the relationship between them, is still unclear.

Perhaps an easier assumption of equivalence is that of the *maguh* with the general Syriac appellation of *mgušē*, or “magi.” Here, the PMA may depict the dynamics of local guilds of magi, in how they deal with legal issues on a local level, summoning litigants before their assemblies, and when they must send for higher authorities to legislate in matters of more serious importance. But these are just guesses and surmises, based on what are obviously large gaps in the extant sources.

How should the infrequently-attested title of the *mowān-handarzbed* fit into this schema? As discussed in Chapter 1, the *Sūr Saxwan* lists this title below that of the *mōbedān mōbed*, and Armenian sources seem to support the *mowān-handarzbed*’s ancillary role in relation to that highest office, and evidence from the *MHD* suggests that this office-holder held the power to approve or dismiss the rulings of *mōbeds*. However, the *Sūr Saxwan* places the *mowān-handarzbed* immediately below the *šahr-dādwarān*, whom we have seen in the Syriac PMA to have a rank and authority at least equivalent to the provincial *mōbeds*. Unfortunately, the single extant sealing of the *mowān-handarzbed* named Narseh, found at Qaṣr-e Abū Naṣr, a Sasanian-era fort near Šīrāz in Ardaxšīr-Xvarrah, does not shed further light on this issue.\footnote{QAN 74 (MMA 36.30.100), with image and discussion in Chapter 1.}

Then, too, there are priestly offices which feature in Zoroastrian Middle Persian
texts of the late Sasanian and early Islamic period but which do not appear in either the PMA (and other non-Zoroastrian literary sources of the Sasanian era) or the material corpus; these include the dastwar (“authority”) and the hērbed (“religious teacher”). It may just be that these religious figures did not have an administrative or judicial function in the Sasanian period so much as one of spiritual authority (i.e., the dastwar), or importance in matters of religious education (i.e., the hērbed). However, sources from the Islamic period show that the hērbed in particular developed into a community leader, in charge of judicial matters. Rather than attempting to conflate the role and function of these offices in the Sasanian period with that of the early Islamic period, we must separate out what each corpus of sources is actually telling us—and when it applies. It may be that we cannot develop a working model that includes all of the known Zoroastrian religious authorities from the Sasanian period. Maybe there is a reason for that.

Despite the utility of the PMA as historical sources with regard to Sasanian jurisprudence and the function of religious and civil officials within this framework, there are still some aspects of our inquiry in which they fall short. For instance, in the summaries above, I focused on Middle Persian borrowings in the Syriac, Armenian, and Greek PMA, with special attention paid to Zoroastrian religious terminology. I did so in order to demonstrate the cultural context shared by Christians and Zoroastrians under Sasanian rule, as well as their importance for the study of late-Sasanian Zoroastrianism. However, beyond these MP borrowings, which I have collected in Appendix 2, the above analysis focused very little on the Zoroastrian religion itself. This is because, while the PMA can corroborate

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520 See Kreyenbroek 1987a and 1987b (dealing primarily with ZMP texts). Additionally, a hērbed is featured in the early post-Sasanian Tabarestān archive as a judicial authority (see discussion in previous chapter), and also appears in early Islamic conquest narratives as the city representative to invading Muslims (references in following chapters).
knowledge of Zoroastrianism known from other sources, particularly Zoroastrian ones, we should be careful of assuming that the PMA’s polemical accounts of Zoroastrian belief and practice reflect actual, contemporary practice, particularly where they contradict what we know from extant Zoroastrian sources—albeit usually later ones. On the other hand, these sources may attest to the variety of Zoroastrian belief and practice that undoubtedly existed in the Sasanian period, and which is hinted at in contemporary Armenian and later Arabic sources as well.\textsuperscript{521} This is an important topic that deserves further study but lies beyond the scope of this chapter.

Additionally, it turns out that while the PMA can supplement and corroborate our knowledge of the Sasanian administrative geography and Middle Persian onomastics as known from late-Sasanian seals and sealings, there are actually very few correspondences between these two corpora with respect to individual Zoroastrian priests. In other words, none of the individuals named as religious officials in the PMA definitively correspond to the personal names of religious officials in the extant corpus of late-Sasanian administrative seal inscriptions—although a few identifications have certainly been suggested.\textsuperscript{522} This gap between the corpora might merely support the claim that, although the PMA pass the test of verisimilitude for their Persian Christian audiences, they are first and foremost literary texts and should not be treated as historical sources. However, I suspect that the PMA serve to highlight just how fragmentary and poorly understood the material record actually is—largely the product of unprovenanced and “clandestine”

\textsuperscript{521} See Shaked 1994.
\textsuperscript{522} E.g., Gignoux (1978: 25-26) connects the Weh-Dēn-Šāpūr known from Armenian histories of the fifth and sixth centuries to the individual named on BNP 3.4. Secunda (2012: 396-97) draws a connection between the literary Mardbūd ī Ohrmazd-dād (ZFJ 494) and the mog of the same name from the bulla QAN 33 (MMA 36.30.256);
archaeology.

Both material sources and literary ones must be read together to reconstruct the extent and function of the Sasanian-era Zoroastrian priesthood, which served and supported the authority of Persian royal rule in a range of roles both civic and religious. Only when, or if, the full picture of the Sasanian-era priesthood is known can this state of affairs be compared to the situation in the ninth and tenth centuries in order to determine what was lost, and what remained the same. The next chapters will deal more directly with the Zoroastrian priesthood of the Islamic period, while the conclusion will assess how different the state of affairs truly was from that of the Sasanian period—and what the implications are for our understanding of the history of the Zoroastrian religion, as a result.
Chapter 3: Zoroastrian Narratives of the Past

And thus, while the times are so unworthy, and the Lie is so full of strife and has such tyrannical power, (and) is the one arranging such pronouncements which, although the thoughts of the faithful (wēhān) are down-cast, from all of us of the righteous guild striving to establish it so that we can persevere, then by and by in most of the lands it is in such decline, that for many reasons we have serious sorrow and fear…

—the Zoroastrian priest Manuščihr (ca. 881), Letter I.2.13-14

This quote is from the Nāmagīhā ī Manuščihr, the “Letters” of a Zoroastrian priest named Manuščihr who, towards the end of the ninth century, chastised his brother priest for his laxity in some rituals of their profession. This letter as well as other writings of this priest paint a grim picture of the Zoroastrian community at this time, faced with dwindling resources and adherents in the face of growing conversion to Islam. The role of the priests was also changing, much to Manuščihr’s lament.

The Zoroastrian priesthood was greatly diminished in the centuries after the Arab conquest, and its traditions became so scattered that only a fragment of the Zoroastrian knowledge that had once existed remained by the ninth and tenth centuries CE. Despite the gap between the end of the Sasanian kingdom and the time of these ʿAbbāsid-era priests, the Zoroastrian Middle Persian (ZMP) texts they composed have been unquestioned as the product of a continuous tradition of priestly transmission, or survivals from Sasanian times.

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523 This and all other Middle Persian translations in this dissertation are my own, but I cite existing translation wherever possible; here cf. trans. Kreyenbroek 1987a: 155.
524 Kreyenbroek 1987a offers a summary of the situation of the priesthood in the Islamic period, while 1987b closely examines Manuščihr’s other work, known as the Dādestān ī Dēnīg.
Scholars have long extrapolated the conservative nature of the liturgical tradition of the Avesta, which was passed down for millennia according to precise practices of memorization and recitation from father to son, for the rest of Zoroastrian tradition at large. The orthodoxy of the ZMP books has been taken for granted as representative of Sasanian-era (or earlier) Zoroastrianism, even while the great loss of Zoroastrian knowledge by the time Dēnkard was written in the ninth and tenth centuries has been recognized. Rather than pursuing a history of texts, however, it is time to study the individuals who wrote and copied these texts, in order to determine the context in which they were writing and their connection to the past. In the following chapters of the dissertation, I attempt to do just that.

The lineage of the Islamic-era priests, as inheritors of the Sasanian priesthood and its religious traditions, is critically important to our understanding of Zoroastrian “orthodoxy” as viewed from extant texts. Therefore, the claim of such continuity in lineage—through genealogy as well as the transmission of ideas—should be closely scrutinized. However, a close examination of both Zoroastrian texts from the ninth and tenth centuries as well the traditional scholarly view of them reveals several misconceptions about the relationship of the Zoroastrian priests of that time, as well as their claims of a lineage from the Sasanian past.

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525 Dēnkard VIII provides a summary or outline of the Avesta as had previously existed (in the Sasanian period), acknowledging the contents of religious works that were lost to these later authors. There is not yet an edition of this book of the Dēnkard, but West 1892 offers an early translation; also see Gignoux 1994.

526 I follow the criticisms raised by de Jong 2016, who sees scholarship on Zoroastrianism as mostly focusing on texts, and scholarship on Zoroastrians in the Islamic period as too strongly shaped by the eventual outcome of that community’s diminished status.
In this second half of the dissertation, I question standard narratives of Zoroastrian history and priestly transmission by examining Zoroastrian priests in Arabic sources of the ninth and tenth centuries alongside contemporary Zoroastrian Middle Persian texts. In this chapter [3], I consider Zoroastrian narratives of the past and the priesthood in ZMP texts of the ninth and tenth centuries, including the Dēnkard, the Bundahišn, the Zand ī Wahmān Yasn, and the Letters of Manuščihr, and evaluate the ways in which they articulate the history of the religion and the priesthood. Then, I problematize scholarly interpretations of these narratives, particularly through the tendency to present Zoroastrian priestly genealogy in a single family tree. I conclude by offering a new and more accurate picture of this priestly genealogy, as well as a method for correlating identifications of individual priests.

Then, Chapter 4 examines Arabic sources more broadly to provide an external view of the presence of Zoroastrian mōbeds in Islamic society in the the ninth through eleventh centuries. There, I examine the reputation of mōbeds in Muslim intellectual and political circles, in the real and imagined settings of the courts of the caliphs and amīrs. Chapter 4 considers why and how conceptions of the ancient lineage of the priesthood and its reputation in Islamic society were crucial for the survival of the religion. The Arabic sources not only demonstrate just how active the mōbeds were outside of their dwindling Zoroastrian communities but also how they employed their knowledge and expertise to gain the favor—and patronage—of new rulers in a drastically altered context from that of the Sasanian past from which they claimed descent.

Together, Chapters 3 and 4 demonstrate the contingency of the Zoroastrian tradition in the Islamic period: how the political, intellectual, and social context of the ʿAbbāsid and
Būyid regimes shaped the institution of the Zoroastrian priesthood and how the interventions of individual priests—rather than some presumed continuity with the Sasanian priesthood—resulted in the survival of the Zoroastrian tradition as we know it. The goal for this entire dissertation is to place Zoroastrian priests at the forefront of the historical study of Zoroastrianism in order to understand how and why the extant tradition survives in the form we know today.

This chapter begins with a discussion of the status of Zoroastrians and the priesthood after the fall of the Sasanians, presenting a review of scholarship as well as key passages from contemporary sources of the ninth and tenth centuries. While I acknowledge the drastically changed circumstances of the community under Islamic rule, I also emphasize the ways in which the Zoroastrian community (and particularly its priests) reshaped narratives of their history and positioned themselves to their advantage amongst their Muslim counterparts. In this way, I demonstrate that the priesthood responsible for the survival of the Zoroastrian tradition was not an institution that existed in fading isolation (as it has often been portrayed) but was truly an institution borne of an Islamic context.

1. Introduction and Literature Review: Zoroastrians in the Islamic Period

And as for the people of (other) religions among them [i.e., in Fārs], there are Jews, Christians, and Magians, but there is no Šābian or Samaritan, nor is anyone of the other
sects evident, and most of these religious communities are Magian, with them being the majority of the other communities and the largest in number, followed by the Christians, and the Jews, who are the least in number. As for the books of the Magians, their fire temples, their religious rites and what was customary in the days of their kings, they pass it down and they follow it, maintaining possession of it. The Magians are not more numerous in any country than in Fārs, because there is the seat of their kingdom and their religious rites and their books.\textsuperscript{527}

—al-Iṣṭaḥrī (10th cent.), \textit{Masālik wa-l-mamālik}

This report comes from a late tenth-century Arabic geographical work by Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm al-Iṣṭaḥrī (d. after 952), whose description of Fārs was either inspired by or derived from an earlier (lost) work by Abū Zayd al-Balḥī (d. 934), a secretary under the Sāmānids. This passage indicates that in the tenth century the Zoroastrians (known in Arabic as \textit{al-Majūs} or “Magians”), were most numerous in Fārs (MP \textit{Pārs}), the ancestral home of Sasanian Zoroastrianism, where they outnumbered Christians and Jews (and perhaps also Muslims, although the text is less clear on this point). Al-Iṣṭaḥrī, himself a native of the region (from Iṣṭaḥr, or MP \textit{Staxr}, in Fārs), informs us that the Magians’ fire temples and religious rites (\textit{buyūt nīrānihim wa-adyānuhum}) had been passed down by them just as they had been during the time of their kings. This seems to attest to the continuous transmission of Zoroastrian knowledge by the Magians of Fārs from the Sasanian period into the tenth century, after nearly 300 years of Islamic rule.\textsuperscript{528}

Over the course of several articles and a monograph, Jamsheed Choksy provides a detailed look at Zoroastrianism in the Islamic period, balancing Zoroastrian Middle Persian texts with Arabic and Persian sources to show patterns of both conflict and cooperation between Zoroastrians and Muslims.\textsuperscript{529} Touraj Daryaee also presents a nuanced overview

\textsuperscript{527} ed. de Goeje, I.139, with my own translation; cf. translation of Nyberg 1958: 8-9.
\textsuperscript{528} So Nyberg concludes, although he dates al-Iṣṭaḥrī’s report, as a quotation of al-Balḥī’s original, to the ninth century, and translates the passage slightly more emphatically as “The Magi have preserved the books, the fire-houses and the customs of the era of their kings \textit{thanks to an uninterrupted succession},” emphasis added (1958: 8-9).
\textsuperscript{529} Choksy 1987 and 2015, monograph 1997.
of Zoroastrianism in the Islamic period, summarizing many sources in Arabic to show the gradual and geographically uneven changes the Zoroastrian community faced after the Arab conquest of Iran. The standard (if now qualified) view of conversion to Islam in the medieval period can be found in Richard Bulliet’s famous work on the subject, which argues that an early majority of the population of Iran, where most Zoroastrians seem to have lived, converted to Islam only after the ‘Abbāsid revolution of 750, with the late majority adopting Islam by 850 or later.

By the ninth century, the rapidly changing social framework of the Zoroastrian community can be seen in the despair of the Zoroastrian priest Manuščihr, a hērbed and the rad of Pārs and Kirmān writing in the late ninth century (quoted at the beginning of the chapter), who laments the decline of the priesthood as well as their dwindling resources.

Philip Kreyenbroek has written two articles the Zoroastrian priesthood in the Islamic period, based primarily on the writings of the priest Manuščihr. In these studies, Kreyenbroek summarizes the dire economic situation of the priesthood in the ninth century, fundamentally different from that of the extensive bureaucratic institution evident from the end of the Sasanian period (see Chapter 1).

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530 Daryae 2015.
531 Bulliet 1979 (especially Chapter 5). His model is based upon quantitative analysis of the lineages of Iranians in medieval Muslim tabaqāt, or biographical, literature, assuming that the adoption of Islamic or more obviously Arab names in these lineages occurred after an individual or family converted to Islam.
532 At the end of the Dādestān ī Dēnīg, Manuščihr refers to himself as “the rad and chief of the guild of priests of Pārs and Kirmān” (pārs ud kirmān rad ud āsrōnān pēšag framādār, DD 93.13) and similarly signs one letter as “the chief of the guild of priests of Pārs and Kirmān (Pārs ud Kirmān āsrōnān pēšag framādār, NM 2.9.13), addressing another as the rad of Pārs and Kirmān (NM 3.1). However, he seems to refer to himself most frequently as a hērbed, if these are not headings added to the manuscripts later (DD, NM 1.0, 2.1.0, 3.0); his brother, Zādspram, is referred to in the manuscript headings as an hērbed as well (NM 1.0, 2.1.0; WZ 0.3).
533 Kreyenbroek 1987a and 1987b.
This conception of decline is taken up by other scholars, who generally treat the Zoroastrians of the Islamic period as an isolated and insular minority community. This certainly became the situation of the Zoroastrian community in Iran, but it was not already so in the ninth or even tenth century, as I will show. Yet, for example, Robert Hoyland calls the extant ZMP books “the literature of an already moribund society…largely inward-looking, concentrating on the life and heritage of its own community.”\footnote{Hoyland 1997: 242-43, critiqued by de Jong 2016: 226.} Macuch’s more recent summary of Middle Persian literature is more nuanced, although she also gives the impression of a priestly class working in isolation and for its own near interests:

> With a few exceptions, the extant Pahlavi works—most of which were written or compiled after the Muslim conquest—are mainly concerned with religious themes of theological and scholastic interest, written by priests and scholars who strived to preserve the ancient religious culture of Iran and keep up the venerable traditions their fathers had known for countless centuries.\footnote{Macuch 2009: 117, whose chapter provides an excellent summary and bibliography for extant Zoroastrian Middle Persian literature.}

This picture of Zoroastrian priests toiling to preserve their traditions presents only a partial view of the activities of these priests. In reality, and as I will demonstrate in this chapter and the subsequent one, Zoroastrian priests of the ninth and tenth centuries were not merely copying ancient religious traditions in the manner of their fathers; rather than being mere hapless transmitters, they actively shaped these traditions to promote their own authority both within their communities and outside of them. The Zoroastrian priests writing the extant Zoroastrian Middle Persian books were part of Islamic society.\footnote{For a similar view, see de Jong 2016: 227, who says of the social and cultural situation of the early Islamic period, “It is not just that the numbers of Muslims who were not Arabs complicates the picture (for those focusing on the encounter of ‘ethnic’ communities), or that many of those who wrote in Arabic actually spoke Persian or another Iranian language as their first language: rather, this scenario is inadequate on more principled grounds, in so far as the Zoroastrians did not meet the new polity, they were a part of it.”} Consideration for
the Islamic context of the ZMP works affects how we view the Zoroastrian traditions that they preserve.

As part of a recent effort to contextualize extant Zoroastrian sources in the Islamic period, Christian Sahner focuses on the exposition of Zoroastrian law in response to the rise of Islamic conversion, while Yuhan Vevaina examines issues of gender and marriage in a similar context.\(^{538}\) During the ninth through eleventh centuries, various Zoroastrian religious authorities wrote a series of ZMP \textit{rivāyats}, religious treatises in a question-and-answer format. Each \textit{rivāyat} address the issues faced by a religious community that is no longer politically or socially dominant. These treatises focus on topics such as conversion from the “good religion” (MP \textit{weh-dēn}), as well as how to safely interact with people from a “bad religion” (MP \textit{ag-dēn}).\(^{539}\) The level of concern about conversion and intermarriage is evident in Islamic sources from the period as well as Zoroastrian ones.\(^{540}\) A more focused summary of Arabic sources for the study of Zoroastrianism will be taken up in the following chapter (Chapter 4), but I highlight here that such literature demonstrates the concerns of a community that was very much a part of Islamic society.\(^{541}\)

\(^{538}\) Sahner 2020 and 2021, Vevaina 2021. These and other recent articles by de Jong, Rezania, Campopiano, and Terribili will be considered again in Chapter 4.

\(^{539}\) While \textit{ag-dēn} is commonly translated as “Muslim/Islam,” it is formally ambiguous and, in the long history of Zoroastrianism, referred to many non-Zoroastrian religions.

\(^{540}\) Contemporary Christian sources share these concerns; see Tannous 2020 as well as other contributions in Hurvitz et al. 2020.

2. Zoroastrian “History”

A handful of Zoroastrian priests from the ninth and tenth centuries are known by name from Middle Persian and Arabic sources. Some scholars, whom I will discuss below, have attempted to corroborate both corpora of texts for correspondences in the names of these priests, with varied results. The genealogical relationship of these individuals to each other—as mōbeds from a single priestly family which can be traced to the now-distant Sasanian past—is an assertion often repeated in modern scholarship. It also seems rather essential to the scholarly understanding of orthodoxy in post-Sasanian Zoroastrianism, in that the Islamic-era priests are portrayed as the inheritors of a continuous Zoroastrian tradition from the Sasanian period.

This claim is usually expressed through what I term the “traditional genealogy”—I use “traditional” in the sense that it has been handed down from scholar to scholar, and also claims to be part of the tradition of Zoroastrian sources. However, this “traditional genealogy,” which appears throughout modern scholarship, contains many mistakes that become evident in a close study of relevant sources and their chronology. As I will show, where the ZMP sources seem to assert the heredity of the priesthood and its lineage within a single family, upon closer scrutiny these statements a) only vaguely describe this link to the past or b) are supplied by scholars’ over-identification of common Zoroastrian names of the period.

The study of the pre-Islamic history of Persia has been a perennial problem for historians, primarily because most of the sources for this history are considered “outside” sources or were written in a much later historical period.542 Before there was serious study

542 For a summary of these problems, see the first and second chapters of the dissertation.
of material sources like the corpus of Sasanian seals and bullae (introduced in Chapter 1) or the (often problematic) study of Syriac, Armenian and other literary sources from the Sasanian period (discussed in Chapter 2), nineteenth-century historians like Theodor Nöldeke mostly relied on Arabic and Persian sources to reconstruct Sasanian history. This is because of the translation and preservation in the later Perso-Arabic literary tradition of an originally Sasanian historical tradition, known as the Xwadāy-nāmag or “Book of Kings,” supposedly composed towards the end of the Sasanian period in Middle Persian but which no longer survives in its original form or language.

The basic form of this historical tradition is that of a chronicle or king list, which gave the reign of each figure (with no distinction between mythical, legendary, or historical) as well as their important deeds, sometimes with longer narratives accompanying them. Ehsan Yarshater called this tradition “Iranian national history” and gives an overview of the important Arabic and Persian authors of the ninth through thirteenth centuries who preserve some form of this pre-Islamic Persian history. The recent work by Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila attempts to answer the question about the origins of the Xwadāy-nāmag traditions (plural) and their reception in Arabic and Persian, adopting a cautious approach to their assessment.

I do not attempt to deal with the issue of the “Book of Kings” traditions broadly speaking in this dissertation. This chapter examines how the authors of the extant Zoroastrian Middle Persian (ZMP) books viewed and recorded the past, particularly that

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543 Yarshater 1983.
544 Hämeen-Anttila 2018.
545 Nevertheless, in the next chapter (Chapter 4), I will call attention to the role of Zoroastrian priests in the transmission of the putative Xwadāy-nāmag traditions and of Persian history more generally.
of the Sasanian period. First, I will address the question of whether there even is a “Zoroastrian history” in extant ZMP texts that can be examined.

In his introduction to Jean de Menasce’s summary of Zoroastrian literature, Yarshater says the following about “history:”

History was considered by the Sasanians an important branch of knowledge, but not so much an impartial record of events as a means of validating social and political ideals and institutions, and for personal edification. Too clear a distinction was not accordingly made between fact, legend, and myth, and a good deal of wisdom literature and entertainment material was incorporated.

Yarshater claims to see this kind of Sasanian history through the “renderings, quotations and adaptations” of Persian history that survive in Arabic and Persian. Thus, he is not talking about extant Zoroastrian texts but more broadly “Iranian” history, and he separates “religious” history from “national” history in the Iranian tradition.

In this model, which Yarshater develops further in a separate article, the ZMP books represent Iranian religious history, characterized as a cosmic history, to a greater extent than the national history of the Xwadāy-nāmag, which was preserved and Islamicized in the Perso-Arabic literary tradition. However, in his view even the Xwadāy-nāmag is inflected with a religious character, because of “the firm union of church and state” in the Sasanian period, on the one hand, and because of the scribes’ shared outlook with the Zoroastrian priests by virtue of their common training, on the other. Additionally, Yarshater points out that the socio-political and didactic aspects of Iranian national history

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546 Editor’s comments found in de Menasce 1983: 1168.
547 See Yarshater 1983: 395, following Christensen.
come through primarily in the guise of wise statements attributed to kings and sages, many of the Zoroastrian priests.\textsuperscript{549}

While I agree with Yarshater that the authors of the ZMP books had different concerns and intentions than the court-sponsored authors of Persian histories—who composed their Arabic and Persian historiographies at roughly the same time that the Zoroastrian priests wrote in the ninth and tenth centuries—I do not so clearly see the separation of “religious” and “national” history in any of these sources, which all provide evidence of and comment on the role of Zoroastrianism in pre-Islamic Persian history.\textsuperscript{550}

Alternatively, Daryaee has used the term “Zoroastrian sacred history” to explain the unique and selective historical overviews found in the Zoroastrian Middle Persian works.\textsuperscript{551} Because the Sasanians considered themselves to be the heirs of the Kayānids, he explains, intervening historical periods and dynasties like the Achaemenids and the Parthians were omitted from their official histories. For Daryaee, Zoroastrian history essentially is Sasanian history, due to the influence of the Zoroastrian priesthood in the sixth century, at the time of writing the putative Sasanian \textit{Xwadāy-nāmag} under Xusrō I.\textsuperscript{552} Thus, Sasanian history, too, is a “sacred history” that “is not concerned with detailed historical events, but events and personages who are relevant to the Zoroastrian religious

\textsuperscript{549} Yarshater 1983: 398-400. So far, scholars have only touched the surface of the connection between Zoroastrian wisdom literature, or \textit{andarz}, and the wise sayings recorded in the Arabic literary tradition, which feature in works of \textit{adab} and \textit{siyāsa} (“statecraft”) as well as compilations of known Middle Persian works; see Zakeri 2007.

\textsuperscript{550} Nor do I subscribe to the terminology of “national” history, but that is another matter.

\textsuperscript{551} Daryaee 2014: 68.

\textsuperscript{552} Daryaee 2014: 67, equating “Sasanian sacred history” with a “Zoroastrian view of history,” arguing that by the end of the sixth century, “Zoroastrianism provided the basic moral and intellectual foundation for the idea of a written royal history, so the records of dynasties and events were shaped by Zoroastrian ideals regardless of historical fact.”
tradition.” ZMP texts like the *Bundahišn*, therefore, exemplify “the exposition of a sacred Zoroastrian history composed in the Sasanian period.”

I would rather emphasize that any “history” in the ZMP books is a reflection of the attitudes of ninth- and tenth-century Zoroastrian priests, rather than a simple reproduction of Sasanian royal and/or religious propaganda. For example, the *Letter of Tansar*, purported to be the advice of the Zoroastrian priest Tansar during the reign of the first Sasanian king Ardaxšīr (r. 224–42), survives as a thirteenth-century New Persian translation of an Arabic translation made by Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ (d. 756), who supposedly translated it from the Middle Persian original. Although Boyce assumed the *Letter of Tansar* to be an authentic early Sasanian document (even dating it as early as the fourth century), I tend to follow others in arguing that the extant version of the letter—including its famous description of the relationship of kingship and religion as “twins”—reflects the Islamic context of its translation. At best, it is from the sixth century.

I propose a more useful model for examining “Zoroastrian history,” if such a thing exists in the senses introduced by these scholars, that incorporates the social frameworks of historical memory at play in the writing of Zoroastrian texts in the ninth and tenth centuries, as well as the cognitive framework of the transmission of religious knowledge.

In what follows, I examine how the priests of the ninth and tenth centuries articulate the

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553 Daryaei 2014: 67. For an alternative opinion, see de Jong 2016: 228, who sees in the extant Islamic-era ZMP texts a lack of any interest in the Sasanian past.
554 Daryaei 2014: 70.
555 The text survives in Ibn Isfandiyār’s (d. 1216) *Tārīḵ-e Ṭabarestān*; translation in Boyce 1968a.
556 See Gignoux 1984: 74-75, who concludes, “it would not be an overstatement that we are here dealing with a mythologisation [emphasis original] of an ideal conception of kingship, which was only translated into reality, in a different way of course, in subsequent Islam.” Contra Boyce 1968a, presenting an opinion followed by many others (e.g., Kreyenbroek 2008).
557 See the Introduction to the dissertation for a discussion of my application of theories of cultural memory as well as Whitehouse’s cognitive model of the doctrinal mode of religiosities.
history of the religion and the institution of the priesthood, then I complicate these narratives in their social and political contexts.

2.1 Dēnkard IV:

The largest compilation of Zoroastrian religious knowledge can be found in the Middle Persian text known as the Dēnkard (“Acts of the Religion”), a post-Sasanian composition whose seven extant books (III-X) cover a range of topics. Long considered an “encyclopedia” of Zoroastrian religious knowledge, it is also viewed as the late effort of a dwindling priesthood to record its traditions. In fact, this is the narrative that the redactors of the text present. The following passages from the Dēnkard exemplify the closest thing to historical narrative in the ZMP books. But what becomes apparent here and elsewhere in ZMP literature is the sketchy, or fragmented view of the past, which is punctuated by the reigns of specific kings and specific heroes of the religion associated with them.

The longest and most well-known “historical” passage in the Dēnkard is from its fourth book where, in the span of only three manuscript pages, a history of Zoroastrianism

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558 This important text is transmitted in only a single complete manuscript (B), copied in 1659 in Turkabād, Iran and then brought to India in 1783; however, the earliest colophon states that the manuscript was copied in Baghdad in 1020 (more on this colophon appears in Chapter 4). There are also three partial manuscripts of the Dēnkard (K43a and K43b, both from the same Copenhagen manuscript but copied from different Dēnkard manuscripts; and manuscript DH, which also contains the Bundahišn). In addition to two early editions, first by Dastur Peshotan Bahramji Sanjana and his son Darab Sanjana from 1869-1928 and second by D.M. Madan (1911), there is a facsimile edition of the one (nearly) complete manuscript (Dresden 1966); see Gignoux 1994 and more recently Rezania 2017 for an overview of this work. The Dēnkard has not been translated in its entirety, but there are several editions and translations of individual books: Dēn. III, edition and French translation in de Menasce 1973; Dēn. IV, partial English translations in Shaki 1981 and Bailey 1943; Dēn. V, edition and French translation in Amouzgar & Tafazzoli 2000; Dēn. VI, edition and English translation in Shaked 1979; Dēn. VII, edition and French translation by Molé 1967; Dēn. IX, partial edition and English translation in Vevaina 2007, partial English translation in West 1892.

559 See de Menasce 1958 (Le Dēnkart: une encyclopédie mazdéenne).
from Darius (a conflation of several Achaemenid kings of that name) down to Xusrō I (r. 531–79) is laid out. The tale presented in Book IV is one of written religious knowledge, both its loss and preservation.

In the narrative of Dēnkard IV, the king Wištāsp (OP Vištāspa-) first received the Mazda-worshipping religion from Zardušt. Dārā (one of the Achaemenid kings called Darius) placed copies of Zardušt’s Avesta and its commentary (zand) in safe-keeping in the royal treasury and the archives (yak ganj ī šāhīgān yak diz ī nibišt). After the destruction wrought by Alexander “the Roman,” Walaxš (the Arsacid king Vologeses) commanded each province to preserve both their own authoritative traditions, both oral and written. Ardaxšīr (the first Sasanid king), on the advice of Tansar, collected these scattered teachings and selected the most authoritative. Šāpūr I then collected non-religious writings from all scientific disciplines from India, Rome, and other lands, and then compared them to the Avesta, to which he added anything that it did not already contain, also placing these writings in the royal treasury (ganj ī šāhīgān). Next, Šāpūr II organized an empire-wide religious disputation, in which Ādurbād was victorious against other interpreters of the nasks (i.e., books of the Avesta). The king then declared that they would not tolerate those “of bad religion” (ag-dēnīh). Finally, “his present majesty” Xusrō I, who further puts down heresy, gathered an assembly and empowered the mōbeds, particularly the mōbed of

561 The MP word šāhīgān (“royal”) is tentative; Skjærvø suggests instead šasabīgān (“satrapal”) (Unpublished edition, 1155). Van Bladel 2012: 58-61 categorizes this word as “obscure” (reading [*şpykʾn]), citing other scholars’ attempts to make sense of it (see Cantera 2004: 108 n.12).
Ohrmazd (MP *Ohrmazd-mōbed*) as the most knowledgeable in the religion, to study the Avesta and the Zand for the good of all the people of the kingdom.\(^{562}\)

Daryaei has convincingly argued that this narrative was an invention of the late Sasanian period, whereby Xusrō I sought to promote his own reputation as a restorer of the religion by emphasizing the magnitude of what had previously been lost—and by reconstructing the memory of Ardaxšīr to magnify his own program.\(^{563}\) Rezania points out the larger structure of the *Dēnkard* IV passage in relation to what has just preceded it—a description of the seven *Amahraspands* or “Bounteous Immortals”— which is then paralleled by the list of seven righteous kings who participated in the transmission of the Avesta: Wištāsp, Dārā, Walaxš, Ardaxšīr, Šāpūr I, Šāpūr II, and Xusrō I.\(^{564}\)

This passage is considered to be an authentic text from the late Sasanian period: the fact that Xusrō is called “his present majesty” (*im bay*) in the above passage from *Dēnkard* IV suggests that this portion of the text is from the sixth century, copied in the later Islamic-era redaction of the text.\(^{565}\) The passage is quite detailed, particularly with regard to the project of Xusrō, when viewed in comparison to other “historical” passages in the *Dēnkard* and other ZMP works, which are far more selective even as they continue this history with contemporary figures of the Islamic period. Furthermore, one of the papyrus documents from the early post-Sasanian “Pahlavi Archive” at Berkeley, which have been dated to the

\(^{562}\) On the title of *Ohrmazd-mōbed* in the corpus of Sasanian seals and sealings, see Chapter 1.

\(^{563}\) Daryaei 2003a, using the *Dēn.* IV translation of Shaki 1981.

\(^{564}\) Rezania 2017: 353-54, who states, “What these kings have in common are attempts to save or restore the Avesta and, thus, to counteract the harm to the Good Religion in the era of Mixture.”

\(^{565}\) Bailey 1943: 155 cites Bartholomae for first pointing this out (*Zur Kenntnis der mitteliranischen Mundarten*, 1920: iii.9.n.2). This view was also held by Zaehner (1955: 11-12) and Boyce (1968a: 5). Additionally, van Bladel 2012: 57-62 demonstrates striking parallels between this passage and an eighth-century work of Abū Sahl ibn Nawbaḥt (fl. ca. 770–809), one which pre-dates Ādurfarrbay ī Farroxzādān’s initial compilation of the *Dēnkard* in the early to mid-ninth century.
seventh and eighth centuries, appears to refer to the *Dēnkard* as a guide for religious practices. Some version of this work, or another work by the same name, evidently circulated before its redaction in the ninth and tenth centuries, when new compositions were added to the work in compilatory fashion.

The motif of destruction and retrieval of knowledge set forth in *Dēnkard IV* is repeated throughout the ZMP works—recasting the opposition of destructive heretics and righteous Zoroastrians onto new figures. The part about Alexander appears throughout the ZMP texts as well as in Arabic sources. One variant says he burned the Avesta and/or quenched sacred fires, while others that claim that previously the Avesta had been written in gold on leather hides, which some accounts number at 1,000 books (MP *naskīhā*), or 1,200 chapters (MP *fragard*), or even 12,000 leather hides (Ar. *jīld* / (pl.) *julūd*). One such account features in the epilogue of *Dēnkard III*, culminating in the important work of the ninth- and tenth-century redactors of the *Dēnkard* in preserving Zoroastrian knowledge in the face of widespread conversion to Islam.

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566 Berk. 53 (no date) describes the construction of a house according to “the wonderful help of the *Dēnkard* for judging of the worship under the spectators” (*kardan i xāndādīh i abāyist i abd ayār Dēnkard-iz i pad [handā]xtan i yazišn i andar pad-wēnāgān rāy*); text and translation from Weber 2008: 84-86. This reading is not accepted by everyone, however.
567 For a summary and references to these sources, see van Bladel 2009: 33-36.
569 *AWN* 1-9.
570 *Dēn.*VIII.1.20.
571 ŠĒ 2-5.
572 This number appears in several Arabic sources, e.g., al-Masʿūdī (d. 956, *Tanbīh*, ed. de Goeje, 91) and al-Bīrūnī (d. 1048, *al-Ājār al-bāqiya*, ed. Fück, 76), who both report that it was “written in gold on 12,000 cow-hides” (*maktūbatun bi-l-ḏahabi fi ṯnāʾ ašari alfi jīldan min julūdī l-baqari*).
2.2 Dēnkard III:

_Dēnkard_ Book III is the longest extant book, and it ends with a short “historical” or chronological overview of the transmission of the religion from Zardušt to its destruction by Alexander, then the recovery of texts by Tansar the _hērbed_, and down to the final editors of this work in the Islamic period. The work of the last three individuals mentioned in this account can be summarized as follows: Ādurfarrbayānī Farroxzādān, the _hudēnān pēšōbay_ (or “leader of the faithful” of the Zoroastrians), was the first to collect the knowledge scattered by the harm and destruction of the Arabs ( _az wizend ud wišōbišn i az tāzīgān_ ) and to reassemble it in his _dīwān_ at the court (MP _dar_). Next, his son Zardušt ī Ādurfarrbayān, the subsequent _hudēnān pēšōbay_, caused the _dīwān_ to fall into disarray. Finally, the _hudēnān pēšōbay_ Ėdurbād ī Ėmēdān restored and re-edited the compilation of the _Dēnkard_, as he himself states in this chapter of the _Dēnkard_. I will discuss these three individuals and their chronology in more detail below, adding more figures to the family tree of Zoroastrian priests of the Islamic period. The ʿAbbāsid and Būyid context of these Zoroastrian priests will be explored more thoroughly in Chapter 4.

The motif of the destruction and retrieval of knowledge echoes the larger Zoroastrian themes of cosmic history, from the destruction and contamination of the

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573 _Dēnkard_ III.420; for a partial translation of this passage, see Rezania 2017: 344, 346-47. Previous partial translations and discussions can be found in Cantera 2004: 106-24 and Shaked 1994a: 99-103.
574 Here and wherever possible I follow the spelling conventions of Philippe Gignoux from his _Iranisches Personennamenbuch_, an onomasticon for Middle Persian epigraphic sources (Gignoux 1986a)—although I do adjust his transliteration of [w] from _-v_ to _-w_ and omit some unnecessary diacritics; thus, Juvān-Jam instead of his Juvān-Jam. I also follow conventional spelling for more well-known names (e.g., Šāpūr instead of Šāpuhr / Šābuhr / Šābūr), and, for the sake of continuity, I use the MP Romanized spelling established by MacKenzie 1967 even when the source text is in Arabic (unless otherwise indicated).
575 On the correspondence of this title to the Arabic _amīr al-muʿīnin_, and Kreyenbroek 1987a: 160, who considers the MP phrase a calque of the Arabic one; also see Anklesaria 1969: II.3, Boyce 1979: 147.
material world to its eventual perfection at the end of time. Each time this story is told, however, it reflects the current concerns of its authors or redactors. Thus, the lengthy (by comparison) historical narratives of Dēnkard IV and Dēnkard III are abbreviated elsewhere in the Dēnkard and other ZMP works, and the emphasis is placed on different salvific figures in each version. Whereas the sixth-century Dēnkard IV narrative emphasizes the religious reforms of “his present majesty” Xusrō I, the late ninth- to early tenth-century narrative of Dēnkard III highlights the efforts of the contemporary priesthood.

However, nearly all of the “historical” narratives of the Zoroastrian past in the Dēnkard and other ZMP books highlight the efforts of one individual in organizing the religion: the early Sasanian-era priest known as Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān, who was famous for defending the Zoroastrian religion against its opponents. The next sections explore his presence in Zoroastrian narratives of the past as presented in other ninth- to tenth-century ZMP works, namely the “apocalyptic” text of the Zand ī Wahmān Yasn, and Book VIII of the Dēnkard. Then, I will discuss the figure of Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān more directly, particularly for the role he plays in the conception of the Zoroastrian priesthood in the ninth and tenth centuries.

2.3 The Zand ī Wahman Yasn:

There has been much interest in Zoroastrian apocalyptic texts by scholars of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, who attempt to see patterns of influence as well as correspondences between these different religious traditions.\(^{576}\) Usually, the antiquity of

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\(^{576}\) Of particular interest is the relationship between the Jewish and Zoroastrian “Myth of the Four Ages,” a version of which appears in second-century BCE Book of Daniel, with the other in the first chapter of the Zand ī Wahman Yasn (an alternate version of Seven Ages appears in the third chapter); see the comments in the edition of the text by Cereti 1995, as well as Macuch 2009: 154 for summary of the debate and various scholars’ positions. Much of Kreyenbroek 2002 is devoted
Zoroastrian apocalyptic is taken for granted, as well as its influence on early Jewish and Christian apocalyptic.\(^{577}\) However, the only extant Zoroastrian apocalyptic literary texts were written in the ninth and tenth centuries, and so must be analyzed in this context: written and redacted by a community living under Islamic rule. It may be possible to separate earlier layers of these texts, as some scholars have attempted to do. However, I follow other scholars who view texts like the *Zand ī Wahmān Yasn* as products of the Islamic period.\(^{578}\)

The *Zand ī Wahmān Yasn* is an apocalyptic text that foretells the restoration of the Zoroastrian community (and its priesthood) after the upheavals of millennia of destructive and salvific events. The extant version of the text presents two different variations of the ages of metals. The first (*ZWY* 1) has four ages and metals and emphasizes the reign of Xusrō I, with the appending second chapter (*ZWY* 2) detailing the council called by Xusrō after the defeat of the heretic Mazdak, where the priests are instructed to keep the religion to themselves and their offspring. The second version of the ages of metals (in *ZWY* 3) is much longer and describes seven ages, which are framed as Zardušṭ’s vision of seven branches on a tree.\(^{579}\) Here, the third age (that of copper) includes the reigns of the early Sasanids Ardaxšīr and Šāpūr (II), during which Ādurbād “of victorious fate” or “of

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578 E.g., Gignoux 1986c and Daryaee 1998, who emphasizes that Zoroastrian apocalyptic was written in the Islamic period, saying “we are not dealing with apocalyptic stories but with contemporary political events embedded in this genre of semi-literary historical works;” also see Vevaina 2011, who discusses all of these problems as well as the Islamic context of the Zoroastrian “four ages” myth, and Anthony 2012, who explores the messianic elements of “nativist” Zoroastrian rebellions in the early Islamic period in light of the contemporary Zoroastrian Middle Persian text of the *Jāmāsp-nāma*, as well as the connection to developing Islamic apocalypticism.
579 *ZWY* III.20-29.
victorious fortune” (pērōz-baxt) undergoes an ordeal of copper (rōy passāxtag).\textsuperscript{580} Whereas Ardaxšīr is the “arranger and restorer of the world” (gēhān ārāstār ud wirāstār) and Šāpūr “arranges the world created by me, Ohrmazd” (gēhān ī man Ohrmazd-dād ārāyēd), Ādurbād is given the appellation of “true restorer of the religion” (dēn rāst wirāstār).

\textit{ZWY} III.25

ud ān ī rōyēn xwadāyīh ī Ardaxšīr ī gēhān ārāstār ud wirāstār ud ān ī Šāpūr-šā ka gēhān ī man Ohrmazd-dād ārāyēd bōxtagīh pad sāmān ī gēhān rawāg kunēd ud wehīh paydāg bē bawēd ud Ādurbād ī pērōz-baxt ī dēn rāst wirāstār pad rōy ī passāxtag īn dēn abāg jud-ristagān abāz Ī rāstīh āwarēd

The (age) of copper is the reign of Ardaxšīr, the arranger and restorer of the world, and that of king Šāpūr who will arrange the world created by me, Ohrmazd, and he will make salvation current among the creatures of the world. And goodness will appear. And Ādurbād of victorious fate, true restorer of the religion, through the ordeal of copper will return this religion to truth, along with the heretics.\textsuperscript{581}

Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān is mentioned in nearly all of the extant ZMP works. Elsewhere in the \textit{Dēnkard} he is called an “adornor” (ārāstār) of the religion,\textsuperscript{582} and in the \textit{Dādestān ī Dēnīg} he is referred to as “one superior in the religion” (MP dēn-abarag).\textsuperscript{583} As seen above, the passage in \textit{Dēnkard} IV describes Ādurbād’s victory in disputation (gōwişi ī passāxt), which seems to have led to two distinct but related aspects of his reputation. First, Ādurbād was considered a sage, credited with many wise sayings and with whole collections of

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{580} The Middle Persian version of this passage from the \textit{ZWY} places the third age chronologically out of order, followed by the Arsacids’ age of brass. Another version of the seven ages of metals however, retains the correct chronological order: the New Persian \textit{Zartušt-Nāmah} (ch. 57-58) has the correct chronological order of ages, but the figure of Ādurbād has been collapsed into that of the king Ardaxšīr in the age of brass, while the Arsacids are bronze (see translation of Sheffield 2012: 496-97).
\item \textsuperscript{581} Cf. trans. Cereti 1995: 152, who supplies the word ‘molten’ (widāxt) due to Ādurbād’s reputation of undergoing the ordeal of molten copper; the earliest references to Ādurbād’s ordeal, however, are to one of disputation (as in \textit{Dēn.IV}, above).
\item \textsuperscript{582} \textit{Dēn.III.200, Dēn.V.3.4, Dēn.VII.7.20, Dēn.IX.8.4.}
\item \textsuperscript{583} \textit{DD.36.26.}
\end{itemize}
handarz attributed to him.\textsuperscript{584} Second, and perhaps more famously, Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān was known to have undergone an ordeal in which molten copper (rōy widāxtag), was poured on his chest.\textsuperscript{585} Having survived this ordeal, he proved the strength and correctness of his religion.\textsuperscript{586}

His name is listed among other heroes of the religion in “historical” overviews of the past, from the longer narratives of Dēnkard IV and the Ardā Wirāz Nāmag, to shorter lists of righteous figures in opposition to fiends and heretics.\textsuperscript{587} When the past is presented according to the schema of the ages of metals, Ādurbād is variously assigned to that of steel (MP pōlābdēn)\textsuperscript{588} or copper (MP rōyēn).\textsuperscript{589} Most of the references in ZMP books place him during the reign of Šāpūr II (r. 309-79),\textsuperscript{590} but he is also reputed to have disputed

\textsuperscript{584} Ādurbād’s wise sayings survive in Middle Persian in two collections, known respectively as the Andarz ī Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān (AAM) and the Wāzag ī āwčand ī Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān (WEA), as well as a scattering of his wise sayings in Book VI of the Dēnkard (see Shaked 1979: 279-300). Ten wise sayings are also attributed to Ādurbād in Dēn.III.199 (portrayed as a challenge to ten sayings of the prophet Mani); another ten appear in the Pahlavi Rivāyat Accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg (Pahl.Riv.DD 62, ed. and trans. Williams 1990). Ādurbād is also featured in short text known as Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān ud šāhān šāh (AMS), or “Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān and the King of Kings,” from the miscellaneous collection of texts in manuscript K20; in this text, the Persian king questions Ādurbād, along with an Indian and a Roman, in a disputation (ed. and trans. Asmussen 1971).

\textsuperscript{585} For references to Ādurbād’s ordeal in ZMP works, see Dēn.V.22.4, VII.5.5 and 7.19-21, as well as AWN.1.10, ZWY.III.25, and Supp.ŠnŠ.15.16. Note that sometimes the molten metal is steel (MP pōlābdēn), as in Supp.ŠnŠ. 15.16.

\textsuperscript{586} The “ordeal” (usually MP war) has a long history in Persia as an oath-verification procedure, and whole (lost) Zoroastrian legal texts were dedicated to its regulations.

