

?????? ??????

?????? ?? ????? ????

?? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?? ?????? ?????????? ??????????

???????? ???? ???? · Friday, March 20th, 2015

NOWRUZ i. In the Pre-Islamic Period

Nowruz, “New Day”, is the holiest and most joyful festival of the Zoroastrian year. It is also its focal point, to which all other high holy days relate.

NOWRUZ

i. In the Pre-Islamic Period

Nowruz, “New Day”, is the holiest and most joyful festival of the Zoroastrian year. It is also its focal point, to which all other high holy days relate. Its celebration has two strands, the religious and the secular, both of which have plainly evolved considerably over many centuries, the one with extension of observances, the other with accumulation of charming and poetic customs, most of them special to it.

Nowruz is not, however, referred to in the small corpus of Old Avestan texts attributed to Zoroaster, nor does its name occur in the Young Avesta. Its earliest appearance is in Pahlavi texts, as n?g r?z (nwk rwc,

As far back as records go, Nowruz has been, either in fact or by intention, a celebration of early spring, when the sun begins to regain strength and overcome winter’s cold and darkness and when there is a renewal of growth and vigour in nature. Zoroaster’s people were demonstrably animatists (M. Boyce, 1992, pp. 53-5), that is, they apprehended a cognitive spirit, mainyu (M. Schwartz, p. 641), in all things, tangible or intangible. So for them this return of spring would have represented an annual victory for the Spirit of the sun; and Zoroaster saw in it also, it appears, the symbol of a still more glorious victory to come. This was the especial hope which he offered his followers (see FRAŠ?.K?R?TI), that the present struggle between good and evil on all planes, physical, moral and spiritual, will end in total victory for the good. Our “limited time” will then be succeeded by the “Time of Long Dominion” (virtually eternity), with the world and all that is in it restored to the perfect state in which it was created by Ahura Mazd?. A traditional spring festival, ushering in the loveliest season of the year with joyous festivities, could thus, be renamed the “(festival of the) New Day” and celebrated with religious rites, be a recurrent reminder of the unique “New Day” which will eventually bring everlasting bliss; and so this observance could aid faith and deepen understanding of doctrine. This is likely to have been a way of teaching to which Zoroaster naturally resorted, preaching as he did to an ancient, non-literate, pastoral people (see AVESTAN SOCIETY), who used no images to sustain belief, but venerated divinity in and through what they

saw and experienced in the world around them.

Nowruz and Rapi?win. There is another clear example of an animistic perception of a natural phenomenon being used to illumine doctrine, which is closely associated with Nowruz and almost certainly also belongs to the teachings of the prophet. According to tradition he live long, and so had time to develop the devotional life of his young community; and one powerful disciplinary tool which he is likely himself to have forged was duty to pray five times in the twenty-four hours, using each time the same short utterance, put together from his own compositions (Boyce, 1992, pp. 84-85). The Zoroastrian 24-hour day begins at sunrise, with three prayers being said during the daylight hours, and two during those of darkness, at midnight and at approaching dawn. It is likely that the two latter were added by Zoroaster as a rigorous new spiritual exercise, the other three, at sunrise, noon and sunset, having been offered by generations of Iranians before him. The word for “noon” is by origin mundane, though its literal meaning had doubtless long been forgotten by Zoroaster’s time. It appears in YAv. as *rapi?w?-*, “noon”,

Rapi?win gained futher prominence in two groups of texts composed after the Sasanian calendar reform of the early sixth century CE (see below), which brought it about that the Zoroastrians celebrated Nowruz officially twice, once as a religious and once as a secular observance. The rites of Rapi?win belonged exclusively to the former, and plainly in order to refer unambiguously to it priests in certain contexts used these rites as a synonym for Nowruz. Thus in Pahlavi and Zoroastrian Persian texts which give lists of observances which it is the duty of every believer to keep, among the holy days mentioned Rapi?win always appears (in a variety of late spellings); and in all the *pat?t* (confessional formularies) it is the sin of not keeping Rapi?win which is acknowledged, leaving in both groups Nowruz apparently (and inconceivably) ignored. (For references to those texts see Boyce, 1969, p. 202, no 8). The substitution which has clearly taken place here of Rapi?win for Nowruz, could only have been made because the symbolism of Rapi?win was powerful in itself and closely linked, most particularly by the prophet, with that of the great festival.

Nowruz in the Young Avesta: Although Nowruz is not mentioned in the surviving Young Avestan texts (that is, those composed by Zoroaster’s followers over an ill defined period, mainly, it seems, between about 1000 to 800 BCE), its dominant place in the devotional calendar is indicated by one particular development found in them. This is the creation of six annual one-day festivals called literally “Year-Times” *y?irya ratav?* (Air.Wb. cols. 1497-1498 s.v. *ratu-*), but which may be termed “Seasonal Feasts”. These, to judge from their individual names and their irregular scattering through the year, were old pastoral and farming feasts that were now consecrated on the model of Nowruz to strengthen through observance the understanding of doctrine. The doctrine in their case was the fundamental one of the Heptad and the links of each of its divine members with one of the seven creations (see under *AM?ŠA SP?NTA*). The six feasts are assigned to a creation and its divinity in the order given in the Zoroastrian creation myth (see *BUNDAHIŠN*), the sixth being that of mankind, which was under the especial care, through his Holy Spirit, of Ahura Mazda?; and only its name, *Hamaspā?maedaya*, has yet to be satisfactorily explained. The seventh, that of fire, which quickens all the others, was under the guardianship of *Aš?a* (q.v.), one of whose helpers is *Rapi?wina*, the Spirit of fiery noon; and its feast is Nowruz itself. Nowruz is never treated as one of the Seasonal Feasts, but the chain of six leads up to it; and it is likely that its assignment to great *Aš?a* was inspired by its earlier links with *Rapi?wina*, *Aš?a*’s natural fellow worker and that this then led to the creation of the six Seasonal Feasts.

Its has to be deduced from later texts and usage that the priests who devised this devotional

calendar were skilled astronomers, able (perhaps following their Oav. Predecessors in this) to fix the celebration of Nowruz (though not necessarily with absolute precision) at the spring equinox; and the celebration of the last Seasonal Feasts just before it shows that it was indeed regarded as the first day of the new year, with the chain of these feasts beginning afresh thereafter.

Another festival kept by this calendar began after the sun set on *Hamaspāmaedaya*, and lasted until just before sunrise of the following day. It was the only observance which took place at night, and was probably called in Zoroaster's day something like the "Night of Souls (*urvan-*)". Each family then welcomed back their departed kindred to their old home, to be received with ritual blessings and gifts of consecrated food and clothing, the essence of which, through this consecration, was believed to reach them. (See further under *FARVARDGŌN*). To judge from the existence of similar nocturnal observances among other Indo-European peoples, this was a very ancient rite. But quite early in the *YAv.* period, it appears, as the religion spread, gaining more converts, pressure from them (Boyce, 1995) led to its absorbing the hugely popular cult of spirits of the heroic dead, the *Fravašis*, who were the family protectors, and it was presumably renamed «Night of the *Fravašis*» (though the *urvan-* were still believed all to come). Since Zoroastrianism seeks to further joy against sorrow, it was (as later usage shows), a happy celebration, with the hosts seeking to gladden their invisible guests with choice foods (of which they themselves partook in communion with them) and with the brightness cast by fires fragrant with incense. There was thus a continuity of observances from the sunrise of *Hamaspāmaedaya* to the sunset of Nowruz, forming the holiest and happiest time of the year.

By another pious development of the *YAv.* period a distinctive Zoroastrian calendar was created by devoting each of the 30 days of the month to one of the beneficent divine beings, who was named thereafter at all acts of worship on that day, and was looked to then for special care and protection. What probably began as a mnemonic list of these dedications, as "[the day] of so-and-so", came to form the essential part of *Y.16*, and shows clearly the divergences between them and the dedications of the Seasonal Feasts and Nowruz. This is because the first 7 month days are also devoted to the members of the *Heptad*, but in a different order. So *Ahura Mazda* receives the first month day (which in the first month of the year is Nowruz) but the sixth Seasonal Feast, and *Aša* receives the third month day. There is no indication that these overlappings (accommodated in the liturgies) troubled the faithful, and millennia later *Rapiwina* was being honored on both the first and third days of the first month, a happy duplication which may have a long history.

No month names appear in *Y.16*, and this accords with indications that those of the known Zoroastrian calendar were not given until the later Achaemenian period. Only one set of Old Iranian month names exists, that in the Perso-Babylonian calendar of the *Bisotun* inscription (see *CALENDAR: i*), and its months appear to be named for seasonal activities or phenomena. This is a widespread custom in ancient calendars, and it seems probable that when it was evolved the *YAv.* devotional one simply kept whatever month names of this kind was then in use among the Avestan peoples. The list of 30 *YAv.* day dedications indicates a calendar of the most advanced ancient type, attested among peoples gifted in such matters across the world (Nilsson, Chaps. 3 and 9); that is, it was calculated by the sun and had 12 months and 360 days, and was kept in harmony with the longer natural year by intermittent intercalating of a 13th month. Ideally this would have taken place every 6 years, but probably it was carried out irregularly, whenever the festivals were felt to be falling unacceptably behind due season. This, though a clumsy seeming device, was practical, and would have ensured that Nowruz would always have been kept at or near the spring equinox.

Nowruz in the 365-day calendar of the Achaemenians: The prevailing scholarly opinion is now that

the early Achaemenians, at least from the time of Cyrus the Great, were Zoroastrians. Yet in his Bisotun inscription Darius (522-486 BCE) used not the Zoroastrian calendar but a Perso-Babylonian one, with OP month names (see under CALENDARS, p. 659) and days that were simply numbered. Apart from the month names this was the Babylonian lunar calendar familiar to the Achaemenians' Elamite scribes, whose 12 months were kept in harmony with the natural year by the regular intercalation of 3 extra months every 8 years. But during Darius' reign Babylonian astronomers replaced this system by a more accurate one of a 19-year cycle, with intercalation of 7 months at a time; and numerous dated cuneiform tablets show that this system was adopted by the Persian King's Elamite scribes in 503.

These facts have strengthened a fairly general and well-established assumption that when one of Darius' successors introduced a 365-day Zoroastrian calendar this was an entirely new creation, and that the YAv. list of day names was a backformation. This assumption leaves unexplained, however, many problems (of which most of its supporters have plainly been unaware), and these problems do not exist if one adopts an alternate hypothesis: that when the Persians embraced Zoroastrianism they accepted the YAv. calendar as a devotional one, guiding their religious lives, but kept the Perso-Babylonian one for secular purposes, reckoning by it such things as the regnal years of their kings, important political events, and tax years. The use of two different calendars in such ways is a well known phenomenon, occurring again in Iran itself in Islamic times.

One then has, on this hypothesis, to make the further assumption that when in due course the YAv. calendar, modified by the addition of 5 days, became the Achaemenians' state calendar, since it kept its religious character it was not used by unbelievers among their subjects, even if they were in the Great King's employ. This assumption is supported by the fact that this was the usage under the Arsacids (see below).

It has long been recognized that the Persians adopted a 365-day calendar on the model of the Egyptian one, which became known to them after Cambyses' conquest of Egypt in 525 BCE. The Egyptians had brought their own 360-day solar calendar into as close a correspondence with the natural year in possible while reckoning only in whole days by adding 5 days as an extra "Little Month" at the end year's end; and some influential Persians, most probably Treasury officials sent to work in the conquered land, must have been attracted by this method of time-reckoning, as better suited to administrative purposes than the Babylonian lunar one. But years appear to have passed before it occurred to some pioneering spirit that the Persians could follow the Egyptians' example by modifying in the same way a 360-day solar calendar of their own, namely the Zoroastrian devotional one. Much diligent persuasion would surely have then been needed to win support for so bold a measure, which was adopted, it is calculated, in the reign of Xerxes, Darius' son (486-465); but presumably high dignitaries in the powerful order of scribes would have been fairly readily convinced of its advantages, and leading Persian priests must also have been won over, seeing it perhaps as an enhancement of the dignity of the religion. But explaining what was proposed to intelligent men through direct discussions would have been a very different matter from explaining it generally to the diverse Zoroastrian communities of the vast Persian empire, non-literate as most of Xerxes' subjects would naturally have been, and with a number of them perhaps not greatly trusting their Persian ruler in matters of religion; and the results show that attempts to gain willing acceptance of the measure failed to a marked degree, with most people not only bewildered to resist any change that would prevent them offering due veneration to the divine beings at the property appointed times.

What mattered, however, for the introduction of any new measure was the approval of the Great

King. As his Daiva inscription shows, Xerxes was a devout Zoroastrian and capable of ruthless action over what he thought right for the religion; and in the case of the proposed calendar reform he was also doubtless interested in a development that promised more efficient administration of his immense possessions, and could command enough obedience from those in authority among his subjects — the Persian satraps and their priests and nobles, the judges and ministers of state, and above all the army — to impose his will. It was proposed to follow the Egyptian model by introducing the 5 extra days at the end of the year, which for Zoroastrians was just before Nowruz (with Rapi?wina not yet returned and winter still theoretically reigning); and a year for this would naturally have been chosen when by the 360-day religious calendar Nowruz was to be kept 5 days before the spring equinox. This, it has been calculated, would have been the case in the years 481 to 479 BCE. The discrepancy would up till then have been adjusted in due course when an extra month was intercalated. Instead it must now have been decreed that 5 days were to pass after the last day of the old year before the great festival was celebrated, with heavy penalties doubtless for any who disobeyed. As with the days of the Egyptian “Little Month”, these 5 days were evidently simply numbered. (There is no indication of dedications being assigned to them before the later Sasanian period, see under g?h?nb?r.) Various Persian terms are recorded for them as a group in post-Achaemenian times, and the one which most probably represents their original official designation is Phl. Andar G?h, the “Between Time”, cf. the Av. adj. antara- (Air. Wb., col. 132) and MP g?h ii, used also for “days of the) Between Time.”

An also well attested MP term for these days is, however, the abusive “Stolen Days”, R?z ? duz?dag/truftag; and plainly most people remained utterly perplexed about how they had seemingly been conjured into existence, _”stolen” from where, and why? The concept of days without religious dedications would have long been alien to Zoroastrians, and some courageous individuals may have felt impelled openly to defy the royal decree, and so almost certainly to suffer martyrdom. (Men have died resisting calendar change in other societies.) But the reformists and those submitting fully to the imperial decree, would have celebrated Hamaspa?maedaya and the Fravašis’ Night as usual, on XII. 30 bidding their unseen visitants farewell as dawn brightened, and when have entered the unfamiliar limbo of the “Between Time”, all religious activity suspended. Most people, however, the evidence shows, in their incomprehension ignored the 5 extra days and celebrated Nowruz, as usual, but with perforce diminished observances, in the privacy of their own homes, and then continued counting the days normally, so that when the time came for the official celebration of Nowruz with religious rites and public banquets, it was by their reckoning not 1.1. but 1.6.

There is no reason to doubt that then almost all would have joined in the public observations, both out of prudence and because these would have been familiar and both deeply felt and much enjoyed; and as long as the proper holy day had already been kept, there could be no harm in keeping it again. And so it must have gone on throughout the first year of the reform, with every major festival being celebrated twice by the traditionalists, once privately and five days later publicly. But by doing this they had to confront the reality of the new calendar: however inexplicable its origins, and however wrong its workings, it now existed, side by side with their own, and, having the weight of royal authority, to be accepted.

When, however, they reached the end of their own old calendar year, because at the introduction of the 5 extra days they had ignored them, they were now 10 days in advance of the reformed calendar: their XII.30 was its XII.25, with the second “Between Time” still to come. They were faced thus with a dilemma for which there was no simple solution; but they evidently decided (which suggests consultation among their leaders) that the best way of not failing in their religious

duty was to maintain the tradition of a ritual farewell to the Fravašis just before sunrise of Nowruz. This then meant entertaining these honored guests for all the 10 days which now intervened between their apprehended coming after sunset of XII.25 by the old calendar and departing before sunrise of I.1 by the new. All 10 days came accordingly to be called the “Fravašis Days”, (MP R?z?n Fravard?g?n, reduced in later usage to Fr?rd?g?n).

Thereafter, through this acceptance of the new calendar, there should have been a return to the single observance of festivals. But what marked the traditionalists was good memories, and they did not forget that in the previous year Nowruz had been officially celebrated on what was for them I.6; and so they now celebrated it again, privately, on that day, which is the month day dedicated to Haurvat?t (MP Hord?d/Khord?d). All other major festivals were evidently then repeated similarly through the second year of the reform; and it indicates the utter perplexity produced for the majority by that reform, and the confusions in their struggles to cope with it, that whereas in its first year they had celebrated the major festivals privately 5 days before they were officially kept, now in the second year they did so days afterwards.

The one exception to this pattern of duplication which developed in the second year of reform is Hamaspa?maedaya, the greatest of the 6 Seasonal Feasts, and evidently indissolubly linked to the “Fravašis’ Night”. The two were now celebrated, one after the other, during the 24 hours of XII.25, but not again until the 5th “Between Day”, in order that the “Fravašis’ Night” should immediately precede Nowruz. So in their case the duplication took place after 10, not 5, days (with a third celebration of the “Fravašis’ Night” alone to judge from later usage, on the eve of I.6).

Given the obvious scale of the traditionalists’ private non-compliance, it is unthinkable that the authorities would not have been aware of it from the outset; but, because of its scale, it would have been impossible for them to suppress it, and they were presumably content with enforcing public acceptance of the 365-day calendar, and expected the private duplication of observances soon to wither away. But on the contrary the traditionalists, secure in numbers, evidently grew bold and began to celebrate their duplicated feasts openly, and to claim that these were “greater” than those kept by the reformed calendar, being the truly valid ones. Further, a number of people who had accepted the reformed calendar half-heartedly, or under duress, probably came now to share this conviction and to swell the ranks of those celebrating the duplicated feasts; and so strong did this movement become that before the end of the Achaemenian epoch the Great Kings evidently accepted it and themselves kept these feasts. (The evidence for this is that “greater” feast days appear in the Zoroastrian calendars of post-Achaemenian times (see below), which must descend from the state calendar which was in use before the fall of the Persian empire. At some point, accordingly, a leading priest or priests felt justified in altering a vital phrase in Yt. 13.49, so that as this hymn has been transmitted it declares that the Fravašis, returning to their old homes “at the time (ratu-) of Hamaspa?maedaya, are present there “for 10 nights”, *dasa pairi xšafn?*, in place of “for the night” of the like. There is a paradox in this, in that the traditionalists, striving to be faithful in every respect, found themselves impelled to alter words in what should have been the immutable authority of a sacred Avestan text.

At some stage also a few manuscripts of the Av. *?fr?nag?n ? G?h?nb?r*, that is, the *?fr?nag?n* for the “Seasonal Feasts”, give as the days for celebrating these feasts the second or “great” ones; but the Av. phrases involved are short and very simple, and the insertions, which were plainly not generally accepted, could have been made even as late as Sasanian times. (Geldner, *Avesta* ii, pp. 272-74, marks them off from the rest of the text, and in his tr. Darmesteter, *Zend-Avesta* ii, pp. 732-34, distinguishes them as 7a, 8a, etc.)

Another development, consequent on celebrating Great Nowruz on 1.6, is likely to have come about simply through the persistence of popular usage. This was the custom of sprinkling each other then with water in honour plainly of Haurvat?t (Hord?d) whose day it is, and whose creation is water.

There was one further irony in that, as a consequence of each second duplicated feast being considered the greater, the second celebration of Hamaspa?maedaya, held on the fifth “Between Day”, came to be regarded as greater than the first on XII.25; and the whole set of “Between Days”, which from the second pentad of the R?z?n Fravard?g?n, as greater than the first pentad. So the “Stolen Days”, so bitterly suspect, were nevertheless incorporated in the devotional year.

