

The Antiquity of Old Avestan*

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The question of the exact chronological relationship between the two Avestan languages, Old Avestan, or Gathic, and Young (or Younger) Avestan, is occasionally discussed in Iranian scholarship. Contrary, however, to what one might think, such discussions are not usually found in linguistic and grammatical descriptions of the Avestan languages. There it is usually taken for granted that Old Avestan is older than Young Avestan, for two main reasons: (1) Old Avestan can be shown to be linguistically very close to, in some respects even more archaic than, Rigvedic, the oldest Indic language;¹ (2) Old Avestan can be shown to be phonetically, morphologically, and syntactically more archaic than Young Avestan. Arguments against this simple way of thinking are found in another area of Iranian studies, namely in the discussion surrounding the prophet Zarathustra's date, where it has been suggested that it is *simplistic*.

The linguistic issue comes into this discussion through the fact that most Western scholars since Martin Haug² have been convinced that Zarathustra was the author of the Gathas, which constitute the largest portion of the Old

* I want to thank my student Yuhan Vevaina for reading several drafts of this article and making numerous suggestions to make it more complete and reader-friendly, all of which I have gratefully incorporated.

1. The date of the Rigveda is also controversial, though less so than the Avesta, and it is today commonly assumed to have been composed in the 2nd millennium B.C.E.

2. Haug 1862: 218-219.

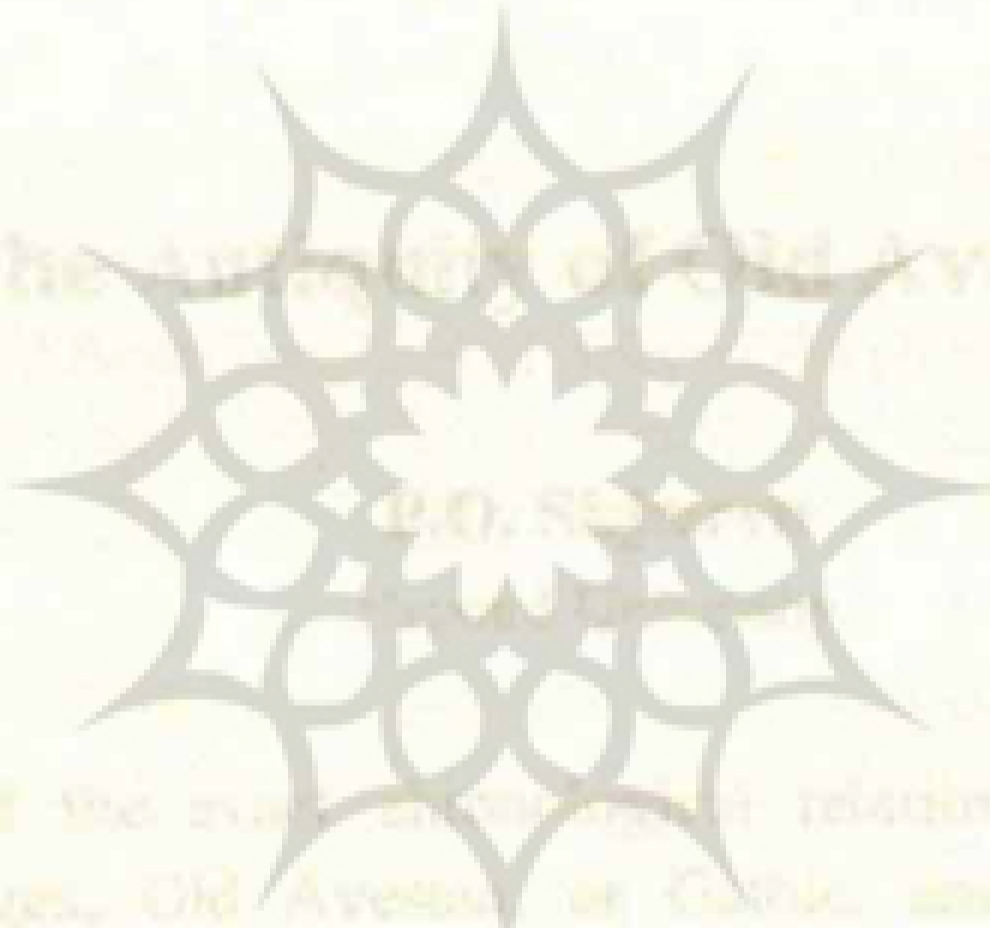
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The Avestan Manuscript E1 (F4)



