

The Late Sasanian Economic Impact on the Arabian Peninsula

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Could the economic expansion during early Islamic times have originated in a late Sasanian interaction with Arabia? Scattered literary references and archaeological data seem to suggest a Sasanian association with the development of mining in Arabia, of agriculture in 'Umān, and of the leather and cloth industry in Yaman towards the end of the sixth century. This would have been a matter of expanding production, and, if substantiated, would undermine the view that the only important consequence (and perhaps purpose) of the Sasanian occupation of Yaman (and other parts of the Arabian littoral) was to control Indian Ocean commerce.¹ It is possible to argue that the late Sasanian occupation of Bahrayn, 'Umān, and Yaman had both strategic and economic objectives and results and that the latter had as much to do with the exploitation of resources and the development of production as it did with commerce. Since Persian immigrants appear to have been involved in at least some of this development there is also the possibility that economic expansion under the Sasanians in Arabia developed as a colonial economy.

The background, and perhaps condition, for Sasanian economic activity in Arabia lay in the direct Persian government and military occupation of regions along about two-thirds of the Arabian coastline by the late sixth century. It was probably natural

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The number twelve is also found in the twelve signs of the zodiac, twelve doors of the sun and moon, twelve hours, etc.

On the eschatological analysis, at the end of the world there will be a collective return of the light that has remained in the material world, together with the twelve main gods and their emanations and members who are dwelling in the New Paradise. The remaining saved light of the material world takes place in the shape of the last god (Estumēn yazd) who with the main gods and angels of the three creations ascend to their original homeland, the Unique Realm of Light, to join the Unique God. So the precosmic unity which was pluralized and emanated in a number of divinities during the cosmic period, for the sake of the salvation of light, comes back to its eternal Unity.

I conclude this paper with my assumption that numbers are the main instruments imagined by Mani to help the material creation to explain the phenomena of mixture and the process of the salvation. In other words, numbers are the practical instruments with which the monumental mythology of Mani is built.

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creates time in order to save the light of the macrocosm. He is endowed with **Patience**⁴¹ and is helped in this duty by his feminine counterpart, the Maiden of Light.

9. The Maiden of Light⁴² symbolizes **Kindness**.⁴³ It is through her joined action with the Third Envoy that the dark powers enchained in the sky deliver their light, and plants, animals and the human soul appear on earth.

10. The saved light from the material world ascends by the Column of Glory⁴⁴ who symbolizes **Righteousness**.⁴⁵

Two gods are especially in charge of the redemption of the human soul. They are endowed with reason and called "Xradešahryazd": the god of the kingdom of reason.

11. The first is **Jesus the Splendor**⁴⁶ symbolizing the **Grace**⁴⁷ of his Father-god. He is in charge of saving the soul of the first human being: Adam. He is probably also the **Final Judge**,⁴⁸ who is in charge of the last judgement.

12. The second is the **Light-Nous**,⁴⁹ the essence of Light, man's thinking mind that is his reason. He is in charge of the salvation of the individual human soul. He acts as a conscience of man and with his Five Virtues shows the right path to the human soul.

In some texts, the twelve attributes represent the pre-existent conception of the twelve Maidens of Light (or Virgins of Light).⁵⁰ It seems that the Twelve Sons of the Father in the precosmic paradise have been mirrored in a feminine equivalent in the twelve Virgins of Light in the cosmic creation.

41. Patience / Tolerance: MP. *burdth*; Pth. *burdift*, *dragmauft*; Sgd. *βurtarmikyāk*.

42. The Maiden of Light / Virgin of Light: MP. *kanig rōā*, *saḏwēs* (Boyce, 1975, 98, 20); Pth. *srīgarkārb cīhr yazdān* (Sundermann, 1997, 102); Sgd. *kanig rōān*, (*rošnā*) *βaypuroc*, *waxā* i *Zurwan*.

43. Kindness / goodness / mildness: MP. *xubth*; Pth. *hubasagift*; Sgd. *šumantiyāk* / *vopt* / *xupyā*.

The Maiden of Light is sometimes qualified with Harmony.

44. The Column of Glory: MP. *srōš šhray*, *kūšwarwār yazd*, *ahar ahrām yazd*; Pth. *bāmistan*; Sgd. *bāmistan*, *šwkaršoc*, *srōš art βoyi*.

This god is compared to a Column and also sometimes to a living tree (Klimkeit, 1993, 80).

45. Righteousness / Rectitude: MP. *ardāyth*; Pth. *razwartift* (Boyce, 1975, 132); Sgd. *razkaryāk* (Sundermann, 1981, 50).