\textsuperscript{587} Dēn.IX.8.4; AWN.1.10-13; DD.36.26, where Ādurbād is described as “the one of superior dēn” as the middle figure in list of past and future saviors (DD.36.26, ān ī dēn-abarag čiyōn ādurbād). This list of saviors also appears in Dēn.V.3.4, again with Ādurbād as a central figure; and in a New Persian rivāyat, Ādurbād’s name is mentioned after Zardušt’s and before the souls of the pious (see M.R. Unvala 1922: I.45; trans. Dhabhar 1932: 40).

\textsuperscript{588} Dēn.IX.8.4; perhaps this relates to the version of Ādurbād’s ordeal which says that molten steel was placed on his chest (MP pōlābdēn, Supp.ŠnŠ. 15.16).

\textsuperscript{589} ZWY III.25

\textsuperscript{590} Dēn.IV.20, Dēn.V.22.4.
the prophet Mani—although the latter flourished a generation before him in the third century.\textsuperscript{591}

From these examples, we already see that Ādurbād has a special place in ZMP literature, even if historical accuracy is lacking. Next, I consider how these narratives of Ādurbād reflect the particular concerns of the ninth- and tenth-century Zoroastrian priests in an Islamic context, and how the Zoroastrian memory of the past was shaped by the social, political, and cultural frameworks of that context.

\textbf{2.4 Dēnkard VIII:}

Book VIII of the \emph{Dēnkard} lists the contents of the (now lost) so-called Great Avesta—the great compilation of all of the texts of the Zoroastrian religion in twenty-one \textit{nasks}. Scholars suppose that the Avesta was written down some time in the fifth or sixth century, a task for which the Avestan script was invented.\textsuperscript{592} This written Avesta was likely Avestan texts along with Middle Persian translations and commentary—the whole sum of the religion at that time. The description in \emph{Dēnkard} VIII offers a glimpse of what was contained in these \textit{nasks}, and some fragments do survive, but even by the time of the ninth-century compilation of the \emph{Dēnkard} the priests recognized that some of their texts had been

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{591} \textit{Dēn}.III.199-200, where Ādurbād issues ten statements and then Mani responds and rebuts each one. Mani lived during the reigns of Šāpūr I (r. 240–72), Hormizd I (r. 270–73), Bahrām I (r. 273–76), and Bahrām II (r. 276–93), who finally putting Mani to death. Several Arabic chronicles which preserve the Sasanian “Book of Kings” tradition (MP \textit{xwadāy-nāmag}) contain the episode in which Mani disputes with an unnamed mōbed. And in fact, a recently published Coptic Manichaean text from ca. 400 CE describes a debate between Mani and a priest of a Zoroastrian fire temple in Ormazd-Ardayštīr that is called \textit{Adourbat} “the judge” (Copt./Gr. \textit{δικαστής}); \textit{Keph.}359.3, for which see Gardner, BeDuhn, & Dilley 2018: 38-39; also cited by Vevaina 2022: 307-08, n. 75, with references to the Arabic tradition of Mani’s disputation with a Zoroastrian priest.
\item \textsuperscript{592} On the date and transmission of the Avesta, see the articles collected in the volume edited by Cantera 2012, e.g., Tremblay 2012: 117.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
irretrievably lost. This narrative of loss and destruction, however, is not attributed to the Arab conquest and the downfall of the Sasanids, nor to the subsequent dwindling of the priesthood as the population gradually converted to Islam. Instead, the ninth-century recollection of the lost tradition is located in the more distant past, with its savior also a distant figure:

<abar> brīnag ī bahr čiyōn hād ud fragard ī andar naskīhā az dēn gugāyīh <ud> āgāhīh az yašt-frawahr Žarduxšt čāšišn andar Ėrān šahr hazār būd āšnāg. ud pas az wīšōbišn <ī> az marg ī duš-xwarrah xešm-kerd aliksandar mad u-š būd ī ēdōn ābāz nē windād ī pad dostwar dāštān šāyēd hē. ud ān ī hu-fraward ādurbād ī mahrspandān padiš passāxt kerd ud bōxtan āšnāg tā-iz *nūn andar mādayān ī Ėrān šahr <ud> pad čāšišn ud pašn dāšt estēd

(Regarding) the divisions of the parts such as the haītis (sections) and fragards (chapters) which are within the nasks—from the testimony and knowledge of the dēn, from the teachings of Žardušt, whose spirit is worshipped—it is known that there were 1,000. And after the destruction which came after the death of the evil-fortuned, wrath-made Alexander, it was such that it was impossible for any authority (dastwar) to put it back together to preserve it. And that the blessed Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān’s was tested and saved is still known now within the books of Ėrānšahr (which) have been preserved through (his) teachings and agreements.

I have already mentioned that this narrative of destruction at the hands of the “accursed” Alexander is found in several ZMP works, and was likely to have been late-Sasanian propaganda. However, this motif also appears in contemporary Arabic literature, where its presence demonstrates the continued importance of such narratives—in the context of

593 For example, the short (non-)summary of the lost Waštag Nask says that the description of this particular section of the abestāg and zand have not been transmitted by any authority (Dēn. VIII.12.1, waštag abestāg zand pad dastwar ō amāh nē paywast ābādīh ast pahlom ahlāyīh; text from Skjærvø, Unpublished edition, 1454). The portions of the Avesta which were recited in the Zoroastrian liturgies are the only ones that survive, such as the Vīdēvdād—which is described as an entire Nask of the Great Avesta—as well as the Yasna and its intercalated ceremonies. For this argument of two separate traditions of transmission, i.e., the liturgical and the exegetical (which the Great Avesta represents), see Panaino 2012 and Cantera 2012.

594 Dēn. VIII.1.20-22 (=DkM.679.18-22); text from Skjærvø, Unpublished edition, 1448-49; translation adapted from Vevaina 2007: 65. Macuch 1987: 321-22 offers a similar translation, while West 1892: 10 translates passāxt kerd ud bōxt not as ‘tested and saved’ but as Ādurbād’s own ‘composition and preservation’ of the texts.
Islamic rule. The ZMP authors of the ninth and tenth centuries make relatively few direct references to conquering Arabs and Islam, instead preferring to project the destruction of the religious tradition to the more distant past. Similarly, the restoration (and orthodoxy) of the tradition is presumed to be just as ancient. Furthermore, it is directly accessed through the teachings and admonitions of Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān, which the ninth- and tenth-century ZMP texts claim to represent.

2.5 Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān:

The previous examples demonstrate the pervasive but polymorphous nature of the figure of Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān in Zoroastrian Middle Persian literature. Ādurbād also has a unique reputation in modern scholarship, where his role in organizing the Zoroastrian religion in the fourth century is often taken as a matter of fact. Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān is commonly described in modern scholarship as a mōbedān mōbed under Šāpūr II (r. 309-79), despite the fact that this title is nowhere applied to him in extant Zoroastrian Middle Persian literature. He does receive the priestly title mōbed occasionally in ZMP works, but is most frequently given the honorary titles of the departed, namely hufraward Ādurbād (meaning “blessed Ādurbād,” or perhaps colloquially “the late Ādurbād”), and anōšagruwān Ādurbād (meaning “Ādurbād of immortal soul,” or even “the dearly departed

595 E.g., in works by al-Mas‘ūdī and al-Bīrūnī, cited above; also see van Bladel 2009: 33-36.
596 E.g., Tafazzoli 1983 and Daryaee 2014: 66.
597 Bd.35.a.0-6.
598 AWN 1.10, Dēn.III.199, V.22, VI.D1, VII.5.5, VIII.13.18, and the Colophon to Dēnkard ms. B (to be discussed below).
Ādurbād”). His name commonly appears with no title at all, perhaps because he was so well-known by the Zoroastrian priestly authors and their audiences.

Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān is credited by the ninth-century priests with preserving the religion (MP dēn), and his example is frequently cited by them because they have similarly saved the dēn from destruction in the Islamic period. As previously mentioned, Ādurbād’s fame in the ZMP works is credited to his victory in disputation and/or his ordeal of molten copper. This fame spread outside of the Zoroastrian community, with Muslim Arabic authors mentioning his ordeal of molten metal. Ādurbād’s wise sayings were even translated into Arabic in the tenth or eleventh century, around the same time that the redaction of the Dēnkard and other ZMP works took place.

As discussed above, the authors of extant Zoroastrian Middle Persian works were not as concerned with recording “history” in chronicle or narrative form, in contrast to the Persian historical writing which survives in translations and summaries of the putative Xwadāy-nāmag (“Book of Kings”). Such overviews, including the passage from

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599 Pahl.Riv.DD.62, AWN 1.10, AAM and WEA. The title anōšag-ruwān thus denotes someone who is deceased, e.g., Xusrō I is called anōšag-ruwān to distinguish him from his grandson, Xusrō II.

600 E.g., Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī (d. 971), Taʾrīḫ, ed. Gottwaldt 1844-1848: 53; Ḥamza places Ādurbād during the reign of Šāpūr II with the short statement, “In his time lived Ādurbād, on whose chest molten brass was poured” (wa-fī zamānihī kāna ardabādu llaḏī uḏaybā s-suṭra ‘alā ṣadrīhī). A longer passage appears in al-Bīrūnī (d. 1050), al-Āṯār al-bāqiya, ed. Fück, 75-76; this passage is discussed and translated in Chapter 4. Interestingly, al-Bīrūnī attributes the original ordeal of molten copper to Zarduṣṭ and even claims that the Magians of his time still possessed the hardened copper balls from this miraculous event. A similar account is also recorded by the later Arabic geography of al-Qazwīnī (d. 1283), Āḏūr al-bilād wa-ḥbār al-ʿibād, ed. Wüstenfeld 1848: II.267-68 and trans. Gottheil 1894: 40-41.

601 Miskawayh (d. 1030) preserves the Mawāʾiz Āḏurbāḏ among other Persian andarz works in his al-Ḥikma al-ḥālīda (ed. Badawi, 26-28). This collection of wise sayings roughly corresponds to the Middle Persian andarz works attributed to the Sasanian-era mōbedān mōbed in ZMP works (see note above).

602 Although mōbeds were evidently active in the redaction and translation of the Xwadāy-nāmag into Arabic, as will be discussed in Chapter 4.
*Dēnkard* VIII quoted above, tend to skip over hundreds of years and highlight only a few individuals by name. The fact that Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān features so frequently in these overviews of the past points to his importance to the tradition. His name and his ordeal are mentioned in nearly all of the major extant ZMP works, and he seems to have been particular important to the editors of the *Dēnkard*.603

Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān has been a productive figure and focal point for both Islamic-era Zoroastrian priests and for modern scholars to articulate Sasanian orthodoxy as well as the continuity between Sasanian and Islamic-era Zoroastrianism. Daryaee refers to “the power of the Zoroastrian religious hierarchy and its important architect, Adurbād ī Mahrsapandān [sic].”604 Richard Zaehner, in his study of Zurvānism, views Ādurbād as its opponent and the source of orthodoxy for later Zoroastrians. He was the proponent of “the dualist doctrine, the doctrine of the two primeval spirits, Ohrmazd and Ahriman…the ‘pure’ Mazdean doctrine…”605 To the opposite view, Mary Boyce considered Ādurbād a “Zurvānite” (!).606 For Zaehner, however, Ādurbād’s reputation in the ZMP books is so cemented that he asserts of his doctrine: “It is basically the doctrine of the *Dēnkart*, which

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603 The major exception to this pattern of allusions to Ādurbād ī Mahrsandān is the *Dēnkard* III narrative, written by Ādurbād ī Ēmēdān, which only mentions the efforts of Ardaxšīr’s adviser Tansar, who is called a *hēredān hērbed* (*Dēn*.III.420.6). Both Tansar (also rendered as Tōsar) and Ādurbād ī Mahrsandān appear in the *Dēnkard* IV narrative, in which Tansar is mentioned during the reign of Ardaxšīr and Ādurbād ī Mahrsandān is mentioned during the reign of Šāpūr II. Tansar’s name also appears in Book VII of the *Dēnkard* in a similar list of righteous figures from the past, followed by Ādurbād ī Mahrsandān (*Dēn*.VII.7.14-20). Tansar, who also appears in the *Letter of Tansar* (for which see note above), may have been a real historical figure, since a monumental inscription from the reign of Ardaxšīr’s son, Šāpūr I (r. 242–70), names a Mihrag, son of Tansar, as a contemporary (SKZ 1.30).

604 Daryaee 2008: 67; also see Daryaee 2014: 66, where he calls Ādurbād ī Mahrsandān “the architect of Zoroastrian tradition in the Sasanian period.”

605 Zaehner 1955: 12, citing DkM.454.3 (= *Dēn*.V.22.4) for the ordeal and Šāpūr II’s acceptance.

606 Boyce 1979: 118, where after mentioning Ādurbād’s ordeal, she says, “Unfortunately it is nowhere said what were the doctrines which he thus valiantly upheld; but it may safely be assumed that he was a Zurvanite, like the Sasanian kings and other Persian high priests of their era.”
claims to have been handed down for five or six generations of the family of Ādurbād himself.” Zaehner is not alone in ascribing “orthodoxy” to the legacy of Ādurbād’s Zoroastrianism—in both the Sasanian and post-Sasanian periods. However, his statement about the family of Ādurbād requires some explanation.

3. Genealogy as the Basis of History (and Continuity)

More than just an exemplar, Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān is claimed as the ancestor of the Zoroastrian priestly line. Ādurbād’s genealogy appears in one of the final chapters of the Bundahišn, which was added to that text by the author or redactor sometime in the ninth or tenth century. This important chapter of the Bundahišn will be discussed in more detail below, but here I will note that its scholarly interpretation is confused, with each translator offering a different reading of the passage with regard to the names and number of individuals mentioned therein.

Genealogy appears to be especially important to the redactors of the ninth and tenth centuries, but there are hints that it held a larger place in the Zoroastrian tradition. For instance, in the chapter of the Bundahišn that lists the genealogies of important mōbeds like Ādurbād, the author mentions that the lineages he details are only a few of those mentioned in the Xwadāy-nāmag. Indeed, Arabic translations of the Xwadāy-nāmag tradition do contain some long genealogies, particularly for the legendary heroes of the

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607 Zaehner 1955: 12. For the position that Zurvānism is a (modern) scholarly invention, see Shaked 1992.  
608 An overview of extant translations and transcriptions of the passage is presented in the Appendix to Chapter 3.  
609 Bd. 35.a.7: ed. Bailey, 237; Skjærvø, Unpublished edition, 506; this corresponds with West’s Chapter XXXIII.9 (1880: 147).
past, as well as for Zardušt. Another passage of *Dēnkard* VIII describes the lost Čihrōdād nask of the Avesta (literally meaning “produced from the seed”), in which many lineages had been enumerated, including that of Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān.

Ādurbād seems to have been well-known even outside of the Zoroastrian tradition at this time: two Arabic sources from the late tenth and early eleventh centuries claim that all of the priests of the Islamic period are said to have been descended from him: al-Bīrūnī (d. 1050) explains that the Zoroastrian priesthood was established by Šāpūr II from the line of Ādurbād, and that in al-Bīrūnī’s own time anyone who wanted knowledge of the Avesta must have a written authorization (Ar. *sijill*) from leaders of the religion (Ar. *arbāb al-dīn*), i.e. Ādurbād’s descendants. I will discuss this passage in greater depth in the next chapter, along with the second text, a *risāla* of the Būyid secretary Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm al-Šābi’ (d. 994) dated to the year 986, in which Ṣamṣām al-Dawla grants protection to the descendants of Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān. This text has not to my knowledge been discussed by scholars of Zoroastrianism. However, the date of these Arabic references is important. Combined with the passages in the *Bundahišn*, the *Dēnkard*, and other ZMP texts which

610 Zardušt’s full lineage, which basically matches that presented in the *Bundahišn* (Bd.35), *Dēnkard* (VII.2.70) and the *Wizuagīh ī Zādspram* (Ch. 7), can be found in the Arabic works of al-Maṣ’ūdī (*Murūj*, ed. Pellat, I.270 / §547) and al-Ṭabarī (ed. de Goeje, II.682; trans. Perlmann IV.77); also see Mo’ in 1960.

611 *Dēn.* VIII.13.17-18, _ud was tōhmag ud sraw ī az ān frāz andar ham nask būd ošmurđ estēd u-šō būd guharīhist čiyūn sāsānīyān ī-šān pad huāfrīdān ošmarēd u-šān xwadāyīh ud andar Manuščihr nōdar yōišt friyān <mww> ī spand-šēdān tōhmag : auuarəθrabå . pid ī ādurbād ī mahrspandān : _ud astīh ēg iz pad bawēdīh estēd._ (text from Skærvø, Unpublished edition, 1455; translation in West 1982: 29). Because of the descriptions in *Dēnkard* VIII, it has been suggested that the Čihrōdād Nask, as well as the Dāmdād Nask, could be possible sources for the material in the *Bundahišn*; as in the *Bundahišn*, in the lost Čihrōdād Nask Ādurbād is included in the lineage of the mythical Manuščihr.

feature Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān, these references demonstrate a particular chronological window of the tenth century for the peak of this priest’s reputation in extant literary sources.

Although Ādurbād is lauded in many ZMP books and credited as a champion of the religion, actual claims about the Zoroastrian priesthood’s descent from his lineage do not appear in this or other Zoroastrian compositions and redactions of the late ninth and early tenth centuries. For example, neither the Dēnkard nor the works of Manuščihr refer to the lineage of Ādurbād. While Ādurbād’s genealogy is carefully reproduced in the final chapter of the Bundahišn, this chapter was probably a late ninth-century or early tenth-century appendix.

For example, in one of his Letters, Manuščihr, the rad of Pārs and Kirmān circa 881 CE, mentions the great deal of priestly work that he has to do, “…just as that (work) of the dear departed and very wise leader of the faithful Gušn-Jam ī Šāpūrān, together with a number of sons and relatives, priests of the same family (used to do)…”613 Manuščihr’s complaint, however, is that he must manage this work alone, a task made especially difficult by the conversion of many fire temples to mosques. While at first glance Manuščihr’s statement seems to corroborate the claims of the Bundahišn, i.e., that all the contemporary priests are from the same family, what he means is that things were much easier during his father’s lifetime, when a whole family of priests could attend to the duties to which Manuščihr must devote himself alone.614

613 NM I.3.10ff, ōwōn ī ān-iz ī hu-fraward ud meh-frazānag hu-denān pēšōbāy gušn-jam šābuhrān abāg čand pus ham-dūdag nāfag movīnād hamē rāyēnīd; cf. the partial text and translation of Kreyenbroek 1987a: 155, who reads this passage as evidence of the Islamicization of Kirmān under Ṣaffārid rule (869-903).
614 This and other letters of the collection are addressed to his brother, Zādspram, who has jurisdiction over another stretch of territory and seems equally put upon. In the passage quoted at the very beginning of this chapter, Manuščihr and Zādspram seem to be in disagreement over the proper practice of purification rituals: Zādspram desires to substitute a simpler ritual for the
Although he makes several comments about his contemporary priesthood and its function and authority, Manuščihr does not mention Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān at all in this capacity. Ādurbād only appears once in Manuščihr’s works, in a list of past and future heroes of the tradition. Here, Ādurbād is called dēn-abarag (“of superior religion”) and named just after Zardušt and Pēšōtān, but before Ūsidār, and Ūsidārmāh—all well-known anticipated savior figures, or saošiānts of the Zoroastrian tradition. Perhaps the importance of Ādurbād’s lineage was only emphasized later, in the tenth and eleventh centuries.

3.1 A Dēnkard Colophon:

At the end of the above quotation, Zaehner describes the transmission of the Dēnkard as having been “handed down for five or six generations in the family of Ādurbād himself.” In his note to this statement, Zaehner cites Dēnkard 946.12 (the page according to Madan’s edition) and provides a transcription and translation, which I include here.

The author claims to have transcribed his text from a copy…‘which is the religion of religions, even as the leaders of goodly Fravahr and good religion received it from the family of Hufravart Ādurbād, son of Mahrspand, for five or six generations.’

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615 For instance, in another Manuščihr’s writings, the Dādestān ī Dēnīg (DD.93.13), he states, “Manuščihr ī Gušn-Jam, the rad of Pārs and Kirmān and the commander of the hereditary guild of priests (asrōnān pēšāg), has ordered this to be written and has sealed (it) (Manuščihr ī gušn-jamān pārs ud kirmān rad ud āsrōnān pēšag framādār framād nibištān ud āwistā); similarly DD.44.5 mentions “the commander of the hereditary guild of priests (asrōnān pēšāg) of Pārs, who is the leader of the mōbeds of the province Pārs” (pārs āsrōnān pēšag framādār ud ābar awestān mōbedān ī pārs sālār pēšōbāy ī dēn waxš kerd), cited by Kreyenbroek 1987a: 160

616 There is another figure named Ādurbād who appears twice in Manuščihr’s Letters (NM II.5.14 and II.9.11), but he appears to be a contemporary rival (?) influencing Manuščihr’s brother Zādspram (according to the interpretation of West 1882: 346 n.3).


618 Zaehner 1955: 12 n. 3, as DkM.946.12. Zaehner reads the final verb (az…dašt) as the main one for this whole passage.
Zaehner’s note is misleading, because this is not actually a passage from the *Dēnkard* itself, but from a colophon in Manuscript B, the only complete *Dēnkard* manuscript. Although the manuscript itself was copied in 1659 in Iran, this earlier colophon is dated to 1020 CE and attests that it was copied in Baghdad. The copyist of this colophon specifically credits Ādurbād ī Mahrsandān for the knowledge contained therein, as well as the redactions of Ādurfarbay ī Farrozādān and Ādurbād ī Ėmēdān. But the passage that Zaehner translates is not quite correct. Compare the translation of Sanjana from 1928:

Completed in great joy…from a copy (*pachîn*) which as regards the Religion of religions, is identified with the leaders of the good Religion, who were of happy *fravāhars*, who were descended from the family (*dūdag*) of the holy *Ātāpūpa*, son of Mahraspend, who re-edited (*lakhvār vichārd*) with the help of (*min*) five or six very fortunate ones, the knowledge of the pure Revelation, which is the all-embellished learning of learnings; (and) as the leaders of those of the good Religion who successively (*ākhar ākhar*, or “later on”) at different times (*a-hamvār*) had, in order to maintain it recitation and research, prepared the restoration (of the Religion) at different places through their manuscripts and revision of them.

This translation is closer to that of E.W. West from 1892:

Completed in great joy…from a copy which, as regards the religion, is just as the leaders of the saintly and orthodox, who were of the family of the saintly Ātārpa, son of Māraspend, (who re-explained knowledge, by five or six well-destined ones, from the pure revelation which is the all-embellished learning of learnings) and the successive leaders of the orthodox (who again provided at different times [*ahamvār*] for its restoration, through manuscripts at various places, to maintain reading and investigation therein) had written.

Although West’s original translations are an invaluable source for Iranologists, this colophon has subsequently received more attention recently and deserves a better translation. The passage should be interpreted as follows:

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619 The entire colophon begins with a description of the place where it was copied: in Asūristān, and specifically in Baghdad; then there is a short history of the manuscript, followed by the copyist’s name: Māh-windād ī Narmāhān ī Wahrām ī Mihr-ābān. On the context of this colophon, see de Jong 2016.

620 Sanjana 1928: 95-108 (text) and 67-74 (translation).

621 West 1892: xxxiii-xxxiv.
čiyōn hu-frawhrān hu-dēnān pēšōbāyān ī az dūdag ī hu-fraward Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān ī az 5 ud 6 āwādag abāz az abēzāg dēn ī ast frahangān frahang ī harwist-pēsid dānāgīh wizard hu-dēnān pēšōbāyan ī pas pas abāz hāmwār andar xwānišn nigerišn dāšt ud virāyišn gyāg gyāg pad dast-nibēg-išān padiš kerd ud nibišt estād man Māhwindād ī Narmāhān ī Wahrām Mihr-abān rōz Dēn ī māh Tīr pērōzgar ī sāl 369 ī pas az sāl 20 ī īy bay Yazdgerd šāhān šāh ī Šahriyārān…

Thus, the blessed hu-dēnān pēšōbāyān ("leaders of the faithful") from the family of blessed Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān, five and six generations ago, explained the pure religion which is the knowledge of knowledges...

I, Māhwindād ī Narmāhān ī Wahrām Mihr-abān, on the day of Dēn in the month of Victorious Tīr, in the year 369 after the 20th year of his majesty Yazdgird, king of kings, son of Šahriyār [=1020 CE]…

By 1020, Ādurbād is seen as the progenitor of Zoroastrian scholarship. However, this Ādurbād, according to one reading of the colophon, is thought to have lived only five or six generations before the scribe Māhwindād. Even six long generations would not be enough to bridge the gap between Māhwindād in the eleventh century and Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān in the early Sasanian period.

3.2 The Bundahišn “Priesterstammbaum”

The Bundahišn, or "Primal Creation," is a capacious Zoroastrian cosmological work that covers a range of religious topics. The end of this text includes a series of chapters that provides the genealogies of past, contemporary, and future figures in the Zoroastrian tradition, e.g., the Kayān (including Hōshang and Frēdūn) as well as that of

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622 Text from Skjærvø, Unpublished edition.
623 Cf. translation of West 1892: xxxii ff; Rezania 2017: 32 omits this part of the colophon, and de Jong 2016: 232, acknowledging the difficulty of the text, just summarizes this part by saying, “A part of the colophon describes the history of the text, to which various generations of leaders of the Zoroastrians had contributed much of their time and effort.”
624 So termed by Ferdinand Justi in his Iranisches Namenbuch (1895: 191); the importance of this passage has been noted from the beginning, and Justi offers his own genealogical chart in his appendices, based on West’s interpretation of the passage (1895: 393).
625 See the recent translation of Agostini & Thrope 2020.
Zardušt and the future savior figures that will come at the end of Arab rule.\footnote{\textit{Bd.} 35 = \textit{West} 1882 Ch. XXXI-XXXIII. The genealogical chapter only appears in the longer, Iranian recension of the \textit{Bundahišn}—and only in two of the manuscripts, as I explain below. Anklesaria 1956: 15 classifies Ch. XXXV as original to the work, albeit an appendix (thus Skjærvø’s designation of “35.a.” in his unpublished edition), under the third “head” which he calls “the Kayan dominion;” for Anklesaria, it is not among the chapters that may have been “afterthoughts of the compiler or inserted by some persons later on in the work” (i.e., Ch. XXV, XXVI, XXVII, XXX, XXXIV, and XXXVI), but is an integral part of the ninth-century redaction. Chapter 36, which provides chronologies of different reigns and predicts the end of Arab rule, was added by a twelfth-century redactor.} This section of the \textit{Bundahišn} also contains the genealogy of the final redactor of the work and a list of his contemporary mōbeds. This genealogy goes all the way back to the legendary Manuščihr through a shared lineage with Zardušt himself. This chapter of the \textit{Bundahišn} is crucial for determining the names and relatively chronology of the editors of the ZMP works. As such I will devote considerable space to it here, especially because the scholarly interpretation of it has varied so widely.

The author of this chapter of the \textit{Bundahišn}, who later gives his name as Farrbay,\footnote{I follow Gignoux’ transcription of “Farrbay” for this MP name spelled [plnbg]; see note above. There are several other variations of this spelling, as well as interpretations of his epithet: West did not read the first part as a name, but renders the line as “…and I, too, they boast, whom they call ‘the administration of perfect rectitude’ (\textit{Dādagīh-i Aš́āvahist})” (West 1880: 147); Bailey originally read the name as “Nar-farnbay whom they call Dātēh son of Ašāvahišt” (1933: 236) but in his later notes he corrects the first part of his name to Ātur-farnbay (1989: 221-22); Anklesaria reads “Frenabag, whom they call Dātakīh son of Ašavahist” (1956: 305) but also renders it in his introduction as “Frōbag, son of Dātakīh, son of Ašavahist” (1956: 28-29); Pakzad’s edition reads *man *\textit{Farrōbag ī xwānēnd *Dādagīh ī Aš̂awahišt} (2005: 409); Agostini & Thrope retain Pakzad’s spelling of these names (2020: 189-90); Skjærvø’s unpublished edition reads \textit{ud man-iz Farnbay ī xwānēnd Dādagīh ī Aš̂awahišt} (pg. 506); Choksy’s annotated index of the \textit{Bundahišn} does not include all of the names in the genealogy, but he does read the author’s name as \textit{Farrōbag ī Ardwahišt ī Gōšnjam} (1986: 214).} explains that Zardušt’s father had two sons, Pōrūšasp and Ārāstīy, whose sons were Zardušt and Mēdōmāh, respectively. Zardušt first received and preached the religion (MP \textit{dēn}), and then Mēdōmāh (his cousin) received it from him. The author Farrbay states, “I will detail how the mōbeds of Pārs are all traced back to this lineage of Manuščihr,” i.e. through
Mēdōmāh. Before giving his own family lineage, the author of the *Bundahišn* first gives the full lineage of two *mōbeds* from the distant past: Bāg ī Way-bōxtān, who is glossed as the *mōbedan mōbed* of Šāpur II (r. 309–79), and Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān. Both of these high priests are shown to share a lineage that goes back to the legendary Manuščihr: the former through Mēdōmāh (Zardušt’s cousin), and the latter through a separate lineage back to the grandson of Manuščihr. Thus, when Farrbay gives his own ancestry—through his mother’s line—back to the *mōbedan mōbed* Bāg ī Way-bōxtān, the author is included in the longer lineage of Manuščihr. However, he is only distantly related to Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān, although they both share that same lineage. The following composite chart of these several *Bundahišn* genealogies demonstrates this shared lineage:

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628 Bd.35.53-56, Zarduxšt ka-s dēn āwurd nazdist / fradom andar Ėrānwēz frāz yašt Frašwad [ud] Mēdōmāh [dēn] az-iš padirift. mōbedān ī Pārs hamāg abāz ō ēn tōhmag ī Manuščihr šawēnd / hēnd gōkān kunam / gōwam. See Agostini & Thrope 2020: 188, who offer the following translation: “When Zoroaster brought the dēn, he first offered worship in Ėrānwēz, and Pašsidwad and Mēdyōmāh received it from him. All the mowbeds in Pārs trace their descent from Manuščihr. I will provide a detailed list: From Zoroaster, three sons and three daughters were born…”

629 Bd.35a.0-6 (Skjærvø, Unpublished edition, 504-05) = West 1880: 145-47 (Ch. XXXIII.1-11). Note that Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān is not identified here as a *mōbedan mōbed* at all; it is Bāg ī Way-Bōxtān, who is otherwise unknown, who is called *mōbedan mōbed* of Šāpūr.

630 Bd.35a.6, mādar kē-s man aziš zād ham duxt ī Frīy-māh... This is the lineage of the author, not what comes later in the text; as Bailey says, “Had his father been of the same family it would seem likely that he would have named him rather than his mother” (1933: 14). E.W. West also commented upon this passage (1880: 146, n.8), noting the shared genealogy of the author with the previous individual (Mihr- / Mitrō-akāvid)—who was son of Mardān-vēh, just as the author’s ancestor Pûyisn-shâd was son of Mardān-vēh (see chart below). Aside from Bailey and West, however, this aspect of the author’s genealogy has not been much remarked, but it makes me wonder about the patrimony of the Zoroastrian priesthood in the context of close-kin marriages (when one’s mother could also be one’s sister, or one’s wife also one’s sister). Compare the lineage of Ardaxšīr I, whose name is given earlier in the *Bundahišn* genealogy as “Ardaxšīr, son of Pābag, whose mother was a daughter of Sāsān” (Ardaxšīr ī Pābagān kē-s mād duxt ī Sāsān); other lineages in the genealogical chapters of the *Bundahišn* also go through the mother’s line. Similarly, in the late-Sasanian Syriac cycle known as the *Acts of Pethion*, the narrator tells us in the lineage of Anahīd through her maternal grandfather, Māh-Ādur-Farrah-Zardušt (who was a highly placed Magian noble and religious teacher) and not through her *mōbed* father, Ādur-Hormizd (who was an apostate and Christian martyr); *AMS* II.589.

631 This chart and the others in the dissertation were produced from my own readings of the *Bundahišn*, using LucidChart (free version available online).
Figure 47: Composite genealogies of the *Bundahišn*
Then Farrbay asserts that all of the other mōbeds of his generation also share the lineage of the mythical Manuščihr:

\[
\text{abārīg harw mōbedān ī-šān pad xwadāyīh-nāmag az ham dūdag gōwēd az ēn tōhmag ī Manuščihr ħend. awēšān-iz mōbedān ī nūn ħend hamāg az ham dūdag ħend xwānēnd. ud man-iz-Farrbay ī xvānēnd dādagīh ī Ašawahišt ... ud abārīg mōbedān az ham-dūdag būd ħend.}
\]

All the mōbeds who were in the “Book of Kings” (xwadāyīh-nāmag), it is said, were from the same family, from the lineage of Manuščihr; and all those whom they call mōbeds now, they say, are also from the same family. And also me, Farrbay, whom they call “the administrator,” the son of Ašawahišt…and all the mōbeds, have been from the same lineage.633

I have intentionally omitted a portion of this text here because its reading is so problematic—and a major source of the inconsistencies in the “traditional genealogy” which I will examine critically next.

3.3 Variant readings of the Bundahišn genealogy:

There are two recensions of the Bundahišn: the (shorter) Indian Bundahišn and (longer / “Greater”) Iranian Bundahišn. The former was known first and brought to Europe in the eighteenth century by Antequil Duperron (a 1734 copy of the fourteenth-century manuscript K20) while the Iranian Bundahišn was first brought to India from Iran in 1870 (from manuscript TD1, dated either to 1530 or 1550).634 The genealogical section appears only in manuscript TD1 and its later copy TD2 (with variants), and thus is missing from the Indian recension of the text. Additionally, there are no other complete manuscripts of

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632 This reading of the text comes from Bailey’s 237 (Ch. 35); cf. Skjærvø, Unpublished edition, 506 (Bd. 35.a.7); West’s Chapter XXXIII.9 (1880: 147).
633 My translation.
the longer, Iranian Bundahišn besides TD1 and its copy TD2. None of the incomplete copies preserve the section containing the genealogical chapters.\textsuperscript{635}

Facsimile editions of both manuscripts TD1 and TD2 have been published, as well as a modern edition of the text by Fazlollah Pakzad.\textsuperscript{636} The unpublished 1933 dissertation of Harold Bailey, in which he produced an edition and translation of the Bundahišn, with commentary, is also a crucial resource for anyone working on the text—although at that time he did not have access to the older manuscript TD1.\textsuperscript{637} However, Bailey kept working on the Bundahišn until the end of his life, and his working copy of the text as of 1989 is held at the Ancient India and Iran Trust in Cambridge.\textsuperscript{638} Domenico Agostini and Samuel Thrope recently (2020) published a new translation of the Bundahišn, but they mostly rely on the readings of Pakzad and Bailey before them, particularly for the chapter in question.

Thus, we have two manuscripts containing the genealogical chapter, both of which were copied within the same family of sixteenth-century priests.\textsuperscript{639} Both of the manuscripts TD1 and TD2 have omissions and repetitions that make it difficult to come to any consensus about where to break up the names of individuals. There are at least seven

\textsuperscript{635} Facsimiles of TD1 and TD2 can be found in P.K. Anklesaria 1970 and Anklesaria & Anklesaria 1908, respectively; see MacKenzie 1989b for an overview of this important text.
\textsuperscript{636} Pakzad 2005.
\textsuperscript{637} Bailey 1933; although this “edition” remains unpublished, it has circulated among scholars. Pakzad 2005 is a complete edition of the Greater Bundahišn; Agostini & Thrope 2020 offer a more recent translation, and supposedly a new edition of the text is forthcoming.
\textsuperscript{638} Bailey 1989.
\textsuperscript{639} Anklesaria generally preferred manuscript TD2, despite its being a later copy of TD1—though he does ascribe importance to all three manuscripts (the third being DH, which is missing folios from the beginning and the end, and thus does not include the genealogical chapter). Anklesaria dates the original Iranian recension of the Bundahišn (the GBd) through the genealogy of the “author,” who according to his reading, gives his lineage twice (twelve ancestors on his mother’s side, and six on his father’s side); he translates this lineage both in the introduction and in the body of the translation itself, and concludes the following: “There remains little doubt that the Iranian text gives us almost the original of Farōbag, and the “future translator of the Bûndahishn will…have to take the text in TD as the nearest accessible approach to the original work”” (1956: 30, quoting West 1880: xxxviii).
different versions of this passage in the various editions and translations published since that of West (1880), which list as many as five contemporary priests and as few as two (see Appendix 3). Then there is further confusion about whether these names can be identified with any individuals we already know from other sources. All of this has significant consequences for how we perceive the Zoroastrian priesthood in the post-Sasanian period, as well as how they perceived themselves in terms of both their authority in the present and their connection to the past. So how can there be such ambiguity about this incredibly important passage?

3.4 The patronymic formula (again):

A great deal of the ambiguity of the Bundahišn chapter has to do with the assumption of a patrilineal relationships based upon either a) a particular grammatical structure which is easily effaced through copying error, or b) the conflation of the names of individuals across centuries of Zoroastrian history. First, a review of the grammatical explanation of the MP patronymic suffix (-ān) and the so-called patronymic “formula” (introduced in Chapter 1), is in order. Skjærvø describes the suffix -ān as not only an oblique marker or a patronymic (i.e., an adjective formed from the name of one’s father), but also a general adjectival suffix.640 Similarly, Durkin-Meisterernst classifies the suffixes -agān and -ān as patronymics.641 The Middle Persian patronymic “formula” consists of a two-part name, with the second part ending in the patronymic suffix –ān [ʾn]; thus, the

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640 Skjærvø 2009: 262, where he explains “-ān forms adjectives denoting appurtenance, especially filiation: ardašīr-ān ‘son of Ardashir,’ razm ī wištāsp-ān ‘the battle fought by Wistāsp;’ the expanded form -ag-ān commonly denotes ‘son of’ or serves to build adjectives of relation or appurtenance: šābuhr-ag-ān ‘son of Shabuhr’ (also the name of the book Mani presented to king Šābuhr); pābagān is ambiguous, ‘son of Pāb/Pābag.’”

641 Durkin-Meisterernst 2014: 158 (§ 302) and 162 (§ 312.1.a).
pattern of X ī Y-ān (“X, the son of Y”). The two names are linked by the Middle Persian ē [ZY / y], a particle which links adjectives to their antecedent (among other things).\footnote{Note that MP ē is the precursor of the New Persian (-e), and so it is sometimes called ezafē. Also, the MP suffix -ān can denote the oblique plural.}

An example of this “formula” can be found in the name of the most famous Zoroastrian priest from the Sasanian period: Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān, where Ādurbād is the son of Mahrspand—or from the house of the Mahrspand. And here we already have a genealogical conundrum, because as in the names of the Sasanid and Parthian noble houses, e.g., the Mihrān from Ray, the patronymic suffix does not necessarily indicate direct patrilineal descent. Indeed, Zardušt himself is commonly referred to as Zardušt ī Spitāmān, where the patronym does not denote the name of his father (which is Pōrušasp) but of his family lineage. Regardless, there are other issues with the idea of this “formula,” many of which I addressed in the first chapter of the dissertation.

As I discussed in Chapter 1 with regard to the Ĭabarestān archive, it is unclear that the patronymic formula’s well-attested use in late-Sasanian administrative inscriptions carries the same function in post-Sasanian Zoroastrian Middle Persian writings. The extant copies of the ZMP texts I examine in this chapter were, in most cases, made no earlier than the fifteenth century. In these texts, the patronymic “formula” of X ī Y-ān (“X, the son of Y”) is used far less regularly than one might expect, given its frequency in Sasanian seal inscriptions. For instance, in longer genealogical lists in the Bundahišn and other ZMP texts, the patronymic suffix -ān commonly appears without a preceding ezafē (ī). The most common way to express patrilineal relationships in these lists is with the ezafē (ī) alone linking a son’s name to his father’s—which commonly appears without the patronymic suffix (e.g., X ī Y ī Z, etc.). I will call these genealogies “string lineages,” to distinguish
them from lineages based upon the patronymic formula. In fact, if there is any pattern at all to the genealogies of ZMP texts, it seems to be that either the patronymic suffix (-ān) or the linking ezafe (ī) is used, but not both.

In different parts of the Bundahišn, the name of the Sasanian-era priest Bāg ī Way-Bōxtān appears with and without the patronymic suffix. He first appears in the beginning of his own string lineage as Bāg ī Way-bōxtān ī Ādur-bandag (“Bāg, the son of Way-Bōxt, the son of Ādur-bandag”) and later, at the end of Farrbay’s string lineage (through his mother), as Bāg ī Way-bōxt. Perhaps the loss of the patronymic was simply a copying error. One might suppose, alternatively, that the late copyists had different rules for writing genealogies (whereby the patronymic suffix was unnecessary in long string lineages). At least in the Bundahišn, the ZMP text which preserves most of the extant genealogical lineages, the patronymic suffix does not usually appear in the string lineages which are formed on the pattern of “X ī Y ī Z.” For instance, Ādurbād ī Mahrspand ī (without the patronymic suffix) appears at the beginning of a string lineage, despite his name appearing nearly everywhere else as Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān. The above example of the initial Bāg ī Way-bōxtān (with the patronymic suffix) in a string lineage is thus the exception. In other instances, the patronymic suffix –ān (with or without the preceding ezafe) seems to be used most commonly when the name of a (usually famous) individual stands alone or is not immediately followed by his lineage, e.g. Ardaxšīr ī Pābagān. Note that in the Bundahišn genealogy of contemporary mōbeds, as it appears in manuscripts TD1 and TD2,

643 Bd. 35.a.1 and 35.a.6.
644 Bd. 35.a.3.
645 Bd. 35.36; immediately following the name is a relative clause, after which the string lineage begins.
the only names that are written with a patronymic suffix are Ādūrbād Mahrspandān and Ādūrbād Ėmēdān, and neither patronymic is preceded by the attributive ezafe (ī).

To further complicate matters, the ī was often easily left out in the copying of a manuscript or, alternatively, was mistaken for the single vertical stroke [‘/W] which either is used to mark the end of words ending in certain consonants or as the conjunction “and” (MP ud). These small omissions and mistakes lead to wide variation in interpretations of passages like the Bundahišn genealogy, and thus to wildly different conclusions about the nature of the priests’ familial relationships.

In summary, the irregularity or inconsistency of the expression of genealogy in ZMP texts, coupled with the assumed and unquestioned belief in the fixed nature of the patronymic suffix as known primarily from late-Sasanian seals and sealings, has led to a confusion with regard to the genealogical relationships among the post-Sasanian priests attested in ZMP literature. Perhaps what we really do not understand is how the Zoroastrian priests wrote their genealogies and reckoned their patterns of descent. These patterns are perhaps complicated by Zoroastrian practices of kin-marriage (and our lack of understanding of the practical implications of this practice), whereby one’s father may also be an uncle, or one’s mother or sister also one’s wife, and therefore her lineage might have been just as important (though harder to discern from extant ZMP literature) as that of the father.646 The various statuses of marriage and practices of adoption further complicate lineages.

It is possible that scholars have placed an undue emphasis on the patronymic (the name ending in –ān) as the marker of a genealogical relationship and the assumption of

646 See note above on the maternal lineage of the fifth-century Persian martyr Anahid as it is given in the Syriac narrative of her life.
male lines of heredity. As a point of contrast, the author / redactor of the *Bundahišn* genealogy traces his descent back through his *mother’s* line in a long string lineage that precedes the passage about contemporary *mōbeds* (*Bd*.35a.6). Yet I do not know of a single scholar that accepts this genealogy as Farrbay’s primary one. Instead, they each try to read more into the name he gives himself in the later passage (*Bd*.35a.7-8) and attempt to connect him to the Sasanian-era Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān. In light of all of these uncertainties, I am not inclined to base the genealogy of the entire priesthood on this single passage, nor am I confident in any of the previously offered readings of it.\(^{647}\) Nevertheless, I shall attempt my own.

3.5 The contemporary *mōbeds* of the *Bundahišn*:

Below I provide excerpts from facsimile editions of the two manuscripts, TD1 and TD2, for the passages in question (*Bd*.35a.7-8), from the facsimile editions of each manuscript.\(^ {648}\) My own transliteration and transcription of passages (*Bd*.35a.7-8) follows.\(^ {649}\) I then compare the two manuscript copies before offering my own interpretation of the passage.

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\(^{647}\) See Appendix 3 for a summary view of various other transcriptions and translations of this passage, as well as their resulting lists of contemporary *mōbeds*.

\(^{648}\) Images from P.K. Anklesaria 1970: 204-205 (TD1) and Anklesaria & Anklesaria 1908: 237-38 (TD2).

\(^{649}\) Spellings of the proper names follow those attested in Gignoux 1986a, where possible. See note above.
There are certainly issues in reading this passage, as outlined above. However, in my opinion, we can resolve some of these problems, at least on three points. First, the repetitions of *Zādspram* in TD1 and of *ī Zardušt* in TD2 are likely dittographical mistakes (especially the latter as it occurs across a line break) and should not be read as indications...
of another generation in this genealogical list. Second, the absence of the *ezafe* in both manuscripts for both the names “Ādurbād Mahrspandān” and “Ādurbād Ėmēdān” might also be copying errors, but I question the copyists’ adherence to the patronymic “formula” in practice. In my opinion, for the sixteenth-century scribes of TD1 and TD2, the use of the patronymic -ān without the preceding *ezafe* indicated the fixed form of a well-known name, such as that of the redactor of the *Dēnkard* and his Sasanian-era namesake.

Finally, the *ezafe* which follows “Ēmēdān” in TD2 is probably another copying error; otherwise, the wording ī ud (i.e., *ezafe* with “and”) is highly unusual. The ud itself might be a mistake either in the copying of the manuscripts or in our reading of them, since ud is written with just one short downward stroke and is often added or omitted at will in copying of Middle Persian manuscripts. However, the copyist of TD2 seems particularly careful about adding the word-final marker [w/y] wherever applicable, and this instance appears to be a deliberate use of [W] as ud. If the scribe had added it directly to the final [n] of the name Ėmēdān it might have been mistaken as that final downward stroke instead. The copyist of TD1 does not make the same regular use of [w] as the word-final marker, and thus its presence after Ėmēdān also seems deliberate. My emended reading of the passage is as follows:

\[abārīg harw mōbedān ī-šān pad xwadāyīh-nāmag az ham-dūdag göwēd az ēn tōhmag ī Manuščihr hēnd awēšān-iz mōbedān ī nūn hēnd hamāg az ham-dūdag hēnd xwānēnd ud man-iz-Farrbay ī xwānēnd dādagīh ī Āšawahišt Gušn-Jam ī Wahrāmsād ī Zardušt Ādurbād Mārspandān Zādspram ī Gušn-Jam Ādurbād Ėmēdān ud Āšawahišt ī Frāy-Srōš ud abārīg mōbedān az ham-dūdag būd hēnd\]

If we break up the names of this reading accordingly, it results in a list of five contemporary priests:
1. Farrbay, whom they call dādagīh, son of Ašawahišt, son of Gušn-Jam, son of Wahrām-šād, son of Zardušt
2. Ādurbād (ī) Mahrspandān
3. Zādspram, son of Gušn-Jam
4. Ādurbād (ī) Ēmēdān
5. Ašawahišt, son of Frāy-Srōš

Moreover, as Farrbay claims, all of these priests are from the lineage of Manuščihr—and not, as scholar suppose, the lineage of Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān. Remember that Farrbay has already given his genealogy (through his mother) back to a fourth-century mōbedān mōbed Bāg ī Wāy-bōxtān (whose lineage goes back to the legendary Manuščihr) and claimed this same family lineage for all the mōbeds. The fourth-century Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān, whose lineage is given just after Bāg ī Wāy-bōxtān, is similarly descended from the legendary Manuščihr—but through a separate familial line from that of the author Farrbay.

