A Pahlavi Poem
By W. B. Henning

The study of the Pahlavi poetry, so spiritedly initiated by M. Benveniste, twenty years ago, seems to have come to a dead end. That certain Pahlavi texts, as the Ayādgār-ī Zarērān or the Druxt-ī Asūrīg (the Dispute of the date-palm with the goat), are poems, is conceded on all sides; but the formal problems, the problems of rhythm, metre, and rhyme, remain in the dark. It seems doubtful whether the material at hand is capable of leading us to definite conclusions. There are two main obstacles. Firstly, the notorious sloppiness of the copyists leaves too much room for conjecture; the mere addition or omission, at the editors’ discretion, of the word for “and” and the harf-ī ẓōftet is sufficient to disturb the rhythmical balance. Secondly, as a rule we do not know the dates of composition, and therefore cannot tell how the words were pronounced by the authors; it makes a considerable difference to the metre (whatever it was) whether we put down paṣāk or paig, mazdayasn or mazdēn, rōsn or rōshan, aḵak or aig, šikanj or škanj, giyān or gyān, yazat or yazd, awiš or ʾōš, dūyjist or dūist or durust, haçaḏar or azēr.

One thing is clear: a biased approach will not lead to convincing results. On the strength of the preconceived notion, carried forward from the study of the Avesta (where matters are equally dubious), that the metre is a purely syllabic one, the Pahlavi poems were made to suffer a great deal of emendation; where the usual procedure of omitting inconvenient words produced lines too short to fit into the scheme, either words were added or their pronunciation distorted. The alternative theory, namely that the metre is accentual, seems to offer better prospects. It relieves us of the necessity of changing the texts overmuch; the number of syllables to a line can be left as variable as it is; and the precise pronunciation, rōsn or rōsan, becomes a matter almost of indifference.

Clear evidence in favour of the accentual verse can be found in the very text that formed the starting-point of M. Benveniste’s investigations, the Druxt-ī Asūrīg. The whole of this poem, which is less encumbered with glosses than most other Pahlavi texts, is written in fairly long lines, of twelve syllables on an average, with a caesura in the middle. There is a recurring formula, which fills the first half of lines, x. až man kārēnd “they make x. out of me”. The first word can be one of one, two, or three syllables, so that the first half of a line can have five, six, or seven syllables. Does this not indicate that the metrical
value of a word is wholly independent of its number of syllables? The second half of the lines are not in any way affected by the greater or lesser length of the first halves:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Sentence</th>
<th>Syllable Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>čōb až man karēnd</td>
<td>ke to grīw māzēnd 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>rasan až man karēnd</td>
<td>ke to pāy bandend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>ambān až man karēnd</td>
<td>wāżārgānān wasnād 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>kamar až man karēnd</td>
<td>kē āznāyēnd 4 pad murwārid 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>gyāgrōb až man karēnd</td>
<td>kē wīrāzhēnd mēhan ud mān</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>tabangōk až man karēnd</td>
<td>dārūgdān wasnād</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>maškīzāg 8 až man karēnd</td>
<td>kē sūr abar wīrāzhēnd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is not intended to give a full transcription of the Draxt-i Asūrīg here, a text that bristles with difficulties. A few connected passages, selected at random, will be sufficient to show that the impression produced by the few lines quoted above out of context is not misleading.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Sentence</th>
<th>Syllable Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>draxt-ē rust est</td>
<td>tar ō šahr asūrīg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bun-aš huš est</td>
<td>sar-aš est tarr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>varg-aš nas mānəd</td>
<td>bar-aš mānəd angūr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>širēn bār āwarēd</td>
<td>mardōhmān wasnād 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>tabistān sāyag hēm</td>
<td>pad sar šahrdārān</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>šir 8 hēm varzīgārān</td>
<td>angubēn āzādmārdān.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 The old word for “neck” still persists in modern dialects, e.g., that of Sangisar (Zhukovskyi ii, 314). One does not see why it should be changed to gardan (Unvala, BSOS., ii, 645, followed by Benveniste, J.A., 1930, ii, 194).

