

2 General ‘Farhād’

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1 Introduction

In chapter 1 a review of the sources concerning Farhād and the archeological sites of Mount Bisutūn and Ṭāq-i Bustān has been conducted, with the purpose of individuating the main features of the character defined as ‘The Master of Mount Bisutūn’. There is a point on which the majority of the sources analyzed seem to agree: Farhād (in the poetic tradition), or the artist of the reliefs of Ṭāq-i Bustān (in the historical and geographical tradition) is a foreigner, his fatherland being placed in China according to poets, in Rūm (Greece, Byzantium) according to historians and geographers.

In what follows I will attempt to show that the character of Farhād, as we know it from the Persian romantic tradition, represents the outcome of the literary development of the Master of Mount Bisutūn with possible influences from a historical figure: Farrahān, alias Shahr-barāz, Khusraw Parvīz’s supreme commander of the army (see below, § 4). Indeed, in the romantic transformation of the character of Farhād and its association with the narrative cycle centred around Khusraw and his love for Shīrīn, the conflation between the Farhād of Mount Bisutūn and the historical character of Khusraw Parvīz’s general may have been relevant.

2 Towards a Second Farhād: Farhād in the *Mujmal al-Tavārikh*

The chapter related to the reign of Khusraw Parvīz in the anonymous Persian chronicle entitled *Mujmal al-tavārikh va'l-qīṣāṣ* (composed in 520/1126 ca)⁸⁶ provides important information on the origins of 'the second Farhād'. After a tradition concerning Farhād's love for Shīrīn (see ch. 1, § 7), the author of the *Mujmal* – speaking of the relief of Shabdīz in the site now called Ṭāq-i Bustān – quotes a second and different tradition. His source is an earlier unpreserved text: the *Pīrūz-nāma* ('Book of Pīrūz' or 'Book of The Victorious').⁸⁷ It should be noted that in both traditions given by the *Mujmal* Farhād is qualified as *sipahbad* (general).

According to the *Pīrūz-nāma*, the sculpting of the reliefs at the site now called Ṭāq-i Bustān was the work of a foreign master called Kīṭūs (the Faṭṭūs/Qaṭṭūs etc. of other sources; see ch. 1, § 4.2). The text, however, also mentions another personage connected with the construction of the site: a general named Farhād. Indeed, the passage distinguishes General Farhād – who, according to current interpretation, directed (*farmūd*) the sculpting of the reliefs, the construction of a palace or portico (*ayvān*) in stone, and a castle (*qaṣr*) above it – from the person who, with other master masons, materially carried out the work: Kīṭūs, son of the Greek Sinimmār. When these works were completed – states the author, continuing to quote from the *Pīrūz-nāma* – Khusraw ordered them to be donated to Farhād.⁸⁸

The passage from the *Pīrūz-nāma* quoted in the *Mujmal* has a convoluted syntax and its language seems to be quite archaic. Given its

⁸⁶ On the *Mujmal*, see Daniel, "The Rise and Development of Persian Historiography", 136-9; Weber, Riedel, s.v. "Mojmal al-tawāriḵ wa'l-qeṣāṣ".

⁸⁷ On the *Pīrūz-nāma* as one of the sources of the *Mujmal* see M. Qazvīnī's introduction to the fac-simile edition of the *Mujmal al-tavāriḵ* (1309/1920) from the Paris manuscript Persan 620, reprinted in *Mujmal al-tavāriḵ va'l qīṣāṣ*, ed. Bahār (p. lām ṭā [=39]); and Weber, Riedel, s.v. "Mojmal al-tawāriḵ wa'l-qeṣāṣ". Concerning the date of the *Pīrūz-nāma*, Priscilla Soucek favors a dating to the pre-Islamic period ("Farhād and Ṭāq-i Bustān", 40). However, the *Pīrūz-nāma* seems more likely datable to the early Islamic period, because in another passage the author of the *Mujmal* says: "In the *Pīrūz-nāma* I read that the hate of Shāpūr [Dhu'l-aktāf: this title is only given in the heading of the paragraph, *pādshāhi-yi Shāpūr-i Dhu'l-aktāf*] towards the Arabs depended on the fact that in the sentences (*aḥkām*) of Jāmāsp he had read that, from among the Arabs, a prophet would come who would destroy the religion of Zarathustra" (*Mujmal al-tavāriḵ*, 66,2-14). The work alluded to in the latter statement is probably to be identified with the Pahlavi apocalyptic text *Ayādgār i Jāmāspīg*, ed. and transl. by D. Agostini, in particular chapters 16 and 17, 109-15 (translation). On this basis, it seems possible a dating of the *Pīrūz-nāma* – like the last layer of Middle Persian Zoroastran apocalyptic texts – to the period immediately following the Islamic conquest of Iran (see Macuch, "Pahlavi Literature", 154-5).

⁸⁸ *Mujmal al-tavāriḵ*, 79,16-20; see also the Berlin manuscript *Mujmal al-tavāriḵ*, f. 30r13-17.

importance, it will be quoted and translated in full. The author of the *Mujmal* says:

va dar Pīrūz-nāma čunān khwāndam ki īn šan'athā bar sang Kīṭūs kard, pīsar-i Simsār [var. Sinimmār]-i Rūmī, ān-ki Sidīr va Khavarnaq kard-ast, va Farhād-i sipahbad farmūd-aš bā ustādān-i dīgar. Va čūn bipardākht ba farmān-i Khusraw – bad-ān sar-čašma ayvān būd, va qašr-ī bālā-yi īn šuffa-yi sangīn ki hanūz ba-jāy-ast, va šāh ānjā šarāb khward [var. khward-ī] bā buzurgān va sipāhān – ba Farhād dād. Va ānjā šifat-i Parvīz va Shabdīz va Shīrīn va Mawbad va shikārgāh hama ba-jāy-ast, nigāšta bar sang-ī

I read in the *Pīrūz-nāma*⁸⁹ that these works in stone were made by Kīṭūs, the son of the Greek Sinimmār, the one who constructed the Sidīr and the Khavarnaq. General Farhād ordered him (to construct them), together with other masters.⁹⁰ When they were finished, by Khusraw's order – there was a portico on that spring, and a castle above this stone platform that still exists; and (when the works were finished) the king drunk wine there with the nobles and the army⁹¹ – they were given to Farhād. The images of Parvīz, Shabdīz, Shīrīn, the Mawbad, and a hunting-place are all visible there, sculpted on a rock.⁹²

89 In this place, both in the Bahār edition of the *Mujmal* (79,16), and in the Berlin manuscript (*Mujmal al-tavārīkh*, f. 30r13), the title of this work is given as *Sarvar-nāma* (the Book of the Lord), with a variant *Parvīz-nāma* in the apparatus of the Bahār edition. However, in other places of the *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (37,14, 66,12, 70,22, 80,3 of the Bahār edition, corresponding to ff. 14v2 and 5, 25r16, 27r4, and 30r20 of the facsimile of the Berlin manuscript) the title of this important source is given as *Pīrūz-nāma*.

