

Research article

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The Middle Persian Title of Khusraw Parvīz's Commander-in-Chief

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Abstract: The present article aims to reconstruct one of the titles borne by Khusraw Parvīz's commander-in-chief (*sipahbad*), generally known to the sources as Shahr-barāz, 'The Wild Boar of the Kingdom'. The title that is the object of this study is variously given as Farrukhān, Farruhān, and Khurrahān in Islamic sources, and as Khořeam in an Armenian chronicle. Two New Persian literary texts, the *Shāhnāma* (composed between the late tenth and early eleventh century) and the *Mujmal al-tawārīkh wa'l qīṣaṣ* (begun in 520/1126), offer two forms that certainly originate from a misreading of the title in its Pahlavi and Arabo-Persian spellings, respectively. Such erroneous forms, however, are useful for ascertaining the original form of the title. Only Farrahān, meaning 'glorious, endowed with *farr/farrah*', an adjective derived from *farrah* 'glory, divine charisma' and the adjectival suffix *-ān*, matches all the attested forms.

Keywords: Khusraw Parvīz, Shahr-barāz, misreading, Pahlavi script, Arabo-Persian script, Farhād

1 Introduction

The most famous general under Khusraw Parvīz (r. 590–628 CE) is the one known to the sources by the title of Shahr-barāz 'The Wild Boar of the Kingdom'.¹ He was the commander-in-chief of Khusraw Parvīz's army during the long Persian–Byzantine war (603–628).² After Shahr-barāz had achieved a number of important victories and territorial conquests for Khusraw, the relations between the two seem to have deteriorated. An anecdote revolving around an intercepted letter, variously narrated by different sources, may reflect a historical fact: Shahr-barāz's betrayal of Khusraw and agreement with the Byzantine emperor Heraclius (610–641).³ After the murder of Khusraw (February 628), and the brief reigns of Shīrūya (Qubād II) son of Khusraw and Ardashīr III son of Shīrūya, Shahr-barāz re-

1 In this article, the transcription and transliteration of Middle Persian, New Persian and Arabic forms varies depending on the language. Therefore, New Persian and Arabic *Farrukh* and *Farrukhān* correspond to Middle Persian *Farrox* and *Farroxān*. Only in quotations from New Persian early texts are *ē* and *ō* also represented.

On the rich bibliography concerning the figure of Shahr-barāz, see in particular Mango 1985. Shahr-barāz was a quite common military title in Sasanid Iran. It was also borne by a general named Pirag, of the Mihrān family, living under King Khusraw, probably to be identified as Khusraw I Anūshīrvān. The title Shahr-barāz in reference to the latter general is attested by two seals published by Gyselen (2001: 40–41, seals 2d/1 and 2d/2).

2 On this famous war see, in particular, Howard-Johnston 2021.

3 This anecdote, in eastern Christian sources (in Greek, Syriac and Arabic), has been studied by Mango 1985: 107–111. See also Howard-Johnston 2006: 12–14, who compares the eastern Christian versions of the anecdote with the one given by Ṭabarī; and especially Kaegi and Cobb 2008 (with further bibliography). A version of it is given by Firdawsī 1988–2008: vol. 8, pp. 300–307, lines 3853–3959. According to some scholars, an early political understanding between Heraclius and Shahr-barāz "should probably be rejected as a piece of deliberate disinformation, circulated to further Roman interests as the war reached its climax in 627–628" (Howard-Johnston, Historical commentary to [pseudo-]Sebeos 1999: vol. 2, p. 223).

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turned to Ctesiphon from Rum at the head of his army and ascended to the throne of Persia (April–June 630), but was soon killed.

While the Christian sources, and to a certain extent also some early Islamic sources, do not present Shahr-barāz in an unfavourable light,⁴ the *Shāhnāma* – though not concealing Khusraw's responsibility for the collapse of his own empire – represents a different tradition, much less favourable to him. This is vividly illustrated by the ignominious episode of diarrhoea at the moment of his enthronement, as narrated by Ṭabarī (d. 923 CE).⁵

In Islamic sources, and hence in secondary literature, Shahr-barāz is also known by the title of Farrukhān.⁶ In the *Shāhnāma*, he is instead referred to by the title of Gurāz, i.e. Barāz, 'Boar'⁷ and, after his ascent to the throne of Persia, by the title of Farāyīn.⁸ These few lines aim to reconstruct the Middle Persian form of the latter title, possibly the regnal name borne by Shahr-barāz.⁹

