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AVESTAN QUOTATIONS IN PAHLAVI BOOKS:
ON TWO PASSAGES FOUND IN *DĒNKARD* BOOK VII, DK
VII,1,7 AND DK VII,3,6 *

SUMMARY

The paper analyzes two passages belonging to the seventh book of the *Dēnkard* [Dk] that had earlier been studied and translated by Marijan Molé, presenting a new translation which improves our understanding of the text. Molé’s – and de Menasce’s – approach to the jargon of theological Pahlavi texts, often depending on the Middle Persian Zand of the Avesta, is briefly discussed here. This paper also shows that Dk VII,1,7 is most probably a rendering of an original Zand passage, while Dk VII,3,6 should rather be understood as a “remembrance” of the Avestan Zand.

Keywords: Zoroastrianism; Middle Persian; Pahlavi literature; Avesta; Zand; *Dēnkard*.

RÉSUMÉ

L’article analyse deux passages du septième livre du *Dēnkard* [Dk], qui avaient été étudiés et traduits par Marijan Molé, et propose une nouvelle traduction qui permet de mieux comprendre le texte. L’approche de Molé – et de de Menasce – envers le langage des textes théologiques en pehlevi, qui dépend souvent du Zand moyen-perse de l’Avesta, est l’objet d’une brève discussion. L’article montre que Dk VII,1,7 reflète vraisemblablement un passage original du Zand, alors que Dk VII,3,6 devrait plutôt être compris comme une “réminiscence” du Zand de l’Avesta.

Mots clés : zoroastrianisme ; moyen-perse ; littérature pehlevie ; Avesta ; Zand ; *Dēnkard*.

SINTESI

Nel suo contributo l’autore analizza due passi tratti dal settimo libro del *Dēnkard* [Dk] che già erano stati studiati e tradotti da Marijan Molé, e ne presenta una nuova traduzione, più prossima al significato originale del testo. In questo contesto s’inserisce una breve riflessione sulla metodologia applicata da Molé e da de Menasce allo studio del linguaggio utilizzato nei testi teologici pahlavi, che in molti passi dipendono dallo Zand

* It is a much welcomed occasion to dedicate this paper to Rika Gyselen, whose studies on Sasanian numismatics and sphragistics radically changed our comprehension of Iran’s Sasanian and Early Islamic history. Much like those by de Menasce and Molé, her researches—and the ones by Philippe Gignoux, who has co-authored a number of works on the subject—have been a constant companion of recent years.

medio persiano dell’Avesta. L’articolo vuole dimostrare, inoltre, che Dk VII,1,7 deriva direttamente dallo Zand, mentre Dk VII,3,6 riflette un passo avestico, senza però coglierne il vero significato.

Parole chiave: Zoroastrismo; mediopersiano; letteratura pahlavi; Avesta; Zand; *Dēnkard*.

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This paper stems from the considerations that I have been doing in recent years on the works of Marijan Molé and his teacher, Jean de Menasce. While Molé’s contribution to the understanding of Iran’s religious history is recognized by all, and the innovative tracts of his thought over the legend of Zoroaster and the relation between “Culte, Mythe et Cosmologie”,¹ to put it in his own words, have influenced many of the scholars who worked on Iran’s prophet, Zoroaster, in the second half of the 20th century, his approach to Pahlavi texts has often been underestimated. This is partly due to the fact that his main edition of Pahlavi texts was published posthumously from his *Nachlass* by de Menasce.²

In fact, I believe that Molé’s, and consequently de Menasce’s, investigation on Pahlavi literature, and in particular on the *Dēnkard* [Dk] deserves to be the subject of a re-evaluation. This, because the methodology which Molé applied in his work on Zoroaster’s legend implies a parallel reading of the *Gāthās*, the later Avesta and the Pahlavi texts, each of which is seen as interwoven with the other. Moreover, it is clear to all that the language of the *Dēnkard* often cannot be understood without taking into account the underlying Avesta. Quite evidently, what should here be understood by Avesta is not the Avestan text itself, and much less the Old Avestan texts, but rather the Sasanian, and possibly post-Sasanian, commentaries to the Holy Book of Zoroastrianism.