90 In reference to a more archaic linguistic stage, the difficult passage *va Farhād-i sipahbad farmūd-aš bā ustādān-i dīgar* can also be interpreted as “and he [Kīṭūs] was ordered by General Farhād (to do it), together with other masters”; or as “and by General Farhād (the work) was ordered to other masters (too)”, with *farmūd* in a passive/ergative value, and *bā* meaning ‘to’ (Middle Persian *bāz*, *bāz ō*). The overall meaning of the passage, however, would be the same. In the following phrase, I have interpreted *bipardākht* (they [the works] were finished), and *ba Farhād dād* (they were given to Farhād) as passive/ergative non agential forms.

91 The Berlin manuscript gives here a *lectio facilior* (*Mujmal al-tavārīkh*, f. 30r16): *va šāh ānjā šarāb khward-ī bā buzurgān va laškariyān* (and the king there used to drink wine with the nobles and the soldiers). The reading of the Bahār edition (when the works were finished [...] the king drunk wine there with the nobles and the army) seems preferable. As Soucek (“Farhād and Tāq-i Būstān”, 40) has noted, here a reference is probably to be seen to “the celebration of the completion of the works by a ceremony or festivity”.

92 The new critical edition of the *Mujmal*, based on four manuscripts in Heidelberg, Berlin, Dublin and Paris (*Mudjmal at-tawārīkh wa-l-qiṣaṣ: eine persische Weltgeschichte aus dem 12. Jahrhundert*) gives the same texts, apart from a more archaizing *īn šan'athā ba sang bar Kīṭūs kard* instead of *īn šan'athā bar sang Kīṭūs kard*. I wish to thank Anna Livia Beelaert for having checked the text, as I have not this edition at my disposal.

The interpretation of the verb *farmūd* "(Farhād) ordered" in the difficult passage *va Farhād-i sipahbad farmūd-aš bā ustādān-i dīgar* is problematic. That 'General Farhād' could have been the commissioner of the work, i.e. the one who ordered these works to be accomplished, seems to be improbable in light of what is stated at the end of the just quoted passage, where it is reported that, when the works were finished, "by Khusraw's order ... they were given to Farhād", the commissioner of the works being – as unanimously stated also by other sources – Khusraw Parvīz. For this reason, the passage has generally been interpreted as meaning that general Farhād had been the supervisor or director of the works. This is the interpretation given by Soucek, who translates: "Farhād the Sipāhbad directed him [Kītūs] with other workers".⁹³ And Jules Mohl more freely translates: "Lui [Kītūs] et les autres artistes travaillaient sous les ordres du Sipāhbad Farhād".⁹⁴ However, this interpretation is not convincing, because *farmūdan* does not mean 'to direct or supervise a work'. I would like to suggest a slightly different interpretation: "General Farhād ordered him (Kītūs) to realize (the works), together with other masters", with *farmūdan* meaning 'to tell (to do) something, to have something done'.⁹⁵

The new interpretation of the passage from the *Pīrūz-nāma* assigns a different role to 'General Farhād': he is not so much the commissioner, or the supervisor of the works, as, rather, someone who had a voice in the choice of the skilled workers in charge of the work, also being the ultimate beneficiary of the site. But why is the Farhād enamoured of Shīrīn called 'general', in the first tradition (see ch. 1, § 7)? And: why is the general of Khusraw Parvīz called Farhād in the second tradition? Who is he?

In the *Mujmal*, a third passage (apparently not quoted from the *Pīrūz-nāma*) mentions a *sipahbad* Farhād. It is to be found in the section devoted to the notables of the Sasanid kings where, among Khusraw Parvīz's dignitaries, the author records: "The minister (*dastūr*) was Kharrād Burzīn; the nobles were Bindūy and Gustaham (=Bistām), his uncles; the general of the army (*sipahbad*) was Farhād".⁹⁶ Then,

⁹³ Soucek, "Farhād and Tāq-i Būstān", 40.

⁹⁴ Mohl, "Extraits du Modjmel al-tewarikh", 127.

⁹⁵ The use of *farmūdan* in the meaning 'to command, order (*farmān dādan*)', and 'to tell' in a high and formal style, is quite ancient. See Wolff, *Glossar zu Firdosis Schahname*, 610-12, s.v. "farmūdan"; see also the frequent expression *nāma farmūd* 'he told/ordered (to write) a letter' (Wolff, *Glossar*, 611A); and it is already attested in Manichaean Middle Persian (cf. Durkin-Meisterernst, *Dictionary of Manichaean Middle Persian and Parthian*, 156A).

⁹⁶ *Mujmal al-tavārīkh*, 96,10-11; see also the Berlin manuscript *Mujmal al-tavārīkh*, f. 35r17-18. On Khusraw's uncles, and above all on Bistām, cf. Shapur Shahbazi, s.v. "Bestām o Bendōy"; Nöldeke, "Exkurs 7. Empörung des Bistām"; and Howard-Johnston, s.v. "Kosrow II".

the latter must be the Farhād referred to in the two passages from the *Mujmal* discussed above, where he bears the appellative of 'General'.

From historical sources we know that the commander-in-chief of Khusraw Parvīz's army was a general called Farrahān (or Farrukhān in some sources), also known by the title of Shahr-barāz.⁹⁷ It is therefore possible that the author of the *Mujmal*, or his source(s), confused together two personages: a fictional one, i.e. the Farhād of Mount Bīsūtūn, and a historical one, Farrahān, Khusraw's general. The relationship between the two personages – if there is any relationship at all – has to be explained, starting from a review of the main theories concerning the origins of the character of Farhād.

3 The Hypotheses on the Origins of the Character of Farhād

Concerning the origins of the character of Farhād, three theories, put forward by Aliev (1960), Eilers (1971), and Scarcia (in Cristoforetti and Scarcia 2013), deserve consideration. Apart from Eilers's hypothesis, the theories by the other two scholars are influenced by the passage(s) on Farhād from the *Mujmal*.

Wilhelm Eilers compares Farhād to the character of Onnes (Ὀννης), the first husband of Semiramis, an Assyrian general to King Ninus; according to the legend, when King Ninus won Semiramis's love and married her, Onnes in despair committed suicide.⁹⁸ The similarity between the situation in the Semiramis legend, and the triangle Khusraw (corresponding to Ninus), Farhād (Onnes) and Shīrīn (Semiramis) is striking. This would be a further feature linking the legend of Semiramis with that of Shīrīn, according to Eilers.⁹⁹

On the other hand, starting from the just quoted second passage from the *Mujmal*, Gianroberto Scarcia conjectures that the Farhād of the Persian romantic tradition was based on a true historical character, Khusraw's rebel uncle Biṣṭām; and explains the name of the archaeological site of Ṭāq-i Bustān not so much as "the Arch in the village named after the Uncle of Ḥusraw Parwīz", but as "the Arch of the Uncle of Ḥusraw Parwīz" *tout court*. Indeed, concerning Biṣṭām, i.e. the name of the village where the relief of Shabdīz was located,

⁹⁷ On this personage see below, § 4. The author of the *Mujmal* does know a personage called Shahr-barāz, but seems to ignore that he was Khusraw's most famous general and the same person as the one called 'Farhād' in other places of the book. The author only knows that Shahr-barāz was one of the kings who reigned after Khusraw Parvīz (*Mujmal al-tavārīkh*, 87), that he was not of kingly ascent (*na az aṣl-i šāhān būd*, 87,15B and 97,6), and that in the *Shāhnāma* he was called both Gurāz and Farāyīn (*Mujmal al-tavārīkh*, 83,1).