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شرویشکاوه علوم انسانی و مطالعات فرهنگی

رساله علم علوم انسانی

The question of the exact chronological relationship between the two Avestan languages, Old Avestan or Gathic and Young or Younger Avestan, is occasionally discussed in Iranian scholarship. Contrary to what is normally found in Iranian and professional discussions of the Avestan languages, there is a general view in Iranian scholarship that Younger Avestan, the traditional name (1) of the Avestan language is to be linguistically very close to, or even respects even more archaic than, Gathic, the oldest Indic language; (2) Old Avestan can be shown to be phonetically, morphologically, and syntactically more archaic than Young Avestan. Arguments against this simple way of thinking are found in another area of Iranian studies, namely in the discussion surrounding the prophet Zoroaster's date, where it has been suggested that it is simpler

The Iranian issue comes into this discussion through the fact that most Western scholars since Martin Haug have been convinced that Zoroaster was a contemporary of the Gathas, which comprises the oldest section of the Old

the king of kings, of the lineage of Sāsān, of the auspicious country of Iran, and (written) in the city of Khambāt by the scribe of these writings, the servant of religion, the priestly born Hērbed Māhwindād Oshtā Shāhpur O. Ādar H. Narsang, belonging to the lineage of Mobed Hamjiār H. Rāmyār, an inhabitant of Khambā, on behalf of H. Hōshang, the son of H. Rānā, the son of H. Kāmdīn H. Vāchhā, the son of H. Pāhlan, of the lineage of H. Hamjiār H. Rāmyār, and an inhabitant of Navsari.”

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*rōja hormmijda māha mahira giha hāuana samaye erva[da] māvavaṃdāda
 śāpūra u. ādarena likhītaṃ saṃpūṃa kṛtayā // ervada hosamga e. rāṃnām
 e. kāmādīna e. vāchhā nāgasārika vāstavyā[h] tasyārthe gvahmana-yasta-
 nāma pustakam likhītaṃ // śubhaṃ bhūyāt // lekhakapāthakayo[h] sukhī
 bhavati śrī śrī śrī śrī // śrī śrī śrī //*

Translation

“Completed the book named Gvahmana Yasta, a book copied with devotion, happiness and joy. Written and completed by Ērvad Māhwindād Shāpur O(shtā) Ādar in Saṃvat year 1657, Shākē 1523, in the dark half of the current lunar month Vaishākha, on the bright eighth lunar day, on the day Hōrmizd of the month Mihir, during the Hāvana Gēha. The book named Gvahmana Yasta has been written on behalf of Ērvad Hōshang Ē(rvad) Rāṃnām Ē. Kāmdīn Ē. Vāchhā, an inhabitant of Nāgasārika.²³ May it be auspicious. May the scribe and the reciter be happy. (May there be) bliss, bliss, bliss, bliss. Bliss, bliss, bliss.”²⁴

Colophon 3 in Pazand (fols. 529v-530r)

Transliteration

*Frz paṭ padirōt u śādī rāmašnī rōz hōrmizda māh mihir sāl aḡar nuhusat
 haftāt buda ōz śāhaṇ śāh yazdajirda šahiriiār i sāsṇ tuxma bašahirastṇ
 xazišta īraṇ u aṇdaršahir kaṇbāit kātōba al-hurfa dīn baṇda hōrbut zādah
 hōrbut māh-vaṇdāt oštā śāpōr uštā ādar hōrbut naršaṇ az nasla mōḡat
 hamjiiār ōrḡat rāmiiār sākōn kaṇbāit barāi hōrbut hōšaṇ bōn hōrbut raṇa
 bōn hōrbut kām-ul-dīn hōrbut vāchā bōn hōrbut pālahaṇ az taxmaō mōbōt
 hamjiiār hōrbut rāmaiār sākōn naosārī*

Translation

“Completed in welfare, happiness and peace. Finished on the day Hōrmizd of the month Mihir, year 970 from (the accession of) Yazdegird Shahriyār,

23. Nāgasārika is the older name for Navsari. Its earliest attestation is to be found on the copper plate of the Rāshtrakutas which is dated Shākē 743 (821 C.E.), see *Bombay Gazetteer*, “History of Gujarat”, Vol. 1, Pt. 1, 125; Meherjirana 1947: II, 557.

