Half-human and Monstrous Races in Zoroastrian Tradition

Domenico Agostini
Tel Aviv University

Legends and stories about fabulous races that dwelt in India or in Africa circulated in Iran probably since the Achaemenid times. Unfortunately, scholarship on this topic has neglected some late Iranian and, especially, Zoroastrian sources, such as *Draxt ī āsūrīg* (The Assyrian tree), the *Bundahišn* (Primal Creation), the *Ayādgār ī Jāmāspīg* (The memorial of Jāmāsp), and the New Persian epic *Šāhnāme*. This article examines the aforementioned sources and discusses their accounts of five fabulous races from an Iranian, and especially Zoroastrian, perspective and through a comparative approach to some similar neighboring traditions.

Descriptions and accounts of half-human creatures were already widespread in antiquity and late antiquity in Indian and Classical literature and have been widely studied in modern scholarship.[1]

In contrast the Iranian, and especially Zoroastrian, sources of such literature have been granted very little attention.[2] Though the extant Avestan texts do not refer to such races,

Author's note: I am grateful to my colleagues Antonio Panaino, Corinne Jouanno, and Sergey Minov for their useful suggestions. Many thanks are due, in particular, to Stephanie Jamison for her insightful remarks and comments.

1. For a general account of monstrous races and wonders in the East, see Rudolf Wittkower, "Marvels of the East: A Study in the History of Monsters," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 5 (1942): 159–97. On the contribution of the Greek sources to the circulation of these traditions in the Western world, see Klaus Karttunen, *India in Early Greek Literature* (Helsinki: Finnish Oriental Society, 1989), 127–34; Dominique Lenfant, "Monsters in Greek Ethnography and Society in the Fifth and Fourth Centuries BCE," in *From Myth to Reason? Studies in the Development of Greek Thought*, ed. Richard Buxton (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1999), 197–214. As for the origins of these accounts, Classical sources in particular designate India alongside Ethiopia as regions abounding in wonders; see Klaus Karttunen, "The Country of the Fabulous Beasts and Naked Philosophers: India in Classical and Medieval Literature," *Arctos* 21 (1987): 43–52. On the geographical and anthropological confusion that existed between East Africa and India in the classical collective imagination, see Uday Prakash Arora, "India vis-a-vis Egypt-Ethiopia in Classical Accounts," *Graeco-Arabica* 1 (1982): 131–40; Alain Ballabriga, *Le Soleil et le Tartare: L'image mythique du monde en Grèce archaïque* (Paris: EHESS, 1986), 156–59; Willem Vogelsang, "The Achaemenids and India," in *Center and Periphery* (Achaemenid History, vol. 4), ed. Heleen Sancisi-Waardenburg and Amélie Kuhrt (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut Voor Het Nabije Oosten, 1990), 93–110, at 104. On the idea of distant regions of the earth as realms of radical social and ethical differences in antiquity, see James Romm, *The Edges of the Earth in Ancient Thought* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1992).

2. A brief and clear—but incomplete—treatment of this topic, also including Greek, Persian, and Arabic sources, was given by Davoud Monchi-Zadeh, *Topographisch-historische Studien zum iranischen Nationalepos* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1975), 149–63. For an overview of these characters in Persian epoic, see Josef Markwart, "Woher stammt der Name Kaukasus?" *Caucasica* 6 (1930): 25–69, at 36–41. In particular, Markwart (*Die Benin-Sammlung des Reichsmuseums für Völkerkunde in Leiden* [Leiden: Brill, 1913], 164–69, 200–206; idem, "Der Name Kaukasus," 51) claimed that these monstrous races do not belong to Iranian legend, but originate in Indian and African accounts that reached the Greek and Roman world through writers and travelers. As for contemporary scholarship, David Gordon White's *Myths of the Dog-Man* (Chicago: Chicago Univ. Press, 1991) is an example of a work that ignores the possibility of an Iranian connection between Classical and Indian materials. By contrast, Dominique Lenfant ("L'Inde de Ctésias: Des sources aux representations," *Topoi* 5 [1995]: 309–36) suggests that the Iranian milieu might have been not only the place where Greek authors, Ctesias in particular, heard about these fabulous races but also where he received direct inspiration for their description. She argues that the name of the mythical hybrid animal, manticore (*μαρτιχόρας*), which Ctesias translates as anthropophagous (*ανθρωποφάγος*), might derive from the Old Persian *martiya-* 'man', *xvar-* 'eat' (Lenfant, "Inde," 318). Furthermore,

chapters and passages of ninth- and tenth-century Pahlavi books such as the *Draxt ī āsūrīg* (The Assyrian tree), the *Bundahišn* (Primal Creation), the *Ayādgār ī Jāmāspīg* (The memorial of Jāmāsp), and the New Persian epic *Šāhnāme* provide interesting and varied descriptions of these fabulous people.

This article aims to bring into conversation the aforementioned primary sources, and discuss their accounts on the *sag-sarān* (dog-headed), *war-čašmān* (breast-eyed), *war-gōšān* (breast-eared), *dawāl-pāyān* (leather-strap-legged), and *widestīgān* (lit. 'those who are a span long'—dwarfs or perhaps pygmies) from an Iranian, and especially Zoroastrian, perspective and through a comparative approach to some similar neighboring traditions.

A DIDACTIC SOURCE: THE DRAXT Ī ĀSŪRĪG

The *Draxt ī āsūrīg* is a versified work[3] originally composed in Book Parthian,[4] though only a Pahlavi version has survived. It underwent a long period of oral transmission. The *Draxt ī āsūrīg* reports a dispute between a palm tree and a goat in which the two enumerate their qualities. This poem can also be ascribed to the genre of wisdom literature (*andarz*) because it includes a series of instructions and didactic precepts. The literary genre of dispute, sharing characteristics with oral literature from Mesopotamia, was probably adopted by Iranians as early as the Achaemenid period.[5]

As for the *Draxt ī āsūrīg*, though the Pahlavi version can likely be dated to the Sasanian period, the original tradition might date back to the second century BCE, as Sidney Smith argued.[6] In particular, this period plausibly refers to that of the great Parthian King Mithradates I (165–132), when Iranian and Aramaic elements interacted in Mesopotamia and Elymais.[7] In *Draxt ī āsūrīg* 88–96[8] the goat, while enumerating its importance to mankind, mentions three fabulous races as follows:

Ctesias' description of these people might have also been influenced by Near Eastern art, well known in the Persian court, which abounded in representations of men and animal hybrids (Lenfant, "Inde," 319).

3. Émile Benveniste ("Le texte du *Draxt Asūrīk* et la versification pehlevie," *Journal asiatique* 218 [1930]: 193–225, esp. 204) first recognized it as poetry characterized by verses containing six syllables. In turn, Walter Bruno Henning ("A Pahlavi Poem," *BSOAS* 13 [1950]: 641–48, esp. 645) argued that this poem has an accentual meter—as do most Parthian and Pahlavi texts.

