

From Storytelling to Poetry

the Oral Background of the Persian Epics

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Abstract

The present work examines the role played by oral tradition in the evolution of the Persian (written) epic tradition, which virtually began with the *Shâhnâme* of Ferdowsi (ShNF). The text is also the culmination of a long development that stretches back into ancient times. In the process of transmission of narratives, both writing and oral tradition are assumed to have played a role. While Ferdowsi's written sources have been studied, the influence of oral tradition on his work remains largely unexplored.

In order to explore oral influence on the ShNF, the thesis suggests a new approach. Based on formal characteristics of *naqqâli* (the Persian storytelling tradition as it is known from later times), a set of criteria is proposed to demonstrate the extent to which a written text shows structures which could be explained as deriving from oral composition, here called "Oral Performance Model" (OPM). The OPM consists of formal and thematic criteria. The former consider whether a text can be divided into a sequence of instalments, and the latter examine how instalment divisions affect the thematic organisation of the story. By applying the OPM to the ShNF, it becomes clear that Ferdowsi used techniques associated with oral storytelling.

Such findings on the ShNF throw new light on the later epics, which are not only influenced by the ShNF as a model but are also influenced by oral performance. To demonstrate this, the OPM is applied to the *Garshâspnâme* of Asadi (GN). While oral performance continues to influence the structure of the text, it is also clear that literary elements play a greater role in the GN than in the ShNF. Despite his literary ambitions, Asadi displays his implicit dependence on oral performance, which seems to have fundamentally shaped his perception and appreciation of heroic stories.

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A Note on Transcription

1. The transcription system here used is based on the contemporary Persian (Tehrani dialect) phonological system, which may be summarised as follows:¹

Stops	Voiceless	p	t	c	k
	Voiced	b	d	j	g
Fricatives	Voiceless	f	s	sh	x
	Voiced	v	z	zh	q
Nasals		m	n		
Liquids		l	r		
Glides		y	h	‘	
Vowels	Long	i	â	u	
	Short	e	a	o	
	Diphthongs	ey	ow		

Figure 1: Persian Phonological System

2. *Ezâfe* and pronominal suffixes are connected by hyphen: e.g. *Târix-e Sistân* or *dâstân-e ishân*. The final /h/ is omitted: i.e. *Shâhnâme* rather than *Shâhnâmeh*.
3. For convenience, the same phonological system is applied to the early Persian texts such as the *Shâhnâme* of Ferdowsi and Arabic loan words.
4. This system will apply to all names of works, persons and places cited in this work, except in the quotations where the authors' transcriptions are retained with slight changes in diacritics.
5. However, proper names and nouns for which there are established English spellings are spelt accordingly. Personal names of published authors are spelled according to the individual's preference.

¹Based on Windfuhr 1979: 129 and Lazard 1957.

Introduction

The present work considers the role played by oral tradition in the development of the Persian (written) epic tradition, which practically began with the *Shâhnâme* of Ferdowsi (ShNF) in the early eleventh century AD.² This text is a beginning of the post-Islamic, written epic tradition; it influenced a number of later epic poets in terms of both content and form. Yet it is also the culmination of a long development which goes back to ancient times. It marks a watershed in the transmission of the Persian national legend;³ ancient materials are synthesised and recast into a new literary form, intended for a Moslem audience. In order to appreciate what the ShNF inherited as well as what it created, it is therefore necessary to understand its background in which both writing and oral tradition are assumed to have played a role. While the role of writing has been studied extensively, that of oral tradition virtually remains unexplored. This work will therefore concentrate on the role played by oral tradition in the predominantly written environment where the ShNF was composed.

Thus, the question with which this work will be concerned is not whether Ferdowsi used written or oral sources, but rather how oral tradition interacted with writing in the genesis of the ShNF. The former question, which still dominates academic discussion, seems to be incapable of definite proof in the absence of the relevant information on the textual tradition of the ShNF; there is apparently no certainty as to any written intermediate sources between the *Xwadâynâmag* — a

²The references are to Mohl ed. & trans. 1838-68. They are represented as in 13:111, where the first two digits (before the colon) refer to the king number in Wolff 1935, and the last three digits designate the line number. The translations are by the present writer unless otherwise specified.

Since J. Khaleghi-Motlagh's new edition of the ShNF (Khaleghi-Motlagh ed. 1988) is still incomplete (six volumes have been published thus far), Mohl's edition, rather than Bertels's edition (Bertels et al eds. 1960-71), is used in this work. Although the Paris edition is problematic in many respects (for example, it does not use some of the oldest manuscripts which were discovered after its publication; see further Yarshater 1988: XIII), it facilitates the utility of Fritz Wolff's *Glossar zu Ferdosis Schahname*, without which textual and critical studies of the ShNF would be inconceivable. Furthermore, as A. Piemontese 1980: 218-9 pointed out, the edition is at times found to be closer to the Florence manuscript (Ms. Cl. III. 24 (G.F.3), the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale) than the Moscow edition (also cf. Yarshater 1988: XIV-XV).

³The term 'national legend' is defined by William Hanaway as "the legends of the Persian speaking population of the Iranian cultural area" (Hanaway 1970:1).

(hypothetical) source of the ShNF and other works — and the ShNF itself. The theory of a written background is formally as speculative as that of oral transmission. As the very nature of oral tradition dictates, there is nothing against postulating oral tradition as Ferdowsi's source, but on the other hand such a hypothesis is virtually incapable of positive proof. As it stands, the question of origin of the ShNF seems to have reached a dead end. The question addressed in this work is therefore the broader one of the indirect influence of oral tradition on the ShNF.

Scholarship, it seems, has been preoccupied with the question of Ferdowsi's sources since the late nineteenth century. Jules Mohl, an early editor and translator of the ShNF, was perhaps one of the first to mention that the ShNF was based on oral traditions which had been preserved in writing, on the basis of Ferdowsi's own references to his sources.⁴ Whether such references can be taken literally is open to question (see Chapter III), but it is significant nonetheless that Mohl could point to the influence of oral tradition on the ShNF based on the internal evidence. However, this view was called into question by Theodor Nöldeke, whose monograph on the ShNF is still regarded as the classic study.⁵ Nöldeke held strongly that Ferdowsi's references to oral narratives were purely rhetorical,⁶ based on the assumption that the ShNF was taken from written sources alone.⁷ Foremost among the written sources is a Persian prose work which Nöldeke assumed to go back to the *Xwadâynâmag*. This became a standard theory purporting to explain the origin of the ShNF, and was further corroborated by Mohammad Qazvini and Vladimir Minorsky, who published the original text of the preface to the Persian prose work⁸ and its English translation,⁹ respectively. More recently, however, the theory was challenged by François de Blois, who pointed out that the Persian prose work was not Ferdowsi's main source;¹⁰ he suggested instead that other earlier Persian written sources were used by Ferdowsi for the bulk of the ShNF.¹¹

Since the mid 1950s, the comparative study of epic poetry began to influence works of Iranists. For example, Mary Boyce demonstrated that oral traditions played a role in the transmission of the national legend. She showed in

⁴Mohl 1838, I: VIII-XI.

⁵Bogdanov trans. 1930/1979; hereafter referred to as Nöldeke 1979.

⁶Ibid., p. 67.

⁷Ibid., pp. 62; 108.

⁸Qazvini 1944: 123-48.

⁹Minorsky 1964.

¹⁰De Blois 1992: 122-4.

¹¹Ibid., p. 124.

particular how oral traditions served to put together different strands of narratives,¹² and pointed to their influence on the form and manner of Middle and New Persian epics.¹³ Admittedly her thesis is concerned with the oral transmission of the national legend in pre-Islamic times. As regards post-Islamic times it essentially follows Nöldeke's argument, and assumed that oral traditions vanished after the Arab conquest.¹⁴ Since 1960 theories about oral tradition, for their part, have been developed so considerably that few students of epic poetry could ignore their implications. Foremost among them is Milman Parry's and Albert B. Lord's 'Oral Formulaic Theory' (OFT).¹⁵ Based on this theory, an American Iranist, Olga M. Davidson, attempted to interpret the ShNF as an oral composition. She argued that Ferdowsi not only inherited the older Iranian oral tradition, but also re-created New Persian oral poetry — a process that was to be continued by *naqqâls* (Persian storytellers, see further below) down to the present day.¹⁶

It has been generally assumed that the ShNF is a written composition based on written sources. Of course, this is not without reason. The ShNF agrees, in its general outline, with other (extant) Arabic and Persian works; it consists of fifty divisions, and each tells the stories of a king. It represents the history of pre-Islamic Persia as an unbroken line of fifty kings. The strong similarity between works of this kind from the early Islamic period seems to suggest that the national legend was once thoroughly systematised, possibly — but not necessarily — in written form. The diverse materials used in the ShNF may further point to Ferdowsi's reliance on written sources. More importantly, as Dick Davis showed,¹⁷ the whole of the ShNF reflects Ferdowsi's conscious design and artistic purposes, which is generally associated with written compositions. There is no doubt in any case that the ShNF as such is a written composition.

Rather, the difficulty lies in two points. Firstly, scholars have attempted to pinpoint Ferdowsi's principal written source, which is in fact beyond any proof because the primary texts have not survived. As we saw above, de Blois has replaced the Persian prose work by other texts which are also lost. This is incapable of further scrutiny, and merely confirms the common assumption that the ShNF is

¹²Boyce 1954; 1955: 470ff.; 1957: 32ff.

¹³Boyce 1957: 36; 1983: 1155-8.

¹⁴Boyce notes: "What was not written—and that must have been the bulk—was forgotten; what was written perished, or, in the case of *Vis u Râmin*, was refashioned to suit a later taste. The result in all cases was the same: the minstrel-poems disappeared" (Boyce 1957: 41).

¹⁵See esp. Lord 1960 and A Parry ed. 1971.

¹⁶Davidson 1985: 63-4; 106-11; 127-31; 1994: 19-72.

¹⁷Davis 1992: 11-7.

based on written sources. Secondly, such scholarly concern has prevented many from recognising other aspects of the ShNF, notably its stylistic and formal characteristics which theories of oral composition may seem to help to explain: e.g. recurring story motifs, formulaic expressions, and particular plot structures of stories of the ShNF,¹⁸ which vexed scholars like Edward G. Browne¹⁹ and G. M. Wickens,²⁰ just to mention a few. Although the ShNF is a written epic, it seems also that it is indirectly influenced by oral tradition.

Theories of oral composition, especially the OFT, however have raised some new problems. As is implicit in Davidson's argument, such theories generally assume that oral composition is fundamentally different from the written counterpart,²¹ and tend to ignore the written aspects of an 'oral' text. Clearly, this does not reflect the realities of many epic poems, including the ShNF, which were committed to writing at some point in the course of transmission, and thus exhibit literary (written) traits in varying degrees.²² While the theories about oral literature are helpful in accounting for some features of the ShNF, they are less so in many other respects.

It is clear that the ShNF shows both written and oral characteristics, and that any attempts to reduce the text to one or the other are likely to fail. The thesis will therefore examine to what extent elements typically associated with oral tradition can be found in the ShNF and the later epics, while taking as its point of departure the fact that the ShNF is a written epic. It will seek to contribute to our knowledge of

¹⁸Nöldeke 1979: 71-5; 98-101. On the formulaic nature of the ShNF see Kondo (Yamamoto) 1988; Davidson 1994:171-81.

¹⁹Browne 1906, II: 142-3. See also Davis 1992: XVI; 3-4.

²⁰Wickens 1974: 262. The text is quoted in note 71, p. 27.

²¹Lord notes: "the two techniques [oral and written techniques] are, I submit, contradictory and mutually exclusive. Once the oral technique is lost, it is never regained. The written technique, on the other hand, is not compatible with the oral technique, and the two could not possibly combine, to form another, a third, a 'transitional' technique" (Lord 1960: 129). Finnegan 1977 questions such a clear-cut division of oral and written literature on the strength of her observations of various forms of oral poetry.

²²While admitting that the ShNF is a written epic, Davidson denies the influence of writing on the ShNF: "The factor of *writing*, creating a book, may be involved merely in the *recording*, not necessarily in the *composing*, of his [Ferdowsi's] poetry. In other words, it cannot be simply taken for granted that the composition of the *Shâhnâma* depended on writing. Writing may have played a part only in the recording of the poem. A similar argument may be offered with respect to the aspect of *reading* a book (emphasis by Davidson)" (Davidson 1985: 111). This recalls Lord's remark: "The use of writing in setting down oral texts does not *per se* have any effect on oral tradition. It is a means of recording. The texts thus obtained are in a sense special; they are not those of normal performance, yet they are purely oral, and at their best they are finer than those of normal performance" (Lord 1960: 128). Writing is evidently more than a recording tool, since it is instrumental to producing a "finer text" than that of actual performance.

oral tradition and to give clearer shape and contour to this nebulous concept. This part of the work will be based on the study of *naqqâli*, the living Iranian oral tradition of heroic stories.²³ This tradition will tell us how *naqqâls* (storytellers) build up oral performances using *tumârs*, story texts which are transmitted from master to disciple:²⁴ it informs us not only of stylistic and formal features of oral performance, but also of the way in which oral performance influences the structure of written texts.

On the basis of this information on *naqqâli*, a set of criteria — here called ‘Oral Performance Model’ (OPM) — will be proposed to demonstrate to what extent oral composition is reflected in the ShNF and other epics. The OPM will include formal and thematic criteria: the former consider the way in which a text can be divided into a sequence of instalments — units comparable to actual performances — and the latter examine how such instalment divisions affect the thematic organisation of the text. The model therefore seeks to examine the general or overall influence of a pre-existing oral tradition on written story texts. By systematically applying the OPM to the ShNF, we shall attempt to ascertain the extent to which oral tradition is influential in the text, as well as the extent to which it is modified in accordance with Ferdowsi’s conscious design of his work.

Such findings on the ShNF, moreover, can throw new light on our understanding of the later epics, also known as ‘secondary epics’. These epics are generally seen as imitations of the ShNF; they tell stories which Ferdowsi left out in the ShNF in a manner similar to the ShNF.²⁵ As most scholars agreed that they derive from or depend on the ShNF, there seemed to be no problem to solve. As a result of this lack of scholarly interest, most of the later epics are not published;²⁶

²³Page 1977 & 1979 are the pioneering works on *naqqâli*. On the basis of fieldwork done in Shiraz in the 1970s, she provides useful data on *naqqâli* such as the social backgrounds of storytellers, audiences, the stylistic features of oral performance and the story material. The political changes in Iran which took place shortly after Page’s fieldwork have made similar attempts nearly impossible. After an interval of some twenty years, her work therefore remains as a valuable contribution to the study of *naqqâli*.

²⁴The *tumâr* here used is Dustxâh ed. 1990. Extracts of *tumârs* are also found in Mahjub 1349: 52-63; Page 1977: 135-9 (with the English translation and transcriptions); Dustxâh 1992. More recently, another complete *tumâr* is published in Iran: Afshâri & Madâyeni eds. 1998. The writer is grateful to Prof. Ulrich Marzolph, Enzyklopädie des Märchens, Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, for this reference.

²⁵The ShNF is often compared to a trunk from which the other epics sprung. This simile was first quoted by Mohl from the *Mojmal al-Tavârix* (Mohl 1841: 141-2) and more recently by Marian Molé (1953: 380).

²⁶The *Garshâspnâme* (H. Yaqmâ’i ed. 1317) and the *Bahmannâme* (‘Afifi ed. 1991) have been published. The *Sâmnâme* of Xvâje Kermâni and the *Jahângirnâme* of al-Herâti were published in lithograph in India in 1319 and 1325, respectively.

few texts are translated,²⁷ and only half a dozen essays have been written.²⁸ It is a regrettable situation, since later poets are often the best critics of the work which they take as a model. It is through the later epics that one can best appreciate the way in which the ShNF was received by later generations of epic poets. By taking Asadi's *Garshâspnâme* (GN),²⁹ one of the later epics, as an example, the thesis will explore the background of the later epics: it will apply the OPM to the GN to see what changes take place in the GN, especially in elements typically associated with oral tradition.

These issues will be discussed in the order described below. Chapter I considers methodological problems of oral tradition with special reference to the ShNF and its origin. Following a survey of the written background of the ShNF, it will move on to review the Oral Formulaic Theory which, whether implicitly or explicitly, governs many modern scholars' perception of 'oral literature'. By considering theoretical issues which the theory raises when applied to the ShNF, the chapter suggests an alternative approach to oral tradition, focusing on the realities of oral performance.

Chapter II examines *naqqâli*, as a model of Persian oral narrative traditions, with a view to defining the 'Oral Performance Model', and proposing a set of criteria for demonstrating the possible influence of oral tradition on a written text. It explores the universe of *naqqâli*: historical background, formal characteristics of oral performance, participants (storyteller and audience), and narrative materials. On the basis of these observations of *naqqâli*, characteristic features of oral performance are identified. These then form the basis of the OPM, consisting of formal and thematic criteria.

Before applying the OPM to the ShNF, Chapter III will offer some external and internal evidence for the indirect influence of oral tradition on the ShNF. After a survey of the realities of storytelling in Ghaznavid times (998-1030 AD), it will analyse the significance of a number of standard sentences found in the text, which seem to point either to a written or oral source. Some stories from the ShNF, selected on the strength of such references, are then examined in detail.

Chapter IV is devoted to applying the OPM to one of the stories selected at the end of the preceding chapter. By applying formal criteria of the OPM to the story, it will demonstrate that the story can be divided into a sequence of

²⁷The *Garshâspnâme* has been translated into French (Huart and Massé ed. & trans. 1926/51).

²⁸Notably, Mohl 1838, I: L-LXX; Safâ 1333: 160ff; Massé 1935: 263-8; Molé 1951 & 1953.

²⁹The references are to H. Yaqmâ'i ed. 1317.

(hypothetical) instalments. It then applies thematic criteria in order to ascertain to what extent such instalment divisions affect the thematic structure of the story.

Chapter V considers the implications of the previous chapter. If the ShNF can be shown to have been influenced by oral tradition, this raises the question as to what extent such factors influenced the later epics. Before proceeding to apply the OPM to the *Garshâspnâme* of Asadi (GN), it will seek to redefine these epics which have been little studied, and discuss how the perception of the ShNF by later epic poets influenced the development of the epics. In view of this, a segment of the GN is selected, to which the OPM will be applied. This may help to assess the extent to which oral performance is influential in the GN.

Chapter I Oral Tradition in Written Texts

This chapter will discuss theoretical and methodological questions about oral literature preserved in writing. The first section gives a brief account of the development of the Persian national legend, which provided the basis for the ShNF, and reviews the traditional academic approach to the ShNF. The question of origin of the ShNF, to which many works have been devoted, seems to have reached an impasse and might usefully be replaced by another which would enable one to concentrate on characteristic features and the structure of the ShNF. As a preliminary to this, it is proposed here to shift our perspective to the factors of oral tradition which seem to have influenced the ShNF in some way.

The second section will focus on the Parry-Lord theory, an influential theory in the field of oral literature. While this theory helps us to recognise some elements of the ShNF as typically 'oral', it creates new problems when applied to written epics such as the ShNF. In order to understand why the theory cannot account for 'oral' features in written texts, it needs to be examined in some detail. This study will moreover lead us to envision an alternative approach to Persian oral epic tradition.

1. Evolution of the Persian National Legend

The *Shâhnâme* of Ferdowsi (ShNF) marks the beginning of the Persian written epic tradition. It influenced a number of later epics: its metre (*motaqâreb*) and verse form (*masnavi*) became a standard for the later epics; a particular group of narratives which Ferdowsi adapted for the ShNF virtually determined the future development of the epic tradition; Ferdowsi's narrative style and storytelling technique directly or indirectly served as models to be emulated.³⁰ The ShNF's influence on the later epics was profound: it permeates almost every aspect of the later epics. Viewed from a different perspective the ShNF is also the culmination of a long development which goes back to ancient times. It is a synthesis of ancient traditions — 'the Persian national legend' — recast into a new literary form intended for a Muslim

³⁰The influence of the ShNF on the later epics will be discussed in Chapter V.

audience. It marks a watershed in the history of the national legend, where ancient traditions converged, were transformed and diverged.

Because the ShNF occupies such a central place in the Persian literary epic tradition, any study of the latter must be based on the former. The question of oral influence on the epic tradition, to which the present study is addressed, is no exception to this; it is concerned with the role of oral tradition in the transmission of the national legend, its influence on the ShNF, and the latter's influence on the later epics.

Scholarship has paid serious attention to the ShNF's background and especially its origin, while relatively neglecting its other aspects. This preoccupation with the 'origin' of the ShNF can be explained by the canonical status of the ShNF which is widely held to reflect a lost Sasanian document, which in turn is assumed to have codified still more ancient traditions. If the ShNF can be proven to be a direct descendent of the Sasanian text, this would imply the continuity of the national legend from the remote past down to present-day Iran. According to this line of argument, tracing the ShNF back to the Sasanian text is of critical importance; and many scholars accordingly sought to reconstruct a textual tradition of the ShNF. While this approach sheds light on the background of the ShNF, it is problematic in many other respects. In order to illustrate this, it may be helpful to consider how the national legend developed and came to provide the basis for the ShNF.

Development of the Persian National Legend

Stage 1: Oral Transmission: Up to the Xwadâyname

Many of the myths and legends found in the ShNF probably have their origin in Indo-Iranian times. Deep in the past their details are not well understood, except that some of the mythical heroes originated in this time period. It may be reasonably assumed, however, that the mythical and heroic parts were by and large accepted and developed by priests as part of the Zoroastrian tradition. In the Avesta, heroes and villains are shown to request a boon from divinities one after another.³¹ Behind this list of heroes, there seems to have existed a host of stories relative to them.

In the Parthian period (c. 141 BC - 224 AD) the national legend may have undergone important changes through Parthian minstrelsy. The minstrels effectively

³¹Cf. the Abân Yasht.

contributed to the collection of stories of different peoples who lived in the neighbouring countries,³² as well as incorporating them into the national legend which they inherited from the Achaemenians (550-330 BC).³³ Among the stories those of the Sakas played an important part in the development and organisation of the legend. Not only were they incorporated into the Pishdadian and the Kayanid sections of the ShNF, but they were to become its synonym.³⁴ Dealing with the exploits of the hero Rostam and his family, they are often referred to as the Rostam cycle, or according to the place of origin, the Sistan tradition. Both are here used interchangeably.

In Sasanian times (c. 224-651 AD) the national legend, which was then supplemented and enlarged by addition of the Sistani tradition and no doubt many other elements,³⁵ was for the first time committed to writing. Under the reign of Yazdegird III (632-651) the *Dehqân* Dâneshtar is said to have compiled a chronicle of Persian kings from Kayumars to Khosrow II (591-628).³⁶ This was called *Xwadâyname* (XN), and was to provide the basis for later chronicles.

Stage 2: Written Transmission: Arabic Translations of the XN

Up to the XN the national legend was transmitted orally; from that time onwards writing began to play a role. In the mid-eighth century, the XN was translated into Arabic by Ibn al-Moqaffa' (executed in ca. 757). This translation was widely used by Arab historians who were intent on composing a universal history consistent with Islamic ideology.³⁷ Though it was regarded as the translation of the XN it could hardly establish a correct chronology of Persian kings. Rather, it gave rise to several competing versions over time: an Arab historian reports that a Mowbad Bahrâm had to use twenty copies to establish a correct chronology.³⁸ These versions are too different from one another to allow one to postulate an earlier written model.³⁹

³²They probably did not collect the stories in a manner anthropologists do. Rather, they unconsciously picked them up as they heard them told.

³³See Boyce 1954; 1955; 1957 for more information on the Parthian minstrelsy.

³⁴On the importance of this tradition for the ShNF see further Chapter III.

³⁵For example, the legends of Parthian nobles who became through passage of time integrated into the Kayanian history (Nöldeke 1979: 12-6) and the episodes on Sasanian kings which were apparently formed from the Sasanian period onwards.

³⁶Nöldeke 1979: 23-4

³⁷Notably, Tabari, Dinavâri, Bal'ami, Mas'udi, Esfahâni, Biruni, etc.

³⁸Nöldeke 1979: 25

³⁹Ibid.

Stage 3: Written Transmission: Persian Renditions of the XN

From the late tenth century onwards, the national legend was taken up by Persians who had by then acquired political independence. Characteristically they focused on a chronology of their kings to the near exclusion of Islamic elements. Mas'udi Marvazi was one of the first to compile the history of pre-Islamic Persia in classical Persian, which covered the period from the reign of Kayumars to that of Yazdegird III in verse form (composed in c. 912).⁴⁰ He was soon to be followed by two authors from Balkh: Abu 'Ali Balkhi and Abu al-Mo'ayyad Balkhi. Abu al-Mo'ayyad treated, in prose, heroic and kingly tales of ancient Iran (c. 957),⁴¹ while Abu 'Ali wrote the history of Persia using Ibn al-Moqaffa's and al-Barmaki's *Seyar al-Moluk* ("Biographies of the Kings") which are Arabic versions of the XN (before 1,000).⁴² Though these works are all called '*Shâhnâme*'⁴³ they differ in content and form. It would seem that the genre '*Shâhnâme*' was in the making in the period that immediately preceded the ShNF.

About at the same time (c. 957) the governor of Tus, Abu Mansur Mohammad b. 'Abd al-Razzâq, had four Zoroastrians compile a *Shâhnâme* in New Persian. It is assumed that this work, known as Abu Mansur's *Shâhnâme*, is Ferdowsi's immediate source. Since this assumption directly influences our study it must be discussed in some detail.

Abu Mansur's *Shâhnâme*

The assumption that Abu Mansur's *Shâhnâme* is Ferdowsi's source is based on somewhat precarious grounds. To start with, that text has not survived except for the preface which appears in some of the ShNF manuscripts. Since Abu Mansur's ShN cannot be directly compared to the ShNF the preface is a natural candidate for scrutiny. There we find a passage which accounts for its origin in a similar manner to the ShNF. Excerpt (1) is from the preface and (2) from the introduction to ShNF:

(1) Therefore he [Abu Mansur 'Abd al-Razzâq] commanded his minister (...) Abû Mansûr Ma'marf to gather owners of books from among the noblemen (*dihqân*), sages and men of experience from various towns, and by his orders his servant (...) (the said) Abû Mansûr

⁴⁰Safâ 1333: 160-3.

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 95-8. See also note 324, p. 142 below.

⁴²Ibid., pp. 98-9.

⁴³'*Shâhnâme*' is the Persian translation of '*Xwadâynameg*' meaning "the Book of Lords".

Ma'marî compiled the book (...): he sent a person to various towns of Khorasan and brought wise men therefrom [...], such as Shâg, (Mâkh?), son of Khorâsânî (...) from Herat (Harê); Yazdândâdh, son of Shâpûr, from Sîstân; Mâhoy Khurshîd, son of Bahrâm, from Nîshâpûr, Shâdân, son of Burzîn, from Tûs. He brought all the four and set them down to produce (...) those books of the kings,⁴⁴

(2) There was an old book of tales, spread among *mowbads*; the favourite of all wise men. A nobleman (*pahlavân*), descendant of a *dehqân*, ...who explored the earlier days and sought after ancient stories, brought together old *mowbads* from every province in order to compile a book inquiring into royal families, renowned heroes, ... He heard the *mowbads* tell of kings and events of the world one by one. When he finished learning from them, he completed the celebrated book, which became such a memorial on earth that all, great and small, admired it (E:134-43).

At first glance (1) resembles (2). It tells of Abu Mansur having four wise men set down the books of kings. Similarly (2) describes a nobleman who ordered a book of ancient tales to be prepared. This resemblance led many to interpret (2) in the light of (1), i.e. the nobleman in (2) was identified with Abu Mansur and the 'old book of tales' with Abu Mansur's *Shâhnâme*. Therefore this was Ferdowsi's source.⁴⁵ However, this resemblance may go back, as Olga Davidson points out,⁴⁶ to a common literary convention in which the authors sought to lend an element of truthfulness to the books they are presenting. Davidson cites a similar example from the introduction to *Zarâtoshtnâme*⁴⁷ and we may refer to an account of the transmission of Avestan texts in the *Denkard*:

(1) Daray, son of Daray, commanded that two written copies of all Avesta and Zand, even as Zardusht had received them from Ohrmazd, be preserved. ... (2) Valakhsh the Ashkanian commanded that a memorandum be sent to the provinces (instructing them) to preserve, in the state in which they had come down in (each) province, whatever had survived in purity of the Avesta and Zand as well as every teaching derived from it which, scattered through the land of Iran by the havoc and disruption of Alexander, and by the pillage and plundering of the Macedonians, had remained authoritative, whether written or in oral transmission. (3) His Majesty Ardashir, King of kings, son of Papak, acting on

⁴⁴Minorsky 1964: 266. For the Persian text see Qazvini 1944: 123-48.

⁴⁵Nöldeke 1979: 27, etc.

⁴⁶Davidson 1985: 117-8.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 118.

the just judgement of Tansar, demanded that all those scattered teachings should be brought to the court. Tansar assumed command, and selected those which were trustworthy, and left the rest out of the canon.⁴⁸

Like the older preface and Ferdowsi's introduction, this account refers the later editions of the Avestan texts back to the hypothetical archetypal copies which were prepared by Daray. It may be also worth noticing that each founder of a dynasty sought to establish a canon by ordering scattered teachings to be brought together. Though examples could be multiplied, these are sufficient to indicate that the authors employ similar conventions to account for the origin of their own works. Given this, the identification suggested above becomes less plausible.

There is another factor which seems to lend credence to the assumption. Three out of the four co-authors of Abu Mansur's work are mentioned in the ShNF: Shâg (Mâkh) may correspond to Mâx in the ShNF (42:15), Mâhoy to Shâhu-ye pir (41:2889), and Shâdhân to Shâdân-e Borzin (41:3432).⁴⁹ Since they are quoted as authorities in the ShNF, it may be surmised that their work was ultimately used by Ferdowsi. However, this is not so certain as it appears. As François de Blois points out,⁵⁰ the three authors are mentioned only in the Sasanian section of the ShNF: more precisely, in episodes on the reigns of Nushirvân (41) and Hormozd (42). This might imply that they were responsible only for these specific episodes, rather than the ShNF as a whole. Shâhu and Shâdân-e Borzin are quoted in (41) as the authorities of the stories about the introduction of the game of chess and *Kalile va Demne* into Persia, respectively. Since these stories equally deal with the import of Indian products into Iran, they may have come from a common source. A Pahlavi book with similar content is known to have been written after the Arab conquest,⁵¹ though its relation to Shâhu and Shâdân-e Borzin is uncertain. Mâx, the last of the three co-authors is referred to in the prologue to the story of Bahrâm Cubin in (42), which can be seen to have been incorporated to the national legend significantly later than other narratives.⁵² Thus the three authors are connected with the stories which are secondary accretions to the XN or its redactions.⁵³

⁴⁸As quoted by Boyce ed. 1984: 114.

⁴⁹Nöldeke 1979: 27-8.

⁵⁰De Blois 1992: 122.

⁵¹Nöldeke 1979: 29, n.2.

⁵²Ibid., p. 26.

⁵³De Blois also points out that the Arsacid section of the ShNF is different from al-Biruni's account of the same period. Based on this, he concludes: "It is thus quite clear that the 'book of kings' which Firdausi had before him when he was writing his account of the Arsacids was not the

Thus, it is uncertain to what extent Ferdowsi depended on Abu Mansur's ShN. Since he alludes to three of the co-authors he may possibly have used their work in those particular places, but not for the other parts. Had he used Abu Mansur's text as a primary source he would presumably have referred to it more frequently and in many other parts of the ShNF. It seems more likely that he compiled his own version of the national legend using a wide range of materials,⁵⁴ than that he relied on a single text such as Abu Mansur's ShN.

Towards a Different Approach to the ShNF

The XN and Abu Mansur's ShN play a central role in the hypothetical textual tradition leading to the ShNF: the XN is thought to be the ultimate source of the national legend; Abu Mansur's ShN is assumed to be a New Persian version of the XN and to be Ferdowsi's immediate source. Provided that Ferdowsi faithfully followed the latter,⁵⁵ the ShNF can be shown to be a genuine descendant of the XN. While this is not implausible, it is essentially speculative. As point of fact, our knowledge of the XN is hypothetical rather than factual; the text is irrevocably lost together with its Arabic translation (Ibn al-Moqaffa's work). Although later Arabic works refer to one or the other⁵⁶ and agree in their general features,⁵⁷ they differ in details so much that, as indicated earlier, it cannot be demonstrated that they go back to a single common source. It seems therefore that the XN was not so much a specific source to be adhered to as a system for representing world history as a succession of fifty Persian kings.

The other end of the textual tradition is as speculative as the one just mentioned. As indicated earlier, Abu Mansur's ShN was at best one of Ferdowsi's sources. Other written sources, suggested by de Blois, can hardly resolve the question of Ferdowsi's sources; none of them has come down to us. De Blois's

'*Shâh-nâmâh* of Abu Mansur' known to Bairuni, but rather some other version' (1992: 124).

⁵⁴De Blois suggests that Ferdowsi used "one of the earlier Persian translations of the Book of Kings" for the earlier sections of the ShNF (ibid., p. 124).

⁵⁵It is generally assumed that Ferdowsi was bound by his sources. Nöldeke notes: "The fact is, we always have to bear in mind, that the poet [Ferdowsi] was bound so to say by his sources. ... The lack of any circumstantial information with regard to most of the kings of that dynasty [the Arsacids] was concealed both in the authority used by Firdaousi and in the sources of the same by didactical speeches, ..." (Nöldeke 1979: 70).

⁵⁶De Blois notes, "it remains unclear whether these [later Arab historians] merely reworked the older translation or actually made use of the Sasanian original" (de Blois 1992: 120).

⁵⁷E.g. the general progress of the narrative; fifty divisions, each representing a king's reign, the mention of the duration of the reigns at the beginnings of the sections. These are also observed in the ShNF.

conclusion thus remains a cautious one: "In short, though there can be no doubt that Firdausî's poem is based on written sources, we cannot necessarily presume that it is all based on a single source".⁵⁸ Despite rigorous philological endeavours and ingenious works, Ferdowsi's sources can only be summarised as unspecified written texts which may have been reminiscent of the XN. As it stands, the question of origin of the ShNF remains speculative and is incapable of definite proof, simply because there is not sufficient documentary evidence. This state of affairs is aptly summarised by Jan Rypka:

Notwithstanding all the names that have been quoted, we are unable to disclose the indirect and direct sources otherwise than fragmentarily. A very great deal of material has been lost, either through the unpropitiousness of the times or because the great master put all others into the shade. But we must at any rate not ignore the factors of oral tradition and folklore, from which it is certain that Firdausî borrowed appropriate matter to a very large extent.⁵⁹

Since the inquiry into the background of the ShNF has reached an impasse, it may be suggested that another line of approach is in fact more helpful, and that it is time to change our perspective from the background of the ShNF to its actual characteristics and to its influence on later Persian literature. This new perspective will, among other things, enable us to concentrate on specific features of the ShNF, some of which may be explained by the 'factors of oral tradition and folklore' as Rypka suggests above. Unlike Ferdowsi's alleged written sources, these factors have left their marks, albeit indirectly, on the text of the ShNF. As discussed elsewhere,⁶⁰ some elements which are typically associated with oral literature are found in the ShNF. Like the Homeric epics, the ShNF is evidently written in periodic, formulaic style and includes a number of recurring motifs. As will be shown below, this is not to argue that the ShNF is an oral epic, but to suggest rather that oral tradition played a role in the genesis of the ShNF. William Hanaway Jr. points out:

It should be stressed that the *Shâh-nâme* is a carefully created literary epic and not a

⁵⁸De Blois 1992: 124.

⁵⁹Rypka 1968: 152.

⁶⁰See Kondo (Yamamoto) 1988.

product of the oral tradition, although there is certainly much from that tradition in it.⁶¹

The distinction, while subtle, is crucial since the ShNF also displays features showing a dependence on writing: it seems to follow in its main features other Arabic and Persian chronicles⁶² and more importantly, it shows a structure of elaborate artistry and an artistic scheme of interconnections and cross-references, which seems to be typical of written literature.⁶³ These suggest, as Hanaway points out above, that the ShNF is a carefully crafted written-literary epic. It is a written composition which also shows characteristic features of oral literature. Such co-existence of oral and literary features in the ShNF may indicate that oral tradition can continue to function even when a written tradition exists alongside it. On the basis of this assumption the present work seeks to explore the indirect influence of oral tradition on the genesis of the ShNF, which has received little attention thus far.

2. Beyond the Oral Formulaic Theory: Alternative Approach to Oral Literature

It is owing to the works of Milman Parry and Albert B. Lord that some features of the ShNF can be seen to be typically 'oral'. Their approach, known as the Oral Formulaic Theory (OFT), has its origin in Homeric scholarship, but has developed to provide a definition of oral poetry generally. It has now been applied to as many as "150 separate language traditions".⁶⁴ While this theory allows us to recognise oral characteristics of the ShNF, it does not help to explain why such characteristics are found in written compositions such as the ShNF. This is a universal problem for the OFT approach which any student of epic poetry is likely to confront, since most epics were transmitted in the form of writing, even if they are shown to have been composed in oral performance. In order to demonstrate that oral tradition continues to be influential in a written composition, it is necessary therefore to go beyond the OFT and to build an alternative approach. As a preliminary to this, it may be helpful to review the OFT in some detail, where 'oral perspective' practically originated and still governs modern scholars' views of oral literature.

Although Parry is now famous for his theory on oral poetry, he was originally concerned to study formulaic diction in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. It was

⁶¹Hanaway 1988: 98.

⁶²See note 57, p. 22 above.

⁶³On literary elements of the ShNF see Davis 1992.

⁶⁴Foley 1996: 1.

by chance that he came to associate that diction with an oral method of composition. Whether there is any organic link between the formulaic diction and oral composition is the key question in our review of this theory. First we shall trace the development of Parry's thinking, and turn our attention to some of the central issues of the OFT.

Background of the Oral Formulaic Theory

Parry studied formulaic phrases, especially the noun-epithet phrases for gods and heroes in the Homeric texts, and demonstrated that these fit exactly into the metre in which the texts are composed. Each phrase has the appropriate metrical value and constitutes part of a larger phrase to fill out a whole line. Thus "in composing [the poet] will do no more than put together for his needs phrases which he has often heard or used himself, and which, grouping themselves in accordance with a fixed pattern of thought, come naturally to make the sentence and the verse".⁶⁵ Parry called the phrases 'traditional'. Such intricate systems of formulaic phrases, he argued, cannot be created by a single individual, but must have been the creation of generations of poets who were in need of an easy means of producing verses. They are also called traditional in the sense that once they were found, they were kept by each poet and handed down to his successors.

Parry was led to interpret this traditional style of Homer as oral by his mentor at Sorbonne, Antoine Meillet:

It happened that a week or so before I defended my theses for the doctorate at the Sorbonne Professor Mathias Murko of the University of Prague delivered in Paris the series of conferences which later appeared as his book *La Poésie populaire épique en Yougoslavie au début du XX^e siècle*. I had seen the poster for these lectures but at the time I saw in them no great meaning for myself. However, Professor Murko, doubtless due to some remark of M. Meillet, was present at my *soutenance* and at that time M. Meillet as a member of my jury pointed out with his usual ease and clarity this failing [to understand that Homer must also be oral] in my books. It was the writings of Professor Murko more than those of any other which in the following years led me to the study of oral poetry in itself and to the heroic poems of the South Slavs.⁶⁶

⁶⁵A. Parry ed. 1971: 270.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 439.

From this juncture on, Parry shifted the focus of his studies from Homer's traditional style to the oral style, from the Homeric texts to living examples of South Slavic oral tradition. In the 1930s, he reformulated his doctoral thesis from the perspective of oral verse-making, in which the formulaic diction was seen as not only traditional but also oral:

Whatever manner of composition we could suppose for Homer, it could be only one which barred him in every verse and in every phrase from the search for words that would be of his own finding. ... Without writing, the poet can make his verses only if he has a formulaic diction which will give him his phrases all made, and made in such a way that, at the slightest bidding of the poet, they will link themselves in an unbroken pattern that will fill his verses and make his sentences.⁶⁷

Lord describes his teacher's revolutionary findings as follows:

The stress in Parry's definition on the metrical conditions of the formula led to the realization that the repeated phrases were useful not, as some have supposed, merely to the audience if at all, but also and even more to the singer in the rapid composition of his tale. And by this almost revolutionary idea the camera's eye was shifted to the singer as a composer and to his problems as such.⁶⁸

The shift of emphasis is much more subtle than what it would appear to Parry's enthusiastic followers. One could in fact take this further and question whether there is any fundamental change in Parry's thinking. Take for example the above quote from Parry. If the phrase "without writing" is removed, it would read like one explaining the usefulness of the formulaic diction for epic poets. It looks as though just one more qualifier, 'oral', was simply added to the preconceived idea of the traditional formulaic diction. Is formulaic equal to oral?

The Oral Formulaic Theory became widely known with the publication of Lord's *The Singer of Tales* (ST) in 1960.⁶⁹ In this book, Lord expanded Parry's unfinished study with emphasis on South Slavic oral poetry. His contribution lies,

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 317.

⁶⁸Lord 1960: 30.

⁶⁹Cf. J M Foley comments on the ST: "The impact of *The Singer of Tales* (1960) has, ..., been enormous. Suffice it to say that the book has held its position as the bible of oral tradition more than twenty-five years: it will always be the single most important work in the field, because simply put, it began the field as we now know it" (Foley ed. 1988: 41).

among many other things, in providing an analytical apparatus for the study of oral literature. A set of tests is established to determine the orality of a work: oral poetry has (1) formulaic, and (2) thematic structure, but (3) has no necessary *enjambement*.⁷⁰ This appears very useful to those working on the Persian epics which have many features in common with the Homeric poems: repetition of phrases and episodes⁷¹ are now seen as positive signs of an oral background.

Application of the OFT to the ShNF

The ShNF has been shown to meet the 'oral' tests: seventy percent of the lines are formulaic; it hardly contains necessary *enjambement*; the text is based on stock themes.⁷² It is an oral epic according to Lord's criteria, but we know that it is in fact a written text. How can we explain an 'oral' style in written composition? Ruth Finnegan has gathered similar examples to the ShNF. She cites for instance Larry D. Benson's study on Old English poetry: a formulaic style is recognised in not only the 'oral' epic of *Beowulf* but also in some written compositions in Old English. Benson explains the use of 'oral' style in writing as follows:

To prove that an Old English poem is formulaic is only to prove that it is an Old English poem, and to show that such work has a high or low percentage of formulas reveals nothing about whether or not it is a literate composition, though it may tell us something about the skill with which a particular poet uses the tradition.⁷³

⁷⁰ Parry defines the term '*enjambement*' as follows: "I use the term *enjambement* by itself in its largest sense, that of the running over of the sentence from one line to another" (A Parry ed. 1971: 253, n. 1). He further distinguishes two types of *enjambement*: unperiodic and necessary. In unperiodic *enjambement*, "the verse can end with a word group in such a way that the sentence, at the verse end, already gives a complete thought, although it goes on in the next verse, adding free ideas by new word groups" (ibid., p. 253), and in necessary *enjambement*, "the verse end can fall at the end of a word group where there is not yet a whole thought, or it can fall in the middle of a word group; in both of these cases *enjambement* is *necessary*" (italics by Parry, ibid.) The frequency with which necessary *enjambement* occurs is used as a criterion for determining the degree of 'conscious' working on the part of the poet, since the thought is given a priority over form. On the opposition between 'consciousness' and 'orality' see further below.

⁷¹ Speaking of the ShNF, G. M. Wickens remarks: "... but it would be next to impossible to point to a single Western scholar who has either approached the work with respect or laid it aside with keen pleasure. All have at times commented on what they felt to be its inordinate length, its wearisome repetitions, its stock situations, its stylised language, its dullness and lack of humour—and so on and so forth" (Wickens 1974: 262).

⁷² See Kondo (Yamamoto) 1988.

⁷³ As quoted by Finnegan 1977: 70.

Another illustration is provided in examples of Xhosa and Zulu oral poetry in South Africa. It is reported that some of the South African poets compose poetry in a traditional formulaic manner in performance but they can also produce written versions of their poems. Moreover, a Zulu literary poet who has studied European poems is said to have composed poems in traditional forms.⁷⁴ Based on these reports, Finnegan concludes: "A 'formulaic style' is not therefore inevitably a proof of 'oral composition.'"⁷⁵

As may be apparent from this, Finnegan is a serious critic of the Oral Formulaic Theory. Taking the word 'oral' in its most literal sense she draws on wide-ranging examples from radio programmes through prison songs, to suggest that oral literature takes varying forms. As a result she comes to question the universal applicability of the OFT:

In short, when one starts looking hard at the concept of "oral composition" it becomes clear that it is not a single unique process at all—as is sometimes implied in the oral-formulaic school—but takes different forms in different cultures and circumstances.⁷⁶

In a sense, however, she fails to recognise the essential difference of her material from that of Parry and Lord. As she has been concerned to demonstrate that each oral poetry is specific to the language and culture to which it belongs, she inevitably focuses on the aspects of performance with implicit emphasis on modern short poems which are often improvised in live performance. On the other hand, Parry and Lord sought to interpret formulaic style prevalent in epic poetry, especially the Homeric poems, as oral. The OFT they proposed is intended for long epic poetry for which there is no direct evidence of the process of composition, except for certain stylistic features which Parry called 'formulaic'. Thus the examples which Finnegan provides are in most cases not directly relevant to the OFT.⁷⁷

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Finnegan 1976:158.

⁷⁷In response to Finnegan Lord argues: "This is not the place to go into the details of the controversy over the term "oral poetry." I should like to note here, however, that one must distinguish between the literal and the specialized use of the word "oral" in this connection. Some scholars have been deceived by Ruth Finnegan's confusing assertions that there are oral poetries that are not composed in performance. This is true, but those poetries generally consist of short nonnarrative songs and not of long epics. It is the mode of composition that is crucial, not the mode of performance. ...The distinctive style of which Parry wrote came into being because of the necessities of composition in performance of long narrative poems. The necessity of composing rapidly called forth a special kind of style, which Parry called a "necessary style" (Lord 1991:3).

The OFT is essentially a hypothesis purporting to account for the frequent use of formulaic expressions in the Homeric texts. This is made explicit by Parry's following comment:

Finally, when my study of the Homeric language led me to see that such a language could be created only by a long tradition of oral poetry I found myself in the position of speaking about the nature of oral style almost purely on the basis of a logical reasoning from the characteristics of Homeric style, whereas what information I had about oral style as it could be seen in actual practice was due to what I had been able to gather here and there from the remarks of different authors who, save in a few cases—that of Murko and Gesemann for the Southslavic poetries, and of Radloff for the Kirgiz-Tartar poetry—were apt to be haphazard and fragmentary—and I could well fear, misleading. Of the various oral poetries for which I could obtain enough information the Southslavic seemed to be the most suitable for a study which I had in mind, to give that knowledge of a still living oral poetry which I saw to be needed if I were to go on with any sureness in my study of Homer.⁷⁸

Parry's approach to the South Slavic tradition is to a large extent conditioned by the hypothesis to be tested. This is apparent in his choice of material, the way in which the singers and songs are described and analysed. The findings on the tradition may have reinforced his initial position, but would not alter it by the very nature of the research. Any criticism on the OFT must take this into account and be directed to Parry's reasoning that connects a formulaic style to oral composition. What remains for us is to review this theory.

