Chapter 4. Remains concerning fire in Sasanian times

Ardashîr was a son of Pâpak, who was, or had made himself, vassal-ruler of Ístâxšr near Persepolis in Pars, where there was a great temple of Anâhîd (Anâhîtâ). After Ardashîr succeeded his father, he extended his territory by defeating Shâdshâhpûr, vassal-ruler of Isfâhân, and thereafter he defied and defeated his over-lord, the Arsacid King of kings, Ardawân (Artabanus) at the battle of Hormuzd in A.D. 224. He then entered the Parthian capital of Ctesiphon and was possibly crowned there as King of kings in 226. According to one tradition, he took a princess of the house of Arsaces as his wife and thus secured the legitimacy of his kingship. His kingdom extended from the Oxus to Azerbaijan and Armenia; and in order to unite these far-flung countries, none of which had submitted easily to him, he seems to have used a great deal of propaganda, which included giving prominence to his dynastic fire.

Tôsâr, Chief Hôrbed, was the religious counsellor of Ardashîr I, and also had evidently some authority in political matters. He wrote a letter, now known as the Tansêr Nâme, in reply to one from Gushnasp, King of Parishwâr and Tabaristân, in which he admitted that Ardashîr 'has taken away fires from the fire temples and extinguished them and blotted them out'. He justified this action with the following words: 'After Darius each of the “kings of the peoples” built his own fire-temple. This was pure innovation, introduced by them without the authority of kings of old'. In reversal of this act, the new King of kings, he wrote, ‘has razed the temples, and confiscated the endowments, and had the fires carried back to their place of origin’. Other sources tell us that in Armenia Ardashîr destroyed idols and established sacred fires instead. Ardashîr seems thus to have refused to admit the existence of any dynastic fires but his own, as part of establishing sole dominion
over a unified empire.

On the positive side, Ardashir seems to have established many Šār ī Wahrāms ('fires of Victory') in places which were somehow memorable to him. According to the Kārnāmag ī Artaxshīr ī Pāpakān, he ordered the establishment of ten Šār ī Wahrāms on the coast at Bōxt-Ardashir (KnĀ. 4.7), several in Ardashir-Xwarrah (KnĀ. 7.9), seven in kūlān (KnĀ. 8.18), and ten in Warāxš-Shāpur (KnĀ. 15.21). Although this work, compiled probably around the fifth century, cannot be regarded as an accurate history, these statements may reliably indicate Ardashir's religious zeal. The king declared himself as Mazda-worshipper (māzdāyn) on his coins, and also brought back trophies of war to his own fire temples, according to Ţabarī. Similar deeds were carried out by his son Shapur I (A.D. 241–272). The latter said in his inscription on the Ka'ba-i Zardusht at Naqsh-i Rustam that he 'in land upon land has established many Wahrām fires and has conferred benefices upon many magi-men and has made great the gods' worship (SKZ. Parthian, 1.17)'.

The rock-sculpture near the bridge at Firūzābād shows Ardashir receiving the diadem of kingship from Ohrmazd (Ahura Mazdā) (Pl. 1). Between him and Ohrmazd there is a small fire altar standing knee-high. This altar is shaped like a pillar on a square platform, and its top part is like a large bowl. The scene itself was evidently depicted in order to declare that Ardashir's victory and kingship originated in Ohrmazd; therefore this fire altar may be similar to ones established in the Fires of Wahrām of his foundation.

In addition to the above mentioned evidence, Sasanian coins supply solid ground for the belief that the dynastic fire was considered to be a main symbol of the unity of the empire. Although the earlier coin-issues of Ardashir I bear his face on the obverse and Pāpak's on the reverse, on later issues, from the middle of his reign, a fire altar is depicted on the reverse (Pl. 2). This altar was of the standard shape, that is, a pillar set on a three-stepped base, with three parallel steps at the top. The scene itself was evidently depicted in order to declare that Ardashir's victory and kingship originated in Ohrmazd; therefore this fire altar may be similar to ones established in the Fires of Wahrām of his foundation.

The basic shape reminds us of the Achaemenian fire altar shown in the tomb reliefs at Naqsh-i Rustam (Pl. 15, 20–21 of Pt. 1), but is somewhat different from the altars depicted in Arsacid times on Vologeses' coins (Pl. 54–55 of Pt. 1) and the coins of Persis (Pl. 53 of Pt. 1). Since a diadem is tied to the props, and the legend on the reverse is read as 'the fire of Ardashir', the fire must be the
dynastic one, which was kept burning during the reign of each king. To depict the dynastic fire altar on the reverse of his coins in such a dignified manner must have been a very effective means for Ardashir to disseminate his claim to sole dominion.

This custom, of showing the dynastic fire altar on the reverse of their coins, was continued by the following Sasanian kings; but an altar shaped like Ardashir's can be seen on only few issues thereafter. The commonest shape of altar (see Pl. 3–9) is slightly different, in that instead of having props to support the large top part, the pillar in the middle becomes very thick. The base has usually two steps, but at the top there are still three, which seem to support a large bowl. The flame is huge, and a diadem is usually tied around the pillar or placed above the whole scene — 'scene' because the altar is almost always flanked by figures, shorter than the altar itself.

One of these figures, on the left side of the altar in each case, is presumably the king himself, for whom this particular fire was established, for his crown is usually similar to that of the king on the obverse. The figure on the right, however, varies from time to time, and is usually considered as a priestly one. But on some of the coins of Hormuzd I and Wahrām II, the right-hand figure appears to be female (Pl. 4, 6). C. Trever considers this female figure to be a queen, from the resemblance of her headdress to that of the queen depicted on the obverse; but the similarity in her style of presentation to that of the Goddess Anāhīd suggests more that this figure is Anāhīd. This is particularly striking on a coin of Wahrām II (Pl. 6), where she holds a diadem in her hand in the same manner as Anāhīd is shown in the rock-relief of the investiture of Narsēh at Naqsh-i Rustam (Pl. 10). Therefore it seems likely that in general the figure on the right of the altar is the yazad who guards the fire of the reigning king, though the identification of each yazad is difficult. In some cases the two figures are very similar, so in these instances the figure on the right-hand side might be the heir of the king, since the heir is sometimes depicted on the obverse beside the bust of the king.

After the later issues of Shāpur II (A.D. 309–79), a human bust occasionally appears in the flames upon the top of the altar, or is set against the pillar part of the altar itself (Pl. 11–13). Apart from a similarity of shape, the altars on such issues have two characteristics in common with the earlier ones: one is that they carry a diadem, and the other is that they are guarded by two figures. Therefore, these altars, too, must bear the dynastic fire; but the problem is,
who the busts are supposed to represent. Several suggestions have been made for the identification, ranging from Ohrmazd himself, or Adur, the fire yazad, to the image of a Frawahr (Fravashi), but none of them is wholly convincing.

Firstly, in the case of Ohrmazd, there seems no reason for the supreme Lord to be shown in the flames of the fire, fire being only a part of his sevenfold creation. Though Ohrmazd was often depicted on rock-reliefs in anthropomorphized form in Sasanian times, he never otherwise appears among flames. As Adur, for he was represented by the flames themselves. He was in general the least anthropomorphized of the yazads, and is not known, moreover, to have any particular link with the Sasanian royal house. In the case of a Frawahr, this is most likely to have been particularly the Frawahr of Ardashir I, for he was highly venerated throughout the Sasanian era as the founder of the dynasty. In Istaxr, the birth-place of the Sasanian dynasty, there was a fire called ‘the Fire of Anahid-Ardashir’, which was still burning in the time of Wahrām II (A. D. 276–293) (KNR, 1.25). Hence the fire of Ardashir may have been maintained, exceptionally, in perpetuity, as the fire of Arsaces had apparently been maintained throughout the Arsacid period. Yet if the bust were that of his Fravahr, one would expect the flames in which it is depicted on the reverse of the coins to be those of the original dynastic fire, not that of the actual king on the obverse. This interpretation seems unacceptable, however, for the legend on the reverse always tells us that the fire is in fact that of the reigning king.

Consequently, yet another possibility exists, that the bust actually represents the reigning king. Although there is no other evidence for any king’s bust being placed on an altar in Iran, it was a popular custom among Greeks and Romans to make busts of eminent persons and set them in public places or temples. If a bust of its founder were shown on its altar, this would have established the identity of the fire in question. Especially on the coins of Wahrām V (A. D. 421–39), the head on the altar is very similar to that of the king on its obverse, and wears the same crown (Pl. 13). Therefore it would seem that it must represent the same person, though it must be admitted that in most cases this is not easy to determine.

By the end of the reign of Vologeses (A. D. 484–88), the human bust on the altar disappears again, and after the issue of Khusrow I (A. D. 531–579) the shape of the altar becomes more slender (Pl. 14–16). Nevertheless, the altar must still be that of the dynastic fire, for the diadem is tied around it.
slender altar-shape lasts until the end of the Sasanian period. There is one unusual issue of Khusrow II (A.D. 591–628), which does not have the fire altar on its reverse. Instead it shows a human figure with a diadem (Pl. 17). Although it is not very clear, this figure’s crown looks similar to that worn by Khusrow II on the obverse, therefore this is apparently a standing figure of Khusrow II.

As far as the coins are concerned, the dynastic fire was certainly used as the main symbol of the dynasty throughout the era. The year was counted as such-and-such a year ‘of the fire of’ the reigning king. The circulation of these coins must have served as an efficient means of convincing the people of the legitimacy of Sasanian rule, and of declaring the state of political and religious unity under them.

Let us now examine the fire altars found on seals. Since the use of cylinder seals had almost finished before Parthian times, many Parthian and Sasanian seals are undistinguishable, although a number bear the portrait of the owner in the Parthian period, and his name in the Sasanian epoch. The use of seals was necessary for certain legal documents and for religious affairs, therefore to have a seal was not only common to the kings, kings’ officials and priests, but was necessary also for many ordinary people. Since seals were used to crave ‘for the divine protection’ (as their legends show), they tend to display religious subjects. The fire altar was one of the most popular designs. Its shape is of the standard type with a rather slender pillar and one or two steps on top and base.