24. The scribe invokes the blessings of seven Amahraspands by repeating the word *shrī* (here loosely translated by “bliss”) seven times.

*āsdīn bōn xāršaēt buzurg s(a)njānān frastār ātaš varahrām sākōn šihir
naosārī tamān anjāmūt īn kōtāb niīāiš u yašt u baēan yašt u nīranghā u cīzō
ki hōrbōdān u bahidīnān rā kār āīiat tā baxānand marā yāt u
hōmbahirakinōnd u aj framāiš hērbat hōšang aban ranān ban kavām-ul-dīn
bōn vācā bōn pālōhōn naḥ-ōštōm. Aēuuō paṇtō yō ašahe yak hast rāhi ašāi
avārōan juḍ rāhi šātō maḥō (+manā) vaštō (+vahištō) uruuānō šāt an tan
kōš varzīt ruān xōš pōrōz bēit xurahe aḥōj bihidīn māzadaiiasnān āšōm vōhū*

Translation

“(May it be) according to the will of Yazads. Completed in welfare, happiness and peace on the day Rām of the month Khwardād, year 970 from (the accession of) Yazdegird Shahriyār, the king of kings. It [i.e. the ms.] has been written by me, the servant of religion, Hērbēd Shāpuhr, the son of Dastur Hōshang, the son of Āsā, the son of Qaiyāmuddīn, the son of Chāyyān, the son of Āsdīn, the son of Khurshēd (who was) a leader among the Sanjana priests, an attendant of Ātash Wahrām and an inhabitant of the town of Navsari. This manuscript, (containing) Niyāyēshes and Yashts and the Bayān Yasht, and Nīrang, and something which is made use of by priests and laypeople, has been completed in its entirety (by me). Whilst they recite (from it), they shall remember me and make me a co-sharer. I have written (the ms.) at the behest of Hērbēd Hōshang, the son of Rānā, the son of Qaiyāmuddīn, the son of Vāchhā, the son of Pāhlan.

There is (only) one path which is of righteousness; the rest are alien paths. A joyous mind is best for the soul. Happy is that person who works for his own soul. May the glory of the pure and good Mazdā-worshipping Religion be victorious. Righteousness is good.”

The second scribe set two colophons, one in Sanskrit and the other in Pazand, after the Pazand-Sanskrit Wahman Yasht, whose English translations together with transliterations are as follows:

Colophon 2 in Sanskrit (fol. 529r-529v)

Transliteration

*Paris[a]māptam gvaḥmāna-yasta-nāma [pu]stakam samādhānena
saukhyakārareṇa ānamdenāca pustakam likhitam // samvat 1657 varṣe śāke
1523 pravarttamāne vaiśākha māse kṛṣṇapakṣe aṣṭamyāṃtithau śukra dine*

unique to E1.²² The Pazand-Sanskrit text fills fols. 495v to 529r and is cast in the fashion of Avesta-Pahlavi translations, such as to be found in the Hērbedestān and Nērangestān, with short phrases and sentences. They number 227 in all. The Sanskrit translation is complete, corresponding with the given Pazand text. The scribe has left fols. 538r through 540r blank, possibly meaning to fill them with some other texts. An incomplete table of contents (*fihrist kitāb*) covers fols. 540v to 542v, the last prayer mentioned therein being Namāz Shahrhā (homage to the towns) which begins on fol. 449v. There are some forty-two titles left unrecorded by the writer of the *fihrist* who has filled each folio with fifteen titles within a double-lined rectangle. It appears that the scribe had intended to continue the list on the next fol. 543r, since he jotted down “folio 450” (*waraq 450*) at the foot of fol. 542v and carried on the pagination in Gujarati up to the blank fol. 544v. The list of subjects seems to have been written by another hand, possibly by Hērbed Hōshang himself, who commissioned the work, since the handwriting does not tally with that of either of the two scribes of the manuscript.

