



Examining how Zoroastrian religious heritage has been preserved by diaspora communities and has encouraged the rise of nationalism, with three significant geographical regions as case studies.

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Abstract

During the Persian Empire, Zoroastrianism flourished, influencing the traditions and customs of modern-day Iran and parts of India. Fire altars and royal tombs with inscriptions devoted to Ahura Mazda and subsequently became fire temples. The purpose of this research is to explore the preservation procedures used by heritage institutions and Zoroastrian communities to preserve Zoroastrian intangible and tangible heritage. Whilst, examining the influence of nationalism on diasporic and non-diasporic communities and their religious and national identities and to analyse the importance of mobilities theory in relation to diasporic communities. This study will also explore these preservation methods, three case studies will investigate the differences and highlight the importance of material culture in religion. The outcomes showed that a few of the fire temples required significant renovation work to ensure their stability and continue the religion, diasporic communities in India encouraged the rise of nationalism and the revival of Persian in Iran.

Key Words: Zoroastrianism, Diaspora, Nationalism, Heritage

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Glossary:

Caravanserai: A roadside room where travellers can rest.

Diaspora: Term used to describe migratory travel of collectives.

Heritage: A collection of items physical and material that represents an individual or a collective group.

Hindutva: Hindutva is the predominant form of Hindu nationalism in India

National identity: Is constructed and conveyed in discourse, predominantly in narratives of national culture.

Nationalism: Nationalism refers to a set of beliefs about the nation.

National Identity: An expression of identities projected on a nation.

Nation: Community of people represented under a country's rule.

Secularism: A political philosophy advocating the separation of religion and state

Secularisation: Turning away of society generally from organised religion, whereby religious thinking practices and institutions lose their significance.

Religious Identity: An expression of identity projected on a religious community

Zoroastrian terms:

Ābān: birthdays of the water

Āban Niyaīšn: hymn to the waters

Ābān Rūz: day celebrating water

Ādargān: day celebrating fire

Ādarni: The Dowry given to the bride's father

Afargan: a fire holder containing a burning fire (Harvey 2009)

Ahura Mazda: 'Wise Lord'

Amesha Spenta: the 'beneficent immortals'

Anahita: female yazata of the benevolent waters

Angra Mainyu: the 'destructive impulse/spirit'

Ātār: Birthday of the fire

Ātaš Niyāišn: Hymn to the fire

Ātash Adaran: Second grade of ritual fire

Ātash Behram: An atash behram is the highest grade of the temple.

Ātash Dadgah: third and lowest grade of ritual fire (in a house or minor temple)

Ātashdān: ‘‘fire altar’’

Ātashkada (pronounced *āteshkade*): "room of the fire, house of fire" or translated to mean "fire temple"

Avesta: Sacred books of Zoroastrians

Avestan: The Iranian language spoken by Zoroaster, which the Avesta was composed in.

Ayarheia :‘(Feast of) the homecoming of the herds from pasture

barashnom: ritual ablution, feature of extended rite of purification

behdin: ‘the good religion’ i.e., Zoroastrianism

cāšm :consecrated food at Gāhānbār

dakhma: ‘grave’; a place of exposure for the dead known as ‘tower of silence’

Faravahar: symbol represents Zoroastrian cosmology and teachings. Has now become a symbol of Iraniness or Iranian Nationalism.

Farvardīgān: split into two successive five days, honouring the souls of the deceased.

fravashi, fravahr, fravard: a spirit which has pre-existed this life and will survive after death; synonym for the soul.

Gāhānbār: one of six seasonal festivals

Gathas: the hymns created by Zoroaster

Getig: the corporeal world

Hamaspahmaedaya: given to the feast of the fravashis (A synonym for the soul) celebrated on the last night of the year, before the spring equinox

Hambandagi:(literally, ‘bondness together’),

Haoma: the beneficent plant pressed during Yasna, offered with milk and water at the end of the liturgy

Kusti: Woven cord of wool made of 72 threads; tied around waist over the *sudreh* after initiation.

Magu: ‘priest’

Maidhyairya: ‘Mid-winter’;

Maidhyoi-shema: ‘Mid-summer’.

Maidhyoi-zaremaya: ‘Mid-spring’;

Manthra: powerful word or prayer

Menog: ‘conceptual existence’

nān: Sacred bath before marriage

Nowrūz: New Day – Zoroastrian New Year

Padan: mouth covering worn by priest before the fire

Paitishahya: (feast of) bringing in the corn

Qesse-ye Sanjan: ‘The Ballad of Sanjan’

Sofre: Large white cloth placed on the ground or over the table at Gāhānbār representing seven elements of creation

Spenta Mainyu: ‘beneficent inspiration/spirit’ one of the Amesha spentas

Sudreh: white cotton shirt invested during initiation

The Divô: kindling of the lamp as part of the marriage ceremonies

Yasht: Young Avestan hymns to the yazatas

Yasna: ‘worship/consecration: term used for liturgy and Avestan text

Yazata: ‘being worthy of worship’

Zur-e ātash: "ritual offerings for fire"

Iranian Zoroastrians terms:

Ādisht: "place of fire" (pronounced ādosht or adhokhsh, Dari Zoroastrians of Iran)

Dar-i mehr & dar be-mehr: refer to functional and current temples.

Kalak: “‘clay altar’” (Dari word) (*Yazd Zoroastrians substitute*) for *ātashdān*

Mehragān: Festival honouring the yazata - Mithra

Tīrgān: Festival honouring the yazata – Tištriia

Indian Zoroastrian terms:

Adrâvvûn: Means the Betrothal Day ceremony

Āfrīnagānyu or afargānyu: "place for blessings" (Parsi name for fire holder from Gujarati

Agiary or *aqīārī*: (Gujarati language in premodern times) "fire temple"

Jâmâ pichhoi: Parsi wedding dress – white in colour

Muktād: Parsi celebration before Nav Ruz (Gujarati term for Gāhānbār)

Parsi: ‘Meaning ‘Persian’ refers to a Zarathushti whose family came to India in the centuries following the arrival of Islam in Iran’

Introduction:

Zoroastrianism represents one of the oldest Eastern religions that influenced practices in modern society today and is lacking in scholarship in the heritage discipline. Smith (2006) identifies that heritage is a dominant discourse integrated within identity, nationhood, and the connections between contradictory interpretations of the past. Religious heritage is closely connected to communities and in this context, the diasporic communities have helped to support and maintain their physical religious heritage.

This dissertation critically examines areas of religious heritage debate, particularly focusing on how diasporic communities have encouraged the rise of nationalism and how their heritage is viewed in secular societies. This will be explained through three major case studies referring to three particular locations Azerbaijan, India, and Iran, where the comparison of these locations will be discussed. This study is different to other discourses because this study is focusing on the connections of diasporic communities and nationalism in the context of Zoroastrianism and religious heritage.

The history of the religion will be covered briefly in this dissertation. Whilst historical background is an important component, it is not necessary for understanding the reasons for the emergence of nationalism in these areas. History is important in that it has influenced the religious heritage today. Although some religious ideas have changed since ancient cultures, the theology and materialism of the religion have not. Due to limited scholarship on the fire temple in Tehran, Iran it is not discussed within dissertation, despite providing a deeper understanding of the religious heritage methods undertaken by heritage professionals.

Heritage theory is significant to this dissertation due to the ongoing debates, some of which arise from interdisciplinary overlaps and resulting discourse. Examples of these might be Religious Studies and Heritage Studies and where they meet. Themes such as, Authenticity and Materialities are examined in both disciplines but from differing perspectives. Using heritage theory is useful here to facilitate understanding of the more intangible aspects of religion and its material heritage. Heritage itself is important because it is an intangible and tangible representation of the cultural expressions of the past through preservation and reinventions in the present. Chapter One will highlight the importance of heritage theory and its application to Religious Identity, Religious Heritage, Nationalism and Diaspora.

A study of Zoroastrianism is crucial for understanding the rich heritage and history of the communities and cultures that have preserved the religion for thousands of years. Examples

of these communities reside in, India, Iran, and Azerbaijan and this dissertation will consider how they interact with each other. This will be discussed thoroughly in context using the examples of the multitude of fire temples and other tangible and intangible heritage. The history and theological aspects of this religion have been discussed by a range of scholars, who have underlined the expansive past through archaeological evidence and tangible heritage. Chapter Two describes and evaluates themes that can be connected to Zoroastrianism, such as, Symbolism, Syncretism, Issues faced by the communities, and the connectiveness of the communities in Iran and India.

This dissertation will be located within Western scholarly debates that are operating within general traditions of heritage studies defined by Smith (2006) and discussed the centred Western cultural values for conservation as being applicable in both Western and Eastern discourse. Whilst emphasising on the need to conserve and save for future generations in Western discourse Wang et al (2021) defined the discourse of religious heritage and discussed that the boundaries between religion and heritage have become indistinct, Western discussion on the topic focuses more on sacred and secular concepts of heritage (Wang 2021 et al p.7).

The importance of focusing on Zoroastrian religious heritage encourages the understanding of Eastern heritage whilst highlighting the influence that religious communities had on secular and religious societies. These influences have helped create nationalistic approaches and the imperative preservation of religious heritage in society. This focus on Zoroastrian religious heritage is crucial when viewing other discourses on religious heritage.

Heritage is important because it combines social and cultural heritage, this is discussed in religious heritage and diaspora.

Chapter One: theoretical discussion

1.1 – Heritage

The definition of heritage can be complex and depends on whether it is defined from an individual or national perspective. Individual heritage can be defined through a person's ancestral history, from customs and objects experienced as a child. On a larger scale, however, national heritage may incorporate far wider notions of belonging and identity. Many researchers have examined and defined this term, and their perspectives on its meaning are largely similar. These scholars generally agree that it is a new reinvention of the past's present.

Heritage is not lost and found, stolen, and reclaimed, despite a discourse of conservation, preservation, restoration, reclamation, recovery, recreation, recuperation, revitalization and regeneration, heritage produces something new in the present that has recourse to the past.

(Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1995 p.149)

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's approach to defining heritage is significant because it introduces a new perspective on what heritage symbolises. This is particularly beneficial for debating the Western perspective of physical materialism; therefore, religious heritage may be examined from this unique approach.

Other scholars have highlighted that many accounts on the material culture of heritage have a western bias. Traditional descriptions of heritage have emphasised the importance of cultural value placed on these items (Smith 2006 p.3). These scholars' representation of a westernised perspective on heritage concentrates on the preservation and conservation of heritage's physical materiality, whilst neglecting the non-physical areas of non-western heritage. In non-western nations, heritage encompasses a broader sense of spiritual and intangible heritage, with ritual sites and statues functioning as the key focal points. This dissertation will discuss these perspectives in more detail.

Theories beyond the concept of heritage emerged in the 1980s and 1990s, reflecting on multiple disciplinary sources that are still relevant when debating heritage theory today. Some of these are: Authenticity, Identity, Commodification and Community heritage; these

concepts have been revisited and applied to heritage in different contexts (Waterton, Watson 2013 p.549). The concept of Authorized Heritage Discourse (AHD) is another theory that has made significant contributions to the heritage discipline. AHD focuses on 'aesthetically pleasing' material objects, sites, places, and/or landscapes that current generations are compelled to protect and maintain, with an emphasis on preserving such material things for future generations, creating a sense of common identity, or belonging based on the past (Jones 2009, p.133). Like authenticity, this theory is the core principle that reports on the preservation, management, and representation of the historic environment.

In order to understand heritage, it is important to examine other theoretical approaches from different disciplinary sources. Mobilities theory is an example of this, because it critically analyses people's movement in spaces when united with the dynamic of diverse cultures, migration, and diasporic travel in the context of mobility when they are "on the move." (Cohen 1997). 'Objects variably mobilize place, and they are involved in the reconstitution of belonging and memory' (Lury 1997; Molotch 2003). Many periods of migratory travel have occurred within Zoroastrian communities, generating multiple varieties of memory and a sense of belonging.

