

²¹ M. IQBAL, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Reprint, Lahore 1996 (1925), p. 12.

²² Cf. Q. M. TAYYĪB, *Muqaddima* [in:] S. M. RIDWĪ, *Tārīḥ-i Dār ul-'ulūm-i Deoband*, Vol. 1, Deoband 1992 AD (1976 AD), p. 11.

²³ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 24f.; G.-H. BOUSQUET, *Ghazâlî. Ih'ya 'Oulûm ed-Dîn ou Vivification des sciences de la Foi. Analyse et index*, Paris 1955, pp. 61ff.

²⁴ Cf. G. W. F. HEGEL, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, Berlin 1981 (1833), Einleitung (pp. 29-70).

²⁵ Cf. M. IQBAL, *op. cit.*, pp. 33ff.

²⁶ Cf. A. MAUDŪDĪ, *Iqbāl-'ahd-sāz šaḥsīyat* (1963 AD) [in:] H. HUMAYŪN, (ed.), *Iqbālīyāt*, Dehli 1986 AD, p. 25; *id.*, *Ġamā'at-i islāmī ke 29 sāl*, Reprint, Lāhore 1997 AD (1970 AD), p. 22.

²⁷ SUNNAN ABŪ DĀ'ŪD, *Kitāb am-mālaḥim*, h. 1, Vol. 2, Baīrūt 1988 AD, p. 512 [trans. *id.*] (Maudūdī quoted this *ḥadīṣ* but without *isnād* in: „Taḡdīd wa iḥyā'-yi dīn”, Reprint, Dehli 1994 AD (1940 AD), pp. 39f.).

²⁸ I. KANT, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, Einleitung der Ersten Fassung, MS, H17: „... gegebene Vorstellungen entweder mit anderen, oder mit seinem Erkenntnißvermögen, in Beziehung auf einen dadurch möglichen Begriff, zu vergleichen und zusammen zu halten [...]” [trans. *id.*].

²⁹ Cf. A. MAUDŪDĪ, *cit. op.*, p. 45.

³⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 52-105.

³¹ Cf. Kh. AHMAD / Z. I. ANSARI, *Mawlana Mawdudī. An Introduction to his Life and Thought*, Reprint, Delhi 1992 (1979), p. 15.

³² Cf. M. AHMAD, *Islamic Fundamentalism in South Asia: The Jamaat-i-Islami and the Tablighi Jamaat of South Asia* [in:] M. E. MARTY / R. S. APPLEBY, (eds.), *Fundamentalisms Observed*, Chicago 1991, p. 468.

³³ A. MAUDŪDĪ, *loc. cit.*, p. 46 [trans. *id.*].

³⁴ Cf. M. IQBĀL, *loc. cit.*, pp. 7f.

³⁵ A. MAUDŪDĪ, *loc. cit.*, p. 48, fn. 1 [trans.: *id.*].

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 49f. [trans.: *id.*].

³⁷ F. NIETZSCHE, *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, [in:] *loc. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 101: „Die tragische Erkenntnis ..., ... an denen ihr im Wesen der Logik verborgener Optimismus scheitert [...]” [trans. *id.*].

³⁸ This thesis seems to be confirmed by Sayyid As'ad GILĀNĪ's analysis on the respective conception of the subject of Maudūdī and Iqbāl („Ġamā'at-i islāmī 1941' tā 1947'”, Lāhore 1996 AD, p. 88): „The 'Man with confidence in God' [*mard-i mū'min*] of Maulānā Maudūdī becomes obvious in the shape of an active subject of Iqbāl's suggested and theoretical subject.” [trans. *id.*].

³⁹ Cf. A. MAUDŪDĪ, *Ġamā'at-i islāmī ke 29 sāl*, p. 14, fn. 1.

ANNA KRASNOWOLSKA

ŠAB-E ČELLE

The beginning of winter is a moment of particular importance in Iranian popular time reckoning. The first day of the first winter month Dey, equal to the date of winter solstice, in Iranian folklore is the beginning of Čelle-ye Bozorg („The Great Forty”) - a period which includes the first forty days of winter.¹ That is why the eve of the first day of winter is commonly known as Šab-e Čelle - the Čelle Night.

Čelle-ye Bozorg ends on the 10th of Bahman, the date of the pre-Islamic fire festival, Sade. The festival has been generally forgotten today, although some of its customs and magic practices survived in the Iranian countryside. According to popular time computation, the Great Čelle is immediately followed by the Small one (Čelle-ye Kuček) which lasts only twenty days i.e. until the end of Bahman. On the first of Esfand, the closing date of Čelle-ye Kuček, a semi-vernal festival is held in some parts of Iranian world (Central Iran in particular, but also some places in Tajikistan)². Esfand, the last winter month, may be considered an intermediary stage between winter and spring. Regular spring begins with the festival of Nouruz, on the first of Farvardin equal to the vernal equinox.

Old sources (chiefly Biruni and his followers)³ testify to the existence of a pre-Islamic Iranian festival falling around the winter solstice. Several Zo-

¹ see: A. Krasnowolska, *Some Key Figures of Iranian Calendar Mythology*, Kraków 1998, 51 ff.

² S.H. Taqizadeh, „Old Iranian Calendars Again”, *BSOAS* 14/2, 610; A.Q. Enjavi-ye Širāzi, *Jašnā va aqāyed-o mo'taqedāt-e zamestān*, Tehrān 1352-4 (1973-5), I: 29-53, 86-106; II: 28-77, 152-69; Muxiddinov, „Narodnyj zemledel'českij kalendar' pamirskix tadžikov”, *Pamirovedenie* I, Dušanbe 1984, 158-9.

³ Al-Bīrūnī, *Kitāb al-āṭār al-bāqīya: Chronologie orientalischer Völker*, ed. C.E. Sachau, Leipzig 1923, 225-6 (later on referred to as *Chronology*); *id.* *Al-Qānūn al-Mas'ūdī*, Hyderabad 1954, I, 264; Gardizi, *Zeyno-l-axbār* ed. Habibi, [Tehrān] 1347 (1968), 245; Qazvini, *Ajāyeb-o-l-maxluqāt*, ed. N. Sabuhi, [Tehrān] 1361 (1982), 79-80.

roastrian festivals under different names were connected with the date in various periods. Judging from written testimonies, the date always tended to be celebrated in a way, but never belonged to the most important points of the Zoroastrian religious year. Unlike the great seasonal festivals of Nouruz, Mehrgān and Sade, the festival of the beginning of winter never made a career at Moslem Iranian courts, even if some of the early panegyrists mention a sort of celebration on this occasion. On the other hand, an extremely rich scope of beliefs and practices connected with the date has been preserved in Iranian folklore. This suggests that the importance of the festival in popular culture should have been actually much higher than is apparent from the official (orthodox Zoroastrian and courtly) written sources.⁴ This is probably due to the exceptional place winter occupies in calendric beliefs of rural and pastoral communities.

