

THE MANUSCRIPTS OF ČANGRANGHĀČE-NĀME
AND ARDĀYA-VĪRĀF-NĀME BY ZARTOŠT-E
BAHRĀM-E PAŽDŪ

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Zartošt-e Bahrām was a Zoroastrian poet who lived in Iran in the late 13th century. He is one of the few Zoroastrian authors who wrote in Persian and whose name and scraps of biographical information have been preserved to our days. The most significant and well known of his works are *Ardāya-Vīrāf-nāme*¹, *Čangranghāče-nāme*², and *Qesse-ye Umar Xaṭṭāb va šāhzāde-ye Īrān-zamīn*³, a collection of parables on the perishable nature of this world.⁴ All of them were written in *hazaj-e mosaddas* metre. For several centuries tradition ascribed to him the authorship of *Zartošt-nāme* (originally *Mowlūd-Zartošt*)⁵, but as Ch. Rempis and R. Afifi showed in their studies published independently in 1963 and 1964, the real author was another Zoroastrian, named Kay-Kāūs b. Kay-Xosrow b. Dārā, from the city of Ray.⁶

The episode of Zaratuštra's biography which is the subject of *Čangranghāče-nāme*, is not found in any other source except this poem. After Zaratuštra's religion had been successfully disseminated in the kingdom of Goštasp, the news reached the Indian sage Čangranghāče. This wise man is said to have been one of the teachers of Goštasp's famous counsellor Jāmāsp. Čangranghāče summoned Zartošt to take part in a dispute, and spent two years preparing for it. He devoted all his time to gathering difficult questions and riddles. After the long period of

1 Text published twice: Jamasp Asa 1902; Afifi 1964.

2 The subject of the poem is described in Anquetil Duperron 1771: 48–52; Wilson 1843: 445; Spiegel 1860: 182.

3 Text published in Unvala 1922: 244–259; contents described in Dhabhar 1932: 586–589; Roseberg 1909: 54–55.

4 Unvala 1922: 305–331.

5 The text is published in Rosenberg 1904.

6 Rempis 1963: 337–342; Afifi 1964: xiv–xviii.

preparation, armed with all the knowledge which he collected during his long life, Čangranghāče arrived at the court of King Goštasp. The dispute began, and Zartošt asked his pupil to read from a certain *nask* of the Avesta. This *nask* predicted the arrival of Čangranghāče and enumerated all the questions and riddles that he might prepare, with the answers to them. Staggered by this indisputable proof of the legitimacy of Zartošt's prophetic mission, Čangranghāče accepted the Zoroastrian faith.

Another famous epic by Zartošt-e Bahrām, *Ardāya-Vīrāf-nāme*, interprets a very popular subject, which attracted the attention of European scholars due to the precious information on the Zoroastrian vision of life beyond the grave, and its resemblance to Dante's *Divina commedia*. This is the story of the righteous man Ardāya-Vīrāf who visited the other world where he saw the fate awaiting human beings after death. This poetic version is based on a translation made from the well-known Pahlavi book.

Although the subjects of these two books are distinctly different, the manuscripts found in the European collections show that both epics became part of the extended version of *Ardāya-Vīrāf-nāme*, which also comprises other works by Zartošt-e Bahrām and some works that are not usually mentioned in connection with him. This version has so far been represented by a single manuscript preserved in the National Library of Russia (NLR), MS P.N.S. 11.

In the European manuscript collections there are at least three copies of the epic entitled *Čangranghāče-nāme*, one in the Bodleian Library (BL) and two in the Bibliothèque Nationale (BN). They are:

1. BL, MS Ouseley 160.⁷

This copy is situated on leaves 35–54 of MS Ouseley 160. According to the catalogue, the text is written 13 lines per page, so the volume of the poem should be about 520 verses. The description says that the colophon claims that the poem had been copied from a “bad and orderless” manuscript for Sir William Ouseley. The old colophon, also included in the copy, has the date 1029 of the Yazdgerd era (AD 1660) and the name of the copyist is Kīkā Mīhrjī b. Lāmān b. Jāndā.

Without examining the manuscript personally, it is hard to say anything concerning the contents of the poem, except for the fact that in this copy it is some 400 *bayts* shorter than the copy of the Bibliothèque Nationale (MS Supplément 44), described below.