2 Shahr-barāz in the *Shāhnāma*: from Gurāz to Farāyīn

In the *Shāhnāma*, Gurāz is first mentioned in the section describing the last years of Khusraw Parvīz's reign, in the period of disorder following Khusraw's transformation into an unjust king.¹⁰ Gurāz is presented in an unfavourable light; he is called *bē-hunar* 'unskilful', *dēv-sar* 'bad-tempered', *bē-dād* 'unjust', and *shūm* 'inauspicious, of ill omen', and is described as ungrateful, owing all his fortune to Khusraw.¹¹ For a long time he had been the governor of Rum (*ki būd-ē hamēsha nigahbān-i Rūm*),¹² i.e. of the territories conquered from the Byzantine emperor – territories that, in fact, Gurāz had been keeping under control.¹³ A few lines later, he is called *Gurāz-i sipahbad* (General Gurāz).¹⁴ All this leaves no doubt that the Gurāz of the *Shāhnāma* is the same Shahr-barāz as in the other sources.¹⁵ Gurāz then reappears during the reign of Ardashīr son of Shīrūya, plotting from afar

4 Kaegi and Cobb (2008: 103) write: "The general presentation of Shahrbarāz's defection in the early Islamic historiographical tradition conforms to the presentation of the same event in the eastern Christian historiographical tradition as represented by Theophilus [...] all relate the fall of Persia to Khusraw's treachery toward his own trusted subjects". A pro-Shahr-barāz anecdote, possibly going back to pre-Islamic sources, is also given by the *Kitāb al-Tāj* attributed to al-Jāḥiẓ (see [pseudo-]Jāḥiẓ 1914: 180–185; [pseudo-]Jāḥiẓ 1954: 196–202), in the section devoted to the deceptions used by kings as means to win a war or a conflict (on this anecdote, see Orsatti 2019: 56).

5 Cf. Ṭabarī 1999: 402–403.

6 On the form and meaning of this title, see §§ 3–4 below.

7 The title Shahr-barāz is frequently attested as Varāz/Barāz alone (Weber 1991: pp. 233–234). As for the alternation Barāz ~ Gurāz, and in general on initial *b*- alternating with *g(u)*- (from an older *w*-) in New Persian, see Lazard 1987: 174–175; Orsatti 2007: 123 fn. 199; Filippone 2011: 181, and the bibliography cited in the latter work.

8 Contrary to what Theodor Nöldeke (Ṭabarī 1879: p. 292 fn. 2) claims, in the *Shāhnāma* Shahrān-gurāz (referred to in Firdawsī 1988–2008: vol. 8, p. 388 line 26 and p. 389 line 33, during the reign of Farāyīn) is a different personage from Gurāz/Farāyīn. He is Hurmīz Shahrān-gurāz, a chosen knight from Ištākhr, the person who incited the Iranians to rebel against the unjust king Farāyīn and who killed him with an arrow (on him, see Justi 1895: 9A s.v. *Ahura-mazdāh*: 28. Hormīz Šahrān-gurāz).

9 I will not discuss another title that, according to a number of sources, also refers to Shahr-barāz, namely Razm-yōzān 'He who seeks the battle' (etymology according to Justi 1895: 260B "Kampf aufsuchend"). On the forms of his titles according to the sources, see Justi 1895: 95A (s.v. *Farroḡān*: 9. Ferruhān), 260B (s.v. *Razmiozan*), and 277B–278A (s.v. *Šahrwarāz*). For the different forms of the title Farrukhān in the sources, see also a long footnote by Nöldeke in Ṭabarī 1879: 292 fn. 2.

10 Firdawsī 1988–2008: vol. 8, pp. 299–319 lines 3839–4107.

11 Firdawsī 1988–2008: vol. 8, p. 299 lines 3848–3849.

12 Firdawsī 1988–2008: vol. 8, p. 299, line 3849a.

13 Kaegi and Cobb (2008: 106) consider it plausible, as reported by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam (d. 257/871), that "Heraclius left Shahrbarāz in control of those regions under Persian occupation that he had captured".