In the engravings of these fire altars, the altar either stands alone or is attended by one or two men. Where the fire altar is depicted alone, it is usually supported by two props (Pl. 18–21), as on the early coins of Ardashir I, but more simply conveyed. In some cases there are other cross-pieces to support the pillar-part (Pl. 22–23). These cross-pieces sometimes appear, not as if they are supporting the altar, but as if they are hanging from it (Pl. 24–25). There are also some altars with no props (Pl. 26–27). In all cases the flame upon the altar is very large and vigorous. Only one such seal has an inscription on it (Pl. 27), and on this the word ‘fire ‘([d]wr)’ can be read; but it is not certain if this is part of the title of a priest of a fire temple, or simply of a proper name. There is one altar on which no flame is seen, but on which there appears to be a mound of ash (Pl. 28). This probably represents the fire altar in stylized manner.
Another seal shows a human bust in the flames on the same type of altar (Pl. 29). The inscription on this was read by E. E. Herzfeld as ‘priest of a fire called “Shāpur’s fire”’. This might therefore be the official seal of the priest in charge of that particular fire, and the face on the altar might be that of its founder.

Now we proceed to the case of seals on which is depicted a fire altar attended by one or two men (Pl. 30–35). These men wear a tunic, knee-length, and tied round the waist with a belt. They carry a straight knife on their belts, and wear a hood and seemingly a mouth-veil (padām), although sometimes these details are not recognizable. They hold something like the barsom in their hands. Judging from these characteristics, they must be priests, performing the ritual in front of the fire. The fire altar stands without props and is of a convenient height for serving the fire, that is knee- or waist-high. Where the altar is set under a dome or an arch (Pl. 34), this apparently represents an altar in a temple. According to the Pahlavi books, ‘the fire is enthroned upon the throne in the dome (ātaxsh i andar gumbad abar gāh nishānend) (WZ. 29.3); and many temple remains of this period show in fact the traces of a four-arched structure over the altar-place. Plate 35 shows an impression of a cylinder seal, unusual in this period, depicting a slightly different scene from that described above. Here a human figure, wearing a similar tunic and a sword, stands in front of the standard type of fire-altar, which is rather tall but not higher than his breast. At the other side of the altar two smaller figures approach in a respectful attitude. This scene may be interpreted as showing the cult of the house fire, apparently of the house of one of the high — perhaps princely — ranks, being performed by its head, and the smaller figures may possibly be his children.

Apart from the above-mentioned seals, there are some seals which presumably represent the ritual of sacrifice, since they show not only the altar and priest, but also a sheep or a goat (Pl. 36–38). In these cases, the altars appear to be of the same shape and scale as the fire altars, but no flame is depicted on them. The priests wear the same tunic, and, in the case of the seal on Plate 37, even the mouth-veil. They hold in their hands something looking like either the barsom or a straight sword, both of which are necessary for the sacrifice. In each case a priest stands between the altar and the animal. His body turns towards the altar but his face looks back at the sheep or goat. It is known both from the writings of Herodotus and Strabo, and from the evidence
of later times, that the Persians did not place the whole body of the victim on the fire at the sacrifice, but only a portion of the fat. Therefore it is unlikely that they placed the body on the fire in Sasanian times only. The altar depicted on these seals may accordingly be the sacrificial altar for devoting offerings to other yazads, and so be different in purpose from the fire altar, although it looks similar. Further, some seals bear an altar in a similar setting on which the dead victim is already placed (Pl. 39-40). Other seals show something like the crescent moon and stars (Pl. 41-43), or a bird (Pl. 44) on the altar, or just an empty altar (Pl. 45-47) similarly shaped to the fire altar. These were presumably altars dedicated to other yazads.

Since in Sasanian times the dynastic fire seems always to have carried a diadem, the fire altars depicted on seals are probably those of fire temples or religious sanctuaries, especially in the case of those showing priests performing rituals, or depicting the altar under a gumbad (dome). Each fire temple was usually, it seems, named after its founder, therefore such seals might have been used by members of the founder’s house as well as by the priests in charge of the fire in question. Actually it is known that there were many fires founded at an individual’s expense and named after him in Sasanian times. Shapur I declared that he had set up ‘named fires (pad nām ādur)’ for himself and each important member of his family, ‘for our souls (pad amāh ruwān)’ (SKZ. Parthian 11. 17–19). Not only the king, but also a powerful commoner such as Kirdēr stated: ‘and also by means of my estate, I have founded many Wahram fires from place to place’ (u-m pad xwesh-iz xānag gyāg o gyāg was ādur i wahram nishāst) (KNR. 1.47). Kirder was given the title ‘Herbed’ under Ardashir (see SKZ. Parthian. 1.34), and under Shapur he claimed that of ‘mowbed’, then under Hormizd I (A. D. 272–273) he attained the title of ‘Ohrmazd-mowbed’ and then by Wahram II, the honorific title Bōxtruwān-Wahrām, ‘(by whom) the soul of Wahrām has been saved’, was given to him. He was in charge of the fires called ‘The Fire of Anāhid-Ardashir and Anāhid, the Lady’ at Istaxr (KNR. 1.25). His power, which seems to have lasted at least until the reign of Narseh (A. D. 293–302), was particularly great under Wahram II, and he managed to check the growth of Manichaeism by having Mani executed (c. A. D. 277).

Later Mihr-Narseh, who was the wusurg-framādār (chief minister) of Yazdagird I (A. D. 399–421) and of the following kings, Wahram V (A. D. 421–439) and Yazdagird II (A. D. 439–457), is said to have built village fire temples in the
names of himself and his three sons. Therefore to build a named fire must have been a wide-spread custom in Sasanian times. Some fifty ruins have been identified as fire-temples of this period, almost all of which are located in the area of Pars and the neighbouring provinces. This evidence may indicate that the founding of named fires was not as popular in other regions of the empire. In fact the Parsi, who emigrated to Gujarāt in India from Khorasan at the beginning of the tenth century, were satisfied with only one Ātash Bahrām for nearly eight hundred years.

Before we go on to examine the actual ruins of fire temples, mention must be made of the three most sacred fires, repeatedly spoken of with veneration in the later Pahlavi books, namely Ādūr Farnbāg, Ādūr Gushnasp and Ādūr Burzēn-Mihr. The names of all three appear to be proper names, and so are likely to be their founders’ names (on the basis of the above evidence). One reason for their veneration must be that they were in existence since very ancient, probably Parthian, times or even before. All three were believed to have been established by ancient or legendary figures: Ādūr Burzēn-Mihr (as we have seen) by Vishtāsp, Ādūr Farnbāg by Jam (Yima), and Ādūr Gushnasp by Kai Khusrow. Each was situated in the homeland of one of the leading Iranian peoples: Ādūr Farnbāg in Pars, Ādūr Gushnasp in Media and Ādūr Burzēn-Mihr in Parthia. Since Ādūr Burzēn-Mihr has already been considered in the previous chapter, we shall study here the other two.

Ādūr Farnbāg was said first to have been founded on the Xwarrahomand Mountain in Khwarezm (GBd. 18.10), and then to have been transferred to a certain Mount Roshn in the region of ‘Kāvulistān’, which must, however, be a region in Pars, for the fire ‘remains there even now’ according to the Bundahishn (18.11). Because of the ambiguity of the Pahlavi spelling, the word read as ‘k...stan’ can be interpreted in one manuscript as ‘Karnikān’ that is present Kāriyān, a place renowned for its famous fire temple. Though the actual site has not yet been excavated, the identification is very likely. This fire may be still in existence in the village of Sharīfabad on the Yazdī plain. According to Ibn al-Faqīh al-Hamadānī, after the conquest by the Arabs, ‘Āzarxurra’ (Ādūr Farnbāg) was divided in two for safety, one part being kept in Kāriyān and the other in Fasā, and fire brought by the Dastūr dastūrān (the chief of the priests) to Sharīfabad, perhaps in the eleventh or twelfth century, appears to be one of those two fires; for it is still known to the villagers as an Ātash Bahrām, with the special name of Ādor Xarā (a dialect form of Ādūr
In the case of Ādur Gushnasp, the circumstances are different. The greatest fire-temple ruins discovered until now in Iran are the ruins on Taxt-i Suleimān in Azerbaijan, and these have been identified as those of Ādur Gushnasp. The identification was made certain by the discovery of bullae from a store-room there, which bear the words ‘High-priest of the house of the fire of Gushnasp (mowbed i xanag i Ādur i Gushnasp)’.\(^{(40)}\) According to legend, Ādur Gushnasp was established on Mount Asnavand (Av. Asnavant) in place of an idol-temple at Lake Čečast (Av. Čačasta) (GBd. 18.12). Lake Čečast was identified with Lake Urmiya, some 200 Km west of the site. Therefore it is still doubtful if Taxt-i Suleimān was the original site for Ādur Gushnasp. The temple of Ādur Gushnasp was pillaged by the Byzantine emperor Heraclius in 623 or 624.\(^{(41)}\) This suggests the enormous wealth of the temple, which attracted his attack, and explains why this site was so well fortified thereafter by an immensely strong wall.\(^{(42)}\)

The temple, enclosed by this and an earlier wall, is found to the north of a small circular lake on the hill (fig. 1). One large complex consists of about thirty rooms, some of them domed (fig. 2). In a separate complex to the west of these there seems to be the real sanctuary of Ādur Gushnasp, well protected by long corridors and pillared halls, before access can be gained to it.\(^{(43)}\) This sanctuary originally had a flat roof and was made of mudbrick, but later was converted to a stone structure with a dome.\(^{(44)}\) Under the dome is a great three-stepped pedestal, probably that of the altar of Ādur Gushnasp itself (Pl. 48). There are also several fragmented pillar-altars found in the pillared halls (Pl. 49), similar in shape to those depicted on the reverse of many coins of the period. It is recorded that several royal visits were made to Ādur Gushnasp, including those by Wahrām V (A.D. 421–439),\(^{(45)}\) Khusrow Anōshirvān (A.D. 531–579)\(^{(46)}\) and Khusrow Parwēz (A.D. 591–628).\(^{(47)}\) These visits were usually accompanied by huge presents or endowments to the temple, so famed for its enormous richness among Byzantine and Islamic writers. Ādur Gushnasp seems to have continued to burn down to at least the eleventh century.\(^{(48)}\)