Not only does my reading of the passage above separate the string lineage of Farrbay from Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān, but also there is an additional reason to believe Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān is not his ancestor: the number of individuals listed between Farrbay and Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān, if we do accept this as a string lineage, indicates only a span of four generations (or possibly five, if Dādagīh is actually a proper name). In contrast, when Farrbay traces his lineage through his mother’s line to Bāg ī Wāy-bōxtān, who is noted as a contemporary of Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān, there are at least twelve generations between them. It is unlikely that four generations could span this same gap.

Rather more probable is that this Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān is another mōbed named for the famous fourth-century Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān and is a contemporary of Farrbay in the late ninth or early tenth century. There is even a candidate for just such an individual: a New Persian rivāyat copied in the seventeenth-century names a certain Ādurbād ibn
Mahrsfandān ibn Ašawahišt as responsible for copying the Dēnkard in AY 300 [=931 CE].

It is possible that this Ādurbād ī Mahrs pandān was another descendant of an Ašawahišt we have already met and might fit somewhere in our priestly family tree. Al-Birūnī (d. 1050) mentions a report by “Ādurbād, the mōbed of Baghdad,” who may be this tenth-century copyist of the Dēnkard, if not the final redactor of that work, Ādurbād ī Ėmēdān. But it is impossible to know for certain.

In any case, an early tenth-century date for Farrbay’s descendant fits the identification of another Zoroastrian priest from that time: Zādspram ī Gušn-Jamān, whose name appears as the author of a Middle Persian compilation known the Wizīdagīhā ī Zādspram (“The Selections of Zādspram”), and who is known as the brother and correspondent of Manuščihr ī Gušn-Jamān, whose letters are dated to 881 CE.

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650 British Library MS Avestan 8, fol. 147r.9-10; [‘drb’d bn mhrlsnd bn asw(h)št]. I first became aware of this reference through a note in E.W. West’s translation of the Bundahišn genealogical chapter, where the rivāyat passage is cited and translated by West as follows: “The book Dînkard which the dastûrs of the religion and the ancients have compiled, likewise the blessed Ātarō-pâd son of Mâraspend, son of Asavahist of the people of the good religion, in the year three hundred of Yazdagard Shahryâr, collected some of the more essential mysteries of the religion as instruction, and of these he formed this book” (West 1880: 147 n.4). West’s identification of this individual is taken for granted by Justi 1895: 191 (s.v. “Mañθra-speñta” no. 4, as “Atūnpāt Mâraspand, S. des Aschowahišt, Herausgeber des Dînkart a.o. 931, Priesterstammbaum des Bundehesch”), and is also cited by Donahue 1973: 78 n. 7-8; otherwise, I have not seen mention of this individual by other Iranologists or Zoroastrian studies scholars. This rivāyat manuscript has been recently digitized, and can be found online; Ursula Sims-Williams 2012: 185 notes that it was copied in 1020 AY [=1651 AD] at Navsari by Peshotan ibn Faridun ibn Homji. Vitalone (1987: 9-10) lists other manuscript copies of this particular rivāyat, of Šāpur Āsā, which include two at the Meherji Rana Library at Navsari (NMR T. 30 and NMR F. 60), two at the Mulla Firoze Library at Bombay (MFL SDB 248 and MFL 225), and one at the Bodleian Library of Oxford (Ousley collection 225). I am grateful to Jamie O’Connell for clearing up this information (personal communication); however, I have not yet had a chance to compare these manuscripts with BL Avestan 8.


652 NM I.1.0 and II.1.0 name both Zâdspram ī Gušn-Jam and his brother Manuščîhr ī Gušn-Jam as hērbeds, another type of priest usually understood with a more local or educational role; it is possible he became a mōbed after 881, or else the priests could bear multiple titles for different functions (?).
Furthermore, as I will demonstrate below, the Ādurbād ī Ėmēdān mentioned in the Bundahišn passage is likely the last known redactor of the Dēnkard, who flourished in the early tenth century, a generation after Ādur Farrbay ī Farrozādān (fl. 830s). Thus, we have several good reasons to place Farrbay’s redaction of the Bundahišn and his genealogy of contemporary mōbeds in the late ninth to early tenth century. However, problems arise once one starts to chart out their genealogy as a single family.

The next section explores the many errors and misconceptions that have been recycled in scholarship in the effort to see all the known Zoroastrian priests of the Islamic era as members of the same family—and thus continuing the legacy of the Sasanian priesthood.

4. Inconsistencies, over-identifications, and the patronymic “formula”:

There are two other issues in determining priestly genealogy: 1) the over-identification of individuals based on the similarities of their names, and 2) the recycling of assertions from one scholar to another, neither with credit nor the citation of the original source material.

The first problem arises from the frequency of certain names and the apparently common practice of naming a son after his grandfather, so that there are often cycles of repeated names. A famous example of this is the fourth-century Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān, 653 There is, however, a later colophon attached to some manuscripts of the Bundahišn, which does not figure into the discussion here. 654 Especially if we want to consider Farrbay’s list an exhaustive one of all the contemporary mōbeds—for example, can we assume a later / earlier date for other known individuals who are not mentioned by Farrbay? Or do those individuals help to date his redaction of the Bundahišn (i.e., before the floruit of Isfandiyār, who died in 936 CE)? Or is it more likely that Farrbay’s list is selective?
whose son is named Zardušt ī Ādurbād, and whose grandson is named Ādurbād ī Zarduštān.\footnote{Although this lineage also seems suspect to me, the three are traditionally dated to the reigns of the Persian kings Šāpūr II through Yazdgird I; see the references in the Appendix of Chapter 2.} The evidence of the Sasanian administrative seal inscriptions indicates the popularity of the name Ādurbād. Compounds with the element ādur (“fire”) account for over a hundred and fifty names in the corpus of Sasanian administrative seal inscriptions of clerical officials and magi.\footnote{In this corpus of over 1000 seal inscriptions of Zoroastrian priests (a database which I created for another the first chapter of the dissertation), Ādur is the most frequent name element followed only by Ġušnasp (which accounts for just over one hundred instances).} MP Ādur-bād means “protected by the fire,” and so it is not surprising that it was a common name for Zoroastrian priests—considering the sacred nature of the fire in the religion. They need not all be the same person.

As to the second problem, I will demonstrate an example of what I call the “traditional genealogy.” In the subsequent section, I will offer a method for how to move beyond it.

4.1 The “traditional genealogy” in modern scholarship:

Despite the problems of interpreting the Bundahišn genealogy, the presence of the names Zardušt, Ašawahišt, and Gušn-Jam in that passage, coupled with the assumption of a lineage going back to the famous fourth-century Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān, has been the basis for the conflation of all the known Zoroastrian priests into one family.

For example, Mary Boyce offers the following summary of the office of the high priesthood in the Islamic period, delineating the bearers of the title hudēnān pēšōbāy (“leader of the faithful”) over the span of 150 years:

The first one known is Adurfarnbag Farrokhzadan, a pious and distinguished man who lived at the time of Ma’mun (813-33), and ably defended the Zoroastrian faith in debate at his court. He was succeeded by his second son Zardusht, who is suspected of having brought sorrow to the community by apostatizing in the reign
of Mutawakkil (847-61), and becoming one of the intimates of that caliph. If this is so, his son Wahramshad remained unshaken, for he is twice cited as an authority in matters of Zoroastrian law; and the office of Hudinan peshobay passed to his son Goshnjam. Goshnjam himself had four distinguished sons, one of whom, Manushchihr (fl. c. 881) succeeded him in office.657

Many other scholars both before and since have provided their own similar summaries, with some even citing this specific passage from Boyce.658 Unfortunately, the second half of it is mostly incorrect.

The main problem with Boyce’s summary is that the Wahrāmšād to whom Boyce refers as an authority on Zoroastrian law (albeit without a citation) appears only in late-Sasanian texts like the so-called Sasanian law book, known as the Mādayān ī Hazār Dādestān (MHD), or the “Book of a Thousand Judgments,” as well as the Middle Persian commentaries to the Yasna (and always without a patronymic).659 It is true that the name does appear in the genealogical chapter of the Bundahišn in the string lineage of Farrbay as Gušn-Jam ī Wahrāmšād ī Zardušt, but there is no indication that these are the same individuals known from other texts. In fact, the MHD refers to a Gušn-Jam ī Wahištbar, with an entirely different patronymic of his own.660 Moreover, the ninth-century Manuščihr, brother of Zādsprām, names his own father as Gušn-jam ī Šāpūrān in his letters,

658 Boyce is taken as so authoritative on this matter, that both Jamsheed Choksy and Mahmoud Jaafari-Dehaghi explicitly cite to this passage as evidence of the genealogical relationship of all of these individuals (Choksy 1997: 80, Jaafari-Dehaghi 1998: 24). But the same over-identification and conflation of these individuals can be found earlier, in the works of B.T. Anklesaria (e.g., 1956: 29 and 1969: 17, both of which were published posthumously after his death in 1908) and Chacha (1936: 56).
659 MHD 69.13, A9.5, A11.16. The MHD is a legal sourcebook consisting of actual and imaginary cases that deal with various aspects of civic and religious law; also discussed in Chapters 1-2.
660 MHD A.10.5; here Zurwāndād, elsewhere named as Zurwāndād ī Gušn-Jam (MHD 36.9), appears to be a his contemporary. Gušn-Jam is also cited (without a patronymic) at MHD 89.8, A11.16, A12.11, A31.9, and A36.2.
i.e., “the son of Šāpūr.” Boyce has filled in the genealogical tree by assuming that an authority cited in the late-Sasanian MHD bears a direct relation to the authorities known from Arabic sources of the Islamic era.

But there are no strong grounds for this assumption. If this were the case, then the Bundahišn and its genealogy would have to be dated far earlier than the ninth century. It is far more likely that there is more than one Gušn-Jam, more than one Zardušt, and more than one Ašawahišt in the whole of Zoroastrian priestly history. However, many of the traditional interpretations of the priestly genealogies try to link all these texts together, despite other evidence of their distant chronological settings.

This error appears as early as Justi’s Namenbuch, where, based on West’s interpretation of the passage, Justi offers his own genealogical chart in his appendices. And the “traditional genealogy” is recycled through several more recent encyclopedia entries, for example Shaki’s entry on “Ēmēd ī Ašawahištān” and Gignoux’ on “Zādspram” in the Encyclopaedia Iranica; but also Guidi and Morony’s treatment of “Mōbadh” for the Encyclopaedia of Islam (second edition). There are many other

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661 NM I.3.10, ōwōn ī ān-iz ī hu-fraward ud meh-frazānag hu-denān pēšōbāy gušn-jam šābuhrān [gwšn’ym y ẽ pwḥl’n] abāg čand pus ham-dūdag nāfag mowīmard hamē rāyēnūd.
662 1895: 393.
663 Shaki 1998, who says that Ėmēd “was of a long line of leading mōbeds, descendant of Ādurbād ī Mahraspandān…a fifth-generation descendant of the renowned Ādurbād ī Farrooxzadān…a nephew of Manūščihr, the author of Dādestān ī dēnīg, and the father of Ādurbād ī Ėmēdān, the last redactor of the Dēnkard.”
664 Gignoux 2005b, who states that Zādspram was “one of the four sons of Gušn-Jam,” with “his brothers Zurvāndād, Manuščihr, and Ašavahišt,” who was a descendant of Ādurbād ī Mahraspandān, and whose father (i.e., Gušn-Jam) is cited as an authority in several ZMP works; but he at least acknowledges that the tradition of his descent from Ādurbād ī Mahraspandān is “unverifiable,” although like nearly everyone else he declines to cite the source of this tradition.
665 Guidi & Morony (no date), where they state that Ėmēd ī Ašawahištān was the nephew of Manuščihr.
examples of this “traditional genealogy” in modern scholarship, although they are often abbreviated—and almost never cite textual sources.\textsuperscript{666}

An exception appears in a recent article by Götz König, who cites both ZMP and Arabic sources in his chart of the post-Sasanian priests—although he seems to ignore the fact that the latter prove this “traditional genealogy” to be chronologically inaccurate.\textsuperscript{667} In trying to fit all of the known authors and authorities of ZMP works into a single family tree, König conflates individuals who bear the same name but who appear in works written centuries apart, just as Boyce does with the authorities of the \textit{Mādayān ī Hazar Dādestān}. König’s chart is merely a footnote to the larger point of his article, but this most recent repetition of uncritical assumptions about the relationship of the Zoroastrian priests demonstrates the need for some clarity on these points.

The Arabic sources will be examined next in order to establish a common chronology for the ninth- and tenth-century Zoroastrian priests. First, I will establish some criteria for the identification of individuals and relatives across different sources.

4.2 A new method:

Possible identifications of individuals can be made when \textit{one} part of a name is shared across sources; the mere possibility becomes probable only when \textit{two} parts of the name match; and the most certain identifications are those which also have evidence of a contemporary chronology. In the case of identifying familial relationships, the repetition

\textsuperscript{666} E.g., Kanga 1951: 196-98; de Menasce 1975 offers several uncited statements, such as the fact that Manušcihr was “a descendant of Āturfarnbag,” and that Ėmēd ī Ašawahīštān “was Manušcihr’s nephew.”

\textsuperscript{667} König 2018: 12-13. König ignores the chronological impossibility of Ėmēd ī Ašawahīštān being the father of Ėdurīd ī Ėmēdān, even as he cites the relevant dates from the passage in al-Masʿūdi’s (ca. 956) \textit{Tanbih}—which will be presented below.
of the patronymic should only indicate possible or probable matches, which become certain only from other corroborating evidence (e.g., depending on context, contemporary chronology, or the matching of further strings of genealogy).

For example, the Zādspram ī Gušn-Jam named in the Bundahišn is probably the author of the ZMP compilation known the Wizīdagīhā ī Zādspram (where he is also called Zādspram ī Gušn-Jamān).\textsuperscript{668} He is also probably the brother and correspondent of the priest Manuščihr ī Gušn-Jamān, the author of a series of Letters and the Dādestān ī Dēnīg; Manuščihr addresses several letters to brād Zādspram (“brother Zādspram”) and Zādspram ī Gušn-Jamān (“Zādspram, the son of Gušn-Jam”) and provides independent evidence of a ninth-century date.\textsuperscript{669}

Based only on the repetition (and over-identification) of the name Gušn-Jam in several different ZMP texts, scholars have asserted that this figure had four sons: Manuščihr, Zādspram, Ašawahišt, and Zurwāndād. The fourth son, Zurwāndād, is included by scholars in this genealogy because of the occurrence of the name Zurwāndād ī Gušn-Jam as an authority in the MHD.\textsuperscript{670} However, this text is firmly dated to the late Sasanian period because its compiler, Farroxmard ī Wahrāmān, only cites examples through the reign of Xusrō II (r. 591-628). The chronological distance between the MHD and Farrbay’s redaction of the Bundahišn makes it impossible for Zurwāndād to be a contemporary of the mōbeds listed by the latter. We can no longer claim that Gušn-Jam had four sons. Nor can we claim any relationship between all of these individuals except for Zādspram and Manuščihr being brothers as well as the sons of someone named Gušn-Jam, who can no

\textsuperscript{668} WZ 0, 29.0,
\textsuperscript{669} NM I.0 (hērbed zādspram ī gušn-jamān); NM II.1.0 (hērbed brād zādspram); NM III.2 (zādspram ī gušn-jamān). NM III.21 is dated from internal evidence to AY 250 / 881 CE.
\textsuperscript{670} MHD 36.9; see Perikhanian 1997 and Macuch 1993.
longer be identified with the authority mentioned in the *MHD*. Shai Secunda has argued for completely cutting off any discussion of the *MHD* in connection with the ninth- and tenth-century Zoroastrian priests.\(^{671}\) He is correct in this.

Furthermore, it is only possible that Farrbay, the redactor of the *Bundahišn*, is nephew to Zādspram (and therefore also Manuščihr) through his own lineage to Gušn-Jam—although scholars of the “traditional genealogy” repeatedly state it as a certainty. In fact, it is not at all likely, for two reasons alluded to above. First, in his *Letters*, Manuščihr gives the patronym for his father as *Gušn-Jam ī Šāpūrān*.\(^{672}\) But in the *Bundahišn*, Farrbay lists his own ancestor as *Gušn-Jam ī Wahrām-šād*.\(^{673}\) This discrepancy is usually ignored. As an exception, Ankelsaria suggests a misspelling or omission in the *Bundahišn* manuscript to account for it, but ultimately dismisses it saying, “Unless we assume that Vaharāmsāt had a brother Sāpūhar, who had no issue and Gōsnjam was the adopted son of his uncle Sāpūhar, this statement will remain inexplicable.”\(^{674}\) Perhaps these *Gušn-Jams* are the same individuals. Alternatively, perhaps we are making too many assumptions about paternity in a society complicated by close kin-marriage and adoption practices; this is a topic that should be explored further. Regardless, the genealogical relationship of the *mōbeds* in the ZMP texts should not be accepted without question.

Another problem with the “traditional genealogy” is the over-identification of Ašawahišt in the *Bundahišn*. What is clear from any reading of the passage is that there are two Ašawahišt’s, each with a distinct patronym: *Ašawahišt ī Gušn-Jam* and *Ašawahišt ī*

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671 Secunda 2012.  
672 *Letter* 1.3.10; [gwšn’ ym y š’ pwhl’n’].  
673 Bd. 35.a.8. This problem of the mismatched patronym is true whether one reads Gušn-Žam as the ancestor of Farrbay or as a separate, contemporary individual—which is always an option.  
674 Anklesaria 1969:19.
Frāy-Srōš. The first Ašawahišt is listed in Farrbay’s lineage string (Ašawahišt ī Gušn-Jam ī Wahrām-šād). I have already discussed the merely possible but unlikely identification of that Gušn-Jam with the one listed as father to Zādspram in the same passage (which has led scholars to assert that Farrbay is Zādspram’s nephew). An additional (mis)reading of the text is that Ādurbād [ī] Ėmēdān as the son of (Ēmēd ī) Ašawahišt, son of Frāy-Srōš, with Ėmēd ī Ašawahištān being the author of an extant Middle Persian rivāyat. The further linking of Ašawahišt in this chain leads to the assertion that Ėmēd ī Ašawahištān is brother to Farrbay and also nephew to Zādspram. However, the additional criteria of chronology makes it uncertain and even improbable that the Ašawahišt from the Bundahišn genealogy is the same Ašawahišt who is the father of Ėmēd ī Ašawahištān. To establish this chronology, however, we must look to Arabic sources.

5. Establishing a Common Chronology

5.1 Ėmēd ī Ašawahištān and Ādurbād ī Ėmēdān:

The chronology of Ėmēd ī Ašawahištān—and indeed the rest of the known ninth- and tenth-century Zoroastrian priests—rests upon an Arabic reference to Zoroastrian mōbeds by al-Masʿūdī (d. 956). In his Kitāb al-Tanbīh al-işrāf, after giving a brief description of various Persian offices as well as their hierarchy in the Sasanian-era—including the mōbed, which was the highest under the king himself—al-Masʿūdī names two mōbeds of his own time:

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675 Bd. 35.a.8.
At the time of writing this history, in the year 345 [=956 CE], the mōbed of the Persians for the province of Jibāl, ʿIrāq, and the rest of the lands of the Persians is Ėmēd ibn Ašawahišt, and the mōbed before him was Isfandiyār ibn Ādurbād ibn Ėmēd, who was put to death by al-Rāḍī in Baghdad in the year 325 [=937 CE].

With some slight emendations, particularly in the pointing of the Arabic script, these names are recognizable as Ėmēd ibn Ašawahišt and Isfandiyār ibn Ādurbād ibn Ėmēd, which might be rendered in Middle Persian as Ėmēd ī Ašawahišt(ān) and Isfandiyār ī Ādurbād(ān) ī Ėmēd(ān). The former is an individual known as the author of a Zoroastrian Middle Persian rivāyat, or “letter,” containing a series of questions on various religious topics put to the priest by one Gušnasp, son of Mihr-Ātaš, son of Ādur Gušnasp. Aside from this treatise attributed to him, he is not otherwise known in ZMP literature. However, the Arabic passage from al-Masʿūdī shows that this Ėmēd ī Ašawahištān evidently was the mōbed of Jibāl, ʿIrāq, and Fārs in 937, and was still mōbed there at least until 956, when al-Masʿūdī wrote the Tanbīh.

A range of direct quotations and references to Ėmēd in other Arabic sources show that this mōbed was conversant with Arabic writers in and around Baghdad from the 950s until the 980s. For example, Yāqūt (d. 1229), in his Muʾjam al-buldān, quotes Ḥamza al-

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677 al-Tanbīh al-iṣrāf, ed. de Goeje, 104-05; al-Masʿūdī goes on to say that he gave a full account of the tale of Isfandiyār’s death in his Murūj al-ḏahab, but this passage is missing from the extant version of the text. I discuss this discrepancy in a forthcoming article.

678 De Goeje vocalizes and points the first name as Anmāḏ ibn Ašarhišt [ʾnmʾḏ ʾbn ʾšrhšt]; his notes say provide the alternate readings of Astwahišt [ʾstwhšt], adding that he corrected his reading of these names based on the authority of Darmesteter. In fact, only a few changes make this name recognizable as the author of the Middle Persian rivāyat [n>y; r>w], resulting in [ʾymʾd bn ʾswhšt], with the understanding that both [ʾ] and [y] might represent the long ē of Middle Persian in the Arabic script, as in the second vowel of Ėmēd. For example, de Goeje vocalizes and points the second name as Isfandiyār ibn Ādurbād ibn Anmūḏ [ʾsfndyʾr bn ʾḏrbʾd bn ʾnlµḏ]. Again, only a few minor changes are needed [n>y] to render the final name recognizable as Ėmēd [bn ʾdrb ʾbn ʾnmyḏ].

679 For the text and translation of the Rivāyat ī Ėmēd ī Ašawahištān (REA), see B.T. Anklesaria 1962 and Safa-Isfahani 1980; also de Menasce 1962 for a partial translation. Ėmēd’s interlocutor in this Rivāyat is not otherwise known.
Iṣfahānī (d. 970) extensively about Persian knowledge, and in these passages Ḥamza twice quotes Ėmēd ī Ašawahištān as a direct informant: once as “the mōbedān mōbed Ėmēd ibn Ašwahīšt” and once as “the mōbed Ibn Ašwahīšt.”

He is probably the same “Ēmēd the mōbed” whom Ibn al-Nadīm twice quotes in his Fihrist (completed in 987), also in direct quotation (“he said to me,” qāla lī).
The second but earlier mōbed mentioned by al-Masʿūdī, Isfandiyār ibn Ādurbād ibn Ėmēd, is thought to be the son of the final compiler of the Dēnkard: Ādurbād ī Ėmēdān. A death date of 937 for Isfandiyār would place his father, Ādurbād, in the early decades of the tenth century. Internal evidence in the Dēnkard suggest this is correct, namely the floruit ca. 830 of his predecessor, Ādurfarrbay ī Farroxzādān, who was supposed to have engaged in a religious disputation with someone named “Abāliš” in the court of the caliph al-Maʿmūn (r. 813-33). An early tenth-century date for Ādurbād ī Ėmēdān is further supported by a reference from the Melkite Christian writer, Qusṭā ibn Lūqā of Baʿlabakk (d. ca. 920), who mentions “Ādurbād the mōbed” as an informant about the many languages of the Avesta and the Zoroastrian priests’ understanding of that sacred text. Ādurbād ī Ėmēdān, was also known (through his writings) to ʿAbd al-Jabbār (d. 1025), who cites the authority of “Āḏurbāḏ ibn Ėmēḏ the

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682 Hoyland (1997: 326) also supports this date for Ādurbād ī Ėmēdān, citing the Bundahišn genealogical chapter as well as the opinion of West (Pahlavi Texts, 4.xxx-xxxviii) and de Menasce (Une encyclopédie mazdéenne, 8-12).

683 Ādurfarbay ī Farroxzādān’s disputation is the subject of a Middle Persian treatise called Gizistag Ābāliš (“The Accursed Abāliš;” see Chacha 1936), which is also discussed in Chapter 4 of this dissertation. Additionally, Book V of the Dēnkard includes Ādurfarbay’s refutation of the Christian Bōxt-Mārā.

684 Following van Bladel 2017a: 193-95, who emends the manuscript reading of [‘dry’ ‘l-mwyd], the latter part which had been read al-mu’ayyad, to [‘drb’ (d) ‘l-mwbd] for Ādurbaḏ al-mawbd. For the Arabic text of the letter and a French translation, see Samir & Nwyia 1981; an English translation can also be found in Gutas 2006: 42.

685 Rasā’il, ed. ʿAbbās, III.202, wa-aydan fa-qad yastadilla l-dahru kulluhū man lā yuwaaffaqū li-l-haqqi kamā stadalla l-fayyūmīyyu wa-l-muqammaṣu wa-abū raytata [sic] l-ya’qībiyyu wa-awardaḏu l-mawbaḏu wa-abū ‘alīyyu yazdānbaḥta l-mānāniyyu tuṣma min firaqi l-muslimīna hišāmu bnu l-ḥakami wa-ʿalīyyu bnu mansūrīn wa-l-naẓẓāmu wa-ghayrīhu fa-ba’duhum yassara li-l-ḥaḏrūn wa-la’l-mānūn, wa-li-dalāli l-bid’at ma’an; among the non-Muslims, he lists al-Fayyūmī (d. 942) and al-Muqammaṣ (d. ca. 937)—two Jewish theologians—then Abū Rā’īṭa al-Yā qūbī (d. ca. 830), a Christian “Jacobite,” followed by Ādurbaḏ the mōbed and finally Abū ʿAlī Yazdān-Bōxt (?), a Manichaean; then from the sects of the Muslim heretics, he lists Hišām ibn al-Ḥakam (d. after 795 and perhaps as late as the caliphate of al-Ma’mūn), ʿAlī ibn Manṣūr (?), and al-Naẓẓām (d. ca. 835-45), a Muʿtazīlī.
mōbed’ in his Taḥbīt dalāʾ il al-nubuvwa, on the matter of the Zoroastrian savior named Pešōtan. If we suppose ‘Abd al-Jabbār had access to some writings of Ādurbād Ėmēdān—perhaps even the Dēnkard itself—the later date of ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s heresiographical work does not conflict with an early tenth-century date for this mōbed.

It is almost certain that the Ādurbād Ėmēdān who appears in the Bundahišn genealogy is the same individual who was the final redactor of the Dēnkard. The chronology provided by the Arabic citations corroborates his being the contemporary of Zādspram (who was the brother of Manuščihr, ca. 881) and further strengthens the argument for the late ninth- or early tenth-century date of Farrbay’s redaction of the Bundahišn.

5.2 Zardušt Ėdurfarrbay:

The name of another redactor of the Dēnkard is known not just from Zoroastrian Middle Persian (ZMP) texts, but from contemporary Arabic sources as well. In fact, it is from Arabic sources that we learn how Ėdurfarrbay’s son, Zardušt, caused friction for the community, namely that he apostatized and became a boon-companion (al-nadīm) to the caliph al-Mutawakkil (r. 847–61).

Reynolds and Samir 2010: 134-35, hāḏā īlāḏī atayaqqanuhū mimmā qad ḏakarahū āḏarbāḏu bnu [ʾmyḏ] l-mawbaḏu fī waṣfiḥī [ʾbšʾwtn]...

Reynolds and Samir seem to think that ‘Abd al-Jabbār is referring to the Dēnkard (2010: lxix). I tend to agree. Rezania 2017 argues that the Dēnkard was written for a primarily Muslim audience as an intentionally apologetic text. In fact, this citation from ‘Abd al-Jabbār would support Rezania’s theory, although he does not acknowledge it—which is further proof of the divide across academic disciplines, research languages, and genre-specific studies—despite the recent edition and English translation of this Arabic text.

Bd 35.a.8 and Dēn.III.420.9. However, others like Macuch (2009: 131) acknowledge some uncertainty, offering a date for Ėdurbād either at the beginning of the tenth century (citing Boyce 1968b: 44 and the correspondence with the Bundahišn) or the latter half of the tenth century (citing Tavadia 1956: 50 and the assumption that Ėdurbād was the son of Ėmēd Ėsawahištān). I have shown that the latter view is less likely.
In al-Ṭabarī’s (d. 923) account of the trial of the disgraced ‘Abbāsid general al-Afšīn (d. 841), the narrator of the report describes one of the witnesses, a mōbed, as “a Magian who subsequently converted to Islam at the hand of al-Mutawakkil and became one of the latter’s boon companions.” This mōbed is so well-known for this, in fact, that he is cited by some Arabic authors simply as “al-Mutawakkil’s mōbed,” while others attest to an unnamed mōbed in this caliph’s entourage. Although this mōbed is unnamed in al-Ṭabarī’s and others’ accounts of the trial of al-Afšīn, he has been identified as the individual quoted by Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī once as “Zardušt ibn Ādurḫwarra, known as Muḥammad al-Mutawakkilī,” and a second time as “Muḥammad the mōbed, known as Abū Jaʿfar al-Mutawakkilī.”

This mōbed is also likely the same individual quoted as an authority in the anonymous codex, MS Sprenger 30, another work of Persian history which appears to be from the ninth or tenth century and bears similarities to al-Ṭabarī’s chronicle. The author

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690 Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī (d. 971), al-Tanbīh ʿalā ḥudūṯ, ed. Ṭalās, 21 and 24; and al-Bīrūnī (d. 1050), al-Āṯār al-bāqiya, ed. Sachau, 223.


of the text in MS Sprenger 30 quotes “Abū Jaʿfar Zarādušt ibn Aḥrā the mōbed” at least three times, and notes that he was a contemporary of al-Muʿtaṣim (r. 833–42). Allowing for some copying errors for this foreign name, we can accept Aḥrā as a garbled rendering of Ādurḫwarra (MP Ādur-xwarrah), which is a compound of two name elements “fire” and “glory.”

Zardušt’s father, Ādurfarrbay ī Farrozxādān, was the first redactor of the Middle Persian Dēnkard and was supposed to have disputed in the court of al-Maʾmūn. Book III of the Dēnkard informs us that Zardošt’s apostasy was regarded as a tragedy by Ādurbād ī Ėmēdān, that Dēnkard’s final redactor, who had to pick up the pieces of the text and reassemble them. There is a possible allusion to this catastrophe in one of the Letters of the Zoroastrian priest Manuščihr (ca. 881). However, the details from the ZMP texts are vague without the evidence of the Arabic sources to accompany them. If the identification of Zardošt as the mōbed of Mutawakkil is correct, as I believe it to be, then the very priests

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694 Pg. 62 (as abū jaʿfar zarādušt ibn ahrā al-mawbaḏ); pg. 94 (as abū jaʿfar zarādušt al-mawbaḏ, with reference to al-Muʿtaṣim); pg. 141 (as simply abū jaʿfar); and either a mistake or a citation of his father, pg. 139 (as ahrā al-mawbaḏ); see Rubin 2005: 56. If we consider the possibility that the author of MS Sprenger 30 consulted this mōbed in person, it makes a strong case for dating the chronicle to the mid- to late-ninth century—before Zardošt’s conversion to Islam, because the author does not associate him with al-Mutawakkil as others do. Although then we would have to assume the mōbed changed his name before he converted.

695 See de Blois 1996: 45, citing Boyce 1983, who point out that the name Ādurfarrbay is essentially the same name as Ādur-xwarrah (with farr being a dialectal variation of xwarrah, both going back to Avestan xvarənah-) and in fact was often used interchangeably—at least in reference to the great sacred fire of that same name. Ādur-xwarrah is usually spelled in Middle Persian with a heterogram for the second component of the name [ʾtwr-GDH], and Ādurfarrbay [ʾtwrplnbg] has an additional component—bay (“having a share”), but de Blois seems confident about the identification of the authority in MS Sprenger 30 with son of the Dēnkard redactor.

696 As related in the Middle Persian Gizistag Abāliš, mentioned above.

697 Dēnkard III.420, cited above.

698 NM II 1.13. Based on this passage, Shaked speculates that Zardošt “may have had himself appointed by the Muslim rulers, without consulting the Zoroastrian communities,” thus causing strife among the Zoroastrians (2016: 233, critiquing the translation of West 1882: 329).
responsible for transmitting the most comprehensive extant ZMP work about Zoroastrianism—all three of the redactors named above—were connected with the ʿAbbāsid rulers or contemporary literary circles: Ādur Farrbay ī Farrokhzādān in the court of al-Maʾmūn (ca. 830), Zardušt with al-Mutawakkil (ca. 840s), and Ādur ād ī Īmēdān (ca. 920s) with several Arabic authors.

Even aside from the issue of the identity of the particular mōbed from the al-Afsīn episode, his presence confirms that a Zoroastrian priest was an active participant and key witness in a trial at which the highest offices of al-Muʿtaṣim’s administration, both the vizier Ibn al-Zayyāt and the chief qāḍī Aḥmad ibn Abī Duwād, presided. This position and these relationships must have led to some influence for the Zoroastrian leaders, as well as great risk—as Zardušt’s conversion to Islam and its aftermath demonstrate. Remember that Ādur ād ī Īmēdān’s son, Isfandiyār, was put to death by the caliph al-Rāḍī in 937.

In combining the information from ZMP texts like the Dēnkard and the Bundahišn with what we know from Arabic sources, such as the passage from al-Masʿūdī and others that refer to al-Mutawakkil’s mōbed, Zardušt ī Ādur Farrbāy, we can craft the following chronology of the redactors of the Dēnkard and chart their genealogical relationships:699

Figure 48: The Dēnkard redactors

699 See the glossary in Appendix 3 for a summary of citations for each individual.
The above chart represents a conservative reading of the texts, one that does not attempt to place all of the mōbeds in a single family. Although there may be more genealogical connections than those depicted here, these are the only facts we know for certain at this point. Yet scholars persistently distort the picture of what we do know, through the over-identifications of common Zoroastrian names and the recycling of these misinterpretations in scholarship.

Due to the similarity in the names of Ādurbād ī Ėmēdān (the final redactor of the Dēnkard) and Ėmēd ī Ašawahištān (the author of a rivāyat and the mōbed mentioned by al-Masʿūdī, Ibn al-Nadīm, and Ḥamza al-İsfahānī), many scholars have asserted that Ādurbād ī Ėmēdān is the son of Ėmēd ī Ašawahištān. However, the clarity of al-Masʿūdī’s statements on the chronology of Ėmēd ibn Ašawahišt—supported by other Arabic writer’s citations of him through the mid to latter part of the tenth century—shows that this cannot be the case. Ėmēd ī Ašawahištān cannot be the father of the final redactor of the Dēnkard, Ādurbād ī Ėmēdān, who likely flourished before 920 and whose own son died in 937 and was a predecessor to Ėmēd in the office of mōbed. Isfandiyār was not likely to be succeeded in the office of chief priest by his own grandfather. Ėmēd ī Ašawahištān, the author of a ZMP rivāyat, probably flourished from the mid to latter half of the tenth century.

Despite the textual problems and discrepancies discussed so far, scholars continue to propagate the “traditional genealogy,” which might also be described as a synoptic view in that it attempts to collate all the known names of priests into one family tree just as one might collate all the known variant readings of a text. But as I have shown, trying to fit the

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list of contemporary mōbeds from the *Bundahiṣn* genealogy into one family going back to Ādurbaḏ ī Mahrspandān has led to many errors and chronological impossibilities. In this case, careful emendation lays bare the gap between the ninth century and the fourth century. Only by reading the manuscripts carefully and comparing the names to those found elsewhere in ZMP literature and in Arabic sources, can we get a clearer picture of the family of Zoroastrian priests in the Islamic period, which indicates that the family is probably much larger than previously supposed.

We must look more closely at what is going on in the ninth and tenth centuries, when the priests were writing and editing the Zoroastrian texts and making these claims of transmission from the past. If we have correctly understood the claims of Farrbay and Manuščihr that the mōbeds of Fārs are all from the same family (*dūdag*)—although I am not sure that we have—it might be possible that this claim, or at least the priesthood’s descent from Ādurbaḏ ī Mahrspandān, was only elaborated later in the tenth century. At this time, priestly genealogies gained a new importance as the Zoroastrian priesthood faced several threats to its survival: the dwindling size of the community, with concomitant loss of financial support and thereby the means to maintain the profession, social and financial pressures to convert to Islam, and challenges to the priesthood’s authority by dissenting opinion within the community and rival Zoroastrian movements.

Putting aside the issue of a *lineage* from Ādurbaḏ, he should still be considered the exemplar of the priesthood, and the *dēn-ārāstār*. But we should be critical of statements and summaries that try to fit all of the known priests into a single family. At the very least, let us assume instead that there are multiple Ėmēds, multiple Ašawahišts, and multiple Ādurbaḏs in the long history of the Zoroastrian priesthood. These were common names.
Below, I present a new chart of the chronology and genealogies of Islamic-era Zoroastrian priests, which reads both ZMP and Arabic sources conservatively and carefully. I have numbered (1–5) and highlighted in yellow the contemporary mōbeds named in the Bundahišn genealogy, according to my interpretation of the passage (above). Individuals’ names appear in bold who have extant literary works attributed to them or who are otherwise named in ZMP and Arabic sources. Names that are not in bold are those merely attested in string lineages, with no other identifying information available. Not all of the individuals in the chart below have been discussed in this chapter, but summary of citations can be found under each name in the glossary in Appendix 3.

This is not as satisfying as linking all of the mōbeds in one single genealogical chart, but it better reflects the uncertainty and potential variety of priestly lineages in the post-Sasanian period. Perhaps more will be clarified by further study.
Figure 49: Islamic-era Zoroastrians priests

**Key:**
- Condensed lineage
- Patrilineal descent
- Possible patrilineal descent

MANUSCHIR

- Dādirām
- Rājān

- Fris(ə)
- Ayavan

- Polarasp
- Pōrāsp
- Anzarm

- Miōrōsēn

ZARDUST

- Bāg i Wuy-bōxtān

Ādurābd i Mahragandān (3rd cent.)

- Zarēhān i Ādurābdān

- Ādurābd i Zarēhān (mid-5th cent.)

- Zarēhān
- Wāhrān-Sūr
- Gole-Jam

- Asāwhāhit

- (mošēr)

- Ādurābd i Mahragandān (ca. 931)

1. Farrbay (Dādirām) i Asāwhāhitān
2. Ādurābd i Mahragandān (ca. 931)
3. Zarēhān
4. Ādurābd i Emābdān (ca. 920)
5. Āsāwhāhit i Frīy-Sūrī

- Frīy-Sūrī

- Īstānlyār išn Ādurābd išn Emābd (d. 937)

- Īmād i Asāwhāhitān (ca. 956)

Mānīan Dādir išn al-Kāzānīn (ca. 955)

Farrbay-Sūrī (ca. 1008)

Wāhrām
6. Conclusion to Chapter 3

The traditional narrative about the Zoroastrian priests (in both scholarly sources about the post-Sasanian period and in the remnants of Zoroastrian texts themselves) maintains that after the Arab conquest of Iran the Zoroastrians gradually converted to Islam until by the time they sat down to write their religious texts, there were few priests left to write them and what remains is only a fragment of what there had once been.

Aspects of this narrative are certainly true. However, critical analysis of the sources has undermined the assumption of a strict connection between priestly heredity and religious orthodoxy, as well as the assumption of continuity between the Zoroastrian priesthood of the Islamic period and the Sasanian period. This chapter has examined Zoroastrian narratives of the past and the priesthood and attempted to rectify some of the common mistakes made about the genealogical relationships and relative chronology of the Islamic-era priests. The identity and the perception of Zoroastrian priesthood and its lineage developed over time, and these elaborations should be seen as a product of an Islamic context and viewed alongside parallel genealogical assertions by other religious and social groups of that time. Next, I will demonstrate the Islamic context of these developments in more detail through Arabic sources.
Chapter 4: Zoroastrian Priests in Islamic Society

The previous chapter mentioned several Arabic sources from the ʿAbbāsid period (ca. 750–1258) which corroborate or supply otherwise unknown information about particular Zoroastrian priests. Those references are fairly well-known by scholars of Zoroastrian studies, but there are many more which remain unnoticed. This chapter gathers Arabic citations about Islamic-era mōbeds to take a closer look at the role and function of the Zoroastrian chief priests in the post-Sasanian period, and finds that the mōbeds were participants in elite ʿAbbāsid Islamic society.

The external view provided by Arabic sources can help us understand the position of the Zoroastrian community vis-à-vis the Islamic state, and how mōbeds played a part in this changing relationship. Arabic texts also give context to the Zoroastrian writing movement of the ninth and tenth centuries and how the priestly authors of the Zoroastrian Middle Persian (ZMP) books viewed their connection with their Sasanian past. As I demonstrated in the previous chapter (Chapter 3), the priesthood’s account of that past was changing in the ninth and tenth centuries as the role of the priests was evolving due to the gradual conversion of the population to Islam, with the subsequent loss of resources to support the priesthood. This chapter (Chapter 4) will show the broader context of those changes, as the fate of the Zoroastrian community rested upon the reputation of the mōbed outside of it.

In this chapter, I will trace the Islamic-era mōbed through Arabic citations— as both a historical figure and an ideal construction, examining the mōbed’s reputation in Islamic society and as part of Islamic society. Because although the Zoroastrian community became increasingly isolated and marginalized, this was not always the case. I provide a
range of examples that demonstrate the early associations between the *mōbed* and the Islamic *qāḍī*, and also emphasize the wisdom of the ideal *mōbed* in his roles as judge, scholar, sage, and royal advisor. I argue that this reputation of the past *mōbed* contributes to actual *mōbeds’* roles outside of their communities in the Islamic period: as advisors to Muslim caliphs and amirs, as informants on Persian history and policy, and as authors and translators of Persian works of enduring utility and value.

The final part of this chapter then examines the consequences of the *mōbeds’* participation in Islamic society, both for individual *mōbeds* and the community they represented. Here, I present a previously untranslated edict from the tenth century in which a certain family of *mōbeds*, the descendants or “sons” of Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān, claim to possess an original letter of protection from ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib that exempted them from payment of the *jizya*, among other securities. I conclude by returning to the previous chapter’s topic of genealogy as history, reflecting how memory of the Zoroastrian past was shaped in the ninth and tenth centuries by the immediate contexts of the Zoroastrian present—and what this means for the study of the Zoroastrian priesthood as an institution as well as for the study of Zoroastrianism.

First, however, I will introduce the Arabic sources that are the focus of this chapter and provide a short literature review of their importance for the study of Zoroastrianism.

1. Arabic Sources, Islamic contexts

   Although scholars like Jamsheed Choksy have long viewed some of the more obviously late Zoroastrian texts as the products of the Islamic period and reflecting the concerns of a dwindling community in conflict and coexistence with an increasingly
Muslim world, many studies view the Zoroastrian community of this period as isolated and “inward-looking,” with the Zoroastrian priests merely writing in response to the crisis of Islamicization of their society (but not participants in it).

More recently, scholars of Zoroastrian studies have drawn attention to Baghdad as a center of Zoroastrian religious learning, showing the importance of the ‘Abbāsid capital especially in relation to the compilation of the Dēnkard. Albert de Jong has reiterated that the longest and most comprehensive Zoroastrian Middle Persian work, the Dēnkard (“Acts of the Religion”), was written in Baghdad in the ninth century, and, according to the earliest colophons we have for a Zoroastrian manuscript, was found and copied there again in 1020. Kianoosh Rezania argues that the Dēnkard was actually written for a Muslim audience as an apologetic text defending the Zoroastrian religion in the context of inter-religious discourse in Baghdad. Gianfilippo Terribili applies a linguistic approach to the Dēnkard to highlight the ways in which Zoroastrians of the time negotiated their own “socio-religious identity” in an Islamic context.

Similarly, Michele Campopiano examines ZMP texts of the ninth and tenth centuries for their view on Muslims and purity regulations, giving special emphasis to the apologetic text of the Škand-Gumānīg Wizār (“The Doubt-Dispelling Exposition”) in the

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701 E.g., Choksy 1987 and Choksy 1997; also see the comments of Boyce 1992: 153-54, who notes that Zoroastrians priests evidently learned Arabic and knew of Muslims beliefs, the Qur’ān, and contemporary Islamic theological debates (n. 17 citing Monnot 1989-1990 and de Menasce 1967).
702 E.g., Hoyland 1997: 242-43.
703 Daryaee 2018. See the introduction to Chapter 3 for further discussion of these characterizations of Zoroastrians in the early Islamic period.
704 See Scheiner & Janos 2014 on Baghdad more generally as the intellectual center of ‘Abbāsid society, as well as the other articles in their edited volume.
705 de Jong 2016; also see Rezania 2017 for an excerpt and translation of this colophon.
706 Rezania 2017.
707 Terribili 2017.
context of interreligious debate of the late ninth century and the development of Islamic rationalistic theology.\textsuperscript{708} Christian Sahner, too, argues that Zoroastrian legal texts from the ‘Abbāsid period were shaped in response to contemporary social and political realities.\textsuperscript{709} Yuhan Vevaina examines Zoroastrian menstrual purity laws in this context, arguing that the development of Zoroastrian theology on this topic was a product of interconfessional debate and apologetics.\textsuperscript{710}

As important as the Zoroastrian Middle Persian texts have been for the study of Zoroastrians and Zoroastrianism(s), this field has long relied on outside sources to fill in the gaps of our knowledge and in the written record.\textsuperscript{711} Yet, despite several studies of Arabic sources that mention Zoroastrians in the Islamic period,\textsuperscript{712} few attempt to be comprehensive in their treatment.\textsuperscript{713} Decades ago, Shaul Shaked pointed to the value of the

\textsuperscript{708} Campopiano 2018, also examining passages from the Dēnkard, the Bundahišn, the Zand ī Wahman Yasn, and the rivāyat of Ėmēd ī Ašawahistān; unlike these other texts, however, the Middle Persian of the extant Škand-Gumānīg Wizār (ed. de Menasce) is written in the Avestan script (this form of writing Middle Persian is called pāzand); the text also survives in a Sanskrit translation. In these texts, the MP word ag-dēnān (lit. “(those of) the bad religion”) is taken to mean “Muslim,” in contrast with weh-dēnān (lit. “(those of) the good religion”), which is the most common MP word for those who follow the teachings of Zarduš and worship Ahura Mazda.

\textsuperscript{709} Sahner 2020 and 2021; also see Sahner 2019, where he contextualizes the ZMP Gizistag Abāliš in the contemporary Christian genre of apologetics known as “the monk in the emir’s majlis.”

\textsuperscript{710} Vevaina 2021; also see Vevaina 2011: 252-66, where he situates the Zoroastrian motif of the “four ages” in an Islamic context.

\textsuperscript{711} For example, de Jong’s (1997) Traditions of the Magi, and Bidez & Cumont’s (1938) Les Mages Hellénisés; more recent and noteworthy is Richard Payne’s (2015) State of Mixture, where he has incorporated Syriac hagiographical and historiographical works into the study of Sasanian Iran.


\textsuperscript{713} Kreyenbroek 1987a and 1987b, which are excellent starting points. The entries in the Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd edition (Guidi & Morony, “Mōbadh;” and Morony 1986, “Madjūs”) are actually some of the most comprehensive treatments of Zoroastrian priests for the Islamic period, but these recycle unqualified statements and incorrect information about the ninth- and tenth-century mōbeds in question.
Arabic sources, especially as many of the authors were Iranian in origin and consulted with actual Zoroastrians. However, Shaked and others are mostly interested in the beliefs and practices of Zoroastrians, or of their conversion to Islam, rather than individual Zoroastrians or their priests.