4. On this definition of the language of the text, see Desmond Durkin-Meisterernst, *Grammatik des Westmitteliranischen* (Vienna: OAW, 2014), 14. Christian Bartholomae (*Zur Kenntnis der mitteliranischen Mundarten* IV [Heidelberg: Carl Winter's Universitatsbuchhandlung, 1922], 23–28) was the first to identify the rich Parthian vocabulary of the *Draxt ī āsūrīg.* Chistopher J. Brunner ("The Fable of the Babylonian Tree," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 30 [1980]: 197–202, 291–302, at 193–94) suggested that the text was perhaps intended to be chanted like Manichean hymns. A discussion on the state of research is found in Shaul Shaked, "Specimens in Middle Persian Verses," in *W. B. Henning Memorial Volume*, ed. Mary Boyce and Ilya Gershevitch (London: Lund Humphries, 1970), 395–405.

5. See Brunner, "Babylonian Tree," 194–95.

6. See Sidney Smith, "Notes on 'The Assyrian Tree,'" *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies* 4 (1926): 69–76, at 76. Christian Brunner ("Babylonian Tree," 1995) still considered this dating plausible for the *Draxt ī āsūrīg*, but deemed untenable Smith's proposal to see in this context a disputation between Zoroastrianism (represented by the goat) and the Mesopotamian religions.

7. See Brunner, "Babylonian Tree," 195–96.

8. Translation and transcription are based on the edition of collected manuscripts in *The Pahlavi Texts Contained in the Codex MK Copied in 1322 A.C. by the Scribe Mehr-Āwān Kaī-khūsrū*, vol. 2, ed. Jamaspji Minocheherji Jamasp-Asana (Bombay: Fort Printing Press, 1897–1913), ٢١١: 16—٣١١: 5. The transcription of the Pahlavi passages (*Draxt ī āsūrīg* and *Bundahišn*) is based on David Neil MacKenzie, *A Concise Pahlavi Dictionary* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971), xiii. The transcription of the Pārsi passage (*Ayādgār ī Jāmāspīg*) is based on Gilbert Lazard, *La langue des plus anciens monuments de la prose persane* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1963), 3–4 with slight changes.

Philological Apparatus: +: words emended or to emend; < >: words supplied; […]: words deleted; (…): lacuna.

(88) *+kōf ō kōf +šawēm wuzurg kišwar būm* (89) *az kust ī hindūgān tar ō warkaš [ī] zrēh* (90) *jud sardag mardōmag kē mānēnd tar ō būm* (91) *widestīg ud war-čašm kē čašm pad war ēst* (92) *sar-šān sag +mān brūg-iš mān mardōmān* (93) *kē dār warg-ē xwarēnd az buz šīr dōšēnd* (94) *ō-iz mardōmag zīwišn az man ēst* (95) *pēš-pārag az man karēnd ō wašag hur mān* (96) *kē xwarēd šahryār kōfyār ud āzād*

(88) I go mountain to mountain over the land of the great continent, (89) from the borders of the land of Indians across the sea Warkaš. (90) There are different species of human races who dwell over that land: (91) dwarf and breast-eyed whose eyes are in their chest, (92) those with heads like dogs and with eyebrows like men (93) who eat tree leaves and <drink> goat's milk. (94) And also for these people life depends on me; (95) they prepare appetizers from me such as beer and koumiss (96) that rulers, mountaineers, and nobles drink.

This passage provides scant but interesting information. Dwarfs (or perhaps pygmies), breast-eyed, and dog-headed races are located beyond the borders of India. Furthermore, the passage refers to the Warkaš Sea (Av. *Vourukaša-*), commonly translated in Pahlavi literature as Frāxkard, the Zoroastrian cosmic ocean surrounding the Xwanirah (Av. *Xvaniraθa-*), the mythical and central continent inhabited by Iranian people and by six other historical peoples, among whom are Indians according to late traditions.[9] This ocean divides the Xwanirah, called in *Draxt ī āsūrīg* 88 simply the "great continent," from the other six external continents.[10] The crossing of this ocean by the goat helps to assign to the far off, mysterious eastern region indefinable and almost unknown geographical and anthropological boundaries.[11] It is not even clear if the region is one of the other six continents. Despite the strange appearance of the inhabitants of this land, they are described as both active and peaceful, consuming only leaves (and likely goat's milk) and are even said to enjoy commercial relations with neighboring human peoples. Such a description evokes the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century concept of the "noble savage" in Western European travel literature *ante litteram*.[12]

As for the humanization of the monstrous races in the Parthian context, we find another example in the likely fifth-century Nestorian apocryphal *Acts of Saints Andrew and Bartholomew among the Parthians*, preserved in the fourteenth-century Ethiopic *Gadla Hawāryāt* (Contendings of the Apostles), in which a dog-headed person called "Abominable" becomes Christian and acquires a human aspect.[13] However, striking similarities with the physical

9. See *Iranian Bundahišn* 14: 34–36 (Fazlollah Pakzad, *Bundahišn: Zoroastrische Kosmogonie und Kosmologie* [Tehran: Center for the Great Islamic Encyclopedia, 2005], 190–93, edition).

10. See Mary Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism*, vol. I (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 135–36; Ahmad Tafazzoli, "Frāxkard," in *Encyclopædia Iranica* 10, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (New York: Bibliotheca Persica Press, 2001), 201. On the idea of the seven continents of Zoroastrian cosmography and its development throughout history, see A. Shapur Shahbazi, "Haft kešvar," *Encyclopædia Iranica* 11, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (New York: Encyclopædia Iranica Foundation, 2003), 519–22. On Middle Persian mythical and religious geography, see Carlo G. Cereti, "Middle Persian Geographic Literature: The Case of the Bundahišn," in *Contributions à l'histoire et la géographie historique de l'Empire Sassanide*, ed. Rika Gyselen (Bures-sur-Yvette: Groupe pour l'étude de la civilisation du Moyen-Orient, 2004), 11–36; idem, "Middle Persian Geographic Literature II: Chapters X and XII of the *Greater Bundahišn*," in *Des Indo-grecs aux Sassanides: Données pour l'histoire et la géographie historique*, ed. Rika Gyselen (Bures-sur-Yvette: Groupe pour l'étude de la civilisation du Moyen-Orient, 2007), 55–64.

11. Brunner ("Babylonian Tree," 300 n. 82) suggests that Warkaš might be the Caspian Sea and that the location of these races might range "through the Hindu Kush, in its western extensions, and the Alburz mountains." However, though this toponym may have referred to the Black Sea or Caspian Sea in certain historical periods, there is no certainty and any argument seems to be speculative (see also Boyce, *Zoroastrianism*, 143).

12. On the Enlightenment notion of the "noble savage," see John Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* (Syracuse: Syracuse Univ. Press, 1981), 163–96.