Apart from these three most sacred fires, there are some particularly venerated fires referred to by name in the Pahlavi books. In the Bundahishn these are Ādur i Wartastar in Bakhhān in the Pisa district (GBd. 18.19) in Khurāsān, Ādur i Kātakān (GBd. 18.20) and the fire Karkōy in Seistan (GBd. 18.21).
Fig 1 Plan of Takht-i Suleiman; Schippmann, op. cit., 330, fig. 43.
Fig 2 Plan of the temple at Takht-i Suleiman; ibid., 332, fig. 44.
The first two are not known from any other source, but the Karköy fire must be identical with the ‘miraculous fire of Karkög’ (warzawand ātaxsh ī karkōg) (ShE. 38). This fire was said to have first been established by Frāsiyāb, the Tūrya king, in the capital of Zarang district, and to have been re-established by Kāi Khusrow. These are the names of rather legendary figures, hence this fire may be one of those which had existed and been venerated before Sasanian times. The place of this fire may be identified with the Kōruk mentioned by Isider of Charax in his Parthian Stations (§ 17). Even though he did not mention any fire there, Karköy fire was reported by several Muslim writers and continued in existence for centuries after the fall of the Sasanian dynasty. In Seistan the temple on the Kūh-i Xwāja was enlarged under the Sasanians from the original plan (fig. 3). The fire ‘Paramkar’ and the fire in Komis, which were said to burn without fuel (and which are identified by some scholars), are also mentioned in the Bundahishn (GBd. 18. 23–24). There are other fire temples mentioned by Muslim writers, for example one in Firūzābād and one in Bishāpur. Although actual sites are still difficult to identify, the characteristic structural feature of the ruins of religious buildings from this period is noteworthy.
This is generally called ēhār tāq (‘four arches’), and consists of four corner-pillars supporting a dome (gumbad) over a square room (for example, see Pl. 50–52). This was presumably the actual fire-sanctuary, as mentioned above. As some of the ēhār tāqs are located in high, remote places, A. Godard proposed the idea of ‘signal fires’, to which the priests supposedly carried the fire at night to be a signal. But this theory is improbable, for the practice is not known in Zoroastrian tradition, and also carrying sacred fires by night to isolated places of difficult access would hardly have been possible. D. Huff suggests that ‘all ruins for which a Zoroastrian origin may further be considered, have a square, domed, central room which is sheltered against the outside by walls, corridors or adjoining room’. Further he says that ‘a certain number of ēhār tāqs have to be dated into the Islamic period’. Therefore all ēhār tāqs are not necessarily of Zoroastrian construction, since this type of structure continued in use for religious buildings even into the Islamic period.

Lastly we should discuss the problem of altars standing in the open. At Naqsh-i Rustam there are twin altars decorated with four arched domes on their pedestals (Pl. 53). This decoration must be imitated from the real ēhār tāq construction used in religious buildings. The two altars together remind us of those at Pasargadae (Pl. 1 of Pt. 1), but in both cases their precise purpose is unknown. Single altars of similar character are found at Kūh-i Shahrak, with a simplified decoration of four arches (Pl. 54), and at Bāgh-i Būdrah with no decoration (Pl. 55). Each of these stone structures has a rather large, deep hollow in its top; but the places where they are set are usually among rocks and difficult of access. Since they stand thus in the open, it is unlikely that they bore ever-burning fires; they were more probably used for some open-air cult, as at Pasargadae in ancient times.

In conclusion, it can be said that fire was very much venerated throughout the Sasanian era. In the dynastic fire, the Sasanian rulers found an effective means of propagating their claim to a unique, legitimate authority over the Iranian peoples. The fire altars depicted on the reverse of their coins served well for this purpose, together with the imposing rock reliefs and inscriptions in which their claims were clearly set out. The temple cult of fire flourished, as the number of ruins of this period attest.
Chapter 5. The concept of fire and its cult in literature

Even though fire is referred to frequently throughout the later Avesta, which was finally compiled in its surviving form in the Sasanian epoch, it is mainly mentioned there as one of the seven Creations of Ahura Mazda. It is mostly spoken of as the ‘Fire of Ahura Mazda’ (ātrem ahurahe mazđa, Y. 13.2, et passim), or invoked as ‘Fire, son of Ahura Mazda’ (ātarch puthra ahurahe mazđa, Y. 62.1, et passim), and is venerated as worthy of sacrifice and worship. Far from there being clear references to a temple cult of fire, there is not even plain evidence to be found in the Avesta for the existence of temples; and only a few passages may be taken to reflect the cult of fire in ancient days.

However, despite the lack of detailed textual evidence from the earliest times, there is no question but that fire was venerated continuously throughout the history of Zoroastrianism, and that it was offered many prayers and sacrifices. Fire, when satisfied, it was said, is a giver of these boons: ‘swift bliss, swift protection and swift life, much bliss, much protection, much life, knowledge, holiness, a ready tongue, understanding for the soul and then great enormous undismayed wisdom’ (āsu xᵛahrem āsu thraeitim āsu jītim pouru xᵛahrem pouru thraeitim pouru jītim mastim spāno xshvírem hizvəm urune ushi xratūm pasčaēta masītim mazāntim apairī.āthrem, Y. 62.4). Moreover, fire will give ‘manly courage’ (nairyam... ham.varsitim, Y. 62.5), and ‘fully grown, free-born offspring’ (tuthrusham āsnqm ‘frazaintīm, ibid.) with all good qualities, ‘who will further house, village, tribe, country and empire’ (yā... frādayāt nmānumā visomē a zantūmē daḥyāmē dainghusatimē, ibid.). These passages praise the productive and furthering qualities of fire, which may have originated in the concept of fire as life-force. Further, the image of fire as giving ‘the best life, righteous, shining, having all bliss, so as to be achieving the good reward, good fame and long life for the soul’ (vahishtem ahūm ashaonam roačanghem vispo.xᵛahrem, zaz buye vanghāucē mižde vanghāuçē ‘sravahe urunaēça darqhe havanghe, Y. 62. 6), may reflect the role of fire at the Last Judgment, which is prominently referred to in the Gāthās.(68)

In another passage, fire is venerated as ‘the house-head of all houses created by Mazda, the son of Ahura Mazda, the righteous, the judge of asha together with all fires’ (vispaŋq nmānumq nmānō.paitīm mazdaŋqal mazđa puthrem ashavanm ashahe ratūm... maṭ vispāebyō ātorebyō, Y. 17.11). In the
same passage fire is invoked with five distinctive epithets, which were later developed by scholastics into five categories of fire, which we shall discuss later on. These epithets are berezsavah- 'of high benefit', vohu.fryana- 'being a good friend', urvâzishta- 'most joyful', vâzishta- 'most useful', and spânishta- 'holiest'. All five seem to be fit adjectives to describe fire as conceived in Zoroastrianism. As the object of worship, fire is holy, and as the helper and leader in life, morally and physically, it is a good friend for a righteous man. In the centre of a house, fire can be the symbol of a joyful, happy home-life. The usefulness and benefit of fire can be without doubt recognised by everyone. Urvâzishta is also used as an epithet for the fire whose fravashi is worshipped (Yt. 13.85). Âtar vâzishta is the fire which kills Daëva Sponjaghrya, demon of drought (Vd. 19.40), that is, it is the lightning-fire which is connected with rain-storms. Worshipping fire by these five different epithets seems to be a way of expressing the fundamental unity of all fires.

Yasna 62.1–10 is the main Avestan source for the cult of fire, and is largely identical with the Âtash Nyaish, the prayer addressed to fire. Here it is said that the fire 'should be attended by a fully-aged man as a protector, (and) an instructed man as a protector' (pormâyush.harshtri.buyâ dâhmâyush.harshtri. buyâ, Y. 62.2). Further, the fire is 'to be given proper fuel, proper incense, proper nourishment and a proper abode' (dâityô.aesmi.buya dâityô.baoiti.buyâ dâityô.pithwi.buyâ dâityô.upasayeni.buyâ, ibid.). It is also said that to the fire are to be brought 'fuel, brought according to asha, and barzsmân, spread according to asha and plant hafrastem urvarqm và hadânaeipatvm, Y. 62. 9).

In the phrase 'proper fuel' or 'fuel brought according to asha' the kind of wood is not specified. As long as it is 'dry, selected for burning, and purified' (hikûsh traoelas.pairishtam... yaozdatam, Y. 62.10), it is acceptable. 'To purify the fire-wood' means to take off the bark, as the Pahlavi commentator says (Phl. Vd. 5.4). As for 'proper incense', this is traditionally made from fragrant plants, but their species are unknown except for hafrastem urvarqm và hadânaeipatvm. Other named incenses are the sweetsmelling plants urvâsnâ-, vohu. gaona- and vohu.kereti- (Vd, 18. 71), which unfortunately have not been identified.

'Proper nourishment' means the fat of animals, pithwi- being derived from pitu 'meat'. This offering was considered very meritorious. The fat could be from any beneficient animal as long as it was full-grown and healthy; but
no other part of the animal should be offered to fire. Concerning fat, Catullus said: 'their (the Persians') child may worship the gods with acceptable hymns, whilst melting the fat caul (omentum) in the altar flame' (90). The same observance is reported by Strabo, namely that the Persians believed 'that the god requires only the soul of the victim and nothing else... they place a small portion of the caul (epiploos) upon the fire' (15.3.13). In later times, the fat offering was often taken from the tail of a fat-tailed sheep.

The man who makes these offerings to the fire, it is said, has 'fire-wood, barsman, milk and mortar in his hand' (aēsmō.zastō barsmō.zastō gao.zastō hāvanō.zastō, Y. 62.1). Milk and haoma were essential for the Yasna ceremony,(63) but this high ritual is by no means essential for offerings to the fire, Therefore the description in Y. 62 is considered to refer specifically to the yasna. (The mortar is for crushing haoma. Many remains of mortars have been found in Persepolis, and the seal of Datam(es), discovered there (see Pl. 8, 9 of Pt. 1), shows the scene described in the Avestan words just quoted.)