These are important studies, and I do not mean to challenge these views on the increasing marginalization—and often intolerance and persecution—of the Zoroastrian community in the centuries after the Arab conquest of Iran. However, the story of the Zoroastrians is one in which, despite these major obstacles, the outcome is the survival of the community and the Zoroastrian tradition, however attenuated. My point is that this survival was not a foregone conclusion, and that there is more to be said on the subject of the transmission of the tradition, and particularly its priestly transmitters. What is missing from the predominant scholarly picture of the post-Sasanian priesthood is the role of Zoroastrian priests outside of their communities, and how they interacted with the increasingly Islamic society around them—seeking official recognition by and protection from Muslim patrons. This perspective can be gained by the careful study of contemporary Arabic works, which mention Zoroastrian mōbeds more than one might expect—both as

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714 Shaked 1994b.
715 E.g., Zaehner 1955, who is concerned with the identification of “Zurvānism” as an alternative to more orthodox Zoroastrianism.
716 On the conversion to Islam of Zoroastrians (and others), see especially Levy-Rubin 2011 (as well as the earlier work of Dennett 1950), Savant 2013 and 2016, Yarborough 2019, and Hurvitz et al. 2020.
717 A couple of exceptions being Chaumont 1960, who traces the Zoroastrian hērbed in Arabic sources, and Wikander 1946, who incorporates some Arabic sources into his monograph on Feuerpriester. On the encyclopedia article by Guidi & Morony (“Mōbadh,” EI²), see note above.
719 In contrast, see van Bladel 2017b, who traces several religious traditions that did not survive from Sasanian Persia, as well as the example of the Mandaeans who did (through much adaptation to changing circumstances and the gradual isolation of their community from outsiders—much like the Zoroastrians’ eventual fate).
contemporaries in ʿAbbāsid society and as historical, or ideal, figures from the Sasanian past.

In what follows, I have collected citations in Arabic sources about Zoroastrian priests and attempted to organize them in a meaningful way. As well as bringing all of these citations together in one place as an aid for others interested in the topic, such a project is the only way to notice patterns if such patterns exist. These references span authors, genres, and centuries of Arabic literature. The Zoroastrian mōbed (Ar. al-mawbaḍ / (pl.) al-mawābiḍa) appears in histories, geographies, adab works, heresiographies, ṭabaqāt literature, as well as in Ibn al-Nadīm’s Fihrīst from tenth-century Baghdad. Some of these reports are about historical mōbeds, who appear in histories of the Sasanian period, but other Arabic texts cite the Zoroastrian priests of the ʿAbbāsid era as authors of books, as informants on topics of Persian religious or cultural significance, as sages attributed with wise or clever sayings, as advisors to kings and caliphs, and as participants in religious debates in the court of the caliph or his vizier.

Sometimes the reference is to a named mōbed, and in a few instances this name is corroborated by Zoroastrian texts (as discussed in Chapter 3). Sometimes the reference is to an anonymous mōbed, but can be dated to the reign of a certain caliph. Some of these references to mōbeds are given without context at all, or sometimes the legendary character of the anecdote casts doubt on their historicity. Although we should be concerned with the historicity of reports, even ahistorical or historically inaccurate mentions of mōbeds still offer insights about the reputation of mōbeds at the time of the report’s

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720 These references have received the most scholarly attention, yet the shared genealogy and chronology of these individuals are often mistaken or taken for granted without textual proof—something I address in the previous chapter.

721 Or al-mawbaḍ is given as a name / title.
circulation—and that reputation matters. Each example must be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The Arabic citations of mōbeds can be divided into two categories:

1. the mōbed as a historical figure of the past
2. the mōbed as a contemporary figure

The mōbed as a historical figure of the past most often appears in ʿAbbāsid-era chronicles of pre-Islamic Persian history as an advisor to the Sasanid kings, but he also emerges in more recent Islamic history, particularly at the side of caliphs and amirs, in the form of anecdotes in adab works and official chronicles. The mōbed as a contemporary figure often appears in the role of a learned informant on Persian history, whether through written works or oral reports. These two categories of Arabic citations can be divided further by type of reference, from the perspective of the author of the Arabic work:

1. explanation of the role of the mōbed
2. attribution of a wise saying to a mōbed
3. information received on the authority of a mōbed

I present these categories for convenience in the organization of a large quantity of material. The categories are not mutually exclusive, but rather they overlap.

An alternative mode of organization would be to distinguish between incidental references to Zoroastrians and actual discussion of their beliefs and practices. One might organize these citations by the Arabic literary genre in which they appear. This is partly the organizing method I use in what follows, although my emphasis on the different facets of the mōbed’s reputation in these sources tends to cross literary genres. Thus, I begin with definitions of the mōbed in Arabic sources (section 2), from the judicial aspect of the mōbed

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722 See Appendix 4 for a table that summarizes the Arabic references that appear in this chapter.
723 As Shaked 1994b has done.
and his (perceived) relationship to the Islamic qāḍī to his reputation as scholar, which is evident in the many Arabic citations of oral reports and written works attributed to mōbeds (section 3). Then I trace the relationship of these aspects of the mōbed’s role to his reputation as a sage and royal advisor (section 4). This last aspect of the mōbed’s historical reputation (under the Sasanian kings) is translated to a contemporary role as part of the entourage of the caliph, his vizier, or the amir.

Although this compilation of citations is not exhaustive, it is possible to see some chronological development in the way the mōbed is depicted in Arabic sources: from judge to scholar to sage to advisor. In fact, as I will show in the final section of the paper, the protection of a certain community of Zoroastrians—indeed a single family of priests—becomes clearly articulated in Arabic sources in the tenth century, although the authority of these priests is claimed to be much more ancient. In the final part of the chapter (section 5), I will contextualize the role of particular Zoroastrian mōbeds in Islamic society and their relationship with Būyid Muslim rulers, which culminated in the extraordinary protections granted to the “sons of Ādurbād” in the tenth century.\footnote{Additionally, in Appendix 4 I discuss Zoroastrians in the Islamic period more generally, summarizing the evolution of the status of Zoroastrians, or Magians (Ar. al-majūs), in early Islamic conceptions of the dhimma, the “covenant” that was the mechanism whereby certain non-Muslim religious communities were granted legal recognition and protection under Islamic rule.}

I have chosen to focus on mōbeds as a methodological point: focusing on the transmitters of the Zoroastrian religious tradition in order to examine the mechanics of that transmission and the construction of Zoroastrian religious authority and identity in the Islamic period. The role of the mōbed as viewed from external sources may help us understand the development of the Zoroastrian priesthood and the tradition it safeguarded.
Further Notes on Terminology:

In Arabic, as in Syriac, the Persian term for the religion’s class of priests (MP maguš < OP maguš) had been generalized to refer to the religious community as a whole, e.g., “Magians” (Ar. al-majās; Syr. mgušē). Arabic authors also borrow terms from Persian for different priestly offices: namely, al-mawbaḏ / (pl.) al-mawābiḏa, for MP mōbed ([mgwpt'] < OP *magu-pati-, the “chief priest”), and al-hirbaḏ / (pl.) al-harābiḏa, for MP hērbed ([hylpt'] < Av. aēθrapaiti, the “scholar priest”).

So far, this dissertation has discussed many Zoroastrian priestly titles except the hērbed. This is because the mōbed is featured so prominently in the material corpus of Sasanian seals and sealings (Chapter 1) as well as in contemporary Sasanian literary sources in Syriac, Armenian, Latin, Greek, and Georgian (Chapter 2). As summarized in Chapters 1-2, by the end of the Sasanian period in the sixth century, the mōbed was the leading provincial judicial authority of a vast administrative network. The hērbed, although an important religious specialist in Sasanian-era Zoroastrianism—as exemplified by the ZMP work known as the Hērbedestān—is relatively absent in extant sources from the public or administrative sphere at this time. And his role would change after the Sasanian period came to an end.

Zoroastrian Middle Persian texts like the writings of Manuščihr (ca. 881), who was rad of Fārs and Kermān but is also called hērbed by the manuscript tradition, demonstrate the collapse of functions of ritual priests and scholar priests due to the dwindling size of local Zoroastrian communities and their economic resources. The local authority of the

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725 For the Hērbedestān (lit. “the place of, or courses in priestly studies,” hence “religious studies”), a work about hērbeds and their role in the religious education of the community, see the edition and translation of Kotwal & Kreyenbroek 1992.
726 See introduction to Chapter 3, as well as articles by Kreyenbroek 1987a, 1987b, and 2003.
herbed in the early post-Sasanian period is evident in the Ṭabarestān archive (discussed in Chapter 1), where this official served as a judicial authority for his village community. The herbed appears in Arabic sources as an ancillary priest serving a more local jurisdiction, distinct from the mōbed with respect to hierarchy as well as function. References in Arabic literary sources to the mōbed, however, far outnumber those to the herbed. The mōbed’s role, as previous mentioned, was of a more public, outward-facing nature, perhaps in continuation of his Sasanian-era role. It is thus the mōbed on whom I focus in this chapter in the context of Islamic society.

This chapter argues that the legacy of the Sasanian-era mōbed was consciously shaped and promoted by Islamic-era mōbeds, who participated in and as part of Islamic society. Theses priests’ knowledge and expertise supported their public reputation as judge, scholar, sage, and advisor as much as helped to preserve the legacy of the Zoroastrian tradition in drastically changed social and political circumstances. In order to talk about the actual historical mōbeds of the Islamic era, we must first outline the occurrence of this priestly title in early Arabic literature.

727 In conquest narratives, such as that of al-Balāḏurī (d. 892), it is the herbed of Darabjird, in Fārs, who negotiates the settlement of capitulation on behalf of his community (Futūḥ al-buldān, ed. de Goeje, 388; trans. Ḥitti, II.130-31). Al-Ṭabarī (d. 923) includes a similar report about the herbed of Iṣṭaḥr (Tārīḵ, ed. de Goeje, V.2696). Other Arabic authors refer to the herbed as a temple priest or memorizer of religious texts, assigning a judicial role only to the mōbed, but there is some confusion in the sources, and inconsistency in these definitions; see Chaumont 1960.

728 In fact, both titles of mōbed and herbed are still used today within Zoroastrian communities. Especially among modern Parsis, there is a clear hierarchy and distinction between the roles of the ērvad (herbed), mōbad, and dastur, but this seems to have been a late development sometime after the sixteenth century (according to Kreyenbroek 1987a: 164). The longer diachronic development of the nature and role of these priestly offices deserves closer attention in another investigation. For example, Chaumont (1960: 168, 176) notes that the third-century trilingual inscription of Šāpūr I renders MP herbed in its Greek version as mágos; although Chaumont sees this more as a deficiency of the Greek language rather than a conflation of the offices or titles, further study is needed.
2. Definitions of the *mōbed*: judge and scholar

As previously mentioned, early Muslim conquest narratives preserve the first interactions between Arabs and Zoroastrian priests as local authorities capitulating to new overlords—although these are most commonly *hērbeds*, and not *mōbeds*. It is tempting to begin further examination of Arabic sources with the Qurʾān and the hadith. However, although the Qurʾān does refer to Zoroastrians (as “Magians,” *al-majūs*), it does not mention *mōbeds*. As for the hadith—particularly the canonical Sunni hadith collections that were gathered in the ninth century but represent, in a general way, earlier circulating views—neither the statements of the Prophet Muḥammad nor his Companions mention *mōbeds*, although there are a handful of references to *al-majūs*. These statements will be discussed later in the context of the developing status of the Magian community as part of the *dhimma*, or “covenant” with non-Muslims, and particularly the debate over their designation as *ahl al-kitāb*, or “People of the Book.”

In fact, the earliest (?) references to *mōbeds* in Arabic literature appear in a genre related to hadith: in the *ṭabaqāt* literature which preserves the biographies of early traditionists. It is here that we find the early association between the Zoroastrian *mōbed* and the Muslim *qāḍī*, or “judge.”

2.1. The *mōbed* as judge

Ibn Saʿd (d. 845), in his biography of Abū Qilāba, who was an early traditionist from Baṣra (d. 725/6), says that “if he had been one of the Persians (*ʿajam*) then he would have been a *mōbed mōbedān* [sic], i.e., the *qāḍī al-quḍāt*.”\(^{729}\) The Middle Persian title

\(^{729}\) al-*Tabaqāt al-kabīr*, ed. ‘Umar, IX.183 (#3886); qāla aḥbaranā ʿaffānu bnu muslimin wa-sulaymānu bnu ḥarbin wa-ʿārimu bnu l-fadli qālī ḥaddaṭanā ḥammādu bnu zaydin ʿan ayyūbin qāla qāla muslimu bnu yasār law kāna abū qilābatin mina l-ʿajami la-kāna mawbaṭ mawbaḡān
mōbedān mōbed, literally “mōbed of mōbeds” or “chief of all mōbeds,” was discussed in Chapter 2, where I demonstrated the late-Sasanian development of that office as well as its judicial role. Ibn Saʿd’s description of Abū Qilāba as a hypothetical chief mōbed of the Persians is then glossed in Arabic as qāḍī al-quḍāt, the Islamic “chief judge,” or literally “judge of judges.”

Although the Muslim qāḍī has its own distinct development from that of the Zoroastrian mōbed, the Arab conquerors of the former Sasanian kingdom adopted several administrative practices, such as the jizya (“poll tax”) and ḥarāj (“land tax”), that had Sasanian precedent. The relationship between the Zoroastrian mōbedān mōbed and the Islamic qāḍī al-quḍāt is debated, with some scholars suggesting that the Arabic title was a calque of the Persian one, and others denying anything but a surface association between the two. The origin of the office of qāḍī al-quḍāt can be situated in the early ʿAbbāsid period.

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[sic] yaʾnī qāḍiyu ʾl-quḍāt. Note that here the text reads mawbaḏ mawbaḏān; the order of the MP two-part title is often reversed in Arabic (perhaps reflecting its Arabicization in an idāfa construct), or sometimes the word mawbaḏān just stands alone (although it is technically a plural in the original Middle Persian).

730 See particularly the Appendix of Chapter 2.

731 On the continuity of Sasanian administrative practices in the early Islamic period, see Morony 1982 and 1984. On the development of Islamic law and the role of the qāḍī, see Hallaq 2005 and Tillier 2009.

732 E.g., Tyan 2012, who says, “In fact, the institution of kāḍīʾ ʾl-kuḍāt was an adaptation of the Persian institution of mōbedān-mōbed. The ancient Arab authors did not fail to notice the close relationship between them.” Tyan’s views on the early Islamic judiciary as a late development or even a continuation of Byzantine institutions (Tyan 1960) have been challenged, particularly in light of documentary papyri from Egypt; see Reinfandt 2015, Tillier 2009, and Mohammed 2004). However, many scholars still associate the specific development of the title qāḍī al-quḍāt with that of the mōbedān mōbed; e.g., Yarshater 1998: 13 with n.25 (citing Levy 1953: 67-68), who says that the institution of the qāḍī is a calque on the Zoroastrian mōbed, but also says, “On the other hand, it may be a genuine Islamic institution helped by the Persian tradition.”

733 E.g., Bligh-Abramski 1992: 59, who says, “But even if the title looks like a free translation influenced by the Persian office, the institution itself seems to be inherently Islamic.” For his part, Chaumont (1960: 169-70) thought that the equivalence of mōbed to qāḍī by Arabic authors betrays their misunderstanding or ignorance of the priestly aspect of the mōbed’s role, or perhaps the conflation of titles by the end of the Sasanian era resulting in the generic use of hērbed for a temple priest.
period, when the Ḥanafī jurist Abū Yūsuf (d. 798) was named qāḍī al-quḍāṭ of Baghdad first under the caliph al-Hādī (r. 785–86) and again under Hārūn al-Rašīd (r. 786–809). It was under the latter caliph when the appointment seems to have “signified the final step in political centralization,” with Abū Yūsuf appointing local judges throughout the caliphate.\footnote{Hallaq 2005: 78.} It was also as a function of this office that he wrote his Kitāb al-Ḥarāj.\footnote{Wheeler 2011.}

Regardless of any formal relationship between the Zoroastrian mōbedān mōbed and the Islamic qāḍī al-quḍāṭ, Arabic authors often made this connection, as in the example of Ibn Saʿd’s biography of Abū Qilāba, above. This statement about Abū Qilāba being like a mōbedān mōbed is repeated in several other ṭabaqāt works, both with and without the explanatory Arabic gloss of qāḍī al-quḍāṭ.\footnote{For example, Ibn Abī Šayba’s (d. 849) Muṣannaf and al-Fasawī’s (d. 890) al-Maʿrifa wa-l-taʾrīkh include the report, although both lack the gloss of qāḍī al-quḍāṭ. The full anecdote with gloss appears in Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣfahānī’s (d. 1038), Ḥilyat al-walīyān wa-l-ṭabaqāt al-aṣfīyāʾ, and al-Ḏahabī’s (d. 1348), Siyar aʿlām al-dubālāʾ (ed. Šuʾayb al-ʿArnāʾūṭ, IV.469–70 §178).} I mentioned that the mōbed does not appear in early hadith collections, but later hadith commentaries frequently mention the title in explanation of the formula upon which it is modeled, “king of kings” (Middle Persian šāhān šāh), and which becomes an epithet of Allāh (Ar. malik al-amlāk).\footnote{E.g., Abū Zakariyyā al-Nawawī’s (d. 1277) commentary on the Sahīḥ Muslim, ed. Beirut 1392/1972 (#2143).}

The explanation of mōbed as al-qāḍī (“judge”) and mōbedān mōbed as qāḍī al-quḍāṭ (“chief judge”) also appears in other genres of Arabic literature. Another early reference is in the Kitāb al-Tāj attributed to al-Jāhiz. Written ca. 840s under al-Mutawakkil, the anonymous author describes the role of the mōbedān mōbed of the Sasanian past as “the judgeship of judges” (li-qāḍāʾ al-quḍāṭ).\footnote{ed. Aḥmad Zakī.} Al-Masʿūdī (d. 956) describes a mōbed
who participates in a disputation in the *majlis* of Yahyā ibn Ḥālid al-Barmakī (d. 805) as “a judge of the Magians” (*qāḍī al-majūs*). Elsewhere, al-Masʿūdī explains the meaning of the office in a Muslim context, as being equivalent to the *qāḍī al-quḍāt*. Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Ḥwārizmī (ca. 970s) also glosses *mōbedān mōbed* as *qāḍī al-quḍāt* in the handbook of the *Mafātīḥ al-ʿulūm* (“Keys to the Sciences”). When al-Bīrūnī (d. 1050) introduces the Sasanian-era Mazdak, he calls him *mōbedān mōbed* and then glosses the title as *qāḍī al-quḍāt*.

These examples show that the earliest references in Arabic to Zoroastrian chief priests are not to *mōbeds* in general, but specifically to the highest office of *mōbedān mōbed* and its equivalent office in Islamic society as the *qāḍī al-quḍāt*. But Arabic writers in the ninth century and beyond do not seem to be explaining the etymology of the *qāḍī al-quḍāt* so much as explaining the Persian office of *mōbedān mōbed* in a Muslim context—for a contemporary Muslim community in which *mōbeds* were still circulating (and relying on the prestige of their past reputation).

The date of Ibn Saʿd’s comments in the first half of the ninth century is interesting when compared to the Middle Persian writings of the late ninth-century Zoroastrian priest Manuščihr (ca. 881), who exclusively uses the Middle Persian title *hudēnān pēšōbāy* (“leader of the faithful”) for the highest authority in the Zoroastrian community, rather than *mōbedān mōbed*. Scholars like Kreyenbroek assume the title *hudēnān pēšōbāy*—which is not attested in sources from the Sasanian period—to be an innovation of the Islamic period.

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739 *Murūj al-ḏahab*, ed. Pellat IV.241 (§2578); *qūla l-tāliṭu ʿašaru wa-huwa l-mawbaṭu wa-kāna majūsiyya l-maghabi wa-qāḍī l-majūsi*. Discussed below.
741 ed. van Vloten, 114.
as a calque of the Arabic title amīr al-muʿminīn. Perhaps the mōbedān mōbed was functionally a relic of the past for ninth-century Zoroastrians. However, at this time the figure of the mōbed appears to have been reconstituted in Zoroastrian memory in particular ways, both within Zoroastrian Middle Persian texts like the Dēnkard and in Arabic sources that relate Persian history.

The aspect of the mōbed’s reputation as a chief judge might have held particularly currency in the 840s, when a Zoroastrian mōbed appears as a witness at the famous trial of al-Afšīn during the reign of al-Muʿtaṣim (r. 833-42). As recounted in Chapter 3, that mōbed famously converted to Islam under al-Mutawakkil (r. 847-61), and can be identified as Zardušt ī Ādurfarrbay, the son of the first redactor of the Dēnkard, Ādurfarrbay ī Farroxxādān, who himself was supposed disputed in the court of al-Maʾmūn (r. 813-33). As the ZMP text of the Gizistag Abāliš (“The Accursed Abāliš”) relates, Ādurfarrbay’s disputation occurred in the presence of a Muslim qāḍī (MP kādīg) who was seated with the caliph. In fact, the notoriety of these particular mōbeds and their interactions with other judges and religious authorities is probably the source of the Arabic definition of the mōbed as a qāḍī in the ninth and tenth centuries, and particularly the mōbedān mōbed as qāḍī al-

743 Kreyenbroek 1987a: 160, where he says the title hudēnān pēšōbāy is “reminiscent of the Islamic amīr al-muʿminīn.” Also see Anklesaria 1969: II.3 and Boyce 1979: 147.

744 GA 3.1, ud pas az framān ī Amīr Mūminin Ādurfarrbāy Farroxxādān čiyōn wehdēnān pēšōbāy būd kādīg wuzurg framādār ud xwad Māmūn ud Abāliš āgenēn nišast hēnd (ed. Chacha 1936; cf. trans. Skjærvø 2011: 243-47). Notice that the MP text either explains kādīg as wuzurg framādar (MP for “commander in chief,” or “prime minister,” or even “grand vizier”), or indicates that this other official is present at the disputation. Although the GA is not likely to be historically accurate, it is only one of many such attestations of inter-religious disputations, particularly at the court of al-Maʾmūn, and so represents a very real context. As Sahner puts it, “What we can say with certainty is that the Gizistag Abāliš portrays a historical reality in which it was common to find high-ranking Zoroastrians or Zoroastrian converts at the ʿAbbasid court” (2019: 8). Indeed, we know from Arabic sources that Zoroastrian mōbeds were present at the court and at other debates, as I will demonstrate.
quḍāt. Indeed, Ibn Sa’d (d. 845), with whose definition I began this section, is an exact contemporary of these events.

But the judiciary function of the mōbed was only part of his role: he also had the reputation as a scholar, a sage, and an advisor to kings. These related aspects of the mōbed’s reputation were not innovations of the Islamic period, but appear also in earlier Sasanian-era literary accounts (such as the Syriac and Armenian works discussed in Chapter 2). The fifth-century BCE Greek historian Herodotus already mentions that the magi advised the Persian kings.\textsuperscript{745} The fact that many of these literary sources represent the magi, and particularly the mōbeds, in polemically charged narratives—where they are figures who interfere with and influence the king in negative ways—their reputation as royal advisors was based on actual fact. Furthermore, that reputation would transfer into an Islamic context in significant ways. The next sections of the chapter trace the figure of the wise mōbed in his role as scholar, sage, and advisor.

2.2. The mōbed as scholar

All of the Arabic definitions of the mōbed presented in this chapter overlap in the basic characteristic of the priest as wise and learned, in matters of religion, history, administrative policy, and general wisdom—from judge to scholar to advisor to sage credited with wise sayings. The following citations attempt to relay the scope of these definitions of the mōbed. Many of them also serve to differentiate the function of the hērbed as a local, ritual specialist, as opposed to the more prominent role of the mōbed. Finally, I demonstrate how the historical role of the mōbed as a scholar collapses into his

\textsuperscript{745} For example, the magi interpret the dreams of kings and advise on the future (Astyages in \textit{Histories} 1.107-108, 1.120, 1.128 and Xerxes in 7.19), although this characterization is also considered a literary device (see de Jong 1997: 396).
contemporary reputation in the ninth and tenth centuries as a learned informant for Arabic authors on matters of Persian history, through both written and oral testimonies.

Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih al-Andalusī (d. 940) glosses al-mawbaḏ as ʿālim al-furs, “scholar of the Persians.” 746 Al-Yaʿqūbī (d. 910) describes the mōbedān mōbed as “the scholar in charge of the laws of their religion” (al-ʿālim al-qayyim bi-šarāʾiʿ), further glossing the title as ʿālim al-ʿulamāʾ (lit. “scholar of scholars”); in contrast to the mōbed, the hērbed is described as “the custodian of the fire” (qayyim al-nār). 747 Compare this to al-Maqdisī’s (ca. 966) Badʾ wa-l-taʾrīḫ, in which the author links mōbeds with the “scholars of the religion” (ʿulamāʾ dīnihim) and later reports that hērbeds were entrusted by Zardušt himself with the care of fire temples. 749 Moreover, this position of the mōbed as a learned scholar contributed to or explained his role in the Persian court. For example, Ibn Qutayba (d. 889), in reading the books of the Persians, likens the mōbedān mōbed to the secretaries of his day (al-kuttāb) for the role they play in advising kings. 750

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746. E.g., by Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih al-Andalusī (d. 940), al-ʿIqd al-farīḍ, ed. al-Tūnjī, II.349-50. 747. Taʾrīḫ, ed. Houtsma, 1.202, wa-kānat tusammī l-ʿālima l-qayyima bi-šarāʾiʿ i i dīnihim mawbaḏ mawbaḏān wa-maʿnā hu ʿālimu al-ʿulamāʾ i wa-awwalu man rafaʿa ʿalayhi minhā l-isma zarāduštū wa-kānat tusammī qayyima l-nārī l-hirbaḏa; cf. translation of Conrad and Fishbein in Gordon et al. 2018: 2.478 and that of Hoyland 2018: 133, the latter translating ʿālim as “religious specialist” and ʿālim al-ʿulamāʾ as “chief religious authority.” According to al-Yaʿqūbī, Zardušt was the first to bear the title of mōbedān mōbed. 748. ed. Huart, I.151, wa-qad ḥakā l-fursu ʿan ʿulamāʾ i dīnihim wa-mawbaḏīhim [mwbdyhm]. 749. ed. Huart, III.150, ṭumma wadaʿa bayta l-nirāni wa-wakkala bihi l-harābiḏata. Note that in this tenth-century work, the term hirbaḏ (pl. harābiḏa) is used almost exclusively to indicate the ritual specialists of the Magian religion: Maqdisī records that Zardušt established fire temples and then entrusted them to the hērbeds (III.149-50), while Alexander is condemned for killing the hērbeds as well as destroying fire temples and burning the Avesta (III.153). In contrast, the title mawbaḏ is used only for the Sasanian-era advisor to King Bahrām in the episode concerning Mani (III.159, both as mawbaḏ mawbaḏān and mawbaḏān mawbaḏ), with a general mention of mōbeds consulted by Xusrō II (III.190, al-mawābiḍa). 750. ʿUyūn al-aḫbār, ed. Yūsuf ʿAlī Tawīl, I.60-61.
Al-Masʿūdī (d. 956), another Arabic author who preserves lore about Persian history and culture, explains the office of mōbed in his two extant works. In addition to the glosses of qāḍī al-quḍāt already cited above, in his history of the Sasanian period, al-Masʿūdī (d. 956) records an episode during the reign of Bahrām II (r. 274-93) in which the king’s mōbed is addressed as “overseer of the religion and advisor to the king, the one informing him about matters of state which he has neglected and omitted, in the command of his lands and his subjects.” For al-Masʿūdī, the mōbed of the Sasanian past was “the one in charge of matters of the religion” (al-qayyim bi-umūr al-dīn). He was also the “custodian of the religion,” or even its “preserver” (ḥāfiẓ al-dīn), and close in rank to

751 For an overview and summary of al-Masʿūdī’s contributions, particularly on the history of the Persians and on the Zoroastrian religion, see Shboul 1979: 102-113, 288. There are some anachronisms: in al-Masʿūdī’s description of the Sasanian office of mōbed, he says that the first mōbed after Zarudoṣt was Jāmāsp, who was appointed by Bistāsf (Vištāspa); then he says that the office of the mōbedān was instituted by Ardašīr.

752 Murūj al-ḏahab, ed. Pellat, I.293 (§597); ayyuhā al-qayyima l-dīn wa-l-nāṣiha li-l-maliki wa-l-munabbīha ʿalā mā aḡfalahū min umūri mulkihi wa-aḍāʿahū min amri bilādīhi wa-raʿīyatihī.

753 Murūj al-ḏahab, ed. Pellat, I.287 (§581) and I.293 (§597); in his hierarchy of Persian offices, al-Masʿūdī explains that the mōbed is the chief of all the hērbeds (pl. al-harābīda), who are overseers of matters of the religion in the rest of the kingdom, as well as being judges and those devoted to legal statutes.

754 Tanbīh al-iṣrāf, ed. de Goeje, 103; cf. translation by Hoyland 2018: 99-100. Here al-Masʿūdī also gives a (partly correct) etymological meaning as part of his definition, which incorporates aspects of other definitions seen above. Although the first part of the compound mōbed (MP mow-bed) does not mean “religion” but refers to the ancient name of Zoroastrian religious specialists as magi, or MP mog (mow-), the meaning of ḥāfiẓ as “guardian” or “custodian” correctly interprets the MP suffix –bed. Whereas in the Murūj al-ḏahab, al-Masʿūdī uses the Arabic word qayyim to explain the mōbed’s role as a “custodian,” here he uses ḥāfiẓ instead: a term that in an Islamic context also refers to someone who has memorized the Qurʾān. So it is possible that al-Masʿūdī is hinting at this aspect of the priest’s role as a memorizer of Zoroastrian liturgies, which he alludes to earlier in the Tanbīh—even naming some of the Zoroastrian prayers which the priests recite, in his explanation of the origin of the Avesta (al-Abastāq; Tanbīh, ed. de Goeje, 91-92). However, in his Murūj al-ḏahab, al-Masʿūdī criticizes the Avesta for its incomprehensibility and the priests’ inability to memorize it in its entirety: he says that ʿulamāʾ (i.e., mōbeds) and hērbeds in his own time only memorize a fraction of the Avesta, and then take turns reciting it. This might reflect the antiphonal nature of Avestan liturgical recitation and not a lapse in its memorization, but al-Masʿūdī also says that he has only heard of a single man in the recent past, in Sijistān, who was able to memorize the whole of the Avesta; Murūj al-ḏahab, ed. Pellat, I.271 (§549).
that of the prophets.\textsuperscript{755} In al-Masʿūdī’s hierarchy of Persian offices, the \textit{mōbed} was either second only to the king, or just below his viziers\textsuperscript{756}—but the \textit{mōbed}’s role as an advisor to the Persian kings pervades the Arabic reception of Persian history, and perhaps both influenced and was influenced by the public image of the \textit{mōbed} in the ‘Abbāsid period. Al-Masʿūdī’s own view of the historical \textit{mōbed} likely came from actual, contemporary Zoroastrian priests: he includes the \textit{mōbed} in the categories of “scholars” or “learned ones” (\textit{al-ʿulamā’}) whom he has consulted in person and through written works.\textsuperscript{757}

3. \textit{Mōbed}s as Scholarly Informants

So far, the Arabic definitions of the \textit{mōbed} have ranged from judge (\textit{qāḍī}) to scholar (\textit{ʿālim}) to custodian (\textit{qayyim} and \textit{ḥāfiẓ}) of the religion. These definitions were shaped by an historical understanding of the \textit{mōbed}, as learned through Persian histories, but they also reflect the contemporary roles of Islamic-era \textit{mōbed}s—who acted as judges and custodians of the religion within their communities, but also gained a reputation as scholars in broader Islamic society. In fact, it was often \textit{mōbed}s who transmitted Persian histories and traditions to Arabic authors, as we will see.

There are several references in Arabic literature to \textit{mōbed}s as a learned informant to the intellectual community. Sometimes one has been consulted personally by one of the

\textsuperscript{755} \textit{Tanbīh}, ed. de Goeje, 103; \textit{wa-martabatuhū `indahum `aẓīmatun nahwa min marātibi l-anbiyāʾ}.

\textsuperscript{756} Compare the hierarchy in \textit{Murūj al-ḏahab} (ed. Pellat, I.287) with that in the \textit{Tanbīh} (ed. de Goeje, 103): in the former, al-Masʿūdī lays out seven ranks instituted by Ardašīr, with the \textit{mōbaḏān} below the \textit{wuzarāʾ}, whereas in the latter (which lays out a general hierarchy of Persian offices) there are five ranks, with the \textit{mōbed} in the highest position, and above the \textit{wuzarāʾ}.

\textsuperscript{757} \textit{Tanbīh}, ed. de Goeje, 110; cf. translation by Hoyland 2018: 105. According to al-Masʿūdī, the first \textit{mōbed} after Zardušt was Jamāsp, who is known in Arabic as \textit{Jāmāsb al-ʿālim}, or Jamāsp “the scholar;” \textit{Murūj}, ed. Pellat I.271 (§550).
Arabic authors, usually to explain some Persian matter. Sometimes these references are to the written works of mōbeds—in Persian or translated into Arabic, read by the Arabic authors themselves or cited as contemporary works which had been summarized for them. Mōbeds appear in Arabic sources of the ninth through eleventh centuries as authors, redactors, and translators of Persian texts from a wide range of subjects including wisdom literature, popular tales, and history, as well as religious traditions. The next sections discuss many such citations of mōbeds in more detail to demonstrate the presence of these Magian priests in Arabic scholarly networks and ʿAbbāsid society.

3.1 Mōbeds and their written works:

As mentioned in previous chapter, in the Taḥbīt dalāʿil al-nubuwwa attributed to ʿAbd al-Jabbār (ca. 995), the author refers by name to the teachings of Āḏurbāḏ ibn Ėmeḏ, i.e., the tenth-century priest Ādurbād Ėmēdān, whom we know was the final redactor of the Dēnkard. It is not clear whether the author of the Taḥbīt dalāʿil al-nubuwwa referred to a written work or merely some knowledge of this mōbed’s teachings, but the fact that they were known so specifically by an Islamic heresiographer shows not only the circulation of Zoroastrian ideas but also the reputation of mōbeds in Islamic intellectual circles.

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758 See for example the works credited to mōbeds in Ibn al-Nadīm’s Fihrist, discussed below.
759 ed. Reynolds & Samir, 134-35; also see Shaked 1994: 76-77, citing the translation of Monnot 1974: 286-88. This reference appears during a discussion of false mahdī figures like the Christian Messiah, in which the author mentions (on the mōbed’s authority) the Zoroastrian savior named Pešōtan. This kind of reference is unusual for Arabic heresiography about Zoroastrians: in the many discussions of al-majūs regarding their practices and beliefs, the authors of heresiographical texts do not necessarily have first-hand information (something which de Jong criticizes in his 2016 article). But there are also genuine notices even in heresiographical texts, as this example demonstrates.
760 Rezania 2017 argues that the Dēnkard was written for a primarily Muslim audience as an intentionally apologetic text; this citation from ʿAbd al-Jabbār would support his theory that it was read by a Muslim audience, but he does not mention (or is unaware of) this example—which
Ibn al-Nadīm’s (ca. 987) *Fihrist* includes a section on books with admonitions, ādāb, and wise sayings of the Persians, Greeks, Indians, and Arabs, in which he includes one “kitāb al-mawbaḏān mawbaḏ.” Elsewhere he mentions that the caliph al-Mutawakkil (r. 847–61) summoned a mōbed from Fārs, and this mōbed is listed among the translators of the *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. Mōbeds were particularly active in the translation of Persian history into Arabic: Ibn al-Nadīm lists one “Bahrām ibn Mardānšāh, mōbed of the city of Šābūr in the land of Fārs,” as “one of the translators of the Persians.” This same mōbed is listed as the author of a redaction (iṣlāḥ) of the *Kitāb taʾrīḫ mulūk banī Sāsān*, one of Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī’s (d. 971) textual sources for his *Taʾrīḫ sinī mulūk al-ard wa-l-anbiyāʾ* (“Chronicle of the Years of the Kings of the Earth and of the Prophets”) and which is considered part of the Arabic recension of the Persian “Book of Kings” traditions (MP Xwadāy-nāmag). In fact, this mōbed seems to have been instrumental in the transmission of the Sasanian Persian Xwadāy-nāmag and its translation into Arabic: Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī reports that this mōbed collected more than twenty manuscripts of the Xwadāy-

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is proof of the divide across academic disciplines, research languages, and genre-specific studies—despite the recent edition and English translation of this text.

761 *Fihrist*, ed. Sayyid, II.349-40; *fī l-ḥikami wa-l-jawāmiʿi wa-l-ādābi*.

762 *Fihrist*, ed. Sayyid, II.326. The manuscript reading of [ʾl-mwryd ʾl-swād] al-mawbaḏān mawbaḏ; Hämeen-Anttila 2018: 76 n.55 agrees. It is possible that this is the same mōbed Abū Jaʿfar Zarādušt who is elsewhere associated with al-Mutawakkil and eventually converts to Islam (discussed in this chapter as well as in Chapter 3).

763 *Fihrist*, ed. Sayyid, II.151: bahrāmu bnu mardān-šāha mawbaḏu madīnati sābūra min baladi fārsa; min naqalat al-furs. Though Ibn al-Nadīm’s list of Persian translators roughly accords with the sources cited by Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī for the Persian “Book of Kings” tradition, Ibn al-Nadīm makes no mention of the Xwadāy-nāmag in this section, and instead this list appears under the heading of works on philosophy and the sciences, and also includes a translator of astronomical works.

nāmag and edited them to produce his recension.\textsuperscript{765} Bahrām ibn Mardānšāh thus also appears as a source in al-Bīrūnī’s al-Āṯār al-bāqiya, cited via Ḥamza al-Īsfahānī and referred to simply as “the manuscript of the mōbed” (nusḥat al-mawbaḏ).\textsuperscript{766} Al-Bīrūnī explicitly states that part of his project in his al-Āṯār al-bāqiya is to record all the known versions of Persian chronology, including the traditions of the mōbeds, despite the seeming inaccuracies in their collations.\textsuperscript{767}

These were not the only Arabic authors reading Persian books, either in the original Middle Persian or translated into Arabic. Many Persian titles were known to be in the possession of Zoroastrian mōbeds: for example, al-Masʿūdī (d. 956) also refers to the Āʾin-nāmāh, about which he says, “It is a huge book of several thousand pages, and it is rare to find a complete copy except with the mōbeds and others in positions of authority.”\textsuperscript{768} A passage in the Zoroastrian Dēnkard also alludes to a work by this name (MP Ėwēn-nāmag) which the compiler Ādurfarrbay ī Farroxzādān used as a source for his compendium of religious knowledge.\textsuperscript{769} While the Āʾin-nāmāh was presumably a book about court protocols and titles, it was not the only Persian book al-Masʿūdī claims to have had access

\textsuperscript{765} Taʾrīḵ, ed. Gottwaldt, 24; trans. Hoyland 2018: 41; also see Hämeen-Anttila 2018: 71 with n. 38. Taqizadeh has suggested that this Bahrām was the father of one of the sources listed in the older preface to the Šāhnāmeh: Māhūy-e Khwarshīd, son of Bahrām, from [Bi]shābūr (para. 6; see Shahbazi 1991: 36, n. 96). This suggestion is noted (with skepticism) by Hämeen-Anttila 2018: 71 n. 37, also citing Zakeri 2008: 31-32. On the preface to the Šāhnāmeh, see Minorsky 1956.

\textsuperscript{766} al-Āṯār al-bāqiya, ed. Sachau 108,114,125,129.

\textsuperscript{767} al-Āṯār al-bāqiya, ed. Sachau, 100. Interestingly, al-Bīrūnī records that Ḥamza finds a discrepancy in the chronology of the Sasanids in his collation of the Avesta with the mōbed’s copy (ed. Sachau, 129).

\textsuperscript{768} Tanbīḥ, ed. de Goeje, 104; wa-huwa ʿazīmu fī l-ulūfi mina l-awrāqi lā yakādu yūjadu kāmilan illā ʿinda l-mawābiḏati wa-ġayrihim min ḏawi l-riʾāsāti.

\textsuperscript{769} Dēn.III.147 (=DkM 144, 1.14-18); cited in Gignoux 1986a: 98-99, who sees a reference to the Ėwēn-nāmag as early as the third-century monumental inscriptions of the priest Kirdēr. The title of this work also appears in Dēn.IV (=DkM 409, 1.2-4) and Dēn.V (=DkM 433, 1.2-3).
to. He says that he got all of his information about the Persians directly from their scholars and priests, and specifically from their “accurate and famous” books:

...wa-gayra dālika min aḥbārihim wa-l-ḡirāri min ayyāmihim mimmā aḥadnā ’an ’ulamāʾ iḥim qa-l-mawābiḍati wa-l-harābiḍati wa-gayrihim min ġawī l-ma rifati bi-aḥbārihim bi-arḍi l-ʿirāq wa-ḥūzistāna wa-fārs wa-kirmāna wa-sijistāna wa-l-māhāt wa-ḡayri dālika min arḍī l-aʿājimi wa-naqalnāhu mina l-kutubi l-ṣaḥīḥati al-mašhūrati ʿinda hum

…and other things concerning the history of the Persians and of their great achievements, which we got from their scholars, such as the mōbeds and hērbeds and others acquainted with their past in the land of ʿIrāq, Ḫūzistān, Fārs, Kirmān, Sijistān, Māhāt and other parts of the land of the Persians; and we copied this from the accurate books well known among them.770

Al-Masʿūdī also cites the names of several Zoroastrian liturgies which were recited by Zoroastrians in his own time, some of which survive today both as written works and through priestly oral transmission.771 Additionally, he reports that in the year 915/6 CE he saw in Iṣṭaḥr in the possession of one of the noble families (ʿinda baʿḍi ahli l-buʿaytati l-mušarrafati) a fabulously illustrated book with portraits of the Persian kings, which recorded that it had been translated from Persian into Arabic for Hišām ibn ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān in 731 CE, and which also included a description about the beginning of the Magian religion, among other things.772

Al-Masʿūdī was also familiar with the text of the Letter of Tansar, which was purported to be the composition of the third-century Zoroastrian priest of that name and was translated into Arabic around this time.773 We might only have al-Masʿūdī’s (and later,

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770 Tanbīh, ed. de Goeje, 110.
771 Tanbīh, ed. de Goeje, 91-92; the names appear garbled in the manuscripts, but Hoyland and others before him identify four names as the Yašt, the Vīdēvdād, the [A]ḥbān- / Bagan-Yašt, and the Hādōxt. Al-Masʿūdī even describes the Vīdēvdād as well as the Zoroastrian commentary tradition (Zand).
772 Tanbīh, ed. de Goeje, 106.
773 Tanbīh, ed. de Goeje, 99-100; whereas in Zoroastrian texts Tansar is usually called a hērbed, al-Masʿūdī calls him the mōbed of Ardašīr as well as “his propagandist and herald to his advent” (al-dāʾi ilayhi wa-l-mubaššir bi-żuhūrihī).
al-Bīrūnī’s) mention of this Letter, except that it actually survives in the New Persian Tārīḵ-e Ṭabarestān of Ibn Isfandiyār (d. 1216), who translated (and augmented) it from the Arabic version of Ibn al-Muqaffa’ (d. 756), who claims to have translated from (Middle) Persian—on the authority of a certain Bahram ibn Ḫwarzād, from his own father Manuščihr, mōbed of Ḥurasān, along with other learned men of Pārs.\footnote{Taqīq mā lī-Hind, ed. Sachau, 53 // trans. Sachau, I.109-10, citing “the Book of Tūsar, the hērbedān hērbed” (fī kitābi tūsara hirbaği l-harābiḏatī) for its comments on Magian marriage practices, i.e., substitute successorship (MP stūrīh).}

The complicated transmission of the Letter of Tansar demonstrates that the legacy of mōbed informants goes back even further than our extant Arabic sources reveal—and suggests that many more examples have been lost to us. There are doubtless more citations in extant Arabic works that the above overview omits.\footnote{ed. Mīnovī, 1. The letter has been edited separately by Mīnovī 1932; for the full Tārīḵ-e Ṭabarestān, see the edition of Eqbal 1941. An English translation of the extant New Persian Letter of Tansar in Boyce 1968a; see especially pg. 4 n.1 and pg. 26. On the transmission of the Letter of Tansar, and the Islamic context of its translation, also see Chapter 3.} Persian books were readily available to Arabic authors, it seems, when they sought them; but the very best books, on whatever subject, were in the hands of Zoroastrian priests. And they possessed more knowledge than could be contained in books.

3.2 Mōbeds as oral informants:

In addition to citing the texts and manuscripts of mōbeds past and present, other Arabic authors seem to have met and spoken with contemporary mōbeds, who inform them on some Zoroastrian practice or Persian tradition. I just mentioned that the source of Ibn al-Muqaffa’’s (d. 756) Arabic translation of the lost Middle Persian Letter of Tansar is supposed to have been the son of the mōbed of Ḥурсān, along with other learned men of Hāmeen-Anttila traces many of these citations, including a reference to the Bundahišn in the anonymous eleventh-century Persian Tārīḵ-e Sistān (2018: 138-39).
It would not be surprising if Ibn al-Muqaffa’, the early translator of other Middle Persian works, had other mōbeds among his informants as well.**778** Al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 868) in his *Risālat al-ḥanīn ilā awṭān* (“Letter on the Yearning for Homelands”), when using an example from Persian epic literature, cites a mōbed’s reading of the Persian *Life of Isfandiyār*.**779** It is conceivable that al-Jāḥiẓ knew this mōbed as well as other Zoroastrians, because his works are filled with accurate references to different beliefs and practices of al-majūs that are also known from Zoroastrian Middle Persian texts.**780**

Al-Maqdisī (ca. 966) says he met a hērbed of the majūs in Fārs.**781** He also visited a fire temple in Gōr,**782** one of the villages of Fārs, and records a sample of the Avesta which the caretakers of the fire temple showed him and read for him.**783** Al-Masʿūdī (d. **777** See note above.

**778** E.g., the *Kalīla wa-dimna*.

**779** *Rasāʾil*, ed. Hārūn, II.408; “And the mōbed related that he read in the life of Isfandiyār ibn Yustāsf ibn Luhrašf, in Persian (bi-l-fārisiyya)... that he was asked, ‘What do you long for?’ and he answered, ‘A whiff of the dust from Balḫ and a drink of the water of its river’ (wa-ḥakā l-mawbaḏu annahū qara’a fi sīratā isfandiyāri bni yustāsf bni luhraśfa bi-l-fārisiyati annahū lammā ǧazā bilāda l-ḥazari li-yustānfqū uṭṭahū mina l-asrī ‘talla bihī fa-qīla laḥū mā taštahī qāla šammata min turbatā balṭa wa-sarbata min mā i wādīhā). Cf. Hameen-Anttila 2018:32-33 (with n. 22-23), who hesitantly identifies the Persian work read by the mōbed with one mentioned in Ibn al-Nadīm’s *Fihrist*, titled *Kitāb Rustam wa-Isfandiyār* and supposedly translated (from an original Middle Persian) by someone named Jabala ibn Sālim.

**780** See especially his *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*, ed. Hārūn, I.55-56,190; II.289-90; IV.95-96,296-300; V.66-71, etc. Another letter of al-Jāḥiẓ attests that the Persian sayings of Buzurgmihr, as well as the Testament of Ardašīr, were read in the court in Baghdad (Rasāʾil, ed. Hārūn, I.191-92). Note that al-Jāḥiẓ became a kāṭib for the vizier Muḥammad ibn Ṭabd al-Malik al-Zayyāt (d. 847), to whom the *Kitāb al-ḥayawān* is dedicated; this is the same official who arbitrates at the trial of al-Afšīn (ca. 841) alongside as well as the soon-to-be-apostate mōbed and nadīm of al-Mutawakkil, as well as the qāḍī Aḥmad ibn Abī Duwād (d. 854)—for whom the *Kitāb al-ḥayawān* was eventually completed. The date of this oral report makes it likely that al-Jāḥiẓ’s mōbed is the same mōbed associated with the caliph al-Mutawakkil (r. 847-61), who is thought to be the son of the first rector of the Dēnkard, Ādurfarbay ī Farrokhzādān (see Chapter 3).