Critique of the Oral Formulaic Theory

The key concept of the OFT is the formula and formulaic expression. Added to this later was another criterion, 'theme', which deals with story content. These two are taken to characterise oral poetry, as Lord mentions below:

Stated briefly, oral epic song is narrative poetry composed in a manner evolved over many generations by singers of tales who did not know how to write; it consists of the building of metrical lines and half lines by means of formulas and formulaic expressions and of the building of songs by the use of themes. This is the technical sense in which I shall use

⁷⁸A. Parry ed. 1971: 439-40.

the word "oral" and "oral epic" in this book. By formula I mean "a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea". . . . By theme I refer to the repeated incidents and descriptive passages in the songs.⁷⁹

In order to test the validity of the claims implied here, we should perhaps ask ourselves whether a poem made up of formulas and themes is necessarily oral. If we do not take this for granted, we will see that finding certain stylistic and thematic features in a poem is one thing, and ascribing them to a particular medium of composition is quite another. It may well be, therefore, that the link between the use of formula and theme and oral composition is less central and exclusive than Parry and Lord would leave us believe. Therefore it will be necessary here to explore the question further. We shall begin with the theme.

The Theme

A theme is defined by Lord as "a repeated passage with more or less verbal correspondence",⁸⁰ which ultimately derives from Parry's view that: "Homer relates the same action in more or less the same way because that was the only way he had learned".⁸¹ This definition of the theme recalls that of the formula ("a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea"). In effect, the difference between them is only a matter of degree; the formula usually does not exceed a line, while the theme comprises more than one line. Parry notes this similarity between the two in a field note: "Indeed, it is obvious that the distinction between the verse and the simple theme is only one of degree, and that even as the verse and theme might be called formulas, so the simple verse might be designated as one of the types of simple themes".⁸² The theme is only an extended formula. There is no functional distinction between the formula and the theme.

However, Lord provides another definition of the theme: "Following Parry, I have called the groups of ideas regularly used in telling a tale in the formulaic style of traditional song the 'themes' of the poetry".⁸³ The theme is here taken as a semantic unit (a "group of ideas"), and it can be thus distinguished from the

⁷⁹Lord 1960: 4.

⁸⁰Lord 1986b: 336.

⁸¹A. Parry ed. 1971: 405.

⁸²Ibid., p. 446.

⁸³Lord 1960: 68. Elsewhere Lord mentions that: "The theme, even though it be verbal, is not any fixed set of words, but a grouping of ideas" (ibid., p. 69).

formula. Though Lord seems to be unaware of the fact that he has provided the two different definitions for the term theme (one being an extended formula and the other a semantic unit), he switches from one to the other depending on his immediate concern. When he calls attention to the form of a repeated passage he turns to the first definition of the theme,⁸⁴ while in considering the contents of a song he employs the second.⁸⁵ In the first case, what he actually does is to analyse formulaic expressions of the passage which nevertheless are called themes; whereas in the second case, he considers the thematic structure of the song. Such a practical need to study the contents of a song may have given rise to the second definition of the theme. The question is, however, whether the presence of semantic units proves that a text is composed in performance. Our experience as readers immediately asserts that any text has 'themes' which are always structured. Vladimir Propp, a Russian folklorist, has shown that Russian fairy-tales exhibit thirty-one functions, an aggregate of which constitutes one composition, one system. This system is so stable and widespread that many narratives, including more complex types of literature, have been shown to follow the same pattern.⁸⁶ It is not surprising, then, if a similar patterning of themes is found in the South Slavic or Greek epics. It would be surprising on the contrary if such thematic structure were specific to oral literature. The theme (whether in the first or the second definition) does not allow us to distinguish oral from written literature. While thematic analysis may bring a deeper understanding of a text, it is unlikely to prove the orality of the text.

The Formula

If the theme as a semantic unit is not related to orality, it may be the formula—within the context of the Oral Formulaic Theory—that leads us to it, as Parry writes: “the technique of the formulas is one which could only be created and used by oral poets”.⁸⁷ Since the Oral Formulaic Theory gained popularity in the field, the idea of

⁸⁴See for example Charts IV-VI in Chapter Four of the ST (pp. 69-70; 72-7), where Lord lists variant forms of given themes. The charts aim at showing how a theme can take different forms according to singers or songs produced by the same singer over time.

⁸⁵Lord's analysis of the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad* (Chapters Eight and Nine of the ST) shows little concern over the verbal forms of themes. In Chapter Eight, for example, he seeks to explain how given themes in the *Odyssey* fit into the overall pattern of a universal return song, reconstructed based on his vast knowledge of similar Greek and Yugoslav songs. But such can be made without recourse to the concept of oral literature.

⁸⁶See for details Propp 1968; 1971: 94-114. Propp's study has been developed since. See esp. Greimas 1966; Bremond 1973; Genette 1980.

⁸⁷A. Parry ed. 1971: 322.

formulas as the language of the oral poet has not gone unchallenged. The standard criticism is that formulaic style can be found in written texts, too.⁸⁸ It is not necessarily a yardstick of oral literature. When two formulaic texts, oral and written, are juxtaposed to one another, how does Lord distinguish one from the other? Quoting lines from Yeats “which exhibit some of the characteristics of oral literature”,⁸⁹ Lord writes:

It is individualistic in an individualist’s milieu. Its particular style, its striking choice of words and ideas and poetic combinations are purely Yeats. ... These delights are in a tradition of *written* poetry, but are not in an oral *traditional* Hiberno-English poetry. The technique here, indeed, is to seek a striking nontraditional image (emphasis by Lord).⁹⁰

Elsewhere Lord describes literary poets as ‘self-conscious’, and contrasts them with oral poets: “They [Pound and Eliot] choose their words, they construct a ‘fixed’ text, ... The very self-conscious way in which that is done argues an attitude toward a text that is not part of the mentality, or ‘mind-set,’ of oral-traditional poets”.⁹¹ Even if a text shows formulaic style or other oral features, in other words, if the intentions behind them are individualistic, the text is not typical of oral literature. The criterion is, not stylistic features in themselves, but the author’s or singer’s intention which is external to the text. The opposition between oral and written literature shifts to that of traditionality and individuality.

However, this is not something Lord is solely responsible for. Like many other things discussed in the ST, he has inherited it from Parry. In order to pinpoint the cause for the shift therefore, we need to go back to Parry’s works. For this purpose, no work is more revealing than ‘A Comparative Study of Diction as one of the Elements of Style in Early Greek Epic Poetry’, the Master of Arts thesis submitted to the University of California in 1923.⁹² It is here that we can glimpse the origin of Parry’s vision in tradition, style and the aesthetics of the Homeric poems.

From the beginning Parry was concerned to study Homer’s style which appeared to him to embody epic psychology:

⁸⁸E.g. the ShNF and the two examples from *Finnegan* 1977 quoted above.

⁸⁹Lord 1991: 17.

⁹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁹¹*Ibid.*, p. 79.

⁹²A. Parry ed. 1971: 421-36.

Now any complete discussion of epic style must take into consideration the larger subjects of epic psychology, society, even religion. For since the proper study of style is the study of the ability with which an artist has expressed his ideas, the first thing is to know the nature of the author's thought (p. 422).

A poet's style is, for Parry, a manifestation of his 'mind-set'. Homer writes in a particular style because he has the matching way of thinking, life or even beliefs. The style is characterised as traditional and formulaic: "Its [the style's] striking feature is its traditional, almost formulaic quality, its regular use of certain words and phrases in a certain way" (ibid.) The question is then what 'traditional' and 'formulaic' meant to Parry.

'Traditional' is explained in the opening paragraph which describes characteristics of the Greek epics. Homer and others take their stories from legend, tell it in a grand manner, in straightforward narrative, the psychology of their characters being subordinated to the narration. These are called 'traditional elements' of the style for which "there were certain established limits of form to which the play of genius must confine itself" (p. 421). Therefore the 'traditional' poet would be the one who composes his song strictly within the precepts of the tradition. In view of modern aesthetics which typically values creativity and originality, he might not be looked at in a favourable light. In terms of Parry's traditional aesthetics, however, he would be looked upon as a perfect poet. This traditional aesthetics is illustrated through the analogy of Greek sculpture. In the following, ancient Greek tradition is discussed with reference to Phidias the sculptor:

By following this tradition of design and expression Phidias has filled his work with the spirit of a whole race: he has not only followed its conception of the nature of the goddess, he has also represented her in the position and with the attributes which the race had chosen and approved as the most fitting to represent the beauty, the strength, the calmness of her nature (pp. 424-425).

Since the tradition has been evolved by centuries of artists and audiences, it is said to embody 'the race's' idea. The beauty of traditional style is thus found in the perfect union between the artist's idea and the sensibilities of the whole race. This is to say, the quality and value of a work is measured by the extent to which the artist follows the tradition. The ideal work is therefore the one in which the artist's individuality is completely submerged in the tradition or that of his race.

To bring this home, Parry proposes to study 'ornamental adjectives' in the Homeric texts, a study which was to be developed into the famous analyses of the noun-epithet formulas some years later. His analysis here is cursory, but to the point. The ornamental adjectives are formulaic and are used for metrical convenience. They are used, in other words, not to describe particular conditions of the objects, but to fill out the spaces. The underlying assumption in this now familiar account is that Homer does not impose his own thought on the descriptions of this or that god, but he lets the tradition speak for him in the use of the ornamental adjectives. Here is a perfect example of blending oneself with the tradition:

We realise that the traditional, the formulaic quality of the diction was not a device for mere convenience, but the highest possible development of the hexameter medium to tell a race's heroic tales (p. 425).

A 'formulaic' style is a surface, linguistic manifestation of the 'traditional' mentality of Homer and other Greek poets because it involves no individuality. Thus the traditional mentality is taken to mean the utter lack of individuality or originality on the part of the poets: "It is in this respect that epic poetry differs diametrically from modern poetry which lays so great a value on individuality and uniqueness of style" (p. 422).

This perception of the traditional and formulaic style has been passed on uncritically to the concept of oral poetry in varying guises. It matters little whether style is called traditional, formulaic, or oral, or whether it is ascribed to metrical convenience or oral composition — it all comes down to Parry's vision of Homer as a 'traditional' poet. As a result, when Parry and Lord try to explain the difference between the oral and the written formulaic style, they slide into discussion of the individuality of style or the "mind-set" of poets. This is evident in Lord's interpretation of a formulaic style in Yeats' poem quoted earlier, as well as in the quote in the above paragraph. Similar overtones are felt in Parry's assessment of Pindar's verse, which was written after the formulation of the Oral Formulaic Theory:

Indeed, it seems to me that one gives a very wrong idea of the style of choral poetry in likening its conventional side to that of the epic. Homer is telling the old tales in words which his hearers scarcely heeded as they followed the story, for those words were to them the only ones which could be used, and they knew them far too well to think about them.

But Pindar is moving alone in his own thought, choosing in a way that is his alone from the grand words of poetry. ... Tradition gave him these artifices, but it did not give him his phrase. These he must choose, and if he would use an epithet he must think and pick.⁹³

Parry saw a formulaic style as part of the cultural equivalent of 'primitive man'. He began the doctoral thesis with Ernest Renan's remarks to the effect that he aims at seeing "how the way of life of people gives rise to a poetry of a given kind and a given degree of excellence".⁹⁴ He was not of course unique in this among the academics who came to maturity and studied in the early twenties. Finnegan can point to similar statements or assumptions on "the power of tradition, the unchanging nature of 'folk poetry,'" and so forth.⁹⁵ These assumptions are, moreover, often connected with Romanticism which was part of the general climate of the day. Perhaps, it would be unfair to criticise Parry for his personal preferences. It becomes problematic, however, when they are seen as objective truth, or a general touchstone of oral poetry. Unless we are prepared to share Parry's vision of Homer, we are not offered a plausible explanation for formulaic style in written composition. There seems to be no formal and stylistic criteria for oral literature within the context of the OFT. Before drawing a conclusion however, we will consider if practising oral poets really follow their tradition as Parry and Lord claimed.

The Singer

If the question of 'individuality' is the crucial factor in oral composition, any deliberate phrasing or arrangement of story elements by oral poets will seriously impair the quality of their compositions. Paul Kiparsky raised a question about this back in 1974. He argued that almost identical words begin and end the *Iliad* and that such a remote correspondence would presuppose something of memorising or conscious working on the singer's part.⁹⁶ Curiously, Lord offers similar examples.

Lord examines the two performances of a song, 'the Taking of Baghdad' given by Sulejman Fortic in 1934 and 1950, respectively. These versions are essentially the same in terms of content, but they differ in details. In the 1950 version one episode is substituted for another:

⁹³A. Parry ed. 1971: 284-5.

⁹⁴Cf. *ibid.*, p. 2.

⁹⁵Finnegan 1977: 131-2.

⁹⁶Kiparsky 1976:105-6.

In 1934 Fortic told how the messenger from the sultan went to Kajnidzha, did not find Alija at home, and was directed by his mother to the mosque garden where Alija was assembled with the other men. In this he follows his master's, Ugljanin's, singing of the story faithfully. In 1951, possibly because he felt that as president of the National Front in Novi Pazar the mention of religious institutions such as mosques was not wise or fitting, he has omitted this incident, thus avoiding forbidden gatherings of Moslems at their churches. However, the feeling that Alija could be reached only through an intermediary was also very strong, and Fortic substituted another incident for the one with the mosque.⁹⁷

In spite of Lord's emphasis on the role played by the tradition in the substitution, it is the singer, in the last analysis, who replaced the mosque episode with another. It is he who deliberately omitted that episode in consideration of a delicate political issue.

There is another difference between the two songs. The 1934 version had "an unhappy and unsatisfactory ending" which came to be modified in 1950:

The second major difference between the two versions is in the ending. The way in which the earlier version ends is unorthodox. None of the other versions of this song has an unhappy and unsatisfactory ending. This ending may have been something that Fortic had himself improvised earlier at a time when he had not heard the song many times all the way through or when he had forgotten it. In other words, this unhappy ending may itself have been a change introduced into the song by Fortic himself (ibid.)

The uncharacteristic ending is said to have resulted from 'improvisation' which is one of the points of controversy over the OFT. Some twenty years after the publication of the ST, improvisation was distinguished from oral composition:

The use of the term "improvisation" in referring to the method of composition of the South Slavic oral-traditional epic has caused some misunderstandings. ... My own preferred term for that type of composition is "composition by formula and theme". "Composition in performance" or possibly "recomposition in performance" are satisfactory terms as long as one does not equate them with improvisation, which, to my mind, means to make up a new nontraditional song from predominantly nontraditional

⁹⁷Lord 1960: 118.

elements.⁹⁸

Thus, the 1934 version was 'improvised' rather than 'composed in performance' since it contained 'nontraditional elements' ("this ending may have been something that Fortic had himself improvised"). Nevertheless this song is oral because we know that it was in fact produced by Fortic the oral singer. It should be clear that the distinction between improvisation and composition in performance cannot be made on the basis of linguistic / formal criteria alone. Rather, it requires knowledge of the context in which the song was produced.

To illustrate this further, we will consider the case of Avdo Mededovic who is praised by Parry and Lord as a model singer.⁹⁹ Avdo is such a master of the art of singing as to go beyond the limits of oral poetry:

We should not be surprised to find a fair number of nonformulaic expressions in such a talented oral singer as Avdo Mededovic. It would be fantastic to expect that a gifted poet who has thought in poetic form all his life should not have sufficient mastery of that form to be able not only to fit his thought into it but also to break it at will.¹⁰⁰

It is surprising, as a matter of fact, to find Avdo "break it at will". Avdo provides a framework for oral culture and, at the same time, breaches it simply because he is a master. In 1986 Lord went as far as to say: "He [Avdo] is *conscious* of this fullness and proud of his ability" (italics added). Avdo is no less self-conscious than the modern poet. Not only does he know what he is singing, but he also handles narrative material 'self-consciously' and effectively, just as any artist would do to impress his reader or audience. In this sense, no objective criteria could be shown

⁹⁸Lord 1991: 76.

⁹⁹That Lord constructs an explanatory model from Avdo is clear from the following: "Even when the text was read to him [Avdo] from a book—and I should like to emphasize this—Avdo made no attempt to memorize a fixed text. He did not consider the text in the book as anything more than the performance of another singer; there was nothing sacred in it. ... A general principle is here involved that is of significance when we are dealing with a tradition being invaded by printed song books: namely, that if the printed text is read to an already accomplished oral poet, its effect is the same as if the poet were listening to another singer. The song books spoil the oral character of the tradition only when the singer believes that they are *the* way in which the song *should* be presented. ... But they can spoil a tradition only when the singers themselves have already been spoiled by a concept of a fixed text (Lord 1960: 79; emphasis by Lord). See also *ibid.*, pp. 109; 131; 137.

¹⁰⁰Lord 1960: 131. Here is another comment by Lord on Avdo: "There is clearly ring composition in Avdo Mededovic's 'The Wedding of Smailagic Meho,' and Avdo has created and exploited it for artistic purposes and in order to bring into focus the ancient mythic, heroic, social, and historical values of his traditional culture" (Lord 1986a: 64).

to exist to distinguish the oral poet from the modern literary poet.

In summary, Parry and Lord's singers are no different from the literary poets as far as their intention to produce a good poem is concerned. It is true, however, that they are not the same as Yeats, Eliot or Pound. Despite the breakdown of the opposition between traditionality and individuality, they are still oral poets, not because they sing in formulaic style, but because we know for actual fact that they are practising singers. In order to determine whether the text is oral, it is necessary therefore to know aspects of the context in which the text is produced. Relevant features of context will of course vary depending on the level of investigation, but would include the knowledge of the singer, audience, code, the form of message, setting, time and place, etc. In the final analysis, however, these will be reduced to a single component which would ultimately distinguish oral composition from written, namely performance, as Finnegan points out:

What distinguishes it [oral art] from written forms, and it is here, *as well as* in the bare text, that one must look for the stylistic characteristics of a genre of poem or an individual's art.¹⁰¹

This may seem a rather obvious point to make, but it is precisely the type of point that has been overlooked by Parry and Lord and no doubt many others who have been concerned to find yardsticks of oral composition in written composition for which there is no direct evidence about performance. It touches on probably the most important drawback of the OFT. For it effectively states that in the absence of contextual information there is no way of telling whether Homer was an oral singer.

Requirements and Background for a New Approach

The previous discussion shows the limitations of the OFT when applied to the Persian epics. Firstly, the OFT holds oral tradition and written tradition to be mutually exclusive. This is a rare situation for many oral or orally derived texts. The ShNF for instance consists of an aggregate of wide-ranging materials which appears to be influenced by both traditions. Any theory claiming to describe characteristics of oral tradition must therefore take account of joint effects of written tradition. Secondly, the OFT as first formulated pays less attention to oral performance which is the principal attribute of oral literature. A new approach must be based on first-hand observation of a living oral tradition. Given this, the

¹⁰¹Finnegan 1977: 133 (emphasis by Finnegan).

approach will necessarily vary according to a particular tradition the researcher will choose, since it is constrained by its socio-cultural co-ordinates as well as the time over which it develops. The implication on our work is that an adequate approach should focus on an oral tradition specific to the Persian cultural area and, to the Persian epics. Thirdly, the OFT has much in common with the present study, which seeks to explain the influence of the preceding oral tradition on the development of the ShNF and the later epic tradition in which writing played an important role. Our approach must seek not to describe stylistic features of oral performance, but to define its formal characteristics with a view to using these in the analysis of the Persian epics. To be applicable to the epics, it must focus attention to overall structure of oral performance which is likely to affect the structure of a text produced in performance. This emphasis on structure derives from the shortcomings of the OFT in that it concentrates on aspects of formulaic style and thematic structure which are widely observed in written texts as well.

Based on these criteria, a practical method for studying the role played by oral tradition in the genesis of a written narrative may be proposed. This approach will:

- Be based on *naqqâli*, Persian professional storytelling, which is the only known and observable form of Persian oral epic tradition. It moreover entails elements of written tradition through which stories have been handed down from storyteller to storyteller. A *tumâr*, which is a story text composed by a storyteller, has been published.
- Identify overall and formal characteristics of *naqqâli* performance.
- Seek to determine the way in which the formal characteristics of oral performance influence the structure of the *tumâr*.
- Include a set of formal and thematic criteria for determining the influence of oral tradition on written narratives.

This must of course be developed on the basis of analysis in the later chapters. In the next chapter, a model of oral performance, here called 'Oral Performance Model' (OPM), will be proposed on the basis of the analysis of *naqqâli* performance and the *tumâr*, and will be applied to the ShNF in Chapter IV, and to the *Garshâspnâme* in Chapter V.

Chapter II The *Tumâr*, Storyteller's *Shâhnâme*

Chapter I emphasised the importance of a different approach to oral influence on the Persian epics. As the study of the Oral Formulaic Theory showed, such an approach must be based on a living oral tradition of the 'Persian speaking' areas, such as *naqqâli* which continues in Iran down to the present day. This chapter will discuss general features of *naqqâli*, and especially a *tumâr* or story text composed by *naqqâls*. The study of the text will centre on its structure and story content; the first part of the study will attempt to elucidate the way in which a storyteller formally marks the boundaries of sequences of narrative elements in view of oral performance, and the second will seek to understand how the storyteller interprets a story from the ShNF, and how his interpretation influences the thematic organisation of the text. On the basis of such studies, the 'Oral Performance Model' (OPM) — seeking to determine the extent to which oral tradition is influential in written narratives — will be proposed at the end of this chapter.

1. *Naqqâli* the Persian Professional Storytelling

This section considers specific features of *naqqâli*. Following a brief account of the historical background of *naqqâli*, it will discuss its participants (the storyteller and the audience), the format of oral performance, and the types of stories performed.

Historical Background of *Naqqâli*

One prominent *naqqâl* tells us that *naqqâli* originated in the Safavid period (1501-1736).¹⁰² From its inception this tradition was closely linked with Twelver Shi'ism which was established as the state religion under the Safavids. The founder of the dynasty, Shah 'Isma'il I (1501-1524), employed, among other things, *naqqâls* ('storyteller') to promote this faith. He divided them into seventeen groups and entrusted each with a particular sector of the population: the army personnel and the

¹⁰²The following description is based on Morshed 'Abbâs Zariri's account (Dustxâh 1345: 73-4). On Zariri see further below. Storytelling before the Safavid period is discussed in Chapter III.

members of the *zurxâne*,¹⁰³ etc. While this specialisation appears to have caused different groups to develop different manners of telling, common to all the groups was gradual addition of heroic stories to religious material such as the telling of Hoseyn's martyrdom. Such stories were probably used to attract the audience's attention.¹⁰⁴ Development of *naqqâli* thus proceeded along the penetration of Shi'ism into the society.

During the reign of Shah 'Abbâs I (1588-1629) one of the first coffee houses in Iran was built, which were to become a place for *naqqâli*. By providing basic facilities for social gatherings and entertainment the coffee houses became established as a cultural centre in urban areas. They brought together individuals from different social backgrounds and professions, from kings¹⁰⁵ and nobles, through poets and artists, to merchants and craftsmen who worked in bazaars. The clientele engaged in various activities at the coffee houses: drinking and smoking, meeting friends, playing games, etc. Most importantly, they enjoyed listening to storytellers, as Adam Olearius witnessed in the early seventeenth century:

The coffee house is an inn in which smokers and coffee drinkers are found. In such shops one also finds poets and historians whom I have seen sitting inside on high stools and heard them telling all manner of legends, fables and fantastic things. While narrating they gesticulate with a little stick like tricksters.¹⁰⁶

In Qajar times (1779-1925) *naqqâli* continued to flourish. In the following quotation, Sir John Malcom describes performance in some detail:

In the court of Persia there is always a person who bears the name of "story-teller" to his majesty; ... and those ... [men], sometimes display ... extraordinary skill. But the art of relating stories is, in Persia, attended both with profit and reputation. Great numbers attempt it, but few succeed. It requires considerable talent and great study ... They must

¹⁰³*Zurxâne* is a place where traditional Persian sports are played. Like the coffee houses as we will see below, the *zurxânes* function as a place for social gatherings and a centre for the local community. In the past, members of the *zurxâne* also took part in guild organisations as well as neighbourhood associations. See for further details Arasteh 1961a: 51; 1961b: 257; Floor 1971: 51, and for the connections between the *zurxânes* and *naqqâli* see Dustxâh 1345: 74.

¹⁰⁴Dustxâh 1345: 74.

¹⁰⁵Shah 'Abbâs I occasionally visited coffee houses and had drink, talked to people, and listened to storytellers. He also entertained foreign guests at coffee houses. A Spanish ambassador to Iran wrote, rather sarcastically, in his diary that the king of Persia kindly entertained ambassadors in such a respectable place (Falsafi 1334, II: 315).

¹⁰⁶Olearius 1656, repr. 1971: 558. The English translation is by Page 1977: 20.

not only be acquainted with the best ancient and modern stories, but be able to vary them by the relation of new incidents, which they have heard or invented. They must also recollect the finest passages of the most popular poets, that they may aid the impression of their narrative by appropriate quotations.¹⁰⁷

In the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth storytelling was immensely popular. This is best captured by the number of individuals who took up the profession. A study shows that in Tehran alone approximately 5,000 to 10,000 storytellers and entertainers were in the business.¹⁰⁸ By contrast, in the mid 1970s only four professional storytellers were found in Shiraz.¹⁰⁹

With the advent of printing techniques, stories performed at the coffee houses began to appear as cheap prints. Many of them were the abbreviated versions of the stories performed and were often of inferior quality.¹¹⁰ Nonetheless they played an important role in the transmission of the stories by providing women and children — part of the populace so far excluded from the coffee house culture — with access to a host of storytelling material.¹¹¹ Contrary to the common assumption that writing is the major factor destroying oral culture, in Persia at least, writing served to spread oral culture across a wider audience.

The late twentieth century saw *naqqâli* decline progressively. In the 1940s radio broadcasting began in Iran. Triggered by World War II that broke at about the same time, it rapidly took the coffee house patrons away from *naqqâli*. From the late 1950s television viewing became so popular that many storytellers were forced out of their jobs.¹¹² The future of *naqqâli* depends on a few willing storytellers who strive to keep the tradition going.

The Storyteller and the Audience

Little research has been done on the social background of the storytellers. It may be reasonably assumed, however, that they generally come from the middle to lower classes. One of the existing storytellers, Morshed Vali-ollâh Torâbi, comes from a family of *ta'ziye-x'vâns* (the readers of passion play). He himself was a *ta'ziye-x'vân*

¹⁰⁷Malcom 1815: 552-3.

¹⁰⁸Aubin 1908: 241.

¹⁰⁹Page 1979: 196.

¹¹⁰Hanaway trans. 1974: 9.

¹¹¹For instance, a storyteller mentions that he heard his mother tell ShNF stories (Torâbi 1369: 14); See also Marzolph 1994:94.

¹¹²EIr, s.v., "coffee house".

before he became a storyteller. He was so impressed by a storyteller that as soon as he went home he asked his father's leave to learn storytelling.¹¹³ Over the last fifteen years or so he has been working for a local council beside storytelling. He is literate. In contrast, a late storyteller Morshed 'Abbâs Zariri (1909-1972) was orphaned when he was very young. He was adopted by a group of dervishes and spent his formative years wandering from place to place with them. He worked in many different places and switched jobs frequently until he became a storyteller in the 1920s;¹¹⁴ he was motivated by a simple desire to earn his living. This indicates that storytelling still was a profitable business in those days. Later in his career Zariri taught himself how to write and read, as he explains in the following:

Though I was a famous storyteller, I did not know how to read and write. I used to memorise *tumârs* by hearing someone read them out for me. But eventually I thought of reading them by myself. I bought an elementary book, and learned reading and writing with my friends. It took me little to master the skill. I came to enjoy reading soon.¹¹⁵

During the apprenticeship a storyteller, as a rule, transcribes his master's *tumâr* which is a story text,¹¹⁶ so that he can pick up material, learn to structure a story, and master the language and style peculiar to storytelling. By the time he has finished copying it, he will have mastered the art of *naqqâli*. The *tumârs* thus play an important role in the transmission and preservation of story material and, by extension, the tradition of *naqqâli* itself. No less important element in the process is learning by hearing. A future storyteller attends to the master's performances, and may tape-record them so that he can repeatedly listen to them until he learn them by heart. It is also possible that he takes part in a group lesson, if such were available, to deepen his knowledge of Persian classical poetry.¹¹⁷

The coffee house patrons typically constitute the audience of *naqqâli*. A study shows that the modern clientele of the coffee houses consist of the lower classes, manual labourers, elderly men, and typically live in poor districts.¹¹⁸ In similar terms Torâbi describes his audience:

My audience consist of sportsmen, all good Iranians, merchants, dervishes, storytellers

¹¹³Torâbi 1369: 14.

¹¹⁴Dustxâh 1345: 75.

¹¹⁵Dustxâh ed. 1990: XVII-VIII.

¹¹⁶See Mahjub 1349: 48-9.

¹¹⁷Torâbi 1991: a private communication to the writer.

¹¹⁸EIr., s.v., "coffee house".

and poets. No woman is included because the coffee houses are in the south [of Tehran], not a place for women.¹¹⁹

Torâbi's audience mostly live in the neighbourhood of a coffee house where he regularly performs *naqqâli*, and work in the bazaar which is close to the coffee house. On one occasion he had a noticeably smaller audience. As it turned out, his regulars were all invited to a wedding party in the community. They apparently know one another quite well and frequent the coffee house to exchange business and local information or simply to unwind after work by listening to the storyteller.

The Performance

In *naqqâli* the stories are told in instalments, each lasting for about ninety minutes. Some storytellers give two sessions a day (one in the morning and the other in the evening) and continue the same story over six months.¹²⁰ Others, like Torâbi, give one session a day and complete the ShNF¹²¹ in about six months. Performance is conducted according to a set procedure, as illustrated in the following description of Torâbi's typical session.¹²²

In arriving at a coffee house Torâbi prepares what he calls a *sardam* ('platform') by piling up tables and chairs on which he places a *tumâr*. About four o'clock in the afternoon he orders his pupil to strike a gong which hangs from the ceiling, while handing over a stick to him. The pupil calls for a *salavât* prayer¹²³ and recites verses which conclude with a *salavât*. When the stick is returned Torâbi, for his part, recites a *salavât* and a couple of poems. He calls for another *salavât* before moving on to the day's session. Typically, he tells a prose story at the centre of the coffee house, while reading verses at the *sardam*. As he concentrates on telling he frequently gesticulates with the stick (which represents sometimes a horse and sometimes a sword) and raises his voice. About half an hour later, he returns to the platform to say a prayer to Muhammad and to recite poetry. After having repeated this once again, he strikes the gong and calls for a *salavât*. With this he picks up the

¹¹⁹Torâbi 1369: 15. In one of the interviews that the writer had with Torâbi in 1991, he remarked that women could come to the theatre or watch television if they were interested in *naqqâli*.

¹²⁰One of Page's informants completes the ShNF in 18 months and another in 6 months with two sessions a day (Page 1979: 197).

¹²¹The *naqqâli* version of the ShNF ends with the reign of Bahman.

¹²²Based on the writer's observations on Torâbi's performances given at a coffee house in Tehran and a private home in May 1991.

¹²³A *salavât* is a prayer recited by Shi'ite Muslims: *allâhommâ sallâ 'alâ mohammad va âl-e mohammad* (May God bless Mohammad and his family), as quoted by Page 1977: 62.

story from where he left off. About thirty minutes later, he exchanges a *salavât* with his audience and goes on to read verse passages. Once again he calls for a *salavât* and continues the story for about a quarter of an hour. Approximately fifteen minutes before the ending he makes a turn to collect money from members of the audience, while calling for prayers to the Prophet.

A typical session may consist of three parts, about half an hour each, with a lead-in. The beginning and the end of each part are marked by a combination of *salavâts* and recitations of classical poems which may not be related to the story proper; they are generally used to get the audience focused on his performance. *Salavât* prayers in particular appear to be helpful for this purpose since they demand the audience's participation, in which no Muslim would fail to co-operate.

The Stories

Since the storytellers pick up only traditional material¹²⁴ it is relatively easy to identify the types of stories dealt with. The stories are, generally, drawn from the Persian epics and romances, as shown in Figure 2 and Figure 3 below.¹²⁵

Text	Date of Composition	Remarks
<i>Samak-e 'Ayyâ'</i> ¹²⁶	ca. 1185	An early Persian romance.
<i>Abu-Moslemnâme</i> ¹²⁷	12th cent.	Based on a historical personage.
<i>Eskandarnâme</i> ¹²⁸	12th to 14th cent.	A Persian recension of the Alexander Romance; reworked in Safavid times.
<i>Dârâbnâme-ye Tarsusi</i> ¹²⁹	12th cent.	A Persian recension of the Alexander romance.
<i>Dârâbnâme-ye Biqami</i> ¹³⁰	12th to 16th cent.	Also called <i>Firuzshâhnâme</i> after the main protagonist.
<i>Hamzenâme</i> ¹³¹	ca. 9th cent.	Originally composed at the order of Hamze b. 'Abd al-Allâh Xâreji (d. 828-29) and reworked in Safavid times. ¹³²

¹²⁴Cf. "The audience is familiar with the storyteller's repertoire, and a storyteller will not perform material which is unknown to his audience" (Page 1979: 199).

¹²⁵The works listed on the tables are extracted from the following studies: Afshâri 1369: 479-80; Bizâ'i 1341: 21; Lesân 1976: 13; Mahjub 1337: 531; 1340: II; 1349: 42; Page 1979: 196; Dustxâh 1345: 74.

¹²⁶Xânlari ed. 1968-74; the abridged French translation is by Razavi 1972. Gaillard 1987 is a useful introduction to this work.

¹²⁷E. Yaqmâ'i ed. (ND). See further Mahjub 1338 (2), (3), (4); 1364-5; 1368.

¹²⁸Afshâr ed. 1343; the abridged English translation is by Southgate (Southgate trans. 1978).

¹²⁹Safâ ed. 1344-46.

¹³⁰Safâ ed. 1339-41; the abridged English translation is by Hanaway (Hanaway trans. 1974).

¹³¹She'âr ed. 1347.

<i>Hoseyn-e Kord</i>	late 16th to early 17th cent.	Created in Safavid times, and treats the struggles of Shi'as against Sunnis under the reign of Shah 'Abbās I. ¹³³
<i>Amir Arsalân</i> ¹³⁴	19th cent.	Composed by one of the chief storytellers of Nâser al-Din Shah of the Qajars.

Figure 2: Romances in *Naqqâli*

Text	Date of Composition	Remarks
ShNF	ca. 1010	Based on the Sistani tradition
<i>Garshâspnâme</i>	ca. 1054-6	Based on the Sistani tradition
<i>Borzunâme</i>	14th to 15th cent.	Based on the Sistani tradition
<i>Farâmarznâme</i>	late 12th cent.	Based on the Sistani tradition
<i>Bahmannâme</i>	before 1129/1130	Based on the Sistani tradition
<i>Moxtârnâme</i>	?	Religious narrative ¹³⁵
<i>Xâvârânâme</i>	completed in 1426-7 ¹³⁶	'Ali's adventurous biography ¹³⁷

Figure 3: Epics in *Naqqâl*¹³⁸

In Safavid times when storytelling was vigorously cultivated, storytellers had, it seems, a greater amount of latitude in the selection of material than today. For example, they adapted earlier prose works: the Alexander Romance and *Qesse-ye Hamze*, to their needs, as well as introducing new stories such as *Hoseyn-e Kord*. By the late nineteenth century, however, they seem to have settled to a group of canonical stories such as listed on the tables above. Among these *Hamzenâme*, *Hoseyn-e Kord*, and *Amir Arsalân* were especially popular¹³⁹ — as Zariri points out, however, these were superseded by the ShNF in the late 1920s. At the beginning of Zariri's career (ca. 1928) *Eskandarnâme*, *Moxtârnâme*, *Hamzenâme*, *Amir Arsalân*, and *Hoseyn-e Kord* were frequently told, but “not a single line was told from the ShNF, since many storytellers did not know how to read and write; they learned stories by word of mouth”.¹⁴⁰ This shift to the ShNF was apparently

¹³²See further Hanaway 1970: 197.

¹³³Hanaway trans. 1974: 9.

¹³⁴Mahjub 1340 ed.

¹³⁵See Safâ 1333: 383.

¹³⁶Safâ 1333: 378.

¹³⁷Ibid., pp. 377-9.

¹³⁸The secondary epics are discussed in Chapter V.

¹³⁹Mahjub 1338 (1): 66; Mahjub ed. 1340: II; 1349: 42.

¹⁴⁰Dustxâh ed. 1990: XXVIII.

political. Around 1929 storytelling was banned from the coffee houses together with *ma'rekegiri*¹⁴¹ and *maddâhi*:¹⁴² “Only the telling of the ShNF was encouraged. It was only after the ban that *shâhnâme-x'âni* became widespread”.¹⁴³ Torâbi, who is a generation younger than Zariri, relates the ShNF only.

In the present-day *naqqâli*, the stories — epics and romances alike — are told in prose with occasional verse passages. As Torâbi's performance has shown, prose is used to tell a story, and verse to mark the internal divisions of a performance. This functional difference between prose and verse is reflected in the storyteller's physical positions during a performance: when telling a prose story he stands at the centre of the coffee house; and in reciting verses he installs himself at the platform or *sardam*. In terms of narrative structure too, verses which appear intermittently in the *tumâr* text are used, for example, to enhance dramatic effects, to express the internal feelings of characters, or to sum up the story told up to that point. Verse functions as an attention-getter in the narrative, introducing different rhythms in prose narration.

Typical Features of *Naqqâli*

So far we have attempted to capture specific features of *naqqâli*. From a historical perspective *naqqâli* is in a degenerative stage where no innovation or structural shifts would be likely to occur. In terms of the means of transmission, it uses both oral and written media: the art of storytelling that is handed down through informal interaction between a master and his pupils; and the *tumârs* by way of which the stories are transmitted in a fixed form. In terms of the participants, it is intended for the coffee house clientele who in general form close relationships with one another. We have also discussed the stylistic features of oral performance with reference to Morshed Vali-ollâh Torâbi's session. Among them the following seems to be particularly important:

1. the duration of a performance (approx. 90 minutes);
2. the serial form in which performance is given.

¹⁴¹*Ma'rekegiri* is a generic term for entertainment, including juggling, riddle, snake-charming, storytelling, telling of miracles performed by saints and priests, etc. (*Loqatnâme*, s.v., “*ma'reke gereftan*”).

¹⁴²*Maddâhi* means ‘praising of the family of the Prophet, but it may also refer to *rowzex'ân*, ‘the telling of the martyrdom of saints’ (*Loqatnâme*, s.v., “*maddâhi*”).

¹⁴³Dustxâh ed. 1990: 27.

Since these are structural features of every performance they can be expected to influence, in a fundamental way, how storytellers structure and organise a story. Finally we have considered the genres of stories that are dealt with in *naqqâli*: Persian epics and heroic romances.

Each of these factors contributes to the shaping of *naqqâli* performance in varying degree and in different manners. In order to elucidate this, and ultimately to propose the OPM seeking to determine the extent to which oral tradition is influential in a written text, the next section will examine a published *tumâr* of a prominent *naqqâl*. The first part of the section will concentrate on the formal structure of the *tumâr*, and the second on its thematic organisation.

2. The *Tumâr*, the Storyteller's ShNF

The text on which the following study is based is Morshed 'Abbâs Zariri's *Dâstân-e Rostam va Sohrâb: revâyât-e naqqâlân* ('The Story of Rostam and Sohrâb: the Storytellers' Narratives') which is part of a thousand page long *tumâr*, *Zaririnâme* ('the Book of Zariri').¹⁴⁴ As its title suggests, this is a storyteller's version of the story of Rostam and Sohrâb in the ShNF.

This particular *tumâr* was chosen as the object of study simply because it was the only published *tumâr* in Iran — in fact one of the first to be ever published — at a time when this study was first envisioned.¹⁴⁵ There is no reason, therefore, to believe that it is necessarily a typical *tumâr*.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴Dustxâh ed. 1990. Zariri reflects on his *tumâr* as follows: "For thirty years I gathered and wrote a *Tumâr* that is as voluminous as the *Shâhnâme* itself. I wrote and asked the responsible authorities to look at my work and me, but I did not realize that those beautiful days of fifty years ago had died away. They came all right, but only to find out who I was and to ask me a lot of personal questions, and left me with a lot of empty promises" (Shirazi 1973: 126). Other excerpts from *Zaririnâme* are published in Dustxâh 1992: 122-44.

¹⁴⁵Mahjub 1349: 52-63 includes some fragments of *tumârs*; Page 1977: 135-9 cites and translates a *tumâr* on the story of Rostam and Sohrâb, which is then compared with the transcriptions of performances of the same story.

¹⁴⁶Since then, in fact, another *tumâr* was published in 1998: *Haft Lashkar: tumâr-e jâme'-ye naqqâlân: az Kayumars tâ Bahman* ('The Seven Armies: the *tumâr* of the *naqqâls*: [relating ShNF stories] from the reign of Kayumars to that of Bahman', Afshâri & Madâyeni eds. 1998). This is a prose retelling of the Persian epic tradition, as its sub-title indicates, covering the reigns from Kayumars through Bahman. According to Morshed Vali-ollâh Torâbi with whom the editors of *Haft Lashkar* have consulted, it is an abridged version of a complete *tumâr* to be performed by a storyteller in six months (*ibid.*, p. xxxi). It is a composite epic story based on the ShNF; the *Garshâspnâme* (pp. 40-52); *Sâmnâme* (pp. 57-143); *Bânu-Goshaspnâme* (pp. 197-204); *Jahângirnâme* (pp. 205-216); *Borzunâme* (pp. 246-325); *Bahmannâme* (pp. 492-570) and possibly many other works. It thus illustrates a sweeping range of ShN telling in its entirety and deserves

The Structure of the *Tumâr*

This section seeks to understand the structure of the *tumâr*. It will suggest the utility of dividing the text into structural elements, which are hierarchically organised. Such elements may inform us how the storyteller constructs an immediate performance based on small chunks of information, and organises a series of performances, in order to complete the story within a fixed time frame. The point of departure for this study is therefore to identify some structural elements in the *tumâr*.

A superficial reading of the *tumâr* shows that the text consists of some structural units. Some units are evidently larger than instalments or units comparable to actual performance, and others are smaller. For ease of reference, the larger units may here be called "chapters" and the smaller units "episodes". The chapter divisions are marked by Ferdowsi's verses which sporadically occur in the text, and the episode divisions by certain types of connectives. The hypothetical instalments can therefore be seen as the structural units which are larger than the episodes, but are smaller than the chapters. They stand halfway between the chapters and the episodes.¹⁴⁷ In what follows, each of these units will be examined to see how its boundaries are formally marked.

Chapter Divisions

As has been just mentioned, the boundaries of chapters are marked by citations from the ShNF, which are found at places where, according to the storyteller, important changes take place in Ferdowsi's story line. On the basis of this, the following chapter divisions can be identified:

therefore fuller treatment. With regard to the treatment of individual stories, as the story of Rostam and Sohrâb (pp. 183-196) shows, it generally follows Ferdowsi's story line. Unlike Zariri's *tumâr*, it does not seem to provide a clue to the way storytellers organise performances. Zariri's *tumâr* is admittedly far from typical but is adequate for our purposes.

The present writer is grateful to Prof Ulrich Marzolph, *Enzyklopädie des Märchens* for this reference.

¹⁴⁷As Marina Gaillard showed, the *Samak-e 'Ayyâr* consists of the four structural units: *histoire*, *épisode*, *chapitre*, and *scène* (Gaillard 1987: 55). The *histoires* are the largest units and relate the central threads of the romance: the birth and growth of the protagonist, his marriage, the death of his first wife, the second marriage, the birth of his sons, his death and so forth (ibid., p. 91). Each story is composed of *épisodes* which in turn consists of a certain number of *chapters*, made up of several *scènes* (ibid., pp. 55-6). The *histories* seem to correspond to our 'chapters', the *épisodes* to the 'instalments' and the *scènes* to the 'episodes', while the *chapters* have no equivalents in our hypothesis. Gaillard suggests further that the *Samak-e 'Ayyâr* may have been performed by storytellers in instalments (ibid., p. 88).

- Chapter 1: The birth of Sohrâb (pp. 1-33);
- Chapter 2: Sohrâb's departure to Iran (pp. 34-168);
- Chapter 3: Sohrâb's arrival in the White Fortress (pp. 169-229);
- Chapter 4: The combat of Sohrâb and Rostam (pp. 230-258);
- Chapter 5: Sohrâb's combat with the Persians (pp. 259-341);
- Chapter 6: The death of Sohrâb (pp. 347-371).

Whether these are actually important turning points in Ferdowsi's story line is a matter of debate. Some might wish to count, mainly in thematic terms, the scene in which Sohrâb is informed of his father Rostam, as also important. Others may consider including Afrâsiyâb's intervention into the list. In such a case, however, the analysis will cease to appeal to formal criteria, and still more importantly, it will neglect the fact that those divisions reflect what the storyteller perceives significant in reworking Ferdowsi's story.

Instalment Divisions

Since the boundaries of instalments are not formally marked, we must here appeal to non-linguistic or formal criteria. In doing so it seems useful to take into account formal characteristics of *naqqâli* performance. The following two characteristics are especially relevant: (1) the average duration of instalments, i.e. 90 minutes; (2) the question of serialisation. The first implies that each instalment is of roughly equal length, while the second requires each instalment to be at once complete and incomplete. That is, in organising an instalment, the storyteller would have to take care of two seemingly mutually exclusive requirements. On the one hand, he must complete at least one episode (which is a component of the instalment, as will be discussed below), in order to satisfy the audience for the current instalment. On the other hand, he must leave another episode incomplete at the ending, in order to get the audience interested in the next. In terms of the overall structure of the *tumâr*, each instalment is seen as a semi-independent story, as well as constituting an organic part of the *tumâr* as a whole.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁸Gaillard notes a similar principle at work in the *épisodes* of the *Samak-e 'Ayyâr*: "Celui-ci [un auditoire], satisfait par la résolution de quelques-unes des intrigues en même temps que captivé par les nouvelles aventures entamées, obéirait aux lois pérennes qui tiennent toujours en haleine le consommateur de feuilletons. Dans ce cas, c'est une contrainte pratique qui serait à l'origine d'une telle forme" (Gaillard 1987: 88).

But how can we identify the beginning and the end of an instalment, with such an abstract criterion as 'incompleteness and completeness'? Though based on a formal characteristic of *naqqâli* performance, this process nevertheless leaves a great deal to intuition and subjective judgement. In this connection, it may be helpful to look to theoretical works on literature which deal with this question; if we know how a story ends we shall have found criteria for identifying the boundaries of instalments, since these are essentially similar to a story in terms of 'completeness'. Vladimir Shklovsky, a Russian Formalist, has remarked that the story ends when the initial proposition is transformed into the opposite: "The sense of completeness, of a finished state, derives from the fact that the narrative moves from a false recognition to a revelation of the true state of affairs"¹⁴⁹.

Shklovsky adopts a fairly narrow view of narrative completeness in terms of the opposition between the initial and the final situation (false vs. true). It is quite possible, on the other hand, to think of different changes for different situations. For example, if the initial situation is about the state of a hero, we would expect the story to end when this situation changes. Or if the hero confronts an adversary at the beginning, he would defeat the adversary at the end. It is clear that we cannot limit changes to the opposition alone, for there are as many types of initial situations as there are things which can be related in performance. Rather, it is a far-reaching change of the initial situation that lends the sense of completeness to the story involved. Based on such a notion of change we shall attempt to identify instalment divisions in the *tumâr*.

If we divide the chapters into instalments according to this criterion we will have the instalment divisions as presented in Appendix I. By way of illustration, we shall here consider the first instalment of chapter 2 (2.1) of the *tumâr*,¹⁵⁰ to see if it satisfies the criterion. A summary of the instalment is given below:

¹⁴⁹As an illustration of this, Shklovsky (1990: 56) proposed to consider Lesage's *Asmodeus*. This story centres on the Devil and a student who discuss a possible relationship existing among three people: a young woman, a young man and an old man. In an answer to the Devil's question about this, the student infers that the woman is married to the old man and has an affair with the young man (false recognition). However, the truth is that the woman is actually married to the young man, while having an affair with the old man (true recognition). This revelation brings the story to an end.

