



The Bundahishn or Knowledge from the Zand

Various Authors

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Bundahishn, meaning "Primal Creation", is the name traditionally given to an encyclopædic collections of Zoroastrian cosmogony and cosmology written in Book Pahlavi. The original name of the work is not known. The traditionally given name seems to be an adoption of the sixth word from the first sentence of the younger of the two recensions. Most of the chapters of the compendium date to the 8th and 9th centuries, roughly contemporary with the oldest portions of the Denkard, which is another significant text of the "Pahlavi" (i.e. Zoroastrian Middle Persian) collection. The later chapters are several centuries younger than the oldest ones. The oldest existing copy dates to the mid-16th century. The Bundahishn survives in two recensions. A shorter was found in India, and is thus known as the Lesser-, or Indian Bundahishn. A copy of this version was brought to Europe by Abraham Anquetil-Duperron in 1762. A longer version was brought to India from Iran by T.D. Anklesaria around 1870, and is thus known as the Greater- or Iranian Bundahishn or just Bundahishn. The greater recension (the name of which is abbreviated GBd or just Bd) is about twice as long as the lesser (abbreviated IBd). The two recensions derive from different manuscript traditions, and in the portions available in both sources, vary (slightly) in content. The greater recension is also the older of the two, and was dated by West to around 1540. The lesser recension dates from about 1734. Traditionally, chapter-verse pointers are in Arabic numerals for the lesser recension, and Roman numerals for the greater recension. The two series' are not synchronous since the lesser recension was analyzed (by Duperron in 1771) before the extent of the greater recension was known. The chapter order is also different.

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