All these theories explore and adapt to the root of what heritage is, looking beyond heritage can encourage this further by evaluating the discourses and representations of heritage through lived experiences to decentre heritage theory

(Waterton, Watson 2013 p.558).

Heritage is a sense of belonging within a community, whether religious or not. The fact that individuals share a similar experience or worship the same religion ties them together through a common identity. This involves documenting their heritage in order to reinforce and better understand it; instances of individuals archiving their heritage have been found in both religious and secular heritage.

Amidst a landscape of monumental buildings and objects that were once created to be markers of events or ego, and which feed national and collective memory and identity [there is] an increasing desire by individuals to record and mark their existence within wider social groups and networks

(Robinson Silverman 2015, p.15)

Heritage is an intangible experience. For example, the relationship between individuals and the physical object being exhibited can fluctuate depending on the person viewing it. An example of this the courtyard of the Varjavand Hall in Yazd, which comprises of exhibits presenting key religious artefacts portraying Zoroastrianism to tourists. (See Figure 10).

1.1.2: Religious Heritage:

In this project religious heritage is particularly important.

The definitive objective of heritage on which this dissertation will concentrate is Religious Heritage. Many academics have challenged the distinction between religious and secular heritage. Religious heritage possesses a 'livingness' component through the representation of the past in the present, continuously embracing history by intensifying the cultural value placed on its intangible and physical heritage. (Stovel p.1 2005; Wijesuriya 2005). While the term living may be understood as the opposite of non-living, and refer to a place still in use, alternatively it may be used to denote the presence of residents in settlements or near the site (Stovel p.1 2005; Inaba 2005).

Each member of the religious community is a living component of the religion; the religion has been preserved through verbal transmission and physical preservation carried out at each settlement with a place of worship nearby. Zoroastrians, for example, construct temples near bodies of water in the same way that their ancestors erected fire temples near pools of water, as an essential feature of their faith.

Unlike 'heritage,' which has been constructed over time and distance, religious heritage reflects the host culture, merging tangible and intangible heritage in the natural/cultural environment. (Stovel 2005; Wijesuriya 2005 p.2). Zoroastrians, for example, believe that the

Ahura Mazda is the intangible 'living' incarnation of their religion and thus their heritage, and that the theological and physical components are expressions of their identity.

In many cases, clear typological distinctions are neither possible nor useful, recognising that religious forces are based on belief systems that have been at the core of our life, and noting that any form of living heritage is inseparable from the frameworks of the religion or belief system of its society

(Stovel 2005; Wijesuriya 2005 p.2)

Religious identity is a part of religious heritage. Similarly, to National identity, religious identity can be used to describe the religious artefacts and customs of a community that have accustomed cultural value and meaning to the religion. Religious identity can be based on sanctified religious artefacts and sacred buildings, defining religion

as a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things set apart and prohibited beliefs and practices which unite into one moral community called a church and all those who adhere to them

(Durkheim 1964 quoted in Werbner 2010 p.234)

However, in this study, 'the church' is an Ātash Behram (fire temple), sometimes known as a "fire cathedral," since it houses the holiest of consecrated fires (Hartz, 20;2009). Religious identity is developed from this collection of beliefs and is expressed in the daily lives of religious communities through religious texts, ceremonial rituals, clothing, and other techniques. When religious adherents begin practising a specific faith, their identities grow in strength with each new member to whom they extend their identity.

Other academics have defined religion in a number of ways; these studies emerged in the early nineteenth century. Religion has been discussed in relation to society and its systems, as well as individuals and material culture. Weber (1978) observed that religion had a vital influence in a society's economic transformation, although Weber attains a

limited description of religious rituals and traditions. The discussion focuses on the links between religious notions and the concept of a class structure in greater depth. When investigating the connections between the Hindu Caste system and Zoroastrianism in India, these religious concepts will have been combined so that the community members can fit into a harsh and alien society. Similarly, Durkheim emphasised the ideas of religion and society, postulating that religion and society generated each other. When considering a religion such as Zoroastrianism, these principles of religion and society being interwoven are critical. The emergence of the religion by Zoroaster revolutionised the possibility of monotheistic religion and the accessibility of the elements required for worship for all. Religion, according to Leger, has a vital function in society since it functions as the principle of our communal representation and collective memory of the community (Turner 2017, p.291).

Religious identities flourish within a strong connected community, and their ideas and practises are accepted across several traditionally marginalised secular societies. When concentrating on Zoroastrianism, this is relevant because of the suffering that Zoroastrian communities have been subjected to in multifarious societies in different locations. The communities, religious identities have been influenced by the condition and viewpoints of society in particular a secular society, like the case in Azerbaijan. Heritage and society are inextricably linked; heritage protects and upholds community aspirations; religious heritage is created through these aspirations. Different religious identities could be utilized to renegotiate and perpetuate tensions with different religious groups, while also explaining how religious identity emerges when established faiths are challenged or endangered by neighbouring or invading religious groups (Werber 2010, p.233). This is significant when focusing on the relationship between Muslims and Zoroastrians, this study examines the damage of religious identities and heritage performed by other dominating religions. These dominating religions have thrived in societies where their beliefs are the only truth, therefore, the encounter between other religions such as Zoroastrianism questions and threatens other religious beliefs. Enforcing decisions to replace Atash Behrams with mosques in an attempt at undermining and minimising the religion (Choksy, 2006, p.329).

Religious identity represents the division of the human and sacred worlds, the individual and their God (or Wise Lord), sacred and profane. It conceives and embodies the cosmologies of variation between the living and the dead (Werber 2010 p.233). Pilgrimages are assemblies of religious identities from multiple places to explore other people's perceptions of religion via ceremonial rituals and performances (Werber 2010 p.234). There is a collective feeling of

belonging and inclusiveness experienced at ceremonial rituals, strengthening the individuals character and placement within a community. Durkheim refers to collective ritual observations as liberating for the person attending, through feelings of courage that are expression into the community (Durkheim, 1964; p.234).

As highly intricate, staged symbols of aesthetic communal experiences, these ritual observations establish religious identities, with individuals from multiple backgrounds encountering one another through the ritual performances observed at pilgrimage centres (Werber 2010 p. 247).

1.1.3. Religious identity:

Intangible and tangible objects that a community, nation, or individual has determined are significant in defining themselves can be used to define religious identity. The communities' important artefacts are frequently manifestations of the religion, collectiveness, and communal beliefs, negotiating and validating their connections as a larger group.

The desire to emphasise a specific religious identity might originate from widespread suffering under more dominant faiths; this causation is essential in understanding Zoroastrian religious identity. Suffering, according to Fozi and other academics, is a component of Zoroastrian history (Fozi, 2014, p.25). This suffering has been experienced through destruction of religious heritage, damaging their religious identities. An example of this is evident through the repeated invasions of Iran during the Persian Empire and the destruction of Persian libraries. The mention of this suffering imperative to this discussion, the religious community and their hybrid identities have been tarnished throughout the centuries. The continuation of the religion occurred through the persistence of community members not allowing themselves to be oppressed under imperial rule. The migration to India, continued this survival of the religious identities and heritage.

The Faravahar, a Zoroastrian symbol that once originally decorated the Persepolis walls, represents the link between the spiritual and material realms. It is now placed at the entrance of Zoroastrian fire temples. Iran has reclaimed it as a major symbol, representing both their future and their old historical connections. The immaterial world is represented by natural phenomena, which could have introduced the construction of early religions. Internal beliefs

and experiences shape identity. Environmental variables contribute to the theory of how cosmic entities arise.

The concept of a religion being referred to as a cult is crucial within this study.

Zoroastrianism has been referred to a 'fire cult' with their clear worship of fire, religion and cults are distinctively different. Zoroastrians seek favours from Ahura Mazda for wealth and health which is performed through prayers and hymns (Yasna), gifts (possibly from pilgrims) and sacrifice (the cow in Zoroastrianism). Through the decision to worship a religion, the individual has chosen to change their viewpoint on the world and wanting to further better their life through services that are viewed as the correct way within the religion. For Zoroastrianism, the latter part is crucial within their religion, for man is encouraged to practise 'good thoughts, good words, and good deeds' so that he can lead a pure and healthy life. Kant (1973) has described this action as 'moral action' demanding that humans assert their autonomy and responsibility (Turner 2017, in R. King 2017 p.290).

1.2 – Diaspora

The discussion of the term Diaspora has been used from the classical world but was reclaimed in academia during the late 20th century (Cohen 1996, p.1). Scholars used the term to describe different factors and characteristics, there is no singular definition known to describe the term. It is a fluid description used to describe communities who have undertaken migratory travel away from their homeland. Safran (1991) introduced defining characteristics that can be used to describe diasporas, Butler (1998) highlighted similar dimensions that are experienced by diasporic groups. These characteristics and dimensions are not imperative to this study, however, some of the concepts noted by these scholars can help to encourage the understanding of diaspora groups and their relationship towards religion and religious heritage. There are many negative connotations that have been projected onto the idea of diaspora groups, the collective memory of such communities has impacted their heritage. This study highlights the significance that nations and borders play when a diasporic group enters into a new environment and the imperative nature of their survival is placed at risk by other dominating members within a society.

The term diaspora has been developed to mean a positive symbol of 'life,' in contrast with the negative connotations that have historically been associated with the denomination (Majhail, Doan 2019 XII). There are numerous classifications that have identified diasporas by two key features: the first is that the people are 'scattered,' and the second their wish to return home. According to Berg et al, for a diaspora to occur, the general rule of communities is that a typically bigger number of people are necessarily required to establish in at least two nations beyond the homeland. However, this rule is only explored by Berg et al, and there is little evidence to support this notion ((Berg, 2019 p.4). This criterion does not apply to religious diaspora communities such as Zoroastrians, since their communities contribute to the two biggest populations in India and Iran, (their homeland) with smaller groups migrating across the globe. Consistent with Berg et al, members of such communities are physically separated from their homeland, but through memory, their connection to their heritage and

traditions is more carefully observed than with those who still live in the nation of origin, since there is a greater urge to preserve these valuable cultural notions.

The insatiable yearning to return to their homeland is not true for all groups. Clifford (1997) emphasises that 'multi-locale diasporas' were not always defined by a specific geopolitical perimeters, resulting in many irrational sentiments regarding their physical return to their 'homeland' and the sentimental and physical attachment to land (Ang 2011 p.86). Ang (2011) expands on the concept of 'return' by stating that it could be a mythical element of the diasporic experience. This is because diasporic agency not only preserves the memory of these experiences but the physical establishment of adapting their cultural identities in new locations. Therefore, the old homeland remains a crucial part of their identity. However, rather than being a fundamental component of their identity, it symbolises their extensive past, the trace of ancestral influence and attachment. Furthermore, diasporas are dispersed, fluid formations that shift within each environment that they are subjected to, multi-identities with them.

Rose et al (2009) highlights the confrontations that the Zoroastrian community has been subjected to concerning their self-definition and normative practices, in particular, those groups where other dominating religions co-exist alongside them (Rose p. 15, Harvey 2009). In diaspora, there is a leader of these small groups who is responsible for organizing community affairs and ensuring the preservation of the religion. In India, these leaders are representatives of the community in areas of power, projecting the views and opinions of the community. They are known as the Anjuman or Anjoran (Hinnells 2005 p.608).

