

Kirdēr's Clairvoyants: Extra-Iranian and Gathic Perspectives

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I

The high priest Kirdēr's late 3rd century CE Pahlavi text (inscribed in copies at four different sites), which reports a vision of how he will be favorably received in the afterlife, is a unique Sasanian document whose broad interest, though obvious enough from the various studies devoted to it hitherto, is far greater than has been suspected. As I shall show, crucial aspects of the text can be clarified by an abundance of data from cultures other than Iranian. In addition, I shall show that Kirdēr's text illuminates some important passages of the Gathas.

The most recent study of the relevant Kirdēr text is that of F. GRENET (2002). GRENET's article, which builds on the earlier studies by Iranists (for which GRENET supplies the essential bibliography), provides a new translation and commentary containing the following solutions to textual *cruces*, from which my own remarks will proceed:

- (1) Kirdēr did not himself have the vision, but had the role of **inducing** ("provoker") others, **youngsters**, to **have the vision for him**, while he remained in conversational contact with them during their trance.¹
- (2) The inscriptions refer to these children via the word <*lysik*> = *rehīg*, the equivalent of Book Pahlavi <*lsyk*> 'boy, page', both forms accounted for by *raθyaka-* (SIMS-WILLIAMS *'of the court'). GRENET² confirms the youth of the clairvoyants through their markedly unsophisticated ("naïf"), simple description of what they see, e.g. "a woman" for the Dēn, "princes" (or "rulers", *šahriyār*) for the gods, "a bridge" for the eschatological Činwad structure, etc.
- (3) **The boys obtain their clairvoyant trance through an <'dwyn mbly>**, which GRENET³ takes as *ēwēn mabr* "le manthra⁴ (qui provoque) la vision" (<'dwyn> = *ēwēn* *'vision').

1 GRENET 2002, pp. 6 and 17.

2 GRENET 2002, pp. 17–18.

3 GRENET 2002, p. 15.

4 Middle Persian *mabr*, Avestan *māθra-*, cf. Vedic *mantra-*, i.e. 'formula'.

- (4) The youths had been installed/seated in (= during?) the vision-manthra (*ōy rehīg ... andar ēwēn mabr nišast bend*), which was produced (*kerd*, i.e. ‘administered’) by Kirdēr.⁵

Although the two tentative suggestions to which GRENET limits himself⁶ as to conceivable extra-Iranian parallels to Kirdēr’s use of children in divination are not sufficiently close to what the text presents, his expectation⁷ that the scholarly comparative study of mediumistic procedures should produce numerous parallels may now be fulfilled. In what follows, I shall adduce material from outside Iran, most of which parallels the crucial points from GRENET’s analysis which I have stressed above, which may be restated in generalization:

- (1) The person desiring a clairvoyant vision obtains it through children acting as mediums under his direction and interrogation;
- (2) the mediums are seated or otherwise installed for receiving the clairvoyant vision, and
- (3) the vision is brought on through a special formula delivered by the supervising adult.

A further feature of the extra-Iranian documentation, which will be taken up later, is the constant involvement of a luminous or reflective object as instrument of the child medium’s divination.

The richest non-Iranian parallels⁸ to the procedure of the Kirdēr text are found among the Late Antique magical papyri from Egypt in Greek and, more abundantly and with more detail, in Demotic, which consist of divinations by means of lamps and vessels. The prescriptions for these procedures are collected and discussed in HOPFNER (1926), and are easily accessible in the English translations in BETZ (1986).⁹ These prescriptions, occurring among others in which similar instructions are given for unmediated visions, indicate that the person desiring the divination uses as medium a boy (whose sexual innocence is often stressed). The boy is installed (made to sit, or squat, or lie on his stomach, or stand, usually on a new brick or bricks). In order to “make the boy fall into a trance and see the gods”,¹⁰ the director administers a formula. The papyri usually preface these combinations of imprecations and magical sounds with a caption, “Formula”; in addition, one finds designations like “the spells for the

5 GRENET 2002, pp. 9, 10, 11, and 18.

6 GRENET 2002, p. 18, fn. 14. A Muslim report of an alleged practice of Harrānian “Sabians” to toss a live boy into an acid, whereby all fleshly parts are dissolved except for the head and its protruding nerves, which is used as a divinatory “talking head”; and Herodotus’ account of Amestris having her husband Xerxes slaughter a number of boys and girls—but this only to propitiate an underworld god.