The traces of various festivals and significant calendric events occurring around the beginning of winter have been preserved either explicitly in written records or implicitly in the structures of calendar systems themselves:

- the fifth of the six *gāhānbārs* (obligatory festivals of the so called Old Avestan year), Maidhyāirya (Mid-year) was supposed to coincide with the winter solstice⁵;
- winter solstice was one of the hypothetical starting points of the Iranian year in undefined historical past⁶;
- in the periods when Nouruz was held at summer solstice, the otherwise autumnal festival of Mehrgān should have taken place at the beginning of the winter;
- in multicultural areas of the Middle East, Christmas (Syr. *Yaldā* - „Nativity”) was celebrated by local Christians. The festival's name (maybe together with some elements of its rite) passed to their non-Christian neighbours, but some of the authors dealing with the subject in Iranian context believe the term *yaldā* to commemorate the solar festival of the birth of Mithra;⁷

⁴ Parviz Rajabi supposes that, besides the series of Nouruz celebrations in spring, the beginning of Dey actually was the most distinctive period in Iranian ceremonial year: *Jašn-hā-ye Irāni*, Tehrān 1375 (1996), 217.

⁵ Taqizadeh, *Old Iranian Calendars*, London 1938, 31; id. „OIC Again”, 605; W. Hartner, „Old Iranian Calendars”, *The Cambridge History of Iran* 2, 1985, 751-3; M. Boyce, „Iranian Festivals”, *The Cambridge History of Iran* 3(2), 1983, 795.

⁶ S.H. Taqizāde, *Gāhšomāri dar Irān-e qadim*, Tehrān 1357 (1978), 60-63; id. *OIC*, 21; „OIC Again”, 603-5; H. Razi, *Gāhšomāri va jašn-hā-ye Irān-e bāstān*, Tehrān 1371 (1992), 546.

⁷ Razi, *op. cit.*, 538-43; see also A.A. Fayyāz, „Šab-e Yaldā” in: M. Honari and M. Tabātābā'i, *Āyinhā-ye Nouruzi*, London 1370 (1991), 96-100; Rajabi, *op. cit.*, 224-30.

- a Zoroastrian fire festival, Āzar-jašn, used to be held shortly before or shortly after the winter solstice⁸;

- in Biruni's books, under the date of the first of Dey, there is a reference to a royal and agricultural festival called Xorram-ruz (Happy day), Xore-ruz (probably Xor-ruz, i.e. „Sun-day”) or Navad-ruz (Ninety days);⁹

- it can be supposed that the festival of Kākil, located in the middle of Dey by Biruni¹⁰, originally was intended for the beginning of the astronomic winter.¹¹

In Biruni's writings the six obligatory Zoroastrian festivals (*gāhānbārs*) are already deprived of their stable seasonal positions. But their Avestan names and epithets show that originally these were agricultural and pastoral festivals, strictly attached to the year's seasons. *Bundahišn* 25, the largest known Pahlavi text concerning calendar matters, qualifies the Maidhyāirya *gāhānbār* as the winter solstitial point, i.e. the moment before which the day decreases and after which it begins to increase. The festival's name itself means Mid-year, thus the opening of the second half of a summer-started year.

There is no direct evidence for an Iranian year beginning in winter. However, some calendric data speak for such a possibility. Taqizadeh supposes this may have been the case when the Young Avestan calendar was first introduced in Iran in order to replace the Achaemenian one, presumably at the turn of the 6th and 5th century B.C. According to the Iranian scholar's calculation the year should have started then on the first of Dey equal to the first of the Old Persian month Anāmaka, falling on the winter solstice. This should have been also the date of the Old Avestan Maidhyāirya festival.¹²

In the Zoroastrian calendar as we know it today, Dey is the tenth month of the year. But its name, Av. *dathušō*, „the Creator's (i.e. Ohrmazd's) [month]” allows to suppose that Dey originally was intended as the opening of the twelve month series, similarly as Ohrmazd's day opens the series of the thirty days of a month.¹³ Moreover, the irregular distribution of the *gāhānbārs*

⁸ *Bundahišn* 25. 13-14: *Zand Ākasih. Iranian or Greater Bundahišn*, translit. & English transl. by B.T. Anklesaria, Bombay 1956, 207; Boyce, „Rapithwin, Nō Rūz and the Feast of Sade”, *Pratidānam*, The Hague-Paris 1968, 213-15; id., *A Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism*, Oxford 1977, 175-85.

⁹ *Chronology*, 225; *Qānūn*, 264; see also Gardizi, 245; Qazvini, 79-80;

¹⁰ *Chronology*, 226; *Qānūn*, 265; Gardizi, 246.

¹¹ Taqizadeh, *OIC*, 42.

¹² „OIC Again”, 603 and *Gāhšomāri*, 187; see also Razi, *op. cit.*, 546.

¹³ Taqizāde, *Gāhšomāri*, 60. Differently Boyce, thinks the dedication of the 10th month

within the Zoroastrian year (80 days instead of 75 between the 4th and the 5th *gāhānbār*) bears witness to the presence, for a period of time, of the five *epagomenae* days (N.P. *panje, andargāh*) between the months of Āzar and Dey.¹⁴ These days, devoted to the cult of the dead, were usually added between the end of the old and the beginning of the new year in order to complete the number of the year's days to 365.

During the last century of the Sasanian rule and still after the Arab conquest, the New Year day (Nouruz), equal to the first of Farvardin, was established on the summer solstice.¹⁵ Accordingly, the great festival of Mehrgān, traditionally linked with the autumnal equinox, should have shifted to the winter solstice. As Taqizadeh observes, this was probably not the case, since Mehrgān, held in honour of the god Mithra, was one of those Old Iranian festivals which were closely attached to the seasons rather than dates. It was always perceived as firmly connected with autumn and with the harvest time.¹⁶

Yet some of the early Islamic texts suggest that Mehrgān might also have been celebrated as a solar festival at the beginning of winter. In Biruni's report on Mehrgān, as in the case of some other festivals, there are traces of its double calendric assignment. Some fragments of his *Chronology* allow us to situate Mehrgān at the autumn equinox:

„Aleranshahri says: God has made the treaty between Light and Darkness on Nauroz and Mihrajan.” (I.e. day and night are then equal.)

„Some people have given the preference to Mihrajan [over Nauroz] by as much as they prefer autumn to spring.”¹⁷

Another passage, however, seems to point rather at the festival's solstitial position:

„... Mihr is the name of the sun, who is said to have for the first time appeared to the world on this day; [...] therefore this day was called Mihr. This is indicated by the custom of the Kisras of crowning themselves on this day with a crown on which was worked an image of the sun and of the wheel on which it rotates.”¹⁸

to the Creator theologically justified as protection against demons in the coldest and darkest period of the year (*A History of Zoroastrianism II*, Leiden-Köln 1982, 249).

¹⁴ Taqizadeh, *OIC*, 22, 25, 48.

¹⁵ see Biruni, *Chronology*, 216 and *Qānūn*, 90-91; *Nouruznāme* ascribed to Omar Xayyām, ed. Minovi, Tehrān 1933, 11.

¹⁶ *OIC*, 38-41, 46; „OIC Again”, 607.

¹⁷ *Chronology*, 222-3; English transl. by Sachau: *The Chronology of Ancient Nations*, London 1879, 208-9.

¹⁸ *Chronology*, 222; Sachau's translation, 207.

A preserved fragment of Rudaki's Mehrgān poem, containing a fine description of a garden in winter, seems to confirm the winter position of the festival:

*Malekā, jašn-e Mehregān āmad
jašn-e šāhān-o xosrovān āmad
xazz be jā-ye molham-o xargāh
be del-e bāq-o bušetān āmad
murd be jā-ye susan āmad bāz
mey be jā-ye arqavān āmad*¹⁹

„O, King! The festival of Mehrgān came / the festival of kings and Xosrou came / beaver fur replaced silk (i.e. snow replaced the grass) and a tent / appeared in the heart of the garden. / Myrtle replaced the lilies again / and wine came instead of *arqavān* [...].”

