



ARAMAIC III. IRANIAN LOANWORDS IN MIDDLE ARAMAIC

ii. Iranian Loanwords In Early Aramaic

Speakers of Iranian languages were in all likelihood in contact with Aramaic speakers from the 7th century B.C. onwards in northern Mesopotamia, but this contact has not left a detectable impression. It is with the advent of the Achaemenids to power in the 6th century that a growing number of Iranian loanwords are found in Aramaic. In the Achaemenid period Aramaic was in use throughout the empire as a sort of official language and the Aramaic script was widely employed from Egypt in the southwest to Bactria and Sogdiana in the northeast. Texts were in all likelihood dictated in the native dialects, Iranian and others, written down in Aramaic, and then read out again in the native language at the place they were received. It is therefore not surprising that the Aramaic script, and the scribal practices of the chancery using Aramaic, achieved important status in these areas even after Aramaic had been replaced by Greek.

Many Iranian loanwords found in Aramaic are also found in neo-Babylonian and Elamite administrative and legal texts. It may also be assumed that the Iranian loanwords in Hebrew (primarily in the Book of Esther) entered via Aramaic.



The sources for these loanwords are 1) literary—the biblical books of Ezra (Ez), which quotes many early documents, and Daniel (Dan), which, although redacted in the time of the Maccabean revolt (i.e. ca. 186 B.C.), contains earlier material and is replete with Iranian words and usages; 2) the various collections of letters, contracts, administrative documents, etc. from Egypt (C = Cowley, K = Kraeling, D = Driver); 3) Aramaic inscriptions from Persepolis (B = Bowman); 4) inscriptions from other parts of the empire, primarily from Anatolia. As will be seen below, much of the vocabulary is from the spheres of administration, law, and commerce, but the texts also contain vocabulary from other walks of life. The later the text, the more Iranian words and idioms it will contain. Some phrases are entirely Iranian, and some documents, such as the ship-repair order (C 26) issued by *Aršāma* and the letters sent by *Aršāma* from Babylon and/or Susa (D), are particularly replete with Iranianisms. The Aramaic used in these texts has been called Official or Imperial Aramaic.

In the eastern provinces and the periphery of the Hellenistic world Aramaic continued in use as a written language into the Arsacid and Roman period. Aramaic inscriptions are known from Armenia and Georgia (Mc'xeṭ'a) as well as from such sites as Laḡmān and Qandahār in Afghanistan and Taxila in Pakistan. The Aramaic of these inscriptions was clearly a sort of heterograph; with Aramaic words replacing the language actually spoken by the scribe. Three Aramaic dialects spoken in the Near East during this period have also left us inscriptions that contain Iranian words, primarily Parthian in form. They are a) Palmyrene inscriptions from Palmyra, the important ancient caravan city in the Syrian desert, the written dialect being a continuation of “official Aramaic” with Eastern traits; b) the Hatra inscriptions, from Hatra in northern Iraq, whose dialect shows clear eastern traits; and c) the Syriac inscriptions from the Edessa area (modern Urfa in southern Turkey), the earliest testimony to the Syriac dialect of Aramaic.

The graphic realization of Iranian words in Aramaic in the early period presented few problems, for the Aramaic consonantal shape fit the known and assumed Iranian words; however, the vocalization of Iranian words transmitted in Biblical texts conforms to the patterns of Aramaic and Hebrew, while the consonantal shape remains relatively intact. Iranian *č* is expressed graphically by Aramaic *š*, *θ* by *t* and *xw* at times by simple *h*.

It is not surprising that the number of Iranian words in the administrative and legal fields is relatively large. Among the administrative functions, the