⁹⁸ Eilers, "Semiramis", 52 and fn. 90.

⁹⁹ On the legend of Semiramis in connection with Shīrīn, see above ch. 1, § 2. See also Part II (*The Origins of Turandot*), ch. 2, § 1 below.

the author of the *Mujmal* adds: "Biṣṭām was Gustaham, Khusraw's (maternal) uncle".¹⁰⁰ Scarcia thus conjectures that the arch was constructed by Biṣṭām/Gustaham "to celebrate his fleeting moment of glory", and was then left unfinished after Khusraw Parvīz's triumph. As to the appellative *sipahbad*, Scarcia recalls that Khusraw's uncle belonged to the ancient and noble family of the Ispahbads; *sipahbad* in the *Mujmal* would therefore be not so much a title attributed to 'Farhād', but the name of his (i.e. of Biṣṭām's) family.

When Khusraw, after having defeated the rebel general and usurper to the throne, Bahrām Chūbīn (591 CE), decided that the moment had arrived to rid himself of his uncles, Biṣṭām formed an army, married Bahrām's widow, Gurdiya, and rebelled against Khusraw, proclaiming himself king. The final battle between Khusraw and Biṣṭām was fought out in the vicinity of Hamadan, and therefore not far from Ṭāq-i Bustān. Khusraw defeated him, but only through treachery: Biṣṭām was killed and his army scattered. Some sources cite Gurdiya, instigated by Khusraw, to be Biṣṭām's assassin; soon after, Khusraw married her. Gurdiya, therefore, the wife of Biṣṭām and responsible for his death, then married Khusraw: enough to give birth to the legend of the two rivals for love of a woman, who became the reason for the death of her unrequited lover 'Farhād'.¹⁰¹

This hypothesis is fascinating, but does not take due account of the passage, in the *Mujmal*, where it reports that "when the works were finished, by Khusraw's order [...] they were given to Farhād" (see above, § 2). This seems to exclude a possible identification of Farhād/Biṣṭām as the commissioner of the arch. Moreover, the third just quoted passage from the *Mujmal* explicitly states that Farhād was the commander of Khusraw's army, and that he was someone different from Khusraw's uncle. If the *Mujmal* and its source, the *Pirūznāma*, have to be taken as reliable historical sources, these texts give glimpses of a different historical background (see below, § 5).

In 1960 Ghazanfar Aliev put forward an interesting hypothesis to explain the appellative 'general' (*sipahbad*) attributed to Farhād in the *Mujmal*. As we have already seen (ch. 1, § 7), Aliev thinks that the origins of the Farhād character and legend, unknown to the Sasanid sources, are quite recent. He also focuses on the popular and oral origins of his legend, and thinks that only gradually the legend of the *Kūhkan*, the Excavator of Mount Bisutūn - connected to the Mount Bisutūn area - merged with the legendary cycle of the loves of Khusraw and Shīrīn. As to the *Farhād-i sipahbad* of the *Mujmal*, Aliev thinks that such

¹⁰⁰ *Mujmal al-tavārīkh*, 79,15; see also the Berlin manuscript *Mujmal al-tavārīkh*, f. 30r12-13.

¹⁰¹ See Cristoforetti, Scarcia, "Talking about Sīmurǧ and Ṭāq-i Bustān with Boris I. Marshak", 344-6 (*On the so-called Farhād*). On Khusraw's uncles see fn. 96 above.

an appellative must have arisen out of misreading – possibly due to the author of the *Mujmal* himself – of the name of Khusraw's famous general, *Farrahān* or *Farruhān*, also known to the sources as Farrukhān, and better known by the title of Shahr-barāz, the conqueror of Syria and Jerusalem. Indeed, according to Aliev, the name فرهاد might have been graphically confused with and finally read as فرهاد, Farhād being a much more famous personage than Farrahān Shahr-barāz at the time of the composition of the *Mujmal*. Aliev's hypothesis, therefore, only concerns the origins of the title *sipahbad* attributed to Farhād in the *Mujmal*; indeed he rejects the idea of Farhād as a historical figure.¹⁰²

Aliev's intuition about a graphic confusion between 'Farrahān' and 'Farhād' (only possible on the basis of the writing of this name in Arabic script¹⁰³) may be illuminating in explaining the figure of Farhād in the *Mujmal/Pirūz-nāma*. Aliev, however, does not discuss the second tradition reported by the *Mujmal* (see § 2 above), which seems to refer to a different Farhād from the one known from the romantic poetical tradition: he is neither the Mountain Excavator (*Kūh-kan*) for love of Shīrīn, nor a master stone-cutter or a sculptor, but a general who had a role in the construction of the site of Ṭāq-i Bustān. Therefore, it cannot be excluded that the 'Farhād' of the second tradition from the *Mujmal/Pirūz-nāma* actually referred to Khusraw Parvīz's general, whether his connection with the works at Ṭāq-i Bustān be historically true or not. 'Farhād' can in actual fact represent not only a misreading of the name, or title, 'Farrahān', but can be a trace of the superimposition of a historical character on that of the Master of Mount Bisutūn.

To sum up: the two passages concerning Farhād in the *Mujmal al-tavārikh*, in which Farhād bears the title of *sipahbad*, suggest that Farhād, the Master of Mount Bisutūn, was here superimposed on another personage who in actual fact was a general. In particular the second passage, which has the *Pirūz-nāma* as its source, clearly distinguishes General 'Farhād' from the Master of Ṭāq-i Bustān, named Kiṭūs.

4 Farrahān Shahr-barāz

Farrahān, or Farrukhān as he is called in some sources, is a key personage in the critical period which led to the destitution and death of Khusraw Parvīz and, shortly thereafter, to the end of the Sasanid dynasty. In the sources and in modern studies he is more often called Shahr-barāz.¹⁰⁴ He was Khusraw's most famous general, well-known

¹⁰² Aliev, *Legenda o Khosrove i Širin*, 73-81 (in particular 77).

¹⁰³ In ancient manuscripts, final *nūn* and *dāl/dhāl* can be easily confused.