13. See White, *Myths of the Dog-Man*, 22–25, translation. This story is very similar to the legend of the dog-headed Saint Christopher (see White, *Myths of the Dog-Man*, 34–36) and the account in the Cologne Mani Codex of Mani, who meets and converts the hairy and shaggy hermit (see Ludwig Koenen and Cornelia Römer, *Der Kölner*

and anthropological descriptions of these people already appear in certain earlier Greek and Roman sources such as Ctesias, Megasthenes, Pliny the Elder, and Aelian. In particular, the dog-headed (*κυνοκέφαλόι*; Cynocephali) and dwarfs or pygmies (πυγμαῖοι 'those who are a fist long' and Trispithami *τρεῖς + σπιθαμόι* 'those who are three spans long")[14] are already said to live at peace with men and—while uncivilized and with a wild appearance—to keep commercial relations and live in a salubrious region in India (Ctesias *apud* Photius' *Library* 72:21–24, 40–43, Megasthenes *apud* Pliny's *Natural History* 7.2:23, 26, and Aelian's *On the Nature of Animals* 4:46).[15]

Moreover, the dog-headed race is known for drinking milk, as are the people in the *Draxt ī āsūrīg*, and eating the dry fruit of *siptachora*[16] (Ctesias *apud* Photius' *Library* 72:40, and Aelian's *On the Nature of Animals* 4:46).[17]

As for the breast-eyed, there are passing references in Classical literature that point to a tradition of the Acephali having eyes on their breast and living in Libya (Herodotus, *Histories* 4:191),[18] while the Blemmyes[19] with both mouth and eyes located in their breast dwell in Ethiopia (Pliny, *Natural History* 5.8:46).[20] The term used for these breast-eyed races is Sternophthalmi (*στερνοφθάλμόι*), for which the Middle Persian term *war-čašmān* could be a possible calque. The Sternophthalmi appear in several passages in Classical literature about remarkable races, together with Pygmies and Cynocephali (Homer and Aeschylus *apud* Strabo's *Geography* 1.2:35, and Pseudo-Apollodorus *apud* Tzetzes' *Chiliades* 7, 144:759–68).[21] The fact that the Greek sources predate the Pahlavi version of the *Draxt ī āsūrīg*, and some of them even the supposed Parthian original, is important, if not decisive, evidence for the literary and philological dependency of this Iranian text and of its monstrous nomenclature. This may point to a Greek narrative tradition that circulated also in the Iranian world, probably since the Achaemenid period through Greek writers and scientists such as Ctesias

Mani-Kodex [Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1988], 90–93). In this context, also the formerly Manichean Saint Augustine stresses the possibility for monstrous races—in particular the dog-headed—to be saved as creatures of God and offspring of Adam (*De civitate Dei* 16.8; see Eva Matthews Sanford. William MacAllen Green, et al., *Augustine: City of God*, 7 vols. [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press and London: W. Heinemann, 1957–1972], 40–49 [vol. 5], edition and translation).

14. For discussion about the identification of the dwarfs/pygmies in Ctesias and Megasthenes, see Karttnunen, *India*, 128–31.

15. See respectively Andrew Nichols, *Ctesias: On India, and Fragments of His Minor Works* (London: Bristol Classical, 2011), 50, 54–55, translation; Harris Rackham, *Pliny: Natural History*, 10 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press and London: W. Heinemann 1938–1962), 520–25 (vol. 2), edition and translation; Alwyn Faber Scholfield, *Aelian: On the Characteristics of Animals*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press and London: W. Heinemann, 1958–1959), 268–69 (vol. 1), edition and translation. For the identification of the dog-headed race in Ctesias with Indian people, see Nichols, *Ctesias*, 123–24. In Herodotus' *Histories* 4:191 (see Alfred Denis Godley, *Herodotus*, 4 vols. [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press and London: W. Heinemann, 1921–1925], 394–95 [vol. 2], edition and translation) the dog-headed dwell in Libya. According to Karttnunen (*India*, 6), Ctesias' India, in particular, might be identified with the region of the Indus, in modern Pakistan. In Pliny's *Natural History* 8.80:216 (Rackham, *Pliny*, 150–51 [vol. 3], edition and translation) the Cynocephali are a kind of dog-headed ape that could either refer to the *cynocephali hamadryas* (mandrills) or the *cynocephali babuin* (baboons).

16. According to Dominique Lenfant (*Ctesias de Cnide: La Perse. L'Inde. Autres fragments* [Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2004], 312 n. 854) this tree is to be identified with the Indian jujube or fig.

17. See respectively Nichols, *Ctesias*, 54, translation; Scholfield, *Aelian*, 268–69 (vol. 1), edition and translation.

18. See Godley, *Herodotus*, 394–95 (vol. 2), edition and translation.

19. Otto Maenchen-Helfen (*The World of the Huns* [Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1973], 143) refers to some sources that cite the Blemmyes as a tribe dwelling in Sudan in the fifth century.

20. See Rackham, *Pliny*, 252–53 (vol. 2), edition and translation.

21. See respectively Horace Leonard Jones, *The Geography of Strabo*, 8 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press and London: W. Heinemann, 1917–1932), 156–57 (vol. 1), edition and translation; Theodore Kiessling, *Ionnis Tzetzae: Historiarum Variarum Chiliades* (Lipsia: Vogel, 1826), 268–69, edition.

and Megasthenes who gravitated towards the Persian royal court,[22] in which the three races were part of an established set of monstrous societies. Afterwards it is reasonable that these stories remained current and widespread in the Iranian world via the Hellenizing cultural policy of the Parthians, and later through that of the Sasanian dynasty, which attempted to assimilate and translate into Middle Persian some elements of the Greek literary tradition.[23]

A COSMOGONIC SOURCE: THE IRANIAN BUNDAHIŠN

The second Pahlavi source in question is found in the fourteenth chapter of the *Iranian Bundahišn*.[24] This is a major cosmologic and cosmogonic work based on detailed Avestan sources, and primarily contains the story and description of the nature of the world and of mankind from creation to the resurrection of the dead. It is not possible to date the first compilation, but it probably took place in the late Sasanian period. Moreover, as is true for most Pahlavi literature, the book underwent many redactions up to the first centuries of the Islamic era, including a substantial one in the second half of the ninth century.

The *Bundahišn* 14: 36[25] reports as follows:

> [TD1 43v: 12—44r: 4] *čiyōn dah sardag mardōm ī az bun guft <ud> pānzdah sardag az frawāk būd wīst ud panj sardag hamāg az tōhm ī gayōmard būd hēnd čiyōn zamīgīg ud ābīg ud wargōš ud war-čašm ud ēk-pāy ud ān-iz kē parr dārēd čiyōn šawāg ud wēšagīg <ī> dumbōmand kē mōy pad tan dārēd čiyōn gōspandān kē xirs gōwēd ud kabīg ud +māzandarān kē bālāy šaš ēk ī mayānag <ī> bašnān ud +widestīg kē bālāy šaš ēk ī mayānag <ī> bašnān hrōmāyīgān ud turkān ud sīnīgān ud dāyigān ud tāzīgān ud sindīgān ud hindūgān ud ērānagān ud awēšān-iz ī gōwēd kū pad ān šaš kišwar +hēnd az ēn harw sardag-ē nōgtar was sardag būd hēnd.*
>
> The ten races of men mentioned at the beginning, plus the fifteen races descended from Frawāg, make twenty-five human races, all of which are from the seed of Gayōmard: including terrestrial men; aquatic men; breast-eared and breast-eyed; one-legged men; men with wings like bats; forest-dwellers with tails and fur on their body like animals called bears; monkeys; people of Māzandarān who are six times a normal man's height; dwarfs who are one sixth of a normal man's height; Romans; Turks; Chinese; Dāyīgān; Arabs; Sindhis; Indians; Iranians; and others who they say inhabit the six continents. Many other newer races came from each of these races.