In a partly preserved poem by Daqiqi²⁰, Mehrgān is praised as a fire-festival, its description of fire following the pattern used by the poets of subsequent generations in their winter Sade *qasidas*. Unfortunately, no calendar clues are available.²¹

In the Roman Empire the Mithraists held their festival of Mithra's birth on the winter solstice, under the name of Dies Solis Natalis. Hence the later acceptance of the symbolic date for Christ's birth.²² The festival was in praise of the sun reborn after the year's longest night.

The Syriac term *yaldā*, adopted in Persian for the longest night of the year and frequently used in classical literature, means „Nativity” and seems to be a Christian borrowing²³, although some modern Iranian authors prefer to believe that an immediate remaining of the Mithraic cult is involved. So does Razi in his extensive work on Iranian festivals. While using the term *yaldā*, he puts stress on the solar aspects of the festival and consistently identifies with one another the nativity of Mithra, that of Messiah and that of the Sun.”²⁴

¹⁹ S. Nafisi, *Mohit-e zendegi va ahvāl-o aš'ār-e Rudaki*, Tehrān 1336 (1957), 497

²⁰ G. Lazard, *Les premiers poètes persans*, Paris 1964, I, 143-4; II, 151;

²¹ In the works of Ghaznavid poets Mehrgān is an explicitly autumnal festival, connected with the ripening of grapes and the production of wine (cf. C. H. de Fouchécour, *La description de la nature dans la poésie lyrique persane du XI siècle*, Paris 1969, 24-5). So it is in the well-known anecdote about Rudaki and Amir Nasr in *Čahār Maqāle* by Aruzi-ye Samarqandi (*Čahār Maqāle*. Matn-e kâmel, ed. M. Qazvini, Tehrān 1345, 37).

²² Cumont, *Les mystères de Mithra*, Bruxelles 1913, 9, 173, 206; id. *Textes et monuments figurés relatifs aux mystères de Mithra II*, Paris 1896, 230.

²³ See *Jašn-e Sade*. Anjoman-e Irānšenāsi, našriye-ye šomāre 2, Tehrān 1324 (1945), 24-5.

²⁴ Razi, *Gāhšomāri*, 537-47.

In early Persian classical poetry the night of Yaldā is a frequently evoked symbol but, curiously enough, its connotation is predominantly negative. The darkness, endlessness and hopelessness of this night are stressed, but never its aspect of being a turning-point at which the new sun is born. Moreover, the night of Yaldā may symbolize ignorance, obscurantism and oppression. As such, it frequently appears in the context of Christianity, and is opposed to the Islamic, most hopeful and promising Leylato-l-Qadr (The Night of Power, when the Qor'ān has been revealed to the Prophet), or to Iranian Nouruz - a true festival of the new beginning. Numerous examples have been gathered by Dehxodā in his lexicon.²⁵

*Gar zi-ye to qoul-e tarsā majhul ast
ma'ruf nist qoul-e to zi-ye tarsā
u bar došambe-vo to be ādine
to leyl-e qadar dāri va u yaldā.*²⁶

„Just as you cannot understand what a Christian says / your speech is alien to him: / he [speaks] of Monday [Dhx: Sunday] and you of Friday / you have your Night of Power, he his night of Yaldā”.

*Nazar be ruy-e to har bāmdād Nouruzi-st
Šab-e ferāq-e to har šab ke hast - Yaldā'i-st.*²⁷

„With the sight of your face, every morning becomes Nouruz / Every night of separation is Yaldā.”

Xāqāni associates the Yaldā night with the hopeless situation of a hero (Biblical Joseph or epic Iranian Bižan) imprisoned in a dark pit.²⁸

So, apparently no memory on the Mithraic aspects of the date survived in Iranian literary tradition of the Islamic period. Also the original meaning of the term *yaldā* seems to have been forgotten.

The existence of a fire festival at the beginning of winter is confirmed by some pre-Islamic as well as Islamic sources which, however, are inconsistent as to its date. *Bundahišn* 25, 13-14 speaks of a fire-festival on the Āzar (9th) day of the month of Dey. The text qualifies the day as the beginning of winter and the time when the weather is becoming cold. It is clear that, just as in the case of some other Zoroastrian festivals (Mehrgān and Tiragān, e.g.), its celebration had to be transferred from a cardinal to a liturgical point:

²⁵ *Loqatnāme-ye Dehxodā*, Vol. 50, Tehrān 1347 (1968), 262.

²⁶ *Divān-e aš'ār-e Hakim Nāser-e Xosrou Qobādyāni*, ed. N.S.H. Taqavi, [Tehrān] 2535 (1976), 9.

²⁷ *Kolliyāt-e Sa'di*, ed. M.A. Foruqi, [T?], 723. See also *Divān-e Manučeheri*, ed. M. Dabirsiyāqi, Tehrān 1370 (1991), 25; *Divān-e Onsori*, ed. M. Dabirsiyāqi, Tehrān 1342 (1963), 301.

²⁸ *Gozide-ye aš'ār-e Xāqāni-ye Šervāni*, ed. S.Z. Sajjādi, Tehrān 1351 (1972), 7, 32.

instead of the winter solstice (the first of Dey), to the day of the fire, nine days later. In Biruni's works, however, no reference to a fire-festival is found under either of those dates.

Instead, Biruni records an Āzar-jašn (Fire Festival) on the Fire day, i.e. the ninth (Āzar) day of the Āzar month (the third month of autumn), although, in accordance with the computation beginning with the summer Nouruz, he believes it to mark the oncoming of spring.²⁹

Both Ferdousi and Gorgāni state the existence of a festival in the month of Āzar, day of Dey (the reverse of the *Bundahišn* term) - an unprecise date, since there are three Dey-days in a month: the 8th, the 15th and the 23th. While in Gorgāni's *Vis-o Rāmin*, just as in Biruni's report on Āzar-jašn, the festival is said to fall in early spring³⁰, Ferdousi seems to consider it a fire-festival celebrated at the beginning of the cold season -

Kojā māh-e Āzar bodi ruz-e Dey

*gāh-e ātaš-o morq-e beriyān-o mey*³¹

„... as it was the month of Āzar, day of Dey / time for fire and roasted chicken and wine.”

Some relics of an ancient winter festival in the month of Dey may be traced in early Persian poetry.³² The common motifs of the Dey-qasidas are the kindling of fire and the drinking of wine in winter scenery, possibly in a large tent (*xargāh*). Azraqi mentions, moreover, roasting poultry and eating fruit - the latter element is characteristic of the contemporary Šab-e Ālle rite and magic.

Boyce reports on a Zoroastrian fire festival called Hiromba - in her opinion one of antiquity - which is still celebrated in the villages of Šarifābād and Mazra'e Kalāntar near Yazd, on the 26th of Āzar (a spring festival in the vague calendar of modern Iranian Zoroastrians). This date conforms to none of the old fire-festivals but, falling one hundred days before Nouruz, had probably been the reverse of Sade.³³ On the other hand, since it is separated from the winter solstice by only a few days, the two dates could have easily been merged. A Sade festival once celebrated by the Indian Parsees on Āzar,

²⁹ *Chronology*, 225. Celebration by Iranian Zoroastrians of today: Boyce, *Stronghold*, 175.