Colophons of the Manuscript

The ms. contains three colophons, two in Pazand and one in Sanskrit. The first colophon is in Pazand and its English translation is given with transliteration as follows:

Colophon 1 (fols. 487v-488v)

Transliteration

Pad yazdān kām

fōrjipada padarōt šādī u rāmōšnī andar rōz rām ōz māh I xardāt sāl bar nuh sat u haptāt až šahān šāh yazd jird šihiriār nōpōštōm mōn dīn bōndah hērbōt šāpōr bōn dastōr hōš(a)ng bōn āsā bōn kaiiqmudīn bōn cqiīq bōn

22. Dhabhar (1923: 3) mentions about the availability of Sanskrit translation of the Pazand Wahman Yasht. Geldner (1896: ii) does not refer to it while describing the contents of ms. E1. It is not mentioned either by West (1880) or K.A. Dastur (1903), or Bharucha (1906), or Unvala in his introduction to Anklesaria's Zand I Vohūman Yasn (1957), or Cereti (1995). A list of mss. owned by Dastur Edalji Sanjana has been noted in the official records of the Bombay Parsi Panchayet. The very first ms. mentioned therein contains Zand I Wahman Yasht Ba Sanskrit whose whereabouts is not known. It is also worth noting that the ms. E1 which is generally believed to have belonged to the revered Dastur does not appear in the list, see Modi 1930: Vol. 2, 727-729.

have been destroyed, however, in almost all old mss. and have been supplied by a later hand; consequently, they are for the most part palaeographically worthless.”¹⁸ Hence the value of that in E1. After the usual short prayers like Yathā Ahū Vairyō, Ashem Vohū, Nīrang ī Kustī Bastan, Srōsh Bāj and Hōsh Bām, the manuscript gives the five litanies (Niyāyēshes), and Pazand prayers such as the Nām Setāyesh, Patēts or penitentiary prayers and the Nīrang ī Bōy Dādan; the twenty-one Yashts¹⁹ (hymns) and Gāhs²⁰ (watches of the day), and various types of Nīrang (incantations), Namāz (homages) and Bāj (sacred utterances) – all essential utterances for priests and laymen alike to live a holy and devout Zoroastrian life. Prayers which are indispensable for ritual priests such as Āfrīnagāns and Āfrīns, Nuptial Blessings in Pazand and Sanskrit, and various types of Shnūman or dedications to the divinities have their natural place in a manuscript written by a venerable ritual priest attached to the Sanjan Ātash Bahrām. The introductory Pazand passage in Khōrshēd Niyāyēsh (Ny. 1) beginning with *stāem zbāem* shows traces of an Indian recension, that is, it was copied from a manuscript written by a Parsi scribe. Manuscripts copied from an Iranian original omit the passage as does the manuscript F1 written by Āsdīn Kākā in 1591 C.E.²¹

The second part of the ms. contains the Nīrang ī Kustī Burīdan (incantation for cutting the sacred cord) and a few other Nīrangs, Āfrīnagān ī Rapithwin and Āfrīn ī Gāhāmbār Bā Paywand (prayer of praise for the Gāhāmbārs recited with hand contact), Yasht ī Gāhān Murd (the Gāthā, Y. 28-34, recited on the dead), and the text of the Pazand-Sanskrit Wahman Yasht which is

18. See Geldner, Prolegomena ii n.1.

19. The scribe Shāpuhr Hōshang has enumerated only the last six Yashts (Yt. 14 to 19) as belonging to the Bayān Yasht Nask (see colophon on fols. 487v-488v), since there is no unanimity about the identification of the first ten Yashts, see West 1891: intro., xlv n.1 and 426, 431, 436 and 444; Dhabhar 1963: iv-v. The remaining Yashts which do not belong to the Bayān Yasht Nask are taken from other Nasks for exorcising evil spirits and as a shield against the evil influence of planets.

20. A confused statement in Pahlavi (fol. 422v) at the beginning of the five Gāhs seems to suggest that they belonged to the Hādōkht Nask [**gāhīhā *nibēsam hādōxt* “I write the Gāhs from the Hādōkht (Nask)”. Among the Sāda mss. of the Khorda Avesta, E1 is the oldest known ms. that contains the five Gāh prayers.

