a "tentative chronology of Kidarite-Hephthalite political history". There is also a very extensive bibliography.

In "Ancient Afghanistan and its invaders" Nicholas Sims-Williams presents the linguistic evidence for the history of Afghanistan found in the Bactrian documents and inscriptions, giving a very clear summary of what can now be stated with some assurance from the reading of the immensely increased corpus of Bactrian texts of the last ten years. These documents began to appear in the Peshawar bazaar and on the international art market in the 1990s and have been studied by specialists, amongst whom Professor Sims-Williams is a leading expert. He summarises in nine tables some of the linguistic heritage in Bactrian from the Achaemenians, the Greeks, the Kushans, and many others, concluding with the remains in Bactrian from the Islamic period in Arabic and Persian after 739. The linguistic commentary is extensive. Of particular interest is the discussion of the names of some of the Kushan kings, e.g. Kanishka. There is an extensive literature on this question going back to W. B. Henning. Sims-Williams revives, with new evidence, the old comparison of the Bactrian suffix *-ēško* with the Tocharian B suffix *-śke* and compares e.g. Pathian *-ičak*, Sogdian *-c'kk*, suggesting convincingly that all these suffixes are cognate and have their origin in an unknown Iranian language in which **čk* > *šk*. This is only a sample of very many matters discussed, and there is a large bibliography.

The last study is an extensive examination of the relationships of Indo-Iranian with Tocharian by G.-J. Pinault. Loanwords from Iranian have long been studied in Tocharian, and Pinault adduces some new examples from an old Iranian different from Avestan (perhaps Scythian?) as well as new material from Bactrian, Sogdian, and Khotanese. He reminds us of how different the two Tocharian languages are A and B, and notes that they were not mutually intelligible and must have separated at least five centuries before the date of our documents. Particularly interesting is the long and thorough discussion of the much-misunderstood Tocharian words for "right" and "left", in which taboo plays a part: "right" tends to be stable and mostly fixed, whilst "left" is variable and unstable. The survey of linguistic contacts between Sanskrit, Iranian, and Tocharian is much too complex to be summarised here. The article concludes with a useful list of Bailey's writings relevant to Tocharian, followed by an extensive bibliography.

The book concludes with a general appreciation of Bailey in his life at Queen's College, Cambridge, by Ilya Gershevitch, a rendering of a piece first published in Russian in *Vestnik Drevne j Istorii* in 1990/4. It is a fitting tribute to one great scholar by another.

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Evil, Good, and Gender. Facets of the Feminine in Zoroastrian Religious History. By Jamshed K. Choksy. pp. xii, 166. New York, Peter Lang, 2002.
DOI: 10.1017/S135618630331346X

The religious equality of men and women is commonly considered as one of Zoroastrianism's remarkable characteristics. Together with its ecological features, it bestows a modern appearance on this ancient religion. There are, however, in the texts, particularly in the Middle Persian sources, a number of passages which point to misogynic attitudes. R. C. Zaehner attributed them to a Zurvanite tradition, which Geo Widengren tried to trace back to the Avesta[1]. Against this, Mary

[1] Geo Widengren, "Primordial Man and Prostitute: A Zervanite Myth in the Sassanid Avesta". In: *Studies in Mysticism and Religion Presented to Gershom G. Scholem* (Jerusalem, 1967), pp. 227–234.

Boyce[2] and Albert de Jong[3] argued that women were generally held in high esteem and occupied a dignified position in Zoroastrianism, their negative portrayal within the same tradition being only isolated and occasional occurrences and in any case inconsistent with Zoroastrian teaching.