2 māz- is apparently a dialect word, from mārz-, in the sense of Persian mālīdan, to which it belongs by etymology; another example of the loss of -r- in this position is Persian māze, māzū “spine”, from mārzu- “the place of the vertebrae” (derived from Av. mārsu- “vertebra”, cf. JRAS., 1942, 242). I do not think that there is any talk of “kissing” in this line (as Mr. Unvala suspected, loc. cit.).

3 This Parthian word is common throughout the text (= MPers. rāy). Failure to recognize it has produced some interesting misunderstandings, cf. Benveniste, p. 200.

4 Probably belongs to Persian azīdan/āzādan (the forms are not clear); cf. ču dībā ba-zarr āzade (āzade) in the Shahaname.

5 Although many forms and words are Parthian (or Median), many others belong to the Southern dialect. The confusion reminds one of that familiar from the later Pahlawiyyat; how much it belonged already to the original text is not by any means clear. It would be easy enough to harmonize.

6 “A leather cloth (a sufre) on which they serve the dinner.”

7 This is cast in the form of a riddle. The reader or listener is left to guess, from the description, that the date-palm is meant. “Its leaves resemble the (leaves of) reeds”—in shape, of course, not in taste (as Bartholomae said, Mir. Mund., iv, 24). That the last two words belong to this paragraph is shown by para. 28 (see below).

8 Junker has two ideograms for šakar “sugar” in the Frahang, both of them due to misunderstanding. “HLY” is sometimes = HL′ = šīr “milk” vii 4 (LBw) also occurs, see p. 67, n. 20, sometimes = HLI (i.e. hali) = sik “vinegar” v 2 where the correct word is relegated to the variants (sik and sirke); in Pahl. Texts 30, 6 = Huvar ud Rēdak 31, “HLY” i trūš is “astringent vinegar” = Arab. zill thiqīf (Tha’alibi). The other series, v 2 = xxxi 2-3, contains the Semitic word for “beer” (or date-wine). Aram. šīrā, etc. The Persian words are hur and another that I cannot read (if occurs in the Kārnāmag vii 8 “As they had no wine, they offered him beer”).
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>tabangog až man karēnd</td>
<td>dārōgdān wasnād</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>šahr o šahr barēnd</td>
<td>bīşīšk o bīşīšk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>āšyān hēm murvīžagan</td>
<td>săyag kārdāḡān.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>āstāy bē abaganēm</td>
<td>pad nōyg būm rōyēd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>kad hirzēnd marudmag</td>
<td>kum bē nē wināsēnd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>bašn-um est(?) zargōn</td>
<td>yad o rõz yāvēd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>hawīz marudmag</td>
<td>kēš nēst may u dānā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>až man bār xʷarēnd</td>
<td>yad amburd ōštēnd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 + 5 = 10</td>
<td>5 + 5 = 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>vāžēnd-um pad afsān</td>
<td>pāršīg marūdōm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>ku vāš a'ī ud wad-zrad</td>
<td>abē-sūd drāztān</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>yad tē bār āvarē</td>
<td>mardōhmān wasnād</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>gušn-at abar hirzēnd</td>
<td>pad ēwēn ē ēgāwān</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>xʷad gumānūg ahēm</td>
<td>ku rūspīg-zādak a'ī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 + 4 = 10</td>
<td>7 + 5 = 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>abēzāg Dēn Māzdēsnān</td>
<td>čē čāšt xʷēbar Ūhrmazd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>yud až man kē buz hēm</td>
<td>yaštān nē šahēd keč</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>čē jīw až man karēnd</td>
<td>andar yazišn yazdān—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gōš-urva, yazd</td>
<td>harvīn čahārpāyān,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>hawīz Hōm tagīg—</td>
<td>nērog až man est.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7 + 6 = 13</td>
<td>6 + 6 = 12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 dārōgdān wasnād would make better sense.
2 "Migrants" or "tramps".
3 "Date-stones."
4 "If the people leave (the young shoot) alone, so that they refrain from hurting me, my crown will be green till the end of the days."
5 The identical, wholly Parthian, phrase recurs in the Ayēdgar-i Zarērān para. 93 (p. 13, line 5). Parth. yad is found several times in the text under review. The explanation given in BSOAS, xii, 52, cannot be fully maintained in view of the ideogram HN = yad in the Parthian inscriptions, see ibid. 54, 66. The ideogram is ḫa = "if", which corresponds best to OIr. yad; several interrelated forms may have coalesced in yad. [Cf. even in the colophon to the Book of Zarēr, P.T., 165b, yadē rōz fraškerz.]
6 "Until they have had their fill.” Instead of ʾōš- one could also read awiš-, more closely conforming to Man. Parthian ʾwyšt-.
7 "HT," if not simply a mistake for yt, is presumably the ideogram for that same word. If the Pahlavi HT (already in inscriptions) is an ancient mistake for HN = hēn, it may have been used in this text to represent the Parthian ideogram HN = hēn = yad. Cf. above. At any rate, it does not correspond to ʾag "if", to judge by para. 25, HT 'L 'YK = yadē kū.
8 The Parthian form is preferable on account of para. 19 (see above), where hirz- seems better than arz-. Perhaps one should replace all ideograms by strictly Parthian or Median forms; I fear I have not been sufficiently consistent.
9 Here the full Parthian form is spelled out, not too correctly. In the same line the apparent ʾyē represents aṣi or a'ī "you are", Parthian ʾyy. So also in para. 53, ū kwest a'ī ēdar "you are affixed here" (you are stuck here).
10 "Until you can bear fruit for men, they have to lead a male to you, as they do with cattle. I would even go so far as to suspect that you were born out of wedlock.”
11 = which.
12 Uncertain. Kyē may be = Parthian kyē, which equals Persian kas. On the other hand, the rhythm (cf. kardin nē šahēd at the end of lines) may favour the explanation proposed by Bartholomae, loc. cit., 26, line 5.
33 havīz 1 bār-yāmag 2 yud az man ke buz hēm  
çe 3 pad pušt dārēm kardan nē šahēd.  
5 + 5 = 10  
6 + 5 = 11

