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MIHRAGĀN (p. *Mihragān/Mehregān*; A. *Mihradjān*; *Meherangān* among the Parsees), name of an Iranian Mazdaean festival dedicated to Mithra/Mihr, traditionally celebrated in Iran around the autumn equinox. Its origins, its place in the calendar, its duration, its rituals and the beliefs connected with it, its diffusion in other cultural areas and its survivals in the Islamic period present several problems which are the subject of discussions and controversies. It is also a word used in toponymy, patronymy and music (see below, iv).

i. The name of the festival. It comes from the Pahlavi *mīhrakān/mihragān*, ancient *mīthrakāna* (Darmesteter, ii, 443), a noun derived from a proper noun, i.e. Mithra (Benveniste, 1966, 14; on the suffix *akāna* becoming *agān*, of Parthian origin, see Gignoux, 1979, 43 ff.). According to another attractive but faulty interpretation, the *kāna* component (no longer *akāna*) is a variant of *ghna* (Vedic *han*, Old Persian *jan*) meaning to strike or kill; *mīthrakāna* is then the killing (or sacrifice) for Mithra, the expression being parallel to that designating the Indo-Iranian god Verethragna (Campbell, 235; on Verethragna, slayer of dragons, and its dialectal variants, see Benveniste and Renou,

68-90; Skjaervø, 192). In the Islamic period there no longer appears to be any reference to Mithra. The most prolific author on the pre-Islamic festival, al-Bīrūnī, thinks that the Arabised form *mihradjān* means love (*mīhr*) of the spirit or the soul (*djān*; *Āthār*, 223, tr. 209; the majority of Muslim authors followed his interpretation, and the Persian poets often make *mihradjān* rhyme with *mīhrbān*, friendly, benevolent). However, the meaning "sun" has also been given for *mīhr* and several myths which are associated with it (see below). Other interpretations which connect this name with death (*mīr*) are equally erroneous (on traditions and anecdotes reported by al-Bīrūnī and other authors, see Šafā, 30; al-Masʿūdī, *Murūdj*, iii, 404 = § 1287), as is also the view that it is a form of plural in the suffix *gān/djān* coupled with a noun of divinity given to the months and days of the Mazdaean months or of ceremonies forming the names of festivals (an error of the Persian editor of the *Taḥfih* of al-Bīrūnī, 254, n. 1).

ii. Problems of calendars. The historical evolution of the various types of calendars used by the Iranians, notably under the influence of the Babylonians, Egyptians, Greeks and the Arabs, is difficult to trace, but it determined the place and duration of their ceremonies and periodic festivals. The festivals celebrated at the solstice assumed a particular importance among the Indo-Iranians. They may have begun the year with the autumn equinox although, as for example among the Jews, several "beginnings" of the year could have been recognised simultaneously (Boyce, *HZ*, i, 174). The Achaemenid administration used a "luni-solar" year beginning with the spring equinox, similar to, but different from, that of the Babylonian calendar (Hartner, 747). This practice was taken over by the Seleucids, then by the Arsacid Parthians, at least as far as royal chronology was concerned (Bickerman, 778 ff.; see also below). Alongside the "Old Persian" calendar, we should take note of an "Old Avestan" calendar beginning the year in mid-summer. Both were abandoned for an "Egyptian" or "New Avestan" calendar (around 510 B.C.?; on the first reform see Takizāda, *Maḳālāt*, vi, 77 ff.; Hartner, 749 ff.). Another difficulty arises from the adjustment of time between the Zoroastrian calendar of 360 days and the solar year of 365 days and a quarter. This problem, never solved in a satisfactory manner, led, under the Sāsānids, to a resort to "epagomenes" i.e. intercalary or "stolen" days (*duz-dāda*), at the end of the year and one month every 120 years to recover the quarter of an annual day (see Takizāda, *ibid.*, 85 ff.; Bickerman, 786 ff.). Not well received by the faithful, this Sāsānid reform led to a duplication of Zoroastrian religious festivals: *Naw-rūz*, *Mihragān* and the six *Gāhāmbārs* (Christensen, *Types*, ii, 143 ff.; Boyce, 1970, 513 ff.). Today, the Iranians use, alongside the lunar *hidjri* calendar, a solar calendar beginning the year from the spring equinox (*Naw-rūz*), based on the *Djalālī* [q.v.] calendar inaugurated under the Saldjūk sultan Djalāl al-Dīn Malikšāh (465-85/1073-92 (cf. Hartner, 772 f., 784 f.)).