¹⁰⁴ On the forms of his names (or titles) see Justi, *Iranisches Namenbuch*, s. vv. "Farroḫān: 9. Ferruhān", 95; "Razmiozan", 260; and "Šahrwārāz", 277-8. On Razmyzān/Romizān/

to both Christian and Islamic sources as the supreme commander of the Persian army during the long Perso-Byzantine war (603-628 CE). He is the general who made important territorial conquests for Khusraw when, after the murder of Maurice (602) – the Byzantine emperor who had restored Khusraw to his throne after Bahrām Chūbīn's revolt – Khusraw had at last a pretext to move against Byzantium.¹⁰⁵

According to Cyril Mango's reconstruction, Shahr-barāz appears for the first time on the scene in 606-7 CE, when he leads the invasion of Mesopotamia, under Byzantine control at the time. He conquers Mardin, Amida and, in 609, Edessa. In the following year he crosses the Euphrates and takes possession of the city of Zenobia. In 611 he conquers Apamea, Emesa, Antioch. In 613 he conquers Damascus, thus taking control of a great part of Syria. In 614 he invades Palestine and conquers Jerusalem, finally taking the Holy Cross to Persia.¹⁰⁶ After many years of continuous victories, he suffers his first serious defeat in Armenia in 622. Afterwards, in 626, his army besieges Constantinople. On this occasion the Persian troops have a secondary role, compared to the role of the troops of the Avars. Mango voices a doubt: "On se demande si son manque d'activité n'était pas voulu".¹⁰⁷

Romiyūzān 'He who seeks the battle' (etymology according to Justi, *Iranisches Namenbuch*, 260), the different forms of this title and the question of Razmyūzān's identity with Shahr-barāz, see Nöldeke in Ṭabarī, *Geschichte der Perser*, 290 fn. 3. On the identity between Shahr-barāz and Razmyūzān, and the forms of the latter title see also Banaji, "On the Identity of Shahrālānyōzān in the Greek and Middle Persian Papyri from Egypt", 30 fn. 18, who proposes a different etymology for the title Razmyūzān (34-35 and fn. 43; I wish to thank Matteo Compareti, who brought this article to my attention). On this matter, see also fn. 106 below.

105 On these events, see Mango "Héraclius, Šahrvaraz et la vraie croix". See also the articles by Howard-Johnston reprinted in the volume *East Rome, Sasanian Persia and the End of Antiquity*, and in particular his "Al-Tabari on the Last Great War of Antiquity"; and Kaegi, Cobb, "Heraclius, Shahrbarāz, and al-Ṭabarī". See also Banaji, "On the Identity of Shahrālānyōzān", who also identifies Shahr-barāz as the general who in 619 conquered Alexandria, known from Greek and Middle Persian papyri from Egypt with the title of Shahr-ālānyōzān.

106 Scholars generally accept the datum, mainly reported by Christian sources, that the conqueror of Jerusalem was Shahr-barāz, and that he also had the title of Razmyūzān. However, both Ṭabarī and Bal'amī consider the general who conquered Jerusalem as a different person from the Farrahān (Farrukhān) also called Shahr-barāz. Ṭabarī (*History*, V: *The Sāsānids*, 318) says that the conqueror of Jerusalem was Rumiyūzān (this is the form of the title given there), considered as a different general from Shahr-barāz; and Bal'amī (*Tārikh*, 2: 1095) mentions, as the conqueror of Jerusalem, another commander (*sarhang*, captain), likewise different from Shahr-barāz, called Šadrān. Concerning the identity between Shahr-barāz and Rumiyūzān, Nöldeke expresses some doubts: "Ob es [the title 'Rumiyūzān'] nun ein früheren Title oder Beinamen oder aber doch Name eines Unterfeldherrn ist der fälschlich mit seinem Obern verwechselt wird, kann ich nicht sagen" (Ṭabarī, *Geschichte der Perser*, 290 fn. 3).

107 Mango, "Héraclius, Šahrvaraz et la vraie croix", 106-7. According to Howard-Johnston, such an early political understanding between Heraclius and Shahr-barāz "should probably be rejected as a piece of deliberate disinformation, circulated to further Roman interests as the war reached its climax in 627-628" (see Historical commentary to Pseudo-Sebeos, *The Armenian History attributed to Sebeos*, 223).

In the sources an anecdote revolving around an intercepted letter, narrated in many variants, throws some light on the deterioration in relations between Khusraw and Shahr-barāz and the latter's betrayal.¹⁰⁸ For some time after Khusraw's deposition and murder (February 628), Shahr-barāz continued to hold the conquered territories both in Mesopotamia and in Syria, keeping himself far from Persia. Mango indeed writes: "[After Khusraw's deposition and killing] les hostilités en Perse prirent fin, tandis que Šahrvaraz restait toujours dans les territoires qu'il avait conquis sur les Romains et *qu'il considérait, peut-être, comme sa propre satrapie*".¹⁰⁹ Only in July 629, according to some sources, a meeting and an agreement between him and the Byzantine emperor Heraclius (610-641) took place; after that Shahr-barāz came back to Persia.¹¹⁰ About Shahr-barāz's rule over the occupied territories (Rūm, i.e. the Byzantine territory), Bal'amī writes: "Farrukhān [i.e. Farrahān Shahr-barāz] conquered all Rūm, and entrusted it to Maurice's son. But the people gathered together and said: 'We do not want the son of Maurice [...].' Therefore Farrukhān kept on staying there and *ruling over Rūm as a king (malikī-yi Rūm hamī kard)*".¹¹¹ After Khusraw's murder, and the brief reigns of Shīrūya (Qubād II) son of Khusraw, and Ardashīr III son of Shīrūya, for a short period (40 days according to Firdawsī; from April 27 to June 630 CE, according to Justi¹¹²) Shahr-barāz reigned on the throne of Persia, hoping to transmit the kingdom to his sons; but he was soon killed.¹¹³

Parvaneh Pourshariati has recently argued that Farrukhān and Shahr-barāz were two different historical personages,¹¹⁴ basing her

¹⁰⁸ This anecdote has been studied, in eastern Christian sources, by Mango, "Héraclius, Šahrvaraz et la vraie croix", 107-11. See also Howard-Johnston, "Al-Ṭabarī on the last great war of Antiquity", 12-14, who compares the eastern Christian version of the anecdote with the one given by Ṭabarī; and especially Kaegi, Cobb, "Heraclius, Shahrbarāz, and al-Ṭabarī" (with further bibliography), who also analyze and translate the early Islamic version of the anecdote attributed to the traditionist al-Zuhrī (d. 142/742) preserved in the *Kitāb futūh al-Miṣr wa akhbārīhā* by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam (d. 257/871). A version of this anecdote is also given by Firdawsī, *Shāhnāma*, 8: 299-308, ll. 3841-959.

¹⁰⁹ Mango, "Héraclius, Šahrvaraz et la vraie croix", 109 (emphasis added). Also one important account, quoted by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam in his *Kitāb futūh al-Miṣr* and attributed to the traditionist al-Zuhrī, clearly shows that "Heraclius left Shahrbarāz in possession of those regions under Persian occupation that he had captured" (Kaegi, Cobb, "Heraclius, Shahrbarāz, and al-Ṭabarī", 106).

¹¹⁰ See Mango, "Héraclius, Šahrvaraz et la vraie croix", 110-11.

¹¹¹ Bal'amī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 1095-6 (emphasis added).

¹¹² Justi, *Iranisches Namenbuch*, 95 (s.v. "Farroḫān: 9. Ferruhān").

