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Pahlavi *tōšn* (*tušn*) in Denkard VII

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Abstract: Denkard VII which considered as the “Legend of Zoroaster” has been the subject of several investigations. The first translation was by E.W. West (1897: *The Sacred Books of the East*. Vol. 47. Clarendon: Oxford University Press: 26); Many years later Marijan Molé (1967) published a French version of Book VII; in Persian, Ahmad Tafazzolī and Žāleh Āmūzgār (1993: 55–110) translated some parts of the book VII; the last version which is in Persian belongs to Rashed Muhassel (2012: *Denkard VII*. Tehran: Pažuheshgāh-e olūm-e ensāni). Chapter two, sentence 34 of Denkard VII contains a word transcribed as *tōšn/tušn* of which this essay aims to have a critical view.

Keywords: Avestan; Denkard; Manuscriptology; Middle Persian; Pahlavi; *tōšn*

1 Introduction

As the nature of the Aramaic origin writing system of Pahlavi suggests, the absence of vowels in a significant number of lexical entities imposed uncertainties. W. B. Henning (1942: 238) stated that a Pahlavi word can even be transcribed in a hundred different ways.

The word *tōšn* is attested just once in the whole Pahlavi corpus and it seems only to be found in the compound “*tōšn-dārišnih*” DK VII, 34. Although the word  can be transliterated and transcribed in different ways¹ (Jamasp Asa et al. 1976a, 1976b) for reasons given below it should be read as *twšn*, either *tōšn* or *tušn*.

¹ The word has been scribed as  in MS J. 5 folio 171 and  in D10a folio 358.

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2 Discussion

The compound has been recorded as follows:

West in the “Sacred books of the east, Vol. XLVII” has the verse as follows with just the English translation:

34) “Then Pôrušâsp, having washed the clothes, walked up to it and, thereupon gathering up the whole of that Hôm, all of it was then also appropriated by him through assistance like that of that archangel, just as what thou **offerest for the food-sustenance** of a friend’s son of two years or three years of age.” (1897: 26)

Molé’s transcription of Denkard VII 2.34:

Adak ô hân apar raft purušâsp ul šust vastrak. u-š adak hân harvisp apar drūt u-š adak hân harvisp pat apākīh ((pat)) apākēnīt mānāk i ōy čēgōn kē pus i dōst i 2-sālak 3-sālak pat **tōšn-dārišnih** barēh (1993: 20, 21).

Molé’s translation:

34) Purušâsp avança vers lui après avoir lavé ses vêtements; il le cueillit en entiere et le serra tout entier ainsi que le fait celui qui porte un enfant chéri de deaux ou trois ans en **lui donnant de la nourriture** (1993: 20–21).

Rashed Mohassel’s transcription:

34) ēg ô ān abar raft pôrušâsp ul šust wistarag u-š ēg ān harwisp abar drūd u-š ēg ān harwisp pad abāgīh pad abāgēnīd mānāg i ōy čiyōn kē pus i dōst i dō-sālag ud se-salag pad **tušn-dārišnih** barēnd (2012: 30, 212).

Rashed Mohassel’s translation:

34) آنگاه پوروشسپ به سوی آن درخت برفت و جامه بشست و آنگاه همه آن <هوم> را ببرید و پس همه آن ها را با هم به همراه برد به مانند آن که پسر دوست داشتنی دو ساله و سه ساله را به آرامی نگاه دارند <و> بیرند (2011: 30, 212).

Nyberg in his glossary prefers the word as:

tušn <twšn’> ‘silent, quiet’ Av. *tušni-*, also in compounds *tušnā-maitiš*, *tušni-šad* (1974: 196).

Likewise, W. Malandra on Pahlavica (Zamani & Abedi 2022)² mentions:

tušn-dārišnih n. “quiet, gentle holding (of an infant)”.

The word or the compound does not occur in Mackenzie’s concise dictionary of Pahlavi but from a semantic point of view the situation of Dk 7.2.34 is that the *hōm*-plant [Av. *haoma-*, Ved. *sōma-*; a divine plant in Zoroastrianism] “descends into the tree whence it is reaped”. The sense seems to be that *Pōrušâsp* took all the *hōm*-plant in a bundle: “in a manner as one would carry tenderly a child of two or three years old”. West’s “**offerest for the food-sustenance**” and Molé’s “*donnant de la nourriture*” do not fit the whole phrase because it is *Pōrušâsp*, a male, who is

² <https://www.pahlavica.org/tōšn> (March, 24, 2022).

holding the child; and the child obviously is not being suckled by the father! Although he can hold out food to the child it can further be expressed that the Phl. verb *dāštan*, *dār-* does not mean ‘to give’.³

3 Old Iranian and the attested forms

It seems that West and Molé assumed *tōšn* to be related to Pahl. *tōšag* ‘provisions’ (MacKenzie 1971: 83) which causes an inapt filling for the meaning. The problem with this relationship is that Pahl. *tōšag* and its Sanskrit cognate *toṣa-* ‘satisfaction’ (Mayrhofer 1992: 517) point to PIr. **tauša-ka-* (Ibid) which never renders Pahl. *tōšn*; however, it seems quite logical to relate it to YAv. adjective *tušni-* ‘quiet, silent’, OAv. *tušnā* in the compound *tušnā.maitiṣ* (Bartholomae 1904: 658) and therefore, Vedic adverb *tūṣṇīm* ‘quietly, silently’ (Mayrhofer 1992: 663). Lubotsky reconstructs its PIIr. and PIr. as **tuHšni-* > PIE root **teh₂-* ‘to steal, hide.’⁴

The attested forms in Avesta are:

Y 43.15 *daxšaṭ ušiiāi tušnā.maitiṣ vahištā*

Meaning **silent thinking** benefits my hearing as the best (Skjærvø 2004: 40).

Yt. 13.29 *vīdāraiaṭ spəṇtō mainiiuš*

yā amauuaitiṣ tušnišāōō

Meaning Spanta Manyu supports... [who] are powerful, **abide in silence** (Malandra 2018:88) /sitting silent (Skjærvø 2012: 66).

It has also been used as a personal name in Yt. 13.139 *tušnāmaiti* and seems logical to assume that it can be linked with Y 43.15 (de Vaan 2003: 175); moreover, according to Humbach it is a YAv. adaptation of the Gatha form (1954: 62).

4 Conclusion

Therefore, we would opt for the transcription and translation as follows:

ēg ō ān abar raft pōrušasp ul šust wistar=ag u=š ēg ān harwisp abar drūd u=š
 ēg ān harwisp pad abāg=īh pad abāg=ēn=id mām=āg ī ōy čiyōn kē pus ī dōst ī
 dō=sāl=ag ud [se=sal=ag] pad tōšn=dār=išn=īh bar=ēnd.

3 P.C. with William W. Malandra.

4 P.C. with Alexander Lubotsky; (according to his “Indo-Iranian Etymological Dictionary”, forthcoming).

“Just like him who were to carry a dear two- or three-year-old son holding it in silence (gently)”. This would imply that just like a father who is carrying a dear son who might be asleep and he is trying to carry him as tenderly as possible not to wake him up.

Abbreviations

Av.	Avestan
Dk.	Denkard
P.C.	personal communication
PIIr.	Proto-Indo-Iranian
PIr.	Proto-Iranian
PIE	Proto-Indo-European
n.	Noun
Phl.	Pahlavi
OAv.	Old Avestan
YAv.	Younger Avestan
Y	Yasna
Yt.	Yasht
Ved.	Vedic
vol.	volume

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