

ARTICLE

A note on Pahlavi lexicography: Middle Persian *hassār*, *hassārīh*

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Abstract

This article deals with the identification and interpretation of two rare Middle Persian words. Firstly, some attestations of the as yet unrecognized word <hs'lyh> *hassārīh* are discussed, showing that it means “direction”. Then, a semantic analysis of its underived counterpart *hassār* is carried out, as a basis for an etymological proposal. Finally, it is argued that *hassār* descends from Old Persian **haçā-sāra*- “(having the head) in the same direction”, and a possible reconstruction of the semantic development of the word is provided.

Keywords: Pahlavi; Avestan; Middle Persian; *hassār*; *hassārīh*

1. K43c and the word <hs'lyh> in the Zoroastrian ritual vocabulary

The fragment of Pahlavi manuscript labelled K43c consists of two non-contiguous folios (numbered 186 and 191 in Persian script) containing some liturgical indications concerning the *Paragna* ritual.¹ The text is still unpublished but is easily accessible thanks to the facsimile printed in Christensen (1936, vol. 2).²

Even from a superficial look, it is clear that ms. K43c provides a slightly different formulation of some ritual indications already known from the *Nērangestān*, which have recently been studied by Cantera (2020). In particular, f. 186 coincides to a great extent with N.30.10–11, where the procedures for drawing the water for libations are described, and ends with a fragment corresponding to N.49.14 dealing with the collection of consecrated milk (Av. *gqm jūuuiqam*, Pahl. <jyw'> *jīw*) which is going to be mixed with the water (cf. Cantera 2020: 73 f.). F. 191 (starting from l. 3) contains ritual indications on the cutting of the *barsom* similar to those given in N.79.8 ff. (cf. Cantera 2020: 79–81).

The fact that these passages from the *Nērangestān* have the same content as K43c but express it in different words is very helpful in clarifying the meaning of the very first word occurring in K43c, the subject of this paper. As I shall argue below, this word, which is not registered in the main lexicographical repertoires of Pahlavi, should be read as <hs'lyh> *hassārīh*. Here follows a synoptical presentation of the sentences in K43c containing this term, alongside their equivalent in the *Nērangestān*. The edition

¹ Cf. Christensen (1936, vol. 2, 7 f.), Asmussen (1992, with further literature) and Martínez-Porro 2017: 107.

² Alberto Cantera is currently working on an edition of this ms. together with other witnesses of the *Paragna* ritual.

of the passages from the Nērangestān is based on Kotwal and Kreyenbroek (1992–2009, abbreviated K&K) with some improvements made possible by comparison with K43c.

K43c f. 186r ll. 1–2

[AMT zwhl YNSBWNyt' š OL] hs'lyh Y MYA
OZLWNšn' APš 'pst'k' PWN hs'lyh Y MYA
YMRWNšn'

[ka zōhr stānēd ā-š ō] hassārīh ī āb šawišn
u-š abestāg pad hassārīh ī āb gōwišn.

“[When he takes the *zōhr*] he should go
towards the water and recite the Avesta
directed towards the water.”

N.30.10

AMT zwhl YNSBWNyt' š PWN wl Y MYA
OZLWNšn' APš 'pst'k' PWN *hs'lyh [mss.
hslyh]³ Y MYA YMRWNšn'

ka zōhr stānēd ā-š pad war ī āb šawišn u-š
abestāg pad *hassārīh ī āb gōwišn.

“When he takes the *zōhr* he should go
towards the water and recite the Avesta
directed towards the water.”

K43c f. 186v ll. 10–11

AMT jyw' OHDWNyt' š OL hs'lyh <Y>
gwspond OZLWNšn' APš 'pst'k' [...
YMRWNšn' ...]

ka jīw gīrēd ā-š ō hassārīh ī gōspand šawišn
u-š abestāg [... gōwišn ...]

“When he takes the *jīw* he should
move towards the sheep and [recite] the
Avesta.”

N.49.14

AMT jyw' OHDWNyt' š BRA *hs'lyh⁴ Y
gwspond OZLWNšn' APš 'pst'k' PWN *hs'lyh⁵
<Y> gwspond gwbsn'

ka jīw gīrēd ā-š bē *hassārīh ī gōspand
šawišn u-š abestāg pad *hassārīh ī gōspand
gōwišn.

“When he takes the *jīw* he should move
towards the sheep and recite the Avesta
directed towards the sheep.”