In diasporic environments, heritage can be recognised through physical items such as clothes, meals, and tangible symbols of identity, for example, photographs, letters, books, and jewellery. In religious diaspora, the heritage could be reflected through a symbol of their deity or God. For example, Zoroastrians carry a symbol of the Faravhar, or an image of Zoroaster framed on the wall of their agiary (See figure 1). This is similar to Christianity, where an image of Jesus is a key emblem, The notion of having a heath fire or a communal temple where they can worship fire is required for Zoroastrians, and the act of recall via memory is presented at these holy places. This collective memory deepens the link between their geographical origins and their new country's cultural integration. Non-material artefacts

include oral transmission of languages, prayers, and songs, and the concept of remembering their birthplace via debates and stories. Some diasporic groups may need to adapt their languages to the prevailing language of their new nation-state. The adaption to a new language was an essential element of the Parsi Zoroastrians' heritage, with the translation of Avestan works into Gujarati, encouraging the continuance of the faith for other Parsis so that they could study the Avesta scriptures in their own language (Boyce 1979 p.116-117).



(Figure 1, Photo of Zoroaster on wall of Yazd Atash Behram Taylor et al 2018, Youtube 2022)

When concentrating on diaspora, authorised heritage discourse can be problematic; it can be regarded as a 'denationalising' force (Ang, 2011, p.87). The idea of a diasporic perspective disrupts the equality of heritage, identity, and nationhood, which has an impact on heritage designation guidelines and procedures. Furthermore, it undermines the tendency to identify heritage validity in immutable connection to place. As diasporas are firmly entrenched in narratives about the past, retroactively focused on the beginnings of diasporic groups, diasporas share a perspective towards the past that entails the act of remembering. Heritage, like diaspora, is linked to the past via the act of preserving for the future. Diasporic communities inside nation-states typically result in de facto pluralisation of culture and society, with these groups absorbing key elements of their traditions, customs, and languages. As part of the process of building their identities in a new area, they bring their memories with them.

Scholars have discussed the theory of heritage pluralisation. Politics of inclusion incorporates notions of difference and diversity into a nation's self-understanding (Stevens 2007),

Ashworth (2007), there is a positive pluralisation of the past deeply rooted within the nation's history rather than the heritage of the migrant (Ang, 2011, p.89).

Lowenthal (1998) argued that heritage requires the domestication of the past in order to assist in the present. Selective memory is associated with this domestication. Migratory memory is connected to the migrant's narrative of integration within the nation-state which, includes the suppression of their disruptive memories of separation for more positive memories (Ang 2011, p.89).

Diaspora communities with rich and deep histories are at risk of adopting a past-focused perspective rather than a contemporary engagement in a new environment. Their identities may be labelled as 'immigrant,' implying that they originate from elsewhere other than as contributing members of their new society (Ang 2011, p.89-90). Feelings of exclusion might occur. Furthermore, it is not unusual for diasporic communities to relinquish heritage connections to their homeland in favour of new, hybrid identities that are not bound by their origins. It is probable that the Parsis of India changed their identities to appeal to new generations of Zoroastrians who would grow up with an Indian identity rather than their ancestral Persian one. Their ancestral identity is not lost, as their title indicates their Persian history and rituals signify these ties. However, to feel more inclusive, their identities may have needed to be integrated to 'fit' in with their co-inhabitants (Ang 2011, p.92).

The study of diasporic groups and religion focuses on the 'movement' of peoples from one destination to another, religious groups often embark on pilgrimage travels to expand their religious connections. Whilst diasporic groups migrate from one nation to another in search of a home.

Mobilities theory can help understand this movement of people, in modern society it is easier to travel places with vehicles and other forms of transport, this was more of a challenge in ancient societies. Urry (2004) theorised that people travel to watch the world and everything that is perceived through the act of viewing becomes part of the individual's possession. For Zoroastrians, their pilgrimages exchanged a sense of belonging to those members through rituals, meeting other members at pilgrimage sites and strengthening their religious piety. For example, the Caravanserai in Azerbaijan was visited by many different peoples including those of Indian Merchants, where through collective devotion their fire temple was rebuilt

(Liutikas 2018 p.40). In modern society, the fire temple in Baku, Azerbaijan is still visited today by many different visitors who have different perspectives of the site (Ateshgah 2022).

Diasporic and non-diasporic groups have the same collective bloodlines and heritage; the distinction is the impact of migration on diasporic communities. Despite inheriting characteristics of their new environments such as caste and modifications to diet, dress, and language. Zoroastrians were able to reclaim and sustain both their religious identity and, to a lesser extent, their nationalist identity. Religious identity is expressed through a community's beliefs and practices, which include artefacts and buildings. Religious communities confront the possibility of losing their original religious identities as they settle and strive to adapt in new locations. Religious identity was maintained through the preservation of Zoroastrian religious practices, literature, clothing, hymns, and fire temples.

Diaspora is important because it combines the concept of identities and heritage, highlighting the influence on society by diasporic and non-diasporic communities.

1.3 – Nationalism

Discourses on the discussion of Nationalism began during the early 19th century, many scholars have defined the meaning of Nationalism coining it with the term of a nation. Debating that nationalism and nation are interlinked when understanding a society and the customs. National identities are indispensable when focusing on Nationalism. These terms are crucial within this study, the influence of nationalism onto religious communities effects their religious and national identities.

Nationalism can be represented through a collective community concerned about the how their national identity is portrayed (Kedourie, 1965. P.9). In particular, religious identities can be diminished for the stronger political agendas in a political secular society and therefore removing significant factors of their identities. An interesting perspective on the meaning of nationalism, is that it can be perceived through the outlook of the world as a whole and establishing a group identity from within (Calhoun 1997, p. 520). Nationalism can be used to organise perceptions of identities, connecting people together with other nationals and distinguishing them from members of other nations.

Other scholars of Nationalism, describe it as a 'political principle' whilst, Billig (2005) states that Nationalism is a reproduction of obvious practices and imaginative constructions. For examples, museums, censuses, and national competitions. These reproductions are similar to the definition of a nation, a collective of individuals who believe themselves to be unified by a set of characteristics that distinguishes them from other nations (Hass 1986, p.726).

Scholars have disputed the definition of a nation, Hobsbawm (1983) and Anderson (1983) have described a nation as an 'imagined community' that holds cultural value and forms to create invented traditions. Nations are an expression of multiple identities and hybrid traditions that are preformed through symbols and behaviours by a multitude of communities. Secular nations are not removing religious communities, some nations are ruled by strict and harsh governments who enforce their own beliefs onto a nation. An example is Azerbaijan where religious minorities have been restricted by other dominating religious communities and their identity has been transformed into a collective secular identity. Damaging their

personal identity for their safety.

Heritage and Nationalism draw from invented traditions and characteristics of the nation with close connections of heritage through memories, myths, symbols and shared values or characteristics that are important to understanding the modern nation. Nationalism interprets these symbols, transforming them into a national identity for a nation. Remembering the rich history of the nation and its individuals. Heritage and Nationalism are important within this study, as heritage symbols have been interpreted into society and used for nationalistic purposes.

Secular heritage is significant through these invented traditions as they reinvent the present through the past and grow older traditions into modern society. For nations where religion is prominent, religion could be known as an invented tradition and is separate from secular traditions. However, it is something that could differentiate this nation from others if the religion is a minority or if it is part of a diasporic community. If a nation is created with only diasporic communities, in theory, it is a different type of nation as it combines distinct cultures and characteristics and there is no singular tradition that this nation could be defined by. This nation is imagined because the members of even the smallest nations will never know or meet most of their fellow members (Anderson, 1983, p.6)

Religious nationalism incorporates manufactured practises within borders that focus on identity, emphasising the holy and mythical connection between believers, the past, and the present (Werber 2010; Wetherell and Mohanty p.254; 2010). The most important of these religious connections supported the foundations of the old and robust imagined communities, which were not aligned with the secular state's totalitarian position (Anderson, 1983, p.169).

The recollection of national symbols, memories and traditions are vital with the intricacies that are experienced at sacred religious ceremonies. Societies are required to establish and rejuvenate themselves through expressive collective and rites (Smith 1998a;15) (Özkırımlı 2017 p.28). Religious communities will have adopted a sense of religious nationalism through national rules and customs. Non-diasporic communities in Iran have expressed a sense of Persian revival through forms of nationalism. The relationships between the diasporic community in India encouraged and supported this rise of Iranian nationalism whilst incorporating the 'reintroduction' of Persian heritage into their society after decades of suppression.

Chapter Two – Zoroastrian fire temples - Case studies

The ancient religion of Zoroastrianism was started by the prophet Zarathustra and modern descendants of the religion can be found largely in India and Iran (Yasuda, Raj and Griffen, 2018, p.40). The Greeks referred to him as Zoroaster, placing him some 6,000 years earlier than the Greek philosopher Plato (ca.492-ca 347 B.C.E). However, later historians' postulate 600 B.C.E, the same time as Hebrew prophets (Hartz et al 2009 p.24). Moreover, modern scholars have debated the dates of Zarathustra's existence, suggesting that it was between 1500-1000 B.C.E, although this is a notably extensive range of time. Most accounts of Zarathustra's life were orally transmitted for almost a thousand years before written documentation, proving it more difficult to verify their accuracy. Nevertheless, most of the knowledge about Zarathustra comes from his writings and his physical and spoken (oral) influence (Hartz et al 2009 p.24).

Zoroastrians use variants of the title originating from *Zarathushti Din* (the 'religion of Zarathustra) or (the 'Zoroastrian religion'). Others make use of 'Mazdayasna' or 'Mazdaism,' as this title is the closest to the ancient definition of the religion, connecting it solidly to Ahura Mazda ('The Wise Lord') (Rose, 2018, xxi). Most Zoroastrians, however, prefer the Iranian version of the term and refer to themselves as Zarathushti or Zardushti, embracing this name to preserve their Iranian ancestry (Rose p. 11, Harvey 2009). Nevertheless, Indian Zoroastrians prefer to be known by the term 'Parsi,' meaning 'Persian,' intensifying their connection to their homeland through the expression of their heritage and religious identities. Later, Zoroastrian immigrants from Iran to India in the 18th and 19th centuries came to be known as 'Iranis,' however the term 'Parsi' is still used in some parts of India to identify Indian Iranian Zoroastrians (Rose, 2018, xvi).

For Zoroaster to begin preaching his teachings to bigger crowds, he first had to convince his people to convert, and this was a tedious experience only receiving a single convert. His cousin, Maidhyoimanha, which encouraged him to travel elsewhere to preach to strangers (Boyce 1987, p. 31).

Zoroaster enforced two significant obligations: one for individual to fulfil, which was to pray five times a day, and a communal requirement to celebrate the seven feasts. These annual seven high feasts were dedicated to Ahura Mazda (Wise Lord) and the Amesha Spentas (Holy Immortals, one of the divine beings of Zoroastrianism). These seven feasts, known as Maidhyoi-zaremaya, Maidhyoi-shema, Paitishahya, Ayarheia, and Maidhyairya, have been a long-standing tradition of Zoroastrian history (Rose, 1987 p.33).

Zoroastrianism is a monotheistic religion that emphasises the necessity of man's participation in the conflict between good and evil. The good is Ahura Mazda, who represents light, honesty, truth, and justice, whereas the bad is Angra Mainyu or Ahriman, who represents darkness, deception, untruth, and injustice (Ringer, 2011, p28). The principle of "good thoughts, good acts, and good words" is fundamental to Zoroastrian theology. If practised in daily life, the individual will escape the evil spirit Angra Mainyu, further increasing their devotion to Ahura Mazda.

The world's elements are essential for understanding Zoroaster's teaching, with fire being the most significant in the ceremonial rites that take place in the house and temple. In the Gathas, fire is associated with Asha (a principle that governs the world), and Ahura Mazda's emblem provides strength and courage to the devoted (Rose, Harvey; p.27 2019). Fire is vital to Zoroastrian religion; it is a significant symbol of their religious past. Many non-Zoroastrians have observed the presence of fire at what are now archaeological sites.

