

More on the “Traditional Date of Zoroaster:” the Arsacid Era and Other Topics

by GHERARDO GNOLI

The present article belongs to the Nachlaß of our regretted master and colleague Professor Gherardo Gnoli (who suddenly departed on March 7th 2012).¹ It was originally written in Italian, but, as usually, the author supposed that the final version should have been published in English, according to the standard policy of “East and West,” the academic periodical for which the article was prepared. It is for this reason that already in the original manuscript some sentences or technical terms and expressions were carefully given in English, so that no misunderstanding on crucial points or terms could be possible. Thus, assuming the nod of the author would have been freely given, we have decided to publish not only the extant Italian text (with few editorial changes as in the case of the Italian Ruckübersetzung of a few of the above mentioned English parts), but also a corresponding English translation.

This study concludes a well-structured answer to the critics directed by the late Professor A. Shapur Shahbazi (deceased on June 2006) against the “Lecture Four” of Gnoli’s Zoroaster in History (New York 2000) and it is the last of a unique conceptual block of three articles of which only two appeared during Gnoli’s life. The first one, as its title makes clear, “Agathias and the Date of Zoroaster” (East and West 54, 2004, pp. 55-62)² offers an interpretation of some passages concerning the Persian chronology in the Histories of the Late Antiquity Byzantine author; the second one (which appeared in the Proceeding of the 5th European Conference of the Societas Iranologica Europaea, Milano 2006, pp. 101-114) entitled “The Seleucid Era and the Date of Zoroaster,” was a further step in his original plan. Unfortunately, it was impossible to publish the third and last article of this coherent “project”. The text was actually submitted to “East and West” between December 2011 and February-March 2012, but it was never published because of the mandatory interruption of the issues of this periodical after the well-known events that discontinued the academic and institutional activities of the IsIAO.

Thus, this posthumous edition fulfils a deep desire of the author, and finally offers to the scholarly community a complete vision of Gnoli’s latest reconsiderations on some

¹ I must thank Prof. Adriano Valerio Rossi, who kindly involved me in the editorial task of this article. I have discussed Gnoli’s article with Prof. Rossi and decided with him some criteria of the present edition and the way to edit it. I must also deeply thank Dr. Jeffrey Kotyk (University of Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada) for his kind advice in the final redaction of the present preface.

² In my knowledge, another version of this article has been published with the same title in the volume *Ērān ud Anērān. Studies presented to Boris Il’ich Marsāk on the Occasion of His 70th Birthday*. Webfestschrift Marshak 2003, <http://www.transoxiana.org/Eran/Articles/gnoli.html>, accessed on the October 26th 2020. See also the printed version in the corresponding volume *Ērān ud Anērān. Studies presented to Boris Il’ich Marsāk on the Occasion of His 70th Birthday*, eds. M. Compareti, P. Raffetta, G. Scarcia, Venezia 2006, pp. 213-221.