



IRANIAN
SERIES

RECLAIMING THE FARAVAHAR

ZOROASTRIAN SURVIVAL IN CONTEMPORARY TEHRAN

NAVID FOZI



LEIDEN
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Reclaiming the Faravahar

IRANIAN STUDIES SERIES

The *Iranian Studies Series* publishes high-quality scholarship on various aspects of Iranian civilisation, covering both contemporary and classical cultures of the Persian cultural area. The contemporary Persian-speaking area includes Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Central Asia, while classical societies using Persian as a literary and cultural language were located in Anatolia, Caucasus, Central Asia and the Indo-Pakistani subcontinent. The objective of the series is to foster studies of the literary, historical, religious and linguistic products in Iranian languages. In addition to research monographs and reference works, the series publishes English-Persian critical text-editions of important texts. The series intends to publish resources and original research and make them accessible to a wide audience.

CHIEF EDITOR

A.A. Seyed-Gohrab (Leiden University)

ADVISORY BOARD OF ISS

- F. Abdullaeva (University of Cambridge)
G.R. van den Berg (Leiden University)
F. de Blois (University of London, SOAS)
J.T.P. de Bruijn (Leiden University)
D.P. Brookshaw (University of Oxford)
N. Chalisova (Russian State University of Moscow)
A. Adib-Moghaddam (University of London, SOAS)
D. Davis (Ohio State University)
M.M. Khorrami (New York University)
A.R. Korangy Isfahani (University of Virginia)
F.D. Lewis (University of Chicago)
L. Lewisohn (University of Exeter)
S. McGlenn (unaffiliated)
Ch. Melville (University of Cambridge)
D. Meneghini (University of Venice)
N. Pourjavady (University of Tehran)
Ch. van Ruymbeke (University of Cambridge)
A. Sedighi (Portland State University)
S. Sharma (Boston University)
K. Talattof (University of Arizona)
Z. Vesel (CNRS, Paris)
M.J. Yahaghi (Ferdowsi University of Mashhad)
R. Zipoli (University of Venice)

RECLAIMING THE FARAVAHAR

ZOROASTRIAN SURVIVAL
IN CONTEMPORARY TEHRAN

Navid Fozi

Leiden University Press

Cover design: Tarek Atrissi Design
Cover illustration: Faravahar (photo Navid Fozi)
Lay-out: TAT Zetwerk, Utrecht

ISBN 978 90 8728 214 1
e-ISBN 978 94 0060 187 1
NUR 718

© Navid Fozi / Leiden University Press, 2014

All rights reserved. Without limiting the rights under copyright reserved above, no part of this book may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise) without the written permission of both the copyright owner and the author of the book.

This book is distributed in North America by the University of Chicago Press
(www.press.uchicago.edu)

To the Zoroastrian Community of Iran

Contents

List of Figures and Tables	8
Acknowledgements	9
CHAPTER 1 – Background, Questions, and Theory	11
CHAPTER 2 – The Preterrain of Fieldwork in Iran	37
CHAPTER 3 – The Ritual Construction of an Alternative Religious Space	53
CHAPTER 4 – Claiming Authenticity in Shi'i-Dominated Iranian Culture	99
CHAPTER 5 – The Performance of Difference and Similarity	121
CHAPTER 6 – Religious Rationalization and Revivalism	147
CHAPTER 7 – Conclusion	175
Notes	189
Bibliography	211
Index	231

List of Figures and Tables

FIGURE 1	Faravahar	42
FIGURE 2	Gāhambār, Tehran Fire-Temple	65
FIGURE 3	Gāhambār, Tehran Fire-Temple	65
FIGURE 4	Khordādīgān, Tehran, Marker	73
FIGURE 5	Portrayal of Zoroaster, Tehran Fire-Temple, Iraj Hall	76
FIGURE 6	General Porseh, Tehran Fire-Temple, Iraj Hall	87
FIGURE 7	Nozuti, Tehran Fire-Temple	91
FIGURE 8	Nozuti, Tehran Fire-Temple	91
FIGURE 9	Nowruz Sofreh Competition, Tehran Fire-Temple, Iraj Hall	111
FIGURE 10	New Fire-Temple's Design Competition, Tehran	167
TABLE 1	Number of Mobeds and Mobedyars, Breakdown by City and Gender in 2013	22

