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Detail from above the entrance of Tehran's fire temple, 1286š/1917–18. Photo by © Shervin Farridnejad

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Samuel Jordan Center for Persian Studies and Culture
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Timuș, Mihaela. 2015. *Cosmogonie et eschatologie: articulations conceptuelles du système religieux zoroastrien. (Cahiers de Studia Iranica 54)*. Paris: Peeters Press. 288 pp., €30.00, ISBN 978-2-910640-40-8.

Shervin Farridnejad

The present book is part of the PhD thesis of Mihaela Timuș, submitted to the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes (5th section – Systèmes de pensée) in 2009. It includes seven studies, divided into two main thematic subjects, namely the cosmogony and eschatology of Zoroastrianism. The first part on the Zoroastrian cosmogony is divided into four chapters. In the first chapter, she discusses the European exegesis concerning the Zoroastrian cosmogony. She starts with a survey on “Modernity and the study of Antiquity”, regarding Manichaeism and Zoroastrianism in the European academic scenes in the 17th and 18th centuries and mainly discusses the works of three important scholars of this period, namely Anquetil Duperron (1731-1805) and his contemporaries, Eugène Burnouf (1801-1852) and Marc Joseph Müller (1809-1874). Various aspects of their studies and the scientific reception of their works on different aspects of Zoroastrian as well as Manichaean cosmogony are discussed.

In her second chapter, Timuș brings the “Narrative of the Mazdean Cosmogony” into the focus of her research. She begins with a discussion of Iranian historical-religious diversity according to the cosmo-

gonic models represented in the *Bundahišn*, one of the major Pahlavi compilations on Zoroastrian cosmogony and cosmography. In the context of the tripartite structure of Mazdean cosmogony, she analyzes among others the research of James Darmesteter (1849-1894) and the reception of Zoroastrian cosmogony in interaction with biblical cosmological models.

In her third chapter “Specific expressions of Zoroastrian dualism. The (earth) tremor”, Timuş discusses various matters regarding Zoroastrian Dualism according to its specific vocabulary, as well as the recorded historical apologetics and polemics on this subject. She continues with an evaluation of the Zoroastrian narratives of the beginning of the world and the genesis of the mountain and conclude the chapter with some discussion of controversies and funerary practices.

The fourth and last chapter of the cosmological part of this volume is dedicated to a survey on “Platonism, Neo-platonism, Neo-mazdeism” ideas. Furthermore, she addresses the question of the so-called Zoroastrian iconoclasm, presented by Mary Boyce. A final discussion on the “forms” between cosmogony and eschatology, as a bridge between this part and the following part concludes this chapter.

The second main part of the volume on Zoroastrian eschatology begins with a chapter on the history and backgrounds of the Western perception of the Zoroastrian eschatology by reference to some hypotheses, mainly proposed by a number of French scholars during the 18th and 19th centuries, among others the theologian Father Fenel (1695-1753), Father Foucher (1704-1778), Anquetil-Duperron, as well as Eugène Burnouf.

In her sixth chapter, the author proposes a closer reading of the passages related to Zoroastrian eschatology. Using a hypothesis already proposed by previous scholars in the field, Timuş explains how the Zoroastrian religious system is based on a permanent balance between the beginning and the end of the world.

The seventh and final chapter is dedicated to the eschatological concept of the scales which weigh the good and bad actions of men in the course of the Last Judgment, accompanied by a historiographical survey of a previous scholarly hypotheses on this subject.

The volume includes also a selection of important unpublished materials for the history of Iranian studies preserved in the French archives.

The book of Mihaela Timuş presents not only a valuable account of some important aspects of Zoroastrian cosmogony and cosmology, but furthermore is a praiseworthy example of the critical study of the history of Iranian studies.