⁷ Ethé & Sachau 1889, col. 1113–1114, No. 1951.

2. BN, Supplément 48.⁸

This copy, like the previous one, is placed in a collection. The catalogue states that it was copied in 1760–61 by Nūr-bīk in Ahmadabad. The next item in the collection (No. 199-4) is described as the introduction to *Zartošt-nāme* by Zartošt-e Bahrām.

It is mentioned in Blochet's description that Nur-bek, who made this collection, copied many of the colophons from the older manuscripts, and the colophon of No. 4° says that the old manuscript was copied on the day of Bād of the month of Ābān, in the year 1008 of the Yazdgerd era by *hīrbad* Farīdūn son of Jamšīd, son of Rannān, son of Qavām ad-dīn. The beginning of the *Čangranhāče-nāme* here is as follows:

سر دفتر بنام پاک یزدان نگهدار زمین و چرخ گردان

Beginning of the book – with the pure name of God,
the keeper of the Earth and revolving sphere ...

3. BN, Supplément 44.⁹

The epic is included in a collection copied in Surat in 1173/1760. The scribe copied the colophon of the old copy that he used for this manuscript:

تمام شد فرخنده بروز شادی ورامشنی بروز باد بماه ایان سال اور هزار هشت از
شاهنشاهی ایزدجرد شهریار ساسان تهجم ایران الحرف من بنده هیرید فرامرز بن
جمشید بن راننان بن قام الدین بتاریخ ۲۴ شهر ربیع الاول سنه ۱۱۷۴

This colophon says that the protograph of the manuscript was copied on the day Bād of the month of Ābān, in the year 1008 of Yazdgerd era, while the present copy itself was produced on 24 rabī' I, 1174 of *hijra* by *hīrbad* Frāmarz b. Jamšīd b. Rannān b. Qivām ad-dīn. As we can see the date almost entirely coincides with the colophon in MS Supplément 48, with the sole exception of the first name of the copyist.

Besides *Čangranhāče-nāme* (ff. 1 v.–28 v.), this volume also includes a copy of *Jāmāsp-nāme* in verse, 102 leaves in total, 26 x 15 cm. The title "Tchangraghacha-name" is written in French on fol. 1r. The poem consists of about 910 verses. The beginning is similar to the copy in MS Supplément 44. I

⁸ Blochet 1905: 160–162, No. 199–3°.

⁹ Blochet 1905: 158, No. 195–1°.

had the opportunity to study the photocopy of this manuscript acquired by the National Library of Russia. The manuscript originates from a defective copy with many leaves mixed and misplaced, so the present text lacks the logic of narrative.

The description of MS Supplément 48 in Blochet's catalogue does not allow us even to estimate the length of the poem. But the coincidence of the colophons in both MSS proves that both copies in the Bibliothèque Nationale probably originate from the same source – a manuscript of 1008/1639. We also know that this manuscript was corrupt or in its turn was copied from a corrupt protograph.

All the three *Čangranghāče-nāme* MSS are united by the place of their provenance: they came to Europe from India. As we can see from the colophons, the poem became widespread among the Parsees before the middle of the 17th century. It had certainly been brought to India from Iran. Besides, all three copies contain a corrupt and orderless text of the poem.

I was intrigued by the fact that in MS Supplément 44 the story of the Indian sage forms only part of the text. The rest of it (not less than a half of the whole text) is nothing else than the author's introduction to the poem *Ardāya-Vīrāf-nāme*, found in some copies of this work.