K43c f. 191r ll. 4–6

AMT KN cy<ny>t' *š [ms. 'h] BRA OL hs'lyh
<Y> wyšk' OZLWNšn' APš 'pst'k' PWN hs'lyh
<Y> wyšk' *YMRWNšn' [ms. 'yt']

ka ōh čī<nē>d *ā-š bē ō hassārīh <ī> wēšag
šawišn u-š abestāg pad hassārīh <ī> wēšag
*gōwišn.

“When he is to collect it, he should go in
the direction of the thicket and recite the
Avesta directed towards the thicket.”

N.79.9

AMT OL cynyt' BRA OL *wl *Y⁶ wyšk
OZLWNšn' APš 'pst'k' PWN *hs'lyh⁷ <Y>
wyšk' gwbsn'

ka *ōh čīnēd bē ō *war ī wēšag šawišn u-š
abestāg pad *hassārīh <ī> wēšag gōwišn.

“When he is to collect it, he should go in
the direction of the thicket and recite the
Avesta directed towards the thicket.”

As can be seen, Pahl. *hassārīh* is used as an alternative to Pahl. *war* with the meaning “side, direction”.⁸ Despite what may appear from Kotwal and Kreyenbroek’s edition, where *war* is systematically restored regardless of the manuscript readings, in the quoted passages

³ Cf. K&K/3: 132, fn. 610 who read <XDYLY> and emend it to *war*.

⁴ Mss. <hslyh>; cf. K&K/3: 224 fn. 1443 who read <SLY> and emend it to *war*.

⁵ Mss. <hylyh>; cf. K&K/3: 224 fn. 1444 who read <YLY> and emend it to *war*.

⁶ Mss. <wlš>; cf. K&K/4: 56 fn. 255.

⁷ Mss. <hsyh>; cf. K&K/4: 56 fn 256.

⁸ This meaning for Pahl. *war* is not reported in *CPD* but is rightly recognized by K&K/3: 316 (s.v. *war*²) and Cantera (2020: 73 f.) in his translation. Cf. also the meaning “side, part” in NP listed by Steingass (1892) s.v. *bar*.

from the Nērangestān there are only two certain occurrences of *war*, whereas everywhere else corrupted spellings for *hassārīh* are found. As a matter of fact, this is not the only case in which spellings pointing to Pahl. *hassārīh* have been misinterpreted or emended by editors. I have been able to identify at least four more passages from the Pahlavi religious literature.

N. 52.7 (after K&K/3: 236 f.):⁹

AMT 'hlwb'n lwb'n plwhl YDBHWN't' OL dšntwm blswm QDM 'y YBLWNyt' PWN
 *hs'lyh¹⁰ Y zwhlk'

ka ahlawān ruwān frawahr yazād, ō dašntom barsom abar ē barēd, pad *hassārīh ī
 zōhrag

“When he worships the souls and *fravashis* of the righteous, let him make the offering on the point of the *barsom* that is farthest to the right, beside the *zōhr* cup.”

Pahl.Riv. 58.38 (after Williams 1990: 208–9):

š'n' BRA OL hs'lyh Y blsm OZLWNšn' APšn' 'pst'k PWN hs'lyh Y blsm gwbšn'

ā-šān bē ō hassārīh ī barsom šawišn u-šān abestāg pad hassārīh ī barsom gōwišn.

“Then they should go towards the *barsom* and recite the Avesta directed towards the *barsom*.”

Boyce and Kotwal (1971: 68) take the spelling for <hs'lyh> as a corruption of Av. *ašaiia* and interpret the “*ašaiia* of the *barsom*” as a reference to Y.8.2 (so Williams 1990), but there is clearly no need for such an emendation.

ŠNŠ.Supp. 13.9 (after Kotwal 1969: 42 f.):

HNA l'd PWN ahurāi mazdāi hs'lyh Y dtwš zwhl hm LBBME Y OLE zwt' l'st' YHSNWšn'

ēd rāy pad ahurāi mazdāi hassārīh ī daθuš zōhr ham dil ī ōy zōt rāst dārišn

“On account of this, at *ahurāi mazdāi* the *zōhr* should be held in the direction of the *daθuš* exactly level with the heart of the *zōt*.”

Kotwal (1969: 102 fn. 16) reads <'s'lyh>, but in the text emends it to an otherwise unattested **sarih*, tentatively translated as “above” (not in his glossary at p. 169). A reading *hassārīh* “direction” is supported by the parallels exposed so far and fits perfectly within Kotwal’s interpretation of the sentence.