In a way, this methodology is the direct descendant of de Menasce’s “theological” approach to the texts, which is most clearly spelled out in his edition of the pāzand *Škand Gumānīg Wizār*.³ There, of course, relevant sources were to be sought mainly outside Zoroastrian literature, while in the *Dēnkard* the source is the Zoroastrian Holy Book itself.

The importance of the underlying Avestan text to understand the Middle Persian religious writings of the Zoroastrians had already been underlined by C. Salemann, criticizing, in this respect, E. W. West.⁴ This same approach has been magisterially applied to the understanding of Zoroastrian Middle Persian texts by Sir Harold W. Bailey in his “Zoro-

¹ Molé 1963.

² Molé 1967.

³ De Menasce 1945.

⁴ Salemann 1908, pp. 130-131. See Molé 1967, p. 4*.

astrian Problems in the Ninth-Century Books”.⁵ Molé’s and de Menasce’s contribution to our knowledge of late Sasanian and early Islamic Zoroastrianism is all the more relevant given that for the greater part of the 20th century Middle Iranian linguistic and philological studies have mainly focused on the manuscripts, and fragments thereof, which had been discovered in Central Asia at the beginning of the century and later. A good part of these manuscripts consists of Parthian and Middle Persian fragments written in the unambiguous Manichaean alphabet. It was starting from these texts that D. N. MacKenzie was able to develop a phonetic transcription of Zoroastrian Middle Persian⁶ and it is by studying the language of the Turfan texts—as well as that of the inscriptions dating from the early Sasanian period—that a generation of scholars has been able to establish a far better knowledge of Middle Persian and, more in general, Middle Iranian, than what we had at the beginning of the 20th century.

The linguistic knowledge deriving from the study of Manichaean Middle Persian has then been applied to Pahlavi, leading to a number of excellent editions of Pahlavi texts. Sheer linguistic knowledge, however, does not suffice to correctly understand some of the more complicated passages and many editors have taken into consideration the underlining Avesta. This is the case, i.a., with A. V. Williams’ edition of the *Pahlavi Rivāyat*,⁷ and to a lesser extent with Jaafari-Dehaghi’s edition of the first part of the *Dādestān ī Dēnīg*,⁸ Gignoux and Tafazzoli’s *Anthologie de Zādspram*,⁹ and Amouzgar and Tafazzoli’s edition of the fifth book of the *Dēnkard*,¹⁰ just to mention a few of the more relevant works.¹¹ However, none of these authors has carried out a systematic and in-depth comparison such as that applied by Molé to the seventh book of the *Dēnkard*. In fact, in the introduction to his “La légende de Zoroastre selon les textes pehlevis” Molé has quite clearly stated his approach to the text, remarking that its greater part consists of quotes taken from the Scriptures, and further stating:

L’établissement du texte du septième livre ne pose pas des problèmes insurmontables; son interprétation est beaucoup plus difficile. La plus grande partie du texte consiste en citations scripturaires introduites par

⁵ Bailey 1943, see also, i.a., Bailey 1930-32.

⁶ MacKenzie 1967.

⁷ Williams 1990.

⁸ Jaafari-Dehaghi 1998.

⁹ Gignoux and Tafazzoli 1993.

¹⁰ Amouzgar and Tafazzoli 2000.

¹¹ Quite of course this very limited list excludes texts which do not rely on the religious tradition, such as the (*Mādayān ī*) *Hazār Dādestān*, those belonging to specific literary traditions such as the short *andarz* texts gathered in the sixth book of the *Dēnkard*, and bilingual Avesta-Pahlavi texts.