The development thus brought about unintentionally by the calendar reform in the holiest time of the year proved to be not only large-scale but lasting, with an observance till then of 36 hours extended to one of 18 days: from sunrise on XII.25 (the 1st Hamaspa?maedaya), through that night (the 1st “Fravašis’ Night”), to XII.26-30 (the first pentad of the R?z?n Fravard?g?n); then the 5 “Between Days” (their 2nd pentad, ending on the 5th day with the 2nd celebration of Hamaspa?maedaya, and after sunset the 2nd one of the “Fravašis Night”); then I.1 (Lesser Nowruz) and I.2-5 (which, with I.1, was a 2nd celebration of the 2nd pentad of the R?z?n Fravard?g?n, followed by the 3rd one of the “Fravašis’ Night”) to I.6 (Greater Nowruz), 17 days in all; and then, since Great Nowruz was filled with observances and festivities at places of worship and in the home, an 18th day was added which preserved the essential symbolism of the “New Day” feast, for it was spent out of doors, in garden, orchard or field, with carefree enjoyment and delight in the resurgence of spring. (The adding of this one day may well predate the calendar reform.)

This account of developments consequent on the Achaemenian calendar reform is based necessarily on evidence from later times, for the Achaemenian period is in many respects ill-documented, and there is no trace from then even of the existence of a Zoroastrian calendar. But that the YAv. calendar was in use then, modified by the extra 5 days, can be inferred from a number of local calendars (all but one Iranian) which survive, in complete or fragmentary state, from post-Achaemenian times (see CALENDARS: i). Those by now known are Middle Persian, Parthian, Sogdian, ?warezmian, Bactrian, Cappadocian and Old Armenian. The last was recorded by a Christian Armenian scholar in the eighth century C.E., the others survive through literary sources and actual use into the early Christian/Islamic periods, and all belong to regions which had been Achaemenian satrapies, and which after the downfall of the Persian empire were never again ruled by a single, unifying power. So what they have in common —and that, allowing for differences in language, is almost everything — can safely be held to derive from an Achaemenian state calendar brought into use by the Persian early enough in their epoch to become established as the accepted means of time-reckoning for all their Zoroastrian subjects. These calendars have day names descended from those given in the YAv., with indications of the existence of the 5 extra days and the 10-day Fravard?g?n. The MP calendar is fully known and is that which (with developed forms of its names) is still in use by Zoroastrians today; and it is reasonable to suppose that it represents almost without change the OP one of the Achaemenians. One new feature which can be attributed to the late Sasanian period is the giving of individual dedications to the 5 “Between Time” days; but the older treatment of them as a featureless group is clearly attested in the Old Arm. calendar, where this time is simply called that “of the added (days),” Aveleats´ (Aweleats´), gen. pl. of aveli (aweli), cf. Gk epagomenai.

It and the other calendars all have month names, which, according to various small indications,

were introduced in the Achaemenian period sometime after the main calendar reform. This was presumably a purely devotional measure, by which the month names of the YAv. calendar (which, as we have seen, were probably mundane) were replaced by religious ones. These (keeping innovation to a minimum) were chosen from among the day names: but since there was no Avestan authority to follow in this case, some latitude seems to have been given to regional priesthoods. One variation occurs in the naming of the first month, which in the MP and Pth. calendars is devoted to the Fravašis (with use of the gen. pl. Fravardʾn, “[month] of the F.”), but in the Sogd., ʾvar and Arm. Ones is given to the “[spirit] of the New Year (Navasard)”, while in the Arm. Alone it is the twelfth month (otherwise assigned to Spʾnta ʾrmaiti / Spendarmad) which is dedicated to the Fravašis (also with a gen. pl., Hrotits / Hrotic). In this case the Persians and others appear to have been influenced by the duplication of observances which had brought it about that the Fravšis were thought to remain at their old homes till I.5, and so, by naming the first month for them, they may have been stressing this, and with it the paramount importance of the Great Nowruz; whereas the Armenians plainly chose rather to honour the Fravašis with thought of their coming on the night of XII.25. In so doing they appear truer to an age-old tradition that the feast of souls belongs to the old year and winter with its darkness.

The giving of month names resulted in the inauguration of a new series of feasts of a type previously unknown in Zoroastrianism but common in Near Eastern religions — festivities dedicated simply to a single divinity; for whenever a month and day name were the same, that day was declared to be the feast of the divinity concerned. (The term for these feasts, MP jašn

The Achaemenian calendar reform, initiated, it seems, for what was perceived to be a practical advantage, can be considered to have damaged the Zoroastrian religious year through causing such complex duplications of holy days; but in time these duplications, and above all the 18-day observance culminating at the Greater Nowruz, came to be a joy to the devout as the protraction of times rich in worship, and to others a welcome additional holidays (although necessary work still had to be done, and only priests and the rich could have kept the full period without any secular activities). The real and lasting harm developed from replacing the old 360-day calendar, kept stable in relation to the seasons by intercalation, with a 365-day one used without intercalation, as has by now been established (see most recently de Blois, 1996). At its introduction, pinpointed as being in a year between 481 and 478, 1 Fravardʾn would have coincided with the spring equinox; but almost at once the calendar year began to recede by a day every four years against the natural year — a movement barely perceptible to individuals in their own lifetimes, but which by the end of the Achaemenian period would have led to dislocation of the 365-day calendar by over a month. This was especially damaging for the celebration of Nowruz, since the symbolism of spring is so deeply significant for the “New Day” feast.

Nowruz under the Arsacids: The earliest evidence for state use of the Zoroastrian calendar comes from under the Arsacids, and is provided by some of the many ostraca excavated at their royal fortress of Old Nisa. These, from the first century BCE, are dated by the year according to the Arsacid era, with the months and days of the Zoroastrian calendar (I.M. Diakonoff and V.A. Livshits, ed. D.N. MacKenzie). Two inscriptions and a legal document survive from later Arsacid reigns dated in the same way; but the dynasty’s non-Zoroastrian subjects (Hellene, Babylonian and Syrian) dated still by the Macedonian calendar made current by the Seleucids, with use of either the Arsacid or the Seleucid era, or both side by side.

The Arsacid period also provides the earliest description of Nowruz festivities. This comes from the romantic epic *Vis u Ramin*, which was identified by V. M. Minorsky (1946, 1947, 1954 and

1962, with all these articles collected and revised by him in 1964, pp. 151-99) as by origin a Parthian oral work, which has passed through an MP version and exists in the classical Persian rendering of Gorg?ni (ed. M. A. Todua and A.A. Gwakharia. French tr. by H. Mass é. Eng. tr. by G. Morrison, in which the episodes are numbered as in the earlier editions by M. Minovi and M. J. Mahjub. For further bibliography see de Blois, 1992, pp. 165-67). The poem has plainly undergone revisions and extensions in the course of its long transmission, but much has been shown to belong to the Parthian original. This includes the royal banquet with which the poem begins. Not only is such a banquet a characteristic way to launch an epic, but what happens at this one is essential to the story. The host is Mobad, lord of Marv, that is, a vassal king of the Arsacids; but in the epic his concept often blurs, as here, with that of a Parthian Great King. So he is termed lord of the earth and greatest of all kings, and his guests are vassal kings and nobles, with their ladies, from all parts of Iran, including P?rs. The banquet is held in the open, under blossoming trees, and wine flows freely to the sound of minstrelsy and birdsong. Meantime the King's humbler subjects are also celebrating out of doors, in field and garden, likewise with wine and music, some racing their horses, others dancing or picking flowers; and in the days that follow the King rides out, magnificently attended, and distributes largess lavishly. (Ed. Todua and Gwakharia, pp. 34-35. tr. Morrison, pp. 19-21.).

A difficulty for accepting this straightforwardly as a Parthian account of Nowruz festivities is that during the Arsacid period the month Fravard?n continued to recede slowly against the natural year, passing through winter into autumn, while in the poem this joyous celebration is called the Bah?rjašn, the "Spring Festival". This expression is recorded by Biruni (Q?n?n, Vol. I, 1954, pp. 260, 264, see de Blois, 1996, p. 47) for the Greater Nowruz of 6?dar, which belongs to the Sasanian calendar reform of the sixth century C.E. There are two passages in Vis u Ramin where the text has obviously been adjusted to that calendar change, but this can hardly be a third one, for this spring festival, being an essential part of the story, should belong to the epic's Parthian core. It seems likely therefore that this is the earliest known attempt by Zoroastrians to solve the problems with regard to Nowruz produced by the Achaemenian calendar reform. Till that reform, Nowruz would have been kept always in at least approximate relationship to the natural seasons by the intercalation of a month at fairly frequent intervals, and so would always have been celebrated in the spring. A celebration at that time of year is not only doctrinally appropriate but also natural and delightful, and so, it seems, there came to be a third Nowruz in addition to the "Lesser" and the "Great" ones, held at the spring equinox. This Nowruz appears then to have acquired in due course its own distinctive legend: that it had been founded through the action of the Pišd?di?n hero-king, Av. Yima [?ša?ta], Pth. Yim, MP Jam, Jamš?d, who figures largely in the Iranian "national" epic, the older parts of which took shape in the Arsacid period; and the association through him of the "Spring Festival" with the holy Avesta gave it still a religious tincture.

Nowruz in Pahlavi literature and under the Sasanians: Materials in Pahlavi literature are often impossible to date. It is written in the Middle Persian of the later Sasanian period, which had become the literary koine of the Iranian lands ruled by Persia, and had absorbed many non-Persian words, mainly Parthian. Somewhat similarly its contents were often drawn from various Iranian oral traditions, including Parthian, with generations of anonymous transmitters adding to them. So as small text glorifying the day Hord?d of the month Fravard?n, that is, the Great Nowruz, may well have its origins in priestly schools of the Achaemenian period, passed down and developed in Parthian times. (Ed. by J. M. Jamasp Asana, pp. 102-08. Eng. tr. by K.J. Jamasp Asana, pp. 122-29. German tr. by J. Markwart, with reproduction of the text and notes, 1930, pp. 742-65B.) It has the simplest of structures, being no more than a list of all the great events that are declared either to have happened on that auspicious day or been set in motion then. This begins with

creation by Ohrmazd and proceeds through achievements by Pišd?di?n kings, down to the golden age of Jam, to whom three memorable deeds are assigned. The first, that he “made this world immortal and undecaying” derives from the Avestan legend of Yima, but the origin of other two is less obvious. The third being “the making of ossuaries (ast?d?n?h?) and ordering people to make them.” And when they saw what was ordered by Jam, they “made the day ‘New Day’ and called it ‘New Day’” (r?z pad n?g r?z kerd ud n?g r?z n?m nih?d), ed. J. M. Jamasp Asana, paragraph 11). This last statement has little logical justification in what has gone before, and appears to have been inserted irrelevantly by a copyist familiar with the connection of Jam with the spring Nowruz.

There follows a relatively long section on acts performed on that day by kings and heroes of the Kayanian epic, with next the birth of Zoroaster and the conversion of Vištasp, after which, by what appears to be another arbitrary insertion, comes the only claim put forward for a manifestation of the day’s glory in Sasanian times, that on it “?? events in 18 years” came to ?usrow II (593-628 CE). This is the only reference to a datable figure in the text, which then passes on to prophecy, foretelling what will happen on this day as time draws to a close, and culminating in Frašegird, which will be brought about on this day by Ohrmazd. This text presumably began as propaganda for the superiority of the Great Nowruz over the “lesser” feast when this was a burning issue, that is in the Achaemenian period, just after the calendar reform, and its core had probably been handed down in priestly schools to Sasanian times, when this controversy no longer raged. From the outset, however, the “Lesser Nowruz” had enjoyed its own incontrovertible claim to superiority.

There is a Phalavi passage referring to both the Great and the Lesser Nowruz in the difficult text, the N?rangest?n, which cannot be at all closely dated. In the passage concerned (ed. F.M. Kotwal and P.G. Kreyenbroek, vol. III, p. 120) the anonymous priestly authors give the xšn?man (dedication) for services celebrated on “The day Hord?d... which (is) the Day of the year” (Hord?d r?z ...? r?z? s?l), and the Avestan is “(by the grace) of the yearly Haurvat?t” (haurvat?t? ...y?iryay??). What the meaning is here of y?irya- is not certain. Does it signify uniquely as is usually supposed, of the (New) year”, or does it indicate the one important day Hord?d of the 12 such month days in every year? Whatever the precise sense, later usage attests that “?ord?d-S?l” became one of the regular terms used for the Great Nowruz. The N?rangest?n authors then cite a named authority for the use of a particular expression in the longer term cf. the xšn?man for this day, but also another, nameless one who rejects this, suggesting that it was for “[Day] One – for Nowruz” (?k – pad n?g r?z). So at the time when this text was composed, the Lesser Nowruz, on the first day of Fravard?n, was called the “New Day”, and the Greater Nowruz was known by this other expression.

The earliest text of unquestionably Sasanian date with a bearing on Nowruz is the statement by the prophet Mani, made in or before the year 244 CE, that in the Iranian calendar there were 5 days “which are reckoned as the Panz G?h”, that is, the “Five (Day) Times”, a variant on Andar G?h. (F.C. Andreas and W. B. Henning, p. 190. Henning, 1934, pp. 32-35 = his Selected Works, 1977, I, pp. 346-49, with further discussion by W. Sundermann, 1979, pp. 109-11. Cf The Pazand M?n?g ? ?rad, Ch. 57.13: panj g?h ? fravard?n “the 5 [Day] Times of F.”) Not so long after this Biruni records, (??r, p. 218), “H?rmizd b. Š?pur”, that is, H?rmizd I, is said to have connected the two Nowruz (Lesser and Great) together, raising to feast days all the days between. All these days thus became officially holy days of obligation, when only necessary work should be done. H?rmizd reigned only briefly (272-273), but his high priest was Kird?r, to whom this measure can be attributed. It also affected the chain of 6 Seasonal Feasts, to which in his inscriptions Kird?r still referred as rad (Av. ratu-); and in one of them (KZ, I.15) he claimed to have had performed at his own expense 6798 radpass?g, that is, religious services for these feasts (D.N. MacKenzie, 1970,

pp. 264-66, with further 1989, pp. 65-66, 71, and Boyce under G?H?NB?RS). The special service for all 6 festivals (as for Nowruz) is the Visperad (see under Avesta) to which possibly he alluded by this name. The only Seasonal Feast which could not be made to conform to this general pattern was Hamaspa?maedayā, since 8, not 4, days intervened between its celebrations on XII.25 and the last of the “Between Days”; and the solution found for it appears to have been to keep XII.25 as the day of its first celebration, and then, after a 5-day gap (the first pentad of the R?z?n Fravard?g?n) to treat all the 5 “Between Days” as belonging to the rad, making six days in all. There was thus a further sanctification of the “stolen days” as part of the devotional year.

A number of other notices concerning Nowruz were composed or modified after the Sasanian calendar reform of the early sixth century CE; and so it is necessary to go at once to it, leaving a considerable gap in time. It is possible to guess, however, at some of the preparatory activity that must have gone on in the intervening years. The reform was clearly inspired by the adoption in the Roman empire in 46 BCE of the Julian calendar of 365 $\frac{1}{4}$ days, the quarter days being added as a whole one every 4 years. This calendar had been introduced to halt the regression against the natural year of the one till then in use by the Romans, and provided the Zoroastrians with a model for checking the similar regression of their own calendar. But the introduction of a single day in this manner would have presented difficulties for them, not least the repeated dislocation of the established pattern of observances on the eve of Nowruz. There were probably therefore years of intermittent deliberations before the suggestion gathered support that instead a whole month should be inserted every 120 years, which would prevent the regression of the calendar year ever becoming so seriously damaging again. There was, however, still a problem, for it was evidently believed (presumably after propaganda of the Achaemenian period) that the 365-day calendar had been created by Ohrmazd himself. (Iranian Bundahišn, ed. P. D. Anklesaria, fol. 12.15-13.2) Now, therefore, it was declared (apparently as a simple assertion) that it became needful thereafter for Zoroaster to “intercalate the years with months”, whereby “time returned to its original condition. There he ordered people in all future times to do so” (B?r?n?, ???r, p. 55). So since nevertheless the calendar which they were using was defective, their ancestors must have been at fault in failing to carry out the prophet’s command. This interpretation of the facts allowed its supporters to argue for reform not as something new, still less as of foreign inspiration, but as a return to due obedience to the prophet’s wishes and so thoroughly meritorious.

It appears that by no means all were easily convinced, since discussions seem to have been long drawn out before at last the King called a great council to consider the matter. Biruni (???r, p. 44) refers to such councils as if they had occurred repeatedly, but it is virtually certain that the description he gives is of this one particular meaning. The council was made up, he says, of “mathematicians, literary celebrities, historiographers and chronicles, priests and judges”; but what decision was reached would have rested, formally at least, with the King. The priests’ case must have carried weight with regard to restoring the doctrinal link between natural seasons, for Nowruz especially, but some councilors (most probably ministers of state and other leading figures among the influential order of scribes) must have argued persuasively for the advantages of keeping the calendar as it was, for among them also there were doubtless faithful traditionalists, and 1 Farvard?n had been by now New Year’s day — and Nowruz — from time immemorial.

The solution reached, through an awkward compromise, was to work for several centuries (until long after it had in fact passed its usefulness). By what may be termed the Royal Reckoning 1 Fravard?n remained New Year’s day, to be used as such for secular purposes, such as taxation and the counting of regnal years; but there was also to be a Priestly Reckoning for the priests were to be allowed to move the official religious observance of Nowruz to the first day of whatever month,

at the time the reform was enacted, coincided with the spring equinox. The intention was obviously to intercalate thereafter a month every 120 years, so that this holiest of festivals would never again be further than a month away from its rightful season. With Nowruz (the Lesser and the Great) were moved the 6 Seasonal Feasts, with which were the essential communal observances of the devotional year and some other important feasts also. But loyalty to tradition meant, it seems, that a probably predominantly secular Nowruz was also still kept on 1 Fravard?n, and this was very likely observed by priests among themselves, as well as by the laity generally. Indeed one may assume that from the outset almost the whole community would have kept both festivals, for there is no reason to doubt that most scribes were devout, as well as that most priests enjoyed festive occasions; and in time the observance in Fravard?n M?h seems to have attracted the legends associating a secular Nowruz with Jamš?d, a development originating probably (according to the hypothesis proposed above) in connection with the Bah?r Jašn of the Arsacid period.

The year chosen for implementing the reform was one when 1 ?dar, the ninth calendar month, coincided with the spring equinox. This occurred in 507-511 CE (S.H. Taqizadeh apud V. Minorsky, 1947, p. 35), when Kav?d 1 (488-531 CE) was on the throne; but the great council for deciding on the reform may well have been held in the time of his father P?r?z (459-484, see B?r?n?, ???r, pp. 45, 118-19. Otherwise idem, Q?n?n, I, pp. 91, 132). The way it was carried out (cf. de Blois, 1996, p. 47) was presumably that before the beginning of the chosen year people were ordered to ignore the 5 “Between Days” and to proceed directly from XII.30 to 1.1 (as their ancestors would have done in the distant times of the 360-day calendar). They would then have carried on through the following eight months, with every family observance, and every communal one which remained in the Royal Reckoning, coming 5 days early. The Fravašis would then have been welcomed on 25 ?b?n and entertained through 26-30 ?b?n and the “Between Days”; and on 1 ?dar the lesser Nowruz would have been celebrated.

The confusion attending this reform must have been less than at the Achaemenian one. There was apparently agreement on it, so confrontations should not have existed. It was led by the priests, which must have been reassuring in matters affecting the religion; and they could give the reason for it, which was relatively easy to understand, and if not understood could nevertheless be provided in firm dogmatic terms, with the compelling argument that the religious Nowruz should be held in the spring; and the calendar remained unchanged in length, with no inexplicable “stolen days” appearing. Yet the reform must have caused considerable distress in its first year and for some little time afterwards. The earliest reference for it having taken place comes from a Syrian Christian martyrology, where it is stated that in the thirtieth year of King Kav?d, that is in 518 CE (when 1 Fravard?n was a summer month), the Persians celebrated “Fr?rd?g?n” in a month equivalent to the English spring month of March (G. Hoffmann, p. 79).