⁹ According to Alberto Cantera (personal communication), to whom I owe the reference to this passage, a comparison with N. 52.6, where *ō hōytm ī barsom* “the point of the *barsom* that is farthest to the left” is glossed with *pad war ī zōhrag*, could reveal a slight semantic difference between *war* and *hassārīh*, at least as far as their usage in ritual context is concerned. This is indeed conceivable and deserves further investigation, although it probably does not affect much the semantic interpretation of *hassārīh* outside the technical vocabulary of Zoroastrian ritual, which will be the object of the analysis carried through in the next paragraphs.

¹⁰ Mss. <hslyh>; cf. K&K/3: 236 fn. 1559 who read <'SLY> and emend it to *war*.

There remains one attestation of *hassārīh* in a difficult passage of the Pahlavi translation of the *Gāθā Ahunauuaitī* (Y.28.9b):¹¹

yōi vā yōiθamā dasamē stūtām

“nous qui avons pris place à la cérémonie de vos éloges” (Kell.)

“(we) who are standing by at the offering of praises to You” (Humb.)

MNW 'w' HNA Y LKWM hs'lyh YHBWNm st'yt'l'n'

kē ō ēd ī ašmāh hassārīh dahom stāyīdārān

“(we) who (are) in Your direction tenth among worshippers (?)”

Presumably, already in the most ancient layer of the Pahl. translation, this sentence was not correctly understood due to the ambiguity of the Old Avestan (OAv.) forms *yōiθamā* (Pf.Ind.1.Pl. of *yat-* “to take a position”) and *dasamē* (Loc.Sg. of *dasama-* “offering”) and was consequently given a word-for-word translation which does not make full sense in Middle Persian.

As to the rendering of *dasamē*, it seems preferable to me to accept the reading of ms. K5 <YHBWNm> (subsequently corrected to <YHBWNyt'>, which is the reading of all the other mss.) to be read as *dahom* “tenth”, written as a Pres.1.Sg. of *dādan* “to give” due to homophony. This form can be explained as an erroneous translation of OAv. *dasamē* (mistaken for Young Avestan (YAv.) *dasama-* “tenth” instead of YAv. *dasma-* “offering”), according to an interpretation already found in Y.11.9, a YAv. passage where *dasmē yōi vā yaēθma* is quoted at the end of a numerical series 1–10 (cf. Malandra and Ichaporia 2013: 16).¹² The later corruption in Y.28.9b of <YHBWNm> to <YHBWNyt'> *dahēd* (Pres.2.Pl. rather than 3.Sg.) may have been triggered by the presence of <LKWM> *ašmāh* “you” in the sentence.¹³

The only Pahl. word which could represent the translation of OAv. *yōiθamā* is clearly *hassārīh*. This erroneous translation is most easily explained by assuming that *yōiθamā* was not interpreted as a verb but rather as an abstract noun in *-man-* or *-ma-* from the perfect stem of the verb *yat-* (*yōit-*, variant of *yaēt-*).¹⁴ Since *yat-* is usually translated as a verb of motion in Pahlavi,¹⁵ it does not seem unlikely that the assumed abstract derivative was rendered with a word meaning “direction”.

Admittedly, such an explanation must remain hypothetical to some degree, as long as the sense of the whole Pahl. sentence is unclear. However, I believe that the recognition of

¹¹ This and the following passages from the Pahlavi translation of the Avesta are presented in a new critical edition prepared with the aid of the material published online on the Avestan Digital Archive (<https://ada.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/>). Since in some cases the interpretation of the OAv. passages is doubtful, the translations by Kellens and Pirart (1988–91, abbreviated as Kell.) and Humbach, Elfenbein, and Skjærvø (1991, abbreviated as Humb.) will always be presented in parallel.

¹² Cf. also Fiō *dasmahe*: *dahom*. The reading of the mss. is usually emended to **dasmahe* (cf. AiWb: 702, Klingenschmitt 1968: xix) but the Av. spelling *dasmahe* could represent a further example of the erroneous association of *dasma-* with a meaning “tenth” in the Pahlavi translation practice.

¹³ A reading *dahēd*, lacking a clear counterpart in the Av. text, is accepted by all other editors (Dhabhar 1949, Shaked 1996, Skjærvø 2000, Malandra and Ichaporia 2013).

¹⁴ Cf. AiWb: 1236–8 and Kellens (1984: 401). For a discussion on the Pahl. translators’ understanding of Av. morphological derivation cf. Cantera (2004: 249 f., 329–36).