Until the Sāsānids, *Mīthrakāna/Mihragān* remained, at least officially, a single day (Boyce, 1970, 518 f.; idem, *HZ*, ii, 34). Celebrated in autumn, the seventh month of the year, under the Achaemenids (6th/4th century B.C.), the festival was, inexplicably, observed in the spring, and *Naw-rūz* in autumn, under the Arsacid Parthians (3rd century B.C.-2nd century A.D.) who, following the Macedonian calendar established under the Seleucids, made the year begin with the autumn equinox (Boyce, 1975, 107; idem, 1976, 106). The introduction of the reform under the Sāsānids (who inherited the Parthian system) led, at

least in popular practice, to the duplication of the festival: the 16th day (*mīhr rūz*) of the seventh month (*mīhr māh*), was celebrated as the "little" (*khurdak* or *kūček*) or "general" (*āmma*) *Mīhragān* and the 21st day (*rām rūz*), as the "great" (*buzurg*) or "special" (*khāssa*) *Mīhragān*. According to al-Bīrūnī, the Sāsānid king Hormizd I (272-3 A.D.), joined together the festival days of *Naw-rūz* and *Mīhragān* which were observed respectively over six days. Then, the kings and people of Iran celebrated the two festivals over thirty days (al-Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 223 f., tr. 208 f.; idem, *Tafhīm*, 254 f.). The whole month of Farwardīn (that of *Naw-rūz*) had been consecrated to a festival divided into six sets of five days, respectively for the princes, nobles, servants of princes, the people, the shepherds and stock-breeders (after *Āthār*, according to al-Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 218, tr. 203; under *Āthār*, according to Ps.-*Ḍjāhīz*, *Maḥāsīn*, 360, tr. 97, with some variants as to the social groups.) But the circumstances concerning the duration of the festival remain vague (al-Bīrūnī, *ibid.*, also mentions for the Sāsānid *Naw-rūz* a duration of five days for the reception by the king of the people of all ranks and a sixth day of private royal celebration). One thing remains certain; the Zoroastrians festivals were still being adjusted for time in relation to the solar year, to keep them at a normal date, a second reform of the calendar was undertaken under the Sāsānids between 507 and 511. At first, *Mīhragān* apparently continued to be celebrated for six days by the Zoroastrians until after the 10th century A.D.; the Zoroastrian festivals were then reduced to five days, *Mīhragān* also losing the *rām rūz* which represented for the Zoroastrian faithful the authentic ancient day of the festival (Boyce, 1975, 106 f.; idem, 1983, 807 f.). The Parsees of India and the Zoroastrians of Iran use different calendars for their periodic festivals (see below). After Islamisation, some caliphs and Muslim rulers celebrated *Nay-rūz*/*Naw-rūz* and *Mīhragān* at the spring and autumn equinoxes (see below).

iii. Evolution and diffusion of the ritual. This festival probably represents a pre-Zoroastrian Iranian new year celebrated in autumn. It seems also that before the adoption of Zoroastrianism, the Iranians established, by contact with the Babylonians, their new year (**Navasarda*, then *Nō-roz*/*Naw-rūz*) in the spring, while preserving their autumn festival which they then called *Mithrakāna* (Boyce, *HZ*, ii, 34), celebrated on the 16th day of the 7th month according to the calendar introduced by the Zoroastrian magi (between 457 and 454 B.C. and not, as Takizāda states, in 441 B.C.; see Hartner, 776 f.). From then on, the characteristics of the festival were influenced by the multiple aspects of Mithra, which involve a simple concept (friend, alliance, friendship, love, contract, etc.) of the Vedic Mitra, a divinity with the juridico-priestly, beneficent, conciliatory, luminous, etc. aspect, often associated with Varuna, of the Avestan *yazata* (not known by Zoroaster but integrated in *yashē* 10: see Zaehner, 98 f.; see also Boyce, 1969, 14 ff.), similar to Verethragna, *yazata* of victory, and the Vedic Indra, the Mithra-Ahura syzygy, later Ahura-Mithra, corresponding to the Vedic-Mithra-Varuna (on Mithra and his place in Zoroastrianism, see Boyce, 1969; idem, *HZ*, i, 24 ff. and index; concise account in Turcan, 5 ff. and bibliography.)

