

Women and ritual in medieval Zoroastrianism

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Recently, feminist anthropologists of religion have repeatedly stressed the importance of studying women as religious subjects and not as the objects of religious rules or imagery. The question is or should be how women construct reality and how they experience and shape their religious lives.¹ This inevitably leads to problems where the religious lives of women in antiquity are concerned: for many ancient religions women's perspectives on just about anything are entirely unknown and it seems to me that in those cases a detailed study of women's roles and duties as defined and circumscribed by the (male) religious establishments is still worthwhile.² In Zoroastrian literature, women's voices are never heard, but women occupy a very prominent place in priestly and legal Zoroastrian texts. These texts, to be sure, were written by male priests either for the use of other male priests or for the instruction of the laity and they give information on how men and women were supposed to lead their lives. What we can reconstruct of women's lives, therefore, is mainly an abstraction of the opinions of male priestly authorities on the lives of lay women; this abstraction is unlikely to cover fully the realities of women's lives and certainly does not reflect the inner life of Zoroastrian women, a subject that is entirely lost to us for any period preceding the twentieth century.

Classifications of things and people are an important source for anyone wishing to understand the ways in which religious traditions and the persons who formulate them perceive the world and the society in which they operate. Such classifications often come in the form of lists, enumerating and classifying the objects of study. Such lists frequently are the earliest evidence we have of the ways in which bearers of the tradition, most often male priests, structure the universe, society and the place the tradition and its followers have in it. A related subject are lists of equations, in which individual items are put into a category. An example of such lists have been studied recently is the formula "the Shi'ites are the Jews of the *umma* (the Islamic community)."³ In his study of this equation, Steven Wasserstrom notices some interesting characteristics of the handling of equation lists, in particular the fact that they purport to simply impose order on raw data, but actually create and generate their materials, in this case with a clear polemical goal. This process is not unique to early Islamic heresiography, although Islamic authors developed the genre to dazzling heights, but can be found in the literature of almost all religious traditions of the Middle East.

The question of "what" women are, according to the male authorities who make statements on this, can be particularly revealing and for these matters, classification lists and related genres may lay bare entirely unexpected structuring principles, which often help us understand why women are treated the way they are in the traditions under discussion. A well-known example is the classification of women as a totally different species of being, created from the sins of the devil, in the Syrian Shi'ite sect of the Nusayris.⁴

If we approach the subject of women in Zoroastrianism with the question of "what" they are, in which class of beings they have been placed or what their place in the universe is said to be, academic writing on the history of Zoroastrianism usually stresses the honourable and equal place women have in Zoroastrianism. One would certainly expect to find such an image in the writings of modern Zoroastrians, and such is indeed the case. Both Parsi and Irani Zoroastrian writers stress the fact that Zoroastrianism was unique among ancient religions in the honorable and liberal position it assigned to women. Thus, the well-known Parsi scholar Jamshid Cawasji Katrak writes the following: "Among the famous peoples of remote antiquity, there was no community in which man had more unselfish sympathy with woman than the Zoroastrians of Iran."⁵ On the Iranian side, Rostam Šahzādī writes, "In the tradition of Righteous Zarathustra and of ancient Iran, the position of women was one of the highest reverence."⁶

Whereas one would expect to find such positive interpretations of the data in texts deriving from within the tradition,⁷ it is striking to see that such interpretations are also commonly found in Western academic studies (by Western scholars and by Zoroastrians) of ancient, medieval and modern Zoroastrianism.⁸ The cornerstone of such positive interpretations are the references to the equality of men and women with respect to their religious duties and to the rewards and punishments of the hereafter, which are found in the earliest layer of Zoroastrian literature.⁹ This fact in itself is incontrovertible; various passages make reference to the fact that men and women had equal hope of reaching heaven and equal fear of punishment in hell. Men and women were also required to wear the sacred girdle, the *kusfi*, and the sacred shirt, nowadays known as the *sudra* (Middle Persian *šabīg*). If one would stretch this religious equality to the present day, it would seem as if this was a constant factor in Zoroastrianism. Following this lead, women would be classified, in Zoroastrianism, as female humans, who are distinguished from male humans merely by their anatomy and the concerns for purity that result from their anatomy, to which we shall return. Closely related to this interpretation of women in Zoroastrianism is another idea that is much cherished by modern interpreters: that of the autonomy of the individual.¹⁰ The basic idea is this: every person, man or woman, is