¹¹³ Firdawsī, *Shāhnāma*, 8: 385-90, ll. 1-48. On these events, see also Pseudo-Sebeos, *The Armenian History*, 86-9 (ch. 40, 129-30); and Howard-Johnston, Historical commentary to Pseudo-Sebeos, *The Armenian History*, 223-6.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Pourshariati, *Decline and Fall of the Sasanian Empire*, 142-53.

argument on the account given in the *Shāhnāma*.¹¹⁵ However, that Shahr-barāz and Farrahān (this is probably the right form of the general's title¹¹⁶) were the same person emerges almost unanimously from the sources, included the *Shāhnāma*. In this poem Shahr-barāz (The Wild Boar of the Reign) is called Gurāz (Wild Boar, i.e. metaphorically Hero) probably because, as Nöldeke has suggested, the form Shahr-barāz, with two consecutive short syllables, would have been incompatible with the meter of the poem; and not infrequently this title is attested as Varāz/ Barāz alone.¹¹⁷ After his accession to the throne, this same personage is called Farāyīn (فرايين). It is highly probable that the form 'Farāyīn' of the *Shāhnāma* originated as an erroneous reading of the other title borne by Shahr-barāz in its Pahlavi spelling: Farrukhān according to Theodor Nöldeke.¹¹⁸

It is also possible that the form 'Farāyīn' is not just the result of an erroneous reading of a Pahlavi word, but was dictated by the wish to deliberately obscure the honorific title of the general, afterwards usurper of the throne of Persia, responsible for the Persian defeat in front of Byzantium and, indirectly, for the fall of the Sasanid dynasty: a sort of *damnatio memoriae* through concealment of his regnal name or honorific title. Whereas the Christian sources and, to a certain extent, also some early Islamic sources do not present

¹¹⁵ "for our argument that we are in fact dealing with two separate figures and not one, we fortunately possess a source that in this, as in many other cases, contains valuable information, and here must be deemed the most reliable, namely the *Shāhnāma* of Ferdowsī" (Pourshariati, *Decline and Fall of the Sasanian Empire*, 146).

¹¹⁶ See below, notes 118 and 133.

¹¹⁷ See Nöldeke in *Ṭabarī, Geschichte der Perser*, 292 fn. 2. According to Dieter Weber, 'Shahr' (Reign) was a prefixed honorific extension of titles such as Warāz (Wild Boar) or Palang (Leopard), and therefore could also be omitted (Weber, "Ein bisher unbekannter Titel aus spätsasanidischer Zeit", 234).

¹¹⁸ See Nöldeke in *Ṭabarī, Geschichte der Perser*, 292 fn. 2. In order to explain the form *Farāyīn* of the *Shāhnāma* it seems preferable to suppose a Pahlavi form <plh'n>, that is Farrahān, an adjective meaning 'glorious', from *farrah* 'glory' (spelled phonetically as <plh> instead of heterographically as GDE) and the adjectival suffix -ān. Indeed, *farrox(v)* 'fortunate, blessed' < Old Iranian **h₂arāna-h₂ant-*, Avestan *xvarənah-vant-* (see Hasandüst, *Farhang-i rīša-shinākhtī-yi zabān-i fārsī*, 3: 2003-4, no. 3599, s.v. "Farrox") would have been spelled <plhw> in the Pahlavi script; and Farroxān would have been spelled <plhw'n> with a <w>, before suffix -ān, not represented in the form given by Firdawsī. It should also be noted that in its first occurrence in the printed edition of Ṭabarī's chronicle (*Annales quos scripsit Abu Djafar Mohammed Ibn Djarir at-Tabari*, 1002, l. 13), the general's title is not given as Farrukhān, but as Farruhān, with a vocalization with *u* which may represent a hybrid between Farrahān and Farrukhān. The form Farrukhān instead of Farrahān may have crept in as a *lectio facilior* instead of a less common Farrahān. Indeed, in Middle Persian both Farrox and Farroxān are frequently attested as proper names, spelled <plhw> or <plhw'> (Farrox), and <plhw'n> (Farroxān), respectively (see Gignoux, *Noms propres sassanides*, 82, no. 352, s.v. "Farrox", and 83, no. 354, s.v. "Farroxān").

Shahr-barāz in an unfavourable light,¹¹⁹ the *Shāhnāma* – though not concealing Khusraw's responsibilities in the collapse of his own empire¹²⁰ – represents in some respects a different tradition, much more unfavourable to Shahr-barāz Farrahān.¹²¹

5 Farrahān Between History and Legend

Apart from narratives showing a high degree of literary elaboration and even mirroring a more or less deliberate purpose of distorting the recounting of events, reliable historical documents about Shahr-barāz are not numerous. Ryka Gyselen has published two seals belonging to a general named Pirag, having the honorary title of Shahr-barāz and living under King Khusraw (therefore either Khusraw I Anushirvān, or Khusraw II Parvīz). This general was the *spāhbed* of the side of the south (*kust ī nēmrōz*). In the second seal it is added: "(of the) Mihrān (family)".¹²² Parvaneh Pourshariati has claimed the identification of the owner of the seal with the Shahr-barāz of the epoch of Khusraw II.¹²³ If the Shahr-barāz general of Khusraw Parvīz was a member of the ancient Mihrān family of Arsacid origins, the treatment reserved to him in the Persian and in some Islamic sources, starting from the ignominious episode of diarrhea at the moment of his enthronement narrated by Ṭabarī,¹²⁴ must be imputed to the seriousness of his faults. Ṭabarī only says that he did not belong to the reigning royal house, i.e. the Sasanid family; but in two places the *Mujmal* asserts that the Shahr-barāz who succeeded to the throne of Persia was not of royal blood.¹²⁵ The way Firdawsī describes Gurāz is

119 This accounts for the report by al-Zuhrī, connected – according to Kaegi and Cobb – to the eastern Christian historiographical tradition. Indeed Kaegi and Cobb write: "The general presentation of Shahrbarāz's defection in the early Islamic historiographical tradition conforms to the presentation of the same event in the eastern Christian historiographical tradition as represented by Theophilus [...] all relate the fall of Persia to Khusraw's treachery toward his own trusted subjects" ("Heraclius, Shahrbarāz, and al-Ṭabarī", 103).

120 On Khusraw Parvīz's downward spiral see Firdawsī, *Shāhnāma*, 8: 299-319, ll. 3839-4107.

121 At the beginning of the episode narrating the last years of Khusraw's reign (Firdawsī, *Shāhnāma*, 8: 299-319, ll. 3847-9), Gurāz is qualified as *bī-hunar* (unskilful), *div-sar* (bad-tempered), *bī-dād* (unjust), and *shūm* (bad ominous).

122 Gyselen, *The Four Generals of the Sasanian Empire: Some Sigillographic Evidence*, 40-1, seals 2d/1 and 2d/2.

123 Pourshariati, "Recent Discovered seals of Wistaxm, uncle of Husraw II?". Banaji, "On the Identity of Shahrālānyōzān", 29 fn. 13, rejects Pourshariati's identification.