Mithrakāna was celebrated in the 7th month of the ancient Achaemenid year called *Bāgayādīsh* (Hartner, 746), supposedly as this name was taken to mean (the month of) the cult of Baga, assimilated with Mithra (Takizāda, *op. cit.*, 98 ff.). This interpretation has

now been rejected for philological reasons and because the festival was established, in Mesopotamia, under foreign influences (see below), well after the ancient Iranian names had been given for the first time to the months (Boyce, 1981, 67 f.; idem, *HZ*, ii, 16 ff., 24 ff.; on the name Baga, see also Gignoux, 1979, 88-90). Another problem arises from the fact that on 10 *Bāgayādīsh* the festival *Magophonia* was celebrated, a commemoration of the murder of the magi (or "of the magus", Gaumāta) under Darius I (on *Magophonia*, some of whose rites may have influenced *Mithrakāna*, see Henning; Takizāda, *op. cit.*, 99 ff.; Dandamaev, 138 f., 575 f.; Widengren, *Religions*, 163 ff.; Boyce, *HZ*, ii, 86-89; Hartner, 749).

Mithrakāna may have been established in Mesopotamia under the influence of a Babylonian autumn festival placed under the protection of *Šamash*, the equivalent of Mithra, this influence having developed the solar aspect of this myth. It was apparently the first time that the Iranians dedicated a festival to a single god (Boyce, *HZ*, ii, 35). Its rites have been made known to us especially by the Greek authors and, in their later elaborated form, by the authors writing in Arabic. The dominant aspect is that of a royal festival of a new year or renewal, celebrated by festivities, present-giving, animal sacrifices. The numerous features common to this festival and *Naw-rūz* show that the two festivals may have been treated together (notably by Ps.-*Ḍjāhīz*). According to the epic-religious tradition, the festival was founded by the hero-king Thraētaona/Frētōn/Farīdūn who killed with his bull-headed club the dragon *Azhdahāk*/Dahāka/Dahhāk; (Widengren, *Religions*, 60 f., 68 f., 258 f.; see also G. Dumézil, *Le problème des centaures*, Paris 1929, 72f.; according to the tradition of Ṭabaristān/Māzandarān, Farīdūn was brought up in the north of Lāridjān [q.v.] where he used to hunt mounted on a cow). The myth has been historicised in the Iranian epic in which the legitimate king Farīdūn institutes the festival of *Mīhragān* to celebrate his triumph over the usurping tyrant Dahhāk whom he chains to Mt. Dunbāwand/Damāvand. He inaugurates the month of *Mīhr* by putting the crown on his head; the nobles perform libations. He introduces the practice of celebrating *Mīhragān* with rest, festivities and banquets. He is remembered in the month of *Mīhr* in which one should not wear a worried and sad expression (Firdawsī, ed. Mohl, i, 114; ed. Moscow, i, 9-10; Asādī, 329, 474 f., Fr. tr., ii, 164, 271 f.). The hero-smith Kāva [see *kāwāh*], after having triumphed over Bēvarasp/Dahhāk, asks the people to pay homage to Farīdūn (al-Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 222, tr. 207 f.).

The dominant feature of the festival was its royal and solar aspect. Mithra being the mediator between Ohrmazd and Ahriman. According to various traditions, the sun appeared for the first time on the day of *Mīhragān*; God made the contract between light and darkness on the day of *Naw-rūz* and *Mīhragān* (al-Bīrūnī, *op. cit.*, 222, tr. 208; Widengren, *Hochgott*, 94, 99 f., 158). According to other traditions, on the day of *Mīhragān*, God created the earth and bodies; he illuminated the moon which was until then a sphere without light. *Mīhragān* is regarded as a sign of resurrection and the end of the world, for everything which grows then reaches its perfection (al-Bīrūnī, *ibid.*). The rituals are still little known. According to the Greek sources, the Achaemenids apparently celebrated *Mithrakāna* more than *Navasarda*/*Naw-rūz* at Persepolis, the autumn season being pleasanter there and more convenient for bringing tribute (Nylander, 143, citing Athenaeus; Boyce, *HZ*, ii, 110). It seems

that they also used to sacrifice horses to Mithra there; the satrap of Armenia sent them annually 20,000 colts for the *Mithrakāna* (Boyce, *HZ*, i, 173; ii, 110, according to Strabo). *Mithrakāna* was celebrated joyfully, notably with dances (according to Duris); it was the only annual occasion on which the king of Persia became inebriated (according to Ctesias, physician to Artaxerxes II); cf. Boyce, *HZ*, ii, 35. It is thought that *soma/haoma* was used for these libations (Boyce, *HZ*, i, 173; Turcan, 9; and see below).

