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Source: Ancient Iranian Studies, January 2026, VOL. 5, NO. 14, 115-126.

Published by: Tissaphernes Archaeological Research Group

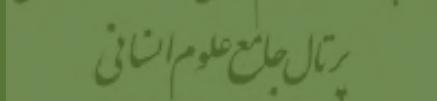
Stable URL:

<https://doi.org/10.22034/ais.2025.523992.1162>



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Daštān (Bīnamāzi), the Related Rules in Sasanian and Post-Sasanian Texts

Esmaeil Sangari¹ , Parvin Davari² , Mahmoud Mohammadi³ , Erfaneh Khosravi¹ 

Abstract

Daštān is a Persian word meaning the menstrual cycle that happens to every girl after puberty. In Zoroastrianism, the menstrual cycle is tied to mythology so that they believed it occurred after the Ahriman's kiss on the forehead of Jahī (Demoness of lasciviousness). The consequence of this belief about menstruation (Daštān) resulted in strict rules to prevent pollution and impurities of sacred elements. Most rules were written in post-Sasanian texts. The obligations of a woman in time of Daštān were stated in those texts. This research describes and analyzes the issue of Daštān in texts based on literary evidence. It examines whether the strict laws surrounding Daštān originated from religious laws or were rooted in myth, and what attitude towards women they created. Studies show that Daštān was considered filthy. Since the menstrual cycle is a periodical condition, a set of rules were conducted for women to obey in order to prevent the spread of pollution. In spite of negative ideas in some texts including *Bundahišn* and *Zādsprām* about this issue, there were no negative approaches towards women.

Keywords: Daštān; Woman; Zoroastrianism; Punishment; Pahlavi's Texts.



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Article info: Received: 16 May 2025 | Accepted: 6 July 2025 | Published: 1 January 2026
Citation: Sangari, Esmaeil; Davari, Parvin; Mohammadi, Mahmoud; Khosravi, Erfaneh. (2026). Daštān (Bīnamāzi), the Related Rules in Sasanian and Post-Sasanian Texts, *Ancient Iranian Studies*, Vol. 5 (14), 115-126.

<https://doi.org/10.22034/ais.2025.523992.1162>

Introduction

In Zoroastrianism, Daštān is rooted in mythology. Referring to *Bundahišn*, it occurred while Ahriman kissed the forehead of Jahī (De Jong, 2008: Jeh; Zaehner, 1955: 359; *Bundahesh*, 40: 5), however, in *Zādspram*, it is claimed as a sexual intercourse between Ahriman and Jahī (*Anthologie de Zādspram*, 31: 34). Hence, Jahī had a mission from Ahriman to pollute women (Russell, 1990: 262; Zaehner, 1955: 351). The demonic background of Daštān has been mentioned in these two aforementioned references.

In the other Pahlavi texts such as *Rivāyat-iĀdur-farrōbay ī Farroxzādān*, *Rivāyat-iHēmīt-iAšawahištān*, The Pahlavi *Rivāyat*, *ŠāyestneŠāyest*, *SaddarNasr Saddar Bundahišn* and *Dārāb-Hormazyār's Rivāyat*, the rules and the obligations of a woman on menstrual cycle have been declared. Although there is no evidence of mythological belief in these texts, Daštān was considered a penetration of a demon into a woman's body.

Therefore, is it possible to suppose a link between the strict rules about Daštān and the demonic ideas? Were there general rules in previous times that were subsequently affected by the social conditions of Zoroastrianism to generate a mythical background for Daštān?

Literature Review

Several studies have been conducted

on Daštān, most of which focus on general subjects. For instance, Mendoza Forrest (2011) in her book *Witches, whores, and sorcerers: the concept of evil in early Iran* has discussed general issues and has not mentioned any details about rules. Sangari in his PhD thesis (2013) has studied several aspects of women's right in the Sasanian period, including marriage, divorce, adoption, inheritance and guardianship. Sangari (2018) also in his paper, has studied the women's legal system in the issue of marriage and has given a new division. Secunda (2015) in a journal article "Relieving monthly sexual needs: on Pahlavi Daštān-māhwizārdan" only written about the punishments of Daštān-māh (Daštān-month).