In this passage, the same fabulous races found in the *Draxt ī āsūrīg* appear (with the exception that the dog-headed are missing and instead we have the breast-eared). These are included in the twenty-five "more-or-less" human races that were generated from the seed of the primordial human being Gayōmard. Although there is no geographical indication, the fact that Xwanirah, as can be seen above, is the dwelling place of the historical people, suggests that these three monstrous races were scattered alongside others over the six peripheral continents. We will return to this point later.

As for the dating of chapter 14, we shall take into consideration the eighth book of the Pahlavi encyclopedic work *Dēnkard*, which describes the twenty-one *nask*s (books) of the

22. On the presence and activity of these two Greek authors at the Achaemenid court, see Wittkower, "Marvels of the East," 159–65.

23. On this topic, see Domenico Agostini, "Greek Echos in Pahlavi Literature: A Preliminary Survey of Calques and Foreign Terms," *Linguarum Varietas* 5 (2016): 13–24; Joel T. Walker, "The Limits of Late Antiquity: Philosophy between Rome and Iran," *The Ancient World* 33 (2002): 45–69; Kevin van Bladel, *The Arabic Hermes: From Pagan Sage to Prophet of Science* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2009), 41–47.

24. For an overview of this text, see David Neil MacKenzie, "Bundahišn," *Encyclopaedia Iranica* 4, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1990), 547–51. http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/bundahisn-primal-creation

25. The translation is based on the transcription of the MS. TD1 43v: 12–44r: 4. For the facsimile of the manuscript, see *The Bondahesh: Being a Facsimile Edition of the Manuscript TD*1 (Tehran: Iranian Culture Foundation, 1970), ۹۸–۸۸. See also the edition of the passage in Pakzad, *Bundahišn*, 192–93.

Sasanian Avesta as they were preserved in the ninth century.[26] In fact, *Dēnkard* 8.13: 1–4[27] lists the contents of the *Čihr-dād nask* ("the establishment of the origins"; Av. **čiθrō.dāti-*), which also records each race and their distribution in the regions of Xwanirah and in the other six continents. Given that chapter 14, like the other chapters of the *Bundahišn*, refers to the *dēn* (i.e., tradition or scriptures) as an authoritative source, we can speculate that some parts of the Avestan *Čihr-dād nask* (or perhaps only parts of its Pahlavi commentary, *zand*) might have been the source for this passage.

Lists of historical people, half-human races, and human-like animals appear also in the Manichaean tradition. Werner Sundermann edited the Sogdian Manichaean fragment So 20229 (K29), part of the didactic sermon of the *Four Worlds* that belongs to a sequence of homiletic instructions including pieces of the *Kephalaia*-type, some of which are also attested in the Coptic *Kephalaia*.[28] Except for the headless peoples (*'sty ky' [sry] nyst*; v., 6) who may be associated with the breast-eyed and breast-eared, the fragment includes only races unknown to Zoroastrian texts such as cow-headed, two- or three-headed, or many-handed. They are said to live in unspecified different regions and islands, likely in peripheral regions of the four corners of the world, that recall the "blurred" ahistorical dimension of the *Draxt ī āsūrīg*.

Another Manichaean Middle Persian text, preserved in three fragments, enumerates human races (white, black, and red people) that seem to live in and around Iranian lands.[29] The human races appear together with descriptions of half-human creatures such as pig-headed, ass-headed, and bull-headed races, and it is possible that the dog-headed may be attested in parallel texts.[30]

The presence of this genre of lists also in the Manichaean tradition suggests that the idea of mankind encompassing both men and monstrous races was probably current in the late antique Iranian world. Nevertheless, the Zoroastrian and the Manichaean lists do not overlap and seem to reflect two different regional traditions: the former still based on Classical models; the second, of a more abstract and generalized kind, which according to Sundermann is more a reflection of the imagery of Indian deities and Buddhist saints.[31]

A LAY SOURCE: THE AYĀDGĀR Ī JĀMĀSPĪG

The last Pahlavi source on these fabulous peoples is found in the ninth chapter of the *Ayādgār ī Jāmāspīg*, better known as the "Jāmāspi" by the Zoroastrian community of India.[32] This text enjoyed great popularity and has reached us through various manuscript traditions,

26. Cf. Michael Stausberg ("The Invention of a Canon: The Case of Zoroastrianism," in *Canonization & Decanonization: Papers Presented to the International Conference of the Leiden Institute for the Study of Religions (LISOR) Held at Leiden 9–10 January 1997*, ed. Arie van der Kooij and Karel van der Toorn [Leiden: Brill, 1998], 257–77), who argued that the *nask*s were not exactly "books" and did not represent the Sasanian Avesta but rather the *dēn*.

27. See Dhanjishah Meherjibhai Madan, *The Complete Text of the Pahlavi Dinkard*, vol. 2 (Bombay: Fort Printing Press, 1911), 688, ll. 6–16, original text; Edward William West, *Pahlavi Texts*, part 4 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1892), 25–26, translation.

28. See Werner Sundermann, "On Human Races, Semi-human Beings and Monsters," in *The Light and the Darkness: Studies in Manichaeism and Its World*, ed. Paul Allan Mirecki and Jason BeDuhn (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 181–99, at 186–188, edition and translation.

29. See ibid., 194–96, edition and translation.

30. Three parallel passages are found in a Persian fragment listing the ten species of men (see Christian Bartholomae, *Die Zendhandschriften der K. Hof- und Staatsbibliotek in München* [München: Palm, 1915], 80), in the *Persian Rivāyats of Hormazyar Framarz* (see Ervad Bamanji Nusserwanji Dhabhar, *The Persian Rivayats of Hormazyar Framarz and Others* [Bombay: Cama Oriental Institute, 1932], 257), and in an incomplete Sogdian magic text, P 3 (see Émile Benveniste, *Textes sogdiens* [Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1940], 65, edition and translation).

31. See Sundermann, "On Human Races, Semi-human Beings and Monsters," 192.

32. For a historical study and edition of this book, see Domenico Agostini, *Ayādgār ī Jāmāspīg: Un texte eschatologique zoroastrien* (Rome: Gregorian and Biblical Press, 2013).

including Pahlavi, Pāzand, and Pārsi.[33] Written in a simple and direct style, it is structured as a series of questions and answers between the King Wištāsp, protector of Zoroaster and the first ruler accepting this religion, and Jāmāsp, known as a clairvoyant *par excellence* in the Iranian tradition. It may be understood as an encyclopedia presenting essential doctrines for laymen: myths, legends, history, and various geographic and ethnographic matters. Like the *Bundahišn*, the Jāmāspi draws its content from the lost Avestan *nask*s, including archaic topics also found in other Pahlavi texts as well as more modern themes from the Sasanian and Early Islamic period.[34]

As for the fabulous peoples, the *Ayādgār ī Jāmāspīg* 9[35] reports as follows:

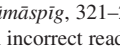
[M52, f. 142r: 9–142v: 15] (1) *pursīd guštāsp šah +ki ōšān var-čāšmān u var-gōšān u davāl-pāyān u +taš-tēzān*[36] *u +kahrabā-sarān*[37] *[u] būm u zamīn čūn pa nīma urmuzd ēstand ayā pa nimā ahrīman +az-išān dād u dīn čūn xvarišn u zīvišn či u čūn ka mīrand ō ki afganand +az-šān ruvān +ōy ki šavad* (2) *guft-aš jāmāsp +ki ōšān mardumān pa zamīn var-čašmān mānand +az-šān jāy zamīn parīān u +parōs*[38] *nišīnand* (3) *+az-aš dār u diraxt vas bēd u gāv vas dārand +az-šān sālār <u> xudā nēst pa nīma ahrīman ēstād* (4) *+ō*[39] *ka mīrand bixvarand [bi]har yak ki ōšān +ōy ātaš afganand [u] andar miyāna purr +bād*[40] *+zīvandiš har jānvar ēšān +xura*[41] *+kārad*[42] *bixvarand* (5) *var-gōšān +hamgōna bi-ēšān xvariš barg diraxtān <u> giyāh*[43] *u na dād šināsand na dīn ka mīrand druvand hand* (6) *u +taš-tēzagān*[44] *šahr +kūzī*[45] *u xvēš-+ci pa tan +kanīzak*[46] *bi +n̊īz gamān̊*[47] *u zīr parastār band ba nīma urmuzd hand* (7) *u hamvāra avā var-gōšān pa gōišn +vaxšiš*[48] *kārzār ēstand u ka mīrand hast +ōy bihišt hast +ōy duzax šavand* (8) *davāl-pāyān u +si-sarān*[49] *varzīdār u suturg u rīman na dād na dīn na kirfa na gunāh šināsand* (9) *+az-išān mih sālār nest u pa nīma ahrīman ēstad u har či ašō hand bix-varand u har ki-šān aziš bimīrand bixvarand* (10) *+az-šān pāk [pākizī] nēst +az-šān ruvān pa nīma ahrīman ōy duzax šavand*

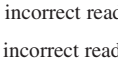
1) King Wištāsp asked: "How is the country and the land of those breast-eyed, breast-eared, leather-strap-legged, dwarfs, and dog-headed? Are they on the side of Ohrmazd or on the side of Ahriman? How are their law and religion? Which and how are their nourishment and life? When they die where are they thrown? Where does their soul go?" 2) Jāmāsp replied to him: "<As for> that people who dwell in the land of the breast-eyed their place is the land of the witches and they settle <there>. 3) There are many forests and fruit-trees, and they have many cows.

33. On the dating, the practice of, and the relationship between these three systems of transliteration of Middle Persian, see Domenico Agostini, "Pehlevi, Pâzand et Pârsi: Trois systèmes d'écriture au service de Zoroastre," *Eurasian Studies* 12 (2014): 177–88.

34. See Domenico Agostini, "Rediscovering the Jāmāspi: A Walk in Four Steps," *Iranian Studies* 45 (2012): 169–80, at 180.

35. The translation is based on the transcription of the MS. M52 142r: 9–142v: 15. For the facsimile of the manuscript, see Agostini, *Ayādgār ī Jāmāspīg*, 321–22.

36. The transcription in Pārsi is an incorrect reading of the original Pahlavi  [wtstyk'n] *widestīgān*.

37. The first part of the word is an incorrect reading of the arameogam in Pahlavi  [KLBA] *sag*.

38. Emend with Pahlavi *fraz*.

39. Emend with *u*.

40. Better to emend with *būdan*.

41. The transcription in Pārsi is an incorrect interpretation of the arameogram that here should be read [YDE] *dast* instead of [GDE] *xwarrah*.

42. The transcription in Pārsi is an incorrect interpretation of the arameogram that here should be read [OHDWNt] *grift* instead of [OB̲YDWNt] *kard*.

43. The word is written in its Pahlavi original writing in the manuscript.

44. See n. 36.

45. The transcription in Pārsi is an incorrect reading of the original Pahlavi  [kwck'] *kučak*.

46. See previous note.

47. °…°: incorrect reading of the Pahlavi [nycwm'n] *nēzūmān*.

48. Probably an incorrect reading of the Pahlavi  [kwhššn'] *kōxšišn*.

49. See n. 37.

> They have neither a leader, nor a lord; they are on the side of Ahriman. 4) When they die, they are eaten; they throw each of them to the fire in the stage of their full maturity; they eat every animal[50] they catch. (5) The same is for the breast-eared, but their nourishment is the leaves of trees and the grass; they do not know any law and religion. When they die they are sinners. 6) The country of dwarfs is small. Their body itself is small, but they are skillful and wise servants; they are on the side of Ohrmazd. 7) They are always in argument, strife, and battle against the breast-eared; when they die some go to paradise, some go to hell. 8) The leather-strap-legged and the dog-headed are tough, violent, and stinking; they do not know any law, religion, virtue, and sin. 9) They do not have a supreme leader, and they are on the side of Ahriman; they eat all who are righteous and also eat those of them who die. 10) They are dirty and are on the side of Ahriman; they go to hell.

This chapter offers by far the most detailed and interesting description of the social and alimentary habits, as well as religious orientations, of these races. With the exception of dwarfs, who can be righteous or wicked and dwell in an organized society, the fabulous races are depicted as living in an anarchic and savage tribal system characterized by heresy, cannibalism, and injustice.

The bucolic and peaceful representation of the breast-eyed, dwarfs, and dog-headed races in the *Draxt ī āsūrīg* is here replaced by a brutality and wildness that is antipodal in the Zoroastrian cosmic and social order. Actually these descriptions are similar to those that are found in the *Alexander Romance* by Pseudo-Callisthenes, which was composed in Alexandria before the fourth century CE. In the Greek and Syriac versions in particular, dog-headed (Cynocephali), breast-eyed (Sternophthalmi), and leather-strap-legged (Hymantopodes; ἱμαντόποδες) people appear, and to some of them violent and brutal behavior is attributed.[51] The *Alexander Romance* was in wide circulation all over the Near East and was translated into several languages, including Middle Persian. As Kevin van Bladel has conclusively shown, the Syriac version (seventh century) of the work was likely translated from a lost Middle Persian *Vorlage* (sixth century)[52] that might attest to a strong diffusion and persistence in the Sasanian and Zoroastrian milieus until the centuries of the compilation of the Pahlavi literature.

Though it is very difficult to know where and how the *Alexander Romance* acquired this new negative representation of some monstrous races,[53] I suspect that the description at least of leather-strap-legged and the dog-headed in the *Ayādgār ī Jāmāspīg* can be attributed to the tradition of Alexander. In fact, returning to the account of the *Ayādgār ī Jāmāspīg*, one finds the same savage and chaotic landscape, where neither land nor sky could be seen, in Alexander the Great's journey along the rivers of Atlas—home to monstrous races such as the dog-headed, the headless with eyes and mouths on the breast, and the savage leather-strap-

50. The text has *jānvar*, Phl. *gyānwar*, which can also be translated as 'living being', and may therefore refer to the practice of cannibalism.

51. On the fabulous people in the *Alexander Romance*, see Richard Stoneman, "Romantic Ethnography: Central Asia and India in the Alexander Romance," *The Ancient World* 25 (1994): 93–107.