We have little information as to the diffusion, in eastern Iran, of *Mithrakāna*, whose Sogdian counterpart may have been *Bagakāna*, a contracted form of *Bagamithrakāna*, celebrated on the 16th day of the 7th month (Boyce, 1981, 68 f.). The name *mihragān*/*mihragān* is to be found in the Jerusalem Talmud (*moharnaki*) and in that of Babylon (*muharnekai*); see Taḳizāda, *op. cit.*, 192. The Seleucid and Arsacid periods are much less documented. According to the epic tradition, the festivals of *Mihragān* and *Sada* were revived by the last Arsacid, Ardavān, and by the first Sāsānid, Ardashīr-i Pāpakān (Firdawsī, ed. Mohl, v, 302, 328; ed. Moscow, vii, 442, 769). Although apparently more orthodox Zoroastrians than their Sāsānid successors, the Arsacids transposed *Naw-rūz* and *Mihragān* (see above, and Boyce, 1983, 805). Under their influence, some Iranian cults and sanctuaries, some of which were dedicated to Mithra, were introduced into Armenia. With Christianisation, the great *Mihragān* (Arm. *Mehekan*, 21 *Mehek* = *Mihr*) was consecrated to St. George the Soldier (Taḳizāda, *op. cit.*, 194 ff.; Boyce, *Zoroastrians*, 89; eadem, 1981, 67; eadem, 1983, 804 f.; Turcan, 17). As far as we can see, it was in Asia Minor, rather than in Mesopotamia, that Greco-Roman contacts were established out of which arose the mysteries of Mithra (Turcan, 18). It is also possible to interpret the identification of Mithra with Helios-Apollo as more of a symbiosis than a syncretism (at least at Sardis; Boyce, *HZ*, ii, 268 f.). But the Mithra of the mysteries is very different from the Median-Persian Mithra and the diffusion in the Greco-Roman world of the rituals of *Mithrakāna* (across Armenia?) remains conjectural, notably inasmuch as we are concerned with their direct influence on the Mithraic celebration, then the Christian one of *Natalis invicti* on 25 December (Cumont, 167) or of *Mithrakāna* celebrated in Phrygia, at the time of the wine-harvest, with libations of wine and animal sacrifices (Campbell, 239 f.). The epic legends and heroic character attached to the ritual of *Mihragān*, celebrated especially by men, have supplied more definite links with Roman Mithraism (Boyce, 1966, 107, n. 3; idem, 1969, 26, n. 83; idem, 1983, 802).

With the Sāsānid reform, the religious calendar consisted of seven obligatory festivals: the *Gahāmbars* (instituted, according to tradition, by Zoroaster; see al-Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 219, tr. 205) and *Naw-rūz* (Boyce, 1983, 794 f.). Despite its optional character, *Mihragān* preserved all its prestige. Some preferred it, just as they preferred the autumn to the spring (al-Bīrūnī, *op. cit.*, 223, tr. 208 f.). *Mihragān* was also regarded as the beginning of winter (al-Mas'ūdī, *Tanbih*, 216, Fr. tr. 289; idem, *Murūdj*, iii, 404 f. = § 1287). The mythological elements, beliefs and rituals connected with *Naw-rūz* and *Mihragān* mentioned in the Islamic sources seem nevertheless to date back to earlier periods or even to refer to Iranian customs held in honour under some caliphs (see below). While the connections between Zoroastrian festivals and epic tradition are probably ancient (according to Ps.-Djāhīz, "*Naw-rūz* belongs to *Djam* and *Mihradjān* to

Afrīdūn", *Maḥāsīn*, 360, tr. 97), their duplication leads to a re-elaboration of the epic traditions; the little *Mihragān* commemorates the joy of all human beings when they heard tell of Farīdūn's expedition, whereas on the great *Mihragān* he triumphed over Dāhāk and bound him (al-Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 222 f., tr. 207 ff.; al-Kāzwinī, 123; Boyce, 1983, 807). According to various traditions, on the day of *Mihragān* the kings of Persia used to wear (in the manner of Farīdūn?) a crown on which was engraved the image of the sun and the wheel on which he turns. A valiant warrior would stand at the gate of the palace to invoke the aid of the angels (who came to the help of Farīdūn?): al-Bīrūnī, *ibid.* According to Ps.-Djāhīz, the bearer of good omen, at *Naw-rūz* and *Mihragān*, was said to come through the agency of two spirits (according to Inostrantzeff, the *amesha spentas* or "archangels" Haurvatat and Ameretat connected respectively with water and plants): *Maḥāsīn*, 361, tr. 97, 3. Then, expressing his good wishes, he would place before the king, on a silver table, cakes prepared with different grains; seven grains of each kind; seven branches of an auspicious tree (and auspicious inscriptions), seven white earthenware plates, seven silver *dirhams* minted that year, a new *dīnār* and a bouquet of wild rue. On this day, the king would abstain from discussing any matter. The first thing that was presented to him was a gold or silver vase containing white sugar, Indian nuts and silver or gold cups. He would then drink fresh milk in which dates had been soaked. He would give the dates to his favourites and sample whatever sweets he liked (*ibid.*, 361 f.; tr. 98 f.).