responsible for his or her own deeds, thoughts and words. These, and these alone are weighed at the judgement of the soul on the fourth day after death and these and these alone determine the fate of that soul: whether it will enjoy the pleasure and comfort of heaven, endure the hardship and punishment of hell or will reside in the place of mixture, where good and evil are both absent. Zoroastrianism, according to this interpretation of a doctrine that is considered central to its system, does not know hereditary sin, collective sins, and does not allow of any interference by a third party between a person and the forces of heaven. Here again, it is possible to find similar ideas in the earliest layers of Zoroastrianism and in modern varieties of that religion. The problem, in both cases, lies in the intervening periods.¹¹

If we survey medieval Zoroastrian literature (in Pahlavi and Persian) and the enormous amount of information it has to offer on women, their religious lives, responsibilities and duties, a rather different picture emerges. Reconstructions of Zoroastrianism which skip from the prophet to the present, as a recent introductory book does, for instance,¹² obscure the depth of its history and may lead to distorted reconstructions, which are particularly offensive in effacing virtually all we know of the changing roles of women in Zoroastrianism.

In the majority of Zoroastrian literature, the texts written in Pahlavi or Middle Persian in the ninth and tenth centuries CE as the final repository of a long period of oral tradition, women are most definitely not autonomous individuals equal to men.¹³ This is immediately revealed in systems of classification concerning law.¹⁴ In most areas of law, three categories are operative: men are a separate class, itself divided in various layers headed by priests; the second class are women, children and Zoroastrian slaves: the third class are non-Iranians, and includes Zoroastrians in a state of mortal sin. The fact that women are in one class together with children and slaves is significant.¹⁵ Taking my cue from the study of classifications hinted at earlier, I would suggest that in Zoroastrian literature, women are most often classified as children.¹⁶ There are of course palpable differences between women and children: male children eventually change class, children are not held responsible for the sins they commit up to a certain age,¹⁷ whereas women always are. The main and most influential difference between women and children is the fact that women menstruate and are caught in an elaborate system of purity rules, which bind them to their families and to the place where they spend their entire life: the house of the husband.¹⁸ Like children, a woman is always under the authority of a man: before her menstruation starts, she is under the authority of her father, brother or the leader of the family (*dūdāg-sālār*); once the menstrual cycle has started, she is under the authority of her husband, for she is supposed to be given in marriage following the first menstruation. When the husband dies or in the

very few cases where divorce is allowed, the woman reverts to the authority of a male member of her family. It follows, therefore, that all Zoroastrian women are wives; unmarried women simply do not exist, with three exceptions: pre-pubescent girls; women in an intermediate period between marriages to different husbands, who can be made "guardian of their own body" (*tan ī xwēš sālār*)¹⁹ for a set period; and widows who are not given in levirate or other substitute marriages.²⁰ In all these three cases, however, there is a male somewhere in the background, who is in authority (*sālārīh*) over the woman's life. To make this picture a bit more complete, I must add that all men, too, are under someone else's authority: every Zoroastrian must have a priest who is in spiritual authority over him or her and decides what is proper and what not, a system that is also found in Shi'a Islam.²¹ If there is one key word with which to describe the desired attitude of women and in a more limited sense of men in medieval Zoroastrianism, it is indeed "obedience."

If we look at the two corner-stones of the interpretation of women's lives in Zoroastrianism I mentioned earlier, the religious equality and the individual autonomy, we find very little of the latter. The former, the religious equality, can be found regularly: men and women had the same basic religious duties and enjoyed the same hope of salvation.²² Men and women were all bound by a very elaborate set of purity rules, but these were of far greater significance for women's lives than they were for men's, because menstruation, miscarriage, child-birth, still-birth and even breast-feeding, all situations that pertain to women's bodies only, were considered polluting and required solitary confinement and sometimes elaborate purification rituals.