following officials should be mentioned: **'zdkry'** *azdakara* “recorder” (C 17:5); **'drgzr'** *handarza-kara* “counselor” (Dan); **'ḥšdrpn'** *xšaθrapāna* “satrap” (Dan); **'ḥštrpn'** (Xanthos); **'gzbr'** *ganzabara* “treasurer” (Ez); **'pgnzbr'** *upaganzabara* “sub-treasurer” (B pp. 30ff.); **'gwšky'** *gaušaka* “hearer, spy” (C); **'dtbr'** *dātabara* “law officer” (Dan); **'dtky'** *dātaka* “lawyer” (C); **'hdbr'** *hadabāra* “companion” (Dan); **'hpthpt'** *haftaxwapātā* “guardian of the seventh (part)” (K 8:2, 3); **'hmrkr'** *hamāarakara* “accountant” (D); **'prmnkr'** *framānakara* “superior, foreman” (C); **'prsk'** *frasaka* “investigator” (Ez); **'prstk'** *frastāka* “leading official” (Ez); **'prtrk'** *frataraka* “governor” (C); **'prtm'** *fratama* (Heb.) “general” (Dan); **'ptyprs'** *pātifrāsa* “retribution” (C); **'srk'** *sāraka* “chief minister” (Dan); **'tpt'** *tāyupātā* “policeman” (Dan). Such professions as *patikarakara* “sculptor (D)”; *waršabara* “forester” (D) and *nāupati* “(ship) captain” (C) should also be noted.

A variety of items from the realm of realia deserve mention here: **'bšwn'** *abišavana* “pestle” (B); **'šrn'** *āčarna* “furnishings” (C); **'ḥšynpyn'** *axšainafaina* “turquoise” (B); **'stdn'** *astōdāna* “ossuary” (KAI 262); **'trwdn'** *āθrōdāna* “fire altar” (C); **'drḥt'** *draxta* “tree” Sardis (KAI 260); **'hmynk'** *hamyānaka* “necklace, belt” (Dan); **'hndwn'** *handavana* “repair material” (C); **'hnpn'** *hanpāna* “covered passage” (K); **'hwn'** *havana* “mortar” (B); **'nbršt'** *nibrāšti* “lamp” (Dan); **'ndn'** *nidāni* “container, sheath” (Dan; Gen Apoc); **'prds'** *paridaiza* “garden, park” (Enoch); **'prbr'** *paribāra, parbar* “wall” Sardis (KAI 260); **'ptp'** *piθfa* “ration” (C; D); **'wpšr'** *upačāra* “repair (material)” (C 26); **'wpkrt'** *upakarta* “preparation, gathering of material” (C); **'zrnyk'** *zaranyaka* “arsenic” (C).

The following nouns belong essentially to the administrative sphere: **'bygrn'** *abigarana* “penalty, fine” (C; K); **'drng'** *ādranga* “guarantor” (K); **'wdys'** *avadaisa* “protocol” (C); **'zt'** *āzāta* “free” (K); **'zd'** *azdā* “known” (C; Dan); **'dwn'** *advan* “route, (stage of a) journey” (D); **'bg'** *bāga* “portion, domain” (D); **'grd'** *garda* “domestic staff” (D); **'gnz'** *ganza* “treasury” (C; D; Ez); **'dm'** *dama* “domain” (Xanthos); **'dšn'** *dāšna* “gift” (D); **'dt'** *dāta* “law” (passim); **'dwškrt'** *duškarta* “misdeed” (C); **'hd'bgw'** *hadā-abigāva* “with interest” (D); **'hnbg'** *hngyt'* *hanbāga, hangaiθa* “partners (in land or movable property)” (C; K); **'ksntw'** *kasanθva* “decrease” (D); **'nštwn'** *ništavana* “order” (C; Ez); **'srwšyt'** *sraušyata@* “punishment” (D); **'ptbg'** *patibāga* “portion” (Dan); **'ptgm'** *patigāma* “message, report” (passim); **'ptšgn'** *patičagna* (Hebrew **ptšgn** /strong>; Aram. **pršgn**) “document, copy;” **'psšrt'** *pasčā-rāti* “addition to dowry” (K); **'rz'** *rāza* “secret” (Dan); **'ywz'** *yauza* “rebellion” (D).

There are also interesting idioms which consist of a form of the Aramaic verb **'bd** “to do, make” and an Old Persian noun: **gst ptgm** (*gasta patigāma*) **yṭ'bd**



(D) “he will be strictly called to account;” **hdmyn tṭʿbdwn** (Dan) “you will be direly punished;” **hndrz** (*handarza*) **yʿbdwn** (D) “they will give instructions.” There is a group of words used in an adverbial construction: *apatamā(m)* “finally” (Ez); *azdā* “publicly” (Dan); *asparnā* “in full” (D; Ez); (*a*)*drazdā* “diligently” (Ez).