Although *Naw-rūz* may have been more important than *Mihragān* in certain respects (welcoming the New Year, collecting the land-tax, nominating governors, transferring posts, minting coins, etc.), it was a right of the ruler to receive presents and his courtiers, relatives and dependents on the two festivals. Each one gave what he liked best or something in which he excelled. The donors were able to record the value of the gift in the *diwān*. The king had to remunerate these presents with gifts or rewards. On the day of *Mihragān*, he would wear new clothes of poplin (*khazz*), silk or closely-woven fabric. He would distribute to his courtiers and relatives, at *Naw-rūz*, their winter clothes and, at *Mihragān*, their summer clothes (Ps.-Djāhīz, *Tādī*, 146 ff., Fr. tr. 165 ff.; these gifts of clothing were called *āyēn*, Christensen, *Sassanides*, 125, 407 ff.; on the presents that the king of Persia received from all quarters, see also Ps.-Djāhīz, *Maḥāsīn*, 367-8, tr. 100-1).

At *Naw-rūz* and *Mihragān*, the king held a public audience to which all, great and small, had access (Ps.-Djāhīz, *Tādī*, 159-60, Fr. tr. 178-9; Nizām al-Mulk, 57, tr. 42 f.; al-Ghazālī, *Nasiha*, 167 ff., tr. 102 ff.). These audiences were abolished by Yazdgard I (399-421) or Bahram Gūr (421-39) and his son Yazdgard II (439-57); see Ps.-Djāhīz, *Tādī*, 163-4, Fr. tr. 181-2; al-Ghazālī, *ibid.* and tr. 103, n. 3; Christensen, *op. cit.*, 283, 303. This custom may have been borrowed by *Naw-rūz* from *Mihragān*, the festival of Mithra Lover of Justice (*Dāvar Mihr*): Boyce, 1975, 110, n. 18. The ruler could grant forgiveness for an offence committed at *Naw-rūz* or *Mihragān* (Ps.-Djāhīz, *Tādī*, 101-2, Fr. tr. 126-7, anecdote concerning Khusrāw I Anūshīrwan and Mu'āwiya). Moreover, it was at *Mihragān* that Kavād I (488-531) organised, in 528-9, a massacre of the Mazdakites (just as Darius I had massacred the magus Gaumāta and his followers at the *Mithrakāna*): Ibn al-Balkhī, 90; cf. Widengren, *Religions*, 343.

As at *Naw-rūz*, a fair was held at *Mihragān*. The Persians wished to live for a thousand years (in the manner of Dāhāk). Eating pomegranate and smelling the perfume of rose-water secured them against illness (al-Bīrūnī, *op. cit.*). During the festivities of *Mihragān*, particular musical tunes were played (see below, iv).

With the installation of the 'Abbāsīd caliphate in the ancient Sāsānīd territory, socio-cultural life was strongly influenced by Iranian traditions in Baghdad and in the provinces. While the Zoroastrians continued to celebrate their ceremonies according to their own practices (see below), *Naw-rūz* and *Mihragān* survived, deprived of their original religious functions, in an Islamic context. Presents had been sent to the caliphs on these occasions before the 'Abbāsīd period. Mu'āwīya had imposed heavy contributions at *Naw-rūz* and al-Ḥajdīdādī had attempted to re-establish the Sāsānīd custom of obligatory presents at the two festivals; this was abolished by 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz (see Šafā, 51 f.). With other borrowings from the Sāsānīd fiscal system, the 'Abbāsīds also adopted the contributions in the form of presents. They celebrated *Naw-rūz* at their court with wine and music (al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūdj*, vii, 277 f. = § 2962). According to some poetic fragments attributed to the caliphs (al-Ma'mūn, al-Mutawakkil) and various poets writing in Arabic, these same festivities were to develop into *yawm al-mihradjān* (see Šafā, 52 f., and Sādāt Nāširī, 4,

426 ff., following Ps.-Djāhīz, *Maḥāsīn*, and Ibn al-Muḳaffa', *Bulūḡ al-arab*; al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūdj*, viii, 340 f. = § 3502).