46. Jesus the Splendor: MP. *yišo' ispistān*, *xradelahr yazd*, *mirdān pusar*; Pth. *yašo' ztwa(h)*; Sgd. *'rōyp'y βoyi*.

47. Grace / Thankfulness: MP. *ilnoheth* (*gratitude*); Pth. *kirtagift*; Sgd. *šrakartyāk*.

48. The Final Judge: Pth. *dādbar rōštagar*; Sgd. *rasti-xtā*.

49. See note 19.

50. The twelve Virgins of Light: MP. *kanigān rōšnān*; Sgd. *βaypuroc*

makes the three emanations and protects his realm from the assault of the darkness.

2. With her **Wisdom**,³² the Mother of Life emanates her son, the Primal Man, and prepares and encourages him to fight the power of evil. She also helps the Living Spirit to the material world.

3. The Primal Man is the hero-god of the Light kingdom, the warrior who in the fight with darkness sacrifices himself for the sake of the **Victory**³³ of the Light and for the final redemption of the light world. He realises with his action the salvation of the light that is why his virtue in Parthian is **buxtagift**.

4. In the same way, his Five Sons, the Five Light Elements accept their captivity with **Contentment**.³⁴

5. The Friend of Lights,³⁵ endowed with **Zeal**,³⁶ accepts to go to the enemy camp to help the captives, and shows the way to the Primal Man.

6. The Great Builder,³⁷ endowed with **Truthfulness**,³⁸ starts to build the New Paradise.

7. The Living Spirit is the powerful god who with **Faithfulness**³⁹ goes to the abyss to save his captive brother. He is the demiurge god of the cosmos, who with the help of the Mother of Life fashions the two ships of the sun and moon, the stars and planets, the ten skies and the eight earths. The Living Spirit is also a warrior god, he and his sons captured the Archons and fettered them in the sky. Two of his sons, Adamas of Light and *xroštak yazd*, are warrior gods. The macrocosm created this way is held and protected by the five sons of the Living Spirit. The redemption of the remaining imprisoned light in the cosmos and the salvation of the living soul is accomplished by the gods of the third emanations.

8. The Third Envoy / the Third Messenger⁴⁰ sets in motion the world and

32. Wisdom: MP. *zrt* (h) / *wiřh*; Pth. *zrtf*; Sgd. *yarjakyak* (Syr. *hkm'*).

33. Victory (in Parthian: Salvation): MP. *pērozāh*; Pth. *buxtagift*; Sgd. *wanunakyak* (Syr. *zkwf'*).

34. Contentment: MP. *hunsandih*; Pth. *hunsandift*; Sgd. *ansandyak* (Syr. *pys'*).

35. Friend of Lights = First god of the second emanation; Mp. *rošnan xwarst*; Pth. *rtih rōšn*; Sgd. *frihrōšn βzyi*.

36. Zeal: MP. *tuxlagth*; Pth. *abrang*; Sgd. *andox* (Syr. *nkpw'*).

37. The Great Builder: MP. *nōglahrafur yazd*, *rāz eg rōšn*; Pth. *bāmyazd*; Sgd. *βamβacyi*.

38. Truthfulness: MP. *rāstih*; Pth. *rāstift*; Sgd. *rastyak* (Syr. *srr'*).

39. Faithfulness: MP. *wāwarth*; Pth. *wāwarift* / *hamwadendift*; Sgd. *waryta* (Syr. *hymawt'*).

40. Third Messenger: MP. *narisah yazd*, *rōšnlahr yazd*; Pth. *narisaf yazd*, *mīhr yazd*, *rōšnlahr yazd*, *hridig frēstag*, *zū'rysby?* (Sundermann, 1979); Sgd. *mīhi βzyi*, *narisaf yazd*, *štik frēste*.

The Sogdian texts identifies the old Iranian Mithra god with the Third Messenger, while the Middle Persian texts with the Living Spirit.

The number five also occurs in the construction of the ten skies and the eight earths. *The sun and moon each have five wafes,²² five houses,²³ and five collecting soul angels²⁴ in each wall. There are five arches,²⁵ and three pillars in the fifth earth and five ditches²⁶ in the dark earth.*

Now I would like to turn to the number twelve. The number twelve comes next in frequency after the number five.

The Father of Light has Twelve Sons, "The Twelve Great Ones, of the same kind, the brilliant face of the Father",²⁷ also called the Twelve Dominions or Twelve Acons.²⁸ These are the abstract qualities of personified divinities, symbolizing the intellectual powers of the Father, who is at the head of the Manichaean pantheon. Meanwhile, each of these entities reflects the outstanding virtues of one of the twelve main gods²⁹ emanated by the Father, with which they accomplish their cosmic actions.