The order of titles found in MS Supplément 44 is the following:

- 1) نویسم بنام ایزد بخشاینده بخشایشگر مهربان آغاز داستان کتاب وچنکرنگهاچه نامه – “In the name of God the forgiving, the merciful, the benevolent; the beginning of the story of the book *Čangranghāče-nāme*”.
- 2) “Discovery of the reason for composing the book” – سبب پیدا کردن نظم کتاب
- 3) “The story of Zartošt and Čangranghāče” – داستان زرتشت با چنکرنگهاچه
- 4) “The answer” – پاسخ داد
- 5) “Arrival of the letter to Čangranghāče” – نامه رسیدن نزدیک چنکرنگهاچه
- 6) “The story of God's prophet” – حکایت پیغمبر یزدان
- 7) “His invoking the help ...” On the margin near this title there is a French inscription: “Préface du Veraf namah” – یافت خواستاری او (sic!)
- 8) “The beginning of the book” – آغاز کتاب

We have already said that the text of this copy is orderless, and different parts are intermingled with each other. Verse by verse, we compared it with the text of *Ardāya-Vīrāf-nāme* in MS P.N.S. 11 of the National Library of Russia. All the elements of *Čangranghāče-nāme* were found in the opening part of the version contained in that manuscript. They are: extensive praise to the Creator Ahura-Mazda, Amesha Spenta, prayers. In the chapter entitled “About the discovery of the reason for writing this book” we can read about the happy years of the author's (Zartošt-e Bahrām's) youth, when he, having learnt the subjects necessary for a Zoroastrian, entertained himself and his friends by writing verse from time to time. He lived in *qašabe* Bīžan-Ābād in X^wāf (Khorasan). His father

Bahrām-e Paždū was a *hīrbad*, who could read Pahlavi and was a specialist in astrology. Zartošt was highly dispirited and depressed when his father died. The author gives a detailed description of the cold and dreary winter night, the time when demons rule on earth. Fortunately his mother, a righteous woman, helped her son to drive away sad thoughts. She lit a bright fire and brought him some good books. One of the books was *Mowlūd-i Zartošt* in verse (better known to us under the title *Zartošt-nāme*) and a translation from Pahlavi of the story of Ardāya-Vīrāf's journey to the other world, in prose. Zartošt decided to make a poetic version of it, and this decision was supported by a divine sign. The morning came and Zartošt's friends offered him all their help and support in accomplishing such a pious deed. The next chapter, entitled "Beginning of the book", briefly retells the history of the world from the time of creation until the sermon of Zaratuštra. The main details of the prophet's legendary biography are also mentioned. And finally after this chapter, the story of Čangranhāče begins. As we can see, neither the name of the Indian sage, nor the intention to write a poem about him, are mentioned in the introduction.

The author's introduction is found in only two copies of *Ardāya-Vīrāf-nāme*: the NLR manuscript, and another manuscript used by Rahim Afifi in preparing his edition of the text (Afifi 1964). The latter copy is preserved in the Council of Zoroastrians in Tehran, and thanks to Afifi's edition, it was possible to become acquainted with its text. All other copies contain only the text describing Ardāya-Vīrāf's miraculous journey, without introduction and any incorporated subjects. We place here a list of known manuscripts.

Afifi's edition was based on the three following texts:

1. The first publication of *Ardāya-Vīrāf-nāme* by Jāmāsp Asa in 1902 in Bombay, which was carried out following dastur Kay-Khosrow and dastur Jāmāsp Asa's manuscript. This copy has no introduction, the story begins immediately after two *bayts* invoking God:

کنم آغاز از دین نغز گفتار	بنام آن خداوند جهاندار
زمن بشنو تو این گفتار بهدین	حدیثی گویم اندر راه این دین
گرفت آن پادشاهی را سزاوار	شهنشاه اردشیر از فر دادار

"In the name of the Lord, Possessor of the world, I will begin the talk about the "good faith"; I will tell a story about this faith, listen to these words of mine, oh, bihdin.
Šahanšah Ardašir, due to the divine farr, took this kingdom rightfully ...

2. The manuscript of BN Supplément 45¹⁰ also does not have the aforementioned introduction, but it starts with 15 verses telling about the rule of Ardašir and

¹⁰ Blochet 1905: 157, No. 193.

giving praise to the lawful and just rulers, whose justness makes the world flourish. The copy is dated 1208 of *hijra*/AD1793, hand of Qanbar-‘Alī Gujrātī b. Mīrzā Ja‘far-‘Alī b. Šalīḥ-Muḥammad-xān Šīrāzī. Beginning:

چو گیتب شاه گشت آن شهریاری که بود از شاه بهمن یادگاری

When that šah who was a reminder of Šah Bahman, became the king of the world ...

