My dissertation is the first work solely dedicated to Zoroastrian philosophy in the Islamic world. Its goal is to describe the way Zoroastrians wrote philosophy as well as some principles they developed in order to articulate Zoroastrian doctrine. It uses recent work comparing Iranian religion and culture with that of Greek, Indian, and Islam, but then supplements that with additional philosophical sources to embed these Zoroastrian philosophers into their Baghdad context. I call this group the Dēnkard School, because of their focus on the Zoroastrian Pahlavi text called the *Dēnkard*, and my method is to follow the school's chronological development. I begin with the Sasanians before dedicating one chapter to each of the figures we know by name: Ādurfarrōbay, Mardānfarrox, and Ādurbād.

After an introduction, the first chapter discusses the famously cosmopolitan court of Husraw I Anōšag-Ruwān (d. 579). It saw the confluence of three major streams of thought: the Alexandrian Neoplatonism brought by Paul the Persian, the Athenian Neoplatonism brought by those Neoplatonists themselves, and the variety of Indian thought brought by Burzōy. The Sasanian experience with this wealth of thought bolstered Zoroastrian philosophy into increasingly sophisticated speculations. To show this burgeoning thought, I analyze all Pahlavi texts associated with Wuzurgmihr, Husraw's famous courtier, as well as the more substantial *Mēnōy ī Xrad* (Spirit of Wisdom). Both texts show the start of the rigorous analysis the Dēnkard School would pursue.

The earliest member of the Dēnkard School is Ādurfarrōbay ī Farroxzādān (d. before 840). Biographical information is sparse, but he likely flourished before the reign of al-Maʿmūn (r. 813 – 833) and probably

frequented the same intellectual circles as prominent theologians and philosophers. What is certain is that he was highly respected among Zoroastrians, being both a legal and philosophical authority. In this chapter I contextualize him as much as the sources allow before analyzing three philosophical texts attributed to him: *Gizistag Abāliš* (Accursed Abāliš), selections of *Dēnkard* V, and selections of *Dēnkard* IV. These are some of the most philologically difficult texts preserved in Pahlavi, so philology is prominent in the analysis. Some of Ādurfarrōbay's thoughts are clear, though; for example, he argued that the Avestan language (and, so, Zoroastrianism) was innate to the human mind in an unarticulated way. This may recall the Islamic doctrine of *fiṭra*, which holds that all people are born Muslim and are enculturated into other beliefs afterwards, but Ādurfarrōbay is drawing upon the incredibly influential Indian philosopher and grammarian Bhartṛhari (d.c. 5th CE), who held a similar position regarding the Sanskrit language. Ādurfarrōbay also drew on him for philosophical analyses of time and number.

The next generation produced Zoroastrianism's greatest polemicist Mardānfarrox ī Ohrmazddādān (f. mid-9th). Mardānfarrox had detailed knowledge of contemporary religious and philosophical positions in Baghdad, and he produced a masterpiece of Zoroastrian dialectics. He writes detailed polemics against monotheism (including Islam, Judaism, and Christianity) and Manichaeism that show his knowledge of each and helps further locate the Dēnkard School in time and space. His most interesting contribution, though, is his polemic against the atheists, which seamlessly integrates Islamic *kalām* and *falsafa* with the *Dēnkard* to argue for two divine beings from experience alone. In this chapter I analyze Mardānfarrox's polemic against the atheists among other sections to model how Zoroastrian philosophers probably employed the *Dēnkard* in philosophical debate.

About a century after Ādurfarrōbay, Ādurbād ī Ēmēdān (d. early 10th) had to again restore the *Dēnkard*, since it had deteriorated. Ādurbād likely occupied the same high status as Ādurfarrōbay, since he held the same august title, and since he was mentioned by Islamic heresiographies as a source for Zoroastrian doctrine. His philosophical contributions, however, are diffused across the 420 anonymous chapters of *Dēnkard* III, which is the most authoritative source for Zoroastrian philosophy in this period. While its content is bewilderingly technical, Mardānfarrox's example shows us how to read it. In this chapter I try to show their metaphysics of light, and how it produces everything else: including knowledge, time and space, motion, and the normal world of our experience. The most interesting and important fact about *Dēnkard* III is that the root of its discussion is the same phenomenological insight motivating Sohrawardī (d. 1191) in his *Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq* (Philosophy of Illumination), and much of their further developments from that insight follow the same trajectory as Sohrawardī as well, including self-awareness, levels of light, and dark barriers.

Finally, the conclusion integrates the foregoing into contemporary scholarship on Zoroastrianism. It has two goals: it tries to introduce a philosophical focus into the study of the *Dēnkard*, and to help this, I include an unified interpretation of the philosophy of the school; it also tries to introduce a new problem into the scholarship: the school's disappearance. Scholarship on these texts has usually sought their anterior sources, most prominently Aristotle, but I want to point out that such a sophisticated school should not suddenly disappear. It needs a thorough explanation. I sketch one possible answer:

the outward facing polemical doctrines (and polemicists) entered Islamic *kalām*, while the phenomenological and technical doctrines (and thinkers) entered Illuminationism.

As of today, I have completed all the philologically demanding tasks, and I only have to apply comments to the expository portion of chapter 4 on Ādurbād. Once these comments have been integrated, I will be able to defend. I estimate the dissertation will be ready for defense early in Spring 2023.