čēgōn Dēn gōbēt ‘ainsi que le dit la Religion’. Ces citations sont introduites par des courts paragraphes qui indiquent brièvement leur contenu et présentent l’évènement raconté comme un miracle confirmant le caractère authentique de la mission prophétique de Zoroastre. Les deux catégories de passages se distinguent aussi bien par leur vocabulaire que par leur syntaxe. Les paragraphes d’introduction sont en général plus clairs et peuvent être traduits tels quels; ils livrent même parfois la clef de l’interprétation de la citation qui suit. Celle-ci ne doit jamais être traduite d’après le sens apparent des termes pehlevis. S’agissant d’une traduction de l’avestique, la première démarche à faire est de tâcher de reconstituer l’original et de le comprendre (Molé 1967, p. 4*).

I completely agree with this statement, to one exception: it should be made clear that the source is the *Zand* and not the *Avesta*, and consequently that in the interpretation of the text one needs to pay attention to the fact that the alternation between “natural” language and “avestizing” language is less regular than what Molé seems to believe. Moreover, I think that many of the passages found in the *Dēnkard*, no doubt in the first three books, but also in the later three, are not simply quotes, but rather retellings, reformulations, reinterpretations.

Turning more specifically to the *Dēnkard*, it should first of all be underlined that its author presents this text as a selection taken from the “Good Religion”: *wehdēn*, a term which applies to the Holy Scriptures. When describing the history of the text he further says:

Dk III, 420 (B [316].9-11) *abar dēn nibēg <ī> dēnkard nibēg az nigēz ī wehdēn hād dēnkard nibēg kardag ast ī az wispdānāgīh *pēsīd dēn mazdēsna paydāgīh*

On the Book of the Religion, which is the book of the *Dēnkard*. From the exposition of the Good Religion. The book of the *Dēnkard* is an (epi)tome taken from the revelation of the Mazdean religion, adorned of omniscience.

Ādurbād ī Ēmēdān was the last compiler of this book, and his meritorious action took place under difficult circumstances. He had to piece together what was left of a collection of texts gathered by Ādurfarrbay ī Farrozzādān after the arrival of the Arabs and the consequent trouble, which was later struck by some catastrophe during the period of Zarduxšt ī Ādurfarrbayān. Ādurbād did not only gather all what was left, but also compiled some extracts of what he considered to be relevant, and pieced

together a new book that he calls the “*Dēnkard* of 1,000 chapters”, which is the very book which partly came down to us.¹²

Ādurbād was active in the 10th century, being probably one generation younger than *Zādspram*. It is demonstrable that the compiler of the eighth book of the *Dēnkard* did not any more correctly understand Avestan¹³ and, therefore, based his work only —or mainly— on the Pahlavi Zand and on what in Sasanian times was considered to be traditional knowledge. There, where the Zand is missing, as is the case for the *Waxtar Nask*, Ādurbād gives no résumé of the text, saying only that the Avestan text was still kept and used for rituals. This statement is of great interest, since it proves that the *Dēnkard* is no direct rendering of the Avesta, but rather a shortened version of the Zand.

Moreover, at the time when the eighth book was compiled, both the Avesta and the Zand of nineteen *nasks* of the Sasanian Avesta were still available, one *nask* being completely lost, the *Waštāg*, and one, as we have just seen, surviving only in its Avestan version.

Following de Menasce,¹⁴ the author of what still is the best extant description of the *Dēnkard*, the books which form part of this work can be classified as follows:

- 1) Books III, IV and V form the part which according to this author can be defined as “apologetic”.
- 2) Book VI is a treasure of Zoroastrian *andarz* or gnostic literature.
- 3) Books VII, VIII and IX are taken from the *Zand*.¹⁵

One more thing has to be taken into account when studying the *Dēnkard*: its manuscript tradition. In fact the existing *Dēnkard* has been transmitted down to us in only one independent manuscript, known as B codex, containing the complete surviving text except for the so-called “missing