7 GRENET 2002, p. 18.

8 For a general overview of the extra-Iranian material, cf. JOHNSTON 2001.

9 See BETZ 1986, Greek pp. 14 top, and 55–56; 101–102; 133–134; Demotic pp. 195–200; 204–208; 218–224 and 235–240.

10 BETZ 1986, p. 133.

youth",¹¹ and "the spell which you should recite"¹² and "spirit formula".¹³ In all instances the contexts explicitly state that the purpose of the formula is to induce a vision. During the vision, the boy is interrogated as to what he sees.

HOPFNER¹⁴ cites non-Egyptian texts of Greek and Roman antiquity with a boy or boys used for divination via mirror or vessels or the surfaces of liquids. One of these tells how the Trallians had a boy prognosticate the outcome of the war with Mithridates; the boy saw an image of Mercury on the water, and made a prediction in verses. In another instance, boys, under supervision of an occultist, see via water where a sum of stolen money was buried. Finally, Didius Julianus is said to have employed specialists in divination in order to learn his future; these recited magic formulas over a boy, who made the fatal prediction via a mirror.

The relevant tradition of Byzantine divination is documented in late manuscripts edited by DELATTE (1927), of which the data on divination by children is brought together and discussed by HOPFNER (1932).¹⁵ The mediums are explicitly innocent children; they are pictured performing divination variously via a vessel, a torch, and a mirror; in each illustration they are seated next to a directing magician. The divination is preceded by the recitation of formulas.¹⁶

The same divinatory procedure is richly attested in medieval West European (German and English) material, presented and discussed in KIECKHEFER (1998).¹⁷ In the nineteen divinatory "experiments" given in the 15th century Munich ms. Clm 849, again the divination (scrying) takes place via the mediumship of youths who are given conjurations, and gaze at mirrors, crystals, thumbnails, vessels, and the oiled shoulderblades of sheep.¹⁸ The editor does not mention the relevant Byzantine, Late Antique Egyptian, and Classical texts, but compares later Jewish texts, which show essentially the same divinatory practices, as possible sources of the West European procedure(s).¹⁹ It is interesting that an "experiment" (via mirror) in the Munich manuscript has a conjuration which begins with *bismille* (< Arab. *bismillāh*);²⁰ that indeed the basic divinatory procedures under discussion were known in the Arab world is confirmed by Ibn Khaldūn's acquaintance with them.²¹

11 BETZ 1986, p. 206.

12 BETZ 1986, p. 237.

13 BETZ 1986, p. 239.

14 HOPFNER 1926, pp. 70–71.

15 Cf. GREENFIELD 1988, pp. 290–291.

16 HOPFNER 1932, see esp. pp. 219–220 and 226–227; illustrations opposite p. 227.

17 KIECKHEFER 1998, pp. 96–122.

18 KIECKHEFER 1998, pp. 103–118.

19 KIECKHEFER 1998, pp. 115–116.

20 KIECKHEFER 1998, p. 105.

21 Cf. KIECKHEFER 1998, pp. 98–99.

In view of the latter data, it is relevant that EDWARD LANE provides a highly engaging, detailed personal account of a divination conducted in Cairo in the 1830's by a Maghrebi magician operating through a boy medium to whom he administers magic formulas, with the vision taking place as a reflection on a pool of ink. One detail which recalls the more ancient Egyptian divinatory recipes is the accompaniment of incense.²²

An illustration of the global nature of the divinatory practices under discussion is found in the later texts: In the Byzantine and Munich manuscripts, as well as in LANE's account, the youths are directed to have the spirits bring in a ram or bull to be slaughtered for their ruler, who then partakes of it. Subsidiary details of this feature overlap in the three bodies of material.²³

It is interesting that in one of the Late Byzantine magical mss.²⁴ five spirit names are invoked for an onychomancy, of which two are of Middle Iranian origin ('Αναίς = Anāhīd and 'Αβριμάν = Ahrīman). A third name, Ζαμγή = *Zamgī*, is reminiscent of MPers. *zamīg*, Pers. *zamī* 'earth', but this is probably coincidental, with Ζαμγή instead being a confected exoticum whose form is phonically in accord with the preceding magical name Ζυγαέλ = *Ziyaél*. HOPFNER takes the first two names, along with a late Byzantine magical manuscript illustration of a man wearing a tiara who is captioned "Apollodoros the Persian (Πέτρος) lecanomanticist" and is shown directing a boy in a vessel divination, as going back to ancient Persian lecanomancy. The latter details more likely represent a Byzantine maintenance of the Late Antique topos of the μάγος as a Persian sorcerer. This topos would also, in reference to onychomancy, suit the magical attribution to the names 'Αναίς and 'Αβριμάν, cliché Persica known to the Byzantines via literary and oral transmission. However, it is not impossible that the Byzantine continuation of the Late Antique topos was refreshed by some actual Byzantine acquaintance with Sasanian divinatory practices involving youths.