21. See Geldner, Prolegomena, xlvi; Dhabhar 1927: intro. 6-7; Jamaspasa 1991: fol. 10v.

their work. It is written in black ink on handmade paper, the text being set within a double-lined rectangular frame, about 6½ inches long and 3½ inches wide. The first scribe filled this frame with a nearly always uniform 15 lines to a page, and the second scribe kept to this practice,¹⁵ although the rectangular frame is missing from his first page, and from the last few pages. There are ample margins surrounding the frame for writing any instructions or emendations or omissions to the text.¹⁶

The 400-year old manuscript has not escaped the ravages of time. In 2001, it was in a not-so-healthy condition and needed extensive repair. When it was taken to Cambridge, it attracted the attention of the Trustees of the Ancient India and Iran Trust who showed it to Dr. Nicholas Hadgraft, an expert in the field of restoration of old books and manuscripts. With generous support from the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe, a preliminary restoration was undertaken so as to prevent its further decay. Dr. Hadgraft strengthened some of the worst worm-eaten folios with a special, expensive, Japanese transparent paper and provided a folder for each group of dismantled leaves to protect them and hold them together. These are regarded as interim measures before funds can be provided for a thorough restoration of the whole manuscript.

Contents of the Manuscript

E1 is one of the most comprehensive manuscripts of the Khorda Avesta and contains prayers which are regularly used by both priests and lay members of the Zoroastrian community. The first part opens with the Avestan alphabet, which is learnt by Zoroastrian children before the investiture ceremony (*nō-zūd/sedre-pushun*) as an exercise for pronouncing correctly the difficult Avestan texts.¹⁷ As Geldner pointed out, “such Av. alphabets originally stood at the opening of most Khorda Avesta and Yasht mss. They

15. However, an exception to the rule are folios 124v, 178v and 386r-v which contain 16 lines each and fols. 410v and 463v 14 lines each.

16. See fols. 2v, 22v, 30r-v, 38r, 39r, 99v, 101r, 123v, 137r, 142r, 147v, 155v, 156v, 157v, 163r, 170v, 176r, 178v, 219r, 222v, 229v, 231v, 244v, 248r, 254v, 256v, 268v, 296r, 298r, 327v, 349v, 366v, 386r-v, 387r, 394r, 400v, 401v, 402v, 404r, 406r-v, 419r, 446v, 447r, 495r and 536r.

17. This tradition has been maintained by the Sanjana priests of Udvarda to the present day, see Dhabhar 1932: 1; Mirza 1990: 130.

the then high priest of Surat, Dastur Kaikhusru Dadabhai,¹¹ who was also given the charge of the new fire temple; and perhaps it was as a gift of friendship that the manuscript E1 passed into the possession of Dastur Kaikhusru, and then of his kinsman, Dastur Kavasji Jamshedji Mumgājinā.¹² Two leaves are left blank in it to divide the work of the first scribe from that of the second, and on one of these an undated note in Gujarati states that both volumes belonged to Dastur Kavasji Jamshedji.

Subsequently, Lady Maneckbai Bahramji Seervai,¹³ the wife of a noted Parsi philanthropist, bought the manuscript from Dastur Kavasji and presented it as a pious gift, an *ashōdād*, to the learned scholar-priest Dastur Erachji Sohrabji Meherjirana. This was done sometime before 1875, the year of her death; so it would have been he who lent E1 to Geldner when the latter was preparing his magnificent edition of the Avestan texts, published from 1888 to 1896. In order to identify the earliest traceable owner of the manuscript, Erachji seems to have agreed graciously to give it the signature E1, the "E" standing for "Edujji" [Sanjana].

In 1897, Dastur Erachji gave all his books and manuscripts to the First Dastur Meherji Rānā Library in Navsari, a distinguished and generously managed institution;¹⁴ and there it was catalogued according to the library's own system, acquiring thus the signature F4. It was through the magnanimity of the Trustees of the Library that I was permitted to take the manuscript to Cambridge to work on.

The manuscript is well planned and both scribes were neat and careful in

11. The library of Dastur Kaikhusru and his son Noshirwan is now housed in the D.N. Modi Ātash Bahrām at Surat, see Turel 1975: 74.

12. Kavasji's grandfather Barjorji was dumb (Guj. *mumgā*), and the nickname *mumgājinā* was attached to his descendants who held the office of Dasturship in Surat, see Patell 1888: 165 and 690; Modi 1930: Vol. 2, 593-596. Kavasji was appointed High Priest of Karachi in 1871. He died in Surat in 1875, see Patell 1910: 363; Punthakey 1996: 52; Dhalla 1946: 223.