Another development brought about by the calendar reform affected Hamaspa?maedaya, and so indirectly Nowruz. In its case (it has been deduced, see above) when Kird?r made the “Seasonal Feasts” ?-day festivals, Hamaspa?maedaya had been awkwardly split, with 25 Spendarmad as its first day and (after a 5-day gap) the Panj G?h, the 5 “Between Days”, as the remainder of the observance. But now by the Priest’s Reckoning the link was broken between 25 Spendarmad and this rad, which had existed since the time of the Achaemenian reform; and it evidently occurred to some priest that Panj G?h could – or perhaps even should – be understood to mean, not the “(Time of) the 5 Days” but the “(Time of) the 5 G??s”, that is, the 5 groups of Zoroaster’s hymns. (The Avestan word g??- had developed into g?h in MP usage, and so was identical in form with MP g?h “time, day”). So the celebration of the first day of Hamaspa?maedaya was abandoned, and this rad was reduced to the 5 “Between Days”, with each day being dedicated to the Spirit of one of the

G??s, and the whole festival being known as the G?h?nb?r, “Time of the G??s”. This development appears to have been treated by some with reserve, to judge from the (un-datable) reference in the Iranian Bundahišn (Ch. Ia.22) to “those 5 stolen days – some call them the 5 Gathic Times, some the Good Pentad” (?n panj r?z ? truftag, ast k? panjag ? weh g?w?d). But the usage became widely accepted, and in time the term g?h?nb?r was applied to the other Seasonal Feasts also. The old one, rad, was dropped, and all six were reduced to the same pattern of 5-day feasts, the 5th day being in each case the “great” one. (See further under g?h?nb?r, p.255 and Boyce, 1970, pp. 535-36). Only Nowruz remained a 6-day observance.

There is no trace of the term g?h?nb?r, or of one like it, in any of the calendars inherited from Achaemenian times by Zoroastrian communities outside the Sasanian empire, nor of the moving of the 5 “Between Days” to before ?dar M?h.

Nowruz in early post-Sasanian times: The effects and the local failures of the sixth-century calendar reform can be traced, but in a way that sometimes leaves problems, in the literature of the early centuries after the Arab conquest. Because of the huge losses of Zoroastrian books, then and thereafter, most of the information comes from the writings of Moslem scholars. These sometimes contain materials from earlier Moslem works that have also been lost, so that dating can be problematic.

To take first the connection claimed between the Panj G?h and the G??s: Biruni (???r, p. 43) cites three books which he had consulted, in all of which these 5 days were called individually by badly garbled forms of the G??s’ Avestan names, but then, by an unwitting confusion, he cites from a fourth book 5 terms for them as group, each of which refers to them simply as the Panje, “Pentad”. The 5 adjectives which are given for the Panje (elucidated by Henning, 1952, p. 203 n.1) are the traditionally abusive “stolen” (trufte and duz?de); a laudatory “fortunate” (hujaste); and the neutral “of Fravardigan” (Varvardiy?n) and “of the Between Days” (andarg?h?n). B?r?n?’s contemporary, the astronomer and mathematician Kušyar, says simply that the 5 additional days “are called the stolen days”, the only term apparently known to him.

This statement appears in his Z?ju-l j?mi’ (in a passage cited here from de Blois, 1996, pp. 41-42), in which he gives the only direct information there is about when the 5 days were moved back to the end of Isfand?rmad month (which meant abandonment of the Priests’ Reckoning and return of the religious Nowruz to 1 Fravard?n). Kušyar writes that “after the Arab conquest the five (days) remained at the end of ?b?n-m?h up until the year 375 of Yazdegird, and the sun took up residence in Aries on the first day of Farward?n-m?h, and the five (days) were moved to the end of isfandarmad-m?h”. The year 375 Yazdegird? corresponds to 1006 CE, and 1 Fravard?n to March 15th in that year by the Julian calendar.

There exists a small and difficult Pahlavi text (ed. and elucidated by de Blois, 2003, pp. 139-43) which is dated 377 Yazdegird?, just two years later and this sheds, uniquely, a direct light on the perplexities that must also have attended the two earlier calendar changes. It represents a letter written by the priests of Abaršahr (northern Khorasan) apparently to brethren in Pars (Fars), saying that they have accepted the wih?zag (“movement”), and have “performed worship” (yazišn) according to that “ritual regulation”. But (they continue) one student-priest (h?wišt) says: ‘Untile such time as it is clear to me why they carried out this wih?zagi it will have no validity for me, for I met M?bad Farrah-Sr?š, and he wrote an explanation and he made many considerations, but still I do not know why he has carried out this wih?zag.’ Then a letter arrived from the land of Baghdad from Ust?d Ab? Miswar Yazd?n-p?s, son of Marzb?n... saying: ‘We have looked in the books of

the religion and have accepted the wih?zag of the leader of the people of the Good Religion”, undoubtedly the M?bad?n M?bad of Pars. But still the student-priest was unconvinced, saying that the Ust?d was “a man of the government” (that is, presumably, a respected Zoroastrian scribe employed by the Buyid ruler of that time), and “does not know about the religion”. There was no longer a Zoroastrian great king to enforce the reform, and so the priests of Khorasan (who had, it seems, been shaken by their student’s doubts on this matter) ask for a further ruling. The evidence provided by this letter is corroborated by B?r?n?, who, writing in 1030 CE (Q?n?n, I, p. 76; commented on by de Blois, 1996, p. 42), says that in the days of the Daylamites (Buyids) the 5 days had been moved to the end of Isfandarmad M?h – after, he explains, the neglect of four intercalations of one month, so that the calendar was four months in arrears. He accepted the Zoroastrian priests’ claim that such intercalation had frequently been practised from the time of Zoroaster (???r, p. 45); and he also explains, evidently on similar authority (???r, p. 44), why it had been thought impossible by the Zoroastrians to insert quarter-days instead of months, because it would disturb the order of the days of prayer “according to the laws”. But in the Q?n?n he says that the moving of the 5 days back to the end of Isfandarmad was not widely recognized beyond those parts of Iran where the Buyids ruled – that is, in the west – and that “many of the Magians of Khurasan have rejected it”. It is further known that N?ser-e ?osrow, writing in 1045 and 1052, gives a number of dates in both Yazdegird? and Hijr? years, and the synchronisms are only accurate if the 5 days then still followed ?b?n M?h (though de Blois, 1966, p. 42, indicates the possibility that he was using “some old handbook of astronomy or astrology”).

What Biruni writes in the ???r in his chapter on the festivals of the Persians is of particular value as portraying the actual practice of the Zoroastrian community in about 1000 CE. This was just before the 5 days were moved, and he records the celebration of “Farwardij?n” at the end of ?b?n month, giving details of the entertainment of the Fravašis for ten days, from 25 ?b?n to the last day of the Andarg?h (???r, p. 224). There is then a lacuna affecting the end of ?b?n M?h, where the lost text may have covered the departure of those visitants. As it is, his account of the beginning of ?dar M?h is also defective, and in the little that survives concerning the Nowruz of the Priests’ Reckoning there are only a few lines of any real interest. These tell (p. 225) of a day called Bah?r?aš?n, which used to be “the beginning of spring” at the time of the Kings of Persia. In those days a “thin-bearded man used to ride about, fanning himself... to express his rejoicing at the end of the cold season and the coming of the warm season” Biruni adds, was being kept up only for fun. Other notices of it tell how if the old man were still to be seen after noon he was chased and beaten, for clearly he represented the Spirit of winter, due to depart before Rapi?win’s return at midday of Nowruz. The reason why the mime no longer had this significance is explained by Biruni: ?dar M?h, having receded against the natural year by three to four months, had become a winter month, and so was inappropriate for the celebration of spring. Since this recession had brought 1 Fravard?n back from summer to spring, it was reasonable to move the “Between Days” back to before Fravard?n, and thus to unite the Nowruz of the Priests’ and the Royal Reckonings; and this appear to have been a calendar reform based on a natural development and probably led by popular sentiment.

It is possibly for this reason that the Parsis of Gujarat, the founders of whose community cannot have left Iran later than the early ninth century CE, came to adopt this reform (which is one of the indications of effective communication existing between them and their co-religionists in the motherland for some time after their migration). It is, however, an interesting fact, since the seasons in Gujarat are quite different from those in Iran, and so the natural compulsion towards this reform seems lacking in their case. Another interesting fact is that sometime, it is thought, between 1125 and 1250 CE the Parsis were sufficiently well organized and disciplined to carry out the only

intercalation of a month known ever to have taken place. To do this they repeated the 12th month, Spendarmad, so that in the year of reform 6 Spendarmad II = the previous 1 Fravard?n; and in consequence still in the twentieth century, nearly a thousand years later, Parsis kept 6 Spendarmad as a holy day, called the “Abandoned New Day”, S?d? Nahr?j (M. P. Kharegat, pp. 118-30), and celebrated 19 Spendarmad, that is, Ruz Fravard?n, as a special jašn of the Fravašis (Modi, pp. 423-34).

A number of accounts survive by Moslem writers of the celebration of Nowruz in Fravard?n month, and several of these were either composed before the Sasanian calendar reform or demonstrably use sources which were (see de Blois, 1996, pp. 39-41; selections from these writings were made by J. Markwart, pp. 724-38 and A. Christensen, 1934, pp. 145-54). The principal accounts are by Tha‘alebi, Ya‘qubi, Biruni and Ferdowsi, with that by Biruni in his ???r (pp. 215-19) being by far the longest and most comprehensive, while that by Tha‘alebi is sometimes more vivid.

Biruni begins (p. 215) by dealing briefly with the underlying religious character of the feast on 1 Fravard?n, saying that it was an auspicious day because “it is called Hormuz, which is the name of God, who has ... created the world”; and he then says of 6 Fravard?n that this was the “Great Nowruz, for the Persians a feast of great importance. On this day –the say– God finished the creation, for it is the last of the 6 days”; and he lists some of the great past events that have taken place on it, including Zoroaster’s holding on that day “communion with God”. Either out of prudence or courtesy the Zoroastrians evidently did not tell him or any other Moslem scholar of their hopes for Frašegird, with the ultimate triumph everywhere of their religion.

These indications of the basic religious significance of the festival are in any case quite overshadowed by an abundance of material attributing its founding, through popular acclaim, to Jam (Jamš?d). One well-known legend told by Biruni (???r, p. 216) is that Jam was drawn through the air in a chariot by d?v’s, traveling in one day from Dem?vand to Babylon. “And people made this day a feast day on account of the wonder which they had seen during it and they amused themselves with swinging in order to imitate Jamš?d”. Tha‘alibi’s fuller version (ed. Zotenberg, pp. 13-14) runs: “It was the day of Ohrmazd of the month of Fravard?n, the first day of spring which is the beginning of the year, the renewal when the earth revives from its torpor. People said: ‘It is a new day, a happy festival, a true power, a wondrous King!’ And they made this day, which they called Nowruz, their chief festival, honouring God for having raised their king to such a degree of grandeur and power, and thanking Him for all the ease, well-being, security and wealth which had been granted them through the good fortune of this king and beneath the shadow of his government. They celebrated the fortunate festival by eating and drinking, playing musical instruments and giving themselves over entirely to amusement and pleasures”.

Another story (Biruni, ???r, p. 216) has a different explanation of the feast’s origin: Jamš?d was making a progress through Iran and had himself carried into Azarbaijan on a golden throne borne on the necks of men. Rays of the sun fell on him and when people saw him “they were full of joy and made that day a feast day”. Yet another legend also has the motif of Jam’s sun-like brightness, which goes back to Yima’s Avestan epithet, ?ša?ta, which can mean “shining, radiant”; and this story has an ethical and religious component. It tells how Ibl?s destroyed the world, but how at the command of God Jam came and defeated him. Justice and prosperity returned, and Jam “rose on that day like the sun”, light beaming from him. All dried-up wood became green, so people said “New Day” (r?z ? naw).

These attempts to explain the origin of Nowruz, the products probably of speculation in priestly schools and remembered by minstrels, are far removed from what seem the much more archaic reference to Jam's three great deeds at Nowruz given in the Pahlavi text of the wonders of that day, none of which associates him with the founding of the festival.

Biruni does not have much to say about special customs at the festival, but he does record (p. 216) that people gave each other sugar then, and says that according to ʔdurbʔd, Mʔbad of Baghdad, this was because the sugar-cane was first discovered during the reign of Jam on the day of Nowruz (that is, on 1 Fravardʔn), having before been unknown. "Jam on seeing a juicy cane which dropped some of its juice, tasted it and found that it had an agreeable sweetness. Then he ordered the juice of the sugarcane to be pressed out and sugar to be made thereof. It was ready on the fifth day and then they made each other presents of sugar".

Biruni also says (p. 217) that it was the custom at the Great Nowruz to sow seven kinds of grain around a plate, "and from their growth they drew conclusions regarding the corn of that year, whether it will be good or bad". This is one of the indications that he depended for his information about the festival on books and the results of verbal inquiries, and never actually attended its celebration, or he would have seen that the seeds had been sown earlier, to be ready for the growth to be studied on the great day itself.

Some of his informants were, however, placing both intelligent and precise. Thus he received a clear explanation (p.224) of the origin of the 10-day Fravardʔgʔn observance, almost 1500 years after it had come into existence; and with regard to various customs with water at the Great Nowruz, he gives a series of anecdotal explanations for them, connecting them with Jam, but also says finally (p.218) that "according to another view" it was simply because the month day of its celebration was sacred to "Harʔʔʔ, the angel of water".

Two striking characteristics of Nowruz customs – emphasis, at this 7th feast, on the number seven, and on newness to match the newness of spring – are only just touched on in Biruni's account, but are prominent in that given by Pseudo-Jʔʔiz, Ketʔb al-maʔʔsen wa'l-azʔdʔd (ed. G. van Vloten). This collection of mixed materials, assigned to perhaps as late as the twelfth century CE, contains two sections about Nowruz as it was celebrated at the Sasanian court (brought together and tr. by R. Ehrlich, pp. 95-101). Because the author is unknown, as are his sources, and because it appears in some respects fanciful, this account has been latterly disregarded; but the descriptions are basically in harmony with the spirit of the festival and with its usages (as known from later practice), and this points to the existence at some stage of a genuine Zoroastrian source that has been embroidered on. There is moreover a characteristic Zoroastrian stress on white as the colour of purity, and therefore appropriate to the New Day of unsullied beginnings. So, it is said, there was placed before the King after his rising a table on which were twigs of 7 kinds of trees which were brought auspicious, and 7 white earthenware plates, and 7 white dirhams of the year's coinage. There was brought to him a vessel containing white sugar, with freshly pared nuts; and all the Kings of Persia thought it was propitious to begin the day with a mouthful of pure fresh milk. Well before Nowruz different kinds of seeds were sown in separate containers, and on the 6th day of Nowruz what had grown was cut with songs and music and mirth. The second Zoroastrian section of the Ketʔb al-maʔʔsen describes the presents given at Nowruz to the King, from magnificent ones from foreign rulers down to humble gifts from lowly subjects, all of which were listed by a scribe, with the present given to each in return (cf. Biruni, ʔʔʔr, p. 219).

There is also mention by Pseudo-Jʔʔiz of what is better stated by Biruni, (ʔʔʔr, p. 218) in the

following words: “After the time of Jam, the Kings made this whole month, i.e., Farvard?n M?h, one festival, distributed over its six parts. The first five days were feast days for the princes, the second for the nobility, the third for the servants of the princes, the fourth for their clients, the fifth for the people, and the sixth for the herdsmen”. This appears to be one of the schematizations produced by scholastics, which have little or no relation to reality; but it is very possible that the King with his nobles may have chosen to prolong the festivities for this length of time. The religious Nowruz was 18 days long, beginning as it did on the 25th of the 12th month and lasting till the day after the Great Nowruz began only on 1 Fravard?n so temptation to extend it must have existed.

Nowruz in modern times: There are some brief notices about Nowruz from the following centuries, but it is not until modern times – that is, from fairly late in the nineteenth century – that its observations have been fully described, in the case of the Parsis mostly by themselves. By then, and roughly for the next one hundred years, the festival was being kept with some marked differences by three broad groupings: traditionalists, strongly represented in the old centres of Zoroastrianism in Iran (mostly in the Yazdi region) and in Gujarat; a majority of moderate progressives, yielding gradually to the pressures of city life and increase in scientific knowledge, but still retaining many old beliefs and observances; and the radical reformists, sweeping most of these away. For trying to trace the history of Nowruz the data provided by the traditionalists is vital, especially since what the Parsi and Irani traditionalists have in common – which is a surprising amount – is likely to go back in general at least to the Sasanian period, and is demonstrated in details much older. It needs to be noted, however, that although the Iranis and Parsis used what was essentially the same calendars, the 365-day one of the Achaemenian reform, there was the difference of a month between their reckonings because of the solitary Parsi intercalatic of a month in the 12th or 13th century CE. Priests of both communities knew of this discrepancy and accepted it; but in the 15th century a group of pious Parsi laymen, thinking that the usage of the motherland must be older and more valid than their own, adopted the Irani version of the calendar, calling it the Qadimi, “Old”, modified by Gujarati speakers into Kadmi. This movement roused furious indignation among most Parsis, as slur on their own devotedly cherished tradition, and they sprang to the defence of their own version of the calendar, which came to be called, objectively, Šenš??, a term developed from the dignified Š?h?nš?h?, “Royal”. At its height the dispute was very bitter, with some bloodshed. This is long past, but religious Parsis, other than reformists, remain divided into the large body of Š?h?nš?h?s, and the small one of the Kadmis.

The Parsi reform movement was initiated fairly early in the 19th century, but in Iran for nearly another hundred years there was only the one kind of Zoroastrians, who may be named collectively simply Traditionalists; and the most conservative of these held out against the reformists there down to the 1960’s. They were then still keeping 3 Nowruzes: a secular one at the spring equinox, in their calendar month of ?b?n, and the two religious ones in their month of Fravard?n. What is at first sight remarkable is that it was the secular one which they called Nowruz, giving other names to the religious festivals; but this was perhaps because “New Day” is so fitting a name for a spring celebration.

Names are, however, among the few identifiably innovative things about the observance of the religious feasts, then being celebrated in summer. (The detailed description of them given by Boyce, Stronghold, pp. 214-35, and summarized below, is of the practices of one of the Yazdi villages in the year 1965, which may have differed in some small respects from those of other villages in the region.) The first was preceded by the ten days of Fravard?g?n, termed the “Lesser and Greater Pentad” (Panj? kas?g, Panj? mas), for which every house had been scrupulously

cleaned, and during which the Fravašis were entertained by night and day. By at the latest the third day of Panj? kas?g seven kinds of seeds were sown in little cotton bags or wooden boxes, or in clay container on house walls, all carefully washed with pure water and filled with clean earth, and watered daily thereafter with pure water. On the fifth day of Panj? kas?g many women and some men went to the village priest to receive n?rang (consecrated bull's urine) to cleanse away pollution from the old year, this being what was in times long past the last day of that year, with the "Between Days" ahead. (This rite was regarded as of especial importance for women, because of what were thought of as the inevitable pollution of childbirth and menstruation.) Also on that day the "pure room", ganza p?k, kept always free from ritual pollution, was cleaned with extra care and whitewashed anew in preparation for the greater holy days to come.

Panj? was ended with the rite of farewell to the Fravašis, enacted from before dawn till nearly sunrise on every Zoroastrian roof; and with the sun came the new year. A festive meal was eaten by the family in the sunshine, at which wine used to be drunk, and visitors came to exchange greetings. But then preparations began to be made to go out to the da?mas, always referred to as the D?dg?h, "appointed place", and this is what gave this "Lesser Nowruz" its current name, "[the Day of] the D?dg?h-e Panj?". The observance followed the traditional pattern for communal rites at the da?mas, with related families forming groups; and those women whose children had died and been carried there took for them some of the little cotton bags with sprouting seeds to place among the usual offerings. ?fr?nag?n services were celebrated for individual souls, recently departed and there was a communal one for all Fravašis; and an evening meal, which began with consecrated food, was eaten by all, seated in a great horseshoe on the desert shingle, the families in an established order. The festival was thus annexed as it were to the Fravašis days, a confusion that would seem to have arisen in the distant past, because of the duplicated celebration of Nowruz on 6 Fravardin.