As we have seen, Kirdēr's divinatory procedure matches what is detailed in various ancient, Late Antique, and medieval sources: child mediums, their being ritually seated/installed, and their receiving a special magical formula for their vision. However, these sources all also have the vision taking place via the children gazing at a shining or reflective object.²⁵ These global comparative considerations necessitate the question of whether (1) such an object, which has such an important technical function in the production of divinatory visions as per the non-Iranian testimonies, was also part of the otherwise parallel Sasanian procedure, or whether (2) despite the other correlations with the non-Iranian

22 LANE 1836, pp. 269–279.

23 HOPFNER 1932, p. 228; KIECKHEFER 1998, p. 109; LANE 1836, pp. 273–274.

24 HOPFNER 1932, p. 232.

25 Professor SHAUL SHAKED tells me he has encountered the same divinatory complex in Jewish, Muslim, and Ethiopic texts. For divination through mirrors and lenses (*āyīna-bīnī*) in New Persian literature and folklore, see OMIDSALAR 1995, p. 441.

documentation, the Iranian method involved a direct vision by the mediums solely through the impetus of the magic formula(s).

No reference to the luminous object has hitherto been detected in the portion of Kirdēr's text where it would occur. In the relevant place (paragraphs 20–25), Kirdēr stresses at length how much he prayed to the gods to somehow show the validity of the Avestic teachings about individual eschatology and of Zoroastrian practices, and also to provide the justification of his own earthly prestige by their indicating his personal fate after death; note esp. paragraph 22, which I translate thus:

And praying toward the gods, I then established this (as a) sign (*ēg-im ēd nišān mihād*): If you gods have it in your ability, then show me the means (*čārag*) [of knowing] hell and heaven, as you indicate in the Nasks ...

The “means” is elaborated in paragraph 24, where Kirdēr states that he produced the <'dwyn mbly> for the sake of divine service and for his own soul, so that he may know if he will be (appear in the afterlife as) righteous (*ardā*) or wicked, and further in paragraph 25, where Kirdēr makes clear that he delivered the <'dwyn mbly> to the boys, and then immediately reports what they say they see. Near none of the three inscriptional attestations of <'dwyn mbly> is there a lacuna long enough accommodate an allusion to a bright/reflective object.

The problem calls for a reexamination of <'dwyn>, the epithet that characterizes the <mbly> (*mahr* ‘formula, manthra’). GRENET's²⁶ interpretation of <'dwyn> is *ēwēn* ‘vision’, so that the phrase would mean “manthra de la vision”. GRENET further notes “l'*ēwēn mahr* serait ‘le manthra (qui provoque) la vision’ (le sens d'*ēwēn* comme ‘vision’ étant garanti indirectement par *ēwēnag* ‘miroir’)”; he adduces the fact that *Dēnkard* IV speaks of a *mēnōg-wēnišnīh* ‘spiritual vision’ (“se qu'on peut comprendre aussi comme ‘vision de l'au-delà’”), in which he finds a precise echo of the “manthra de la vision”. GRENET goes on to note that the mastery of this vision is attributed in the *Dēnkard* to the “mowbeds of Ohrmazd”, it perhaps being significant that after the divination which took place during the reign of Shapur I, Kirdēr was titled “Mowbed of (the god) Ohrmazd” by the next ruler, Ohrmazd I. In support of the etymology of <'dwyn> in <'dwyn mbly>, GRENET²⁷ cites, as PH. HUYSE's opinion concerning the two homophonous words *ēwēn*, that “les étymons sont respectivement **abi-dayanā-* > *ēwēn* ‘coutume, rite’ et **ā-dayana-* > *ēwēn* ‘vision’ (inféré d'après *ēwēnag* ‘miroir’ <*ā-dayana-ka-*), dans les deux cas sur la racine *dī-* ‘voir’”.

