

## **Y. Mansouri, *Pahlavi Dictionary (Pahlavi-Persian-English), 5 vols., Tehran, Shahid Beheshti University Press (2015-2021).***

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The main advantage of this extensive and voluminous dictionary of Pahlavi texts, published in six years, is that it claims to include all the vocabulary of Pahlavi texts. The introduction of the book contains some explanation of the author's method and a short history of Pahlavi lexicography, although not always accurate. The author states that he has included all the words from Pahlavi texts, but he has omitted unreadable and ambiguous words (vol. 1, p. XIII). Furthermore, he mentions that his dictionary is not a frequency dictionary, but he refers to several texts when it comes to frequently used words, to some extent indicating their frequency. He also gives attention to variations in readings if a word has been read differently by previous Pahlavi scholars (vol. 1, p. XIV). Although it may not have been necessary to include etymologies of words or mention their cognates in non-Iranian languages, the author has included etymologies, albeit sometimes inaccurately, using primarily the etymological dictionaries written by Western scholars for Iranian languages. Another advantage of this dictionary is that it sometimes includes synonyms and antonyms. More importantly, it has useful Persian, English, and Pahlavi indices at the end of each volume. After the introduction of each volume, abbreviations, main sources, and references are listed reasonably, although one can find in the section, some printing errors or mistakes in transcription.

However, the book contains inevitably numerous errors and mistakes, especially because it is written by a single author, who cannot have expertise in all the Pahlavi texts, no matter how proficient one may be in reading and understanding these texts. The author could have avoided some of these errors if he had more information about lexicography and its necessities. We mention some examples. Including proper names in such a dictionary is completely unnecessary; listing denominative verbs as subentries (i.e., under nouns and adjectives; see vol. 1, p. XVI) is also unreasonable, especially when one sees that the author has not consistently followed a uniform approach in this regard; according to the author (vol. 1, p. XVI), compound verbs are listed as subentries under nouns and adjectives. This is a correct approach, but the examples mentioned at the same place (such as *abām dādan*, *abām stadan*, etc.) are not compound verbs in the sense commonly used in grammars.

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In what follows, we will mention some other shortcomings of the Dictionary regarding its method and some errors the author made in understanding the meanings of Pahlavi words and phrases (for brevity, we have selected only a few examples from volumes 1 and 5).

Under each entry it is necessary first to separate different meanings and then list the examples under each meaning separately. The author's approach is to usually present all the meanings of a word together and then, if there are two or more examples for a word, list them consecutively. For example, under the entry *wasīh* (5/188), the meaning "sufficiency" should be distinguished from "abundance" and the examples for each meaning should be listed separately (incorrectly, the meaning "much, many" is also given for the word *wasīh*). Another example is the two meanings "taken into consideration" and "judgment" given for the word *āmār*; if this is correct (and we suppose for a while that is), these two are distinct meanings and should be separated. Similarly, under the entry *wād* (5/74), the meanings "name of a demon, haughtiness, arrogance" are different, separate meanings. It also should be noted here that if an adjective is used as a noun and thus becomes a noun, it should be separated from its adjectival usage. For example, in 1/314, the word *abzūdāg-ē*, which is listed as an example under the entry *abzūdāg*, is not an adjective and cannot be translated as "increased." Labels that indicate the domain of word usage should be placed inside parentheses before the definition, not after it. For example, refer to 1/6, under *ābānīg*, and 1/14, under *āb-tōhmag*. Sometimes the labels are entirely unnecessary or incorrect. For instance, 1/19, under *ābzan*, which has "toponym" as its label!

One encounters numerous errors in distinguishing adjectives from nouns and, in general, in identifying the parts of speech. For example, *ābān-nāf* in the expression *Burz ī ābān-nāf* (1/6) is an adjective, not a noun, *āb-xwarišn* (1/18) is also an adjective, not a noun. In an example from *Dēnkard* (1/318), *a-cārag* is an adverb, not a noun. Similarly, in an example from the *Kārnāmag* (5/187), *was* is an adjective, not an adverb. Under *was-anāgīh* (5/191), which is a *bahuvrīhi* compound and an adjective, it is erroneously written: "n[oun] as adj[ective]"! The same mistake occurs with *āb-cihr* and *āb-cihrag* (1/8): it is evident that *āb-cihr* is an adjective in the expression *starān ī ab-cihrān*, and *āb-cihrag* is also an adjective in the expression *starag ī āb-cihrag*, and not "adj. as n." There have also been errors in distinguishing simple from compound words. Sometimes two independent words have been regarded as a compound word and chosen as an entry. For example, *ābān-mēnōg* (1/6) should be read as *ābān mēnōg* "the spirit of water" (as two separate words), not as a compound. *āb-hōšēnīdan* (1/11) is also not a compound because the sentence *cē agar āb hōšēnīdan nē ...*, which contains this word, means "because if water does not dry up ..." (whit *āb* in oblique case, but without *rāy* as it is usual in Pahlavi texts). Similarly, *was-gōwišn* (5/193) is not compound, at least in the author's evidence; in this evidence, it should be read as *was gōwišn (tō kē andar dānē was gōwišn ī rāst*, meaning "you who knows a lot of true words"). The same is correct for *was ēwēnag wināh* "many kinds of sins" (5/192), which has been mistakenly entered as *was-ēwēnag*. And there are many other similar cases.