¹² Cf. de Menasce 1958, p. 9: “À la suite d’une catastrophe dont la nature n’est pas précisée, l’exemplaire du livre confié à Zarduxšt s’abîme, se déchire, finit en si mauvais état qu’il s’agit encore une fois de le reconstituer: c’est l’œuvre de celui qui écrit: “Moi, Āturpāt ī Ēmētān”. Mais son labeur ne se borne pas à cela: il en fait des extraits (*haciš vicī*) qu’il met en ordre, mais aussi, à partir de ce matériel composite, il rédige un ouvrage nouveau qu’il appelle, “à l’instar du *Dēn Kart nipīk*, le *Dēn Kart des 1 000 chapitres*”, qui est l’ouvrage pehlevi que nous connaissons sous le nom de *Dēnkart*”.

¹³ See Cereti 1997, p. 102.

¹⁴ De Menasce 1958, pp. 7-8.

¹⁵ According to this same author (de Menasce 1958, pp. 9-10) book three was probably due to Ādurbād’s pen, while books four and five were compiled by Ādurfarbay. Should this be the case, books seven, eight, and nine would represent the summaries of the Zand Avesta, gathered and ordered by Ādurbād, and book six may be an anthology of what in Sasanian and Islamic times was considered to be the “Sayings of the Ancient Teachers (*pōryōtkēšān*)”.

folios.” It is a late and bad manuscript, as correctly underlined by de Menasce (1958, pp. 5-7), dated to 1009 a.Y. (1640 CE), which was brought from Iran to Surat in 1783 CE. Through its colophons, we can trace the history of the transmission of the text, which ultimately goes back to an archetype written in Baghdad in year 369 20 a.Y. (1020 CE) by Māhwindād ī Narimānān ī Wahrām ī Mihrābān.¹⁶ The only other known independent codices of the *Dēnkard*, each of which contains only a very limited part of the text, are K43a, which contains parts of the sixth book and two chapters of the third, K43b, which presents a selection taken from books three, five and nine, and DH which preserves extracts from books three and five and book nine almost complete.¹⁷

Practically all major work on the *Dēnkard* was done by Jean de Menasce and his students.¹⁸ This is because of all Pahlavi books the *Dēnkard* is the one which stands closer to the Sasanian Avesta and de Menasce’s approach, deeply influenced by his own studies, can well be applied to exegetical and scholastic texts. It is not by chance that de Menasce preferred to focus his attention on *Dēnkard* III, while it was Molé who tackled book seven, narrating Zoroaster’s legendary life. The many quotations are often—but by no means always—introduced by formulas such as *čiyōn dēn gōwēd*, *čiyōn pad dēn gōwēd*, *čiyōn az dēn paydāg*, etc. However, not all passages introduced by these and similar formulas are real quotations from the Zand: one finds real quotations, pseudoepigrapha, and “recollections”, i.e. quotations which are not literal, but based on vague reminiscences. The only real clue to identify a quote from the Zand lies in the language itself, which should present “avestizing” characters.

According to de Menasce, the individual chapters belonging to book three can be assigned to different literary genres. Quite interestingly, some of the chapters are found twice in book three, with slight or more significant variants. This leads the author to conclude that:

Quelles conséquences peut-on tirer de ces deux faits pour l’histoire de la composition du livre III? Les doublets démontrent à coup sûr qu’il existait une *Vorlage* dans laquelle ont puisé éditeurs et copistes. La disparition du chap. 239, dont le titre seul est demeuré, et sa présence dans le chap. IX du *ŠGV* comme citation explicite du *Dēnkard*, suggèrent que l’auteur du

¹⁶ The abbreviation a.Y. refers to the Yazdegardi era, beginning in 63 CE, when the young king rose to the throne ; 20 a.Y. indicates the post-Sasanian era beginning with the year of Yazdegard’s death, twenty years after his coronation, i.e. in 651 CE.

¹⁷ See Cereti 2001, p. 46.

¹⁸ Exception made for Maria Macuch, who has translated a number of passages taken from *Dēnkard* VIII in her many articles on Sasanian law. Shaked’s edition of the sixth book of the *Dēnkard* stands alone, since it is a compilation of *andarz* texts, some of which are known also from other anthologies, which was at some time joined to the *Dēnkard*.