Formerly, when there were many priests, the rites of Rapi?win would have been performed in the fire temple on Ruz Ardibehešt, the third month-day, but these had to be neglected by then. Nevertheless, and though it was wholly inappropriate to the summer heat, the return of "Rapatven" at noon on 1 Fravardin was joyfully recognized, and his name restored in noonday prayers (Boyce, Stronghold, p. 50 with pp 175-76).

Otherwise 2-5 Fravardin were quiet days, with a partial return to normal work, but with thoughts gilded by expectation of the great day to come – the holiest and most joyful of the year; and this pause had the effect of somewhat isolating it, so that it was almost again the observance of a single momentous day; but the name now given it was entirely prosaic, simply the "Seventeenth Day", Havz?ru, a dialect contraction, with metathesis of hevдах ruz (cf. Kermani "Arved?ru", J. Soroushian, p. 5); for it was the seventeenth day after the coming of the Fravašis on 25 Spendarmad, as it had become after the Achaemenian reform.

Inevitably in some ways the observances of the eve of Havz?ru repeated those of the D?dg?h-e Panji, since they were by origin one feast, so there was again sweeping and tidying, and setting out in the ganza-p?k of pots of greenery, a mirror and a brazier. A lamp was lit there at dusk, and festive food was placed there for the Fravašis; but this time there was no repetition of the farewell to them at the following dawn. But again new clothes were worn on the new day, when all rose with (or before) the sun, eager to exchange the greeting "May your Havz?ru feat be auspicious!" jašn-e Havz?ru-t mob?rak, with some then exchanging sprays of greenery. The village was full of visiting relatives, mostly from Tehran, who had returned for the occasion, and it was to be a day of visiting and hospitality, goodwill and kindness, and feasting, dance and song. But central to it

were the religious rites, with blessed communion through them. At other times the village priest might be able to call on the help of colleagues, but at Havz?ru every priest was fully engaged with his own community; so here the priest had to compromise. This was the only occasion in the year when he solemnized the long service of the Visperad (see under Avesta), created probably for Nowruz and the g?h?nb?rs, and strictly an “inner” ritual, to be performed in a sacred precinct; but he now carried it out alone as an “outer” one, in an empty house set aside for religious use and kept ritually clean. There he spread a pure white cloth in a corner of one of the two open porticos, where he began the service at about 8 o’clock; and for hours to come he concentrated completely on the words and ritual, oblivious to the bustle which filled the rest of the building. There was a huge baking of bread in its ritually clean kitchen, and women came with offerings to be blessed, fruits of all kinds and an egg, the symbol of life, until the floor and sills of the portico where he sat were covered with copper bowls. Each woman also handed to his daughter a list of all those over 9 years old who were in her house, with the words “May they live!” (zande b?šand). These were uttered only on this one occasion, the sole festival devoted entirely to the living and to life; and the lists were eventually laid near the priest. It was nearly noon by the time he had prepared the first parah?m (the sacred liquid made from pounded ephedra, haoma), and the offerings had become consecrated. Two lay helpers (dahm?beds) then cut the eggs and fruits in half, and one half was put back in the family bowl, the other half went into big basins to be carried later to the fire temple. A big new round of freshly baked bread was added to each family bowl, and when the women returned to collect theirs each of them received from the priest’s daughter a spoonful of the parah?m infused in consecrated water, which would give renewed strength and vitality for the new year, and some took a spoonful away for their husbands. All carried home the bowls of consecrated offerings to be shared by their families, but the priest, after he had completed the Visperad, had still to solemnize a Dr?n and ?fr?nag?n service in honour of Rapi?win, and to pray by name for the well-being of every person on the lists supplied him. So it was past 3 o’clock before he finished, having been reciting for many hours with barely a pause in the August heat. Then after a brief rest, and a little of the consecrated food, he went to the fire temple, which was packed with men and boys, to solemnize an ?fr?nag?n service for the whole community after which their share of the consecrated Visperad offerings was distributed and eaten there. After this last element in the Havz?ru village communion the evening revelry began in the homes, and the priest could rest.

Havz?ru being over, the “seven seeds” were no longer watered, and their greenness quickly turned brown in the heat. But not only was the next day, Amord?d, still a holiday, purely for pleasure, but the holiday season was held to last not for 18 but 21 days from 25 Spendarmad. This seems to have developed under the influence of the third, spring Nowruz. One consequence was that any household which had not been visited by the priest during Panj? could still properly be visited.

The secular festival, called simply Nowruz, was held at the spring equinox, on a day corresponding to 21 March by the Gregorian calendar. (It is thus kept at the same time as the Moslem holiday. For a description of its observance in 1964 at the same Yazdi village as the two religious festivals see Boyce, Stronghold, pp. 164-76.) It was preceded by the usual scrupulous cleaning of houses and their contents, and everyone tried to put on at least one new item of clothing on its first day. Meantime two places in the house had been prepared for welcoming the new year. In one small store-room, from which everything black (such as smoke-darkened cooking pots) had been removed, a square of wood (a viju, used ordinarily as a hanging larder) was suspended by ropes from the smoke-hole in the domed roof, and a number of things were set out, in rigidly prescribed order, on the floor beneath, šiw-e viju (which yields a name for the observance): a mirror with a lamp before it, a green-wrapped sugarcane, a pitcher full of curds and a vase holding sprays of evergreen (cypress or pine): a bowl of water containing a pomegranate stuck full of silver coins,

and a pitcher of water in which dried fruits had been steeped for three days. There was a glass full of p?luda, a sweet drink, white in colour, and a new earthenware pitcher with pure water, its mouth closed by a green-painted egg; and a little woven basket full of fresh green stuff (such as coriander, parsley or lettuce); and in front was placed a platter with a special sweet dish, ?ang?l or kom??-e Nowruz, cooked for this festival. The predominant colours were thus green and white, and the objects represented growth, life, purity, prosperity and sweetness. The tall sugarcane was put in place last, and the door of the room closed; and it was believed that at the moment of the beginning of the new year the viju would turn a full circle overhead, symbolizing presumably the movement of the sun, which according to the Zoroastrian creation myth began at that moment. There is, notably, no allusion in the observance to the number seven, which belongs exclusively to Havz?ru. (The Persian Moslem Haft S?n, has been shown to be of recent origin.)

In the main room a table had been set out more simply, with a silver standing mirror, a ?orda Avesta wrapped in green silk, a little picture of Zoroaster (brought from Bombay), and two silver vases with sprays of pine and the purple-flowering Judas tree. In previous times the New Day would have been welcomed at sunrise with the unseen turning then of the vij?, but now it was announced at sunset by Tehran radio, and the master of the house went round the family, sprinkling each with rose-water and wishing them a happy New Day. Sweets were distributed, and a convivial supper followed with its main dish, as always, fish, a rarity in the Yazdi region.

The next morning, soon after a festive breakfast the first Nowruz visitors appeared. The main groups came then and throughout the first week of the festival. First, there were those (mainly Moslems) who had worked for the family in any way during the year. They were given new-year greetings, with two to four painted eggs, a handful of ?j?l (dried melon and sunflower seeds with pistachio nuts), and sometimes money. Then there were Zoroastrian children of up to the age of twelve or so. Those from the better-off families went only to relatives or close friends, but poorer children made their rounds more widely, receiving painted eggs, ?j?l and little presents – a coin or two, pencils, writing books and the like. Finally there came friends, relatives and acquaintances to pay formal calls and to exchange greetings and token gifts, typically sprays of cypress and pine, or pomegranates. In the evenings there were often big gatherings of family and friends; and this was also a favoured time for weddings. The festival lasted for 21 days, a little longer than the 18 days of the religious one; but it seems natural to have sought an extension of the secular Nowruz roughly to match this, and twenty-one, a multiple of two sacred numbers – three and seven – would have been an auspicious number of days to choose. There may well have been influence also from the Semitic week, become a familiar measure. But spring also brought urgent farmwork that had to be done. Even this, however, was reduced as much as possible on the S?zda bedar, “the Thirteenth [Day] out of doors”, which everyone sought to spend in the open, in orchard, field or garden, purely in pursuit of pleasure (picnicking, playing games, making music and the like, or just contentedly resting). The explanation of the origin of this much-loved festival is a little complex, but it seems to be as follows. When thus in the mid twentieth century the Zoroastrians celebrated their secular Nowruz by the spring equinox, they did so when their calendar month was ?zar (?dur), and by it the thirteenth day of the festival has in itself no particular significance. But when Nowruz is fixed according to the Zoroastrian calendar, then the thirteenth day after 6 Fravardin, the Great Nowruz, is 19 Fravardin; and that is Ruz Fravardin of M?h Fravardin, the yearly jašn of the Fravašis. This had been established in Achaemenian times and was much beloved by the community, it being considered one of the high holy days. (See Modi, p. 431 with n. 2, for how it was kept in the early twentieth century by Parsis.) Its celebration appears to have been enjoined in deliberate contrast with that of the R?z?n Fravard?g?n, since people left their houses and went out to funerary places, where they would invite the spirits of their family departed to take pleasure as

their guests in feasting and merry making. This observance was outside the period of the religious holy days (18 days from 25 Spendarmad to 8 Fravardin) and was never a part of them; but it was well within the 21 days of the secular Nowruz. So sometime when a secular Nowruz, celebrated in the spring, was being observed in addition to the religious one, this beloved thirteenth days feast must have been made a part of it; and since it had then lost its connection with 19 Fravardin, the merry-making was carried on out of doors just for itself, and more generally, without any devout intention. The fact that the Sizdabedar is celebrated by both Zoroastrians and Shi'i Moslems suggests that it had been incorporated in the 21-day secular Nowruz before Islam gained many converts in Iran.

The Parsis have, historically, no secular observance of Nowruz presumably because the climate of Gujarat did not demand a spring celebration so insistently, and there would have been no local tradition to support one. A "Jamšedi Nowruz", celebrated on the Gregorian March 21st, has become popular but cannot be traced to earlier than the nineteenth century (Anquetil du Perron, seeking knowledge in the 18th century of Parsi feasts, did not hear of this one, see his *Zend-Avesta*, Tome II, p. 574); and it appears to have evolved from the secular Iranian festival after Parsis had learnt at school about their community's links with Cyrus and Darius, had visited Iran and seen the ruined glories of Persepolis, the "Ta't-e Jamšid", and had read in the Gujarati translation of Ferdowsi's *Š?hn?me* of Jamšid's association with Nowruz. The festival, which lasts one day and has no special observances, is much enjoyed, and new-year greetings cards are increasingly exchanged in Western fashion; but it is still ignored by a few strict traditionalists.

As individuals such traditionalists probably exist throughout the community; but the stronghold of Parsi traditonalism is recognized to be Navsari, the centre of the Bhagaria priesthood, and down to the first part of the twentieth century a quiet little country town whose religious practices provide valuable parallels to (and some differences from) those of the Yazdi villages. The Parsis use the term Mokt?d,

Their practice is again similar but not the same with regard to the name each gives to 6 Fravard?n, since both are practical and seek simply to fix it by a calendar indication: Havz?r?, the "Seventeenth Day" among the Iranis, ?ord?d S?l among the Parsis. According to the N?rangest?n passage this name orginiated in translation; and there is also a passage in one of the Persian Rivayats, (Unvala, I, p. 317 II. 4-7. tr. Dhabhar, p. 302) where the Persian priests refer to the day as "day ?ord?d of the month Farvard?n, Jašn-e S?l?n". This festival (according to Seerval and Patel, p. 218) "is believed to be the birthday of Zoroaster" (not one of the wonders claimed for it in the old Pahlavi text on Roz Hord?d) and "is kept with as much pomp and rejoicing as Pateti". But the Parsi festival lacks Havz?r?'s unique emphasis on life and the living, and the lists of relatives which Parsis give their priests are handed in for the "G???" days, and are of the family departed, so that their souls may be prayed for. It seems probable, in this case, that the Iranis have preserved a genuine old tradition of Nowruz, the festival celebrating the coming "New Day" of eternal life, which among the Parsis has been assimilated to the dominant cult of care for souls.

Among elder Parsis in Navsari there was a fading memory of the next day, R?z Amord?d, being celebrated out of doors, in garden or orchard (verbal communication from F. M. Kotwal), but although this custom has been abandoned, the conviction remains firm among Parsi traditionalists that this day belongs to Mokt?d (Ceremony to remember the departed souls). More often, however, when a custom is observed by one community but not by the other it is not possible to tell whether it has been added or dropped. Thus traditionalist Parsis do not imbibe n?rang on the eve of Pateti or parah?m at Nowruz, and Iranis do not exchange the ham?z?r at any Nowruz, whereas this is – or

was – a feature of Parsi observance at Pateti (Modi, pp. 382-83; Seevai and Patel, p. 219).

The return of the Rapi?win, so important a part of Nowruz, was joyfully acknowledged by both communities, but his rites were earlier reduced in Iran, because of the rapidly dwindling in the number of priests fairly there early in the twentieth century. Before then, in both communities, because most priests were heavily engaged with other duties on 1 Fravard?n it was left to those of the ?taš Bahr?ms to perform the rituals of welcome to Rapi?win at noon that day. (Cf. Darmesteter, *Zend-Avesta*, II 736-37. Information about Irani practice was received verbally by the writer, in 1964, from Mobed Khodadad Neryosangi and Mobed Rostam Khodabakhshi, both of Yazd.) It was the third day of the month, dedicated to Ardibehešt, which was kept as the jašn of Rapi?win, and in Mumbai gatherings of laity attended “an imposing ceremony” at a chief ?taš Bahr?m (Karaka, I, p. 145. For the priestly observances see briefly Modi, p. 429 with p. 431, and in detail for Navsari, where the jašn is greatly beloved, F. M. Kotwal apud Boyce, 1969, pp. 205-09. Rapi?win rituals are treated with technical precision in the *Persian Rivayats*, ed. Unvala, I, pp. 316-25. tr. Dhabhar, pp. 300-03.)

Another point on which the Iranis and the Parsi traditionalists were in accord was in the shared participation by priests and laity, in their different roles, in the labours and fulfillments of these high holy days. In Navsari still, devout families keep a room, or at least an alcove, ritually clean, like the Irani *ganza p?k*, and they too whitewash it afresh each year for Mokt?d. They set out vases of flowers there for the departed family souls, and the women prepare ritually pure food in their own scrupulously clean kitchens, and portions of particular dishes are carried to the Wadi Dar-e Mehr to be consecrated there at an “inner” religious service. All but the priest’s prescribed share is brought back for the family to divide among themselves in communion, as in Iran; and at some point there too the family priest comes to each house to solemnize an ?fr?nag?n service for departed souls, thus blessing the Mokt?d flower and food offerings. The flowers are renewed at a minimum of five-day intervals, that is, three times between 25 Spendarmad and 5 Fravard?n. (Greenery was necessitated in the Yazdi area of Iran within living experience, because there are no flowers in the villages in the heat of summer.)

The tendency among many Parsis to simplify these ancient observances can be traced from early in the nineteenth century, when a large number had already become city dwellers, chiefly in Mumbai, and so were meeting inevitable difficulties in maintaining them strictly. Not all lived any longer within walking distance of a fire temple, and even for those who did it was not easy to carry pure objects through busy streets without coming into physical contact with unbelievers; and the private of the laity became even busier, with increasing financial pressures and manifold activities. So it was a natural development that the responsibility for preparing Mokt?d food for consecration was transferred to priests, with the work being carried out under their supervision in temple kitchens; and that the Mokt?d flowers were likewise procured by priests and set out on family tables in temple precincts, the laity’s contribution being to give instructions, to pay, and to attend in order to say their own prayers for the departed. These were thus said in halls fragrant with the scented flowers and filled at times with murmured Avesta. A movement to reduce the 18-day Mokt?d to 10 days also began early, with ample authority for this being cited from the Avesta (Yt. 13:49) and Pahlavi and Persian books; but there was a confusion here in terminology, for all these passages refer to the R?z?n Fravard?g?n (26 Spendarmad to the 5th “Between Day”), whereas Parsi “Mokt?d” applies to the period from 25 Spendarmad to 5 Farvard?n, and the Irani parallel proves this to reflect long-established usage.

This was no longer, however, accepted by all as a decisive defence, and a movement to sweep

away all observance of Pat?t? and ?ord?d-S?l came into being with the founding in 1906 of the Zartoshti Fasl? S?l Mandal, the “Zoroastrian Seasonal Year Society”. This was the work of the distinguished layman K.R. Cama, who was troubled by the calendar problems dividing the community, and saw the solution to them in adopting the Gregorian year with a fixed Jamš?d? Nowruz on 21 March; and since he thought, like the priests of the Sasanian calendar reform, that the calendar supposed have been used by Zoroaster must have been in harmony with the seasons, he became convinced that it had been in fact the Gregorian one, with the intercalation of an extra leap day approximately every four years having simply become neglected. His society attracted members, who called themselves Fasl?s; but the overwhelming majority of Parsis was as firm as their Sasanian predecessors in rejecting this calendar, with the rogue leap-day, so that the immediate effect of his proposal was to add a third element to the Parsi calendar conflict.

The Iranis were meantime sending bright boys from lay and priestly families to be educated in Mumbai, among whom was Kay Khosrow Shahrokh, a remarkable man from a traditionally learned Kermani lay family. He became an ardent reformist of his ancient faith, and among much else a champion of the Fa?l? calendar. He convinced Tehranis of its validity, and also the lay leaders of the Zoroastrians of Yazd and Kerman, and in 1939, after years of reasoning and exhorting, the reformers persuaded the whole Irani community to adopt the Fa?l? calendar. This they renamed B?st?ni, “ancient” (convinced, like K. R. Cama, that it went back to Zoroaster himself), and called the old one – Qad?m? to the Parsis – N?-dorost, “Incorrect”, while the traditionalists named the Fa?l? calendar Jad?d, “new” and used the term Qad?m for their own. The greatest achievement had been to win over Yazd, but many Zoroastrians there remained troubled by the thought that they were doing wrong in using this alien form of reckoning for calculating their holy days; and almost at once, led by their priests, they reverted to the Qad?m? one. So for the next few decades the small Irani community was split, with most Yazdis celebrating three Nowruzes as before, D?dg?h-e panj? and Havz?r? in the summer, Nowruz in the spring, while the Tehranis and Kermanis now kept only the last. (See Boyce, Stronghold, index s.v. “calendar”. Idem, 1979, pp. 212-13, 221.)

In the 1970’s the reformists in Tehran made a concerted effort to win over the Yazdis by targeting their young people, to whom, in holiday camps, they offered instruction in various secular callings as well as a fundamentally reformed religious teaching, with many old doctrines as well as observances swept away, and the merits and claimed antiquity of the Fa?l? calendar vigorously urged. This time they were lastingly successful, and thereafter the Irani community has used only the one, Fa?l? calendar, with Nowruz celebrated on March 21st. Efforts have continued among the Parsis to win greater acceptance of the Fa?l? calendar, but these have so far been resisted, and both the Š?h?nš?his and the Kadmis still celebrate the two religious Nowruzes, though mostly with reduced rites. Supporters by family tradition of all these groups are to be found in the Parsi Diaspora communities.

Bibliography: Given in the text.

(Mary Boyce)

Last Updated: November 15, 2009

NOWRUZ ii. In the Islamic Period

Nowruz survived while less significant festivals were eclipsed by their Islamic rivals and gradually became abandoned by indifferent Mongol and Turkish rulers or hostile clerical authorities.