**781** *al-Bad*’ wa-l-ṭaʾrīḥ, ed. Huart, II.60; wa-ḥabbaranī hirbaḏu l-majūsi bi-fārsā anna fī kitābin lahum anna muddata l-dunyā... This report appears in a section discussing various traditions about the duration of this world.

**782** Thanks to Kevin van Bladel for suggesting to emend this toponym from [xwz] to [jwr], i.e., Gōr, with just a change in the pointing.

**783** *al-Bad*’ wa-l-ṭaʾrīḥ, ed. Huart, II.62-63, wa-la-qad daḥaltu bāyta l-nārī ḥūza* [=jūra] wa-hiya kūratun min kuwari fārsa qadīmatu l-bināʾi wa-saʾaltuhum ’an ǧikri l-bāriʾi fī kitābi llāḏī
also visited fire temples of the majūs, particularly one in Iṣṭaḥr, Fārs. And he informs us about two successive individuals to hold the office of mōbed in his own lifetime, including their names (in a passage quoted in Chapter 3). His and others’ statements are crucial for establishing a chronology for the Islamic-era mōbeds, as I demonstrated in the previous chapter.

To reiterate, briefly: Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī (d. ca. 970s) quotes the mōbed of Mutawakkil (r. 847–61), named Zardušt ibn Ādurḫwarr, as an authority on the Persian scripts. Then, the same mōbed is quoted by name several times by the anonymous author of the chronicle in MS Sprenger 30, who also refers to the authority of Zoroastrian priests on matters of Persian history. Another mōbed identified as Ėmēd ī Ašawahīstān is quoted by two contemporary Arabic authors. Ibn al-Nadīm twice quotes “Ėmēd the mōbed” about the history of Persian scripts, and Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī (d. 970) quotes this mōbed twice as well. Based on these citations and others, we can more firmly date several known authors

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jāʾ ahum bihī zarduštu fa-qaraʿū ālayya bi-lisānīhim fa-fassarāhū ‘alayya bi-mafhūmīhim l-fārisiyyatī. Although there is no explicit mention of “priests” in this report, we can assume some kind of religious specialist (probably hērbeds) had the care of the fire temple.

784 Murūj, ed. Pellat, II.397ff (§1399 begins a general description of Persian fire temples).

785 al-Tanbih, ed. Taṭās, 21-24; the mōbed’s report on Persian scripts is quoted again by Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (d. 1229) in his Muʾjam al-buldān (ed. Wüstenfeld, III.185, 925), and also by al-Ḥwārizmī (d. ca. 970s)—without crediting Ḥamza or the mōbed—in his Majāṭīḥ al-ʿulūm (ed. van Vloten, 116-17). This information on Persian scripts could come from written source material, but I think this mōbed was still alive to be an oral informant for Ḥamza, who describes his report as a “quotation” (ḥikāya). On these and other reports of the Persian scripts in Arabic sources, see van Bladel 2017a.

786 See discussion in Chapter 3.


788 Ḥamza’s quotations of Ėmēd are preserved in a later work of Yāqūt (d. 1229): Muʾjam al-buldān, ed. Wüstenfeld, I-1.426 (qāla ʾl al-mawbaḏān mawbaḏ [ʾmyd] bnu [ʾswḥst]) and I-2.637 (wa-qāla ḥamzatu bnu l-hasani l-iṣbahānīyyu samiʾ tu mawbaḏa bna [ʾswḥst]). See further comments in Chapter 3.
of Zoroastrian Middle Persian works to the late ninth and early tenth centuries, as well as correct our understanding of their genealogical relationships to each other.

Other references to mōbeds as oral informants include those of al-Bīrūnī (d. 1050), who refers to a third-hand oral report from a contemporary mōbed of Šīrāz about the names of the five epagonal days of the Zoroastrian calendar. He also cites two other Zoroastrian priests as informants on Persian festivals: Ādurbād, mōbed of Baghdad, explains why people gift each other with sugar on the festival of Nawrūz, while the mōbed Xwaršīd explains the date of the feast of Ādur-čašn is the first day of the Persian month of Šahrēwar. These priests are possibly contemporaries of al-Bīrūnī, but it is unclear if they are quoted directly as oral sources or from previous written works.

Baghdad was a center of learning in the ʿAbbāsid period, particularly with the explosion of book culture after the popularization of the medium of paper in the ninth century. Not only was there a “Zoroastrian neighborhood” (darb al-majūs) of Baghdad, the city was also the seat of the Zoroastrian mōbeds at this time and the place where they copied Zoroastrian Middle Persian books like the Dēnkard.

The above reports demonstrate that Zoroastrian mōbeds and their written works were consulted by Arabic authors on a variety of Persian subjects. Furthermore, they show

789 al-Āṯār al-bāqiya, ed. Sachau, 44; al-Bīrūnī says, “I myself heard Abū l-Faraj Ibrahīm ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥalaf al-Zanjānī say that the mōbed in Šīrāz had dictated to him in this form…” (wa-sami tu abā l-faraji ibrahīma bni aḥmadi bni ḥalašini l-zanjāniyya yaqūlu anna l-mawbaḍa bi-šīrāza amlāḥa ʿalayhi ḥakādaq). Elsewhere in al-Āṯār al-bāqiya al-Bīrūnī refers to a written work of Abū l-Faraj al-Zanjānī, on the chronology of the Sasanids (ed. Sachau, 126).
790 On a possible connection to either the final redactor of the Dēnkard, Ādurbād ī Ėmēdān, or a later copyist of the Dēnkard, Ādurbād ibn Mārsfandān ibn Ašawahišt, see the comments in Chapter 3.
792 See de Jong 2016, especially pg. 299 on the darb al-majūs (citing al-Samʿānī’s Kitāb al-Ansāb, ed. al-Bārūḍī, V.205).
that the same mōbeds that are known as the redactors of some of the most important extant ZMP works were connected to Muslim intellectuals. Furthermore, the reputation of the mōbed as a judge, a scholar, and also a sage, helped win him a place in the court of the caliph as an advisor. The next sections explore the reputation of the mōbed in Arabic sources as both a sage and a royal advisor, both in the Sasanian past as well as the contemporary Islamic period.

4. The mōbed as sage and advisor

There are many passing references in Arabic texts to the mōbed at the side of the caliph, but they say little directly about the nature of this relationship or the identity of the mōbed—not to mention his standing in the Zoroastrian community. However, this particular role of the mōbed was portrayed as a continuation of the Sasanian-era, when mōbeds like the famous Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān advised the king and disputed with heretics like Mani in the royal court.794 There is reason to suspect that the mōbeds aspired to play their own part in the administration of the caliphate, even in the role of advisor to the caliph himself. The continuity is no accident: mōbed advisors and wise men feature in Arabic translations of Persian histories and wisdom literature, and many of these texts were translated by mōbeds or from their manuscripts. The following section will first discuss the general reputation of the mōbed as a sage and wise figure before turning to specific examples where he is associated with Islamic rulers.

794 Vevaina 2022: 308 n. 75 summarizes some Arabic traditions of Mani’s disputation with a mōbed; for the translation of Arabic accounts about Mani, see Reeves 2011.
4.1 The wise mōbed:

In Arabic sources the mōbed not just as a man of learning but is often a sage full of wise and witty sayings. As previously mentioned, the title al-mawbaḏ is sometimes glossed in Arabic as ‘ālim al-furs, “scholar of the Persians.” Many wise sayings are attributed to mōbeds in Arabic, often appearing as stand-alone quotations on a particular topic alongside other Greek or Muslim sages, sometimes in full anecdotes in the setting of a majlis or in the court of the caliph, sometimes in Arabic translations of Middle Persian wisdom literature (MP andarz). Other times the citation of a mōbed is a trope or device used by authors to attribute antiquity and authority to their sources, as perhaps in the case of Miskawayh (d. 1030), in his introduction to al-Ḥikma al-ḥālida (“Eternal Wisdom”)—a compilation of wisdom literature from various sources and traditions, beginning with Persian wisdom.

Miskawayh, after describing how in his youth he had read in one of al-Jāḥiẓ’s works about a Persian book called Jāwīdān ḫirad—which is Middle Persian for “Eternal Wisdom”—then claims to have finally found a manuscript of this work in the possession of the mōbedān mōbed of Fārs. Miskawayh quotes al-Jāḥiẓ, who quotes al-Wāqidī (d. 822), who quotes al-Faḍl ibn Sahl (d. 818), who says that the king of Kābulistān sent an old man named Ḏūbān to al-Maʾmūn, who subsequently informs him about a lost book of ancient Persian wisdom buried beneath the ruins of the Sasanian palace at Ctesiphon, which al-Ḥasan ibn Sahl later copies (and translates) with the help of an otherwise unknown

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795 E.g., by Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih al-Andalusī (d. 940), al-ʿIqd al-farīd (see note above).
797 A famous early historiographer from Medina, transmitter of mağāzī, sīra, and futūḥ literature, whose work survives mostly in quotation; see “Wākidī,” Eİ by S. Leder.
individual named Ḫiḍr ibn 'Alī. This is the “Testament of Ūšanj” (MP Ḥōšang) which Miskawayh claims to have found and provided for his readers.

Miskawayh’s citation of al-Jāḥiẓ (above) is from what is thought to be a pseudepigraphical work, and the frame story which he recounts is certainly fantastical. Even so, the later characters and the setting of this nested (re)discovery of Persian wisdom are plausible—in the court of the caliph al-Maʾmūn, with the translation of this text sponsored by his vizier al-Ḥasan ibn Sahl. Furthermore, this and other wisdom literature collected in al-Ḥikma al-ḥālida certainly reflects Middle Persian originals or even translations, including a collection of wise sayings attributed to none other than Ādurbād ī Mahrspāndān (featured in Chapter 3), whom Miskawayh calls ḥakīm al-furs (“sage of the Persians”). This collection of wise sayings roughly corresponds to the two extant Middle Persian andarz works attributed to that Sasanian-era mōbed.

The translation of Ādurbād’s wisdom into Arabic by the eleventh century (if not earlier) should be viewed alongside other developments in the tenth century, when a certain group of Zoroastrians claimed special privileges from the Būyid amir as descendants of this same priest. I will discuss this and more in the final part of this chapter. For now, I return to the reputation of the mōbed as a sage more generally.

799 Miskawayh cites the Istiṭālat al-fahm, which is regarded as a pseudonymous work (see Pellat 1984: 144).
801 After the “Testament of Ūšanj,” this is the second collection of wisdom in Miskawayh’s work: the Mawāʿiẓ Āḏurbāḏ (ed. Badawī, 26-28). The two Middle Persian andarz collections are known respectively as the Andarz ī Ādurbāḏ ī Mahrspāndān (AAM) and the Wāzag ī ēwčand ī Ādurbāḏ ī Mahrspāndān (WEA); some of Ādurbād’s wise sayings also appear in Book VI of the Dēnkard (see Shaked 1979: 279-300) and elsewhere in extant ZMP literature (see Chapter 3).
The wise *mōbed* appears frequently in Arabic *siyāsa* literature, particularly in the genre known as “Mirror for Princes,” or *Fürstenspiegel*—apparently continuing a Persian tradition of advice for kings. Sometimes the *mōbed* is most commonly an ahistorical, decontextual, generic figure credited with some aphorism. Sometimes the anecdote is more specific, but with recycled content: al-Tawḥīdī (d. 1020) recounts an episode in which a *mōbed* astounds al-Maʿmūn with his intellect (and his wordplay with a Qurʾānic verse). However, Wadād al-Qāḍī notes that this saying is elsewhere attributed to ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, and that it also appears in Miskawayh’s (d. 1030) *al-Ḥikma al-ḥālīda*. Furthermore, a similar anecdote appears in al-Rāġib al-Iṣfahānī’s (d. 1108) encyclopedic *adab* work entitled *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabāʾ* (“Lectures of the Learned”), but this time the witty phrase is solely attributed to the *amīr al-muʾminīn*. It is not unusual for the attribution of aphorisms and anecdotes to migrate between famous individuals, but the inclusion of the *mōbed* as a player in these court games illustrates a real reputation.

This aspect of the *mōbed*’s reputation is on display in the numerous attestations of his presence at religious disputations, in which he often gets the better of his opponents. For example, the disputation on love that is supposed to have occurred ca. 800 in the *majlis* of Yaḥyā ibn Ḥālid al-Barmakī (d. 805), as related by al-Masʿūdī’s (d. 956). Similarly,

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802 The figure of the wise *mōbed* also pervades the Zoroastrian Middle Persian works, and a whole book of the *Dēnkard* devoted to collections of wise sayings features many aphorisms from *mōbeds*, including those of Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān (which is actually referred to as written work, or book, in its own right). More on the wisdom of Ādurbād appears below.


804 *al-Baṣāʾir wa-l-Ḏaḥāʾ ir*, ed. al-Qāḏī, 7.121; the wordplay has to do with Q. al-Isrā’ “The Night-Journey” 17:7.

805 Ibid.

806 Ibid.

807 *Murūj al-ḏahab*, ed. Pellat, IV.236-46; see a discussion and translation in Meisami 1989, where she credits the *mōbed* with the most detailed and sophisticated argument of those gathered, as al-Masʿūdī’s linchpin for a larger narrative point about the downfall of the Barmakids. In this
al-Rāġib al-Iṣfahānī describes how al-Maʾmūn was sitting with Muslim theologians (mutakallimūn), and the Christian catholicos (al-jāṭalīq), when the Zoroastrian mōbed joins them. The anecdote reads like a bad joke of the “a priest and a rabbi walk into a bar”-type, with the mōbed delivering the punch-line, getting the better of his Christian counterpart, and making al-Maʾmūn laugh uproariously. 808 Sahner has noted another alleged disputation in the court of al-Maʾmūn also hosted by al-Faḍl ibn Sahl, this time on the topic of monotheism (tawḥīd) and taking place between the eighth Šīʿī imām ʿAlī al-Riḍā (d. 818) and a “great hērbed” (al-hirbaḏ al-akbar). 809 Another time, al-Riḍā debated with Magians among other non-Muslims on the topic of the sinlessness of the prophets (ʾismat al-anbiyāʾ). 810

It is difficult to situate the disputational inter-faith majlis as a historical event, despite references to specific individuals, because the individuals and the content of their debate are often recycled (and attributed to different individuals at different times). The names of some famous intellectuals are repeated in these and other accounts of debates and disputations. For example, Ibn Qutayba al-Dīnawarī (d. 889) and Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih al-Andalusī (d. 940) both relate the story of a mōbed—who is glossed by the latter as ṣāḥib al-furs—in a disputation about the nature of the world with Hišām ibn al-Ḥakam (d. after

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808 Muhāḍarāt al-udabāʾ, ed. Murād, IV.147 (trans. van Gelder 2005: 61); also see Sahner 2019: 10, who says, “The anecdote is so unusual that one wonders whether there is a ring of truth to it.” The story appears to be a retelling (in slightly different wording) of an anecdote that also appears in al-Tawḥīdī’s (d. 1020) earlier adab work, al-Baṣāʾir wa ṣaḥāḥ l-Ḥakam (Insights and Treasures”), already nearly 200 years after the purported event (ed. Wadāḍ al-Qāḍī, VII.79).


This is the same imāmī Šīʿī theologian who also appears in al-Masʿūdī’s account of Yaḥyā ibn Ḫālid’s majlis (cited above). Thus, there seems to be an ensemble cast of recurring characters in these disputations, particularly Šīʿī ones.

The caliphates of al-Maʿmūn (r. 813-833) and his father Hārūn al-Rašīd (r. 786-809) were a popular setting for stories about religious disputation. Yet, the rhetorical nature of al-Masʿūdī’s narrative (and others’) does not preclude an actual historical occurrence. Nor does the relatively late date of these Arabic accounts necessarily indicate their fabrication—especially when contemporary texts also allude to them.

Zoroastrian texts from the ninth and tenth centuries also provide examples of interreligious disputation. I have already introduced the Middle Persian text known as the Gizistag Abāliš, which describes how Ādurfarrbāy ī Farroxzādān disputed in the court of al-Maʿmūn. Scholars have shown that this story is based on an Arabic precedent adapted to a Zoroastrian context (with Abāliš likely rendering the Arabic name Abū ᾳAlī or Abū Layṯ in the Arabic vocative). The fact of its adaptation and attribution to this specific individual at the court of al-Maʿmūn shows that such an event was thought to be possible.

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813 See Appendix 4 for an overview of hadith about Zoroastrians and their status in the dhimma, including reports transmitted by Šīʿī authorities that relate that ʿAlī said that Magians were ahl al-kitāb.
814 ed. Chacha 1936; discussed above.
816 However, De Blois (1996: n. 79) is skeptical of this text having any historical value beyond confirming the date of the figure in question; he calls it “an edifying work of fiction” in which the anonymous author uses the known figure of Ādurfarrbay ī Farroxzādān to give verisimilitude to his account. Christian Sahner reads the Gizistag Abāliš in the context of contemporary Christian apologetic texts with similar disputational settings, but unlike these Christian works, he points out, ZMP texts offer little engagement or critique of Islamic thought; instead, he argues for reading the GA “as an internal catechetical work written primarily for a priestly audience, but possibly including educated lay people, too” (Sahner 2019: 17); he also rejects the notion that the intended purpose of the GA was to differentiate Zoroastrians from Manichaens (zanāḏiga), but I think his rejected scenario is actually on the right track, particularly when Sahner questions, “If
Other examples from Zoroastrian tradition corroborate these (real or imagined) contexts of religious disputation in the court, in a long tradition going back to the first Sasanian kings—with legendary champions like the third-century Ādurbādī Mahrspandān, to whom the Zoroastrian priests of the Islamic period trace their lineage as well as their textual tradition (as discussed in the first part of this chapter). Even if such religious disputation is a literary invention, it is still very likely based on historical fact. There are too many instances for this not to be the case. Furthermore, the presence of the mōbed in such imagined contexts demonstrates his public role as a representative of his religious community. And the stereotype of the wise mōbed seems to have paid off in tangible ways for the Zoroastrian community of the ninth and tenth centuries, as the mōbed sought the patronage and protection of a series of Muslim rulers.

so, could it be that the Zoroastrian author turned to the caliph’s court as a setting to assign value to competing systems, based on the principle that an imaginary majlis was the ideal place to weigh Zoroastrian claims against those of its dualist competitors? (16).

On the competitive religious environment in the Sasanian court, see Gardner et al. 2015.

Ibn Saʿdī (ca. 1010) tells of his disappointment in the theological debating societies of Baghdad: he complains that the discussions between Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians, Manichaens, and Muslims (both “Sunnīs and heretics”) do not use the revelation of the Qurʾān as a starting point—as related by the Andalusian al-Ḥumaydī (d. 1095) in his biographical dictionary, Jaḏwat al-muqtabis (ed. Maʿrūf & ʿAwwād, 161–62) and reproduced with some additions by another Andalusian biographer, al-Daqqī (d. 1203); this anecdote is discussed in Cook 2007. Al-Ḏahabī (d. 1348) describes another such inter-religious majlis in Baṣra in 772/3, as a group of ten persons, primarily poets, which included a Sunnī, a Śīʿī, a dualist (al-ṯanawī), a Ṣufrī (Ḫārijī), a zindiq, the son of the Jewish exilarch, a Christian theologian (mutakallim al-naṣārā), as well as a Şābi’, and one of the majūs named ‘Amr, the nephew of a mōbed (Taʾrīḫ al-Islam, ed. Ṭadmurī, IX.383, where I have emended the editor’s reading of al-Muʿayyad to al-mawbaḏ, which is plausible based on his religious identity); cf. translation by Snir 2013: 8 n. 31.

Even when he is an example of heresy, as in the list of heretics in which Ibn Ḥazm (d. 1064) mentions “Ādurbād the mōbed” among other ninth- and tenth-century Jewish, Christian, Manichaean, and Muslim heretics who all miss the mark (Rasāʾil, ed. Ḵᵛāżī, III.202, wa-aṣ’ūn fa-qad yastadillu al-dahru kulluhā man lā yuwaʃfaqu li-l-ḥaqiq kamā stadaʃa l-fayyāmīyya wa-l-muqammaʃa wa-ābī rāyata [sic] l-yā qūbīyū wa-aḏurbāḏu l-mawbaḏu wa-ābī ᾀliyī yazdān buʃta l-manāniyū ʔumma min firāq l-muslimina hišāmu bnu l-ḥakami wa- aliyī bnu mansūrin wa-l-naẓẓāmu wa-ḡayruhū fa-ʃa-даhum yassara li-l-kufri wa-ša-даhum li-l-īmāni wa-li-daʃlāli l-bidʿati maʿan).
However, before moving on to Arabic references to the role of the mōbed at the side of the caliphs and amirs, I want to note another aspect of the wise mōbed’s reputation in the Islamic tradition: as an oracle of the coming of the prophet Muḥammad. A particular tradition that appears in Arabic histories of the Persians is that upon the beginning of Muḥammad’s ministry (ca. 613), the mōbed advisor to the Sasanian king Xusrō II (r. 590–628) had a dream foretelling the coming of the Arabs. This is part of the so-called “palace tradition,” in which the Sasanian palace (Ar. īwān) was also said to have trembled and quaked at the moment of Muḥammad’s birth. Accounts of the mōbed’s dream and the palace earthquake can be found in the works of al-Ṭabarī (d. 923), Ibn Ṭabarī, and Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih al-Andalusī (d. 940), al-Masʿūdī (d. 956). These narratives represent an Islamicization of Persian history, perhaps even on the part of Persian transmitters or even contemporary mōbeds, as one scholar suggests. I have not yet had time to trace this tradition thoroughly, but it deserves further study in discussion with the development of the institution of the Zoroastrian priesthood in the Islamic period—and as part of Islamic society.

4.2 The mōbed as advisor:

According to Arabic sources, mōbeds appeared at the side of caliphs, viziers, and amirs—evidently as early as the beginning of the ʿAbbāsid caliphate. For example, al-

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820 Taʾrīḫ, ed. de Goeje, I.981.
822 Murūj al-ḏahab, ed. Pellat, I.320 (§649) and II.333 (§1280).
823 Although he does specifically mention the palace tradition, Choksy discusses the cross-influences of premonitory literature in Islamic Arabic and Zoroastrian Middle Persian texts, suggesting that the Dēnkard redactors Ādurfarrbayī Farrozxādān and Ādurbādī Emēdān, “periodically had contact with Muslim scholars” in Baghdad and “would have added fictitious materials to the legend in the Dēnkard and other books so as to create commonality between the lives of Zarathushtra and Muhammad” (1997: 66).
Bīrūnī (d. 1050) reports that when Abū Muslim arrived in Nīšāpūr (ca. 748), Zoroastrian mōbeds and hērbēs of Nīšāpūr petition him to execute the prophet Bāh-Āfrīd on the grounds that he was corrupting Islam as well as the Magian religion. Al-Šahrastānī (d. 1153) records another variation of this account, in which “a mōbed of the Magians” brought Bāh-Āfrīd’s followers before Abū Muslim, who then killed him at the gate of the main mosque of Nīšāpūr.

As al-Šahrastānī describes it, the dispute was a sectarian one: the followers of Bāh-Āfrīd rejected the recitation of the Avesta (here indicated by the Arabic word zamzama) and the worship of fire in favor of other practices, and as such were “the deadliest enemies of the zamzamī majūs,” i.e. the Zoroastrians who practiced recitation, and particularly the priests. From these reports, it appears that the Zoroastrian priests of Nīšāpūr had the ear of the future leader of the ʿAbbāsid revolution, with the particular concern and common interest of safeguarding the orthodoxy of their religion. This was the beginning of what appears to be a pattern of mōbeds in the ʿAbbāsid court—Magian priests at the side of Muslim rulers, in a position with great potential reward, but also great risk.

I introduced the apostate mōbed of al-Mutawakkil, Zardušt ibn Āduxwarr, above and in Chapter 3. It seems that this mōbed (thought to be the son of the first redactor of the

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824 al-Āṯār al-bāqiya, ed. Sachau, 211; wa-lamā warada abū muslimin nīṣābūra jītamaʿa ilayhi l-mawābiḏatu wa-l-harābiḏatu wa-a ʾlamū annahū qad afṣada dīna l-islāmi wa-dīnaḥum. In al-Bīrūnī’s account, Bāh-Āfrīd is a native of Zūzan in Nīšāpūr. Compare this account to that from Ibrāhīm ibn al-ʿAbbās al-Ṣūlī, as cited in Ibn al-Nadīm’s (d. 987) Fihrist: Bāh-Āfrīd is a priest (takahhana) in the region of Abaršahr whom Abū Muslim’s generals convert to Islam, but he is later killed because he continues to serve as a priest (li-takahhuniḥ); ed. Sayyid, 420-21 (trans. Dodge, II.822). For more on this revolutionary figure and “nativist prophet,” see Crone 2012: 144ff.

825 Kitāb al-milal wa-l-nihal, ed. Cureton, 187; tūmma anna mawbaḍa l-majūsī rafaʿ ahū ilā abī muslimin fā-qatalahū ʾalā bābī l-jāmīʿ ʾi bi-nīṣābūra. In this section, al-Šahrastānī describes various sects of the Magians, including one called al-Sīsāniyya which seems to have been an offshoot of Bāh-Āfrīd’s movement, and which was led by a man called “Sīsan” in Nīšāpūr in the time of Abū Muslim. It is either Sīsan or Bāh-Āfrīd himself whom the mōbeds bring before Abū Muslim.
Dēnkard, Ādurfarrbay ī Farroxzādān), was frequently consulted by al-Mutawakkil, to the point that some Arabic authors simply call him *al-mawbaḏ al-Mutawakkilī*.\(^{826}\) This mōbed’s presence at the trial of the al-Afsīn in 840 indicates the high position he held in the ʿAbbāsid court, especially considering that al-Ṭabarī tells us that this mōbed, after he converted to Islam, became al-Mutawakkil’s boon companion.\(^{827}\) His conversion was particularly devastating to the Zoroastrian community: contemporary Zoroastrian texts allude to the disarray caused by Zardušṭ’s apostasy. For example, the subsequent redactor of the *Dēnkard*, Ādurbād ī Ėmēdān, had to put the *dīwān* of Zoroastrian knowledge back together again. As Zardušṭ’s conversion to Islam demonstrates, proximity to the caliph was a potentially dangerous proposition for adherents of Zoroastrianism. It also held great advantage.

There are numerous Arabic sources that attest to mōbeds being present in the court of caliphs and amirs, conversing with them and advising them on various topics. Regarding associations with ʿAbbāsid rulers, these anecdotes are mostly set in the mid-eighth to mid-ninth centuries, beginning with Abū Muslim and extending into the reigns of al-Muʿṭasim (r. 833–42)\(^{828}\) to that of al-Mutawakkil (r. 847–61).\(^{829}\) But apart from the famous mōbed of

\(^{826}\) Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī (d. 971), *Tanbīh*, ed. Ṭalās, 21 and 24; and al-Bīrūnī (d. 1050), *al-Ăṯār al-bāqiya*, ed. Sachau, 223. See discussion in Chapter 3, as well as de Blois 1996.

\(^{827}\) al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīḫ*, ed. de Goeje, III.2.1310. From the perspective of the Muslim audience, however, the mōbed is not a trustworthy witness—either in regards to his own religion (because he would later convert), or because his testimony is inadmissible in a Muslim court (not having yet converted); see trans. Bosworth 1991: 188, with n.539.

\(^{828}\) I.e., the al-Afsīn episode, discussed above.

al-Mutawakkil, the most frequent association of mōbeds with an 'Abbāsid caliph is with al-Ma’mūn (r. 813–33).

For example, Ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr (d. 893) records a conversation between al-Ma'mūn and the mōbedān mōbed about the fruits of the intellect. Al-Bayhaqī (ca. 930s) relates that al-Ma’mūn and a mōbed discussed what is beneficial for the body; he also states that the mōbed did not convert to Islam, despite this exchange. I have already mentioned that al-Tawḥīdī (d. 1020) recounts an episode in which a mōbed astounds al-Ma’mūn with his intellect. Yāqūt (d. 1229) recounts an episode in which al-Ma’mūn’s consultation with a nameless mōbed seems like a regular occurrence. In another example, the mōbed is with al-Ma’ mūn when he receives reports from al-Ḥasan ibn Sahl (who was attempting to put down opposition in ‘Irāq); although the setting provides another excuse to show off the wit and wisdom of the mōbed—who recognizes the mortality inherent in all living things—it also hints that the presence of the mōbed, who had ties to Magians back in Iraq worth reporting in official government correspondence, in some way provided political support to al-Ma’mūn.

Christian Sahner has drawn attention to similar debates attested between Magians (and their priests) and the eighth Shī‘ī imam, ‘Alī ibn Mūsā al-Riḍā (d. 818), during the

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830 ed. al-Kawtarī [1968 reprint], 48; qāla wa-sa’ala mawbaḍa mawbaḍāna [sic] fa-qāla lahu mā tamaratu l’-aqli qāla ṭimaruhā l-karīmatu kaṭirtatun minhā Ӏhrāzu l-marr’i naṣībihī mina l-šukri wa-an tutimma niyyatuhā fī l-harsi ‘alā mukāfa’ati kulli gī ni’matin / na’matin wa-yablūqā min ḡālikā bi-l-fa’ī gūyata l-qudrati; cited by Sahner 2019: 10. Although the caliph is not named in this excerpt, it is part of a longer passage of anecdotes about al-Ma’ mūn.


832 al-Ḏaḫāʾir, ed. Wadād al-Qādī, VII.121. See discussion above.

833 Mu’jam al-buldān, ed. Wüstenfeld, II.519 [as ‘l-mwbd]: in this anecdote concerning a certain man named Dinār, one of al-Ma’ mūn’s commanders (?), the caliph receives some pertinent advice from the mōbed with a wise saying about the nature of objects in motion and at rest.

834 al-Rāġib al-Iṣfahānī (d. 1108), Muḥāḍarāt al-udabā’, ed. Murād, IV.337. A much-abbreviated version of this anecdote, featuring a similar saying attributed to a mōbed, appears in al-Jāhiz’ Kitāb al-Ḥayawān (ed. Hārūn, VI.503).
time he attended al-Maʾmūn in Marw as his expected heir (before his murder). The presence of mōbeds and Magians in general in the court of al-Maʾmūn was a point of contention for some: one of his generals, Harthama, journeyed to Marw in 816/7 to confront al-Maʾmūn about his reliance upon al-majūs. The criticism was particularly for al-Maʾmūn’s permitting non-Muslims holding government positions.

Taken individually, these examples do not bear much historical weight; because of the decontextualized referential nature of the adab literature in which they appear, often reiterated centuries later, they seem to be part of the semi-legendary setting of early ʿAbbāsid rule. However, the verisimilitude of these examples is corroborated by other citations already mentioned, which point to mōbeds as part of the ʿAbbāsid intellectual community—and part of the translation movement of Persian history which promoted their reputation as wise figures and advisors. This reputation granted mōbeds proximity to Muslim ruling elite, a position which they would use to their advantage, as they did under the Persian Būyid amirs.

5. Mōbeds under the Būyids:

An Arabic inscription on the ruins of the fifth-century BC Achaemenid palace of Darius at Persepolis informs us that in the year 344 AH [=955 CE] the Būyid amir ʿAḍud al-Dawla

835 Sahner 2019: 9-10, cited above.
837 al-Yaʿqūbī, Taʾrīḫ, ed. Houtsma, 2.546, where Harthama says, “You have promoted these Magians over your true friends and supporters;” Conrad and Fishbein (in Gordon et al. 2018: 3.1212) note the parallel account in al-Ṭabarī, where Harthama is most certainly referring to the Barmakids.
(d. 983) enlisted “Mārsfand, the mōbed from Kāzarūn” (mārsfand al-mawbaḏ al-Kāzarūnī) to read the Persian inscriptions for him there.839 Persepolis, in the heart of Iranian territory in the province of Fārs, had been an important cultural and religious site since the time of the Achaemenids, and it was also the site of Sasanid monuments and inscriptions as well—which are probably what ‘Aḍud al-Dawla wanted read to him.840

Most of the reports of mōbeds mentioned in the previous sections were set in the court or entourage of the ‘Abbāsids or their intellectual circles, but mōbeds evidently also sought the patronage of the amirs of the Būyids (ca. 934-1062), a Daylamī dynasty that claimed descent from the Sasanid kings, notably through an alleged genealogy leading from ‘Aḍud al-Dawla back to Bahrām V Gōr (r. 420-38).841 As self-styled šāhān šāhs (MP for “king of kings”), in Arabic malik al-mulūk, part of the heritage claimed by the Būyids extended to their tolerance—or even support—of Zoroastrians, who were initially numerous in Fārs when the Būyīds made it a base of operations.842 There were even several prominent Būyid bureaucrats with the nisba of al-Majūsī, i.e. “the Magian.”843 As with al-

839 Donohue 1973: 75-78 provides the text, translation, and commentary as well as an image of this inscription. Also see Mokhlesi 1384/2005: 53.
840 Daryaee 2015: 111-12 says, “Tradition has it that ‘Aẓōd ad-Dowle had asked Mārsfand (Pahl. Mahrspand) to read the inscriptions left by the Sasanian king of kings, Šāpūr II, next to where he left his inscriptions” (citing Frye 1975: 251 and Bosworth 1978: 19).
841 See Kraemer 1986: 44; on the Iranian background of the Būyids, also see Madelung 1969 (with reference to Kabir 1959 and 1956), as well as Bosworth 1978, Donohue 2003 and Mottahedeh 2012. For example, on a medal from 962 in Ray, Rukn al-Dawla depict himself as a Persian king with an inscription in Middle Persian reading, “May the glory of the šāhān šāh increase,” a traditional inscription found on many Sasanian coins and seals. A medal from 969 in Fārs similarly depicts ‘Aḍud al-Dawla with the same MP inscription as well as the Muslim šahāda in Arabic (lā ilāha illā llāhu); see Kraemer 1986: 44-45.
842 See Frye 1960 for the prominence of Zoroastrians in western Iran under the Būyids, as well as the quote from al-Iṣṭaḥrī at the beginning of Chapter 3.
843 E.g., Abū Saḥl Saʿd ibn Faḍl al-Majūsī, who served as ‘Aḍud al-Dawla’s representative of Baghdad before his conquest of Iraq, also Abūʾl-Faraj Manṣūr ibn Saḥl al-Majūsī, who was his financial minister, and Bahram ibn Ardašīr al-Majūsī, another official (Donohue 2003: 81, 189). Additionally, ‘Aḍud al-Dawla’s physician was ‘Alī ibn al-‘Abbās al-Majūsī, and there were many more Magians associated with him (Kraemer 1986: 85ff).
Maʿmūn, such support of non-Muslims was not entirely popular. Miskawayh (d. 1030) relates that in the year 979 CE Muslims in Šīrāz rioted, plundering the homes of Zoroastrians and killing some; the amir retaliated against these Muslims. Additionally, the Magians of Kāzarūn (the home of ʿAḍud al-Dawla’s mōbed translator) must have continued to hold some influence with the Būyid amirs, because evidently they were able to prevent a Šūfī mosque from being built there by Abū Isḥāq al-Kāzarūnī (d. 1033).

If not just Magians but actual mōbeds played a role in the Būyid entourage, it might also affect our understanding of the Zoroastrian priesthood as an institution at that time—and force us to examine the contingency of its survival in the Islamic period as well as its transmission of Zoroastrian religious texts. This section demonstrates not only the presence of Zoroastrian mōbeds at the side of the Būyid amirs but also the mechanics of the priesthood’s survival through Islamic expressions of authority and dependent on Muslim patronage.

ʿAḍud al-Dawla’s mōbed translator, Mārsfand al-Kāzarūnī, bears a name which connects him to a famous Zoroastrian priest, Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān, the mōbed of Šāpūr II (r. 309-79), who is cited extensively in extant Zoroastrian Middle Persian literature as the “restorer” or “arranger” of the Zoroastrian religion. Ādurbād was perhaps always important within the Zoroastrian tradition, but he gained new significance in the tenth

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844 Tajārib al-umam ed.-tr. H.F. Amedroz and D.S. Margoliouth, The experiences of nations, 7 vols. 1920-1921. This account also appears in Ibn al-Aṯīr (d. 1223), al-Kāmil fi l-taʾrīḫ, ed. n/a, VIII.235; cited by Donohue 2003: 81.
845 As recorded the life of Šayḥ Kāzarūnī (d. 1034), written in New Persian by Maḥmūd ibn ʿUṯmān (ca. 1327). Many elements of this hagiography are fantastical, and the fire-worshippers soon convert to Islam through the ministry of this Sufi saint (Firdaws al-muršidiyya, ed. Meier, 29-30); also see Bosworth 1978: 18-19 with n. 30, Choksy 1987: 27-28, Donohue 2003: 81 with n. 307, and a recent partial translation by Yavari 2020.
846 This figure is discussed extensively in Chapter 3.
century when a group of Magians claimed descent from him as well as the possession of a letter of protection from ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib. It is this letter which I present next, with the first translation of the edict in which it appears. Then, I discuss the full significance of these claims for the Zoroastrian priesthood, which are only evident in other Arabic sources of the period (and which have not yet, to my knowledge, been examined together by any scholar).

5.1 The “sons of Ādurbāḏ”

A letter of the Būyid secretary, Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm al-Ṣābiʾ (d. 994), records an edict from the amir Ṣamṣām al-Dawla (r. 983–87, 989–98) that affirms protections for a specific community of Zoroastrians. This letter, dated to the year 375 AH [=986 CE], details how the descendants of Ādurbāḏ ī Mah rspandān had presented the Būyid amir with a letter from ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib that detailed their original agreements and protections:

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This edict first came to my attention through Donohue’s report about the mōbed Mārsfand al-Kāzarūnī, where he not only connects his name to the ancient Ādurbāḏ ī Mahrspandān but also comments that “the Buwayhids gave recognition to the family by granting them special exemptions and freedom of worship in 375H” (Donohue 1973: 78); his note (n. 8) refers the reader to a manuscript of the Rasāʾil of al-Ṣābiʾ in Leiden (Ms. Or. 766). Donohue’s statement has gone virtually unnoticed by scholars of Zoroastrianism; but the recent edition of the Rasāʾil has made this edict easily accessible—if one knows to look for it. I am grateful to Klaus Hachmeier, both for his work cataloguing the Rasāʾil and his personal communication on the subject; see Hachmeier 2010 for descriptions of the letters of al-Ṣābiʾ and their manuscripts.

848
(other) people of your community give, for reasons thus granted to you, and to all
who trace their lineage to your (fore)father; as well as (3.) the mandate of Muslims,
both among those governing and (their) subjects, both the early generations and
the later ones, for your protection and defense, and the maintenance for your
sanctuary, and abstaining from taking anything that you own—both animate and
inanimate, and both newly acquired and old; and (4.) that you do not force
provisions from anyone, and do not demand restitution, and that you are not
opposed in the performance of the ceremonies of your religion, and are not
prohibited from entering your fire-temples and from repairing those of them and
the shrines that require it, and that you are not opposed in fulfilling your religious
duties and using your revenues and your estates and your religious endowments
and their disbursement for what has been dedicated from the coffers of your charity
for it; and (5.) that you conduct yourselves as has been prescribed for you in
leadership over the people of your community and the levy that the one appointed
to leadership imposes, it being a single dirham a year from each man from among
the people of your community except for you, and that its lawsuits proceed under
your jurisdiction, and its judgments are executed by you; and (6.) that you not share
(with Muslims) the principal balance of your inheritances, nor its derivatives or
surpluses nor its losses or gains, and do not become familiar in anything with them,
just as the leader of the faithful, 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib reported from the Messenger of
God (may God bless him) about the prohibition of inheritances between
different religious communities,849 which is the same as what his letter included in
it about your fulfillment of what is required from the compliant dhimma-
agreement, as well as the certified document and the stipulated conditions and
circumscribed limits.

You have asked that you continue in all these provisions, abide by his pact
with you, and carry out his ordinance unto you. Therefore, we consider complying
with your request and relieving you of your need as obedience to God Almighty
and his Messenger (blessing and peace be upon him) and adherence to the
instruction of the leader of the faithful (God’s blessings be upon him), in both his
letter mentioned earlier and in his binding decree copied here, and his judgement
carried out concerning it and his conduct that adheres to it, so you should have
complete faith regarding that, and you can rely on it.

And whoever reads this letter of ours from among the ranks of overseers
and officials of the land-tax and the police and the trade tribunal and judiciary and
inheritance tribunal and other (branches) of civil administration, let him refer every
matter, both small and large, to one of the sons of Āḏurbāḏ ibn Mārsfand, and let
him treat them to their benefit with regard to assistance and avoid disadvantaging
them in his reckoning, and let them be on guard against him violating and
disregarding (it), God-willing.

Written in (the month of) Šawwāl, in the year 375.

849 According to the editor of the text, this refers to the hadith of the Prophet in which he says, “A
people cannot inherit two religions” (lā yatawāraṯu ahlu millatayni); al-Thāmirī, II.378 n. 1,
citing J.2, §.912 (no.2731). This same utterance is cited in the edict of protection for the Śābians
(on which see note below).
Many of the protections granted to the Zoroastrians in this letter, including the freedom to practice their religion unmolested, to adjudicate their own legal disputes, and to manage their property and finances with security, are not uncommon rights granted to non-Muslims, or dhimmīs, living under Muslim rule. Of course, the enforcement of these protections depended on the favor of the ruling elite and local officials whom the end of this letter addresses. However, a few of the statements in this letter deserve special comment, for example the exemption from the payment of the jizya for a particular group within the Zoroastrian community, as well as that group’s assertions of a specific lineage and their right to leadership of the community, which was laid out in a letter from ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib that they claim to possess.

Exemption from payment of the jizya was not a condition regularly stipulated for non-Muslims under Muslim rule. Levy-Rubin notes that in the early Arab conquest, such exemption might be granted to a community when payment was substituted by military assistance (which was normally avoided by payment of the jizya). However, it seems that Christian monks in Egypt had originally been exempt from paying the jizya, until the

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850 For the history of the dhimma as it evolved in Islamic legal and social practice, particularly those laid out in versions of the Šurūṭ ʿUmar, see Levy-Rubin 2011 as well as Dennett 1950; while Zoroastrians are included in these and similar studies, the emphasis is usually on Christian and Jewish communities living under Muslim rule. Levy-Rubin summarizes that, in the eighth and ninth centuries, “although there was no single document, nor a single consistent, accepted, and comprehensive set of regulations regarding non-Muslims, many of the regulations themselves were starting to take shape and were enforced at least, but not only, in the above-mentioned cases which were recorded by historians and preserved. Shurūṭ ʿUmar (and the competing documents) constituted therefore an attempt to give one formalized and uniform expression to a host of variegated regulations which were applied sporadically under different rulers” (2011: 103).

851 As in the example of the peoples of Jurjān and Darband, who both offered military assistance to the Arab conquerors in lieu of the payment of taxes, but without converting to Islam; see Levy-Rubin 2011: 49 with n. 262, citing al-Ṭabarī (Tarīḥ, ed. de Goeje, I.2658 and 2664) and Pourshariati 2008: 248 and 274-75. In the Darband example, the jizya is explicitly mentioned.
late seventh or early eighth century when local rulers began to demand it of them. Such exemptions for specific social classes may have been a Sasanian practice inherited by Muslim rulers: al-Ṭabarī explains the fiscal reforms of Xusrō I (r. 531–79), which include an exemption from payment of the jizya “for people from noble families, great men, warriors, hērbeds, secretaries, and those in the king’s service.” Then, al-Ṭabarī says that ʿUmar adopted these tax assessments when he conquered Persia and taxed the ahl al-dhimma there. So while it was not unheard of for religious specialists (such as monks and hērbeds) to be exempt from the payment of the jizya in the early period of Islamic rule, it is remarkable that a group of Magians in the late tenth century would still claim that privilege.

The written decree from ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib is similarly incredible, and must be spurious—a tenth-century invention to claim antiquity for the status of the Zoroastrians of Ādurbād’s family line, made to pro-ʿAlid rulers. It is not the only such claim in circulation in the tenth century. Simcha Gross has analyzed the Islamic context of tenth-century a letter by the Iraqi Jewish jurist and writer, Rav Sherira Gaon, that recounts the

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852 Levy-Rubin 2011: 101-02 with n. 8 and 23, citing Dennett 1950: 78-84 and Theophanes’ ninth-century Chronographia (ed. De Boor 1883: 430); in one account, the monks’ exemption is recalled by the command of al-Manṣūr (r. 754–75). Levy-Rubin notes that prohibitions on interreligious disputations also occurred around this time in Egypt.


855 Other such claims were common, often through the assumed genealogy of clientage (walāʾ); discussing the Daylamite Būyid claims to be descended from the Arab tribe of Ḍabba, see Bosworth 1978: 12, “When local, autonomous dynasties arose in various parts of the Caliphate from the ninth century onwards, they often tried to establish a connection with the Arab-Islamic past by attaching themselves to some figure in the Prophet Muhammad's entourage, or to one of the early Muslims, or to some tribe of the Arab aristocracy. The process can be traced at both ends of the Islamic world, amongst both the Berbers and the Persians.”
Arab conquest of Jerusalem and claims that the Jews “greeted ʿAlī favorably” upon his entrance to their city.\textsuperscript{856} The Jews and other dhimmī communities articulated their autonomy and protection with similar claims through Muḥammad or his Companions. Such claims include the Treaty of Najrān and variations of the Pact of ʿUmar (Ar. Šurūṭ ʿUmar), both of which established protections for Christian communities from the beginning of the Arab conquest but had long and/or late developments in the Islamic legal tradition.\textsuperscript{857}

Moreover, the same secretary who recorded the edict of Ṣamṣām al-Dawla about the Magians in 986 CE—Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm al-Ṣābiʿ, who was himself a member of the non-Muslim Ṣābian community—also preserves an edict of protection from the ʿAbbāsid caliph al-Ṭāʾiʿ (r. 974–91) for the Ṣābians of Ḥarrān, al-Raqqā, and Diyār Muḍar.\textsuperscript{858}

The family of Ādurbād was not the only group of Zoroastrians at this time to make a claim of protection through a document dating back to the early Muslim umma. Another tradition claims that Muḥammad granted protection to the family of Salmān al-Fārisī, a Persian convert from Zoroastrianism and a Companion of the Prophet. According to a text known as the ʿahd nāmeh (NP “written treaty”), Salmān’s family presumably remained Zoroastrian but were give special exemptions under a written grant which is dated to year nine of the hijra, or 631 CE. However, the extant versions of this charter appear in Persian histories only as early as the tenth century, and the document probably has its origin in an Arabic version of the late ninth or early tenth century.\textsuperscript{859}

\textsuperscript{856} Gross 2017.

\textsuperscript{857} See Levy-Rubin 2011 on the Shurūṭ ʿUmar as a product of the mid-ninth century, as well as a general discussion of the genre and arguments for its genuine origin in the surrender agreements of the early Arab conquest (which were themselves based on centuries of international diplomacy in the region); her work is also cited in the note above.

\textsuperscript{858} See van Bladel 2009: 105-106, with n.183.