ŠGV s'est servi d'un "exemplaire" qui n'est pas celui dont provient notre unique copie, où ce chapitre manqué – à moins que ce ne soit précisément de cette copie ou de son "exemplaire" qu'il l'aurait *matériellement découpé*. (de Menasce 1958, p. 14)

Moreover, de Menasce insists on the fact that by far the great majority of the chapters of book three are introduced by the sentence *az nigēz ī wehdēn*, further saying that the *nigēz* is most probably "un procédé d'interprétation de l'Écriture, ou, plus largement, de la Révélation".¹⁹ The passage which we will comment in short is not introduced by this formula, but may nonetheless be an example of this "process".

Let us now turn to book seven. It represents the most extensive version of Zoroaster's legend, the importance of which is much enhanced by the fact that it constantly refers to the Middle Persian Zand of the Avesta. As correctly remarked by de Menasce, it is the Zand that acts as authority, showing that the Zoroastrians of late Sasanian and early Islamic times held the Avesta and its Middle Persian commentary on the same footing, as far as religious authority goes.²⁰ Quite clearly, also *Dēnkard* VII is not, at least not in the main, simply a translation from the Avesta —and therefore it is not simply a summary of the Zand—, rather it is a retelling, preserving, as we shall see, passages from the Middle Persian commentary.²¹

Following in the steps of his master, Molé lays a great value on the Pahlavi version of the Sasanian Avesta and in particular on the summaries preserved in books eight and nine of the *Dēnkard*.²² About book seven Molé says:

D'une manière générale, le septième livre du *Dēnkart* est d'un archaïsme beaucoup plus prononcé que toutes les autres versions de la légende dont nous disposons. Il doit ce caractère en grand partie à l'usage qu'il fait des citations de textes avestiques perdus pour la plupart, mais dont certains se laissent identifier. Les citations sont introduites par une formule telle que *čēgon Dēn goβēt* ou *čēgon hač Dēn paitāk* ; une ou deux phrases qui précèdent en résumé les grandes lignes. La syntaxe, voire le vocabulaire

¹⁹ De Menasce 1958, p. 17.

²⁰ De Menasce 1958, p. 64.

²¹ De Menasce 1958, p. 65, "Retenons cependant que le livre VII n'est pas en soi une traduction : c'est un ouvrage qui a dû être rédigé en pehlevi et dans lequel est insérée, en conclusion de développements en prose, la traduction pehlevie d'un texte avestique le plus souvent prosodique".

²² Molé 1963, p. 275, "Il est donc tout à fait erroné d'agir comme si « l'époque de l'Avesta perdu » était postérieure à l'époque de l'Avesta récent. Ce sont des facteurs extérieurs – l'usage rituel de certains *nask* à l'exclusion des autres – qui ont décidé de la conservation, jusqu'à nos jours, d'une partie des écrits en avestique. À l'époque de la compilation du *Dēnkart*, la plus grande partie du canon sassanide existait encore, et notamment les trois commentaires des Gāthā".

de ces introductions diffèrent considérablement de ceux des citations scripturaires ; il s'agit bien du pehlevi des écrits originaux tandis que la langue des citations est fortement influencée par l'avestique. Les introductions sont apparemment l'œuvre personnelle du – ou des – compilateur(s) du *Dēnkart* qui, ailleurs, se bornent à résumer un épisode sans citer. C'est pourtant plutôt une exception. (Molé 1963, p. 276).

Here we are not going to go into the details of Pahlavi translation syntax, but rather focus on two passages taken from book seven, which show the Avestan influence on the Pahlavi text. Both were, in my opinion, translated erroneously by Molé, still, it is by applying the method that he and de Menasce developed, that I will try to improve on their translation.