³⁰ *Vis-o Rāmin*, M. Todua, A Gvaxarya eds., [Tehrān] 1349 (1970), 50.

³¹ *Šāhnāme-ye Ferdousi*, ed. Bertel's, M. 1971, IX, 253 and 264.

³² See e.g. *Divān-e Farroxi-ye Sistāni*, ed. M. Dabirsiyāqi, Tehrān 1349 (1970), 291; *Divān-e Qatrān-e Tabrizi*, ed. M. Naxjavāni, Tehrān 1362 (1983), 254; *Divān-e Azraqi-ye Heravi*, ed. S. Nafisi, Tehrān 1337 (1958), 43; cf. C.-H. De Fouchecour, *op. cit.*, 25.

³³ Boyce, Rapithwin, Nō Rōz, 213-15; *Stronghold*, 176 ff.

26 in commemoration of King Hušang's discovery of fire is recalled by Katrak.³⁴

In Biruni's register of Iranian festivals the first of Dey appears under the name of Xorram-ruz (the Happy Day) or Xorre-, i.e. perhaps Xor-ruz (Sun-day), also as Navad-ruz (Ninety Days), because of its ninety-day distance in time from Nouruz. On this day, Biruni tells us, the king, dressed in white, used to sit down on a white carpet in the plain and everybody could approach him with their grievances. According to Biruni the festival was in commemoration of the eternal bonds of the twin brothers: Hušang the king and Veykard the farmer (*dehqān*). On this day the *dehqāns* (landlords) were invited to feast with the king, in order to renew the primeval brotherhood.³⁵

Although the ceremony was an official one and Biruni says nothing about the popular customs of the festival, its agrarian implication is clear. On this day the king and the landlords represented together an archetypal Hušang-Veykard pair, symbolising the insoluble ties of the sacral royal power with nature and fertility. In this context Veykard appears as an ancestor and patron of the farmers, just as Hušang is the forefather of the ruling house.³⁶

Under the date of the 16th (the Mehr i.e. Mithra's day) of Dey in Biruni's works³⁷ there is a celebration referred to as the Night of Kākil, Kāukil, Kāktal and the like. To my knowledge no serious attempt at the interpretation of this puzzling festival has been undertaken until now, and none of the etymologies proposed for its name look satisfactory. Yet, most the scholars involved seem to agree that the first component of the term should be read as *gāv* („cow”, „bull”, „ox”).³⁸

Taqizadeh thinks the festival to have been originally attached to the winter solstice. The mythology of the Kākil (Gāvgil? Gāv-e gil?) night, as recorded by Biruni, concerns Feridun and his miraculous bull. The festival

³⁴ J.C. Katrak, „Ancient Iranian Festivals According to Biruni”, *The Commemoration Volume of Biruni International Congress*, Teheran 1976, Vol. B, 149-50.

³⁵ *Chronology*, 225; see also Ta'ālībī, *Ta'rīx qurar as-sayr* (*Histoire des rois des Perses*), ed. & transl. Zotenberg, Paris 1900, 6-7.

³⁶ According to Biruni, another festival celebrating the unity of the two brothers was the festival of Tiragān close to the summer solstice, at the opposite pole of the year (*Chronology*, 220-21).

³⁷ *Chronology*, 226; the text partly missing in Sachau's edition has been published by A.B. Xalidov: „Dopolnenija k tekstu *Xronologii* al-Bīrūnī po leningradskoj i stambul'skoj rukopisjam”, *Palestinskij Sbornik* 4 (67), 1959, 159-60; *Qānūn*, 265; see also Gardizi, 246.

³⁸ For various solutions see: Taqizadeh, *OIC*, 42; S. Wikander, *Der Arische Männerbund*, Lund 1938, 104-5; Habibi's commentary to *Zeyno-l-axbār*: Gardizi, 240, n. 34; Katrak, *op. cit.*, 143.

chiefly commemorates the events of the hero's childhood and young age. The bull is described as made of seven precious metals which he distributes among the people while appearing to them on this night. In Iranian mytho-epic tradition Feridun is the hero the most closely connected with the Mithraic cult.³⁹ Another occasion on which his exploits are praised is the feast of Mehrgān.⁴⁰ Therefore, while looking for the traces of Mithra's winter cult in Iran, one should thoroughly examine the Kākil festival.⁴¹

In the contemporary popular culture of Moslem Iranians, the beginning of winter is marked by a variety of rites, beliefs and customs.⁴² The abundance of testimony from different parts of the Iranian world points to a long-established tradition. The night of the first of Dey initiates the Čelle-ye Bozorg, and thus the whole winter. It is usually known as Šab-e Čelle (the Čelle Night) although the term Yaldā is also in use, especially in the West.⁴³

The customs and rites of this night survived in the countryside and recently are spreading into the cities of Iran.⁴⁴ The most complex reports are those from the North-Western and Central parts of Iran, furnished by Enjavi in his two-volume collection (see above, n. 2), but some materials concerning Xorāsān prove the existence of like practices in the eastern regions as well. In Tajikistan the date is sometimes underlined by a festival⁴⁵, and almost everywhere it is an important demarcation point of the year, for it opens the Winter Čelle. In Tajik local calendars the winter solstice has special names: *oftob nihāl* (sun-seedling?) in Bartang valley⁴⁶, *xyra zyvort* (sun-turn) in

³⁹ Wikander, *op. cit.*, 97 ff; G. Widengren, *Les religions de l'Iran*, Paris 1965, 258-9.

⁴⁰ *Chronology*, 222.

⁴¹ A more detailed study of this festival will be published separately.

⁴² The grammatical present time predominantly used in this part of the paper should be understood as an „ethnographic present”. My sources come from the last half century or so and probably many of the described beliefs and practices have been abandoned until today.

⁴³ Personal information from Tabriz and Lahijān; for Širāz see Homāyuni, *Gušehā-i az ādāb-o rosum-e mardom-e Širāz*, [Tehrān] 1352 (1973), 195-6; my Herāti interviewees knew the term Yaldā but they qualified it as a *farangi* (foreign) name for Šab-e Čelle. For the Mokri Kurds, Ayyubyan recorded the name of the festival as Ševe Suri (Šab-e Suri) - the term commonly used for the last Wednesday of the year, probably because of the fire celebration common to both festivals. („Taqvim-e mahalli-ye kordi”, *Našriye-ye Dāneškade-ye Adabiyāt-e Dānešgāh-e Tabriz* 2/16, 1343 (1964), 206).

⁴⁴ Rajabi, *op. cit.*, 220.

⁴⁵ in the Xuf valley it has some features of the New Year: M.S. Andreev, *Tadžiki doliny Xuf II*, Dušanbe 1958, 322; for Šughni Isma'ilis see A. Semenov: „Iz oblasti religioznyx verovanij šughnanskix ismailitov”, *Mir Islama* 1/4, 1912, 553, note.

⁴⁶ Muxiddinov, *loc. cit.*

Yaghnāb.⁴⁷ In the Panjšir valley, in Afghanistan, it is called *aftougašt-i zimiston* (winter sun-turn)⁴⁸.