NOWRUZ

ii. IN THE ISLAMIC PERIOD

Introduction. The Islamic conquest altered many Iranian traditions specifically associated with national ideology, imperial institutions, and Zoroastrian rituals. Although Nowruz was an established symbol of these three aspects, it did survive while less significant festivals were eclipsed by their Islamic rivals and gradually became abandoned by indifferent Mongol and Turkish rulers or hostile clerical authorities during Safavid and Qajar periods. Nowruz survived because it was so profoundly engrained in Iranian traditions, history, and cultural memory that Iranian identity and Nowruz mutually buttressed each other, and the emergence of a distinctly Persian Muslim society—and later the emergence of a nation state with the advent of the Safavids—legitimized the ancient national festival and allowed it to flourish with slight modifications or elaborations. Indeed, as will be set out in subsequent sections, the incremental expansion of Nowruz ceremonies from the Safavids, through the Qajars, to the Pahlavi period enabled the court to parade its power and strengthened its attempts at forming a stronger central authority. Besides, it explains the establishment of increasingly sophisticated and protocol-ridden royal audiences with all the pomp and ceremony they could muster. Like all rituals, therefore, it both manifested a belief or ideology and reinforced it through an annual recital. It was precisely because Nowruz was associated from the outset with cultural memories of the splendor and divinely bestowed power of the royal courts of pre-Islamic Persia that it was attractive to rulers, from the Abbasid caliphs to the Pahlavis. Along with its many ceremonies, and most notably that of gift exchange, it provided the rulers with an alternative source of affirming and enhancing their power and prestige through a strictly non-Islamic channel; for unlike religious festivals, they could appear and be celebrated as the focal point and the peerless heroes of the occasion.

While most of the traditions now associated with Nowruz have been inherited from the past usages, no comprehensive history of Nowruz in the Islamic period has been written. Such an account must be pieced together from occasional notices in general and local histories, brief records by geographers, and scattered references in works of poets and storytellers. Only for recent times do we have detailed information in the form of eyewitness reports by travelers and, more importantly, studies of contemporary practices throughout Persia and countries affected by Persian culture. But even these are problematic, as the former category mainly describes court usages and the latter usually gives uncritical narratives embellished with rhetorical and, frequently, fanciful interpretations.

History up to the Safavid period. The Arabs captured the capital of the Sasanian Empire on a Nowruz day, taking the celebrating inhabitants by surprise (Ya?qubi, I, p. 198). Henceforth, the early Arab governors forcefully levied heavy Nowruz and Mehrag?n taxes on the conquered people (Jahši?ri, pp. 15, 24; ?uli, p. 219). The Umayyad and Abbasid caliphs retained this onerous burden of taxation on their conquered subjects, but, at the same time, they also celebrated both Nowruz and Mehrag?n with considerable relish and pomp, thereby helping to keep alive Nowruz and its many traditions (Mas?udi, Moruj VII, p. 277; Tanu?i, pp. 145-46; Ahsan, pp. 287-88).

Later, other Islamic dynasties of Persia did the same (for the Taherids, see J??e?, p. 150; for the

Samanids, see Biruni, tr. Sachau, p. 217), and the court poets praised the occasion and offered their congratulatory panegyrics. Y?qut reports (Bold?n, Cairo, VI, p. 258; cf. Moqaddasi, p. 431) that the Buyid (see BUYIDS) ruler ?A?od-al-Dawla (r. 949-83) customarily welcomed Nowruz in a majestic hall, wherein servants had placed gold and silver plates and vases full of fruit and colorful flowers. He sat on a costly seat (masnad), and the court astronomer came forward, kissed the ground, and congratulated him on the arrival of the New Year. Then the king summoned the musicians and singers and invited his boon companions. They entered and filed in to their assigned places, and all enjoyed a great festive occasion. Beyhaqi describes the lavish celebration of Nowruz at the Ghaznavid (see GHAZNAVIDS) court (Beyhaqi, ed. Fayy??, pp. 9, 12, 704, 751, 815), and some of the most beautiful descriptive opening passages of Persian courtly panegyrics (especially by Farro?i, Manu?ehri, and Mas?ud-e Sa?d-e Salm?n) are in praise of Nowruz. Their simple yet melodious rhythms suggest that they may have been accompanied by music. The melodies known as the “Nowruzi” airs, apparently inherited from the Sasanian period, included the Great Nowruz (Nowruz-e bozorg), Nowruz-e Kay Qob?d, the Lesser Nowruz (nowruz-e ?ordak or ??r?), the Edessan Nowruz (Nowruz-e rah?wi, comprising the Arabian and Persian melodies), and Nowruz-e ?ab? (Deh?od?, s.v. “Nowruz”; Borumand-e Sa?id, pp. 302-8). In the 14th century, ??fe? says that “the melody of the Nowruz breeze (b?d-e nowruzi) rekindles the inner light, and the melody of the “Throne of victory” (ta?t-e piruzi) inspires the song of the nightingale intoxicated by flowers.”

The Nowruz festivities were by no means restricted to the royal courts. It was “a solemn feast through all of Persia, ... observed not only in the great cities, but celebrated with extraordinary rejoicings in every little town, village, and hamlet” (Lane, 1848, II, p. 462; see also Bi?ami, I, p. 150; Far?marz b. ?od?d?d, I, p. 49; for testimonies of poets see Borumand-e Sa?id, pp. 253-384). In Shiraz, Muslims and Zoroastrians celebrated Nowruz together and decorated the bazaars (Moqaddasi, p. 429). Biruni testifies that many ancient Nowruz rites were still observed in his time. People grow, he says, “seven kinds of grains on seven columns and from their growth they draw inferences as regards the crop of the year whether it would be good or bad” (Biruni, Chronology, tr. Sachau, p. 217). They held the first day of Nowruz as particularly auspicious, and the dawn the most auspicious hour (Idem, p. 217). Good omens appearing before Nowruz included fires and light glowing on the western bank of the Tigris opposite Kalw???, and on the Den? (text: dm?) mountain in F?rs. Tasting honey thrice in the morning of Nowruz and lighting three candles before speaking were thought to ward off diseases (Idem, p. 216). People exchanged presents (notably sugar), kindled fire (to consume all corruptions), bathed in the streams (Idem, p. 218), and sprinkled water on each other.

Ebn Faqih (p. 165) specifies that “this ancient custom is still observed in Hamadan, Isfahan, Din?var, and the surrounding regions,” and the Tarjoma-ye Tafsir-e ?abari (I, p. 148, n. 1) adds that in so doing people said: “May you live long! (zenda b?ši?!zenda b?ši?!).” We may add that to this day traditional households sprinkle rose water on relatives and guests. According to Kušy?r (apud Taqiz?da, p. 191), the sixth day of Nowruz was called “Water-pouring [day]” (?abb al-m??) and was revered as the Great Nowruz and “the Day of Hope,” because it commemorated the completion of the act of creation. ?az?li (I, p. 522) strongly disapproved of Muslims celebrating Nowruz by decorating the bazaars, preparing sweets, and making or selling children’s toys, wooden shields, sword, trumpets, and so on.”

In 897, the Abbasid caliph al-Mo?ta?ed (r. 892-902) forbade the people of Baghdad “to kindle bonfire on New Year’s Eve and pour water [on passersby] on New Year’s Day,” but fearing riot he rescinded the order (?abari, III, p. 2163). The Fatimid caliphs also repeatedly forbade the kindling

of fire and sprinkling of water at Nowruz (Maqrizi, p. 394). ??bi described the rules issued against Nowruz celebration in the fourth century Baghdad as follows: “A Muslim was forbidden to dress like a ?emmi [that is, people of the book, namely Jews, Christians, and ??bians, and by extension Zoroastrians], ... to give an apple to someone on Nawrüz to honor the day, to color eggs at their feast,” and, in general, “sharing in jollifications on that occasion was condemned.” Some non-Muslims “hired a special cook to work during the night to have the dishes fresh in the morning, gave parties for relatives and friends, at which they served green melons, plums, peaches, and dates if they were in season.” Women bought special Nowruz perfumes, and “eggs were dyed in various colors. To sprinkle perfume on a man ... and tread seven times on him was a means of driving away the evil eye, laziness and fever. Antimony and rue were used to improve the sight during the coming year. Colleges were shut and the students played. ... Muslims drank wine in public and ate cleaned lentils like the ?emmis and joined them in throwing water on folks.” Respectable peoples threw water on each other in their houses or gardens; the commoners did this on the street (Ket?b al-Hafaw?t, tr. Tritton, pp. 144-45).

A detailed account of Nowruz celebration in the 10th-century Isfahan is given by Ebn ?awqal (p. 364): “During the Nowruz festival, people gather for seven days in the bazaar of Karina, a suburb of Isfahan, engaged in merriment; they enjoy various food and go around visiting decorated shops. The inhabitants and those coming from other places to participate in this festival, spend a good deal of money, wear beautiful clothes, and take part in gatherings for plays and merrymaking. Skillful singers, both male and female, take their places side by side on the riverside along the palaces. The whole atmosphere is filled with joy and happiness. Many assemble on rooftops and in the markets, engage in festivities, drinking, eating, and consuming sweets, not letting an idle moment to pass by. ... No one disturbs them, for their rulers have allowed this festival, and it is a well-established tradition. It is said that besides the abundance of fruits, drinks, and food brought in and sold for a meager price, the expenses of the night of the spring equinox amount to 200,000 dirhams. As for the prices, 2,000-dirham weight of finest grapes costs a mere five dirhams” (see also the eyewitness description by M?farro?i [tr., pp. 17-18] and the testimony of Nasafi, p. 168).

A particular custom was the enthroning of the “Nowruzian ruler” (mir-e Nowruzi, somewhat similar to the lord of misrule in Medieval Western literature and folklore). A commoner was elected as “king” and provided with regalia (often mockingly old and unseemly), a throne, court officials, and a number of troops, and he ruled for a few days and was fully obeyed. Then he was dethroned, beaten, and forced to flee (Qazvini, 1944; Idem, 1945). In some regions, particularly in Kurdistan, this ancient tradition is still practiced (Wilson, p. 245; Keyv?n, p. 119; Bois, p. 477; Mostowfi, I, pp. 351-53).

Religious views on Nowruz. Opposition to ancient Iranian observances was natural in a strictly Muslim society, and a few attempts at restricting Nowruz rites have already been noted. Some claimed that the Prophet had told those who celebrated Nowruz and Mehrag?n that God had given them two superior feasts, namely, al-Fe?r (end of fasting month) and al-Na?r (the Feast of Sacrifice; al-?lusi, p. 336). Others asserted that ?Ali b. Abi ??leb (d. 661) had said “for me a feast day is that on which I do not sin” (?az?li, II, p. 566). N??er-e ?osrow (cited by Honari, p. 194) expressed “shame” (??r) when hearing about the auspiciousness of Nowruz: “although throughout the world Nowruz is dear and pleasant to the ignorant (gar ?e be jah?n ?aziz-ast o ?oš zi n?d?n), to me it verily appears as unsavory and demeaning (n??oš o k??r).” Abu ??med Mo?ammad ?az?li (1058-1111) declared that all festive acts must be abandoned and one should fast on such days and not even mention the name of Nowruz and Sada so that these “Zoroastrian observances” become “degraded and turned into perfectly ordinary days and no name or trace of them shall remain”

(?az?li, I, p. 522). In contrast, many legitimized Nowruz as an Islamic Iranian feast. A tradition attributed to the Prophet (hadith) describes him accepting a bowl of sweets as the Nowruz gift and blessing the day as the occasion of renovation of life with its special custom of sprinkling water on each other as the symbol of divine rainfall (Biruni, p. 215). Another report claims that ?Ali b. Abi ??leb received Nowruz gifts from a Persian landlord (dehq?n?n) and said: “May every day of ours be a Nowruz!” (Pseudo-J??e?, pp. 237-38).

Scholars wrote in Persian and Arabic on the history of Nowruz, its rites, auspiciousness, and the various properties of its days; others collected poetry composed in its honor or words rhyming with Nowruz. The accounts by Mus? b. ?Is? Kasravi, J??e?, Pseudo-J??ez, Biruni, and Pseudo-?ayy?m still constitute our main source on Nowruz. Several short treatises on the characteristics of Nowruz or literary, religious, and astrological comments on it are also extant (ed. H?run V, pp. 17-48), but many others referred to in the sources (for a list see ?ayy?d, pp. 81-3) have not survived. Several calendar reforms were effected in by the Abbasids and the Buyids before the Saljuq sultan Jal?l-al-Dawla Malekš?h (r. 465-85/1073-1092) established in 471/1079 the Julian-style solar year that fixes the beginning of the calendar year (Nowruz) at the vernal equinox (Taqiz?da, pp. 156-80; see CALENDARS ii. ISLAMIC PERIOD).

A widely reported hadith (Majlesi, Be??r LIX, pp. 143-91; Moll? Fay? apud Mo?in, 1947, pp. 73-84) transmitted by Mo?all? b. ?anis, a Persian disciple of the sixth Shi?ite Imam Ja?far-e ??deq (d. 765), gives Nowruz a very strong Islamic significance and recounts for each of the “thirty days of each month” qualities which are directly parallel to those given in the Pahlavi treatise of M?h farvard?n rü? xord?d (Markwart, pp. 742-55) even with regard to the names of the patron deities of those days (cf. Mo?in, pp. 73-84; Monzavi, pp. 34-37; Shahbazi, pp. 255-56). Ja?far-e ??deq said that Nowruz was a most blessed day because it was on that day when God made the Sun rise, the wind blow, and the earth flourish; the occasion when He made a covenant with the pre-existing souls of mankind to worship none but Him, brought Noah’s ark ashore safely, and the day when He will resurrect the dead by ordering the living to pour water on them (hence the auspiciousness of sprinkling water on each other at Nowruz). It was on that day that God sent Gabriel with His message to Mo?ammad, that the Prophet shattered the idols of Mecca and nominated ?Ali at the ?adir-e ?omm as his legatee (on the date see Taqiz?da, p. 154, n. 310), as well as the day when ?Ali defeated the heretics at Nahrav?n, and when the Mahdi, the Lord of Time, will appear. Indeed, “no Nowruz comes unless we expect salvation from grief, for this day is an attribute of ours and our Shi?ites.” After the publication of such works, the faithful were assigned the task of greeting Nowruz with elaborate prayers which include several suras of the Qor??n (Nab??i).

Later History. The festive celebration of Nowruz during the Safavid period is well attested (see bibliography). In preparation to it, commanders, ministers, favored officials, rich merchants, and guild leaders were given pieces of land in the vast park of B??-e Naqš-e Jah?n of Isfahan to decorate and illuminate. Each group set up tents with canopies of silk and brocade, and erected booths variously embellished; servants offered drinks and sweets to large crowds for several days. In the royal palace, a large table cloth (sofra) was spread on the floor of the Hall of Mirrors (t?l?r-e ??ina), and on it were placed large bowls of water and plates of various fruits, greeneries, sweets, and colored eggs. According to Chardin (II, p. 267), in keeping with an ancient Iranian tradition, on the eve of Nowruz people send each other colored eggs as gifts. The shah gave some five hundred of them to his womenfolk. The eggs are encased in gold and decorated with four miniature paintings. The shah sat at the head of the sofras, amongst the royal women he favored most, who were all bedecked in jewelry. They engaged in pleasant conversation, and then, at the shah’s command, female dancers, musicians, and singers entered and entertained the audience. In another

chamber the court astronomer was trying to determine the exact moment of “the turn of the year” (ta?wil-e s?l, that is, when the Sun entered the sign of Aries at the vernal equinox). As soon as he gave the sign that the New Year had arrived, pages sent off firecrackers into the sky, and, seeing this, the household female servants let out cries of exultation thereby announcing the good news to the king and his companion. At the same time, the news was made public by some palace guards firing off their muskets and citadel guards their cannons, whereupon an official band occupying the center of the great town square (Meyd?n-e naqš-e jah?n) beat on their drums and kettledrums and blew into their wind instruments (sorn?y). Shouts of joy filled the air; eunuchs opened special bags of wild rue (esfand) and sprinkled seeds into the fire, causing the air to be pleasantly scented. The shah, as all other Iranians, gazed at a bowl of water the moment the year “turned,” believing that “water is the symbol of prosperity” (?b rowšan?i-st, lit. ‘water is light’) and if one looks at it at the turn of the year he would enjoy happiness all year long. A few prayers (usually Qur?anic verses, extensively cited by Majlesi, II) were recited, and everyone wearing new clothes drank some water or rosewater, congratulated elders, kinsfolk and friends, and partook of sweets. Elders presented gifts to the members of household, relatives, servants, and friends, and distributed alms to the poor, dervishes, and local sayyeds (descendants of the Imams). In the palace, the shah held a great banquet with wine and music for military commanders, senior civil officials, foreign envoys and notable merchants. In other households elaborately prepared dinners were served, and in general everyone enjoyed the occasion with drinks, music, visitation, and exchanges of gifts and pleasantries. Children were particularly happy, and enjoyed the holidays running around, receiving various gifts, playing various games (specially the “egg-cracking game,” similar to the children’s game of conkers played with chestnuts in the West), and watching polo, wrestling, and horse racing. The gifts exchanged depended on the status of the individuals. The shah sat in the audience hall and distributed gifts, usually gold and or silver coins placed in small colorful bags, to the courtiers, kinsfolk, household servants and foreign envoys. He received in turn precious gifts from his harem, ministers, representatives of social groups and professions, provincial governors, and envoys of neighboring countries. The usual “gifts” to the shah included slave girls (especially from Armenia and Georgia, some of whom ended up as royal wives and others were given to favorite officials), money, prized horses, and beasts of burden with precious saddlery (for the gifts exchanged between the governor of F?rs province and Shah ?Abb?s I see Arberry, p. 19). The shah and rich notables also ordered the slaughter of livestock according to religious rites and distributed the meat to the needy. During the following days, people went outdoors and spent the time in the open air playing, feasting, horseracing and, when possible, hunting.

N?der Shah Afshar (r. 1736-47) always celebrated Nowruz by holding a feast and distributing gifts and robes of honor, as did Karim Khan Zand (r. 1751-79) and his successors (see bibliography). In the Qajar period (1779-1925), the public practices were similar to the contemporary observances (see below), but the official celebration (sal?m, lit. ‘greeting’) underwent elaborations. Generally, the shah received guests consisting of kinsmen, military and civil official, leading religious figures, tribal chiefs, poets, heads of various guilds, and, increasingly, foreign notables. N??er-al-Din Shah (r. 1848-96) began to regiment the festivities by introducing military bands, sending invitation cards, and holding sal?m into three audience sessions. The sal?m-e ta?wil (‘greeting for the turn of the year’) started an hour before the turning of the year and lasted for about four hours. The table of haft sin was prepared in front of the Peacock Throne in the Museum Hall (t?l?r-e muza), and dignitaries gathered around it: military officials headed by the crown prince on the one side, civil officials headed by the chief finance minister (mostowfi-al-mam?lek) on the other side; the leading clergy, Qajar princes carrying royal arms and insignia, and cabinet ministers headed by the prime minister (?adr-e a??am) flanked the throne. The Master of Ceremonies announced the arrival of the

shah, who appeared bedecked in jewelry and proceeded, among the bowing of the silent audience, to the throne and took his seat. The court orator (?a?ib-al-mam?lek) would read a sermon in praise of the Prophet and the first Imam until the court astronomer announced the turning of the year. The shah offered his felicitations first to the ulama and then to the officials, recited some verses of the Qor??n, drank a sip of water, and presented gifts (coins inside small red-silk bags) to the clergymen, who took their leave forthwith. Then the music band played cheerful tunes, and the shah distributed gifts to the audience and left for the inner quarter of the palace (andarun). On the second day, a general audience was held in the Marble Palace (sal?m-e ??mm-e ta?t-e marmar). The shah and senior Qajar princes carrying royal regalia assembled, together with civil and military officials, received foreign envoys and presented them with gifts, paying particular attention to the Ottoman ambassador. Then the shah sat on a bejeweled chair placed upon the Marble Throne, and his aid announced the start of the public (??mma) audience, whereupon music bands played, cannons roared, drums beat, and trumpets sounded. The poet laureate recited a poem in honor of Nowruz and in praise of the shah, and the official orator closed the ceremony with a flamboyantly eulogistic address. On the third day, the sal?m-e sar-e dar, a truly jovial public occasion, was held in the Marble Palace. The shah appeared on a balcony accompanied by officials as well as favorite womenfolk and attendants, and the public participated in the festivities. Ropedancers, keepers, and trainers monkeys, bears, and fighting rams entertained the crowd in front of the palace, and received their rewards. Court jesters made everyone laugh, and wrestlers fought for the highly coveted position of the supreme paladin (pahlav?n-e p?yeta?t), which entailed receiving a special armband. On the thirteenth day (sizdah bedar) people moved out of the towns and celebrated the end of Nowruz in parks, gardens, and along the streams (see below).