The interpretation of <'dwyn> as involving vision is more convincing than the translation as ‘ritual’, since the alternative, ‘ritual (*ēwēn*) manthra’, is redundant in itself (the manthra in question is by nature a ritual matter) and insufficiently specific as a technical term. The variant interpretation with *ēwēn*,

26 GRENET 2002, p. 15.

27 GRENET 2002, p. 15, fn. 9

'customary manthra', goes against the textual evidence that the procedure under consideration was not a routine matter. However, the term <'dwyyn> *a priori* should have a nuance other than that of 'seeing' *per se*, the latter being expressed by MPers. *wēnišn* (cf. *mēnōg wēnišnīh*). The comparative dimensions of the divinatory procedure in Kirdēr's text now raises the question of whether the relationship of <'dwyyn (*mhly*)> to Book Pahlavi 'dwyynk' 'mirror' may indicate that the manthra was named from the fact that the vision it initiated was seen as a reflection, as in the Western divinations by youthful mediums. The remarks which follow, to the effect that <'dwyyn> : <'dwyynk'> *phonologically* represent *āyēn* : *āyēnag* rather than *ēwēn* : *ēwēnag*, do not much matter for the conclusions drawn from the *semantic* relationship between the words. However, a digression as the pronunciation and the precise etymology of these words will clear the way for a closer assessment of the concomitant issues.

The relevant spellings are Book and Inscriptional Pahl. <'dwyyn(')> 'manner, custom, form, propriety, rite, ritual', whence Book Pahl. <'dwyynk'> with the same meaning; the homograph of the latter, Pahl. <'dwyynk'>, means 'mirror'. The Pahlavi spelling 'dw- for ēw- < OIr. *abi- is illustrated by Book Pahl. <'dw'n'> 'bridle'.²⁸ For Pahl. 'dwyynk' 'custom, rite' the pronunciation *ēwēn(ag)* is proved by Manichean Middle Persian <'ywyyn(g)>, and a derivation from *abi-dayana- is supported by Manichean Parthian 'bdyn 'custom', Armenian *aurēn(k')* 'custom, law',²⁹ and now Bactrian *αβδδivo* 'custom'. With these I further compare Khwarezmian <βzyynk> 'example, illustrative model' < OIr. *abidayana-ka- *(proper) form, formality' < *'shape, appearance' from OIr. *abi* √*dī* 'to look upon, behold, etc.' (Av. pres. stem *aibi*/aiβi(-)vaēna- 'id.').³⁰

The situation is complicated by the fact that, against Pahl. <'dwyyn'> = *ēwēn*, 'custom, rite' in New Persian is *āyīn*, whose expected MPers. antecedent *āyēn* is attested as Man. MPers. 'yn (and 'yng) 'manner' (DURKIN-MEISTERERNST 2004, p. 6, there transcribed as *ā'in* (and *ā'inag*), and Armenian *-ayēn*, alongside Parth. **ādēn* > Arm. *-*arēn*.³¹ The Khotanese Saka *āyīnaa-* 'example, illustrative model' points to a basic mg. *'form' < *'appearance', this time from OIr. **ā* √*dī*, Av. pres. stem *ā(-)vaēna-* 'to look at, behold, examine, consider carefully'. Thus OIr. *abi* √*dī* (**abidayana-*) and *ā* √*dī* (**ādayana-*) have parallel semantic developments.

28 Cf. e.g. Av. *aīβidāna-*, Khwarezmian pl. <'βz'ny>, all 'bridle' < OIr. **abidāna-*.

29 HENNING 1944, p. 110, fn. 1.

30 The oldest attestation is in the Gathas, Yasna 31.15 *tā cašmōng θβisrā bārō / aibi ašā* **vaēnahi* [mss. *aibi.vaēnahi*] *vīspā* 'surveying all those [violations] with the vibrant clarity of [Thine] eye, Thou beholdest all with truth'. A later correspondent is Sogdian <βywn-> 'to prophesy', <βywny> 'prophet'. While the <'dwyyn> of <'dwyyn *mhly*> could, in theory, stand for *ēwēn* = Sogd. <βywn-> from **abi-waina-*, the Sogdian semantic development has no clear parallel within Iranian, and the certain meaning of MPers. *ēwēn* 'custom, rite' makes an additional meaning *'prophetic' unlikely.

31 Cf. HÜBSCHMANN 1897, pp. 59 and 511.

Finally, for 'mirror' Pers. has *āyīna*, *āyīne*. Its antecedent, OIr. **ādayana-/ādayanā* (with *-k-* suffixation) **'device for looking, looking-glass'* (cf. *speculum*, κατόπτρον, *miroir*) gives the forms for 'mirror' throughout Iranian: Baluchi *ādēnk*, Manichean Parthian <'dyng>, <'dyng>, Sogdian <'dy'n'k>, Ossetic Iron *ajdæn*, Digoron *ajdænæ*, and Khotanese *āyāna-* (with variants with internal *-ī-* and *-ē-*).