From the time of the appearance of the first dynasties more or less independent of the 'Abbāsīd caliphate, the celebration of *Mihragān* assumed, until the Mongol invasion, great importance at the courts of most princes, great and small, in the Turko-Iranian environment. The Ṭāhirid 'Abd Allāh b. Ṭāhir arranged for the distribution of clothing at *Naw-rūz* and *Mihragān* (Ps.-Djāhīz, *Tādj*, 149, Fr. tr. 169). 'Ubayd Allāh b. 'Abd Allāh b. Ṭāhir wrote some verses in Arabic on *Mihradjān* (Sādāt Nāširī, *Mihragān*). The sultans of Ḳhurasān arranged for the distribution of autumn and winter clothes to their soldiers at *Mihradjān* (al-Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 223, tr. 209). Some contributions at *Naw-rūz* and *Mihradjān* were imposed in Ḳum on the *bāzār* folk; they were suppressed (in Ḳum, then in Āba) from the reign of the Būyid Rukn al-Dawla (335-66/947-77); Ḳumī, 164 f.).

By comparison with those *bayts* in Arabic of which we are aware, the poetic production in Persian on *Mihragān* is considerable. *Naw-rūz* and *Mihragān*, often synonyms of spring and autumn, form a part of the nature themes celebrated by Persian poets. Among the best known who wrote poetry on *Mihragān* we may cite (excluding the epic poets such as Firdawsī and Asadī):

	died around or in	patronised by	references*
Rūdakī	329/940	Sāmānids	LN; SN, 4, 427; DS, 46.
Daḳīkī	368/978	<i>idem</i>	<i>ibid.</i>
Mundjik Tirmidhī	370/980 or 380/990	Āl-i Muḥtādī, Ġaghāniyān	SN, 4, 428.
Farrukhī	429/1037	Prince of Ġaghāniyān; Ġhaznawids:	LN; SN, 4, 429-32; 5, 458; DS, 50-54.
'Unṣurī	431/1039	Maḥmūd and Mas'ūd	LN; SN, 5, 458-9; DS, 46-7
Manūčihri	432/1040	Princes of Dāmghān and Rayy; Mas'ūd	LN; SN, 5, 459-62; DS, 47-50; Hanaway.
Azrakī	before 465/1072	Saldjūks of Harāt and Kirmān	LN; SN, 9, 206-7; 10, 266-69.
Ḳatrān	after 465/1072	Princes of Tabrīz, Gandja and Nakhḍjawān	LN; SN, 6, 34-38; DS, 46.
Djurdjānī/ Gurgānī	after 466/1073	Contemporary of the Saldjūks Ṭoghrlī and Alp Arslan	SN, 6, 34
Nāšir-i Ḳhusraw	481/1088	(Ismā'īlī)	LN.
Mas'ūd-i Sa'd-i Salmān	515/1122	Ġhaznawids of Lāhawr	SN, 6, 38-9; 91-4.
Mu'izzī	between 519-21/1125-8	Saldjūkids Malikshāh and Sandjar	
Šabir Tirmidhī	between 538-42/1143-47	Sandjar and Kh̲wārazmshāh Atsīz	SN, 10, 269.
Mukhtārī	544/1149	Saldjūks of Kirmān	SN, 11, 325-6; DS, 46.
Sūzanī	562/1166 or 569/1173	Princes of Bukhārā and Samarkand	LN
Raḡhīd al-dīn Waṭwāt	573/1178 or 578/1182	Kh̲wārazmshāhs	LN.
Anwarī	after 585/1189	Sandjar, then various princes	SB, 11, 325-6.
Kh̲hākānī	595/1199	Shirwānshāh Manūčihri, then various princes	LN.