Acknowledgements

This book is based on my dissertation at the Anthropology Department of Boston University. I am deeply indebted to my PhD supervisor Professor Charles Lindholm for his unceasing support, guidance, and encouragement. I am grateful to Professor Robert Hefner for his critiques and comments. I thank Professor Robert Weller for his support, both as the chair of the anthropology department and as a critical reader of my chapters at Boston University Anthropology Department's Writing Group. I also thank Dr. Kimberly Arkin, an indispensable member of this Writing Group, and my fellow graduate students Leonardo Schiocchet, Mentor Mustafa, Tenzin Jinba, Noah Coburn, Sara Tobin, and Eric Michael Kelly, who challenged my analyses and provided insights. My special thanks go to Professor Jamsheed Choksy at Indiana University-Bloomington who generously offered his expertise on Iran and Zoroastrians; his close reading of the chapters and detailed comments enriched my work. I am thankful as well to my other professors at the Anthropology Department of Boston University who nurtured my academic interests and helped me cultivate the necessary analytical skills: Fredrik Barth, Peter Wood, Jenny White, Richard Augustus Norton, Frank Korom, and Nancy Smith-Hefner. Moreover, I would like to extend my appreciation to the department administrator, Mark Palmer, and program coordinator, Kathy Kwasnica.

My intellectual encounter with anthropology started as a PhD student at the Anthropology Department of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where Professors Paul Nadazdy, Neil Whitehead, Frank Solomon, Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, Catherine Bowie, Sharon Hutchinson, and Larry Nesper taught me to think anthropologically. I am especially indebted to Professor Charles Hirschkind who took me on as his student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and continued to mentor me even after I transferred to Boston University after he joined the University of California-Berkeley. The theoretical core of this dissertation was conceived during a meeting with him in spring 2009.

I am also indebted to my professors at University of Texas-Dallas: Pamela Brandwein who taught me to think critically, Murray Leaf who introduced me to anthropology, Bobby Alexander who supported my first major fieldwork, as well as Douglas Dow, and Paul Tracy. During three years of Post-doctoral Research Fellowship at the Middle East Institute of the National University of Singapore I had the time and support to revise the dissertation into this book. My thanks go to Professor Michael Hudson, the director of the Institute, and to Dr. Charlotte Shriver, its deputy director, for their interest in my work and the generous extension of my fellowship. Special thanks to Mimi Kirk the Institute's editor who helped me formulate the book proposal and edited some of the chapters. Thanks also to Professor Janet Kestenbergh Amighi who provided valuable comments and suggestions towards the end of this process. I would like to convey my deepest sense of appreciation to Dr. Asghar Seyed-Gohrab the editor in chief of the Iranian Studies Series of the Leiden University Press who worked with me patiently. I am also indebted to the anonymous reviewers whose comments and critiques improved this work tremendously

Financial support for my fieldwork for period of 2006–2007 was generously provided by the Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad. I received funding for another six months from Boston University Graduate Research Abroad Fellowship for Jan 2008–July 2008. The Vienna Program provided me with six months of writing fellowship as a Junior Visiting Fellow at the Institut für Wissenschaften vom Menschen in Austria (July 08–Jan 09), and the Zentrum Moderner Orient (the Center of Modern Oriental Studies) in Berlin offered me two months of write-ups (July–August 2010). Boston University's Anthropology Department supported my writing by offering me a Teaching Fellowship for two years. I am grateful to all these institutions for their help in this project.