**Synopsis and Timeline of the PhD.Thesis**

This doctoral research, titled “The Description of Zoroastrian Divine Beings in the New Persian Texts of the *Vaṣf-e Amšāsfandān*”, aims to conduct an analysis of the contents of two versions of the *Vaṣf-e Amšāsfandān* which are known to us in verse form. The versified renditions of the *Vaṣf-e Amšāsfandān* are extant in some Zoroastrian New Persian collections, ranging in date from the sixteenth century CE to the nineteenth century CE. In the renditions of the *Vaṣf-e Amšāsfandān* the characteristics of the Zoroastrian divine beings, *Amšāsfand*s, are described. These *Amšāsfand*s are identified with abstract concepts, such as good thought and divine order, as well as natural elements such as the sun and moon. The purpose of this analysis is to investigate the commonalities between the content of the *Vaṣf-e Amšāsfandān* in its different renditions and the Avestan and Pahlavi as well as other Zoroastrian New Persian accounts in a comparative approach.

The main subject of the *Vaṣf-e Amšāsfandān* is related to the *Amšāsfand*s as significant elements in Zoroastrianism. In the Avestan texts, the term *Amšāsfand* in its specific meaning refers to the six great divine beings which along with the supreme god construct a holy heptad. In later Zoroastrian traditions, the meaning of this term was broadened to denote all bounteous divine beings who were created by god to cooperate with him to defeat the wickedness (Mary Boyce, 1989). The presence of these divine beings can be seen almost everywhere in the Zoroastrian tradition. Their names still live on as the names of the days and the months in the Zoroastrian calendar, and in the current Iranian calendar, as the names of the months of the year.

The identity of the *Amšāsfand*s as gods has been a scholarly subject of discussion since the Zoroastrians worship them along with their supreme god as can be seen in the Zoroastrian creed (*Yasna* 12.1). Johanna Narten (1982) has done valuable research on the term Aməṣ̌a Spəṇtawhich she called “göttliche Wesenheiten” (divine beings) based on the Avestan texts. However, there have not been any attempts as yet to examine the identity of the *Amšāsfand* in the Zoroastrian New Persian literature. This project takes the first steps toprovide an insight into the concept of the *Amšāsfand* in the *Vaṣf-e Amšāsfandān,* which determines if *Amšāsfand* can be considered as gods or angels, or if the nature of their identity continues to be ambiguous. The analysis by Enrico Raffaelli (2014) of the Avestan text of the *Sīh-rōzag* and its Pahlavi version which is concerned with the thirty-three Zoroastrian divine beings is one of the main references during this study.

The continuing question over the nature of the Zoroastrian divinities, as well as the enduring occurrence of them in Persian literature, demonstrate the need for a deeper study of the roles and attributes of *Amšāsfand*. Furthermore, the *Vaṣf-e Amšāsfandān* belongs to the category of “Zoroastrian Literature in New Persian,” texts which were composed after the Arab conquest of Iran in the seventh century. While the works of Zoroastrian New Persian contain valuable information about the Zoroastrian religion, they have not received adequate attention by scholars. The New Persian corpus of Zoroastrian texts have been a primary literary source for the Zoroastrians in Iran and India for centuries. The texts are also significant in documenting the history of Zoroastrian communities (Daniel Sheffield 2015).

The analysis of this text can provide significant information which clarifies ambiguity in other aspects of Zoroastrianism as well. For example, the identity of Šāh Wahrāmin one of the Zoroastrian apocalyptic texts, is a character who will appear at the end of the world to save the people from oppression and restore Zoroastrianism. This has puzzled scholars such as Carlo Cereti (1996), and Touraj Daryaee (2012) so greatly that they suggested that Šāh Wahrām can be related to a political figure connected with the Sasanian dynasty which had been overthrown by the Arab invasion. However, in the *Vaṣf-e Amšāsfandān,* Šāh Wahrām is considered an *Amšāsfand,* belonging to the ancient collection of the Zoroastrian divinities. In addition, *Vaṣf-e Amšāsfandān* presents significant information about the mythological Avestan heroes whose stories are also found in the Zoroastrian Middle Persian texts as well as the *Šāhnāmeh* which are discussed in this thesis as well.

I have already found and studied six manuscripts, and two lithograph editions related to the two versions of *Vaṣf-e Amšāsfandān* and selected two manuscripts dating to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as the main texts for my analysis. I started my thesis by working, first, on the content which will be the second and main part of my thesis. Then, I intend to provide a thorough introduction, and finally, I will present the result of my research reviewing the concept of *Amšāsfand* from the Avestan texts to the New Persian text of *Vaṣf-e Amšāsfandān*.

In the main part of this research which discusses the content of *Vaṣf-e Amšāsfandān*, first, a synopsis of the description of each *Amšāsfand* based on the two main versions of *Vaṣf-e Amšāsfandān* is presented. Then, in a comparative approach, the New Persian verses which have parallel content with the other Zoroastrian texts, including Avestan, Pahlavi as well as the other Zoroastrian New Persian accounts are quoted, transliterated, translated and discussed.

From my extensive analysis of the content to date, I have come to understand that the *Amšāsfand*s, as appointed by god to be patrons of his good creation, are not autonomous. Their significance is primarily defined by their roles as protectors, emphasizing their close relationship and dependence on god.

The latest timeline for the completion of this thesis are as follows:

**Part I Introduction** (by May 1, 2025)

* Background studies on the As
* *Vaṣf-e Amšāsfandān* in the Manuscripts and Lithographs
* The features of the two main texts selected for this analysis
	+ Grammar, Vocabulary
	+ Narrative structures
	+ Islamic technical terms

**Part II Content Analysis** (by February 1, 2025)

 **Part III Conclusion** (by June 1, 2025)