These sections of Y. 62 can apply both to the fire in the temple and to the fire in an ordinary house, which has to be kept burning during the householder's life-time; for fire is 'worthy of sacrifice and prayer in the houses of men' (yesnyō buyd vahmyō nmānahu mashyākanam, Y. 62.1). Even the expression dāityō.upasayeni.bav- 'being with a proper abode', does not necessarily apply to a fire temple or altar only. It simply indicates a fixed, suitable place which may also be the hearth in an ordinary house. Therefore the words in Y. 62 cannot be taken as a certain allusion to the temple cult of fire.

However, in the Vendidad, whose final compilation must have taken place after Seleucid times, a specially established sanctuary for fire appears to be referred to as dāityō.gātū- 'appointed place', as mentioned above.(64) In the Pahlavi translation this is rendered as dād.gāh, and this term is generally used to mean a fire temple in Sasanian times. The Pahlavi commentary on the Vendidad passage glosses dāityō.gātū- as Ātaxsh i Wahrām (Phl. Vd. 8.81), though the term is also used for a water sanctuary in the same text (13.17). As the Avestan equivalent of Ātaxsh i Wahrām, that is Ātar Vorōzhgnahe, is not attested, and the yazatas Ātar and Vorōzhgna have no particular link with one another, except as having occasionally the same epithet, Mazda-dāta- 'created by Mazdā', the reason is not certain for calling the greatest temple fire Ātaxsh i Wahrām in Sasanian times.

Compared to these sparse Avestan references to fire, there are more
elaborate statements and scholastic developments in the Pahlavi literature, as well as some detailed explanations of the cult. For example, the Bundahishn, ‘Original Creation’, whose final compilation belongs to the ninth century A.D., represents a Zoroastrian theology which must have been current in Sasanian times. The creation myth is vividly expounded there as follows:

First, Ohrmazd (Av. Ahura Mazda) and the Infinite Light (asar-rōshnih), and Ahreman or Gannag Mēnōg (Av. Angra Mainyu) and the Infinite Darkness (asar-tārīghih) existed independently. ‘Between them there was emptiness’ (u-shān mīyān tuhīgih, GBd. 1.5). Ohrmazd, knowing through his omniscience that battle against Ahreman was inevitable, created the first Creation. This Creation was wholly spiritual (mēnōgīthā) and everything was ‘unthinking, unmoving and intangible’ (amenīdār ud aravāg ud agrīstār, ibid. 1.14). After 3000 years Ahreman became aware of the existence of Ohrmazd and his Creation, and tried to destroy them. Ohrmazd made a treaty (paymān) of war, limited to 9000 years, with Ahreman, because Ohrmazd knew he could win the war in this fixed time.

The Creation of the material world was carried out in order to settle the time and place for that war, and the manner in which it would be fought. Therefore each individual act Creation by Ohrmazd was followed by an act of Counter-Creation by Ahreman. ‘Ohrmazd created the body of his Creation in the form of fire, bright, white, round and seen from afar, from his own selfhood, from the substance of light’ (Ohrmazd az ān i xuḵsh xwadih az gētīrōshnīth kirb i dāmnīn i xuḵsh frāz bērēnīd pad ātāxsh kirb i rōshn i spēd ud gīrd frāz paydāg, ibid. 1.44). ‘Fire was created in the form of live embers, and its brightness was derived from the Infinite Light’ (ātāxsh dād xwarg u-sh brāh az asar-rōshnīth awīsh paywast, ibid. la. 4). The close relationship between fire and the Creation, as seen in the thought of Zoroaster, was obvious still in Sasanian theology. In another Pahlavi book, the Wizādāgīthā i Zādspram ‘Selections of Zādspram’, composed about fifty years before the final redaction of the Bundahishn, it is said that ‘Fire was diffused in all, entirely in the six elements’ (ātāxsh andar wisp būd pargandag, hamnis pad shish gōhrag, WZ, I. 25). These six ‘elements’ (in Zādspram’s Hellenized terminology) are the creations of sky, water, earth, plants, animals and man, as found in the Avesta.

There were five classifications of fire, the Berezi-savang, Vohufryan, Urvāzist, Vāzist and Spēnīst, based on the five epithets of fire set out in Y. 17.11. According to the Zand of Y. 17.11, Berezi-savang is the fire which is destined for use
in the material world, which includes the ‘fire of Wahrām’. Vohufryān is that in the body of man and animals, Urovāzist is in plants,(65) Vāzist is in the clouds, and Spēnist is the fire which blazes before Ohrmazd the Lord.(66)

Of actual fires, the three most sacred, Ādur Farnbāg, Ādur Gushnasp, and Ādur Burzēn Mihr, were held to have been created at the original Creation, for the protection of the world, in the shape of three Glories (GBd. 18.8). In the reign of Taxmūraf (Av. Taxma Urupa), the tradition was, when men crossed the sea on the back of the mythical Gav Srisōk, from Xwanirah (the central clime) to other climes, the fire which they had with them on the Bull’s back fell into the sea, blown by the wind. Then these three fires took its place, blazing like three Glories in the ādur-gāh (‘brazier’ or ‘fire-container’), and giving light so that they could cross safely (GBd. 18.9). In the time of Jam (Av. Yima), it is said, all this hero’s works were performed with the help of these three fires (GBd. 18.10). Then Ādur Farnbāg was established in a fixed abode by Jam, and Ādur Gushnasp by Kai Khusrow (as mentioned above in the previous chapter). Ādur Burzēn Mihr was said to be still moving about then, and protecting the world. This fire, according to tradition, appeared in a vision to Vishtāsp, together with Wahman (Av. Vohu Manah) and Ardwahisht (Av. Asha Vahishta).(67) Vishtāsp was held to be the person who established Ādur Burzēn Mihr in a fixed ‘proper’ place. However, legends still continued about these three fires, and it is said that they will accompany and help illustrious Peshōtan future son of Vishtāsp, when he goes to destroy image-shrines (ZVY. 7.26, 37).

These legends must reflect the great popularity of the veneration of the three fires in Sasanian times. Each of them was said to have a particular link with the three classes of society, that is, Ādur Farnbāg with the priestly class (āsrōn), Ādur Gushnasp with the warrior class (arteshṭār), and Ādur Burzēn Mihr with the agricultural class (wāstrīyōsh) (GBd. 18.17). These fires are frequently mentioned in connection with the taking of oaths by kings and heroes,(68) and visits by such persons to their shrines. Thus Ardashīr is said to have visited Ādur Farnbāg in order to pray for victory before the battle of Hormuzd (KnA. 7.1). According to the Shāhnāme, Rustam held a feast at Ādur Barzēn, that is, Burzēn Mihr (Warner, II. 107), and Ādur Gushnasp received royal visits from Kai Khusrow (op. cit. III. 20), Kai Kaus (op. cit., IV. 258), Wahrām V (op. cit., VII. 139), Khusrow I (op. cit., VII. 250, 363), and Khusrow II (op. cit., VIII. 283, 307, 312). In Sasanian times such pilgrimages brought
money to the shrines and their priests, and were considered greatly meritorious.

Ordinary believers also ardently visited and gave money to these great fires. But to take care of one’s own fire properly was a more basic and essential duty. It is said that ‘if anyone does not maintain the fire-place (ātash-gāh) properly, (even) if he gives a hundred dinars to the fire Gushasp (Gushnasp), it is not accepted, and that sin does not depart from him’.

Proper care meant the due supplying of clean fire-wood and incense, and maintaining the fire in purity. The presentation of zōhr, the fat offering, is also mentioned. For safety, the use of last year’s fire-wood is recommended.

‘If someone were to extinguish a fire’, it was a great sin, therefore, for recompense for this act, he must undertake ‘collecting ten fires, and enduring ten punishments, and killing ten ants’ and giving the fat-offering (zōhr) to the Ātash i Wahrām’ (Kē ātashx-ēw bē ozaned, ā-sh dāh ātashx bē činišn u-sh dāh pādfyrāh bē barishn u-sh mōrzak dāh bē ozanishn u-sh zōhr ā ātashx i Wahrām dahishn, SnS. 7.9). In the case of Karshāsp, who was a great Iranian hero, his soul was rejected from heaven by Fire in spite of his many great achievements, because he committed an involuntary sin against fire. The cauldron in which he was cooking meat was overturned and extinguished the fire beneath it, as the result of a sudden movement by Az i Sruwar. His soul was at last forgiven only through the intercession of Zoroaster.

Especially to extinguish the Ātashx i Wahrām, which should be ever-burning in purity and holiness, was a great sin. Therefore it was very proper to appoint a person to be in charge of a sacred fire, and to give him maintenance and salary. In the Pahlavi books, a fire temple was generally called xānag i ātashx or mān i ātashx, or kadag i ātashx, all meaning the ‘house of fire’, and an ‘altar’ or stand on which the actual fire was kept was ādur (ātashx)-gāh (=-dān). The fire in it might be one of three grades, namely Ātashx i Wahrām, Ātashx i Ādarān and Ādurūg, though the distinction or difference between these is never systematically explained in the Pahlavi books.