\textsuperscript{859} On Salmān al-Fārisī, the ʿahd nāmeh, and its development over time, see Savant 2013: 61ff and 83-89, where she notes that different versions of the text say either “those who converted and
Both the claims of the Jews (that they “greeted ʿAlī favorably”) and of Salmān al-
Fārisī’s ʿahd nāmeh date to the same period in which al-Ṣābi’ records the manšūr of
Ṣamṣām al-Dawla (986 AD), with the Magians’ own claim to an original letter of
protection from ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib. The multiplicity of these claims in the tenth century to
more ancient authorities are just what one should expect from the shifting political
landscape of the time. The variations in these claims also demonstrate the fluid and
precarious status of the Zoroastrian community as it attempted to navigate political
upheavals and the gradual conversion of their coreligionists to Islam.

At this time in the tenth century, Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān’s genealogy becomes
explicitly articulated in Zoroastrian Middle Persian works like the Bundahišn. Yet even
these tenth-century Zoroastrian works do not claim that all the contemporary Zoroastrian
priests descended from Ādurbād (as I demonstrated in Chapter 3). Yet eventually the
memory of Ādurbād’s defense of the religion and the legacy of his teachings were
gradually transformed into a claim of familial lineage, as evident in the edict of Ṣamsām
al-Dawla above. There, exemption of payment of the jizya was granted to “the sons of
Ādurbād ibn Mārsfand” (wulid ādurbād ibn mārsfand) as well as “to all those who trace
their lineage to your (fore)father” (wa-li-kulli rāji’ in bi-nasabihi ilā abīkum). The authority
of these Magians extended to their leadership of their community (mina l-rīyāsati ʿalā ahli
millatikum), a position which seems to have been supported by both their lineage to

(wa-) who kept their religion” or “those who converted or (aw) those who kept their religion,” so
that the intended recipients of this protection among Salmān’s family are ambiguous. Also see
Magnusson 2014, who argues against critics who dismiss it as a more modern forgery, which was
subsequently published and translated into Gujarati by the prominent Parsi scholar Sorabjee
Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy in Mumbai in 1851; the modern edition, and perhaps the manuscript upon
which it was based, omits the preface which situates the text with similar hadith traditions.
Ādurbād and the possession of the letter from ʿAlī that detailed their specific privileges and protections.

The reputation of Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān as the pre-eminent Zoroastrian mōbed is evident in other Arabic sources of this period. As mentioned, Miskawayh (d. 1030), who may have converted from Zoroastrianism himself and who was a secretary of several of the Būyid amirs from as early as the reign of ʿAḍud al-Dawla, transmits the Arabic translation of the wisdom of Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān—whom he calls ḥakīm al-furs (“sage of the Persians”)—along with other Persian wisdom literature.860 There is more to this story than merely the attraction of apocryphal anecdotes to famous figures. The Būyids were known for promoting scholarship in Baghdad under their patronage.861 Many of these Arabic authors are the ones citing oral reports and written works of mōbeds (as detailed above). Despite the fantastical nature of Miskawayh’s frame story that explains how he obtained books of Persian wisdom (summarized above), it is conceivable that Miskawayh obtained a version of these books of Persian wisdom from a mōbedān mōbed of Fārs in his own time, as he says. It seems to have been one who promoted the importance of Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān. Other Arabic sources, however, reveal the full significance of the Magians’ claims to the lineage of Ādurbād.

5.2 al-Bīrūnī’s Ādurbād

In his al-Āṭār al-bāqiya, al-Bīrūnī (d. 1050) records the following statements about Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān and his descendants, as well as their authority in the his own time:

wa-gad ḏukira fi kutubi t-tawārīḥi anna fi ʿāhirī mulki sābūra gī l-aktāfī zaharat unmatun muḥālifatun li-l-majūsiyyati fa-hājjahum āḏurbāḏu bnu mārṣfanda min šaʿ bi dūṣura bni manūššiḥra wa-ḡalabahum ʿumma arāhum āyatan bi-an amara

860 al-Ḥikma al-ḥālida, ed. Badawī; see citations above.
It has been recorded in the books of chronicles that in the end of the reign of Šāpūr [II] “of broad shoulders” there appeared a community in opposition to the Magians, but Ādurbāḏ ibn Mārsfand, from the lineage of Dūsur ibn Manuščihr, debated them and overcame them, then he showed them a sign (miracle) by ordering molten copper to be poured on his breast, and so it was poured on him and it hardened but did not harm him, and then Šāpūr established his [=Ādurbāḏ’s] sons along with the sons of Zardušt in the office of the high-priesthood (al-mawbaḏān-mawbaḏiyya). No knowledge of the Avesta which he [Zardušt] brought is permitted except to one of them who is trustworthy in his religion and whose way is praised among the adherents of their religion, and he has no authority in this way until a sealed document is written for him in which it is attested that the masters of the religion have granted (him) permission for it. 862

In this passage, al-Bīrūnī explains that going back to the time of Šāpūr II (r. 309–79), the Zoroastrian priesthood all descended either from Ād urbāḏ or from Zardušt. Additionally, al-Bīrūnī says that in his own time, written authorization (sijill) must be sought from the masters of the religion (arbāb al-dīn) in order to have any knowledge of the Avesta. The implication is that these priests, the descendants of Ād urbāḏ (awlādahū) whom we met previously in the edict of Ṣamṣām al-Dawla as the wuld Āḏ urbāḏ ibn Mārsfand, were recognized as leaders in their community and exercised a monopoly over their religious knowledge.

Moreover, this passage states that Ād urbāḏ ī Mār spandān himself came from the lineage of Manuščihr, which is just how Ād urbāḏ’s lineage is given in the ZMP text of the

862 ed. Fück, 75-76. This passage is from the fragments excluded from Sachau’s 1878-79 edition and translation; it was first printed and translated by Taqizadeh 1937; cf. the partial translation of Shaked 1969: 187. These fragments are part of al-Bīrūnī’s longer description of false prophets. Before describing Ād urbāḏ’s ordeal of molten copper, he relates a tradition about Zardušt’s similar ordeal (also of molten copper) by which he proved the truth of the Avesta; according to al-Bīrūnī, the Magians still possessed the hardened copper balls left by Zardušt’s ordeal. A similar account is recorded by al-Qazwīnī (d. 1283), Āṯār al-bilād wa-ahbār al-’ibād, ed. Wüstenfeld 1848: II.267-68 (trans. Gottheil 1894: 40-41).
Bundahišn (discussed in Chapter 3). In fact, this lineage of Manuščihr is also shared by Zardušt himself and it was delineated in several Arabic sources exactly as it appears in ZMP texts. Whether the Zoroastrian priests’ lineage from Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān was real or imagined or simply elaborated, it was an accepted fact by the late tenth and eleventh centuries. Moreover, both the general belief in this genealogy by Muslims, as well as the reputation of the mōbed in Islamic society as a judge, scholar, sage and advisor outside of the dwindling Zoroastrian communities provided centuries of protection for those within them.

6. Conclusion to Chapter 4

The figure of the mōbed in Islamic society was amalgamated from the legacy of the Sasanian priests as judges, scholars, sages, and royal advisors. Zoroastrian mōbeds were writing and compiling Zoroastrian Middle Persian texts in the ninth and tenth centuries, but they were also interacting with Arabic intellectuals in a broader scholarly network and in interreligious debates. It is probable that the role of the mōbed as an informant on more ancient Persian matters contributed to his enduring and favorable reputation in contemporary Islamic society. Moreover, mōbeds positioned themselves beside the ruling Muslim elite, bargaining for the patronage of ʿAbbāsid caliphs and Būyid amirs for the protection of their community.

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863 Bd.35a.3. Taqizadeh misreads these names in the al-Bīrūnī passage and thinks they are Ādurbād’s father and grandfather, but Fück has the correct reading.
864 Zardušt’s full lineage, which basically matches the ones presented in the Bundahišn (Bd.35), Dēnkard (VII.2.70) and the Wizīdagīh ī Zādspram (Ch. 7), can be found in al-Masʿūdī (Murūj, ed. Pellat, I.270 / §547) and al-Ṭabarī (ed. de Goeje, II.682; trans. Perlmann IV.77); also see Mo’ in 1960.
The references collected in this chapter add to the mounting evidence and arguments that we should be situating ZMP texts in their Islamic context. Moreover, this study foregrounds the Zoroastrian mōbeds in the narrative of their tradition, and examines how they helped shape their legacy for the benefit of their priesthood and their community, contributing to the longevity of the Zoroastrian tradition and its survival until today.

It is not any single anecdote but the totality of them—with all the usual caveats about trusting our sources—that verifies the participation of Zoroastrian priests in the intellectual culture and administration of the ʿAbbāsid caliphs and the Būyid amirs in the ninth through eleventh centuries. There were mōbeds that advised Muslim rulers, as well as intellectuals, and benefited from their patronage. Just catching a glimpse of these relationships—on the fringe of the luminaries of the Arabic literary tradition with whom they are interacting—may help us understand in turn what the Zoroastrian priests were writing in Middle Persian around the same time, and what the connection is between the priests, their texts, and their imagined link to the Sasanian past. It is evidently a much more complicated picture than the traditional Zoroastrian narrative presents.

As the letters of the Zoroastrian priest Manuščihr show, in the late ninth century Fārs there was some difficulty in getting communities to recognize the regional authority of a particular priest. Perhaps relevant to this is Patricia Crone’s illustration of the persistence and plurality of “local Zoroastrianisms” in this period.\(^{865}\) There were multiple communities of Zoroastrians living under Islamic rule, and it is not clear to what extent they communicated with each other or followed similar practices.

\(^{865}\) See Crone 2012 on the heterogeneity Zoroastrianism and various related messianic uprisings in the eighth century.
Arabic sources shed light on where and when these communities thrived, what groups and individuals were considered authoritative in the wider Zoroastrian community, and what regional variety there might also have been. We should be viewing these ambitious Zoroastrian priests as part of the intellectual culture of the ‘Abbāsid and Buyid courts, and placing Zoroastrianism in the dialectic of competing claims to Magian orthodoxy and orthopraxy in the early Islamic period. This will have implications for the context of the surviving body of Zoroastrian literature and what it represents of the Zoroastrian tradition. Perhaps we should be emphasizing the particular elite religion of the Sasanian magi and their early Islamic successors as even more particularized: a single school of priests, perhaps descended through one family (whether the genealogy is real or imagined)—priests who, once they had lost the patronage of the Sasanids, sought it from local elites in a new context.

The presence of mōbeds as participants in the larger ‘Abbāsid society is a part of that negotiation of religious authority. As the mōbeds struggled to retain the followers of the good religion, they sought the support and influence of the Muslim ruling elite in order to maintain their authority in the eyes of their communities—and protect them against offshoot heretical movements.

Yet, despite the guarantee of protection granted to the Magians by the edict of Șamṣām al-Dawla, by the end of the eleventh century many Zoroastrians had converted to Islam. The story of the Zoroastrian community after the eleventh century, including the migration of many Zoroastrians to India and the subsequent centuries of letters exchanged between these Parsīs and the Zoroastrians of Iran, is another important chapter of Zoroastrian history. However, I leave it for others to examine.
CONCLUSION

The typical narrative found both in scholarly sources about the post-Sasanian period and in the remnants of Zoroastrian texts themselves claims that after the Arab conquest of Iran the Zoroastrians gradually converted to Islam until by the time they sat down to write their religious texts, there were few priests left to write them and what remains is only a fragment of what there had once been. This narrative is not incorrect, but it generally assumes a continuity and pervasiveness of a unitary or “orthodox” Zoroastrianism from the Sasanian period to the Islamic period. This is “orthodoxy” in the sense that it is a construction: it is reflective of the beliefs and practices of the Zoroastrian community as they survive in the textual tradition that has been handed down by particular Zoroastrian priests who present their religion and its traditions as always having been favored by Persian kings who were representatives of the God Ohrmazd here on earth. In other words, the “orthodoxy” of Zoroastrianism in this period is based on a circular argument bound by a textual tradition that was mostly redacted only in the Islamic period.

Rather than assume the extant Zoroastrian Middle Persian texts to be the battered storehouses of Sasanian Zoroastrian religious lore or the uncomplicated evidence of even earlier strains of Zoroastrian cosmology, eschatology, and apocalypticism, recently scholars have attempted to situate the Zoroastrian texts in the context in which they were written, copied, compiled, and redacted. The Zoroastrian traditions that they contain are materially constrained, selected, context dependent, and motivated by explicit concepts. Moreover, they are the products of particular individuals. My contribution is to foreground the Zoroastrian priesthood in the study of Zoroastrianism, from its height at the end of the

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866 Following Whitehouse (see Introduction).
Sasanian period as an administrative institution to its transformation after the fall of the Sasanian empire, when Zoroastrian priests in the ninth through eleventh centuries renegotiated and retold the traditions of the religion and the institution of the priesthood under Muslim rule.

The first two chapters established the extent of Zoroastrian priestly bureaucracy as well as their role and function as part of the Sasanian administration, comparing the material corpus of Sasanian administrative seals and sealings and the documents of the Ṭabarestān archive, on the one hand, with contemporary literary sources in Syriac, Armenian, and Middle Persian, on the other. These chapters illustrated the vast administrative network and hierarchized institutional framework of the Sasanian priesthood, in its titles, offices, geographic organization, and judicial functions. Chapters 1 and 2 also demonstrated the necessity of interdisciplinary study of the Sasanian period: this view of the Sasanian priesthood can be gained only from reading all of the aforementioned sources together and corroborating the evidence offered by each corpora’s partial view. There is still much to do, especially as new material sources are being discovered and published that will continue to alter our understanding of the Sasanian period.

Chapter 3 examined the status of the Zoroastrian priesthood in the early Islamic period as well as Zoroastrian narratives of the past in order to show the gap between the institution of the priesthood in the late-Sasanian period and that of the early Islamic period as well as the attempts made by modern scholars and the priests themselves to bridge that gap—primarily through the elaboration of priestly genealogies and the acceptance of traditional narratives about them. Although the claims of the hereditary priesthood and its
lineage permeate the Zoroastrian Middle Persian works—and even some Arabic sources—
I argued that the chronology and verifiability of these claims is not evident from the actual
extant citations and mentions of Zoroastrian priests. We should test and verify, and ask
why these claims were made and written and in what context. Thus, I have clarified some
misconceptions about Islamic-era Zoroastrian priestly genealogies, but I have also
examined the broader social and political contexts in which these priests were living. In
Chapter 4, I demonstrated the presence of Zoroastrian mōbeds in and as part of Islamic
society, where their reputation as judge, scholar, sage, and advisor translated into
relationships with Muslim rulers and intellectuals. It is in this position that Zoroastrian
priests negotiated for the protection of their community but also for their own authority
within it, as one particular family of priests in the late tenth century claimed not only to
possess a letter of from ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib but also that because of it they were exempt
from payment of the jīzya. I argued that the genealogy of the “sons of Āḏurbāḏ” and the
perception of Ādurbād i Mahrspandān as the progenitor of the priesthood and religious
orthodoxy were elaborations of the tenth century—built upon existing narratives and
memories but retold in the specific cultural, social, and political frameworks of Zoroastrian
priests who survived as part of a new Islamic society and not simply despite it.

What is at stake in unraveling priestly genealogies (and the scholarship on them) is
more than the need for greater scholarly precision. The claim that the Islamic-era
Zoroastrian priests were all from a single family—and that that family is the sole inheritor
of the extant Zoroastrian tradition—rests upon a number of assumptions and promotes the
belief that those priests’ ownership of the tradition is representative of that entire
tradition—i.e., that what survives of the tradition is the tradition, not only in terms of
proportion but in terms of orthodoxy or homogeneity. If, however, we suppose that this is not the case, we may be better prepared to understand the extant ZMP texts as illustrative of one of the varieties of Zoroastrian thought and tradition that existed in both the Sasanian and post-Sasanian periods. If the myth of orthodoxy is shattered, then we can investigate not only the development of Zoroastrian belief and practice over time and across different regions, but also how our own perceptions have affected the study of Zoroastrianism.

The Zoroastrian priests who were writing and editing their religious texts in the ninth and tenth centuries were clearly doing so in an Islamic context, and were in dialogue with speakers and writers of Arabic. Zoroastrian studies scholars should be, too.
APPENDICES

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 1

App.1.1 Published Catalogues and Collections of Sasanian Seals and Bullae

The following table (Table 1) is meant to provide an overview of the relative distribution of these different collections as well as to provide a guide to the publication(s) in which these seals and bullae can be found. I have indicated only those collections which contain seals or seal inscriptions attributed to clerical administrations (the maguh, driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar, and mōbed) and to magi. Whereas the above analysis deals primarily with administrations and collections whose geographic location is known (either in the inscription itself or through the provenance of the objects), the following table indicates the total number of administrative and personal seal inscriptions, even when the toponym or find spot is unknown. Additionally, in this table I do not distinguish between repeated seal impressions, but count each individual occurrence in the corpus; nor do I distinguish between seal impressions found on bullae and actual seals. Note that many publications have focused only on Sasanian administrative bullae, and so there may be many more magi personal seal inscriptions in these collections which have not yet been published.867

867 For example, several other mog-related inscriptions from Sasanian seals and sealings are known only from Gignoux’s onomastica of inscriptive Middle Persian (Gignoux 1986 and its supplement in 2003); these are finds from unpublished and generally unavailable collections which were consulted by him personally. Therefore, no other information about the objects on which they appear (e.g., size, shape, iconography, or cosignatories) is known, nor are there photographs of these objects. Because Gignoux was interested only in their onomastic value, he notes only inscriptive seal impressions, mostly those from the personal seals of magi. Without any other attendant knowledge, these items are not extremely useful for the current study of the geographic and administrative scope of the priesthood in the Sasanian period. I have still included them in the overall totals of clerical administrative and magi inscriptions in the corpus, although they do not appear in Table 1.
The abbreviations used here, as throughout the chapter, are those common in the French publications of Gignoux and Gyselen, with a few exceptions. The publication indicated is the original publication for each museum or excavated collection; many of these readings were subsequently emended by Gignoux.

Table 1: Magi in Published Collections of Sasanian Seals and Bullae

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collection</th>
<th>Abbrev.</th>
<th>Publication(s)</th>
<th>Inscriptions of Clerical Offices and Magi</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ak Depe</td>
<td>AD</td>
<td>Gubaev et al. 1996</td>
<td>maguh (11), mog (10)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amdt Collection, Institut für Klassische Archäologie, Friedrich-Alexander-Universität, Erlangen</td>
<td>AE</td>
<td>Gignoux &amp; Gyselen 1992</td>
<td>mog (2)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musée d’Art et d’Histoire, Geneva</td>
<td>AHG</td>
<td>Vollenweider 1967; emended Gignoux 1986</td>
<td>mog (1)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashmolean Museum, Oxford</td>
<td>AMO</td>
<td>Gignoux &amp; Gyselen 1987</td>
<td>mog (4)</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>American Numismatic Society</td>
<td>ANS</td>
<td>Gropp 1974; emended Gignoux 1975a; emended 1986</td>
<td>maguh (2), mog (2)</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ahmad Saeedi Collection</td>
<td>ASC</td>
<td>Gyselen 2007, 2012c</td>
<td>driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar (18), maguh (92), möbed (2), mog (23)</td>
<td>135</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cyril Dupont Collection</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Gyselen 2015</td>
<td>maguh (1), mog (1)</td>
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<td>Bišāpūr</td>
<td>Bišāpūr</td>
<td>Curiel &amp; Gyselen 1987</td>
<td>driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar (1), mog (1)</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baghdad Museum, Iraq</td>
<td>BM</td>
<td>Frye 1970a</td>
<td>maguh (3)</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bonn, Institute of Paleontology</td>
<td>Bonn</td>
<td>Gignoux &amp; Müller 1977</td>
<td>mog (1)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sceaux sasanides de diverses collections privées</td>
<td>DCP</td>
<td>Gignoux &amp; Gyselen 1982</td>
<td>maguh (7), möbed (1?), mog (40)</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dehqade-ye Eqlid, in the National Museum of Iran</td>
<td>DE</td>
<td>Cereti &amp; Bassiri 2016</td>
<td>handarzbed (2)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>Bullae</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg</td>
<td>EL / ME</td>
<td>Borisov &amp; Lukonin 1963; emendations in Gignoux 1986; additions in Gignoux &amp; Gyselen 1987</td>
<td>maguh (16), mōbed (2), mog (11)</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musée Irán Bāstān (now the Tehran National Museum)</td>
<td>IBT</td>
<td>see under Dehqade-ye Eqlid (DE), Mehrābād, Qaṣr-e Abū Naṣr (QAN), Susa, and Tepe Kabūdān (TK) collections</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td>Islamische Kunst, Berlin</td>
<td>IKB</td>
<td>Horn &amp; Steindorff 1891; emended Gyselen 2016</td>
<td>mōbed (1), mog (9)</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>M. Jazayeri Collection, Tehran</td>
<td>JT</td>
<td>Gignoux &amp; Gyselen 1987</td>
<td>maguh (5), mog (2)</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kangāvar (IBT)</td>
<td>Kangāvar</td>
<td>Cereti &amp; Bassiri 2016</td>
<td>maguh (1)</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>C. Kevorkian Collection, Paris</td>
<td>KP / KEV</td>
<td>Gignoux &amp; Gyselen 1987 (BSS), 1989 (NSS); others are now part of the BNP collection (see Gyselen 1993)</td>
<td>maguh (1), mog (4)</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Khoy Museum, West Azerbaijan province, Iran</td>
<td>Khoy</td>
<td>Akbarzadeh et al. 2009; also see MOT</td>
<td>maguh (16), mog (11)</td>
<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Koninklijke Musea voor Kunst en Geschiedenis, Brussels</td>
<td>KMB</td>
<td>Gyselen 2001a</td>
<td>mōbed (2)</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Musées Royaux d’Art et d’Histoire (= Musée du Cinquantenaire), Brussels</td>
<td>MCB</td>
<td>Gignoux &amp; Gyselen 1987</td>
<td>mog (2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mehrābād (IBT)</td>
<td>Mehrābad</td>
<td>Akbarzadeh &amp; Daryaee 2012</td>
<td>driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar (1), maguh (2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Museum of Fine Arts, Boston</td>
<td>MFAB</td>
<td>Gignoux &amp; Gyselen 1987</td>
<td>mog (1)</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Moḥsen Foroughi Collection, Tehran</td>
<td>MFT</td>
<td>bullae in Frye 1968; emended Gignoux &amp; Gyselen 1987; seals in Frye 1971 with readings in Gignoux &amp; Gyselen 1982 (DCP)</td>
<td>driyōšān-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar (3), dādwar (3), handarzbed (2), maguh (30), mōbed (6), mog (21)</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; including the Qaṣr-e Abū Naṣr (QAN)</td>
<td>MMA</td>
<td>Brunner 1978 (seals); for the QAN bullae, see Frye 1973; emended Gignoux 1985 (QAN MMA)</td>
<td>mog (6)</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collection</td>
<td>Museum</td>
<td>Catalogue</td>
<td>Depository</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>M.I. Mochiri Collection, Tehran</td>
<td>MOT</td>
<td>Mochiri 1977; Gignoux &amp; Gyselen 1979, 1981, 1987; some now in the Khoy collection</td>
<td>driyōšan-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar (4), dādwar (1), maguh (17), mog (20)</td>
<td>42</td>
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<tr>
<td>Qasr-e Abu Naṣr; in the IBT and MMA</td>
<td>QAN</td>
<td>Frye 1973, <em>emended</em> by Gignoux 1974 (QAN IBT) and Gignoux 1985 (QAN MMA)</td>
<td>driyōšan-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar (12), handarzbed (13), maguh (37), mōbed (2), mog (137)</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parsi Museum, Bombay</td>
<td>PMB</td>
<td>Frye 1970b: 83</td>
<td>maguh (1)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvard Semitic Museum</td>
<td>SM</td>
<td>Herzfeld 1938, Frye 1960</td>
<td>maguh (5), mōbed (1)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susa, at IBT</td>
<td>Susa</td>
<td>Gignoux &amp; Gyselen 1987 and Akbarzadeh &amp; Daryaee 2012 (IBT); for those at BNP see Gignoux 1978</td>
<td>driyōšan-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar (1), maguh (2), mōbed (2), mog (2)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tappe Bardnakoon</td>
<td>TB</td>
<td>Khosrowzadeh et al. 2020b</td>
<td>driyōšan-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar (4), maguh (12)</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel Aviv, private collection</td>
<td>Tel Aviv</td>
<td>Agostini &amp; Shaked 2018</td>
<td>mog (2)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tepe Kabūdān, at IBT</td>
<td>TK</td>
<td>Bayani 1972, with additions in Gignoux &amp; Gyselen 1987 (TK IBT 3-13)</td>
<td>driyōšan-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar (2), maguh (7), mōbed (3)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tol-e Qaleh Seyfābād, at the Bisāpūr Museum</td>
<td>TQS</td>
<td>Ghasemi 2018, Ghasemi &amp; Gyselen 2018</td>
<td>driyōšan-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar (4), maguh (70)</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takht-e Sulaymān</td>
<td>TS</td>
<td>Göbl 1976; additions in Cereti &amp; Bassiri 2016</td>
<td>driyōšan-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar (2), maguh (1), mōbed (25), mog (59)</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tureng Tepe</td>
<td>TT</td>
<td>Gyselen 1987; Cereti &amp; Bassiri 2016</td>
<td>driyōšan-jādaggōw-ud-dādwar (1), maguh (3), mog (1)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yale University</td>
<td>YU</td>
<td>Torrey 1932; Gignoux &amp; Gyselen 1987</td>
<td>maguh (2), mōbed (1), mog (9)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

869 The items at Yale are all now in the Yale Babylonian Collection (YBC), though previously some were held by the Yale University Art Gallery. When Torrey published his catalogue in 1932, the collection was split between the Yale School of Fine Arts (YAG) and the James B. Nies Collection of Babylonian Antiquities (NBC). In 1984 Gignoux examined items in the YBC that were added to its collection after 1932 (published in Gignoux & Gyselen 1987: 209-15). There are more Sasanian sealings which were subsequently added to the YBC which have not yet been published, except for brief descriptions on their online catalogue (housed by the Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History: https://collections.peabody.yale.edu/search/); I hope to publish these items in the near future.
App.1.2 Personal Seals and Seal Impressions of *magi*

The following two tables record the names of magi as known from personal seal inscriptions, both those found on actual seals (Table 3.1) and those found on seal impressions (Table 3.2). Many of the latter (magi personal seal impressions found on bullae) are cosignatories to other clerical offices, with attendant geographic information (either from a find site or the toponym indicating that office’s jurisdiction); however, I have omitted this information here for the sake of simplicity.

### Table 2.1 Magi Personal Seals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source ID</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Patronym</th>
<th>Transliteration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AE 10.3</td>
<td>Ādur-Farrbay</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td></td>
<td>twrpnmbg mgw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AE 30.16</td>
<td>Frāy-panāh</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td></td>
<td>pl’dpn’h Y mgw’ Y wyhy’n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHG 100</td>
<td>Ohrmazd</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Hōm-Ohrmazdzān</td>
<td>‘wṛrmzd mgw Y ḫwrm Y ḫrmzd’n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A MO 10.19</td>
<td>Narēn</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Gund-xwārān</td>
<td>nlyny ZY mgw gwndhw’l’n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMO 20.7</td>
<td>Rādag</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Kumārag</td>
<td>l’tky ZY mgw ZY (kw)m’lk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMO 30.39</td>
<td>Ādur-Farrbay</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Gušnaspān</td>
<td>twrplnbg ZY mgw ZY gwšnsp’n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMO 50.1</td>
<td>Dādag</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Kumār</td>
<td>d’tky ZY mgw ZY kw’m’l</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANS 04 (B.1)</td>
<td>Dārāyā-Ohrmazd</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Wēh-Ādur-Farr</td>
<td>d’y’wḥlimzd=d’y ZY mgw ZY wyd’twpln</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANS 12 (B.11)</td>
<td>Pandag</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Pandagān</td>
<td>pndk’ Y mgw Y pndk’n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASC 10.4</td>
<td>Mihrrag</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Narsēghān</td>
<td>mtrky mgw nlsyk’n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASC 20.19</td>
<td>Mihr-Pērūz</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>(p)npwr</td>
<td>mtplylw Y mgw (p)npwr / dyny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASC 20.7</td>
<td>Bāg</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td></td>
<td>b’ky ZY mgw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASC 30.C.1</td>
<td>Māhin (?)</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Wahrāmān</td>
<td>m(‘h?)’n Y mgw Y whl’n’n / ŞRM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASC 30.D.2</td>
<td>Dēn-dōst</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Bōzēdān</td>
<td>dyndwst’ Y mgw Y bwct’n ’pzwn’</td>
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<td>ASC 30.F.1</td>
<td>Mēdōmāh</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Pābtarān</td>
<td>mytwm’hy ZY mgw ZY p ptl(‘n’?)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASC 40.A.1</td>
<td>Bāy-būd (?)</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>??</td>
<td>b’ybw’t Y mgw Y ….’n</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASC 40.A.4</td>
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<td>mog (?)</td>
<td>Mihr-??ān</td>
<td>…(? y mgw?) mtr…’n</td>
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<td>ASC 40.C.8 (?)</td>
<td>Mazdak</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Ohrmazdz-??</td>
<td>mzd (ZY) …ZY mgw ’wrmzd…(? )</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASC 70.4</td>
<td>Burzōy</td>
<td>mog</td>
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<td>bwlcwdy ZY mgw</td>
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<td>ASC 70.5</td>
<td>Ādur-Marzgar</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>twlmlckly mgw lwb’n HZYTN</td>
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<tr>
<td>BML AE 4</td>
<td>Ādur-Hudād</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Hudād</td>
<td>twlyhd’t ZY mgw hw’d’t</td>
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<tr>
<td>BML AE 8</td>
<td>Ūšan</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Warāzān</td>
<td>wšn Y mgw Y w[l’ c’n]</td>
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<tr>
<td>BML AF 3</td>
<td>Ādur-Ohrmazd</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Ādur-bādān</td>
<td>[jtw’whrmzd Y] mg[w Y twrp’l’n’]</td>
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<td>BML AF 5</td>
<td>Burz-Ādur-Gušnasp</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Mihr-Xwar</td>
<td>bwc’twrwšn[sp Y] mgw Y mthrhlwn</td>
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<tr>
<td>BML AF 6</td>
<td>Mihr-Ohrmazd</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>m[tr’whr]mzd Y mgw Y…</td>
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<td>BML AF 7</td>
<td>Jōzmand</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Mihr-Ādur-Gušnasp</td>
<td>ywcmnd Y mgw Y mtr’twrwšnsp’</td>
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<tr>
<td>BML AF 9</td>
<td>Wahrām</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>B…</td>
<td>whl’m Y mgw Y lw’n’</td>
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<td>BML AH 1</td>
<td>Mār-Taybūṭā / Mardāy-būd</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Anāhīd-panāhān</td>
<td>mltʾywbtʾ mgw Yʾnʾḥytnʾhʾn</td>
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<tr>
<td>BML CC 4</td>
<td>Rāst-Ādur</td>
<td>mog</td>
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<td>[l]stʿtwly ZY mgw</td>
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<td>BML CG 11</td>
<td>Wuzurg</td>
<td>mog</td>
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<td>wcgl mgw</td>
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<tr>
<td>BML DB 2</td>
<td>Māh-dād</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Zurvān-dādān</td>
<td>mʾḥdty…zwlwʾ ndʾ[t]ʾn</td>
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<td>BML EC 6</td>
<td>Way-bōxt</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Ādur-Farrbayān</td>
<td>wʾdbwḥtʾ Y mgw Yʾtwrplnbgʾn</td>
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<tr>
<td>BML ED 4</td>
<td>Māh-Ādur</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td></td>
<td>mʾḥʾ[tw]l mg[w]</td>
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<td>BML EG 2</td>
<td>Mazd</td>
<td>mog</td>
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<td>mzd ZY mgw</td>
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<td>BML EH 1</td>
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<td>mog</td>
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<td>BML EJ 2</td>
<td>Weh-būd / Nabā-būd</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Ohrmazdān</td>
<td>nbʾbwtʾ Y mgw Yʾwḥrmzdʾ[ʼn]</td>
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<td>Mard-Anōš</td>
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<td>mltʾnʾwš Y mgw</td>
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<td>BML EP 2</td>
<td>Māraspand</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Burz-Māh-Gušnaspān</td>
<td>mʾlsndl mgw Y bwclmʾhgwšnspʾn</td>
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<td>BML EP 3</td>
<td>…-Farrox</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Ohrmazdān</td>
<td>…ltlwʾ(Y) [mgw Yʾwḥrmzdʾ[ʼn]</td>
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<td>BML EQ 1</td>
<td>Māh-weh</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Zardu(x)štān</td>
<td>mʾḥwyḥ Y mgw Zltwḥštʾn</td>
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<tr>
<td>BML FB 1</td>
<td>Ohrmazd-Ādur</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>M…ān</td>
<td>wʾhr[mzdʾtw]lʾrʾ Y mgw Y mʾḥʾ[tm]l mgw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BML HF 2</td>
<td>Ādur-Farrbay</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Ahēn</td>
<td>ṭwr[pnl]bgʾtnʾn Y mgw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BML OA 6</td>
<td>Dād-weh-Ādur</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Māhēnān</td>
<td>[d]ʾtwyḥʾtwr Y mgw Y mʾḥyn[ʼn]</td>
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<td>BNP 10.A.19 / 08.02</td>
<td>Artašištal</td>
<td>mog</td>
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<td>ršštl mgw</td>
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<td>BNP 10.B.15 / 03.15</td>
<td>Mard-būd</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>…ān</td>
<td>mltbwtʾ Y mg[w] Y […ʾ]n</td>
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<tr>
<td>BNP 20.B.03 / 03.20</td>
<td>Bābāq</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Dōšāramān</td>
<td>[bʾ]pʾ( k) Y m[g]w Y dwšʾlmʾ[ʼn]</td>
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<td>BNP 20.B.14 / 03.36</td>
<td>Dād-…</td>
<td>mog (?)</td>
<td>…dādān</td>
<td>(dʾt)ʾn Y mgw Y…(dʾt)ʾn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BNP 20.B.15 / 03.21</td>
<td>Gušnasp</td>
<td>mog (?)</td>
<td>Farrbayān</td>
<td>(gwšnspʾ Y [mgw?] Y p[r]nbdʾ[ʼn]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BNP 20.B.17 / 03.16</td>
<td>Weh-dād</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Sraw-yazdān</td>
<td>wyhdʾt Y mgw Y (srʾw)yzdʾn</td>
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<tr>
<td>BNP 20.B.30 / 09.28</td>
<td>…-bōzān</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>…bayān</td>
<td>…-bwćʾn Y m[gw?] Y …(bgʾn)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Ohrmazd</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Yazdān</td>
<td>wʾhrmzd Y mgw Y(yzdʾ[ʼn]</td>
</tr>
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Table 2.2 Magi Personal Seal Impressions on Bullae