¹⁵⁰Citations from the *tumâr* are shown as in 2.1.1 for example, where the leftmost digit stands for the chapter number, the middle for the instalment number, and the rightmost for the episode number: 2.1.1 thus designates the first episode of the first instalment of the second chapter. On the internal divisions of the *tumâr* see Appendix I.

This instalment begins with the Turanian vizier Pirân setting off to court. As he is leaving the house he sees a messenger running towards him, from whom he learns of Rostam's marriage to Tahmine. He immediately sends the messenger off to Samangân, hoping to dissuade the king Sohram from treason.

Upon receiving this message, Sohram decides to depart with his son Zenderazm secretly. However, Tahmine encounters the messenger and comes to know Pirân's intervention. She is so enraged that she splits the messenger into two. Pirân's peace move thus fails to materialise. This comes to the knowledge of Afrâsiyâb, who thereupon orders Pirân to be put to death.

While the execution is under way, Afrâsiyâb's father, Pashang, comes to see him, and intercedes for Pirân.

What changes in this instalment is the status of Pirân: he starts an ordinary day (initial situation) and finds himself at the gallows in the end (final situation); his status changes from that of a vizier to that of a condemned criminal. According to the principle of 'completeness', therefore, the instalment ends with the execution of Pirân. On the other hand, it is also incomplete because, at this point, we cannot tell how Pashang's intervention will affect the fate of Pirân. Instalment 2.1 thus meets the criterion of being at once complete and incomplete.

Having thus divided the chapters into instalments, it is necessary next to examine whether each hypothetical instalment is of similar length. As was mentioned earlier, *naqqâli* performance lasts approximately ninety minutes. This suggests that if our instalments are somehow comparable to actual performances, they are expected to be of more or less equal size. The statistics show that the average length of instalment is 9.4 pages long, ranging from 7 to 12.¹⁵¹ This result may be taken as satisfactory as it indicates regularities among the hypothetical divisions. In order to see whether such a hypothetical instalment division in fact corresponds to actual performance, we may compare instalment 2.1 with a transcription of Zariri's performance on the same segment of the story.¹⁵² In the performance version the storyteller relates how Pirân summons Sohram and

¹⁵¹There are a few exceptions. Instalments 4.3, 5.2 and 6.2 are shorter than the rest, with 3, 4, 5 pages respectively. The cases of 4.3 and 6.2 may be explained by lengthy citations from the ShNF, while 5.2 remains as an exception.

¹⁵²Dustxâh 1345: 73-88.

Zenderazm, and how this leads to his plight. On the whole he follows the *tumâr*, except at the ending. He omits the episode on Pashang's intervention, and concludes the performance at a point where Afrâsiyâb orders Pirân to be executed for the last time. As we have already seen, the hypothetical instalment ends with the intervention of Pashang.

Such a difference reminds us that it is the storyteller who ultimately decides where to begin and end an instalment. It is possible, moreover, that the storyteller elaborates on a character or an event which is only cursorily touched upon in the *tumâr*; or he might bring in new characters, events, motifs in accordance with his intentions to create suspense, to convince the audience of the truth of what he is narrating, or to surprise, etc. There are an indefinite number of intentions which would contribute to the structuring of each instalment, and which are all the more difficult to predict on the basis of the *tumâr* at hand. On the other hand, it would seem unlikely that the storyteller can change a story in such a radical manner that the audience would not be able to recognise it any longer. He can do so only within limits. Bearing this in mind, if we look at the performance version again, we can see that in spite of the omission of Pashang's interference, the oral version follows the change in Pirân's status to the end, and leaves his fate unspoken at the end. It entails both complete and incomplete story lines which we have identified in the *tumâr*. The omission of Pashang's intervention does not materially affect the overall structure of the instalment. It only highlights the incomplete story line, which is manifest in the logic of the narrative. The changes which may occur in oral performance cannot affect the internal organisation of the narrative. Thus, even if it is difficult or impossible to predict where the storyteller puts an end to each instalment, this should not affect our analysis that adheres, in principle, to the logical sequence of events.

Episodes

Since, as pointed out earlier, the episode boundaries are formally and regularly marked it is likely that the episodes are the basic units with which the storyteller builds up the story.¹⁵³ The beginnings of episodes are indicated by conventionalised clauses and phrases which may be termed 'markers'. The markers can be classified into two categories according to functions:

- (i) Narrative markers;

¹⁵³For the episode divisions see Appendix I.

(ii) Temporal markers.

The narrative markers are related to the mode of narration, or the special arrangement given to the story by the storyteller, while the temporal markers refer to the order of events in the story.¹⁵⁴ We shall consider how they are used in the *tumâr*, beginning with the narrative markers.

(i) Narrative Markers

The narrative markers consist of five types, as presented below:

1. (*Ammâ*) *beshenow az*

[(But) hear of ...]¹⁵⁵

(*Ammâ*) *cand kalâm 'arz konim az*

[(But) let us have a few words about ...]¹⁵⁶

2. *Az tarafi*

(On the one/other hand)¹⁵⁷

Az in / ân jâneb

(On this / that side)¹⁵⁸

3. *Aknun tavajjoh-e tamâm lâzem ast ke*

(Now, full attention must be paid to ...)¹⁵⁹

Hâl bâyard motavajje-ye in mowzu' shod

(Now, attention must be paid to this point)¹⁶⁰

Hâl bâyard dânest

(Now, you must understand ...) ¹⁶¹

Towzih in ke

(The explanation is that ...)¹⁶²

4. *Aknun bar sar-e soxan ravim ke ...*

¹⁵⁴Cf. Gaillard's analysis of similar markers in *Samak-e 'Ayyâr* (Gaillard 1987: 85-7).

¹⁵⁵Cf. pp. 8; 49; 73; 85; 95; 100; 108; 114; 185; 193; 213; 230; 269; 297; 307; 315; 327; 356.

¹⁵⁶Cf. pp. 24; 105 (*ammâ* only); 116 (*vali*); 124; 183; 284 (*va ammâ*); 348; 362; 369.

¹⁵⁷Cf. pp. 2; 17; 22; 23; 39; 43; 61; 62; 79; 90; 92; 111; 118; 119; 130; 133; 135; 138; 145; 149; 156; 162; 173; 187; 190; 191; 200a; 200b; 211; 212; 252; 262; 264; 266; 267; 268; 271; 285; 286; 288; 290; 292; 298; 299; 305; 306; 308; 313; 327; 328; 331; 332; 336; 341.

¹⁵⁸Cf. pp. 20; 40; 46; 71; 75; 111; 132; 134; 149; 191; 209; 217; 256; 259; 265; 267; 274; 292; 299; 304; 329.

¹⁵⁹Cf. pp. 41; 52.

¹⁶⁰Cf. pp. 10; 70.

¹⁶¹Cf. pp. 28; 111; 239; 305.

¹⁶²Cf. pp. 154; 169.

(Now, let us return to the story ...) ¹⁶³

5. *Bâri*

(Anyway, in short) ¹⁶⁴

Al-qesse

(So the story goes; in short) ¹⁶⁵

Bel-axare/âqebat

(At last) ¹⁶⁶

Groups 1 & 2: Topic Shifters

Ammâ beshenow az... is frequently used to signal a transition to a new event or action with an explicit indication of a character who plays a main part in the episode. For instance, in the following example Tahmine is assigned a leading role:

(1) [At the end of the preceding episode, Zenderazm falls asleep while he is wondering if he could bring a glass of water to Rostam who is invited to stay at the king Sohrâm's castle].

Ammâ beshenow az Tahmine (p. 8).

(**But hear of** Tahmine).

The markers of this type can be preceded by "*tâ be dâstân-e ishân beravim ensha'allâh*" (and we will return to their story by grace of God), as in the following:

(2) *Aknun bar sar-e soxan ravim. Pas az raftan-e Zâl-o Rostam az Samangân, Tahmine mashqul-e parvareh-e Sohrâb shod tâ be dâstân-e ishân berasim ensha'allâh. Ammâ cand kalâm 'arz konim az shahr-e Balx* (p. 35).

(Let us now return to the story. After Zâl and Rostam departed from Samangân Tahmine was busy raising Sohrâb, **to whose story we shall return if God so permits.**

But let us have a few words about the town of Balkh).

This example shows that a technique of interlacing is employed in the *tumâr*.¹⁶⁷ In this technique concurrent actions are woven together, in such a way that one is not completed before another reaches a conclusion. In the above case, Tahmine's

¹⁶³Cf. pp. 35; 184; 320.

¹⁶⁴Cf. pp. 24; 47; 50; 82; 98; 118; 122; 131; 139; 165; 173; 179; 180; 210; 243; 288; 302; 309; 329; 337; 338; 348; 350; 354; 365.

¹⁶⁵Cf. pp. 2; 34; 114; 128; 137; 230; 240; 247; 293; 356; 371.

¹⁶⁶Cf. pp. 42; 152.

episode is picked up again about thirty pages later. Given a story with such a complexity and intricacy, we are led to assume that a great deal of planning has gone into the global organisation of the story.

Az tarafi and *az in (ân) jâneb* are likewise used to signal a transition to a new episode. Unlike the first type, however, these markers are likely to occur at adjacent locations and indicate a succession of events or actions between the interconnected episodes. For instance, the opening of episode 2.11.1 is introduced by *az in jâneb*, as presented below:

(3) [The end of the preceding episode] *bâri, pas az ân be ettefâq, hame bâ ham ravâne-ye dezeh-e Toqrel shode va az ân jâ be Samangân va az now mashqul-e sâxtemân-e ân shahr shodand tâ in ke az avval bozorgtar va 'âlitar gasht* (p. 131).

[The beginning of 2.11.1] *Az in jâneb, nâme'i az shâh-e Shengân rasid be Afrâsiyâb ke: "Sohrâb dar Shengân dastgir shod va u-râ be in tariq ferestâdam jahat-e Balx ...* (p. 132)

[The beginning of 2.11.2] *Az tarafi, lashkar-e cin rasidand be Shengân* (p. 133).

(In short, then, they all set off to Toqrel's castle together, and from there to Samangân. They set about building the town again, which became larger and better than before.

On this side, a letter from the king of Shengân reached Afrâsiyâb, [saying] "Sohrâb was captured in Shengân, and I have thus sent him over to Balx ...

On the other side, the Chinese army arrived at Shengân).

Az in jâneb at the beginning of 2.11.1 signals a change of characters (from the Samangânis to Afrâsiyâb), the passage of time, and place (from Samangân to Balx). *Az tarafi* in 2.11.2 marks not only a shift of the setting and characters but also a return to an episode which has been suspended. In 2.11.1, two Chinese champions come to offer their services to Afrâsiyâb. They are immediately ordered to assault Shengân where Sohrâb is taken prisoner. This episode is then disrupted by the episode on Afrâsiyâb and Pirân. *Az tarafi* therefore indicates a return to the episode of the Chinese army, while suggesting at the same time that the army is on their way all the while Afrâsiyâb and Pirân are considering what action to take.

¹⁶⁷On interlacing see further below.

Group 3: Introducing the Storyteller's Comment

The markers of the third type introduce the storyteller's opinion of, and attitudes towards, what is related in the story.

(4) [After a quotation from the ShNF, in which Tahmine attempts to seduce Rostam.]
Hâl bâyard motavajje-ye in mowzu' shod az in ke Rostam javân-e xoshsimâyâ'i nabude ast ke Tahmine 'âsheq-e zibâ'i-ye u shavad; bal matlab (-e u) in bud ke: "xodâvand az to farzandi be man karâmat konad ke cun to bâshad" (p. 10).

(Now, note that Rostam was not such a beautiful young man that Tahmine would love him for his beauty. But her intention was that: "May the Lord grant me a child who is like him").

The marker in this example signals a change of the mode of communication between the storyteller and the audience. It allows him to disrupt storytelling in order to communicate his own opinion about a point in the story to his audience. The point he raises here is Tahmine's attempt to seduce Rostam. In what follows the above extract, the storyteller justifies Tahmine's action by evoking an earlier custom in which nothing was more important for a woman than to bear a valiant son like Rostam. It is worth pointing out, on the other hand, that such comment would be pointless unless the storyteller feels obliged to defend his position as a spokesman of the national tradition for its possible breach of social norms shared by members of the community. In present-day Tehran, Tahmine is seen as one of the "*zanân-e nâqes-ol-'aql* (thoughtless women)" (p. 10) who would shamelessly chase a man; she does not behave as she ought to in terms of social expectations about female members of society.¹⁶⁸ Given this shared assumption, the storyteller's interpretation can be seen as an attempt to bridge a gap between the world of the ShNF and the reality of modern life.

Another important function of this type of marker is to establish and reinforce a relation between the storyteller and the audience. The storyteller's comments are essentially addressed to the audience and call forth its active participation in performance by encouraging it to evaluate the story being performed as well as the storyteller's interpretation which explicitly or implicitly appeals to the

¹⁶⁸ The word, "woman" is often modified by the adjective, *nâqes ol-'aql* (stupid, lit. deficient in judgement) in the *tumâr*. When Tahmine urges Sohrâb to combat Rostam, the storyteller comments: "Were not Tahmine a woman and *nâqes ol-'aql*, she could never ever say such a thing to this inexperienced and fearless boy. She is thereby sending him to death" (p.165).

shared assumptions. Members of the audience are thus involved in the structuring of the story.

Groups 4 & 5: Return to the Previous Events or Actions

Aknun bar sar-e soxan ravim marks out a return to the previous event or action after a digression (e.g. commentaries, verse quotations, etc.) An illustration of this is provided in (2) above where after a page long digression the storyteller alludes to Tahmine's raising Sohrâb on an island. The other markers perform similar functions, although some are likely to occur in more specific contexts than others. *Al-qesse* and *bâri* in particular tend to appear after verse quotations. In non-verse contexts, they mark a new aspect of the event or action concerned with. In the following example, *bâri* points to a new phase in a battle in which a Persian champion continues to demand Sohrâb who has gone off hunting:

[After describing how Sâm-e Zangi has the preparations made for vigil at the battleground, the storyteller signals a new turn of the event] *Bâri, se ruz jang kard va se shab dar meydân mând tâ in ke Afrâsiyâb, Pirân-râ ferestâd hamrâh-e Sohrâb* (p. 210).

(In short, the battle continued for three days and for three nights the armies remained in the battlefield until Afrâsiyâb sent Pirân to Sohrâb).

To sum up, the narrative markers are placed at transitional locations to formally mark a change of topic across episodes or within an episode. They provide the storyteller with a point of departure for the arrangement of narrative elements in the subsequent episode, and the audience with a key to making prediction of what happens next.

(ii) Temporal Markers

The temporal markers are used to mark a new, often unexpected turn in a temporal series of actions. They consist of the following:

1. Markers of contingency

ke dar ân vaqt (at which moment);¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁹Cf. pp. 15; 119; 144; 146; 189; 195; 197; 213 (*in*); 250; 258 (*mowqe*); 259; 269; 273; 279; 289; 291; 305; 306; 317 (*sâ'at*); 334; 343a; 343b; 348; 349; 354.

dar conin vaqti (at such a time);¹⁷⁰
hamân mowqe' (at that very moment);¹⁷¹
ke (when);¹⁷²

2. Markers of a temporal sequence of events or actions:

tâ (in ke) (until);¹⁷³
cun (when);¹⁷⁴
va (and);¹⁷⁵
ângâh (then);¹⁷⁶
sepas/pas (then);¹⁷⁷
ba'd az ân (after);¹⁷⁸

3. Marker of zero duration:

nângâh (suddenly).¹⁷⁹

Contingency

The markers of this group introduce a contingent event/action to indicate the improvement or worsening of a character's state. In the first example below, Sohrâb's state is likely to improve while in the second it may worsen:

(1) [The king of Shengân has Sohrâb put at the gallows and waits for the execution] *Ke dar ân vaqt, savâri rasid va be ma'murin-e entezâmi goft: "nâme'i az emperâtur jahat-e shâh âvardeam, râje' be hamîn javân ke sar-e cube-ye dâr ast. Barâ-ye man râhi peydâ konid"* (p. 119).

(At which moment a rider arrived and said to the officers, "I have brought a letter from the emperor to the king concerning the boy who is at the gallows. Let me through").

(2) [In an attempt to rescue Sohrâb, the princess Shohre, gives the queen — who tries to stop her — such a strong blow that the queen falls unconscious. Shohre offers to free

¹⁷⁰Cf. pp. 121; 256; 322.

¹⁷¹Cf. p. 44.

¹⁷²Cf. pp. 71; 77; 273; 279a; 279b; 323.

¹⁷³Cf. pp. 32; 151; 181; 220; 331; 364.

¹⁷⁴Cf. pp. 23; 101; 167; 178.

¹⁷⁵Cf. pp. 166; 199; 204; 207; 253; 270; 275; 285.

¹⁷⁶Cf. pp. 12; 64; 370.

¹⁷⁷Cf. pp. 87; 148; 170; 251; 321,

¹⁷⁸Cf. pp. 111; 319 (*pas az*); 355.

¹⁷⁹Cf. pp. 67; 77; 196.

Sohrâb from the confinement but is met with his vehement objection. A dispute is about to rise] *Ke conin vaqti, maleke be xod âmad va harâsân david barâbar-e sardâbe* (p. 121).

(At which moment the queen came to her senses, alarmed, and dashed to the prison).

Although the markers signal the emergence of contingent events they are neutral as to their nature. Whether or not Sohrâb's state improves depends on the relationship between the propositional contents of the sentences linked up by the markers.

Time-Sequence (Omission of Process)

The temporal markers in this group mark a transition from one event or action to another which could be, logically speaking, achieved only after a certain time period. As an illustration of this two examples of *tâ* are given below:

(3) [Sohrâb sets off to acquire weapons with Tahmine. In the course of the journey Tahmine falls ill. Sohrâb is at a loss not knowing what to do]. *Sohrâb benâ kard be gerye kardan tâ pas az peymudan-e masâfati, rasid be qâfele-ye bozorgi...* (p. 95).

(Sohrâb began weeping, and reached a large caravan after a distance).

Tâ seems to imply that Sohrâb will be given aid in one way or another, and that he will not remain in the same state for long. It is a characteristic of the *tumâr* that the mention of a problem (such as Tahmine's falling ill) is immediately followed by a solution to it (encounter with a caravan). What is never mentioned here is a process in which the problem is being solved. In the above example, the sentence prior to *tâ* describes the inchoative state or the beginning of Sohrâb's affliction, but the next sentence already moves on to its probable amelioration. Although there is the phrase 'after a distance' suggesting a passage of time, this is virtually cancelled out by the utmost proximity between the two states. As a result, a transition from one state to another is seen to be almost instantaneous. The same applies to the following example, concerned with geographical distance between two places:¹⁸⁰

(4) [Tahmine goes off to Balkh where her father and brother are taken captive]. *Va be ettefâq-e x^vâje, 'âzem-e Balx shod tâ be xâne-ye u rasid* (p. 65).

¹⁸⁰A similar feature is found in the popular romances: "Space is highly compressed and seldom are we given details of the journey; in the same manner, time is generally foreshortened. We never know how long these journeys take; time is clearly defined only when some event, such as a battle, is presented in great details" (Hanaway 1971b: 141).

(And she sets off to Balkh with the merchant, **and** arrived at his house).

The beginning of the travel is immediately followed by its end, while the process, or more precisely, ellipsis of the process is indicated by *tâ*.

Zero Duration

Nâgâh indicates, in a manner similar to *tâ*, the resolution of a problem which has just arisen. The difference is that *nâgâh* is marked, whereas *tâ* and the other temporal markers in the second group are generally used by default. In (5) below *nâgâh* is used to indicate passage to a new phase of the action:

(5) [Though Tahmine manages to get into a prison where Sohram and Zenderazm are taken captive, nowhere is she able to find them. She is downcast]. *Nâgâh dar-e kuceki did* (p. 67).

(**Suddenly** she saw a small door).

This door implies an opening to the confinement in which Sohram and Zenderazm are taken prisoner, and hence it provides a solution to the problem confronted by Tahmine. Thus *nâgâh* arbitrarily puts an end to Tahmine's plight, while at the same time signalling its dramatic improvement.

On the whole, the temporal markers seem to help the storyteller to achieve a certain economy of narration. *Tâ* for example enables him to omit a description of journey. As we have just seen, *nâgâh* also permits the omission of the process in which Tahmine seeks out a means by which she can reach Sohram and Zenderazm. The first group of markers similarly facilitates a switch from an action that has reached its logical end (e.g. Sohrâb cannot be killed in the middle of the story as in example 1), to another which generally introduces an unexpected turn of the action.

While such economy of narration may help the storyteller to sustain the audience's attention for a fixed period of time, it clearly has a trade-off: flat characters. For example, in (5) above, if Tahmine did not find the small door so easily she would take greater pains to reach her father and brother and as a consequence, she would become more experienced and mature. The characters are given little chance to think, wonder or hesitate at the emergence of a new situation. They remain unchanged from beginning to end and function to maintain the unity of action.¹⁸¹

¹⁸¹Hanaway notes with regard to *Firuzshâhnâme*: "The females show no more psychological

Story Content and its Representations

We have considered the hierarchical organisation of the structural units in the *tumâr*. We have seen that the storyteller constructs each instalment through a configuration of episodes. Although his immediate focus seems to be on their arrangement within an instalment, and especially on completing one episode while leaving another incomplete, he does not fail to take into account the global organisation of the story. He frequently implies prospective events or actions using narrative markers. Furthermore he divides up Ferdowsi's story at points which he considers significant in its development. These last points suggest that semantic components play an important part in the structuring of the *tumâr*. In this section we shall consider the thematic structure of the *tumâr* which is presumably organised along motifs which the storyteller has come to identify as key elements in the development of Ferdowsi's story. Typically, in the *tumâr*, these elements are formally marked. We will look at some of such formal devices and their effects, which have direct bearings on the storyteller's understanding of the story. For convenience the discussion is organised according to the chapters of the *tumâr*.

Chapter 1: Interlacing

The first chapter is organised by the interlacing technique in which two story lines are woven together: typically one story line is broken off so that the other begins before the first is completed. In this chapter for instance, one story line follows the ShNF up to Sohrâb's birth through a sequence of episodes: Rostam's encounter with Tahmine (1.1.4), the engagement (1.1.4), the wedding (1.3.2), Tahmine's pregnancy (1.3.2) and Sohrâb's birth (1.3.7). This story line is broken off at points indicated by the episode numbers in parentheses. After episode 1.1.4, another story line is introduced to relate Rostam's dealings with local people (from 1.2.1 through 1.3.1). In episode 1.3.2, the first story line is briefly taken up again and gives way to the second, which continues through episodes 1.3.3 to 1.3.6; it is ultimately completed in 1.3.7. This example shows in a simple form how the storyteller expands Ferdowsi's story with secondary story line.

development than do the males, and indeed such development plays no part in the Persian romance tradition" (Hanaway trans. 1974:17).

Chapter 2: Red Herrings, Structural Repetition, and Rostam's Dilemma

Red Herrings

In this chapter the storyteller employs a technique for manipulating the audience's expectations: red herring, in which a positive move is offset against a negative one. The positive move may bring about the early resolution of a conflict, which is immediately cancelled out by the negative move. Since the positive move produces no effect on plot, it is used to misdirect the audience to a premature ending. The first two instalments in chapter 2, describing a Turanian interpretation of Rostam's marriage to Tahmine, may serve as an example.

Afrâsiyâb, Turanian king, can hardly accept the marriage which enables Samangân to join forces with Rostam, champion of Iran. He orders the king of Samangân (Sohram) to come to court at once. In receiving the order from a messenger, Sohram, together with his son Zenderazm, sets about preparing for the journey (2.1.5), while Tahmine kills the messenger (2.1.6). Here Sohram's compliance with Afrâsiyâb's order presents a positive move leading to the undoing of the marriage, while Tahmine's killing of the messenger cancels out Sohram's act. The next instalment also contains a red herring. Sohram and Zenderazm are again summoned to court and are more than willing to set out (2.2.3), while Tahmine disagrees with them so strongly that she declares war against Humân who has come down as a messenger from Afrâsiyâb (2.2.4). Here too Sohram's submission to Afrâsiyâb represents a red herring which is to be offset by Tahmine.

In the next two instalments (2.3 & 2.4), which centre on the battle between Samangân and Humân, the storyteller confronts the problem of describing two concurrent events. In the course of the battle, Tahmine and Sohrâb flee to an island, while Sohram and Zenderazm are taken prisoner in Balkh. Concurrent events in this example are Tahmine and Sohrâb's flight, and Sohram and Zenderazm's captivity. Since the storyteller can only describe one event involving one set of characters at one time, he would have to use either contrastive connectives (*ân tarafî* or *az in jâneb*) to indicate the simultaneous occurrence of two events, or the interlacing technique, which he in fact employs in this instalment. He first recounts the episodes leading up to Tahmine and Sohrâb's arrival in Balkh (2.3) and then picks up Sohram and Zenderazm's story line. In doing so he briefly describes what has happened to them, before relating how Tahmine and Sohrâb set about freeing the prisoners (2.4).

Structural Repetition

In the latter half of the chapter, repetition is used to organise the thematic structure. At the beginning of instalment 2.5, Afrâsiyâb orders two Turanians to attack Samangân, and at the opening of the next instalment he intends to make another such attempt. Instalment 2.7 begins with a similar motif, in which he sends off a Turanian champion to Samangân. Finally, at the beginning of 2.11, he himself goes down to Samangân with Pirân. Thus the technique of repetition is manifest in the use of the recurrent motif in which Afrâsiyâb launches assault on Samangân. This motif occurs four times, and is placed at the beginnings of the instalments to mark a new episode in a manner similar to the narrative markers.

If we attempt to divide the second half of the chapter according to this motif we will have found the following divisions: 1) 2.5; 2) 2.6; 3) 2.7-2.10; 4) 2.11-2.13. These are obviously interlinked by the common motif and thus exhibits a coherent pattern. In terms of the internal structuring, however, they differ from one another. One of the salient features is that they increase in volume and complexity as the story progresses. The first division is the shortest, covering only instalment 2.5, which ends with the failure of Afrâsiyâb's attempt. The second is exceptional in that the motif is disrupted by the introduction of a theme in the ShNF (which will be discussed below). The third division is the longest with subordinate motifs of war, the dispersion of characters (leading to interlacing) and reunion. The fourth division is no less complex than the third, as all the story lines converge in instalment 2.13, which concludes the chapter. Another characteristic to be noted is the degree to which Afrâsiyâb's involvement progressively increases. In the first division he dispatches apparently insignificant warriors, in the third a champion who is more important than the former, and in the fourth he himself leads the troops to Samangân. Thus the focus of the story shifts from less significant elements to the more significant within the four divisions.

It is clear that repetition serves as an organising principle for this particular portion of the text. It provides the storyteller with a framework for dividing (part of the) story content into a manageable unit in which relevant information is packed and, as we have seen, each point of information can be contrasted with one another. It also benefits the audience by shaping and directing expectations towards what will happen next, as well as emphasising points in the story. Members of the audience would expect, from Afrâsiyâb's direct contact with Sohrâb, that the storyteller's narrative will soon be connected with Ferdowsi's story line.

Rostam's Dilemma

As has been pointed out, instalment 2.6 provides linkage with the ShNF. In this instalment, the storyteller uniquely focuses on the Persians who are not dealt with elsewhere in chapter 2, and interprets Rostam's alliance with Samangân in terms of the special role he plays in Iran.

In the middle of a war, Pashang (Afrâsiyâb's father) dies and is buried in Iran according to his own will. At the funeral Tus complains that Rostam is so arrogant and self-confident that he behaves like someone superior, though he is in fact inferior in blood and rank.¹⁸² This angers Rostam so much that he walks out of Kâus's court, swearing he will never return.

This episode foregrounds a double role that Rostam plays with respect to Kâus and the Persians. He is a subject of Kâus while at the same time being the governor of Sistan. This is in itself uninteresting. After all, every one plays at least two roles: public and private. Publicly he functions as part of the society and like it or not he is subordinated to a higher authority, whereas in his private life he is a master of all, an autonomous being. What makes Rostam's case outstanding is that as a super-hero he transcends such a distinction. Whether in public or private he could be just Rostam the champion. Hence Tus's claim that Rostam is above anyone else — though he is not, according to his social standing. His double role is thus seen in the championship permitting him to disregard social conventions. That is why he can walk out from the funeral, that is, from the presence of Kâus, with such an ease.

If we go back to the beginning of the story we realise that from the very start Rostam is heedless of his public role as the defender of Iran. He goes off hunting, arrives in an enemy land, and encounters a foreign woman by whom he has a son. He has acted without reflecting, for a single moment, on the possible outcome of his conduct for himself and his country. In view of the fact that Sohrâb 'mirrors' his father in many ways, it is to be expected that his character will also show this ambivalence vis-à-vis the authority of his king. It is inevitable that Rostam will be challenged by his son-enemy for the championship on which his whole being depends. Thus in confronting Sohrâb as he will do later in the story, he will be forced to settle for one or the other role. If he loses the championship he must accept his subordinate position and be punished for his transgression against Kâus; but if he preserves it he will have killed his own son. Neither is less painful and

¹⁸²Tus has a grudge against Zâl and Rostam, who objected to his succeeding his father Zow (see the

distressing than the other.

The challenge has already been in place. When Pirân sees Rostam walking out he does not lose time in telling Afrâsiyâb to launch an attack on Iran. It will not be long before Rostam's personal affairs lead to major conflicts.

Chapter 3: Repetition, Rostam's Fear and Sohrâb's Quest

This chapter relates Sohrâb's occupation of the White Fortress up to Rostam's return to the service, following Ferdowsi's story line. Like the second chapter, it contains recurrent motifs which derive from the ShNF: Rostam's refusal to fight Sohrâb, and Sohrâb's quest for Rostam. The first is repeated three times (3.2.2, 3.3.1, 3.6.4), while it appears only once in the ShNF. In spite of Kâus's urgent summoning Rostam delays his departure for three days. When he finally appears at court, Kâus is in such a fury that he orders Rostam to be hanged. Through the intercession of Giv he is reconciled with the king and goes off to war (12c:417-626). The second motif appears four times in the *tumâr* (3.2.4, 3.3.3, 3.3.7, 3.5.4). Again, this is told only once in the ShNF. Sohrâb occupies the White Fortress which is built to defend Iran at the border. From high up on the fortress he looks at the Persians assembled at the battlefield, hoping to find Rostam among them. He orders his prisoner, Hajir, to point Rostam out to him, but to no avail (12c: 713-847). It is easy to see that the first motif frames the second; as long as Rostam refuses to join the battle Sohrâb's quest is made to continue. Thus these motifs are not only given prominence through repetition but they are also structurally interlocked.

From this perspective the story of Rostam and Sohrâb, as interpreted by the storyteller, is seen to develop along the two axes of Rostam and Sohrâb, which are squarely opposed to one another. Rostam's side of the story is based on his avoiding combat with Sohrâb, whereas Sohrâb's lies in precisely the opposite, namely approaching and seeking Rostam out. By interlacing these two, the storyteller markedly brings out the sense of inevitability that underlies the story.

Rostam's quarrel with Tus is not the only reason why Rostam hesitates to comply with Kâus's request (p. 185). When requested to join the battle for the second time, Rostam declines as follows: "From a day when I heard the name of Sohrâb up till now, I am troubled and upset. Kâus does not stop requesting my services. I am going away so that he would not write to me any more" (p.191). He

ShNF 9:1-18).

knows, deep in his heart, that Sohrâb is his own son. It is possible moreover that he could anticipate defeat as he hears Sohrâb being praised for his prowess and valour. He cannot, however, delay his departure for good, since his delay has already cost two lives from his household.

In describing Sohrâb's quest for his father, the storyteller uses the red herring technique to overcome the difficulty involved in the retelling of this famous story. That is, although the quest is indeed the central theme of the story, it would not inspire any interest in an audience that knows, in general terms, how and when Sohrâb finds Rostam. It is necessary therefore for the storyteller to find some other means, such as red herring, to keep his audience interested. In this chapter, red herrings are used to create the illusion that Sohrâb may be recognised by his kin. Sohrâb comes very close to achieving his objective twice in the chapter. On the first occasion, he fights with Rostam's foster-brother (Sâm-e Zangi) without knowing his opponent's identity. Only after the combat in which he wins, he comes to know who the opponent was (3.5.3). Though, on the second occasion, Sohrâb actually reveals his identity to Rostam's uncle Shirowzhan, he is ignored by the latter. In the combat which he is forced to fight, he looks to an opportunity to tell his identity, but delivers such a blow that he unwittingly kills Shirowzhan. This time, too, recognition fails to take place. The red herrings in these cases are the suggestions that Sohrâb might make peace with the Zâboli champions, which would eventually lead to recognition. Such illusions seem to arouse expectations in the audience that the story may end prematurely.

Chapter 4 : Ferdowsi's Red Herring and Rostam's Symbolical Disguise

This chapter focuses on the first combat of Rostam and Sohrâb, which follows Ferdowsi's story line. It is remarkable that in this part of the story, Ferdowsi employs a red herring for compositional effects.¹⁸³ The red herring consists in the treatment of Sohrâb's uncle, Zenderazm, who accompanies Sohrâb to Iran at Tahmine's request. Since Zenderazm is apparently the only person capable of introducing Sohrâb to Rostam his fate will influence the course of the story. If he succeeds in revealing Sohrâb's identity to Rostam he would render the story pointless. It is clear from the start that he is made to be eliminated. He is thus accidentally killed by Rostam. Sohrâb seeks revenge on the murderer of his uncle,

¹⁸³Ferdowsi's use of red herrings is discussed in Chapter IV.

without knowing that Rostam killed him.

When Rostam confronts Sohrâb, he immediately foresees his own defeat: “This boy makes me scared. Perhaps somebody has said to him, ‘if you defeat Rostam you will have conquered Iran’” (p.239). Rostam pretends to be Alvâ, his sword-bearer: “It would be better to hide my name, for even if he [Sohrâb] defeats me, he would not attack the Persians for fear of Rostam” (ibid.) By claiming a false identity he effectively takes on a double role. He confronts Sohrâb as Alvâ to fulfil his obligation as a champion, while at the same time, as Rostam, he sees his son without doing any harm. He thus achieves what appears to be irreconcilable objective, that is to fight with his adversary-son. The ambivalent nature of Rostam, which is seen in the previous chapter, is now manifested in his use of the alias Alvâ.

In single combat Sohrâb displays a child-like simplicity or even plain stupidity.¹⁸⁴ He throws Rostam to the ground —which is a good indication of his prowess¹⁸⁵ — and yet he accepts a false rule of combat which Rostam claims out of desperation, and lets him go. This illustrates that championship requires not only physical strength but also intellectual ability, and that Sohrâb hopelessly lacks the latter. Indeed, his simplicity has been emphasised by a recurring motif in which he is easily taken in by his enemies (2.7.5, 2.9.4, 2.10.2, 2.12.1).¹⁸⁶ This may be explained by his lack of education.

Sohrâb spent his formative years on an island alone with Tahmine and a lioness (2.3.2),¹⁸⁷ which clearly is not an ideal environment for raising a child. Sohrâb has grown up, isolated from everything related to civilisation and culture which, according to the storyteller, is to be sought in the father figure. It is

¹⁸⁴In a popular version of the story, Sohrâb is described as a simple-minded country boy: “He [Sohrâb] was sent to school when he reached the age. He always gave a slap to a classmate who said something to him. He was indeed a son of Rostam. Though he was only six years old, he was stronger than those twice as old as him; and he stroke them down. The children insulted him, saying “Go on, you sloppy bastard. You have no father” (Enjavi Shirazi 1369: 28).

¹⁸⁵Sohrâb’s prowess is suggested by his resemblance to Garshâsp who is his remote ancestor. For instance, Zâl and Rostam make the following remark in seeing Sohrâb for the first time: “If an evil does not spot this baby, and if he comes to full maturity, he will be second only to Garshâsp” (p.32). When Rostam spies out Sohrâb’s tent, “he [Rostam] saw Sohrâb seating himself on the throne like Garshâsp” (p.231). On Garshâsp see Chapter V.

¹⁸⁶The motif here duplicates Sohrâb’s defeat by Gordâfarid in the ShNF (12c:271-359), which in turn foretells the combat of Rostam and Sohrâb.

¹⁸⁷The child nurtured by wild beasts is a common motif in the Persian epics and romances. For instance, Zâl is brought up by the Simorgh. Hence his epithet “magician” in the tradition. Nöldeke writes of Daqiqi: “It is self-evident, that he [Daqiqi] was well acquainted with the heroic legend which is besides shown by a verse by him in Shams i Qais (...): ‘the Simorgh and, the unfeathered arrow, the magical Rakhsh and the magician Zâl are not fitting for thee’” (Nöldeke 1979: 33, n.4).

inevitable, then, for Sohrâb to seek out Rostam. He must, if he desires to acquire knowledge and experience required for championship which he fully deserves.

Chapter 5: Rostam's Flight and Sohrâb's Quest

In this chapter two distinctive story lines — one about Rostam and the other about Sohrâb — are developed in parallel and are related in alternation, as Figure 4 below shows:

Episode	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.4	5.5	5.6	5.7	5.8	5.9	5.10
Hero	Sohrâb	Rostam	Sohrâb	Rostam	Sohrâb / Rostam	Rostam / Sohrâb	Sohrâb	Sohrâb	Rostam	Sohrâb

Figure 4: Alternation of Rostam's and Sohrâb's Story in Chapter 5

As in the case of the third chapter, Rostam's absence from the battlefield frames and prompts Sohrâb's desperate attempt to reach him. First we shall consider Rostam's story.

The defeat has rendered Rostam so helpless that he attempts suicide: "Look! After all these years of waging war and doing justice, you are defeated by the hand of a boy, unknown and of humble origin. You have ruined the age-old house of Garshâsp" (p.269). His despair is not merely due to the fact of defeat, but because of a transgression according to the storyteller: "He [Rostam] does not know why he is defeated. It is because he rebelled against the king" (ibid.) When Rostam was beaten by Sohrâb he lost the championship and all that went with it. He is no longer a super-hero who can afford to ignore the king's commands. Being deprived of all the privileges, he has found himself in a position similar to Sohrâb. He is not strong enough to be a champion, while Sohrâb is not sufficiently clever. They are caught in a tricky situation where neither can achieve his objective without eliminating the other, even though they are father and son. Rostam must destroy Sohrâb to re-establish himself as a champion, and Sohrâb must reach Rostam to acquire intelligence needed for championship. Their lives are so intertwined that no resolution can seem possible.

As in the case of chapter 3, Sohrâb's story is related through a chain of motifs with red herrings (5.1, 5.3, 5.4, 5.9). Whenever Sohrâb attempts to locate his father by asking around Persians or Zâbolis, he just misses a chance by accident or through obstacles (5.3, 5.4-5.5; 5.7, 5.10). In episode 5.10 for example, he sets off to Zâbolestân with a Samangani soldier who claims to know Tahmine. On the

way, however, he happens to kill the soldier. Nevertheless, he continues his journey until he reaches a castle in which he encounters and falls in love with Gordiye, who recognises him as Rostam's son. He then heads to Zâbolestân with her, and is stopped by those who seek revenge on him. In the end he is forced to return to the battlefield. What awaits him is none other than Rostam.

Chapter 6: Recognition, the Moment of Transformation

From the structural point of view the previous chapter is open-ended (as is the third chapter for that matter). Nothing would stop Rostam from hiding, and as long as he is missing Sohrâb will go on searching for him. While such an open-ended structure would probably be connected with the storyteller's practical needs to extend a session of *naqqâli* as long as possible, it presents him with the problem of finding an ending. How is it possible to conclude what is by its nature open-ended? An answer may be found in the following extract:

After a while or according to some, after seven years of wandering in the desert, whether this was punishment for ostentation or disrespect for the king, or for the sake of his maturing and progress thereafter, or a time of trial or whatever the reason, it came to an end anyway (p. 347).

The moment the storyteller decides to put an end to the story, Rostam makes yet another suicide attempt, which appears to succeed. While unconscious he sees Noah introduced by Garshâsp.¹⁸⁸ He pleads with the prophet to grant him victory over Sohrâb. When his prayer is heard he feels like being reborn. Filled with courage and power anew, he makes his way back to the battlefield and confronts Sohrâb once again. Everything is different this time. No sooner has the combat begun than Rostam destroys Sohrâb. Thereupon he is re-established as a champion and gets his old reputation and glory back. Sohrâb reveals his identity to Rostam, and is recognised. Both are transformed simultaneously. On the one hand Rostam turns from Alvâ to the father, and on the other Sohrâb from the enemy to the son. The moment of recognition is, however, also the moment of parting. Sohrâb perishes in the arms of Rostam.

¹⁸⁸Noah has a connection with Sistan. The author of the *History of Sistan* relates that Noah "moored his ship in Sistân, and dispatched a carrier-pigeon which brought back the news that the punishment was lifted, and that the water was receding" (Gold trans. 1976: 7).

After Sohrâb's death, so the story goes on, Tahmine challenges Rostam in Zâbolestân. Zâl intervenes in their fight and calls down the Simorgh, which reviews the case of Sohrâb's death. The Simorgh names those who are guilty: Tahmine, Sohram, Afrâsiyâb, Pirân, Sohrâb, Tus, Gudarz, Rudâbe, Giv, Zâl, Kâus and Rostam. Each of them is responsible for Sohrâb's death in his or her own way and in varying degree. The Simorgh's judgement urges the audience to reinterpret what has gone before and to appreciate it from multiple perspectives.

What is more intriguing, however, is that Rostam remarries Tahmine by whom he has yet another son.¹⁸⁹ In the overall structure of the *tumâr* the story of Rostam and Sohrâb is no more than a single instalment which is to be linked up with another.

The Storyteller's Narrative Techniques and Interpretation of the ShNF

The foregoing discussion shows that the storyteller uses a limited number of compositional techniques to organise the thematic structure of the *tumâr*. In fact he employs only three techniques: interlacing, red herring and repetition. Interlacing is used for three purposes: to pad up Ferdowsi's story line (chapter 1); to describe concurrent actions or events (chapter 2); and structurally to illustrate how incompatible Sohrâb's quest is with Rostam's desire to escape from the dilemma (chapters 3 & 5). Red herring is employed to raise the audience's expectations towards a happy ending or the premature resolution of the conflict between the father and son. In chapter 2 it is used to express Pirân's efforts to separate Tahmine from Rostam, and in chapters 3 to 5 Sohrâb's attempts to reach Rostam before confronting him in single combat. It appears to be a basic rhetorical strategy with which the storyteller builds up and intensifies the tragic outcome of the story. Repetition as used in the *tumâr* is rather different from what we would generally expect in oral literature. It is not a compositional device on the level of sentence or line such as formulaic expression, but a framework for a configuration of episodes. In chapter 2 it provides a framework for a group of episodes in which the storyteller moves from simple to increasingly complex and significant actions and events. The third chapter involves repetition of what the storyteller perceives as key motifs in the ShNF. Emphasis is thus given to Sohrâb's quest for Rostam, which is prompted

¹⁸⁹The child to be born is Zarasp-bânu or Farâmarz. According to another tradition, however, Zarasp-bânu (Zar-bânu) is born of Key Qobâd's relative whereas Farâmarz's mother is a daughter of

and framed by Rostam's flight. Another use of repetition is found in the characterisation of Sohrâb.

Though the devices used by the storyteller are few in number, they appear to be rather effective in producing desired effects. One of the reasons for this is that they are frequently used in combinations. In chapters 3 and 5 for example, red herrings (Sohrâb's efforts to meet Rostam) are repeated several times, so that the audience would sympathise with Sohrâb and may possibly hope for a happy ending, forgetting for a moment how the story ends. It is increasingly disappointed each time Sohrâb fails to meet Rostam. Repetition intensifies the logic of red herring in which tragic effect increases precisely in proportion to the force of a red herring.

It is relevant to note that these devices are used by the storyteller to show the development of the story of Rostam and Sohrâb. By emphasising certain parts of the story they signpost a path to understanding this story. How do they instruct us to interpret it? We may retrace them briefly before discussing the Oral Performance Model. The first signpost is found in the latter part of chapter 2 (2.6) where the focus is shifted from the conflicts between Afrâsiyâb and Sohrâb to Rostam. It brings to the surface Rostam's ambivalent position in relation to Kâus: his hero status grants him such independence that he can afford to defy the king. What is at issue here is that his independence is contingent upon his being a super-hero. When he ceases to be so he will have to accept his subordinate position like anyone else. Thus his independence is not genuine but the momentary suspension of his real status. With the first signpost we are thus led to understand that the story of Rostam and Sohrâb as interpreted by the storyteller is the story about how Rostam resolves his ambivalence, not exactly independent of nor subordinate to Kâus.

The second signpost marks Rostam's defiance against Kâus in chapter 3. He disobeys Kâus's summoning three times. At this point he still acts as an independent agent, though he fears that his status is threatened by Sohrâb, both morally and socially. With the emergence of Sohrâb who is the mirror image of himself, his ambivalence is deepened and is at the point of being split up into two opposites: independence and submission. In fact this is symbolised, in chapter 4, by his claiming a false identity (Alvâ) in the fight with Sohrâb. The false identity enables him to perform his duty without betraying himself. The outcome of the first confrontation is likewise ambiguous in that he is physically defeated by Sohrâb while intellectually defeating Sohrâb. With the fifth signpost, emphasising Rostam's wish to kill himself, it becomes increasingly clear that he cannot cope

with the state of ambivalence any more. The only solution that he can see at this time is death. Nonetheless the death is not so much physical as symbolical; for what he desires to kill is the ambivalence inside. Indeed at the end of chapter 5 he is saved by his ancestor Garshâsp, and is granted power so that he can destroy Sohrâb, as he in fact does in chapter 6. He thus reconciles himself with the reality of life in which he has to serve Kâus in his capacity as a champion. The story of Rostam and Sohrâb, seen in this light, is not a tragedy of infanticide but a tragedy of a man who has to kill a child in himself.

Oral Performance Model (OPM)

So far we have tried to examine three aspects of *naqqâli*. Firstly we have considered formal features of *naqqâli* performance, and have arrived at its minimal requirements: the fixed duration of a performance and the serial form in which performance is given. Secondly, we have focused on the structure of the *tumâr*, especially on the way in which the storyteller divides it up into smaller units. By applying formal and linguistic criteria we have established the three levels of structural units in the *tumâr*: the chapters, the instalments and the episodes. We have then turned to the thematic organisation, since the *tumâr* is also influenced by the way the storyteller interprets the story of Rostam and Sohrâb in the ShNF. As we noted above, it is organised around the theme of Rostam's dilemma with frequent recourse to interlacing, red herring and repetition. On the basis of these findings we may here propose an 'Oral Performance Model' (OPM), a hypothesis seeking to examine the role played by oral tradition in the genesis of a written narrative text.

The OPM is here taken as a set of criteria by which the influence of oral tradition on a written narrative is determined. It consists of three criteria: formal criteria which are drawn from salient formal features of oral performance; thematic criteria which are related to the theme of a text; and narrative techniques or devices by which the theme is expressed.

Formal criteria are based on the two salient features of oral performance: the duration of performance and the serial form in which performance is given. This form fundamentally influences the structure of a story; if a story is serialised, it would divide into smaller units, and each would roughly have equal length, given the fixed duration of performance. Such units are called instalment. Each instalment is assumed to be semantically complete, while being a part of the larger whole. It is composed of a series of episodes which are formally marked by narrative or temporal markers.

One of the thematic criteria is the presence of the key motif, which in the case of the *tumâr*, is Rostam's ambivalence. This particular motif has been identified as such because it is formally and structurally marked by the storyteller. It is highlighted by interlacing, red herring and repetition, as the study has shown. Thus, another thematic criterion is that a key motif must be formally marked by narrative devices.

These criteria constitute the OPM. To put it in more concise terms, the hypothesis states that:

- A text ultimately based on oral performance consists of a series of instalments or equivalents;
- Each instalment is of roughly equal length and is semantically complete in itself, while being a part of the larger whole;
- Each instalment consists of a series of episodes which are formally marked by narrative or temporal markers.