The first of the two passages finds a striking parallel in a chapter belonging to book three,²³ thus probably preserving a real quote from the Zand-Avesta, while the other finds no precise correspondence in the known Avesta, and thus seems to be a vague “recollection” rather than an actual quotation from the Zand.

In the first chapter of book seven, while telling the story of how *Gayōmarθ* was the first to receive the Religion from Ohrmazd, the author writes what follows:

Dk VII,1,7 (B [470].18-19): *ud ēn-iz az wehdēn paydāg kū: pad ān ī gōwišnīh aršuxt gayōmarθ ō ān ī amahraspandān hu-axwīh mad (kū garōdmānīg).*

Molé's translation reads: “Ceci également est révélé dans la Bonne Religion: « En prononçant ces paroles correctes Gayomart obtint la bonne essence des Amahraspand (c.-à.-d. paradisiaque) ».”²⁴

Moreover, it should also be underlined that as far as can be understood from his edition of the seventh book of the *Dēnkard*, the French author does not seem to consider this passage to be a direct quote from an Avestan text.²⁵

However, three elements should be emphasized:

1) To obtain the meaning given in Molé's translation, the syntagm *gayōmarθ ō* has to be considered as equivalent to *ō gayōmarθ*, which can only be done by imagining a copyist's error or, more probably, a Zand prototype, where in a syntax influenced by that of the Avestan original, the preposition *ō* might have followed the noun, possibly as an expedient used to indicate a case ending.

²³ See what was said above about the existence of “double” chapters in the third book of the *Dēnkard*.

²⁴ Molé 1967, p. 5.

²⁵ Molé 1967, pp. 4-5.

2) *Aršuxt* is clearly a transcription of YAv. *arš.uxda-* “correctly spoken” [GA_v *arəžuxda-*], in Avestan commonly found in connection with *vak-*, *vačah-*. Bartholomae considers the Pahlavi rendering of *arš.uxda-*, *arəž.uxda-* to be *rāst gōwišn*.²⁶ However, it is not unusual that one and the same Avestan term may have more than one rendering in Pahlavi, one being a mechanical transcription, the other a translation.²⁷ Moreover, it should be clearly said that *aršuxt* occurs also in passages which are not translations of Avestan texts. An obvious example is found in the well known passage on the four different instruments instituted through Limited Time by Ohrmazd (Dk III, 192; B [158.17ff.]). Listing the different entities with which the “Robe of Priesthood” (*āsrōnīh brahm*) is identified, the author says: *andar xēmān pad ān ī āsnōdag menišn, ān ī aršuxt gōwišn* “among characters in noble thought and in the rightly spoken word”.²⁸

3) Also *hu-axwīh* should be understood as a technical term, translating YAv. *hauuanḥuua-* “good life, joy”, though, as shown by Molé, the Pahlavi commentators have rather understood it as “the state of having a good life”, a meaning that may fit also some of the Avestan passages. Furthermore, Molé underlines that some Sasanian commentators went as far as understanding the word more as “courage”, glossing it by *nēw-dilīh*.²⁹

Turning now to *Dēnkard* III, 23, corresponding to the thirteenth question posed by a disciple,³⁰ we find a passage which is strikingly close to the one found in *Dēnkard* VII, and which is here presented unmistakably as a quote from the Avesta:

Dk III, 23 (B [14].3-11). 13 **pursišn pursīd kū ka kunišn ud bōxtišn ī gayōmarθ az ān ī abestāg gōwēd kū: pad-iz ān gōwišn ī aršuxt gayōmarθ ō ān ī amahraspandān hu-axwīh abar mad ān ī-š čimīgīh [ī] <čē> Rōšan būd kē guft kū ān xwad garōdmān dād ēstēd ō padīrīfīh pad čāšt <ud> čāšīnīh čimīg mad.*
*passox hād dahišn ī gayōmarθ ō gētīg andar ēbgatīg abēzagīh ī gētīg čiyōn garōdmān-iz būd *nē garōdmanīg dād ēstād guftan ī gayōmarθ az ōy dastwar padīrīft ō kunišn <ud> bōxtišn ī gayōmarθ ēbgatīgīh būd guft ēstēd nē hambasān har dō pad rāstīh padīrīftan <ud> čāstan xūb.*

²⁶ Bartholomae 1904, col. 204.