The year's longest night, like the other crucial points of the year, is believed to determine the following year's prosperity, hence its importance for farmers and for practically everybody. A kind of holiness, and a special power are ascribed to the Čelle night. In Bābol (Māzandarān) it is believed that on this night the trees, waters, and other beings bow before God.⁴⁹ In some localities (e.g. Ardebil) the Čelle night is considered inauspicious (*nahs*)⁵⁰, although elsewhere it may have just the opposite value. So, in Vefs-e Arāk „because of the snowfalls by which water in the *qanāts* increases and which are an advantage for agriculture, the Čelle night, known as the [First] Step of Winter (*qadam-e zemestān*) is esteemed beyond measure. The people believe the first step of winter is beneficial.”⁵¹

Elsewhere, as in Alamdār-e Tabriz, its being auspicious or not depends on human attitudes: neglecting the Čelle celebration may result in drought and all kinds of disasters.⁵² The Mokri Kurds (Feyzollāh-begi tribe), who name each of the 100 days of their winter after an individual or a family, try to give the first day the name of the most prominent person in their village. That would grant a favourable course to the whole season. In turn, the weather of the day is an omen for its namesake.⁵³

The traces of a fire-festival celebrated at the beginning of winter are residual. While *korsi* (a charcoal heater) is one of this evening's symbols and necessities, its purpose is chiefly heating and the fire itself is not visible to those gathered around it. The custom of kindling fires or lights on the Čelle night survived, e.g. in the Ardebil area of Āzarbāyjān. According to Enjavi, at midnight the locals go out to the steppes and believe that precisely at midnight Čelle enters the town. In order to welcome it they light fires and loudly pronounce a spell: „O, Čelle, for God's sake, don't be harsh!”⁵⁴. In Mr. Behnām Arši's personal report from Ardebil this detail is lacking, but he does say that on the Čelle night „sometimes a light is kept until the morning. In some villages with no electricity the people keep a kerosene lamp burning till dawn”. In Iranian folklore keeping the lights burning all night is com-

⁴⁷ M.S. Andreev & A.K. Pisarčik, *Materialy po etnografii Jagnoba*, Dušanbe 1970, 156.

⁴⁸ M.S. Andreev, *Po etnologii Afganistana. Dolina Pandžšir*, Taškent 1927, 66.

⁴⁹ Enjavi, *op. cit.*, I, 129.

⁵⁰ I owe this information to Mr. Behnām Arši from Arebil; cf. Dehxodā, *loc. cit.*

⁵¹ Enjavi I, 23.

⁵² Enjavi II, 34.

⁵³ Ayyubyān, *op. cit.*, 193-4; cf. Enjavi II, 7.

⁵⁴ *op. cit.* II, 30-31.

monly practised on the nights once reserved for the visits of the ancestral souls (predominantly Čahāršambe-ye Suri or the night preceding Nouruz).

In Darre-ye Miyāne-ye Sefali (Malāyer region), where the Čelle rite is very much developed, children use to throw burning torches in the air on the last autumn night, in honour of a female personification of Čelle.⁵⁵

According to a communication from Mr. S.G. Baha, the custom of kindling fires on the Čelle and on the following evenings was common in the Persian-speaking Shi'a community of Qandahār (Afghanistan).⁵⁶ According to my informant the custom was practised in the Winter Čelle which he believed to begin in the month of Qous/Āzar. Groups of young boys used to go from house to house, singing a special song and asking for brushwood. A big fire was made with the collected fuel. The boys sat around it joking and telling stories and some leaped over it. The same winter custom and a similar song is communicated by Hanifi for the Persian-speaking population of Afghanistan⁵⁷, although neither its geographical range nor the date of its performance is specified. Also Boyce in her *Zoroastrian Stronghold* has recorded a ritual song sung by Zoroastrian children while collecting wood for the fire festival of Hiromba in Šarifābād.⁵⁸

The idea of preparing for the Čelle night by a kind of purification survived in some places in Western Iran. This may take the form of *xāne takkāni* (general house-cleaning), possibly with an interdiction of cleaning after that date, of carpet-washing, or of taking a bath.⁵⁹ Such actions commonly precede the Nouruz festival.

Probably some forms of fortune-opening magic (*baxtgošā'i*) by destroying various objects (especially when old and used) or throwing them into running water may be considered close to the purification rites. On the other hand, as will be seen, some instances of throwing things into the water should rather be interpreted as a kind of sacrifice. These are actions associated for the most part with the days immediately preceding or following Nouruz, but, in some regions, executed on the Čelle day as well. For instance in Ahār (Āzarbāyjān) families go to the municipal sewage outflow early on the Čelle morning. They cut off their nails and hair and throw the clippings into the

⁵⁵ Enjavi II, 159-60; cf. Krasnowolska *op. cit.*, 213-14.

⁵⁶ This group, originating from Iran, most probably settled in Afghanistan in the Safavi or Nāderi period.

⁵⁷ P. Hanifi, „Sorudhā-ye atfāl”, *Folklor* 1/1, 1352 (1973), 72-80.

⁵⁸ *Stronghold*, 179-80.

⁵⁹ Enjavi I, 20; II, 157.

sewage, reciting in Āzeri Turkish the formula: „Any burdens I had I've left here”.⁶⁰

The common conviction is that the Čelle night should be a vigil, and for this purpose families, neighbours or friends come together and engage in various entertainments, once of traditional kinds. The most typical common element of the Šab-e Čelle observances is its special treat - *šabčare* (the „night-snack”). Its main ingredients are fresh fruit (especially watermelons, melons and pomegranates, sometimes quinces, oranges etc), preserved for the occasion. The necessity of eating watermelons (*hendune*) especially on the Čelle night, is underlined in reports on Šab-e Čelle both from West Iran and from Xorāsān.⁶¹ The fruits are commonly believed to protect from diseases of the forthcoming summer and its heat or, sometimes, from the winter cold.

At one time, seemingly it was believed that eating watermelons on the Čelle night assured an abundance of fruits. In Ahār the head of the family, while cutting the watermelon into pieces, pronounces the following: „Oh God, be your blessing upon our town and our homeland. Make the forthcoming spring wet, our fields fertile and our fruit-trees full of fruits...” When the meal is over, the rinds and the remains of the fruit are thrown into running water.⁶²

Some other practices of this night also seem to be remnants of fertility magic. And, although the Čelle night is just the beginning of winter, these actions are all aimed at the following spring and summer.

Different kinds of seeds, primarily wheat, play an important role in the local menus of this evening, mostly as components of *ājil* (a mixture of dried fruits, a variety of nuts and grilled seeds, commonly used as a ritual and sacrificial food),⁶³ as *beryāni* (roasted wheat seeds)⁶⁴; in a ground form as *qāvut* (flour made of one or many kinds of roasted seeds), or cooked as a kind of soup. The magical function of those seeds is still visible in some of the recorded practices.

While traditional hot dishes for Šab-e čelle are not a must everywhere, they are mentioned in many reports. Most frequently they are various kinds of *polou* (cooked rice with additions): *rešte-polou* (rice with noodles), or

⁶⁰ Enjavi II, 36.

⁶¹ For information collected in Ahvāz I am grateful to Mr. Wojciech Blumhoff. The testimony from Bojnurd, North Xorāsān, comes from Mrs. Foruq Tāheri.

⁶² Enjavi II, 33-4.

⁶³ Homāyuni, *loc. cit.*; personal communications from Gilān, Xorāsān, Ahvāz.