14 Firdawsī 1988–2008: vol. 8, p. 300, line 3855a.

15 As Nöldeke (Ṭabarī 1879: 292 fn. 2) has suggested, the form Shahr-barāz/Shahr-gurāz, with two consecutive short syllables, would have been incompatible with the metre of the poem.

against Ardashīr.¹⁶ And indeed, after Ardashīr's murder, he is described as arriving at Țisfūn (Ctesiphon) from Rum at the head of his immense army.¹⁷

The following chapter, which in Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh's edition is titled: *Pādshāhī-yi Farāyīn* (فرايين) *panjāh rōz būd* (The reign of Farāyīn lasted fifty days), begins ex abrupto with these words: *Farāyīn cu tāj-i kayān bar nihād ...* (When Farāyīn placed the Kayanid crown on his head ...),¹⁸ thus implying that Farāyīn is the same as Gurāz, after his ascent to the throne of Persia. Where does the title Farāyīn come from?

3 The many forms of the general's title

In the chronicle by Ṭabarī, Shahr-barāz, the general who besieged Constantinople, is also known by the title Farruhān, also given as Farrukhān. Indeed, in the printed editions of Ṭabarī's chronicle, this title is given as Farruhān (فُرْهَان), vocalized with *u* (a hybrid form, as we shall see below) in its first occurrence,¹⁹ and as Farrukhān (فَرْخَان) in the following ones. In an important footnote about this title, Theodor Nöldeke considers the first form, *Ferruhān* (Farruhān), to be a graphic variant of *Ferruchān* (Farrukhān), which is the form generally given in Islamic sources; and maintains that the form Farāyīn of the *Shāhnāma* originated as an erroneous reading of the latter, i.e. *Ferruchān*, in its Pahlavi spelling.²⁰ Ferdinand Justi maintains that "Ferāin ist aus einer unrichtigen Lesung der Pahlawizeichen entstanden", without, however, providing hypotheses regarding the original title.²¹ Likewise, Khaleghi-Motlagh considers Farāyīn to be a New Persian transformation (*fārsī-shuda*) of the title فَرْخَان (Farroxān) or فَرْهَان (the second letter is not vocalized), and leaves undecided the question of the original Middle Persian form of the title.²²

Nöldeke's identification of the general's title with the Middle Persian form Farroxān is questionable. In the Armenian chronicle attributed to Sebeos (mid-7th century), the title, or one of the titles borne by the famous general, is Khoṛeam,²³ with *ṛ* representing Iranian *rr < rn*,²⁴ i.e. probably Khorre(h)ān. This is the same form as was given by Eutychius of Alexandria (877–940) in his annals, where the occurrence of جرهان instead of خرهان Khurrahān is certainly due to an error in diacritical punctuation.²⁵ This is also the same form of the title as was given by al-Bīrūnī (d. 1048 CE) in his *al-Āthār al-bāqīya*, where after Ardashīr b. Shīrūya (in a list of names of Sasanid kings) there follows: *Khūhān* [خوهان, sic for خرهان] *al-muḥāṣir li-'l-Rūm* "Khurrahān the Besieger of Rum (Constantinople)".²⁶

The form Khoṛeam attested in the Armenian text, as well as the reconstructed title from Eutychius' annals and al-Bīrūnī's list of kings, show that the title of Khusraw Parvīz's general was Khorre(h)ān, i.e. Farrahān, an adjective meaning 'glorious, endowed with *farr/farrah*', derived from

16 Firdawsī 1988–2008: vol. 8, pp. 378–382 lines 11–50.

17 Firdawsī 1988–2008: vol. 8, p. 382 lines 47–50.

18 Firdawsī 1988–2008: vol. 8, p. 385 line 1a.

19 See the form of the title in Ṭabarī 1879: 292 line 2. See also Ṭabarī 1999: 319 lines 1–2; Ṭabarī 1881–82: 1002 line 13.

20 See Ṭabarī 1879: 292 fn. 2: "*Ferruhān* ist eine andere Schreibart für *Ferruchān*, wie er unten heisst (*h* und *ch* habe bekanntlich im Pehlewi dasselbe Zeichen) [...] Fird. hat *Ferāin*, was nur auf falscher Lesung des *Ferruchān* in Pehlewī-Schrift beruhet wird".