Thus what GRENET gives as HUYSE's opinion is correct as far as the reconstruction **ā-dayana-ka-* for 'mirror' goes, but is incorrect as concerns this reconstruction for the alleged Pahlavi *ēwēnag* 'mirror', vs. **abi-dayana->ēwēnag* 'rite, custom'. From *ā-dayana-ka-* only **āyēnag* is expected, since **abi-d-* does not elsewhere give Middle Persian *āy-*, ordinarily represented in Pahl. spelling by 'y-', not 'dw-'. Therefore, given an underlying **ādayana-* reflected by Persian *āyīna* (*āyīne*) and by other New Iranian languages, and by Parth. *ādēn-ag* and parallel forms in the other Middle Iranian languages, it is **āyēnag* (and not **ēwēnag*) that MPers. should have had for 'mirror'. [Cf. KORN 2005, p. 79.]

The spelling of Pahl. <'dwynek'> 'mirror', which ordinarily would represent *ēwēnag* (rather than **āyēnag*), may be explained as follows: As demonstrated above, Middle Persian had *ēwēn* (Pahlavi <'dwyne'>), *ēwēnag* (Pahl. <'dwynek'>), and *āyēnag* (expectedly **'dynek'*), all meaning '(form,) custom, rite, etc.'. In addition, MPers. had *āyēnag* 'mirror'. Of these, *āyēn* 'form, etc.' and *āyēnag* 'mirror' were etymologically inscrutable, whereas the forms *ēwēn(ag)* (<**abidayana-*) could be analyzed as a prefix *ē-* plus **wēn-*, a nominal derivative of the present stem *wēn-* 'to see', on the analogy of *ēwan* (<'dwn'>) 'stalk, trunk' alongside *wan* 'tree, stem' and *ēwāz* (<'dw'c'>) alongside *wāz*, both 'word'. In the speech of the learned, *ēwēn* came to be thought of as more correct than *āyēn* for 'form, custom, rite', so that <'dwyne'> represented both *ēwēn* and *āyēn*, particularly under the influence of the constant collocation of *āyēnag* with *wēn-* (spelled <wyn->) 'to see'. Thereby *āyēn-* of both *āyēnag* 'mirror' and *āyēn* 'form, custom, rite' came to be spelled <'dwyne-> as a pseudo-archaism.³² In competition with *ēwēn(ag)*, and perhaps with support from its Parthian equivalent **ādēn* and the MPers. cognate *āyēnag*, *āyēn* replaced *ēwēn*.

As we have seen, the comparative evidence brings <'dwyne (mhly)> into relationship with <'dwynek'> 'mirror', which amounts to a formal relationship *āyēn : āyēnag*. For the absence of **<-k>* (*-ag* <**-aka-*) in <'dwyne'>, cf. among other such alternating stems in West Iranian, Balochi *ādēn* and *ādēnag*, *ādēnk* 'mirror' (KORN 2005, p. 166) in West Iranian the Saka (Khotanese and Ossetic) forms for 'mirror' cited above, as well as Khovar *a'rēn* 'mirror' <MIr. **ādēn*,

32 Comparable purely orthographic pseudo-historicisms are Book Pahl. <dpwyl> *dibīr* 'scribe' (<**OPers.* = Elamite **dīpīra*, cf. Sogd. <δp'yr>), whose spelling was influenced by <dylywl> (~ <dlyl>) *dīlēr* <OPers. **dīdibara-* 'having heart, brave'; <b'lsn'> *bāliš* 'cushion' <OPers. **bardīš-* = Av. *barazīš-*; and <pgt'm> (= <pyt'm>) 'message', which replaces **<ptg'm>* in order to render the pronunciation *payyām* alternating with *payām* (both > Persian).