It has been plausibly suggested that the enigmatic **ddymyy** (K 9:3) which follows Aramaic **yhbth lky** “I gave/have given it to you” is a similar declaration in Old Persian *dadāyam ayāy* (for **adadāyam *ahyāi*). In the inscription from Arebsun (KAI 264) the phrase **dynmzdysnš dainā-mazdayasniš** “Mazda-believing,” and in KAI 265, the verbal **mgyš lmrh** (Greek *emageuse Mithrē*) “acted the *magus* to Mithra” is found. Religious terminology from the Iranian sphere is found in the Aramaic of the recently discovered Xanthos trilingual: **krpʿ karpa** “religious usage, rite” and **ḥštrpty xšaθrapati** “noble, protective spirit,” used for Apollo (lit. “landlord”). In the Taxila inscription (KAI 273) the following religious terms are found: **hwptysty hu-patyāsti** “good obedience,” **hww[rd] hu-varda** “good progress” and **hwnštwn hu-ništavana** “good order” and from Qandahār I **ptytw patīθva** “for redemption (?),” **ptyzbt pati-zbāta** “forbidden,” **prbsty frabasta** “unbridled,” **mzyšty mazišta** “elders, superiors.” The inscriptions from Afghanistan contain other Iranian terms.

A not unexpected source of interesting Iranian words in Aramaic are the Qumran scrolls. The Aramaic texts are written in Standard Literary Aramaic and therefore reflect essentially the Eastern Literary dialect. As well as several Iranian words known from other texts, they contain such words as: (*a*)*sparaka* “buckler” (Gen Apoc.), *daxšta* “desert” (Targ. Job), *naḥšīr* “hunt” (I Q Wars), *naḥšīrūta* “slaughter” (Test. Levi), **naiza-ka* (written *nzk*) “spear” (Targ. Job).

Of particular interest are the Iranian titles that have reached us in variant forms. In the inscriptions from Mcʿxeṭʿa in Georgia, the same title is written both **bṭḥš** (I 1.2) and **pyṭḥš** (II 1.2-5). In the Greek version of inscr. I this is rendered *pitiaksēs*. In the Hatra inscription, there *may* also be two versions of this term: **bṭḥš**ʿ (no. 143) and also **pdḥš**ʿ (no. 127). The forms **byṭḥš** (Parthian) and **bṭḥšy** (Pahlavi) are known from Šāpūr KZ while the Greek transcriptions *pitiaksou* and *pituaksou* are also found there, and Ammianus Marcellinus preserves *vitaxa*. On this word see O. Szemerényi in *Monumentum H. S. Nyberg II*, Acta Iranica 5, Tehran and Liège, 1975, pp. 363-65. Another title with slightly divergent spellings is found as **pšgryb**ʿ in the Syriac *Hymn of the Soul* (where it was recognized by I. Gershevitch, *JRAS*, 1954, p. 124) as well as in an Old Syriac



inscription; at Hatra it has the forms **pzgryb'** (185:3) and **pšgryb'/psgrb'** (287:6; 282). It is attested in Man. Mid. Pers. as *ps'gryw* and as a Parthian loanword in Man. Sogd. as *pš'gryw*, and derives from OIr. **pasčā-grīva* "behind/instead of the self," i.e. "viceroy" (see Szemerényi, op. cit., p. 365, with references). Among the other civic and religious titles that occur in these inscriptions are **'rgpt'** "city governor" (Palmyra), **mhrqr'** "incantation maker" (Palmyra), **hdrpt'** "fire-priest" (Hatra), and **nhšrpt'** "in charge of hunt" (Hatra). The god Nergal, of Babylonian origin, is given the title **dhšpt'** at Hatra. It is Parthian **daxšpat*, known from Syriac *daḥša* and Armenian *dahič*, *daḥčapet*, where it means "chief guard, executioner." This is consonant with Nergal's role as god of the underworld.

Texts of the Achaemenid period: R. A. Bowman, *Aramaic Ritual Texts from Persepolis*, Chicago, 1970 (= B); A. E. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.*, Oxford, 1923 (= C); G. R. Driver, *Aramaic Documents of the Fifth Century B. C.*, revised edition, Oxford, 1964 (= D); E. G. Kraeling, *The Brooklyn Museum Aramaic Papyri: New Documents of the Fifth Century B.C. from the Jewish Colony at Elephantine*, New Haven, 1953 (= K); H. Donner and W. Röllig, *Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften 1*, Wiesbaden, 1962 (= KAI).

