



ASPET

ASPET, Armenian title (in contemporary Greek documents also *Aspetes*) hereditary in the Bagratuni (Bagratid) family. It has been derived from either Old Pers. **viθa/visapati* “head of the clan” (N. Adontz, *Armenia in the Period of Justinian*, tr. and rev. by N. Garsoïan, Lisbon, 1970, p. 312), or, more convincingly, Old Pers. **aspapati*, later *aspad/-bed* (J. Markwart, “Die Genealogie der Bagratiden und das Zeitalter der Mar Abas und Ps. Moses Xorenaci,” *Caucasica* 6/2, 1930, p. 68, and H. Hübschmann, *Armen. Etymologie*, p. 109), which designated the Iranian office of Master of the Horse (commander of the cavalry). Because of this Iranian *office*, it has been assumed that *Aspet*, likewise, stood for a similar Armenian office, rather than a title. This is difficult to accept, since the Armenian army, overwhelmingly cavalry, was under the command of the High Constable (*sparapet*, derived from *spādapaiti*-, later *spāhbad/-bed*), which left no room for a Master of the Horse. And there are hardly any references by the Armenian historians of the Arsacid period to any Bagratids in command of the king’s forces. Like the *matxaz* of the Xorxoruni family, *Aspet* seems to have been a special, gentilitial, title of the Bagratids, who derived from it their other, short-lived, name of Aspetuni. This title disappears in the Arab period of Armenian history. The existence of this title and name may possibly be due to Arsacid Armenia’s imitation of Iran, where one of the Seven Great Houses bore indeed the name of Aspāhbad (in contemporary Greek Aspétios).



BIBLIOGRAPHY

See also A. Christensen *Iran Sass.*, pp. 104 n. 1, 107-08.

M. Ehtéham, *L'Iran sous les Achéménides*, Fribourg, 1946, pp. 21 n. 4, 65.

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