To give an impression of evidence for women's participation in the religious life of Zoroastrians in the late Sasanian and early Islamic periods, from the fifth to the ninth centuries CE, we may note the following. Although there can be no doubt that priesthood was a male prerogative throughout the history of Zoroastrianism, as it still is today, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that in the Sasanian period, women could perform several duties which came to be restricted to men in the further development of the tradition. Under certain restrictions, women could be witnesses in legal cases and perhaps even act as judges (*Dk.* 8.20.29).²³ They could attend *hērbdestān*, courses in religious studies, and they could perform some of the daily rituals; in particular, they could tend the sacred fire and perform some of the daily priestly rituals for the fire and libations to the water in the context of their own houses (*H.* 5.5; *N.* 22.4ff.).²⁴ One source interestingly adds that a woman is allowed to function as *zōt* (meaning the priest who performs these rituals) for women only (*ŠnŠ* 10.35). The passage is, I believe, worth quoting in full:

"A woman is allowed as *zōt* for women; and when she performs a *drōn*-ritual, she recites two Ašem Vohu, puts the *barsom* back on the *barsom*-stand, brings it back,[?] and then she must recite one more and it is good; and when she recites it unintentionally before the *cāšnī*, it is allowed. The *drōn*-ritual of a woman of bad reputation must not be performed, but its expenses must be paid."²⁵

This exhausts, to my knowledge, the *dossier* on women performing priestly functions, but the evidence seems to be incontrovertible: in highly specified cases and circumstances (and under male authority), women did have access to functions we are in the habit of considering male prerogatives. The fact that women performing priestly functions have rarely ever been taken into consideration is due to the fact that all these options had been closed to women at the time when Zoroastrian literature came to be written down.

In Zoroastrian texts written in Persian and dating presumably from the fourteenth century CE, we suddenly come across a completely different state of affairs: women are suddenly excluded from the most basic of all religious duties, the daily prayers. Three passages are relevant here: all three of them derive from two Persian Zoroastrian texts of crucial importance, both known under the title *Sad dar*, "a hundred chapters."²⁶ The *Sad Dar* texts are almost the only evidence we have for the development of Zoroastrianism in the period from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries CE. They are extremely interesting both for the evidence they provide for the width of priestly knowledge of the traditions and for the religious life of the laity, who are probably the intended audience. They have frequently been seen as merely derivative texts, reproducing a poor understanding of a more glorious Middle Persian tradition,²⁷ but this assessment strikes me as a bit unfair. Given their authority in the later *Persian Rivāyat* literature, they are a crucial link between the Pahlavi tradition and the developments of later Zoroastrianism. This special position is sometimes underscored by the presence of elaborate rules for lay behaviour that did not make it into the later tradition, such as the rulings on the prayer of women.

The first passage comes from the *Sad dar-e nasr* or "Prose Sad dar." chapter 59:

"In the good, pure religion of the Mazdā-worshippers women are ordered not to pray, for their prayer is this: three times every day, in the morning, at the time of the noon prayers and at the time of the evening prayers, they must stand before their husband, fold their arms and say: "What do you think, so that I shall think the same, and what do you need me to say and what do you need me to do; what do you command?"

"Whatever the husband says, that they must do on that day; they should, of course, not do anything without the consent of their husband, so that God will be pleased with that woman. For the contentment of God is connected with the contentment of the husband. When she obeys the orders of her husband, she is called "righteous" (*ašō*) in the religion; if not, she is called "whore" (*jeh*)."