The Iranian words in Ezra and Daniel: W. B. Henning, in F. Rosenthal, *A Grammar of Biblical Aramaic*, 2nd revised ed., Wiesbaden, 1963, pp. 58-59.

W. Hinz, *Altiranisches Sprachgut der Nebenüberlieferungen*, Wiesbaden, 1975.

For Xanthos: M. Mayrhofer, "Die iranischen Elemente im aramäischen Text," in *Fouilles de Xanthos. Tome VI. La stèle trilingue du Létôon*, Paris, 1979, pp. 181-85.

The Iranian words in the Job Targum and bibliography for the other words in the Qumran Scrolls: J. C. Greenfield and S. Shaked, "Three Iranian Words in the Targum of Job from Qumran," *ZDMG* 122, 1972, pp. 37-44.

See also J. C. Greenfield, "On some Iranian Terms in the Elephantine Papyri," *Acta Antiqua* (Budapest) 21, 1977, pp. 113-18; "Some Notes on the Arsham Letters," in *Irano-Judaica*, Jerusalem, 1982, pp. 4-11.

For Mc'xeṭ'a: A. M. Ap'ak'ije, G. P'. Gobejšvili, A. N. Kalandaje, and G. A. Lomṭ'aṭ'ije, *Mcxeṭ'a: ark'eologiuri kvlevajiebis sedegebi. I. Armazisxevis*



ark'eologiuri jeglebi, 1937-1946 çç ganat 'xaris mixedviç', Tiflis, 1955.

For Afghanistan: H. Birkeland, "Eine aramäische Inschrift aus Afghanistan," *Acta Orientalia* 16, 1938, pp. 222-23; G. Davary and H. Humbach, *Eine weitere aramäoiranische Inschrift der Periode des Aśoka aus Afghanistan*, Mainz, 1947.

A. Dupont-Sommer, "Une nouvelle inscription araméenne d'Aśoka trouvée dans la vallée du Laghman (Afghanistan)," *Comptes-rendus de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles lettres*, 1970, pp. 158-73.

For Kandahar I see D. Schlumberger, L. Robert, A. Dupont-Sommer, and E. Benveniste, "Une bilingue gréco-araméenne d'Aśoka," *JA* 246, 1958, pp. I-48; for Kandahar II see E. Benveniste, A. Dupont-Sommer, and C. Caillat, "Une inscription indoaraméenne d'Aśoka provenant de Kandahar (Afghanistan)," *JA* 254, 1966, pp. 437-70.

Palmyra: F. Rosenthal, *Die Sprache der palmyrenischen Inschriften*, Leipzig, 1936, pp. 96-97.

Hatra: F. Vattioni, *Le iscrizioni di Hatra*, Naples, 1981; D. Harnack, "Parthische Titel, vornehmlich in den Inschriften aus Hatra," in F. Altheim and R. Stiehl, *Geschichte Mittelasiens im Altertum*, Berlin, 1970, pp. 492-549.

(J. C. Greenfield)

iii. Iranian Loanwords In Middle Aramaic

The period between Achaemenid and Sasanian rule saw the emergence of the Middle Aramaic dialects. The main division of the Aramaic language ran between the eastern and western dialects, with Syriac as the major exception, lying across the boundary line between the two groups. The presence of Iranian elements was, predictably, felt much more strongly in the eastern regions of Aramaic, which were under direct Iranian domination or at least within the Iranian cultural sphere. Among the most important survivals from that area is the Jewish rabbinical literature of the Babylonian Talmud and Midrash, which was continued in the post-Talmudic and early Islamic period in Gaonic literature. This literature consisted mostly of religious discussions relating to questions of law, ritual, liturgy, theology, exegesis, and legendary history. Very close to it linguistically is Mandaean literature, from the small



religious sect that still survives in the area between present-day southern Iraq and Iran. Syriac developed a rich and varied literature over a very wide geographical area; it reflected the thinking and discourse of the Christian communities from Egypt and Asia Minor to Syria, Mesopotamia and Persia, with a certain limited presence in India. The impact of Iranian is felt most strongly in Jewish Babylonian Aramaic and in Mandaic, as well as in Eastern Syriac. The western dialects, such as Palestinian Syriac and Galilean Jewish Aramaic, also contain a certain number of Iranian loanwords, but these are not as numerous as the words that can be identified as Iranian in the eastern varieties of Aramaic. The language of Aramaic centers such as Hatra and Palmyra also displays a fairly small number of Iranian loanwords.