* Abbreviations: DS = Dabīr Siyākī LN = *Lughat-nāma* SN = Sādāt Nāširī

Apart from the usual themes (nature, love and wine), these poetic evocations contain numerous mentions of and allusions to the celebration of *Mihragān*, the happy autumn festival of good omen, which takes the place of spring, with wine and the flute replacing the rose and nightingale. It was also the festival of Farīdūn and the great festival of the kings (Fouchécour, 24 f., citing Mu'izzī, Manūčihri, 'Unšurī and Farrukhī). Although this kind of information may be quite rare in the narrative sources, the *Tārīkh-i Bayhaḳī* supplies us with complementary information on the festival (*djashn*) and the custom (*rasm*) of *Mihradjān* at the court of the Ghaznawid Mas'ūd [q.v.], observed around the autumn equinox. The celebration of Ramaḍān may have provided an obstacle for that of *Mihragān* (see Farrukhī, for the years 419-21/1028-30: cited by Dabīr-Siyāḳī, 53 ff.; Fouchécour, 25 f.). In 422, Mas'ūd received the presents of the princes and governors, many of them horses, on the day of *Mihragān* (28 Ramaḍān/18 September 1031). He celebrated the festival with great pomp two days later, on the breaking of the fast (*fiṭr*). He organised a reception "such as no-one had ever seen". The sultan and his entourage were inebriated. Musicians and poets enlivened the festivities at the court and outside. Considerable rewards were distributed: 1,000 *dīnārs* for 'Unšurī; 20,000 *dirhams* for the foreign poets at the court, 50,000 for Zaynabī 'Alawī; 30,000 for the musicians and jesters (*Tārīkh-i Bayhaḳī*, 359 f.; Bosworth, 132). This celebration is mentioned more briefly for the years 426/1035, 429 (9 Dhu 'l-Hidjja/12 September 1038!) and 430/1039 (at that time he sent to India Mas'ūd-i Rāzī who ventured to advise him in a *kašīda*): *Tārīkh-i Bayhaḳī*, 642 f., 734 f.

It seems that the celebration of *Mihragān*, like that of *Sadak/Sada* [q.v.], had been abandoned, in its Islamic context, after the rupturing of traditions provoked in Iran by the Mongol invasion (Šafā, 58, 118). This theme, however, continued to inspire poets (e.g. Damīrī, d. 973/1565, a contemporary of Šāh Ṭahmāsp I: LN). It has been suggested that some *Shī'ī* festivals following their solar computation may be survivals of *Mihragān* (e.g. in the ceremonies of *kālī-shūyān/shūwān* at Mashhad-i Ardahāl, near Kāshān, celebrated in the month of Mihr; see Āl-i Aḥmad, 200 ff.; A. Boloukbachi, in *Objets et Mondes*, xi, Paris 1971, 133-40). There is also continuity in the celebration of *Mihragān* by the Zoroastrians, who use different calendars in Iran and India (Boyce, 1968, 213, n. 86; eadem, *Stronghold*, 164 ff. and index; eadem, *Zoroastrians*, 221 and index). Although the Parsees of India seem to have stopped observing this non-obligatory festival during the 19th century (Boyce, 1969, 32), they retained the ritual (Dhabhar, *Rivayats*, 343; *Mehr and Jashne Meherangan*, Bombay 1889; idem, LN; *Ceremonies*, 429 ff.). One of the causes of their neglect of *Mihragān* is probably, under pressure from their Hindu surroundings, the opposition to animal sacrifice which they were still practising in the 18th century (witnessed by Anquetil-Duperron; cf. Boyce, 1966, 197; eadem, 1975, 106). Their celebration is now limited to a cult restricted to 16 Mihr (Boyce, 1969, 32). By contrast, the Zoroastrians of Iran have continued to observe this festival. At the beginning of the 20th century, those of Yazd used to celebrate it (from 16 to 20 Mihr), in February-March according to the time adjustment of the *qadīmī* calendar of 365 days, with notably, in each house, the sacrifice of an animal: sheep, goat, poultry for the very poor, and the eating of unleavened bread. Despite the objections of their coreligionists in Tehran and Bombay, the

Zoroastrians of the villages of Yazd were still celebrating it for five days in 1960, under the name *Djashn-i Mithrized*. It was a joyful and convivial festival, to which the "migrants" from Tehran were invited, the principal elements of the ritual still being the cult of Mihr, to whom the animal sacrifice was dedicated (essentially a sheep or goat, whose flesh was roasted, shared out and eaten) and the offerings of products of the season preserved and brought for the festival (Boyce, 1975, 108 ff.; eadem, *Stronghold*, 54 ff., 83 ff., 200 ff.). These rituals were probably survivals of *Mithrakāna*, the sacrifice of livestock symbolising the immolation of the primordial bull (Boyce, 1975, 108, 117 f.). A large sanctuary of Kirmān is dedicated to "Shāh Mihr Ized" (Boyce, *Stronghold*, 83).

iv. Other usages of the noun.

(1) As a toponym, *Mihragān* designates, in a compound or adjoining forms, various localities and districts:

Mihradjān, ancient name of Isfarāyīn [q.v.] in Kūhrāsān. According to Yāḳūt (7th/13th century), it was still a village near the ruined town; 51 villages were under its control. It was also a small town between Isfahān and Tabas (Yāḳūt, v, 233; Barbier de Meynard, 552; Le Strange, 393).

Mihradjānāvādh (= *Mihradjānābād*), a town in Fars (Le Strange, 283; Schwarz, i, 30, iii, 180).