whose lack of **-aka-* is apparently a conservative feature. Furthermore, there are many Middle Persian (Pahl. and Man. MPers.) noun doublets with and without *-ag*, for each pair of which the New Persian correspondent only reflects the form without *-ag*. Most are, like ‘mirror’, *-(V)n-* formations, e.g. *afsān(ag)* ‘tale’; *āšyān(ag)* ‘nest’; *wahān(ag)* ‘cause, reason, pretext’ (GERSHEVITCH, BSOAS 14 [1952], p. 483 [= *Philologica Iranica*, 1985, p. 114]); *dān(ag)* ‘grain, seed’; and *sēn(ag)* ‘breast’. In an instance like Pahl. *mēwag*, NPers. *mēwa/mīve* ‘fruit’, it is only the chance survival of Man. MPers. *mēw* that shows a form without *ag* existed; the point applies all the more to ‘mirror’, which is by comparison far more limited in potential contexts. The homophony of *āyēn* ‘rite’ and ‘mirror’ would have been a factor in the elimination of the form in favor of *āyēnag* > *āyīna* in the latter meaning. Additionally, it is possible that in <’*dwyn (mhly)*> the lack of the suffix could have the result of generalizing the meaning of the first term from ‘mirror’ to a quasi-denominative sense of **‘mirroring’ = ‘reflecting’*. Such a broad sense accords with the fact that the text, in referring merely to a ‘formula of/for the **mirroring/reflection*’ seems intentionally not to be specific about the actual stage of the clairvoyant procedure in which the youths gaze into some reflective object, whose detailing would be incongruous with the manifest solemn reportage of an extraordinary event (in this regard, the ambiguity of the homography/homophony with ‘rite’ could also be opportune). The reticence as the object may also be due to the non-traditional nature of its use. Indeed, the text’s phraseology which implies that an unusual means (*čārag*) of divinatory confirmation was involved, accords with a foreign origin of the procedure, which we have seen to correspond to practices which are particularly well documented in manuals of magic from Late Antique Egypt and Byzantium. Precisely this provenience is found for other aspects of Sasanian magic. Realia which reflect this fact include the Sasanian magical seals which copy, or are similar to, Late Antique Greco-Egyptian and Byzantine amulets for various purposes.³³ In addition, the Sasanian magical protector *Sesen* has an analogue in the Byzantine Saint *Sisinnios* (who has a close Jewish angelic parallel, which, like the Late Antique *Sesengen Barpharangēs*, derive from Aramaic transmissions of a very ancient East Mediterranean protective god).³⁴

The adaptation of this imported means of intermediated divination is part of both a Sasanian cosmopolitanism and the passing of the distinctively Iranian procedure attested in the Pahlavi *Ardā Wirāz Nāmag*, in which the medium, acting on behalf of the priesthood, authenticated the teachings of Zoroastrianism through a drug-induced vision of the other world. This means of access to the

33 See GYSELEN 1995, Fig. 43b (type 9.1) with Fig. III; Fig. 48 (type 8.4) with Fig. II; Fig. 47 (type 8.3) with Fig. I; Fig. 49 (type 8.5) with Figs. V and VI, and Fig. 46b (type 7.2). Note also the important remarks on foreign influences on Sasanian magic, p. 20.

34 SCHWARTZ 1996, with evidence that the name of the magical god on the Sasanian seal-amulets (“*Sāsān*”, GYSELEN 1995, pp. 55–59) should be transcribed as *Sesen*.

spirit realm is also attested, but without the use of an intermediary, in the Pahlavi account of the conversion of Wištāsp. These accounts go back to a stage of Iranian society which accepted an expertise in psychopharmacology as a means of knowledge of the divine, a stage no longer current in the Sasanian realia.

II

In our most ancient body of data, the Gathas, there are indications of Zarathushtra conducting a direct divination. Taken together, the details, *grosso modo*, have correspondences in Kirdēr's text.

For the latter, we may first eliminate from consideration the divinities (reported by the children as 'rulers' or 'princes', *šabriyār*) which GRENET³⁵ identifies as Mihr (Av. Miθra), Rašn (Av. Rašnu), Jam (Av. Yima) and Wahrām (Av. Vərəθraγna); these (as opposed to the deities mentioned toward the end of the text in the account of the entrance to Paradise) do not figure in the repertory of Gathic divinities. This leaves us with the following skeletal summary of the séance of Kirdēr's inscription,³⁶ which, I shall endeavor to show, have correlations in the Gathas; the most pertinent Gathic correspondences are in bold type in what follows: A man who is Kirdēr's homomorph, *mard ī Kirdēr hangirb* (Av. *kəbrp-* 'body, form'), appears, which is most likely the individual's body in the afterlife.³⁷ Kirdēr's *hangirb* is met by the *Dēn* (Av. *daēnā*), who escorts him eastward along a bright road, *rāb* (Av. *gātu-*, *pañtā-/paθ-*, *gərəzdi-*, and *aduuan-*), past the pit of hell brimming with noxious creatures, *xrafstar* (Av. *xrafstra-*), and over the Bridge, *publ* (Av. *pərətu-* i.e. *cinuuatō*), on to an encounter with Srōš (Av. *səraoša-*, 'Hearkening'), with Wahman (Av. *vobu manah* 'Good Mind'), who leads Kirdēr's *hangirb* to the palace, i.e. **paradise** (Av. *gārō dāmāna-*, Mazda's 'House of Song'), where Kirdēr's *hangirb* banquets,³⁸