To start with Babylonian Jewish Aramaic, it is clear that the numerous loanwords in the language did not all enter Aramaic at the same time. Different chronological layers of loanword material must be separated out; these distinctions can be made linguistically through the known rules of phonetic changes, but these changes affected a relatively small number of words in the language, and many words still can not be chronologically determined with confidence. In some cases we can use evidence that is not purely linguistic, such as the fact that a certain word is already found in early Aramaic, or that it is common to several varieties of late Aramaic, suggesting that it constitutes a common heritage from earlier Aramaic, even if it is not actually attested in the older language.

Loan words can also be distinguished according to the Iranian dialect from which each derives. In some cases it is possible to observe phonetic features that characterize northwest Middle Iranian (Parthian) as different from the southwestern language (Middle Persian). Such clear distinctions are rare and even where they do occur, their significance is limited by the fact that the language of the Sasanian period, which was basically Middle Persian, had become at an early period a *koinē*, absorbing words from other dialects and containing a rich Parthian element as part of its vocabulary. Words that display Parthian linguistic features are not necessarily borrowings from the Parthian language; in many cases, they may be words of Parthian origin that were current in the Persian language and were borrowed into Aramaic as Persian words. Many words of east Iranian origin, such as Sogdian or Khwarezmian, also became part of the Persian language and may have been similarly borrowed into Aramaic from Persian.

Even in the case of genuine Parthian words, i.e. Parthian words that were



never absorbed into Persian and may have been borrowed directly from Parthian into Aramaic, it would be wrong to assert, as has sometimes been done, that they were necessarily borrowed in the Parthian, or Arsacid, period. Parthian continued to exist as a language of culture and trade in the Sasanian period, and Parthian words could have entered Aramaic in the post-Arsacid period. Dialect differences should not be confused with the chronology of borrowings, and even the use of dialect distinctions as an indication of regional provenance is problematic since individual words were prone to wander from one dialect to another.

A word like *rāz* “secret,” for example, had already been introduced into Aramaic when it was a chancery or official language of the Achaemenid dynasty and is found in nearly all later Aramaic dialects. Likewise *pitgām* “decree, word” displays in its phonetic structure the marks of an early borrowing (Mid. Pers. *paygām*, NPers. *payām*). *Pitgām(a)* is found in basically this form in many Aramaic dialects, sometimes with late inner-Aramaic developments, e.g. **pwgd'm** in Mandaic. Another early borrowing into Aramaic with widespread attestation in later Aramaic dialects is Aramaic **ptkr** “sculpture, image,” from Old Iranian *patikara-* (see G. D. Driver, *Aramaic Documents of the Fifth Century B.C.*, Oxford, 1954, p. 72f.). Apart from these and other words that are already familiar from the Aramaic documents of the Achaemenid period, several words may be assigned to the same chronological layer of borrowing on phonetic grounds. A list of such words from the Babylonian Talmud was made up by S. Telegdi (“Essai sur la phonétique des emprunts iraniens en araméen talmudique,” *JA* 226, 1935, p. 218f.), although it may be doubted whether all of his criteria are indeed valid. The maintenance of the letter *qōf* in the morphemes *-ak(a)-akān(a)*, for example, can not be considered an archaism, since in early Arabic borrowings (probably made toward the end of the Sasanian period) the Arabic letter *qāf* is consistently used for the same function. It would not be justified to regard the borrowing of **zndnqn** “jailer” from Middle Persian **zēndānakān*, **zēndānagān* as pre-Sasanian on phonetic grounds, nor can a very early borrowing period be presumed for words like *kandaq* “ditch, moat,” which occurs in early Arabic, but which was probably borrowed not earlier than the 5th century A.D. G. Widengren (*Iranisch-semitische Kulturbegegnung in parthischer Zeit*, Cologne, 1960, pp. 25ff.) makes his own list of early borrowings into Mandaic, but his criteria for establishing Parthian words are questionable.