Throughout the religion, there is a strong emphasis on ceremonial etiquette and purification, which is represented via daily prayers and ceremonial cleanliness. This is a major statement of their religious identity, since non-Zoroastrians have recognised the relationship between the Zoroastrian follower and the tangible artifact throughout history, demonstrating their absolute commitment to Ahura Mazda. When analysing the relationship between religion and heritage, Chau (2005) highlights the importance of 'doing' in East Asian cultures, stating that the act of praying has significant value to the participant because it enhances their religious intensity and commitment. Zoroastrians believe that this ritual protects them against contamination and practising through two substantial acts of 'doing' (Chau 2005). For example, wearing Padan (masks) when visiting a holy fire, and disposing of the deceased on mountaintops or on anthropogenic towers known as dakhmas (Paula, pp.117-119).

The religion flourished as a state religion for three Iranian empires (224-651 BCE) from the sixth to the seventh centuries BCE. The Achaemenid Empire (550-330 BCE), the Parthian Empire (247-224 BCE), and the Sasanian Empire. Furthermore, textual material on ostraca, rock reliefs, parchment, and coins shows that the faith saw an increase in restoration throughout these decades, with written information from these periods (Rose, 2018, xviii). The below archaeological evidence chapter supports this.

Throughout history, Zoroastrianism has faced hostility and efforts at erasure from other dominant religions and cultures; nonetheless, despite being in fragmented groupings over the world, the religion has thrived. For many centuries, Zoroastrians held critical governmental posts that were critical to the Iranian Zoroastrian identity and had a lasting influence on the establishment of Islam (Rose, 2018 p.xix). In ritual performances, the magians or magi (Zoroastrian priests) was diverged from the Persians, their collection of the Avesta was influential with its arrangement for prayers at worship (Günaltay, 1987; Masters). Dizdar (2016).

To accommodate the large established flames, ceremonial structures were built (Rose, Harvey; p.28 2019). Fire temples with encircling hallways from three or four directions (Agiary) and several areas separating the fire and its rites were prominent throughout the Persian, Seleucid, Parthian, Nabataean, and Indo- Greek eras. Temples similar to this might be found in Iran, Afghanistan, Gandara (North Pakistan), Syria, and Mesopotamia (Iraq) (Emeli 2007). Later Islamic literature documented the dynasty's development, as Zoroastrian priests consolidated their influence through the construction of fire temples becoming significant centres of worship (Rose, Harvey, 2018, p. xxiii). Burrow contended that Zarathustra's influence on the Iranian religion resulted in the decision to transform Indo-Aryan gods (Varuna and Indra) into demons modelling them after the gods of Iran's Indigenous Indo-Aryan people. They are not, however, recognised as gods in the New Iranian faith (Mallory, 1991 pp.42-43). Mallory goes on to say that the Zoroastrian faith utilises particular terminology to identify demons, and that it was a "religious-based fight" against Iran's divided Indo-Aryan population. The success of Iranian expansion, resulted in the division of Indo-Aryans into western (Mitanni) and eastern (India) groups" (Mallory,1991, p.43)

2.1: Geographical origins:

In ancient Iran, the religion spread from Persis to Northern Media (the area of Atropatene, present Azerbaijan) (West, 2019, p.26). Through evidence of psalms and liturgical arrangements such as the Yashts and other material that composed the Avesta by priests, Zoroastrianism may have impacted other Eastern civilizations (West, 2019, pp.26-27).



(Figure 2, Map projecting geographical origins from Persis into Northern Media. Encyclopaedia Britannia 1994)

2.1.2 Archaeological evidence:

Archaeological evidence of Iranian and Azerbaijani heritage sites has provided clear evidence of fire temples, which possibly indicates the presence of Zoroastrian rituals. The excavation of Shirvanshah's palace and Maiden tower in Azerbaijan found evidence of a fire holder within the tower. Following this, theorists questioned whether the tower might have been used as a fire altar, further suggesting Zoroastrian influence (A. АХУНДОВ, 1986 P. 46).



(Figure 3 Walled city of Baku, Shirvanshah's Palace, and Maiden Tower Cantoni 2022)

Boyce emphasises the importance of Zoroastrian physical heritage at archaeological locations where the Achaemenian kings, Cyrus, Cambyses, Darius the Great, and Xerxes were all devout Zoroastrians with tombs and interpretations of fire altars (Boyce, 1987 pp.50-60). However, according to Rose, "there is no reference of Cyrus' name, nor that of any other Achaemenid emperor in Zoroastrian literary tradition" (Rose, 2018, p.35). Furthermore, this debate emphasizes the difficulty to dismiss the clear archaeological evidence of Zoroastrianism at such ancient burials.

Supporting Boyce's argument, the excavation of Pasargadae in the 1970s was an example of Iranian archaeological confirmation of Zoroastrianism existence. This was the capital of Cyrus the Great's Achaemenid Empire, which was founded in 540 BCE. Ancient Persian inscriptions were unearthed about 521 BCE (Rose 2018 p.28). The excavations discovered examples of Persian culture and identity, such as two white stone fire-holders with a three-tiered top and base that were over waist height. It is speculated that altars were erected on high ground to be closer to the sun, thereby developing their devotional worship of light. (Rose, 2018).



(Figure 4 Zoroastrian symbol of Mithra at Pasargadae, Steven 2022)

Iconography on Persian royal tombs supports alleged rituals conducted in front of a burning fire at Shirvanshah's Palace and the Maiden Tower in Azerbaijan. These paintings depict the king standing in a respectful position on a three-tiered raised platform, further corroborating unambiguous indicators of the use of fire holders (Rose, Harvey 2019 p.28). This archaeological evidence supports the geographical origins of the Zoroastrian faith, which have long been contested by scholars. Many academics have argued that the ancient location of Pasargadae is an important part of Iranian history and a significant indicator of Zoroastrian religion (Boyce 1979, p.50). The presence of Zoroastrianism at these locations, however, is still contested. Rose contradicts herself by emphasising the difficulty of discovering Zarathustra material in Old Persian inscriptions, but then emphasises the intimate connection of the Old Avesta in these inscriptions. It's difficult to convey her attitude to these inscriptions, with constant contradictions (Rose, 2018, p.27).

2.1.3: Zoroastrian heritage:

Intangible, tangible heritage and oral heritage was once the only indicator of the Zoroastrian religion before the decision to transfer all their knowledge onto a written record. The exception being the Avesta and iconography on royal tombs though this is still debated (Hartz et al 2009 p.24) The importance of language in Zoroastrianism recognises the identity of liturgical texts through written and oral transmission., Nonetheless, there are major differences between Avestan, Iranian, and Indian languages, which might be attributed to widespread migration. When analysing Avestan Iranian, it is essential to mention that it is the sister language of Old Indic. The first Iranian language, Avestan, was spoken later by Persian

monarchs and Scythian nomads. It is presently spoken only in Iran and Tajikistan (Anthony 2007 p.51). Regardless of evidence, Avestan Iranian and Old Indic are descended from the same parent language, Indo Iranian (Anthony 2007, P.51). Written heritage is significant in understanding ancient cultures and religions, with the uncertainty of the original composition of the Gathas there is little to no evidence that it was written before the Sasanian Empire (West, 2019 p.30). The majority of Zoroastrian theological knowledge came from these works, priests would study Avestan and practise religious writing in Pahlavi. (Middle Persian Language) (West 2019 p.30).

Zoroastrian heritage is shaped by non-diasporic and diasporic communities, their material objects take different roles through the interactions of generational communication and the intense desire to preserve their religion. These religious believers adapted their written heritage in favour of the dominating communities that have emerged through migration. This migration may have contributed to the translation of the Avesta into Gujarati upon the arrival in India. The language change was crucial to the survival of the oral recital of the Avestan hymns memorized by Priests and laymen.

Storytelling and narration encourages the placement of these diasporic groups in both space and time, their heritage stories are meaningful to the individual when told by family members as they share a bond between the past and present. Connecting them personally to their ancestral heritage, giving them a sense of belonging and fulfilment (Davies et al 2016 p.92). Zoroastrian storytelling was crucial within Iran during Sasanian and Parthian periods, their religious heritage was perceived through song and dance, the interaction with Islam destroyed this act. Artistic narration was adopted instead of physical performances of Dance and Music (Mahdir et al 2007, p.115). These acts of ‘doing’ (Chau 2005) are strengthened within sacred spaces often used for rituals, knowledge transmissions and other activities. In this instance, artistic narration is an ancient act of ‘doing’ for Zoroastrians’. Other acts of doing are represented through the celebration of the festivals, birthdays and calendar days symbolising their intense devotion to Ahura Mazda and Amenta Spentas. These festivals (gāhānbārs) and calendar days are different for both Iranian and Indian Zoroastrians and have undertaken changes since the periods of the Zoroastrian kings. Two examples of significant celebrations are Ābān Rūz commemorating the waters, where both communities make their way towards water, with Iranians taking a pilgrimage towards northwest of Yazd (Stausberg, 2015 p.389).

And Ādargān, dedicated to fire, visiting a fire temple is crucial, with some Zoroastrians visiting the Irānšāh fire in Udwada, Gujarat (Stausberg, 2015, p. 389)

Some scholars (Niechcial, Klagisz 2016) claim that Zoroastrianism is a dying religion because its decline in believers; however, the religion cannot be considered a 'dying' religion, as two of its oldest communities still practise it. Although Zoroastrianism fluctuated within state power, it did become a firm state religion throughout the Persian Empire. Klagisz may be alluding to the decrease in government numbers, since Zoroastrians cannot marry non-Zoroastrians, it can become difficult to find other practising families intensifying the need to preserve their religious heritage through offspring (Hinnels, 2005, p.6). Moreover, Zoroastrianism could be regarded as "living heritage," as their intangible and tangible heritage reflects a component of the spirits, all equal to the elements on Earth, which has occurred through the individual engagement with a material object and using it for worship (Stovel 2005; Wijesuriya 2005 p.2). This act of 'doing' is significant through the interaction of tending to old flames in fire temples, sacred drinking of haoma and practising daily Gah prayers. The material culture of these tangible and intangible objects represent the past through cultural and social products of identity, belonging and inclusion. These acts of worship are significant to Zoroastrianism therefore, the need to preserve their declining religion is more evident.

The history of fire temples has long been disputed; the notion of this religious icon did not exist until the fifth century. Many researchers believe that the Persians did not feel any need for an enclosed area to worship fire, and that exposed fire altars were favoured during this time (Boyce, 1987, p.60).

In the Achaemenid period, long before fire altars were used for worship, image statues were erected. Zoroastrianism was known as an image cult by Artaxerxes in the early third century. The images were used for worship representing Aredvi Sura Anahita. These images inspired verses to yazata in Avestan hymns (Boyce, 1987, p.62). As there is no actual documentation, it is only possible to hypothesise that temples may have arisen from the adoption of this image cult. The magi (priests) might have been displeased with this cult behaviour and in response, created their own style of worship to perform the Yasna and other rituals (Boyce, 1987, p 61).

Scholars including Boyce, referred to Zoroastrian fire worship as the cult of fire.

Interestingly, this form of the religion may have been inspired by the image cult, which began long before the idea of fire temples. When the practise of establishing fire temples became popular and widespread, they became the religion's focal point, and fire became a physical embodiment of the Zoroastrian religious identity. Examples of this, are three sacred fires Zoroastrian fires, Adur Burzen-Mihr, Adur Farnbag and Adur Gushnasp. All three, were said to have been brought into existence by Ahura Mazda himself. Making them the best sites for worship.