¹⁵ Cf. the examples reported in AiWb: 1236–8, especially the quotation of this passage in Y.11.9 where *yōi vā yaēθma* is translated as *kē-mān az ašmāh mad estēd*.

an attestation of Pahl. *hassārīh* “direction” represents a step forward in comparison with previous attempts to read the same word as *asarīh* “endlessness, abundance” (Dhabhar 1949: 20 in the glossary)¹⁶ or *āsārīh* “encouragement” (cf. Shaked 1996: 654 fn. 40), which are both otherwise unattested and show no connection with the original Av. text. Likewise, Bartholomae’s emendation <hdyb’lyh> *ayārīh* “help, assistance” (followed by Malandra and Ichaporia 2013: 27) should be rejected as unnecessary.

2. The meaning of Manichaean Middle Persian <hs’r> and Pahlavi <hs’l>

The reason why the word written as <hs’lyh> has been transcribed as *hassārīh* in the previous paragraph is that I think it should be linked with Manichaean Middle Persian (MMP) <hs’r> *hassār*, translated as “likewise” (adv.), “like” (prep.) or “alike” (adj.) in the main dictionaries.¹⁷ Before I propose a new etymological interpretation for both words, it is worth analysing the few attestations of Middle Persian (MP) *hassār* in order to identify all of its semantic nuances. Firstly, some additional passages from the Pahlavi translation of the Gāthās will be introduced in which a spelling <hs’l> corresponding to MMP <hs’r> has mostly remained unnoticed.¹⁸ Then, the meaning of <hs’r> in its Manichaean occurrences will be discussed.

2.1. Pahlavi Yasna

The Pahlavi translation is quoted excluding the explanatory glosses which, as will be exemplified below, are later additions based only on the older Pahlavi word-for-word translation.¹⁹

Y.30.9d:

hīiaṭ haθrā manā bauuaṭ yaθrā cistiš aṅhaṭ maēθā.

“si nos pensées se concentrent là où la compréhension est ...” (Kell.).

“when (our) thoughts will have become concentrated (on the place) where insight may be present” (Humb.).

MNW hs’l mynšn’ YHWWNyt [...] ’š TME plc’nkyh AYT [...] BYN myhn’

kē hassār menišn bawēd [...] ā-š ānōh frazānagīh ast [...] andar mēhan

“he whose thought is concentrated (?), there dwells (?) his insight.”

Bartholomae (*AiWb*: 1763) simply transcribed the word as <a dd a r>, and Dhabhar (1949: 20 in the glossary, see n. 16) interpreted it as *asar*: “*a-sar mēnišn*, continuous thinking, concentrated mind”.²⁰ Skjærvø (2000), however, rightly recognized in this word the Pahl. counterpart of MMP *hassār*. Since *hassār* is employed to translate

¹⁶ The additional <’> in *-sār* is explained by Dhabhar by postulating a “pazandized” form of the common word *asar* “endless”.

¹⁷ Cf. Durkin-Meisterernst (2004: 185 f.), Boyce (1977: 47), ultimately depending on Andreas and Henning (1932: 212).

¹⁸ Cf. Malandra and Ichaporia (2013: 204), who list the spellings pointing to *hassār* among the “words of uncertain interpretation”.

¹⁹ Cf. Cantera (1999: 176 f. fn. 8 and 9) and Cantera (2004: 244–53).

²⁰ Cf. also the cautious considerations in Malandra and Ichaporia (2013: 33 fn. 8) who, however, emend the word to *hās*r (= Av. *hāθra-*, a measure of time!).

the OAv. adv. *haθrā*, its most plausible translation is “in the same place”, so, figuratively, “concentrated” with reference to thought. Unfortunately, the sense of the whole sentence both in Avestan and Middle Persian is not fully clear, so it cannot be decided whether the equivalence of *haθrā* and *hassār* is the result of a mechanical word-for-word translation or of a conscious interpretation of the Av. text. The explanatory gloss *kū menišn pad dastwarīh ī any dārēd* “i.e. (he) has his thought directed by someone else’s authority” is totally unrelated to the Av. text and probably depends on a reading *a-sār* “without head, without guide” (cf. Av. *asāra-*, Pahl. transl. **asardār*, *AiWb*: 210). Despite being useless for the purpose of clarifying the meaning of *hassār*, such a gloss demonstrates that the word belongs to the oldest stage of the MP language and had become unintelligible to later commentators.²¹

Y.32.6a–c:

pourū.aēnā ēnāxštā yāiš srāuuahiieitī yezī tāiš aθā
hātā.marānē ahurā vahištā vōistā manajhā
θβahmī vā mazdā xšaθrōi ašāicā sēnghō vīdqm.