Mihradjān-kadhak/*Mihradjān-kadak* (*Mihradjān-kuḍhak*), a densely populated and very fertile district in the 4th/10th century in Djabāl, near Šaymara (Yāḳūt and Barbier de Meynard; al-Mas'ūdī, *Tanbīh*, Fr. tr. 74, 453; Le Strange, 202; Schwarz, iv, 470 and index).

Mihrikān, one of the villages in the region of Rayy (Yāḳūt, 233; Barbier de Meynard, 552; Schwarz, vi, 805).

Mihrkān, a village in Fārs (Schwarz, i 37).

Mihridjān, a small town in the country of Marw; a major village in Fārs, near Kāzārūn [q.v.] (Yāḳūt, 234; Barbier de Meynard, 553).

Without being able to establish their antiquity, some of these toponyms are still attested. There are also, according to *Farhang-i dughrāfyā'ī-yi Irān* (ed. Razmārā, Tehran 1949-53), the following villages:

Mihrakān, a region in Līngā, Lāristān (vii, 229).

Mihrandjān, two villages, region of Kāzārūn, Fārs *ibid.*

Mihrgān, two villages, region of Bandar 'Abbās (viii, 400).

Mihrgān, region of Nāyīn; *Mihrgān*, *Mihrandjān-i arāmītra*, in ruins, and *Mihradjānī turkhā*, region of Isfahan (x, 88).

(2) As a personal name. *Mihradjān* was given rarely as a patronym (see e.g. *Mihradjān b. Rūzbih*; Schwarz, iii, 136, n. 3). However, there exist many proper Persian names derived from Mihr. According to a Zoroastrian custom, a name with Mihr was given to a child born on this day (Farevashi, 306). As well as names such as *Mihrān*, *Mihrbān*, *Mihrdād*, etc., many female names are also formed, such as *Mihrbānū*, *Mihrudukht*, *Mihrmāh*/*Mihr-i māh* [q.v.], *Mihrvash*, etc. Several people were also known by their *nishas* derived from toponyms (*Mihradjānī*, *Mihrdjānī*, *Mihridjānī*, *Mihrikānī*, etc.).

(3) *Mihragān* and music. As with *Naw-rūz*, *Mihragān* also gave its name to some musical themes whose origin goes back to the Sāsānid period (see Christensen, 1918, 376). Several names were given to these tunes (*āvāz*, *dastgāh*, *lahn*, *naghma*, *navā*, *pardā*), whose tenor is not known in the general body of *maḳāms* [q.v.]. We can distinguish essentially *mihragān-i buzurg*, the eleventh of the twelve *maḳāms* according

to al-Farābī; *mihragān-i kurdak* or *kūčik*, a *parda* or a *makām* (LN; Dabir-Siyāki, citing Manūčihri).

(4) Apart from its use for *nisbas* and music, the adjective of relationship *mihragānī/mihragdānī* is also used in Persian to designate anything which relates to the festival, the season and its products, with the meaning of autumnal or wintry, especially in poetry (LN, s.v.).

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MIHRĀN, the name generally given by the classical Islamic geographers to the Indus river (Skr. Sindhu, Grk Σίνδος, "Ívδος, Lat. Sindus, Indus), but Nahr al-Sind, Sind-Rūdh, Nahr Multān, etc. were also used by them.

There was, in fact, considerable confusion over the precise nomenclature of the Indus and its constituents, with, in particular, uncertainty over what was to be regarded as the main river channel. Thus al-Iṣṭakhri, followed by Ibn Ḥawkal, records the Nahr Multān or Mihrān as rising in the mountains of Central Asia. They compare it to the Nile, in its breadth, its becoming swollen seasonally with waters which flood and fertilise the agricultural areas along its banks and its having crocodiles; together with this river are the Sind-Rūdh, situated three days' journey from Multān [q.v.], and the Djandrāwar, which joins the Indus lower than the Sind-Rūdh (Ibn Ḥawkal, ed. Kramers, 322, 328, tr. Kramers-Wiet, 315, 320-1; cf. al-Mas'ūdi, *Murūdjī*, i, 372-3, 377-8 = §§ 412-13, 419; al-Bīrūnī, *India*, tr. Sachau, i, 259-60). Al-Muḳaddasi, 482-3, resumes this information: that the Mihrān is the main river, and the Nahr Sindarūd a tributary flowing at a distance three stages from Multān. As Marquart pointed out, *Ērānshahr*, 258-61, the Sind-Rūdh is in fact the genuine Indus, but the geographers took the system of the Chenab-Ravi-