This view is challenged by Jamshed Choksy in the book under review. It argues that, rather than being a mere inconsistency or an occasional occurrence, the negative image of women was the predominant attitude in Zoroastrianism. For over three and a half millennia the concept "that the demonic feminine was more powerful than the divine feminine" would have "shaped the day-to-day lives of many Mazda-worshipers, especially women" (p. 120). Being a corrollary of patriarchy (pp. 115, 117) and dualism – as manifested for instance in notions of order, piety, chastity, perfection, purity as opposed to chaos, impiety, sexuality, imperfection, pollution – the negative image of women would have been employed "to produce a bifurcation based on gender" (p. 4) by connecting the good notions to the masculine, male spiritual beings and legendary protagonists and evil notions to the feminine, female spiritual beings and legendary figures. The Zoroastrian religion would propagate notions "of the feminine's presumed spiritual, moral, and physiological deficiency, and supposed penchant for disharmonious actions" (p. 114f.). Male devotees had to guard themselves against the potential dangers posed by women and female demons (p. 119). On a primary level, Zoroastrian doctrine presented an opposition between male versus male, Ahura Mazda versus Angra Mainyu. At a secondary level, "bipolarity came to be played out as masculine against feminine": male versus female (p. 115). Being thus relegated to a secondary level, demoness – like women – were denied "absolute control and independence for their power was said to originate from the masculine evil spirit Angra Mainyu" (p. 118).

Furthermore, the argument goes, the concepts produced by Zoroastrian clerics served social functions in addition to religious ones. The ideological bifurcation between male equalling good and female equalling evil would manifest itself in Zoroastrian history and social life. With the advent of western-style education and secularisation, the social roles of women changed, and the religious values attributing negative aspects to the feminine attenuated (p. 119). Then the faith became "for the most part free of gender stereotypes" (p. 115) to such an extent that "now in secular, urban, settings the feminine is often perceived as the dominant, vibrant force within the community with the masculine being viewed as passive – especially by women themselves" (p. 119).

Divided into six chapters, this book proposes to examine "doctrinal, theological, ritual, and socioreligious developments over time in the relationship between evil, good, and gender" (p. 4). Methodologically, the study wants to be an "analytical survey" but does not intend to "provide every iota of data". Being "firmly grounded in the source materials" (p. 5) but at the same time utilising additional theoretical paradigms of a wide range of disciplines, this study proposes to guide the reader to specific primary sources and to the secondary literature on individual issues. It employs texts and artworks, which would have historiographic, literary, religious and secular dimensions, always keeping in mind that the texts available "reflect male discourses . . . on both theodicy and gender", since until the nineteenth century, women's own interpretations of the relationship between religion and gender would not have been preserved within or outside the faith's canon (p. 6).

Chapter one, entitled "Introduction: Gender, Sanctity, and Demonology" (pp. 1–8) maintains that for much of its history the Zoroastrian religion regarded the feminine as chaotic, dangerous, evil and distant from the order and goodness of god. Generations of male priests would have linked Zoroastrian concepts of evil to the feminine, whereby undesirable characteristics were personified in demonic female spirits (p. 2). The feminine was blamed as the agent of disorder and the cause of evil features.

[2] Mary Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism*. (Leiden, 1975) Vol.I, p. 308 n. 83.

[3] Albert de Jong, "Jeh the primal whore? Observations on Zoroastrian misogyny". In: Rai Kloppenborg and Wouter J. Hanegraaff (eds.), *Female Stereotypes in Religious Traditions*. (Leiden, New York, 1995) pp. 15–41.

Chapter two, entitled "Dualism and the Feminine" (pp. 9–30) discusses Zarathustra's lifetime (in the "Post-Bactrian-Margiana Archeological Complex, ca. 1750–1500 BC", p. 10) and homeland (in "western and southern regions of present-day Central Asia", p. 10). While Zarathustra saw his own role as that of a traditional, devotional poet, his image would have been turned into that of a historical, prophetic leader by the Median magi. The image of Zarathustra as a sage and founder of the Iranian religion would have been a projection of the magi, who assumed the roles of that religion (pp. 11–13). After a brief outline of the Zoroastrian scriptures (pp. 13–15), teachings and religious practice, it is maintained that the Gathas would testify to a nascent "rudimentary dualism", according to which people and deities could tie themselves to Asha "thereby ordering the cosmos in an enlightened fashion". Only later generations of magi would have transformed "the devotional poet's dualistic words into a cosmic duality" (p. 15), in which Angra Mainyu became the direct opponent of Ahura Mazda. The Amesha Spentas of the Younger Avesta would constitute a group of spiritual beings divided into "three active masculine and neuter[4] domains paired with three passive feminine domains" (p. 16). The Yazatas would equally display "a symbolic, interlinked, gender-based, division into active masculine and passive feminine entities" (p. 17).

