



BUN-XĀNAG

BUN-XĀNAG, phrase occurring in the sentence *AYK-t bwny BYTA ZNE ḡw YHWWN* (*kū-t bun *xānag ēn ēw bawēd*). In the inscriptions of Kirdīr at Naqš-e Rostam (KKZ and KNRm), for which W. B. Henning, in the introduction to his edition of inscription KNRm, proposed the translation “this foundation house shall be thine.” He argued that *BYTA* (the ideogram for *xānag*) must necessarily refer to the building on the walls of which the inscription KKZ was incised, the Ka’ba of Zardošt, and suggested that it was used as a repository for religious records and charters and even the Avesta. He recalled the fact that Naqš-e Rostam was earlier called *kūh-e neβešt* “mountain of scriptures” (Ebn Balkī, pp. 49f.) and that the Pahlavi term *diz ī nibišt* “fortress of scriptures” may have referred to the Ka’ba. Henning’s reading of the phrase has been questioned, however, and must probably be abandoned.

H. Humbach (1974, pp. 206-08) proposed a comparison with Pahlavi *bun-kadag* “maison de base,” which he explained as the building that served as the basis for Kirdīr’s ecclesiastical reforms. M. Back (1978, p. 508 n. 257) pointed out that everywhere else in Kirdīr’s inscriptions *BYTA* means “fortune, estate, possessions” and translated the phrase as “Stiftungsvermögen” (foundation capital). *BYTA* is used by Kirdīr in the phrase *PWN NPŠE BYTA* to mean “at (my) own expense” (see Henning, 1939, p. 826 n. 2). Back retained the meaning “foundation” for *bwny* (commonly “beginning, origin”), but even this may be unnecessary. There is finally no special reason for taking *bwny BYTA* as a compound rather than as two separate words, in which case the sentence can be translated as “and let this estate/property be your beginning” (i.e., your



start-up capital; for a different interpretation, see *deû ī nebešt*).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

M. Back, *Die sassanidischen Staatsinschriften*, Acta Iranica 18, Tehran and Liège, 1978.

W. B. Henning, "The Great Inscription of Šāpūr I," *BSO(A)S* 9, 1939, pp. 823-49.

Idem, *The Inscription of Naqš-i Rostam (1-48)*, Corp. Inscr. Iran., pt. 3, vol. 2, portfolio 2 (pls. xxv-xlvi), London, 1957.

H. Humbach, "Bun-xānag et Ka'ba-ye Zardušt," in *Hommage universel III*, Acta Iranica 3, Tehran and Liège, 1974, pp. 203-08.

M. Shaki, "Two Middle Persian Legal Terms for Private Property," in P. Gignoux and A. Taffazzoli, eds., *Mémorial Jean de Menasce*, Tehran and Louvain, 1974, pp. 327-36 (p. 335: "*bun-xānag* . . . may, in all probability, denote "principal (property)" or "capital").