After fifteen introductory *bayts* the text is similar to the previous manuscript, starting with the *bayt*:

شهنشاه اردشیر از فر دادار گرفت آن پادشاهی را سزاوار

Šahanšah Ardašīr, due to the divine farr, took this kingdom rightfully ...

3. The third manuscript (named by Afifi *Dīnkard-nāme*), from the Council of Zoroastrians in Tehran, has the introduction that we meet with in the copies of *Čangranghāčē-nāme*. This introduction is interrupted at the description of the day that followed the cold winter night. This description in *Dīnkard-nāme* MS is much shorter, and the episode of Zartošt’s friends’ approbation of his plan is absent.

There are several other copies of the epic that were not considered by Afifi:

1. BN, Supplément 48,¹¹ which starts without any introductory verses with the words “Šahanšah Ardašīr, due to the divine farr ...”. The old colophon that was preserved by the last copyist, has the date day Anīrān in the month of Farvardīn 1104/20 March, 1735.
2. British Library, Roy. 16. Bii.¹² This manuscript, dated 1678, has the same beginning.
3. British Library, Add. 6940. This manuscript was copied in the early 19th century from the manuscript of 1789, and “has at the beginning nineteen additional verses relating to the conquest of Alexander and the ruin in which it involved the Persian empire and the Zoroastrian faith”¹³, i.e. it should probably have the same beginning as MS Supplément 45 of BN.
4. *Ardāya-Vīrāf-nāme* manuscript, described in the catalogue of the India Office Library¹⁴ has the beginning that is similar to BN copies of *Čangranghāčē-nāme*. It is found on leaves 47–78 of MS No. 2506, 15 lines per page. A simple calculation shows that the volume should be 960 verses at most. The catalogue describes it as an abridgement of the

¹¹ Blochet 1905: 160–162, No. 199–2°.

¹² Rieu 1879: 47–48.

¹³ Rieu 1879: 48.

¹⁴ Ethé 1903: col. 2819, No. 2819

poem. It seems probable that in fact it is another copy of Čangrānhāče-nāme with the introduction of Ardāya-Vīrāf-nāme.

Now we return to the manuscript P.N.S. 11 of NLR. This codex is an unusual object in many respects. First of all, it is practically unique as a collection of Zoroastrian works originating and copied in Central Asia. The book contains several works by Farīd ad-dīn ‘Aṭṭār and three Zoroastrian epics: *Šad dar*, *Zartošt-nāme* (or *Mowlūd-i Zartošt*) and *Ardāya-Vīrāf-nāme*. It entered the NLR (then the Imperial Public Library) as part of the “Kaufman Collection” – a collection of manuscripts gathered during military expeditions in Central Asia and transferred to the library by the Governor-General of Turkestan, K. P. von Kaufman.

The manuscript was not only brought from Central Asia, it was copied there, in Bukhara between 1653 and 1656 (different parts have different dates). Zoroastrian works are placed in the middle of the volume. There are three different copyists who have their names mentioned in the colophons. Zoroastrian epics were copied by Muḥammad-Qāsim b. Muḥammad-Jamīl al-Kābulī in 1065 A.H./AD1654–65, Attar’s *Haydar-nāme* and *rubā’ īyāt* were also copied by his hand on 1 Šavvāl, 1066/23 July, 1656 and in Šafar 1066/November–December 1655 respectively. Other Attar’s works are written in the hands of two other scribes.

Here, although it begins with the same introduction as the copy in *Dīnkard-nāme* manuscript, *Ardāya-Vīrāf-nāme* differs greatly from all the copies of *Ardāya-Vīrāf-nāme* mentioned above. It is several times as extensive as all other copies known to us, as it includes several incorporated poems, all in the same *hazaj-e mosaddas* metre. All these poems are incorporated into the text of the story of Ardāya-Vīrāf’s journey to Paradise and Hell. Below we place the list of all parts, according to the headings that we find in the text of the manuscript.