35 GRENET 2002, pp. 23–24.

36 GRENET 2002, pp. 19–24.

37 Cf. GRENET 2002, pp. 19–20, who, however, notes a second possibility, that this *hangirb* (or, with GRENET, *hangerb*) is merely the childish reportage of a figure who looks like the Kirdēr present in the ceremony. However, for this one would expect **hamdēsag* or **hamčibr* 'having the same appearance' rather than *hangirb* **'having the same body or form'*; note further that *hangirb*, with *n*, instead of **hamkirb*, suggests that the form is a technical term.

38 I had derived MPers. *bazm* 'banquet' from OIr. **bazma(n)-*, √*baz* 'to extend', as 'a spread', parallel to the English usage; see SCHWARTZ 1990, pp. 204–205 (where the Proto-Indo-European etymon should be corrected to **b^heAg^h* instead of **b^heAg*, to accommodate Vedic *bābhú-* and other cognates of Av. *bāzu-* 'arm'). I now take *bazm* as a labially dissimilated reflex of OIr. **api-wazma(n)-* 'food for guests'. Cf. OIr. **api-wāzaka-* > Khwarezmian *bəwāzək*, Sogd. *ēwpāzē* 'guest', and see further the words referring to hospitality which I derived from Indo-Iranian √*waz* 'to nourish, to strengthen' in SCHWARTZ 1990, pp. 200–202 (where note on p. 200 the mention of Manichean MPers.

and Ohrmazd (Av. *abura- mazdā-*, *mazdā- abura-*) points to him and smiles, and takes him ...

In Y28.5 the focus is on Zarathushtra's desire for a vision of the supernal realm of Rightness (*Aša- < Arta-*), with a pathway, via Vohu Manah and Sraoša, to Ahura Mazda. A mantra is included to protect against the *xrafstras* encountered:

Y28.5

- a *ašā kaṭ ǝβā darāsānī manascā vobū vaēdamnō*
 b *gātūmcā aburāi sāvuištāi səraošəm mazdāi*
 c *anā maṭθrā mazištəm vāurōimaidī xrafstrā hizuuā*

O Rightness, shall I see Thee, as I attain Good Mind,
 and a way to the strongest Ahura Mazda, as well as the greatest Sraoša?
 Via the (following) mantra,³⁹ with the tongue shall we avert the *xrafstras*: ...

The passage is illuminated by Y33.5, in which 'the all-greatest Sraoša' (*vīspā. mazištəm səraošē*) is linked to 'the paths (*paθ-*) which are straight in accord with Rightness, among which Mazda Ahura dwells'.⁴⁰ In Y34.12–13 these paths are clarified in terms of the 'well-adorned' road (*aduuan-*) which the *daēnās* of

bazm as 'Gastmahl' and *bazmag* 'guest'). See also SCHWARTZ, Section II and fn. 6 forthcoming in the volume honoring Dastur Firoze Kotwal, ed. J. CHOKSY. I prefer this etymology of *bazm* phonologically and semantically to the etymologies noted by GRENET 2002, p. 21, fn. 18: from OIr. **apī zam* 'par terre' (proposed by GRENET himself) or from the Old Iranian etymon of Av. *bajina-* 'cup' (proposed by SHAKED).