The above are the formal aspects of the OPM. The thematic criteria are:

- A text ultimately based on oral tradition is generally organised around a key motif which is explicitly marked by the storyteller or the author;
- Such a text is characterised by the frequent use of certain narrative techniques and devices.

Chapter III The Influence of Oral Tradition on the *Shâhnâme* of Ferdowsi (1)

In what went before, we have proposed a series of criteria for determining the possible influence on the ShNF of an oral epic tradition, here called the 'Oral Performance Model' (OPM). There are, however, other issues to be clarified before applying the OPM to the ShNF. These issues will be discussed in this chapter, and the OPM will be applied to the ShNF in the next chapter.

In setting the 'influence of oral tradition on the ShNF' as our immediate concern, we have assumed that an oral tradition played a role in the genesis of the ShNF without providing evidence. It is essential therefore to demonstrate that (1) there existed an oral tradition roughly at the time when Ferdowsi was composing the ShNF; and that (2) the oral tradition influenced Ferdowsi.

The first section of this chapter attempts to explore the external evidence for the possible influence of oral tradition on the ShNF; it considers the role of storytellers at court and on the street, their repertoire and the transmission of the Persian national legend and other stories, mainly on the basis of the *History of Beyhaqi*. The second section examines the internal evidence for the influence of oral tradition on the ShNF. Even a brief examination of the evidence suggests that Ferdowsi's references to his sources are found in places where 'oral influence' seems plausible, but also, occasionally, where this is not the case. Further study is therefore necessary. This will help us to select a sample corpus, to which the OPM will be applied in the next chapter.

1. Oral Tradition in the Early Islamic Period

For the study of the oral tradition in Iran in the late tenth to the eleventh century, no work appears to be more valuable than Beyhaqi's chronicle, which provides ample

information on Ghaznavid court life.¹⁹⁰ Of particular interest for our purposes are his descriptions of rulers' daily activities in which references are made to such professions pertaining to the oral tradition as: *shâ'erân* or *sho'arâ* ('poets'), *motrebân* ('minstrels or musicians') and *mohaddesân* or *qavvâlân* ('storytellers'). Since these appear to have played a complementary role it is necessary to look at each one of them to assess the storytellers' role.

Poets, Minstrels, and Storytellers

The poets enjoyed the most prominent position among the three professions. They were always present on ceremonial occasions such as *Nowruz*, *Mehragân* and state banquets.¹⁹¹ Typically on those occasions they presented *qasides* or panegyrics to their patrons, and were rewarded according to the extent to which their poems met their patron's needs and tastes. Some had their works recorded in Beyhaqi's chronicle¹⁹² or had their own *divâns*.¹⁹³

As L. T. P. de Bruijn has shown,¹⁹⁴ the minstrels performed a function distinct from the poets. Unlike the latter, they were not allowed to sing the songs of their own invention and were restricted to the reproduction of well-known songs. In other words, they were performing artists. Like the poets, however, they were indispensable to religious festivals and state banquets. According to Beyhaqi they were called in after the poets, as in the following:

... Amir [Mas'ud I] sat down to the feast of *Nowruz*. He had brought many presents and taken a lot of trouble [in preparing the feast]. He heard poems (*she'r*) recited by poets (*sho'arâ*), to enjoy himself in this time of winter, and unwind and relax. [When the poets finished reciting,] he gave them presents. Then he asked for musicians (*motrebân*).¹⁹⁵

The minstrels were also close attendants of the kings, along with *nadims*, *qolâms*, and storytellers. They were called forth whenever feasting and drinking took

¹⁹⁰Fayyâz ed. 1971.

¹⁹¹Ibid., pp. 54; 334; 487; 689; 697; 735; 789-90.

¹⁹²For the verses cited by Beyhaqi see Waldman 1980: 68-9.

¹⁹³Beyhaqi lists typical themes of court poetry: "And those poems that they [poets] recited are all recorded in *divâns*, and if I were to quote them here, this may get long. For the masters have expanded on descriptions of assemblies and wine, on celebrations of feasts and on praises of kings (Fayyâz ed. 1971: 360).

¹⁹⁴De Bruijn 1987: 16-7.

¹⁹⁵Fayyâz ed. 1971: 815.

place,¹⁹⁶ and generally followed their patrons on picnic and hunting expeditions.¹⁹⁷ It seems that the minstrels' functions extended from performance on ceremonial occasions to entertaining in more intimate surroundings. On the one hand, they overlapped with those of the poets in terms of public performance and on the other, those of the storytellers with respect to close attendance on rulers, as we shall see below.

Storytellers also were among courtiers. They are often mentioned with a group of *nadims* and minstrels who served Ghaznavid kings and princes:

And every day I [Beyhaqi] waited on [Sultan Mas'ud] as usual, with my companions [consisting of] musicians (*motrebân*), storytellers (*qavvâl*), and old *nadims*. I had something to eat and returned for evening prayer.¹⁹⁸

In contrast to the minstrels, however, the storytellers did not perform on ceremonial occasions. Rather, they were confined to the private quarters of kings. In the following passage, Beyhaqi informs us of the role played out by the storytellers:

One night he [Abu Ahmad-e Xalil] came to court to call on a gatekeeper on duty for a business which kept him till late. When he was setting off the night had long worn off. Thinking it unsafe to go back he stayed in a private vestibule; he had an acquaintance there who held him in respect. <...> A servant came in and asked for a storyteller (*mohaddes*). As it happened, however, no storyteller (*mohaddes*) was present. Abu Ahmad stood up with dignity and went with the servant, who thought him to be a storyteller (*mohaddes*). When he got to the amir's [Mas'ud's] pavilion he took to telling a story (*hadisi*). The amir looked through the curtain, hearing an unfamiliar voice. He recognised Abu Ahmad but said nothing before the story (*hadis*) was completed, which was delightfully interesting. [When Abu Ahmad finished his story] the amir asked, "Who are you?" Abu Ahmad answered, "I am Abu Ahmad-e Xalil, father of Abu Moti' who is your lordship's companion (*hambâz*) ..."¹⁹⁹

This shows that storytellers were normally present at the gate, ready to serve kings whenever needed. Since, however, the servant came to call a storyteller when Abu Ahmad gave up going home, it seems likely that it was usual for the storytellers to

¹⁹⁶Ibid., pp. 6, 54, 145, 179, 207, 235, 290, 311, 373, 439, 527, 572, 618, 629, 663, 715, 785, 793, 891.

¹⁹⁷Ibid., pp. 203, 232, 292, 647, 653-4, 689.

¹⁹⁸Ibid., p. 80.

¹⁹⁹Ibid., pp. 153-4.

be called late at night and to tell evening stories. This seems to find some confirmation in an account by Ibn al-Nadim:

Thus saith Muhammad ibn Ishâq [al-Nadîm]: The truth is, if Allâh so wills, that the first person to enjoy evening stories (*asmâr*) was Alexander, who had a group [of companions] to make him laugh and tell him stories (*xorâfât*) which he did not seek [only] for amusement but [also he sought] to safeguard and preserve [them].²⁰⁰

Al-Nadim further relates that the kings who came after Alexander also heard evening stories, especially *Hezâr Afsân*, a Sasanian prose work which provided the basis for the *Thousand and One Nights*.²⁰¹ It may well be that the Sasanian kings also had storytellers tell evening stories; it is reported that the storyteller “was forbidden ever to repeat himself, unless at the king’s command”.²⁰² The injunction of the Sasanian kings for the storytellers may therefore imply that storytelling was used not merely for diversion but also for vigilance, for which purpose novelty appears to be the principal application. Thanks to the storytellers who were absent on the night when Abu Ahmad happened to be at court, we are thus informed that the same tradition of evening storytelling, though perhaps indirectly, continued down to Ghaznavid times.

Another of Beyhaqi’s account suggests that storytellers acted as agents between kings and their potential rivals:

There was constant, but heavily covered up, correspondence between Amir Mas’ud and Manucehr-e Qâbus, governor (*vâli*) of Gorgân and Tabarestân. ... He [Manucehr] had sent to Amir Mas’ud a man called Hasan the storyteller (*mohaddes*) who did storytelling (*mohaddesi kardi*) and from time to time also brought and delivered letters and messages. ... And whenever [Amir] sent the storyteller to Gorgân he did so under the pretext of ordering him to bring seeds of the sweet basil, oranges, nuts? (*tabq*) and other things.²⁰³

Thus, the storyteller had his place at court, and his role was significantly different from that of the poet and the minstrel. In contrast to these two, it seems, he

²⁰⁰Dodge trans. 1970, II: 714. Cf. MacDonald 1924: 365 where the last phrase in the quote is rendered as “...not seeking pleasure by that, but only to be vigilant and on his guard” which seems more plausible.

²⁰¹Ibid. On the development of the *Thousand and One Nights* see MacDonald 1924 and Abbot 1949: 163-4.

²⁰²Boyce 1957: 34, based on *Kitâb al-tâj* ed. Cairo, p. 24. This recalls the frame story of the *Thousand and One Nights* in which Shahrazad seeks to amuse King Shahriyar with a variety of stories for her own survival.

acted solely in his capacity as a close attendant and companion to his patron, and so perhaps was in a less elevated position than the others. He was not allowed to perform on formal occasions, such as religious festivals and state banquets, in which the poet and the minstrel played an important part. The storyteller neither recited poetry nor sang songs, which was done by the minstrel. Instead, his principal duties consisted of telling 'prose' stories in the evening and delivering messages. For this latter he very much counted on his eloquence and ingenuity, at which as a storyteller, he must have excelled.

Storyteller's Repertoire

Having identified the general function of the storytellers, we will now consider their repertoire. Especially it is important for us to know that the storytellers transmitted the national legend or types of stories which were to be included in the ShNF. In post-Islamic times, one of the earliest records on the oral transmission of the national legend dates from the mid-seventh century. According to Ibn Hishâm, a certain al-Harîth entertained the people of Mecca with the story of Rostam and Esfandiyâr which he had learned during his stay in Persia.²⁰⁴ By the eighth century, stories of Rostam spread into Armenia. The historian Moses Khorenats'i mentions Rostam with reference to one Turk, governor of the west:

But if you wish, even I am telling inappropriate and contemptible lies about him [Turk the governor], just as the Persians say that Rostam Sagdjik had the strength of 120 elephants. The songs about his strength and spiritedness seemed very disproportionate; not

²⁰³Fayyâz ed. 1971: 162.

²⁰⁴Nöldeke 1979: 19, n. 4. With reference to al-Harîth, Hitti 1964: 273 notes: "One tradition makes al-Nadr ibn-al-Hârîth ibn-Kaladah, the physician and poet-minstrel whose pagan recitals competed with the revelations of Muhammad in winning the favour of the people, responsible for the introduction of this instrument into Makkah from al-Hirah". In note 6 (p. 273) he suggests that Ibn al-Hârîth is the one referred to in the Koran 31: 5-6, "There is one person who purchases frivolous stories so as to lead people away from the path of God; ignorant, he makes mock of God's path. For reasons such as this there will be a humiliating punishment". This is interpreted by Mahmud ibn 'Umar al-Zamarkhshari (d. 1143) as follows: "'Frivolous stories': such as evening conversation dealing with legends, tales lacking any basis of truth, the telling of fairy tales and jokes, excessive talk in general, unseemly popular poems; also singing and acquaintance with musicians, and so forth. It is said that this passage was revealed concerning al-Nadr ibn al-Harîth, who had the custom of travelling as a merchant to Persia. He would purchase books of the Persians and then would recite tales therefore to members of the Quraysh tribe. He would say: 'If Muhammad has been reciting for you tales of 'Ad and Thamud, well then I'm going to recite for you tales of Rostam and Behrâm, and of the Persian shahs and the monarchs of Hirah!'. They found his tales very amusing and began to give up listening to the recitation of the Qur'an" (Based on Pinault 1992: 19).

even the tales of Samson or Hercules or Sagdjik could match them.²⁰⁵

In the tenth century, various tales were told among the Persians. Ibn al-Nadim names several of such tales in the *Fihrist*, among which the following seem to belong to the national legend: “Rostam and Isfandiyâr, Bahrâm Cubin, the Life of Anushirwân, Dârâb and the Golden Idol, and the Book of Lords (*Khwadây-nâmag*)”.²⁰⁶ These accounts imply that the Persian national legend, or parts of it at least, were known to people outside the Persian-speaking regions.

At the Ghaznavid court too, the national legend was transmitted orally. For instance, Beyhaqi gives the following account in which Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna (998-1030) is said to have heard the story of Bahrâm Gur:

Here in Bost, Amir Mahmud (...) gave orders to hunt a wild ass and put it in fetters. He then commanded it to be released after having it branded with the name of Mahmud, just as Bahrâm Gur did so which he heard storytellers (*mohaddesân*) relate.²⁰⁷

The telling of such heroic tales was presumably so prevalent that the terms *shâhnâme-x^vân* (‘the teller of ShN’) and *kârnâme-x^vân* (‘the teller of wars / chronicles’) came to be used to designate a class of storytellers who specialised in the national legend. In the following panegyric poem which is dedicated to Sultan Mahmud, Farroxi (d. 1037) alludes to a teller of *Shâhnâme*:

All kings talk about his [Mahmud’s] sovereignty and nobility;
The sky has never nourished such a person among the rulers,
this I have heard from a *shâhnâme-x^vân*.²⁰⁸

Among the *shâhnâme-x^vâns* the name of Kârâsi has come down to us. Kârâsi seems to have been a renowned courtier-storyteller at the court of Sultan Mahmud. He had been *nadim* of the Buyids, ‘Izz al-Dowle (d. 977), Faxr al-Dowle (d. 997), and possibly of Majd al-Dowle (d. 1029) before he found his way to Mahmud’s

²⁰⁵ Thomson trans. 1978: 141.

²⁰⁶ Dodge trans. 1970, II: 716. The stories appear under the heading of “the names of the books which the Persians composed about biography and the evening stories about their kings which were true” (ibid.) The stories cited are found in the ShNF, with the exception of the story of Dârâ and Golden Idol which is found in the *Dârâbnâme* of Tarsusi (Safâ ed. 1344, I: 126-50).

²⁰⁷ Fayyâz ed. 1971: 659-60. The episode about Bahrâm Gur is found in the ShNF (35:1394-9): Bahrâm gives orders to release a herd of 600 wild assess, with a golden ring bearing his name on their ears; he forbids them to be sold to merchants, but orders them to be given away. By following Bahrâm’s example, Mahmud perhaps intended to demonstrate his own benevolence.

²⁰⁸ Dabirsiyâqi ed. 1956: 248.

court.²⁰⁹ The following reference to Kârâsi occurs in a group of ShNF manuscripts:

Sultan Mahmud was so fond of him [Kârâsi] as to always keep his company. So finally the Sultan granted such a favour to him that at night he preferred listening to his stories to those of the poet 'Onsori'²¹⁰

Other references to Kârâsi appear in verses of poets in the Seljuq period (1038-1157). In the following example, Amir 'Abd-Allâh Mohammad Mo'ezzi (d. ca. 1125-7) evokes a typical scene of entertainment where storytelling is offered along with juggling:

Kârâsi recited *Hezâr Afsân* like a storyteller;
as Sardânak performed thousands of tricks like a juggler²¹¹

In the *Masnavi-ye Tohfat al-'Erâqeyn* Afzal al-Din Badil b. 'Ali Xâqâni-ye Shervâni (d. 1199) refers to Kârâsi as a legendary teller of the national legend:

You made a turtle-dove speak Persian,
and made Kârâsi a *kârnâme-x'ân*.²¹²

Although the evidence for the oral transmission of the national legend in the Islamic period is scattered and fragmentary, it nevertheless suggests that the legend was cultivated both in and outside Iran from the seventh century onwards. It also demonstrates that there existed a special branch of storytelling about the legend, *shâhnâme-x'âni*. Among the practitioners of this art the name of Kârâsi has survived. He was so renowned that he was still remembered by poets in the Seljuq period.

The storytellers told not only the national legend but also other types of stories. In the following excerpt, Beyhaqi describes storytelling *in situ* with concrete examples of tales told:

²⁰⁹*Loqatnâme*, s.v., "Kârâsi"; Bahâr ed. 1318: 395-7.

²¹⁰*Loqatnâme*, s.v., "Kârâsi". The passage is found among the ShNF manuscripts that include what 'Abbâs Eqbâl (ibid.) called a 'middle preface' which is later than the 'older preface' (the 10th cent.) but is earlier than Baysonghur's preface (the 15th cent.) It is little short of variants in which Kârâsi is designated a poet, *nadim* or teller of *Hezâr Afsâne* (Wallenbourg 1810: 52). Mohl 1838, I: XX cites yet another version in which 'Onsori rather than Kârâsi is said to have related to the sultan evening stories. Since this manuscript family is relatively neglected by scholarship it is difficult to establish a correct version of the passage at the present. It may be assumed, however, that Kârâsi was generally known as a storyteller as verses of Mo'ezzi and Xâqâni suggest.

²¹¹*Loqatnâme*, s.v., "Kârâsi".

²¹²Qarib ed. 1955: 28, n. 14.

Most of the commoners are such that they prefer the absurdly improbable (*bâtel-momtane'*) such as tales (*axbâr*) of *divs*, *paris* and ghouls in a desert, mountain or sea. A fool gathers an audience (*hengâme sâzad*) and others like himself come around and he says, "In such and such a sea I saw an island and landed there with five hundred men. We cooked a meal and put a pan on the fire. When the fire flared up its tongue touched the ground, the island moved away. We saw it was a fish"; "In a mountain I saw this or that," and "an old sorceress turned a man into an ass and another sorceress put ointment into his ears to change him back into a man" and such a kind of fables (*xorâfât*) that would put the innocent to sleep when told at night.²¹³

This passage, though brief, tells us much about storytelling in the Ghaznavid period. In the first place, it reveals that storytelling was popular not only in court circles but also among the common people. Secondly, it suggests that there were two prominent types. On the one hand, there was a tradition of evening stories which we saw in connection with Abu Ahmad's example above. On the other hand, as Beyhaqi suggests here, there was a kind of street performance which took place in a casual manner, presumably, in busy streets or market-places. Beyhaqi's description of such a performance is so lively that it may possibly have been based on his actual observations. The expression '*hengâme sâxtan*' which he uses to describe the performance originally meant 'to make a noise' and came to connote, by extension, 'to gather a crowd of spectators or audience for a performance of storytelling, juggling, rope-dancing or acrobatics'.²¹⁴ Later, in Safavid times, such folk entertainments were provided alongside storytelling for coffee-shop clientele, but the practice was evidently in place well before the establishment of the coffee houses in Iran.²¹⁵

Thirdly, and most importantly, Beyhaqi informs us that materials which are reminiscent of the popular romances, especially tales of marvellous travels or adventures, were told by the storytellers in the early 11th century.²¹⁶ He provides three examples. In the first example he refers to tales of the supernatural beings such as demons, fairies, and ghouls. After the description of a performance he offers a more concrete example in which a man mistakes a fish for an island, and

²¹³Fayyâz ed. 1971: 905.

²¹⁴*Loqatnâme*, s.v., "*hengâme*", based on *Borhân-e Qâte'*.

²¹⁵Cf. Mo'ezzi's line quoted above. On the coffee houses see Chapter II above.

²¹⁶Persian popular romance is defined by Hanaway as "lengthy prose literature" (Hanaway 1971a: 59; 1971b: 139). Elsewhere the Persian popular romances are taken as "heroic tales focused on one individual and recounting his exploits both military and romantic" (Hanaway 1971b: 141), and are assumed to have been transmitted in oral and written forms (Hanaway 1971a: 59; 1971b: 141-2).

alludes to tales of marvellous travels at large. Finally he gives an account of tales in which a man is enchanted by sorceresses.²¹⁷ Despite his critical attitude towards 'popular' storytelling, Beyhaqi unwittingly became a witness to the oral transmission of romance materials in the eleventh century.

Thus, storytelling was a popular phenomenon at court and elsewhere. At court, the storyteller told evening stories for entertainment as well as for night vigilance. In the street and in private houses, he entertained the people with tales of marvellous adventures. His repertoire chiefly comprised the national legend and, as mentioned above, tales of marvellous travels. Such was the general state of affairs as regards storytelling when Ferdowsi set to verse the Persian national legend.

2. Ferdowsi's Allusions to his Sources

We have seen that storytelling was widespread across the Islamic world and served to diffuse the national legend. It was available to feed Ferdowsi's ever active mind with a rich mine of story materials and narrative techniques which had accumulated over time. Although the existence of such an oral tradition in itself does not prove anything about its influence on the ShNF, it may suggest that such possibility could be seriously considered. This assumption moreover receives some confirmation from Ferdowsi who occasionally remarks on the influence of oral tradition on the ShNF. Since these remarks directly come from the author they provide a natural starting point for study of the possible role of oral tradition in the ShNF.

On the influence of travel literature on the popular romances see Hanaway 1971b: 145-6).

²¹⁷As Hodivala 1939: 151 pointed out, the second example is told in the first voyage of *Sindbad the Sailor*, *Sindbad the Porter* in the *Thousand and One Nights* as follows (Hodivala cites the fourth, rather than the first, voyage of Sindbad, but the episode occurs in the first in Burton 1885, 6: 11 and Dawood trans. 1973: 115-6):

"The passengers went ashore and set to work to light a fire. Some busied themselves with cooking and washing, some fell to eating and drinking and making merry, while others, like myself, set out to explore the island. While we were thus engaged we suddenly heard the captain cry out to us from the ship: 'All aboard, quickly! Abandon everything and run for your lives! The mercy of Allah be upon you, for this is no island but a gigantic whale floating on the bosom of the sea, on whose back the sands have settled and trees have grown since the world was young! When you lit the fire it felt the heat and stirred. Make haste, I say; or soon the whale will plunge into the sea and you will all be lost!'" (Dawood trans. 1973: 115-6).

This episode is also found in Persian versions of the Alexander legends. In the ShNF, Alexander sees a mountain emerge from the sea. He wants to go to see what it is, but is persuaded by a Rumi philosopher to send his soldiers instead. The soldiers approach the mountain and find it to be an enormous fish. When they get closer, the fish suddenly disappears under the water, causing the boat to sink (20: 1173-82). In the *Dârâbnâme* of Tarsusi, Dârâb fights with his enemies on a whale which he takes for an island (Safâ ed. 1344, I: 83-6). In the *Eskandarnâme*, Alexander has a philosophical conversation with a whale (Afshâr ed. 1343: 218-9; Southgate trans. 1978: 64).

At the beginnings of stories Ferdowsi refers to his sources. Such references to source material are of primary importance; they seem to provide first-hand information on Ferdowsi's sources. More often than not, however, they are remarkably ambiguous; sometimes Ferdowsi refers to oral tradition, sometimes to written sources, or both at the same time. A few examples will suffice to illustrate this point. In the following passages, Ferdowsi tells us that he heard a story told by a *dehqân* (see further below) or *mowbad* ('Zoroastrian priest'):

(1) *ze mowbad be din gune dêrim yâd / ham az goft-e ân pir-e dehqân nezhâd* (12b:1).

(We have learned this story from a *mowbad*, and from the speech of an old man of *dehqân* origin).

(2) *sar âmad konun bar man in dêstân / co beshnud-am az gofte-ye bâstân* (41:3430).

(I brought the story to an end, just as I heard it told of the past).

These could be taken as evidence for the use of oral narratives in the ShNF. Further, this finds some confirmation in the following where the names of individual storytellers are given:

(3) *yeki pir bod marzbân-e hari / pasandide-o dide az har dari*

jahândide'i nâm-e u bud Mâx / saxondân-o bâ farr-o bâ barg-o shâx

beporsid-am-esh tâ ce dêrad be yâd / ze Hormoz ke benshast bar taxt-e dêd

conin goft pir-e Xorâsân ke shâh ... (42:15-8a).

(There was an old man who was *marzbân* at Herat. He was agreeable, versed in every art, and experienced. His name was Mâx. He had eloquence and dignity, as well as benevolence and subtlety. I asked him what he remembered of Hormozd who succeeded to the righteous throne. The old man of Khorasan related that the king ...)

In contrast to the above examples, the following passages mention both oral and written sources:

(4) *konun z-in sepas nâme-ye bâstân / bepeyvand-am az gofte-ye râstân* (13g:77).

(From now on I will set into verse an ancient book on the speech of the righteous).

In other examples, oral and written sources are mentioned in the same context, thus making it impossible to ascertain whether Ferdowsi's immediate source was spoken or written.

(5) *konun ey sarâyande fartut mard / su-ye gâh-e Ashkâniyân bâz gard
ce goft andar in nâme-ye bâstân / ke guyande yâd ârad az râstân
pas az ruzgâr-e Sekandar jahân / ce guyad ke-râ bud-o taxt-e mehân
conin goft dânanade dehqân-e Câj / k-az-ân pas kasi-râ nabod taxt-e 'âj*

<...>

az-ishân be joz nâm nashnide-am / na dar nâme-ye xosravân dide-am (21:42-61).

(Now, O singer of old age, turn to the reign of the Ashkânians;

What was said in an ancient book in which a storyteller brings back a memory of the righteous? What does he say about the world after the reign of Alexander? Who succeeded, and [what happened to] the great throne? A wise *dehqân* of Câj says that after that no one took the throne of ivory. <...> About them I heard only their names, nor have I seen them in a book of kings).

In the following example introducing Daqiqi's verses, Ferdowsi points to the existence of a common 'written' text:

(6) *barin nâme bar cand beshtâfti / konun har ce josti hame yâfti;
az-in bâre man pish goftam saxon / agar bâz yâbi baxili makon;*

<...>

konun man beguyam saxon k-u begoft / man-am zende u gasht bâ xâk joft (15:9-13).

(You have worked on this book for some time, and have obtained whatever you sought to achieve. I [Daqiqi] also composed verses on this matter. If you can get [them], do not be stingy.

<...>

I [Ferdowsi] am going now to repeat what he [Daqiqi] has composed, for I am alive while he was joined to the earth).

These examples clearly show that Ferdowsi's references to source material are remarkably ambiguous. Sometimes Ferdowsi seems to refer to storytellers (oral traditions), and sometime to narrators in books he consulted (oral tradition preserved in writing). In still other cases he alludes only to written sources. It is difficult to tell just what sources Ferdowsi had used.

Scholars have offered different interpretations of Ferdowsi's references such as these. Not surprisingly, different interpretations are based on different assumptions about the origin of the ShNF. Jules Mohl, an early editor and translator of the ShNF, assumed that Ferdowsi's principal source was the Middle

Persian *Xwadâynâmag* (XN),²¹⁸ which was taken to be a collection of oral traditions.²¹⁹ Since this view traces both oral and written aspects of the ShNF back to its source, it apparently presents no interpretative problems as to Ferdowsi's references to source material; his references to oral traditions are taken as referring to the contents of the source book, those to written sources as the book itself, and those to oral and written sources as the form and contents of the book. Elegant as this solution may be, it is no longer tenable; it is unclear whether the XN in fact existed, let alone what use Ferdowsi may have made of it.

Mohl's view was rejected by Theodor Nöldeke. Nöldeke assumed, for his part, that Ferdowsi used only written sources, especially Abu Mansur's *Shâhnâme*.²²⁰ He therefore did not accept any influence of oral tradition on the ShNF, and interpreted Ferdowsi's references to that as a figure of speech:

As has already been pointed out, it is a delusion, when he [Ferdowsi] speaks in such a way, as if relating from an oral narrative of some dihqân, or the like. When he says in ... that he brings into verse "what had been related of the antiquity," it only means the same thing which is meant by "the book of the old times." In the next verse he addresses the reader as a listener: "O son, lend me thy ear!", which is a similar case.²²¹

As in the case of Mohl's view, however, we can no longer say with such certainty as Nöldeke did that Abu Mansur's work was Ferdowsi's primary source.²²²

More recently, the theories of these two scholars were questioned by an American Iranist, Olga M. Davidson. While disagreeing with both Mohl and Nöldeke about the proposed sources,²²³ Davidson presents a different view about the ShNF. Drawing on the Oral Formulaic Theory, she suggests that the ShNF is essentially an oral work.²²⁴ Oral tradition as implied here is seen not just as a source of the ShNF, but as the medium of its composition. Davidson accordingly takes

²¹⁸See Mohl 1838, I: XXV; XLVI-VII, where Mohl mentions that having obtained "the Pahlavi work of Dâneshtar the *dehqân*", Ferdowsi began to compose his work.

²¹⁹Referring to Ferdowsi's account of the origin of the 'ancient book', Mohl mentions that "le procédé employé sous les deux rois [Anoshirvan (531-79 AD) and Yazdegird III (632-51 AD)] prouve bien évidemment qu'il s'agissait de réunir des traditions orales et vivantes" (ibid., p. XI). Cf. also pp. VIII-X where Mohl expounds on the *dehqâns* as the representatives of oral tradition ("C'est ainsi que les Dihkans devenaient les représentants de la tradition orale ...", p. IX).

²²⁰Nöldeke 1979: 26-31.

²²¹Ibid., p. 67; cf. also p. 28.

²²²See Chapter I above.

²²³Davidson 1985: 116.

²²⁴Davidson 1994: 60-69.

Ferdowsi's references to both oral and written sources as 'narrative gestures'.²²⁵ Noting the words *dehqâns* and *mowbads* which are found in Ferdowsi's references (e.g. examples 1 & 5 above), she mentions that: "... the *mubads* and the *dehqâns* represent for Ferdowsi the equivalent of oral poetry, and it is their traditions that he appropriates in the manner of an oral poet".²²⁶ On the other hand, she argues that Ferdowsi's references to written sources are so stylised as to defy any elucidation,²²⁷ which she calls a 'mythopoeic stylization of oral poetry'.²²⁸ She takes the written sources alluded to by Ferdowsi as a symbol for "expressing the authority and authenticity of oral poetic traditions that are being performed".²²⁹ Despite her expressed disagreement with Mohl, however, Davidson is not so far from the latter, except for a single point, i.e. the written aspects of the ShNF. Since her views are based on the OFT, she cannot by definition accept that Ferdowsi used written sources, even if their contents are typically associated with oral literature;²³⁰ once the oral poet learns to read and write, he is assumed to lose the ability to compose orally.²³¹ As has been pointed out in Chapter I, however, this does not accord with the reality of the ShNF.

Since, as was discussed in the Introduction, the question of origin of the ShNF is incapable of definite proof, it has been suggested that other approaches may in fact be more helpful. Even more so, as Ferdowsi's references to his source material still play an important role in our understanding of the ShNF. As mentioned before, the meanings of the references cannot be determined when viewed in isolation; some point to oral sources, others to written ones, and still others to both oral and written ones. This uncertainty about the references can, however, be alleviated when examining each reference in its context. Most of the references are found in the prologues to some stories in the ShNF. This suggests that each reference may offer information specific to the story to be told, which is apparently intended to predispose the reader to interpret the story in a certain way. For example, when Ferdowsi mentions that a story is based on an 'ancient book',

²²⁵Ibid., p. 116.

²²⁶Ibid., p. 115.

²²⁷Ibid., pp. 117-23.

²²⁸Ibid., p. 122.

²²⁹Davidson 1994: 48.

²³⁰Davidson 1985: 111.

²³¹"Such a singer [an oral singer who has learned writing] will probably learn some songs from the book, but he will still retain a residue of songs that he learned from oral transmission, and hence his repertory will be mixed in origin. When he thinks of the written songs as fixed and tries to learn them word for word, the power of the fixed text and of the technique of memorizing will stunt his ability to compose orally" (Lord 1960: 129-30).

the reader might take it as historically true; and when Ferdowsi refers to a story as based on oral tradition, the reader may expect one of the familiar stories to be told. If this is the case, it is necessary to ascertain which stories are claimed by Ferdowsi to have been based on oral tradition.

The Distribution of Ferdowsi's References to his 'Sources' in the ShNF

When examining the distribution of Ferdowsi's references to his 'source material', one is struck by the fact that not every story includes a reference. As Figure 5 below shows, references are absent from 80% of stories, and are present only in the remaining 20%. The references are unevenly distributed over the ShNF. Such a fragmented distribution suggests that the references are not used for practical purposes, like narrative markers indicating transitional points in the *tumâr*; were they linking devices they would occur more regularly and frequently in the text.²³² Further, the fragmented distribution of the references may imply that a particular reference is connected with a particular story in a significant way.

The stories with references are found in many parts of the text. In the Kayanian part, all stories contain at least one reference, except for the section on Key Qobâd (12), story 13f which is part of the section on Key Xosrow (13), and that of Bahman (16). In the Achaemenian part, the sections on Dârâb (18) and Eskandar (20) comprise references. The Ashkânian part (21) consists of only one story which includes references. In the Sasanian part, five out of thirty sections comprise references. Especially the sections from Nushirvân through Xosrow Parviz (41-43) have a number of references. By contrast, none of the sections on the Pishdadian kings entail any references, except for the section on Manucehr (7). Likewise in the Sasanian part, most of the sections lack any indications as to Ferdowsi's sources.

²³²As *Figure 5* shows, however, references serve to mark the beginnings or the ends of stories or episodes within a section.

Part	Dynasty	King's Name	Story No.	References	Context
I	The Pishdadids	Kayumars	1	(2)*	(a: Beginning of story; b: Beginning of episode)*
		Hushang	2		
		Tahmuras	3		
		Jamshid	4		
		Zahhâk	5		
		Feridun	6		
		Manucehr	7	1	a: Beginning of episode
		Nowzar	8		
		Zow	9		
		Garshâsp	10		
II	The Kayanids	Key Qobâd	11		
		Key Kâus	12	1	a: Prologue
			12b	2	a: Beginning of story b: Beginning of episode
			12c	1	a: Prologue
			12d	2	a: Prologue b: Beginning of episode
			12e	1	a: Prologue
		Key Xosrow	13	1	a: Prologue
			13b	1	a: Prologue
			13c	1	a: Beginning of story
			13d	1	a: Prologue
			13e	2	a: Beginning of story b: End of story
			13f		
			13g	2	a: Panegyrics b: End of story
		Lohrâsp	14	1	a: End of story
		Goshtâsp	15	3	a: Prologue b: Beginning of episode c: Prologue
		Bahman	16		
		III	The Achaemenids	Homây	17
Dârâb	18			1	a: Prologue / Panegyrics
Dârâ	19				
Eskandar	20			2	a: Prologue / Panegyrics b: Beginning of story
IV	The Arsacids	The Ashkânians	21	2	a: Prologue b: Beginning of episode
V	The Sasanids	Ardashir Bâbakân	22		
		Shâpur-e Ardashir	23		
		Ormozd-e Shâpur	24		
		Bahrâm-e Ormozd	25		
		Bahrâm-e Bahrâm	26		
		Bahrâm-e Bahrâmiyân	27		

	Narsi-ye Bahrâm	28		
	Ormozd-e Narsi	29		
	Shâpur-e Zu'l-Aktâf	30	1	a: Interim
	Ardashir-e Nikukâr	31		
	Shâpur-e Shâpur	32		
	Bahrâm-e Shâpur	33		
	Yazdgerd	34		
	Bahrâm Gur	35		
		35b		
	Yazdgerd	36		
	Hormozd	37		
	Piruz	38		
	Balâsh	39		
	Qobâd	40		
	Nushirvân	41	11	a: End of story; the rest: Beginnings of stories or episodes
	Hormozd	42	1	a: Beginning of story
	Xosrow Parviz	43	4	a: Beginning of story b: Beginning of story c: Beginning of episode d: Prologue
	Qobâd (Shiruy)	44		
	Ardashir-e Shiruy	45		
	Gorâz	46		
	Purândox	47		
	Âzarndox	48		
	Farroxzâd	49		
	Yazdgerd	50	1	a: Beginning of story

Figure 5: Distribution of Ferdowsi's References to his Sources

*Key: Story No.: based on Wolff's classification with slight modifications (Shâpur-e Ardashir is counted as the 23rd, and the numbers of the subsequent kings are accordingly rendered as Wolff's Königszahl+1 (Wolff 1935: VI-VII); References: if a given segment of a story contains more than one reference and the segment constitutes a single semantic unit (e.g. prologue, panegyrics, the beginning or the end of a story or an episode), the references are counted as one regardless of their actual occurrences in the segment; Context: designates a general context where each reference is found; *: The story of Kayumars does not count, as it is the very beginning of the ShNF which is likely to have been heavily edited.*

Stories Reportedly Based on Oral Tradition

Having identified the distribution of the references in the ShNF, a question arises as to what types of stories are associated with oral tradition. As *Figure 6* below shows, twenty-five stories are said to have been based on oral stories, nine on the oral and written, and four on the written. If the first two categories of stories are put together, these account for about ninety percent of the stories with references. In general terms, therefore, references are found in the stories which are claimed by

Stories Based on Oral Tradition		Stories Based on Oral / Literary Traditions		Stories Based on Written Sources	
Line No. (References)	Story / Episode	Line No. (References)	Story / Episode	Line No. (References)	Story / Episode
		7 (46-7)	Zāl and Rudābe, &c."		
12 (11)	Kāus's expedition to Mazandaran				
12b (1)	Kāus's expedition to Bābarestān				
12b (537-8)	Seven heroes				
12c (22-3)	Rostam & Sohrāb				
12d (1)	Siyāvosh				
12d (1695-6)	The building by Siyāvosh of Gang-Dezh				
		12e (11-5)	Xosrow's flight and Seven Heroes		
		13 (1-4)	Tus's first expedition to Turan		
		13b (18-9)	Tus's second expedition to Turan		
13c (1-5)	Story of Rostam and the Xāqān-e Cin				
13d	Rostam & Akvān Div				
13e (1386-9)	Bizhan & Manizhe				
				13g (34)	Xosrow vs. Afrāsiyāb
		14 (915-6)	Goshāsp's adventure		
		15 (4069-75)	Rostam & Shaqād	15 (9-13)	Daqiqi's verses
18 (9-10)	Dārāb's war with the Arabs				
		21 (42-5/60-1)	The Ashkānians		

21 (499)	Episode of Haftvâd				
30 (8)	Shâpur-e Zu'l-Aktâf				
41 (769-770)	Story of Nushâd				
41 (1606-11)	Story of Mahbud				
41 (1790-1)	Nushirvân's battle with the Xâqân				
41 (2697)	The introduction of the game of chess				
41 (2889)	The story about the game of chess				
41 (3432-3)	Kalîle and Demna	41 (4000-1)	Bozorgmehr's didactic discourse		
				41 (4203)	Nushirvân's second war with the Emperor of Rum
41 (4395)	Hormozd appointed as the heir apparent				
41 (4544-5)	Nushirvân's will				
42 (15-8)	Bahrâm Cubin (1)				
43 (2264)	Bahrâm Cubin (2)				
43 (3800)	The building of the city of Madain by Xosrow Parviz				
		43 (3481-3502)	Xosrow & Shirin		
				43 (3890-1)	Magnificence & greatness of Xosrow Parviz
50 (2)	Yazdgerd				

Figure 6: Classification of ShNF Stories according to Ferdowsi's References

Ferdowsi to have been ultimately based on oral tradition. Furthermore, most of the stories associated with oral tradition fall in the sections on Key Kâus (12) and Key Xosrow (13), Nushirvân (41), and Xosrow Parviz (43). Among many stories in some fifty sections of the ShNF, only about thirty stories of these four sections are indicated by Ferdowsi as deriving from oral tradition. This prompts a further question as to whether those stories have anything in common. In what follows, details of each story are examined based on information already available in the secondary literature. This study is intended to suggest, not any particular sources, but general features which may be found among the stories in question.

Many stories in this group, notably those in the sections on Key Kâus and Key Xosrow (12 & 13), are attested only in the ShNF. Since these are not mentioned by other Persian and Arab authors, they are generally assumed to have derived from sources only used by Ferdowsi, which for obvious reasons remain unidentified. Most of the stories in 12 & 13 relate Rostam's heroic exploits, known as the Rostam cycle or Sistani tradition. As we saw briefly in Chapter I, this cycle has an extensive oral background. It is thought to have originated among the Sakas and to have been adopted by Parthian minstrels. In the course of time, it then seems to have become an integral part of the Kayanian cycle.²³³ The essence of the Kayanian history as we know it today thus already existed when the Sasanians undertook the compilation of the XN.²³⁴ The Rostam cycle apparently continued to evolve in Islamic times. By the 7th century it was obviously known to people outside Iran.²³⁵ In the 10th century it was so prevalent as to virtually eclipse the Kayanian cycle. Mas'udi reports that the history of the Kayanians was recorded in a book, entitled *Kitâb al-Sakisarân* ('the Book of the Chiefs of the Sakas').²³⁶ According to the abstract given by the same author, the Rostam cycle appears to have played a major role in accounts of Kayanian history.²³⁷

²³³Boyce 1955: 474-5.

²³⁴Based on Boyce 1954; 1955, esp. pp. 473-7; 1957.

²³⁵See **Storyteller's Repertoire**, p. 79 above.

²³⁶De Meynard ed. & trans. 1861-77, II: 118-9. Based on this information, A. Christensen (1931: 142-3) assumed that the incorporation of the Rostam cycle into the Kayanian cycle took place in the early 8th century when *al-Sakisarân* and the XN were translated into Arabic by Ibn al-Moqaffa'. He thereby suggested that the two cycles were artificially patched together by Arab and Persian historians. As Boyce pointed out (1954: 49-50, also note 4, p. 149 develops an argument against that of Christensen), however, the fusion is made in a casual manner, suggesting gradual development over a long time period. See also Davidson (1985: 72-3) for a criticism on Christensen's view.

²³⁷The book is said to have contained the following stories: wars between Iran and Turan; the death of Siyâvosh, the story of Rostam, the story of Esfandiyâr; the killing of Rostam by Bahman, and other marvellous episodes of the primitive history of the Persians (de Meynard ed. & trans. 1861-

Likewise, two stories in the Achaemenian and the Arsacid part are found only in the ShNF. With regard to the episode of Dârâb's war with the Arabs (18), Nöldeke mentions that it probably stemmed from a local tradition in the region of Khorasan, suggesting a probable connection with the legend of Abu Moslem.²³⁸ The latter provided the core for a Persian popular romance, *Abu-Moslemnâme* ('The Book of Abu Moslem') which used to be one of the favourite subjects of the *naqqâls*.²³⁹ The episode on the origin of Haftvâd's worm in the story of Ardashir (21) is found only in the ShNF.²⁴⁰ It is ascribed to Ferdowsi by Nöldeke²⁴¹ but its fantastic nature bespeaks its folkloric origin.

In the Sasanian part, the stories which are said to have been based on oral tradition tend to be of imaginative nature, and those lacking references appear to relate factual accounts of kings (e.g. accession, death of kings, or war accounts, etc.)

The story of Shâpur Zu'l-Aktâf (30) differs considerably from those of Arab and Persian historians, notably Tha'âlebi's *Ghurar Axbâri Muluki al-Furs wa Siyarihim*, which is generally assumed to go back to a source common to the ShNF.²⁴² Ferdowsi's account includes the episodes of Shâpur's mother who is miraculously rediscovered among Hormozd's concubines, Maleka falling in love with Shâpur at first sight, and Shâpur's rescue by a Persian slave woman.²⁴³ These episodes may be reminiscent of Persian popular romances, and point to their influence on the story.²⁴⁴

In the section on Nushirvân (41), eight stories comprise references to oral tradition. Most of them are imaginative narratives, and some of them are attested only in the ShNF: the revolt of Nushâd, Kasrâ's campaigns against the Xâqân of China, and the episode on the invention of the game of chess.²⁴⁵ Other stories, despite Ferdowsi's statements to the contrary, have literary-written antecedents. For example, the episodes about the introduction of the game of chess and that of *Kalile*

77, II: 118-9) It seems fairly certain, by analogy with the ShNF and *tumârs*, that Rostam plays an important part in those stories. On the oral transmission of the Sistani tradition see the *Fihrist* (Dodge trans. 1970: 716). We have also seen that *shâxnâmex'âni* was a popular phenomenon at the court of the Ghaznavids.

²³⁸Nöldeke 1979: 65-6.

²³⁹On the *Abu-Moslemnâme* see Mélikoff 1962; Mahjub 1338 (2), (3), (4); 1364-5; 1368.

²⁴⁰Nöldeke 1979: 11-2.

²⁴¹Ibid., p. 12.

²⁴²Zotenberg ed. & trans. 1900: XXVII.

²⁴³Ibid., p. XXXVII.

²⁴⁴For example, 'falling in love at first sight' is found in *Firuzshâhnâme*, *Samak-e 'Ayyâr*, *Dârâbnâme*, etc. See Hanaway 1970: 208ff.

va Demne were probably circulated in written form. They are attributed by Ferdowsi to two individuals, Shâx and Shâdân-e Borzin, respectively, who are assumed to be among the co-authors of Abu Mansur's ShN.²⁴⁶ Further, the episode of the introduction of chess is found in a Pahlavi work, *Vichârishn i Chatrang* along with the episode of Bozorjmehr's invention of the game of *nard*, whose authority is left unspecified by Ferdowsi.²⁴⁷

The sections on Hormozd (42) and Xosrow Parviz (43) are mostly taken up by the lengthy episode of the revolt of Bahrâm Cubin which, according to Nöldeke, was worked into chronicles after the Arab conquest.²⁴⁸ This episode was probably also transmitted orally²⁴⁹ despite Nöldeke claim to the contrary. In any case Ferdowsi's renderings of it considerably diverge from those of the historian Tha'âlebi.²⁵⁰ An episode in the section on Xosrow Parviz includes a reference to an oral story delivered by a Parsi; "*conin goft rowshan-deli Pârsî*" (A Parsi with an enlightened mind said thus), for which no detailed information is available. The story of Yazdgerd (50) includes a few episodes which are found only in the ShNF: e.g. Mâhu'i's betrayal and the king's tragic death.²⁵¹

The stories and episodes which contain references to oral tradition can be roughly divided into three. The first includes the stories or episodes which are attested only in the ShNF, the second those whose literary antecedents are known to us, and the third those for which oral and literary antecedents can be postulated, and which may originally have circulated as an independent story. The first group consists of the stories or episodes in the sections on Key Kâus (12), Key Xosrow (13), Dârâb (18), Ardashir (21), Nushirvân (41) and Yazdgerd (50). The second group entails the two episodes in the section on Nushirvân (41), and the third the story of Bahrâm Cubin in the sections on Hormozd through Xosrow Parviz (42-3). It would seem that these stories, whether unattested elsewhere or found in earlier literary works, were felt by Ferdowsi to be somewhat different from, or independent of, the national legend. This must, however, be taken with due caution. Unattested sources could mean many different things. They may have been lost over time, been available only to Ferdowsi, transmitted orally, or they may

²⁴⁵Zotenberg ed. & trans. 1900: XXXIX.

²⁴⁶On Abu Mansur's ShN see Chapter I above. Cf. also de Blois 1990: 51 (but de Blois 1992: 122, n.1 denies that the tale of the introduction of chess is based on Abu Mansur's *Shâhnâme*).

²⁴⁷Nöldeke 1979: 28-9; de Menasce 1983: 1185; de Blois 1992: 122, n.1.

²⁴⁸Nöldeke 1979: 26; 29; 71.

²⁴⁹Cf. Dodge trans. 1970, II: 716.

²⁵⁰Zotenberg ed. & trans. 1900: XXXIX.

²⁵¹*Ibid.*, p. XL.

simply not have been used by other historians; most of them are imaginative as opposed to factual. Even stories or episodes whose textual antecedents are known to us may well have been transmitted orally, and oral performances could change over time. Taking all this into consideration, one can only suggest that Ferdowsi may have intended to supply additional information on stories which were generally thought of as not forming an integral part of the national tradition, but which he wished to include in his work for one reason or another. What is important here is that he seems to justify the presence of such stories in his work by linking them back with oral tradition.

Stories Ultimately Based on Oral-Literary Traditions

The following stories include references to oral-literary stories: the episode of Zâl's birth (7), Key Xosrow's return to Iran (12e), the first two episodes of Xosrow's war against Turan (13 & 13b), the adventures of Goshtâsp in Rum (14), the story of Rostam and Shaqâd (15), the story of Alexander (20), a part of the Ashkanian section (21) and episodes in the sections on Nushirvân (41) and Xosrow Parviz (43). These share one distinctive feature: parallel accounts are found in the writings of other historians.