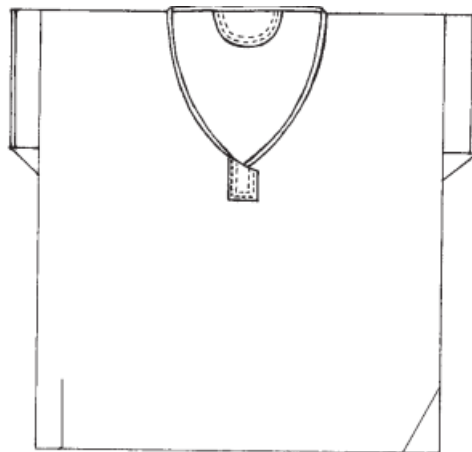
Over the centuries, there had been an increase in the movement of fire from one location to another. In particular, in India and Iran where the movement of these fires have interacted with different lay-men and worshippers. Mobilities theory can be applied to the movement of fire, with the theory being projected onto people it could be difficult to apply it to objects. However, through these movements, these fires have experienced different sacred spaces throughout their physical transportation, impacting the objects authenticity and material transformation. When viewing the fire in a heritage space, visitors are seeing a fire that has experienced many processes of material culture before arriving at its final destination. Community members will have taken protective measures throughout the entire movement process, the visitor's experience of the fire will create a sense of belonging and inclusiveness through perceiving the fire. These movements will be addressed in further detail in relation to specific case studies.

There are 167 Zoroastrian fire temples in the world (World Heritage, 2022). This dissertation will discuss a select few from three particular locations as case studies.

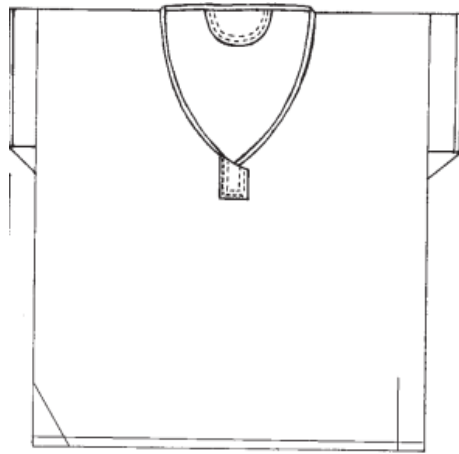
2.2.4: Zoroastrian Religious identity

Zoroastrian religious identity has numerous differentiating features, as each diasporic and non-diasporic community has shaped the religion's collective identity. With their institutions, restoration of Ātash Behrams, and dress all being altered over the years, a crucial intangible piece of their religious identity is still the Avesta. Through their financial connections and trade, Indian Zoroastrians have encouraged the continuance of the faith, ensuring that the Zoroastrian identity is not diminished further.

The kusti and sudreh are distinct tangible items of their religious heritage, worn in ceremonial situations. The 72 strands of the woven kusti represents the 72 chapters of the Yasna, the physical rituals of Zoroastrianism all project the spiritual intangible aspects of the religion. Incorporating the Menog (thought world) and Getig (physical world) worlds together into their culture, a clear indication of their religious heritage.



(Figure 5 – Left- Sudreh for female Zoroastrians. Lilaowala 2014)



(Figure 6 Right- sudreh for male Zoroastrians Lilaowala 2014)

It is crucial to recognise that the physical customs of Zoroastrian heritage, like many other faiths, embody the theological customs with the connections between people and things. Material engagement theory investigates the interactions that might arise between an individual and the material environment as a result of the creation or use of an object (Renfrew, Bahn 2017, p.504). For, Zoroastrians, this act of 'doing' (Chau (2005) happens during the process of wrapping the kusti around the body before rituals, the maker of the Kusti weaving the 72 strands and the interaction between priest and plant (haoma) with the principal drinking ritual representing the Yasna.

2.2.5: The Zoroastrian religion

The Zoroastrian liturgy texts are an example of written heritage that was once transcribed through oral transmission. The Divine Books of Zoroastrianism form an irregular collection identified as The Avesta. This was composed during different periods, mostly dated before 300 BCE in Avestan. However, what was preserved is only a small portion of the text that originally existed (West 2019 p.2). As it was edited and organised under the Sasanian kings of Iran during the 3rd and 6th centuries, the Avesta comprised twenty-one volumes, of which the major components (disregarding the minor texts and fractions) were the Yasna, the Yashts and the Vīdēdāt or the Vendīdād (West 2019 p.2).

The Yasna is a liturgical compilation of texts written over time and recited by priests in the divine service. The Yashts are hymns of praise, addressed to assorted deities and holy

entities. The Vīdēdāt ('Law against Demons'), described by West as 'a sort of Zoroastrian Leviticus, a body of legal and ritual prescription' (West 2018 p.2). The Yasna (chapters 28-53) includes a series of ancient texts; at the centre of these (chapters 35-41) is the *Liturgy (Yasna) in Seven Chapters* (West 2019 p.3). In Avestan, this means Yasna Haptaŋhāiti or 'worship in seven chapters' and within this are the Five Gāthās ('Songs') collectively written as seventeen separate poems. *The Liturgy in Seven Chapters* followed the same structure as the Gāthās and is spoken by a priest before an assembly of worshippers, who is speaking as their representative, close to a sacred fire on an altar (West 2019 p.21).

The *Seven Chapters* accommodated popular religious sentiment; worship was extended not only to the abstract principles in the prophets' poems but also to the metaphysical elements of the physical world, the Earth, the Waters, the souls of all good people and of all harmless animals. Later in Zoroastrian religion, other objects of reverence were ceremoniously acknowledged, not as Ahuras or Daevas but as yazatas 'worshipful ones' (West 2019 P.27). In the younger Avesta, adoration is projected towards such figures as Mithra, the Sun and Moon, the wind god Vayu, the river goddess Ardvī Anāhitā and others (Yashts 5-10, 15; Yasna 25.4-5).

All the poems except the last (Yasna 53) were written by Zoroaster himself and are the oldest texts within the Avesta comprising the oldest Iranian religious text that holds significant value within the religion (West 2019 p.3).

The Gathas are the Old Avestan 'songs' of Zarathustra (known as *Yatha ahu vairyo* or *Ahuna Vairya*, and *Airyema Ishyo*). Two prayers are a clear indication of understanding Zoroastrianism in its earliest form (Rose 2018 p.9). En masse, the poems were described as the 'Five *Gathas*' which related to five singular poems of different times and three of these poems combine several elements, known as *Haiti* or 'partitions'. There are 17 *Haiti* of all five *Gathas*, numbered according to their position in the *Yasna* (The Zoroastrian liturgy of seventy-two sections). The Gathas possesses influential value within the Zoroastrian religion, because it is regarded to represent the original teachings of Zarathustra. However, some Zoroastrians argue that anything that differs from the original Gathas texts should not be classified as 'Zoroastrian' (Rose 2018 p.xvi).

2.2.6: The symbolism in Zoroastrianism:

Symbolism is important in religion because it illustrates the connection between myth and reality. Understanding religious identities implies a focus on iconography, which may effectively connect religion and identity. A symbol is a means of comprehending and investigating a country's rich history and culture in connection to man-made artefacts. Although each religion and culture has different meanings and expressiveness, symbolic numbers are a useful indicator of this (Chwalkowski 2016 pp.8-11). The numbers three and four are crucial in understanding Zoroastrianism's spiritual symbolism; they are depicted through physical and spiritual heritage. The worship of the four elements (air, water, earth, and fire) reveals the importance of the number four in Zoroastrianism (Chwalkowski, 2016, p.11).

The three number is prevalent in Zoroastrianism, as demonstrated by the three virtues of Humata, Hukhta, and Huvarshta (good thoughts, good words, and good acts). It is probable that the three-tiered fire temples pay respect to these virtues (Chwalkowski, 2016, p.9). The number three was sacred to the proto-Indo-Iranians, inspiring numerous Zoroastrian and Brahmanic observances (Boyce, p.4). This number represents the consistent aspect of belief and observance from the Gathas onwards. The significance of this number is expressed in Zoroastrian religion through the act of wearing of the 'kusti,' which is braided around the body three times before rites (Rose, 1987, pp.31-32).

Natural heritage is equally as fundamental in the context of Zoroastrianism with architectural and spiritual heritage. The living natural environment is the foundation of their faith, with the four elements interwoven in the doctrines and rituals practised for generations. They have taken living representations from their surroundings and transformed them into symbols of worship for their devotion to Ahura Mazda.

2.2.7: Syncretism and Zoroastrianism

Syncretism has been used to identify the manifestations in the history of religions. Kraemer claims that throughout the history of humans, there have been multiple examples of syncretism, through something called 'culture-contact', which occurs as an inevitable effect. (Kraemer, 1956 pl.389 in Leopold et al 2004, p.51).

The Caste System and its rules are a direct reflection of the intolerance placed on individuals for their fundamental beliefs. Zoroastrians who practise Hindu customs have a firm awareness of the religion's strong intolerance on Indian soil, and their expressions of their beliefs were impossible to overlook when coexisting closely with such a dominant religious group. People who look at religion from the outside and fail to understand its underlying unity might attribute it to syncretism (Leopold et al 2004 p.57). Both Zoroastrianism and Hinduism have fundamentally different beliefs, yet Zoroastrians must cohabit in their community. Faith syncretism is the acceptance of one religious' aspects from another; these beliefs may be irreconcilable with one another but are reinterpreted to be transformed in their meaning when melded together (Leopold 2004, pp.106-111).

2.2.8: Relationships between Zoroastrian Indian and Iranian communities

The relationship between the Parsis and the Iranian community in Iran is significant in Zoroastrian history. Iran's religious heritage has resulted from a modernist interpretation of Zoroastrianism that can be seen as multipurpose, in that it perceives Iran's pre-Islamic heritage as liberal and pluralistic while at the same time being open to interpretation by those with extreme nationalist attitudes. The encounter with the Parsis strengthened this understanding of Iran's pre-Islamic heritage by providing a better knowledge of both religious perspectives and allowing greater admiration for their common rich history (Marashi, 2020 p.75). Collectively the two oldest groups share the same national identity, the worship of Zoroastrianism. It is one that has distinct historical and archaeological evidence, the cultures and customs of the religion have stayed the same throughout. The only difference is the Parsis's who have adopted Indian cultural and social customs, truly expressing their identity of being Indian Zoroastrian (Niechcial, Klagisz 2016 p.293). However, there is a shared demand to express their true identities rather than under the false pretence of being referred to as 'fire worshippers' strengthening the relationship between the two communities, attributing to their shared opposition to an idea that harms their religion and identity.

Despite their ecclesiastical beliefs, the practices between the two communities are apparent with a clear difference being their language. The two groups use their native languages, for Parsis, it is conspicuous that they would practice and speak Gujarati as there is no demand on diasporic communities to speak their ancestral language after the translation of the Avesta. Their religious heritage was not dismissed by this adoption, as they had already incorporated their religious and social customs which provided a unique sense of cultural belonging that expressed their multi-identities (Niechcial, Klagisz 2016 p.286).

2.2.9: Pilgrimage

Pilgrimage is significant in almost every religion; the act of travelling to a sacred religious site is common for many followers of religion, including Zoroastrians. Zoroaster was the first to notice that his adherents were not just locals; in several of his poems he refers to his followers as *išontō*, people who are enthusiastic about experiencing his preaching in person, sometimes travelling great distances to attend (West, 2019, p.18).

Great religious identity value has been attributed to many pilgrimage centres (Werber 2010, p.239). Modern tourism has maintained this value from travellers visiting these sites and can be referred to as the predecessors of modern tourism (Fairder in Wessels, 2007; Raj & Griffin, 2015). An example of this is, the Multani caravanserai in Baku Azerbaijan, which served as a shelter for Zoroastrian pilgrims and merchants travelling from India. It was built close to a high stone wall closing off the temple area, not far from a main gate, making it easily distinguishable and accessible to visitors (Dizdar 2017).

Roots tourism is a term to describe people travelling to what they regard as their ancestral homeland to discover their heritage. These tourists are often part of the communities who were forced to leave their homeland in recognizable diaspora groups due to large scale circumstances (Berg: Majhail, Doğan 2019 P.4). Many Parsis have travelled back to Iran to refresh their knowledge and sense of nationalist pride (Sheffield 2013 p.16).