It is also important to make a distinction between genuine loanwords (i.e.



words of Iranian origin that became part of the Aramaic vocabulary) and Iranian words quoted in Aramaic, perhaps only in a single context, without being absorbed into Aramaic. This distinction, valid in theory, is not easy to make in practice. Many of the words of Iranian origin listed in the various Aramaic lexicons were completely naturalized, and some of them even passed the test of supreme absorption into a foreign language in that verbs were formed from them, and they became part of the Semitic root system of the language. In other cases, where what looks like a whole Persian phrase is quoted in an Aramaic context, such as **k'r hzr gwn'** (TBavli [Babylonian Talmud], *Sanhedrin* 98a) "a donkey with a thousand colors," it would be hardly justified to consider each word as a loanword in Aramaic (in this example it may be noted that **gwn'** was independently borrowed into Aramaic). Similarly, numerous juridical terms that occur in *The Lawbook of Yišō'-boxt* (ed. in E. Sachau, *Syrische Rechtsbücher* III, Berlin, 1914) do not seem to have become part of the Syriac language. In other cases where an Iranian word occurs in an Aramaic text, it is often simply impossible to determine what status the borrowed word has in Aramaic.

The phonology of the Iranian loanwords in Babylonian Jewish Aramaic, as reflected in its orthography, has been thoroughly treated by S. Telegdi ("Essai sur la phonétique"), who distinguishes three modes of reflecting in Aramaic the Iranian phoneme *č* when it is also retained in Iranian: by *šin*, by *šade*, and, rarely, by the combination *šet-šade*. The grapheme with *šin* corresponds to Parthian usage, although the occurrence of such a grapheme does not necessarily indicate a borrowing from the Parthian. The Iranian phoneme *ǰ* is most often rendered by the Aramaic *zayin*, occasionally, especially in late (Gaonic) texts, by the combination *dalet-zayin* (as in **dzwd**, Mid. Pers. *ǰud* "separate, different"), and even by *dalet-yod* (**dywṭr**, Mid. Pers. *ǰuttar* "different").

A case of unusual phonetic correspondence occurs in a small group of words, where one may assume an interchange of *-g/-γ-* with *-x/-ḫ-*: Aram. **brḥ'** "ram," cf. Mid. Pers. *warrag*, NPers. *barra*; Aramaic (and Hebrew) **ḥzn'** "superintendent, guard," perhaps connected with Iranian *ganza-*, *gazna-* (cf. Sogdian *γzn*), which otherwise gives the productive Aramaic, Hebrew, and Arabic root **GNZ**. The derivation of Aramaic **ḥzn'** from Iranian gains some credibility from the existence of the Arabic root **KZN** "to store up," from the same Iranian origin (see W. Eilers, "Iranisches Lehngut im Arabischen," *Actas do IV Congresso de Estudos Árabes e Islâmicos* [Lisbon, 1968], Leiden, 1971, p.



602). Note also Aramaic **gwšgr** “dark or coarse flour,” with which NPers. *košk-ārd* has been compared (H. Fleischer in J. Levy, *Chaldäisches Wörterbuch über die Targumim*, Leipzig, 1867-68; B. Geiger in S. Krauss, *Additamenta ad librum Aruch completum Alexandri Kohut*, Vienna, 1937; repr. New York, 1955, s.v.).

Occasionally an unetymological ‘ayin occurs in Aramaic words of Iranian origin. The most conspicuous example is **k’k** “bread,” probably from an Iranian antecedent of NPers. *kāk* (but cf. T. Nöldeke, *Persische Studien* II, Sb. d. Kais. Akad. d. Wissenschaften in Wien, phil-hist. Kl. 126, 1892, p. 42; Eilers, “Iranisches Lehngut,” p. 612). Aramaic **ḥn**, **ḥn**, **nyny** “spearmint” is of doubtful origin, but the phenomenon is widespread in Arabic words (see A. Siddiqi, *Studien über die persischen Fremdwörter im klassischen Arabisch*, Göttingen, 1919, pp. 69ff., and Eilers, “Iranisches Lehngut”).

