The study of the Pahlavi books has so far contributed remarkably little to our understanding of the processes of development and change which affected the Zoroastrian priesthood during and after the Sasanian period. The main reasons for this can be found, no doubt, in the a-historical nature of many of these books — end-products of a long oral tradition, comprising texts of various origins which may well reflect different stages of such developments — and in the fact that, while these works contain frequent references to priests, matters pertaining to the actual organisation of the Zoroastrian Church are seldom explicitly discussed there.

The information offered by the Dādestān i Dēnīg (hereafter DD.) is therefore all the more welcome. As the work of a single author, the 9th century high-priest Manušcihr, the DD. describes the conditions of a well-defined period, and it deals repeatedly and at some length with the way in which the deteriorating economic position of the Zoroastrian community affected the clergy. The dynamics of change, moreover, are strikingly illustrated there by the questions and answers, the former reflecting the problems of a community struggling to adapt itself to the conditions of its time, the latter apparently prompted by Manušcihr’s desire to maintain the traditional order of things as far as possible.

Elsewhere, an attempt was made to trace the changes and developments in priestly functions and titles over a longer period of time. Here it is intended to present the relevant passages of the DD. in full, and to analyse the information found there, so as to gain as clear a picture as possible of the working conditions of the Zoroastrian priesthood in the latter half of the 9th century.

That the economic burden of maintaining the extensive and differentiated clergy which had developed in the Sasanian era was becoming too heavy for the Zoroastrian community of Manušcihr’s time, is shown by DD.43. The question deals with the plight of a distinguished prelate, who may have been the head of the ecclesiastical organisation of a city (môbed), and who is an authority on the Zand and the šāyist-nē-šāyist (i.e., respectively, the Pahlavi translation and exegesis of the Avesta, and the corpus of instructions on

matters of observance and ritual). For reasons not stated here — but hardly
unconnected, one might suppose, with economic considerations — this
priest leaves the place where he has held such an eminent position. Perhaps
for fear of provoking Muslim antagonism, he travels more or less incognito
to “a city such as Isfahan”, where the laymen are accustomed to commission
priests from other towns to have the more elaborate ceremonies (hamāg-
dēn) performed on their behalf. There, the priest does not “seek employ-
ment from the city”, which may mean that he does not apply to the local
religious authorities for some sort of official position within the ecclesiastical
hierarchy. He is therefore obliged to earn a living by such activities as
accepting commissions to make arrangements for the performance of religious
ceremonies (on which see below). The Zoroastrian community of
his new place of residence, however, appears to be greatly embarrassed by
the arrival of so eminent a priest, whose proper remuneration would be
beyond its means:

\[DD.43\] (K 35, 159r.2ff),\(^7\)

(1) 43-om pursin ud pāsox hān ī pursīd kū mard-e abarmāndīg ud abzārōmand kē-s andar
dēn abzār ī wuzurg kard estēd u-s dastwarīh ud mōbedīh kard estēd, ayāb-iš nē kard estēd
bē-s abzār ī wuzurg andar ī andar dēn kard estēd, (2) ud andar sahr ud gūyīg kas nēst kē
zand ī sāyist-nē-sāyist weh dānēd kū āy; pad gūyīg ī cīyōn Spāhān frāz rāsēd; mardomān ī
sahr hamāg-dēn ud was yazīshīn hamē fumāyēnd ās kās kās az any sāhīhā, *ďryōsān* kē-šān
abzār ī abzārīmān ī āy nēst; bē o sahr hamē āyēnd ī hamāg-dēn ud was yazīshīn ī ās
hamē padīrēnd. (3) hān mard ī *abarmāndīg ī abzārōmand gāh ī abzārīmān ī xwēs ud gūh ī
dēn ud gūh ī abzār i-s āst (*rāy*) nē-huškōhīhā ud šārmgēnīhā rāwend āndar sahr ud kār-e
ud dādestān-e az sahr ī xwīhēd ī kār-e ī dādestān-e ī dūdīgār ī nē dānēd kē-s sāzāghīg pad-
iš āst. (4) mardomān ī sahr abzār ī kardārīh ī hān mard ī dēn ī kard estēd āst ī hamāg-
dēn yazīshī ī yazīshīn ī kār ī hamē fumāyēnd ēg-īšān hān mard bahr kardan u-sān bahr
abāyēd dād(\(\text{an}\)) ī hān mard ī cīyōn ī abāyēd kardan? u-sān āwīš abāyēd ēndāxt(\(\text{an}\)
ayāb nē? (5) ud hamāg-dēn ī dēn ī kār sād ī was ī abāyēd guftān ī ū kū tō mad ēg-
mān bē o āy ī cīyōn ī tō nē *abāyist* \(^10\) fumādān, ayāb cīyōn kūnīshn? (6) bahr ī sād ud
nīrmād ī ī abārīg ī dār i-s ī hān abzār ī āwīš abāyēd, ēndāxtīna ī cīyōn ī bahr ī abzār ud
gūh ī dēn ī abzārīm ī mardomān ī cīyōn abāyēd ēndāxtīn?

'(1) The 43rd question and answer is that which was asked: a high-born\(^11\) and competent
man, who has achieved\(^12\) great mastery in (the field of) the religion, and who has held the
rank of a mōbed and a dastwar, or who has not held this, but has achieved great mastery in
(the field of) the religion, \(^2\) and in the city and the place there is no one who knows the
Zand and the sāyist-nē-sāyist better than he; he comes to a place such as Isfahan: the people
of (that) city always order the hamāg-dēn and many rituals (to be arranged) by various
persons from other cities, poor men who do not have his (i.e. that priest's) mastery and high
birth; they come to the city and accept the hamāg-dēn and many rituals. (3) That high-born
and competent man goes into the city modestly, without the pomp (befitting) his birth, and
the position of the religion, and the position (due) to the mastery which he possesses, and he
does not seek employment from the city, and he does not know another (type of) employ-
ment that would be suitable for him. (4) On account of the mastery and the activities which
that man has shown in the religion, should the people of the city let that man share in the
hamāg-dēn and in the works of ritual which they order (to be performed), and should they
give a share (of the fees) to that man, or how should they act? And should they let him have
(a share), or not? (5) And about the hamāg-dēn and the great profit from (such) works,