Russel (1990) in his article "Bīnamāzī", has divulged the Daštān rules and related topics in general. He has not provided a precise set of information. Kiel (2010) in an article called Gazing through Transparent Objects in Pahlavi and Rabbinic Literature: A Comparative Analysis, has analyzed Daštān woman in the sacred texts. He has focused solely on this field and has not disclosed any other concerning details.

Necessity of Research

The laws in Zoroastrian jurisprudence have given a negative view of women as detested creatures and then imposed cruel and rigorous obligations.

This research aims to clarify the ambiguous points about Daštān by scrutinizing diverse jurisprudential texts and to present a clear perspective on the status of woman.

Daštān and the Relevant Subjects

In Pahlavi texts, Daštān coincides with the girl's sexual maturity. According to *Hērbedestān*, the girl was exempt from the rules of Daštān before the age of 15. Therefore, the starting time for Daštān was after this age (*Hērbedestān*, 6: 6.7). In other words, a girl steps into womanhood by the occurrence of her first Daštān (Menstrual cycle). In *Hērbedestān*, there is no proof of a demonic view about Daštān, but as a mixture (Gumēzišn) and a natural phenomenon (Russell, 1990: 262). As might be expected, the girl was ready to get married after the first Daštān (*The Persian Rivayats of Hormazyar Framarz*, tr. Dhabhar, 1932: 192). Mendoza Forrest has considered the menstrual blood "Generative" rather than demonic (Mendoza Forrest, 2011: 71). Despite a primary belief about the origin of Daštān, it was considered an emergence of sexual maturity. As it occurs once a month, it was more probable to be regarded as demonic as well.

It is worth mentioning that if a girl had reached the age of Daštān, she was supposed to get married. If the girl avoided or her parents discouraged her from marriage, they had

committed a sin (*The Persian Rivayats of Hormazyar Framarz*, tr. Dhabhar, 1932: 192-193; *Sad dar Bundahesh*, 63: 3-7). Daštān was the appearance of maturity in girls as a natural mechanism in their bodies. The expulsive blood was foul-smelling and unpleasant in comparison to normal blood, and inevitably, society linked it to Ahriman and mythical beliefs. Strict and complex rules were formulated for women, and even the inheritance laws about women were affected by Daštān.

In Zoroastrianism, Daštān was a sign of filthiness. It was believed that the filthiness would penetrate in the whole body of a woman (*Dēnkart V*, 24: 20). In consequence, a woman could pollute the sacred elements such as water, sun, plants and a virtuous man (*Saddar Bundahesh*, 15: 6-7; *Šāyest nē šāyest*, 3: 29; Kiel, 2010: 25). As the woman was regarded as filthy (at the period of Daštān), her eyes could pollute or damage the sacred elements (Kiel, 2010: 26; Macuch, 2012: 257). Therefore, to prevent her from watching these elements, she had to be isolated in Daštānistān (Kiel, 2010: 26; *Vendīdād*, 16: 2). Daštānistān or Xāne-ye-Daštān (Daštān house) was a separate place for women to stay at the period of Daštān (*Dārāb Hormazyār's Rivāyat*, tr. Unvala, 1922: 221).

There are two controversial ideas regarding the accommodation of women in Daštānistān. Some con-

sented to the woman's presence in an isolated room of their house. Whereas others preferred to build a segregated place to quarantine women until they were purified (*Dārāb Hormazyār's Rīvāyat*, tr. Unvala, 1922: 221). It is probable to derive a conclusion that women were not necessarily obliged to spend their Daštān time in a public, segregated place. However, the elite families may provide a special room in their own house; however, Daštānistān was allocated to those who were not rich enough to build a separate room.