52. See Kevin van Bladel, "The Syriac Sources of the Early Arabic Narratives," in *Memory as History: The Legacy of Alexander in Asia*, ed. Himanshu Prabha Ray and Daniel T. Potts (New Delhi: Aryan Books International, 2007), 54–75, esp. 61–64. See also Dieter Weber, "Ein Pahlavi-Fragment des Alexanderromans aus Ägypten?" in *Literarische Stoffe und ihre Gestaltung in mitteliranischer Zeit*, ed. Desmond Durkin-Meisterernst, Christiane Reck, and Dieter Weber (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2009), 307–18. Contrariwise Claudia Ciancaglini, "The Syriac Version of the Alexander *Romance*," *Le Muséon* 114 (2001): 121–40.

53. In this regard Prof. Corinne Jouanno wrote me that "les textes anciens dont a pu s'inspirer le Roman d'Alexandre sont souvent perdus ou fragmentaires (Mégasthène), si bien qu'il n'est pas facile de trancher concernant l'originalité du Roman. Il est vrai que chez Ctésias, l'image des Cynocéphales n'est pas spécialement négative, mais peut-être l'était-elle chez d'autres auteurs" (pers. comm. 6/24/19).

legged peoples,[54]—reflecting the most ancient Greek recension *alpha* of his homonymous romance (3:28).[55] In the later recension *epsilon* of the *Alexander Romance*, now dated to the eight century CE,[56] the dog-headed (Cynocephali) are depicted as very bellicose. Alexander is obliged to use fire to disperse them in battle and only after ten hard and dangerous days of marching can his army leave the land of the dog-headed (29:4).[57]

Through their physical and anthropological dehumanization, the intimate natures and souls of these fabulous races are debased according to the Zoroastrian ethical balance, and they are excluded from the human choices of good and evil that belong to humankind from Gayōmard.

The anthropological description of the dwarfs is of great interest. Their depiction as witty and able servants, mostly following Ohrmazd, is not found elsewhere. It might be a reference to their activity and duties in the Iranian courts but may also be a literary loan from Egyptian and Greek tradition.[58] In both Egypt and Greece, dwarfs were reported to be skillful and active in court and in society;[59] dwarfs were also viewed as particularly smart and clever in the Greek world.[60] Furthermore, their multifaceted skillfulness and respect for the rule of law are also said to be qualities common to pygmies and/or dwarfs in Ctesias *apud* Photius' *Library* 72:23.[61] The reference to their ceaseless hostility to the breast-eared race might be an Iranian adaptation of a story that already appears in the *Iliad* 3:3–7 and then in Megasthenes *apud* Pliny's *Natural History* 7.2:27,[62] in which pygmies fight against cranes.

The leather-strap-legged and the dog-headed races are described in particularly bad terms. The habits and society of the leather-strap-legged are not properly discussed in Classical sources, except for their reported geographical location in Ethiopia.[63] I suggest that the dreadful description of the leather-strap-legged race might have its origin in a passage in the

54. In the context of the circulation of this topic in the Early Islamic period through *ʿajāʾib* and encyclopedic literature, this monstrous race is already cited in the ninth-century Arabic *Kitāb al-hayāwān* (Book of the Animals) by al-Jāḥiẓ' in a corrupt Persian form, *al-dawāl-bāy* (see Natalia L. Tornesello, "From Reality to Legend: Historical Sources of Hellenistic and Islamic Teratology," *Studia Iranica* 31 [2002]: 163–92, at 165–66). In the same work, Tornesello offers an outstanding comparison between the Iranian Islamic sources on monstrous and half-human people and Hellenistic literature. On the *ʿajāʾib* literature, see Travis Zadeh, "The Wiles of Creation: Philosophy, Fiction, and the 'Ajā'ib Tradition," *Middle Eastern Literatures* 13 (2010): 21–48.

55. See Elizabeth Hazelton Haight, *The Life of Alexander of Macedon by Pseudo-Callisthenes* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1955), 122, translation. See also Stoneman, "Romantic Ethnography," 95. On the complicated transmission of the different recensions of the Greek text, see Stoneman, *The Greek Alexander Romance* (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 28–32; Corinne Jouanno, *Naissance et métamorphoses du Roman d'Alexandre* (Paris: Éd. du CNRS, 2002).

56. See Richard Stoneman, "Primary Sources from the Classical and Early Medieval Periods," in *A Companion to Alexander Literature in the Middle Ages*, ed. David Z. Zuwiyya (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 9.

57. See Jürgen Trumpf, *Vita Alexandri Regis Macedonum* (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1974), 103, edition.

58. Achaemenid Iran knew of the Egyptian dwarf deity Bes, though the deity's significance at the time is not properly understood (on this figure, see Kamyar Abdi, "Bes in the Achaemenid Empire," *Ars Orientalis* 29 [1999]: 111, 113–40). However, in my opinion, the diffusion of this deity is not related at all to the motif of dwarfs.

59. See Veronique Dasen, *Dwarfs in Ancient Greece and Egypt* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 104–55, 225–41; Warren R. Dawson, "Pygmies and Dwarfs in Ancient Egypt," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 24 (1938): 185–89.

60. See Dasen, *Dwarfs*, 215–16.

61. See Nichols, *Ctesias*, 50, translation.

62. See respectively Augustus Taber Murray, *Homer: Iliad*, 2 vols. (rev. by William F. Wyatt) (orig. ed. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1924), 128–29 (vol. 1), edition and translation; Rackham, *Pliny*, 522–23 (vol. 2), edition and translation. On the battle between pygmies and cranes, see Asher Ovadiah and Sonia Mucznik, "Myth and Reality in the Battle between the Pygmies and the Cranes in the Greek and Roman Worlds," *Gerión* 35 (2017): 151–66.

63. See Pliny's *Natural History* 5.8:46 (see Rackham, *Pliny*, 252–53 [vol. 2], edition and translation); Pomponius Mela's *Choreographia* 3.103 (Frank E. Romer, *Pomponius Mela's Description of the World* [Ann Arbor: Univ. of

Syriac version of the *Alexander Romance* (probably copied from a Middle Persian *Vorlage* as noted above), where the leather-strap-legged stone (*'arqay reglē*) and slay Greek soldiers before fleeing and hiding under rocks (2:7).[64] However, it is noteworthy that, contrary to the *Ayādgār ī Jāmāspīg*, the headless with eyes and mouths in their breasts are described in the Syriac *Alexander Romance* as childlike and simple and with a certain humanity (they speak like men).[65]

As for the dog-headed, though Classical sources describe them as ugly, hairy, and wild, they are not usually violent or aggressive against men (as noted above). However, in the *Ayādgār ī Jāmāspīg* they lose their "good savage" image and now belong to Ahriman. I would compare them to the savage dog-headed (*kleb barnaš*) who dwell beyond the Huns in the seventh-century Syriac *Legend of Alexander*[66] or the dirty and violent dog-headed race (*kleb barnaš*) who belong to the twenty-two kingdoms alongside Gog and Magog—the Unclean Nations—and who were imprisoned within the northern gates[67] by Alexander in the seventh-century Syriac *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* 8:10.[68]

There is no precise information about the geographical location of these fabulous races. It even seems that they dwell neither in Xwanirah nor in any of the six peripheral continents, as the *Ayādgār ī Jāmāspīg* has already devoted chapter 5 to a short description of the human-like people who live in those continents.[69] The only indication might be that the breast-eyed and the breast-eared dwell in the land of the witches (Phl. *parīg*; Av. *pairikā-*).[70] In fact, the Avestan *Vendidad* 1.9 says that once Ohrmazd created the seventh best country (called Vaēkərəta), a place inhabited by hedgehogs, Ahriman then fabricated, in opposition to it, the witch Xnąθaitī, who follows the Iranian hero Kərəsāspa (Phl. Karsāsp/Garšāsp).[71] The Pahlavi commentary (*zand*) to this passage in the Pahlavi *Vendidad* 1:9[72] locates Vaēkərəta in Kābul while the witch Xnąθaitī (Av. *pairikąm yąm xnąθaitī*) becomes the witch-desire (Phl. *parīg-kāmagīh*).[73] It is tempting to identify the land of witches in the *Ayādgār ī Jāmāspīg* 9:2 with Vaēkərəta/Kābul, meaning that at least the land of the breast-eyed and the breast-eared was located in Xwanirah.