35 mōzag hēm saxtag 4 
angustbān husūrōgaš šāh hāmhrizān. 5  
6 + 4 = 10

36 mašk-um karēnd ābdān 
pad garm rōz ud rabīn 6 
pad dašt ud vīyābān sard āb az man est.  
6 + 5 = 11

39 nāmag až man karēnd 
daftar ud pādaxšīr frawardag dībivān 7 
abar man nibēšēnd  
6 + 6 = 12

42 ambān až man karēnd 
kē nān ud pušt 8 ud panīr harwīn 9 (?) rōyn-xwārdīg 10 
kāpūr ud mušk sīyā(u) ud xaz 11 tuxārīg 
was yāmag šāhvār padmōzan kanīgān 5 + 6 = 11  
pad ambān āwarēnd frāz 9ō sahr čē Ėrān  
6 + 6 = 12

49 kad buz ō wāzār barēnd 
harv kē dah drahm nē dārēd 
ud pad wāhāg dārēnd frāz ō buz nē āsēd 13 ;  
7 + 6 = 13

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1 Doubtful. MSS. 'Le.
2 " Satchel ", = Persian bārjamē.
3 = which.
4 " Of morocco leather ", saxtag belongs to Pers. saštiyān ; cf. also the Sogdian form mentioned in BSOAS., xi, 714, n. 6.
5 " The archer's thumb-stall [not 'gloves'] for the illustrious companions of the king."
7 Or dīwān (not, of course, to be read dābīrān), the ancestor of Persian dīwān. Originally dipi + pāna, hence "where one keeps and looks after the documents, writings, etc.". The word was early shortened to dēwān (by dīwevān). In this form it is attested (apart from Arm. dīvan) as the name of one of Mani's books, his Epistles. Each epistle was called a dyb = dīb in Middle Persian, e.g. Muhr Dīb "the Epistle of the Seal "; the whole collection was a dipi-pāna. Surely the oldest example of the use of this word for the collection of a man's writings. 
8 Var. pīst. Both pronunciations existed also in Persian.
10 Rōyn-xwārdīg, literally "butter-food", means "sweetmeats" in Pahlavi. The "Southern" form rōvān-xwārdīg in the Hūrav ud Rēdag, para. 37, corresponds to hālāvī in the Arabic version. In spite of the help afforded by Tha'alibi, Mr. Unvala misunderstood the word as "side-dish". — The Man. MPers. form is ruwmu, see BSOAS., xi, 57, n. 56.—Possibly the line ran originally rōyn ud rōyn-xwārdīg.
11 " Tokharian marten-furs " ? Ḥz = xaz occurs in the list of fur-animals in Gr.Bd., 9612. — Or should one read mušk sīyā(u) [če] buz tuxārīg "black musk [of] the 'Tokharian' goat" (=Musk deer ?) ?—Neither xaz nor mušk are articles usually associated with the name of Tokharistān/Balkh.
12 Frē is used in Man. Parthian, but in the Parthian inscriptions there is prōš instead, e.g. HN prōš 'L = yad frāzē bā. This curious form represents the ancient nominative, i.e. frānēz = Av. frās = Skt. prāś, with loss of the nasal; it shows that Bartholomae's rule, Grdr. Ir. Phil., i, 1, p. 11, § 24, is not correctly formulated.
13 Thus rather than āsēd.