The second passage is from the *Sad dar-e bondaheš*, chapter 69:

"Concerning that which was asked about a woman who does not obey her husband, and a child that does not obey its father and mother, how much sin it is, know that women must wash their face in the early morning, just like men who pray and fold their arms before Ohrmazd and prostrate themselves and pray. They, too, must fold their arms and prostrate themselves nine times and pray to their husband and say: "What do you need, so that I shall do that; what do you command?" and they must engage themselves in whatever the husband commands. They may, of course, never stray from the commands of their husbands. And the contentment of God, may he be exalted, is caused by the women preserving the contentment of the husband. For that reason, God, may he be exalted, has taken prayer away from them, so that they pray to their husbands. Every woman whose husband is not satisfied with her, her soul is, of course, not going to escape the punishment of hell and will not go to heaven."

Finally, chapter 85 of the *Sad dar-e bondaheš* has the following:

"And at the five *gāhs*, when men tie the *kustī* and pray, women too must tie the *kustī* and stand before their husband, fold their arms, and pray to their husband and say: "What is your wish that I shall do it, what do you order? And what is your wish that I shall do it, what is your wish?" And when she does not have a husband, she must say these things before her father or her brother or before the man who is her lord. She must prostrate herself nine times before him and then engage in the things they have told her to do. For the creator Ohrmazd says in the religion: "I have taken away prayer from women, so that they pray to their husbands. For whenever their husband is not satisfied with them, I who am Ohrmazd, shall not be satisfied with them."

There is an undeniable difference between what we could reconstruct of women's participation in communal or family religious life in the Sasanian period and the information presented here. I must stress that this development was a dead-end street and not a lasting innovation: later sources mention nothing of the sort and women pray just like men in all

modern Zoroastrian communities. These passages completely remove the ideal of the religious equality of men and women. Women no longer are supposed to engage in any religious activity other than that of serving their husbands. We are facing a system, in short, in which men and women are completely unequal with respect to their religious duties.

The second ideal, that of individual autonomy, has also collapsed in these texts. The system according to which the contentment of Ohrmazd depends on that of the husband and not on an individual woman's thoughts, words and deeds can be found in numerous elaborations throughout these texts, which show how a person's salvation or damnation is not based on what he or she does, thinks and says alone, but is affected by the actions of others and continues to be so after death.²⁸ The basic structure, according to which every person has an account of good and bad deeds, thoughts and words, which are judged after death and inform that person's afterlife, is held upright, but it is much more complex and shows how all individual Zoroastrians are linked to each other and influence each other's lives. The sins and virtues of children are added to the stock of their parents; the sins of unmarried women are added to the stock of the father who did not give her in marriage; certain sins transcend the generations and are passed on to even unborn generations. Specifically for women, a series of rituals was developed which was based on the idea that all women, however scrupulously they have observed the purity rules, are guilty of offending against the purity of twelve aspects of creation in their periods of menstruation. This ritual was known by the telling name of *daštān-gonāh*, "the sin of menstruation," and consisted of twelve cycles of *Vendīdād*-rituals; the particulars of these rituals should not interest us here, but from the number of rituals involved, for which priests must be hired, one can perhaps imagine the immense cost such a ritual entailed. It is in these texts from the fourteenth century that we find the equation of women with children, which we surmised from earlier literature, spelled out for us:

"Every woman who does not obey her husband, who does not do what her husband tells her to do, does not have any rights or shares [in the possessions] of the husband, whatever she wants. If he does not give her food and sustenance, he will have no sin. And when a woman is modest and speaks little, she will give birth to more sons. The husband must sustain her like his child; there is no difference." (*SDB* 34)

With these texts, we have come a long way from the Sasanian situation, where at least upper class educated women could engage privately or for other women in rituals that are known otherwise as priestly. We are even further removed from the autonomous women, equal to men in religious matters, an image that was reconstructed on the basis of the earliest texts and

of modern observance. To understand this development, we need to ask the question what had happened in the meantime.