2.2.10: The migration from Iran

Evidence of the migration from Iran to India has been documented through the only surviving Persian text, known as the Qesse- ye- Sanjan (The Ballad of Sanjan) (Williams 2009 p.1). The migration to India was not an unforeseen event; Iranian Zoroastrians had been travelling for trade to India for centuries before the 16th century (when the Qesse – ye – Sanjan was written). It was Wink who suggested that the migration to India happened before and after the Muslim conquest of Iran (Wink 1991, in Williams 2009 p.205). These Zoroastrian merchants may have faced competition over trade routes with their Muslims counterparts. The familiarity with the routes could have contributed to the decision to migrate to India (Ibrahimov 2010, p.75). These migrations promoted changes in visual and verbal identity, in order to facilitate adaptation. Indian dress was incorporated into the Zoroastrian clothing and over time the language and text changed from Fars to Gujarati. The decision to align to a more vegetarian diet, which included cutting out beef and pork changed the religious identity of Zoroastrians. However, many of their practices continued, including the disposal of their dead in dakhmas (An ancient Iranian practice) and worship at fire temples along with other domestic rituals from Iran (Rose, 2018, xix).

2.2.11: The issues faced by Zoroastrians

Invasion-related loss of Zoroastrian heritage has resulted in significant harm to liturgical evidence that formerly thrived in religious communities. With the demolition of fire temples during the Arab conquest of Iran and possible earlier invasions from Greek rulers may have contributed to the destruction of the Avesta. Fortunately, the revised texts in Gujarati may have continued the written transcripts of the Avesta, however the damaged caused to the community and their religious heritage cannot be replicated.

As previously established, Zoroastrians experienced generational degradation by their religious neighbours prior to their migration. Arab Muslims oppressed religious communities by establishing grand mosques on the ruins of ancient fire temples, which diminished their heritage and identity. The religion thrived, and Zoroastrians concentrated on conserving the existing fire temples through consistent preservation practises. Institutions in India have undertaken processes to preserve the Zoroastrian heritage transforming it towards future generations and their heritage. This dissertation will discuss this further.

DISCUSSION: CASE STUDIES:

2.2-Iran

Zoroastrianism in Iran struggled to continue with the rise of Islam, the communities were discriminated against and subjected to serious restrictions and limitations for being in a non-Muslim community. For example, non-Muslims were restricted from riding horses, building houses higher than Muslim houses and were only allowed to wear simple austere clothing (Hartz et al 2009 p.53). These limitations on non-Muslim communities damaged their religious identities and heritage; for Zoroastrians, the *kusti* and *sudreh* are defining characteristics of their identity. The religious community suffers as a result of the transition to simple attire. In particular, historic religions may be ostracized by the aggressive communities and forced the smaller community to live in a monotheistic culture. However, in 1906, two good events occurred in Iran that effected the future of Zoroastrianism's identity. The first Iranian constitution and parliament were established. The constitution recognised Iran's three religious minorities, Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians; this evident acknowledgement of the community meant that they were granted equal legal rights (Borbor 2006, p.267). Despite this mention in the constitution, Zoroastrians were still subjected to abuse and persecution for centuries and a lot of European accounts of this treatment support this (Ringer, 2008 p.30).

2.2.1: Heritage in Iran:

Zoroastrians were seen as sources of this ancient and now “national” heritage, as they were the most “authentically Iranian” out of all Iran’s peoples (Ringer, 2008, p.207). With the oldest religious community, they symbolise ancient Iran and are part of the ‘authentic’ Persian empire that projected Zoroastrianism at the forefront of Iranian society something that had not occurred since the Arab conquest. Iran’s classical heritage, including Zoroastrianism and its religious community performed a significant responsibility in the political and national revival that absorbed Keikhosrow Shahrokh until his death (Marashi, 2020, p.44).

The Zoroastrian community have tried to preserve their heritage for generations, with their community numbers declining due to mass conversion for their safety there is little documentation on Zoroastrian Iranian heritage. The rise of nationalism within Iran incorporated the acceptance of Zoroastrian heritage into society, that is used for a political motive rather than a cultural one with the use Zoroastrian heritage and customs. Examples of these are: the cleansing of the Zoroastrian language, the removal of Arabic entities and the use of Zoroastrian calendar days. This occurs through the preservation and maintenance of the rich history and heritage of the religion within Iran.

In ancient Iran there were many fire temples where Zoroastrians worshipped for their devotion to the Ahura Mazda. The destruction of Iranian fire temples after the Arab conquest resulted in the geographical shift in Zoroastrian communities residing in the southern cities of Iran rather than residing in the capital (Boyce, 1979 p.162). Although travelling from these remote locations in Iran proved a challenge, it allowed Zoroastrianism to thrive as they were concealed from persecution from Muslim neighbours within the bigger cities.

Within this case study, there are a few fire temples in Iran that will be used to support the evidence of religious heritage. These include Isfahan Fire Temple and The Yazd Fire temple.



(Figure 7, Isfahan Fire temple Iran, Iranian 2005)

The fire temple in Isfahan is situated at the furthest point closer to the sky and the sun, this style of temple is similar to the original mountain top fire altars that were used during the fourth century. Once inside the fire temple, it is clear that this style of open-air temple was popular because the positioning where the sun is projected directly into the walls of the

temple, where the ancient flames were once burnt. This further proved the devotional worship of light with the sun and fire being this physical embodiment. The temple appears to have not needed any preservation techniques but there is clear evidence of physical transformation and if it were owned by a heritage institution rather than the government, it would have been conserved to maintain the structural integrity of the temple. There is little documentation on this site, however, pilgrims and tourists have travelled to view the ancient temple and its outstanding surroundings (Timeline, 2019).



(Figure 8, The Yazd Atash Behram, UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2022)

The Yazd Atash Behram is a contemporary structure that protects the historic 15,000-year-old victorious fire within (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2022). Tourists and visitors may observe the fire in the altar through a glass screen that separates them avoiding contamination. The religious components can be seen throughout the site; there is a garden that surrounds the temple and a large pool of water in the centre of the entryway, which symbolises a number of the four elements venerated within the religion.



(Figure 9, Faravhar above Yazd Atash Behram Iran, World Heritage Centre UNESCO 2022)

There is distinct Parsi influence, with the Faravhar emblem representing the faith erected on top of the entryway, reminding Zoroastrians of their 'good thoughts, 'good deeds,' and 'good words' (See Figure 9).

The Varjavand Hall within the fire temple has been transformed into an exhibition room, displaying Zoroastrian customs, with images placed throughout the fire temple for visitors to view. The heritage organisers of the site have placed a barrier between the visitors and the display to preserve the objects from the interaction of humans. Benjamin accentuated that objects contain rich history and heritage that is occurs through the interaction of people and the object. The authenticity of the object is transmissible from its beginning that is evident through the experience of the object (Benjamin 1969 in Jones 2009 p.137). The objects on display are key components in the religion and have undergone the process of museumification to preserve them to its original authentic state. Whilst, recognising the objects history it projects a new meaning in the form of a display object (Wang et al 2021 p.4).

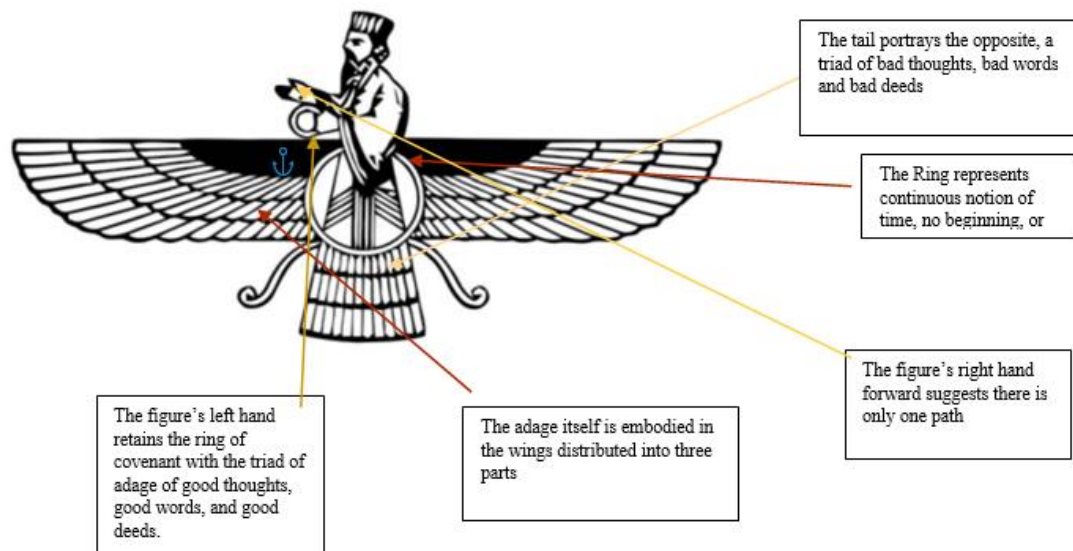


(Figure 10 Items on Display at Varjavand Hall in Yazd. Fallah 2017)

The movement of the consecrated fire from one place to another, can manipulate the authenticity of an object and impact the objects material transformation caused by human interaction. Holtorf (2013) has highlighted that people's affective responses to physical signs of ageing and patina create sense of antiquity evoking associations between people, objects and places across time and space (Jones 2010). In the case of the fire altars, there is clear evidence of physical material transformation from transportation and upon arrival at its final destination protective measures can be taken to maintain and monitor the fire observing any damage. In a heritage context, viewing the fire at an Atash Behram entangles the visitor with the rich history of the fire through the signage placed nearby. This protective barrier between the visitors and the objects creates the illusion that the object is sacred, allowing the visitors to feel a sense of inclusiveness as they are viewing something that is greater than them. Therefore, extending the value of the object.

2.2.2: Iranian Zoroastrian Religious identity:

The acceptance of Zoroastrian religious symbols and celebrations as national, secular symbols and celebrations was exhibited through the appropriation of the ancient past to create a modern national identity (Ringer, 2008, p.206). The concept of expressing a national identity from a minority religious community oppressed for decades under a dominant religious society is difficult to comprehend, however, the Zoroastrian symbol Faravahar has been adopted as a major iconographic symbol representing Iraniness (Fozi, 2014, p.42). On the surface, it appears that Iran is ignoring its prejudice against Zoroastrians and embracing their ancient Persian roots in modern society. However, as the rise of the nationalist emblems were used, the Faravahar began projecting a different narrative of a religious past onto a secular nation. This past is the essence of modern Iranian national identity (Ringer, 2008, p.206). (See Figure 11)



(Figure 11 Faravahar – Zoroastrian Symbol. Fozi 2014 P.42)

Zoroastrians have long condemned the use of the faravahar for non-religious reasons, but the symbol's popularity has cast Zoroastrianism in a favourable light. Iranian nationalism is associated to Zoroastrianism through traditions such as Sadeh, Mehregan, and Nowruz. (Fozi 2014, p.43) Symbolism represents the immaterial world and the material world through iconography, nationalism has been influenced in the rise of symbols that are projecting identities on a national scale. It would be difficult to not notice the close connections between Zoroastrianism, citizenship, and nationalism, they have been clear indicators of Iranian and now Parsi identities for centuries and the community is deserving of official citizenship (Ringer, 2008, p.209).

2.2.3: Zoroastrian Iranian Non-Diaspora

There little academic documentation on the Iranian Zoroastrian community with population numbers fluctuating it is difficult to find relevant information on the community.

The Iranian Zoroastrian community was subjected to oppression, abuse and mistreatment by invasions and attacks throughout the centuries, their connection with the Parsis strengthened the Iranian community through financial and spiritual support encouraging their survival. The support and connection with the Parsis in the 1940s reintroduced their heritage in a new perspective, bringing visitors and tourists to their Atash Behram and predominantly their

community. Due to the large scale of discrimination caused by neighbouring Muslims in both Yazd and Kerman, the memory of this has been long imprinted as part of their collective identity of present-day Iranian Zoroastrians.