In recent times, the official celebrations were condensed into one day of public audience, broadcast since the 1940s by the radio and since the 1960s by the television. These media have tended to standardize the Nowruz ceremonies and, consequently, a great deal of regional variations is fast disappearing.

In Contemporary Persia. Nowruz remains the single most important national festival of the Iranians who celebrate it with considerable zeal and pomp (Zoroastrian practices are treated separately). In the aftermath of the Islamic Revolution of 1979, attempts were made by some influential clerical authorities to dampen public enthusiasm for Nowruz, and there was a discernible tension between the various factions on the amount of freedom and scope allowed for the display of public jubilation and display of nationalistic sentiments during the Nowruz period. But this somewhat austere and puritanical approach was soon toned down: partly because of the Iran-Iraq war (see IRAQ vii. IRAN-IRAQ WAR) and the sentiments that it aroused, and partly because of the overall policy of the leaders of the Islamic Republic in the post-Khomeyni period to depict the regime as both religious and culturally proud of its ancient heritage. In this way, the fate of this festival is akin to the reception of that other 'Iranian' symbol, the Š?h-n?ma, which also suffered only a brief and partial eclipse. Moreover, as has already been stated, the present-day religious authorities have a veritable arsenal of literature at hand in the voluminous corpus of religious discourse from the Safavids onwards that incorporate Nowruz into Shi?ite lore and popular anecdotal literature.

At present, government offices are closed for five days and educational institutions for thirteen. Houses are cleaned, and new clothes obtained. A fortnight before Nowruz, wheat (or barley, or both, sometimes lentil and other seeds as well) are grown in earthenware plates or in a bag of thin cloth wrapped around a clay jar. In rural areas the nowruz-???n?n, that is, minstrels consisting of boys, youths, and even adults, go around at evenings before Nowruz and stop before doors; they recite chants in praise of Nowruz, play on drums (tonbak) and tambourines, and receive rewards in

kind or money. In 1842 Alexander Chodzko collected a good selection of such chants in *M?zandar?n* (for contemporary chants see Maleki; Darviši; ?On?ori; Honari, pp. 107-16; Purkarim). Nowadays in cities, especially Tehran, ??ji Firuz performs the nowruz-???ni.

In rural areas, many people still greet Nowruz by collecting rainwater for their Nowruz sofa, and by kindling bonfires on rooftops, in alleys or in courtyards. In towns this has become an elaborate ceremony on the evening of the last Wednesday of the year to kindle seven or nine fires and to jump over them while chanting a verse (see ?AH?RŠANBA SURI). Until recently, a few days before Nowruz wooden arches were erected at street junctions, bazaars, and shops, and they were lavishly decorated with variegated carpets, tapestry, pictures, mirrors, flowers, and greeneries (Massé, I, pp. 145-46). At present, fruits, sweets, and colored eggs are placed in containers together with pitchers of rose water and pure water. People of every call and means stroll around or get busy buying large quantities of sweets, fruits, and dry nuts. The sweets, most importantly the *sowh?n*, *samanu/samani*, and small cookies made with chickpea or rice flour, are prepared at home or bought from confectioneries. Most favored fruits used to be apples, sour orange, lemon, quince, grapes, and pomegranate, but now various oranges, pears, even bananas, etc., are in style. The nuts include pistachios, shelled almond and walnut, and roasted chickpeas, all mixed with melon seeds, dried apricots, raisins, and dried mulberries (see ?JIL). The fruits, sweets, and nuts are placed in the *sofra-ye haft sin*, together with bowls of water (one containing a red fish) and milk, candles and colored eggs, a mirror, the *sabze*, a few garlic cloves, vegetables (tarragon, leek, spring onions, basil, etc.), some new coins, a copy of the *Qor??n* (or other holy scriptures, depending on the faith of the household), some cheese, and a container of *samanu/samani* (see HAFT SIN). Greeting cards of all sorts and contents are sent to family and friends. Families in bereavement do not celebrate Nowruz. Many still believe that the departed souls of relatives will visit the house on the eve of Nowruz, and the houses are accordingly cleaned and a meal, or *ranginak* (a sort of pastry with pitted dates), or *ahl?* (sweetmeat made with rice flour, sugar, and saffron) is prepared and distributed (either in the streets or cemeteries) as offerings in memory of the departed ancestors (Honari, pp. 58-63 with literature; cf. Faqiri, 1971), in the tradition of *Fravardag?n* (see FRAWARDIG?N). Also, there is still a widespread belief that on the morning of Nowruz a child or a handsome adult must knock at the door and when asked “who is it?” and “what have you brought?” reply: “I am the fortune and I bring health and prosperity” (Inostrantsev, pp. 100-10, tr. K??emz?da, pp. 107-108; cf. Honari, pp. 53, 97, 141-42).

On the eve of Nowruz special kinds of bread are baked, and a meal (usually fish with rice pilaf mixed with herbs) is consumed. Lights from bonfires illuminate many a rural house and village, and candles burn on graves, often accompanied by dishes of sweets, again as offerings to the dead. Meanwhile festive bands go around singing, dancing, and playing music, usually receiving gifts from neighborhood families. The exact moment of the “turning of the year” is announced in advance. In anticipation, families gather around the *haft-sin* table, many reciting prayers intended to impart good will to all. As soon as the year “turns,” children and in-laws get up and kiss the hands of the father and mother (or other elders if present), and offer their greetings. They themselves are in return kissed on the cheek (males) or forehead (female), and given their gifts (usually new banknote, occasionally gold or silver coins), and then the junior members of the family go through the same procedure with their elder siblings or in-laws. Customary congratulatory exclamations are: “May your Nowruz be happy!” (Nowruz-e [or ?eyd-e] *šom? mob?rak* [or ?ojasta/far?onda] *b?šad*), “May health, victory, and prosperity be with you this year and many (or a thousand) years to come!” And to the elders: “May God save you for us!” (?od? *s?ya-ye šom?-r? az sar-e m? kam nakonad*, lit. ‘May God not diminish your shadow over our head!’). Replies are normally the same and for the last phrase run something like this: “May you be

under the protection of God (often adding: and of Morte?? ?Ali)!" Then some sweets, nuts, and colored eggs are distributed among those present, and water is drunk for bringing health and happiness. The candles are not put out (certainly not by blowing on them) but left to be burned all the way. Immediately afterwards (or in the following morning if the year has turned during late night), kinfolks, household servants, friends, and acquaintances visit each other, go through the same ritual, are welcomed by the offer of rosewater, and partake of sweets and other delicacies. Those families who are in mourning usually visit the graves of the departed and pray, then return home. After that, the elders and notables of the society and the kindred visit them but without observing the customary ceremonies of Nowruz, merely wishing them health and long life and pray that no loss may befall the family again.

Children specially love Nowruz. They do not need to work, go to school, or be restricted in play; they wear new clothes, receive gifts, and play various games, particularly the "egg-cracking" and tipcat (similar to baseball and played with wooden sticks, see ALAK-DOLAK).

The following days are spent in visiting friends, going on picnics, and, increasingly, traveling to other cities and countries. Particularly favorite sites include Persepolis (I registered 1,330,749 visitors on 21 March 1976), Isfahan, Mašhad, and other historic monuments, as well as holy sanctuaries and shrines or the Caspian or Persian Gulf resorts for the more affluent. The thirteenth day is the "outing day," and every family gets out, throws the plate of sabza away (while making a wish that with it all mishaps may be averted), finds a spot in a park, garden, or along a stream, spreads a carpet on the ground, and enjoys the day by playing chess, backgammon, cards, alak-dolak, etc, singing, dancing, chatting merrily, and listening to music. Elaborate meals are cooked and large quantities of fruits, nuts, drinks, and sweets consumed. Having thus bidden Nowruz a worthy goodbye, they return joyfully to their living places in the evening.

In other lands. Nowruz has been celebrated with considerable zeal amongst the nations of Iranian background inhabiting other lands, namely, the Tajiks, Afghans, and Kurds of Iraq, Syria, and Turkey. In Tajikistan, particularly in the province of Badaš?n, Nowruz is "the Great Festival" and "the inherited national festival," symbolizing friendship and renovation of all beings (Sulaq?ni, p. 245). Various sweet dishes are prepared, and, in accordance with an old custom, before Nowruz the matriarch of the house places a pair of red brooms in the upright position in front of the house entrance, and hangs a piece of red cloth over the lintel—red being the color of happiness and blessed times. The family's most important belongings are gathered outside, all doors and windows left opened, the house meticulously swept, and utensils thoroughly cleaned. Then the matriarch of the house re-enters, carefully replacing the furniture and utensils, and prepares for the arrival of Nowruz. Visitation, greetings, and partaking of the sweets and drinks follow. The guests are entertained with sumptuous meals, particularly the b?j (head and trotters of a sheep cooked with whole wheat), and there then follow outdoor games, among which t?b-b?zi (playing on swings), egg-cracking, and wrestling are common (Sulaq?ni, pp. 245-46).

In Afghanistan, Nowruz is the official holiday, and in the Bal? area it is also called "the Feast of Red Roses" (jašn-e gol-e sor?). The rites associated with welcoming the holiday (cleaning houses and buying new clothes, preparing sweet dishes and elaborate meals) and with celebrating it (school holidays, visitation, exchange of gifts, partaking of sweets and fruits) are much the same as in Persia (Sulaq?ni, pp. 248-49; Mak?ri; Naba?i; Hamilton, p. 388). Even the preparation of the meal for the departed souls is customary (Honari, p. 61). In Heart, the special meal is rice pilaf and rooster stew. The men who are betrothed, send Nowruzi gifts to their brides, including a rooster, sweet dishes, and a set of clothes. Shortly before the "turning of the year," men gather in mosques

and shrines, and local priests recite prayers and write them on paper using as ink the water mixed with saffron contained in copper tubs; each man drinks a sip of the saffron water (?b-e za?far?ni), and some also take a bowl of it home for their family, viewing it as a symbol of blessing and abundance. The haft-sin spread (sofra) is not usual, but the samani (called samanak in Herat) and sizdah bedar are. Outdoor games, particularly wrestling and bozkaši (lit. ‘goat-dragging,’ an equestrian game) follow the usual visitation and indoor entertainment. A particular custom is to raise an ?alam. In Maz?r-e šarif region it is called ?alam-e mob?rak” (attributed to Imam ?Ali) and is raided by the elders and notables on the morning of the first Nowruz day and taken down forty days later. During this period, it is an object of public veneration, and various votives are offered to it and boons are sought from it. The holidays continue for a time, but two days are especially important: the first ?ah?ršanba (Wednesday) and the sizdah. The first Wednesday rivals the usages of sizdah in Persia: people prepare special meals and spend the day outdoor in merrymaking and playing games. The day is especially joyful for women, who gather in gardens and peacefully party, sing, dance, and play, especially in the swing. Watching cock fights and camel fights is also common (Mak?ri, pp. 221-26).

All Kurds celebrate Nowruz with enthusiasm, even in lands where their traditions do not meet with official sanction. Great quantities of sweets and fruits are consumed, and women ceremoniously cook samani. Everywhere elaborate bonfires are kindled and fireworks (on hill tops and roofs, in streets and the countryside) are accompanied by music, dancing, singing, and picnicking. In some areas the setting up of the “Nowruzian king” is still practiced (Mokri; Minorski, pp. 102-03; Keyv?n, pp. 59-140; Bois, p. 477).

Wherever Persian culture has gone Nowruz has gone with it. Moqaddasi witnessed it celebrated in traditional Iranian way in Yemen (pp. 45, 100). In the Fatimid Egypt, Nowruz was observed as a national festival with all its Persian rituals: wearing new clothes, sprinkling water, kindling fire, carnivals, singing and playing music, official public receptions, exchanges of gifts, recitation of congratulatory poems, and distributing alms (al-?ayy?d, pp. 115-26, citing Qalqašandi, Maqrizi, and Nowayri). A text, allegedly written by Ptolemy and based on the predictions of the Prophet Daniel, was circulated, which described the qualities of Nowruz according to its place in any of the seven days of the week and in relation to planets and the Nile River (H?run, V, pp. 47-8). It was later adapted by Safavid scholars in describing the qualities of Nowruz based on astrological and calendrical associations (see HAFTA). Despite some opposition, Nowruz continued to be celebrated in Egypt albeit somewhat modified, and survives to this day (Lane, 1895, Chap. 26; for contemporary Egyptian Nowruz poems see pp. 127-29). In Spain, Ebr?him Ho?ri al-Qayraw?ni found it useful to give a collection of the congratulatory phrases used at Nowruz (II, pp. 1005-1006). Moslem dynasties of the Indian subcontinent observed the Nowruz rites ardently and fully (Taqaawi; ?udahri, pp. 31-37) as did the Ottoman sultans and officials (Carra de Vaux), the amirs of Bukhara (Olufsen, p. 367), and the people of Central Asia and the Caucasus (Inostrantsev, pp. 100ff.; ?Abd-All?h J?n;). In Northern T?leš (?Abdali) and Arr?n (now in the Republic of Azerbaijan) Nowruz is a national holiday, and buying of new clothes, cleaning and repainting houses, carnival-style minstrelsy and firework (?ah?ršanba suri), and visiting relatives and friends are customary, as are the Nowruz-???ni and preparation of the Nowruz table with candles, water, flowers, sweets, fruits, colored eggs, and the samani. The latter is considered the symbol of Nowruz and celebrated in folk poetry, for example “Samani, look after me; I will prepare you every year” (Madadli; ?Abdali). The four Wednesdays before Nowruz are days of festivities commemorating the four acts of creation, and are called Water Wednesday, Fire Wednesday, Earth Wednesday, and Air or Trees Wednesday (Fuad Aliyev, pers. comm. dated 2 February 2002).

Muslim Indian immigrants took Nowruz to South Africa (Iren) and sailors carried it together with the Persian (Zoroastrian-style) calendar to East Africa and to the coasts of the Indian Ocean (Khareghat). The Swahilis have retained much of the Nowruz (vocalized as Nairuzi) ceremonies but adapted them to their beliefs and local rites: a feast is held one week before Nairuzi, then comes fishing and collecting wood in bundles for five days. On the sixth day, another banquet follows, the Qurʾān is recited, and on the next day people go to the beach, bathe, put on new clothes, sing and dance. After a ceremonial meal all fires are extinguished and later rekindled by the primitive method of fire sticks (for details see Gray; Freeman-Grenville). In recent years Nowruz has again come in favor in Turkey. On 21-23 March 2000 a symposium was held in Ankara for studying the observance of Nowruz in the Turkic-language regions, and the papers were published in *Uluslararası Nevruz Sempozyumu bildirileri: 21-23 Mart 2000, Ankara* (see bibliography). They demonstrate the wide spread of Nowruz celebrations and joyous songs associated with it among the peoples speaking Turkic languages: the Nachchevanis, Turkmens, peoples of Sivas, Afyonkarahisa, northern Caucasus and Central Asia, the Alavid Bektashis of Anatolia, the Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Kyrgyz, and the Altay Turks. Also there are useful accounts of the Nowruz-related folklore and plant symbolism in Anatolia, and on practices common to various groups. They contain solid data which demonstrate the wide spread observation of the Nowruz. Most recently, Iranian communities abroad have popularized Nowruz and *sizdah bedar* far beyond the borders of Persia and the sphere of Persian culture.

Bibliography:

Abbreviations: *Hamʿyeš-e Nowruz—Majmuʿa-ye maqʿalāt-e noʿostin hamʿyeš-e Nowruz*, Tehran 2000; *Nowruz wa ʿahʿšanbe suri—Noʿostin jalasāt-e soʿanrʿni wa baʿʿ darbʿra-ye Nowruz wa ʿahʿšanba suri wa sizdah-bedar*, Tehran 1977

Sources:

Farʿmarz ʿodʿdʿd b. ʿAbd-Allʿh al-Kʿteb Arrajʿni, *Samak-e ʿayyʿr*, ed. P. N. ʿʿnlari, 5 vols., 5th ed., Tehran, 1968-74.

Mirzʿ Mehdi-ʿʿn *Astarʿbʿdi*, *Dorra-ye Nʿdera*, ed. ʿAbd-Allʿh *Anwʿr*, Tehran, 1962, pp. 178, 227, 246, 274, 287-88, 299-300, 363.

Moʿammad Biʿami, *Dʿrʿb-nʿma*, ed. ʿü. ʿafʿ, ʿ vols., Tehran, 1960-62.

Cornelius de Bruin, *Voyage par la Moscovie, en Perse et aux Indes Orientales*, 2 vols., Amsterdam, 1718, vol. I, p. 191.

Jean Chardin, *Voyage de chevalier Chardin en Perse, et autres lieux de l’Orient*, ed. L. Langlès, 10 vols., Paris, 1811, vol. II, pp. 249ff., 267, vol. III, p. 452.

Pietro Della Valle, *Suite des fameux voyages de Pietro della Valle, gentilhomme Romain, surnommé l’illustre voyageur ...*, 2 vols., Paris, 1684, vol. I, p. 286, vol. II, pp. 277-78.

Abu ʿʿmed *Moʿammad ʿazʿli*, *Kimiʿ-ye saʿʿdat*, ed. ʿ. ʿadiv-Jam, 2 vols., Tehran, 1982.

Antonino de Gouveia, *Relation des grandes guerres et victoires obtenues par le roi de Perse Chah Abbas contre le empereur de Turquie Mohamet et Achmet, sons fils*, Rouen, 1646, pp. 447-49.

Abu Es??q Ebr?him b. ?Ali ?o?ri, Ket?b zahr al-?d?b wa ?amar al-alb?b, ed. ?A.-M. Bajawi, 2 vols., Cairo, 1970.

Abu ?Osm?n ?Amr b. Ba?r J??e?, Ket?b al-t?j fi a?l?q al-moluk, ed. A. Z. Pasha, Cairo, 1914.

Mo?ammad b. ?Abdus al-Jahši?ri, Ket?b al-Wozar?? wa al-kott?b, ed. M. Saqqa, E. Ebyari, and ?A.-?. Šalabi, Cairo, 1938.

Engelbert Kämpfer, Amoenitatum exoticarum politico-physico-medicae, bk. 1, ed. and comm. W. Hinz as Am Hofe des persischen Grosskönigs 1684-1685; das erste Buch der Amoenitates exoticae, Leipzig, 1940, p. 262.

Mofa??al b. Sa?d b. ?osayn M?farro?i, Ket?b ma??sen al-E?fah?n, 2 vols., ed. J. Tehr?ni, Tehran, 1933; tr. ?osayn b. Mo?ammad b. ?Ali-Re?? as Tarjoma-ye Ma??sen-e E?fah?n, ed. ?Abb?s Eqb?l, Tehran, 1949.

Raphaël du Mans, Estat de la Perse en 1660, ed. Ch. Schefer, Paris, 1890, p. 114 (see also F. Richard).

Taqi-al-Din A?mad b. ?Ali al-Maqrizi, Ketab al-?e?a? al-maqriziya al-mosamm? be Al-Maw??e? wa al-e?teb?r be ?ekr al-?e?a? wa al-???r, ya?ta??o ?alek be a?b?r eqlim Me?r wa al-Nil wa ?ekr al-Q?hera wa m? yata?allaqo be h? wa be eqlime-h?, ? vols., Cairo 1906-8, vol. II, pp. 241-42, 263-64.

Šeh?b-al-Din Mo?ammad Nasavi, Sirat-e Jal?l-al-Din Menkiberni, ed. M. Minovi, Tehran, 1965.

Adam Olearius, Relation du voyage d'Adam Olearius en Moscovie, Tartarie et Perse, 2 vols., Paris, 1672, vol. I, p. 399.

Pseudo-J??e?, al-Ma??sen wa al-a?d?d, Cairo, 1932.

Pseudo-?ayy?m, Nowruz-n?ma, ed. M. Minovi, Tehran, 1933.

Abu'l-?Abb?s A?mad b. ?Ali Qalqašandi, ?ob? al-a?š? fi ?en??at al-enš??, ?? vols., Cairo, 196, vol. II, pp. 407-13.