The Sasanian imperial armies were swept away by the Arabs in the middle of the seventh century CE. The process of the Islamization of Iran and the Iranians was extremely complex and varied regionally, but as a sweeping statement one can say that it took Islam three centuries to establish itself as the dominant religion of the Iranians. Zoroastrians came to be subsumed in the category of "protected communities" and were not collectively forced to convert to Islam, but the majority of Iranians eventually did and by the tenth century CE, the Zoroastrians had become a marginal phenomenon in Iranian society.²⁹ One section of the remaining Zoroastrian community fled the country and left for India. The Zoroastrians that stayed in Iran fell victim to the indescribable carnage and destruction inflicted on Iran by the Mongols; like the Iranian Jews, they barely survived the thirteenth century and the remnants of the Zoroastrian communities gradually moved to areas of Iran where barely anyone wished to live and kept a very low profile.³⁰

For Muslims as well as for Zoroastrians, inter-religious marriages were unacceptable. The status of Zoroastrians as a "protected community" differed from that of Jews and Christians in additional restrictions placed on marriage rules: Muslim men could not marry Zoroastrian women unless they converted to Islam.³¹ In this sense, Zoroastrians fell into the same class as Mandaean, whose claim to being a "people of the book" was also considered questionable. It was completely impossible for any non-Muslim man to marry a Muslim woman, so there were no further restrictions there. From a Zoroastrian perspective, inter-religious marriages were entirely out of the question. Zoroastrians have only two categories of people in this sense: Zoroastrians and followers of the evil religion, which includes all others.³²

If we want to think through the possibility that the change in women's religious lives is somehow connected with the advent of Islam, it is important to be precise: it can have nothing to do with Islam as a religion or its views on marriage, conversion or women. Islamic views of women in no way influenced Zoroastrian practices. There are some suggestions that present themselves nonetheless. One is entirely speculative and may perhaps be corroborated from modern developments: there seems to be a mechanism of tightening the grip on women by the men of a community which perceives itself as endangered by a hostile environment. One would almost be inclined to believe that the psychological effect of such a perceived threat leads men to dominate whatever they can dominate: their children and their wives. It is striking to see, in this respect, that the exclusion of women from religious life does not seem to have gained a foothold among the

Zoroastrians who had moved to India. In view of the lack of texts, this must remain entirely speculative. Part of the explanation must be sought elsewhere, within the tradition itself. The texts known as *Sad dar*, from which the passages on women were taken, were written by priests for the instruction of the laity, to explain to them how they should organise their lives. They are based to a large extent on earlier Pahlavi texts and it is in one of these that we find the source of at least part of our passages. In the *Pahlavi Rivāyat accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg*, an untitled Pahlavi work of unknown authorship dating to the ninth or early tenth century CE, we find the following:

"How should a wife behave towards her husband?

The wife of *pādixšāy* (status) should consult her husband three times every day saying: "What do you require when I think and speak and act, for I do not know what is required when I think and speak and act, tell me so that I will think and speak and act as you require?" Then she must do anything that the righteous husband tells her, and she should refrain from tormenting and afflicting her husband."³³

The passage is clearly the source of the questions put into the mouths of the women in the later texts. Unlike the later texts, however, it has no ritual implications. Quite on the contrary, several passages in the earlier compilation stress the fact that men and women are obliged to perform certain rituals. We do find, however, some restrictions that appear here for the first time: women do not have to recite the *Niyāyišn* for the Sun and Fire, they are not allowed to enter the fire-chamber, and were therefore banned from some rituals, either as performers of the rituals or as observers. The passages in question are PhIRDd. 17a2 and 17b1 and their interpretation is very difficult.³⁴ Zoroastrianism is a non-congregational religion: unlike Christians, Jews and Muslims, Zoroastrians do not have daily or weekly communal ritual gatherings. The only rituals in which the community as such participates are the six yearly festivals called *Gāhāmbār* and in these, it is said, women may not occupy the front places. There are some traces, therefore, of earlier restrictions placed on women in participating in non-domestic rituals.