21 Justi 1895: 95A.

22 Khāliqī-Muṭṭlaq 2019: 172 Nr. 442 (s.v. *Farāyīn*).

23 Cf. [pseudo-]Sebeos 1999: 62–89 (chapters 33–39 [110–130]).

24 For this phonetic development, see Bolognesi 1960: 28.

25 Eutychius 1909: 8.18. This title can be found in the section of the annals devoted to the brief reign of Khusraw Parvīz's general, whose name is given as *Shahmārān or *Shahryārān (sic for Shahr-barāz) "the one who fought against Rum".

26 Al-Bīrūnī 1878: 128.

farrah 'glory, fortune, divine charisma' and the adjectival suffix *-ān*.²⁷ What makes it possible to consider Farrahān and *Khorre(h)ān or *Khurrahān as doublets of a single form is that *farrah/farre* and *khwarrah/khorre* are two parallel outcomes corresponding to Median *farnah-* (attested in Median proper names) and Young Avestan *xvarənah-*, 'glory', respectively.²⁸

Nöldeke considered it unlikely that this personage could have been called both Farrukhān and Khurrahān (*Chorahān*).²⁹ If Nöldeke's doubts refer to the possibility of the coexistence of different forms for one and the same title, it should be noted that alternations between different outcomes of the same word are also attested for other proper names, as in (Shahr-)Barāz ~ Gurāz, or in Bisṭām ~ Gustaham (Khusraw Parvīz's uncle). However, if what Nöldeke meant is that it is not clear how such alternations could have actually coexisted from a synchronic point of view, this is indeed a question that deserves deeper research. We should assume that, behind the form Khoṛeam in the Armenian chronicle, as well as the forms of the title given in Arabic script in the works of Eutychius and al-Bīrūnī, a different dialectal allomorph of the title reconstructed as Farrahān is mirrored.

What is certain is that Nöldeke's *Ferruchān* and *Chorahān* cannot be regarded as two forms of the same word. They are derived from two different Middle Persian lexical units: *farrox*, an adjective meaning 'fortunate, blessed',³⁰ and *xwarrah* 'glory, divine charisma'. Consequently, Middle Persian *Farroxān* and **Xwarrahān/Farrahān* represent two different words. In the Armenian chronicle attributed to Sebeos, the name Farrox is rendered as Khoṛokh;³¹ and Khoṛeam, the form attested for the general's title, cannot correspond to an original title Farroxān. The latter would rather have been spelled <*Khoṛokhan> or <*Khoṛokham>.

The form Farrukhān may have crept in as a *lectio facilior*, substituting a less common Farrahān that was no longer understood in Islamic times. Indeed, already in Middle Persian, Farrox is frequently attested as a proper name, and Farroxān is also occasionally attested, while Farrahān is much rarer (see below, § 4).³² The form Farruhān given by Ṭabarī can be explained as a hybrid of the two forms.

4 The origin of the form *Farāyīn* in the *Shāhnāma*

As is well known, *farrah/xwarrah* is written heterographically as GDE in Zoroastrian Middle Persian using the Pahlavi script. However, the form *farrah* is well attested in Manichaean Middle Persian and Parthian.³³ In New Persian, this word is more often read as *farra/farre*;³⁴ but at least for the language

27 For this suffix, see Durkin-Meisterernst 2013: 162–163 § 312; Horn 1898–1901: 177 § 104. See also Weber 1991: 234, who maintains that in a number of Middle Persian titles the suffix *-ān* does not possess a patronymic value, but rather has a more general adjectival meaning.

28 See Gnoli 1999; Ḥasandūst 2014: vol. 3, pp. 1995–1996 Nr. 3588, s.v. *farr*. See also Shavarebi and Qaemmaqami 2016. The *f-* form has traditionally been considered to be of Median origin, despite its being found in many other Iranian languages and dialects. For a different explanation of the origin of the *f-* forms, see Lubotsky 2002: 191–195.

29 Ṭabarī 1879: 292 fn. 2: "Dass Šahrbarāz sowohl *Ferruchān* als *Chorahān* geheissen habe, ist freilich kaum wahrscheinlich; aber wie sich die Sache wirklich verhält, begreife ich nicht recht".

30 In the name Farroxān, the suffix *-ān* after the adjective possesses a clearer patronymic value.

31 See, for example, the personage called Farrukh Hurmuz in Islamic sources, whose name is spelled Khoṛokh Ormīzd in an anecdote in which he appears as the unrequited suitor of Būrān, the daughter of Khusraw Parvīz (Bor in the Armenian text). Cf. [pseudo-]Sebeos 1999: 89 (ch. 40 [130]).