It is not claimed that the mere statement that this is accentual poetry relieves us of the need for further investigation. On the contrary, a great deal of work will be required in order to discover the accented syllables, their place within the lines, and other questions of detail. For example, it seems that the limits of variation in the number of syllables are precisely set. The differences between the maximum and the average, and between the minimum and the average are apparently equal. Thus, in the Draqt-i Asūrig the average number of syllables to a line is 12; the maximum is 14, the minimum 10 (with a single exception, in para. 1, which is sufficient to render the text suspect); the variation therefore is 2. In the Manichean Middle Persian hymn analysed in Trans. Phil. Soc., 1944, 56, the average number is also 12, but the variation is 3 (max. 15, min. 9). There are thus subtle differences in the structure of the verses which should be further explored. In the fragment published by Schaedler, Studien, 290 sq. (alphabetic hymn, end of 'Ain to Tau with tailpiece) the average is 11, the variation 2:—

\[ \text{wād anōšag "xašbūy} \quad x + 6 \\
\text{parwarzēd au bagān} \quad \text{ad zamīg ud draxtān.} \quad 6 + 6 = 12 \\
\text{časmag rōšnīn} \quad \text{dālūgān āfrīdāgān.} \quad 4 + 7 = 11 \\
\text{kōfān nāsāg} \quad \text{wyāwarāg ud bagčīhr.} \quad 4 + 6 = 10 \\
\text{radnīn ārām} \quad \text{uspardwāwend} \quad 5 \text{ wyāg.} \quad 4 + 5 = 9 \\
\text{šahrān anāsāg} \quad \text{mān mān ud gāh gāh.} \quad 5 + 5 = 10 \\
\text{Tau sažēd argāwīst} \quad \text{šahrdārān māsišt} \quad 6 + 5 = 11 \\
\text{namāz ud astawīsn} \quad \text{au Mār-Mānī "xašnām.} \quad 6 + 6 = 12 \\
\text{āfrīd āfrīd} \quad \text{pad nawāg} \text{ī} \text{ rōz wuzzarg} \quad 4 + 6 = 10 \\
\text{au Mār-Zāqō amōzāg} \quad \text{ad hamag ram} \text{ī} \text{ rōšnīn.} \quad 7 + 6 = 13 \\
\text{Average} \quad 5 \cdot 1 + 5 \cdot 8 = 10 \cdot 9 \]

The following verses seem to confirm the rule; here the average number of syllables is 9·5, the variation 2·5 (max. 12, min. 7). They belong to a Parthian "alphabetic" hymn, of which the strophes B—Z and T—N are preserved in

1 It is strange that all students of this text, even Bartholomae (loc. cit., 27), have stumbled over the perfectly ordinary ideogram for "date".—Amraw is the appropriate Parthian form (Man. 'mrw, against Arm. armav); however, at the end of the text, para. 54, xurmā is written in clear (helm'y, "hwlm'k").

2 The goat predicts that the hopes which the date-palm put on its seeds (in para. 19, see above) will come to nought. Hence, "may your pipe and stones end up in (lit. go forward to) the alley of the dead"? I feel rather uncertain of the reading of the last two words, kōy mūrdān; may one compare the Persian phrase kūče-yi xāmūlān "cemetery"? At any rate, Mr. Unvala's version has little to commend itself, "Wounded to the life thou wilt be destroyed exterminated by the spiritual leaders"?