124 Ṭabarī, *History*, V: *The Sāsānids*, 402-3.

125 See fn. 97 above. Concerning Shahr-barāz, Ṭabarī (*History*, V: *The Sāsānids*, 402) says: "He was not of the royal house of the kingdom". In the *Mujmal al-tavārikh* (87,15

not fitting for someone of noble origins.¹²⁶ Firdawsī even represents a dialogue between the just enthroned Farāyīn and his two sons; his eldest son, while expressing his concerns about his father's decision to ascend to the throne of Iran, says: "When has any of our fathers ever been a king!", thus asserting their not royal ascent.¹²⁷ Shahr-barāz is instead considered as a Sasanid in the *Chronicle of Seert*.¹²⁸

If the *Pīrūz-nāma*, as quoted by the *Mujmal*, is to be considered a reliable historical source, it seems to depict Khusraw and Farrahān in their moment of glory, before Farrahān's treachery and the final catastrophe. Indeed, this text seems to present the construction of the main arch and the front reliefs of Tāq-i Bustān as a celebration of Khusraw's victories over Byzantium, in a moment in which "Khusro had every reason to be confident that final victory was within his grasp ... (and) commissioned several monuments designed to celebrate and commemorate his forthcoming victory".¹²⁹ Farrahān was the protagonist of these victories; hence his connection with the monument - whether the statement that it was afterwards given to him (possibly as a recompense for his war achievements) be historically true, or not. Having long stayed in the Byzantine occupied territories, Farrahān may have been informed about the most skilled local artists; hence a second reason for his connection with the site. Though not all scholars are inclined to attribute the reliefs in the front panels of the main grotto of Tāq-i Bustān to Khusraw Parvīz's epoch, and their meaning and historical context are still debated, the *Pīrūz-nāma* would provide further evidence - to be subjected, of course, to critical scrutiny - endorsing their attribution to the epoch of Khusraw Parvīz.¹³⁰

If, instead, the tradition about Farhād given by the *Mujmal/Pīrūz-nāma* has not to be considered as historically reliable, its value for literary studies is nevertheless relevant. It shows that the figure of Farrahān Shahr-barāz had soon entered legend.

col. B and 97,6) it is written: "(He was) not of royal descent (*na az ašl-i šāhān/mulūk*)"; see also the Berlin manuscript *Mujmal al-tavārīkh*, ff. 32v15 and 35v5.

126 See fn. 121 above.

127 Firdawsī, *Shāhnāma*, 8: 386, l. 5B.

128 Cf. Mango, "Héraclius, Šahrvaraz et la vraie croix", 110.

129 Howard-Johnston, "Pride and fall: Khusro II and his regime", 94. Lushey ("Bisutun. Geschichte und Forschungsgeschichte", 129), in reference to the many monuments commissioned by Khusraw II in this period speaks of 'Bauprogramm'.

130 A different date for the reliefs in the main arch of Tāq-i Bustān has been presented and discussed by Callieri, *Architecture et représentation dans l'Iran sassanide*, 154-9. For a recent review of the hypotheses on the date and context of this monument see also Compareti, "La raffigurazione della 'gloria iranica' nell'arte persiana e la sua distinzione dall'uccello fenice/simurgh", 10-15; and "Observations on the Rock Reliefs at Taq-i Bustan".

6 Legendary Developments of the Figure of Farrahān Shahr-barāz; the King of Syria

In a legend focusing on the figure of Shahr-barāz, the latter appears as the (probably unwanted) husband, and afterwards as the unrequited suitor to the hand of Būrān, daughter of Khusraw II and, after the murder of Ardashīr III son of Shīrūya, queen of Iran (630-631 CE).¹³¹

In what appears to be the earliest attestation of the legend, given in the Armenian history attributed to Sebeos (mid seventh century),¹³² Būrān is said to be Shahr-barāz's wife. (It must be noted that the name of the famous general and usurper of the throne of Persia is given here as Khoream, i.e. probably Khorre(h)ān, a variant of the title 'Farrahān' under which the general was also known¹³³). As a marriage between Shahr-barāz and Būrān does not seem to be attested in other sources, this marriage may represent an early legendary development. It is also to be noted that in this text, immediately after the murder of Khoream Shahr-barāz, a different personage, Khoṛokh Ormizd (Farukh Hurmuz of Islamic sources¹³⁴), appears as the unwanted - in fact, killed - suitor to the hand of Būrān (Bor in the Armenian text).

The passage from the Armenian chronicle is as follows: "[After Khoream's killing] they [the Persians] installed as queen Bor, Khosrov's daughter, who was his [Khoream's] wife, and they appointed as chief minister at court Khoṛokh Ormizd, who was prince of the region of Atrpatakan. Then this Khoṛokh sent (a message) to the queen: 'Become my wife'. She agreed, saying: 'Come with a single man at midnight, and I shall fulfil your wish'. Arising at midnight, he went with a single aide. But when he entered the royal palace, the guards of the court fell on him, struck him down and killed him".¹³⁵

¹³¹ On this queen see below, Part II, ch. 3.

¹³² Cf. Pseudo-Sebeos, *The Armenian History*, 89 (ch. 40,130).

¹³³ Th. Nöldeke (in *Ṭabarī, Geschichte der Perser*, 292 fn. 2), without questioning that Shahr-barāz and Farrukhān were the same person, considers unlikely that this personage could have been called both Farrukhān and Khurrahān (*Chorahān*). However, an oscillation between different outcomes of a same word is attested for other proper names too. Suffice it to quote Bisām ~ Gustaham; (Shahr-)Barāz ~ Gurāz; Fahrabadh or Bahlabad ~ Bārbad (Khusraw Parvīz's famous musician). Indeed, in the title borne by Khusraw's general, *farrah/farre* and *khwarrah/khorre* are two parallel outcomes corresponding to Old Median *farnah*- and Young Avestan *xvarənah*- 'glory' respectively - the form with *f* having traditionally been considered of Median origin, though being found in many other Iranian languages and dialects (see Gnoli, s.v. "Farr(ah)"; for a different explanation of the origin of the *f*- forms see Lubotsky, "Scythian Elements in Old Iranian", 191-5; see also Shavarebi, Qaemmaqami, "Les mots moyen-perses XWARRAH et FARR"). As to the Armenian spelling Khoream, with *r* representing Iranian *rr* < *rn*, see Bolognesi, *Le fonti dialettali degli imprestiti iranici in armeno*, 28.

¹³⁴ On this personage, see Pourshariati, *Decline and Fall of the Sasanian Empire*, 146-53.

¹³⁵ Cf. Pseudo-Sebeos, *The Armenian History*, 89 (ch. 40,130).