⁶⁴ see Rajabi, 221.

different kinds of *sabzi-polou* (rice with greens). In Kermānšāh it may be *zerešk-polou* (barberry-polou), in Gilān - *māhi-polou* (rice and fish)⁶⁵, in Širāz - *havij-polou* (rice and carrots).⁶⁶ In Ardebil, according to the report of Mr. Arši, it is *āš-e rešte* (noodle soup) or *āš-e māst* (yoghurt soup). In the local culture yoghurt is considered a „cold” food. People eat it, as they say, in order to show their disregard for cold weather.⁶⁷

Apart from fish and sometimes poultry, meat dishes are seldom mentioned as a part of the Čelle menu, except for Xorāsān. In Birjand „in the old times, when each family killed one or two sheep for the winter, people invited their relatives for hot meat (*gušt-e dāq*), called *joqle* in the local dialect”.⁶⁸ In Herāt a sheep was killed for winter and its meat dried. This meat (*gušt-e land*) was an ingredient of Čelle food, eaten together with *qolur-šir* (dried wheat groats and milk).⁶⁹

Most of the foods used are symbolic in some way and their choice has a magical motivation, although its interpretation may change with the passage of time. By taking a traditional meal, the participants hope to influence their fate. This may concern the weather and crops, personal destiny and general prosperity.⁷⁰ Sometimes foods or their remnants serve some further magical actions which may have the more or less overt character of an offering. In Takāb (Āzarbāyjān): „...on the night of Čelle they spill grilled grains of wheat on the roofs of their houses and believe that through this action the prosperity of the coming year will be secured”.⁷¹ The Lur nomads, whose winter starts already on the 7th day of Ābān, celebrate its beginning with fires, explosions and children's ritual begging. Some of the grilled wheat collected by the children is spilled by a fireplace as an offering to the Old Woman called Dayāle, who rules over the cold part of the year.⁷²

In some villages of Xorāsān the rinds of watermelon eaten on Šab-e čelle

⁶⁵ Personal reports collected by Miss Arletta Žolińska and Mr. S.G. Bahā.

⁶⁶ Homāyuni, 196.

⁶⁷ Personal report by Mr. B. Arši. On eating „hot” and „cold” foods on Šab-e Čelle see Homāyuni, *loc. cit.* On „hot” and „cold” foods see also: Penkala-Gawęcka, „Goraże i zimne w tradycyjnej medycynie Afganistanu”, *Etnografia Polska* 23/2, 308-29; „Sardi va garmi-ye qazā” in: Ž. Mottahedin, *Dānešnāme-ye kuček-e Irān*, Bethesda 1998, 367.

⁶⁸ Personal communication collected by Mr. J. Mikāniki. The custom of serving a meat dish on Šab-e Čelle is also attested for Bojnurd (information due to Mrs. Tāheri).

⁶⁹ Oral information by Mr. Q.H. Asir-e Heravi, see also his *Farhang-e Asir. Ambān-če-ye gap-e Herāt*, Pešāvar 1368 (1989), 132.

⁷⁰ see e.g. Enjavi II, 31.

⁷¹ *ibid.*, 34.

⁷² M. Asadyān-e Xorramābādi et al., *Bāvarhā va dānestehā dar Lorestān-o Ilām*, [Tehrān] 1358 (1979), 210-11; cf. Krasnowolska, 213.

are thrown onto a neighbour's roof. It is believed that in this way, a neighbour who could not afford a watermelon would at least participate in its beneficial qualities by scraping some remnants from the rind. Then he, in turn, should throw the rind on the roof of the next house, and so on, until the seventh roof is reached, so that seven neighbours might share the same fruit.⁷³

In Faruraq near Xoy (Āzarbāyjān) a piece of watermelon is left „for a beggar” outside the door of a house in which there is a newly married couple. By taking his share the beggar is expected to open the fortune of the young people.⁷⁴ (The watermelon is the gift of the boy's family to his bride.) Here the fruit functions as an offering to a supernatural being (possibly in a beggar's disguise) who, on that night, visits the households and, when feasted, would provide good fortune and prosperity to the donors.

The young boys of Alange-ye Sarziyārat in Māzandarān use to take an empty pot to the roof of the village baths on the Čelle evening, so that each family could put a portion of their festive *polou* into it, as the „share of the bathkeeper”.⁷⁵

In Darre-ye Miyāne-ye Sefali-ye Malāyer, where the rite and mythology of Šab-e Čelle, as recored by Enjavi, seem extremely rich and complex, the sacrificial procedure is even more developed.

„The people of this village say winter has two names. One is simply Zemestān (Winter), another is Šeyx Ali-xān. Šeyx Ali-xān is an ancient name for winter. Two or three days before the beginning of the winter each family should take their year's wheat to the mill and have it ground and stored in their flour-chest (*tāpu*). This should certainly be done before the Night of Čelle, as on this night Čelle comes and puts his hand to the *tāpu*” In this way the flour becomes blessed and will not be exhausted till the next year.⁷⁶

Here the benefactor has a definite name or even several names, since he is called Zemestān, Šeyx Ali-xān and Čelle (two of the names are personifications of a calendar unit). The person venerated under these names is believed to visit the village on this particular night. As has been shown elsewhere⁷⁷, putting a hand on a heap of corn and flour or leaving its imprint in sacrificial food is a constant feature of such mysterious visitors. Moreover, a

⁷³ Šakurzāde, 195.

⁷⁴ Enjavi II, 37.

⁷⁵ Enjavi I, 127. A bathkeeper just like a shepherd, a black-smith, a miller and some other village artisans, is believed to be endowed with magic powers and is thus subject to some special prerogatives or limitations; local baths are often a place of magic practices (cf. Mottahedin, „Garmābe”, *op. cit.*, 378).

⁷⁶ Enjavi II, 147.

⁷⁷ Krasnowolska, Chapter 6 and 7.

visit of two (male and female) „Čelle”, chosen from among the inhabitants by drawing lots, is performed in Darre on two consecutive evenings. The female Čelle, named Čelle Zari (maybe *Čelle-gozari*, „Čelle-spending”?) appears on the last night of autumn and her celebration includes various rites of fecundity and prosperity, mostly for women.⁷⁸ The male Čelle, known under the name of Amu Čelle-jun (Dear Uncle Čelle), is believed to visit the village on the first night of the winter.

„On the Čelle eve, at sunset, all the doors and windows of the house should be opened. The people say that if they were closed, Uncle Čelle would feel offended and wouldn't visit the house. Also, the lamps of the house should certainly be lit at sunset. Then they put on the *korsi* two plates of sprouted wheat and lucerne (*gāvdāne*) they had prepared earlier. The purpose of germinating wheat is to ensure its abundance in the next year; that of germinating lucerne - to keep the labour oxen in good health. Then they prepare for dinner. When the time for the meal comes, a little boy comes outside and shouts three times: 'Dear Uncle Čelle, are we allowed to have our meal?'”⁷⁹

A share of the Čelle meal is set aside for Amu Čelle and is left for him on the roof or by the entrance door. Later in the evening a man representing Amu Čelle is chosen from among the villagers and circulates about, riding a horse or a donkey. Portions of food from all the households are collected in a big pot and offered to him. Then the people accompany him to the boundary of the village. At the river bank Amu Čelle orders them to throw his share into the water and to go back home.⁸⁰

The ceremony combines various ritual elements. The dominant symbolism is that of entertaining a supernatural guest on a short stay. Opening doors and windows, lighting lights, inviting and offering food serve this purpose. The guest, for his part, is supposed to secure enough food for the winter as well as abundant crops throughout the following year - this is symbolized by the germinating seeds. Preparing such „Adonis gardens” at the beginning of winter is rather uncommon. In most cases, and all over the Iranian world, this is done in the Nouruz period as a symbol of nature reviving in spring.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Enjavi II, 157-60.