13. Her husband, Bahramji Noshirwanji Seervai, had donated a big silver fire-vase for the holy Ātash Bahrām of Navsari in 1866 C.E., and endowed a public Jashan in commemoration of that auspicious event which is celebrated every year on the day Khordad of month Khordad in the central hall of the Ātash Bahrām, see Patell 1910: 209-210, 539.

14. Although of modest means, the Meherji Rānā Library serves the fraternity of scholars with an unmatched dedication. In contrast, the management of the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute in Bombay is being run on political lines where scholars, in general, will have to cut through bureaucracy to check a single manuscript.

other colophons. These record that he was Hērbed Māhwindād,⁷ son of Oshtā Shāpuhr of Khambāt (Cambay), and that he too completed his work in 1601. The priests of Khambāt formed another group of Parsi priests which had close contacts with the Bhagarias.⁸

There is then a long gap in the history of the manuscript, which next appears among the books and manuscripts owned by Dastur Edalji Darabji Rustamji Sanjana,⁹ who lived early in the nineteenth century. His great-great grandfather, Hērbed Dārāb Hērbed Sohrāb, had been living in Navsari, but from the middle of the seventeenth century there were troubled times when the countryside around Navsari was infested by bands of brigands who sometimes invaded the little town, bringing death and destruction; and so he moved with his family to Surat for safety, and his descendants remained there.¹⁰ But how the manuscript E1 came into the possession of Dastur Edalji Sanjana is not known. By then it had received rough treatment, having been split into two parts without any regard to an appropriate division according to its contents: the separation was made at folio 295, in the middle of a text, at the Avestan word *ašauua*. The first letter, *a* of this word remains at what was now the end of the first volume, and the text of the second volume begins with the rest of this word, *šauua*.

In 1823, the D.N. Modi Ātash Bahrām was established in Surat. Its consecration was carried out under the supervision and guidance of Dastur Edalji Sanjana, and this led to cordial relations developing between him and

7. Hērbed Māhwindād belonged to the priestly group (Guj. Panth) of the Khambātā stock whose priestly jurisdiction stretches over the boundary between the river Māhī and the river Sābarmati, see Kotwal and Boyd 1982: 212.

8. E.g., the learned scribe Āsdīn Kākā, a venerable Bhagaria priest of Navsari, is known to have written the ms. of Chim ī Kustīg in Cambay in 1547, see Jamaspasa 1991: xiii-xiv with n. 3.

9. All high priests of the H.B. Wadia Ātash Bahrām who bore the surname "Sanjana" belonged to the Bhagarsāth group of priests. About 450 years ago, one of the ancestors of Dastur Edalji, viz. Hērbed Peshotan who belonged to the Sanjana group of priests, was adopted by his maternal grandfather Oshtā Jivā Hērbed Shāēr Hērbed Chāndā, a Bhagaria priest. Since then Peshotan and his descendants were initiated as Bhagaria priests, see Sanjana 1895: Genealogy; Meherjirana 1899: 148; Meherjirana 1939: 6.

10. The priestly families who moved to Surat with their lay clientele subsequently founded a colony called Farāmparā, and Dastur Edalji's great grandfather, Dastur Bahrām Hērbed Dārāb, was appointed its first high priest, see Sanjana 1895: Appendix ii; Turel 1975: 87 (Guj. Section).

Zoroastrianism at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London,⁴ and here I propose to describe the salient features of this hitherto unpublished manuscript.

It was written at the beginning of the seventeenth century C.E. at Navsari, which is the centre of the Bhagaria group of Parsi priests. At that time the Bhagarias were giving the hospitality of their town to those priests of the Sanjana group who were tending the oldest of the Parsi sacred fires. This is the Ātash Bahrām which had been established at Sanjan after the founders of the Parsi community reached India. The priests who looked after it had rescued it when Sanjan was taken and sacked by a Moslem army in the fifteenth century, and had eventually brought it to safety in Navsari. So for a long time there were two groups of Zoroastrian priests living there in harmony: the Bhagarias who continued their hereditary duties of serving the religious needs of the townspeople, and a small group of Sanjanas who tended the sacred fire.