“Puisque, ô Maître qui conserves en mémoire, tu connais par la très divine Pensée les ... des (torts) par lesquels celui qui en commet beaucoup cherche, en temps de trouble, à établir sa renommée, la définition (de ces torts) doit vous être exposée, (à toi), ô Mazdā, et à l’Harmonie, au moment d’exercer l’emprise sur toi.” (Kell.)

“The many crimes against peace with which (the deceitful one) strives for notoriety, whether he so (strives) with these (crimes) / Thou knowest (about that) through best thought, O Ahura, Thou who rememberest (people’s just) deserts. / Let praise be broadcast for You, O Wise One, and for Truth, in (the domain of) Thy power.” (Humb.)

KBD *kynyk’n’ kyn’ BOYHWNyhyt [...] MNW slwt YKOYMWNYt [...] AYK AMT OLEŠ’n’ hs’l [...] / šk’lk’ m’lynyt’l’ whrmzd [...] W ZK Y p’hlwm k’s Y PWN whwmn [...] / PWN *HNA Y LK LKWM whrmzd hwt’yh ZK Y hl’yjh hmwhtšn’ BRA YDOYTWNYhyt*

*was kēnīgān kēn xwāhīhēd [...] kē srūd ēstēd [...] kū ka awēšān hassār*²² [...]/

āškārag āmārēnīdār Ohrmazd [...] ud ān ī pahlom āgāh ī pad wahman [...]/

pad ēd ī tō ašmāh Ohrmazd xwadāyīh ān ī ahlāyīh hamōxtišn bē dānīhēd [...]

“It is desired that the hate of many malicious men is announced, because if they (are) that way, (You) Ohrmazd (are) the true reckoner and the highest knower by means of Wahman. In this realm of Yours, Ohrmazd, the teaching of righteousness will become known.”

Leaving aside the serious exegetical problems in this OAv. passage (cf. Kellens and Pirart 1988–91, vol. 3, 84 f.), it seems to me that the Pahl. word-for-word translation reveals a coherent interpretation by the translator: the evil ones should be openly denounced because their behaviour will be judged and punished by Ohrmazd. In particular, the words *yezī tāiš aθā* at the end of the first line match perfectly with *ka awēšān hassār* “(lit.) if they so”. In this case, *hassār* appears to be employed in the more general meaning

²¹ On the importance of the Pahlavi translation of the Yasna and Vidēvdād as documents of early MP cf. again Cantera (1999) and Cantera (2004: 164–239).

²² So Skjærvø (2000). Malandra and Ichaporria (2013: 41 fn. 6) correct the text into <’s>, taking it as a transcription of Av. *aθā*.

of “so, that way”, without any local connotation.

Y.46.8a–b:

This last passage deserves discussion only because it contains a word apparently pointing to Pahl. <hs'1> (registered as <'s'1> in Dhabhar 1949 and compared to the previous attestations in Malandra and Ichaporria 2013: 204):

yā vā mōi yā gaēθā dazdē aēnaḥē
nōiṭ ahiiā mā āθriš šiiāθanāiš frōsiiāt

“[...] ou qui soumet mes troupeaux au tort, que le désastre (rituel) ne résulte pas pour moi de ses actes.”

“And if someone aims at my herds to injure (them), / may destruction not reach me through his actions.”

MNW ZK Y L gyh'n' YHBWNyt 'w' OLE kynyk' [...] / LA PWN ZK Y OLE kwnšn' 'w' *mn²³ 'slyš²⁴ l'nynyt'l 'HWEy_d²⁵

kē ān ī man gēhān dahēd ō ōy kēnīg [...]

nē pad ān ī ōy kunišn 'ō man (?) *āθriš [...] frāz rānēnīdār 'hē

“Who gives injury to my world,

may (he) not direct āθriš against me (?) as a consequence of his actions.”

In order to establish a plausible reconstruction of the original word-for-word translation of this passage, the manuscript text needs to be corrected in several points. In my opinion, the corruptions here are twofold. First, some mechanical errors took place: the sequence here conjecturally restored as *ō man* “against me” was corrupted into a spelling pointing to <ANE> *an* “I”²⁶ and the mere transcription of the OAv. hapax *āθriš* <'slyš> was erroneously split into two words, originating in some mss. the pseudo-attestation of *hassār* <'s'1> with which we are concerned. At a later stage, maybe at the time when the explanatory glosses were added, the correct Opt.3.Sg. *rānēnīdār 'hē* was deliberately changed into *rānēnīdār ham* in order to make sense of the corruptions, disregarding the fact that this would have compromised the correspondence with the original Av. text.²⁷ The corruption of <'slyš> into <'s'1> lyš> (maybe passing through a stage where <'slyš> was written with double <l> for an alleged /l/) was already found in the text read by the later commentators, who explain *asār rēš* “infinite wound” as *kē pad tan ud ruwān rēš kunēd* “which causes a wound both in the body and in the soul” (i.e. both in life and in afterlife, forever).²⁸ Once again, such a