⁷⁹ *ibid.*, 160.

⁸⁰ *ibid.*, 162.

⁸¹ For the oldest reports on the „Adonis gardens” sown on Nouruz see Jāhiz, *Al-mahāsin wa 'l-aqdād*, ed. van Vloten, Amsterdam 1974 (repr. of the 1868 edition), 363; Biruni, *Chronology*, 216; Omar Xayyām, *Nouruz-nāme*, ed. M. Minovi, Tehrān 1933, 31-2; for modern times: M. Honari, *Āyinhā-ye nouruzi*, London 1991, 52.

In the passage quoted above the magical action concerns not only the growth of the cereals but also the well-being of the live-stock.

In addition to being thought of as a generous protector of crops and herds, Čelle is also imagined to have some power over the winter weather, namely over the snow and frost, as he himself is a personification of the winter or of a part of it. The offerings are to assure his clemency for the approaching season. In Southern Xorāsān a kind of weather magic is performed on the Čelle night: a root of *čubak* (soap-wort) is put in the water and beaten with a beater, in order to produce as much foam as possible.⁸² This is apparently an imitation of snow, essential for agriculture in the dry region.

Although agrarian magic seems to be a substantial element of the Čelle evening, some examples of personal magic have been recorded for this date as well. Most frequently, both kinds are combined with some forms of divination. In Darre-ye Miyāne-ye Sefali during celebration in honour of the female Čelle, a series of such practices occur. The girl chosen as Čelle Zari becomes a „bride” for the evening and her „wedding” is staged - this is believed to help her and other unmarried girls find husbands within a year. A pomegranate is shared by the girls as a token of fertility.⁸³

Taking omens on the eve of Čelle is common. In addition to Čahārsambe-ye Suri (the year's last Wednesday), this is the second traditional date for augury. Both dates are classic intermediary moments between neighbouring seasons. The assumed presence of supernatural guests visiting the people on both nights should, no doubt, be a further favourable factor. The auguries, just as the magic, may concern the coming year's crops and weather as well as private matters (chiefly girls' marriages). The accessories involved are often identical with those used for magic purposes. The night of Čelle itself may be considered augural in the sense that its weather is supposed to foretell the weather for the whole winter.⁸⁴

Sometimes the foods of the Čelle treat may serve for divination. In the villages of Māzandarān walnuts are used for this purpose⁸⁵, and in Navade-ye Rudbār, near Alamut, the fish-scales of the fish prepared as a ceremonial dish on this evening help to forecast the snowfall in the approaching winter.⁸⁶ Some other forms of divination, known all over Iran and most frequently related to the pre-Nouruz period, such as *fāl-guš* (divination by over-

⁸² Šakurzāde, 195-6.

⁸³ Enjavi II, 158-9.

⁸⁴ For Sadan in Gorgān see Enjavi I, 130.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 126.

⁸⁶ *ibid.*, 128-9.

hearing) or *fāl-e kuze* (by the objects drawn at random from a pot of water) may also be performed on the Čelle evening. In Gilān divination from the *Divān* of Hāfez is common on this date.⁸⁷

Another custom, once apparently very popular in some regions of Iran and partly preserved to the present day, is that of sending a special gift (*čelle'i*, *čellegari*, *časm-roušani*) - by a young man or his family to his fiancée, by the parents-in-law to their daughter-in-law or by the parents to their married daughter. Less frequently such presents are sent to a young man - a future son-in-law or a newly married son, if he lives apart from his parents. Here, again, as in the case of the other customs, there are at least two competing dates on which this is done: besides Šab-e Čelle, presents for a fiancée are sent on the first of Esfand, then under the name of *esfandi*.

The reason for this second date seems clear - in pre-Islamic Iran the Esfand (5th) day of Esfand (the day of Esfandarmaz - Mother-Earth) was women's day. In particular, on that day wives received presents from their husbands.⁸⁸ Later this holiday became assimilated to a neighbouring, apparently „stronger” date, the end of Čelle-ye Kuček. The reasons for giving presents to a fiancée on the Čelle evening are not clear, except for a transfer of the custom by analogy, from one crucial moment of the year, to another one with similar qualities. The geographical range of the two dates is not known. Anyway, giving presents on Čelle has been reported from Western Iran as well as from Xorāsān. The practice may also take place on some Islamic festivals, e.g. Qorbān. In Gilān, at one time, presents to wives were given during a harvest festival.⁸⁹

The gifts are highly ritualized. Their contents, arrangement (with a stress on aesthetics) and ways of delivering are all subject to traditional rules, much like the menu of a ritual meal. The main items are foods, primarily foods required for the Čelle dinner.⁹⁰ Included are also objects of personal use for the girl and, possibly, for the members of her family. The social import of the traditional Čelle or Esfandi gifts is enormous, strengthening bonds between the families and persons involved. Carrying the trays with presents (often in a symbolical number of 7, 12 etc.) to the girl's house is performed in an ostentatious manner, sometimes with music and a procession, in full view of the neighbourhood. The female guests are frequently invited to see the presents. The ceremony is, in effect, an exchange of gifts, as the donors are

⁸⁷ Information collected by Miss A. Žolińska; for Širāz see Homāyuni, 194.

⁸⁸ Biruni, *Chronology*, 229.

⁸⁹ S.M.T. Mirabolqasemi, *Sarzamīn-e mardom-e Gil-o Deylam*, Rašt 2536 (1977), 146.

⁹⁰ see Enjavi I, 23 (for Šahrāb-e Arāk) and II, 126 (Māzandarān).

invited to a common Čelle meal and the trays are, in some cases, given back, laden with reciprocal presents.

Xorāsānis, according to Šakurzāde, arrange seven kinds of fruit on their Čelle trays. They decorate them with long feathers, known as those of birds of paradise. Sometimes they put a dress or a piece of jewellery on top of the tray.⁹¹ According to information by a girl student from Farimān, it was once customary for the groom's family to offer winter clothing to their future daughter-in-law on the Čelle evening, but today, jewellery is offered most frequently.⁹² Similarly in Herāt a young man used to send his fiancée warm clothes and in addition, a sheep intended for winter dried meat (*gusfand-e palvāri*). The custom is still practised by Herāti refugees in Mašhad.⁹³

The exchange of the Čelle presents between young people may also be done half-secretly, in a way that brings it close to „ritual begging”. But in this case too, family consensus is required. In Tāleqān (near Qazvin) it takes the form of *šāl-andāzi* (shawl-throwing): a young man climbs on the roof of his beloved's house and through a small window in the dome of the house hangs a long shawl with a present attached at the end. The girl unties the present and then she or her mother attaches a gift for the boy. But if the girl's family does not accept the suitor, they may attach an old shoe or a similar object.⁹⁴ In Takāb the object lowered on a long string into the fiancée's house through a smoke-hole is a toy-camel (*šotorak*) with gifts in the saddle-bags.⁹⁵

The Čelle ceremonial begging is not necessarily done by young men in love, but may be performed by groups of small boys and youngsters as well: in Serkān and Artimān they walk unseen on the roofs and hang their strings inside the houses in order to get their share of Čelle fruits or sweets.⁹⁶ In Jovinān (Kāšān region), groups of boys openly go from house to house on the first three evenings of Dey, singing a carol-like song and getting gifts (small change, sweets, some traditional kinds of food or objects) from their hosts. The text includes a prayer for those who give a present - the chorus repeats *āmin!* (Amen) after the greetings for each member of the family. For those who prove mean, there is a curse.⁹⁷

⁹¹ Šakurzāde, 153.