Among the stories listed above are five stories of the Rostam cycle: (the episode of Zâl's birth, Key Xosrow's return to Iran, the first two episodes of Xosrow's war against Turan, and the story of Rostam and Shaqâd). It is a curious fact that those stories are also related by Tha'âlebi. That is, only those stories which Ferdowsi specifically claims to have taken from a book are found in the *Ghurar*, while many stories of the Rostam cycle are absent. A likely explanation is that they were included in a common source as has been generally assumed.²⁵² If that is the case, it may be of some interest to inquire further why these stories in particular were preserved in writing.

The only reference in the Pishdadian section introduces a lengthy sequence of episodes from Zâl's birth up to Rostam's first adventure (7:46-1992); hence it virtually inaugurates the Rostam cycle in the ShNF. On essential points those episodes are not so different from other stories of the cycle: Zâl is born with white hair, brought up by the Simorgh, rediscovered by his father Sâm, grows to be an excellent young man, and marries a beautiful foreign woman who becomes Rostam's mother. Rostam grows up rapidly and accomplishes a feat at an tender

²⁵²I.e. Abu Mansur's *Shâhnâme* (Nöldeke 1979: 63).

age. There are, of course, many differences in detail but on the whole those are extraordinary and set Zâl and Rostam 'above humans'.²⁵³ In this respect the episodes are quite in conformity with other stories of the cycle and therefore have no particular features to be selected for a historical work like the *Ghurar*. A possible reason seems to be that they were not deliberately selected but were the only materials available for the reign of Manucehr where they are placed. Since Manucehr takes revenge on Salm (who killed his father Iraj) in the reign of Feridun (6:593-1127) — which apparently is the single most important accomplishment in his life — there is nothing of interest to record for his own section. This gap in the genealogical lines of Persian kings is conveniently filled up by the episodes of Zâl and Rostam which were apparently upgraded from the Rostam cycle to the mainstream of Persian history for that purpose. This can be easily tested by trying to remove all the episodes of the Rostam cycle from the section on Manucehr. Nothing of significance remains, as Manucehr only gives counsel and approval to Sâh, Zâl and Rostam.

The next three episodes present little difficulty in establishing the reason why they are mentioned by Tha'âlebi. Since they centre on Key Xosrow rather than Rostam, they could be included in Persian history (which is the focus of Tha'âlebi's interest), regardless of many details that can be traced back to the Rostam cycle. Thus, the main point of story 12e is how Key Xosrow is brought back to Iran by Giv, though several of earlier episodes deal with Rostam: his destruction of Sudâbe, invasion against Turan, and seven-year reign in Turan (12e:29-508). In the ShNF, the two episodes from the section on Key Xosrow assign an important role to Rostam, while in the *Ghurar* they are only summarily related to provide a context for the subsequent episodes, where Key Xosrow acts as the protagonist. Nevertheless, that Tha'âlebi had a source reasonably close to that of Ferdowsi can be inferred from his reference to Rostam in a brief account of the wars between Iran and Turan.²⁵⁴ In the middle of this account he once mentions Rostam along with Tus, Gudarz and Giv, and he concludes it with the return of the Persian army led by "Rostam and the chiefs of the army",²⁵⁵ which coincides with the end of story 13c of the ShNF.

The story of Rostam and Shaqâd describes how Rostam is killed by his half-

²⁵³In comparing the ShNF with the *Ghurar* Nöldeke (1979, p. 65) notes that "The main common source did not however, contain any of those stories, where Rustam is lifted up far above the human level into the domain of the demoniacal or the titanical".

²⁵⁴Zotenberg ed. & trans. 1900: 223-4

²⁵⁵*Ibid.*, p. 224.

brother Shaqâd in the reign of Goshtâsp (15). As some have noted,²⁵⁶ this is one of the versions accounting for Rostam's death. In a more 'orthodox' version, Rostam is killed by King Bahman who takes avenges on the death of Esfandiyâr.²⁵⁷ It is easy to see how the Shaqâd version is motivated by public sympathy for Rostam. It saves him from becoming a traitor to his country by letting him perish by the hand of his obscure brother.²⁵⁸ It thereby confers on him some dignity and integrity at the moment of death. It is in full accordance with Ferdowsi's treatment of Rostam, but may be less so with Tha'âlebi's. Nevertheless, even Ferdowsi seems to have been concerned about the unorthodox character of this particular version, since he uncharacteristically names the authority, Âzâd Sarv.²⁵⁹ He tells us that Âzâd Sarv has a book of kings (*nâme-ye xosravân*), is a descendant of Sâm-e Nareymân (Rostam's grandfather) and remembers a great deal about Rostam's exploits (15:4071-75). By providing such a detailed account of Âzâd Sarv, he attempts to justify his preference of Âzâd Sarv's exposition over the more orthodox one.²⁶⁰ In contrast to his attempt to reconcile the killing of Rostam with the sentiment of the national tradition, Tha'âlebi's inclusion of this episode in the *Ghurar* seems peculiarly baffling, indicating perhaps his commitment to his sources.

There are apparently plausible reasons for the inclusion of stories of the Rostam cycle in the *Ghurar*. The episodes of Zâl's birth *et al* were perhaps the only materials available, while the episodes on Key Xosrow requires no explanation, primarily centring on Xosrow the king. What these have in common seems to be that they either substitute for a king's story or focus on a king. That is, the factor determining the inclusion or omission of stories of the Rostam cycle into the *Ghurar* is the degree to which a king is part of those stories. Only stories in which kings play a significant role were chosen for preservation in writing, while the vast majority of stories of the Rostam cycle apparently remained undocumented until Ferdowsi included some of them in the ShNF. This conclusion must, however, remain tentative because of the anomaly of the story of Rostam and Shaqâd.

As Mary Boyce has shown,²⁶¹ the story of adventures of Goshtâsp (14) has its origin in a Median legend. Like the Kayanian and the Rostam cycle, it was

²⁵⁶Notably, Davidson 1985: 72.

²⁵⁷See note 237, p. 94 above.

²⁵⁸Shaqâd was probably invented for this part, since he is not mentioned elsewhere in the ShNF or in other epics.

²⁵⁹This is the only occasion when Ferdowsi mention his authority for the stories of the Rostam cycle.

²⁶⁰Cf. Davidson 1994: 55.

²⁶¹Boyce 1955: 474.

transmitted by way of different minstrel traditions, to be ultimately recorded by Ferdowsi and Tha'âlebi. In the course of time it apparently underwent considerable changes to acquire additional colour and flavour which Boyce describes as "essentially vulgar, [being] inflated with irrelevant detail under which it loses point and progression".²⁶² In fact, the extant versions distinguish themselves from other stories of the Kayanid part in that they have peculiarly 'novelistic' character, with mundane descriptions of Goshtâsp's job-hunting, of his association with farmers and of marketplaces (14:119-221). This seems to point to the influence of a different tradition from that of the Rostam cycle and the national tradition.²⁶³

The Alexander legend (20) probably existed in various oral and written forms. It ultimately derives from Pseudo-Callisthenes's Alexander Romance which was translated into Middle Persian, Syriac (6th cent.) and Arabic (8th cent.) The story, as related by Ferdowsi, is probably based on an Arabic recension, since it includes Alexander's pilgrimage to the Ka'bah (20:657-692). It was also one of the stock themes of storytelling and provided the basis for later romance works: *Eskandarnâme*, *Dârâbnâme*, Nezâmi's *Sharafnâme* and *Eqbâlnâme*, as well as Jâmi's *Xeradnâme-ye Eskandari*. It would seem, though it is difficult to demonstrate, that oral versions influenced Ferdowsi's text, since his version contains a number of adventures which are not found elsewhere.²⁶⁴ This seems to suggest that there was a continuous oral tradition alongside the written one.

In the Ashkânian section (21), Ferdowsi mentions only the names of kings and provides no detailed account. This is ascribed to his sources which relate, the poet says, nothing of significance about the kings (see example 5 cited above).²⁶⁵ Lastly, the riddles posed by Nushirvân to the *mowbads* (41) may go back to the tradition of wisdom literature which was popular from the Sasanian period through Islamic times.²⁶⁶ Although several texts of this genre have come down to us from Sasanian times, how they are related to Ferdowsi's treatment of the episode is difficult to say.

The influence of oral-literary traditions can be plausibly postulated for stories roughly up to the section on Alexander (20). This can be stated with some certainty as regards the stories of the Rostam cycle, as is evidenced by the

²⁶²Ibid., p. 470.

²⁶³The *Garshâspnâme* of Asadi (GN) attributes a similar episode to Garshâsp (H. Yaqmâ'i ed. 1317: 223-31). On the GN see Chapter V.

²⁶⁴Zotenberg ed. & trans. 1900: XXXIII-IV.

²⁶⁵Cf. de Blois 1992: 122-3.

²⁶⁶Nöldeke 1979: 66-7. On the Pahlavi works see de Menasce 1983: 1180ff.

corresponding expositions in Tha'âlebi's *Ghurar*, while some doubt remains as to the latter parts of the ShNF. Thus, most of the stories of the Rostam cycles are consistently described by Ferdowsi as ultimately based on oral or oral-literary traditions, and may therefore serve as sample corpuses to which the Oral Performance Model will be applied. In the latter parts of the work, such regularity can not be observed. Ferdowsi's references to oral tradition are found in some stories or episodes (e.g. the stories of Shâpur Zu'l-Aktâf, Bahrâm Cubin and a few episodes on Nushirvân) where the influence of oral tradition seems plausible, but they are also found in places where this is not the case. At best, they seem to point to the traditional nature of the stories incorporated into the ShNF.

The references provide some insights into when and how each part of the ShNF was composed. In the Pishdadian part, no reference is found except for the section on Manucehr, which, as pointed out earlier, primarily focuses on Zâl and Rostam. The near absence of the references might perhaps suggest that the Pishdadian part was composed independently of the other parts of the text. Further, unlike in other parts of the text, each story of the Pishdadian period (except for the section on Manucehr) is relatively short, and concentrates on the king's life and achievements without much digression. Such an orderly arrangement of materials points to the use of pre-organised information which may well have been preserved in writing.

By contrast, the Kayanian part is characterised by the regular occurrence of references. Especially in the sections on Key Kâus and Xosrow, most of the stories include references. Given this systematic use of the references, it is tempting to suppose that the references were originally introduced to mark the stories of the Rostam cycle, which Ferdowsi somehow felt obliged to do, in order to justify their presence in the ShNF. In all probability those sections had been completed before the Sasanian period, since there is a marked difference in the way in which references are used. By the time Ferdowsi set to work on the Sasanian period, references had become so much a part of his poetic lexicon that he began to use them for purposes different from those originally intended. This may help to explain inconsistencies among the references in the later parts of the ShNF.

This chapter has considered the external and internal evidence for the oral influence on the ShNF. In the first section we have seen that storytelling was vigorously cultivated in the Ghaznavid period. Storytellers entertained princes and commoners alike with stories from the national legend and fantastic tales of travels. They directly or indirectly provided oral narratives and storytelling technique to

Ferdowsi who was versifying the national tradition. This is suggested by Ferdowsi's remarks on his sources. As has been shown, the study of such remarks has led us to choose the sections on Key Kâus and Xosrow as sample corpuses to which the Oral Performance Model will be applied in the next chapter.

Chapter IV The Influence of Oral Tradition on the *Shâhnâme* of Ferdowsi (2)

The present chapter is to complete our study of the influence of oral tradition on the ShNF. The preceding chapter has examined Ferdowsi's references to his sources and has demonstrated that oral tradition may have been most influential in some stories in the sections on the reigns of Key Kâus and Key Xosrow. This chapter will therefore focus on these sections in applying the Oral Performance Model (OPM) to the ShNF. Among the relevant stories the second story of the section on Key Xosrow (story 13b) will be used as a sample text. The story is described by Ferdowsi as based on oral-literary traditions, in which writing is also assumed to have played a role: it is, for instance, related in Tha'âlebi's *Ghurar*, albeit briefly.

The Oral Performance Model, briefly, consists of formal and thematic criteria. The formal criteria consider whether a text can be divided into instalments, units comparable to *naqqâli* performances. Each instalment is of equal length and is semantically complete, while being a part of the larger whole. The instalment is further broken down into a series of episodes, each of which is formally marked by a narrative or temporal marker. The thematic criteria examine how such instalment divisions affect the thematic organisation of the text. One of the essential criteria is that a story is organised according to a key motif which is formally marked by recurring narrative devices or techniques. In applying the OPM to story 13b, we will begin with the formal criteria and move on to the thematic.

The Section on the Reign of Key Xosrow (13)

Before applying the Oral Performance Model to story 13b, a summary of the section on the reign of Key Xosrow may be provided as a guide to the following analysis. Story 13b comprises the second episode of the section.

- (13) On succeeding Key Kâus, Key Xosrow seeks revenge on Afrâsiyâb who has killed his father, Siyâvosh. He orders Tus to lead troops to Turan while sending Rostam to India. Despite Xosrow's injunction to avoid the route leading to a castle where Farud (his half brother) lives, Tus takes the route and assaults the

castle, ending up killing Farud.

The Persians are caught by heavy snow and take refuge in a fortress, where they are attacked by the Turanians at night. A fierce battle ensues, in which the Persians suffer defeat.

- (13b) As soon as the troops come back, Key Xosrow commands Tus to lead an army again to Turan. As in the previous campaign, the Persian troops are caught in a snow storm (caused by a Turanian sorcerer) and are besieged in a fortress. They attempt a night attack on the Turanians but are defeated. In a plight, Tus writes to Xosrow to send for Rostam. After a long while Rostam finally comes and destroys several Turanian warriors such as Kâmus.
- (13c) Rostam defeats Turanian chiefs and brings victory for the Persians. Xosrow who has joined the battle nevertheless orders the war to be continued until Afrâsiyâb is caught. He leads the troops deep into the land of Turan, plundering and destroying many cities and villages, but nowhere can he find Afrâsiyâb. He leads the army back to Iran.
- (13d) At this point, Ferdowsi digresses to recount the story of Akvân Div in which Rostam engages in a brief fight with Afrâsiyâb.
- (13e) Ferdowsi relates the story of Bizhan and Manizhe, which has little connection with the battle between Xosrow and Afrâsiyâb, except that Rostam wages a war against the Turanians at the end.
- (13f) Ferdowsi returns to the war between Iran and Turan, in which a series of single combats are fought; Pirân is killed together with a number of his and Afrâsiyâb's kinsmen.
- (13g) In the ensuing wars Xosrow himself leads the army. He destroys Shide, son of Afrâsiyâb, in a single combat and defeats the Turanian troops.

Afrâsiyâb flees to Gang-Behesht where he prepares for the next battle with the Faqfur, the emperor of China.

Xosrow assaults the fortress and takes Garsivaz and Jahn prisoner, while Afrâsiyâb escapes with the Faqfur and attempts a night attack on the Persians, in which he fails. Afrâsiyâb takes refuge in Gang-Dezh by a lake, parting from the Faqfur who returns to China. Xosrow assaults the fortress and is given yet another slip by Afrâsiyâb.

On a mountain Afrâsiyâb encounters the hermit Hum who seeks revenge on Afrâsiyâb for Siyâvosh's death. In escaping from the hermit Afrâsiyâb plunges into the lake. Gudarz, who has accompanied Xosrow to the lake, orders Garsivaz to be tortured so that Afrâsiyâb may come out. Hearing the cries of Garsivaz, Afrâsiyâb comes out of the lake and is killed by Xosrow with Garsivaz.

Xosrow has reunited Iran with Turan and China. Having achieved everything he wanted, he becomes weary of the world. On one of those days he sees an angel in a dream, telling him to abdicate. Having appointed Lohrâsp as his successor, he goes away on an expedition, during which he mysteriously disappears with his companions.

The section on the reign of Key Xosrow contains several repetitions and two major digressions. One of the obvious repetitions is found in story 13b, where everything, for the most part, goes the same until Rostam arrives. Other repetitions are found in story 13g, in which Xosrow besieges Afrâsiyâb twice over. The digressions are stories 13d and 13e, where there seems to be no organic connection with Xosrow's war with Afrâsiyâb, the central theme of the section (see *Figure 7* below for a graphic representation of the structure of the section). These are evidently superfluous in light of story progression, which can be confirmed by a comparison with other accounts of Key Xosrow's reign.

Tabari relates that Tus leads the army and kills Farud in the first campaign. Xosrow orders Tus to be put in chains, and appoints Fariborz as commander-in-chief. Fariborz takes refuge in a castle, leaving Gudarz and his party behind. As a result, Gudarz loses seventy children in a combat that ensues. In the second campaign, Xosrow dispatches four armies, each taking a different route. One led by Gudarz defeats Pirân and other chiefs. Xosrow, leading another, fights and kills Afrâsiyâb's son, Shide. Assembling all troops, he takes arms against the Turanians, now headed by Afrâsiyâb. Many of the Turanians are destroyed, and Afrâsiyâb flees to the region of Mazandaran, where he is pursued by the hermit Hum. He takes a refuge by a lake, and is killed by Xosrow with his brother Garsivaz.²⁶⁷ Tabari's account consists of three parts: (1) Tus's and Fariborz's expedition (roughly covers stories 13-13c in the ShNF); (2) Gudarz's battle with Pirân and Turanian chiefs (story 13f); (3) Xosrow's war with Afrâsiyâb (part of 13g), and contains none of the repetitions and digressions which are present in the ShNF.

²⁶⁷Based on Perlmann trans. and annot. 1987: 8-19.

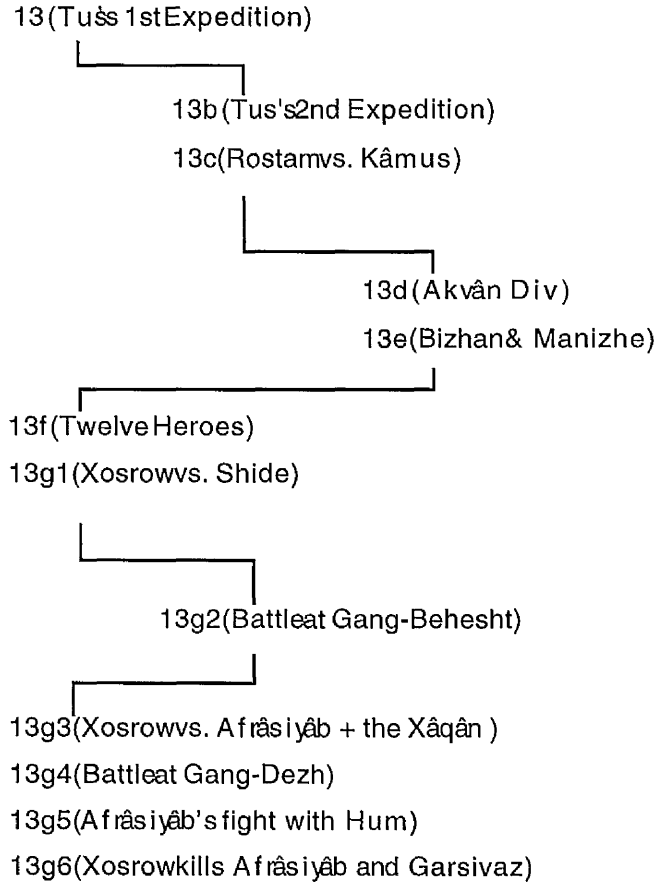


Figure 7: Structure of Section 13 in the ShNF

The vertical line shows the progression of the narrative. The horizontal line shows the extent to which stories digress from the central theme of the section.

As mentioned in the preceding chapter, the story of Key Xosrow is also found in Tha'âlebi's *Ghurar*. Tha'âlebi gives a brief account of stories 13-13c of the ShNF or the first part of Tabari's account. He does not recount the episode of Farud, which is present in both Tabari's account and Ferdowsi's. Like Tabari, he leaves out stories 13d and 13e, proceeds to story 13f or the second part of Tabari's account, and relates Afrâsiyâb's flight to Gang-Dezh only once.²⁶⁸

Among the three accounts of the story of Key Xosrow, Tabari presents the most austere account, where no mention of Rostam is made. Tha'âlebi also focuses

²⁶⁸Zotenberg ed. & trans. 1900: 222-34.

on Key Xosrow, although he alludes to Rostam, which implies that a fuller account involving Rostam was probably known. On the other hand, Ferdowsi incorporates a number of episodes on Rostam, especially in the earlier parts of the section on Key Xosrow. In stories 13b and 13c, Rostam plays an important role. Story 13d relates his combat with Akvân Div. In story 13e, Rostam rescues Bizhan and Manizhe and fights with Afrâsiyâb. Even in story 13g, where Xosrow seeks revenge on Afrâsiyâb, Rostam plays a pivotal role; he twice disapproves of Afrâsiyâb's pacifying messages (13g:531-2;1569-1600). Thus, most of the repetitions and digressions in Ferdowsi's account are related with Rostam, and may point to the influence of the Sistani tradition.

1. Formal Criteria

In contrast to the top-down approach that was used to analyse the *tumâr*, the bottom-up approach will be taken for story 13b. In considering the *tumâr* it was relatively easy to first identify chapter-divisions that are marked by direct citations from the ShNF. In story 13b, on the other hand, it is easier to begin with episode-divisions which are indicated by narrative markers. Episodes are then grouped together to form a series of instalments.

Episode Divisions

The boundaries of episodes are formally indicated by the following narrative and temporal markers.

(1) narrative markers

va zin (zân) ruy [and on this (that) side];

*az ân ruy (suy)*²⁶⁹ (on that side);

-i (indefinite marker);

(2) temporal markers

*co (cun)*²⁷⁰ (when);

(va) zân pas / pas [(and) after that / after]

descriptions of sunrise or sunset.

The narrative markers are generally used to indicate a shift of focus, while the temporal markers signal a temporal sequence of events (*co* and *pas et al*), or internal

²⁶⁹*Suy*, meaning 'direction or side', is used in this instance as the equivalent of *ruy* ('side').

²⁷⁰*Co* is a shortened form of *cun* and occurs far more frequently than the original form, possibly, under the influence of the metre.

divisions of an event or action (sunrise or sunset). We shall consider how they are used in context, beginning with the narrative markers.

(1) Narrative Markers

Va zîn (zân) ruy / az ân ruy

Va zîn (zân) ruy / az ân ruy (suy) is typically used at the start of a battle scene in which after a panoramic view of the armies the internal situation of each army is described. Located at a transitional point, it indicates a shift of attention from one army to the other:²⁷¹

[Following a description of the Turanian army]

Va zîn ru-ye lashkar sephdâr Tus / biyârâst bar sân-e cashm-e xorûs (13b:309)

(And on this side of the army, the commander Tus prepared an army in the manner of cock's eye).

[Then after the descriptions of the Persian army]

Va zân suy Humân be kerdâr-e kuh / biyâvard lashkar hame hamgoruh (13b:341)

(On that side, Humân assembled all his army like a mountain).

The marker is not merely used for convenience of description, but it can also be employed as part of narrative stratagems through which Ferdowsi manipulates the audience's sense of sympathy, dramatic irony or suspense, for instance, in the form of a contrast between the Turanians and the Iranians. When, for example, the Persians are in a plight, being hemmed in a fortress by the Turanians, the latter are naturally at the height of their power. The contrast is made explicit by a paragraph introduced by *va zân ruy*, as shown below:

*Va zân ruy Pirân be kerdâr-e gard / hami rând lashkar be dasht-e nabard
navandi be mozhde biyâmâd ze pish / begoft ân kojâ rafte bod kam-o bish
co beshnid Humân bexandid-o goft / ke shod bi-gamân baxt-e bidâr joft*

<...>

bozorgân-e irân por az dâq-o dard ...(13b:969-73a)

(On that side, Pirân led his army to the battlefield swift as a gust of wind. A courier came

²⁷¹Cf. 13b:309, 341, 429 (the end of a war), 1175, 1179, 1512.

with the tidings, and said all what had gone on. Hearing this Humân said smiling, “a fortune is on our side”. <...> Chiefs among the Iranians were full of agony and pain ...).

Later in the story, when the Persians are convinced of Rostam’s coming (which is a centrepiece of the story), such a contrast between the two parties begins to take on dramatic irony; for the Persians recover from defeat while the Turanians are trying to dissuade themselves from the feeling that they will suffer defeat in the end. While Humân is at pains to convince Pirân that they have so many weapons and arms that they cannot possibly be defeated by Rostam and Tus, a shift is made to the Iranian side:

*Va zân su co âgâhi âmad be Tus / ke shod ru-ye keshvar por âvâ-ye kus
az irân biyâmad gav-e piltan / Fariborz-e Kâ’us bâ anjoman (13b:1138-9)*

(On that side, when Tus received the tidings that Rostam and Fariborz, son of Kâ’us, came from Iran with their armies, the earth was filled with the sound of drum).

The irony here emerges by virtue of the contrast between what the Turanians know and the truth that the audience is already informed of.

Indefinite marker -i

An episode may begin with the introduction of an unidentified character who is marked by *yeki* (‘one’), the indefinite article *-i* or a combination of both (*yeki N-i*, ‘a certain N’). In Persian such an indefinite construction is a marked form in default of the definite articles. When placed at the beginning of an episode, it is particularly effective in drawing the reader’s attention to what follows. Just before the following example, Tus is prepared to face the enemy with a group of able men:

ze Torkân yeki bud Bâzur nâm / be afsun be har jây gostarde gâm (13b:355)

(There was a certain Bâzur by name among the Turanians, who excelled in the art of magic in every respect).²⁷²

The mention of one Bâzur is surely unexpected for the audience, which would expect yet another combat to begin. Since the audience is as unprepared for this as the Iranians (who are of course left in suspense at this stage), it will be all the more interested in what this Bâzur is going to perform, possibly, against the interest of

²⁷²Cf. 13b:121, 176, 355, 376, 1373, 1545.

the Iranians. Such an unidentified character introduced at the beginning of an episode is thus an effective means of arousing the audience's curiosity.

(2) Temporal Markers

Co (cun)

Co (cun) provides a context in which a new situation unfolds. The context may vary according to the semantics of verbs which appear in ensuing clauses. Roughly eighty percent are verbs of perception: *didan* (to see), *shenidan* (to hear), *âgah shodan* (to realise), and roughly twenty percent are verbs of action: *raftan* (to go), *âmadan* (to come), *rasidan* (to arrive at), etc. When accompanied by verbs of perception, *co (cun)* highlights the immediate response of the subject who has acquired a piece of information either by seeing or hearing, as shown in the following:

Co Rostam bedid ân-ke Xâqân ce kard / biyârâst lashkar be dasht-e nabard (13b:1334)

(When Rostam saw what the Xâqân did, he arranged the army on the battlefield).

Co jâdu bedid-esh biyâmad be jang / 'omudi ze pulâd-e cini be cang (13b:380)

(When the sorcerer saw him, he came to fight with a mace made of Chinese iron).²⁷³

Co beshnid Humân xorush-e sepâh / neshast az bar-e tâzi aspi siyâh (13b:590)

(When Humân heard the army shout / he mounted a black, Arabian horse).

Co beshnid Pirân ze har su sepâh / ferestâd-o begreft bar kuh râh (13b:564)

(When Pirân heard it he sent an army everywhere and set out to the mountain).²⁷⁴

When *co* is accompanied by verbs of action, it denotes a change of place or setting where a new action takes place:

Co Bâzur bar shod be kuh dar zamân / bar âmad yeki bâd-o barf-e zhiyân (13b:360)

²⁷³See also 13b:178, 380, 523, 886, 1026, 1031 (*bengarid*), 1334, 1406, 1427 (*negah kard*).

²⁷⁴See also 13b:153, 243, 435, 521, 564, 590, 658, 696, 737, 757, 907, 971, 1198, 1223, 1323, 1377 (*be gush âmad*), 1480; the other examples with verbs of perception are as follows: 157 (*biyâsud*); 182, 266, 444, 782, 1188, 1384 (verbal phrases with *shodan / gashtan*); 1093 (*padid âmad*).

(Bâzur reached the mountain in an instant, and there came a gust of wind and heavy snow).

Co nazdik-e kuh-e Hamâvan rasid / be dân dâman-e kuh lashkar kashid (13b 460)

(When he [Tus] came near Mt. Hamâvand, he led the army to the foot of the mountain).²⁷⁵

(Va) zân pas / pas

(Va) zân pas / pas establishes a temporal order between what has been just told and what is coming up next.²⁷⁶ The following example occurs after Tus sets his mind on dispatching a messenger to Key Xosrow to enlist Rostam's help:

az ân pas biyâmad be Xosrow xabar / ke Pirân shod az razm piruzgar (13b:653)

(Then the tidings came to Xosrow that Pirân was victorious in war).

Az ân pas indicates that what is going to be told, namely Xosrow's receiving the news, is connected with what has been told, or Tus's resolution to write to Xosrow. In the following examples, however, the adverbial phrase is not used to locate an up-coming episode within the same sequence of events in time. Rather, it signals a change of point of view. The following examples occur after Rohhâm tells his father, Gudarz, that he has arrested a sorcerer who has caused a snowstorm to fall upon the Persians:

bedidand az ân pas delirân-e shâh / co daryâ-ye xun gashte âvardgâh (13b:387)

(After that, the king's warriors found that the battlefield became like a river of blood).

After a description of the battlefield, focus is shifted to two chiefs:

conin goft Gudarz az ân pas be Tus / ke na pil bâjad na âvâ-ye kus ...(13b:389)

(Gudarz then said to Tus, "neither elephants nor war drums are necessary, ...").

²⁷⁵See also 13b:460, 648, 880, 1068; the other examples with verbs of action are: 277 (*neshastan*), 305 (*goftan*), 360 (*bar shodan*), 1424 (*bar gashtan*). *Az ân jâygah* ('from that place, thence') also indicates a change of setting: 1312 (*vaz ân jâygah*), 1489 (*az ân jâygah*), 1446 (*vaz ân jâygah*).

²⁷⁶Cf. 13b:365 (*va zân pas*), 387 (*az ân pas*), 389 (=), 471 (*pas ângah*), 502 (*pas*), 653 (*az ân pas*), 779 (*va zân pas*), 1240 (=), 1410 (*pas*). The following have similar functions: 371 (*ân zamân*), 414 (*ân gahî*), 949 (*andar zamân*, or at which moment, which emphasises unexpected turn of events), 1123 (*ham andar zamân*, 'at the very moment' with emphasis on the urgency of an event), 1296 (*ham-ân-gah*).

What is presented here is not two events that happened one after another in time but a single event — discovery of losses by the Persians. What changes is the point of view from which the narrator describes this event. In the first example, the narrator takes a panoramic view of the battlefield, and in the second example he comes closer to the two chiefs to let them express their feelings about what has happened. In cases like these *az ân pas* functions in a manner similar to *az in / ân ruy*.²⁷⁷

Descriptions of sunrise / sunset

Descriptions of sunrise or sunset with which story 13b is replete are among the temporal markers, marking the beginnings or ends of episodes just like *co* and *pas az ân*:

*co bar zad sar az kuh xorshid-e zard / be xamm andar âmad shab-e lâjvard
bar âmad xorush az dar bârgâh / tahamtan biyâmad be nazdik-e shâh* (13b:60-1)

(when the golden sun rose over the mountain it drove away the darkness of the night. A loud cry was heard at court that Rostam came to meet the king).

On closer examination, however, they appear also to indicate internal divisions of an event. Story 13b centres on four events: (1) Tus's departure; (2) the first battle; (3) the second battle; (4) the third battle. These events are depicted in chronological order, and each is further punctuated with alternating descriptions of sunrise and sunset. If we divide up each of the events based on descriptions of sunrise or sunset, we would arrive at *Figure 8* below:

Event	Day	Mor. / Night (Line No.: 13b)	Contents
1	1	Morning (60)	Rostam comes to the court.
	2	Morning (75-6)	Tus offers his services to Key Xosrow.
	3	Morning (91)	Tus departs with his army.
2	1	Night (290)	Tus fights with Arjang and then with Humân.
	2	Morning (293)	A mass combat begins.
		Night (422)	Each army holds a meeting.
3	3	Morning (456)	The Persians take refuge in the mountain Hamâvan.
	1	Morning (471)	The Turanians find that the enemy has fled.
		Night (506)	The Turanians locate where the enemy is.
	2	Morning (518)	Pirân comes to speak with Tus.
	3	Morning (540)	The Persians resolve to attack the Turanians at night.

²⁷⁷Also 13b:343 (*va zân pas*). When used in a conversation between characters, the adverbial phrase marks the continuity of an event as well as a shift of focus, as in 13b:756 and 13b:779.

	Night (578-9)	The Persians attack the Turanians.
4	1 Night (788)	Tus sees Siyâvosh in a dream.
	2 Morning (828)	The Xâqân comes to Pirân with his army.
	3 Morning (904)	Persian chiefs hold a meeting together.
	Afternoon (928)	The chiefs receive the news that an army is coming towards them.
	Midnight (996)	The arrival of the army is confirmed.
	4 Morning (1008)	The Xâqân musters his army.
	5 Morning (1063)	Fariborz comes to the field.
	6 Morning (1167)	Giv and Tus fight with Kâmus.
	Night (1219)	Rostam's arrival is reported.
	7 Morning (1278)	The Turanians hold a meeting.
	Afternoon (1361)	Rostam fights with Ashkabus.
	Night (1491)	The Turanians hold a meeting.
	8 Morning (1499)	Rostam fights with Kâmus.

Figure 8: Internal Divisions of the Events in Story 13b

As is shown, the descriptions of sunrise or sunset are used as an organising principle in the narrative. Events 1 to 3 are described as occurring in a three-day period, which sets a regular pattern to the organisation of the story. By contrast, event 4 breaks this pattern by virtue of its length and depth; it extends into eight days, and some of the events are divided into even shorter periods of time. It is shown to be the central part of the story in which Ferdowsi goes along at a much slower pace than in the other parts. Here he apparently attempts to engage the audience by deliberately frustrating its desire to know the outcome of the battle.

Characteristic Use of Narrative / Temporal Markers in the ShNF

The preceding section shows that Ferdowsi has a far narrower selection of narrative and temporal markers than the storytellers. He uses only *co (cun)* and *va zân pas* to indicate a temporal sequence of events and *va zân ruy*, &c to signal a change of focus, while his modern successors can use any one of the following: *tâ, cun, va, ângâh, sepa, ba'd az ân* for the former, and *(ammâ) beshenow az, (ammâ) cand kalâm 'arz konim az, az tarafi*, etc. for the latter meaning.²⁷⁸ What keeps Ferdowsi from enlarging a lexical repertoire of narrative or temporal markers is perhaps the *motaqâreb* metre, in which the ShNF is written. Metrical constraints would prohibit the occurrence of the kind of phrases: *(ammâ) beshenow az* or *(ammâ) cand kalâm 'arz konim az* in the ShNF, but would be likely to encourage *va zin (zân) ruy, az ân ruy (suy), (va) zân pas, or az ân pas*, which precisely fit into a metrical pattern made

²⁷⁸The narrative and temporal markers in Zariri's *tumâr* have been discussed in Chapter II above.

up of short, long, (over-) long syllables.²⁷⁹ These markers are, in fact, formulaic in the Parry-Lordian sense of the word. They generally occur at the beginning of a line and have the same metrical value. Even *co*, which is only a syllable long, is habitually used with such words as *beshnid* ('he/she /it heard')²⁸⁰ or *xorshid* ('the sun')²⁸¹ to complete one foot (plus a syllable in some contexts). Although such formulaic expressions are excluded from our formal criteria, it is undeniable, in this instance, that they are used for ease of versification.

It is also noteworthy that unlike the storytellers, Ferdowsi does not use narrative markers to indicate the beginning or end of evaluative commentary in the ShNF,²⁸² implying the absence of interim commentary in the story. This does not mean that he is a more objective narrator than the storytellers. It does suggest, however, that he pays more attention to the global organisation of the story than *naqqâls*, as he comments on the story in the prologue (13b:1-19) as well as in the epilogue (13b:1089-95). He guides the audience as to the way in which the story ought to be interpreted without directly intruding on the story. Other types of markers that are rarely used in the ShNF are markers of contingency and zero duration: *ke dar ân vaqt* ('at which moment'), *hamin mowqe'* ('at that very moment'), *nâgâh* ('suddenly'), etc.²⁸³ The use of such markers is, as we saw in Chapter II, closely associated with the particular structure of the *tumâr* in which the storyteller arbitrarily cuts off narration, presumably for convenience' sake. Conversely, the infrequent use of these markers in the ShNF may suggest that the structure is more organically constructed than that of the *tumâr* so that 'chance' or 'contingency' can hardly play any significant role. The near absence of the markers to indicate interim commentary or contingent events or actions is a good indication of significant editings that have gone into the ShNF, which apparently is not a first-degree oral text.

²⁷⁹It is noticeable that the other, less frequently used, markers also have the same metrical value: e.g. *az an jâygah; vaz ân jâygah; pas ângah*.

²⁸⁰Also, 13b:75; 456; 518; 540; 784; 828; 928; 1008; 1063; 1167. The second vowel in *beshnid* is dropped by poetic license, so that the word fits into the metrical pattern.

²⁸¹13b:153; 243; 435; 521; 564; 590; 658; 696; 737; 971; 1198; 1223; 1323.

²⁸²E.g. *hâl bâyard motavajje-ye in mowzu' shod az in ke ...* ('pay now attention to this point ...') etc.

²⁸³However, the use of *andar zamân* in line 13b:949 [*nehâdand zin bar samand-e camân / xorush âmad az dide andar zamân* (Scarcely had he [Gudarz] saddled a wandering charger than the sentinel cried out)] is similar to that of the markers of contingency, indicating the unexpected turn of events.

Instalment Divisions

Instalment divisions can be established by grouping together episodes which have been identified above. As in Chapter II, the criterion is to identify a point where at least one story line is completed.²⁸⁴ Thus, starting with the first episode that relates Xosrow's order to kill Tus, we will move along the story until Xosrow commands Tus to take an army to Turân, which takes place in the fifth episode. This seems to be a reasonable point to stop because in the next episode a different story line is taken up: Pirân takes an action knowing Tus's departure. If we continue in this manner up to line 1588 where the story ends, we shall arrive at instalment divisions, which are listed in Appendix II together with groupings of episodes.²⁸⁵

As *Figure 9* shows, the average length (the number of lines) of the instalment is 92 lines long and the average episode count (the number of episodes per instalment) is between 6 and 7. Making allowances for $\pm 20\%$ variance, i.e. between 74 and 110 for instalment length, and between 5 and 8 for episode count, the following instalments fall outside the specified ranges. Instalments 2, 5, and 8 are out of the range in both instalment length and episode count. Instalments 4, 10 and 15 are shorter, 62, 68, and 54 lines long respectively, and instalments 3, 7 and 9 are longer, 117, 135, 140 lines long respectively. In terms of episode count, instalment 6 contains more episodes than average, with 9 episodes. The overall result is that about 53% falls outside the range as regards to instalment length, as does about 24% in terms of episode count. We shall now look at each of these instalments to consider why they are irregular and to assess the findings as a whole.²⁸⁶

²⁸⁴For a detailed account of the method for identifying instalment divisions see Chapter II above.

²⁸⁵The prologue (13b:1-19) and the epilogue (13b:1589-95) are not included in the list.

²⁸⁶Alternatively it is possible to rearrange the instalment divisions themselves. Many attempts, in fact, were made to arrive at more reasonable divisions than the one presented. Each time adjustments were made to some instalments, as it turned out, more adjustments were required for others. The present version is, therefore, no better than many other alternatives. After many trials, a particular group of instalments were found to be resistant to any attempts to establish consistency. This led to the realisation that these anomalies might have to do with Ferdowsi's editing. It seems therefore more productive to consider why they are resistant than attempt to eliminate them.

Instalment No.	Instalment Length	Episode Count	Episode Length
1	101	5	20
2	55	4	13
3	117	7	16
4	62	6	10
5	67	10	6.7
6	96	9	10
7	135	7	19
8	135	10	13
9	140	6	23
10	68	5	13
11	97	6	16
12	95	6	15
13	90	5	18
14	95	6	15
15	54	6	9
16	72	5	14
17	90	5	18
Average	92	6.3	14.6
Tolerance Range	74-110	5-8	11.7-17.5

Figure 9: Statistics on the Hypothetical Instalments in Story 13b

Instalment 2 is significantly shorter than the others, with the least episode count of four. In terms of instalment length it could be added either to the first instalment or the third to reach a better division, but in terms of its contents it cannot, since, as noted above, it takes up a story line different from that of the first or the third. The story line is, moreover, about Pirân's plot against Tus which, if treated in more detail, could be considerably longer. In Zariri's *tumâr* for instance, a similar story line is expanded into about ten pages in prose (2.7.5-2.8.3 in Appendix I). Instalment 5 is also short but contains more episodes than average. It relates as many as ten episodes in the shortest space of time. Ferdowsi apparently intended to achieve the greatest possible conciseness, possibly because of the motif dealt with: a Turanian sorcerer causes a snowstorm to fall down on the Persian army. This motif has been used in the preceding story, where the Persians suffer from a snowstorm (13:1015-22). If it had to be repeated nevertheless, it is perhaps to establish a sense of parallelism between the two stories in order to highlight the difference, that is, Rostam's participation in the present story. In contrast to the fifth instalment, the eighth is longer than average with the maximum episode count of ten. Here Ferdowsi describes the same number of episodes in more leisurely manner than in the fifth. For one thing, he fully dramatises Fariborz's marriage offer to Farangis in the form of speeches and for another, each of the turns in conversation is indicated by the narrative marker *co*. The use of speeches increases

line numbers, and that of the narrative marker boosts episode count.

These observations suggest that the ratio of episode count to instalment length (episode length) somehow affects narrative speed and depth (the extent to which Ferdowsi covers each of the episodes in an instalment). When episode length becomes smaller, as in the case of instalment 5, narrative speed increases but depth decreases. Conversely, when it gets greater, as in the case of instalment 8, the narrative slows down, while narrative depth increases by about 50%. By modulating episode count and length in this manner, Ferdowsi controls the speed and depth of the narrative, which are in inverse proportion to each another. Thus, in instalments 3, 7, and 9 which exceed the average length of instalment, while keeping episode count constant (that is within the range), the narrative decelerates, whereas each of the episodes receives more thorough treatment than elsewhere. One of the key factors to this is, in fact, the absence or presence of descriptive passages which abound in these instalments. Instalments 3 and 7 relate a motif of war, while instalment 9 describes how Pirân receives the Xâqân of China, with minute descriptions of his army and war equipment. On the other hand, although instalment 15 relates Rostam's combat with a Kâshâni champion, episode length is shorter than average, resulting in the acceleration of narrative speed. Ferdowsi's priority in this instalment is to speed up while keeping episode coverage at a minimum. Similarly, instalment 4 gives a hurried account of a battle in which contrary to instalments 3 and 7, descriptive passages are curtailed. Instalment 6 also goes rather rapidly with the Persian army literally hurrying off to a fortress in a mountain. Here narrative speed is relatively equal to the pace of the story.

Instalment 10 is somewhat different from the others. It has an average episode count and is only slightly out of the range in terms of instalment length. Narrative speed and depth are fairly neutral. Further, it is semantically complete, recounting the process in which chiefs among the Persians anxiously await the approach of reinforcements. Like instalment 2, it is significantly shorter than average.

To return now to the overall result of the instalment divisions, about sixty percent of the instalments fail in one way or another to meet the standard definition of the instalment, which requires each of the instalments to be of equal length. Story 13b deviates by roughly 60% from typical oral text such as *tumârs* which, as postulated earlier, should have none of those anomalies. Even then, the fact remains that the story divides into pseudo-instalments, and that most of the deviations can be explained by Ferdowsi's deliberate handling of plot. On the whole, this seems to

indicate that story 13b is not a direct transcription of actual performance or its equivalents like *tumârs*, but a verse adaptation of such. Consequently, the instalments discussed above can be taken to reflect the transformations which Ferdowsi has effected in the process of versification. Most of the transformations are, as seen above, found with respect to narrative speed and depth. Though largely drawing on the art of oral storytelling — as for example keeping instalment divisions intact — Ferdowsi does not merely reproduce an oral performance, but manages to change narrative speed and depth so as to stress one or another episode while making others brief, to control the audience's sympathy, antipathy, beliefs, and interests as he moves along.

2. Thematic Criteria

The formal characteristics which have been identified above have a direct bearing on the meaning, or interpretation of the story. Ultimately, they are contrived by Ferdowsi to dispose the audience favourably or unfavourably towards a set of interpretations of the story. In order to appreciate their functions fully, it is necessary therefore to examine the thematic structure of story 13b, which is also part of the OPM criteria.

The Theme of Story 13b

The thematic criteria of the Oral Performance Model first and foremost require a key motif to be identified in a story. It further states that the motif must be formally marked. Thus, we will begin this section by looking for such a key motif in story 13b.

The story content of 13b is indicated at the close of the preceding story (story 13) in which the Turanians celebrate their victory. In the midst of the celebration Afrâsiyâb warns Pirân to be ever alert to Rostam:

As long as Rostam is a champion, you [Pirân] will not sleep in peace without causing your soul to suffer. I have no worry except about him who never ceases to seek revenge. I fear that he might suddenly pounce down on the Turanian army (13:1694-6).

Afrâsiyâb is not satisfied with the victory as he is well aware that his army was fortunate to fight the Persians at a time when Rostam was absent. Having defeated them moreover, he now feels it inevitable for Rostam to seek revenge. His fear also

reads as a hint on the story to come, namely that Rostam will play his role to defeat the Turanians. This is further confirmed by the prologue to story 13b, where Rostam is praised for his prowess and valour:

Rostam performed a number of marvels on earth, whose story is in the mind of every one. He illustrates what bravery and combat are, and is a paragon of wisdom, knowledge and dignity. In the wilderness he is like an elephant and on the river a crocodile. He is a wise, alert warrior (13b:15-7).

Since this comes in just before the beginning of the story, it highlights the significant role played by Rostam in yet another battle with the Turanians, and thus guides the audience's interest in this direction.

Story 13b appears to be a straightforward narrative. As is implied by Afrâsiyâb's fear and in the praises of Rostam in the prologue, Rostam never fails to defeat his enemies. He will lead an army to Turân where he defeats everyone who dares to challenge him. The end of the story is thus predictable even before it begins. The problem of telling this kind of the story would be to find some way to create narrative suspense to engage the audience in a pursuit of the protagonist. One way of achieving this is to develop a story in an unpredictable manner to reach a predictable conclusion. If, for example, Rostam does not take part in the second campaign, what will happen to the Persians? When does he come to assist them? Even if the story is as simple as story 13b, it will be made into a number of different plots with different effects. The solution that Ferdowsi provides is to keep Rostam away from the campaign for a moment.

Despite the praises for Rostam which appear to promise his immediate appearance, he is thus kept away from the foreground for about 500 lines, or through the first six instalments. As a result the Persians suffer defeat as before, and many of Gudarz's children perish in the battle. The sustained absence of Rostam serves two purposes: on the one hand, dramatic effects are achieved through the plight of the Persians with whom the audience is likely to identify itself, and on the other Rostam is awaited with greater eagerness. The question is, then, when and how he is brought in to the story. It is precisely on this question that the latter half of the story centres. The question is first posed when Tus, commander-in-chief, sets his mind on writing to Key Xosrow to have Rostam sent for:

When this letter reaches Xosrow it will kindle fire in his heart anew. The elephantine hero [Rostam] will come with his army of lions to assist us. Let us be once again hopeful of

victory, that we shall be able to meet Key Xosrow again (13b:641-3).