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<tr>
<td>BML ZR 06 (2)</td>
<td>Arān mog Māy-Gušnasp ṭn Y mgw Y mʾygwšnsp</td>
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<tr>
<td>BNP 01.01 (2)</td>
<td>Bōy-Šahrēwar mog Bā…ʾn bwštlyw[l] Y mgw Y bʾ[. . . . . Y]</td>
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<tr>
<td>BNP 01.04 (2)</td>
<td>Yazdān-dād mog Windādān yzdʾnʾdʾ t Y mgw Y wn(dʾ)ʾn[ Y]</td>
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<td>BNP 02.01 (2)</td>
<td>Ādur-Farrbay mog Māh-Ādur- Gušnaspān [ʾt]wplnbg ZY mgw ZY mʾہ twr[gwšnspʾn[ n]</td>
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<tr>
<td>BNP 04.06 (2)</td>
<td>Mard mog Ādur-farr (mlfʾ) Y mgw Y (ʾtwrplnʾ)</td>
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<td>BNP 04.08 (2)</td>
<td>Yazd-Ohmazd mog Ādur-Farrbayān yzdʾw[h]rz[d] Y [Y] mgw Y twrʾplnbgʾn ; mzlʾʾn</td>
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<tr>
<td>BNP 04.09 (2)</td>
<td>…-Bōxt mog Ādur-Gušnaspān … bвшtʾ Y mgw Y [ʾt]wrf[gwšnspʾn[ n]</td>
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<tr>
<td>BNP 04.11 (2)</td>
<td>Bā… mog Māh-Dādān b [. . . . . Y] mgw(Y) mʾḥdʾ tʾ[ Y]</td>
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<tr>
<td>BNP 04.12 (2)</td>
<td>Yazd-Ohmazd mog Ādur-Farrbayān (wyḥ) wḥrmzd [Y] mgw Y tw[rtplnbgʾnʾn[ n]</td>
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<tr>
<td>BNP 06.01 (2)</td>
<td>… mog (?) Dādenān … [Y mgw Yʾ] dʾtyʾnʾn</td>
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<td>BNP 07.04 (2)</td>
<td>Mard-būd mog Dād-Bābagān mlbtwt[Z Y [mgw ZY dʾtbʾpkʾn n</td>
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<td>BNP 07.05 (2)</td>
<td>Mihr mog Mīhrān mtrʾ[ Y Y mtrʾʾn</td>
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<td>BNP 07.06 (2)</td>
<td>Pādīg mog pʾtyʾ Y mgw</td>
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<td>BNP 07.07 (2)</td>
<td>Wahrām mog Gušnasp-dādān whlʾ n Y mgw Y gwšnspʾnʾʾn</td>
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<td>BNP 07.08 (2)</td>
<td>Māḥ-dād-Gušnasp</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Uşōyān / Wišōyān</td>
<td>mʾḥdʾ tgowšn[sp] [Y] mgw Y (wš)wdʾn</td>
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<td>BNP 10.02 (2)</td>
<td>Burz</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Gušnasp</td>
<td>bw[lc]* Y mgw Y gwšn(sp)</td>
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<tr>
<td>BNP 10.07 (2)</td>
<td>Dēn-Farrbay*</td>
<td>mog*</td>
<td>Yazgirdān*</td>
<td>[effaced, but reconstructed]</td>
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<tr>
<td>BNP 10.08 (2)</td>
<td>(Dēn)-Farrbay</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Yazgirdān</td>
<td>[dyn]plnbg Y mgw Y (yzd)kwstʾn</td>
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<td>BNP 10.15 (2)</td>
<td>Burzēn</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Ardēnān</td>
<td>bw[cynʾ Y?][mgw Y [y]sltynʾn</td>
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<td>BNP 10.16 (2)</td>
<td>Burzēn</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Ardēnān</td>
<td>bw[cynʾ Y?][mgw Y [y]sltynʾn</td>
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<tr>
<td>BNP 10.17 (2)</td>
<td>Burzēn</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Ardēnān</td>
<td>bw[cynʾ Y?][mgw Y [y]sltynʾn</td>
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<td>BNP 10.18 (2)</td>
<td>Burzēn</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Ardēnān</td>
<td>bw[cynʾ Y?][mgw Y [y]sltynʾn</td>
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<td>BNP 10.19 (2)</td>
<td>Burzēn</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Ardēnān</td>
<td>bw[cynʾ Y?][mgw Y [y]sltynʾn</td>
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<td>BNP 10.26 (2)</td>
<td>Burzēn</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Ardēnān</td>
<td>bw[cynʾ Y?][mgw Y [y]sltynʾn</td>
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<td>BNP 10.28 (2)</td>
<td>Burzēn</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Ardēnān</td>
<td>bw[cynʾ Y?][mgw Y [y]sltynʾn</td>
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<td>BNP 10.29 (2)</td>
<td>Burzēn</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Ardēnān</td>
<td>bw[cynʾ Y?][mgw Y [y]sltynʾn</td>
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<td>BNP 10.30 (2)</td>
<td>Ādur-Wahnām</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Ādur-Farrbayān</td>
<td>twrhwānʾm Y m[gw?J Y twrplnbgʾn</td>
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<td>BNP 10.31 (3)</td>
<td>Ādur-Wahnām</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Ādur-Farrbayān</td>
<td>twrhwānʾm Y m[gw?J Y twrplnbgʾn</td>
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<td>BNP 10.32 (2) = KP 11</td>
<td>Dēn-Farrbay</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Yazgirdān</td>
<td>dynplnbg Y mgw Y yzdkrtʾn</td>
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<tr>
<td>BNP 10.33 (2) = KP 12</td>
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<td>mog</td>
<td>Yazgirdān</td>
<td>dynplnbg Y mgw Y yzdkrtʾn</td>
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<td>BNP 10.34 (2) = KP 13</td>
<td>Dēn-Farrbay</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Yazgirdān</td>
<td>dynplnbg Y mgw Y yzdkrtʾn</td>
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<tr>
<td>BNP 13.01 (2)</td>
<td>…-Ādur</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Ādur-Burzān</td>
<td>…[ʾt?]wr Y mgw Y twrʾbwlc[ʾn?]</td>
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<td>BNP 15.03 (2)</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Māḥ-Dād-Gušnasp</td>
<td>… Y mgw Y mʾḥdʾtgwšn[sp?]</td>
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<tr>
<td>BNP 16.01</td>
<td>Ādurbōzēd</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>twrbcyctʾ Y mgw Y …[ʾn]</td>
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<tr>
<td>BNP 16.04</td>
<td>…p…</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>B…</td>
<td>…p…Y mgw Y b…ʾn</td>
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<td>BNP 16.05</td>
<td>Guštāsp</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Hu-Hōmān / Ohrmāzdān</td>
<td>gwš(:t)ʾspʾ Y mgw Y lhwšnʾn (OR 'hwrm&lt;zd&gt;ʾn) ; ŠRM Y bgpswlʾn</td>
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<tr>
<td>BNP 16.08</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Mihr-…ān</td>
<td>… Y mgw Y m[t[…]ʾn</td>
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<td>BNP 16.10</td>
<td>Sēn</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Pahlawān</td>
<td>synʾ Y mgw Y plsʾn ; gwšsptʾb</td>
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<td>BNP 16.11</td>
<td>Ādur-Ohrmazd</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Friyanān</td>
<td>twrʾhwrmzd Y mgw Y plyʾnʾn ; …(dʾ)ʾY mgw Y m[t[…]ʾn</td>
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<td>BNP 16.12</td>
<td>…-dād</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Mihr-…ān</td>
<td>…(dʾ)ʾY mgw Y m[t[…]ʾn</td>
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<td>BNP 16.25</td>
<td>Pusweh</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Pwsyḥ Y mgw</td>
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<td>BNP 16.26</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…t ZY mgw[w]…</td>
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<td>BNP 16.28</td>
<td>Pusweh</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Pwsyḥ Y mgw</td>
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<td>BNP 16.32</td>
<td>Zarmihr</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>ābastān ud panāh ʾāto x gušnasp</td>
<td>zmlty mgw[sp]ʾn W p[nt]ʾLʾtšy gwsnsptʾy</td>
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<td>BNP 16.33</td>
<td>Mihr-Gušnasp</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Dād-Gušnasp</td>
<td>[mtlgw]šnspʾn Y mgw Y dʾtgwšn[sp]ʾn</td>
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<td>BNP 16.38 = KP 22</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Gušnasp</td>
<td>…Y mgw gwšnspʾn</td>
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<td>BNP 16.39 = KP 23</td>
<td>Gušnasp</td>
<td>mog (?</td>
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<td>BNP 16.40 = KP 24</td>
<td>Bāb (?</td>
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<td>mog (?</td>
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<td>EL 01 (2)</td>
<td>Ard</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>'lt' Y mgw Y…</td>
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<td>EL 07</td>
<td>Ādur-Dārāy</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Gušnasp (?) twl'd't Y mgw Y (gwšnsp)ʾn ṭzwʾn'</td>
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<td>FDAB</td>
<td>Abān-mard</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Pērōzān p nʾdʾn (?)…</td>
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<tr>
<td>Herzfeld pers.coll. (?)</td>
<td>Ohrmazd-dād</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Spanandān rast 'wrmrzdʾt mgw ZY spʾ ndʾtʾn rsty</td>
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<td>IBT 02 (2)</td>
<td>Ādurbād</td>
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<td>… tw[rt]ʾ t Y mgw Y…</td>
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<td>IBT 03 (2)</td>
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<td>… [ʾt]wrʾdʾt Y mgw Y…[ʾn]</td>
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<td>IBT 08 (2)</td>
<td>Ādurān</td>
<td>mog (?)</td>
<td>… ulwšk mgwš / gwškʾn ; ʾtwrʾn Y (m)lvšnʾn</td>
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<tr>
<td>Herzfeld pers.coll. (?)</td>
<td>Ādur-Dārāy</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Gušnasp (?) twlʾšk mgwš / gwškʾn ; ʾtwrʾn Y (m)lvšnʾn</td>
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<tr>
<td>JT 04 (2)</td>
<td>Astwadird</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Dād-Gušnaspān 'stwltʾ Y mgw Y …</td>
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<td>JT 05 (2)</td>
<td>Astwadird</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Dād-Gušnaspān 'stwltʾ Y mgw Y dʾtgwšnspʾn</td>
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<tr>
<td>Khoy 010 (2)</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>… Y mgw Y…</td>
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<td>Khoy 010 (3)</td>
<td>M…</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>…-Ādur-… m…m(gw?)ʾn(t(w)…</td>
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<td>Khoy 027</td>
<td>…-dād</td>
<td>mog (?)</td>
<td>… lʾtʾn(mgwa)…p…</td>
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<td>Khoy 044</td>
<td>Ādur-spand</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Ard… (ʾt)wrspn(d) Y mgw Yʾlt…</td>
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<td>Khoy 049</td>
<td>Ohrmazd</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>… 'wrmrz&lt;zd&gt; Y m&lt;gw&gt;…[ʾn]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Khoy 070</td>
<td>Farrox</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>… pl(h)w…mʾn(g)w Y…sp…</td>
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<tr>
<td>Khoy 104 (2)</td>
<td>Dēn-Farrbay</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Yazgdirdān &lt;d&gt;ynplnbg Y mgw Y (ydz)rʾtʾn(ʾn)</td>
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<td>Khoy 110 (2)</td>
<td>Gušnasp</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Dēn… (gwšnsp)ʾt Y mgw Y dyn…</td>
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<td>Khoy 138</td>
<td>Mihr…</td>
<td>mog (?)</td>
<td>…-Mihr (?) mlt…ZY m&lt;gw?&gt; Y Yt…gw ymlʾn…n</td>
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<td>Khoy 153</td>
<td>Hu-Gušnasp</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Māh-Burz-Mihrān (hw)gwšnsp (Y) m(g)w Y mʾbwclmʾtʾn(ʾn)</td>
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<td>Khoy 162</td>
<td>Ādur-</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Mihr- (tw)lp…(Z)Y mgw ZY mt…'</td>
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<td>MFT 01 (2)</td>
<td>Mihrād-Farrbay</td>
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<td>Xusrōyān mltʾ tʾ plnbg Y mgw Y hwšlwbʾn[ʾn]</td>
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<td>MFT 04 (2)</td>
<td>ym(ʾ)yn</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>stʾlsʾn dʾcʾn Y mgw Y mlʾn(ʾ)yn Y mʾ bwclʾmʾtʾn(ʾn)</td>
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<td>MFT 05 (2)</td>
<td>Māh-Farr</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>… mʾ lvšn…Y mgw Y (pl)ʾn[ʾn]</td>
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<tr>
<td>MFT 06 (2)</td>
<td>Mihr…</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Dād-Farroxtān mtr[…]stʾ Y mgw Y dʾplbwʾn</td>
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<tr>
<td>MFT 10 (2)</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Dādān (?) …Y mgw Y (dʾtʾn?)</td>
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<td>MFT 16 (2)</td>
<td>Dād-Farroxtān</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Dād-Ādurān dʾplbwʾ Y mgw Y dʾtʾ twrʾn[ʾn]</td>
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<tr>
<td>MFT 17 (2)</td>
<td>Mihr-Gušnasp</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Gušnasp-dādān mtrgwšnspʾ Y mgw Y gwšnspʾdʾtʾn</td>
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<td>MFT 21 (2)</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Dād-Gušnaspān […] Y mgw Y dʾtgwšnspʾn</td>
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<td>MFT 28 (2)</td>
<td>Ādurbād</td>
<td>mog (?)</td>
<td>twlʾptʾ Y ZYʾn (mgwpt)</td>
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<td>MFT 32 (2)</td>
<td>…-Farrbay</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>…plnbg Y mgw Y […]ʾn</td>
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<td>MFT 33 (2)</td>
<td>…-Farrbay</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>…plnbg Y mgw Y […]ʾn</td>
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<td>MFT 37 (2)</td>
<td>Burzēn</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Ardēnān kwšk mgwš / ld ; bwclʾn Y mgw Y ltyʾnʾn</td>
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<td>MFT 39 (2)</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Dād-Gušnaspān (Y) m(g)w Y dʾtgwšnspʾn</td>
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<td>MFT 47 (2)</td>
<td>Dād-…</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Gušnasp dʾt[…]ʾsʾpʾ Y mgw Y [gswšnspʾn]</td>
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<td>MFT 51 (2)</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Ādur-Farroxtān [??] ZY mgw ZYʾ twrplnbgʾn</td>
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<td>MFT 52 (2)</td>
<td>Nazd-Šāh</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Aštād-Burzēnān</td>
<td>[m]zdš’h Y mgw Y ’st tbwlcn’n</td>
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<td>MFT 57</td>
<td>Dād-Farrox</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Burzōyān</td>
<td>[dʾtplh[w] [ZY] m[gw?] ZY ’h]lzd w’n</td>
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<td>MFT 58</td>
<td>Mard-weh</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Gušnasp-Aštād</td>
<td>(m)ltwḥ Y mgw Y gwšnsp’twr’n</td>
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<td>MFT 59</td>
<td>Ādur</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Spīḷamānān…</td>
<td>‘tw[ṛ] [Y] mgw Y sp’y[t]’m’n’n…’n</td>
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<td>MFT 60</td>
<td>…-Farrbay</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Bān…ān(ʔ)</td>
<td>[…plḥ]bg Y mgw Y ’b’n[w][t’n] ; hwslw[m]h</td>
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<td>MOT 05 (3)</td>
<td>Māhōg (?)</td>
<td>mog (?)</td>
<td>Farrox</td>
<td>m’b[wk’] (Y mgw?) Y plḥw</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOT 17 (2)</td>
<td>Māh-Gušnasp</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Yasnān</td>
<td>m’hgwsns[p] [Y] mgw Y ysn’n</td>
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<td>MOT 23 (2)</td>
<td>Farrox</td>
<td>mog (?)</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>plḥw Y [mgw…]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOT 32</td>
<td>Gušnasp</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Gušnasp</td>
<td>gwšnsp ZY [mgw ZY] gwšnsp</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOT 33</td>
<td>Farrbay</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Mīhrān</td>
<td>plnbґ ZY mgw ZY mltn’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOT 34</td>
<td>Dēn-Farrbay</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Yazdgirdān</td>
<td>(dyn)plnbґ Y mgw Y yzkt’rn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOT 35</td>
<td>Gušnasp-Māh</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>gwšnsp[m]h Y mgw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOT 36</td>
<td>Mard-būd</td>
<td>mog (?)</td>
<td>mltb[wt’] [Y mgw?]</td>
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<tr>
<td>PIT.b 03 (2)</td>
<td>Farrox-…</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>plḥw […?] Y mgw</td>
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<td>PIT.b 04 (2)</td>
<td>…-Gušnasp</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>…(gwšnsp[p]? [Y] [mg]w Y …</td>
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</tr>
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<td>PIT.b 07 (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>…</td>
<td></td>
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<td>PIT.b 08 (2)</td>
<td>Bāg…</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>…</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>PIT.b 09 (2)</td>
<td>Dārāb-Aštād</td>
<td>mog (?)</td>
<td>hw’n mgwḥ / ld ; d’lp / ’št’t Y (mgw)</td>
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<td>PIT.b 14 (2?)</td>
<td>Mīhrēn</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>mtryn</td>
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<td>QAN 002 (IBT)</td>
<td>Ādur-Ardag</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Mīhr-Bādagān</td>
<td>‘twl ldkt Y mgw Y [m]tr[p t’][k [n]</td>
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<td>QAN 005 (IBT)</td>
<td>Weh-dād</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Yazdgird</td>
<td>wḥwd’t ZY mgw ZY y(z)dwlt’n ’L (yz)dw</td>
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<td>QAN 010 (MMA)</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…mgw štw’n (?)</td>
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<td>QAN 011 (IBT)</td>
<td>Weh-Sāpuhr</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Druwān</td>
<td>wydšhpwrhy ZY mgw ZY dlw’n</td>
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<td>QAN 012a (MMA) (1)</td>
<td>Weh-Sāpuhr</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Druwān</td>
<td>wydšhpwrhy ZY mgw ZY dlw’n</td>
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<td>QAN 012b (MMA) (2)</td>
<td>Wārdān</td>
<td>mog (?)</td>
<td>w’l[r][t’] n…</td>
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<td>QAN 018 (IBT)</td>
<td>Ohrmazd</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Mard-ōšān</td>
<td>’w[hrmzd] Y mgw Y ml’t wš’n</td>
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<td>QAN 018 (IBT) (2)</td>
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<td>mog</td>
<td>…Dād-Ohrmazdān</td>
<td>…d’t’wrhmzd’n</td>
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<td>QAN 019 (MMA)</td>
<td>Pērōz</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Mīhr-Gušnasp</td>
<td>pylw’c Y mgw Y mtr’gw[S]nsp’</td>
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<td>QAN 020 (IBT)</td>
<td>Anōšag-būd</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Mīhrān-…ān</td>
<td>n[w?]škbwr’ Y mgw Y ml’t(n’š)’n</td>
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<td>QAN 022 (IBT)</td>
<td>Burzōy</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Bōyān</td>
<td>bwlcw’y Y mgw Y bwy’n</td>
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<td>QAN 029 (IBT)</td>
<td>Pusweh</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Ādur-Wehdādān</td>
<td>pwsw’y Y mgw Y ’twrwḥwd’t’n</td>
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<td>QAN 032 (MMA)</td>
<td>Weh-būd</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Gušnaspān</td>
<td>wyḥbwr’ Y mgw Y [Y gwšnsp]’n</td>
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<td>QAN 033 (MMA)</td>
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<td>mog</td>
<td>Dād-Ohrmazdān</td>
<td>mlbwr’ Y mgw Y d’t’wrhmzd’n</td>
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| QAN 039 (MMA) | Ādur-Burz-Mihr | mog | Ādur-Burz-Mihrān | t̂wr̂bw'lcmtr Y mgw Y t̂wr̂bw'lcmtr(')n
| QAN 040 (MMA) | Spurrag / Báffarag | mog | Puswehān | spnℏk Y mgw Y pwswyℏ n
| QAN 041 (?) | ... | mog | Gušnasp | {][d/']lwY Y [mgw] Y [gwšn]šp
| QAN 042 (MMA) | ... | mog | Kirmāyān | ...Y mgw Y ky'lm’n
| QAN 043 (?) | Ohrmazd / Ānōšag-būd | mog | Mard-ōšān | w[ḥrmzd] Y mgw Y mlṭ'wš'n
| QAN 050 (IBT) | Anōšag-weh | mog | Panāh-wehān | nwš(k)wyℏ Y mgw Y pn' ḥwyℏ'n
| QAN 052 (MMA) | ... | mog | Burzēnān | ...y mgw Y bwrcyn'n
| QAN 055 (MMA) | ... | mog | Ādur-Gušnaspān | ...p. Y mgw Y 't[wr?]gwšnsp[ 'n]
| QAN 063 (IBT) | Anōšag-weh | mog | ... | '{ nwš(k)wyℏ Y [mgw…]
| QAN 065 (MMA) | Māh-... | mog | Dād-Ohrmazdān | m(̌'h)?...Y mgw Y d’t whrmzd’n
| QAN 067 (IBT) | Burzēn | mog | ... | bwlc[y]n (Y mgw)
| QAN 069 (MMA) | Mard-Anōš | mog | ... | mlṭ' nwš(§) Y mgw Y...
| QAN 070 (IBT) | Ātāxš-baxt-Farrox (?2) | mog | Āb (?) | ...'tš b[x] plxw' y mgw y’ p'
| QAN 071 (MMA) | Mihr-... | mog | ...-dādān | mtr' (Y mgw Y ) [...]d t[n'y]
| QAN 073 (?) | ... | mog / mowān-handarzbed | Narsehān | ...y ZY] mgw mgw ZY nrš̂h n ZY mgwny hndl[c]pty
| QAN 074 (MMA) | ... | mog / mowān-handarzbed | Narsehān | ...y ZY] mgw mgw ZY nrš̂h n ZY mgwny hndl[c]pty
| QAN 076 (MMA) | Gušnasp | mog | Mihrbān | (gwšnsp')...[mtr[b'[ n]
| QAN 079 (MMA) | Burz-weh | mog | Amurdād | bwlc(wḥj) Y mgw Y 'mrdt'
| QAN 080 (MMA) | Mihr-ōšš | mog | ... | mtr'wš Y mgw Y [...]n
| QAN 081 (MMA) | ... | mog | Baxt-bōzd | ... [Y mgw Y] bḥtbwcf't
| QAN 082 (MMA) | Wind...? / Vandar-vād (?) | mog | ... | (wndlw't') Y mgw Y[...’n]
| QAN 085 (IBT) | ...-Ādur | mog | Burzōyān | ...twr' Y mgw Y bwlcwy’n
| QAN 090 (MMA) | ... | mog | Baxt-Gušnaspān | ... mgw Y] bxt gwš(n)šp’n
| QAN 092 (MMA) | Ardēn | mog | ... | [’]ltyn Y ml[gw Y ...']n
| QAN 094 (IBT) | Wahrām | mog | Ādur | w̌hl'n Y mgw Y t[w][r'n?]
| QAN 095 (IBT) | Yazdģird | mog | ... | (yzd)klt Y mgw Y ...lt
| QAN 097 (IBT) | Ādur-bōxt | mog | ... | ('twrbwℏht') Y mgw Y m… n
| QAN 098 (MMA) | Anōšag-weh | mog | Panāh-wehān | nwš[kwyℏ] Y mgw Y pn' ḥwyℏ'n
| QAN 100 (IBT) | Farrox-zād | mog | Ph̀hw t Y mgw | p̀hw t Y mgw
| QAN 104 (IBT) | Dārāy-weh | mog | Bardag / Būdag | b' bxt b'y mgw Y bwt…
| QAN 105 (MMA) | Māhēn-Farrox | mog | Māh-Gušnaspān | (m)jnpyrhw Y mgw Y m' [hwšn]šp'n
| QAN 106 (?) | ... | mog | Dād-Gušnasp | ...[Y mgw] Y d' tGWšnsp
<p>| QAN 205 (MMA) | Weh-Šāpuhr | mog | wy(dš)b[pw]řry (ZY mgw)… |
| QAN 225 (MMA) | Māh | mog | (m ŭ) Y mgw |
| QAN 231 (IBT) (2) | Mard-büd | mog | … mtlb[wʔ?] [Y] mgw [Y] |
| QAN 232 (MMA) | Māh-bōxt | mog | Ādur-mānān m 'hwšt' Y mgw Y ‘twlm ŭ n |
| QAN 252 (MMA) | Šāpuhr | mog | [šhpʔ]wly ZY (mgw?) |
| QAN 253 (IBT) (2) | Māh-windād | mog | Anōš-bōxtān m’hwnd t Y mgw Y ['nwš]bwt’ n |
| QAN 254 (MMA) | … | mog | Dād-Gušnasp [Y mgw] Y d’tgwsnp |
| QAN 270 (IBT) | … | mog | Māhān …t’ Y mgw Y m ŭ n |
| QAN 273 (IBT) (Māh?) | mog | …hs… Y mgw |
| QAN 274 (IBT) | Parmuș-Ādur | mog | [p]lnš twly |
| QAN 275 (IBT) | Dārāy-weh | mog | Bardag / Būdag b’bxt b’y mgw Y bwt… |
| QAN 279 (MMA) | Pusweh | mog | Ādurān-dādān pwsyhy Y mgw Y [’t]wrnd’t n |
| QAN 304 (IBT) (2) | Māh-bōxt | mog | Ādur-bānān m’hwlc’ Y mgw ’twrp’n n |
| QAN 307 (IBT) | Ardwahišt | mog | r[t]&lt;w-hšt Y mgw |
| QAN 334 (MMA) | Māh | mog | (m ŭ) Y mgw |
| QAN 335 (?) | Māh | mog | (m ŭ) Y mgw |
| QAN 348 (MMA) | Bāffarag | mog | Puswehān b[’p]lk’? Y m[gw] Y pw[swyhy]n |
| QAN 355 (?) | … | mog | Kirmāyān …Y mgw Y kylm’n |
| QAN 358 (?) | Pusweh | mog | Ādur-Wehdādān pwsyhy Y mgw Y ’twrwhywd’t n |
| QAN 360 (MMA) | Weh-dād | mog | … wh(wd’t) ZY mgw ZY… |
| QAN 363 (?) | Māh-bōxt | mog | Ādur-bānān |
| QAN 363 (IBT) | Māh-bōxt | mog | Ādur-bānān m’hb[wlc’?] Y … [’twrp’n n] |
| QAN 365 (?) | Spurrag / Bāffarag | mog | Puswehān … Y mgw Y pwsyhy’n |
| QAN 366 (?) | Anōšag-būd | mog | Mīhrān-.ān ’n[w?]škbwt’ Y mgw Y ml[t’nš] n |
| QAN 368 (?) | … | mog | …mgw ṣ̌w’ n (?) |
| QAN 371 (?) | Spurrag / Bāffarag | mog | Puswehān … Y mgw Y pwsyhy’n |
| QAN 372 (?) | Pērōz | mog | Mihr-Gušnasp pylwc’ Y mgw Y mtr’gwšnsp’ |
| QAN 373 (?) | Anōšag-dād | mog | Mard-būdān …Y mgw Y mlbtw’t n |
| QAN 380 (?) | …-Gušnasp | mog | …-gwšnsp [Y mgw] |
| QAN 381 (?) | …-Gušnasp | mog | …-gwšnsp [Y mgw] |
| QAN 396 (?) | … | mog | Ādur-Gušnaspān …p. Y mgw Y ’[wʔ?]gwšnsp’ n |
| QAN 397 (?) | mog | …Dād-Ohrmazdān …d’t’wrmzd’n |
| QAN 398 (?) (1) | mog | …Dād-Ohrmazdān …d’t’wrmzd’n |
| QAN 398 (?) (2) | Māh-bōxt | mog | Ādur-bānān m’hwlc’ Y mgw ’twrp’n n |
| QAN 399 (?) (2) | Māh-bōxt | mog | Ādur-bānān |
| QAN 400 (?) (2) | Šahrewar | mog | Farroxān | (št₁,wr Y m[gw] Y phḥw(y)ʾn ?) |
| QAN 401 (?) | Anōšag-dād | mog | Mard-būdān | … Y mgw Y mltbwtʾn |
| QAN 403b (MMA) (2) | Māh-windād | mog (?) | Anōš-bōxtān | m ḥwnrdʾ T Y nwštbdwtʾn |
| QAN 404 (?) (2) | Ādur-bōxt | mog | Mard-būdān | (ʾtwrbwḥ)t Y mgw Y m…ʾn |
| QAN 405 (?) (2) | Anōšag-dād | mog | Mard-būdān | nwštškʾt Y [mgw] mrtbwtʾn |
| QAN 405 (?) (3) | mog (?) | … Y mgw …. |
| QAN 408 (MMA) | Ādur-Gušnasp | mog | Anōšag-zād | ′twrgwšnsp Y mgw Y nwškʾz t |
| QAN 414 (IBT) | Anōšag-dād | mog | Mard-būdān | … Y mgw Y mltbwtʾn |
| QAN 420 (IBT) | Dārāy-weh | mog | Bardag / Būdag | b bʾt bʾy mgw Y bwt… |
| QAN 421 (?) | … | mog | Kirmāyān | … Y mgw Y kylmʾn |
| QAN 424b (MMA) (2) | Māh-Ānōš | mog | Gušnasp (?) | mʾ&lt;ḥ&gt; nwš Y mgw Y (gwšnsp?) |
| QAN 429 (IBT) (2) | Ādur-bān… | mog (?) | … | twr(p)ʾn… |
| QAN 430 (?) (2) | Māh-bōxt | mog | Ādur-bānān | |
| QAN 431 (?) | Māh | mog | (mʾḥ) Y mgw | |
| QAN 432 (?) (2) | Burzōy | mog | Bōyān | blcwcy Y mgw Y bwyʾn |
| QAN 438 (?) | Anōšag-būd | mog | Mihrān-ān | ʾn[wʔ jkbwrʾ Y mgw Y mlʾn(š)ʾn |
| QAN 433 (?) | Sāpūr | mog | | [šlpʔ]wlhy ZY (mgw?) |
| QAN 447 (?) | Anōšag-būd | mog | Mihrān-ān | ʾn[wʔ jkbwrʾ Y mgw Y mlʾn(š)ʾn |
| QAN 457 (?) | Māhēn-Farrox | mog | Māh-Gušnasp | (mʾḥ)ynprhw Y mgw Y mʾ[hwšnspʾn |
| QAN 464 (?) | ….-Gušnasp | mog | … [gwšnsp Y mgw] |
| QAN 467 (?) | Pērōz | mog | Mihr-Gušnasp | pylwcʾ Y mgw Y mtrʾgw[š]nspʾn |
| QAN 468 (?) | mog | …-Dād-Ohrmazdān | …dʾtʾwrmzdʾn |
| QAN 469 (?) | Ādur-Gušnasp | mog | Anōšag-zād | ′twrgwšnsp Y mgw Y nwškʾz t |
| QAN 470 (?) | Pusweh | mog | Ādur-Wehdādān | pwsyhw Y mgw Y ′trwylwšdʾtʾn |
| QAN 493 (?) | Spurrag / Bāffarag | mog | Puswehān | Y mgw Y pwsyhwʾn |
| Susa 4b (IBT) | mog (?) | Māh-… | twlmtny (Y mgw Y mʾḥ… |
| TS 045 | Ādur-Mihr | mog | Māh-… | twlmtny (Y mgw Y mʾḥ… |
| TS 055 | …Kerdīr | mog | … | …[tl]y ZY mgw… |
| TS 1963/104-2 | Frāy-Gušnasp | mog | Abarzdānlān | plʾdgwšnsp ZY mgw ZY ′plzlʾtʾn |
| TS 1963/105-1 | Wehdōst | mog | Ėrān-Gušnaspān | wyḥdwstʾ Y mgw Y ʾyl ngwšnspʾn |
| TS 1963/107-5 | Frāy-Gušnasp | mog | Abarzdānlān | plʾdgwšnsp ZY mgw ZY ′plzlʾtʾn |
| TS 1963/108-1 | Soštāns (?) | mog | Ādur-dādān | swšydyns [Y mgw] Y ʾtrwdʾtʾn |
| TS 1963/111-1 | Wehdōst | mog | Ėrān-Gušnaspān | wyḥdwstʾ Y mgw Y ʾyl ngwšnspʾn |
| TS 1963/130-8 | Yazdān-kerd / Yazdān-gird | mog | … yzdʾ nkrtʾ Y mgw Y … |
| TS 1963/136-1 | Soštāns (?) | mog | Ādur-dādān | swšydyns [Y mgw] Y ʾtrwdʾtʾn |
| TS 1963/138-1 | Soštāns (?) | mog | Ādur-dādān | swšydyns [Y mgw] Y ʾtrwdʾtʾn |</p>
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<td>TS 1963/139-2</td>
<td>Ādurbād-Gušnasp</td>
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<td>Frāy-Gušnasp</td>
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<td>Abarzardān pl’d gwšnsp ZY mgw ZY ’plzlt’n</td>
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<td>Weh-döst</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Ėrān-Gušnaspān wyḥdwst’ Y mgw Y ’y’l ngwšnsp’ n</td>
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<td>Rōzvarān</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Būdān lwcl’n Y mgw Y bwt’n</td>
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<td>m gw ’pstyn</td>
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<td>Pērōz-Tahm</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>pylwchm ZY mgw</td>
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<td>TS 1963/71-5</td>
<td>Sōšāns (?)</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Ėdur-dādān swšydyns [Y mgw] Y ’twrd’t’n</td>
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<tr>
<td>TS 1963/73-1</td>
<td>Frāy-Gušnasp</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Abarzardān pl’d gwšnsp ZY mgw ZY ’plzlt’n</td>
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<td>TS 1963/76-1</td>
<td>Frāy-Gušnasp</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Abarzardān pl’d gwšnsp ZY mgw ZY ’plzlt’n</td>
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<td>TS 1963/76-2</td>
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<td>mog</td>
<td>Abarzardān pl’d gwšnsp ZY mgw ZY ’plzlt’n</td>
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<td>TS 1963/76-3</td>
<td>Farrox</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>Mazān pahāh ṧ yazdān plḥw Z(Y) mgw ZY m’h’ n pn’h ’L yzdān</td>
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<td>mog</td>
<td>Ėdur-Mihrān tw’d t ZY mgw ZY ’twlmtl’n</td>
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<td>mog</td>
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<td>[mgw’?</td>
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<td>mog</td>
<td>… yzd nkrt’ Y mgw Y …</td>
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<td>mog</td>
<td>Weh-dād-Gušnaspān twrp’tgwšnsp’ Y mgw Y tw’d tgwnš/s’p’ n</td>
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APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 2

App.2.1 Mōbeds in the Persian Martyr Acts

The following table presents the mōbeds (Syr. mawhpāṭē / Arm. mogpet / Geo. mogwi) that appear in extant PMA, regardless of historicity or the date of each individual martyr act. I have limited these attestations to those individuals actually referred to as mawhpāṭā within the text; some of these individuals may appear in other tables of the Appendices, since they are also referred to as “chief mōbed” (Syr. mawhpāṭā rabbā) or “leader of the mōbeds” (Syr. rēš d-mawhpāṭē) or some other variation that may indicate the highest office of mōbedān mōbed (see discussion below). As previously discussed, the aim of such a table as this one is to be as comprehensive as possible; more critical analysis can be found in Chapter 2 and the rest of the tables in the Appendices. Asterisks (*) indicate some dispute over the interpretation of a name, but I have generally followed the renderings of Gignoux, Jullien, and Jullien (GJJ).

Table 3: Mōbeds in Syriac Persian Martyr Acts

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The following table gives an overview of Middle Persian loanwords in the later
PMA that relate to religious concepts and practices. This list is not comprehensive (and
does not include every relevant martyr act), but should give a representative sample of the
Zoroastrian milieu of these texts—and which should be further explored.

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<td>AMS II 577</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>wek-dēnith</td>
<td>AMS II 577</td>
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<tr>
<td>yāšt</td>
<td>AMS II 589</td>
<td>Histoire 354, 355 // Jullien §6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zandīšt</td>
<td>AMS II 573</td>
<td></td>
<td>Histoire 396, 412 // Jullien §1, 11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Histoire 436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zūrūnān</td>
<td>AMS II 577, 592</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>MP title</td>
<td>Pethlon Cycle</td>
<td>Grigor</td>
<td>Yazd-Panâh</td>
<td>Mâr Abâ</td>
<td>Yazd-bûzêd</td>
<td>Giwargis</td>
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<tr>
<td>ämârgar</td>
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<tr>
<td>arzbed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Histoire 210 // Julien §1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>äyênbed</td>
<td>AMS II 584, 599</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Histoire 242, 255, 259 // Julien §21, 29, 32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dehgân</td>
<td>AMS II 584</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>drustbed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Histoire 522</td>
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<tr>
<td>marbed</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Histoire 257 // Julien §31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>mo̞bedân mo̞bed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Histoire 401 // Julien §5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(Ohrnázd.-)jâdaggôw</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Histoire 253, 264 // Julien §27, 35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>östandar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Histoire 435</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>padîxšar</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Histoire 437</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pasânîg (darwâz-pân)</td>
<td>AMS II 572, 574, 599, 602, 604</td>
<td>Histoire 369 // Julien §14</td>
<td>Histoire 228, 235, 239, 242, 245, 255 // Julien §13, 17, 20, 21, 22, 29</td>
<td>Histoire 528, 529, 530, 531</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rad</td>
<td>AMS II 572, 574, 599, 602, 604</td>
<td>Histoire 369 // Julien §14</td>
<td>Histoire 228, 235, 239, 242, 245, 255 // Julien §13, 17, 20, 21, 22, 29</td>
<td>Histoire 528, 529, 530, 531</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shahr-dâdwar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Histoire 228, 259 // Julien §13, 32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xwanaway</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Histoire 437</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Middle Persian Titles in the Later PMA
Table 6: Names and Dates of Magian Officials Appearing in the later PMA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Jurisdiction</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Citation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>marzbānā</td>
<td>Nisibis</td>
<td>Yazdēn, son of Mihr-Zabiroy</td>
<td>ca. 600</td>
<td>Life of Krisṭina / Yazdōy</td>
<td>AMS IV.207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mawhpāṭā</td>
<td>Balašfarr</td>
<td>Ādur-Hormizd</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>Life of Ādur-Hormizd</td>
<td>AMS II.559, 565, 584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mawhpāṭā</td>
<td>Bēth Aramāyē</td>
<td>Ādurbādagān</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>Life of Mār Abā</td>
<td>Histoire 233, 235 (Jullien §16, 17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mawhpāṭā</td>
<td>Bēth Aramāyē</td>
<td></td>
<td>542</td>
<td>Life of Yazd-panāh</td>
<td>Histoire 401, 411 (Jullien §5, 10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mawhpāṭā (rabbā)871</td>
<td>Bēth Aramāyē</td>
<td></td>
<td>542</td>
<td>Life of Grigor</td>
<td>Histoire 368, 369, 380 (Jullien §14, 22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mawhpāṭā (rabbā)872</td>
<td>Karkā d-Ledān (Bēth Huzāyē)</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>Life of Yazd-panāh</td>
<td>Histoire 397-99 (Jullien §2-4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mogpet</td>
<td>Ray873</td>
<td>Pērōz</td>
<td>553</td>
<td>Life of Yazd-bōzōd</td>
<td>Ališan 127, 128, 129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mōbedān mōbed875</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>542</td>
<td>Life of Yazd-panāh</td>
<td>Histoire 401, 403, 411 (Jullien §5, 6, 10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mōbedān mōbed</td>
<td>Āzād-sad</td>
<td></td>
<td>550</td>
<td>Life of Mār Abā</td>
<td>Histoire 259, 271 (Jullien §32, 40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mawhpāṭā</td>
<td>(maternal grandfather of martyr)</td>
<td>&gt; 600</td>
<td>Life of Giwargis</td>
<td>Histoire 435</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Ohrmazd-)jadaggōw (court)</td>
<td>Farrox-dād</td>
<td></td>
<td>547</td>
<td>Life of Mār Abā</td>
<td>Histoire 253, 264 (Jullien §27, 35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rad</td>
<td>Balašfarr &amp; Nisibis, son of Ādur-māhān</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>Life of Ādur-Hormizd and Anahid</td>
<td>AMS II.572-74, 599, 602, 604</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

871 This official seems to be referred to interchangeably in this text as mawhpāṭā rabbā and just mawhpāṭā.
872 This official seems to be referred to interchangeably in this text as mawhpāṭā rabbā and just mawhpāṭā.
873 (Arm. ṛēoy) = նը էուս զիկիբ գաւառի մոգպետ.
874 Also called rabb mgušē (Histoire 226, 228, 229, 230, 232, 233, 235, 236, 249) and dayyānā (Histoire 229) in this text.
875 This author of this text glosses the title as rēšā da-mgušē w-mawhpāṭā ḥad rabbā, and later refers to him simply as mawhpāṭā.
Although Zoroastrian literary works mention several early Sasanian mōbedān mōbeds by name, it has been difficult to pin down when, exactly, that office was instituted. For example, the late-Sasanian (or post-Sasanian) Kārnāmag ī Ardaxšīr features a mōbedān mōbed already during the reign of the first Sasanian king, Ardaxšīr ī Pābagān (r. 224–42). However, the monumental inscriptions of the priest Kirdēr, from the later part of the third century, lack any mention of the title mōbedān mōbed among his many honors—suggesting that that office post-dated his lifetime, and that any reference to a mōbedān mōbed in the third century is anachronistic. Later Arabic sources that preserve

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\(^{876}\) See trans. of Grenet 2003, ed. Antia 1900.
pre-Islamic Iranian history tell different versions of the history of the Zoroastrian priesthood. For example, al-Masʿūdī (d. 956) says that the office of the mōbeds was instituted by Ardašīr (r. 224–42), along with the other ranks, including the mōbedān mōbed.\(^{877}\) Al-Ṭabarī (d. 923) includes a similar report,\(^{878}\) along with al-Thaʿālibī (d. 1038).\(^{879}\) However, al-Bīrūnī (d. 1048) credits Šāpūr II (r. 309–79) with this innovation.\(^{880}\) Meanwhile, according to al-Yaʿqūbī, the first to bear the title of mōbedān mōbed was Zardušt.\(^{881}\) In fact, the title of mōbedān mōbed is not attested in any documentary or literary text written before the fourth century; it is certainly a later development from near the end of the Sasanian period—perhaps the fifth century, at the earliest.\(^{882}\)

The title mōbedān mōbed appears in Zoroastrian Middle Persian texts of the late Sasanian period, where it is applied to high priests as early as the reign of Yazdgird I (r. 399–420). For example, the MHD, which was compiled in the seventh century during the latter part of the reign of Xusrō II (r. 591–628), refers to Ādurbād ī Zarduštān as the mōbedān mōbed during the reign of Yazdgird I (r. 399–420),\(^{883}\) to Mardbūd as the

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\(^{877}\) Murūj al-ḏahāb, ed. Pellat, I.287 (§581).
\(^{878}\) Taʾrīḥ, ed. de Goeje, I.816 (trans. Bosworth V.9).
\(^{879}\) Ḡurar mulūk al-Fārs wa-siyarihīm, ed. Zotenberg 1900: 485.
\(^{880}\) al-Āṯār al-bāqiya, ed. Fück, 75-76.
\(^{881}\) Taʾrīḥ, ed. Houtsma, I.202; this passage is cited in Chapter 4.
\(^{882}\) Gignoux, Wikander, Christensen, Nyberg, and Nöldeke all proposed a fifth-century date, during the reign of Bahram V Gōr (r. 420–38)—however, my own reasoning (and my proposal of the late fifth-century at the earliest) differs from theirs, which I believe is founded on a misunderstanding of the Syriac texts by Christensen. See, for example, Gignoux 1983a and 1983b, where he follows Wikander in assuming the beginning of this office in the fifth century. Wikander 1946:50-51 cites Nöldeke 1893 and Nyberg 1931: 82ff for this opinion, based on their reading of a single Syriac PMA; however, Nöldeke only uses the term “Obermagier” in his short notice about and partial translation of the Life of Ādur-Hormizd and Anahīd, whereas Nyberg uses the term mōbedān mōbed in reference to the same martyr act, citing Christensen’s French summary, which explicitly uses the title mōbedān mōbed to describe the martyrs’ interlocutor (Christensen 1928:51, citing Nöldeke 1893!). However, the title does not appear in the Syriac original, where Ādur-Fraţgird is instead simply called in by the Syriac title of mgušā rabbā.
\(^{883}\) MHD A36.3-6, A38.6-12; see Perikhian 1997: 312-13, 316-17. In the first passage, Ādurbād ī Zarduštān is referred to as a mōbedān mōbed. A short while later, the author of the MHD refers
mōbedān mōbed of Pērōz (r. 459–84), and to Weh-Šāpūr as the mōbedān mōbed of Xusrō I (r. 531–79). Yet the ZMP text known as the Sūr saxwan (“The Banquet Speech”), which was perhaps written in the sixth or seventh century, does not mention the mōbedān mōbed in the hierarchy of officials under the king. The mōbedān mōbed appears frequently in the commentary passages, or Zand, of the Pahlavi Yasna, the late-Sasanian Middle Persian translation of and commentary on the Avestan liturgy known as the Yasna. However, these references are acontextual, and the date of the written Pahlavi Yasna is not known for certain, although it, too, likely dates to the late Sasanian period and the sixth century.

On the other hand, ZMP texts written in the ninth and tenth centuries name mōbedān mōbeds as early as the reign of Šāpūr II (r. 309–79). However, these references may be anachronistic, coming from texts that were most likely written as late as the sixth century to a “written testament” that is sealed with the seal of the mōbedān mōbed (ayādgār ham-paččēn ī pad-iz muhr mōbedān mōbed) and refers to the reigns of the ancestors of Xusrō I, by which the author of the MHD places Ādurbād ī Zarduštān and his contemporaries during the reign of an unspecified Yazdgird. Other references to Ādurbād ī Zarduštān and his contemporaries in ZMP texts suggest that Yazdgird I (r. 399–420) is intended. The “written testament” (ayādgār ham-paččēn) referred to is likely that of Weh-Šāpūr, mōbedān mōbed of Xusrō I, which had just been mentioned in the text (see note below).

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884 MHD A39.16.
885 MHD A34.7, A35.15, A36.17, A39.5; see Perikhanian 1997: 310-. This is the mōbedān mōbed to whom a “written testament” (ayādgār ham-paččēn) is attributed; Macuch 1993: 14 translates it as the “Abschrift des Memorandums” which Weh-Šāpūr wrote, and notes that elsewhere he is credited with the codification of the Avesta in 21 nask (likely referring to the passage in ZWY 2.2-4).
886 Discussed in previous chapter.
887 E.g., Yasna 2.6, where the translated line “and the most Zardušt-like, righteous master of righteousness we desire for this worship” (Zarduštom-iz ahlav ī ahlāyīh rad xwāham ō ēn yazin) is further explained by the gloss “the men in the duty of the mōbedān mōbed” (mardōm andar xwēskārīh ī mōbedān mōbed). A similar translation and gloss appear at Y. 3.8, 4.11, 6.5, and 7.8. The title also appears in a slightly different context in Y. 13.13 (where the mōbedān mōbed is equivalent to the wisest person in the religion) and Y. 10.13. Also see Y. 28.7, 29.9, 53.1 (where, in the commentary, Vištāspa is credited with establishing the office of mōbedān mōbed), and 54.1. See the edition by Dhabhar 1949.
888 See Table 5, below.
or seventh century—and certainly not before the fifth century.

Earlier PMA written before the sixth century also use a variation of the Syriac expressions rēš da-mgušā (“chief of the Magians”) and rēša d-mawhpāṯē (“chief of the mōbeds”); see Table 4 below. In the fifth-century Historia Ecclesiastica of Sozomen, the author recounts the tales of the Persian martyrs and refers to a “great arch-mage” (Gr. ὁ μέγας ἀρχίμαγος) of the Magians, perhaps on par with (or a translation of) the Syriac mawhpāṯā rabbā. 889 However, it is not clear if these Syriac and Greek terms are equivalent to Middle Persian mōbedān mōbed—or whether that office yet existed in the fifth century.

To my knowledge, the earliest martyr act in which the borrowing of the MP title mōbedān mōbed appears (rather than a Syriac phrase like rēša da-mgušā) is in Syriac PMA written in the mid-sixth century or later. 890 Furthermore, in these sixth-century PMA, the borrowing of mōbedān mōbed is introduced or explained for its audience in a way that other MP titles and offices in earlier acts are not: for example, in the Life of Yazd-panāh (d. 542), the MP term mōbedān mōbed has to be glossed as “chief of the Magians and a

889 HE.ii.10.3 and ii.13.3, where this title is distinct from the “arche-mage” (Gr. ἄρχιμαγος) which also appears in this section, probably a rendering of Syriac mawhpāṯā—which is itself the Syriacized form of the Middle Persian mōbed > mog-pet, meaning “chief magus.”
890 C. Jullien 2008 mentions a mōbedān mōbed appearing in the Life of Jacob Intercisus, who was martyred in 421 during the reign of Bahram V Gōr (r. 420–39). However, I could not find this title in Bedjan’s edition of the martyr act (AMS II.539-58), which instead only features “sages” (Syr. ḥakkīmē) or the king and a judge (dayyānā) (II.544). Similarly, the related martyr act of Jacob the Notary mentions only a “prefect” (huparkā) named Mihr-Šābūr (AMS IV.189-200); this may be the same Mihr-Šābūr who is named as rēšā da-mgušē in 421 in the martyrdom of Pērōz (AMS IV.253-62) and simply “the Magian” (mgušā) in the account of the 10 Martyrs of Bēth Garmai (AMS IV.184-88). Similarly, Ze’ev Rubin, in his chapter on the “Sasanid Monarchy” in The Cambridge Ancient History, states that the earliest attested mōbedān mōbed is Mihr-Šābūr under Yazdigrd II (r. 439–57); however, he includes no citation for this reference (2001: 649). However, Guidi & Morony’s Encyclopedia of Islam entry on “Mōbadhi” attributes the statement, about Mihr-Šābūr being the first attestation of the mōbedān mōbed, to Wikander, who uses the Christian martyr acts as his primary evidence; see Guidi & Morony 2012. The Armenian History of names one Mihršapuh, lord of Arcrunik’, as a mardpet and commander of Vardan Mamikonean’s army in 451 (ed. Thomson, para. 71).
certain great mōbed.” Similarly, in the *Life of Mār Qardagh* the title appears in the explanatory phrase, “a certain Magian who was called mōbedān mōbed;” this is a text which, although it is set in the fourth century during the reign of Šāpūr II, scholars consider to be dated from the sixth century at the earliest, and more likely the early seventh century. Thus, while the use of mōbedān mōbed for a fourth-century figure is anachronistic, the seventh-century date of composition of the text places this reference in company with other examples from the later PMA. The title mōbedān mōbed also appears in the *Life of Mār Abā*, which was written soon after the death of the catholicos in 552. Here, however, there is no explanatory gloss for the borrowing, which occurs multiple times. If the office of mōbedān mōbed only developed in the early sixth century, then by the end of that century the title could be used without comment.

On the other hand, both of the Armenian Histories of Łazar and Elišē, written in the late fifth century (ca. 490) and the early sixth century, respectively, use the Armenian rendering of the title (movpetan-movpet) for an important official active during the reign of Yazdgird II (r. 439–57). I think the application of the title for the mid-fifth century is anachronistic, based on the Syriac sources just mentioned above. But the late fifth-century date of Łazar’s work—or perhaps, if we are generous with the time it took for him to finish the work, in the early sixth century—would make it the earliest extant attestation of the

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891 Histoire 401 // Jullien §5, rēšā da-mgušē w-mawhpāṯā ḥad rabbā; see discussion of this passage above in the section on Yazd-panāḥ.
892 Walker 2006: 53 (= AMS II.482), mgušā ḫad...d-metqrē-wā mōbedān mōbed. Walker is among those who date the *Life of Mār Qardagh* to the early seventh century.
893 Histoire 226ff, 259 // Jullien §12ff, 32.
title mōbedān mōbed.

The following table includes references from multiple sources beyond the PMA, including Zoroastrian Middle Persian texts, Armenian and Georgian literary works from the Sasanian period, and later Arabic chronicles. As such, this list is a work in progress, and not exhaustive. Furthermore, I have tried to include only those officials whose names are given in the texts; I have excluded many references to simple mōbeds or others designated as “head of the Magians” (Syr. mawhpāṭā and mgušā rabbā), except those that have been discussed in the context of the office of mōbedān mōbed. When there are multiple references to an individual, those in bold indicate the actual use of the title mōbedān mōbed, as opposed to other references, i.e., to the individual as a mōbed, or to their name only (indicated by parentheses).

Table 7: Zoroastrian Chief Priests in Literary Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Date of Reference</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Reign</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mawbāḏ ān mawbāḏ</td>
<td>al-Yaʿqūbī, Taʿrīḫ</td>
<td>10th cent.</td>
<td>Zardušt</td>
<td>Vištāsp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mawbāḏ ān mawbāḏ</td>
<td>al-Ṭabarī, Taʿrīḫ, I 2.816</td>
<td>10th cent.</td>
<td>Fāhr</td>
<td>Ardaxšīr I (r. 224-42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mawbāḏ ān mawbāḏ</td>
<td>al-Maqdisī, Badʿ wa-l-taʿrīḫ, III.159</td>
<td>10th cent.</td>
<td>Bahrām I (r. 271–74)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mawbāḏ ān mawbāḏ</td>
<td>Ibn Hazm, al-Fiṣal fi l-milal, 70-72</td>
<td>11th cent.</td>
<td>Bahrām II (r. 274–93)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mōbedān mōbed</td>
<td>Bd 35a.0-6</td>
<td>&gt; 9th cent.</td>
<td>Bāgā Wāy-bōxtān</td>
<td>Šāpūr II (r. 309–79)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

895 Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān is never actually called a mōbedān mōbed in any extant ZMP text. In the MHD passage, which refers to a fire temple deed, he is never given the full title (contra Perikhanian 1997: 314-15, who supplies the missing title). In the Bundahišn’s genealogical chapter, Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān’s lineage is included in among the genealogies of the mōbeds, but only Bāg ī Wāy-bōxtān is explicitly referred to as mōbedān mōbed. In many of the references included here, Ādurbād appears by name only (with no title at all, except perhaps that of hufraward, or “dearly departed”), and usually (but not always) with the patronym Mahrspandān.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AA, AMS, WEA; Dēn. Colophon B</td>
<td>ὁ μέγας ἀρχίμαγος</td>
<td>5th cent.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sāpūr II (r. 309–79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rēš d-mawhpāṭē / mawhpāṭā</td>
<td>&gt; 5th cent.</td>
<td>Ādur-farrah</td>
<td>ca. 344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mgušā rabbā</td>
<td>&gt; 5th cent.</td>
<td>Ādur-Frāzgird</td>
<td>ca. 361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rēš d-mawhpāṭē / mawhpāṭā</td>
<td>&gt; 5th cent.</td>
<td>Ādur-farr</td>
<td>ca. 368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rēšā d-mawhpāṭē</td>
<td>&gt; 5th cent.</td>
<td></td>
<td>ca. 378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mōbedān mōbed</td>
<td>MHD A36.6-9, A38.10; Dēn.III.137; Dēn.VI.D8, D9; Pahl.Texts 81ff.; Pahl.Yasna Intro. 15</td>
<td>&gt; 7th cent.</td>
<td>Yazdgird I (r. 399–420)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mōbedān mōbed</td>
<td>Dēn.VI.D10; MHD A38.10; NM I.10.8</td>
<td>&gt; 9th cent.</td>
<td>Yazdgird I (r. 399–420)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rēšā da-mgušē / mawhpāṭā</td>
<td>&gt; 5th cent.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yazdgird I (r. 399–420)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mōbedān mōbed</td>
<td>(MHD A38.10); NM I.10.8</td>
<td>&gt; 7th cent.</td>
<td>Windād</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mawbaḏān mawbaḏ</td>
<td>al-Ṭabarī, Taʾrīḫ, I-2.860-62</td>
<td>10th cent.</td>
<td>Bahram V (r. 420–38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rēšā da-mgušē</td>
<td>Life of Pērôz (AMS IV.254, 258)</td>
<td>&gt; 5th cent.</td>
<td>Mihr-Šābūr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mgušā rabbā</td>
<td>Life of Pethion (AMS II.618)</td>
<td>&gt; 5th cent.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>movpetan-movpet</td>
<td>Lazar [88]</td>
<td>5th cent.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>movpetan-movpet</td>
<td>Elīšē [62]</td>
<td>6th cent.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mōbedān mōbed</td>
<td>MHD A39.16</td>
<td>7th cent.</td>
<td>Mard-būd</td>
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<td>al-Ṭabarī, Taʾrīḫ, I-2.879-80</td>
<td>10th cent.</td>
<td>Pērôz (r. 459–84)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>mawbaḏān mawbaḏ</td>
<td>al-Ṭabarī, Taʾrīḫ, I-2.885</td>
<td>10th cent.</td>
<td>Kavād (r. 488–531)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mōbedān mōbed</td>
<td>MHD A14.13, A34.7, A35.15, A36.17, A39.5; NM I.4.15, ZWY II.2-4</td>
<td>&gt; 7th cent.</td>
<td>Web-Šāpūr (ī Dād-Hormizd)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mawbaḏān mawbaḏ</td>
<td>al-Ṭabarī, Taʾrīḫ, I-2.965, 981-83</td>
<td>10th cent.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mawbaḏān mawbaḏ</td>
<td>Miskawayh, Tajārib al-umam I:191-92</td>
<td>10th cent.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mōbedān mōbed</td>
<td>Life of Mār Ābā</td>
<td>6th cent.</td>
<td>Dād-Hormizd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mōbedān mōbed</td>
<td>Life of Mār Ābā</td>
<td>6th cent.</td>
<td>Āzād-sad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>raʾis al-muzamzimin</td>
<td>al-Ṭabarī, Taʾrīḫ, I-2.1060</td>
<td>10th cent.</td>
<td>Xusrō II (r. 591–628)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mawbaḏān mawbaḏ</td>
<td>al-Thaʿālibī, Gūrū mulūk, 471</td>
<td>11th cent.</td>
<td>Xusrō II (r. 591–628)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mōbedān mōbed</td>
<td>Dēn.VI.D5</td>
<td>&gt; 9th cent.</td>
<td>Web-dād ī Ādur-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mōbedān mōbed</td>
<td>Ohrmazd</td>
<td></td>
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<td>---------------</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dēn. VI.D10; NM I.10.8</td>
<td>&gt; 9th cent.</td>
<td>Ādurfarrbay</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 3

App.3.1 Glossary of Islamic-era mōbeds

This section is a glossary of the Zoroastrian priests of the Islamic period mentioned in this Chapter and in Chart 3, with references to ZMP and Arabic sources (information on editions and translations can be found in the Bibliography). For each entry, I render the names in Middle Persian except when they are only attested in Arabic (e.g., Isfandiyār ibn Āḏurbāḏ); I provide alternative spellings and disambiguation where necessary. Chapter 4 will provide many more references to Islamic-era mōbeds, many of whom are unnamed; I collect those references in Appendix 4.

Ādurbād ī Ēmēdān (fl. before 920)
The final redactor of the Dēnkard and the author of the epilogue of Dēnkard III; he is called hudēnān pēšōbāy (Dēn. III.420), and also included the list of contemporary mōbeds in the genealogical chapter of the Bundahišn (Bd.35). He is probably the father of Isfandiyār ibn Āḏurbāḏ ibn Ēmēd, whom al-Masʿūdī (d. 956) says was put to death by the caliph al-Rāḍī in 937 CE.

The Melkite Christian writer, Qusṭā ibn Lūqā (d. ca. 920), mentions “Ādurbād the mōbed” as an informant about the many languages of the Avesta and the Zoroastrian priests’ understanding of that sacred text; following van Bladel 2017a: 193-95, citing the text of Samir & Nwyia 1981: 610.

In his Taṯbīt dalā’il al-nubuwwa, ʿAbd al-Jabbār (d. 1025) cites the authority of “Āḏurbāḏ ibn Ēmēd the mōbed” on the matter of the Zoroastrian savior named Pešōtan, possibly alluding to a written source (Ādurbāḏ’s redaction of the Dēnkard); ed. Reynolds & Samir 2010: 134-35. Ibn Ḥazm (d. 1064) also mentions “Ādurbād the mōbed” in a list of ninth- to tenth-century heretics who partake in religious disputations; Rasāʾil, ed. ʿAbbās, III.202.