²³ Pt4, Mf4 <ANE' OLE Y>, F2 <ANE' OLE ' >, T6 <ANE OLE>, E7 <HWE'm OLE Y>, R413 <ANE>, J2 <ANE \OL Y/>, K5, M1 <Y ANE 'w' > (for an up-to-date discussion of the grouping of the mss. in families cf. Zeini 2020: 10–13, 26 f.). Skjærvø (2000), Malandra and Ichaporria (2013): <ANE OLE>.

²⁴ Pt4, E7, T6: <'sl lyš>, F2, J2, K5 <'s'1 lyš>. Skjærvø (2000): *asār rēš* (but see below fn. 28), Malandra and Ichaporria (2013: 72 fn. 1): **asā rēš*.

²⁵ Mss. <HWE'()m>.

²⁶ For some examples of confusion between phonetic and heterographical reading of <ANE> cf. Bartholomae (1906: 122–4). The most plausible way to account for the following <OLE> in all mss. but R413 is to postulate a dittography of *ō man* written as <'w' mn> and <OL mn> respectively.

²⁷ For the meaning of the verb *rānēnīdan* “to drive, to push” cf. König (2010: 193 f. fn. 124 f.) and Skjærvø (2012: 39–41).

²⁸ P.O. Skjærvø (p.c.) has kindly suggested to me an alternative solution: the reading <'sl> could be a spelling for Pahl. *āhr* “dread, fury”, translating OAv. *āθriš*, and <lyš> *rēš* “wound” could be a gloss to *āhr*.

reconstruction is rather hypothetical, since it is impossible to know to what extent the Pahlavi translator understood the OAv. text in the first place. Anyway, it should appear from this discussion that the attestation of the spelling <’s’l> in Pahl. Y.46.b is in all likelihood unrelated to the word *hassār*.

2.2. Manichaean texts and Armenian *hasarak*

In the Manichaean corpus, the passages where the meaning of <hs’r> *hassār* is recognizable with enough certainty are only five. They are presented below grouped according to their meaning (the references are based on Durkin-Meisterernst 2004):

- a) *hassār* as an adverb meaning “in the same place/direction as” (as in Pahl. Y. 30.9 = OAv. *haθrā*).

M7981 I V i 28 (Hutter 1992, l. 332), transl. Boyce (1975: 66 fn. 17):

ud parrōn az zamīg ud āsmān hāmkišwar, ud bēdandar az hān panz dušox ō ērag pādgōs-rōn, az anōh ōrrōntar abar tam dušox, az xwarāsān dā ō xwarniwār pādgōs, *hassār wahištāw ēg dēsmān īg nōg dēs*.

“beyond the cosmos of earths and heavens, and outside those five hells in the south quarter, nearer (?) than there, upon the darkness of hell, from the east to the west region, corresponding to Paradise, build a new building.”

Although the traditional translation “corresponding to” (Andreas and Henning 1932 “entsprechend”) is ambiguous, it seems difficult not to give *hassār* a local meaning (“in the same place as Paradise” or “in the same direction as Paradise”). In fact, the whole passage is aimed at describing – in a fairly cryptic way²⁹ – the place where the “New Building” (*dēsmān īg nōg*, see Andreas and Henning 1932: 184 fn. 1) is going to be built.

- b) *hassār* as an adverb meaning “so, likewise, in the same way” (as in Pahl. Y.32.6 = OAv. *aθā*).

M7981 II V ii 3, 13 (Hutter 1992, ll. 757–67):

ud *hassār-iz hōšag axtar pad ēw māh yak rōz abzawēd [...]*

“and likewise, the constellation of Virgo exceeds one month by one day”

ud *hassār-iz māhīg axtar pad ēw māh yak rōz abzawēd [...]*

“and likewise, the constellation of Pisces exceeds one month by one day”.

These parallel sentences follow a passage dealing with the relation between epagomenal days and constellations in the Iranian and non-Iranian (here probably Babylonian) calendar.³⁰ According to the traditional interpretation, followed in the given translation, *hassār* is employed as a simple anaphoric adverb marking the continuity of discourse. However, since the purpose of these sentences is to indicate the two periods of the year in which, according to Mani’s interpretation, the surplus days accumulate in the non-Iranian

²⁹ Cf. Boyce 1975: 66 fn. 17.