Women's Obligation at the Period of Daštān

When a woman was in Daštān period, she had to obey some rules. These rules were not only summarized on averting the eyes, but the woman had to remove her jewelry and clothes to simply wear another outfit to avoid polluting (*Dārāb Hormazyār's Rīvāyat*, tr. Unvala, 1922: 205; *Šāyest nē šāyest*, 3: 4 & 5). The woman could not watch the sacred elements during Daštān (*Saddar Nasr*, 68: 4-5; *Saddar Bundahesh*, 41: 1; *Dēnkart V*, 19: 16&26). She was obliged to keep the distance of 15 steps away from the sacred elements (*Vēndīdād*, 16: 4). If she did not obey the rules, she would have an extreme punishment (*Saddar Bundahesh*, 41: 2-3). It was a common belief that the demon of Daštān would penetrate the body of a woman

and could transfer the pollution and filth through her eyes while she was looking (*Šāyest nē šāyest*, 3: 29; *Saddar Bundahesh*, 15: 6-7). She had to wear another outfit for Daštān time (*Šāyest nē šāyest*, 2: 3; 2: 96). Daštān women were obliged to stay in Daštānistān, away from other people in separate places. They were permitted to return home after purification and cleansing (*Rīvāyat-i Hēmūt-i Ašawahistān*, 35: 4; *Dēnkard V*, 16: 4; *Dārāb Hormazyār's Rīvāyat*, tr. Unvala, 1922: 221; *Šāyest nē šāyest*, 3: 6).

The abstinence was severely uncompromising to keep two Daštān women away from each other, even at the same place (*Saddar Nasr*, 68: 7). The pollution of a Daštān could affect a virtuous man's intelligence, memory and wisdom through speaking (*Dēnkart V*, 24: 20). The maliciousness of a Daštān woman might be possibly transferred to the fire by approaching to it (Pahl.Riv, 18d10). Since she might change the flavor and color of the food (*Dēnkart V*, 24: 20), she was not allowed to serve any food for others or herself (*Le livre d'Ardā Virāz*, 76: 3). Unavoidably, others could serve food for Daštān women, and the one who brought food had to put it three steps away (*Šāyest nē šāyest*, 3: 34). According to the aforementioned conditions, logically, the Daštān woman had to quit the housework or any other jobs during Daštān.

The woman had to obey some rules while eating food. She could not eat with bare hands, but covered by sleeves or another covering (*Saddar Nasr*, 41: 3; 68: 6). The abstinence of a Daštān woman was taken seriously, even she had to walk on a route without any plants, from the house to Daštānistān (*Vendīdād*, 16: 2; *Pahlavi Widēwdād*, 16: 2). In Daštānistān, the place where the woman was about to sit had been covered with dry soil to prevent polluting the earth (*Vēndīdād*, 16: 2). Additionally, the woman was obliged to notify her husband at the time of Daštān to forestall any pollution. In case of any sexual intercourse during Daštān, the woman would have committed a sin (*Rivāyat-i Hēmīt-i Ašawahistān*, 41: 4; *Dēnkart V*, 9: 11). If the woman was hid her Daštān, the husband had right to divorce the woman without her permission (*Rivāyat-i Hēmīt-i Ašawahistān*, 7: 5; *Saddar Bundahesh*, 34: 11). Since the pollution of Daštān could enter the spirit of the man (husband), divorcing the woman was an authorized reaction (Shaki, 1971: 341; *Pahl.Riv*, 34d2). If the man intentionally had a coitus with a Daštān woman, the sin was assigned to the man (*Rivāyat of Ādur-farrōbay ī Farroxzādān*, 139; *The Pahlavi Rivāyat of Āturfarnbag and Farnbag Srōš*, 139). If the intercourse was constantly repeated, the sin would be multiplied (*Vendīdād*, 16: 16). Apparently, the

presence of a Daštān woman outside the house (e.g. Daštānistān) was not an obligation. There may have been specific rules for women to follow in Daštān jurisprudent texts. Occasionally, the women failed to comply with the rules; for this reason, penalizing statements were written to prevent sexual relations during Daštān.

If the women could maintain abstinence, their spirits would receive a reward on the Day of Resurrection. Referring to the book *Ardā Virāz*, the woman who respected the rules of Daštān would have been granted an outfit made of gold, silver, and jewelry (*Le livre d'Ardā Virāz*, 13: 1-6).

