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## Yezdistan *versus* Kurdistan: Another Legend on the Origin of the Yezidis

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### Abstract

The paper focuses on the analysis of the term *Yezdistan* (*Ēzdīstān*) attested in a Yezidi legend, having obvious parallels with the *Shahnameh*'s "Tale of Zahhak". It is particularly interesting that this plot does not occur in any of the Kurmanji versions of the *Shahnameh* ever recorded in Armenia and represents, in fact, a separate legend out of the epic context.

### Keywords

Yezidis Origin, Yezdistan, Kurdistan, *Shahnameh*

The syncretic nature of Yezidism, revealed in its various aspects (see, e.g., Arakelova 2004; eadem 2015; Asatrian/Arakelova 2014: 121-132), is particularly obvious in the fact of coexistence of several legends on the origin of the Yezidi people in the tradition. Two of them—one of the pronounced Abrahamic background, and the other, going back to an Old Iranian mythologem—have been previously discussed in detail (Kreyenbroek 1995: 182-192; Spät 2002; Asatrian 2007; Asatrian/Arakelova 2014: 72-76).

However, the Yezidi lore attests one more ethno-genetic myth, going back to a *Shahnameh* plot, which occurs in a text written down in Armenia, in the 40-s of the last century, by the prominent Yezidi pandit Amine Avdal. His informant, Ahmade Čolo from the village of Alagaz, Ashtarak region, was a well-known story-teller and an outstanding connoisseur of the Yezidi oral tradition. Originally from historical Western Armenia, he moved to Eastern Armenia after the 1915 Genocide in the Ottoman Empire.

The legend told by Ahmade Čolo, says: "On the shoulders of an unrighteous king, two snakes had grown up. The king asked the shaikhs how