A list of the most important categories of loanwords according to their meaning and semantic field follows. There is a fairly large number of terms related to state administration, designating either functions and abstract notions or concrete objects, as well as titles of office. Abstract notions and concrete objects belonging to the area of state or local administration in Babylonian Jewish Aramaic include: **hrmn** < Parth. **hramān* “command” (but cf. Mandaic **pr**’**m’n**, from Persian *framān*); **gz**, also in Syriac < **ganja* “treasury” (an old borrowing, with a phonetic assimilation of the *n* that seems to have occurred in Aramaic); **by dw’r** “postal station” (the etymology of the second word is uncertain but the word seems to be of Iranian origin; the first word is Aramaic “house”); **mwhrq** < Mid. Pers. *muhrag* “seal;” **glmhrg**, cf. NPers. *gel-mohra* “bull;” **ptšgn**, **pršgn** < OIr. **pati-čagna-*, “document, copy” (an old borrowing), cf. Mandaic **p’ršygn**, **p’ršykn**, Syriac **pršgn**. A Mandaic term that belongs to the same class is **prwdg** “decree; passport” (perhaps also Syriac **prwdtq**, not attested in literature). The word seems to derive from Iranian (cf. Mid. Pers. *frawardag* “letter, missive”).

Titles of office and terms designating state functionaries: **mrzbn** cf. NPers. *marzbān*, a military title; **rqpt**, **rgbt**, **lqpt** “a high-ranking official,” cf. Inscr. Parth. *ḥrkpty*, Inscr. Mid. Pers. *ḥlgwpt* ; **prdšk**, **prdkš** some court official, perhaps from Mid. Pers. **pardak-kaš*, lit. “one who draws the curtain,” cf. Arabic-NPers. *ḥājeb* ; **qhrmn** “ruler, commander” (contracted from Parthian **kār-hramān*, cf. Mid. Pers. *kār framān*); **bzbn** “customs collector” < Mid. Pers. **bāz-bān* ; **zhrwr** “tax collector (?),” perhaps connected with a Mid. Pers. word like **zīnhār-bār*, literally “one who carries a document of safety;” **mrkl** < OIran. **ahmār-kāra-* “accountant;” the word is an



older borrowing; **drbwn** “gate keeper” < Mid. Pers. **dar-bān*; **kwšqb’n** “guardian of a tower” < Mid. Pers. **kōšk-bān*; **gzbr**’ (attested in Hebrew and Aramaic; Mandaic **g’nzybr**) < OIran. **ganza-bara-*, evidently an old borrowing; **dbyr** “scribe” < Mid. Pers. *dibīr* (a Persian word quoted in Aramaic, not a loanword); **pštybn**’ “guardsman” < Mid. Pers. *puštībān*.

Several words designate “messenger”: **zgd**’ (Mandaic **šg’nd**’), cf. Sogd. *ʿynt*, *ʿynty*; **prystq**’, cf. Mid. Pers. *frēstag*; **prwnq**’, Mandaic **p’rw’nq**’, cf. Mid. Pers. *parwānag* “guide, leader.”

Aramaic loanwords from Persian that are concerned with the administration of justice include: **dw’r** “judge,” probably from forms like NPers. *dāvar* (Mid. Pers. *dādwar*); **gzyrpt**’ “police officer,” cf. Mid. Pers. *wizīr* “judgement, decision;” **ytgr**’ “certificate,” cf. Mid. Pers. *ayādgār* “memorandum;” **pwršyšmng**, a corruption of **pwršyšnmng** “proceedings of a judicial enquiry,” from Mid. Pers. **pursišn-nāmag* (a similar form exists in Syriac); **w’bwrg’n** “safe, trustworthy,” Mid. Pers. *wābaragān*; **dstbyr**’ “bill of divorcement” (attested in a Syriac magic bowl from Babylonia, see Shaked, “Bagdana”), probably connected with *dastwar* “authoritative (document);” **bwktnmng** (Syriac) “deed of acquittal (?)” (cf. Bedjan, *Histoire de Mar Jabalāhā*, Leipzig, 1895, p. 234), from Mid. Pers. **buxt-nāmag*.

A number of terms refer to punishment by law: **bzywny** “prison,” perhaps from an Aramaic-Persian combination, *be zēna-* “house of weapons;” **zndwqn**’, **zndwq**’ “jailer,” probably from Mid. Pers. **zēndānag*, cf. NPers. *zendān-bān*, which originally must have meant “keeper of the armory;” **mtprs**’ “punishment,” cf. Mid. Pers. *pādefrāh* (the Aramaic word is probably derived from Parthian).