²⁷ See among others Dk VII,1,34 (B [474].19-20) *rad ī buland* against Bd 26.8 (TD₁ 67v.14-15) *ratwō berezāt (ltwpkblzt')* for YAv. *raθβō bərəzatō* (Y. 1,17, Y. 22,4 etc.).

²⁸ B [159].10-11, cf. Zaehner 1937-39, pp. 304 and 306, de Menasce 1973, p. 199.

²⁹ Molé 1967, p. 144.

³⁰ The text of Dk III, 11-26, cf. de Menasce 1973, pp. 35-43, presents sixteen questions by a disciple and the corresponding answers, each discussing either ritual or doctrinal matters.

13th question. He asked: Given that the Avesta says about the doings and salvation of *Gayōmarθ*: **“By those well spoken words *Gayōmarθ* rose up to the good existence of the *Amahraspands*”** what is its logic? It was *Rōšan* who said: “that same *Garōdman* was created”. It is accepted (*ō padīrifīh mad*) as reasonable (*čimīg*) to teach (*čāšt*) and in doctrine (*čāšišnīh*).

Answer: thus, the creation of *Gayōmarθ* to the material world (*gētīg*) took place in the assailable purity of the material world. Though *Garōdman* also existed, he was not created paradisiacal. (These were) the words about *Gayōmarθ* accepted by that authority. It is not contradictory (*hambasān*) (with) what (also) was said “the doings and salvation of *Gayōmarθ* were (during) the Assault of Evil (*ēbgatīgīh*)”. It is good to accept as truth and teach both (these doctrines).³¹

In fact, it seems clear that the translation of the highlighted passage should also apply to the paragraph found in book seven and discussed above. Moreover, the fact that we find the same text in two different books of the *Dēnkard*, both times presented as a citation taken from the Scriptures, makes it quite probable that we are here faced by a real a quote from the Avestan Zand.

The other passage which illustrates well Molé’s method, and its limits, is found in the third chapter of the seventh book, telling the miraculous events which took place between Zoroaster’s birth and his conversation with Ohrmazd. Here, once recounted that the sorcerer *Durasraw*, summoned by *Pōrušasp* to see his son, and furious at the sight of the prophet’s *xwarrah*, tried to crash Zoroaster’s head with his hands, the *Dēnkard* goes on to say:

Dk VII,3,6 (B [488].17-19) *ud ēdar paydāgīhist wuzurg awdīh <ī> ō wasān čiyōn dēn gōwēd kū: ēg ōy mar aš ō pasīh, gaw abāz rāyēnīd (kū abāz hušk) nē-iz pas ān mar pad ān gaw gōšt pad zafar abāz jūdār būd.*

Translated by Molé as: “Voici qu’un grand miracle fut révélé à beaucoup, ainsi que le dit la Religion: Il retourna alors les mains du *mar* en arrière (elles se desséchèrent); désormais, le *mar* fut incapable de porter de la viande de ses mains à sa bouche pour la manger”.³²

This passage was understood by Molé³³ as a quotation from the Avesta, and he was also able to identify a passage from the so-called *Hōm Yašt*, which partially covers the same meanings.

³¹ Cf. de Menasce 1973, p. 42.

³² Molé 1967, p. 29.

³³ See Molé 1967, p. 170, where the author proposes the parallel with Y 9.29 and its Pahlavi version.