Since the Persians have been defeated and since Tus has requested Rostam's assistance, Rostam could, in principle, be introduced at any point from now on. Yet the logic of the story is such that when he comes in he will defeat his enemies, whoever they may be, to bring the story to an end. Therefore it is essential for Ferdowsi to delay his appearance as best he could, while at the same time having the audience anticipate it. He has already shown, at the beginning, his skills to that effect. He has explicitly emphasised Rostam's role in this story by means of Afrâsiyâb's speech and by praising him in the prologue. Using such narrative devices as this he attempts to effect narrative suspense in each of the instalments that follow (8 through 17). It is noticeable that he builds up the suspense on the level of instalments rather than the other structural units, as if to enact a storytelling session. This seems to be a good indication of his drawing on a model of oral performance. We shall, then, examine how each instalment is constructed in terms of the question of the timing of Rostam's coming or non-coming.

Organisations of Instalments 8-17

Instalment 8: 653-787

When Key Xosrow receives a letter from Tus he sends for Rostam. Rostam comes to the court shortly and is requested to set out to the Hamâvan mountain immediately with Fariborz as the forerunner. Before departure, however, he is asked by Fariborz to help him marry Farangis, Siayâvosh's widow. He successfully persuades Key Xosrow and Farangis herself to consent to Fariborz's offer. After the wedding Fariborz sets out to the battlefield and Rostam follows him.

Xosrow is alarmed by the circumstances in which his army is caught up and immediately summons Rostam to be sent to the front. It would be natural to expect Rostam to leave without delay. All the more so, because Rostam is generally assumed to be quick in responding to the kings' request.²⁸⁷ Nonetheless just before his departure he is involved in Fariborz's personal affairs which are irrelevant to the development of the story. He is delayed at court even though his fellows are suffering miserable defeat all the while. By dwelling on the episode of Fariborz's

²⁸⁷When, for example, Kâus is taken prisoner in Mazandaran Rostam sets off immediately to rescue him (12:238-96). His fights in Mazandaran are referred to in story 13b as an illustration of Rostam's bravery and prowess (13b:1142-3).

offer to Farangis Ferdowsi deliberately delays Rostam's departure.

Instalment 9: 788-927

Tus sees, in a dream, Siyâvosh and hears him saying, "Let the Iranians remain here, and you will be triumphant in the war" (13b 792). He is convinced that Rostam will come. Meanwhile Pirân receives the Xâqân (emperor) of China and his champion Kâmus. He explains to them about Persian chiefs and the course of the war. On the other hand, Tus and Gudarz are concerned about the enemy which is uncharacteristically quiet for the day. Their only hope lies in Rostam: "When Rostam comes to this battlefield he will bring to an end evils for the army" (13b:916).

Because Rostam has set out at the end of the previous instalment,²⁸⁸ and because Tus predicted this according to the oracle given by Siyâvosh,²⁸⁹ the audience is mentally prepared to see Rostam arrive within this instalment. However it is bound to be disappointed when the point of view shifts to the Turanians, describing how Pirân receives the Xâqân. The audience is perhaps no less dispirited than Tus and Gudarz who could only hope for Rostam to arrive.

Instalment 10: 928-95

Gudarz sees Pirân reinforced by the Xâqân's army. While he is despairing a sentinel sees dust rising far away in the desert. He also recognises several banners among the dust. Gudarz rejoices. But it is too dark to distinguish the size and commander of the army. He orders Bizhan to go to the crest of the mountain. Bizhan reports that the army is very small. Tus is so disappointed that he commands his army to get prepared for night attack.

Gudarz and other chiefs anxiously wait for the unidentified army to advance. Keeping pace with its approach, Ferdowsi develops the story at a snail's pace; the sentinel says to Gudarz that the army will not arrive before the dawn (13b:967). That he does this on purpose is also clear from the piecemeal descriptions of the army: rising dust and banners (13b:950-2). He is also careful to tell us that all this is taking place in the dusk so that the sentinel's inability to see further is rendered

²⁸⁸Rostam is said to have "journeyed two stages in a day, and taken no rest night or day" (13b:787). Since he apparently hurried off to the mountain he could get to the Persians anytime after this.

²⁸⁹Tus confirms our assumption that the success of the Persians depends on Rostam by interpreting the oracle, which only refers to his victory, as Rostam's imminent arrival: "Look, Rostam is

realistic. Further, at the close of the instalment he reverses the information on the army by introducing Bizhan's disappointing report. Like the previous instalment, this instalment ends by disappointing the audience.

Instalment 11: 996-1092

Receiving further details of the approaching army, Tus calls off the night attack. Meanwhile the Xâqân takes time to study the enemy's strategies, while ordering his army to draw lines of battle. Tus likewise commands his army to be prepared for battle. The Xâqân holds counsel with Pirân and Kâmus as to the timing of battle. The following morning the army reaches the Persians under the command of Fariborz, who brings the tidings about Rostam's coming.

Ferdowsi once again manipulates the audience. At the beginning he hints at the arrival of the reinforcements, but in the next segment he neither confirms nor denies it by shifting to the Turanians. At the end, he finally makes the army arrive, which, however, is commanded by Fariborz. Unexpected though it may seem, the fact that Fariborz comes ahead of Rostam is in itself unsurprising since he departed before Rostam in Instalment 8.

Instalment 12: 1093-1187

When Pirân is informed of the arrival of reinforcements to the enemy he holds a meeting with the Xâqân, Kâmus and Humân. Later he receives the confirmation that the army is led, not by Rostam, but by Fariborz. He lets Kâmus advance the army to the mountain. Meanwhile Tus encourages his army with the news of Fariborz's arrival and Rostam's which is being materialised. The following morning, when the Persians find themselves surrounded by the enemy, they recognise Rostam's banner at some distance. They renew their energy to fight.

The shift of focus to the Turanian side is not merely a manipulation to delay the narrative progress; it also drives home the fact that story 13b is as much about the Persians waiting for Rostam as about the Turanians fearing of Rostam. The Turanians have almost defeated the Persians and are quite close to that. They do not even have to fight to make it happen. They are currently waiting for the Persians to

coming to us as swift as the wind" (13b:797).

starve on the mountain. Their success is almost certain insofar as they can go on like this without further interruption. As it happens, however, they are informed of the arrival of an army to the Persians. They can no longer count on their success. Their story, like their enemy's, centres around Rostam, except that their interpretation of it goes exactly in the opposite direction: they dread Rostam's arrival. They know for a fact that they would have difficulty in battle when Rostam comes. The interest of the story lies in whether they recognise Rostam in the battlefield, and how this is made to happen is a key element in its organisation.

The Turanian story is organised in a manner similar to that of the Persians. Information on reinforcements to the Persians is given little by little. The sentinel observes an army coming from Iran, but fails to recognise its size or commander (13b:1096-7). This partial revelation of the truth leaves Pirân in suspense. When Pirân first heard the news he expects the worst, namely that Rostam has come. Then another piece of information is brought in to confirm Fariborz's arrival. Pirân is temporarily relieved: "‘We should,’ said Pirân to Humân, ‘wipe off worry from our mind. As long as he [the commander of the Persian army] is not Rostam there is no fear’" (13b:1125-26a). The Turanians will be baffled by uncertainty about Rostam's arrival, just as the Persians have.

It is easy to understand why Ferdowsi focuses on the Turanians at this point. Since Rostam has already come to aid the Persians, the story about the Persians is effectively completed. What remains to be told is Rostam's active participation in battle, which is probably one of the chief interests of story 13b for the audience.

Instalment 13: 1188-1277

Kâmus advances in front of the Turanians and seeks out his match. Giv comes forward. Following a single combat between them, both armies are engaged in battle. At night the report of Rostam's arrival is brought to chiefs among the Persians. In no time does Rostam reach the mountain, he is briefed about the course of the battle and enemy chiefs.

This instalment creates a welcome diversion by bringing in descriptions of single and mass combat after a series of characters' psychological reactions to Rostam's coming or non-coming. It would serve to remind the audience of what this story is really about, that is, the battle between Iran and Turan, and would enliven it to welcome Rostam in one of the most fitting manners. Having introduced Rostam at the end, it inevitably lets the audience expect his active involvement in the battle to

come.

Instalment 14: 1278-1372

On hearing the Persians reinforced, Humân thinks it probable that Rostam has come. He immediately consults Kâmus on the issue. However he is consoled by Kâmus who is so self-confident as to think little of Rostam. Then he commands the Xâqân to guard the rear, while moving forward himself. When Rostam sees the Xâqân advancing he orders his army to draw lines of battle. But he himself refuses to fight, because his horse, Raxsh, has not recovered from the long journey. Both armies fight with one another.

In this instalment, Ferdowsi deludes the audience on two counts: by turning back to the Turanian side while letting Rostam decline from battle. He evidently intends to delay Rostam's playing a role in the story as much as possible.

The Turanian response to Rostam's arrival is once again equivocal. Humân comes quite close to recognising Rostam as he has identified his green pavilion and banner in the shape of a dragon which are guarded by Zabolis with Kaboli swords in hand (13b:1291-3). These are, as average spectators would know, the unmistakable signs of Rostam. Humân's fear is immediately confirmed by Pirân: "Bad luck!", said Pirân to him [Humân], 'should Rostam get to this battle there would be no Kâmus, nor Shangol or Turanian warriors'" (13b:1294-5). If the Turanians are genuinely convinced of Rostam's presence, they would avoid direct confrontation, or at least contrive certain measures to prevent it from happening. Such a shift will, on the one hand, complicate the plot greatly and on the other, will leave the audience in suspense too long. Thus, Ferdowsi brings in Kâmus — who, being a champion of the Xâqân, is little informed of Rostam and therefore remains unaffected by his presence — in order to push the story forward. Kâmus assures that he will destroy the enemies, whether or not Rostam is among them. The irony here is that Kâmus's conceit is ungrounded while the chiefs' suspicion is well-grounded.

Another disillusionment that the audience might feel in this instalment is that Rostam declines to participate in the battle under the pretext of caring for his horse Raxsh. This seems doubly to disappoint the audience. On the one hand, it runs counter to the audience's expectation that Rostam and his horse are indefatigable fighters. On the other hand, it frustrates the audience's desire to see Rostam fight immediately, which has been suggested at the end of the previous instalment. Yet no resolution is provided within the current instalment so that the audience is left in

doubt as to the course of the battle.

Instalment 15: 1373-1426

The battle begins with a single combat between Ashkbus the Kâshâni champion and Rohhâm, in which the former wins. Observing Ashkbus defeat Rohhâm, Rostam comes forward, without Raxsh, to fight with him. He first shoots down Ashkbus's horse and then its owner with arrows. He retires to let the armies fight one another.

Rostam removes the disillusionment created in the previous instalment by fighting with Ashkbus for the Iranians as well as for the audience. On the other hand, he does little to have the Turanians perceive whom they are fighting against. The trick here is that he fights without Raxsh, which has been excused from taking part in the battle. In the following instalment, this apparently insignificant episode will be exploited to the full to confuse the Turanians further.

Instalment 16: 1427-98

The Xâqân asks Pirân and Humân about the man who has destroyed Ashkbus. Since he receives no confirmation he goes to speak with Kâmus. Though Kâmus says it was Rostam, Pirân assures him that this is not so. Nevertheless he resolves to fight the man whoever he may be. At night the Turanian chiefs come out a meeting, fully determined to challenge the Persians next day.

While the Turanian chiefs are naturally curious of the man who has destroyed Ashkbus, they have no clues as to his identity:

He [the Xâqân] said to Pirân, "Who is that Iranian? What is his name?" You might say he is one of the humblest and lowest ranks in the army (13b:1428-9).

The Xâqân could only identify Rostam as a common foot-soldier when he saw him fighting on foot. He may be excused for this mistake because he has not seen Rostam before. When he asks Pirân about Rostam, however, he receives no definite answer: "I do not know this man in Iran, nor do I know who among us can fight with him" (13b:1436). Thus even Pirân who has perhaps met Rostam before²⁹⁰ fails to identify him. He proceeds to make inquiry about Rostam or foot-

²⁹⁰In *Jang-e Haft Gordân* ('the combat of seven heroes'; 12b:537-782) Pirân, as commander-in-

soldier, while speaking to Kâmus. Interestingly, only Kâmus identifies him as Rostam: “my heart is torn in two by the foot-soldier who made our army scared. ... it may be that the brave Sagzi of whom you talked much came to fight on foot, to aid the Persians” (13b:1452-5). Since, as noted earlier, Kâmus has none of prejudice for or against Rostam he is more perceptive, better capable of judging the extraordinary qualities of Rostam. Yet his opinion is immediately denied by Pirân: “He [Rostam] is different. He is a noble cavalier and champion” (13b:1456). Pirân goes on to enumerate Rostam’s attributes such as his garment made of a leopard’s skin and his Raxsh (13b:1454-79). In spite of, or rather because of his excessive knowledge of Rostam, he cannot perceive what he sees; he does not find all of the attributes with which Rostam is to be identified. Thus in contrast to Instalment 14, where Kâmus denied Rostam’s presence, in the present instalment Pirân disagrees with Kâmus about it. Knowing too little has the same effect as knowing too much. Either way the Turanians are urged to confront the Persians who have now enlisted Rostam’s full assistance.

Instalment 17: 1499-1588

After a brief engagement between the armies, Kâmus comes forward to challenge the man who has killed Ashkbus. He is met by Alvâ, Rostam’s spear-bearer who is found to be no match of his. On seeing Alvâ destroyed Rostam engages Kâmus in single combat in which he prevails.

The story has to end at this point, at least temporarily, since Rostam makes a full appearance to defeat Kâmus — temporarily in the sense that the Persian side of the story has completed, but not the Turanians side. For, up to this point, we are not told whether or not the Turanians have come to identify the foot-soldier with Rostam. It seems likely that their story will be carried over to the next story (13c), though its significance may diminish as the story develops.

Ferdowsi’s Narrative Technique

The analysis shows that most of instalments 8 - 17 contain narrative suspense which is evoked by story elements that conjointly encourage and discourage Rostam’s participation in the story. In instalment 8 for example, Rostam comes to Key Xosrow’s court but is detained by Fariborz. The first serves to bring the story

chief, takes arms against Rostam and other Persian heroes who came hunting in Turân.

forward as Rostam moves a little closer towards the battlefield, whereas the second delays the process. Similarly in instalments 9 and 11, Rostam's approach is on the one hand suggested, but is then effectively suspended by means of a shift of focus to the Turanians. Instalment 9 first indicates that Rostam's arrival is imminent and then shifts to describe how Pirân receives the Xâqân and his champions. Instalment 11 again turns to the Turanians after a hint at the approach of an army. In instalments 9 through 16, the Turanian point of view is developed in its own right, and intensifies the opposition between the two armies in terms of Rostam. In Instalments 10 and 11, on the other hand, the advance of the reinforcements which are deliberately left unspecified is literally slowed down. As a result the Persians are left in a state of confusion in which they can never be sure of the arrival of Rostam. Narrative suspense is nearly absent from instalments 13 and 17. The former introduces a change, with descriptions of battle, in the story line which works out the same question about Rostam from different perspectives; whereas the latter naturally is deprived of suspense as it completes the story. Yet it leaves out much about the Turanians who up to then hesitate to identify the foot-soldier as Rostam. In story 13b, in other words, the principle of completeness and incompleteness is at work. In a larger context, the story can be seen as a prolonged instalment of the story of Key Xosrow.²⁹¹

As was pointed out at the beginning of this section, story 13b is a simple story in which the end is predictable. In a sense, it presents a similar problem to Ferdowsi as to the *naqqâl* who deals with well-known stories such as *Rostam and Sohrâb*. Since the audience knows how the story ends, it cannot be satisfied by simple retellings but rather expects to hear something at once unforeseen and gratifying. As we saw in Chapter II, the storyteller's solution is to exploit a limited number of narrative techniques: interlacing, repetition and red herring, with which to surprise, disappoint or please the audience. When looking back over story 13b in terms of narrative technique we are led to observe that a similar set of techniques are in play.

The first technique that stands out in story 13b is interlacing. Since the story is about a war it inevitably involves two parties which are opposed to one another in nearly every respect. It is bound to be divided up into two, and each must be developed in its own terms, to some extent — because if each is told independently of the other there would be no unity in the story. What makes this possible is interlacing, which allows each of the two to be told relatively independently and yet

²⁹¹As *Figure 7* illustrates, story 13b is indeed part of the larger whole.

allows them to be held together. Thus, story 13b develops in terms of two story lines: the war fought by the Persians and that by the Turanians, and alternates between these two as is indicated by the frequent use of the narrative marker *va zin (zân) ruy*. Especially in the latter half of the story which has been examined above, interlacing is deployed to the full. In instalments 9, 11, 12 and 14 it functions as the basis for the shifting focus which is the essential means of enhancing narrative suspense. If those instalments are related only from the perspective of the Persians, much of the pleasure we derive from the story would be lost. In the absence of the contrast provided by the Turanians, the story would become extremely monotonous, only describing the Persians who wait for Rostam. There would be no irony, no suspense, no change of narrative speed. Interlacing thus serves multiple purposes and is indispensable to story 13b.

Structural repetition is also at work in story 13b. When viewed in a wider context, it provides an essential framework for stories 13 and 13b. What happens in the latter half of 13 is repeated in the first half of 13b. That is, the Persians suffer defeat in a similar manner twice over. The repetition serves to string together these two stories while at the same time intensifying the difference that is the presence or absence of Rostam.

The other technique used frequently is red herring pointing to Rostam's immediate participation in the story. To give a few examples, at the end of instalment 8 it is implied that Rostam will soon get to the Persians. In instalment 9, this is further reinforced by Siyâvosh's oracle, or rather Tus's interpretation of it. Instalment 10 then gives a vague sign of Rostam's arrival by referring to the dust and banners that are glimpsed by the Persian chiefs. In instalments 14 and 16 Humân and Kâmus, respectively, believe Rostam's presence among the enemy for good reasons, but are led to disbelieve their own judgement. Though these all point to the resolution of the story, they are fallacies nonetheless; story 13b is not so much about Rostam's presence as the expectation for it.

Review of the Application of the OPM to Story 13b

Story 13b has been examined with respect to all of the OPM criteria. It meets most of the requirements but fails in some others. The result will be reviewed to assess in what aspects the story conforms to or departs from the OPM.

Story 13b satisfies most of the formal criteria. It is shown to be divided into a sequence of instalments, in which various effects are contrived to create suspense in the mind of the audience. As in the case of the *tumârs*, the episodes are regularly

marked by temporal or narrative markers to suggest a sequence of events in time, or to highlight a change of focus. On the basis of this, we may safely assume that story 13b is written in serial form.

Story 13b meets all the thematic criteria. It centres on the question of Rostam's participation in the war, which has been identified as the key motif based on the internal evidence of the text (Afrâsiyâb's hint at Rostam's absence in the war in story 13 and praises for Rostam in the prologue). The motif is variously modified and intensified by such narrative devices as interlacing, repetition, and red herring, so that it is brought into relief in each of instalments 8 through 17. Since story 13 passes the essential criteria of the OPM it can be said to have a close connection with oral performance.

On the other hand, the story fails in the OPM criteria as regards instalment length, episode count, and episode length. It has been demonstrated that about sixty percent of the instalment divisions deviate from the OPM criteria. They fall outside the tolerance range of instalment length, episode count or episode length. Based on the absence of the narrative markers indicating the beginning or the end of evaluative commentary in the course of the story, it is suggested that the prologue and epilogue substitute for evaluative comments, which storytellers often make as they tell a story. These irregularities point to deliberate changes which Ferdowsi has made to his model of oral performance.

What emerges from the findings is that story 13b has characteristics of both typically oral and typically written texts, and the OPM results help us to identify each of the characteristics. The oral characteristics of the story are found in serial form and the thematic organisation which are evidently interconnected; the discontinuous telling of a story requires a key motif to be repeated in each performance so that the audience can pick up the story at any arbitrary point. Thus each one of the allusions to Rostam that appear in various guises in the latter half of story 13b makes sense far more in the context of an instalment as told to the audience than of the story read at one time. The allusions are moreover so organically linked to the story that when removed altogether, much of the narrative interest would be lost. It is possible, of course, to focus on Rostam's fights with Ashkbus and Kâmus by introducing Rostam directly at the opening of the story, but his fights can hardly seem so pleasing as the ambiguity and irony that result from the manipulation of his presence or absence in story 13b. It seems therefore that the story was created on the basis of oral performance, which Ferdowsi took as a model, because this was the only way in which the story could ever be told.

Yet Ferdowsi's story 13b is a written composition, probably meant for reading or public recitation at least. Though we do not know how the story was received, it seems unlikely that it was performed in serial form; for it is physically too short (1590 lines in total) to be made into a series of performances. It is apparently written to be read or recited at a stretch, though in serial form. Here is a technical difficulty that Ferdowsi must somehow resolve, since serialisation is not at all the optimal means of writing a story that is read at one time. The serial form has its own peculiar demands on the organisation of the story. There are perhaps as many demands as a number of serialised stories, but if we are to give one example which is particularly disadvantageous to a non-serialised story, it would be the constancy of an intensity level that must be kept in each one of the instalments in a story because of shifting audiences. Since members of the audience are likely to change from day to day, any one of the instalments must, in principle, be as pleasing as another to let any newcomer come back for the next. If, on the other hand, the same level of intensity is kept all through a written composition that knows no such fickle audiences, it could end up being very tedious.

Ferdowsi's solution is to modulate intensity in each instalment by changing narrative speed and depth. In some instalments he hurriedly relates just what is required to develop the story while in others he slows down by minutely describing combats and armies. At one time he summarises Pirân's reaction to Tus's campaign and at another he dwells on the suffering Persians in order to call for the reader's sympathy. Elsewhere again, he tarries over a seemingly unimportant event just to titillate the reader who is already looking ahead, or in another he describes Rostam's combat with Ashkbus and Kâmus with such vigour and momentum as to evoke in no unambiguous terms his prowess and invincibility. Though these changes are assumed to be deviations from oral performance by the OPM criteria, they are obviously improvements which Ferdowsi has introduced to enhance the 'readability' of a story in serial form.

Another significant revision that Ferdowsi has made in versifying a text based ultimately on oral performance is found in the prologue and epilogue where he comments on the story. These effects can be fully appreciated when we compare them with the practice of storytellers. The storyteller may comment on a story at any time during performance, to secure the audience's attention, to make a point, to draw analogy or to clarify the meanings of verses and proverbs quoted. Some of these comments are eventually codified as evaluative commentaries in his *tumârs*, with indications to distinguish them from the story. Ferdowsi, on the other hand,

may find such commentary obtrusive or even destructive to the progression of the story, since he does not relate the story directly to the audience in front. Yet he may feel it necessary to communicate to the reader what he could only know, being in a position where he can take a bird's eye view of the entire story. Thus instead of commenting on this or that episode as he tells the story, he has provided with his readers general commentary in the form of prologue and epilogue, which are most functional when the story is read at one time.

When applied to story 13b, the OPM sheds light on the nature of oral tradition which may have been influential in the shaping of the text. Since the story essentially confirms to the OPM requirements, it can be said to have been influenced by the *naqqâli* type of storytelling. This tradition was flexible enough to comprise both oral performance and prose works written for performance. It would matter little, to members of the audience, whether or not the storyteller used a written work for performance insofar as they could enjoy his performance, and as long as they could hear what they considered to be authentic or true to the national legend which was shared by all. At least, Ferdowsi gave little thought to clearly distinguishing oral sources from the written, in referring to his sources. Rather, he has left us with equivocal remarks that can be read as referring to both oral and written sources. In the light of *naqqâli*, however, we can now see that such a distinction is far less important than the relative truthfulness of the stories related.

In the oral tradition, to deduce further from the OPM results, stories were essentially told in prose, although they may have been embellished with occasional recitations of poetry. The tradition provided Ferdowsi with 'prose' works — whether oral or written — which he rendered into verse for some parts of the ShNF at least, as he himself bears witness:

yeki nâme didam por az dâstân / saxonhâ-ye ân por-manesh râstân

fasâne kohan bud-o mansur bud ... (15: 1045-6)

(I saw a book full of stories, the sayings of which were grave and right. This contained ancient legends, and was written in prose ...)

Ferdowsi further tells us that when Daqiqi obtained this prose work for the first time he pleased those present by saying, "I shall render it into verse" (E:147). Pursuing his predecessor's path some time later, Ferdowsi himself comes to express a similar intention in the ShNF, as for example in the prologue to the story of Eskandar (20):

konun bâz gardam su-ye dâstân / be nazm âram az gofte-ye bâstân (20:31)

(I will now return to the story, and render old tales into verse).

In the prologue to *Bizhan and Manizhe* (13e), Ferdowsi lays stress on the versifying of old stories:

ma-râ goft az man saxon beshnavi / be she'r âr azin daftar-e pahlavi (13e:32)

("Listen to my story," said she, "Render this book of Pahlavi into poetry").

Some lines later Ferdowsi answers his beloved as follows:

conân cun ze to beshnavam dar be dar / be she'r âvaram dâstân sar be sar

be she'r âram-o-ham paziram sepâs / ayâ mehrabân yâr-e niki-shenâs (13e:36-7)

("Just as I hear you tell each story I will set it all into poetry. I will compose poetry, and am obliged to you, my dear, who are fully knowledgeable").

In order to appreciate the real import and significance of Ferdowsi's endeavours to versify ancient legends in his own times, we would have to consider many other questions that the ShNF presents us: e.g. the relationship between New Persian poetry and Middle Persian poetry, the influence of Arabic prosody, the continuity or discontinuity between pre-Islamic minstrelsy and *naqqâli*, the written tradition of the ShN literature, how Daqiqi's precedence affected Ferdowsi's choice of materials and compositional methods. But for now one may be content with the modest results of the Oral Performance Model, which on the whole appear to indicate that Ferdowsi might perhaps have thought of oral performances which were conducted in a form comparable to *naqqâli*, in composing some parts of the ShNF. This might be a small step forward in delineating the genesis of the ShNF.

Chapter V Storytelling to Poetry: the *Garshâspnâme* of Asadi

This chapter will consider to what extent oral tradition continues to be influential in one of the later epics. The Oral Performance Model will be applied to the *Garshâspnâme* of Asadi (GN), which was completed about fifty years after the ShNF. The OPM may help to clarify the extent to which the GN follows the ShNF, and the extent to which it diverges from it.

Although the later epics are generally assumed to be mere imitations of the ShNF, their relationship with the latter is not so straightforward; rather, it involves both continuity and discontinuity. While praising Ferdowsi for the ShNF, Asadi expresses his literary ambition to outdo his predecessor. His perception of and response to the ShNF play a significant role in the structure of the GN. In order to fully appreciate oral influence on the GN, it is necessary therefore to consider the question in the broader context of a historical reception of the ShNF. The chapter will discuss some general features of the later epics and consider Asadi's reception of the ShNF before applying the OPM to the GN.

1. The Later Epics

After the ShNF, similar epics were produced until around the time of the Mongol conquest. The epics are conventionally called 'secondary epics', partly because they came after the ShNF, and partly because they apparently imitate it in form and content. Henri Massé mentions:

Which part of these poems [the later epics] can be attributed to the use of older legends and to the spontaneous invention? This could not be established with any certainty for want of sufficient studies on the works which all remain almost unedited. One thing is certain: their authors imitate the Book of Kings, whether openly or not. To compare them to Ferdowsi would do him an injustice: the fullness of the subject matter and the splendour of the form which characterise the Book of Kings are no longer found in any of these epigones. But in spite of their manifest inferiority, they possess the merit of having conserved the legendary traditions and composed their poems "in an entirely national

spirit" (Mohl).²⁹²

This view only represents the tendency of many scholars to disregard the later epics as imitations of the ShNF. It is not only unfounded ("for want of sufficient studies on the works") but also misleading. It is not clear, for example, in what respect the epics imitate the ShNF. While it is true that the secondary epics employ the same metre (*motaqâreb*) and verse form (*masnavi*) as the ShNF, this does not at once prove one poet's imitation of another. As Elwell-Sutton pointed out, the verse form was used not only for epic but also for romance (e.g. Nezâmi's *Xamse*) and mystical verse (e.g. Rumi's *Masnavi-ye Ma'navi*), and the correlation of metre and subject matter was not strictly observed in early classical times.²⁹³ Beyond such a superficial level of observations we know very little about the later epics and need therefore to consider them in a different light. In what follows we shall seek to redefine the later epics as a different genre.

That the later epics do not simply reproduce the ShNF is evidenced by their treatment of new subject matter. Massé concedes in the passage quoted above that they merit some credit, since they relate what Ferdowsi has left out. Jan Rypka is more explicit about this:

The secondary epics, some of them anonymous, aimed at completing the work of Firdausî who claimed to have by no means exhausted the whole of the national tradition and in fact encouraged others to do so.²⁹⁴

While indeed treating what Ferdowsi has left out in the ShNF, the secondary epics are not necessarily concerned with the national tradition; they focus, not on kings, but on heroes of the Sistani tradition which is not equal to the national legend.

As *Figure 10* below shows, the heroes of the secondary epics form a single family which effectively originates in Garshâsp, and which is renowned for Rostam, the hero par excellence in the ShNF.

²⁹²Massé 1935: 263-4. Cf. also Mohl 1838, I: LXX-I.

²⁹³Elwell-Sutton 1976: 244.

²⁹⁴Rypka 1968: 163.

Text	Hero	Kinship	Date of Composition
GN	Garshâsp	Patriarch	ca. 1054-6
<i>Sâmnâme</i> ²⁹⁵	Sâm	Grandfather of Rostam	ca. 13-14th cent. ²⁹⁶
ShNF	Rostam	Son of Dastân (Zâl)	ca. 1009-10
<i>Farâmarznâme</i> ²⁹⁷	Farâmarz	Son of Rostam	ca. late 12th cent. ²⁹⁸
<i>Jahângirnâme</i> ²⁹⁹	Jahângir	Son of Rostam	ca. 13/14th cent. ³⁰⁰
<i>Bânu-Goshaspnâme</i> ³⁰¹	Bânu-Goshasp	Daughter of Rostam	ca. 11th cent. ³⁰²
<i>Âzarbarzinnâme</i> ³⁰³	Âzarbarzin	Son of Farâmarz	?
<i>Borzunâme</i> ³⁰⁴	Borzu	Son of Sohrâb	ca. 11th cent. ³⁰⁵
<i>Shahriyârنامه</i> ³⁰⁶	Shahriyâr	Son of Borzu	ca. 12th-13th cent. ³⁰⁷
<i>Bahmannâme</i> ³⁰⁸	Bahman	(Persian king)	before 1129-30 ³⁰⁹

Figure 10: Secondary Epics

As we shall see with reference to the GN, the emphasis on the Sistani heroes in the secondary epic seems to have been strongly influenced by the way in which the ShNF was received by later generations of epic poets; its influence is mediated by a process of reception and interpretation.

This shift from kings to heroes is, furthermore, accompanied by structural and generic changes in the epics, as Molé points out in the following passage:

Myths and historical souvenirs, archetypes and dynastic traditions, all these have no longer much importance for the structure of the secondary epic. The grandiose idea which inspired Firdôsî disappeared. One no longer exalts the past grandeur of the Iranian kingdom, one amuses oneself in listening to the feats of heroes.³¹⁰

²⁹⁵Mohl 1838, I: LIX-LXI; Massé 1935: 266; Molé 1953: 383-4; Safâ 1333: 335-40.

²⁹⁶Safâ 1333: 335.

²⁹⁷Mohl 1838, I: LXIII; Massé 1935: 265; Molé 1953: 384; Safâ 1333: 294-6.

²⁹⁸Safâ 1333: 295.

²⁹⁹Mohl 1838, I: LXXI-III; Massé 1935: 265; Molé 1953: 385; Safâ 1333: 324-35.

³⁰⁰Mohl dated the composition of the text in the 11th to 12th century (p. LXII). This was called into question by Safâ, who suggested the late 13th or the early 14th cent. based on linguistic and thematic evidence. The text seems to have been reworked in the 16th century (Safâ 1333: 325-32).

³⁰¹Mohl 1838, I: LXIII-IV; Massé 1935: 265; Molé 1953: 384; Safâ 1333: 300-2.

³⁰²Safâ 1333: 301.

³⁰³Molé 1953: 384; Safâ 1333: 315-6.

³⁰⁴Mohl 1838, I: LXIV-VII; Massé 1935: 265-6; Molé 1953: 384-5; Safâ 1333: 303-10.

³⁰⁵Safâ 1333: 305.

³⁰⁶Molé 1953: 384-5 and p. 385, n.1 where Molé suggests that some parts of the text may be older than the GN; Safâ 1333: 311-5.

³⁰⁷Safâ 1333: 311. Cf. Molé 1953: 385, n.1.

³⁰⁸*Bahmannâme* is regarded as part of the Sistani tradition, as it treats Bahman's battle with the Sistanis; Mohl 1838, I: LXVIII-IX; Massé 1935: 265; Molé 1953: 384; Safâ 1333: 289-94.

³⁰⁹Safâ 1333: 290

³¹⁰Molé 1953: 386.

Although the secondary epics centre on heroes of the Sistani tradition and as such could be viewed as supplementing the ShNF, they nevertheless constitute a different genre, heroic verse romance.³¹¹ In contrast to the ShNF which “exalts the past grandeur of the Iranian kingdom”, and is therefore a versified history of pre-Islamic Persia, the secondary epics relate the biographies of Sistani heroes. The veritable protagonist of the ShNF is Iran, whereas those of the secondary epics are individuals. The ShNF is organised along a temporal scale which stretches back into the dawn of civilisation up to the collapse of the Sasanian empire. In this vast space individuals play their limited roles within the prescribed periods; their deeds bear significance only when they are reflected in Persian history. The secondary epic is organised along the life-span of a hero, in which a multiplicity of happenings have their unity in the singular character of the hero. Everything related in the secondary epic is of significance insofar as it is experienced by and is related with the hero.

Such structural changes in the secondary epics allow, above all, pre-existing genres to enter into a higher principle of organisation. Molé notes as regards the GN:

But how many changes! The exploits of the hero [Garshâsp] have only an episodic character. The rest consists of war expeditions at the service of Dahâk and Ferîdûn, in descriptions of marvels of exotic countries and meetings with the Brahmins.³¹²

Topics which are often treated in separate genres are brought together in the GN: heroic stories (Garshâsp’s heroic exploits), wisdom literature (Garshâsp’s meetings with the Brahmins which involve riddles and philosophical and religious discourse),³¹³ and tales of fantastic travels³¹⁴ (catalogues of marvels). These may have existed as independent genres. For example, wisdom literature was a recognised genre from pre-Islamic times, while tales of fantastic travels were, as Beyhaqi testifies, popular themes of storytelling in Ghaznavid times.³¹⁵ Or they may

³¹¹Hanaway notes that the secondary epics are strongly influenced by Persian popular romance, and describes *Sâmnâme*, the last of the epics, as “a versified romance with the characters being the name of epic heroes” (Hanaway trans. 1974: 7). As we shall see below, this tendency is already evident in the GN.

³¹²Molé 1951: 129.

³¹³Details of Garshâsp’s meetings with the Brahmins and their import are discussed by Massé (1951: XII-XX).

³¹⁴Mohl 1838, I: LVIII, where Mohl suggests the influence of *Sindbad the Sailor*. See also Massé 1951: XIII for geographical and travel literature which might have been used by Asadi.

³¹⁵On the influence of minor genres on the ShNF see Chapter III above.

have already been part of a well-known story such as the legend of Alexander, which is assumed to have been influential in the shaping of the GN.³¹⁶ Whether they were autonomous or part of a larger whole, whatever works or stories they may have included,³¹⁷ they are inevitably transformed to illustrate different phases of Garshâsp's life. Owing to this assimilating and flexible capacity of its plot structure, the secondary epics seem to have proliferated over three hundred years.

2. The *Garshâspnâme* of Asadi

The *Garshâspnâme* of Asadi is probably the most important work among the secondary epics for several reasons. Firstly, it is one of the first to have appeared after the ShNF (completed in 1054-6). It offers therefore an optimal example for studying structural transformations in the secondary epics, outlined above. Secondly, as Jules Mohl pointed out,³¹⁸ Asadi uniquely expresses his literary ambitions and intent in the preface, which are apparently conditioned by his perception of the ShNF. This provides rare evidence for a historical perception of the ShNF as well as for the way in which this played a role in the evolution of the later epics. Thirdly, and most importantly for our purposes, because of Asadi's expressed rivalry with Ferdowsi, it is all the more interesting to apply the Oral Performance Model to the GN and to examine whether oral performance in some way continued to inspire Asadi. Before proceeding to discuss such details of the text, a summary of the GN may here be provided.

The GN begins with Jamshid's flight to Sistan. Jamshid encounters and marries the daughter of Kurang, king of Sistan. Following a brief account of Jamshid's descendants, the story proper begins. Garshâsp is born. Like many other heroes in the epic tradition, he shows all signs of virtue and courage at his tender age. At fourteen he destroys a dragon by the order of Zahhâk (chapter 1).

Upon his return to Zabolestan, Garshâsp is again sent to assist the Maharaja of India who is threatened by a rebel, Bahu. Having defeated Bahu, he sets out to travel around India and her vicinities, where he finds a great deal of exotic plants, animals, natural phenomena, and encounters various people. He returns to Zabolestan (chapter 2).

Zahhâk summons Garshâsp to Jerusalem, the then capital of Persia. Garshâsp is ordered by his father to take a wife, and begins to look for a suitable woman in Zabolestan, but to no avail. He hears of a Rumi princess who is desired by many but remains single; her

³¹⁶Christensen 1931: 147; Massé 1951: XIV; Molé 1953: 379-80; 387-9.

³¹⁷The details of individual works or stories which may have entered into the later epics should not concern us here. What is important is to understand the fact that different genres can be assimilated into the plot structure of the later epics and that they accordingly take on new meanings and functions in the narratives.

³¹⁸Mohl 1838, I: LVII.

father, the king of Rum, loves her so dearly that he cannot part from her. The king declares that he will give his daughter to the one who passes certain tests, which no suitor have passed. Garshâsp thereupon sets out to Rum, passes the tests, and marries the princess. Meanwhile, a war breaks out between Zabolestan and Kabolestan. Garshâsp single-handedly defeats the Kabolis. After the battle, he takes to building the town of Sistan, which he rules (chapter 3).

Garshâsp's rule proves so successful that it makes Zakhâk insecure. Zakhâk thinks of ridding Garshâsp by ordering him to destroy the king of Lâqate—which is in the Maghreb—and his *div*. Garshâsp defeats the enemies, and sees the wonders of the Maghreb (chapter 4).

Some time after Garshâsp's return to Sistan, his father, Asrat, dies whom Garshâsp succeeds. Shortly after this, his brother, Kurang, also dies, leaving a son, Narimân, behind. Garshâsp adopts Narimân and brings him up as his own son. In the meantime, Feridun rises up and overthrows Zakhâk (chapter 5).

Garshâsp and Narimân are sent to China in order to propagate the new king of Persia. The prince of China concedes to pay tribute to Feridun on the condition that Garshâsp and Narimân destroy his cousin, Tekin-Tâsh, who holds a grudge against the prince. Narimân defeats Tekin-Tâsh in combat. Garshâsp goes off to meet the emperor of China, while Narimân sets out to collect tributes from local rulers. Each sees and marvels at the wonders of China. While Garshâsp is negotiating with the emperor of China, Narimân returns from the country and joins Garshâsp. A war takes place between the Iranians and the Chinese. After a series of fights, Garshâsp and Narimân defeat the emperor's troops. Narimân pleads with Feridun to pardon the emperor, with which Feridun concurs. Feridun rewards Narimân and Garshâsp generously (chapter 6).

Narimân marries the daughter of the king of Balkh by whom he has a son, Sâm (chapter 7).

Meanwhile, it occurs to Garshâsp to collect his treasures which he has deposited with the king of Tangier. Tangier is now ruled by the grandson of the former king, who ignores Garshâsp's request. A war breaks out, in which Garshâsp wins. After having fought a few more monsters and done sightseeing, Garshâsp makes a return journey (chapter 8).

No sooner has Garshâsp returned than he becomes ill. He perishes at the age of 733, giving good counsel to his families (chapter 9).

The text alternates between chapters on Garshâsp's biography and those on his adventures. The biographical chapters represent progressively more advanced stages in Garshâsp's life. The first chapter describes Garshâsp's ancestors, his birth and the dragon hunt which qualifies him as a champion of Iran. The third relates how Garshâsp finds his spouse and sets up, as it were, his home in Sistan. The fifth marks the beginning of a new era: Garshâsp takes over from Asrat, while Feridun defeats Zakhâk. Further, Garshâsp makes way for Narimân to take over his championship. In chapter 7 Garshâsp is shown to be an old man. The final chapter describes Garshâsp's last days, suggesting the only enemy that he cannot overcome is his own mortality. These chapters are interspersed with the chapters on

Garshâsp's adventure which are variations on the theme of his war expeditions to foreign lands. While they differ in details —places (India in the second chapter, the Maghreb in the fourth and the eight, and China in the sixth), the names of Garshâsp's opponents, and particulars of intrigues which Garshâsp overcomes — they are functionally identical to one another. In the ShNF stories of this type (notably those about Rostam) are horizontally arranged according to the dynastic temporal scheme, in the GN they are hierarchically arranged according to different stages in Garshâsp's biography. The structure of GN is graphically represented in *Figure 11* below.

Chapter	Garshâsp's Biography	Adventure	
		Combat	Sightseeing
1	The origin of Garshâsp's family (Jamshid's marriage with the princess of Sistan), and the episodes on Garshâsp's formative years (pp. 21-63)		
2		War expedition to India (pp. 63-125)	Description of marvels of India (pp. 125-202)
3	Garshâsp's marriage; his fight with the Kabolis; his building of the town of Sistan (pp. 202-69)		
4		War expedition to the Maghreb (pp. 269-328)	Description of marvels of the Maghreb (pp. 278-80; 304-22)
5	Feridun's accession; Garshâsp's rule of Sistan; Narimân's championship (pp. 328-35)		
6		War expedition to China (pp. 335-429)	Description of marvels of China (pp. 353-5; 360-5)
7	The birth of Sâh (pp. 429-38)		
8		War expedition to the Maghreb (pp. 438-60)	Description of marvels of the Maghreb (pp. 452-7)
9	The death of Garshâsp (pp. 460-76)		

Figure 11: Structure of the GN

The tripartite structure reflects three different substrata of the GN. The biographical sections connect the story of Garshâsp with the national legend. The sections on Garshâsp's adventure are reminiscent of the Alexander legend.³¹⁹ Just

³¹⁹Cf. the previous section, esp. pp. 136ff. Among many parallels to support this contention, as indicated above, are Garshâsp's conferences with the Brahmins, the places through which he travels, and innumerable species of fantastic nature which are described ostensibly as viewed by

as Alexander conquers countries politically and intellectually, Garshâsp, albeit by Persian kings' requests, masters India, China and the Maghreb which make up the narrative world.³²⁰ The sections on Garshâsp's adventures break down into two: combat and catalogues of marvels. As Asadi intimates in the preface (see below), the former are centrepieces of the narrative and correspondingly account for about 50%.³²¹ The catalogues of the marvels consist of a series of lengthy descriptions of marvels of foreign lands, where no action is narrated.

The GN thus combines at least three different traditions in the story of Garshâsp: the national legend, the Alexander legend and the exotic. Yet the most influential tradition is no doubt the Rostam cycle, as Asadi states in the preface.

Reception of the ShNF and its influence on the GN

In the preface, Asadi informs us how he perceived the ShNF, and how this perception directed him to compose a verse story of Garshâsp. When he was seeking for a worthy task with which to perpetuate his name, his noble friends suggested that he should compose a ShN:

Ferdowsi of Tus, a man of intelligence, has done justice to the delightful stories. He has adorned the world with his *Shâhnâme*. He has sought glory through it. You are from the same region and of the same profession, you have moreover an agile mind in discourse.

Why don't you also set to verse a joyful story from ancient books? (p. 14)³²²

By the time Asadi began composing his work, the ShNF was established as a genre which is here identified with the versifying of a pleasant story in ancient books. The genre requires Asadi to find an appropriate story preserved in writing and to transport this into verse. Since Asadi's poetic skill is taken for granted ("you are of the same profession and have an agile mind in discourse"), his task is to find an appropriate story in 'ancient books'. Following an eulogy for his king to whom

him.

³²⁰For example, Garshâsp generally follows in Alexander's footsteps in the war expeditions: India, the Maghreb (via Jerusalem, Rum and Tangier), China and the Maghreb (via Rum and Tangier). In the ShNF and *Eskandarnâme*, Alexander travels to India, Mecca, the Maghreb (Egypt, Yemen, Andalus, etc.), India, China, Andalus, China and dies in Babylon. On the whole, the heroes visit similar places in a recognisable order.

³²¹The biographical chapters account for about 29%, the combat sections for 48% and the catalogues of marvels for 23% of the text.

³²²The references are to H. Yaqmâ'i ed. 1317.

Asadi is to dedicate a work,³²³ the book of Garshâsp is introduced, which is obviously material of his choice.³²⁴ In the following passage Asadi seeks to have this approved by the king, by distinguishing it from the ShNF.

You might hear of Rostam and believe that no one could be equal to him in courage. If you, however, recall the combat of Garshâsp, all the combats of Rostam will disappear with the wind. The abominable *div* threw him up to the clouds and cast him down to the sea. He was desperate before the heavy mace of Humân, a guard of a field (*dashbâni*) struck him in Mazandaran. The brave Esfandiyâr defeated him, and Sohrâb prevailed over him in wrestling. General Garshâsp, while alive, was never defeated or cast down. He fought in India, Rum and China, and did what Dastân and Rostam were never able to do (p. 19).

The selection of Rostam as a point of comparison is perhaps not accidental, as is suggested by the clause “[you might] believe that no one could be equal to him”. Rostam is the most popular hero in the ShNF and Asadi accordingly expects his readers to know. The subsequent account of Rostam’s defeats, which all can be traced to the ShNF,³²⁵ not only predisposes his readers to a specific type of stories (heroic rather than kingly epic), but serve also to emphasise the fact that Garshâsp is the worthier hero to be dealt with.

Having expounded on Garshâsp’s intrinsic value as a hero, Asadi points out that despite all this, Garshâsp has been left out in the ShNF which exclusively focused, in Asadi’s opinion, on the second-best hero, Rostam:

³²³Namely, Abu Dolaf. On his identity see Massé 1951: VI-IX.

³²⁴Although the book in question is not identified, a reference to a parallel account is found in the *Târix-e Sistân*, which was begun in the mid 11th cent. and completed in the 14th. The author of the *History* refers to *Ketâb-e Garshâsp* (Gold trans. 1976: 1, 3) and elsewhere attributes this to Abu al-Mo’ayyad Balkhi (ibid., p. 24). This latter is known for his prose *Shâhnâme*, written at the command of the Samanid Abu al-Qâsem Nuh b. Mansur (c. 976-97). Opinions differ as to whether the author refers to part of this prose work (cf. Lazard 1967: 95-110) or a different work by Balkhi (Safâ 1333: 97). In any case, this was not probably Asadi’s direct source since, as Massé notes (1951: X), the account in the *Târix-e Sistân* differs from that of the GN in some details. It does suggest, however, that the story of Garshâsp was circulated in a form more or less similar to that of the GN at least about 50 years before the completion of the GN. The legend of Garshâsp was differently transmitted by the Zoroastrian tradition. See Christensen 1931: 99-104; 1934 and Nyberg 1933.

³²⁵In 13d:113-4 Rostam is thrown up to the sky by Akvân Div. In 12e:331-2 Humân strikes Rostam with a heavy mace in order to protect Afrâsiyâb. In the fifth stage of Rostam’s Seven Stages (12:458-9), a guard of the field where Rostam and Raxsh take a rest, suddenly strikes Rostam hard on his leg with a stick. In 15:3526-9 Rostam is shot by Esfandiyâr. In 12c:1091-4 Rostam is defeated by Sohrâb in wrestling.

The eloquent Ferdowsi, who excelled all the poets in the ShNF, recounted many combats of heroes except for this story [of Garshâsp]. This was a shoot grown out the same tree, but became dry and fruitless; it was virtually withered away. I will now let it blossom again with my genius, and will produce fruits from this young branch ... (p. 20).