More attention should have been paid to finding English and Persian equivalents. Furthermore, different definitions or meanings that are listed consecutively for a single entry should not be inconsistent with each other. For example, the definitions “dread, fury, terror” for *āhr* (1/59) are both inappropriate and incorrect. The definition of *wānīd* (5/134) as “overcome, prevail” and its Persian equivalent *cīre* seem to be both incorrect and contradictory; *wānīd* means simply “defeated.” In the cited example, *wānīd kunēd* means “overcome,” not “*cīregī konīd*” (in Persian), which is meaningless. Moreover, contrary to the author’s perception, it is not a compound verb that requires selecting it as a subentry. The definition of *wānīdag-āz* as “dominated by *Āz*, taken over by greed” (5/135) is completely wrong because it is evident from the cited evidence that its meaning is “who has defeated *Āz*.” Paradoxically, the author himself translates the same phrase as “*cīre bar Āz*” in Persian and fails to notice the contradiction between his definition and the translation of the evidence. The last example we mention here is *was-hunar*, which is defined as “multi-talented”; but *hunar* in the cited sentence is the opposite of *āhōg* and means “virtue,” not “talent.”

Complete reliance should not be placed even on the best editions of Pahlavi texts when it comes to choosing examples or entries for a Pahlavi dictionary. We provide an example. The word *ābdīdag* (1/9), which, based on a phrase from *Wizīdagīhā ī Zādisparam*, has been chosen as an entry, is certainly incorrect. *Ābdīdag* as an adjective for metals and swords has never existed in Iranian languages. To be honest, *ābdīde* has only recently been used in modern Persian, but it is a notorious mistake for *ābdāde*. The word used in that phrase of *Wizīdagīhā ī Zādisparam* is unreadable. One can hope that its correct form and meaning will be determined in the future.

The sentences provided under the entries as evidence, besides not always indicating the various uses of a word (sometimes the author has selected similar sentences for the same entry from a single text, or has repeated the same sentence twice under a single entry; see for example 5/70, under *wačast*), in many cases have not been translated correctly or their translation is incomprehensible. We mention a few examples: 1/10, under *āb-gīr*, 1/22, under *ādūgīh*, 1/39, under *āgāhīg* [sic!], 5/4, under *ulīh-āhang*, 5/82, under *wad-frazānīhā*, 5/137, under *wānīdārīh*, 5/142, under *wanynāg*, etc. Furthermore, for some words, the author had the option to choose clearer and less ambiguous sentences to keep himself away from quoting sentences, which do not support his definition or he has failed to understand their correct meaning or syntax. The evidence for the word *wābar* (5/67) can be mentioned as an example.

When an author obliges himself to provide evidence for all entries in his dictionary, no entry should remain without evidence, but sometimes this is the case; for example, see under *wad-āhang* (5/77).

Although the author has stated that ambiguous and doubtful words are not included in his dictionary or are read and defined with caution or are quoted in two or more forms, he has not remained always faithful to his promise. Suspicious words should have been

marked with a question mark throughout the dictionary. We mention two examples only: *āb-girdag* (1/10-11) and *āb-zūngal* (1/19).

The definition of a word should match the textual evidence of that word, but it often happens in this dictionary that it is not the case; for example, *a-cārag* (1/317) is defined as “compelled” (in Persian, *nāčār*; *nāgozār*). This definition is not consistent with the evidence:

*u-m dīd driyōš ī nēst-xīr ī a-cārag*. The correct translation of the phrase is as follows: “I saw an indigent helpless poor man.”

Although transcriptions, if we remain faithful to the transcription method of David N. MacKenzie, are mostly correct, they are not always consistent, especially in the textual evidence, where inconsistencies and mistakes can be sometimes observed; for example, *pēm* “milk” is transcribed erroneously as *pīm* (5/11), *Ardašīr* is transcribed as *Ardašēr* several times (e.g., 5/71), and *cim* “reason” is transcribed as *cīm* (5/68).

The correct understanding of the meanings of words and phrases is a fundamental requirement for the correct selection of entries and providing their correct definitions. Here are a few examples of mistakes that have occurred due to either misunderstanding the meanings of words in a specific context or not understanding the entire context correctly: *wābarīgān*, which sometimes means “true” and is a singular word (e.g., *dēn ī wābarīgān*; 5/68), is placed under the word *wābarīg* and translated as “believable, acceptable”; *ardāy*, which is an adjective for *wād* “wind” and is an inheritance from Avestan *ašauuan* also in this context (cf. *jordā* “corn,” Parth. *yaw ardāw*), is once transcribed as *ardāg* (5/73) and translated as “fast” and once as *Ardāy* and assumed to be the name of a deity (both meanings are incorrect); *ō wany kardan* is listed under the entry *wany* and the author thought that it means “to destroy” (5/139), but our evidence tells us that such a phrase does not exist:

*Porušasp az Zarduxšt pad wišōbišn aziših škeft tarsēnīd ud ō wany kardan sārēnīd.*

It is not difficult to find out that the preposition *ō* is related to the verb *sārēnīd*, not to *wany kardan*. Most of the mistakes in the book stem from this incorrect understanding of the meanings of the Pahlavi sentences.

One of the important shortcomings of this dictionary is due to a deficient understanding of the meanings of theological, philosophical, and legal terms and subsequently their incorrect or insufficient definitions. None of the terms such as *būdag* and *bawišn* (which is incorrectly placed under entry *būdan*), *bawišn-rawišnīh*, *wāxs*, etc. are rightly defined. But this will lead us into a long discussion that is beyond the scope of this short review.

Generally speaking, this dictionary should be revised line by line in terms of transcriptions, grammatical information, and especially English and Persian equivalents for Pahlavi words, not fewer in the selection of textual evidence and their translation. This cannot be done by one person; several people must help the author in this work so that *The Pahlavi Dictionary* becomes more reliable for those who refer to it.