The Rules for Eating Food

The food, which was put three steps away from the woman in Daštān, was polluted (*Šāyest nē šāyest*, 3: 12). Since the remaining food was not suitable to consume (*Saddar Nasr*, 41: 1-2), the woman was given so little food that finish it completely. There were controversies about the remaining food, but the majority of Zoroastrian priests believed that it was not allowed to be eaten (*Rivāyat of Ādur-farrōbay ī Farroxzādān*, 134; *Šāyest nē šāyest*, 3: 12 & 30). Additionally, if a person ate the remaining food of a Daštān woman, he would have lost his intelligence for 50 days and a sin would be assigned to him as well (*Saddar Bundahesh*, 96: 11). The food was served in a valueless dish made of iron, plumb, brass

or other low-price metals (*Šāyest nē šāyest*, 3: 34; *Vendīdād*, 16: 6). In fact, the food of Daštān woman was not flavorsome enough, but also in a low amount in comparison to a normal meal (*Vendīdād*, 16: 7; Russell, 1990, 262).

The Prayers of a Daštān Woman

Learning the daily prayers was popular for women, similarly to men, in Sasanian period. Women ought to say the daily prayers while being Daštān like the other times. Hence, they maintained their prayers normally at the time of Daštān (*Šāyest nē šāyest*, 3: 7-8). When the woman entered in the quarantine of Daštān, she had to read Avesta (*Šāyest nē šāyest*, 3: 6). She could read chapters (Nasks) of Avesta, including nērang, after passing 3 nights and disappearance of pollution (*Dēnkart V*, 12: 5). It is recommended that the women at the time of Daštān say prayers of Dvāzdah-hōmāst to be forgiven of their sins during Daštān or in any other time (*Saddar Nasr*, 66: 1). It is implied from the text of *Saddar Nasr* that there was not a negative idea about the existence of women. For this reason, there were particular prayers for them to compensate for their sins and cleanse themselves.

The issue that is the source of disagreement among the researchers about Daštān, emerges in the style of wearing Kustī. It is worth mentioning that wearing Kustī was an obligation

for each Zoroastrian man or woman after reaching the age of 15. It was considered a belt (sign) of compliance and obedience to God. The Kustī was believed to cease the demons and the duruj (*Saddar Nasr*, 10: 4-10). A Daštān woman had to constantly wear Kustī and Sudra (سدره/سدره) during day and night (*Dārāb Hormazyār's Rivāyat*, tr. Unvala, 1922: 208; *The Persian Rivayats of Hormazyar Framarz*, tr. Dhabhar, 214). However, the Daštān women in Zoroastrian society of Sharif Abad in Yazd, were prohibited from wearing Kustī and Sudra and from saying prayers as well (Russell, 1990: 262), whereas in *Dārāb Hormazyār's Rivāyat* they were demanded to wear Kustī, seven times a day (*Dārāb Hormazyār's Rivāyat*, tr. Unvala, 1922: 208; *The Persian Rivayats of Hormazyar Framarz*, tr. Dhabhar, 214). It is perceivable that a woman had to follow some rituals. There were not any prohibitions. In other respects, some resolutions were recommended to compensate the woman's defect as well. Clearly, Zoroastrianism sought to regard abstinence during Daštān, rather than humiliating the women. If not, there were not any rituals to equilibrate the feminine situation in the society. Besides, wearing Kustī was a due for each Zoroastrian person. Yet, being Daštān might cause many controversies. These different ideas resulted in modification of rules.

The Punishment of Disobeying the Rules of Daštān

In Sasanian and post-Sasanian remained texts, there are explicit rules about disobedience of women in Daštān. The woman should not look at the sacred elements in that specific period, or else she commits a sin. The sins are categorized into various levels. If she looks at the fire, the most inferior level (called: *Framān*)¹ is committed by her (*Rivāyat of Ādur-farrōbay ī Farroxzādān*, 72; *Saddar Bundahesh*, 15: 1). The compensation of *Framān* is not alike in different texts. One *Framān* equaled to four *Stērs*² and each *Stēr* values four dirhams (*Šāyest nē šāyest*, 1: 2; *Dārāb Hormazyār's Rivāyat*, tr. Unvala, 1922: 304). In another text, it is mentioned that there were seven *Stērs*, and each *Stēr* was valued at fourteen *Mithqāls* (*Saddar Bundahesh*, 13: 3). Evidently, this implies that a woman could compensate for her sin by paying the price to eliminate her fault. The value of the monetary unit differed from the texts during the time. That is the reason why there are various prices for compensation in the books. If she was not seated three steps

¹ This is the lowest degree of the sin that arises due to delaying religious action (Mansouri, 2017: 668).