- 39 The mantra occurs in the following stanza, Y28.6. It is self-referentially designated as (b) 'the lofty utterances' through which (b) 'strong support' (*aojōyhuuat rafənō*) is requested. The mantra is phonically marked by the alliteration of the framing phrases, 6a) */dādi artā dāh darga'āyu/ 'give, O Rightness; mayst (Thou, O Mazda) give the long-lived (gift)' and 6b) */ahmabya-ca ahura yā dbišwatah dwaišāh tarwaima/ 'for us, too, O Ahura, whereby we may overcome the enmities of the enemies'. The latter alliterations in *a-* (*a-*) *d-* (*d-*) encode the battle between Aša- 'Right' and Druj- 'Wrong', as is shown by the derivative Y43.8 (see the next fn.), which has the chiasmic phraseology *b-c duuaēšā ... draguuāitē // aṭ ašāunē rafənō ... aojōyhuuat* 'one inimical to the wrongsome, but for the righteous, a strong support'.
- 40 Zarathushtra's vision-quest was literally the focus of his first conception of Y28, represented by Y28.1–8. The two occurrences of *aša-* 'Rightness' at Y28.4b) 'so long shall I search for Rightness' and Y28.5a) 'Rightness, shall I see Thee ... ?' surround the absolute centerpoint of the concentrically arranged concatenating stanzas of the first format (proto-poem) of Y28, on whose structure see SCHWARTZ 2003, pp. 222–223 with pp. 196–197, where other illustrations of Gathic proto-poems are given.
- In the final poem Y28.1–11, the midmost stanza Y28.6 has at its center the name *zavaδuštra-*, which is collocated with an appeal for 'strong support' against enmities. This stanza is the basis of Y43.8, the midmost stanza of what may now be identified as another proto-poem, the concentrically arranged concatenating stanzas Y43.3–13. Here, in elaboration of Y43.8, Y43.9e–10a are based on the old center of Y28, 4b–5c cited above. In Y43.8 Zarathushtra indicates his wish as enemy of evil to embody the inimical 'strong support' which he had requested in Y28.6, and in Y43.(9e–)10a he indicates that his vision-quest has been granted: 'Indeed Thou hast shown me (*dāiš*, aorist) Rightness'.

the benefactors tread. In Y51.11–16 the souls/*daēnas* of Zarathushtra's patrons are described as advancing on the paths to Mazdā Ahura's paradisiac House of Song (*gārō dāmāna-*), and the evildoers are said to fall from the path at the *Cinuuant*'s bridge (*pəratu-*) and be damned forever. This takes us to the second important passage:

Y51.17

- a *bəraxōqəm mōi fərašaoštrō huuō.guuō daēdōišť kəbrpəm*
 b *daēnaiiāi vaɣhūiiāi ɣəm hōi išiiqəm dātū*
 c *xšaiiqs mazdā aburō ašabiiā āzdūiāi ɣərəzdīm*

Frashaoshtra the Haugvid has thoroughly shown to me his welcomed **form** for the good *daēnā*; may the ruler Mazdā Ahura make it animated/invigorated/energized for him, that he may reach the **walkway** of Rightness.

Here Zarathushtra prognosticates his patron's success in the afterlife, and beholds the future *kəbrp-* which will be in a relationship with the "good *daēnā*". This future body is to be animated for its heavenly existence (cf. Y50.9e *aɣ hūdānaoš išaiiqs ɣərəzdā xiiēm* 'may I be experiencing energization on the **walkway** of a bringer of benefit', and the next stanza, Y50.10, in which Zarathushtra links his priestly action to meriting a vision of the paradisiac lights).

In summary: We now have textual evidence for divination in Zoroastrianism, in effect spanning the entire pre-Islamic period. Despite the differences in the form, which in the last period reflect the adoption of a foreign procedure, a core of content, pertaining to visions of the afterlife, remains constant. In addition, the purpose for which the divination was performed, the authentication of the religion, as embodied in priestly authority, also remains constant.⁴¹

Addendum

For the transcription Kirdēr (~ Kerdēr, Kardēr), cf. DURKIN-MEISTERERNST 2004, p. 221 *qyrđyr, kyrdyr, kyrdr*, where note Coptic *Kardel* as discussed by W. SUNDERMANN and M. SCHWARTZ. *Kirdēr* etc. 'powerful' < **kṛti-bara-* 'efficacious', cf. *dilēr* fn. 32.

The outer stanzas of the proto-poem, Y43.3 and 13, concatenate via *sti-* 'estate'. At Y43.3 the 'estates in which Ahura dwells' is in apposition to 'the straight paths of (salvific) benefactions', and Y43.13 locates 'the desired/choice estate' in Ahura's Dominion. Thus we have an overall correspondence with Y33.5c–6a, the midmost lines of the proto-poem Y33.2–10: 5c 'the paths straight in accord with Rightness (**/artāt ā rzūš paḍah/*) in/at which Mazda Ahura dwells' and 6a' 'the priest straight via Rightness' (**/yah zautā artā rzuš/*) jointly yield a phonic anagram of /zaraḍuštra-/.

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