The ‘Fire of Wahrām’ described not as Ātashx i Wahrām but as Ādur Warah-rām, presumably the Parthian term (Ādur i Wahrām in the Pahlavi rendering), is the earliest known category, being found in the inscription of Shāpur I (SKZ, Parthian, 1.17, see above p. 55). As Wahrām is the yazad of victory, it would not be surprising if many Wahrām fires were founded at memorable sites or places of victory by both Ardashīr and Shāpur. However, the reason why
fire of the highest rank came to be called the ‘fire of victory’ is not certain, unless ‘victory’ symbolized the victory of Zoroastrianism over evil or ‘heresy’. This interpretation may be supported by the inscription of Kirder, which claimed that Kirder founded many Ādur ī Wahrāms (KKZ. 1.15), for his ‘victories’ were more likely to have been over ‘heresy’ and alien religions than by force of arms. (79)

According to the Pahlavi Vendidad (8. 81–96), sixteen kinds of fires are named to be purified and brought to the dād-gāh, which according to the Middle Persian commentary is to be understood as the Ātāxsh ī Wahrām. These fires are one, the fire which cooked nasā ‘dead matter’ (ātāxsh-nasāpāk, Av. ātrom nasupāk); two, that which cooked liquid impurities (rūd-pāk, Av. uruzdipāk); three, that which cooked dung (sargēn, Av. saire-hyat); four, that from potters’ ovens (xumb zamîpačān, Av. xumbaht zmānini-pačikāt); five, that from glass-makers’ ovens (xumb šampāčān, Av. xumbaht yāmā-pačikāt); six, that from ānāy ārzūrītān, Av. ānayaht pāro-borēhvat (the meaning is obscure); seven, that from goldsmiths (pītar zarrēnpatkarān, Av. pīsaṛt zaranyō-saēpāt); eight, that from silversmiths (pītar asēmēnapatkarān, Av. pīsaṛt orzatō-saēpāt); nine, that from iron-mongers (pītar ayēn patkarān, Av. pīsaṛt ayyō-saēpāt); ten, that from iron-manufacturers (pītar pālāfrayēn patkarān, Av. pīsaṛt haosafnēnō-saēpāt); eleven, that from bakers’ ovens (tanūr, Av. tamraht); twelve, that from a cooking cauldron (deg, Av. dishtat); thirteen, that from ānāy takīān, Av. ānayaht tāvxāyēt (obscure); fourteen, that from the way of shepherds (rāh stōrbān, Av. pantaht stroa-hayēt); fifteen, that from the (army) camp (?) (skarya, Av. skairīyēt); and sixteen, from the nearest fire (nazdīk, Av. nazdīshītāt), presumably, that is, the hearth fire. These sixteen different sorts of fires held to need purification probably gave rise to the original idea that sixteen different fires had to be collected and purified separately so as to unite in one strong fire, the Ātāxsh ī Wahrām, which was then to be enthroned in its ‘proper’ place. Once installed, an Ātāxsh ī Wahrām is said to be so powerful that it can kill a thousand demons (Phl. Vd. 8.80).

The fire of the second grade, Ātāxsh ī Ādarān, is not referred to in Pahlavi by this term. There the second category of fire appears to be mentioned only as unspecified Ātāxsh ‘fire’. (80) Later literature tells us that this grade of fire was to be formed from fires of the four social classes, priests (āsīn, Av. āthravan.), warriors (artēshātār, Av. rathāšhtar-), farmers (wāstaryōsh, Av. vāsteyōshhuyānt-) and artisans (hutuxsh, Av. hūtī-). This fire seems to have been regarded as being the local community fire, since it was enjoined in later times that ‘when ten Zoro-
Zoroastrian families (behdin) are gathered together, they must build an Ātāxsh-i Ādarān.¹⁸¹

In the case of an Ādurōg, this was even more simple to establish. Embers from an ordinary house fire (which is always carefully kept pure) are enough for this purpose, and though the site must be consecrated, it need not necessarily be a temple. Thus, for example, an Ādurōg (or Dādgāh fire) is usually maintained in what the Iranis call an ātash-sūz, the Parsis a sagri, a small room near the daxma (tower of silence).¹⁸² An Ādurōg could also be placed in a former image-shrine in consequence of the iconoclastic movement in Sasanian times. This movement seems to have been in progress throughout the era, as several passages in the Pahlavi books reflect it. ‘Ātāxsh i Wahrām is goodness and the image is (its) adversary’, (ātāxsh i warahrān wehih, ud uzdēs pityārag, DkM 551. 13–15); and also ‘when image-worship is destroyed, little departs with it of belief in the spiritual beings’ ([ka] uzdēs parastishnih be absihēd, mēnēg wurrēyishnih andak abōg be shawūd, DkM 553, 16–17).¹⁸³ Although the Sasanians’ iconoclasm was not as strict as Muslim iconomachy, Zoroastrians seem to have managed so far to clear up image-worship by the end of the epoch. Judging from cases found in the Pahlavi law book,¹⁸⁴ iconoclasm was pursued on the initiative of the Government and Zoroastrian priests (mobed).

An Ādurōg may also be kept burning in the precincts of an Ātash Bahrām, and might there receive the embers of an Ādarān fire, which are carried to an Ātash Bahrām once a year. An Ātash Ādarān itself received the embers of house fires once a month, according to the Irani tradition recorded in the Rivāyats.¹⁸⁵ The Ādurōg i dādgāh, now termed simply a Dādgāh fire, may be served even by a layman, and, in its simplicity, its cult must reflect strongly the traditional one of the house fire. No persons other than the priests in charge are allowed to enter the sanctuaries of Ādarān and Ātash-i Bahrām. The three classes of fire are distinct, and in principle individual fires are never united. According to cases recorded in the MHD, fire temples could be built firstly by individuals (mard tanīhā, MHD. 27. 9–11), secondly by communities (anjōmani), and thirdly by those (presumably priests) who would become beneficiaries of that fire temple (ham-bāragān xwēsh, ibid. 78.12).¹⁸⁶ Priests were appointed to be in charge of the fire and rituals, and their office was often inherited.

Besides the regular prayers and rituals, ātash zōhr (offering of fat) seems to have been practiced on special occasions such as the Čahārōn (fourth day after death, when in the morning the dead person was to cross the Činvat brid-
ge), (87) hamāg-dēn ceremony, (88) dwāzdaḥ hōmast (recital of 12 kinds of prayers), (89) or at the time of repentance over a serious sin such as extinguishing the fire, or at a ceremony of thanksgiving to Mihr for the birth of a son, (90) or at each of the six Gāhānbārs, (91) or at the time of enthronement of an Ātash Bahrām.

The veneration of fire was prominent in the lives of Zoroastrians at all epochs. Not only did they take oaths by fire, (92) they considered the ordeal by fire as effective and decisive. The famous ordeal by Siyāwush by fire was held to prove his innocence, (93) and the Parthian princess Vis (or her lover Rāmin) was to swear her/his innocence by passing through fire. (94) Both tales were enormously popular and enjoyed by the Sasanians. Moreover, the famous Sasanian priest Ādurbaḏ i Māraspandān, in the reign of Shāpur II, went through the ordeal by molten metal to prove the orthodoxy of his beliefs. (95)

The temple cult of fire, originating under the Achaemenians, seems to have developed greatly in Sasanian times, and it survived unimpaired even after the Zoroastrians had lost their political power and, gradually, their numerical superiority.

Chapter 6. The living cult of Fire

After the last flowering of the composition of Pahlavi works during the ninth and tenth centuries A.D., the Zoroastrians composed only a few texts in New Persian; their numbers dwindled, and many of their temples were replaced by mosques. The history of the Great Fires and the priests who guarded them was transmitted only orally around Yazd and Kerman, which became the last areas where Irani Zoroastrians survived until this century. Zoroastrians who emigrated in the ninth century to Gujarāt in India later sought to fill gaps in their knowledge of the observances of their religion by corresponding with their Irani coreligionists. The answers to their questions, sent by Irani priests, are called the Rivāyats; and these inform us of the continuity of religious practices and Zoroastrian laws among the Irani Zoroastrians even after the fall of the Zoroastrian state.

The cult of fire both in temples and in each house remained the main feature of their religious observance; but there appear to have been several changes in temple usages, mostly on account of precautions taken to preserve the fire among hostile neighbours. The fear of an attack on the sacred fire by unbelievers led in time to the concealment of the fire sanctuary within the
The temple fire had already been established in the *gumbad* in safety and purity in Sasanian times, but still stricter seclusion was introduced now in order to avoid the danger of a holy fire being extinguished. A restriction such as that of allowing no other persons except full-fledged priests to see an Ātash Bahrām appears an extreme one, which has no support from the Pahlavi books, and is not practiced among the Parsis. Another restriction, that ‘the light of the sun should not be allowed to fall on fire’, which is observed even now, may also reflect the harsh circumstances in which the Zoroastrians desperately tried to keep their faith and sanctity pure and holy.

The division of the temple fires into three grades is apparent all the time. It is enjoined in the *Rivāyats* that ‘where-ever the Behdins (Zoroastrians) make their abode, it is necessary that an Ātash Bahrām should be established in that place’. However, it is an expensive matter to establish and maintain an Ātash Bahrām, for at least two priests, fully qualified, are necessary to observe the rituals due to it, the highest grade of fire. Therefore an Ātash Ādarān may be established instead, which may be tended by a priest, not necessarily fully qualified. Among the Parsis Ātash Ādarāns began to be established from the seventeenth century. (Till then they had had only one ever-burning sacred fire, their Ātash Bahrām.) The basic cult was similarly observed by both the Irani Zoroastrians and the Parsis, in the Ātash Bahrām and the Ātash Ādarān; but fullest details of rituals have been recorded in recent times among the Parsis, with their Ātash Bahrāms. In the case of the lesser fire, the Ādurōg-i Dādgāh, now called simply Dādgāh, even a layman may serve it, and the observance is quite simple.

Many of the existing fire temples in Iran and India have been newly rebuilt according to the Parsi temple-plan (fig. 4), as the result of financial support from wealthy Parsis, and migrant Iranis, since the nineteenth century. This plan consists essentially of a square or rectangular hall with an inner chamber, the fire sanctuary, in the centre, and the *Dar-i Mihr* where the ‘inner’ liturgical services (*Yasna, Vîspèrâd, Vendîdâd*, and *Drôn or Bâj*) are performed. The term *Dar-i Mihr* is sometimes used for the whole fire temple (this is in fact the standard usage in Iran), but is never applied particularly to the fire sanctuary. Among the Parsis a *Dar-i Mihr* now always contains a Dādgāh fire; and with them a *Dar-i Mihr* consists of several *Yazîshn-gâhs*, in each of which the ‘inner’ liturgical services can be performed. In each temple the sacred fire itself is placed on the Ātash-gâh in the sanctuary, and can be seen by all its wor-
shippers through windows in the sanctuary walls.