² The equivalent is an institution for sin and crime, derived from the name of the unit of weight of quantity, this equivalent was equal to four Sasanian dirhams (Mansouri, 2022a: 776).

away from the fire, she had committed the sin of *Tanāpuhl*³ Sitting near the torch had the same condition of fire (*Rivāyat of Ādur-farrōbay ī Farroxzādān*, 132; *Saddar Bundahesh*, 15: 1; *Saddar Nasr*, 68: 1) and if she had touched the remained ash, there were fifteen *Tanāpuhl* of sin (*Saddar Bundahesh*, 15: 1; *Saddar Nasr*, 68: 1). If a Daštān woman had looked at a flowing stream of water, it was considered the sin of *Framān*. Sitting in the water had fifteen *Tanāpuhl* of sin (*Saddar Nasr*, 68: 2; *Saddar Bundahesh*, 15: 2-4; *Šāyest nē šāyest*, 3: 28). A Daštān woman should not touch the water. Each drop of water to her body had three hundred *Stērs* of sin (*Saddar Nasr*, 41: 4; *Šāyest nē šāyest*, 3: 28). The raining water on the body had fifteen *Tanāpuhls* for the woman (*Saddar Nasr*, 68: 3; *Saddar Bundahesh*, 15: 5). Walking barefoot on the ground was a considerable sin (*Dārāb Hormazyār's Rivāyat*, tr. Unvala, 1922: 95). Each time of talking to a Daštān woman was a sin of *Framān* for the man (*Rivāyat of Ādur-farrōbay ī Farroxzādān*, 135; *The Pahlavi Rivāyat of Āturfarnbag and Farnbag Srōš*, 135). If a man did not avoid sexual intercourse at the period of Daštān, for each, he had fifteen *Tanāpuhl* of sin (*Le livre d'Ardā Virāz*, 22: 3; *Saddar Bundahesh*,

³ It is the name of a sin that prevents one from crossing the Chinwad Puhl, and its penalty (atonement) is 300 four-dirham coins or 200 lashes (Mansouri, 2022a: 957).

96: 13). Remarkably, the punishment of disobedience in Daštān-marzī was whipping (*Vendīdād*, 16: 15-16; Pahlavi Widēwdād, 16: 15-16). Implicitly, the compensation of sins was altered to pay a specific amount of money as a substitute of physical punishment.

Touching a Daštān woman had a sin of one Xwar¹ (*Rivāyat of Ādur-farrōbay ī Farrooxzādān*, 136; *The Pahlavi Rivāyat of Āturfarnbag and Farnbag Srōš*, 136), which was supposed compensated to be by sixty Stērs (*Šāyest nē šāyest*, 1: 2; *Saddar Bundahesh*, 13: 6). In case of perversity, a sacred punishment was assigned to the person (*Le livre d'Ardā Virāz*, 72: 1-3; *Saddar Bundahesh*, 41: 2). If a man averted himself from his wife at the time of Daštān, he had earned three hundred units of spiritual rewards (*Pahl.Riv*, 43.2). Otherwise, in case of sexual intercourse, he had sixty Stērs of sin (*Šāyest nē šāyest*, 3: 25). To compensate for this sin, some guidelines were offered such as:

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Questions

1. The man who commits intercourse with a Daštān woman, how much is his sin? Can he do so? What expiation ought he to undergo? And if he did not emit the semen during menstruation, what is the difference? And if he did the emission betwixt the thighs, what is your view?

¹This sin arises due to inflicting an injury that results in bleeding (Mansouri, 2022b: 634).