The discussion of Zoroastrian cosmology (pp. 18–19)[5] and eschatology (pp. 20–21) is concluded with the claim that "women, female beings, and the feminine" served only "very limited positive roles such as procreation", while many roles of the feminine "were deemed by the faithful to be negative ones at the spiritual and corporeal levels" (p. 19). Reward and punishment after death would be distributed "on gender-differential bases" (p. 20). After a discussion of Zoroastrian rituals (pp. 21–23), funerary practices (pp. 23–24) and history (pp. 24–28), the chapter reverts to the theme of cosmic and ethical dualism (pp. 28–30). A male-dominated society would have accorded all that is good to a male creator, Ahura Mazda, and all that is evil to a male destructive spirit, Angra Mainyu, the founder of the religion being also a male. To accord the principle of either good or evil to a female being would have given too much authority to women, since the "dynamics of control and power in patriarchal societies did not permit major religious leaders to be women" (p. 28). The Mazdayasnian system of dualism, with the separate locus of evil, would have given priests a viable means "to attribute some blame to women", whereby the masculine and feminine, as "opposites in a strife-torn universe", were associated with good and evil respectively. Women, when in opposition to men, were "construed as allies of Angra Mainyu" (p. 29). By extension, the female became "partially dangerous for Zoroastrians . . . despite of their other positive religious and social roles" (p. 30), which are, however, not discussed in this book.

Chapter three (pp. 31–50) is about the four negative notions of deceit (Drug, pp. 31–33, Daiwi, Pairimaiti, Taromaiti, pp. 34–35), discord (Asrushti, Anaxshti, Bushyasta, p. 35–36), sexuality (Jahika, Jahi[6], pp. 38–40) and avidity (Azi or Az pp. 41–44, Xnathaiti and Uta or Udag p. 44). Negative notions such as Drug, Pairimaiti and Taromaiti are said to "present aspects of the dangerous feminine, . . . and active rebellion against masculine domination" (p. 35). Zoroastrian demonology would be "far more specific in its association of gender with evil as discord and disharmony than many other Near Eastern and South Asian religions" (p. 35). At the "opposite pole of this male-constructed notion of sexuality" (p. 44) would be female deities personifying notions of chaste love (Spenta Armaiti, pp. 44–46), fertility and chastity (Aredwi Sura Anahita 46–49), beauty (Ashi, pp. 41, 49) and good health (Drvaspa, p. 49).

[4] It should be noted, however, that the grammatical gender of all three non-feminine Amesha Spentas (*aṣ̌a-*, *vohu- manah-*, *xš̌aϑra-*) is neuter. The only masculine Amesha Spenta is *spəṇta- mainiiu-*, who stands apart.

[5] The statement that the "current age of mixture between good and evil . . . will also last six thousand years" (p. 18) is at variance with the periodisation of Zoroastrian cosmology, since the "current" age is not that of "Mixture" but of "Separation", which starts with the birth of Zarathustra and ends with Frašegird.

[6] *Jahikā-*, *jahī-* are said to be "mentioned only fleetingly in the Avesta" (p. 38), but there are in fact relatively numerous attestations, see Chr. Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch* (Straßburg, 1904), col. 606f.

Moreover, in addition to their religious roles, the notions of "deceit, discord, uncontrolled sexuality, and avidity in contrast to veracity, concord, chastity, and restraint were social phenomena" (p. 49).

Chapter four, entitled "Weakness, Imperfection and Death" (pp. 51–74) is about the myth of Mashya and Mashyana (pp. 51–57), which is interpreted as presenting the idea that women were "weak in their denial of evil and strong through their espousing of wickedness" (p. 55). Men would fight female evil forces such as Pairika by reciting the holy texts. Pollution would have been equated with disorder and associated with death and the feminine (p. 58).