These twelve attributes are: Sovereignty, Wisdom, Victory, Contentment, Zeal, Truthfulness, Faithfulness, Patience, Kindness, Righteousness, Grace and Light.³⁰

1. With the power of his Sovereignty,³¹ the Father of Light rules his kingdom,

22. Five walls: MP. *panz parisp*.

MP. *frawahrēn, wadēn, rošnēn, ābēn, ādurēn*.

23. Five houses: MP. *panz mān*.

24. Five collecting soul angels: MP. *panz ruwārcin frestag*.

25. Five arches: MP. *panz tag*.

There are five arches and three pillars on the fifth earth: the first is from the western wall to the western pillar, the second arch is from the western pillar to the southern pillar, the third arch is from the southern pillar to the eastern pillar, the fourth arch is from the eastern pillar to the eastern wall, and the fifth great arch is from the eastern (pillar) to the western pillar.

26. Five ditches: MP. *panz kanān*.

The great Builder, one of the parts of the original emanation, called in Iranian texts: *Bāmnyad* or *nōgiāhr āfur yazd*; in order to build the New Paradise (*dd*), *angdah*, Pth. *nawng tabe*), he filled the five ditches of death and leveled them.

27. The Twelve Great Ones, of the same kind as the brilliant face of the Father:

Pth. *dwādēš wuzurgān uzebēš pūhrēn āfurwār. āwānēš cāng bānēn cē pīdār rōšn*.

Called also the twelve great first born: *dwādēš wuzurg wuzurgān* (Boyer, 1975, 93, ab).

28. See note 4.

29. The twelve main gods are: the Father of Light, the Mother of Life, the First Man, the Five Light Elements, the Friend of Light, the Great Builder, the Living Spirit, the Third Envoy / the Third Messenger, the Maiden of Light, the Columns of Glory, Jesus the Splendor, the Light-Nous.

30. The comparative list of the Twelve Dominions in Iranian, Syriac, Chinese and Uigur texts is given in Gharīb, 2000, 265.

31. Sovereignty: MP. *tabhrwān*; Pth. *tabhrwān*; Sog. *tabhrwān* (Syriac: *mlkat*).

role in the creation and maintenance of the macrocosm. These Five Intellectual Members (or Habitations, in Iranian texts: "*pañj gāh*") of the Father of Light are also the transcendent image of the Five Members of man's thinking soul,¹⁸ the microcosm. These abstract attributes will be later emanated as the Five Members of the Light-Nous / the Manohmed Rōšn,¹⁹ one of the last gods of the third creation, who plays an outstanding role in the salvation of the human soul.

The Light-Nous is also endowed with Five Virtues: love, faith, perfection, tolerance and knowledge.²⁰ It is with these Five Virtues that he acts to deliver the captive soul from the slavery of the Five dark elements, and to overcome the Five Original Sins, which are: hatred, wrath, lust, violence, and ignorance.²¹

wheels of fire, water, and wind. He is endowed with Reflection. The fifth son of Mihryazd, Atlas, bears the burden of the whole world on his shoulder, he is endowed with Understanding. Spiritus vivens / Mihryazd has a sixth son: a Call God (*xrōstāg yazd*) the counterpart of the sixth son on the Primal Man, Answer God / *padwastag*. He is also a warrior god called in MP. *dēwān naxrostar* "demons reproaching" and *bandbodyazd* "the master of prison" (Sundermann, 1979).

18. See note 15.

19. Light-Nous: MP. *wahman wuzurg, wahman rōšn, farrāh I dēn*; Pth. *Manohmed rōšn, dēn farrāh*; Sgd. *ōēne farn, ōēnaztāyazn βayī*.

20. The Five Cardinal Virtues are also called five Glories of religion:

	Love	Faith	Perfection	Tolerance / Patience	Knowledge
Pth.	<i>frihišt</i>	<i>wāwarīšt</i>	<i>ispurīšt</i>	<i>ūragmanīšt / burdīšt</i>	<i>širīšt</i>
Sgd.	<i>fritāt</i>	<i>warnyāk</i>	<i>ispurnyāk</i>	<i>βurtārmnyāk</i>	<i>yarβākya</i>

Note: In some texts Contentment is paralleled with Perfection.

Five Virtues are also called Five Gifts. In some texts these Gifts are the fruit of the Five Trees.