Reply

2. The details of atonement are numerous; for, the libations of a thousand animals to the Varhrān fire are mentioned; and a thousand faggots of fuel and a thousand faggots of fragrant wood, and a thousand ceremonies which carry the libations to the waters; and he shall smite a thousand snakes and two thousand lizards; and if he kills of snakes & thousand, it is the greatest good deed; and two thousand frogs of the water, and two thousand which are outside the water, which can run, and thousands of ants carrying grains of corn, and two thousand small ones, and a thousand black flies, and two thousand venomous lizards; and he has to construct thirty bridges over the places of crossing of the waters; and if the man can, he shall so expiate as is manifest in the Avesta; and if he is unable, if he performs the “hamādīn” and the “dvāzdah-hōmāst” with the libations, he shall have expiated properly (*Rivāyat of Ādur-farrōbay ī Farrooxzādān*, 137).

Plainly, the sin of sexual intercourse for a woman at the time of Daštān was a notable sin but not a death penalty (*Rivāyat-i Hēmīt-i Ašawahistān*, 41: 4). The minimum intensity of a sin was Tanalpuhl for the man (*Rivāyat-i Hēmīt-i Ašawahistān*, 41: 7), but for the woman it was six Stērs (*Rivāyat-i Hēmīt-i Ašawahistān*, 41: 6).

How to be Cleansed from Daštān

After the end of the menstrual cycle, the woman had to engage in Dast-šōy¹ (*Rivāyat-i Hēmīt-i Ašawahistān*, 34: 6; *Šāyest nē šāyest*, 2: 44). At first, she had to wash her hands with gōmēz and then to continue with water. If she had only used water, she would have committed a sin. To clean the sin, she had to kill 200 Xrafstars (*Šāyest nē šāyest*, 3: 21; *Dēnkart V*, 24: 27). Furthermore, the dress of a Daštān woman could be cleaned by gōmēz and water (*Dārāb Hormazyār's Rivāyat*, tr. Unvala, 1922: 120). If the blood of a Daštān woman contaminated anything or anybody, it would spread the pollution, and they had to be washed by gōmēz and water (*Šāyest nē šāyest*, 10: 39; 2: 17).

If a Daštān woman had an infant to be breastfed, the baby's clothes had to be removed while being fed and then washed, accompanied by the mother (*Saddar Nasr*, 68: 11-12). For cleaning the baby, they washed his/her hands and the whole body (*Vendīdād*, 16: 7). If there was any trouble with washing the baby, they did not have to do the washing or impose any obligation to him/her (*Rivāyat of Ādur-farrōbay i Farrooxzādān*, 135; *Pahlavi Widēwdād*, 16: 7).

¹ Touse the cow's gōmēz (urine) for cleaning (*Šāyest nē šāyest*, 2: 44) Firstly, Jamshid used the cow's urine to clean and remove dirtiness (*The Persian Rivayats of Hormazyar Framarz*, tr. Dhabhar, 1922: 296-298).

Reasons for the Pain-Taking Rules about Daštān

Negative Approach Towards Women

In the reviewed analysis, the authors believe that there is no explicit statement about hatred of women. The women were asked to respect abstinence at the time of Daštān to prevent any spread of pollution to the sacred elements or environment. In fact, because the blood was considered a polluting fluid during the menstrual cycle, which occurs a few days each month, diverse rules were offered for this phenomenon. Moreover, a group of rules were provided for reparation. Logically, it is understandable that if there was a hatred about women, no rules were created to cleanse them out of sins or pollution. By all accounts, the conditions of that era had caused such rules and restrictions as this matter is more distinguishable in post-Sasanian texts.

Daštān and Nature: Prevention of Polluting the Sacred Elements, Regarding the Sasanian and Post-Sasanian Texts

According to ancient Iranian beliefs, they highly respected nature and the sacred elements, such as water, wind, soil, and fire, which were protected from pollution. Relatively, the rules about Daštān imply the significance of preventing pollution spread rather than humiliating women. There is no sign of

hatred towards women in society according to the rules.