3 The first word remains uncertain.

4 So, of course.

5 "The rest-house of the Jewels is a flowery place."

6 "On the great New Year's day."

7 So to be read.
full. Each strophe has two long lines; the subdivisions are not marked in the MS., but there is scarcely any uncertainty on that account. From M 763, hitherto unpublished:

1 Brādārān amvästān  ud wahigārān  6 + 5 = 11  Whole 23
   wižiḍagān  viččagān  ud āzād  puhrān  7 + 5 = 12
   2 Gvānān rōšnān  wižiḍagīšt argāw  4 + 6 = 10  strophe.
   frōḥīšt stūnān  ud bām frazenādān  5 + 5 = 10  20
3 Dārēd abrang  pad bag  abdēs  4 + 4 = 8  18
   ku bauwēd  aspur  kalān abēnān  5 + 5 = 10
4 Harvēn handān  padrāšt  dārēd  4 + 4 = 8  18
   pad stāvīshn  ō arvājan  rāmīshn  4 + 6 = 10
5 Wēxt  ud  wižid  hēd  až  madyān  wasān  5 + 5 = 10  21
   ēv až  hazārān  ud  dō  až  bèwarān  5 + 6 = 11
6 Zādag  hēd  čē  žīrīšt  abarēn  3 + 6 = 9  18
   ud  noxzādān  čē  rōg  aspurīg  4 + 5 = 9
7 Tābēd  rōšnīft  frōḥīšt  anōsag  4 + 5 = 9  19
   dahēd  bāvag  au  warzīgar  "xēbē  4 + 6 = 10
8 Yudēd  pad  abrang  pad  im  dōšambat  5 + 5 = 10  20
   rōg  āfrīdag  čē  abē-āstārīšt  4 + 6 = 10
9 Kīč  kīč  až  ēsīmāh  pad  "xūstwānīšt  5 + 4 = 9  18
   padvahēd  wandēd  ud  āfrīned  5 + 4 = 9
10 Lāb  ud  nimastīg  2  barēd  ēbūdān  5 + 5 = 10  20
   hirzēd  āstār  andāsēd gowindag  3  4 + 6 = 10
11 Mēhmān  rōsn  mardōhm  paštāg  3 + 4 = 7  15
   pad  rāmīshn  au  angūn  žāmēd  3 + 5 = 8
12 Nīwarēd  4  sśkīft  pad  trixt  čāsābēd  5 + 5 = 10  18
   ud  andēsēd  pad  žafir  žīrīšt  4 + 4 = 8

Average  4·5 + 5 = 9·5  19

To turn now to the thorny question of the rhyme, I will say straightway that in the whole of the Western Middle Iranian material so far recognized as poetical there is not a single rhyme in the strict sense. There are accidental

1 "Selected by sifting", Pers. bāzti. Cf. below str. 5. In MPers. žwyzm occurs (same meaning).
2 This transcription of nmstg is indicated by Parth. inscr. nymstyk (Inscr. of Shapur, line 4, cf. also Sprengling, AJSSL., Iviii, 169 sqq.), which is rendered by παράκλησις in the Greek version, i.e. "appeal, request". This meaning fits the Manichean texts far better than "adoration". Both spelling and meaning are at variance with the derivation from OIr. namah-, which has to be abandoned.
3 Here spelled gwndg, but elsewhere gwng. "Failings, offences."
4 nmyr (ni + var.).
5 I do not regard as a poem the passage from the Great Bundahis (p. 10) to which M. Nyberg has given such prominence (ZDMG., lxixii, 222 sqq.). The wording indicates clearly that the passage is merely a Pahlavi version of an Avestan text (quite possibly of an Avestan poem).
rhymes and assonances; but the principle of the rhyme as such, the deliberate rhyme, seems to have been unknown. The passages quoted above, from Pahlavi and Parthian, show that sufficiently. Especially as the answer to the question has some importance for the history of Persian literature, we should be careful to confine the use of the word to cases in which rhyme was consciously applied as a poetic embellishment.