32 See Gignoux 1986: 82–83 Nr. 352 (s.v. *Farrox*) and 83 Nr. 354 (s.v. *Farroxān*). See also the name or title of another general, given as Φεροχάνης by the 7th-century Byzantine historian Theophylact Simocatta (History IV, 2. 2–6; cf. Theophylact Simocatta 1986: 104), a general under Khusraw Parvīz's father Hurmuz IV (579–590), who was killed by his officers during the 'Persian Civil War' against the rebel general Bahrām Chūbin (Whitby 1988: 292–297). Φεροχάνης certainly mirrors the form *Farroxān*.

33 See Durkin-Meisterernst 2004: 154B–155A *prh*, *frh* /*farrah*/ 'glory'.

of the *Shāhnāma*, the word has to be read as *farrah*, with the final *-h* preserved.³⁵ The latter reading is the one given in Djālal Khaleghī Motlagh's edition of the *Shāhnāma*, where the frequent expression *farrah-i izarā*, 'the divine glory', is spelled without the *izāfa* particle being represented as <y>, as it would be after a word ending in a vowel.³⁶

In a late Pahlavi manuscript (sixteenth century) of a text entitled *Ohrmazd pad harwisp-dānāgīh*, the word *farrah* is written phonetically as <pl'h>, with scriptio plena of /a/ in the second syllable.³⁷ That *farrah* could have been spelled phonetically as <pl'h> or <plh> can already be supposed for earlier texts.

An adjective *farrahān* does not seem to be attested in Zoroastrian Middle Persian. In Manichaean Middle Persian *farrahān* is attested, but apparently only as the plural of *farrah*.³⁸ It cannot be excluded, however, that, in some occurrences, the form *farrahān* could stand for the homophone adjective meaning 'glorious'.³⁹

We can assume that in the Pahlavi script, the general's title, *Farrahān*, was spelled <pl'h'n'> (Fig. 1) or <plh'n'> (Fig. 2).⁴⁰ It cannot be ruled out that these forms, especially the latter, may have been misread – by Firdawsī himself or, most probably, by his source(s) – as <pl'yyn'>, i.e. the form *Farāyīn* of the *Shāhnāma*.⁴¹

Figure 1: Reconstructed Pahlavi spelling <pl'h'n'> of *Farrahān*

Figure 2: Reconstructed Pahlavi spelling <plh'n'> of *Farrahān*

34 In the Persian lexicographic tradition, the reading of this word is generally given as *farra/farre*. See also the reading of the word given by Wolff 1935 for the *Shāhnāma*: 613B (*farre*); 320A (*Xurre*) and 342A (*X'urre*), the latter form only being attested in the toponym *X^(v)urre ī Ardašīr*.

35 Khāliqī-Muṭṭāq 2019: 69 Nr. 110 (s.v. *farr*).

36 See for example Firdawsī 1988–2008: vol. 1, p. 36 (*Tahmūrat*, line 26); p. 41 (*Jamshēd*, line 8).

37 *Manuscript TD4a* 1978: 617.8; 626.7 and 15–16; 627.4.

38 See Durkin-Meisterernst 2004: 155A s.v. *frh*, *prh* /*farrah*/ 'glory'.

39 One example can be seen in the expression *farrahān srīgar* (Durkin-Meisterernst 2013: 269 § 536, example mpT[urfan] 37), which can possibly be interpreted as 'glorious female'.

40 I wish to thank Prods Oktor Skjærvø for providing me with images of the possible Pahlavi writing of these two forms, and for discussing with me some of the issues presented in this article.

41 A famous instance of misreading from a Pahlavi source in the *Shāhnāma* has been demonstrated by François de Blois, in a passage describing Rustam's preparations for the burial of his son Suhrāb – a tomb made of "hooves of horses" (*summ ī sutōr*): "[T]he author of the Neo-Persian prose version that was used by Firdawsī misread this [<hwmb> 'jar' and <'syn> 'iron'] as *sumb ī aspān*, 'horse's hooves'. Firdawsī, for his part, followed his source, as usual, religiously, merely replacing for the sake of rhyme and metre, *aspān* by its synonym *sutōr*" (de Blois 1993: 33).