A further development that seems to have been operative is that of an increasing priestly grip on various rituals. This is reflected mainly in changes of those rituals that involved the participation of a lay individual and his or her priest: the confession of sins and the larger rites of purification.³⁵ These increasingly came to be performed vicariously, by the priest for a sum of money, without the presence or participation of the lay Zoroastrian for whom the ritual was intended. In earlier periods, for instance, any sin that was committed should be confessed to a priest, upon

which the priest decided a suitable penance and the lay Zoroastrian was supposed to recite a formula of contrition. These formulas, called *pefit*, developed into lengthy catalogues of all possible sins, which had to be recited regularly. They grew to be so long, however, that many lay Zoroastrians did not know them by heart and hired a priest to recite them for them. For private use, an abbreviated formula was developed which Zoroastrians prayed before they went to sleep. In this and in other areas, personal ritual activity was taken away from lay Zoroastrians.

It is time to sum up. I hope I have at least demonstrated that it is impossible to make sweeping statements on the position of women in Zoroastrianism from Zarathustra to the present. Their religious lives, even in the minds of the priests who circumscribed them, have varied considerably, as have the contributions they have been enabled to make to the religious life of the community. If there is one constant factor in "classical" Zoroastrianism, it is the fact that women were always kept under the authority of a man and were treated and classified as being on a par with children. The comparatively rich ritual life that some women could lead in the Sasanian period, when almost all Iranians were Zoroastrian, ended with the marginalization of the community at large. One particularly shocking consequence of this marginalization was the exclusion of women from even the most basic of religious duties: the daily prayers, as witnessed in two texts from the fourteenth century. In terms of the development of the tradition, this development was a blind alley and did not last very long. By the fifteenth or sixteenth century, it is no longer found in Zoroastrian texts.

The question how women responded to these developments cannot be answered on the basis of textual materials. It is striking, nonetheless, to find that Zoroastrian as well as Muslim women in Iran have developed a set of rituals in which men are not allowed to participate and in which the sacred languages of the two communities, Avestan and Arabic respectively, may not be spoken. These are, of course, the *sofre*-rituals.³⁶ Characteristically, the men of the communities consider these rituals as deriving from the other tradition: Zoroastrian men consider them to be borrowings from Islamic traditions and Muslim men consider them to be remnants of a pagan past. The anthropologist Susan Sered, in her beautiful book on elderly Kurdish Jewish women in Jerusalem has made a very strong case for the fact that women who are excluded from all participation in the rituals men considered central to the tradition *will* develop a religious universe and ritual life that reflects women's concerns.³⁷ Even in the absence of textual or other proof, I would strongly suggest that these rituals of Zoroastrian and Muslim Iranian women can be elegantly explained from such a framework.

Abbreviations

Dk., *Dēnkard*
PhIRDd., *Pahlavi Rivāyat accompanying the Dādestān ī dēnīg*
SDB, *Sad dar-e bondaheš*
SDN, *Sad dar-e našr*
ŠnŠ, *Šāyest nē-šāyest*

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¹ Cf. particularly Sered 1992:6-8.

² This is also the subject of the vast majority of studies of women and religion in ancient cultures. For some good examples, cf. Pomeroy 1976; Frymer-Kensky 1992; Staples 1998.

³ Wasserstrom 1995:96-108.

⁴ Strothmann 1959:102; Halm 1982:301; Moosa 1987:367.

⁵ Katrak 1965:5.

⁶ Šahzādī 1990.

⁷ Cf. also Dāstoór 1994.

⁸ For some recent studies, cf. Fischer 1978; Jamzadeh & Mills 1986; Rose 1989; Gould 1994.

⁹ For references, cf. De Jong 1995.

¹⁰ For a critique of this notion, cf. De Jong 1999.

¹¹ Whichever position one takes in the vexing debates over the development of Zoroastrian traditions (for an overview of positions, cf. De Jong 1997:39-74), it is certainly the Zoroastrianism of the intervening periods—particularly of the Sasanian and early Islamic periods—that should be considered "classical" Zoroastrianism.

¹² Clark 1998.

¹³ For images of women in Pahlavi texts, cf. Choksy 1988; De Jong 1995.