Love is the fruit of the tree of Glory. Faith is the fruit of the tree of Reason. Perfection is the fruit of the tree of Intelligence. Tolerance is the fruit of the tree of Reflection. Knowledge is the fruit of the tree of Understanding.

Munichaeism myth has also a Tree of Life which grows in a pure soil, its root is virtuousness, its trunk is wisdom, its branches glory, its leaves truth and its fruit is the Eternal life (Henning, 1940, 4-5).

21. Five Original Sins:

	Hatred	Wrath	Lust	Violence	Ignorance
MP.	<i>kēn</i>	<i>xēsm</i>	<i>āwarzōg</i>	<i>istambagš</i>	
Pth.	<i>xēn</i>	<i>dēbahr</i>	<i>āwarzōg</i>	<i>tundīl / istafīl</i>	<i>wadišnāsgāšt</i>
Sgd.	<i>kēn</i>	<i>yipāk</i>	<i>rēž</i>	<i>istaβdyā</i>	<i>mandyarβākya</i>

Love overcomes Hatred; Faith overcomes Wrath; Contentment overcomes Lust; Tolerance overcomes Violence; Knowledge overcomes Ignorance (Henning, 1936, n. 649; Sundermann, 1992, 50-51, 138).

Concerning the five senses we have the Sogdian expressions: *pañj ōβarṭyā āwwežāmaode*: "the collection of the five doors", a divine gift which can keep the senses from committing sins (Henning, 1936 n. 648).

We can assume that the Great Spirit or the breath of life is the conception of the pre-existence of the Mother of Life,¹⁴ the first emanated god in the first creation. I would like to stress that the first creation (emanation) was a woman.

On the structural level, the Father of Light has five constitutive intellectual members: glory, reason, intelligence, thought and understanding.¹⁵ These intellectual members or limbs will be transferred to the Living Spirit,¹⁶ the demiurge god of the second creation, and to his Five Sons,¹⁷ who have the leading

	Life	Power	Light	Beauty	Fragrance
MP.	žiwahr	zorih	rōlāih	hozirih	hubōdih
Pth.	ziwahr	zāwar	rōlāišt	hozihrišt	hubōdišt
Sgd.	žwān	zāwar	roclnyāk	karšnutyā	βōš

14. The Mother of Life: MP. mādar t zndagān, zndagān mādar, ohrmezdbay mād, serigarkirh kirdagār; Pth. mād žwandag, ohrmezdbag mād, ardawān mād, mād rōlā; Sgd. artawān māt, aōmat, rām rātus bay (compares with *Al. fihrest*: البيهة): "peace-dispensing god / joy-giving god".

15. The Five Intellectual / spiritual Limbs of the Father (limbs are also called members): Sgd. panj ruānmēne anšamer, Pth. panj handām gyānea.

	Glory	Reason	Intelligence	Thought	Understanding
Pth.	bām	manuhmed	oš	andēšān	parmānag
Sgd.	farn	znā / lyā	man	šmārūk	patβōš

Note: *farn* in Sogdian is "glory" and not "reason"; therefore, I take Parthian *bām* as "brightness", "glory" and not "reason" as some other scholars take it as a loanword from Syriac; in the same way, the Sgd. *znā* means "reason". Therefore, I take the First Element as glory and the second as reason.

16. Living Spirit: (= Latin: *Spiritus vivens*): MP. Mihr yazd; Pth. wād žwandag; Sgd. wāt žwande, wišparker, aβdkāp tutaw "the king of seven continents".

The Living Spirit is also a warrior god. He attacks and defeats the powers of Darkness and he fettered the chief demons (Archons), living in the skies. He saves the Primal Man and he builds the cosmos with the help of the Mother of Life.

17. The Five Sons (= Pth. panj puhrān) of Living Spirit.

1. The keeper of Splendor: MP. dahibed; Sgd. xšyšt βw;
2. The king of Honor: MP. pahraged; Sgd. smān (a) xštō;
3. The Adamas of Light: MP. wisbed, tashieb yazd; Sgd. wišayni βay;
4. The king of Glory: MP. zandbed, wādahrām yazd;
5. Atlas: MP. mānbed, parmāngēn yazd; Sgd. pašār βayt.