Chapter five, entitled "Society in Antiquity and the Middle Ages" (pp. 75–103) discusses the role of women in Iranian history and society from the Achaemenid to the Islamic period with a view to showing the extent to which male construed notions of the feminine shaped social phenomena throughout the history of Iran. In spite of the general argument, according to which the feminine was seen as dangerous and tied to evil, the presentation gives the impression that the status of women improved in each of the periods under consideration. Thus, it is stated that "from the middle of Achaemenian[7] times through Greco-Macedonian and Seleucid rule" there was "an augmentation of positive feminine roles at a spiritual level" (p. 81), equally during the Parthian period "religious issues of purity and pollution were no longer major impediments to women attaining positions of authority or playing public roles", that "their enhanced civic image was reflected in the arts and literature" (p. 83), that frequent representations of women in artworks during the Sasanian era reflected "their growing importance in the daily activities of Zoroastrian society" (p. 87), and that after the Islamic conquest "Mazdean women, although often ephemeral in the official record, participated actively in defining the culture and the history of both late Zoroastrian and early Islamic Iran" (p. 101). Indeed, it is suggested that it was mainly women who transmitted Mazdayasnian ideas into the Irano-Islamic culture (p. 102). However, it is nevertheless concluded that the role of women in society was dominated by the dualistic view according to which they should emulate the good female divine spirits incorporating "domesticity, maternity, submissiveness, and piety", and that throughout Iranian history public roles for women, authority and leadership would have been considered at least inappropriate and even possibly dangerous, because when in the hands of women they were seen as representing evil female spirits spreading disorder (p. 103). There would have been "constraints regularly placed on women's activities owing to that community's fear of impurity thought to result from bleeding during menstruation and childbirth" (p. 91).

The final, sixth chapter, entitled "Conclusion: Modernity and Change" (pp. 105–120) discusses careers of some educated Parsi women and contemporary gender relations. After the greatest change "in beliefs, lifestyles, and art" had occured after the eighteenth century AD, it argues that the rise of the public image of women was paralleled by the decline of female demons to symbols of undesirable characteristics. Some of them such as *pairikā*, who became a 'fairy' in its New Persian form *parī*, even shifted over into the camp of good spirits (p. 106). There would have been a trend toward de-demonisation of evil beings as a result of which the socioreligious power ascribed to such alleged spiritual forces attenuated (p. 106). The idea that the feminine was coupled with irreligiosity would last be found in the Persian Revayat, which still attested to the notion that "men were righteous and women were potentially problematic" (pp. 106–107).

The association of women and disorder or evil would be attenuated particularly during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (p. 107). In both Iran and India this process would have been triggered by exposure to science and education. In Iran, it resulted from exposure to Hellenistic and

[7] The statement that while polygamy was fully accepted, "polyandry was never permitted" (p. 77) needs to be qualified for there is evidence for polyandry in a recently discovered Bactrian text edited and translated by Nicholas Sims-Williams, *Bactrian Documents from Northern Afghanistan*. Vol.I: Legal and Economic Documents. (Oxford, 2000) pp. 32–35 (Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum Part II, Vol.VI).

Indian sciences since the Sasanian period, while the Parsis of British India had access to western-style education from the 1820s. They came under western influence and, as a consequence, discarded many of their ancient customs and worldviews in favour of rational morals and ethics. The "monumental effect of education upon Parsi women on the Indian subcontinent" (p. 107) resulted in a very high degree of literacy and had an effect on gender relations. "Secularization plus westernization" (p. 109) resulted in "attenuation rather than rupture" of the "interlinked concepts of disorder and evil vis-à-vis order and good" as being connected to gender (p. 110). It is suggested that "the decline of beliefs on negative feminine images enabled contemporary Parsi Zoroastrian women to move beyond the earlier religious stereotypes". Order and disorder, righteousness and falsehood, good and evil would have come to be viewed as social phenomena rather than religious ones. Knowledge would no longer have been considered as a male domain, and the feminine ceased to be feared "as a source of deceit, discord, lust, weakness, and imperfection" (p. 110). Similarly in Iran, as a result of education, westernisation and secularisation, order and disorder, righteousness and falsehood, good and evil eventually came to be viewed for the main part as gender-nonspecific social phenomena rather than gender-specific religious ones (p. 112).