In the *History* of Ṭabarī the heroine of this story is Āzarmīdukht, Būrān's sister and queen after her for a short period. She – says the author – was “one of the most beautiful of the women of the Persians”. When Farrukh Hurmuz, who is here defined as the “Iṣbahbadh of Khurāsān”, sent a message asking her to give herself in marriage to him, she answered: “Marriage to a queen is not permissible”. She then convened him for an amorous encounter, and had him murdered by the commander of her guard.¹³⁶ Despite the many differences with the legend of Farhād, in this narrative it is possible to recognize some of the characteristic motifs of the latter legend: one is, broadly speaking, the motif of the suitor who dies because the woman he loves does not reciprocate him, or has him killed; another motif is, more specifically, that of the lower social status of the suitor, who cannot aspire to the queen's hand as he is not of kingly descent. The latter, despite the corrections introduced by some poets who transformed Farhād into the son of the Emperor of China, is one of the main features of the character of Farhād in the romantic tradition: Farhād's love is without hope, because his rival is a king and he is only a commoner (see ch. 1, § 7).

The tradition which identifies Farrahān Shahr-barāz, instead of Farrukh Hurmuz, as the unrequited wooer of queen Būrān seems to be first attested in Ibn al-Faḡīh's *Kitāb al-buldān* (beginning tenth century). In a line from the poem in which Aḥmad b. Muḥammad, i.e. Ibn al-Faḡīh himself, describes the reliefs at the site of Ṭāq-i Bustān, Ernst Herzfeld identifies a certain Khurrīn (“Et Ḥurrīn qui s'est élan-cé et qui, de sa fleche, fait signe à une jeune beauté qui ne parle pas”¹³⁷) as Farrahān Shahr-barāz, the young beauty not responding to his nod being identified with Būrān.¹³⁸ If Herzfeld's interpretation of the line in question is to be accepted, this text, beyond providing an early attestation of the legend of Shahr-barāz as unrequited suitor to Būrān's hand, also attests to an early connection of his character with Ṭāq-i Bustān and its reliefs: a proof that, at the beginning of the ninth century, the legend of the unrequited wooer, still identified with Khusraw's general, was already widespread in the area.

The tradition which gives Farrahān Shahr-barāz as Būrān's unwanted husband seems to be also reflected in one of the stories intercalated in Abū Dulaf's second *risāla* (mid-tenth century).¹³⁹ At the

¹³⁶ Ṭabarī, *History*, V: *The Sāsānids*, 406.

¹³⁷ Ibn al-Faḡīh, *Mukhtaṣar kitāb al-buldān*, 216,5 (French transl., 261). Khurrīn (Khwarrēn) would be a slightly different adjectival form meaning 'glorious', from *khwarr/khorr* 'glory' and the adjectival suffix *-ēn*, used here in reference to the famous general.

¹³⁸ Herzfeld, “Khusraw Parwēz und der Ṭāq i Vastān”, 99.

¹³⁹ Minorsky, “Two Iranian legends in Abū-Dulaf's second *risālah*”, 175-8. On Abū Dulaf see Minorsky, “Abū Dulaf, Mis'ar b. Muhallil al-Khazradjī al-Yanbu'i”, 116.

end of his description of Tustar, Abū Dulaf speaks of a high ranking lady – whose name is hardly recognizable in this very damaged passage – who had built a wonderful bridge in Tustar. About her Abū Dulaf recounts a story: on the very night of her wedding, with the help of her beardless pages dressed up as slave-girls, she killed “the king of the Yemen” who – after having murdered her kingly “brother” – had married her. Vladimir Minorsky, who published and analyzed this tale, identifies the royal princess who killed the usurper to the throne as Būrān,¹⁴⁰ and the King of the Yemen as Shahr-barāz – in actual fact, the latter had killed Ardashīr, the son of Būrān’s brother Shīrūya, and not her brother. Minorsky defines the character of the King of the Yemen as “a mere invention” due to Abū-Dulaf himself; and adds: “Of what he [Abū-Dulaf] heard he must have retained only the fact that the usurper came from a far-away place”¹⁴¹ This is exactly the feature shared by both the legendary character of Farhād, and the historical or – better – semi-historical character of Shahr-barāz: both come from a far-away country.

Shahr-barāz appears as the hero of a number of legends, which are like scraps of a more ancient corpus focusing on the figure of the famous general. This legendary corpus was possibly the object of one of the lost works quoted by Ibn al-Nadīm in his *Fihrist* under the title: *Kitāb Shahrīzād* (sic for *Shahr-barāz*) *ma’a Abarwīz*.¹⁴²

Among these legends one must have been that of the “Treasure carried by the wind” (*ganj-i bād-āvard*) which, in Niẓāmī’s poem, is only the name of one of the melodies sung by Bārbad at Khusraw’s court.¹⁴³ This story is briefly recounted by Bal’amī, in the section devoted to the wonders of Khusraw’s kingdom – though in this text no reference to Shahr-barāz’s role is to be found. According to Bal’amī, the King of Rūm (the Byzantine emperor) had sent some ships charged with a fabulous treasure to Abyssinia (Ḥabash), in order to preserve his riches from the dangers of the war; but the wind had pushed the ships onto the coasts of Oman, and they had fallen into Khusraw’s hands.¹⁴⁴ Mas’ūdī, in his *Kitāb murūj al-dhahab* (332/943), preserves another variant of this story, which explicitly attributes the recovering of the treasure to Shahr-barāz. In this text Shahr-barāz, whose title is deformed into Shahr(i)bār (a form not too different from the one given

140 Būrān is also famous for having constructed or repaired a number of bridges. About her Ṭabarī says: “She gave orders for silver coins to be minted, and she repaired masonry bridges (*al-qanāṭir*) and bridges of boats (*al-jusūr*)” (*History*, V: *The Sāsānids*, 404).

141 Minorsky, “Two Iranian Legends in Abū-Dulaf’s Second *risālah*”, 177.

142 Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 1: 305.

143 Niẓāmī, *Khusraw va Shīrīn*, ch. 48, 7.

144 Bal’amī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 1091.

in the *Fihrist*), is the margrave (*marzbān*, 'general of the confines') of Maghreb. He recovers the fabulous 'Treasure carried by the wind' on the shores of Antioch, the city he had conquered.¹⁴⁵

A second legend connected with the figure of Shahr-barāz, possibly going back to ancient pre-Islamic sources, is that of the epistolary exchange - with interception of a letter - between Shahr-barāz and Khusraw, already mentioned above (§ 4). Both legends must be of early origins and are recounted in a long narrative concerning Khusraw Parvīz and Shahr-barāz inserted in the *Kitāb al-tāj*, in the section devoted to the deceptions used by kings as a means to win a war or a conflict.¹⁴⁶

The *Kitāb al-tāj* recounts that during a long siege to his capital, the King of Rūm (the Byzantine emperor) had proposed an accord between him and Shahr-barāz, but the latter had refused; Shahr-barāz is indeed depicted as a loyal and valiant general, who gained many victories and successes for Khusraw. The King of Rūm had then prepared himself for naval war, charging his ships with immense treasure and riches. A storm had sunk the king's ships, and Shahr-barāz had recovered the treasure and had sent it to Khusraw, who of course was delighted with it. However, one of Khusraw's slaves (*ghulām*) called Rustah, who was an enemy of Shahr-barāz (no reason for this is given), succeeded in changing Khusraw's heart towards his general. At this point a different and possibly more ancient version of the anecdote of the exchange of letters between Khusraw and Shahr-barāz is given, which is reported in order to illustrate Khusraw's skillfulness in deceiving his faithful general.