⁹² Information collected by Mr. J. Mikāniki.

⁹³ Oral communication by Mr. Asir-e Heravi.

⁹⁴ Enjavi I, 25.

⁹⁵ Enjavi II, 35.

⁹⁶ *ibid.*, 164.

⁹⁷ For texts see Enjavi I, 24.

Overt ritual begging on the Čelle evening seems a frequent practice in the Western and Central regions of Iran. As we have seen, begging for fuel is done in Qandahār and other places in Afghanistan, as well as in Zoroastrian villages around Yazd. The practice is not limited to Čelle. The ceremonial collecting of gifts is also common, in various forms, on Čahāršambe-ye Suri, on the first of Esfand (in Central Iran), as well as on some other crucial dates of the winter and even on some religious days of the Islamic lunar calendar. In Xorāsān, both Iranian and Afghan, ceremonial begging is usually performed on the nights of the Ramazān month.⁹⁸

Ritual begging combined with some forms of performance seems less frequent on the Čelle evening - its most typical periods are around the 10th of Bahman and Nouruz. However, in Rudsār (Gilān) a „gazelle” (*āhu*) - i.e. a person covered with a gazelle skin - is led from house to house and a performance accompanied by „carolling” takes place⁹⁹, and in some villages of Hamadān and Āzarbāyjān the Kuse rite starts at the beginning of the winter¹⁰⁰.

The above collected material allows some general conclusions as to the character of the Čelle/Yaldā night in Iranian folklore.

The festival shares the majority of its rites and beliefs with practically all the other significant dates of the winter-and-spring period: Nouruz and Čahāršambe-ye Suri, Esfand and the 10th of Bahman.

One of the recurring motifs of the festival is that of a new beginning. The rites characteristic of an opening- as well as turning- point of the year include various ways of purification and ablution, the fate-opening magic (*baxtgošā'i*) and auguries.

Another constant feature of the Šab-e Čelle is the belief in supernatural guests who visit the households on that night. An offering consisting of a portion of a ritual dish, a piece of a fruit, some sweets etc., should win the guest's support and help, but its lack may cause his wrath and an eventual disaster. The all-night vigil, burning lights and fires also seem to have been originally connected with the presence of the invisible visitor(s). Originally they should have been imagined as collective, anonymous ancestral souls. The custom of walking on the roofs and getting presents through a smoke-

⁹⁸ Šakurzāde, 377-81; oral communication by Mr. Asir-e Heravi and his *Farhang*, 101-2; S.A. Vakilyān, *Ramazān dar farhang-e mardom*, Tehrān 1370 (1991), 203-16.

⁹⁹ Enjavi I, 108-9; for *āhu* performance before Nouruz see M. Pāyande, *Āyinhā va bāvardāsthā-ye Gil-o Deylam*, [Tehrān] 2535 (1976), 122-4.

¹⁰⁰ Enjavi II, 105, 172, 185; cf. Krasnowolska, Ch. 8.

hole on the Čelle night looks to be a reminiscence of such a concept. Also the practices of magic and divination on this evening seem to be related to the presumed presence of the souls. The belief in the ancestral souls visiting their living kinsfolk on the winter solstice, confirms the former function of the moment as a calendric turning point: this appears to be a continuation of the *andargāh*, a transitory period between the old and the new year, devoted to the cult of the dead.

However, in some instances a particular, holy patron, whether named or not, is meant. He may be represented by a definite figure e.g. a beggar, a bathkeeper, or a person disguised as Amu Čelle. In the cases when he is almost forgotten, some traces of an offering testify to his presence. The Šab-e Čelle visitor has power over both vegetation and weather (in particular snow) and he may personify the winter or a section of it. His visit is thought to bring luck and to be indispensable for the prosperity of the next agricultural year.

When trying to find in our historical sources a counterpart to the mysterious patron saint venerated on the Čelle night, we would probably look for analogy with the mythological Veykard, the protector of farmers and brother to king Hušang, the inventor of fire. Another mythical character which would possibly fit the pattern, is Feridun's miraculous bull, distributing his treasures among the people on his festival.

The kinds of ceremonial foods served on the Čelle night (chiefly of cereals and fruits) bear witness to the agrarian character of the festival. These are usually the foods of an originally sacrificial use, intended as an offering to a supernatural visitor whose blessing would secure growth and fertility in the forthcoming year. Most of the magical actions of the evening are directed towards the next year's crops, much as in the case of the Christmas and New Year magic practices once widespread in rural Europe. There are also some practices, aimed at human fertility and the strengthening of family bonds (the custom of sending presents to a fiancée), but these can be of a derivative character.

The elements of an ancient fire festival and of a solar cult which would witness to a Mithraistic affiliation of the festival, survived to some extent in the ceremonies of the Šab-e Čelle, but are today of secondary importance. We will find them, instead, in the rites of the next crucial moment of the winter i.e. the Sade night, and on Čahāršambe-ye Suri, the opening of the vernal Nouruz cycle.

AGNIESZKA KUCZKIEWICZ-FRAŚ

ABOUT THE SUFFIX *-cī* IN HINDI ⁽¹⁾

Turkic suffix *-cī*, forming nouns of agency, has appeared in Hindi – as well as the group of about 100 Turkic loanwords – in the period of conquest of Northern India by the Muhammadan armies of Ghaznavids and Ghoris. Soldiers of these armies were recruited in the greater part from the peoples inhabiting the large region of Central Asia, from the borders of China in the East to the Mediterranean in the West, speaking different Turkic¹ languages or dialects, but the official and cultural language of the army was Persian (in that time also strongly influenced by Turkic). These Turks, having in the 13th century established the 'Slave Dynasty' in Delhi and settled themselves down in India, became subject to the rapid process of indianisation, also in speech, so that the mother-tongue of their children in the second generation was usually Indian. On the other hand, such a situation was conducive to permeating the foreign elements through the rising Hindi, which soon became a great North-Indian *lingua franca*.

In Hindi we have less than 30 derivatives with suffix *-cī*. In consideration of their etymology they can be divided into four groups:

- 1) genuinely Turkic, suffixed by *-cī* in Turkic;
- 2) of Iranian or Arabic origin; in most cases they have been suffixed by *-cī* in Persian, Tagiki or Afghan;
- 3) borrowed from English, suffixed by *-cī* in Hindi;
- 4) genuinely Hindi, suffixed by *-cī* in Hindi.

Trying to describe 1) and 2), one is confronted with two questions of fundamental weight. The first is from which language of the Turkic family a word was borrowed by Hindi. Chatterji indicates "Eastern Turkī or Chagatai dialect" (Chatterji, 184 f), but as far as the first is inaccurate, the second is absolutely unlikely. The name *Eastern Turki* is given to the Old-Uighur lan-

¹ In the armies conquering India, beside Turks, there also were Pashto-speaking Afghans, and Iranians using different Iranian dialects, like Dari or Tagiki.