The ritual for establishing a sacred fire differs according to its grade. However, for those of the two higher grades it always consists basically of the acts of collecting, purification, consecration and unification. In the case of an Atash Bahram, it is enjoined that 1001 fires of 16 kinds should be collected. These are 91 from corpse-burning fires, 80 fires from dyers, 70 from hot baths (of a king or ruling authority), 60 (or 61) from potters, 60 from goldsmiths, 55 from silversmiths, 50 (or 61) from carpenters (or weapon makers), 75 from burnt bricks, 61 from bakers’ ovens, 61 from cauldrons (or from ironsmiths), 61 from muleteers of the village (or brewers), 40 from the Mazdayasnians (or 50 from ascetics), 35 from cavaliers on the march, 30 from watch-keepers (or 33 from shepherds), 90 from lightning in the sky, 40 from the herbad (priest), and 143 (or 144) fires from laymen (behdins) made by the friction both of pieces of wood, and of flints.

The act of collecting is performed thus: a fire is taken from a prescribed place by a layman, for whom it is considered to be a meritorious act. In the case of a corpse-burning fire, which is heavily polluted, the collection must be
made with the help of a non-Zoroastrian, or by two Zoroastrians, using a perforated ladle in which powdered sandalwood or other fuel is placed. When this is held over that defiled fire at a little distance, the fuel catches the flame easily without touching it. Then some fuel is added to the new fire, and this fire is placed on the ground. A heap of fuel is placed in a trench one span down-wind, so as to catch its flame. This process is to be repeated nine times. (Among the Parsis this process is performed for the same number of times as the number of fires collected from a particular group—for example, 91 times for a corpse-burning fire. This appears to be an elaboration of older practice.)

The purification is performed by priests. Each collected fire is placed in a pit or a vessel, and a perforated ladle full of ignitable stuff is held over it to catch the flame, and then this new fire is placed beside the original fire. This process is repeated seven or nine times, or again, more elaborately, for the same number of times as fires are collected.

The purification of fire seems to reflect a very old ritual; for it was in general meritorious to redeem defiled fire, that which had been wrongly used and had suffered contamination, as is enjoined in the Vendidad (8.81–96) with regard to bringing such fires to the dāityā-gātu. The custom in Iran, which is recorded in the Rivāyats, that the embers of each household fire must be taken to the Ātash Ādarān after the fire has been used more than three times, or every three or seven days, is also the reflection of the same concept. Even the embers from the Ātash Ādarān must themselves be carried to the Ātash Bahrām after four months, or one year, or three years. An awareness of fire suffering in this world from contamination is expressed also in the lost Sūdgār Ṉask, summarised in the Denkard.

The rite of ātash buzorg kardan ‘exalting the fire’, which is still observed in the Yazdi area, is clearly one of expiation for sins committed, perhaps unknowingly, by an individual against fire. Fires used daily by non-Zoroastrians, particularly those in trade, are believed to be in need of redemption, and to purify them by this ritual is considered to be highly meritorious. Therefore, the rite is often performed on behalf of the dead by the living members of the family. Embers are collected from nine fires to which the greatest possible pollution happens, that is, from the fires of nine Muslim traders, a coppersmith, a blacksmith, a locksmith, a baker, a confectioner, a man who makes sugar-loaves, a dyer, a turner, and a bath-attendant. All the embers are placed in an afrinagan (a metal or clay vessel to hold fire for rituals), and are consecrated
by prayer for three days and nights. Then the āfrinagān is carried to the fire
temple for the public ceremony, and after purification by means of kindling nine
successive fires from this consecrated one, the ninth fire is united to the sacred
fire itself.\(^{116}\)

The consecration ceremony for establishing an Ātash Bahrām consists of
performing a Yasna ceremony in the morning (Hāvan Gāh) in honour of the
yazad of the day, and a Vendidad from midnight (Ushahin Gāh) over each purified
fire. One such act of consecration is performed each day by two priests, and
the fire thus consecrated is then united to those already consecrated. Accord-
ingly the consecration of all 1001 (or 1128) fires collected and purified would
take more than two years if it was performed by only two priests. So in order
to complete these essential rituals for establishing an Ātash Bahrām in less
than a year, it is usual to engage several pairs of priests. After the completion
of the consecration, only 16 different fires remain, which are kept tended
separately in 16 vases.

The final unification of these fires should take place on the first of
the Gāthā days at the end of the year.\(^{117}\) Two priests, who have undergone barash-
nom-i nā-shua and khūb (purification ceremonies),\(^{118}\) place all 16 fires in a large
bowl which is to become the abode of this Ātash Bahrām. The unified fire is
then carried to the Yazishn-gāh, and is finally consecrated by the recital of the
Yasna each morning, and the Vendidad each night for 33 days. Before the
consecration is over, the fire-sanctuary must be consecrated separately by the
recital of the Yasna and Vendidad for three days. Then the fire, carried by priests
who are surrounded all the time by lines drawn to form pāvis,\(^{119}\) is moved
into the fire-sanctuary and placed on the atash-gāh, which too stands in a pāvi.
Then the fire is fed with sandalwood and frankincense, and the first Ātash
Nyāish (prayer to the fire) is recited to it. Thereafter the Ātash Bahrām does
not have any other ritual performed in its presence except those addressed to it
itself.\(^{120}\)

In the case of an Ātash Ādarān, these processes are simpler. The initial
collection is made from the fires of four different classes of society, that is,
priests, soldiers, farmers and artisans. The purification process for each fire is
repeated only three times; and then the consecration is performed for three
days, and on the fourth day the Ātash Ādarān is established on its Ātash-gāh.

For a Dādgāh fire, hardly any ritual is performed except the consecration
of the place where the fire is to be placed. After a preliminary cleaning and
washing of the building with water, embers from a household fire are brought to be present for the Yasna ceremony and the Vendidad which are performed for three days, morning and night, and thus the building is consecrated. On the fourth morning, after a Yasna ceremony, the fire which was used at these services of consecration is established as the Dādgāh fire.

These sacred fires, once established, are maintained on their Ātash-gāhs and should never be extinguished nor divided or united. The offerings to the fire are restricted to fuel and incense and fat (or its modern substitutes). Until the late 19th century the fat-offering (ātash-zōhr) was performed on special occasions, such as on the fourth day after a death, when the soul of the dead person passes the Chinvat bridge, or at Mihragan, when the sacrifice of animals usually took place in Zoroastrian houses.

The daily service to the fire includes ritual offering of incense, and so is called the bōy dādan ceremony. This should be ideally performed five times a day at the commencement of each Gāh (division of the day). The bōy or incense is usually sandalwood or frankincense, but if these are not available, any clean and dry fragrant substance may be offered instead. At the commencement of each Gāh, a priest performs the kusti-pādyāb, that is the kusti prayers with ablutions. First he recites xshnaothra ahurahe mazda (‘with the pleasure of Ahura Mazda’), and the sacred prayer ashom vohū vahishtom asti ushtā asti ushtā ahmāi hyat ashāi vahishtāi ashom. Then he washes his face, hands and feet, and wipes them. He unties his kusti and re-ties it, reciting the prayers of Nirang-i Kusti (kusti-ritual).

After the kusti-pādyāb, he goes into the sacred chamber, and recites the Ātash Nyāish, standing in front of the fire. In the case of the Ātash Bahrām, the priest engaged must be a martab (one who has passed the second degree for the priesthood), who has gone through the barashnom and khūb ceremonies. The barashnom-i nō-shua (‘ablution of the nine nights’) is the highest form of purification and once a person undergoes it, the effect lasts as long as he observes certain restrictions in order to keep its purifying effect. That is, he must not eat ‘unclean’ food, which means either food cooked by non-Zoroastrians, or coming from the ‘unclean’ parts of an animal. He has to drink ‘clean’ water, which is brought from a distant stream every morning at dawn, or drawn from a clean well. He must abstain from speaking with unclean people, particularly non-Zoroastrians, or women in their periods. He must always wash his hands and say an Avestan prayer before eating. While he eats he keeps
silence, covers his head and uses his own clean utensils, separate from others. If a priest breaks one of these rules, he has to undertake another barashnom in order to become ritually qualified again.

The khūb ceremony, on the other hand, retains its effectiveness only for four days; and even during these days, if the priest has a bath, or a wet dream, or partakes of food without the regular observance of taking the Bāj, or comes into contact with a non-Zoroastrian, he must undergo it again. The khūb ceremony consists of the performance of the whole Yasna together with a priest who is already ‘with khūb’.

Then at the beginning of each Gāh a priest, qualified as above, performs the kusti-pādyāb and recites Srōsh-bāj and the Gāh-prayer according to the Gāh in which this ceremony is performed. Then he recites Khurshīd-Mihr Nyāish (the prayers to the sun and Mihr) during the three day-time Gāhs (Hāvan, Rapithwin, and Uzērin). In the night-Gāhs (Aiwisrūthrim and Ushahin) he recites Srōsh Yasht (Y. 62) and Srōsh Hādokht instead. After these recitals he enters the sacred chamber, standing at the west front of the fire. He puts on white gloves and first places some frankincense on the sacred fire. Then he arranges six pieces of sandalwood in a ‘throne’ (Gujaratī machī). This means that he first puts two pieces of sandalwood on the fire in the direction of west to east, while he himself faces east. Then he moves to the north, facing south, and puts two pieces north to south over the first two. Next he moves through west-south-east and, facing west, places the last two pieces east to west inside and parallel to the first two pieces. After that he comes back to his first position.