In contrast, *farrox*(v) 'fortunate, blessed' < Old Iranian **h̥arna-h̥ant-*, Avestan *xvar³nah-vant-*,⁴² was spelled <plhw'> in the Pahlavi script; and Farroxān was spelled <plhw'n'>,⁴³ a spelling less immediately recognizable as the origin of *Farāyīn* in Firdawsī's poem.

Another figure in the *Shāhnāma* is called *Farāyīn*, who is mentioned among the wise men at Qubād I's court but not further identified.⁴⁴ In Khaleghi-Motlagh's edition, this name is spelled *Far-āyīn*, with alif-madda after *far-*. It was probably interpreted as a compound adjective, perhaps meaning 'the one who has glory (*farr*, *far*) as his rule/religion (*āyīn*)',⁴⁵ with simplification of final *rr* in *farr* for the sake of metre; however, such a compound adjective is not attested in the New Persian lexicographical tradition. It is therefore possible that the general's original title, Farrahān, was misread and reinterpreted as *Far(r)-āyīn*, 'having *far(r)* as a rule'. The hypothesis of a deliberate misreading of the title, dictated by a wish to obscure the true regnal name of the general who had usurped the throne of Persia,⁴⁶ seems less likely to me now, in the light of the latter hypothesis.

5 From Farrahān to Farhād: Romantic developments of the general's figure

The anonymous Persian chronicle *Mujmal al-tawārikh wa'l qīṣaṣ* (begun in 520/1126) contains a section devoted to the eminent figures of the Sasanid court. Among Khusraw Parvīz's dignitaries, the author records: "The minister (*dastūr*) was Kharrād Burzīn; the nobles were Bindūy and Gustaham, his uncles; the commander of the army (*sipahbad*) was Farhād".⁴⁷ It is clear that in this passage the reading Farhād as referring to Khusraw Parvīz's commander-in-chief is erroneous. However, the form Farhād instead of Farrahān is clearly attested in other passages as well (see below).

The new transformation of General Farrahān's name into Farhād is interesting for two reasons. On the one hand, it attests to the merging of the figure of Khusraw Parvīz's general with the legendary figure of Farhād the *Kōh-kan*, the Excavator of Mount Bisutūn for the love of Shīrīn, a personage unknown to ancient sources but probably known from legends widespread in the region of Mount Bisutūn (on the ancient route linking Hamadan to Baghdad, not far from Kirmānshāh) since ancient times. It is only from the tenth century AD that this legendary personage is also known from literary sources in Arabic and Persian.⁴⁸ He is the character immortalized by Niẓāmī in the poem *Khusraw va Shīrīn* (composed between 571/1176 and 576/1181, with later additions). On the other hand, the transformation of the general's name seems to be an indirect confirmation of the original form of his title: Farrahān. Indeed, a misspelling فرهاد, Farhād, of the general's title can only be explained on the basis of a form written فرهان in the Arabo-Persian spelling.⁴⁹ The hypothesis of such a misreading is plausible, especially considering that in ancient writing styles, <n> and <r> could easily

42 Ḥasandūst 2014, vol. 3, pp. 2003–2004 Nr. 3599, s.v. *Farrux*.

43 Cf. the spelling of the names Farrox and Farroxān in Gignoux 1986: 82–83 Nr. 352 (s.v. *Farrox*), and 83 Nr. 354 (s.v. *Farroxān*).

44 Firdawsī 1988–2008: vol. 7, p. 77, line 318: *guvā kard Zarmīhr u Xarrād-rā/ Farāyīn u Bindōy u Bihzād-rā* 'he took as witnesses Zarmīhr and Kharrād, / Farāyīn, Bindōy and Bihzād'.

45 Khāliqī-Muṭṭlaq 2019: 586 Nr. 1734 (s.v. *āyīn*).

46 This hypothesis was proposed in Orsatti 2019: 50.

47 *Mujmal al-tawārikh* 1939: 96,10–11; *Mujmal al-tawārikh* 2000: 75, 17–18.

48 On this character, see Orsatti 2019: 19–40 and the bibliography discussed there. On the hypothesis that a conflation between the legendary figure of the Master of Mount Bisutūn and Khusraw Parvīz's general was relevant to the genesis of the literary character of Farhād, see below.