The keeper of Splendor (Splenditenens), endowed with Glory stands above the ten firmaments and holds the head of the edifice of the material world (The Five Elements of Light). The king of Honor (Rex honoris) endowed with Reason, stations in the seventh firmament, watches over the demons imprisoned in the sky, he is called in Sogdian the ruler of the skies. (He rules the skies below him.) He is, as his name shows, *pahraged*, the head of the frontier post. The Adamas of Light stands on the earth and fights with the cosmic monster Mazan. Endowed with Intelligence, he is the warrior son of Mihr yazd. His Sogdian name shows that he is called after the old Sogdian deity.

paradise", has Five Greatnesses:² First, the Father of Light;³ second, the Twelve Aeons or Twelve Dominions;⁴ third, the Numberless Aeons⁵ or the Blessed Places; fourth, the Living Air;⁶ fifth, the Light Earth;⁷ and a Great Spirit⁸ breathing the breath of life into all five.

This is the transcendent heavenly image of the cosmos, the conception of the pre-existence of the universal living soul, the body of the Primal Man,⁹ composed of Five Good Elements: water, fire, wind, light and ether.¹⁰ These Five Elements (called the *pañj rōšn* in Iranian texts) are also the Five Sons and the Five armors of the Primal Man with which he fights with Five darknesses in Five battles. Later, these Five Elements become the five constituents of the human animal soul, which will suffer in the Five prisons of corporal matter. The Five prisons of the body¹¹ are: bones, nerves, veins, muscles, and skin. The suffering human soul, the Living Self, is called in some texts "the Suffering Jesus".¹² The human soul also has Five Limbs: life, power, light, beauty, and fragrance.¹³

2. The Five Greatnesses: Pth. *pañj parmāng pwāk*; Sgd. *Pañj mazēya*.

3. The Father of Greatness / the Father of Light: MP. *wahlštaw sahrjār, zurwan swadāy, zurwan šah, pādīšāy didēmvar, yad burzist, pid 1 wuzurgit*; Pth. *wahšt sahrdār, pidar rōšn, pidar burzist, pidar hasēnag, yazdān abardom, haḡān haḡistum, pidar wuzurgift, haḡ rāšūgar*; Sgd. *Zarwā šayī, mazēs šēwanē*.

4. The Twelve Dominions or Twelve Aeons: MP. *dwādes sahrjārīh*; Pth. *dwādes sahrdārīh, dwādes sahrān rōšn*.

5. The Aeons of the Aeons / Numberless Aeons: Pth. *saḡrān saḡr, saḡrān rōšnān*; Sgd. *afritēn oštak*.

6. The Living Air: Sgd. *toxw šaryā* (the purified air) = (Latin: *aēr ingenitus*).

7. The Light Earth: MP. and Pth. *zamīg rōšn*; Sgd.: *roxānā zay* = (Latin: *terra ingenita*).

8. The Great Spirit: MP. *wāxš zindag, wāxš yōzdahr*; Pth. *wižid wād*; Sgd. *zpart wāxš, wāxš yoztaxr* (Sundermann, 1979, 123), *zpart wat*.

9. The Primal Man: MP. *ohrmizdbay*; Pth. *ohrmizdbag, mard hasēnag, mardohm hasēnag, mardohm naxwēn*; Sgd. *h / surmazda šayī, adšay*.

10. Five Good Elements / the Five Elements of Light: Pth. *pañj rōšn, pañj yazd* (MP.: *amahasrpandān*; Sgd. *marō'xpdnt*).

	Ether	Wind	Light	Water	Fire
MP.	<i>frawahar</i>	<i>wād</i>	<i>rōšn</i>	<i>āb</i>	<i>ādur</i>
Pth.	<i>ardāw frawardin</i>	<i>wād</i>	<i>rōšn</i>	<i>ab</i>	<i>ādur</i>
Sgd.	<i>artāw frawartī</i>	<i>wāt</i>	<i>artuxšt</i>	<i>āp</i>	<i>ātr</i>

Concerning the Five Elements of Light, the Sogdian texts show more elaborate information: *pnw y'dh*: five gathas; *pnw rttant*: five jewels; *pnw mx'pwty*: five mahabuthas; *pnw 'stwny*: five columns; *pnw wa'k*: five trees; *pnw yōkynti šr'trk'nt*: five wounded brothers (Sundermann, 1997, 119).

11. The Five prisons of the body: Pth. *astag, padīg, rahg / rag, pid, farm*; Sgd. *astak, pašyā, rak, yāte, farm*.

12. Living Self / Living Soul: MP. *grtw zindag, grtw rōšn*; Pth. *grtw žwandag*; Sgd. *žwande yrtw*. "The Suffering Jesus" is called in western texts "Jesus patibifis".

13. The Five Limbs which constitutes the essence of the soul: Sgd. *grtw m'f'w'w'w'w'*.