Evidently, most of the rules about Daštān were stated in post-Sasanian texts. Referring to the book *Mādayān ī hazārdādestān*, written in the late Sasanian period, there is no explicit mention of these rules. In other words, these rules may not have been customarily put into practice in the Sasanian society, but were applied after the fall of the Sasanian Empire to publicize Zoroastrianism. Undeniably, conducting a set of rules about Daštān was relevant to protection of sacred elements and society. Nevertheless, the cohabitation of the Muslims with the Zoroastrians and the lack of strict rules for Daštān in Islam resulted in the making of detailed and complex rules in their books to prevent the spread of pollution. In Islamic texts, the woman was prohibited from having sexual intercourse, and she could normally do her daily chores (Quran, 1: 222).

The prominent controversy is the existence of Daštān rules in sovereignty of the Sasanians. The emergence of these obligations is mostly in post-Sasanian texts. In the book of *Mādayān ī hazārdādestān*, there is no explanation about divorce and related matters, specifically Daštān and its ignorance. The lack of description about Daštān as a reason for divorce suggests leniency in that time, or that these rules were added to the texts in the post-Sasanian period. The only act about Daštān in

Mādayān ī hazārdādestān declares that if a man does not pay allowance to his wife at the time of her Daštān and then she steals something, the sin would be assigned to the man (Macuch, 1981: 218. *MHDA* 35, 7-9; Macuch, 2012: 257). In fact, the woman could not provide food during her menstrual cycle, and if she stole food in an emergency situation to survive, her husband was guilty. Since the man was regarded as the lord of his wife and was obliged to supply her food (Macuch, 2012: 257-258), it was the man's sin. In particular, in the Sasanian period, there were puissant women in the Royal court such as Šābuhr-duxtag, Ardashīr-Anāhīd, Dēnag, Bōrān and Āzarmīgduxt. If the rules of Daštān were strictly applied, how could these women, categorically Bōrān and Āzarmīgduxt, who were monarchs of a royal court, neglect the rules and still play a significant role in politics? Probably, the related rules were not applied accurately, or the elite women exploited their power to disobey. Furthermore, there were numerous female musicians in the hunting areas of the Sasanian court. How would they follow their daily routines? While the king was outside of the court, he was accompanied by female musicians, dancers, maids or other female courtiers as well. For instance, when Narseh was travelling to Armenia, the accompanying female courtiers were captured by the Romans. Undeniably, all those women could not be purified (cleansed), or on menstrual cycle

at the same time while traveling with the king. Systematically, if the uncompromising rules of *daštān* in post-Sasanian texts were applied in the Sasanian period, the presence of women in the service of a Sasanian king would have been jeopardized. In conclusion, it was not feasible under those conditions.

Conclusion

In Pahlavi texts, there are many conflicts that trigger the curiosity about the origin of *Daštān*'s controversial rules. According to the available evidence, menstruation is a natural cycle that occurs in women after puberty and requires them to observe certain rules during these days. Therefore, this phenomenon has no connection with the devil. Because if it were otherwise, there would be no way to get rid of the sin of not observing menstruation. It seems that different circumstances and periods of time have been involved in intensifying the observance of these laws. Especially in the texts of the post-foundational period, the observance of the laws of the *Daštān* was emphasized more. Perhaps the reason for the emphasis on the laws was that religious men were afraid that with the proximity of Muslims, the observance

of the laws of the *Daštān* among Zoroastrians would fade, and this phenomenon would lead to the contamination of sacred elements. Therefore, by emphasizing and enacting laws around the *Daštān*, they could have created a deterrent to the presence of women in society and prevented the contamination of sacred elements. Moreover, it does not seem that the establishment of these laws was due to the hatred towards women. For instance, the ignorance of clarification on the *Daštān* issue in divorce rules in *Mādayān i hazār dādestān* indicates that there was no severity in accurately following the rules.

Gradually, within the movements and conversions of the Zoroastrian society, the necessity of obeying these rules widely expanded among the Zoroastrians. Over and above that, the complex rules of *Daštān* predominantly affected the status of women in the society. By means of these rules to become purified at the time of *Daštān*, women abstained from society and their responsibilities. Consequently, they could not be continuously present in society. However, this condition should not be considered a form of humiliation for women in Zoroastrian society.

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