1. Introduction with the praise of God (ff. 160v.–161v., 93 verses).
- 2.–3. Two parts entitled در مناجات – “Prayer” (ff. 161v.–162v., 67 verses, and ff. 162v.–164r., 134 verses).
4. در پیدا کردن سبب نظم کتاب – “About the discovery of the reason for writing this book” (ff. 164r.–166r., 170 verses).
5. آغاز این داستان – “The beginning of this story” (ff. 166r.–168v., 194 verses).
6. قصه چنگرنگهاچه دانای هندی با زرتشت – “The story of Čangrānhāče, the Indian sage, and Zartošt” (ff. 168v.–173r., 368 verses).
7. ابتدای قصه اردای ویراف – “Beginning of the story of Ardāya-Vīrāf” (ff. 173r.–181r., 677 verses).
8. در آیفست خواستن فروهر زرتشت اسفتمان اشوفروهر – “On invoking the help of Zartošt Esfatemān’s *fravahar*” (ff. 181r.–182r., 93 verses).

9. قصه سکندر و تابوت – “The tale of Iskandar and his burial stretcher” (ff. 182r.–182v., 46 verses).
10. قصه نوشیروان عادل و ابوزرجمهر حکیم – “The tale of Nūšīrvān the Just and the sage Abūzorjmehr” (ff. 182v.–184r., 122 verses).
11. حدیث فرودخش خنبی – “The story of Fradaxš Xonbi” (ff. 184r.–184v., 36 verses).
12. قصه گاهمبار نوشیروان عادل با مرزبان کارسانی – “The tale of the *gāhambār* of Nūšīrvān the Just and Marzbān-e Kārsān” (ff. 184v.–186r., 112 verses)
13. صفت دوزخ و حالهای دوزخیان – “Description of hell and the state of those condemned to hell” (ff. 186r., 9 verses).
14. آغاز شرح دوزخ و خواریهای ایشان در دوزخ – “The beginning of the description of hell and their (i.e. the sinners’) humiliation in hell” (ff. 186r.–190v., 401 verses).
15. آیفست خواستن اردا از سروش – “Ardā calls upon Soruš for help” (ff. 190v.–194r., 291 verses).
16. حکایت – “A story” (ff. 194r.–196r., 150 verses).
17. حکایت مرد سه دوست و کیفیت آن – “The story of a man who had three friends and the circumstances” (ff. 196r.–197r., 105 verses).
18. حکایت شک و یقین – “The story of doubt and confidence” (ff. 197r.–197v., 44 verses).
19. حکایت خادم و پادشاه آخرت – “The story of the servant and the king of the other world” (ff. 198r.–204r., 508 [196 + 312] verses). This section also includes the story of the prince who married the daughter of a beggar, and that beggar turned out to be a rich man. This story goes without a heading.
20. حکایت سپاسداری – “The story of gratitude” (f. 204r., 31 verses).
21. حکایت اصول دین – “The story of the fundamentals of religion” (ff. 204r.–204v., 21 verses).
22. سوال جاماسپ از زراتشت – “Jāmāsp’s question to Zartošt” (ff. 204v.–205v., 73 verses).
23. آیفست خواستن امشاسفندان – “Invoking help of Amešāsefands” (ff. 205v.–208v., 263 verses).
24. The section without heading, the frame is left blank. It is the conclusion of the story of Ardāy-Vīrāf (ff. 208v.–210r.).
25. باز آمدن اردای ویراف بدین گیتی – “Ardāya-Vīrāf’s return to this world” (ff. 210r.–211r.).
26. انجامیدن قصه اردای ویراف – “The end of the tale of Ardāya-Vīrāf” (ff. 211r.–212r., 84 verses).

27. حکایت عمر بن الخطاب رضی الله عنه – “The story of ‘Umar bin Xaṭṭāb, God be content with him” (ff. 212r.–218r., 499 verses). The praise formula after the name of the second caliph was probably added by the Muslim scribe.
28. حکایت گریه و مویه – “The story of weeping and lamentation” (ff. 218r.–218v., 33 verses)
29. حکایت گرشاسپ و آزدن آتش – “The story of Geršasp and the offence of fire” (ff. 218v.–219v., 105 verses).
30. آغاز داستان بهاریات بهرام پژدو – “The beginning of ‘Bahāriyāt’ by Bahrām-e Paždū” (ff. 219v.–223v., 331 verses). This poem describes the advent of Spring, it was composed by the father of our poet.