The manuscript E1 was commissioned by a Bhagaria priest, Hērbed Hōshang, son of Hērbed Rānā, of the Kākā Pāhlan family.⁵ He, according to the colophon to the first part of the manuscript, employed a Sanjana priest, Hērbed Shāpuhr,⁶ son of Dastur Hōshang, to write the codex, and in 970 A.Y., that is, 1601 C.E., he completed from folio 1 to folio 492. There he stopped, but in that same year Hērbed Hōshang employed another priest to continue the work, and he wrote from folio 493 to folio 537, providing two

4. After digitization of the ms., the project should be completed in 2005. The book will be published by Otto Harrassowitz in Wiesbaden, Germany, in the series *Iranica*, edited by Maria Macuch (Berlin).

5. According to the Pazand (fol. 529v-530r) and Sanskrit (fol. 529r-529v) colophons, Hōshang, who commissioned the ms., and his father, Rānā, were ordained priests (Hērbeds). However, the genealogy of Bhagarsāth priests, published some 300 years later in 1899, erroneously mentions them as unordained priests (Oshtās), see Meherjirana 1899: 18. Hōshang Rānā belonged to the Kākā Pāhlan stock named after his fourth ancestor Pāhlan Ānnā, fondly nicknamed Kākā "old and revered" on account of his venerable age.

6. Hērbed Shāpuhr Dastur Hōshang Āsā belonged to the illustrious Sanjana group of priests who tended the ancient holy fire in Navsari. He humbly calls himself the attendant of the Ātash Bahrām (*frastār ātash varahrām*) and takes legitimate pride in being descended from Kaurshēd Kamdīn, the leader of the Sanjana priests (*buzurg sanjānān*), who together with other two priests shifted the holy fire from Bansda to Navsari in 1479 C.E., see Meherjirana 1947: Vol. 1, 86 with n. 71, 363. He died in 1645 C.E., see Kutar 1929: Vol. 1, intro. 30; Meherjirana 1899: 241.

On The Avestan Manuscript E1 (F4)

Firoze M. Kotwal

The old and valuable manuscript of the Khorda Avesta, previously known as E1,¹ is now housed and catalogued as F4² in the First Dastur Meherji Rānā Library³ at Navsari, the stronghold of traditional Zoroastrianism in India. A visiting fellowship for a five-month period in 2001 at Clare Hall, Cambridge, enabled me to work on a project of bringing out a facsimile edition of this codex together with Dr. Almut Hintze, Lecturer in

1. It is so named after the then owner Dastur Edalji Darabji Rustamji Sanjana (d. 1847 C.E.), the first High Priest of the H.B. Wadia Ātash Bahrām, Mumbai (see Geldner, Prolegomena ii). Dastur Peshotan Bahramji Sanjana (d. 1898 C.E.), the third High Priest of the Ātash Bahrām, seems to have lent the ms. to Geldner for the preparation of his *magnum opus*, The Avesta.

2. The 119 manuscripts presented in 1897 C.E. by Dastur Erachji Sohrabji Meherjirana (d. 1900 C.E.) to the First Dastur Meherji Rānā Library are classified under the letters A to F in a mechanical way, and the mss. written in Avestan, Pahlavi, Pazand, Persian and Gujarati are all covered under the letter F without any particular direction, see Dhabhar 1922: iii-iv and 1923: foreword.

3. The library was inaugurated on 19th April, 1872 C.E. by the scions of the Meherjirana family in honour of the First Dastur Meherji Rānā (d. 1591 C.E.) who went to the court of Akbar (1542-1605 C.E.) to attend the interfaith conference in 1578 C.E. and was subsequently appointed the first High Priest in India by the whole Anjuman of Navsari in appreciation of his services to the Zoroastrian religion and community. On 14th April, 1897, Dastur Erachji donated to it his private library comprising 513 printed books, 892 booklets, magazines and journals, together with 119 mss. written in Avestan, Pahlavi, Pazand, Persian, Arabic and Gujarati languages.

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Ser. No. 6

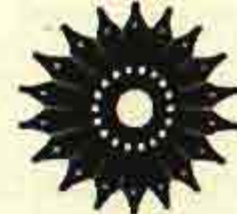
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85 Park Avenue
Tehran 15134, Iran
Fax: (0098 21) 8725953
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Annual subscription rates (postage included) are \$20 or £14 or Euro 22.