



ABRĀZ

ABRĀZ, Middle Persian “high, superior, height,” old Iranian **uparyānk-* “above, high.” For the literal sense of the word, cf. *Bundahišn*, p. 188.11-12; *pad abrāz paydāg*, “visible on high” (i.e., in the heavens). The figurative sense, familiar in New Persian *afrāz* and the military title *sar-afrāz*, was already common in Old Iranian (Avestan *uparatāt-* “superiority;” see *AirWb.*, col. 393). In Sasanian usage, *abrāz* apparently came to serve as an honorific title, although it has not yet been attested as such on stamp seals. The name of the margrave (*marzbān*) of Marv at the time of King Yazdegerd III’s murder (31/651) is accompanied by this epithet, as well as by that of “Sūrī.” (The latter has led to the suggestion that he was of the noted Sūrēn family; see, e.g., *Camb. Hist. Iran* IV, p. 25). Thus Ṭabarī names him as Māhōē, Abrāz, Māhōē Abū Barāz, and Barāz with the titles of *marzbān* or *dehqān* of Marv (series i, pp. 2873.8, 2888.8 and 3249.5 and 9, 2877.16-17); Ebn al-Aṭīr gives Abrāz (III, p. 272.18; variant: Abrāz b. Marzbān). The form Barāz shows interference by a much more common honorific, that of *warāz* “boar” (one of the shapes taken by the god Wahrām). Whatever Māhōē’s role in the death of Yazdegerd, he promptly submitted to the Arabs, commanded by ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Āmer; Ṭabarī’s later reference to him is for the year 36/656-57. Māhōē’s honorific was perhaps especially associated with offices in the eastern part of the Sasanian kingdom or on the northeastern frontier. Ebn Kordādbeh (p. 39.12), in giving a list of “titles of kings of Khorasan and the east,” names “the king of Nesā: *abrāz*.”



BIBLIOGRAPHY

See also: Ṭabarī, series iii, pp. 815.7, 816.1 (for the form Abrāz-banda, emended in a note to the cited passage of Ebn Kordābeh).

Justi, *Namenbuch*, p. 2. Christensen, *Iran Sass.*, pp. 507-08.

J. Wellhausen, *The Arab Kingdom and its Fall*, London, 1927, p. 414.