The book is concluded by an extensive bibliography (pp. 133–160) and a subject index (pp. 161–166), but there is no index of text passages discussed.

Although the topic of this book, gender stereotypes in Zoroastrianism, is fascinating and intriguing, one remains sceptical about its main argument, because there are too many instances where the texts adduced do not support the conclusions drawn on their basis. Moreover, some important contradictory data is not taken into account.

A peculiarity of the ancient Iranian (and indeed Indo-Iranian) religion is the personification of abstract notions. In this process, the grammatical gender of a noun could turn into natural gender. For instance, the grammatically feminine noun *daēnā-* 'conscience, vision' came to be represented as a maiden. The grammatical gender of *druj-* is feminine not because 'deceit' was perceived as a female being, but because all root nouns are normally feminine (= Ved. *drúh-* f. 'deceit'), irrespective of their meaning. Thus also the name of Zarathustra's god, the compound *mazdā-*, whose second member is a root noun, is originally feminine (= Ved. *medhā́-* f. 'wisdom'). The grammatical gender of *druj-* does not turn into masculine in Old Persian (as said on p. 32), for it is not the root noun that is found there, but a thematic derivative *drauga-*, which equals Avestan *draoga-*, both masculine nouns. The claims that "Zarathushtra and the early Mazdean community perceived Drug as feminine", that later Drug was transformed into "a feminine personification of evil" (p. 32) and that she became "the representative of the demonic feminine" (p. 33) remain unsupported, since no evidence is adduced suggesting that *druj-* was represented as a female being, which could have suggested that the noun's grammatical gender changed into natural gender. The texts rather suggest that the concept of *druj-* 'deceit' was more complex than presented here, and in any case not confined to the female gender, because it serves also as an epithet of male beings. For instance, the Dragon Dahāka (*aži- dahāka-*both masculine nouns), an embodiment of evil (but not discussed in this book), is called 'daevic deceit' (*daēuuīm drujim* Y 9.9).

The physical representation of *druj* is more complex, too. *Druj* is frequently associated with the demon of the corpse, *nasu-*[8], such as in Vd 7.1 *druxš yā nasuš*. This demon is not represented as a women, but as a hideous fly. For instance, in the Bareshnum ceremony, 'the Deceit, the corpse

[8] The demon *nasu-* is discussed here separately on pp. 59–63. The equation of *druj* and *nasu* is already found in the Avesta and not only as late as from around the eighteenth century AD, as claimed on p. 106. The grammatical gender of Av. *nasu-* is not always feminine (as said on p. 59: "the female Nasush"), but sometimes masculine (e.g. Vd 19.46 *nasuš daēuuō.dātō*). Such variation suggests that the supposed dualistic bifurcation between good and male, on the one hand, and female and evil, on the other, was less clear-cut than argued for in this book.

(-demon)' (*hā druxš yā nasuš*) is chasen all over the body from top to bottom (Vd 9.15–25) and at the end flies away:

Vd 9.26: *haoiiąm hē aṇguštąm paiti.hiṇcōiš*
āaṯ hā druxš yā nasuš niuuōiriieite
apāxəδraēibiiō naēmaēibiiō
maxši.kəhrpa ərəγaitiia
frašnaoš apa.zaδaŋhō akaranəm.driβiiå
yaϑa zōiždištāiš xrafstrāiš

'You may sprinkle on his left toe,
then this deceit, the corpse(-demon),
is chasen into the northern regions
in the shape of a hideous fly,
the knees forward, protuding buttocks, over and over covered with spots,
just like the most horrible obnoxious creatures.'

Although the *druj nasu*, having knees and buttocks, is partly described in anthropomorphic terms, there is no doubt that the passage refers not to a woman but to an animal, which is explicitly identified by the word *maxši.kəhrpa* as an insect.