In this passage Asadi implicitly criticises Ferdowsi for the neglect of Garshâsp in the ShNF.³²⁶ Because of this, Garshâsp has fallen into oblivion although he sprung out of the same tree, namely the Sistani tradition. While Asadi's criticism of the ShNF is not altogether unreasonable (or at least seems to be plausible in this context), it is singularly addressed to stories of Rostam which are, properly speaking, only parts of the text. What this implies is that the ShNF meant, to Asadi and his contemporaries, versified stories of Rostam taken from the Sistani tradition. In the space of about fifty years or possibly even earlier —as Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna reportedly said, "The *Shâhnâma* is nothing but the history of Rostam; in my army there are a thousand men his equal"³²⁷ —the ShNF effectively became equal to the stories about Rostam. Only against this receptive background of the ShNF, Asadi's comparison of Garshâsp with Rostam would genuinely hold, because there are, as Asadi points out, many heroes and kings in the ShNF, who are equally comparable to Garshâsp.

On the basis of this, it may be surmised that the success of the ShNF chiefly depended on the stories of Rostam drawn from the Sistani tradition. Since, as postulated earlier, most of these stories are only found in the ShNF, they may well have been adapted to epic poetry by Ferdowsi for the first time in the history of Persian literature. It would seem that the act of versifying them itself made such an impact on his contemporary and future readers that it at once widened their 'horizon of expectations'. By including the stories of Rostam into the ShNF, Ferdowsi demonstrated to his readers that those familiar stories could be put to use in epic. This was well received by Asadi and many others³²⁸ who lost no time in perceiving

³²⁶Yet Ferdowsi has dealt with Garshâsp, however briefly. Two Garshâsps appear in the ShNF. One is a warrior who appears through the reigns of Feridun, Manucehr and Zow (6:639; 721; 771; 821; 951; 7:40; 8:126; 10:86; 13d:21), and the other is a king who succeeds Zow. However his reign is nominal since he dies while Afrâsiyâb is preparing a war with Iran. It effectively relates the war between Afrâsiyâb and Rostam, and the latter's search for Key Qobâd (10:1-273). All of these suggests that Ferdowsi knew very little about the story of Garshâsp, and that he did not neglect it deliberately.

³²⁷Gold trans. 1976: 5.

³²⁸Asadi suggests in the preface that many tried to versify heroic stories before him: "although many notable [poets] took pains in secretly hiding treasure in all places, they are gone and passed away in the end, without benefiting anyone. Leave in the world a treasure of this story [of

the potential of Sistani stories as epic material. This is, it seems, how Asadi appreciated the ShNF before taking to 'versifying' the story of Garshâsp.

The GN was a response to the ShNF which served as its model. It extended its model by treating the story of Garshâsp which likewise belonged to the Sistani tradition. At the same, however, it altered its model by focusing on the hero and by including new materials. This double response of the GN in turn set a model for later epic poets; it practically inaugurated a new epic genre, called the secondary epic.

3. Application of the Oral Performance Model to the GN

If some stories of Rostam were influential in the GN as postulated above, the question arises as to their possible connection with oral performance. As was demonstrated in Chapter IV, they show formal and thematic features ultimately deriving from the requirements of oral performance. This may suggest that the influence of the ShNF is not limited to the selection of subject matter; but may well extend into stylistic and formal aspects of the GN. In order to ascertain this, the Oral Performance Model (OPM) will be here applied to a segment of the GN. It may show, on the one hand, that like the ShNF, the GN is in some way influenced by oral performance and on the other, point to structural changes that it underwent. The sample corpus is taken from the episode of Garshâsp's battle with Bahu (pp. 63-125), which is part of the second adventure chapter where the ShNF seems to be most influential.

Formal Criteria of the OPM: Episode Divisions

In general, the boundaries of episodes are formally marked by narrative or temporal markers in the GN. The markers found in the text are as follows:

(1) narrative markers

va zin su (ruy) (and on this side);³²⁹

summing-up phrases:

hamin bud (such was ...);³³⁰

bedin sân (in this manner);³³¹

Garshâsp], which will never be hidden" (p. 14).

³²⁹Cf. pp. 84; 100; 107 (*ruy*); 122.

³³⁰Cf. p. 102.

conin (thus);³³²

indefinite *-i*;³³³

(2) temporal markers

co (cun) (when);³³⁴

*pas*³³⁵ / *ham-andar*³³⁶ (then);

descriptions of sunset / sunrise;³³⁷

indications of specific time:

hamân shab (in the same night);³³⁸

degar ruz (the following day);³³⁹

indicators of simultaneous happenings;³⁴⁰

hamân gah (at the same time).

As can be seen, the markers in the GN are generally similar to those in the ShNF, but different types of markers are also used in the GN: i.e. summing-up phrases; indications of specific time and of simultaneous happenings. Moreover, some of the markers which have counterparts in the ShNF are used in different ways. Since these changes may reflect more general changes which took place in the GN, they deserve our attention. In what follows, therefore, we shall concentrate on those points which are peculiar to the GN and refer the reader to the previous chapter for specific uses of common narrative or temporal markers.

Narrative Markers

Va zin su (ruy)

While, as in the case of the ShNF, *va zin su (ruy)* is used to mark a shift of focus, its use is not limited to scenes of battle. Two examples are used to introduce

³³¹Cf. p. 107.

³³²Cf. p. 89.

³³³Cf. pp. 88; 103; 111.

³³⁴Cf. pp. 82; 83; 84²; 86; 92; 93; 94; 98; 100; 103; 112; 113; 114; 118; 125.

³³⁵Cf. p. 122.

³³⁶See p. 79.

³³⁷Descriptions of sunrise occur on pp. 84; 101; 106; 117, and those of sunset on pp. 82; 91 (later in the night); 106; 117.

³³⁸Cf. pp. 94; 99.

³³⁹Only one example is found on p. 121.

³⁴⁰Cf. p. 120.

contrasting views of characters,³⁴¹ and another seems to be related to the technique of interlacing which will be discussed below.³⁴²

Summing-up phrases

Summing-up phrases are typically used in descriptions of battle. Their uses may be compared to the connectives, *al-qesse* and *bâri*, in the *tumâr*; they mark the ends of descriptive passages and point to the beginning of another sequence of actions.

Temporal Markers

Co (cun)

As in the case of the ShNF, *co (cun)* is used either with verbs of perception or those of action in the GN. Two points are worth mentioning here. Firstly, while in the ShNF roughly 80 % of the examples contain verbs of perception and 20% those of action, this changes to 44% and 56% respectively in the GN. This implies that *co (cun)* is more frequently associated with changes of settings than in the ShNF. Secondly, closely related with the first, formulaic expressions such as *co beshnid* are far less common in the GN than in the ShNF.³⁴³ This may help to explain the decrease of the *co* constructions with verbs of perception. In fact, the GN offers examples in which such formulaic expressions are used in a non-traditional way. In some cases, *co* occurs in the second half of lines as in the following:

Shod ân shab dar ârâyesh-e bazm-o sâz / co in âgahi yâft ân sarfarâz;

bedu goft x'âham k-az ân sân nezhand / Bahu-râ bebinam be x'âri-o band (p. 114).

(At that night, he [the Maharaja] was preparing for feasting and music; when this nobleman received this news, he said to [Garshâsp], "I would like to see Bahu, of such [humble] origin in shame and bonds").

Co in the second hemistich is much rarer than that in the first because, as is illustrated here, the sentence tends to run over to the next line, resulting in necessary *enjambement*;³⁴⁴ the hemistich is often not enough to complete a sentence. In other

³⁴¹Esp. pp. 84 and 100 where the markers introduce Bahu's (Garshâsp's opponent) immediate responses to Garshâsp's actions.

³⁴²Notably, *va zin suy* on p. 122 which refers back to the story line suggested earlier in the text.

³⁴³For the use of *co* in the ShNF see Chapter IV.

³⁴⁴On necessary *enjambement* see note 70, p. 27 above.

cases, the sentence beginning with *co* continues to the second half of the line, which is again a clear example of necessary *enjambement*:

*Co Garshâsp-o Mehrâj ze*³⁴⁵ *jây-e jang / rasidand nazd-e Sarandib tang* (p. 125).

(When Garshâsp and the Maharaja [left] the battlefield, [and] came near Sarandib, ...).

Although these are not sufficient to define Asadi's style, they at least point to some of its characteristics which are apparently different from Ferdowsi's.

Descriptions of sunrise / sunset

Descriptions of sunrise / sunset signal the beginnings (or the ends) of episodes as well as those of instalments (i.e. the beginning of the first episode of an instalment). Their usage is moreover closely connected with the themes of the instalments in which they occur. The descriptions of sunrise typically mark the start of a battle,³⁴⁶ and those of sunset indicate its end as well as the beginning of an intrigue that follows.³⁴⁷ From descriptions of sunrise or sunset one can predict fairly accurately what is going to happen next.

Indications of specific time

Time indicators are found in the GN only. While occurring only three times in our sample, they are frequently found in other parts of the GN, especially in the catalogues of marvels. They indicate either a transitional stage in a given sequence of events (*degar ruz*) or concurrent happenings (*hamân shab*).

Overview of Narrative / Temporal Markers

One may observe two major characteristics in Asadi's handling of narrative and temporal markers. Firstly, most of the new markers are linked with descriptive passages which abound in the GN. This is easily seen in the summing-up phrases which obviously follow (often lengthy) descriptive passages. Secondly, in some episodes narrative markers are omitted, and the boundaries are implied by the new grammatical subjects.³⁴⁸ In Persian the subject of a sentence can be omitted as long

³⁴⁵Amended: *ze* instead of *az* which does not scan.

³⁴⁶See pp. 84; 101; 106; 117.

³⁴⁷See pp. 82; 91; 106.

³⁴⁸Cf. pp. 79; 80; 81; 82; 85; 87; 88; 96; 101; 104²; 105; 106; 109; 110³; 111; 116; 118; 119;

as it is recoverable from the verbal suffix or from the context. When it is explicitly stated, this indicates a shift in point of view, as is illustrated in the following example:

[The beginning of the current episode]

Delirân-e irân berun tâxtand / jodâ har yeki jang bar sâxtand (l. 20, p. 80)

[The end of the current episode]

Ze har su be gerdâb-e xun shod hami / nadânest gardun ke cun shod hami (l. 32, p. 80).

[The beginning of the new episode]

Sepahbod hamân carx-o tir-esh bex'âst / ke pish az pey-e azhdahâ kard râst (l. 33, p. 81).

(Champions of Iran dashed out [into the battleground], and each fell upon [his enemy]

...Everywhere became a pool of blood; the sky could not tell what was going on.

The general [Garshâsp] asked for the same bow and arrows that he had previously prepared to combat the dragon).

The current episode describes a general scene of the combat, viewed from the standpoint of the Persian champions, which is the grammatical subject of the first line. It ends with the descriptive passage, pointing to the fierceness of the battle. In the next line, however, a new grammatical subject (Garshâsp) is introduced to mark a change of point of view and to suggest the beginning of a new episode, in which Garshâsp is expected to ameliorate the state of affairs. As this example shows, narrative markers are most frequently left out among descriptions of war,³⁴⁹ in which Asadi frequently shifts the focus of attention without any connectives, presumably, to express the rapidity with which actions take place.

Thus, in some cases narrative markers are dispensable in written composition, where the reader can leisurely dwell on this or that sentence construction to discover changes of point of view or a new turn of event. This comes as no surprise if we recall that the narrative or temporal markers are used by a storyteller to draw the audience's attention in oral performance. What is surprising, however, is that Ferdowsi kept using narrative markers with such regularity and frequency as we saw in the previous chapter, though he had no live audience before him. This suggests the extent to which he was under the influence of oral performance; he essentially did not see the qualitative difference between oral and written composition. Although Asadi also uses narrative and temporal markers, he does so with less regularity and frequency than his predecessor. As, in fact, he

120; 123; 124.

began omitting some narrative markers, it may well be that he was aware of the pros and cons of evoking a pseudo-performance on paper. To put this differently, he is more inclined towards a literary form, which is not necessarily consonant with Ferdowski's oral performance model.

Instalment Divisions

Appendix III shows hypothetical instalment divisions, each of which consists of a sequence of episodes. As Figure 12 below shows, the average instalment is about 110 lines long and the average episode count is between 8 and 9. In terms of both instalment length and episode count, the GN surpasses the ShNF (of which the average instalment length is 92 lines and the average episode count is 6.3). On the other hand, the average episode length is about two lines shorter (12.5 lines) than that of the ShNF (14.6 lines). This indicates that episodes are narrated at a higher speed in the GN than those in the ShNF, and that each is more superficially treated.

The episode count of the GN is relatively stable, since only two instalments (instalments 2 & 6) fall outside the tolerance range (i.e. $\pm 20\%$ of the average episode count).³⁵⁰ The instalment and the episode length show greater variations, ranging from 49 to 184 lines and from 6 to 21 lines respectively: about sixty percent of the instalments diverge from the tolerance ranges, i.e. instalments 2, 3, 5, 7, and 8 in instalment length and instalments 3, 6, 7, 8 in episode length. This suggests that regardless of varying instalment or episode size, each instalment is self-contained since it recounts enough episodes to complete at least one story line.

Instalment No.	Instalment Length	Episode Count	Episode Length
1	113	9	12.5
2	184	12	15
3	153	9	17
4	113	10	11
5	80	7	11
6	131	6	21
7	61	8	7
8	49	8	6
Average	110	8.6	12.5
Tolerance Range	88-132	6.8-10.32	10-15

Figure 12: Statistics on the Hypothetical Instalments in the GN

Instalment 2 is the longest (184 lines) simply because it contains the greatest number of episodes (12). This in turn accounts for the fact that its episode length falls within the range. Other out-of-range instalments can be divided into two

³⁴⁹Cf. pp. 79; 80; 81; 82; 85; 87; 88; 101; 104²; 105; 106; 109; 110³; 118; 120; 123; 124.

groups. One group consists of instalments 3 and 6, which include discursive passages (speeches). The other comprises instalments 5, 7 and 8 and is characterised by descriptive passages. Within each group, moreover, there are some differences. Instalment 3 is longer than average and so is its episode length. This can be explained by the presence of lengthy speeches and some descriptive passages. The Maharaja warns Garshâsp of a general in Bahu's army (p. 93). The Maharaja's garden of gold is described at some length (p. 94). When Garshâsp retires at night, he receives a messenger from Bahu, who reads out the latter's message in full (p. 95). Garshâsp makes an angry remark on Bahu's message (pp. 96-8). When hearing of this, the Maharaja admonishes Garshâsp (p. 99), who reassures the former (p. 99). Most episodes consist of speeches, resulting in the increased length of the instalment. Instalment 6 includes the smaller-than-average number of episodes while its episodes are longer than average. Like instalment 3, it includes speeches which extend into about two pages (pp. 115-6). Unlike instalment 3, however, it includes narration (Garshâsp arrests Bahu) which takes place with such rapidity that one event leads to another uninterruptedly. The brief narration of the action contributes to the decrease of its episode count in this instalment.

In the second group, instalment 5 describes Garshâsp's fights from varying perspectives. It is remarkable that unlike in the ShNF, descriptions of battle do not lead to the expansion of the instalment. Rather, they result in its significant reduction. This is owing to the near absence of action in the instalment; nothing remarkable happens except for the chief of elephant riders deserting his master, Bahu.³⁵¹ Instalments 7 and 8, which are likewise dominated by descriptions, are plainly shorter than the others with 61 and 49 lines respectively. They centre on a story line different from that in the preceding ones. The main point of the story is exhausted at the end of instalment 6 where Bahu (Garshâsp's opponent) is arrested. Despite the obvious continuity of the story line (the recovery of Sarandib from Bahu's son), the instalments shift focus to Garshâsp's journey to Sarandib and relate a series of short descriptive passages on different objects. On the one hand, such episodic structures give rise to the standard numbers of episodes in the instalment. On the other hand, as in the case of instalment 5, the increase of descriptive passages is accompanied by superficial narration.

³⁵⁰As before, allowances are made for $\pm 20\%$ variance for each item.

³⁵¹Ferdowsi generally combines action and description to slow down. See the previous chapter for more details.

It is clear from the above that description and dialogue play an important role in the text. In the instalments examined above, they nearly subvert the action, and point towards larger, structural changes in the GN. While dialogues characteristically cause episode size to increase (instalments 3 and 6), where the action obviously slows down, descriptions result in the reduction of either instalment or episode size, where the action speeds up (instalments 5, 7 and 8). While in the case of the ShNF such changes of narrative speed are typically made for dramatic effect, this is not necessarily the case in the GN. Dialogues in instalments 3 serve to illustrate characters' personalities, which are intricately linked with a class system. Those in instalment 6 occur after the resolution of the conflict between Garshâsp and Bahu and can be taken therefore as commentary on the foregoing action.³⁵² Descriptions which virtually replace the action in instalments 5, 7, and 8 are evidently ends in themselves. This is explicit in the last two instalments, where the action (Garshâsp's pursuit of Bahu's son) is told for the sake of description.

We shall see next how Asadi's predilection for dialogue and description affects the plot structure of the story, by applying the thematic criteria of the OPM to the sample text of the GN.

Thematic Criteria

According to the thematic standards of the Oral Performance Model, it is necessary to identify key motifs in the GN. On the basis of the preface in which Asadi states his intentions clearly,³⁵³ the following can be regarded as possible key motifs in the text: 1) to portray Garshâsp as a super-hero; 2) to include a series of obstacles and tests which Garshâsp must undergo to prove his superiority.

As was discussed above, Asadi redefines characteristic features of Rostam in the ShNF. This centres on Rostam's limitations as a hero, especially on two counts: 1) Rostam is not invincible; and 2) has not fought in India, Rum and China. Asadi then introduces Garshâsp as the invincible hero who has fought in India, Rum and China ("*sepahdâr Garshâsp tâ zende bud / na kard-esh zobun kas na afkande bud; be hend-o be rum-o chin az nabard / bekard ânçe Dastân-o Rostam nakard*", p. 19). It is clear that Garshâsp is modelled in contrast to Rostam who is seen by Asadi as an imperfect hero; he is made into a super-hero by remedying

³⁵²The significance of these speeches will be discussed below.

³⁵³The text has been quoted earlier.

Rostam's defects. It seems therefore that Asadi's primary concern is to portray Garshâsp as the super-hero who surpasses Rostam in battle, especially having fought in foreign lands.

If, indeed, Asadi merely intends to 'describe' Garshâsp as the super-hero in the GN, he would immediately confront the problem of storytelling; description does not lend itself to the development of a story line.³⁵⁴ He needs to work 'descriptions' into the story. This is made particularly difficult by his definition of Garshâsp as being invincible; Garshâsp of necessity wins in the end. Having thus revealed how the story ends in the preface, Asadi has made it practically impossible to use some of the narrative techniques Ferdowsi has used: keeping Rostam away from the foreground, or red herrings. Garshâsp cannot be used to create suspense, tension or even expectation.

Still, Asadi has one option left. Even if Garshâsp is destined to defeat every opponent he meets, it is uncertain how he does this, which opponents he confronts, and how he overcomes the obstacles that his opponents present. Despite the obvious end of the story, there are a number of possibilities, provided that Garshâsp's opponents play a greater role in the story. This is the option Asadi has taken. By making the opponents test Garshâsp in battle, morality and sagacity, Asadi can moreover effectively work 'descriptions of Garshâsp's invincibility' into the story.

The story of Garshâsp therefore centres on exhibitions of Garshâsp's fight, as well as his opponents' intrigues against him. Accordingly, one may expect most of the following hypothetical instalments to contain at least one segment describing Garshâsp's military exploits, and another focusing on the opponent's (Bahu's) plotting.

The Battle Between Garshâsp and Bahu: Hypothetical Instalment Divisions in the GN

Zahhâk orders Garshâsp to subdue Bahu the rebel. Garshâsp immediately departs to India, prepares his army, meets the Maharaja, the king of India, and shows his courage by hunting a tiger. Our hypothetical instalments start with the scene in which Garshâsp writes to Bahu, commanding the latter to surrender to the Maharaja.

³⁵⁴Cf. instalments 7 and 8 where action is kept to a minimum.

Instalment 1

In response to Garshâsp's letter, Bahu immediately declares war against the Maharaja and Garshâsp. Garshâsp prepares for battle and Bahu, for his part, organises his troops. A mass combat begins. When the Iranians begin to be overpowered by the enemy, Garshâsp joins the battle, and destroys a number of soldiers and elephants single-handedly. His performance is reported to Bahu, who alarmed by the gloomy prospect, contrives a different strategy for the next battle. (pp. 77-82).

As one might expect, the story begins with Bahu's declaration of war against the Maharaja and Garshâsp. Following descriptions of a general mêlée, Garshâsp's military prowess is described in some detail, which constitutes the highlights of the instalment. If his superb performance is anticipated by the audience, it may come as a surprise to Bahu who has presumably never heard of him before. The report on Garshâsp thus alarms Bahu so much that he is forced to alter his tactics against the Maharaja's troops. How Garshâsp responds to this challenge will be the point of the next instalment.

Instalment 2

At night, both commanders are busy preparing for battle. Garshâsp firmly refuses to accept the Maharaja's support; he asks the latter to send the troops back, and tells him moreover to stay at the top of a mountain. On the other hand, Bahu sends his brother and son to Sarandib, to let them prepare the place for a refuge. Having spent three days in preparation, the armies confront one another in the morning of the fourth day. While asking the Maharaja to stay at the top of the mountain, Garshâsp organises his troops. A mass combat ensues. Garshâsp is shown to fight many Indian soldiers and elephants. He defeats two notable warriors, Ajrâ and General Tiv, of Bahu's army. Dismayed by the course of the war, Bahu deploys more soldiers only to increase casualties. After sunset, the Maharaja sends for Garshâsp. Bahu, on the other hand, decides to use trickery; he is well aware that he cannot defeat Garshâsp in battle (pp. 82-92).

This instalment explicitly compares Garshâsp and Bahu, in order to emphasise the difference between them. On the one hand, Garshâsp resolutely refuses to accept the Maharaja's support. As is shown in the previous instalment, Garshâsp needs no troops to support him, since he easily defeats an army all by himself. His refusal thus underscores his self-confidence. On the other hand, Bahu has his brother and son prepare Sarandib for a refuge, anticipating his defeat already at the beginning of

the battle. The contrast is further illustrated by the descriptions of combat, in which Garshâsp virtually crushes Bahu's army. Bahu realises that it is impossible to defeat Garshâsp by sheer force of numbers, and decides to plot against Garshâsp. As in the case of the last instalment, Bahu's scheme against Garshâsp concludes the present one, carrying the audience's interest to the next instalment.

Instalment 3

At night, the Maharaja feasts with Garshâsp. He warns Garshâsp of General Tiv, the pillar of Bahu's troops, and gives him a plenty of presents. When Garshâsp returns to his tent, he sees Bahu's scribe waiting for him. The scribe reads out Bahu's letter, saying "I will give you the world if you take sides with me". Garshâsp strongly rejects the offer, and sends back the scribe with harsh word. At the same time, Gerâhun, general of Garshâsp, secretly returns to the battlefield with his cavaliers to take captive of Indians. Hearing of this, Garshâsp immediately forbids his men to fight outside the battlefield, while sending the captives to the Maharaja. Meanwhile, the scribe returns to Bahu to tell him Garshâsp's answer. Disappointed by the result, Bahu assembles the chiefs, and encourages them to capture Garshâsp. Mabtar takes up the challenge (pp. 92-100).

Bahu's intrigue brings into focus Garshâsp's integrity, as opposed to his military prowess which has been amply illustrated already. As the case of Sohrâb has demonstrated,³⁵⁵ the hero is required to excel not only in military prowess but also in uprightness and wisdom: Sohrâb fails to surpass Rostam owing to his lack of worldly wisdom. Here Garshâsp has proven to be perfect in judgement and morality. Not at all tempted by the prospects of kingship, treasures, and countries, he rejects Bahu's offer outright, and condemns the latter for his meanness and arrogance. Later, when informed of Bahu's attempt, even the Maharaja briefly entertains the possibility that Garshâsp may change his mind after all. He is mistaken, however. Garshâsp will never disobey a Persian king, even if some of them are not morally commendable (like Zahhâk). It is hard to imagine a more striking contrast with Rostam, who not infrequently disobeys Key Kâus. As elsewhere, Garshâsp is shown to be superior to Rostam.

Garshâsp also demonstrates his impartiality in connection with General Gerâhun's unlawful act: Gerâhun seeks revenge on the Indians when the armies are

³⁵⁵See Chapter II.

at rest. Just as Garshâsp is harsh with the opponent, so is he with his own men, rebuking Gerâhun for his misconduct.

Bahu, on the other hand, does not flinch from scheming against Garshâsp. Having failed to influence Garshâsp by cunning, he once again resorts to force. It is clear that Mabtar will play a key role in the next instalment.

Instalment 4

In the following morning, Mabtar organises the actions of his army, while sending a soldier to the Maharaja to assassinate the latter, which however, is interceded by an Iranian warrior. Zardâde, Garshâsp's cousin, defeats an Indian warrior but perishes in the combat with Mabtar's son. Garshâsp destroys Mabtar's son in revenge for Zardâde's death,³⁵⁶ and Mabtar himself who comes to fight later. A mass combat ensues, in which the Iranians prevail. Bahu urges his troops to fight harder. At sunset, Bahu is resolved to fight a terrible battle the next day (pp. 101-6).

What Mabtar plans against Garshâsp is clear from the beginning. Like his master, Bahu, he is shown to be vile. Instead of fighting Garshâsp, he attempts to assassinate the Maharaja. Having failed in this, he lets his son kill Zardâde, Garshâsp's cousin, in a manner that is entirely un-heroic, attacking him from behind (ll. 50-4, p. 103). This enrages Garshâsp so much that he brutally murders Mabtar's son. It is only after his son's death that Mabtar confronts Garshâsp, and pays the price for his villainy. As is indicated by this episode, the present instalment makes up for the absence of combat scenes in the last by focusing on Garshâsp and his warriors' fight.

It must be predictable by now that the end of instalments always points to some new intrigues or tactics which Bahu thinks out against Garshâsp.

Instalment 5

The following morning, lines of battle are formed on both sides. Following a mass combat, Garshâsp's military exploits are brought into prominence; they are repeated twice over. They are described from the perspective of the narrator (or 'omniscient' point of view) and then from that of the Maharaja. The chief of Bahu's elephant troops realises that Fortune has been turned against Bahu, and decides to surrender to the Maharaja. Bahu asserts that all elephants will be delivered to the Maharaja. Thereupon, most of the

³⁵⁶A parallel motif is found in the ShNF. Rostam does not join the battle until his spear-bear, Alvâ, is killed (13b:1545-8).

elephant riders desert Bahu. Bahu immediately regrets his hasty decision, and goes on to scheme against Garshâsp (pp. 106-11).

As in the previous instalment, descriptions of battle dominate the instalment. Here the storyteller seems to have entirely given up developing the plot. It seems rather that he is resolved to entertain the audience by 'showing' Garshâsp's heroic exploits in many different ways.

The chief of Bahu's elephant troops is perhaps clever enough to abandon his master at this point, since he has sensed that fortune is deserting Bahu. This evidently indicates that Bahu will be soon defeated, no matter what scheme he might hit upon. Nevertheless, when left alone with a few hundred soldiers, Bahu thinks out what seems to be his last plan to outdo Garshâsp.

Instalment 6

A black servant of Bahu (Zangi) offers to assassinate Garshâsp. The Zangi's plan is briefly as follows: he will go and see Garshâsp in private, insisting that he has an important message to deliver; while Garshâsp is reading the message he will try to stab him with a dagger. Bahu accepts the offer and sends the Zangi to Garshâsp with a letter of surrender. As is planned, the Zangi attempts Garshâsp's life with a dagger when Garshâsp is reading the letter. But Garshâsp sees the dagger and throws the Zangi to the floor. He tells the Zangi to accompany him to Bahu's tent, promising a commandership. The Zangi agrees to do so, and helps Garshâsp to capture Bahu in his sleep. The Maharaja and Garshâsp celebrate their victory before Bahu (pp. 111-7).

This instalment centres on Bahu's intrigue against Garshâsp, as well as the latter's genius to turn this to his own advantage. The Zangi attempts to assassinate Garshâsp. Garshâsp turns this around and enlists the Zangi's aid to capture Bahu. He not only pre-empts the danger but takes over the opponent's strategy, leading to the accomplishment of his task (i.e. the arrest of Bahu). Asadi omits details such as the name of the Zangi. Nor does he elaborate on the episode of Garshâsp's capture of Bahu; it is an outright success, as Bahu was fast asleep when Garshâsp went to his pavilion. It may be noted that Bahu has not even confronted Garshâsp in battle. Just as Garshâsp is perfect, Bahu is consistently vile — so much so that no space is allowed for his combat with Garshâsp. There is no ambiguity in either of the protagonists, which is rarely the case in the ShNF.

Instalment 7

In the morning, Bahu's troops draw lines of battle without knowing of Bahu's arrest. When they know this, however, they begin running away. Iranian heroes pursue Indians, and battles are fought everywhere. The Indians have left weapons, tents, golden and silver objects, etc., which the Iranian collect in more than two months. After a brief respite, the Maharaja asks Garshâsp to take Sarandib back from Bahu's son. Garshâsp thereupon kills the captives and puts Bahu in prison. The Maharaja and Garshâsp set off to Zanzibar. En route, they stop at an island, where Garshâsp fights monsters. (pp. 117-21).

At the end of the last instalment where Bahu is arrested, the story practically reached its logical ending. From this instalment onwards, a new story line begins, namely Garshâsp's journey to India. This apparently affects the structures of the ensuing instalments, in which short sequences of descriptive passages prevail.

This and the next instalment provide a typical example of Asadi's storytelling. Asadi provides realistic details which Ferdowsi and *naqqâls* would probably have left out.³⁵⁷ At the beginning of the present instalment for example, Asadi tells us how Bahu's soldiers fare after their master is arrested. He goes into details of the weapons, objects, and tents which Bahu's troops have left behind in hurried retreat. Even after introducing Garshâsp's next target (recovering Sarandib from Bahu's son), he does not follow the story line immediately. Rather, he describes the itinerary of his characters; he has them stop on an island, and describes its inhabitants (both human and superhuman) as well as its natural surroundings (ll. 77-84, p. 119). The only respite, as it were, in this pseudo-travelogue, is Garshâsp's fight with the monsters.

Instalment 8

The following day, the Maharaja and Garshâsp set off to the land of Sarandib, which is now governed by Bahu's son who has eliminated his uncle. A naval combat takes place between the Iranians and the Indians. As is elsewhere, Garshâsp brings victory for the Iranians. Bahu's son seeks refuge at the King of Zanzibar, together with his kinsmen. The king welcomes Bahu's son to such an extent that he receives him as his son-in-law. When the Maharaja and Garshâsp arrive at Zanzibar, Bahu's son seeks their pardon. The Maharaja and Garshâsp accept his surrender. (pp. 121-5).

As in the case of the previous instalment, Asadi dwells on minor details of

³⁵⁷On-going actions are rarely related in the *tumâr* (see Chapter II).

Garshâsp's voyage: e.g. a lengthy passage on Garshâsp's voyage to Sarandib (ll. 1-16, pp. 121-2); descriptions of Zanzibar's exotic traditions (ll. 5-13, p. 123), while keeping actions to a minimum. Except for Garshâsp's naval combat, which is described in some thirty lines, actions are either summarised or curtailed. Bahu's son's rebellion against his uncle is hastily related in a few lines (ll. 1-3, p. 122), although it seems to provide enough material for an instalment. What is more surprising is the treatment of Bahu's son, who is forgiven by the Maharaja and Garshâsp by virtue of the fact that it was his father, but not he, who rebelled against the Maharaja.

Asadi's Narrative Technique

The two key motifs — Garshâsp's fights and the obstacles which Garshâsp overcomes — play a large role in our hypothetical instalments. Garshâsp's performances constitute highlights of most instalments (instalments 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7); in a few others, Garshâsp is put to the test with regard to his morality (instalment 3) as well as to his intellect (instalment 6). These tests are elicited by Bahu's schemes. Each of the instalments follows up Bahu's plot which has been hinted at near the end of the preceding instalment, and proves Garshâsp's superiority. Instalment 1 begins with Garshâsp's reaction to Bahu's declaration of war and ends with the latter's renewed tactics against the former. The second instalment then develops the war motif and continues until Bahu suggests his next plan. Similar patterns are repeated up to instalment 7, which focuses on Bahu's son. Even here Bahu's earlier plan to prepare Sarandib for battle motivates Garshâsp's journey to Sarandib.

It is clear from this that Asadi makes frequent use of structural repetition as an organising principle of the instalments. All instalments describe Garshâsp's fights with his opponents and refer to Bahu's intrigues, thus emphasising the key motifs implied in the preface. Another device used in the narrative is interlacing. This technique is first used at the end of instalment 2 (2.13) where Bahu decides to use trickery against Garshâsp. This story line is interrupted by the ensuing three episodes describing the feasting at the Maharaja's camp; it is then picked up again in episodes 3.4 and continues up to 3.6; after an interval of the two episodes it is finally resolved in episode 3.9. Another instance of interlacing is seen in the story line focusing on Garshâsp's journey to Sarandib. After a brief reference in episode 2.3 (where Bahu sends his brother and son to Sarandib), this story line is resumed in instalments 7 and 8. On minor scales, too, interlacing is frequently used in order

to demonstrate the contrasts between Garshâsp and Bahu (e.g. instalment 2).

On the other hand, no red herrings are used in the GN. This is one of the logical consequences of Asadi's characterisation of Garshâsp, and has greatly influenced the story plot. By precluding red herrings (which generally give rise to a number of subplots) from the GN, Asadi has considerably simplified the plot. Unlike the *tumâr* or Ferdowsi's story 13b, the story of our text is linear from beginning to end. This has, furthermore, made the story shorter. The sample text in fact covers only 884 lines, while story 13b amounts to about 1600 lines though relating a similar motif of battle.

Nevertheless, by excluding the red herring from a repertoire of narrative devices, Asadi has in effect eliminated important narrative elements, e.g. suspense and uncertainty, from the story. As the *tumâr* and the ShNF have shown, the red herring is a useful device for evoking alternative possibilities in the story, which evidently misleads the audience, even if temporarily, as to where the story is going. It is capable of creating suspense or tension in the narrative. What Asadi has left out is, therefore, the pleasure an audience would derive from the story as such.

Review of the OPM Tests on the GN

Applied to the GN, the Oral Performance Model has produced the following results; the GN satisfies most OPM criteria. It essentially satisfies formal criteria. The sample text has been divided into a sequence of hypothetical instalments; each instalment comprises a series of short episodes; and most episodes are formally marked by narrative or temporal markers. The formal criteria which the text fails to satisfy are the omission of narrative markers in some episodes and instalment or episode length, which varies considerably among the instalments. In terms of the thematic criteria, our sample is satisfactory, meeting all of them. The two key motifs which are brought to our attention by Asadi in the preface are highlighted by structural repetition in most instalments. Overall, the GN scores as many points as the ShNF (which fails in three of the formal criteria: instalment length, episode length and episode count),³⁵⁸ and could therefore be said to show the influence of oral tradition as strongly, even though such conclusion would be based on a formal observation only.

Indeed, this seems to contradict our analysis so far, which altogether points to the growing importance of literary elements in the GN. While literary elements

³⁵⁸See Chapter IV.

are also found in the ShNF, they are used to maximise the effect of the serial form in which story 13b is written. The presence of literary elements in itself does not deny the indirect influence of oral performance. Rather, the question is what role the literary elements play in the GN.

When applying the formal criteria it was pointed out that the omission of narrative markers presupposes careful reading, since it renders a relationship between episodes implicit. Rather than formally signalling a shift of focus and hence the boundary of episodes, it invites the reader to identify them by himself. The emergence of necessary *enjambement*, which we noted with reference to uses of the temporal marker *co*, is another case in point. Necessary *enjambement* also demands careful attention on the part of the reader, because it suspends a natural flow of narration. These are a few instances of the stylistic devices which require the reader's co-operation.

The study of the instalment divisions shed light on the increase in descriptive and discursive passages in the GN. Speeches bear out the thematic, rather than formal, structure of the text. Garshâsp's reply to Bahu's letter in instalment 3 illustrates his personality, specifically his moral uprightness which never succumbs to the opponent's scheme. In instalment 6, the Maharaja rebukes Bahu at some length for his aspiration to be king despite his humble origin. Bahu defends himself by emphasising his own merit, intellect, and military prowess. The dialogue between the Maharaja and Bahu thus serves as commentary on Garshâsp's battle with Bahu and conveys to the reader a moral lesson that one should not aspire to be what one is not. Here the story is made into the vehicle for this message; it is a narrative example to illustrate the fate of a rebellious subject.

Most descriptions in the GN are not organically linked with the action; one-third of the descriptions can be eliminated from the text without obscuring it. While they are extraneous to the story of Garshâsp in the narrow sense, they are nevertheless integral parts of the narrative. On capturing Bahu, Garshâsp steps into another realm, where action is subordinate to knowledge and wisdom, and where he functions solely as a perceiving subject. The increase of descriptive passages in instalments 7 and 8 is symptomatic of the subsequent section which catalogues marvels of India and her vicinities. It marks a transition from epic to wisdom and travel literature, the amalgamation of which constitutes the GN.

The thematic analysis also brought to light some characteristic features which may probably be connected with Asadi's personal literary aspirations. As the frequent use of structural repetition indicates, each instalment follows a predictable

pattern: it begins with Bahu's challenge and ends with another, with Garshâsp's fighting scenes in the middle. This is further strengthened by the absence of red herrings, which characteristically give rise to unexpected turns of events, and by the stable number of episodes contained in instalments. The formal and static nature of the text is also manifest in the flat characters: Garshâsp is always a perfect hero while his opponents are consistently vile, and over and above it finds its ultimate realisation in the general structure of the text (see Figure 11 above) which shows a balanced, chiasmatic pattern where the biographical chapters alternate with the adventure chapters.

In the light of these literary elements which are present in all aspects of the text — ranging from stylistic devices to the global structure — the serial form in which the GN is apparently composed appears to be strikingly incongruous. The form was transported by Ferdowsi from oral performance to epic, presumably because it was considered to be an effective means to tell a story. It serves to create suspense and to bring about uncertainty as to how the story develops. While it was adjusted and modified according to the difference in the medium and delivery, it still remains as the basis of Ferdowsi's storytelling in terms of both plot and thematic structure. In the last analysis, it seems, its use is motivated by his intentions to tell a pleasant story and to entertain his readers. In the GN, however, this is no longer the case. The story of Garshâsp is permeated by Asadi's intentions to instruct and edify his readers. It is not an end in itself, but rather serves as the vehicle for conveying moral teachings, philosophical discourse, and marvels of the world.³⁵⁹ The action is correspondingly kept to a minimum, and almost all of the narrative devices which Ferdowsi crafted for enhanced readability are eliminated.

Yet the serial form is preserved in the GN, although it would hardly seem to be the most appropriate form for written compositions. Even more so, since Asadi is little concerned with the art of storytelling; straightforward narration would help him better to incorporate descriptive and discursive passages as well as catalogues of marvels. The employment of the serial form is a phenomenon which defies any functional explanation, and suggests all the more strongly the pervasive influence of oral performance in the organisation of heroic stories. The form, while mainly used as the frame for repeating Garshâsp's heroic actions, is observed in the adventure sections of the GN, notably those on Garshâsp's war expeditions in the text. It is

³⁵⁹Asadi describes the Book of Garshâsp not as a pleasing verse story of Garshâsp but as a book of wisdom: "...*ke cun x'âni az har dari andaki / basi dânesh afzâyad az har yeki*" (If you read a little from each chapter, you will learn a lot from each, p. 19).

intricately linked with motifs of battle and intrigue, without which the story of Garshâsp would be pointless. It is here that one can fully appreciate the scope and depth of the influence of oral performance which deeply informed Asadi's understanding of the story of Garshâsp. In spite of his expressed rivalry with Ferdowsi, Asadi thus inherited the serial form from his predecessor, which became an integral element of epic style.

Conclusion

This study has been concerned to elucidate the role of oral tradition in the development of the Persian written epic tradition. It has proposed to shift our perspective from the origin of the ShNF to the characteristics and structure of the text itself (Chapter I). The question of origin of the ShNF is by nature retrospective. It seeks to consider everything but the text in question. While purporting to inform us about the textual transmission of the national legend, it does not allow us to see just how this influenced the ShNF. This state of affairs is not altered by replacing Abu Mansur's ShNF with some other written texts as has been recently proposed.³⁶⁰ It is necessary then to change our perspective, and to seek to envisage the 'here and now' of the ShNF. The question which this work has addressed is therefore to consider the influence of oral tradition on the way in which, starting with the ShNF, the Persian written epic tradition evolved. It is, in other words, an attempt to understand to what extent the epic poets' understanding of the nature of heroic stories was shaped by storytelling.

In an attempt to answer the question, this work has proposed an alternative approach to the study of oral tradition. The study of the Oral Formulaic Theory (Chapter I) has made us realise that what ultimately distinguishes oral literature from written literature is the factor of 'performance'. In view of this, it seemed clear that an alternative approach of this type needs to be based on an understanding of Persian oral tradition. *Naqqâli* was an obvious choice for our purposes; it is an oral epic tradition, provides us with a model of oral performance, and allows us to see how this is developed out of the *tumâr*. Of importance among the formal features of *naqqâli* performance is serial form, since this is seen to influence the formal and thematic structure of a story significantly. A serialised narrative can be divided into a series of instalments, and each is of similar length (as dictated by the fixed duration of an oral performance). These formal features make demands on the thematic organisation of the story: a certain motif recurs with frequency and repetition; because members of the audience change from one day to another, it has to be repeated in each instalment to be appreciated by any newcomer.

³⁶⁰ De Blois 1992: 124.

On the basis of this information on *naqqâli* performance, we have proposed a set of criteria for determining the influence of oral tradition on written epics. Such criteria are here called the 'Oral Performance Model', and include the following formal and thematic criteria (Chapter II):

The Formal Criteria

- Influence of oral tradition on a written text is shown by a series of instalments or equivalents.
- Such instalments themselves are generally of equal length and each is semantically complete in itself, while being a part of the larger whole.
- Each instalment consists of a series of episodes which are formally marked by narrative or temporal markers.

The Thematic Criteria

- A text showing influence of an oral narrative is typically organised around a key motif, which is explicitly marked by the storyteller or the author.
- Such a text is characterised by the frequent use of certain narrative techniques and devices.

Before applying this set of criteria to the ShNF, we have sought to provide some external and internal evidence for the influence of oral tradition on the ShNF (Chapter III). On the basis of the *Târix-e Beyhaqi*, we have shown that the poets, the minstrels, and the storytellers played important roles in oral tradition in Ghaznavid times. While the poets and minstrels performed on public occasions such as stately banquets and Persian and Islamic religious festivals, the storytellers were confined to the private quarters of princes. They entertained their masters with evening stories. They told stories of the national legends as well as tales of fantastic travels.

Trivial as such information may seem, it points to the oral transmission of the national legend roughly at the time when the ShNF was composed, and therefore provides a basis for our inquiry into the oral influence on the ShNF. Another, more important basis is provided by a group of standard sentences found in the ShNF, which seem to refer either to a written or an oral source. We have shown that these standard sentences are unevenly distributed across the ShNF, and that they are concentrated in the earlier parts of the text, notably in the sections on the reigns of Key Kâus and Key Xosrow. We have then examined to what extent the standard sentences can be regarded as reliable, on the basis of information available in the secondary literature. The standard sentences in the sections on Key

Kâus and Xosrow have been shown to be the most reliable. On the basis of this, we have selected story 13b in the section on the reign of Key Xosrow, to which the Oral Performance Model is applied.

When applied to story 13b of the ShNF, the Oral Performance Model has yielded interesting results (Chapter IV). The story meets most of the criteria, except for three of the formal criteria: instalment length, episode count, and episode length (see further below). This means that the story can be divided into hypothetical instalments, and each is made up of a sequence of short episodes, marked by either narrative or temporal markers. The story is, furthermore, built on a key motif (the question of Rostam's participation in war), which is variously modified or reinforced by a set of standard narrative devices. It could be said therefore that story 13b is composed in serial form, as if to enact an oral performance on paper. This suggests that Ferdowsi modelled this particular story (and perhaps other stories of the same group in the ShNF) intuitively on oral performance, the form and technique of which were deeply imprinted in his consciousness through his experience as a listener; this was probably how he thought of heroic narratives.

On the other hand, it is also clear that story 13b is significantly revised by Ferdowsi to enhance its 'readability'. Thus, the three criteria in which the story fails to meet (instalment length and the number and length of episodes) can be thought of as the areas where the new medium of writing allowed Ferdowsi to break with tradition. By changing instalment length, episode count and its length, he has modulated the intensity level of instalments; this has resulted in the varying speed and depth of narration. Such changes are of course important in a written composition such as the ShNF, which is not primarily meant for serial performance. In oral performance, each instalment must in principle be as entertaining as any other, because of a shifting audience. As a result, each instalment is kept at a set level of intensity. While this is helpful for oral serial narratives, it might be detrimental to (relatively short) written narratives which can be read in one sitting. When converting oral performance to a written narrative, Ferdowsi thus made due adjustments in varying the dramatic intensity of instalments.

If Ferdowsi thought of stories on the basis of oral performance, the question arises as to whether this somehow influenced later epics (Chapter V). Although these epics have been considered as imitations of the ShNF, they in fact constitute a separate genre, 'heroic verse romance'. They relate the biographies of heroes of the Sistani tradition. Their plot structure is so versatile that it is capable of incorporating

a number of minor genres into the story of those heroes. Such structural changes in the later epics seem to have been influenced by the way in which later epic poets received the ShNF. In the preface to the *Garshâspnâme* (GN) Asadi implies that the ShNF is equal to the stories of Rostam. While apparently assuming that this view is shared by his readers (and patrons), he compares Garshâsp with Rostam, in order to emphasise the merit of the former who was neglected by Ferdowsi. The GN could therefore be seen as a response to the ShNF: more precisely, to Ferdowsi's rendering of the stories of Rostam which go back to the Sistani tradition. It shifted the focus of attention from Persian history to the story of a Sistani hero, and was a veritable beginning of the later epic tradition.

In this connection, it might be asked whether the stories of Rostam in the ShNF influenced, not just the selection of Sistani materials by later epic poets, but also the form in which those materials were related. For, as postulated earlier, the stories of Rostam seem to have been influenced by oral performance. On the basis of this assumption we have applied the OPM to a sample corpus of the GN.

The OPM, applied to the GN, has produced the following results. The GN satisfies most criteria of the OPM while failing in three formal criteria: the omission of narrative markers in some episodes, instalment length and episode length, which vary considerably between the instalments. The GN scores as many points as story 13b of the ShNF, and could therefore be said to show the influence of oral performance as strongly.

Yet it is also clear that literary elements play a greater role in all aspects of the GN than they do in story 13b of the ShNF. Some stylistic features of the GN seem to presuppose reading, as opposed to listening to a recitation. The omission of narrative markers in some episodes is a case in point. In oral performance where listeners are easily distracted from narration, narrative or temporal markers are effective means of drawing the audience's attention. In written literature, on the other hand, since the author can expect the reader to follow the text carefully and to identify where an episode ends and where the next one begins, narrative or temporal markers cease to be functionally necessary and can be replaced by other grammatical or stylistic devices, as Asadi shows in some episodes of the GN. The instalment organisation of the GN also reveals a further departure from oral performance which typically centres on action. It is characterised by the increase of descriptive and discursive passages. In some cases (e.g. the catalogues of marvels and Garshâsp's fighting scenes) descriptions are seen to be ends in themselves and virtually supplant action. Dialogues mostly convey ethical and moral teachings —

so much so that the story of Garshâsp can be ultimately taken as a moral exemplar. Finally, the thematic structure of the GN is made simpler, devoid of 'suspense and uncertainty' typical of oral narratives. It makes frequent use of repetition which serves to introduce the key motifs (Garshâsp's fights and Bahu's intrigues) in almost every instalment. The repetition establishes a predictable pattern in the narrative, and simplifies the plot structure.