F. Richard, ed., Raphaël du Mans: missionnaire en Perse au XVIIe s., 2 vols., Paris, 1995.

Père Sanson, Voyage ou relation de l'état présent du royaume de Perse, Paris, 1695, p. 207.

Abu Bakr al-?uli, Adab al-kott?b, ed. M. B. A?ari and M. Šokri al-Alusi, Cairo, 1922-23.

Ma??sen b. ?Ali al-Tanu?i, Al-Faraj ba?d al-šedda, 2 vols. in 1, Cairo and Baghdad, 1955.

J. B. Tavernier, Les Six Voyages de Jean-Baptiste Tavernier ... en Turquie, en Perse, et aux Indes, 2 vols., Paris, 1676-77, vol. II, p. 71, cf. p. 442.

Studies:

H. R. d'Alemagne, Du Kurdistan au pays des Bachtyaris, 4 vols., Paris, 1911, vol. I, pp. 171-74.

M. Š. ?lusi, *Bolu? al-arab fi ma?refat a?w?l al-?arab*, Baghdad, 1896, repr. 1925.

J?ber ?An??ori, “Peykh?-ye Nowruz dar Ardabil,” *Honar o Mardom* 53-54, 1967 pp. 27-30.

A. J. Arberry, *Shiraz. Persian City of Saints and Poets*, Norman, Okla., 1960.

?er??-?Ali ?A?ami-Sangsari, “Jašnh?-ye melli-e Sangsar,” *Barrasih?-ye t?ri?i* 3/5, November-December 1965, pp. 87-106.

?Obayd-All?h Ayyubi?n, “Mir-e Nowruzi: yek-i az mar?sem-e kohan-e Nowruz dar Kordest?n, Majalla-ye D?neškada-ye adabiy?t-e d?nešg?h-e Tabriz, 14, 1962, pp. 99-112.

Idem, “Taqwim-e ma?alli-ye Kordi,” *Majalla-ye D?neškada-ye adabiy?t-e d?nešg?h-e Tabriz* 16, 1964, pp. 179-208.

Mo?ammad-Taqi Bah?r, “Tanh? a?ar-i az Ir?n-e qadim, y? ruz-e Nowruz,” *Bah?r o adab-e Farsi* 2, Tehran 1972, pp. 337-40.

Abu Ray??n Biruni, ???r, ed. with Pers. tr. M. Mo?aqeq, Tehran, 1973. Thomas Bois, “Kurdish Society,” *EI?IV*, 1978, pp. 470-79.

?Ali Bolukb?ši, “Nowruz, bozorgtarin jašn-e b?st?ni wa melli-e Ir?n,” *Honar o mardom* 4-5, March-April 1963, pp. 3-11.

E. G. Browne, *A Year Amongst the Persians: Impressions as to the Life, Character, & Thought pf the People of Persia, Received during Twelve Months' Residence in that Country in the Years 1887-1888*, London, 1893, pp. 223, 231, 256.

H. C. Brugsch, *Reise der Königlich Preußischen Gesandtschaft nach Persien, 1860 und 1861*, 2 vols., Leipzig, 1862-63. Louis Dubeux, *La Perse*, Paris, 1841, pp. 461-62.

A. E. Christensen, *Les types du premier homme et du premier roi dans l'histoire légendaire des Iraniens*, pt. II: *Jim*, Leiden, 1934, pp. 138-60.

J. N. Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*, 2 vols., London and New York, 1892, vol. I, pp. 312, 401, 445; vol. II, pp. 31, 160, 295, 470, 476, 478, 481 Mo?ammad-Re?? Darviši, *Nowruz-??ni (25 tar?na-ye Nowruzi o bah?ri)*, Tehran, 1997.

Wa?id Dastgerdi, “?Eyd-e Nowruz wa jašn-e bozorg-e firuz-e Jam,” *Arma??n* 2/1, March-April, 1921, pp. 1-11.

?Ali ?orvaš Deylem?ni, *Jasnh?-ye b?st?ni-e Ir?n*, Tehran, 1957.

B. A. Donaldson, *The Wild Rue. A Study of Muhammadan Magic and Folklore in Iran*, 2nd ed., London, 1976.

Abu'l-Q?sem Enjavi, *Jašnh? wa ?d?b wa mo?taqad?t-e zemest?n*, 2 vols., Tehran, 1973-75.

?Abb?s Eqb?l, “Nowruz-e melli wa ?d?b-e qowmi,” *Y?dg?r* 1/8, 1945, pp. 1-7.

Na?r-All?h Falsafi, *Zendeg?ni-e Š?h ?Abb?s-e Awwal*, 2nd ed., 5 vols., Tehran, 1954.

- Abu'l-Q?sem Faqih, "Nowruz dar F?rs," Faruhar 18, 1983, pp. 920-38.
- Idem, "Sofrah? dar Šir?z," Honar o mardom 106, August 1971, pp. 53-54.
- W. Francklin, *Observations Made on a Tour from Bengal to Persia in the Years 1786-7*, London, 1790.
- G. S. P. Freeman-Grenville, "Nawruz. 2. In East Africa," *EI* 2 VII, 1993, pp. 1047-48.
- Q?sem ?ani, "d?b wa ??d?t-e ?eyd-e nowruz," *Y?dd?sth?-ye Doktor Q?sem-e ?ani*, ed. S. ?ani, vol. 10, London, 1983, pp. 582-92.
- W. Geiger, "Nowruz", *K?va* 1/5-6, 1916, pp. 4-5.
- J. R. Gray, "Nairuzi or Siku ya Mwaka," *Tanganyika Notes and Records*, 38, 1955, pp. XXX.
- A. Hamilton, *Afghanistan*, London, 1906.
- N?hid ?abibi-?z?d, "Ket?bn?ma-ye Nowruz," *Ket?b-e m?h* 1/5, February 1999, pp. 26-31.
- ?Abd-al-Sal?m ??run, ed., *Naw?der al-mak?u???*, vol. V, Cairo, 1954.
- Mehdiqoli Mo?ber-al-Sal?ana Hed?yat, ???er?t wa ?atar?t, Tehran, 1940, pp. 121-23.
- ??deq Hed?yat, *Nirangest?n*, Tehran, 1931, repr. 1963, pp. 49-54.
- ??deq Hom?yuni, "Nowruz wa peyvastegih?-ye ?n b? s?yer-e aqw?m o melal," in *Ham?yeš-e Nowruz*, pp. 251-68.
- Idem, *Molk-e ?abir?miz: farhang-e mardom-e Sarvest?n*, 2nd rev. ed., Tehran, 1992, pp. 405-9.
- Idem, "Mar?sem-e ?ah?ršanbe suri, Nowruz, Sizdah dar Šir?z wa Sarvest?n," *Nowruz wa ?ah?šanba suri*, pp. 140-55.
- Morte?? Honari, *Nowruzg?n: goft?rh? wa sorudah?-i dar ??inh?-ye nowruzi* (Traditions and lyrics of Nowruz), 2nd rev. ed., Tehran, 1998.
- K. A. Inostrantsev, "Sasanidski? prazdnik vesny" (Sasanian festival of spring), in *Sasanidskie ètyudy*, St. Petersburg, 1909, pp. 82-109; tr. into Persian by K??em K??emz?da as *Ta?qiq?t-i dar b?ra-ye S?s?ni?n*, Tehran, 1973, pp. 89-114 with notes on pp. 176-89.
- Iraj Iren, "Rew?yat-i digar az jašn-e Nowruz," *???*, Winter 1995, pp. 819-24.
- ?amid Izadpan?h, "Nowruz dar Lorest?n," *Faruhar* 18, 1983, pp. 891-96.
- A. V. W. Jackson, *Persia, Past and Present*, New York, 1906, pp. 99-100.
- N?der Karimi?n-Sardašti and ?Ali-Re?? ?Askari-??vardi, *Ket?bšen?si-e Nawruz* (Bibliography of Nawruz), Tehran, 2000.
- Mo?sen Fay? K?š?ni, *Res?la-ye Nowruz wa si ruz-e m?h*, in *Majmu?a-ye Anjoman-e Ir?nšen?si*, ed. M. Mo?in, Tehran, 1946, pp. 73-84.

ʔoseyn Kʔʔemzʔda-Irʔnšahr, “Asʔs-e Nowruz-e Jamšidi,” Irʔnšahr 1/10, 1921, pp. 251-73.

Moʔʔafʔ Keyvʔn, Nowruz dar Kordestʔn, Tehran, 1970.

M. P. Khareghat, “The Daryai Noroz,” in Dr. Mod Memorial Volume, Bombay, 1930, pp. 118-30.

E. W. Lane, The Arabian Night’s Entertainments: or, The Thousand and One Nights, 2 vols., New York, 1848.

Idem, Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians, London, 1895.

ʔAyn-Allʔh Madadli, “Nowruz dar ʔzarbʔyjʔn”, in Nowruz wa ʔahʔšanba suri, pp. 209-12.

Moʔammad Makʔri, “Nowruz dar Herʔrt,” in Nowruz wa ʔahʔšanba suri, pp. 219-26.

Iraj Maleki, “Sorudhʔ-ye Sʔsʔni wa tarʔnahʔ-ye Nowruzi,” Majalla-ye musiqi 3/62-63, Winter 1972.

John Malcolm, The History of Persia from the Most Early Periods to the Present Times, 2 vols., London, 1815, vol. II, pp. 404-5.

H. Massé, Croyances et coutumes persanes suivies de contes et chansons populaires, Paris, 1938, pp. 145-62, 508-9.

Moʔammad-Taqi Mir Abuʔl-Qʔsemi, “Negʔh-i be moʔtaqedʔt-e mardom-e Gil wa Deylam,” Nowruz wa ʔahʔršanba suri, pp. 101-09.

Dust-ʔAli Moʔayyer-al-Mamʔlek, “Nʔʔer-al-Din Šʔh wa marʔsem-e ʔeyd-e eslʔmi wa melli,” Sʔlnʔma-ye Donyʔ ʔ, ʔʔʔʔ, pp. 59-71.

Moʔammad Moʔin, “Ruzšomʔri dar Irʔn-e bʔstʔn,” Majmuʔa-ye Anjoman-e Irʔnšenʔsi 4, Tehran, 1946, pp. 1-85.

Idem, “Jašn-e Nowruz,” in Majmuʔa-ye maqʔlʔt, ed. Mahindoʔt Moʔin, vol. I, Tehran, 1985, pp. 157-79.

ʔAli-Naqi Monzavi, “Nowruz wa siruz: ʔadiʔ-e Moʔallʔ b. Kaniʔ,” in Hamayeš-e Nowruz, pp. 33-40.

James Morier, A Journey through Persia, Armenia, and Asia Minor, to Constantinople, in the Years 1808 and 1809 ..., London, 1812, pp. 205-6.

ʔAbd-Allʔh Mostowfi, Šarʔ-e zendegʔni-e man, 3 vols., Tehran, 1964; tr. N. Mostofi Glenn as The Administrative and Social History of the Qajar Period [The Story of my Life], 3 vols., Costa Mesa, Calif., 1997, vol. I, pp. 200-5.

Abuʔl-Faʔl Nabaʔi, “Nowruz-e Irʔni dar taqwim-e eslʔmi,” Majalla-ye Dʔneškada-ye adabiyʔt-e dʔnešgʔh-e Mašhad 15, 1982, pp. 703-38.

Saʔid Nafisi, “Tʔriʔ-e Jašn-e Nowruz,” Payʔm-e Nowin 1/7, March-April 1959, pp. 1-10; 1/8, April-May 1959, pp. 72-84.

O. Olufsen, *The Emir of Bukhara and His Country*, Copenhagen, 1911.

J. E. Polak, *Persien, das Land und seine Bewohner: ethnographische Schilderungen*, 2 vols. in 1, Leipzig, 1865, vol. I, pp. 367-89.

R. K. Porter, *Travels in Georgia, Persia, Armenia, Ancient Babylonia, &c. &c. during the years 1817, 1818, 1819, and 1820*, 2 vols., London, 1821-22, vol. I, pp. 361ff.

Hušang Purkarim, "Marʔsem-e ʔeyd-e Nowruz wa jašnhʔ-ye bʔstʔni dar yek-i az dehkadehʔ-ye Mʔzandarʔn," *Honar o Mardom* 66, March-April 1968, pp. 19-27.

Mirzʔ Moʔammad Qazvini, "Mir-e nowruzi," *Yʔdegʔr I/3*, October 1944, pp. 13-16.

Idem, "Šʔhed-i digar barʔye mir-e nowruzi," *Yʔdgʔr I/10*, June 1945, pp. 57-66.

ʔü. Safʔ, "Nowruz dar qorun-e eslʔmi," *Mehr* 2/4, October 1934, pp. 376-81.

ʔadiq ʔafizʔda, *Nowruz dar miyʔn-e Kordhʔ*, Tehran, 1971.

Javʔd Borumand Saʔid, "Nowruz wa ʔʔinhʔ wa sonnathʔ-ye melli wa mardomi," in *Nowruz-e Jamšid*, Tehran, 1998, pp. 253-383 Moʔammad ʔAli Sajjʔdiya, "Taeš-e ʔoršid bar qʔrra-ye abrišom," *Barg-e sabz* 4/21, March 1995, pp. 6-7 (Nowruz dar Kazakhstan).

ʔolʔm-ʔoseyn Saʔidi, *ʔiyʔva ya Meškinšahr*, Tehran, 1965 (chapter 12 deals with Nowruz and other festivals).

ʔAbd-Allʔh Sʔlʔri, *Farhang-e mardom-e Kuhpʔya*, Tehran, 1998, pp. 244-45.

Foʔʔd ʔAbd-al-Moʔaʔʔi al-ʔayyʔd, *Al-Nowruz wa aʔaroho fi al-adab al-ʔarabi*, Beirut, 1972.

C. Serena, *Hommes et choses en Perse (1877-78)*, Paris, 1883, pp. 231ff.

Saʔid Šʔdʔbi, *Farhang-e mardom-e Lorestʔn*, ʔorramʔbʔd, 1998, pp. 47-52.

Maʔmud Šafiʔi, "Nowruz dar ʔahʔrmahʔl-e Baʔtiʔri," in *Nowruz wa ʔahʔršanba suri*, pp. 63-77.

ʔeydar Šahryʔr Taqavi, "Jašn-e Nowruz dar Pʔkestʔn o Hend," in *Nowruz wa ʔahʔršanba suri*, pp. 10-22.

Ebrʔhim Šakurzʔda, *ʔAqʔʔed o rosum-e mardom-e ʔorʔsʔn*, Tehran, 1967, 2nd ed. Tehran, 1985.

Idem, "Eyd-e Nowruz wa ʔebʔehʔ-ye eslʔmi-ye ʔn," *Našriya-ye dʔneškade-ye adabiʔt-e Mašhad* 15, 1982, pp. 239-56.

A. Sh. Shahbazi, "Mazdaean echoes in Shiʔite Iran," *A Zoroastrian Tapestry*, Bombay, 2002, pp. 247-57, esp. pp. 255-56.

B. Spuler, "Die Zuverlässigkeit der sassanidischen Datierungen," *Byzantinischen Zeitschrift* 44, 1951, pp. 546-50.

Qorbʔn-ʔAli Sulaqʔni, "Nowruz dar Iran o sarzaminhʔ-ye digar," *Hamʔyeš-e Nowruz*, pp. 241-49.

S. H. Taqiz?da, G?hšom?ri dar Ir?n-e qadim, Tehran, 1937; 2nd ed. with new annotations, ed. I. Afš?r, Tehran, 1978.

A. S. Triton, "Sketches of life under the Caliphs, III," *The Muslim World* 62, 1972, pp. 137-47.

Uluslararası Nevruz Sempozyumu b?ld?r?ler?: ??-?? Mart 2000, Ankara(Proceedings of the International Nowruz Symposium held at Ankara 21st-23rd March, 2000), Ankara, 2000 (Nouruz celebrations among Turkic peoples).

Carra de Vaux, "Notice sur un calendrier turc," in *A Volume of Oriental Studies Presented to Edward G. Browne, M.A., M.B., F.B.A., F.R.C.P., Sir Thomas Adam's Professor of Arabic in the University of Cambridge, on his 60th Birthday (7 Febr. 1922)*, ed. T. W. Arnold, R. A. Nicholson, and E. G. Browne, Cambridge, 1922, pp. 106-16.

Sayyed A?mad Wakili?n, "Panja-ye pitok, y?dg?r-i az jašnh?-ye Nowruz," *Ham?yeš-e Nowruz*, pp. 269-78.

S. G. Wilson, *Persian Life and Customs*, 2nd ed., Edinburgh and London, 1896, pp. 236-38, 243-52.

Ehsan Yarshater, "Now Ruz: The New Year Celebrations in Persia," *Iran Review* 4, March 1959, pp. 12-15.

(A. Shapur Shahbazi)

Last Updated: November 15, 2009

NOWRUZ iii. In the Iranian Calendar

The day Hormoz (the first day of any Persian month) of the month of Farvardin is the New Year day in the Persian calendar; at present it coincides with the day of the vernal equinox.

NOWRUZ

iii. IN THE IRANIAN CALENDAR

The day Hormoz (the first day of any Persian month) of the month of Farvardin is the New Year day in the Persian calendar; at present it coincides with the day of the vernal equinox (the day on which the Sun enters the first degree of Aries). This entry does not deal either with the position Nowruz occupied in other calendars (for instance, in the Ottoman fiscal calendar, or in the No?ayri calendar), or with the names of the New Year days in other calendars, which derive from the Persian nowruz, like Nayriz in Egypt or Nayruz in Andalusia (a bibliographical survey on the matter is given in Cristoforetti, 2003), since they are often different from their Persian originals and parallels.

In the Iranian world, too, there were other days called Nowruz. They did not coincide even theoretically with the day when the Sun entered the first degree of Aries. The Nowruz-e mo?ta?edi was introduced for fiscal purposes in 282/895 by the Abbasid caliph al-Mo?ta?ed (r. 892-902,

hence the name). It existed for about a century and was fixed on 11 *ʔazirʔn* in the Syrian calendar (11 June in the Julian calendar), which corresponded to 1 *ʔordʔd* in Persian calendar during 892-895 CE (see Taqizʔda, p. 157).

In astrological context, the expression *Nowruz-e ʔʔʔrazmšʔhi* indicates the day when the Sun enters the 19th degree of Aries, which is the Sun's exaltation (Taqizʔda, p. 140). Originally, this expression indicated the reformed Nowruz introduced in 958-9 CE in *ʔʔʔrazm* (see CHORASMIA) and fixed on 2 or 3 *Nʔsʔn* (2 or 3 April in the Julian calendar; see Biruni, *ʔʔʔr*, text, p. 241, tr., p. 229). In Biruni's *Al-ʔʔʔr al-bʔqiya ʔan al-qorun al-ʔʔʔliya* (text, p. 230, tr., p. 217), one finds a "Naurʔz of the rivers and of all running waters" on 19 *Esfandʔrmoʔ* (the corresponding day in the Julian calendar changed in time, because the Persian calendar was a solar vague calendar).

In modern popular context, there exist a *Nowruz-e ʔabari* in *Mʔzandarʔn* on the 2nd day of *Mordʔd* of the solar Hejri calendar (24 or 25 July; see Humand, p. 107) and, at a short distance from it, a *Nowruz-e deylami* in *Gilʔn* on 15 *Mordʔd* (6 or 7 August; see ʔArši, 2000, p. 24). Humand (pp. 107-19) provides yet another date of this New Year day for the years 1996 (1375 ;Š.) and 1997 (1376 ;Š.), namely 17 *Mordʔd* which corresponds to 8 or 9 August. Along the Persian Gulf coast, there is a *Nowruz-e ʔarab* (Arab New Year), or *Nowruz-e daryʔʔi* (Sea New Year) on 9 *Mordʔd* of the solar Hejri calendar (31 July or 1 August; ʔArši, 1997, p. 18; but see Sadid-al-Salʔana Bandar-ʔAbbʔsi, pp. 35-36, where the given date is the beginning of Leo, that is, 1 *Mordʔd* which is 23 or 24 July). Besides, in *Kermʔn* province (*Lʔlazʔr*), there is a *Nowruz-e ʔupʔni* (Herdsman's New Year) on 27 *Esfand* (17 or 18 March; ʔanʔati, p. 693). Undoubtedly, there are other cases as well, which have not yet been investigated.