49 This explanation of the possible origin of the *Farhād-i sipahbad* in the *Mujmal* was already put forward by Aliev 1985: 77.

be confused (Fig. 3), as could <r> and <d> (Fig. 4),⁵⁰ as shown by the following examples, taken from the so-called *Codex Vindobonensis*, dated Shawwāl 447/24 December 1055–21 January 1056:

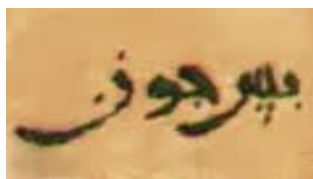


Figure 3: Codex Vindobonensis 1972, f. 2v, line 10; *ba-sar cūn*: final <n>, with an open 'queue', can be misread as <r> or <z>.



Figure 4: Codex Vindobonensis 1972, f. 2v, line 11; *rāh-ē*: this particular variant of <r> can be misread as <d>.

Apart from the short passage from the *Mujmal al-tawārikh* quoted above, another passage from this work concerns Kusrav's general, called 'General Farhād' (*Farhād-i sipahbad*). Describing the relief of a horse traditionally identified as Shabdīz, Khusraw Parvīz's horse, at the site now called Ṭāq-i Bustān (near Kirmānshāh), the author of the *Mujmal* cites a tradition according to which General Farhād, i.e., probably, Shahr-barāz/Farrahān, is presented as someone who had a say in the selection of the skilled workers in charge of the work, and also as being the ultimate beneficiary of the site that Khusraw Parvīz had built.⁵¹

The latter tradition, preserved by the *Mujmal*, is important from both a literary and a historical-artistic point of view. From a literary point of view, it reveals a connection between the legend of Farhād – in his double identity as Khusraw's general and the Master of Mount Bīsūtūn – and the archaeological site of Ṭāq-i Bustān, a connection that has already been the subject of a groundbreaking study by Priscilla Soucek.⁵² From a historical-artistic point of view, this tradition, if reliable, could help us to date and contextualize the creation of the famous reliefs of the main arch in Ṭāq-i Bustān.⁵³

The source of the latter passage is an earlier, unpreserved text, the *Pērōz-nāma* ('Book of Pīrūz' or 'Book of the Victorious'), which certainly dates from the Islamic period and possibly from the first half of the eleventh century.⁵⁴ It is therefore possible that either the author of the *Pērōz-nāma* or the author of the *Mujmal* himself was responsible for the misreading 'Farhād' instead of 'Farrahān'. As in the case of the reading Farāyīn, the misreading had been encouraged for a historical reason: at the time of the composition of the *Mujmal al-tawārikh* or one of its sources, the *Pērōz-nāma*, the famous general was no longer identifiable by the title Farrahān. The author of the *Mujmal al-tawārikh* does

⁵⁰ Cfr. for example Tafazzoli 1974: 343, who cites the spelling <gm'z> for *gumān*, with <z> = <r> with a dot above (p. 339); and a spelling <'ydn> for *ēdar*.

⁵¹ *Mujmal al-tawārikh* 1939: 79,16–20; *Mujmal al-tawārikh* 2000: 64,2–7. For a study and interpretation of this passage see Orsatti 2019: 42–44.

⁵² See Soucek 1974; see also Orsatti 2019: 24–31.

⁵³ See Orsatti 2019: 52. For a different hypothesis concerning the date of the main arch and the front reliefs of Ṭāq-i Bustān, see Callieri 2004: 154–159.

⁵⁴ On the *Pērōz-nāma* as one of the sources of the *Mujmal al-tawārikh*, see Orsatti 2019: 42–45 and Orsatti forthcoming. For a possible date of the *Pērōz-nāma* to the mid-eleventh century, or to the first half of the eleventh century, see Hämeen-Anttila 2018: 171–172 and Orsatti forthcoming, respectively.

know of a personage called Shahr-barāz (though, in one occurrence,⁵⁵ the manuscripts give a definitely wrong reading, شهر ایران, *Shahr-īrān). However, he does not seem to know that Shahr-barāz was the same person as the one called Farhād (i.e. Farrahān) in other parts of the book.⁵⁶ In contrast, the figure of Farhād associated with the stone works in Bisutūn and Ṭāq-i Bustān was certainly much more widely known.