The feminine *druj* is contrasted with the neuter *aṣ̌a*, which the author defines as "the righteous, orderly, principle that opposes female unrighteousness and disorder". The statement that "pious male believers" would have been "regarded as *ashavan*, followers of order, adherents to truth" (p. 33), however, is inadequately supported. Both passages adduced (but not quoted) are unsuitable because neither of them refers to the 'truthful one': Y 34.10 is about the 'the one of good intellect' (*huxratu-*) and Yt 10.45 about Mithra's helpers who watch out for those breaking a contract.[9] Furthermore, there are also the *female* followers of truth, *aṣ̌aonī-*, just as there are male and female followers of deceit (OAv. *drəguuaṇt-*, YAv. *druuaṇt-*, fem. *druuaitī-*, the latter only attested in Vd 20.10 and 12).

Moreover, in some cases the author constructs a contrast of gender where it is difficult to see one. For instance, the claim that "evil women were decried as a perpetrator of evil on men" – rather than as perpetrators on Ahura Mazda – and that the men "thus could view themselves as beguiled victims" (p. 35) is supported with reference to Y 33.4. There *asrušti-* 'disobedience' together with the "archdemon Aka Manah or Akoman" would "ferment strife and turmoil". Feminine disobedience (*asrušti*) and strife (*anāxšti*) would be overcome by "masculine obedience and steadfastness of duty in the form of the male spiritual beings Sraosha and Mithra" (p. 36). However, the antonym of *anāxšti-* 'strife' is not Mithra, but the equally feminine *āxšti-* 'peace', as emerges clearly from the two passages referred to by the author, but not quoted. Indeed, in one of them, Yt 10.28 Mithra, rather than being opposed to strife, is said to be lord over both, 'peace and strife':

Yt 10.29 *tūm akō vahištasca*
miϑra ahi daŋ́hubiiō
tūm akō vahištasca
miϑra ahi maṣ̌iiākaēibiiō
tūm āxštōiš anāxštōišca
miϑra xšaiiehe dax́iiunąm

[9] Another instance is the reference to Yt 18.2 which would suggest that Arshtat was the "feminine mirror image of sloth" and a "servile female spirit" of Mithra (p. 37). However, Yt 18.2 is not at all about Arshtat but about the (grammatically neuter) 'Aryan glory' (*airiianəm x^{v}arənō*)!

'You, O Mithra, are bad and best
for the countries.
You, O Mithra, are bad and best
for the mortals.
You, O Mithra, rule over peace and strife
of the countries.'

There is nothing in this passage suggesting that a male spiritual being was opposed to a female demon. Another instance is Vd 18.16, which together with Bundahishn 27.32, would indicate that the female demon Bushyasta "lulls men into laziness, slumber and neglect of religious duty, thereby permitting cosmic order to disintegrate" (p. 36):

Vd 18.16 *usəhištata maṣ̌iiāka*
staota aṣ̌əm yat̰ vahištəm
nīsta daēuua
aēša vō duuaraiti būšiiąsta darəγō.gauua
hā vīspəm ahūm astuuaṇtəm hakat̰
raocaŋhąm fraγrātō nixᵛabdaiieiti
xᵛafsa darəγō maṣ̌iiāka
nōit̰ tē sacaite

'Get up, O mortals,
pray the "Best Truth"(-prayer),
scorn the demons!
That long-handed Sloth runs up to you,
she who puts to sleep all corporeal life at once
at the awakening of the daylight:
"Sleep long, O mortal,
your (time) has not yet come!"'

However, it is more probable that the passage implies a contrast between the demon, on the one hand, and male and female human beings, on the other, because *maṣ̌iiāka-*, being presented here as a specification of 'corporeal life' (*ahūm astuuaṇtəm*), is likely to include both men and women (genus commune). The language of this passage does not appear to be gender-specific. If a contrast between the female demon of sloth and the male human being was intended, one would expect an Avestan word such as *nar-* which unequivocally identifies the human being as a man in contrast to a woman (*nāirī-*).