In this narrative, the character of the faithful Shahr-barāz deceived by Khusraw may well recall the loyal Farhād deceived by Khusraw with the false news of Shīrīn's death. This narrative, though probably being of ancient pre-Islamic origins, confirms the existence of a tradition favourable to Shahr-barāz, different from the anti-Shahr-barāz tradition offered by other Persian texts such as the *Shāhnāma* (see above).

Very soon the historical figure of Farrahān Shahr-barāz fell into oblivion; of his real biography only some features survived, transformed into legend. His connection with Rūm, the territories of the Byzantine empire under his control, was transformed into his being the king of a far-away country: Yemen, Maghreb or - in the poetic narrative tradition - Syria.

Indeed, in the poems of love and adventure, which represent a stream parallel to that inaugurated by Nizāmī's *Khusraw va Shīrīn*,

145 Maçoudi, *Les prairies d'or*, 2 : 226-7. A still slightly different version of the story of the Treasure carried by the wind (without mention of Shahr-barāz), is given by Amīr Khusraw Dihlavī, *Shīrīn va Khosrow*, 86-89, ll. 969-1005.

146 Pseudo-Jāhīz, *Kitāb al-tāj fī akhlāq al-mulūk*, 180-5 (French transl., 196-202).

there is a character, called 'The King of Syria', which corresponds to Farhād in Niẓāmī's poem: he is the rival of the hero, as is Farhād with reference to Khusraw in Niẓāmī's *Khusraw va Shīrīn*. In fact, the King of Syria (in Khwājū Kirmānī's *Gul va Nawrūz*, composed in 742/1341), or the son of the King of Syria (in Salmān Sāvajī's *Jamshīd va Khwarshīd*, composed in 763/1372), is the rival of the hero in his love for the beautiful female protagonist.

In the first poem, Khwājū Kirmānī's *Gul va Nawrūz*, Nawrūz falls in love with Gul, the daughter of the Qayṣar (the emperor of Byzantium), having heard a description of her from a traveling merchant. Ignoring his father's opposition, he sets out for Rūm. On the way there he meets with various adventures, including an encounter with a handsome young man suffering the pains of love: this is Farrukh-rūz, King of Syria, who with his army had unsuccessfully sought to overcome the Qayṣar's resistance and obtain the hand of his daughter, Gul. The character of Farrukh-rūz, King of Syria, who at the head of his army endeavours to beat down the resistance of the Qayṣar, the Byzantine emperor, recalls the figure of General Shahr-barāz leading his army in a number of military expeditions in Byzantine territory. The name 'Farrukh-rūz' seems even to echo the title 'Farrukhān' under which the general was known in some sources, or, possibly, the name of Farrukh Hurmuz, the personage which was replaced by Shahr-barāz in his role of rejected suitor to the queen's hand, in the just analyzed legend.

Also in the second poem, Salmān Sāvajī's *Jamshīd va Khwarshīd*, Jamshīd, son of Shāpūr, king of China, falls in love with a beautiful girl glimpsed one night in a dream. After much fruitless search, he realizes from the description of a merchant that this beauty is Khwarshīd (Sun), daughter of the Qayṣar of Rūm. Jamshīd sets out and, after a series of adventures, meets Khwarshīd, who immediately returns his love. Only after defeating Shādī, son of the King of Syria, who is also a suitor to Khwarshīd, Jamshīd is able to marry the daughter of the Qayṣar. He returns to China and ascends his father's throne.

The character of the King of Syria (or of the son of the King of Syria) cannot be explained other than as a romantic re-elaboration of the figure of General Farrahān, rival of Khusraw Parvīz – though not, of course, for love of a woman. The surprising war exploits and territorial conquests made by Shahr-barāz under Khusraw's orders, coupled with a remote memory of his mutiny and his prolonged stay in the occupied territories, made of him the king of a far-away country. His true or supposed agreement with Heraclius, the emperor of Byzantium, was transformed into his being a suitor to the hand of

the latter's daughter.¹⁴⁷ It is as if a distant memory of ancient events had later offered the backdrop for a narrative transposed into a romantic plan, with the protagonists of war events transformed into two rivals for love of a woman, the latter being the daughter of the Byzantine emperor, in the tradition of the poems of love and adventure; Shīrīn, in Niẓāmī's poem *Khusraw va Shīrīn* and in the poems composed in response to it.

From a functional point of view, then, the King of Syria corresponds to Farhād, the rival of Khusraw. At the same time, this character also preserves some features of the historical Shahr-barāz as, in actual fact, the latter had conquered Syria, and had continued to keep it as his own kingdom for a period. From a merely literary point of view the King of Syria recalls Shahr-barāz's legendary role of unrequited wooer of queen Būrān.

7 Conclusions

In the romantic narrative tradition the character of Farhād has a double origin: he is, mainly and first of all, the Master of Mount Bīsūtūn, of which Abū Dulaf preserves early evidence (mid-tenth century). This character, connected with the region of Mount Bīsūtūn, is probably of popular origin, though having an early prototype – according to Wilhelm Eilers – in the character of Onnes, Semiramis's first husband, King Ninus's general. Very soon, however, Farhād the Master merged into the figure of another 'Farhād', Khusraw Parvīz's general, his rival for the throne of Persia and – in the romantic narrative tradition – his rival tout court.

The merging of 'the two Farhāds' is attested by a lost text, the *Pīrūz-nāma*, of which some passages are quoted in the anonymous *Mujmal al-tavārīkh* (first half of the twelfth century). Ghazanfar Aliev was right in supposing that the 'General Farhād' of the *Mujmal* had to be understood in reference to Khusraw Parvīz's famous general, Farrahān. However, in the *Mujmal* the identity between Farhād and Farrahān is not just an error in the reading, as Aliev had supposed. It is a clue bringing to light the overlap of two characters, a popular and fictional one, and another endowed with an ancient historical origin.

A series of legends analyzed in the second chapter of this study shows that Khusraw Parvīz's famous general, mainly known by the title of Shahr-barāz, was gradually transformed into the type of the unrequited suitor aspiring to the hand of the queen of Persia (Būrān,

147 In actual fact, marriage bonds between the families of Heraclius and Shahr-barāz are mentioned in the Syriac history by Nicetas (see Mango, "Héraclius, Šahrvaraz et la vraie croix", 105).

or her sister Āzarmīdukht); as he was not of royal ascent, he was unfit for such a marriage. The texts analyzed for this research let us suppose that only afterwards was the woman loved by the general gradually identified with Shīrīn: this triggered the transformation of Khusraw Parvīz's general into his rival for love. Despite the evident differences between the legend of Shahr-barāz and that of Farhād, this study suggests that the character of Farrahān Shahr-barāz may have merged with the character of Farhād, the Master of Mount Bīsūtūn, to contribute to the 'romantic' development of the latter's figure.