2.2.4: Iranian Zoroastrian Nationalism

Zoroastrian leaders constructed the modern Iranian nation. The elements that contribute to the revival of Iranian nationalism include the continuation of the Persian language, its ancient literature, religious beliefs, and awareness of the extensive concept of the nation. Zoroastrian Iranian heritage and history has prospered since this revival, similarly to how it thrived during the Achaemenid period (Niechcial, Klagisz 2016, p. 284). The Pahlavi dynasty adopted an Aryan approach to a nationalist stance in the 20th century (Marashi, 2020 P.26). The name Pahlavi comes from the Pahlavi language that thrived during the Sasanian period; Zoroastrian liturgy texts were translated from Avestan into Pahlavi (Boyce, 1979, p.116-117).

As Iran faced modernity with the increased demand to accept non-Iranian institutions and ideas, there occurred a surge in the glorification of pre-Islamic Iranian traditions. These traditions include Zoroastrianism, which elevated in the new imagined society, and aided religious transition by forging a distinct link between the religious community and the state (Ringer 2008, p.229). Furthermore, the community began to thrive in a culture that had historically persecuted and undermined the devout by demolishing their religious centres to displace their dominant faith. The rituals of the Zoroastrians were seen as supporting the new emergence in nationalism, with the Zoroastrian iconographic symbol becoming the emblem of Iranian nationalism (Ringer, 2008, pp.192-203).

2.3: India

Zoroastrianism in India has thrived since the mass migration from Iran and the Caucasus region in the 8th and 10th centuries. In Navsari, Gujarat, India one of the oldest Parsi communities still thrives (Rose p. 12, Harvey 2009).

There has been a continuation of the invented Parsi tradition of naming different grades of Ātash Behrams after individuals of the local community who assisted in the construction and consecration of the Ātash Bahrāns, Ātash Ādarans, and Ātash Dādgāhs (Palestia 2001, p.8). The ancient fire temples and *dakhmas* in Gujarat were built and maintained mostly via Parsi contributions (Palestia, 2001, p.39). These substantial donations aided in the expansion of religious structures. The Parsi priests and lay academics have been a significant member of Zoroastrian communities, reconsidering the religious heritage of Zoroastrians for many generations. Similarly, to other Zoroastrian elites they have been rethinking the history of the Parsi community (Marashi, 2020 p.72).

2.3.1: Indian Zoroastrian Heritage:

The homogenisation of older and new groups sustains the cultural ties between the past and the future, with Indian heritage being preserved by officials in Mumbai and the dismissal of non-Zoroastrians into Atash Behrams continues to protect the sacredness and authenticity of their temples (Mumbai: Conservation Architects & Historic Building Consultants 2006).

As a diasporic community, Zoroastrians express multiple identities through their tangible and intangible heritage with modern interpretations of historical traditions that are expressed through rituals, festivals, clothing, food, and worship at Atash Behrams. The community constructs their religious heritage through preservation practices and since the community still actively worships in their Atash Behrams the concept of living heritage could be applied to them (Stovel 2005; Wijesuriya 2005 p.2). Their interactions between their material and non-material heritage has not been interrupted by tourists unlike some religious heritage sites. Material engagement theory is crucial when discussing heritage and the interactions between the individual and object, for Zoroastrianism, their connection to their physical heritage strengthens their religious devotion to their faith (Renfrew, Bahn 2017, p.504).

Materiality and buildings are connected through memory, this is an element that is important when explaining the need for their conservation and protection. In areas, such as Mumbai

where there is a limited notion of conservation, the value placed upon the owners is intensified. The connection between the physical heritage and the person matters more than any government attempt at preservation (Benincasa et al, 2019 p.71). Zoroastrian heritage is at more of a risk than other religious communities, with their ancient traditions and customs being significantly smaller than other dominant religions. The preservation of the fire temples by external companies in India have resulted in meaningful and a stronger connections between the community and the buildings.

The Atash Behrams in India are not accessible to non-Zoroastrians, unlike in the Yazd and Baku where tourists are able to flow through the site and experience the rich history that many others once travelled for worship. The Atash Behrams in India are still in frequent use, with eight of them existing throughout India, most of them in Mumbai (Edujee, 2022). The two oldest consecrated fires in Mumbai are housed in the Banaji Limji Agiary (see figure 12) and the Maneckji Seth Agiary.



(Figure 12 Banaji Limji Agiary, Mumbai India. Heritage Institute 2005-17)

Religious sites such as temples, churches and mosques can be considered communal and historical spaces. Bourdieu (1993) states the interplay between religion and heritage creates a “a field of cultural production” which interacts with religious customs of ‘continuity’ and heritage preservation (Bourdieu in Wang et al 2021 p.3). However, if these communal heritage spaces are separated from the public, and not created into a space for tourists to explore, there is a different type of cultural production that is occurring. This type of cultural production is not subjecting the sites to harsh environments from the flow of traffic of human movements. In the Atash Behrams in India, there is a limited amount of movement from the worshippers entering the heritage space.

The Iranshah Atash Behram in Udvada, has undergone extensive renovations over the last 10 years, with the recent renovations beginning in early 2018 and finally completed in 2021. The Shapoorji Pallonji team were responsible for the conservation work, experts were on hand to help strengthen the structural integrity and restore the architectural purpose of the Atash Behram buildings to their original structure (Shapoorji Pallonji et al 2022). Material degradation was undertaken to repair and restore the aging agiary to preserve the values embodied by that heritage (Jones et al 2016 p.824). Heritage conservation and management is a process that involves not only the engagement with material culture but also the cultural, aesthetic, spiritual and economic values of the object and for the building to be continued to be used it required the intense transformations to restore it (Jones et al 2016, p.824). References for the original state of the building, was discovered in an original photograph from 1905 (See figure 13). Due to the fire being of religious importance, conservators were discouraged from contaminating it whilst undertaking the necessary renovations to the agiary in Udvada.



(Figure 13 Original photo of Iranshah atash Behram in Udvada, India. Shapoorji Pallonji And Company 2022)

The fire was moved thirteen times before it reached Udvada where the Atash Behram was built. The transportation of the fire from different environments by Zoroastrians priests impacted the material transformation of the fire and the authentic performance of the object (Hartz et al 2009). Mobilities Methods (Büscher et al 2011) in a heritage environment explores heritage artefacts from their production to a variety of consumption points and develops the 'moment of heritage' through the corresponding act of remembering (Smith 2006

p.2). The inherited memories conveyed from all encounters with the fire and its environment were reclaimed through the agiary conservation, however this is not just heritage through protection and maintenance, but as transformation of an imagined past and its authenticity. The concept of heritage as transformation may be applied directly to the fire, which was reshaped during its journey from thirteen sites.



(Figure 14 Map of all the Thirteen places the fire travelled Atash Behram. Shapoorji Pallonji And Company 2022)

Members of the Parsis community have adjusted to their life in the ‘hostland’ after generations of internal migrations in India, they continue to have spiritual, emotional, and cultural connection to their ‘hostland’ (Safran Kokot et al 2016 p.14). Religious communities can feel a sense of homeland nostalgia when practising ancient traditions of their ancestors in a different environment. The Parsis have built and maintained their fire temples, homes and communal institutions replicating them off the original architecture through oral transmission of memories. This constitutes to their symbolic identity and heritage (Safran, Kokot et al 2016 p.14).

Heritage spaces offer a space to communicate and interact with materials and people within public spaces and the communities that exist in them. Institutions, like larger temples have a functioning position in supporting the local community through the donation of public commodity such as roads and schools. The Parsis took advantage of the British colonial trade in an attempt at preserving their sense of community and identity, this involvement allowed them to raise the necessary funds to build a bigger infrastructure for the thriving community in Mumbai (Palestia, 2001, p.64) (Baumann 2016 in Kokot et al 2016 p.172-173). Baumann supports this, by highlighting the factor that the majority of immigrants do become attached

to their religious heritage and engage in religious community construction. This construction of religious heritage encourages the communities to 'rediscover' their identities in a new environment.

The Parsis's loyalty to India is pluralised within its inclusiveness of the community, Modi suggested that the Parsis's should return back to their homeland. However, documentation from a Parsis expressed 'We don't want to go to Iran. We like India. We want to be here. It is our country' this further questions their loyalty to their 'hostland' (Metha 2011). This is a misconception projected onto the Parsis that they are loyal through the public act of remembrance, further suggesting that the Parsis's and Hindus are distinct. The Zoroastrian community is simultaneously Parsi, Zoroastrian and Indian, which results in a multifaceted identity (Buck 2017, p.13).

2.3.2: Indian Zoroastrian Religious Identity:

Religious identities expressed by diasporic communities are multi-faceted performances engaging with the material culture of their heritage that are constantly shifting within their environments. After coexisting with their British and Indian neighbours, the Parsis asserted their social and cultural connections, actively participating in the establishment of the nationalist movement that extended across India. Ringer indicates that the Parsis became the most anglicized of all the Indian communities, projecting a different and new identity that distinguished themselves from the other dominant religions (Ringer, 2011 p.229). This not only includes their social interactions and engagements but their theological beliefs which have been altered after co-existing inside the Hindu Caste system. Cohen et al discusses the benefits of integration into rich and diverse alien culture through the perspective of a 'revisionist view' with the invention of their traditions. This is combined with the Parsis' strong Zoroastrian beliefs that enabled them the space to express their religious and cultural identities without prejudice (Cohen 1997; Ackermann; in Kokot et al 2016 p.164). Furthermore, although having the freedom to express their religious identities in society, they were collectively labelled as "Hindus" during British Colonial rule, thereby hurting their collective religious identities (Ibrahim 2020).

2.3.3: Indian nationalism

The Zoroastrian diasporic community encouraged and supported the rise of Indian nationalism. However, secularism was a crucial component of the Indian constitution; the independence movement rejected the vision of a homogenous Hindu state. Independent India developed two contrasting views which are now known as "the concept of India" (Ibrahim 2020). Secularists governed politics for decades following independence, intensifying the notion of unity in diversity. A requirement was placed upon religious communities to become parallel with other residing religious communities, more than likely incorporating the syncretism of Hindu and Muslim tradition into Zoroastrian daily life (Ibrahim 2020).

Nationalism was associated with the promotion of solidarity, encompassing a sense of belonging. For Zoroastrians, the adaption of nationalist stances encouraged this sense of belonging strengthened by the recovery of India's past heritage and culture (Buck 2017 p.13). Savarkar (1984 in Buck 2017) described the Parsis's as 'the most patriotic minority' where their history is established through the relationships of the majority and the minorities. Buck (2017) expands on this by highlighting that the Parsis' story within India is of co-existence through memory, this mythical narrative is a politically charged version manipulated to project a biased perspective of the story for a specific audience. For example, Modi used this to project a Hindutva version of India into its communities, wanting a homogeneous Hindu society and suggesting the Parsis' return to their 'homeland' (Ibrahim 2020)

Zoroastrian diasporic communities also faced loss of nationalist identity as a result of settling in a different country and merging with the new host culture. Expression of nationalist identity can be viewed through the nationalistic ideals of a country. A similar diluting effect can be experienced in diasporic communities regarding nationalist identity. The expression of national identity is through a multitude of performances, relevant to a nation as a collective (Gellner 1983). It is commonly represented by diverse traditions, cultures, languages and in some cases dress. Diasporic communities have interpreted their own traditions and cultures to reflect their variable identities in a new multicultural environment. An Iranian national symbol was appropriated from the Zoroastrian community in Iran and exploited for a national identity purpose. Their Zoroastrian nationalism in India was maintained to some extent by the preservation of Iranian national identity, which fostered their expanding relationship over time with their co-religionists in their original homeland.