A second problem with this book is that the host of male evil spirits and demons in Zoroastrianism is neither accounted for nor discussed. The argument appears to be forced even to such an extent that, in order to suit the picture, demons clearly recognisable as male are turned into females. Thus, *āzi-* 'concupiscence' is presented as one in "the tetrad of female demons associated with sexuality" (p. 41). However, the epithet *daēuuō.dāta-* 'demon-spawned' in both the genitive expression *āzōiš daēuuō.dātahe* (Y 16.8) and in the nominative *āziš daēuuō.dātō* (Vd 18.19) unequivocally identifies the gender of *āzi-* as masculine. Discarding the grammatical evidence as "misleading", Choksy hypothesises that "early Zoroastrians thought of Azi as a demoness" – and thus *āzi-* turns into a female demon, who would have become "a tool by which society's strife and woes were demonized and attributed to the feminine, the female, and women" (p. 43). Since Middle Persian *āz* is one of the major agents in the final eschatological struggle between good and evil, it would "once again" show that the Zoroastrian religion presented "male dominance over the female, the divine masculine over the demonic feminine"

(p. 44). However, if one leaves the gender of *āzi*, *āz* as masculine, as required by the texts, this demon flatly contradicts Choksy's equation of 'good' equalling masculine and divine and 'evil' equalling feminine and demonic.

Moreover, the masculine demon associated with *āz*, *aēšma*, Pahl. *xēšm*, the (male) personification of violence and destruction, is barely mentioned (not even in the index). Equally, a host of other male demonic beings are ignored. Nor is there an evaluation of those texts which suggest that there was religious equality between men and women[10] and that women could take on leading roles. In particular, a passage in the Yasna Haptanghaiti (Y 41.2), carefully analysed by Johanna Narten[11], suggests that in ancient Zoroastrianism both men and women (*nā vā nāirī vā*) could function as good leaders (*huxšaϑra-*) in both physical and spiritual life (*uba- ahu-*).

For these reasons, this work "should be used cautiously" because its "conclusions are based on limited data"[12]. Moreover, as illustrated above, the interpretation put forward too frequently does not emerge from the texts. This, combined with the omission of contradicting evidence, weakens and indeed fatally militates against the author's main argument. This book does not succeed in seriously challenging the traditional view of the religious equality of men and women in Zoroastrianism.

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Nation and Novel: A Study of Persian and Kurdish Narrative Discourse. By Hashem Ahmadzadeh. Studia Iranica Upsaliensia 6. pp. 330. Uppsala, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 2003.
DOI: 10.1017/S1356186303323466

If the Persian novel is a relatively new phenomenon, the Kurdish novel is even more recent. Its most tentative beginnings, the socialist-realist *oeuvre* of Erebe Şemo (Shamilov), date from the 1930s; even by the 1990s, the output of Kurdish novelists was vastly outnumbered by that of their Iranian counterparts. The disadvantages of the Kurdish language, notably its lack of uniformity and the degree of assimilation practised in the various states where Kurds live, did not favour an early or rapid development of any modern literary genres, and it is not suprising that some notable writers who define themselves as Kurdish, such as Yashar Kemal and Selim Barakat, choose to use the official State languages rather than Kurdish – thus there is even dispute over what actually constitutes a Kurdish novel. Consequently the publication of this study, focusing as it does on the Kurdish novel by comparing it to the Persian novel, is a rare and welcome event.

This book considers the relationship between the development of the novel and that of the national consciousness, with reference to Iran and Kurdistan. The novel is most often depicted as a phenomenon which evolved in western societies as they reached modernity, often, so the theory goes, enunciating the conflict between individual and society. A similar process, albeit more compressed, is seen amongst developing nations. There appears to be a link between nation and novel, the nature of which is highly debated – and remains highly debatable. One might certainly question the usefulness of taking the novel as an object of study in nationalist discourse when it is certain in the case of both Iran and Kurdistan that there are other forms of narrative discourse – the soap-opera, the film – which are much more popular than novels and reflect public interest to a much greater extent. However, it is also very likely that novels have an importance as nationalist symbols. Members of the intellectual classes are

[10] For a survey of the Avestan passages, see de Jong 1995 (quoted above n.3), pp. 23–25.
[11] J. Narten, *Der Yasna Haptahāiti* (Wiesbaden, 1986), pp. 292–293.
[12] Choksy's criticism of articles by Jafarey, Gould and de Jong, p. 123 n.7.