Michigan Press, 1998], 130, translation); Pseudo-Apollodorus *apud* Tzetzes' *Chiliades* 7, 144:766 (Kiessling, *Ionnis Tzetzae*, 269, edition).

64. See Ernest A. Wallis Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great: Being the Syriac Version of the Pseudo-Callisthenes* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1889), 98–99, translation.

65. See ibid., 101, translation.

66. See Georges Bohas, *Alexandre syriaque* (Lyon: ILOAM, 2009), 35, translation.

67. On Alexander's gate and its location, see Andrew Runni Anderson, "Alexander at the Caspian Gates," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 59 (1928): 130–63.

68. See Gerrit J. Reinink, *Die Syrische Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius* (Leuven: Peeters, 1993), 16 (vol. 220), 26 (vol. 221), edition and translation. This passage is also the source for the similar episode that appears in the *Alexander Romance* since its late eight-century recension *epsilon* (39:7; see Trumpf, *Vita Alexandri*, 146, edition; Stoneman, "Primary Sources," 9).

69. See Agostini, *Ayādgār ī Jāmāspīg*, 99–100, translation.

70. On the *parīg*s, see Adrian David Hugh Bivar, "A Persian Fairyland," in *Papers in Honour of Professor Mary Boyce*, ed. Harold Walter Bailey, Adrian D. H. Bivar, Jacques Duchesne-Guillemin, and John R. Hinnells (Acta Iranica, vol. 24) (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 25–42, esp. at 29–30; Satnam K. Mendoza Forrest, *Witches, Whores and Sorcerers: The Concept of Evil in Early Iran* (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 2011), esp. at 62–82.

71. See James Darmesteter, *The Zend-Avesta: The Vendîdâd,* part I (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1880), 7, translation. On this great Iranian hero, see Prods Oktor Skjærvø, "Karsāsp," in *Encyclopædia Iranica* 15, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (New York: Encyclopædia Iranica Foundation, 2011), 601–7.

72. See Mahnaz Moazami, *Wrestling with the Demons of the Pahlavi Widēwdād* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 34–35, edition and translation.

73. Similarly, *Bundahišn* 31:17–18 locates the witch-desire in Kāwul, in Kāwulestān, as well as the demon-worship that Sām (in early tradition one of the names of Karsāsp) used to practice (see Pakzad, *Bundahišn*, 354–55, edition). Ehsan Yarshater ("Iranian National History," in *The Cambridge History of Iran* 3.1, ed. Ehsan Yarshater [Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1983], 359–477, at 430) reports the outdated interpretation as Gandhāra.

AN IRANIAN NON-ZOROASTRIAN SOURCE: THE ŠĀHNĀME

The eleventh-century epic *Šāhnāme*, which also draws on early Iranian mythical sources, refers to some of these races and may provide some supplementary information about the persistence of this topic in the very first centuries of the Islamic conquest.

The accounts of Sām and Rostam in particular talk of the dog-headed (*sag-sar*; سگسار), supple-legged (*narm-pāy*; نرمپای) whose legs are made of leather (*pāy az davāl*), and *boz-gūš* (بوزگوش), which is probably a corrupted reading of *bar-gūš* (برگوش)—the breast-eared in Pahlavi sources.[74] All these peoples are often said to live in or near the Caspian region of Māzandarān[75] (the people of Māzandarān were known for their violence and wickedness in Zoroastrian tradition).[76]

The dog-headed in particular are negatively depicted as bellicose and dirty mountainfolk, as in the *Ayādgār ī Jāmāspīg*,[77] and are even listed by Rostam among the real enemies of Iran, alongside Romans, Egyptians, people of Hāmāvarān (Himyar in Yemen), Chinese, and people of Māzandarān.[78] Furthermore, alongside people of Māzandarān and the breast-eared (*bar-gūš*), the dog-headed race forms part of the troops that the Turanians reorganize in China after the death of Kamus at the hands of Rostam.[79]

As for the supple-legged (*narm-pāy*), they are depicted in two opposite ways—just as they are in the Pahlavi sources.[80] In the letter of Kay Ka'us handed by his ambassador Fahrad to the king of Māzandarān, they appear to be brave horsemen protecting their king.[81] Conversely, the *Šāhnāme* also depicts them as a savage and bestial people who throw stones at Alexander's army as in the Syriac *Alexander Romance* (see above).[82] This is important evidence for the extent to which the account in the *Alexander Romance*—both Greek and Syriac versions—remained still widespread and rooted in the Iranian imagination in the Early Islamic period.[83]

It is commonly believed that most of these stories in the *Šāhnāme* belong to the legend of the hero Kərəsāspa/Garšāsp, who is also an important and known mythological figure in the Avestan and Pahlavi tradition (though nothing of his own original story has been preserved). In fact, it is only starting from Ferdowsi's epic and early Persian and Arabic historiography that this figure is deprived of his remarkable deeds for the benefit of Rostam, Sām, and other Iranian heroes.[84] The tradition about his battle against the dog-headed race, in what is now the

74. See Markwart, "Kaukasus," 37 n. 4.

75. For some significant examples, see Jean Mohl, *Le Livre des Rois de Abou'lkasim Firdousi*, 7 vols (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1876–78), I: 218–19; I: 280; I: 419–20; I: 431; II: 90; III: 130, translation. Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh ("Bozgūš," in *Encyclopædia Iranica* 4, ed. Ehsan Yarshater [New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 2001], 425) suggests that here Māzandarān might also refer to the place located between India and the Warkaš Sea in the *Draxt ī āsūrīg* 89.

76. On the victory of the hero Frēdōn and the banishment of the people of Māzandarān from Xwanirah, see *Dēnkard* VII.1:26 (see Marijan Molé, *La legende de Zoroastre selon les textes pehlevis* [Paris: C. Klincksieck, 1967], 8–9, edition and translation), and *Ayādgār ī Jāmāspīg* 4: 33–37 (see Agostini, *Ayādgār ī Jāmāspīg*, 45–54, 96–99, edition and translation).