'General Farhād' is quoted in a final passage from the *Mujmal al-tawārīkh* that attests to a romantic transformation of the figure of Farhād, namely, Khusraw's general. In the section devoted to the wonders of Khusraw's reign, Shīrīn is listed as the most beautiful of the 12,000 women in his harem. Then the author adds: "The *sipahbad* Farhād was in love with her. He executed the work at Bisutūn, the vestiges of which are (still) visible".⁵⁷

The romantic development of the figure of Khusraw's commander-in-chief as Farhād, one of the most moving characters in the Persian literary tradition and the hero of a long series of poems in response to Nizāmī's *Khusraw va Shīrīn*,⁵⁸ was then encouraged by a misreading that led to the conflation of the figure of the general with Farhād, the Master of Mount Bisutūn. 'General Farhād', the rival of Khusraw Parvīz for the throne of Persia (in fact, the usurper of his throne), became his rival in love for a woman, Shīrīn, in the romantic narrative tradition.⁵⁹

6 Conclusions

One of the most important personages in the troubled period preceding the Arab conquest of Persia and the end of the Sasanid Empire is Khusraw Parvīz's commander of the army, generally known to the sources as Shahr-barāz, 'the Wild Boar of the Kingdom'. After Khusraw's murder, and the brief reigns of Shīrūya (Qubād II) and Ardashīr III, Shahr-barāz usurped the throne of Persia and held it for a short time (April–June 630). His Middle Persian regnal title, given in a number of variant forms in Islamic and Christian sources (§ 3), can be reconstructed as Farrahān 'glorious, endowed with *farra(h)*', an adjective derived from *farra(h)* 'glory, divine charisma' and an adjectival suffix *-ān*.

Two New Persian texts are of interest in the present research, which aims to reconstruct the original Middle Persian title of the usurper of the throne of Persia. This title was misread as Farāyīn in the *Shāhnāme* (§ 2), and as Farhād in the anonymous Persian chronicle *Mujmal al-tawārīkh wa'l qīṣaṣ* (§ 5). Paradoxically, the misreadings can be helpful in ascertaining the original form of the title. In its Pahlavi spelling (§ 4 and Figs. 1 and 2), Farrahān could have been misread as Farāyīn by Firdawsī himself or, more probably, by his source(s). This form was possibly reinterpreted as an (otherwise unattested) adjective meaning 'having *farr* (glory) as one's habit'. In contrast, in its Arabo-Persian spelling, the title Farrahān was misread as Farhād, a form attested by three passages in the *Mujmal al-tawārīkh*.

The latter confusion is particularly interesting from the historic-literary point of view. The historical figure of Khusraw Parvīz's commander-in-chief and usurper to the throne of Persia had by then partially fallen into oblivion, and his title Farrahān had become largely incomprehensible. However,

55 *Mujmal al-tawārīkh* 1939: 87,15B; *Mujmal al-tawārīkh* 2000: 69,15, in a list of Sasanid kings.

56 See the section devoted to the chronological narrative of the reigns of the Sasanid kings (*bāb* 9, *faṣl* 1). In this section, the author speaks of Farrahān's brief reign (*Mujmal al-tawārīkh* 1939: 82,14–15 – 83,1–2; *Mujmal al-tawārīkh* 2000: 66,9–12) under the strange heading *Pādshāhi-yi Jushnasfanda* (جُشْنَسْفَنْدَه), with *Jushnasfanda probably to be read Jushnas-banda, the latter possibly being Farrahān's personal name (*Mujmal al-tawārīkh* 2000: Endnoten p. 117). About this king, the author – quoting from another lost source, the work by Bahrām-i Mōbad (on which see Hämeen-Anttila 2018: 71–72) – adds: "And in the *Shāhnāma* he is called Gurāz, and he is also called by the titles Farāyīn and Shahr-barāz" (*Mujmal al-tawārīkh* 1939: 83,1; *Mujmal al-tawārīkh* 2000: 66,10–11).

57 *Mujmal al-tawārīkh* 1939: 79,12–13; *Mujmal al-tawārīkh* 2000:64,2–7.

58 See Orsatti 2023: 149–214.

59 On this romantic development, see Orsatti 2019: 35–37 and 41–59.

as the above-mentioned three short passages from the *Mujmal al-tawārīkh* (§ 5) show, this personage, whose title was misread as Farhād, merged with the legendary figure of the Excavator of Mount Bisutūn, Khusraw's rival for the love of Shīrīn, thus finding a new life in the realm of romantic literature.

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