³⁰ Cf. Henning (1934: 32–5), Boyce (1975: 70 fn. 30).

calendar, I regard as equally possible a translation such as “and also corresponding to the constellation of X there is one day in excess over the time of a month”. From this perspective, the meaning of *hassār* would be more similar to (a), albeit with a temporal nuance. In any case, for practical reasons, in the following paragraph the letter (b) will be used to refer to a meaning “likewise, in the same way”, since it is supported by the attestation in Y.32.6 and is somehow implied in the value (c).

c) *hassār* as an adjective meaning “equal”.

M7981 II R ii 27 (Hutter 1992, l. 713):

ud rōz dwāzdah zamān bawēd ud šab dwāzdah zamān, ud harw dō āgenēn *hassār* ēstēnd

“and the day will last twelve hours, and the night twelve hours, and both will be equal together”.

M5750 R ii 20 (Sundermann 1992: 316 ff.)

imīn senān rōzān pad paymān harw se *hassār* hēnd

“those three days are all three equal in length”.

Finally, the Arm. loanword *hasarak* remains to be mentioned, rightly connected by Benveniste (1957–58: 56 f.) to MMP *hassār*.³¹ Benveniste identifies for Arm. *hasarak* both an adverbial usage “pareillement, en commun”, corresponding to our meaning (b), and an adjectival usage “pareil, égal, commun”, corresponding to our meaning (c).

3. Etymology

The only explicit attempt to offer an etymology of MMP *hassār* goes back to Henning (1935: 17), who derived it from Ir. **ham-sarda-* “of the same kind”, from the same stem as YAv. *sarəda-* “Art, Gattung” (AiWb: 1566 f.). This etymology is clearly based on the adjectival meaning “equal” (c), and is probably influenced by the comparison with Parth. *hāwsār* “similar, alike” (Arm. loanword *hawasar*), derived from Ir. **sarda-* by Bartholomae (1906: 35 fn. 1, 233).³² In my opinion, this explanation is questionable in several respects.

First, it should be emphasized that the prefix *ham-* undergoes assimilation before *-s-* only in a couple of verbal forms in which its semantic value is fairly weakened (*hassāz-* “to make ready” < **ham-sač-*, *hassūd* ppt. “whetted” < **ham-sauH-*, cf. Henning 1947: 45).³³ On the contrary, in the great number of *bahuvrīhi* adjectives formed with *ham* + noun, assimilation is never found, probably because the derivational process did not cease to be transparent and productive throughout the Middle and New Iranian period and inhibited phonological changes across morpheme boundaries. As a matter of fact,

³¹ The suffix *-ak* in the Arm. loanword, although ultimately of Iranian origin, is probably the result of an inner-Armenian derivation (cf. Benveniste 1957–58: 57, Olsen 1999: 240 f.).

³² Cf. also Tedesco (1921: 208) who postulated a change *m > v* in **hāmasarda-* > *hāwsār* and wrongly criticized Meillet’s etymology **hāvat-sāra-* which is perfectly plausible (see below). The equivalence of MP *hassār* and Parth. *hāwsār* is implied by Andreas and Henning (1934: 55) and Benveniste (1957–58: 57). However, the two words cannot derive from the same proto-form, because Ir. **-āva-* yields either MP *-āy-* (e.g. MP *ardāy* “righteous” < Ir. **rtāvan-*) or *-ā-* (e.g. MP *jar* “time”, Parth. *yāwar*) depending on the position in the word, whereas MMP <hs’r> has a short vowel in the first syllable.

³³ Cf. Nyberg (1934: 79), who expressed doubts about the assimilation implied by Henning’s transcription *hassār*, and Durkin-Meisterernst (2014: 124 f.) on double consonants in MP.

along with forms such as Pahl. *hamsāmān* “contiguous” and *hamsāyag* “neighbour” (NP *hamsāye*) – all without assimilation – an adjective *hamsardag* “of the same kind” < **ham-sarda-ka-* is attested in Pahlavi (cf. *CPD*: 41), demonstrating that the proto-form postulated by Henning indeed existed, but did not yield *hassār* as its MP outcome.