Yet even the most cautious will not be able to deny the presence of conscious rhyme in a Pahlavi poem that to the present has remained unnoticed. It forms part of one of the Andarz texts in Jamasp-Asana’s Pahlavi Texts, the so-called Pahlavi Shahnmae, to which the other poetical Pahlavi books belong. The passage (p. 54) is conspicuous by its curious, plainly poetic, diction. Its text is in a sad condition: words have been left out, there are a few glosses, some lines may be missing altogether; nevertheless, its poetic character is beyond doubt. The rhyme goes through the whole poem, in the manner of a Qaṣīde; indeed, there is interior rhyme in the maṭla’. It seems that, apart from the opening line, two lines always made up a strophe; the first line of each strophe ended in andar gēhān (to gain such regularity one has to assume that a whole line has been allowed to drop out). There are several uncertain points in the text printed here:—

0 Dārom andarz-ē az dānāgān
1 Ō ūmāh bē wizārom
agar [ēn az mān] padīrēd
2 Pad gēṭī vistāzwa ma bēd
čē gēṭī pad kā bē nē hīst-hēnd
3 [one line missing ?]
śādīh-ī pad dīl čē xandōd
ud čē nāzd gēṭiyān
4 Čand mardomān dīd-hom
Čand xādāyān 4 dīd-hom
was-[ārzōg ?] andar gēhān
mīh-sardārīh abar mardomān
5 Awēsān mīh wēšt-mēnīdār
awēsān abērāh 5 sud-hēnd
bē раft-hēnd andar gēhān 4
abāğ dard bē раft-hēnd asāmān 6
6 Harv ke čūn ēn dīd—čē rāy
ka nē dārēd gēṭī pad spanj 7
ud [nē] tan pad āsān

1 M. Benveniste quoted two passages to prove the existence of rhyme in Man. Parthian (J.A., 1930, ii, 223). In the first, the words at the end of the lines should be read (a) framanyg, (b) abēstaft, (c) wīlāstīft, (d) mānag. In the second, we have (a) wasmād, (b) sētād, (c) mardōhmān, (d) pādāq; ‘ṣ[‘d]’ in the place of ‘ṣ[‘d]’, is wrongly restored (the next word is [mβy]’n). There are no strophes in the second passage, which is an “alphabetical” hymn. Far better accidental rhymes can be found in most Parthian poems.

2 The words I have added are in square brackets.

3 A gloss: spāḥōsdān “generals”.

4 Another gloss: ku amāh mihītā hēm andar gēhān “thinking we are the greatest in the world”. Presumably to explain wēšt-mēnīdār.

5 MSS. ‘pl’s (= ʿfrāh) instead of ‘pyl’s.

6 A variant: āsamān (which also would make sense of a sort). I prefer the rarer word, a-sāmān, which here, in conjunction with abē-rah, probably had the meaning of Pers. bīnā mān.

I have a counsel from the Wise, from the sayings of the Ancient.

To you I will explain it, truthfully, in the world; if you accept [it from me], you will have profit for both worlds:—

Do not put your trust in earthly goods, desiring much, in the world; for earthly goods have never been left in anyone’s hands, neither a palace, [nor] house and hearth.

Joy in the heart? Why laugh and be proud, worldlings?

How many men have I seen, [desiring] much, in the world! How many princes have I seen, lording it over mankind!

Grandly, in overweening pride, they strode in the world—they have gone where there is no way, in pain they went, poor and homeless.

Anyone, when he has seen that—what use if he remains pledged\(^1\) to the world? if he fails to consider the earthly existence an inn, the body a facile thing?

The poem raises a number of important problems; their discussion has to be held over to another occasion. Is this an ancient poem, or merely an imitation of Persian models? Can its date be determined?\(^2\) The sentiment, the distrust of the world, seems appropriate to all periods of Persian and Middle Persian literature; it would have been appropriate to the time of Burzōi. The rhythm would perhaps improve, if one put more modern forms into the text, in the place of the conventional heavy-vowelled Middle Persian forms (e.g. in 2b ē ḍēt pa kās be-n’-hīstand).

\(^1\) Or “self-abandoned”. The word had both meanings. Cf. the passages collected by M. F. Kanga, The Testament of Khusraw I, p. 3, n. 4 (add Pahl. Texts, 143, 5).

\(^2\) The terminus ante quem is a.d. 956 (if the figure—324—in the first colophon, P.T., 83, deserves to be trusted).