More on *harkÇ and *harkapati-

Martin Schwartz (University of California at Berkeley)

In my BAI 17 contribution “The Etymology of Arab. xarÇj Revisited” (26-27), I discussed the history of the taxation term MPers. harg/xarg, in which I dismissed *harÇg/*xarÇg as a ghostword, and I derived Western Middle Iranian forms as well as Greek .......... from earlier *harkÇ + *pati- ‘chief’, upholding interpretation as ‘chief taxation official’ as against ‘citadel commander’ or the like.

I had already checked the final proofs of my contribution when, a short time later in Vienna for the conference of the Societas Iranologica Europaea, Prof. Tommaso Gnoli and I, at our hotel, found we were in agreement on .........., and the next day this colleague presented me with his book just published by the Austrian Academy, in which he devotes a chapter to the word in question (Gnoli 2007, 95-113). I immediately e-mailed my news to the editor of BAI, who responded that there was just enough time for inserting a “last-hour” addendum to my contribution, and we quickly agreed on a brief bibliographical notice of Gnoli’s book and its importance for my subject.

Unfortunately the happy synchronicity in Vienna did not produce the intended BAI 17 addendum citing Tommaso Gnoli on .......... etc., probably (I conjecture) because of the printers’ confusion by the fact that my contribution already had an addendum citing Tafazzoli on .........., in which I differed with this esteemed late scholar, who had preferred the translation of the word as ‘citadel-commander’. When, belatedly, to my chagrin, I noted the omission of the expected insertion from BAI 17, I informed the Editor (with whose fastidious devotion to articles in her journal I have long experience), and she, surprised at the omission, invited me to write the present expansion of the notice.

Gnoli’s chapter (“........”) provides a valuable and meticulous critical history of scholarly treatment of the term in question, and then traces the career of a very prominent local figure, Julius Aurelius Septimius Vorodes (Worÿ.) through a series of inscriptions in Greek and Palmyrene Aramaic from the 260’s CE. This investigation is contextualized in a consideration of the position of Palmyra as economic mediator between the Roman and Sasanian empires.

Gnoli concludes (110) that Worÿ., far from having a military office (as had been thought
largely on the misinterpretation of his title .........), had risen to the position of virtually administrating “the activities of the Palmyrene caravans by means of a two-way interface between the two great preternational empires. Towards the imperial [Roman] fiscus he was the chief of the portorium in Palmyra, while as far as Sasanian Iran was concerned, he was an argapetes, i.e. ‘Chef des Steuerwesen.’1 … [Wory’s various offices] were all centred around the twofold hinging function this person had as a chief of the most important customs station in the whole Roman Near East at that time. Thus he was first of all argapetes and procurator 1 The German phrase goes back to Ph. Huyse, whom Gnoli (101) cites after listing other Iranists who correctly interpreted the term: E. Herzfeld (Gnoli: 98), W.B. Henning, O. Szemerényi, Rüdiger Schmitt, and E. Khurshudian. R.N. Frye is also noted as belatedly (in 1984) coming around to the correct interpretation, after having issued the “rash explanation” ‘commander of a fortress’ (first in the 1959 publication of the Dura Europos documents) whereby the “incorrect etymology had a wide circulation among scholars of ancient history”, this long after the contrary evidence of the forms MPers. hrgwpt and Parth. hrkpty came to light with the 1924 publication of Narseh’s Paikuli inscription, and correct interpretation by Henning and others in the next decades (Gnoli: 98 and 100). decenarius. In this regard it is extremely significant that he should sign his [votive relief] portrait as argapetes (wrwd ‘rgbt• …” A few remarks on the non-Iranian spellings of the term in question are in order. The spelling argapetis at Palmyra in the 260 BCE inscription reflects, as to its g, the contemporary Sasanian West Middle Iranian pronunciation in which the Old Iranian voiceless stops had become voiced, whereas -petiš (alongside -patiš in PDura20), reflects the earlier-established Parthian pronunciation, borrowed with -petiš; cf. Arm. hazarapet ‘chiliarch’, etc. A lesser degree of hybridity is shown by Palm. Aram. ‘rgbi•, as against the earlier-established Jerus. Talm. Aram. ‘raqpt’, Bab. Talm. Aram. ‘lqpt•’ and Syr. ‘lqpt’. The -r/l- of the latter forms may actually come from a Parth. *ark-/*alk-, Parthian compound forms < *(h)arkÇ/*(h)alkÇ < Aram. *halkÇ (= Akk. ilku), reconstructed in Schwartz 2007. The ha- > a-, apparently reflected in the Greek forms as in light of the Byzantine orthography (see below), shows a general Parthian phonological feature, found also in the Manichean texts; it maps as an easterly trait, e.g. with Sogdian, which indeed has S. ’rkH < *arkÇ < *harkÇ, whereas Bact. ..... /harg/ should now be regarded as borrowed from Sasanian MPers. economic terminology (cf. Schwartz 2007). The Parth. spelling hrkpty at Paikuli is clearly an orthographic conservation of the old pronunciation with *h-.
Parthian /l/ phoneme is shown by *wḻg⁰ *Vologeses’.
The Byzantine Greek forms are given with the Aramaic in Telegdi (1935, p. 228, sec. 15). The Byzantine form .........., attested in the Sasanian periods has its first member altered probably due to ....- ‘arch-’, plus the above-discussed archaizing *-petis, whereas .......... shows contemporary phonology. As for the Paikuli outcome of *harka- + *-pati-
for
MPers. *hrgwpt (vs. Parth. *hrkpty), development more or less along the following lines is likely:

*harkapet yielded, with syncope of e, labialization of the stem-vowel (or anaptyctic vowel)
before the labial, and voicing of -k- to -g-, the successive forms *hargopt, *hargoft, and finally
*harguft; see the material and bibliography on the outcomes of *hazÇra-pati- and
*dipWra-pati-
in Shayegan 2004. MPers. *hargbed (cf. .........., etc.) represents an alternative realization of
*harka-pati- (cf. Shayegan, loc. cit.).
While the eminence of the argapetïs in Palmyra results from the realia of that city, one
can understand how, all the more, the Sasanian *hargbed/*harguft, as the official administering
all the revenues from taxation of the Empire, hence in effect the supreme financial overseer, is
seen at Paikuli to have occupied a rank just below royalty.
Having earlier (Schwartz 2007) dismissed the existence of a MPers. *h/xarÇg as antecedent of Arab. *xarÇj, which I explained as an inner-Arabic development from *xarj (<
MPers. *xarg), I take this opportunity to point out the occurrence of the Arabic word as a loan (of

2 I thank Prof. Éva Jeremiás for again showing her great kindness, by providing me with this tome in Vienna, having remembered my mention of a conversation I had long ago with Telegdi, her erstwhile teacher.
3 In the writings of Petrus Patricius on the court of Narseh, probably in reference to the very same hrgwpt/hlkpty
named in the Paikuli inscription; see Shayegan 2004.
4 Shayegan: 94 (who also suggests that hargbed is a military position) states that “there is no evidence that Arm.
hazarpet goes back to Parthian times” since the earliest evidence is in Armenian texts of the 5th and 6th cent. CE.
This is, of course, the period of our earliest Armenian writings; that the word in these texts represents an institutional
word fixed in the Parthian period representing the old term for ‘chiliarch’ is shown by the phonology. The formal
relationship between the Armenian terms hazarapet and hazaraouxt parallels, grosso modo, Paikuli Parth. *hrkpty
and MPers. *hrgwpt.
Shayegan should also have cited Eilers 1962/3, p. 215. Contra Eilers, however, Arab. qandalaft ‘sacristan’
does not reflect the Iranian *-ft- < *-pati, but is rather from late Greek .........., .......... the early Islamic period) into Pahlavi.5 The passage occurs in the ArdÇ WYrÇz NÇmag xxxiv 15
and reports to the reason given by the divine psychopomps Srÿ‰ and Ådur for one of the punishments in hell which ArdÇ W¥rÇz witnesses: Those souls must eat excrement and bear up an intolerable pile of stones on their backs, who in life “measured land falsely and deprived people of their properties and always had to pay heavy taxes (hl’c = xarÇj)” The passage is given in Vahman 1986, p. 143 and Gignoux 1984, p. 97, who notes that the word is an Arabic loan in New Persian, for which the (older) Pahlavi would be harg.

Ms. Giunashvili also informs me that (alongside Arm. hark, mentioned in Schwartz 2007), Old Georgian (in the translations of Ezra and Esdras) has xark‘-i, which word also occurs with various suffixes. Ms. Giunashvili also refers me to the ms. hapax xarak‘-i, which Gippert 1993, p. 53, suspected as a miswriting; the elimination of an underlying disyllabic Mr. form confirms that this OGeor. hapax is an error.

Bibliography

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