In fact, there is no apparent trace of a word *sāl* (the non-Manichaean counterpart of *sār*) with the meaning “sort, kind” (< Ir. **sarda-*) either in MP or NP. Most likely, the non-South-Western outcome attested in Pahl. *sardag* prevailed because it was distinguished from the potential homophone *sāl* “year” (< OP *θard-*, Av. *sard-*).³⁴ As was already recognized by Meillet (1906–08), it is more plausible that both Parth. *hāwsār* and MP *hassār* are compounded with a second member **-sāra-* “head”, well attested in the Iranian languages as an ablaut-variant of **sarah-* “head” in composition. In particular, there are two possible meanings of Ir. **-sāra-* which are relevant to our discussion:

- in compound adjectives with a nominal first element, meaning “having the head of X, resembling X”: e.g. MMP *hūgsār* “pig-headed”, *xarsār* “donkey-headed”; Pahl. *mēšsār* “sheep-headed”, *xašēnsār* “blue-headed” (name of a bird in HKR 25, “mallard duck” according to Azarnouche 2013: 112); NP *gāvsār* “bull-headed”, *dēvsār* “demon-like”, etc. (cf. Horn 1895–1901: 191 f. for further examples); Parth. *hāwsār* (< **hāvat-sāra-*) “similar, alike”.
- in compound adjectives and adverbs meaning “(having the head) directed towards X”: e.g. Av. *starō.sāra-* “reaching the stars with its top” (name of a mountain); MP *nigūnsār* “downwards”; Pahl. *abāzsār* “rebellious”; Sogd. postposition *-sār*, *-sā* “towards” (cf. Gershevitch 1954: 69 f., 223); Chor. postposition *-sār* “towards” (cf. Benzing 1983: 568).

In light of the semantic analysis carried out here, it seems plausible to me that the original meaning of *hassār* was (a) “in the same direction”, i.e. the most concrete and specific, also attested in the abstract *hassārīh*, and that meanings (b) “in the same way, likewise” and (c) “alike, equal” resulted from a subsequent semantic evolution. A possible etymology which would account for this meaning is OP **hačā-sāra-* “(having the head) in the same direction”, with a first element corresponding to Av. *haθrā* (Ved. *satrā*) “an einem Ort, zu gleicher Zeit, zusammen, zugleich” which is rendered by means of Pahl. *hassār* in Y.30.9 (see above).³⁵ In origin, the OIr. compound was probably an adjective, but due to its almost exclusive predicative usage, it became perceived as an adverb in the Middle Iranian stage, just like MP *nigūnsār* “downwards”. Since the only meaning attested for *hassār* as an adjective in MP is “equal, alike”, I am inclined to think that it is the result of a secondary development starting from a somehow faded value of *hassār* “similarly, likewise” (b). The semantic evolution of this word could then be summarized as follows:

- “having the head in the same direction” (adj.) > “in the same direction/place” (adv.);
- “in the same way/manner” (adv.) > “so, likewise” (adv.);
- “equal, alike” (adj.).

³⁴ The MMP word <s’rg>, erroneously quoted in parentheses in *CPD*: 74 together with Pahl. *sardag*, occurs only in compounds such as *ēw-sārag* “of one year” (cf. Durkin-Meisterernst 2004: 306) and should rather have been registered as the Manichaean counterpart of Pahl. *sālag*.

³⁵ Av. *haθrā* is often found in compounds with various meanings: *haθrānc-* “auf einen Punkt gerichtet, vereint”; *haθra-jati-* “Aufeinmalerschlagen”; *haθra-taršti-* “auf einmal entstehende Furcht, plötzlicher Schreck”, etc. A quite close parallel for the compound **haθra-sāra-* is provided by the Sogdian directional adverbs *martāsār* “hither” (< **imaθra-sāra-*), *ōrtsār* “thither” (< **avaθra-sāra-*), *kurtsār* “whither” (< **kuθra-sāra-*), all built from a pronominal stem suffixed with Ir. **-θra* + the element *-sāra-* (cf. Benveniste 1929: 152 f. and Yoshida 2009: 292 f.).

Unlike the simple *hassār*, the abstract derivative *hassārīh* seems to have preserved the old local sense “(the same) direction”. Perhaps it is thanks to the retention of a more concrete connotation that the word *hassārīh* could survive in the Zoroastrian ritual lexicon long enough for us to be able to grasp its meaning and reconstruct retrospectively the history of such an interesting lexical item.

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Abbreviations

AiWb = Bartholomae 1904.
CPD = MacKenzie 1971.
 Humb. = Humbach, Elfenbein, and Skjærvø. 1991.
 Kell. = Kellens and Pirart. 1988–91.
 K&K = Kotwal and Kreyenbroek. 1992–2009.

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