¹⁴ Bartholomae 1924, with many necessary corrections in Macuch 1993:index, s.v. 'Frau.'

¹⁵ Cf. MHD 58.16-59.1, discussed with great learning in Macuch 1993:395; 406.

¹⁶ Women and children occupy a separate class of "legal persons" in many passages, for instance Dk. 8.16.12.

¹⁷ De Jong 1999:322-323.

¹⁸ For an overview of the subject, cf. Choksy 1989:94-103; De Jong 1995:36-37. Culpepper 1974 is the only feminist interpretation of the Zoroastrian rules of menstrual purity, but it is fatally flawed in many respects. For good studies of Zoroastrian attitudes towards the body (but not restricted to the bodies of women), cf. the series of articles by A.V. Williams 1989; 1994; 1997.

¹⁹ The expression occurs in Dk. 8.20.29, where a woman is said to be allowed to be a witness and a judge (thus the manuscript, see further below, "if she is guardian of her own body" (*ka tan ī xvēš sālār*). For the passage, cf. Macuch 1993:346.

²⁰ A woman without a guardian (*a-sālār*) is sometimes mentioned (Dk. 8.20.134: "On the subject of a woman without a guardian, when she takes a lover"), but never in a positive sense.

²¹ See Kreyenbroek 1994.

²² A theme elaborated in Boyce 1975:251.

²³ The manuscript here uses the word *dāchvarīh*, but since this clashes with everything we know of the period, Macuch is probably right in emending that word to *dastvarīh* and thus deleting the single reference to woman judges in Zoroastrian literature (Macuch 1993:346).

²⁴ The passages are discussed in Kotwal & Kreyenbroek 1992:38-47 (women doing priestly studies); 1995:120-125 (women performing priestly functions).

²⁵ *zan pad zōtīh ī zanān šāyēd, ud ka drōn hamē yazēd ā-š ašemvohū 2 guft, barsom abāz ō barsomdān nihēd ud abāz āvarēd, ek did be govišn ud xūb, ud ka pēš az cāšnīg kardan nē pad nigerišn mānāg govēd šāyēd. Drōn ī zan ī dusraw nē yazīšn be uzēnag kunišn.* For the

text, cf. Ms. K20, f. 74r.3ff. (facsimile in Christensen 1931); cf. also Tavadia 1930 ad locum. For the translation of *nē pad nigerišn*, see Kotwal & Kreyenbroek 1995:glossary s.v. *nigerīdan*.

²⁶ For the texts, cf. Dhabhar 1909; for (sometimes rather inadequate) translations, cf. Dhabhar 1932:497-538 (SDB); West 1885:255-361 (SDN); for a brief introduction, cf. De Jong 1999:319-322; a substantial study of the two texts is in preparation.

²⁷ Thus, for instance, Williams 1990:1.18-20 (with references).

²⁸ For a list of examples, cf. De Jong 1999:322-328.

²⁹ The most recent discussion of these events is Choksy 1997.

³⁰ Boyce 1984:163-166.

³¹ For a recent discussion, cf. Friedmann 1998.

³² Inter-religious marriages are discussed in De Jong *forthc.*

³³ PhlRDd. 39b2-3; Williams 1990:2.67-68.

³⁴ Something must be missing in 17b1 (which reads in Williams' translation "I commanded both men and women, saying: 'Perform worship!' rather than to men (alone), because after 15 years (of age) taking a husband seems for women better than recitation of sacred words and performance of worship [...]") The latter half suggests that women are no longer required to "perform worship," as explicitly mentioned in 17a2, and logically contradicts Ohrmazd's command to men and women. It is one thing to surmise that something is missing here, but any addition to the text is likely to force the evidence; the words "to perform worship" (*yašt kardan*) are extremely difficult to interpret in this and many other passages.

³⁵ De Jong 1999:317-319; 329.

³⁶ See Fischer 1978:202-205; Jamzadeh & Mills 1986; Mazdāpūr 1997.

³⁷ Sered 1992:*passim*.

ĀTAŠ-E DORUN

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