Some military and cavalry terms: **zyyn**’ “weapon,” Mid. Pers. *zēn*; **zrd**’ “armor,” cf. Mid. Pers. *zrēh*; the Aramaic word seems to derive from Parthian, unless it is an older borrowing, cf. YAv. *zrāda*; **gwnd**’ “troops,” Mid. Pers. *gund*; **špšyr**’ “sword,” cf. Mid. Pers. *šamšēr*; **psr** (Syriac and Hebrew) “muzzle, bridle, rein,” cf. NPers. *afsār*, *fasār*; **srg**’ (Syriac; Babylonian Jewish Aramaic has the denominative **SRG**) “saddle,” cf. the Arabic loanword *sarj*; **hwryr**’ “stable manager,” Mid. Pers. **āxwar-dār* ; **snw’rt** “helmet,” probably from Old Pers. **sara-varti-*.

Further military terms attested in Syriac: **nyzk**’ “lance,” **nym**’ sheath,” **qtyrq**’ “quiver,” **pyg**’ “foot-soldier.”



There is a fairly long list of words borrowed in the field of garments and textiles (e.g., **gwnd'** "cloak;" **dstwdr** "shawl;" **hmyyn'** "belt"); in the field of food and cooking (e.g., **ṭbhq** "a roasted slice of meat;" **ṭwzyq** "picnic;" **kwpt'** "meat cutlet"). Some terms designate servants (**bdwbr**, **kw'ngr**, **dwrđq**, the latter two for cooks or waiters). Many terms of flora and fauna in Babylonian Aramaic derive from Iranian ('**mgwz'** "nut;" '**sprmqy** "herbs with scent;" **hndqwqy** "melilot;" **z'z'** "dry branches;" **brḥ'** "ram" (doubtful); **qbwṭl** "pigeon;" **rmk** "mare, herd;" **gyt'** "cattle, livestock"). A number of terms indicate household items (e.g., **drğš** "bed;" **tkṭq'**, **tktk'** "chair, bench, table;" **bstrq'**, **nmrq'**, **bys'd'** "cushion, pillow." On these see S. Shaked, "From Iran to Islam," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 7, forthcoming). The adjective "multicolored" is expressed by Aram. **šsgwn'**, probably from Mid. Pers. *šast-gōn* "of sixty colors."

The strong linguistic impact of Iranian on Babylonian Aramaic appears most strikingly with the loanwords that were turned into Aramaic verbs: **gnz** "to store;" **bgn** and **pgn** "to cry for help;" **bšqr** "to search, find out;" **grb** "to seize;" **hrzq** "to close, lock up;" **prhwzy** "to take precautions, beware;" **rwz** "to be glad" (not all the examples are certain).

Syntax and morphology constitute a more complicated field of investigation than vocabulary. Syntactically, the tendency attested in later Aramaic to replace the straightforward past tense in active verbs by a passive construction shows the parallel development in Aramaic of what was the standard mode of expressing the past of active verbs in most languages of the Middle Iranian period. This later became the standard way of expressing the past of such verbs in Neo-Aramaic dialects (see E. Benveniste, *Problèmes de linguistique générale*, Paris, 1966; E. Y. Kutscher, *Hebrew and Aramaic Studies*, Jerusalem, 1977, pp. 70-89).

Influences in the opposite direction, from Aramaic to Iranian also exist; this is most visible in the system of writing the Middle Iranian languages, where in most cases not only was the script borrowed from Aramaic, but also a great many Aramaic words were used as logograms for Iranian words. These words were only borrowed as written signs, not as part of the spoken language. (On the process see W. B. Henning, "Mitteliranisch," pp. 58ff.). Quite a few Aramaic words entered Middle Persian, Parthian, and Sogdian; in Middle Persian, e.g.: **wš** "foundation;" **škwṭp** "root;" **g'clyx** "the work of a fuller;" **gcytk** "poll tax;" **tlgm'n** "interpreter;" **nkyl'd** "repudiating, denying;" **gty** "document;" **mgynd** "shield;" **rgyh** "inclination" (the latter perhaps from a form like Mandaic



r'gwhy "desire," contrary to what is suggested in S. Shaked, *Wisdom of the Sasanian Sages*, Boulder, Col., 1979, pp. 252ff.; see also S. Shaked in *Israel Oriental Studies* 4, 1974, p. 250, and T. Nöldeke, *Persische Studien*). Some of the Aramaic loanwords in New Persian are likely to be borrowings of the Middle Persian period (e.g., *tafšīla*; on these words see J. W. Weryho, "Syriac Influence on Sasanian Iran," *Folia Orientalia* 13, 1971, pp. 299-321).

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