He washes with pure water the stone slab (khvān, khan) on which (in Parsi usage) the metal vessel stands, holding the fire. Then he offers a little sandalwood and frankincense to the fire three times with the words, Humata, huxta, hvarshta (‘good thought, good word, good deed’). He has a metallic ladle (bara) in his hand and makes a circle round the fire in the following manner: his first position is at the west side of the fire, facing east, and he says ā thwā ātarom gārayēmī (‘I praise your fire’, AN. 1). Then he moves to the north-east corner and recites vangheush manangho zaothrabyo yazamaide (‘we worship good mind with libations’, ibid.). The third position is the south-east corner, where he repeats the first words. The fourth is at the east corner, and he makes a second recital of the second phrase having uxdāhe (‘word’) instead of managhō. Next is the south-west corner, with again a recital of the first words. The sixth is the north-west corner, where he repeats the second formula with
shyaorthnahe ('deed') instead of mananghō. The seventh is north, where he says saokāi mananghe ('for the advantage of mind'); the eighth is at the south, with the words saokāi vacanghe ('for the advantage of word'), and finally he takes the original position again, reciting saokāi shyaorthne ('for the advantage of deed'), and then places a little sandalwood and frankincense upon the fire.(132)

Then he recites the Ātaš Nyāish eleven times in Hāvan Gāh, nine times in Rapithvin Gāh, seven times in Uzērin and Aiwisrūthrim, and six times in Ushāhin.(133) During the first Nyāish recital, at intervals of a few words, the priest offers bits of sandalwood and frankincense. Also during the recital of the first Nyāish and during the recital of the first Pāzand portion, when he utters the words dushmata, dushuxta, duzvarshta ('bad thought, bad word, bad deed'), he rings a bell three times. Some priests ring the bell three times at each word, making nine bell-ringings all together. At the end of the recital of the two yathā ahū vairvīs after the first Ātaš Nyāish, he draws two circles, the second outside the first, in the ash with the ladle in his right hand, he himself walking right round the fire altar from north-east through south back to north-east as he does so; and at the end of the third recital of the Ātaš Nyāish he obliterates these circles, first the outer, and then the inner one, during the two yathā ahū vairvīs. In the first and fifth Gāhs (Hāvan and Ushāhin) the priest recites the Ātaš Nyāishes facing east, but during the other three Gāhs he faces west.

For a lesser fire, which need not be flaming brightly all the time, and is therefore usually covered with hot ashes to keep the embers alive, the servitor first makes a hollow in the hot ash, with a metal bara (ladle), and places a new piece of wood in it.(134) (In Iran the wood preferred for fuel is pomegranate, and also the wood from apricot and pistachio trees. In every case all the bark must be thoroughly removed.) Then he pushes the warm ash back around the new piece of wood and, in Iran, places kūsēr (chopped cornstalks) on top of the fire so that it blazes up. Over this he scatters a little frankincense (or sandalwood). Even for the lesser fires, the offering of a ‘throne’ to the fire is performed at high festivals. In the case of Dādgāh fires in the Yazdi area, the number of bōy dādan varies from three times a day to (exceptionally) once in two days.(135)

Apart from the sacred fire in the temple, fire is evidently present at every phase of Zoroastrian life. When, for instance, a baby is born, fire, or a lamp, is kept burning for at least three days and nights in the room, in order to prevent attacks of evil.(136) At a betrothal, an oil lamp is lit in each of the two houses
and a silver coin is placed before it by women who are visiting from the partner’s house. At weddings, which among the Iranis usually take place at midnight, the ceremony is completed by the bride and groom, hand in hand, led by dahmobed (assistant to the priest), circling fire burning in a brazier placed in the court-yard. When a person dies, a lamp is lit and kept burning for three days in the room, or on a place near where the corpse’s head had been. When the corpse is carried to the daxma, a fire is kindled for three days in the ātash-sūz (sagdi in Parsi usage), built near the daxma.

Moreover, fire must be present for the ceremony of hamāzōr (ritual for brotherly unity), at tan-dorostī (for the sick), and at Panji (the festival of the five ‘Gāthā’ days at the end of the year). A fire is also lit on the roof in farewell to the fravashis, who have been visiting their former abodes for the last days of the year.

On Rūz Ādur of Māh Ādur, the ninth day of the ninth month of the Zoroastrian calendar, Ādhurgān festival is celebrated in honour of Ādur, the yazad of fire. On that day people go to the fire temples and recite the Ātash Nyāśī. This festival is very popular among the Parsis.

Another, older, festival of fire is Sada, the ‘Hundredth-day feast’, held a hundred days before Nō Rūz (new year), which means that, originally, it was a midwinter feast. The Parsis, who have no real winter in Gujarat, have abandoned this festival; and because of calendar confusions, the feast does not currently take place in winter in the most traditionalist of the Irani villages. Nevertheless, making a great fire in the open at sunset, with wood collected by the faithful, must be a visible affirmation of the power of Zoroastrianism over evil, in the shape of the darkness of night, which is driven back by the bright flames.

Conclusion

We have been discussing what the temple cult of fire is in Zoroastrianism, and what it means to the Zoroastrians, who are generally called ‘fire-worshippers’. Amongst all the customs of fire-worship, or the veneration of fire, which have been practised widely throughout the world, it was the temple cult of fire which singled out Zoroastrians as fire-worshippers. However, no reference to this cult can be traced in the original words of Zoroaster, nor in the older parts of the later Avesta, nor in the early historical period of Zoroastr-
anism. The older cult of the ever-burning hearth fire is not particularly Zoroastrian nor new. For the Indo-Iranian people, a house fire was to be kept burning continually while the house-head lived; and indeed the cult of the hearth fire had probably been known already to the Indo-Europeans, since it is attested among the Greeks and Indians as well as the ancient Iranians.

A strict prohibition on defilement was applied in the veneration of the hearth fire, which not always have been easy to observe, particularly for a people who were in a nomadic state and much on the move. The story of Keresâspa, the legendary hero who was accused of having defiled the fire on which he was cooking a meal, seems to illustrate the antiquity of this purity law, as well as showing how it could be accidentally broken.

When Zoroaster reformed the religion of the Iranians, he preached a highly moral doctrine, which embodied its own specific cosmology and eschatology. Fire was conceived of as a vital force which pervades all the Creations of Ahura Mazda, and animates them. Without fire there would be no movement or life, which is one reason why fire is closely linked with asha, the principle which regulates movement or the course of life. Fire is a reminder and helper for a good man to be on a right course. Accordingly, at the last Judgment, fire will be present to symbolize righteousness and its victory, through the ordeal of molten metal. In referring to cosmic and symbolic fire, Zoroaster used very vivid images, taken from visible fire, therefore his cosmology and eschatology gave great support to the veneration of actual fire.

However, although fire was particularly important in his thought, it is also true that fire was not the only element which he required to be venerated. Each of the seven creations of Abura Mazdâ was undoubtedly to be worshipped; and among them water appears to have been treated in a manner very similar to fire, both by pagan Iranians and Zoroastrians. To maintain the purity of water and to pray before it with offerings was very important throughout the known history of Zoroastrianism.

In the case of fire, minor contaminations, such as something falling on to the hearth accidentally, must have happened in daily life even among Zoroastrians, who were particularly careful to maintain the purity of fire. (As we know, it was they among the Indo-Europeans who abandoned or prohibited the custom of cremation, for they thought that a dead body would defile the
purity of fire. (149) Rituals for purifying defiled fires were probably therefore evolved in the very early days of Zoroastrianism. When there are fires which should be in a state of purity, but which suffer from defilement or ill-treatment, it is meritorious or even a duty for Zoroastrians to redeem them. The Ātash buzorg kardan ritual, (150) carried out in expiation of such offences, is still practised in the Yazdi area, apparently as a continuation of ancient observance; for the purification of 16 kinds of contaminated fire is mentioned in the Vendīdād. (151)

When the Achaemenians formed their vast empire, the royal hearth fire, besides being a private house fire, seems to have acquired a public character as a sort of symbol of the life and prosperity of the nation, and its unity. The rock-reliefs of the Achaemenian kings show a symbolic presentation of the empire, focused on the king reverencing what is probably the dynastic fire; and this scene is supported by representatives of all the peoples of the empire, while above it are the sun and moon and xᵛarəməh (kingly glory), (152) all of which are taken to be great protectors for the Zoroastrians.

The temple cult of fire was probably introduced into Zoroastrianism in the reign of Artaxerxes II, influenced by the establishment of an image cult in connection with 'Aŋahitā'. (153) By the time of Artaxerxes II, the concept of a public fire fostered by the worship of the royal house fire, must have been easy to accept. Therefore the erection to the introduction of the new temple cult into orthodox Zoroastrianism may well have been simply an increase in the reverence for fire, which had undoubtedly always been a main symbol of Zoroastrianism.

The most important characteristic of a Zoroastrian temple fire is that it is set apart and isolated. Once established in its consecrated sanctuary, the temple fire receives only the three offerings of fuel, incense and zōhr (fat) for its maintenance, and it rests in the 'proper place' in the safest manner, guarded by qualified priests or at least by adequately instructed, upright men. Treated like this, the temple fire is believed to be purer and more powerful than an ordinary house fire, which is used for practical purposes. Thus it is said that the temple fire, (particularly the Wahrām fire), can kill 1000 demons in the night. (154) Therefore the temple fire served admirably the function of purifying contaminated fires, for its power helps to purify and redeem them, if they are brought to the sanctuary and left within reach of its power.

In Sasanian times, the symbolic use of fire developed seemingly to its
height. Fire was established 'victoriously' in conquered lands, and the fires of local princes were replaced by the Sasanian Royal Fire.\(^{(155)}\) The dynastic fire was used as a main symbol of the dynasty, by means of being depicted on the reverse of coins, and thus served to propagate the unique authority of Sasanian rule. Many fire temples were established, not only by kings but also by powerful and wealthy priests or noblemen, especially in the area of Pars and its neighbourhood. The flourishing of temple fires, headed by the three greatest ones, Ādur Farnbāg, Ādur Gushnasp and Ādur Burzēn Mihr, was helped by the scholarly development of theology in Sasanian times; and it was the popularity of venerating fire in such a public manner which confirmed unbelievers in the custom of calling the Zoroastrians 'fire-worshippers'.

The grading of temple fires into three, Ātash Bahrām, Ātash Ādarān, and Ādurōg-i Dādgāh, was probably a relatively late development, but the importance of the fire temple in Zoroastrian life became firmly established, and remains until modern times, Thus the ash from a temple fire has become essential for the vital purificatory rituals, and truly by now Zoroastrians find it difficult to conceive of their religion existing without temple fires. This is all the more strongly felt, since very few Zoroastrians now have a hearth fire, and the modern equivalents cannot really serve the function of a religious symbol. Hence it is said that 'people of the Good Religion (i.e. Zoroastrians) cannot live without the fire (Bahārān)'\(^{(156)}\)

**Notes**

(1) SKZ. Parthian, 1. 20. On the romantic legend of his lineage, see Christensen, L'Iran, 88.
(2) The geographical place is not yet identified.
(3) Tabari, 813; Nöldeke, 1.
(4) She may have been a daughter or cousin of Ardawān, or a niece of Farrukhān, son of Ardawān. See Christensen, op. cit., and E. E. Herzfeld, Paikuli, monument and inscription of the early history of the Sasanian empire, Berlin, 1924, vol. 1, 40.
(5) On the spelling of the name, see M. Boyce, The Letter of Tansar, Roma, 1968, 3.
(6) The Pahlavi form of Avestan aēthra.pati- ("teacher" spiritual leader').
(7) Only a Persian translation survives, made from an Arabic rendering of the original Middle Persian, see Boyce, op. cit., 11-21.
(8) Ibid., 47.
(9) Ibid.
(12) Nöldeke, Tabari, 12. 17.
(13) M. Sprengling, Third Century Iran, Chicago, 1953, 17.
(14) Each Sasanian king can be recognised by his distinctive crown. The shape of the crowns
is discussed in a full list by H. Goetz, ‘The History of Persian Costume’ in Pope, SPA, III, 2227-2256.