Y 9.29 (Geldner 1886, p. 47):

<i>mā zbaraθaēibiia fratuiiā</i>	May he not have strength in his feet
<i>mā gauuaēibiia aiβitituiiā</i>	May his arms be without power
<i>mā zqm vaēnōiī ašibiia</i>	May he not see the earth with his eyes
<i>mā gqm vaēnōiī ašibiia</i>	May he not see cattle with his eyes
<i>yō aēnaḥaiti nō manō</i>	He who is an enemy of our thought
<i>yō aēnaḥaiti nō kāhrpəm</i>	He who is an enemy of our body

The Pahlavi version reads as follows:

PY 9.29 (Dhabhar 1949, pp. 67-68) *ma pad har dō zabar frāz pattūg hād ma pad har dō *gawa [gwy] abar tuwānīg hād (kū-š pad dast wināh kardan ma tuwān bawād) ma zamīg wēnād pad har dō aš ud ma gōspand wēnād pad har dō aš kē kēnīg hād ō ān ī amāh menišn (kū tā-mān tis ī frārōn menīdan ma tuwān hād) kē kēnīg hād ō ān ī amāh karb (kū abāg karb ī amāh kēn dārād)*

May he not be enduring with his two feet, may he not be powerful with his two hands, (i.e. may he not be able to commit sins with his hands). May he not see the ground with both of his eyes, and may he not see the cattle with both of his eyes, he who is malicious against our thought (i.e. he who cannot think about our righteous things), he who is malicious against our body (i.e. who may feel hate against our body).

Now the comparison between the Avestan and the Pahlavi text immediately reveals a few correspondences, which Molé had already remarked (Molé 1967, p. 170):

1) YAvestan *zbaraθa-* “foot” (demonic) is rendered by Pahl. *zabar*.

2) YAvestan *gauu-* “hand” (demonic) is rendered by Pahl. **gawa*. Noteworthy is the fact that the Pahlavi commentator glossed *gawa* by *dast*, thus showing that the distinction between the daevic and the ahuric vocabulary was by then lost.³⁴

3) G/YAvestan *aš-* “eye” (demonic) is rendered by Pahl. *aš*.

Let us now turn back to our text. Given the correspondences which have just been mentioned, Molé’s translation should be improved as follows:

Dk VII.3.6 (B [488].17-19) *ud ēdar paydāgīhist wuzurg awdīh <ī> ō wasān. čiyōn dēn gōwēd kū: ēg ōy mar aš ō pasīh, gaw [gw'] abāz rāyēnīd (kū abāz hušk) nē-iz pas ān mar pad ān gaw gōšt pad zafar abāz jūdār būd.*

³⁴ Cf. Molé 1967, p. 170. Bartholomae (1904, col. 505) gives either *gav* or *gōk* as possible Pahlavi renderings. I suspect that *gōk*, if written **gw**k, should rather be read *gawa*. Similarly **zb**’I should be read *zabar* rather than *zabār*. On the rendering of vowels in Avestan loanwords in Zoroastrian Middle Persian, see Cereti 2005.

And here a great miracle was revealed to many. As the Religion says: “Then to that scoundrel he turned the eyes backwards, he crippled the hands back [i.e. (they) dried back]. Never again was that scoundrel able to bring food to his mouth with those hands and to eat it.”

Notice that:

1) Pahl. *zafar* [zpl] is the transcription of Av. *zafar*, still attested in Middle and New Persian in the meaning of “mouth, maw” (daevic).

2) Pahl. *jūdār* derives from *jūdan*, *jōy*- “to chew; devour” (daevic), well attested also in Manichaean Middle Persian and New Persian.

Should we consider this passage as a quote from the Avesta? In my opinion this is not the case, since the author seems to have misunderstood his text, wrongly taking *zabar* to be *zafar*, and thus supplying a new and different commentary to his passage. It may thus be classed under what Molé calls “remembrances”.

To conclude, I believe that the coincidence between the passages of *Dēnkard* VII and III, suggests that Dk VII,1,7 is indeed based on the Holy Book and its Zand, while the same is not true for Dk VII,3,6, which can be better explained as a passage just echoing an Avestan text.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Bd *Bundahišn*
Dk *Dēnkard*
YAv *Young Avestan*
GAv *Gathic Avestan*

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