2.4-Azerbaijan

In the third century it is evident that, Zoroastrianism became the dominant religion of the Persian Empire, which encompassed Azerbaijan. This became widely regarded as "the mother of Zoroastrianism" (Lech 2007, p.40). Although vestiges of the religion have nearly been lost, it remains imprinted in Azerbaijani cultural life with some traditions are still practised within the secular community (Garayeva, Naumov, 2016 p.11). The Ateshgah in Baku is regarded as one of the most tangible cultural heritage that symbolises Zoroastrianism (Mahammadali 2014 p.299).

Zoroastrianism has left a lasting influence on Azerbaijan's culture and psyche, rooted deeply into the province long before Islam and Christianity making an exact date of its development hard to establish (Rauf Melikov). With hypotheses linking Zarathustra's origins back to Azerbaijan, this is logical given the country's extensive Zoroastrian past. The Azerbaijani people refer to their homeland as "the land of fires," (Krebs 2015, p.116) which was one of the historic Azerbaijani names, along with Media-Antropathena or Athropatene (Woodova, P.132, 2021).

Geologically Azerbaijan is divided into two parts; northern Azerbaijan which became independent with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and southern Azerbaijan which, became part of Iran (Iloba 2011 p.80). These parts have been struggling with their national identities since the division. The Iranian side of Azerbaijan has taken more of a religious approach with many Azeri's self-identifying themselves as Iranians, and northern Azerbaijan is a secular country with a few members masking their identities as Muslims, possibly for protection. In comparison to ancient Azerbaijan which thrived on Zoroastrianism, modern Azerbaijan is a secular state with small parts of the population following the practices and rituals of Islam (Nuruzade, 2016, p.4). This makes it difficult to compare Irani, Indian/Parsi influences on nationalism political ideology of each region, however, ancient Azerbaijan is crucial in understanding how Zoroastrianism progressed and thrived in other regions.

2.4.1: Azerbaijani Zoroastrian Heritage

Built religious heritage still exists throughout Azerbaijan, with the Ateshgah, the Shirvanshah's palace and the Maiden's Tower in Baku, and Mount Shahdag which hides the highest world Ateshgah, similarly to those discussed by Herodotus (Woodova, 2021, P.133). There is evidence that the Maiden Tower with seven layers and seven pipes distributing seven fires with naphtha gas once served as an Ateshgah, a Zoroastrian fire temple (Woodova, 2021, P.133).

The Walled City in Baku, which includes Shirvanshah's Palace and the Maiden's Tower in Baku are protected by UNESCO (UNESCO Centre 2022). See Figure 15 and Figure 16



(Figure 15, Above, Palace of Shirvanshah, Vincent 2011)



(Figure 16, Left, Maidens tower, Cantoni 2022)

Every ritual breakdown of the past and the future into the present is through ancient and modern invented traditions that collect a world full of significance and symbolism (Choksy in Woodova, 2021, p.140). Zoroastrian worship is the interpretation of past and present traditions, renewing and conserving religiously expressed identities. Their Ateshgah is a clear example of religion embracing every aspect of their surroundings, with fire serving as a strong symbol of light and hope. In Azerbaijan, the festival of light (Nowruz) embraces this hope that is represented through the sun and fire. The biggest examples of light that ancient Zoroastrians would have seen every day.

The Ateshgah in Surakhani, Azerbaijan, was previously constructed using natural gas to provide ever-lasting flames for Hindu and Zoroastrian pilgrims. The temple has become a popular tourist destination, receiving thousands of visitors each year (Woodova, 2021, P.132). It was a location that drew visitors from all over the world to worship, with ancient reports picturing the brightness of seven immense flames that burned for hours on top of the temple. It was regarded as large and bold by the Romans (A. АХУНДОВ, 1986 p.52). Since the fire was along the silk road, pilgrims and tourists would congregate at the Caravanserai in Azerbaijan before visiting the temple to seek refuge with other devoted followers in a supporting community (A. АХУНДОВ 1986 p.53-55).



(Figure 17: Above, people near and on fire temple. Date taken unknown. Ateshgah 2022)



(Figure 18, Above, infamous flames. date 2022)

People crowded to see taken unknown Ateshgah

The existing Ateshgah was built in a pentagonal structure in the 17th-18th centuries by Indian merchants, there is clear evidence from the transcriptions that are noted on the Atesh Bahram (Yasuda, Raj and Griffen, 2018, p.40). The Ateshgah was used until the 19th century and now holds a museum for tourists, which preserves the original pilgrimage site by re-telling Zoroastrian heritage to non-Zoroastrians (Yasuda, Raj and Griffen, 2018, p.40).



(Figure 19, Modern Ateshgah temple, Ateshgah 2022)

The Museum institution in Azerbaijan controls the preservation and protection of the site, including decision of the layout of the site, the signage descriptions and placement, the direction of the site guide and the information transcribed to the visitors. Authorised Heritage Discourse explores the relationship between communities and the heritage sector representatives whilst undertaking protective measures to maintain the site. The signage at the site is scattered, giving detailed descriptions of the items on display (Smith 2006, also

Waterton & Smith 2009). Language at heritage sites presented through site guides, signage or audio players is integral when representing an item of heritage to the public. It is important to choose the right presentation to allow and encourage visitors to feel a sense of belonging within heritage sites through visual representation of different languages (Waterton 2009 in Högberg 2012 p.140)

The material transformation of this site can be perceived distinctly through signs of decay and deterioration. The flow of humanity has passed through this heritage site, the atmosphere is symbolised through need to conserve and protect this environment. (See FIGURE)



(Figure 20: Glass protective flooring at Baku Temple. Ateshgah temple 2022)

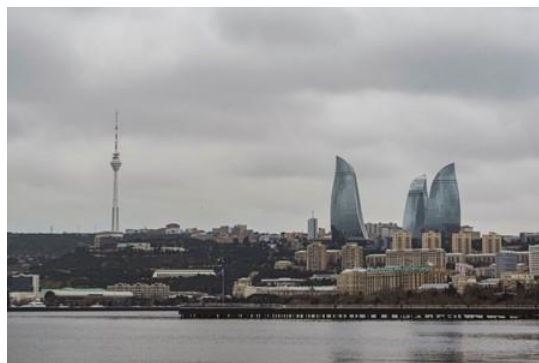
Figure 20 represents the protective measures undertaken by the heritage directors on site, ensuring the safety and protection of the visitors whilst still allowing them to capture the sacredness of the temple. Influencing an interactive environment invites the visitor to feel included throughout, whilst still maintaining the sense of authenticity or ‘realness’ of the object and the interaction between material culture and visitors.

2.4.2 Azerbaijani religious/secular identity

The presence of the many identities poses a big challenge those of Azerbaijani heritage. It is difficult to impose a single collective identity on all Azeri people on both sides of the Araz River, this includes the Azeri diaspora worldwide who will project a different form of Azerbaijani identity than those residing in Azerbaijan (Grebennikov 2013), p.73). However, Zoroastrianism is still deeply imprinted into their customs with the festival of Nowruz shaping one of the main holidays in Azerbaijan (Yasuda, Raj and Griffen, 2018 p.7). A key component of Azerbaijan's rich Zoroastrian past, still projected on the manifestation of ever-burning fires, through the use of public symbols (Woodova, 2021, p.145). An examples of are the imagery of fire onto Azeri passports, the architectural symbol of 'The Flame Towers of Baku', the proactive fire of 'Yanar Dag' and the Baku coat of arms.



(Figure 21– Left, Baku coat of arms, Sayfutdinova 2021)



(Figure 22 Above Flame Towers in Azerbaijan Sayfutdinova 2021)



(Figure 23 Yanar Dag, Willaert 2021, Sayfutdinova 2021)

Those Azerbaijanis who decided to protect their identity by presenting a religious narrative to those in their local religious community have encountered practical, cultural, and verbal challenges. This includes, the discrimination and suppression of the Azeri language, which was an important marker of Azerbaijani identity within Azerbaijan (Grebennikov, 2013, p.73). The ethnic borders are continually being challenged as a potential contributing factor of migration and religion, with its austere and explicit representations integrating Azerbaijanis within a diasporic environment.

However, the Azeri identity is a combination of different factors, historically they have been impacted by many different religions including Muslims, Zoroastrians, Christians and many more. There is a shared expression of Turki identity by Azeri's after the Turkish invasion (Grebennikov, 2013, p.64).

2.4.3: The Non-Zoroastrian Azeri diaspora

There has been little to no evidence of Zoroastrian diaspora residing within Azerbaijan (Grebennikov, 2013, p.73). However, despite the diaspora groups in Azerbaijan not containing any Zoroastrian communities, there is still a grand appreciation for their religious past. This gap in the research, can be placed upon the rise of secular nationalism during the

Soviet Era with suppression of all religions (Nuruzade 2016). This suppression would have impacted the Zoroastrian communities that once thrived in Azerbaijan. It is most probable that migration to other countries occurred, in particular towards Iran or India where larger communities would provide them with a feeling of belonging. Another theory is that they were compelled to convert to Islam for their own safety, with the majority of the population remaining in Azerbaijan and gradually altering the Zoroastrian community. However, more research is needed to support this evidence.

2.4.4: The rise of Azerbaijani nationalism

The Azerbaijani nation did not exist by order; it was an invented nation that established the ideology of nationalism projected by the multitude of identities residing within it (Goyushov 2021). Without a doubt, the roots of Azerbaijani nationalism were affected by the growth in modernization driven by the newly materialised intelligentsia and their munity against the traditional elite. Furthermore, many Azerbaijani modernizers turned away from Islamic nationalism and towards a secular notion of nationalism established in Iran.

Azeri nationalism was exploited as leverage in hopes of influencing the national government, however, this suggests diminutive support within Iran's Azeri community to declare a national identity other than an Iranian (Grebennikov, 2013, p.76). The mixed feelings of independence from Iran had been felt throughout this occurred through a pro-democracy movement rather than an ethnic-based resistance (Grebennikov, 2013, p.76).

Unlike Iranian and Indian nationalism, which were extensively backed by Zoroastrian populations, Azeri nationalism has a less secularistic orientation, with concepts of political ideology considerably weaker among Azeris with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Popular Front Government in 1993(Cornell 2011, p. 164). The discussion focuses on Azerbaijani nationalism merging with Islamic ideology linked to the rising isolation from the Western community (Cornell 2011, p.164-165).

Conclusion:

There is limited Western scholarship on Zoroastrian religious heritage, but the case studies in this study provide a different perspective within the heritage debate. My project offers an alternative theoretical and methodological perspective of nationalism in heritage studies, posing questions regarding material culture rather than cultural ties, as quoted by Smith (1998) and Özkırımlı (2017). There were several significant gaps in the research throughout this dissertation that made adding to the debate challenging. These include Zoroastrian fire temples and the Iranian non-diasporic community.

Despite these gaps, my research has discovered that Zoroastrian religious heritage and fire temples have been conserved through preservation practises implemented by diasporic groups in India and cultural institutions in Azerbaijan. Despite the scarcity of evidence on non-diasporic groups in Iran, my research concentrated on the interactions between Iranian and Indian communities and how they supported one another, thereby strengthening the religion. Recommendations for future research in heritage discourse and diaspora studies might fill these gaps, focusing on the Iranian Zoroastrian diasporic community and extending research from the nineteenth century to the present.

This study contributes to existing knowledge in heritage studies by applying preservation practises to Zoroastrian religious heritage, diaspora studies by exploring the fields of migrant travel and memory, and nationalism studies by concentrating on religious nationalism and symbols of national identity. This knowledge indicates that heritage conservation practises can be applied to Zoroastrian nationalistic and religious symbols that have been projected into societies by non-diasporic and diasporic communities.

This project has examined Zoroastrian religious heritage and the preservation practices undertaken by diasporic communities and heritage institutions. Whilst, focusing on the rise of nationalism that was influenced by diasporic and non-diasporic communities as it relates to the material culture of Zoroastrian fire temples and heritage.

Zoroastrian heritage is a contradictory and ever-changing identity that has adapted to place, time, and location. It will be fascinating to observe how it adapts to current events and continues to prosper in the future.

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