Ādurbād ibn Mahrsfandān ibn Ašawahišt (ca. 931)
= Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān
Named in the New Persian rivāyat of Šāpur Āsā that was copied in the seventeenth-century as responsible for copying the Dēnkard in AY 300 [=931 CE]; British Library MS Avestan 8, fol. 147r.9-10. Perhaps the same individual whom Farrbay, the author of the Bundahišn genealogy, names as a contemporary mōbed: Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān; Bd.35.a.7-8.
Ādurbād ī Yāwandān (early 9th cent.)

Mentioned several times by the author of the Pāzand Škand Gumānīg Wizār (ŠGW 1.38, 4.106, 9.1-3, 10.53) as an authority and perhaps also the teacher of Ādurfarbay ī Farrozxādān (s.v), the first reductor of the Dēnkard (ca. 830s).

Ādurfarbay ī Farrozxādān (ca. 830s)

The first reductor of the Dēnkard, called “blessed” (hufraward) and “leader of the faithful” (hudēnān pēšōbāy); Dēn. III.420.7, Dēn. IV.2, Dēn. V.1.2. He also appears with these titles in the Letters of Manuščihr (NM 1.3.9), as well as his Dādestān ī Dēnīg (DD 87.8).

Book V of the Dēnkard records his replies to a certain Yakūb about the Zoroastrian faith, as well as his refutation of the Christian Bōxt-

Mārī. The Gizistag Abālī records Ādurfarbay’s disputation before the caliph al-

Maʾmūn (called amīr mūminīn, MP rendering of Ar. amīr al-

muʾminīn, “leader of the faithful”) in Baghdad, with a Muslim “judge” (MP kādīg for Ar. qāḍī) and the “chief commander” (MP wazurg framādar equivalent to Ar. wazīr ?); Ādurfarbay himself is called wehdēnān pēšōbāy, a variant of hudēnān pēšōbāy (“leader of the faithful”), as well as anōšag-

ruwān (“dearly departed”).

Ādurfarbay appears along with Ādurbād ī Ēmēdān in the Colophon to Dēnkard ms. B, where they are credited with writing the Dēnkard. A rivāyat is attributed to Ādurfarbay ī Farrozxādān (RAF).

The author of the Pāzand Škand Gumānīg Wizār mentions the Dēnkard of Ādurfarbay ī Farrozxādān, leading some to suppose that the “Doubt-Dispelling Exposition” predates Ādurbād ī Ēmēdān’s redaction of the Dēnkard (ŠGW 4.107); this text also suggests that Ādurfarbay was the disciple of one Ādurbād ī Yāwandān (ŠGW 9.1-3).

Ašawahišt ī Frāy-Srōš (early 10th cent.)

A contemporary mōbed of Farrbay, the author of the Bundahišn genealogy; Bd.35.a.7-8.

Bahrām ibn Mardānšāh (≥10th cent.)

Ibn al-Nadīm lists one “Bahrām ibn Mardānšāh, mōbed of the city of Šābūr in the land of Fārs,” as “one of the translators of the Persians;” Fihrist, ed. Sayyid, II.151. This same mōbed is listed as the author of a redaction (iṣlāḥ) of the Kitāb ta ṛīḥ mulūk banī Sāsān, one of Ḥamza al-

Iṣfahānī’s (d. 971) textual sources for his Ta ṛīḥ sinī mulūk al-

ard wa-l-anbiyā’ (“Chronicle of the Years of the Kings of the Earth and of the Prophets”) and which is considered part of the Arabic recension of the Persian “Book of Kings” traditions (MP Xwadāy-nāmag); Ta ṛīḥ, ed. Gottwaldt, 9 and 24. Bahrām ibn Mardānšāh also appears as a source in al-

Bīrūnī’s al-

Āṯār al-

bāqiya, cited via Ḥamza al-

Iṣfahānī and referred to simply as “the copy of the mōbed” (nushat al-

mawbaḏ); al-

Āṯār al-

bāqiya, ed. Sachau 108,114,125,129.

Possibly the father of one of the sources listed in the older preface to the Šāhnāme: Māhūy-e Khwarshīd, son of Bahrām, from [Bi]şābūr (para. 6; see Shahbazi 1991: 36, n. 96).
Bahrām ibn Ḫwarzād ibn Manuščihr (≥ 8th cent.)
The New Persian Tārīḫ-e Ṭabarestān of Ibn Isfandiyār (d. 1216) contains the extant Letter of Tansar that he translated (and augmented) from the Arabic version of Ibn al-Muqaffa’ (d. 756), who claims to have translated from (Middle) Persian—on the authority of a certain Bahrām ibn Ḫwarzād, from his own father Manuščihr, mōbed of Ḫurasān, along with other learned men of Pārs; ed. Mīnovī, 1.

Ēmēd ī Ašawahištān (ca. 937-70s)
Attributed with a Zoroastrian Middle Persian rivāyat (REA) containing a series of questions on various religious topics put to the priest by one Gušnasp, son of Mihr-Ātaš, son of Ādur Gušnasp. His chronology is known from Arabic sources. Al-Masʿūdī (d. 956) records that this Ēmēd ī Ašawahištān was the mōbed of Jibāl, ʿIrāq, and Fārs from 937 onwards; al-Tanbīh al-iṣrāf, ed. de Goeje, 104-05. Yāqūt (d. 1229), in his Muʿjam al-buldān, quotes Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī (d. 970), who twice quotes Ēmēd ī Ašawahištān as a direct informant: once as “the mōbedān mōbed Ēmēd ī Ašwahištān” and once as “the mōbed Ibn Ašawahištān;” ed. Wüstenfeld, I-1.425-26 and I-2.637. Ibn al-Naḍīm (ca. 987) twice quotes “Ēmēd the mōbed;” Fihrist, ed. Sayyid, I.30, 32.

Farrbay ī Ašawahištān (early 10th cent.)
Author of the final chapter of the Bundahišn, which gives several genealogies including that of several contemporary mōbeds. Farrbay himself gives his own genealogy back through his mother’s line through the fourth-century mōbedān mōbed of Šāpūr II, Bāg ī Wāy-bōxtān, all the way back to the legendary Manuščihr; he also gives his immediate paternal genealogy as “Farrbay, whom they call dādagīh, son of Ašawahišt, son of Gušn-Jam, son of Wahrām-šād, son of Zardušt.”

Farrbay-Srōš ī Wahrāmān (ca. 1008)
Author of a rivāyat (RFW) dated by its colophon to 1008 CE. He is called a mōbed as well as hudēnān pēšōbāy; in answering the questions of a hāwišt (priestly teacher) he mentions the letter of Abū Mansūr, marzbān of Baghdad, concerning a calendar issue (de Jong 2016: 231 interprets the name as “Abū Miswar Yazdān-pādār, son of Marzbān, from Baghdad”). The author of the colophon, the hērbed Spendād ī Farroxburzēn, also calls Farrbay-Srōš a mōbedān mōbed. Skjærvø interprets his name as Frīy-Srōš; Unpublished edition, 2423-27.

Gušnasp ī Mihr-Ātaš ī Ādur Gušnasp (early 10th cent.)
Interlocuter of the rivāyat of Ėmēd ī Ašawahištān (s.v.)

Isfandiyār ibn Ādurbaḏ ī Ėmēd (d. 937)
The son of the final redactor of the Dēnkard, Ādurbaḏ ī Ėmēdān. The mōbed of Jibāl, ʿIrāq, and the rest of the lands of the Persians before his death at the hands of the caliph al-Rāḍī in Baghdad in 937 CE; al-Masʿūdī, al-Tanbīh al-iṣrāf, ed. de Goeje, 104-05.
Manuščihr ī Gušn-Jamān ī Šāpūrān (ca. 881)

The _rad_ of Pārs and Kirmān writing in the late ninth century, author of the _Nāmagīhā ī Manuščihr_ (the “Letters,” one of which is dated to 881 CE: _NM_ III.21) and the _Dādestān ī Dēnīg_ (“Religious Judgments”). Manuščihr refers to himself as “the _rad_ and chief of the guild of priests of Pārs and Kirmān” (_pārs ud kirmān rad ud āsrōnān pēšag framādār, DD_ 93.13) and similarly signs one Letter as “the chief of the guild of priests of Pārs and Kirmān (_Pārs ud Kirmān āsrōnān pēšag framādār, NM_ 2.9.13), addressing another as the _rad_ of Pārs and Kirmān (_NM_ 3.1); only the headings of the _Letters_ call Manuščihr a _hērbed_.

Manuščihr addresses some of his _Letters_ to his brother, Zādspram ī Gušn-Jamān, who is known as the author of the _Wizīdagīhā ī Zādspram_ (“Anthology of Zādspram”) and is also mentioned in the _Bundahišn_ genealogy as a contemporary _mōbed_ of its author, Farrbay.

Mardān-Farrox ī Ohrmzd-dād (9th cent.)

Author of the _Škand Gumānīg Wizār_ (ŠGW), a treatise that includes a defense of Zoroastrianism as well as refutations of Islam, Judaism, Christianity, and Manichaeism, survives both in Pāzand (Middle Persian written in Avestan script) and a Sanskrit translation. Authorities mentioned in this text include Ādurfarrbay ī Farroxzādān and his redaction of the _Dēnkard_ (ŠGW 4.107, 9.1-3, 10.56-58), as well as Ādurbād ī Yāwandād (ŠGW 1.38, 4.106, 9.1-3, 10.53) and Rōšn ī Ādurfarrbay and his _Rōšn-nibēg_ (ŠGW 10.54-55, 11.213).

Mārsfand al-Kazarūnī (ca. 955)

An Arabic inscription on the ruins the palace of Darius at Persepolis informs us that in 955 CE the Būyid amir ʿAḍud al-Dawla (d. 983) enlisted “Mārsfand, the _mōbed_ from Kāzarūn” (mārsfand al-mawbaḏ al-Kāzarūnī) to read the Persian inscriptions for him there; see Donohue 1973: 75-78.

Mihryār ī Mahmadān (9th cent.)

Perhaps a Muslim (based on his patronym), to whose questions the author of the _Škand Gumānīg Wizār_ responds (ŠGW 2-4).

Rōšn ī Ādurfarrbay(ān) (≥ 9th cent.)

Mentioned by the author of the _Škand Gumānīg Wizār_ as an authority and the author of a work called _Rōšn-nibēg_ (ŠGW 10.54-55, 11.213). De Menasce (1954: 116-17) thinks that Rōšn ī Ādurfarrbay is the son of Ādurfarrbay ī Farroxzādān, the first redactor of the _Dēnkard_; particularly because they are mentioned together in the _Škand Gumānīg Wizār_ (ŠGW 10.54-55). However, Secunda (2012: 345-46) is skeptical of this association and suggests that Ādurfarrbay is the son of a _mōbed_ who was at council of Xusrō I (r. 531–79): “Ādurfarrbay the deceitless” (Ādurfarrbay ī a-drō, ZWY 2.2). Secunda notes that in the _Zand ī fragard ī jud-dēw-dād_ (ZFJ 494), Rōšn disputes with Mardbūd ī Dād-Ohrmazd, whom he considers to be the son of another attendee of the council of Xusrō I: Dād-Ohrmazd, the _dastwar_ of Ādurbādāgan (ZWY 2.2).
Zādspram ī Gušn-Jamān (late 9th-10th cent.)

The author of the Wizīdagīhā ī Zādspram (“Anthology of Zādspram”) and the brother of Manuščihr (ca. 881, author of the Letters and the Dādestān ī Dēnīg), Zādspram is also mentioned in the Bundahišn genealogy as a contemporary móbed of its author, Farrbay; Bd.35.a.7-8. Several of Manuščihr’s Letters are addressed to Zādspram, whose headings call him a hērbed.

Zardušt ī Ādurfarrbayān (ca. 840-60)

= Zardušt ibn Ādurḫwarra = Muḥammad al-Mutawakkilī = Abū Jaʿfar al-Mutawakkilī = al-mawbaḏ al-Mutawakkilī

Ādurbad ī Ēmēdān’s (s.v) epilogue to Dēnkard III records that Zardušt ī Ādurfarrbayān, the hudēnān pēšōbāy after (and son of) Ādurfarrbay ī Farroxzādān (s.v.), called the dīwān to fall into disarray, necessitating Ādurbad ī Ēmēdān’s efforts to put it back together. Arabic sources reveal further details, namely that he apostatized and became a boon-companion (al-nadīm) to the caliph al-Mutawakkil (r. 847–61); see de Blois 1996.

He has also been identified as the individual quoted by Ḥamza al-Īsfahānī once as “Zardušt ī Ādurḫwarra, known as Muḥammad al-Mutawakkilī,” and a second time as “Muḥammad the móbed, known as Abū Jaʿfar al-Mutawakkilī;” al-Tanbih ī al-hudūt, ed. Ṭalās, 24 and 21. Yāqūt (d. 1229), Muḥammādī al-mawbaḏ, ed. Wüstenfeld, III.185.

Additionally, the author of the text in MS Sprenger 30 quotes “Abū Jaʿfar Zarādušt ī Ādurḫwarra” at least three times, and notes that he was a contemporary of al-Muʿtaṣim (r. 833–42): pg. 62 (as abū jaʿfar zarādušt ī ādurḫwarra), pg. 94 (as abū jaʿfar zarādušt al-mawbaḏ, with reference to al-Muʿtaṣim), pg. 141 (as simply abū jaʿfar), and either a mistake or a citation of his father, pg. 139 (as āhrā al-mawbaḏ); see Rubin 2005: 56.
App. 3.2 Variations of the *Bundahišn* Genealogy

The following chart gathers different scholarly interpretations of the *Bundahišn* genealogy of the *mōbeds*, in both transcriptions and translations. This chart is followed by another which provides a synopsis of resulting lists of contemporary *mōbeds*. 
All other mowbeds mentioned in the Book of Lords [Xwaday Nāma] are from the same family, from the line of Manuščihr. The mowbeds of today are also said to be from that same family.

As for me, Farrōbag, whom they call Dādagīh, I am the son of Ašawahišt, son of Gušn-jam, son of Wahrāmsād, son of Zoraster. Zoroaster was the son of Ādurbād, son of Māraspand. Zādspāmd was the son of Gušn-jam, son of Ādurbād, son of Ēmēd, son of Ašawahišt, son of Frāy-srōš. Other mowbeds were all of the same family.
Contemporary priests in *Bd.* 35a.7-8, according to different scholars:

<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1. Farnbayī xwănēnd Dâdâgîh</td>
<td>1. Farrôbag, called Dâdâgîh</td>
<td>1. Farrôbagī xwănēnd Dâdâgîh</td>
<td>1. Frôbag</td>
<td>1. Ātur-farnbay</td>
<td>1. Nar-farnbay, called Dâtēēh</td>
<td>1. one called (Dâdakîh-i Ashâvâhistî)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ašwahišt</td>
<td>Ašawahišt</td>
<td>Ašawahišt</td>
<td>Dâtakîh,</td>
<td>Dâtēēh</td>
<td>Ašavahišt</td>
<td>Yûdân-Yim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gušn-jam</td>
<td>Gušn-jam</td>
<td>Gušn-jam</td>
<td>Ashavahišt</td>
<td>Ašavahišt</td>
<td>Yuvân-yam</td>
<td>Vâhrâm-shâd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wahrâmşâd</td>
<td>Wahrâmşâd</td>
<td>Wahrâm-šâd</td>
<td>Goshn-Jam</td>
<td>Yuvân-yam</td>
<td>Vahrâm-šât</td>
<td>Zaratûst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zarduxşt</td>
<td>Zoroaster</td>
<td>Zarduxşt</td>
<td>Vâhrám-šât</td>
<td>Vâhrám-šât</td>
<td>Zartuşt</td>
<td>2. Āturôpâd</td>
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<td>(Zoroaster?)</td>
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<td>2. Āturôpâd</td>
</tr>
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<td>Ādurbâd</td>
<td>2. Zarduxşt</td>
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<td>Aṭûrpât Mahrspandân</td>
<td>Aṭûrpât</td>
<td>Mâhrspand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Mahrspand</td>
<td>Ādurbâd</td>
<td>Mahrspand</td>
<td>Mahrspand</td>
<td>Mahrspand</td>
<td>Zâd-sparham</td>
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<td>Mahrspand</td>
<td>(1b.?) Zaratust son of</td>
<td>Zâtsprahm</td>
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<td>Gušn-jam</td>
<td>Gušn-jam</td>
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## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 4

### App.4.1 Table of Arabic Citations about mōbeds

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<td>Ibn al-Nadīm (d. 990)</td>
<td><em>Fihrist</em></td>
<td>al-Mutawakkil summons a mōbed from Fārs to translate the Kalīlah wa-Dīmnah</td>
<td>Sayyid 2009: II.326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibn al-Nadīm (d. 990)</td>
<td><em>Fihrist</em></td>
<td>kitāb mōbedān mōbed</td>
<td>Sayyid 2009: II.349-40</td>
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<td>Ibn al-Nadīm (d. 990)</td>
<td><em>Fihrist</em></td>
<td>Ėmēḏ the mōbed</td>
<td>Sayyid, I.30,32</td>
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<td>Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī (d. 991-2)</td>
<td><em>Uyūn al- ṛahār al-ridā</em></td>
<td>al-Rida (d. 818, 8th imām) converses with hērbed al-akbar in Marw at court of al-Maʿmūn, disputation held by al-Faḍl ibn Sahl</td>
<td>al-Lājavardī 1957: 167-68</td>
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<td>Ibn Ḥazm (d. 1064)</td>
<td><em>Rasāʿil</em></td>
<td>Adurbād the mōbed</td>
<td>ʿAbbāṣ 1980: III.202</td>
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<td>Ibn Ḫazmī (d. 1216)</td>
<td><em>Tārīḵ-e Tabarestān</em></td>
<td>Letter of Tansar (NP), from Ibn al-Muqaffāʾ (Ar.) from Bahrām ibn Ḥwarzād, from his own father Manuščihr, mōbed of Ḫurasān, along with other learned men of Pārs (MP)</td>
<td>Minovī 1932: 1</td>
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<td>Ibn Qutayba al-Dinawari (d. 889)</td>
<td><em>Uyūn al-aḥbār</em></td>
<td>the möbedān möbed on/ as secretaries in the books of the ṣajam</td>
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<td>Yūsuf ‘Ali Ţawīl 1986: 1.60-61</td>
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<td>Ibn Qutayba al-Dinawari (d. 889)</td>
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<td>möbed with Hišām ibn al-Hakam (d. after 814)</td>
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<td>Ibn Sa’d (d. 845)</td>
<td><em>al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā</em></td>
<td>Abū Qilāba möbedān möbed = qāḍī al-ṣalṭāt</td>
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<td>‘Alī Muḥammad Umar, 9.183 (#3886)</td>
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<td>Ibn ’Abd Rabbih al-Andalusī (d. 940)</td>
<td><em>Iqd al-farīd</em></td>
<td>the Persian möbedān</td>
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<td>Yūsuf Ţūnjī 2001: 1.246</td>
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<td>Ibn ’Abd Rabbih al-Andalusī (d. 940)</td>
<td><em>Iqd al-farīd</em></td>
<td>möbed of Xusrō II has dream foretelling coming of Muhammad</td>
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<td>Ibn ’Abd Rabbih al-Andalusī (d. 940)</td>
<td><em>Iqd al-farīd</em></td>
<td>möbed = ’ālim al-furs</td>
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<td>Yūsuf Ţūnjī 2001: 2.349</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miskawayh (d. 1030)</td>
<td><em>Tajārib al-umam</em></td>
<td>Muslims in Šīrāz riot again al-mājūs in 979</td>
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<td>Amedroz &amp; Margoliouth 1920</td>
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<td>Miskawayh (d. 1030)</td>
<td><em>al-Ḥikma al-ḥālida</em></td>
<td>Dūbān from Kābulistān advises al-Ma’mūn in Ḫurāsān</td>
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<td>Badawī 1952: 19</td>
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<td>Miskawayh (d. 1030)</td>
<td><em>al-Ḥikma al-ḥālida</em></td>
<td>finds (ps.)-al-Jāḥiẓ manuscript with möbedān möbed in Fārs</td>
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<td>Badawī 1952: 5</td>
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<td>MS Sprenger 30</td>
<td>möbed a source on the lineage of Jāmāsp to Manuščihr</td>
<td>p. 103; Rubin 2005: 56</td>
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<tr>
<td>MS Sprenger 30</td>
<td>[’ḥr’] möbed as source on rise of Bahram’s minister Mihr-Narseh</td>
<td>p. 139; Rubin 2005: 57</td>
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<td>MS Sprenger 30</td>
<td>Abū Ja’far reports on something from reign of Yazdgird II</td>
<td>p. 141; Rubin 2005: 56</td>
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<tr>
<td>MS Sprenger 30</td>
<td>möbed and hērbeds as sources for author’s history</td>
<td>p. 46; Rubin 2005: 56</td>
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<tr>
<td>MS Sprenger 30</td>
<td>Abū Ja’far Zarādušt ibn [’hr’] the möbed</td>
<td>p. 62; Rubin 2005: 56; see de Blois 1996:45 n.78</td>
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<tr>
<td>MS Sprenger 30</td>
<td>Abū Ja’far Zarādušt the möbed; described as contemporary of al-Mu’tasim</td>
<td>p. 94; Rubin 2005: 56</td>
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<td>pseudo-al-Jāḥiẓ (ca. 840s)</td>
<td><em>Kitāb al-ṭāj</em></td>
<td>role of möbedān möbed likened to “judgeship of judges” (li-qadā’ al-ṣalṭāt)</td>
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<td>Ahmad Zakī 1914</td>
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<td>Qusṭā ibn Lūqā of Ba’labakk (d. ca. 920)</td>
<td>Adurbād the möbed</td>
<td>Samir &amp; Nwyia 1981; see van Bladel 2017: 193-95</td>
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<td>Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (d. 1229)</td>
<td><em>Muʾjam al-buldān</em></td>
<td>möbedān möbed Īmēd ibn Ašawahišt (via Ḥamza al-Īsfahānī)</td>
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<td>Wüstenfeld I-1.426</td>
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<td>Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (d. 1229)</td>
<td><em>Muʾjam al-buldān</em></td>
<td>möbed Ibn Ašawahišt (via Hamza al-Īsfahānī)</td>
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<td>Wüstenfeld I-2.637</td>
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<td>Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (d. 1229)</td>
<td><em>Muʾjam al-buldān</em></td>
<td>möbedān from Ḫurāsān, court of al-Fadl ibn Sahl (d. 818)</td>
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<td>Wüstenfeld I-2.669</td>
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<td>Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (d. 1229)</td>
<td><em>Muʾjam al-buldān</em></td>
<td>al-Ma’mūn consults a möbed about his general Dinār (?)</td>
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<td>Wüstenfeld II.519</td>
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| Yāqūt al-Hamawī (d. 1229) | Muğam al-buldān | (via Ḥamza) Zardušt ibn Āḏuṟḫwar, known as Muhammad al-Mutawakkilī  
Wüstenfeld III.185; see de Blois 1996:45 |
| ʿAbd al-Jabbār (d. 1025) | Taḥbīt dalāʾ il-al-nubuwwa | Adurbād ibn Emēd the möbed  
Reynolds & Samir 2010: 134 |
| [Anonymous] | Tārīḵ-e Sistān | quote of Bundahišn (via Abū l-Muʿayyad al-Balḫī)  
see Hāmeen-Anttila 2018: 138-39 |

App.4.2 Magians (al-majūs) in Early Islamic Conceptions of the Dhimma

Indeed, those who believe, and those who are Jews, Ṣābians, Christians, Magians, and those who are polytheists—God will judge between them all on the day of the resurrection. Surely God is a witness to everything.896

Qurʾān 22:17, Sūrat al-Ḥajj

The above is a well-known passage from the Qurʾān [22.17, Sūrat al-Ḥajj] that contrasts three groups: first, “those who believe,” i.e., Muslims; then (and perhaps including) the specific religious groups of Jews, Ṣābians, Christians, and Zoroastrians, or “Magians” (Ar. al-majūs); and finally, all others (who are relegated to the category of “polytheists”). God will judge them all on Judgment Day. For the polytheists there is no hope, but the other groups mentioned here in the second category occupied a licit, if liminal category of non-Muslim groups, or dhimmī, that were incorporated into Islamic society despite their non-conversion. This passage and others like it in the Qurʾān, as well as a significant number of hadith, form the basis of that distinction.

Today many scholars make a distinction between ahl al-kitāb and ahl al-dhimma, with the former strictly referring to Christians and Jews while the latter is a more inclusive term that covers other protected religious minorities like Zoroastrians.897 However, this position is based upon the arguments of Islamic jurists like al-Ŝāfīʿī (d. 820) and Aḥmād

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896 inna Ilāḏina amanū wa-Ilāḏina ḥāḏū wa-l-ṣābiʿa wa-l-naṣārā wa-l-majūsā wa-Ilāḏina ašrākū inna Ilāḏa yaḏsilu baynahum yawma l-qiyāmati inna Ilāḏa ʿalā kulli šayʾin šahīdu
897 See Vajda 2012 (EI “Ahl al-Kitāb) and Friedmann 2012 (EI3 “Dhimma”).
ibn Ḣanbal (d. 855), whose opinions were developed precisely in the period under examination in this second half of the dissertation. Moreover, although many scholars then and now disagree about whether Magians were/are *ahl al-kitāb*, they all depend upon the same Qur’ānic passages and hadith traditions, which I will now outline. In fact, the status of the Magians has no clear consensus in the Arabic sources of the eighth century and seems to have developed gradually over time.

There is evidence of the evolving nature of the understanding of the *dhimma* even within the Qur’ān. The passage quoted above, which is the only time that Zoroastrians appear in the Qur’ān, is held to be a late *sūra*, revealed to the Prophet when he was in Medina; whereas earlier passages, (held to have been revealed to the Prophet when he was still in Mecca, before his emigration to Medina) do not include the Zoroastrians in these groupings. For example, one Meccan passage [*Qurʾān 2:62, Sūrat al-Baqarah*] reads, “Indeed, those who believe, and those who are Jews, Christians, and Ṣābians—who believe in God and the last day and do good, they will have their reward with their Lord, and they will have no fear, nor will they grieve.” The Magians are not mentioned here. Yet, from the early days of the Arab conquest, Zoroastrians received a protected status in accordance with their payment of the *jizya*, as is reported in many hadith as in conquest narratives. It is evident from these reports that *al-majūs* were at times accepted as *ahl al-kitāb*, based on traditions going back to Muḥammad, ʿUmar, or ʿAlī.

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898 Many of these passages have been discussed by Friedmann 2003, Magnusson 2014a, and Choksy 1997.  
899 However, unlike with Jews and Christians, Muslims were not allowed to eat the meat prepared by Zoroastrians or to marry Zoroastrian women; see Choksy 1997: 114-16. Also see Cook 1984 on the permissibility of eating “Magian cheese,” as an exception to these prohibitions.
There are three main reports in the Sunnī hadith collections, which I name A, B, and C, as well as a separate tradition of reports going back to 'Alī (report D) that I will discuss later. The first (A) tells us that Muḥammad took the jizya from the Magians of Hajar, 'Umar took it from the Magians of Fārs, and 'Uṯmān took it from the Berbers (al-barbar). The second report (B) is a repetition of the precedent set by Muḥammad in taking the jizya from the Magians of Hajar, and often appears with the qualifying statement that Muḥammad also prohibited marrying their women and eating their slaughtered animals—which would have been permitted for other ahl al-kitāb like Jews and Christians—thus marking Magians as a separate category.

The second report (B), which really consists of shorter restatements of the first report, goes back to a range of authorities including the forebearer of the ʿAbbāsid dynasty, Ibn ʿAbbās (d. 686-8). But another isnād for report B goes back to a grandson of 'Alī:

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900 The first report (A), in all its variations in four different works, goes back to the prolific transmitter Ibn Šihāb al-Zuhrī (d. 742). Three authors repeat this report with essentially the same matn: Mālik ibn Anas (d. 796), Muwaṭṭa , Book 17 al-Zakāt, 41, #668, ed. Hilāfī, II.287-91, qāla balāgānī anna rasūla l-jizyata min majūsi l-bahrayni wa-anna ʿumara bna l-ḥattābi aḥaḍahā min majūsi l-fārsi wa-anna ʿuṯmānu mina l-barbari; ; Abū ʿUbayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām (d. 838), Kitāb al-ʿAmwāl, §79-81, ed. Harrās, 45; al-Balāḏurī (d. 892), Futūḥ al-buldān, #246-247, ed. de Goeje, 80. A slightly different version in the Jāmiʿ al-Tirmiḏī (d. 892), but on the authority of al-Zuhrī from al-Sāʾ ib ibn Yazīd, and with ʿUṯmān taking jizya from the Persians (al-furs) instead of the Berbers (al-barbar): Book 21 Siyar, 31 (#1588), ed. Maʿrūf, III.242 n.2 (where the editor includes this report in a footnote, as a spurious hadith, rather than the main body of the text), ḡaddaṭanā l-ḥusaynu bnu abī kabšata l-baṣriyyu ḡaddaṭanā ʿabdu l-raḥmani bnu mahdiyyin ʿan mālikin ʿan l-ḥuṭriyyī ʿan l-sāʾ ibi bni yazīdin qāla aḥaḍa rasūlu llāhi l-jizyata min majūsi l-bahrayni wa-aḥaḍahā ʿumaru min fārsas wa-aḥaḍahā ʿumānu mina l-fursi wa-saʿaltu muḥammadan ʿan hādā ḡa-qaša hūwa mālikun ʿan l-ḥuṭriyyī ʿan l-nabīyyī. In both Mālik’s Muwatta’ and Tirmiḏi’s Jāmi’, the reported tradition says that the Messenger of God took the jizya from al-Bahrayn rather than Hajar, but these terms are used synonymously throughout these works. Another version of report A, however, asserts that Abū Bakr (or his official, Ḥāʾid ibn Walīd) accepted the jizya from the Magians of Fars, followed by ʿUmar, and with ʿUṯmān accepting it from the Berbers; see Abū ʿUbayd, Kitāb al-ʿAmwāl, §86, ed. Harrās, 47-48.

901 See Abū Yūṣuf, Kitāb al-ḥarāj, ed. 1352/1934 Cairo, 129; and al-Balāḏurī, Futūḥ al-buldān, ed. de Goeje, 81.
al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyya (d. 714-20), to whom is attributed the origin of the Murjiʾi doctrine, which advocated for a “postponing” of judgment upon the political schisms of the umma.\(^{902}\) Jamsheed Choksy also points out the Murjiʾi and Šīʿi backgrounds of two prominent transmitters in this second tradition (B): Qays ibn Muslim (d. 738) and Qays ibn al-Rabīʿ al-Asadī (d. 785).\(^{903}\)

The third report (C) also reiterates this precedent, but in the context of a narrative set during the reign of ʿUmar ibn al-Ḥaṭṭāb in which the caliph’s initial confusion about how to treat the Magians is resolved when a Companion of the Prophet, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAwf (d. 652), testifies to Muḥammad’s treatment of the Magians of Hajar.\(^{904}\) The third report (C) has two distinct versions: one (C1) describes a letter from ʿUmar ibn al-Ḥaṭṭāb concerning the treatment of the Magians—and his subsequent change of opinion after the testimony of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAwf. This report (C1) goes back to a provincial secretary named Bajāla who saw ʿUmar’s letter and / or witnessed the statement of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAwf about the Magians of Hajar.\(^{905}\) Magnusson points out that Bajāla was a member of the Tamīm tribe, which included Zoroastrians among its members.\(^{906}\) In fact,
the Tamīm had connections to Hajar and Bahrain already in the Sasanian period. Tamīmīs like al-Munḏir ibn Sāwā served the Persians as Arab client-kings of the important date markets there, before he became the Prophet Muḥammad’s governor. In the other version of the report (C2), however, 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn 'Awf says that he heard the Prophet explicitly say to treat Magians as ahl al-kitāb.

While all of these sources just mentioned show a range of opinions regarding the status of Magians and its development over time, the key point that all of them share is that the sunna of the Prophet and his successors set a precedent for exacting the jizya upon Magians in return for all of the usual protections (and disadvantages) afforded to ahl al-dhimma. The disagreement comes in the recognition or denial of the Magians as part of the ahl al-kitāb. For example, even while Abū Yūsuf records the traditions about the Prophet accepting the jizya from the Magians of Hajar, and even though he commonly lists the Magians alongside Jews, Christians, Šābians, and Samaritans as ahl al-dhimma, he also explicitly says that the Magians are not to be considered ahl al-kitāb; according to Abū Yūsuf, Magians are in fact “polytheists” (mušrikūn), although they and the rest of the Persians occupy a separate category from Arab polytheists and apostates from Islam (who are never under any circumstances allowed to pay the jizya or afforded the rights of the ahl al-dhimma). For Abū Yūsuf and others, the proof of the Magians intermediary

of the Book;” here Lecker also traces the Persian influence on the Tamīm tribe, including reports of conversions to Zoroastrianism among its members, as well as the settlement of the Islamic converts from the Persian cavalry (asāwira) among the Tamīm tribe in Basra.

Lecker 2005: XI.73. Al-Balāḏurī includes a variation of the Hajar report (B) in which the Prophet sends a letter to Munḏir ibn Sāwā asking the people of Hajar to convert—and though the Arabs convert, the Magians and Jews refuse but end up paying the jizya; Futūḥ al-buldān, ed. de Goeje, 81.

Kitāb al-ḥarāj, ed. 1352/1934 Cairo, 67 and 128-29, wa-qad aḥaḍa rasūlu lāli l-jizyata min majūsī ahl hajari wa-t-majūsu ahlā širki wa-laysa bi-ahli kitābin wa-hā 'ulā i 'inda maīa l-‘ajami wa-lā tankah nissā‘ahum wa-lā ta‘kul ḍabbāḥahum wa-waḍa‘a‘ umaru bnu l-ḥattābi
category—not as *ahl al-kitāb* but still as *ahl al-dhimma*—is that the Prophet accepted the *jizya* from them but did not allow Muslims to marry their women or eat their slaughtered animals, as was permitted for Jews and Christians as *ahl al-kitāb*.

All of these reports (A, B, and C) are distributed fairly evenly in the range of Arabic texts listed above, beginning in the earliest sources (the *Muwatṭa‘* of Mālik ibn Anas and Abū Yūsuf’s *Kitāb al-Ḫarāj*). This demonstrates that several versions of these reports were circulating in the eighth century and continued to do so into the ninth century—and that the debate about the status of the Magians as *ahl al-kitāb* continued as well. Additionally, Abū Yūsuf also reports traditions going back to ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, who says that Magians are in fact people with a book (*ahlu kitābin*), and that this was the reason for Muḥammad accepting the *jizya* from them in the first place (= report D). This report is repeated by ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan‘ānī (d. 827), although the Yamanī traditionist clearly thinks the chain of transmission is suspect. Other versions of the ‘Alī tradition credit him with saying the following:

I of all people know them best: they are people with a book which they read and a doctrine which they study, but it was taken from their hearts.

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910 *Muṣannaf*, ed. al-A ḥsami, VI.70-71 (#10029).

By God, no one on earth today knows about this better than I do, that the Magians had a book which they know and a doctrine which they study.\footnote{387}

Thus, in the tradition of reports going back to ʿAlī (D) the Magians have merely lost their scriptures, but it does not mean that they never had them.\footnote{912}

Abū ʿUbayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām (d. 838), although he does not repeat the full reports of the ʿAlī tradition (D) in his Kitāb al-Amwāl, does refer to such traditions that credit ʿAlī with the statement that the Magians were a people with a book—but he explicitly says that these traditions do not actually go back to ʿAlī, in comparison to other more authentic traditions which go back to the Prophet Muḥammad (i.e., A, B, and C).\footnote{Abū ʿUbayd summarizes, “These are authentic reports about the Messenger of God and the imāms after him accepting the jizya from them (i.e., the Magians); then people started discussing the issue later.”\footnote{915} The author’s way of refuting the ʿAlī tradition is to assert instead that Muḥammad was “the most knowledgeable about this” (wa-huwa kāna ālā bi-ʿilmī dālika).

Thus, even if the traditions going back to ʿAlī are not to be trusted, several of the above authors—including Abū Yūsuf and Abū ʿUbayd—transmit the variation of the report (C2) whose isnād goes back to the fifth and sixth Šīʿī imāms al-Bāqir and al-Ṣādiq, in which it is ʿAbd al-Rahmān ibn ʿAwf who testifies to ʿUmar that the Prophet said about the Magians, “Treat them as you would People of the Book” (sunnū bihim sunnata ahli l-

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \footnote{387} ‘Abd al-Razzāq, Muṣannaf, #10029, ed. al-Aʿzamī, VI.70-71, wa-llāhi mā ʿalā l-arḍi l-yawma aḥadun ʿa lamu bi-dālika minnī inna l-majāsa kānū ahla kitābin ya rifulūhū wa-ʿilmin yadrusūhū.
\item \footnote{912} Other variations of this report include a longer narrative recited by ʿAlī which provides an aetiology for Magian kin-marriage and the loss of their scriptures as a result of this sin.
\item \footnote{914} Kitāb al-Amwāl, §86, ed Harrās, 46-48; also see §1706-1708, ed. Harrās, 724.
\item \footnote{915} ed. Harrās, 48 (§86); fa-qaḍ saḥḥati l-ahbāruʾ an rasūli llāhi ʿs-l- ʿs wa-l-aʾ immatu ba ʿdahū annahum gabilāhā minhum ʿumma takallama l-nāsu ba ʿdu fī amrihim. The full treatment of the Magians can be found on pp. 44-51 (§76-92); cf. translation of Nyazee 2002: 29-34, 498-99.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
This version of the report (C2) also appears in the Muwaffa’ of Mālik ibn Anas, as well as in al-Baladhurī’s Futūḥ al-buldān. Considering the Magians as ahl al-kitāb seems to have been a partisan issue: the ‘Alī reports (D) and several of the more favorable versions of report B are all transmitted by Ṣī‘ī authorities or transmitters (as discussed above).

Despite the skepticism of Abū ‘Ubayd and ‘Abd al-Razzāq to the ‘Alī tradition (D), and despite the absence of this tradition in the six canonical Sunni hadith compilations, there are passing references in other Arabic works which demonstrate that these reports still circulated in the tenth century. For example, al-Muṭahhar ibn Ṭāhir al-Maqdisī (ca. 966) reports (without an isnād) a transmission from ‘Alī in which he says that the Magians were people with a book, and furthermore that they had a prophet (fa-qāla kāna l-majūsu ahla kitābin wa-lahum nabīyun). The proliferation of both the ‘Alī tradition (D) and the two variants of the ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf tradition (the Tamīmī C1 and the Ṣī‘ī C2) shows that the Islamic perception of the Magian community was not static, but rather was influenced at different times by competing authorities within the Muslim community.

This is part of the broader social and political context in which Zoroastrian mōbeds negotiated their own status, as well as that of their community. Chapter 4’s survey of Arabic sources demonstrates the presence of the mōbed beside Muslim rulers and in

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918 ed. de Goeje, 267; trans. Ḥitti, I.424.
919 al-Bad’ wa-l-ta’rīḥ, ed. Huart, III.6, where ‘Alī stops in the middle of a story about the Companions of the Cave in order to make this comment: wa-rwu’ya ‘an ‘aliyyi bni abi ‘talibin r.d.h. ḡakara aṣḥāba l-kahfi fa-qāla kāna l-majūsu ahla kitābin wa-lahum nabīyun wa-sāqa l-qissatan; also see IV.158 in the same work for another passing reference by al-Maqdisī to al-majūs as ahl kitāb.
dialogue with Muslim intellectuals. The developing Islamic perception of the Magians as part of the *dhimma* was perhaps actively shaped by these *mōbeds* as part of Islamic society.
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1. Abbreviations:

The following list contain abbreviations for Journals, frequently cited primary sources, and other common abbreviations that appear in this dissertation. A full list of abbreviations for museum and excavated collections of Sasanian seals and bullae can be found in the Appendix 1 (Table 1).

AAM Andarz ī Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān (ZMP text)
AMŠ Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān ud Šāhān-šāh (ZMP text)
Ar. Arabic
Arm. Armenian
Av. Avestan
AWN Ardā Wirāz Nāmag (ZMP text)
Bd. Bundahišn (ZMP text)
BSOAS Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies
Dēn. Dēnkard (ZMP text)
DkM Dēnkard, Madan edition
EI Encyclopedia of Islam, 2nd edition
EI Encyclopedia of Islam, 3rd edition
Elr Encyclopaedia Iranica
FīP Frahang ī Pahlawīg
GA Gizistag Abāliš (ZMP text)
Geo. Georgian
Gr. Greek
JAOS Journal of the American Oriental Society

Lat. Latin

*MHD* Mādayān ī Hazār Dādestān (ZMP text)

*MP* Middle Persian

*OP* Old Persian

*Pahl.Riv.DD* Pahlavi Rivāyat accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg (ZMP text)

*PMA* Persian Martyr Acts


*RAF* Rivāyat ī Ādurfarbay ī Farroxzdān (ZMP text)

*REA* Rivāyat ī Ėmēd ī Ašawahištān (ZMP text)

*RFW* Rivāyat ī Farrbay-Srōš ī Wahrāmān (ZMP text)

*ŠGW* Škand Gum Zand ī fragard ī jud-dēw-dādānīg Wizār (ZMP / Pāzand text)

*ŠnŠ* Šāyest nē Šāyest (ZMP text)

*Supp.ŠnŠ* Supplementary Texts to the Šāyest nē Šāyest (ZMP text)

*Syr.* Syriac

*WEA* Wāzag ī āwčand ī Ādurbdād ī Mahrspandān (ZMP text)

*ZFJ* Zand ī fragard ī jud-dēw-dād (ZMP text)

*ZMP* Zoroastrian Middle Persian

*ZWY* Zand ī Wahmān Yasn (ZMP text)

2. Primary Sources:

2.1. Armenian and Georgian:

*Life of Yazd-bōzēd* (Armenian)

*Life of Evstat’i* (Georgian)

*Life of Vaxtang* (Georgian)
2.2. Syriac:

_Chronicle of Arbela (Chr.Arbela)_


*Life of Giwargis = Histoire 416-571.*


*Life of Mār Abā = Histoire 206-74; Jullien I.1-41.*

*Life of Yazd-Panāh = Histoire 394-415; Jullien I.73-87.*

_Pethion Cycle = AMS II.559-631._


2.3. Middle Persian:

Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān ud Šāhān-šāh (_AMS_)


Andarz ī Ādurbād ī Mahrspandān (_AAM = PT 12_)


Ardā Wirāz Nāmag (_AWN_)


_Bundahišn (Bd)_


**Dādestān ī Dēnīg (DD)**


**Dēnkard (Dēn.)**


**Gizistag Abāliš (GA)**


**Hērbedestān (Hēr.)**


**Kārnāmag ī Ardaxšīr (KA)**


**Mādayān ī Hazār Dādestān (MHD)**


*Nāmagīhā ī Manuščihr (NM)*


*Pahlavi Rivāyat accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg*


*Pahlavi Yasna*


*Rivāyat ī Ādurfārbāy ī Farroxzādān (RAF)*


*Rivāyat ī Ėmēd ī Ašawahištān (REA)*


*Rivāyat ī Farrbay-Srūš ī Wahrāmān (RFW)*


*Šahrestān ī Ērānšahr (ŠĒ)*


*Šāyest nē Šāyest (ŠnŠ)*


*Škand Gumānīk Wičār (ŠGW) — Pāzand (MP written in Avestan script)*


*Supplementary Texts to the Šāyest nē Šāyest (Supp.ŠnŠ)*

*Sūr Saxwan*


*Wāzāg ī Dwēnd i Ādurbād ī Mahrs pandān (WEA = PT 33)*


*Zand ī Wahman Yasn (ZWY)*


2.4. Arabic

‘Abd al-Jabbar (ca. 995) *Taḥbīt dalāʾ il al-nubuwwa*


Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih al-Andalusī (d. 940), al-*lqd al-fārid*


Ibn al-Aṯīr (d. 1233), *al-Kāmil fi l-taʾrīḫ*


Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī (d. 991-2), *ʿUyūn al-āḥbār al-Riḍā*


al-Balāḏurī, Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā (d. 892), *Futūḥ al-buldān*


al-Bayhaqī (ca. 930s), *al-Mahāsin wa-l-masāwiʾ*


al-Birūnī (d. after 1050), *al-.origins wa-l-masāwiʾ*


———. *Taḥqīq mā li-l-Hind (Ta’riḥ al-Hind)*


Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī (d. 971), *Taʾrīḫ sinī mulūk al-ḍawla wa-l-anbiyāʾ (Taʾrīḫ al-Islām wa-wafāyāt al-ṣaḥāḥ wa-l-ʿaʾlām)*

Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 855), *Musnad* ed. 1313. 6 vols. Cairo.


al-Iṣṭahīrī (d. after 952), Abū Ishāq al-Fārisī, *Masālik wa-l-mamālik*
al-Jāḥiz (d. 868) *Kitāb al-Ḫayawān*
———, *Rasāʾil*
(pseudo-) al-Jāḥiz (ca. 840), *Kitāb al-tāj fī aḫlāq al-mulūk*
al-Masūdī (d. 956), *Murūj al-dīnār*
———, *Kitāb al-Tanbīḥ w-al-išrāf*
al-Maqqūdisī (ca. 966), *al-Muṭahhar ibn Ṭāhir, Badʾ wa-l-taʾrīḵ*
Miskawayh (d. 1030), *al-Ḫīkma al-ḫalīda*
———, *Ṭajārib al-umam (for the Šīrat Anūširwān)*
Ibn al-Nadim (d. 990), *Fihrist*
al-Nawawī, Abū Zakariyyā (d. 1277), *Šarḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*
al-Qazwīnī (d. 1283), *Āʿār al-bilād wa-ḥbār al-ʿibād*
Ibn Qutayba al-Dinawarî (d. 889), *ʿUyūn al-aḥbār*
al-Râğib al-Isfahânî (d. 1108), *Muḥâdarât al-udabâʾ wa-muhâwarât al-ṣuʿarâʾ wa-l-bulaḡâ*
al-Rayhânî, ʿAlî ibn ʿUbayda (d. 834), *Jawâhir al-kilâm wa-farâʾid al-ḥikam*
al-Rûdâwarî, Abû Šujâʿ (d. 1095), *Ḏayl tawâris al-umâm*
Ibn Sayd (d. 845), *Ṭabâqât al-kabîr*
al-Šahrastânî, Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Karîm (d. 1153), *Kitâb al-milal wa-l- niḥâl*
al-Ṭabarî, Abû Jaʿfar Muḥammad (d. 923), *Ṭabarî* (Taʾrīḫ al-rûsūl wa-l-mulûk)
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al-Thâlibî (ca. 1022), *Ḡurar mulûk al-Fârs wa-siyârihim*
al-Tirmîdî, Abû ʿIsâ (d. 892), *Jamiʿ al-ṣaḥîḥ*
Abû ʿUbayd al-Qâsim ibn Sallâm, (d. 838), *Kitâb al-āmmâl*

al-Yaʿqūbī (d. ca. 910), Ibn Wādīḥ, *Kitāb al-buldān*


Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (d. 1229), *Muṣjam al-buldān*


———, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*


Abū Yūsuf (d. 798), *Kitāb al-ḵarāj*


2.5. New Persian

Balʿamī (d. 997), Abū ‘Alī Muḥammad, *Tārīḵ*


al-Ḡazālī (d. 1111), *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk / al-Tibr al-masbūk*


Ibn Isfandiyār (d. 1216), *Ṭārīḵ-e Ṭabarastān*


———, *Letter of Tansar*


Nizām al-Mulk (d. 1092), *Siyaṣat-nāma / Siyar al-mulūk*

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