Some of the sections listed above (16–19, 27) are found separately, for example in Darab Hurmazyar’s collection of *rivayats*.¹⁵ The story of Ardāya-Vīrāf, as it is presented in other copies, is divided between sections 7, 8, 13–15, 24–26.

There is no reason to think that any parts incorporated into this extended version of *Ardāya-Vīrāf-nāme* were written by someone other than Zartošt-e Bahrām. Only one of the sections is said to be the work of a different author – *Bahāriyāt* by Bahrām-e Paždū. However, the question as to who was the compiler of this version needs further investigation. A number of independent tales and stories have been incorporated into the main text, it seems, not without a conception in view. We can try to trace the logic of the editor.

Two main ideas are being developed. First, the historical survey of Zoroastrianism: from the creation of the world, following the main landmarks of mythological history before Zaratuštra we reach the description of his sermon (and his dispute with Čangranhāče). Then, after a brief description of events that took place between the time of Zaratuštra and the invasion of Iskandar, we read about the rule of Ardašīr. It was he who ordered the priests and sages to find a way to reinforce religion. Ardāya-Vīrāf was chosen for this mission and he was sent to the other world. Towards the end of the book we find *Qesse-ye Umar Xaṭṭāb*, where the Iranian captive prince predicts to the caliph all the events that will follow the conquest of Iran by the Arabs, until the end of the world. This prophecy is inspired by the apocalyptic visions of Zaratuštra described in *Bahman-yašt*,¹⁶ and Zartošt-e Bahrām undoubtedly read their Persian version in *Zartošt-nāme (Mowlūd-i Zartošt)*.¹⁷ But in the interpretation of Zartošt-e Bahrām, predictions of the end of Zaratuštra’s millennium become real historical events of Iran’s history

¹⁵ Unvala 1922: 317–334, 305–331

¹⁶ West 1880.

¹⁷ Rosenberg 1904: ٦٦٧٧.

between the Arab conquest and the Mongol invasion. We read here a brief account of the main dynasties and most outstanding rulers who reigned in Iran until the 13th century, and about the hardships that befell Zoroastrians in that period.

The second topic – the main line of *Ardāya-Vīrāf-nāme* itself – the fate awaiting the souls of people after death. It is illustrated by a number of parables on the vanity of this world and the necessity to be concerned about the life after death (Nos. 9–12, 16–19, 22, 28, 29). The subjects of these tales are borrowed from different sources: Zoroastrian mythology, the famous “Tale of Barlaam and Ioasaph”, and *Šāh-nāme*.

So we find the story of Čangranghāče to be a part of this version. It follows the introduction and description of the history of the world before Zaratuštra, and it is entitled “Beginning of this book”. The BN manuscript Supplement 44 originates from a manuscript with mixed leaves. It seems natural to propose that the original manuscript could have been a copy of the extended version of *Ardāya-Vīrāf-nāme*. It was damaged, and part of it (the introduction and the story of Čangranghāče) was separated from the rest of the text, having thus given life to the separate copy (or even copies) of *Čangranghāče-nāme*.

Although we have not seen the other two copies of this poem, but taking into account that they are “bad and orderless”, the hypothesis can be framed that all three copies originate from the part of the same manuscript, damaged, which fell apart and had its leaves confused. This means that the copies of *Čangranghāče-nāme* beginning with the *bayt*:

سر دفتر بنام پاک یزدان نگهدار زمین و چرخ گردان

should be regarded as part of the extended version of *Ardāya-Vīrāf-nāme*, which so far has been found represented by the single manuscript of the National Library of Russia.

Another fact should be considered. Some of the smaller sections incorporated into the text of *Ardāya-Vīrāf-nāme* in the NLR manuscript are found separately in other manuscripts. In these cases they do not have any introductions with the praise of God, which is a necessary element of every epic work written in Persian. The beginning of *Ardāya-Vīrāf-nāme* also has several variants. We could propose that due to the independence of their subjects, these shorter poems could have been extracted from the extended version of *Ardāya-Vīrāf-nāme*, which turned out to be too cumbersome. Of course, all this needs to be thoroughly verified by comparing all known manuscript copies of Zartošt-e Bahrām’s works.

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