Abu Reyʔʔn Biruni (see *ʔʔʔr*, text, pp. 32-33, tr., pp. 36-38) speaks of a Nowruz of the ancient—that is, Sasanian—kings on the day of the summer solstice. However, the Persian tradition refers to the coincidence between the Nowruz and the first degree of Aries (see Biruni, *ʔʔʔr*, text, p. 45, tr. p. 55). Yet, such a fixed coincidence has no historical evidence, because in Sasanian times the Persian calendar was based on a vague solar year of 365 days, and the above-mentioned coincidence would only take place during four consecutive years once in 1,461 years. According to an out-of-date theory—particularly based on Arabic and Persian records in astronomical works—there were two Nowruzes during the Sasanian period: a "civil" Nowruz which moved back throughout the seasons, and a "religious" Nowruz, approximately fixed within the year by means of monthly intercalations carried out in every 116 or 120 years (see CALENDARS). However, "it has been fairly widely accepted ... that there is no documentary evidence for intercalations and that it is indeed unlikely that they ever actually played a role in practical time-keeping" (de Blois, p. 40).

The Nowruz on (vague solar) 1 *Farvardin* is the only historically testified Nowruz, and it represented the New Year's day par excellence. This Nowruz moved one day backward throughout the solar seasons in every four years, and the above-mentioned passages by Biruni could be very well explained as traces of replacing the Nowruz from a position close to the summer solstice in late Sasanian times (620-23 CE; during the 7th century, the summer solstice occurred on 19 June of the Julian calendar, and 1 *Farvardin* coincided with 19 June only during these four years) to a position which coincided with the first degree of Aries during the years 1004-7 CE ; (during the 11th century, the vernal equinox occurred on 15 March of the Julian calendar, and 1 *Farvardin* coincided with 15 March only during these four years). Such a dramatic event has been implicitly recorded in the monumental inscription of *Gonbad-e Qʔbus* (see Cristoforetti, 2004, pp. 10-14). Then the Nowruz moved back again, and according to the *Nowruz-nʔma* (p. 12)—which is a New-

Persian treatise attributed to ʿOmar ʿayyʾm(i) and probably composed during the 11th-12th centuries—the Saffarid ruler ʿAlaf b. Aʿmad (r. 963-1001/2; d. 1008-9) reformed the calendar in order to fix the Nowruz, but the text is not clear (for a discussion see Cristoforetti, 2006a, pp. 33-39). The Nowruz-nʾma (p. 10) mentions a Farvardin-e ʾʾiš (its [that is, of the vernal equinoctial Sun] own Farvardin) in order to indicate the moment of the “correct” occurrence of the Nowruz, in spite of the different seasonal positions it occupied at various times.

In 471/1079, Saljuq ruler Jalʾl-al-Dowla Malekšʾh (r. 1073-92) introduced a calendar reform which fixed the New Year day, called Nowruz-e jalʾli after a part of his name, at the first degree of Aries. Even afterwards, however, the vague solar calendar survived among some Zoroastrian circles which, until now, consider the Nowruz days to be linked to different forms of Persian vague solar calendar (Boyce, 2005, p. 22), and there are traces of a popular Nowruz which moved to the 1st day of other Persian months in non-Zoroastrian context, too (Cristoforetti, 2007, pp. 45-54; Karamšʾhyef, pp. 687-88; Vakilian, p. 202).

Besides, in most sections in Arabic and Persian astronomical works, which describe various calendars, one comes across a Nowruz-e kabir or Nowruz-e bozorg (Great Nowruz) on 6 Farvardin, but the surviving sources on the importance of the sixth day of the first Persian month are all from the Islamic period. The “Great Nowruz” was also called Nowruz-e ʾordʾʾi (Nowruz of day of ʾordʾd; Dhabhar, p. 339; ʾordʾd is the name which was given to the sixth day of every Persian month) or Nowruz-e ʾʾʾʾa (Nowruz of the elite; see Borhʾn-e qʾʾeʾ, s.v.), and it followed the Nowruz-e ʾaʾir (Small Nowruz) or Nowruz-e ʾʾmma (Nowruz of the common people) on 1 Farvardin.

The earliest source (mid-9th century) for the occurrence of the Nowruz on 6 Farvardin is the account by Kasravi recorded in the Ketʾb al-maʾʾsen wa al-aʾyʾd (p. 363; for the identification of the author see Inostrantsev, pp. 85-87). A similar, but not identical, account is to be found in Biruni (ʾʾʾr, text, pp. 217-19, tr., pp. 201-4). In addition, a relevant source about the Nowruz on 6 Farvardin is the Middle-Persian text entitled Mʾh ʾ Frawardʾn Rʾz ʾ Hordʾd (see J. M. JamaspAsana, pp. 102-8 for the text; and K. J. JamaspAsana, pp. 122-29 for the translation) from the Codex MK, which was once part of the personal library of the editor of the text, J. M. JamaspAsana. The importance of 6 Farvardin is confirmed in the 52nd chapter of the New-Persian work ʾad dar naʾr, probably composed during the 7th century CE (West, pp. xxxvii, 314-15) and in the New-Persian narration (rewʾyat) by Dastur Darab Hormazyar (Molé, pp. 99-100). According to Kušyʾr b. Labbʾn Jili (d. ca. 1030 CE; apud Taqizʾda, p. 191), “the sixth day of the Nowruz” (that is, 6 Farvardin) was called ʾabb al-mʾʾ (water-pouring [day]), and it was revered as the Great Nowruz and ; “the Day of Hope,” because it commemorated the completion of the act of creation.

Biruni mentions that “the man who connected the two Naurʾz with each other is said to have been Hormuz b. Shʾpʾr the Hero [Hormozd ;I, r. 272-273 CE], for he raised to festivals all days between the two Naurʾz” (Biruni, ʾʾʾr, text, p. 218, tr., p. 203; cf. Idem, ʾʾʾr, text, p. 224, tr., p. 209 for an identical notice about the Mehragʾn). Yet, “this measure can reasonably be attributed in fact to his [Hormozd ;I’s] high priest, the mighty prelate Kerdir” (Boyce, 2003, p. 59). However, this implies the existence of an old rivalry between the two Nowruzes—a fact that is made implausible by the disagreement of some scholars (cf. de Blois, p. 48) on the matter of the supposed intercalations prior to late Sasanian era, which caused the doubling of the Nowruz. The idea of the absolute importance of 6 Farvardin, because it is the day of fulfillment of creation (Belardi, pp. 72-75), is of general value in a phenomenological perspective and can enlighten the importance given to 6 Farvardin independently from calendrical problems. In this regard, consideration must be given to

Biruni's hypothesis about 6 Farvardin celebrated as "the moment when Jam returned successful" (Biruni, 1971, text, p. 233, tr. p. 220). According to Christensen, "the sixth day of the spring festival was in origin the day of the spring equinox, the right Nowruz; then, when Persians adopted Islam ... , the Mazdaian festival Hamaspa?ma?daja disappeared, and the spring festival began at spring equinox, but the idea of the solemnity of the sixth festive day has been conserved" (tr. of Christensen, p. 144).

The question is complicated by the existence of various other festivals, similarly doubled, as attested in Iranian tradition. In this regard, the coincidence between the 6th day of the Persian calendar and the New Year of the Armenians, Sogdians, and Khwarazmians obviously creates further complications.

In the *Tarīḥ-e Bostān*, Abu Bakr Mo'ammad Narša'i speaks of a second local Nowruz that followed the first one by five days, but he does not call it "the Great Nowruz" (Narša'i, text, p. 16, tr., p. 18; for a discussion on the topic see Cristoforetti, 2006b, pp. 100-3).

Ebn 'awqal (p. 364) reports about seven festive days of Nowruz in Isfahan during the 10th century (see NOWRUZ, Islamic Period); this is an apparent reference to a week. As a matter of fact, in spite of Biruni's account on Hormozd ;I, there is no historical evidence of a 6-day festive period of the Nowruz celebration.

Persian astronomer and mathematician Mollā Mo'afar Gon'ab'di, who worked at the court of Shah 'Abbās I (r. 1588-1629) in Isfahan, did not mention the sizdah-e Nowruz in the list of Persian festivals, but he recorded both the "great Nowruz" on 6 Farvardin and the 'b'nag'n on 10 Farvardin (Gon'ab'di, Chap. 15, pp. 12-16). However, it seems improbable that references to 6 Farvardin as "the great Nowruz" in such a late theoretical work could prove the actual observance of the festival. Christensen (pp. 155-56) considered the festival on the 6th of Farvardin being still alive during the 17th century on the basis of the *Bor'ān-e q'ate'* (pp. 287-91); however, the only quoted traveler who wrote on the subject is rather generic: "the feast of Nowruz continues about one week, but the first day ... is by far the most solemn" (Dubeux, pp. 461-62). According to Christensen (p. 158), the six-day festive period has been prolonged during the 19th century. Nowadays, without any attention to 6 Farvardin, the festive period of Nowruz ends on 13 Farvardin with the sizdah bedar or sizdah-e Nowruz.

There are ancient traces of a twelve-day festival in the *'Oyun a'b'r al-Re'* by Ebn B'awayh Qomi (d. 381/991-2), in the section dedicated to the usages of the people called A'?'b al-Rass (Qomi, Chap. 16, pp. 132-35). According to this text, the A'?'b al-Rass lived in twelve towns, each bearing the name of a Persian month, and their king was called T.rkuz (= N.rkuz < Nokruz). When the time of the festival of the main town arrived, a big party was launched there during "twelve days and twelve nights," like the number of "their festivals during a year."

In the middle of the 10th century (958-59), the Sun entered the 19th degree of Aries on 3 Nis'n/April. According to Biruni (1971, text pp. 241-2, tr. pp. 229-30), the Khwarazmshah Abu Sa'id A'mad (on the uncertain dates of his reign see Fedorov, pp. 73-74) fixed the Nowruz on that day (Nowruz-e 'razmš'hi). In his Persian *Tafhim* (p. 272), Biruni also refers to the 2nd of Nis'n as the Nowruz-e 'razmš'hi in 958-59 CE. This incertitude is of some interest, because 2 Nis'n was the 13th day after the official date of the vernal equinox for the Christians (21st of A'r/March), and the Khwarazmshah's astronomers took into consideration "the Greek and Syrian"—that is, Christian—calendar in order to fix the local one. A fixed Nowruz could be found

in Noʻayri tradition as well: according to the *Majmuʻ al-aʻyʻd* by Abu Saʻid Maymun ʻabarʻni (d. 1034-35): “[Nowrʻz] always falls on the fourth day of April. It is the first day of the Iranian year, which begins in the month named farwardʻn” (apud Bar-Asher, p. 218). However, the vague solar Nowruz of the Persian tradition fell on 4 April during 924-927 CE only, and it is the 15th day after the day considered as the vernal equinox day by the Christians (March 21), in spite of the fact that during the 11th century the vernal equinox fell on March 15 of the Julian calendar. It is noteworthy that exactly 13 days run between the two dates proposed for the Christian Nativity since ancient times (December 25 and January 6), in a possible parallel with the two dates of Aiʻn celebrations in Alexandria (Pettazzoni, pp. 171-75). Possible analogies with the 12-day period between the vernal equinox and the Western usages performed on the 1st of April were suggested by the Iranian scholar Maʻmud Ruʻ-*al-Amini* (see Cristoforetti, 2005 p. 321-22). According to Boyce (2005, p. 30) the reckoning of Sizdah bedar “appears to be taken over from the religious Nʻ Rʻz of 6 Fravardʻn ... for thirteen days after that was Fravardʻn day of Fravardʻn month” (that is, 19 Farvardin, which is Nowruz-e ʻrazmšʻhi). At the moment, there is no sufficient evidence that would give a solid explanation for the origin of the 13-day period of the Nowruz celebrations with the sizdah bedar at the end of them.

Bibliography:

Z. ʻArši, Šemʻl, 1st ed., Tehran, 1995; 2nd ed., Tehran, 2000 (photos by N. Kasrʻiyʻn).

Idem, *Jonub: az Bušehr tʻ Jʻsk*, Tehran, 1997 (photos by N. Kasrʻiyʻn).

M. M. Bar-Asher, “The Iranian Component of the Nuʻayrʻ Religion,” *Iran* 41, 2003, pp. 217-27.

W. Belardi, *Studi Mithraici e Mazdei*, Rome, 1977.

Abu Reyʻn Moʻammad b. Aʻmad Biruni, *Al-ʻr al-bʻqiya ʻan al-qorun al-ʻliya*, ed. E. Sachau as *Chronologie orientalischer Völker von Albêrûnî*, Leipzig, 1878; repr. Leipzig, 1923 and Baghdad, 1963; tr. E. Sachau as *The Chronology of the Ancient Nations*, London, 1879; repr. Frankfurt am Main, 1969 and Lahore, 1983.

Idem, *Ketʻb al-tafhim le-awʻel ʻenʻʻat al-tanjim*, ed. J. Homʻi, 4th ed., Tehran, 1988 (1st ed. Tehran, 1939-40).

F. de Blois, “The Persian Calendar,” *Iran* 34, 1996, pp. 39-54.

M. Boyce, “Preliminary Note by Professor Mary Boyce to Agha Homayoun Sanati’s Translation of Her Article ‘On the Calendar of Zoroastrian Feasts’,” in *ʻtaš-e Dorun = The Fire Within. Featuring 45 Papers on Various Aspects of Culture, History, and Religion of Ancient Iran*, ed. C. G. Cereti and F. Vajifdar, n.p., 2003, pp. 57-61.

Idem, “Further on the Calendar of Zoroastrian Feasts,” *Iran* 43, 2005, pp. 1-38.

Moʻammad-ʻosayn b. ʻalaf Tabrizi, *Borhʻn-e Qʻʻeʻ* (Dictionnaire de la langue persane), ed. M. Moʻin, 6 vols., Tehran, 1955-56, repr. Tehran, 1963-73.

A. Christensen, *Les types du Premier Homme et du Premier Roi dans la histoire légendaire des Iraniens*, pt. 2: *Jim*, Leiden, 1934.

S. Cristoforetti, *Persiani intorno all’Africa e vicende calendariali*, Venice, 2003.

Idem, “Il sizdah ; bedar e il ‘pesce d’aprile’,” in *Scritti in onore di Giovanni M. ;D’Erme*, ed. M. Bernardini and N. L. Tornesello, Naples, 2005, pp. 321-34.

Idem, “Ipotesi sulla kab?sa sistanaica di Khalaf b. A?mad,” in *Proceedings of the 5th Conference of the Societas Iranologica Europea held in Ravenna, 6-11 October 2003*, vol. II: *Classical and Persian Studies*, ed. A. Panaino and R. Zipoli, Milan, 2006a, pp. 33-39.

Idem, “Calendars in Narshakh?’s Ta’r?kh-i Bukh?r?,” in *Ancient and Mediaeval Culture of the Bukhara Oasis. Materials of the Conference Based on the Joint Uzbek-Italian Researches in Archaeology and Islamic Studies (Bukhara, Sept. 26-27, 2003)*, ed. Ch. Silvi Antonini and D. K. Mirzaakhmedov, Samarqand and Rome, 2006b, pp. 100-3.

Idem, “The ‘Hall of the Ambassadors’ Paintings in the Frame of the Calendrical Systems of the Iranian World,” in *M. Compareti and S. Cristoforetti, The Chinese Scene at Afr?sy?b and the Iranian Calendar*, Venice, 2007, pp. 33-71.

B. N. Dhabhar, *The Persian Rivayats of Hormazy?r Framarz and Others. Their Version with Introduction and Notes*, Bombay, 1932.

L. Dubeux, *La Perse*, Paris, 1841.

Ebn ?awqal, *Ket?b ?urat al-ar?*, ed. M. J. de Goeje, Leiden, 1873; ed. J. H. Kramers, Leiden, 1938, repr. Leiden, 1967.

M. Fedorov, “The Khw?razmsh?hs of the Banu ?Ir?q (fourth/tenth century),” *Iran* 38, 2000, pp. 71-78.

N. Humand, *G?hšom?ri-e b?st?ni-e mardom?n-e M?zandar?n wa Gil?n wa pažuheš-i dar bony?n-e g?hšom?rih?-ye Ir?ni, hamr?h b? taqwim-e b?st?ni-e ?abari-deylami*, ?mol, 1996.

K. A. Inostrantsev, *Sasanidskie étyudy (Sasanian etudes)*, St. Petersburg, 1909.

D. Karamš?hyef, “Az ?omumiyat wa taf?wot-e rosum?t-e e??el??t-e nowruzi-e Bada?š?n,” in *Pažuheš dar farhang-e b?st?ni wa šen??t-e ?vest?* (Proceedings of the Conference held in Amersfoort, Oct. 7th-11th, 1977), vol. 2, ed. M. Mirš?hi, Vincennes, 1997, pp. 685-93.

Mo?affar b. Mo?ammad Gon?b?di, *Šar?-e bist b?b-e ?Abd-al-?Al?? Ne??m-al-Din b. ?osayn ?anafi Birjandi*, lithogr. ed., Tehran, 1267/1851.

J. M. JamaspAsana, ed., *The Pahlavi Texts Contained in the Codex MK copied in 1322 ;A.C. by the Scribe Mehr-Āwân Kaî-khôsrô*, ? vols., Bombay, 1897-1913.

K. J. JamaspAsana, “The day Khord?d of the Month Farvardin Commonly Called Khord?ds?l: Translated from the Original Pahlavi Text,” in *The K. ;R. ;Cama Memorial Volume*, ed. J. J. Modi, Bombay, 1900, pp. 122-29; repr. Tehran, n.d.

M. Molé, *Culte, mythe et cosmologie dans l’Iran ancien*, Paris, 1963.

Abu Bakr Mo?ammad b. J??far Narša?i, *T?ri?-e Bo??r?*, ed. Ch. Schefer, Paris, 1892; tr. R. N.

Frye as *The History of Bukhara*, Cambridge, Mass., 1954.

Nowruz-n?ma, res?la-i dar monš?? wa t?ri? wa ?d?b-e jašn-e nowruz, neg?reš-e ?Omar-e ?ayy?m, ed. M. Minovi, Tehran, 1933.

R. Pettazzoni, *Essays on the History of Religions*, Leiden, 1954.

Abu Ja?far Mo?ammad b. ?Ali b. al-?osayn b. Mus? b. B?bawayh Qomi, ?Oyun a?b?r al-re??, lithogr. ed., Tehran, 1275/1858-59.

M. ?A.-?. *Sadid-al-Sal?ana Bandar-?Abb?si, Pir?mun-e ?alij-e F?rs wa dary?-ye ?Om?n*, Tehran, 1992-93.

H. ?an?ati, “Taqwim-e ?up?ni wa nojum-e kuhest?ni dar L?laz?r-e Kerm?n,” ?yanda 6, nos. 9-12 (??ar-Esfand), 1980-81, pp. 690-99.

S. ?. *Taqiz?da, G?hšom?ri dar Ir?n-e qadim*, in *Maq?l?t-e Taqiz?da*, vol. 10, ed. I. Afš?r, Tehran, 1978.

A. Vakilian, “Panje Pitok: a Memorial of Nowruz Festivals in Taleghan,” *Articles Presented to the 1st Symposium on Nowruz (Spring 2001)*, Tehran, 2001, pp. 201-9.

G. Van Vloten, ed., *Le livre des beautés et des antithèses (Ket?b al-ma??sen wa al-a?y?d)*, attribué à Abu-Othman Amr ibn Bahr al-Djahiz de Basra, Leiden, 1898.

E. W. West, ed. and tr., *Pahlavi texts*, pt. III, 5 vols., ed. F. M. Müller, Oxford, 1885; rep. Dehli, 1965.

(Simone Cristoforetti)

Last Updated: November 15, 2009

This entry was posted on Friday, March 20th, 2015 at 1:52 pm and is filed under ????? ? ???????. You can follow any responses to this entry through the [Comments \(RSS\)](#) feed. You can leave a response, or [trackback](#) from your own site.