Among these literary elements, the serial form in which the GN is seemingly composed is strikingly incongruous. This is indeed remarkable, since the serial form — the hallmark of oral performance — would hardly seem to be the most appropriate form for written compositions. Despite the growing importance attributed to literary elements in the GN, which ultimately seems to reflect his awareness of the potential of the medium of writing, Asadi has not departed from an oral performance model which his predecessor also followed; he has in fact followed the model as meticulously as the latter. This best illustrates, it seems, the extent to which oral performance was influential in Asadi's understanding of heroic stories. In the GN and perhaps many other epics, characteristics originating in oral performance overrode the authors' literary intentions and practice, because it was probably the most characteristic way in which stories were told and received in early Islamic times.

The influence of oral tradition on the Persian epics is pervasive but indirect. Oral tradition has continued to inform the way people told and listened to stories; it runs deeply through the Persian epics. It was something that the epic poets and their readers shared and developed together; it was part of a reservoir of shared knowledge and experience, and as such was seldom explicitly acknowledged. When Ferdowsi modelled stories of Rostam on oral performance in the ShNF, this was readily appreciated by his contemporaries; it appealed to the mental categories of his readers — including Asadi of Tus — whose perception and appreciation of stories were fundamentally shaped by the realities of oral performance. Asadi perceived the ShNF not as the history of pre-Islamic Persia but as the stories of Rostam. This perception then formed the basis of Asadi's literary project, and provided him with the form and techniques he needed. For all his ambitions and expressed rivalry with Ferdowsi, the one thing he did not do was to experiment with a different literary form. Characteristics ultimately deriving from the requirements of oral performance had thus become integral elements of the new genre of written epic poetry.

Appendix I The Hypothetical Divisions of the

Tumâr

Note 1: The leftmost digit refers to the chapter No., the middle to the instalment No. and the rightmost to the episode No. Thus 1.1.1 represents the first episode of the first instalment of the first chapter.

Note 2: The episode marked with * include citations from the ShNF.

Chapter 1 The Birth of Sohrâb

- 1.1.1* Rostam wanders from a hunting field to another (p. 1).
- 1.1.2 Tahmine encounters Rostam in a hunting ground, and invites him to Samangân (pp. 2-3).
- 1.1.3 Tahmine persuades her father, King Sohram, to enlist Rostam's assistance (pp. 3-4).
- 1.1.4 While Rostam is musing over the invitation, a group of Samangânis take away his horse, Raxsh (p. 4).
- 1.1.5* Rostam follows Raxsh's footsteps, and reaches Samangân (pp. 4-5).
- 1.1.6 Raxsh is restored to Rostam (pp. 6-7).
- 1.1.7 Tahmine's brother, Zenderazm, persuades Rostam to stay in Samangân (pp. 7-8).
- 1.1.8* Tahmine attempts to seduce Rostam (pp. 8-9).
- 1.1.9 The storyteller comments on the preceding episode (p. 10).
- 1.1.10 Rostam proposes to Tahmine (pp. 10-12).
- 1.1.11 Sohram gives Tahmine in marriage, but the wedding is called off owing to Rostam's fight with Ejram (p. 12).

- 1.2.1 Sohram tells Rostam about the Xojandis who have control over the local reservoir (pp. 12-15).
- 1.2.2 The Xojandis complain that Ejram monopolises the reservoir. They enlist Rostam's assistance to defeat Ejram (pp. 15-17).
- 1.2.3 Rostam and Zenderazm are taken captive by Ejram (pp. 17-19).

- 1.2.4 Tahmine rescues Rostam and Zenderazm (pp. 20-22).
- 1.2.5 Reyhâne, Ejram's wife, takes refuge in Xojand (p. 22).

- 1.3.1 Zâl has a premonition that Rostam is in danger. He goes to Samangân (p. 23).
- 1.3.2* The marriage is consummated, and Tahmine becomes pregnant (pp. 23-24).
- 1.3.3 Reyhâne kidnaps Zâl (pp. 24-28).
- 1.3.4 Rostam arrives at the talisman where Zâl is confined (pp. 28-30).
- 1.3.5 Rostam breaks the talisman and rescues Zâl (pp. 30-32).
- 1.3.6 Tahmine gives birth to a boy. Rostam and Zâl return to Zabolestan (pp. 32-33).

Chapter 2 Sohrâb's Departure to Iran

- 2.1.1 The baby is named Sohrâb (pp. 34-35).
- 2.1.2 Pirân learns of the happenings in Samangân and sends Yamuti to Samangân (pp. 35-37).
- 2.1.3 Sohrâm and Zenderazm meet Yamuti (pp. 37-38).
- 2.1.4 Tahmine kills Yamuti (pp. 39-40).
- 2.1.5 Afrâsiyâb hears of Pirân's failed attempt to intermedate between Samangân and Xojand. Thereupon he gives orders to execute Pirân, who is saved by Pashang, Afrâsiyâb's father (pp. 40-42).

- 2.2.1 Afrâsiyâb sends Humân to Samangân (pp. 42-43).
- 2.2.2 Tahmine refuses to surrender to Humân (pp. 43-44).
- 2.2.3 Sohrâm and Zenderazm surrender and are taken captive (pp. 44-45).
- 2.2.4 Tahmine wages a war against Garsivaz (pp. 46-47).
- 2.2.5 Tahmine takes flight, and is separated from Sohrâb (p. 47).
- 2.2.6 Sohrâm and Zenderazm are imprisoned in Balkh (p. 48).
- 2.2.7 Tahmine is reunited with Sohrâb on an island (p. 49).
- 2.2.8 Tahmine raises Sohrâb with a lioness on the island (pp. 50-52).

- 2.3.1 A merchant, X^vâje Kâus, is on his way to Toqrel's fortress (pp. 52-53).
- 2.3.2 X^vâje Kâus rescues Tahmine and Sohrâb from the island. He sets off to the fortress with Tahmine and Sohrâb (pp. 53-57).
- 2.3.3 X^vâje Kâus tells Tahmine the reason why he is going to see Toqrel (p. 57).

- 2.3.4 Tahmine attacks Toqrel's fortress (pp. 57-60).
- 2.3.5 Toqrel surrenders to Tahmine and consents to serve her (pp. 60-62).
- 2.3.6 Tahmine returns to Samangân with Sohrâb, Kâus, and Toqrel (pp. 62-64).
- 2.4.1 Tahmine and X^Vâje Kâus leave for Balkh to rescue Sohram and Zenderazm (pp. 64-65).
- 2.4.2 Tahmine enters the prison where Sohram and Zenderazm are kept (pp. 65-67).
- 2.4.3. Tahmine finds Sohram and Zenderazm (pp. 67-69).
- 2.4.4 Tahmine rescues Sohram and Zenderazm (pp. 69-70).
- 2.4.5 Tahmine and others are stopped by the police (pp. 70-71).
- 2.4.6 Tahmine manages to leave the town with Sohram and Zenderazm. Her party encounters Sohrâb and Toqrel en route and leaves for Samangân together with them (p. 71).
- 2.5.1 The news comes to Afrâsiyâb that Sohram and Zenderazm have escaped from the prison (pp. 71-72).
- 2.5.2 Afrâsiyâb kills X^Vâje Kâus, and sends an army to Samangân (pp. 73-74).
- 2.5.4 Tahmine realises that they are in short of money to rebuild the town of Samangân.
- 2.5.5 Tahmine and others rob gold of a tax collector whom they meet en route (pp. 80-81).
- 2.5.6 When Tahmine reaches Samangân, Afrâsiyâb's army arrives. A war breaks out between the two, and Tahmine defeats the Turanians (pp. 82-84).
- 2.5.7 The town of Samangân is rebuilt (p. 84).
- 2.6.1 When Afrâsiyâb knows of the previous episodes, he gives orders to kill the tax collector. However, he is persuaded by Pashang to forgive the tax collector (pp. 85-86).
- 2.6.2 Pashang dies (pp. 86-87).
- 2.6.3 Pashang is buried in Iran according to his will (pp. 87-89).
- 2.6.4 At the funeral, a quarrel breaks out between Tus and Gudarz (pp. 89-90).
- 2.6.5 Rostam is called forth by Kâus (pp. 90-92).
- 2.6.6 Rostam, humiliated by Tus, walks out of the funeral. Pirân reports to Afrâsiyâb on this event and urges him to attack Iran at once (pp. 92-94).

- 2.7.1 Tahmine goes to obtain weapons with Sohrâb, and falls ill on the way (p. 95).
- 2.7.2 Tahmine is saved by camphor merchants (pp. 95-98).
- 2.7.3 Having helped the merchants to collect camphor, Tahmine returns to Samangân (pp. 98-99).
- 2.7.4 Afrâsiyâb decides to destroy Samangân, hearing of the previous episodes (pp. 100-101).
- 2.7.5 Afrâsiyâb sends Tameshk to Samangân. Having been defeated by Sohrâb, Tameshk pretends to be his servant (pp. 101-102).
- 2.7.6 Sohrâb continues to trust Tameshk, despite his mother's warning (pp. 102-103).
- 2.7.7 Having failed to assassinate Sohrâb, Tameshk takes flight to a caravan (pp. 103- 104).
- 2.7.8 Sohrâb is deceived by Tameshk again (pp. 104-105).
- 2.7.9 Sohrâb prevents Tahmine from killing Tameshk (p. 105).
- 2.8.1 Tameshk plots against the Samangânîs (pp. 105-107).
- 2.8.2 Tahmine warns Sohrâb of Tameshk's plot (pp. 108-110).
- 2.8.3 Sohrâb is injured by Tameshk and becomes aware that he has been deceived. He runs away in shame (p. 111).
- 2.8.4 Tahmine also goes away from the field (p. 111).
- 2.8.5 Afrâsiyâb plunders the town of Samangân, and captures Sohram and Zenderazm (pp. 111-112).
- 2.8.6 Afrâsiyâb orders Sohram and Zenderazm to be executed, but is persuaded by Pirân to put them in prison at Eskandar's (p. 112).
- 2.8.7 Afrâsiyâb gives orders to search for Sohrâb and Tahmine (p. 113).
- 2.9.1 Sohrâb is saved by Shohre, princess of Shengân (p. 114).
- 2.9.2 Sohrâb asks Shohre to marry him (pp. 114-116).
- 2.9.3 The king of Shengân, knowing the affair, sends Qeys. Sohrâb defeats Qeys but is deceived. He is arrested with Shohre (pp. 116-118).
- 2.9.4 The following morning, Sohrâb finds himself bound in fetters (p. 118).
- 2.9.5 Sohrâb is laid down at the gallows (p. 118-119).
- 2.9.6 Sohrâb is saved by a messenger from Afrâsiyâb, and is brought back to the prison (p. 119).
- 2.9.7 Shohre fails to rescue Sohrâb (pp. 119-121).

- 2.9.8 Sohrâb escapes from the prison and is united with Shohre. Shohre finds herself with child (Borzu). The king of Shengân comes to know this, and sends Sohrâb to Afrâsiyâb while putting Shohre in prison (pp. 121-123).
- 2.10.1 Tahmine is saved by Sohrâb-e Ilxâni, and leaves for Samangân (pp. 124-128).
- 2.10.2 Tahmine encounters Sohrâb. She and Sohrâb leave for Eskandar's fortress where Sohram and Zenderazm are confined (p. 128).
- 2.10.3 Sohrâb defeats and forgives Eskandar (pp. 128-130).
- 2.10.4 Eskandar plots to kill Sohrâb (p. 130).
- 2.10.5 Sohrâb defeats Eskandar in combat. Eskandar consents to serve Sohrâb (pp. 130-131).
- 2.10.4 All return to Samangân (p. 131).
- 2.11.1 The news reaches Afrâsiyâb that Sohrâb is still alive (2.9), and that Sohram and Zenderazm have been rescued (2.10). While dispatching Chinese generals to Shengân, Afrâsiyâb himself goes down to Samangân with Pirân (pp. 132-133).
- 2.11.2 The Chinese attack the country of Shengân. Shohre takes flight with her son Borzu (pp. 133-134).
- 2.11.3 Pirân, disguised as an arms-dealer, visits Sohrâb (pp. 134-135).
- 2.11.4 Garsivaz is terrified by Sohrâb's appearance (pp. 135-137).
- 2.11.5 Garsivaz brags to Afrâsiyâb that he has frightened Sohrâb, while Afrâsiyâb is not entirely convinced of this story (p. 137-138).
- 2.11.6 Afrâsiyâb is annoyed by Garsivaz's bragging so much that he secretly decides to eliminate Garsivaz (p. 138).
- 2.11.7 Garsivaz beats a war drum to prove his bravery. Sohrâb, impressed by the sound of the drum, comes to see Garsivaz and takes the drum away from him (pp. 138-139).
- 2.11.8 Garsivaz is sentenced to death (p. 140).
- 2.12.1 A general of Arjang, Tufân, intervenes to rescue Garsivaz. He is thereupon ordered to fight Sohrâb (pp. 140-142).
- 2.12.2 Tufân asks Sohrâb about his father. Sohrâb finds himself incapable of gratifying Tufân's curiosity on this subject (pp. 142-144).
- 2.12.3 Sohrâb knows that the Chinese generals have come. He defeats the Chinese,

- and takes them captive (pp. 144-145).
- 2.12.4 Afrâsiyâb demands the return of the drum and the Chinese. While the drum is returned, the Chinese refuse to go back as they intend to assassinate Sohrâb; they are slain by Sohrâb (pp. 145-146).
- 2.12.5 A group of merchants inform Afrâsiyâb of a dragon which lives in a valley. Pirân contrives a plan (pp. 146-147).
- 2.12.6 Tufân falls victim to the dragon (pp. 148-149).
- 2.12.7 Following Tufân, Sohrâb sets off to the valley where the dragon is. Afrâsiyâb and others also depart (p. 149).
- 2.12.8 Sohrâb destroys the dragon (pp. 149-150).
- 2.13.1 A fight breaks out between Sohrâb and Afrâsiyâb's party (pp. 151-152).
- 2.13.2 Sohrâm and Zenderazm are taken captive. Sohrâb demands their return (pp. 152-154).
- 2.13.3 Pirân persuades Sohrâb to serve Afrâsiyâb. Sohrâb travels around Turan (pp. 154-156).
- 2.13.4 Sohrâb returns to Balkh. He overhears women gossiping about his father (pp. 156-158).
- 2.13.5 Sohrâb is greatly upset by the fact that he knows very little about his own father. He pretends to be in love with Afrâsiyâb's daughter to conceal his troubled state of mind (pp. 158-159).
- 2.13.6 Afrâsiyâb and Pirân come to know that Sohrâb knows nothing about his relationship with Rostam. Taking advantage of Sohrâb's ignorance, they persuade him to defeat Rostam. All go to Samangân (pp. 159-161).
- 2.14.1* Sohrâb asks Tahmine about his father (pp. 162-165).
- 2.14.2 Tahmine urges Sohrâb to fight against Rostam (pp. 165-166).
- 2.14.3 The Turanians leave for Persia. Afrâsiyâb asks a hermit what the war is going to be like. The hermit, however, collapses in the middle of his prediction (pp. 166-167).
- 2.14.4 Sohrâb declares that he should only fight with Rostam (pp. 167-168).

Chapter 3 Sohrâb's Arrival at the White Fortress

- 3.1.1* Sohrâb reaches the White Fortress (pp. 169-170).
- 3.1.2 Sohrâb attacks the fortress (pp. 170-172).
- 3.1.3* Sohrâb takes Hajir captive (p. 173).

- 3.1.4* Sohrâb fights with Gordâfarid (pp. 173-177).
- 3.1.5* Gazhdahm writes to Key Kâus (pp. 178-179).
- 3.1.6 Sohrâb realises that the Persians have fled from the fortress (pp. 179-180).
- 3.1.7 Sohrâb occupies the fortress (pp. 180-181).

- 3.2.1 Nehâl the Xotani joins Sohrâb at the fortress. Sohrâb finds Nehâl's two-headed club distasteful (pp. 181-184).
- 3.2.2* Key Kâus summons Rostam, while sending Fariborz to the fortress (pp. 183-184).
- 3.2.3 Rostam refuses to comply with Kâus's request (pp. 184-185).
- 3.2.4 Sohrâb tells Hajir to show him Persian champions (pp. 185-186).
- 3.2.5 Fariborz sends a bottle of wine to Sohrâb, which has been previously poisoned by Pirân. Fariborz proves his innocence (p. 187-189).
- 3.2.6 Nehâl fights against Fariborz with his two-headed club. Sohrâb intervenes to stop them fighting (pp. 189-190).
- 3.2.7 Sohrâb defeats Nehâl, who has wounded Fariborz (pp. 190-191).

- 3.3.1 Fariborz informs Kâus of his combat with Nehâl and Sohrâb's assistance. Kâus sends for Rostam, but to no avail (p. 191).
- 3.3.2 Tus sets off to the front, and Kâus also departs (p. 191).
- 3.3.3 Zâl sends Sâm-e Zangi to the battlefield (pp. 193-194).
- 3.3.4 Tus reaches the battlefield, and so does Afrâsiyâb. Sohrâb inquires Hajir of the newcomers (pp. 191-192).
- 3.3.5 Two Chinese, Shojâ'vand and Arshidvand, come to the front. A fight takes place between the Chinese and Tus. Shojâ'vand is killed, while several Persians are taken captive (pp. 195-196).
- 3.3.6 Kâus arrives at the battlefield (pp. 196-197).
- 3.3.7 Sohrâb inquires Hajir of the newcomers. Tus goes to rescue the Persians (pp. 197-199).
- 3.3.8 Tus rescues the Persians (pp. 199-200).
- 3.3.9 Sohrâb invites Tus for a drink (pp. 200-201).
- 3.3.10 Sohrâb kills Arshidvard, who has been lying in ambush (pp. 201-202).

- 3.4.1 Pirân plots against Sohrâb when he realises that Sohrâb is friendly with the Persians (pp. 202-203).
- 3.4.2 Sohrâb is enraged by Tus's arrogance (pp. 203-204).

- 3.4.3 Sohrâb wages a war against the Persians, some of whom are taken captive (pp. 204-206).
- 3.4.4 Sohrâb stops Tus and Gudarz who come to rescue the captives, but is persuaded to forgive Tus. He goes hunting (pp. 207-208).
- 3.5.1 Sâ-m-e Zangi comes to the Iranian camp. He defeats some Turanians (pp. 209-210).
- 3.5.2 Pirân takes Sohrâb back to the battlefield (p. 210).
- 3.5.3 Sohrâb knows that Sâ-m-e Zangi, whom he has destroyed, is in fact Rostam's foster brother. Shirowzhan sets off to the White Fortress (p. 211).
- 3.5.4 Shirowzhan comes to the Iranian camp. Sohrâb inquires Hajir of this man (pp. 211-212).
- 3.5.5 Sohrâb is determined to reveal his identity to Shirowzhan (p. 212).
- 3.5.6 Kâus thinks light of Eftexâr-e Kermâni who has come to assist the Persians. The Kermâni holds a grudge against the king (pp. 213-215).
- 3.5.7 Eftexâr humiliates Sohrâb (pp. 213-216).
- 3.5.8 Gudarz kills Eftexâr (pp. 217-219).
- 3.6.1 Hezhabr-e Kâshâni insults Sohrâb, and is captured by Shirowzhan. Pirân incites Sohrâb to fight with Hezhabr (pp. 220-222).
- 3.6.2 Sohrâb kills Hezhabr (p. 222).
- 3.6.3 Although Sohrâb reveals his identity to Shirowzhan, he fails to convince the latter. He accidentally kills him (pp. 222-223).
- 3.6.4* When reading a letter from Key Kâus, Rostam immediately sets off to the fortress (pp. 224-229).

Chapter 4 The Combat of Sohrâb and Rostam

- 4.1.1 Bânu-Goshasp comes to the fortress (p. 230).
- 4.1.2* Zenderazm is killed by Rostam. Sohrâb seeks revenge on the death of Zenderazm (pp. 230-235).
- 4.1.3* Sohrâb attacks Kâus at his pavilion (pp. 236-237).
- 4.1.4 Sohrâb asks Rostam to reveal his identify in combat. Rostam pretends to be Alvâ (pp. 238-239).
- 4.1.5* Sohrâb asks Hajir about Rostam (pp. 240-242).
- 4.2.1* Rostam fights with Sohrâb (pp. 243-246).

- 4.2.2 The combat between Rostam and Sohrâb continues (pp. 247-250).
- 4.2.3 Rostam falls ill and takes a rest (pp. 250-251).
- 4.2.4 A fight takes place between Turanian women and Persian women (pp. 251-252).
- 4.2.5 Rostam visits Sohrâb at night (pp. 252-253).
- 4.2.6 Rostam makes a will (pp. 253-254).

- 4.3.1* Rostam fights with Sohrâb for the second time (pp. 255-256).
- 4.3.2* Rostam is defeated by Sohrâb (pp. 256-257).
- 4.3.3* Rostam breaks free from Sohrâb by cunning (p. 257).
- 4.3.4 Rostam disappears from the battlefield and makes a suicide attempt (pp. 257-258).
- 4.3.5 Sohrâb comes to know that he has been tricked by Rostam (p. 258).
- 4.3.6 Zâl reaches the battlefield (p. 258).

Chapter 5 Sohrâb's Combat with the Persians

- 5.1.1 Sohrâb encounters Bânu-Goshasp (p. 259).
- 5.1.2 Bânu-Goshasp rescues Gudarz (pp. 259-262).
- 5.1.3 Bânu fights and defeats Sohrâb (pp. 262-265).
- 5.1.4 Bânu meets a Turanian woman (pp. 264-265).
- 5.1.5 Bânu helps Turanian women to take revenge on Afrâsiyâb (pp. 265-266).
- 5.1.6 Afrâsiyâb marries one of the Turanian women, who will be the mother of Sorxe (p. 266).
- 5.1.7 Kâus marries another Turanian woman, who will give birth to Siyâvosh (p. 267).
- 5.1.8 Afrâsiyâb orders Garsivaz to kill the Turanian woman who has become Kâus's wife (p. 267).
- 5.1.9 Garsivaz follows the woman who has set out to Fars (pp. 267-268).
- 5.1.10 Bânu goes hunting (p. 268).

- 5.2.1 Rostam makes another suicide attempt (p. 269).
- 5.2.2 Zâl prevents Rostam from killing himself (pp. 269-270).
- 5.2.3 Zâl and Rostam encounter Key Ârash. Rostam runs away (pp. 270-271).
- 5.2.4 Rostam meets Eshkham (pp. 271-273).
- 5.2.5 Humân urges Eshkham to attack Rostam (p. 273).
- 5.2.6 Zâl's men defeat Eshkham. Rostam disappears (p. 273).

- 5.3.1 Key Ârash reaches the fortress (pp. 274-275).
- 5.3.2 Afrâsiyâb fights with Farzin. Key Ârash takes up arms against the Turanians, after his sons are killed (pp. 275-276).
- 5.3.3 A messenger from Shohre comes to the battlefield (pp. 277-278).
- 5.3.4 Sohrâb goes to see Shohre (pp. 278-279).
- 5.3.5 Pirân brings Sohrâb back (p. 279).
- 5.3.6 Key Ârash displays his prowess (pp. 279-282).
- 5.3.7 Sohrâb fights with Key Ârash (pp. 282-283).
- 5.4.1 Zâl is taken captive by Razmâvar. Rostam encounters the Zabolis (pp. 284-285).
- 5.4.2 Rostam knows that Zâl is taken captive (p. 285).
- 5.4.3 Rostam leaves for Xâvar (pp. 285-286).
- 5.4.4 Sohrâb kills Razmâvar. Afrâsiyâb orders Humân to bring Zâl back (p. 286).
- 5.4.5 Rostam rescues Zâl (pp. 286-288).
- 5.4.6 Zâl returns with Humân while Rostam disappears (p. 288).
- 5.4.7 Sohrâb attempts to kill Pirân (pp. 288-289).
- 5.4.8 Sohrâb decides to confront Zâl in the battlefield (pp. 289-290).
- 5.4.9 Zâl alludes to Rostam's child (p. 290).
- 5.4.10 Sohrâb calls Zâl to the battleground, and tries to reveal his own identity. He is interrupted by Pirân who realises his intention behind. Sohrâb is deliberately knocked down by a club blow. The armies engage in combat, in which Afrâsiyâb is seriously injured and takes flight (pp. 291-292).
- 5.4.11 Sohrâb watches the armies fight (p. 292).
- 5.4.12 Pirân realises that Sohrâb has deliberately injured himself (pp. 292-293).
- 5.5.1 Pirân gives orders to search for Afrâsiyâb, while he persuades Sohrâb to return to fight (pp. 293-296).
- 5.5.2 Rostam saves Afrâsiyâb's life (pp. 297-298).
- 5.5.3 Afrâsiyâb expresses his gratitude to Rostam (pp. 298-299).
- 5.5.4 A messenger from Tahmine arrives at the battlefield (p. 299).
- 5.5.5 Sohrâb leaves for Samangân (pp. 299-302).
- 5.6.1 Pirân brings Sohrâb back, and sends Humân to Samangân (pp. 302-303).

- 5.6.2 Rostam takes Sohrâb's letter to Samangân (pp. 304-305).
- 5.6.3 Rostam orders a farmer to deliver the letter (p. 305).
- 5.6.4 Humân encounters Kamândâr, and then Rostam (pp. 305-306).
- 5.6.5 Kamândâr fails to kill Rostam. Humân runs away (p. 306).
- 5.6.6 Rostam disappears again after defeating Kamândâr (pp. 306-307).
- 5.6.7 Pirân persuades Sohrâb to fight against the Persians (pp. 307-308).
- 5.6.8 Sohrâb is injured by Bânu-Goshasp (pp. 308-309).
- 5.6.9 Sohrâb is healed by Kâus's antidote (pp. 309-311).
- 5.7.1 Pirân orders Qahtarân to attack Zâbol. Sohrâb follows Qahtarân (pp. 312-313).
- 5.7.2 Both the Persians and the Turanian follow Qahtarân. A war breaks out between the two armies (pp. 313-314).
- 5.7.3 Sohrâb encounters and falls in love with Manire (pp. 315-317).
- 5.7.4 Manire is killed by Xorramshâh, her own father (pp. 317-318).
- 5.7.5 Sohrâb kills Qahtarân (pp. 318-319).
- 5.7.6 Sohrâb kills Xorramshâh (p. 319).
- 5.8.1 Sohrâb kills Kiyâ Pashinand and Kiyâ Armin (p. 320).
- 5.8.2 Afrâsiyâb and Pirân urge Sohrâb to attack the Persians (pp. 320-321).
- 5.8.3 A mass combat ensues (pp. 321-322).
- 5.8.4 The Persians suffer from Sohrâb's fierce attack (pp. 322-323).
- 5.8.5 The Persians take flight to Mazandaran (p. 323).
- 5.8.6 The Persians enlist the Mazandarani's help (pp. 323-324).
- 5.8.7 Sohrâb defeats the Mazandarani (pp. 324-325).
- 5.8.8 Rudâbe sends Shabân to Kâus (pp. 325-326).
- 5.8.9 Sohrâb kills Shirowzhan's son (p. 327).
- 5.9.1 Rostam encounters Zaboli merchants (pp. 327-328).
- 5.9.2 Rostam attacks bandits' fortress and sends the Zaboli merchants back to Zabolestan (pp. 328-329).
- 5.9.3 Rostam kills the bandits (p. 329).
- 5.9.4 Rostam meets Golfâm. He finds Golfâm's weapon disagreeable (pp. 329-331).
- 5.9.5 Sohrâb waits for Rostam (p. 331).
- 5.9.6 Shabân comes to the battlefield (pp. 331-332).

- 5.9.7 Sohrâb beats the war drum (p. 332).
- 5.9.8 Both hosts draw lines of battle (pp. 333-334).
- 5.9.9 Shabân defeats Sohrâb (pp. 334-336).
- 5.9.10 Golfâm comes to the battlefield. Shabân disapproves of Golfâm's weapon (pp. 336-337).
- 5.9.11 Sohrâb kills Shabân (pp. 337-338).
- 5.9.12 Sohrâb kills Golfâm (pp. 338-339).

- 5.10.1 A Samangani soldier offers to introduce Sohrâb to the Zabolis (pp. 339-341).
- 5.10.2 The soldier accidentally kills a villager. He is then killed by Sohrâb (p. 341).
- 5.10.3 Sohrâb encounters and falls in love with Gordiye. He sets off to Zabolistan with her (pp. 341-343).
- 5.10.4 Sohrâb and Gordiye meet Shabân's children. They go to Mazandaran with them (p. 343).
- 5.10.5 Sohrâb kills Shabân's children, and attacks the fortress where the Persians have fled (pp. 343-344).
- 5.10.6 Sohrâb has a nightmare (p. 344).
- 5.10.7 When Sohrâb nearly seizes the fortress, Tus turns Sohrâb to Bânu-Goshasp (pp. 344-346).

Chapter 6 The Death of Sohrâb

- 6.1.1 Rostam tries to kill himself again (p. 347).
- 6.1.2* Rostam is granted his former power by Garshâsp and Noah (p. 347).
- 6.1.3* Rostam confronts Sohrâb again (pp. 348-349).
- 6.1.4* Both armies arrive at the place where Rostam and Sohrâb fight with each other (pp. 349-350).
- 6.1.5* Sohrâb reveals to Rostam his own identity as he is dying (pp. 350-351).
- 6.1.6* Sohrâb tells Rostam what must be done when he is gone (pp. 351-352).
- 6.1.7* Rostam asks for Kâus's antidote, but to no avail (pp. 352-353).
- 6.1.8* Sohrâb dies (p. 353).
- 6.1.9* Rostam laments Sohrâb's death (p. 354).
- 6.1.10* Both armies retreat (pp. 354-355).
- 6.1.11* Rostam returns to Zabolistan with Sohrâb's body (p. 355).

- 6.2.1 The Turanians return to Turan (p. 356).
- 6.2.2 Tahmine knows of Sohrâb's death (pp. 356-358).
- 6.2.3* Tahmine laments her son's death (pp. 359-361).

- 6.3.1 Tahmine goes to Zabolistan (pp. 362-363).
- 6.3.2 Tahmine fights with the Zabolis (pp. 363-364).
- 6.3.3 Zâl calls down the Simorgh (pp. 364-365).
- 6.3.4 The Simorgh judges the case of Sohrâb's death and reproaches all those concerned for their attitude to Sohrâb (pp. 365-369).
- 6.3.5 Zâl mediates Rostam and Tahmine (p. 369).
- 6.3.6 Rostam remarries Tahmine (pp. 369-370).
- 6.3.7 Tahmine gives birth to a son (p. 370).
- 6.3.8 Rostam laments Sohrâb's death (p. 371).

Appendix II The Hypothetical Instalment

Divisions of Story 13b in the ShNF

Prologue (ll. 1-19)

Instalment 1 (ll. 20-120)

1. The Persian army returns to Iran. Xosrow laments Farud's, his brother's, death. He orders Tus to be put to death.
2. Xosrow forgives Tus at Rostam's request.
3. Tus offers his services to Xosrow.
4. Xosrow gathers an army to be sent to Turan.
5. Xosrow entrusts the army with Tus, who departs immediately.

Instalment 2 (ll. 121-175)

1. Pirân receives the news that the Iranians are invading Turân again. He departs with chosen cavaliers to gather information on this matter.
2. Tus receives a pacifying message from Pirân. He replies that he will get Pirân rewards if he comes over alone. Although Pirân appreciates this, he evidently has something different in mind. He reports to Afrâsiyâb the approach of the Iranians.
3. Afrâsiyâb sends an army to Pirân.
4. Tus also advances and faces the Turanians across the river Shahd.

Instalment 3 (ll. 176-292)

1. Arzhang, the son of Zare, advances in front of the Turanians.
2. Arzhang is defeated by Tus.
3. Tus confronts Humân who comes forward. They engage each other in bragging and verbal abuses which customarily proceed physical fighting.
4. Giv interferes with the two commanders.
5. Tus and Humân proceed to fight one another.
6. Tus shoots Humân's horse.
7. Humân is taken off the field by his companions.

Instalment 4 (ll. 293-354)

1. The following morning the armies get prepared for battle.
2. Humân orders Pirân to open the arsenal.
3. Tus gives orders to draw lines of battle. A mass combat ensues.
4. Tus feels that he is fighting a losing battle. He calls out champions out of the lines.
5. Humân gathers his army.
6. Tus commands his men to keep the field.

Instalment 5 (ll. 355-421)

1. Pirân orders Bâzur the magician to hurl a violent snowstorm down on the Persians from the top of the mountain.
2. Pirân commands the army to attack the enemy who is caught in the snow.
3. Humân destroys many Persians.
4. The Persians despair of the war.
5. A sage tells Rohhâm that Bâzur is at the summit of the mountain.
6. When Rohhâm cuts off Bâzur's hand, the sun appears again.
7. Persian champions find themselves surrounded by bodies.
8. The champions attempt to renew the war.
9. In the midst of the battle that follows, Tus is advised by a priest to withdraw the army from the battlefield.
10. Tus commands Giv to retreat.

Instalment 6 (ll. 422-517)

1. The Turanians celebrate their victory.
2. The Persians cremate the dead, among whom there are a number of Gudarz's children.
3. Gudarz mourns for the deceased.
4. Tus is informed that many of Gudarz's children perished in the battle. He orders them to be buried, while commanding those alive to take flight to the mountain. He also sends a messenger to Xosrow, reporting the state of affairs and asking for Rostam's help.
5. The Persians are hurrying towards the mountain, while the enemy is fast asleep.
6. Tus asks Giv to lead the army to a fortress at the top of the mountain, while leaving those capable of fighting with Bizhan at the foot of the mountain.
7. Pirân receives the news of the enemy's flight.
8. Pirân orders Lohhâk to locate the Persians.
9. Knowing that the enemy is in the mountain, Pirân commands Humân to hurry there with cavaliers.

Instalment 7 (ll. 518-652)

1. The next morning a Persian sentinel finds the enemy approaching.
2. Tus orders his army to draw lines of battle in front of the mountain.
3. Humân reports to Pirân that the enemy is fully armed and is ready to fight.
4. Pirân comes to speak with Tus to ascertain his intentions. Pirân hems in the Persians on the mountain. Tus sets his mind to a night attack.
5. A mass combat begins.
6. The combat ends.

Instalment 8 (ll. 653-787)

1. Xosrow receives the news of Pirân's victory.
2. Xosrow summons Rostam with his troops. He tells him about the course of the war and the losses that have been suffered by Gudarz's family, and points out that his only hope lies in him. Rostam willingly offers his services.
3. Xosrow engages Rostam to depart immediately, along with Fariborz who is to lead the vanguard of Rostam's troops. Fariborz asks Rostam to help him to marry Farangis.
4. Xosrow requests his mother to accept Fariborz's offer.
5. Rostam persuades Farangis to marry Fariborz.
6. Farangis refuses the offer.
7. Farangis finally consents to marry Fariborz.
8. Fariborz celebrates his marriage for three days.
9. After the wedding Rostam sets about preparing his army. Fariborz departs to Mt. Hamâvarân with his army.
10. Rostam also departs.

Instalment 9 (ll. 788-927)

1. Tus sees, in a dream, Siyâvosh sitting on the throne of ivory. He is advised to stay where he is until Rostam comes.
2. Pirân intends to let the Persians alone until they come to the end of the resources in the mountain.
3. Pirân receives the news of the Xâqân of China coming to assist them.
4. Pirân receives the Xâqân.
5. The Xâqân inquires of the Persians.
6. Tus is anxious about the enemy's move. Gudarz suggests to digging ditches round the mountain.

Instalment 10 (ll. 928-995)

1. Gudarz keeps a watch for the approach of reinforcements.
2. A sentinel sees dust rising in the desert. He vaguely identifies banners and assumes that a Persian army is coming. Gudarz rejoices with the news.
3. The Turanians feel at ease with themselves, knowing that the Persians are greatly troubled by the course of the war.
4. Bizhan tells Gudarz that only a small army is approaching.
5. Tus is disappointed with the news, and commands the army to get prepared for a night attack.

Instalment 11 (ll. 996-1092)

1. The sentinel reports to Tus the approach of an army. Tus calls off the night attack.
2. The Xâqân postpones war for a day, to study the enemy's strategy. He has the army prepared on the field.
3. Seeing the enemy on the field, Tus commands his army to draw lines of battle.
4. The Xâqân holds counsel with Pirân and Kâmus. Encouraged by Kâmus who insists on renewing the battle, he decides to fight next day.
5. The following morning the Persians receive the news of the arrival of reinforcements.
6. Gudarz receives Fariborz, and learns that Rostam is on his way.

Instalment 12 (ll. 1093-1187)

1. Pirân receives the news that reinforcements have come to the Persians. He holds counsel with the Xâqân, Kâmus and Humân.
2. Pirân confirms Fariborz's arrival.
3. Tus receives the news of the arrival of Fariborz and Rostam. He cheers his men up with the news.
4. Kâmus arranges the army on the field, while the Persians find Rostam's banner approaching.
5. The Turanians await the enemy on the field. Kâmus advances in front of the Turanians.
6. Gudarz and Fariborz take arms against the enemy.

Instalment 13 (ll. 1188-1277)

1. Kâmus organises his army round about the mountain. He sets about bragging in front of the Turanians.
2. Giv comes forward in front of the Persians. The armies engage one another in battle.

3. At night, a sentinel brings the news of Rostam's imminent arrival to the Persian chiefs.
4. Gudarz goes to receive Rostam.
5. Rostam holds counsel with the Persian chiefs. He is briefed about Kâmus and other Turanian champions.

Instalment 14 (ll. 1278-1372)

1. Humân gathers information about the Persians. He suspects that Rostam has arrived.
2. Humân discusses the possible arrival of Rostam with Kâmus. Kâmus, however, thinks little of Rostam and assures Humân of his victory.
3. While ordering the Xâqân to command the rearguard, Humân takes the vanguard.
4. The Xâqân thereupon leads his army, and the Turanians draw lines of battle.
5. Rostam commands Tus to lead the army, while refusing to participate in the battle to let Raxsh rest for the day.
6. The armies face one another. Kâmus swears to himself to win victory over the Persians.

Instalment 15 (ll. 1373-1426)

1. Ashkbus advances in front of the Turanians.
2. Rohhâm advances in front of the Iranians, and is defeated by Ashkbus.
3. Seeing Rohhâm defeated, Rostam comes forward to fight with Ashkabus. He brags about his superiority that he can fight him without a horse.
4. Rostam shoots down Ashkbus's horse.
5. Rostam defeats Ashkbus.
6. After Rostam retires from the field, the Xâqân commands the army to attack the Iranians.

Instalment 16 (ll. 1427-1498)

1. The Xâqân inquires Pirân about Rostam, but achieves no definite answer. Humân does not know who has defeated Ashkbus, either.
2. Kâmus suggests that it was Rostam, while Pirân flatly denies the possibility by describing Rostam.
3. Kâmus assures Pirân that he will destroy Rostam.
4. Pirân returns to the camp and reports to the Xâqân on what has passed between Kâmus and himself.
5. In the evening the Turanians hold counsel together and decides to challenge the enemy immediately.

Instalment 17 (ll. 1499-1588)

1. The Turanians attempt a quick attack.
2. Rostam advances while commanding the army to fight.
3. Kâmus advances in front of the Turanians and calls Rostam.
4. Alvâ comes forward in place of Rostam, and is killed by Kâmus.
5. Rostam advances to confront Kâmus. He destroys him and goes on about the vicissitudes of the world.

Epilogue (ll. 1589-1595)

Appendix III The Hypothetical Instalment Divisions of the GN (The Battle between Garshâsp and Bahu)

Instalment 1 (pp. 77-82)

1. Garshâsp writes to Bahu, demanding his surrender (pp. 77-8).
2. Bahu declares war against the Maharaja and Garshâsp (pp. 78-9).
3. Hearing of Bahu's intention to fight, Garshâsp prepares for battle (p. 79).
4. Garshâsp organises his troops (p. 79).
5. Bahu for his part organises his army (p. 79-80).
6. A battle begins (p. 80).
7. Garshâsp defeats enemies all by himself (p. 81-2).
8. Bahu is told of Garshâsp's performance; he goes to see how Garshâsp fares alone against a number of Indians. He devises a strategy for the next combat (p. 82).
9. Both armies retire in the evening (p. 82).

Instalment 2 (pp. 82-92)

1. Garshâsp feasts with the Maharaja. At night the Maharaja's troops arrive, which Garshâsp tells the Maharaja to send back (p. 82-3).
2. Garshâsp selects a few commanders, some 50,000 men and 1,000 elephants out of the Maharaja's troops, sends back the rest (p. 83).
3. Bahu has his brother prepare Sarandib for a refuge (p. 84).
4. Having spent three days in preparation, the troops confront one another on the fourth day (p. 84).
5. Garshâsp tells the Maharaja to remain on the top of a mountain, while giving instructions to his champions and organising the troops (pp. 84-5).
6. A mass combat begins (pp. 85-6).
7. Garshâsp joins the battle and defeats many Indians and elephants (pp. 86-7).
8. Tiv, Bahu's commander, watches Garshâsp fight with amazement (p. 87).
9. Garshâsp defeats Ajrâ, an Indian champion in single combat, and goes on to fight with many others (p. 88).
10. Failing to persuade Bikâv, Bahu's champion, to challenge Garshâsp, General Tiv fights with Garshâsp and perishes in the combat (pp. 88-9).

11. Bahu puts more troops with dismay, resulting in ever more casualties (pp. 89-90).
12. The battle continues in this way until the evening. The Maharaja sends for Garshâsp (p.91).
13. In Bahu's camp, the wounded are treated and the dead are buried. Bahu thinks it best not to fight with Garshâsp, but to influence him by gifts (pp. 91-2).

Instalment 3 (pp. 92-100)

1. At the Maharaja's camp, the Maharaja and Garshâsp spend the night with wine and music (pp. 92-3).
2. The Maharaja warns Garshâsp of Mabtar, one of the four generals of Bahu; according to the Maharaja, this Mabtar watched Garshâsp fighting during the battle. Garshâsp promises to the Maharaja that he will defeat Mabtar (pp. 93-4).
3. Garshâsp is given a number of sumptuous presents by the Maharaja (p. 94).
4. In returning to his tent, Garshâsp receives Bahu's scribe who has brought Bahu's secret message, in which Bahu entreats Garshâsp to take sides with him (pp. 94-6).
5. Garshâsp is enraged by Bahu's mean proposal. He rebukes the scribe and sends him back with harsh word; he then informs the Maharaja of Bahu's message (pp. 96-8).
6. The Maharaja, alarmed by the possibility of Garshâsp's betrayal, persuades him to stay with him. Garshâsp swears his allegiance with the Maharaja (pp. 98-9).
7. Gerâhun, Garshâsp's champion, returns to the battlefield with his cavaliers; he assembles Indian hostages (p. 99-100).
8. The news of his men's wrongdoing comes to Garshâsp. Garshâsp forbids his men to fight outside the battleground, while sending the captives to the Maharaja (p. 100).
9. The scribe returns to Bahu. He tells Bahu that he failed to influence Garshâsp. Disappointed by the result, Bahu immediately assembles the nobles, to say that he will give his country to anyone who could capture Garshâsp. Mabtar takes up the challenge (p. 100).

Instalment 4 (pp. 101-106)

1. Mabtar draws lines of battle (p. 101).
2. The Maharaja sends someone to point Mabtar out to Garshâsp. Garshâsp then organises the action of his troops (pp. 101-2).
3. Mabtar fails to assassinate the Maharaja (p. 102).
4. Zardâde, Garshâsp's cousin, defeats an Indian warrior (p. 103).

5. Zardâde is defeated by Mabtar's son (p. 103).
6. Garshâsp slaughters Mabtar's son in revenge for Zardâde's death (p. 104).
7. Mabtar thereupon challenges Garshâsp, only to be defeated (pp. 104-5).
8. A mass combat ensues in which the Iranians prevail (p. 105-6).
9. Bahu urges his troops to fight on (p. 106).
10. Bahu says to his troops, "It remains for us to fight a terrible combat" (p. 106).

Instalment 5 (pp. 106-111)

1. The Indians draw lines of battles (p. 106-7).
2. The Iranians also form ranks with splendour and pomp (p. 107).
3. Garshâsp gives instructions to his troops; a mass combat begins (pp. 107-9).
4. Garshâsp displays his military prowess (pp. 109-110).
5. The Maharaja watches Garshâsp combat with amazement (p. 110).
6. The chief of the elephant riders surrenders to Garshâsp, with his elephants and soldiers (p. 110).
7. Shocked by the chief's betrayal, Bahu lets those willing go to the Maharaja. Most of the elephant riders desert Bahu. Bahu schemes against the Maharaja and Garshâsp (p. 110-1).

Instalment 6 (pp. 111-117)

1. Asadi here introduces a Zangi (Bahu's black servant). The Zangi tells Bahu of his plot to assassinate Garshâsp: he will see Garshâsp in private, pretending to bring him a secret message; while Garshâsp is reading the message, he will attempt to stab him with a dagger (p. 111).
2. The Zangi is shown to Garshâsp's tent. He hands a message to Garshâsp, and produces a dagger to stab him. Seeing this, Garshâsp throws the Zangi on the ground, who lies unconscious (p. 111-2).
3. When the Zangi comes to his mind, Garshâsp tells the Zangi to accompany him to Bahu; if the Zangi helps him to capture Bahu, he will be given a commandership, with which the Zangi agrees (pp. 112-3).
4. Garshâsp arrests Bahu in his sleep, destroys his pavilion, and brings him to the Maharaja (pp. 113-4).
5. The Maharaja is pleased with the news of Bahu's arrest. He celebrates his victory with Garshâsp, in front of Bahu. The Maharaja rebukes Bahu for his wrongdoing and rebellion. Bahu, for his part, reviles the Maharaja (pp. 114-6).
6. Garshâsp rebukes Bahu for his bluster, and puts him in chains. The feasting and

music continue until next morning (pp. 116-7).

Instalment 7 (pp. 117-121)

1. Bahu's army draws lines of battles without knowing what has happened to the king. When realising that they have been deserted, they begin running away (pp. 117-8).
2. The Iranians pursue the Indians, killing and capturing them (p. 118).
3. The Maharaja asks Garshâsp to take Sarandib back from Bahu's kinsmen (pp. 118-9).
4. Garshâsp kills the captives, and puts Bahu in prison, together with his slaves and relatives (p. 119).
5. Garshâsp leads his army to Zanzibar. En route, he stops on an island by the coast (p. 119-20).
6. Two *divs* suddenly jump out of the bushes and devour two soldiers of Garshâsp's army (p. 120).
7. Garshâsp destroys some of the monsters called *nasnâs* (pp. 120-1).

Instalment 8 (pp. 121-125)

1. The Maharaja and Garshâsp set off to the land of Sarandib (pp. 121-2).
2. Asadi here briefly describes how Bahu's son assassinated his uncle to gain control over Sarandib (p. 122).
3. A naval combat ensues between Garshâsp and Bahu's son (pp. 122-3).
4. Garshâsp fights single-handedly with the Sarandib army (p. 123-4).
5. Bahu's son flees to the king of Zanzibar with his family (p. 124).
6. The king of Zanzibar receives Bahu's son as his son-in-law (p. 124-5).
7. When Garshâsp and the Maharaja come to Zanzibar, Bahu's son seeks their pardon; They accept his surrender (p. 125).

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AJAMES	<i>Annals of Japan Association for Middle East Studies</i>
BSOAS	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i>
CHI	<i>The Cambridge History of Iran</i>
Elr	<i>Encyclopaedia Iranica</i>
JRAS	<i>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society</i>
TAPA	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
ZDMG	<i>Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i>

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