(15) J. de Morgan, op. cit., 646-649. John Allans considers both figures to be priests. See ‘The Coinage of the Sasanians (A) Types’, Pope, SPA, I, 816. See also F. D. J. Paruck, Sasanian coins, Bombay, 1924.


(17) In the case of rare coins of Ardashir, shown together with Shapur I, and of Wahrām II, depicted with his son, see Morgan, op. cit., 657-664 and 670-675.

(18) Allans, art. cit., 818.

(19) Christensen, L’Iran, 162.

(20) Paruck, op. cit., 27.


(22) Cf. the inscription on a pillar in Bishapur, see R. Ghirshman, ‘L’inscription du monument de Chāpour 1er à Chāpour’, Revue des Arts Asiatiques, 10, 1937, 123-129.

(23) See further P. Ackerman, ‘Sasanian Seals’, SPA I, 784-815.


(25) Ackerman, art. cit., 785.

(26) See also fig. 9.

(27) Herzfeld, Paikuli, I, 82.

(28) As this object is not perforated, it may perhaps not be a seal, but an amulet, as suggested by H. H. von der Osten, Ancient Oriental Seals in the Collection of Mr. Edward T. Newell, Chicago, 1934, 79.

(29) In the case of Pl. 39, there seems to be a flame on the altar, but it is more likely that it is in fact a sword.

(30) See Strabo, 15. 3. 14.

(31) For details see Sprengling, op. cit., 17.

(32) Kirdēr left four inscriptions, at Naqsh-i Rustam (KNR), Ka‘ba-i Zardusht (KKZ), Sar-Mashhad (KSM), and Naqsh-i Rajab (KNRb), which have been conflated by J. Brunner, art. cit.

(33) Kirdēr appears in a Manichaeian text, M 6031, 11-13, see W. B. Henning, ‘Mani’s Last Journey’, BSOAS, 1942, 948-949.

(34) Nöldeke, Tabari, 109.


(37) About the details of information given by Arab and Persian writers, see Schippmann, Feuerheiligtümer, 86-94. See also A. V. W. Jackson, ‘The Location of the Farnbāg Fire, the most ancient of the Zoroastrian Fires’, JAOS, 1921, 81-106.


(41) See Christensen, L’Iran, 448.

(42) About various royal gifts to the shrine, see Ibid., 166.


(44) For a description of the buildings, see Schippmann, Feuerheiligtümer, 329-338 (with further
references).
(45) *Shāhnāme*, Warner, 7. 94.
(49) For full references concerning this site, see *Ibid.*, 37–45.
(52) See *Ibid.*, 499 ff., on this construction.
(58) See Chapter 1.
(59) This prayer consists of the sections identical with Y. 33. 12–14, *Sīrōza* 1. 9., Y. 62. 1–10, Y. 34. 4.
(60) ‘Full age’ in Zoroastrianism meant 15 years old (Yt. 8. 13).
(61) This is also what Strabo noticed in his time (15. 13. 732), and remains the practice down to modern times.
(62) *Vohu-kerviti-* is translated as ‘sulphur’ in the *Pahlavi Vendidad*, but this rendering is doubtful, as sulphur cannot be classified as a plant. In modern usage, sandalwood and frankincense are generally offered, when means permit.
(63) That is the ceremony in which the 72 kā’s are recited by two priests.
(64) See p. 50, above.
(65) Probably this connection is made up simply because of a similarity between *urvāzista-* and *vurav.*
(66) Y. 17. 11, also WZ. 3. 77–82. In *GBd.*, 18. 1–6, the explanation of *Barzzi-savang* and *Spamist* is reversed.
(67) WZ 24. 6; see also *DK*, VII, 4. 74, transl. by west, *SBE* XLVII, 67.
(68) For example, Manushchihir took oath by *Barzin* (*Burzān*) *Mīhr*, *Shāhnāme*, Warner, I. 237.
(69) See *Dd.*, 89. 1; west, *SBE* XVIII, 254.
(70) *Sad Dar*, 11. 4; *West*, *SBE* XXIV, 271.
(71) *Dd*. 48. 15, West, *SBE* XVIII, 164.
(72) *Dd*. 78. 19, West, *SBE* XVIII, 232.
(74) Ants for Zoroastrians are noxious creatures (*xrafstar*), created by Ahreman.
(76) *Sad Dar*, 39. 4, West, *SBE* XXIV, 301.
(77) Later the term *Dār-i Mīhr* came to be a standard one for a fire temple. See further M. Boyce, ‘On the Sacred Fires of the Zoroastrians*, *BSOAS* 31, 1968, 68. On the usage of *-gah* and *-dān* see W. Eilers, ‘Herd und Feuerstatte in Iran’, *Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Sprachwissenschaft* 12, 1974, 312–313.
(78) In the *KnA* (a later work, probably of the 5th century A.D.), the expression *Ātāxš-i Wahrām* is used for the foundations of Ardashir.
(79) See p. 63.
(80) See M. Boyce, art. cit., 67.
(81) *Riāyats*, Unvala, I. 72; *Dhabhar*, 60.

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(82) Sagri means ‘brazier’ or ‘fire-place’. For Iranian ātash-sāz, see M. Boyce, ‘An old village dakhma of Iran’, Ph. Gignoux and A. Tafazzoli (ed.), Memorial Jean de Menasce, Louvain, 1974, 8.


(85) Rivâyats, Unvala I, 67; Dhabhar, 56.

(86) See M. Boyce, art. cit., 58.

(87) Rivâyats, Unvala I, 75; Dhabhar, 70.

(88) Ibid., Unvala I. 161; Dhabhar, 175.

(89) Ibid., Unvala I. 307; Dhabhar, 291.

(90) Ibid., Unvala, I. 701; Dhabhar, 436.


(92) Rivâyats, Unvala, I. 45; Dhabhar, 39.

(93) Shāhnamâne, Warner, 2. 218–221.


(97) I. e. priests who were initiated navazud (who had undergone Navar and Maratib), and who wore the padam (penom, mouthveil), see Rivâyats, Unvala, I. 76; Dhabhar, 72–73.

(98) Ibid., I. 65 and 67; Ibid., 56 and 57.

(99) Ibid., I. 73; Ibid., 62.

(100) See Modi, CC, 219.

(101) Rivâyats, Unvala I. 73; Dhabhar, 62.


(103) For drôn or baj as liturgical services, see M. Boyce and F. Kotwal, ‘Zoroastrian baj and drôn-I’, BSOAS, 1971, 58–60.

(104) See also Chapter 5, note 20.

(105) See Rivâyats, Unvala, I. 74; Dhabhar, 63–64. Yet the numbers vary even according to Kamdin Shâpur himself, who gave the list published there. He stated that the number was 1001, but the total amount of fires which he gave adds up to 1103. According to Parsi usage, there are 1128 fires, see Modi, CC, 210. The following list os according to Kamdin Shâpur and Modi, loc. cit., with the differences between Persian and Parsi usage being shown by the Parsi usage in brackets.

(106) On the use of lightning, see Rivâyats, Unvala, I. 74; Dhabhar, 62–63.

(107) Modi, CC, 201–204.

(108) Rivâyats, Unvala, I. 75; Dhabhar, 69.

(109) Modi, CC, 204–205.

(110) Ibid., 205–206.

(111) See Chapter 5 above, p. 77.

(112) Rivâyats, Unvala, I. 67; Dhabhar, 56.

(113) Ibid., I. 72; Ibid., 61.

(114) Ibid.

(115) Dk. 9. 12. 1–3; West, SBE XXXVII, 189–190.

(116) See M. Boyce, Strongheld, 186–189.

(117) Modi, CC, 212.
Details are given below.

An area enclosed by a line ritually drawn to ward off evil influences.

There rituals described here are according to Modi's account (CC. 201–214), therefore Parsi usage. In Iran, though no new Ātash Bahrām has been established for centuries, according to the Rivāyat the rituals are basically the same, see Unvala, I. 74; Dhabhar, 63–70.

Once gēmēz (bull’s urine) seems to have been used for this purpose, see Modi, CC, 229–230.


The kusti (kōstī) is the sacred cord which all Zoroastrians must wear continually.

Modi, CC, 87–88.

Ibid., 197–198.

Ibid., 102–11.

This description is according to M. Boyce, Stronghold, 136. See also Modi, CC, 141.

‘Taking the Bāj’ means saying an Avestan prayer before performing some acts, such as eating, having a bath, after which silence is kept until the act is completed, and the bāj is ‘left’ with another Avestan prayer.

Modi, CC, 140.

Ibid., 221–226.

Ibid., 220.

See Boyce, Stronghold, 75.

Ibid.

Some keep the lamp burning for ten, or even for forty days, see Modi, CC, 5.

See Ibid., 18–19.

See Boyce, Stronghold, 173. According to Modi (CC, 31), the Parsi practice is slightly different, but the essential fact, the presence of the fire being requisite, is the same.

Boyce, Stronghold, 152; Modi, CC, 59.

Rivāyat, Unvala, I. 71; Dhabhar, 58–59, see also Boyce, Stronghold, 194.

See Boyce, Stronghold, 43–44.


Ibid., 216–217.

Ibid., 225.

Modi, CC, 433; see also Boyce, Stronghold, 175.

Boyce, Stronghold, 176–182.

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