77. See Mohl, *Le livre des Rois*, I: 234–35, translation.

78. See ibid., II: 90, translation.

79. See ibid., III: 130, translation.

80. On the two-faced description of this race, see also Tornesello, "From Reality to Legend," 166–67.

81. See Mohl, *Le livre des Rois*, I: 431, translation.

82. See ibid. V:162, translation.

83. On the relation between the *Alexander Romance* and the *Šāhnāme*, see Haila Manteghi, "Alexander the Great in the *Shāhnāmeh* of Ferdowsī," in *The Alexander Romance in Persia and the East*, ed. Richard Stoneman, Kyle Erickson, and Ian Netton (Groningen: Barkhuis Publishing and Groningen University Library, 2012), 161–74.

84. See Marijan Molé, "Garshâsp et les Sagsār," *La Nouvelle Clio* 3 (1951): 128–38, esp. 129–31; Khaleghi-Motlagh, "Bozgūš," 425. Ehsan Yarshater ("National History," 433) believes that the connection between Rostam and Garšāsp is problematic.

Andaman Islands, reappears only in the eleventh-century epic *Garšāsp-nāma* by Asadi Ṭusī.[85] It is tempting to see these monstrous races as having already belonged to the ancient legend of Kərəsāspa/Garšāsp, but at this stage such an interpretation would be mere speculation.

In general, the accounts of the *Šāhnāme* seem to mirror those of the Pahlavi texts, in particular the *Ayādgār ī Jāmāspīg*, confirming that in the Sasanian and Early Islamic periods several different literary models existed on this topic.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Iranian world was acquainted with stories about half-human and monstrous races since the Achaemenid period, probably via Greek authors and travelers at the court of the Persian King of Kings. These literary traditions also likely circulated during the Westernized Parthian period and the successive Sasanian era, when the canonization of the Avesta led to the collection of texts from India and the Greek world according to the late Zoroastrian tradition.

A second literary wave of monstrous races arrived in Iran by means of the *Alexander Romance* (which achieved a sort of "best-seller" status) throughout late antiquity, and other texts related to the figure of the Macedonian conqueror.[86]

Regarding Zoroastrian literature, the three ninth/tenth-century Pahlavi texts all drew from this common and vast literary heritage that flourished until the early Islamic period and found a new lease on life in the epic of the *Šāhnāme*. Zoroastrian literature, however, differs in its characterization of three different models of monstrous races that range from the very positive to the truly negative. I suggest that the difference between them depends not only on the choice of the sources but also on the literary genre to which they belong.

The *Draxt ī āsūrīg* provides a relatively idyllic image of these people; they live in a bucolic and peaceful way. This description probably drew from a widespread Classical Greek and Latin model to which the original Parthian composition of the text is even chronologically very close. This positive attitude might be also the result of the didactic and gnomic nature of this text. In fact, the main goal is to stress the goat's superiority over the palm tree through paradigms, for the author depicts the goat's milk as such a beneficial and mighty product that it is even able to humanize these monstrous races and connect them to human society.

The fourteenth chapter of the *Bundahišn* seems to include a set of races, quite similar to the Classical model, among the different forms of mankind generated from Gayōmard and, in doing so, gives them a kind of cosmogonic role and position. I suspect that the same taxonomic and encyclopedic nature of this chapter, which stands among a group of chapters briefly enumerating different types of animals, plants, and flowers, might be the reason for the absence of any information on their customs and behavior.

In the ninth chapter of the *Ayādgār ī Jāmāspīg* these people, with the exception of dwarfs, lose their glimmer of humanity and become as violent as the monstrous and half-human races that populate the exotic journeys and legends of Alexander and to which the Iranian account is probably indebted. Most of these people are clearly assigned to the army of Ahriman in the framework of the final and strictly dualistic earthly battle between Good and Evil, which also emphasizes the profoundly eschatological nature of the text. It is exactly at this point that

85. See ed. Ḥ. Yaġmā'ī (Tehran, 1317 Š./1938), §§ 65–66, edition.

86. Though Zoroastrian tradition represented Alexander the Great as an enemy of the religion, Late Sasanian propaganda might have presented King Khosrow II as a new Alexander, whose political and legendary legacy was still significant and influential (see Gerrit J. Reinink, "Heraclius, the New Alexander: Apocalyptic Prophecies during the Reign of Heraclius," in *The Reign of Heraclius (610–641): Crisis and Confrontation*, ed. Gerrit J. Reinink and Bernard H. Stolte [Leuven: Peeters, 2002], 81–94, at 89–90).

these races start to symbolize the obscure and chaotic outer world dominated by savagery and ignorance—a place where the civilizing light of Good Mazdean *dēn* had not yet reached.

Though several historical, social, and literary dynamics related to the development and use of these three different models remain unclear, their further investigation may be relevant in the future to shed light on questions such as the process of mythic re-localization and/or the idea of "othering" in ancient and medieval Zoroastrianism.

Races / Literature	Dog-headed	Breast-eyed	Breast-eared	Leather-strap-legged	Dwarfs
Pahlavi	*sag-sarān* (*Draxt ī āsūrīg* 92; *Ayādgār ī Jāmāspīg* 9:1, 8–10)	*war-čašmān* (*Draxt ī āsūrīg* 91; *Bundahišn* 14:36; *Ayādgār ī Jāmāspīg* 9:1–4)	*war-gōšān* (*Bundahišn* 14:36; *Ayādgār ī Jāmāspīg* 9:1, 5)	*dawāl-pāyān* (*Ayādgār ī Jāmāspīg* 9:1, 8–10)	*widestīgān* (*Draxt ī āsūrīg* 91; *Bundahišn* 14:36; *Ayādgār ī Jāmāspīg* 9:1, 6–7)
Greek and Latin	*Cynocephali* (Strabo, *Geography* 1.2:35; Pliny, *Natural History* 7.2:23; Aelian, *On the Nature of Animals* 4:46); Tzetzes, *Chiliades* 7, 144:766; Photius, *Library* 72:40–43)	*Sternophthalmi* (Strabo, *Geography* 1.2:35; Tzetzes, *Chiliades* 7, 144:765) *Acephali* (Herodotus, *Histories* 4:191) *Blemmyes* (Pliny, *Natural History* 5.8:46)		*Hymantopodes* (Pliny's *Natural History* 5.8:46; Pomponius Mela's *Choreographia* 3.103; Tzetzes' *Chiliades* 7, 144:766)	*Pygmies* (Strabo, *Geography* 1.2:35; Tzetzes, *Chiliades* 7, 144:764; Photius, *Library* 72:21–24) *Pygmies and Trispithami* (Pliny, *Natural History* 7.2:26)
Manichaean		*Headless (ast [sar] kē nest) (Sogdian So 20229 [K29]*, v., 6)			
Alexander Romance	*Cynocephali* (Greek *alpha* recension, 3:38; Greek *epsilon* recension, 29:4)	*Acephali* (Greek *alpha* recension, 3:38) *kul kuleh rišā layt hwā lahun* (Syriac version, 2.7)		*Hymantopodes* (Greek *alpha* recension, 3:38) *'arqay reglē* (Syriac version, 2.7)	
Syriac	*kleb barnaš* (Apocalypse of the Pseudo-Methodius 8:10) *kleb barnāš* (*Syriac legend of Alexander*)				
Šāhnāme	*sagsar*		*bar-gūš*	*narm-pāy*	