



CHILIARCH

CHILIARCH, Greek title of one of the chief offices of state in Achaemenid Persia, presumably translated from Old Persian *hazārapati-*, attested in Greek as *azarapateîs* (plur.; Hesychius, ed. K. Latte, Copenhagen, 1953, I, p. 52), explained as *eisaggeleîs*, that is, announcers or ushers. In Parthian the corresponding title was *hazārpēt* or *hazāruft*, borrowed in Armenian as *hazarapet* and *hazarwuxt* respectively; in Middle Persian it was *hazārbed* or *hazāruft* (Gignoux, pp. 24: Mid. Pers. *hz'lwpt*, 54 Parth. *hzwpt*; in ŠKZ, see below, the Greek version has *hazaropt* and *azariptou*).

Information about the office comes from foreign, mainly Greek, sources. We first learn from Herodotus (7.81) that the Achaemenid forces were grouped under commanders of 10,000, 1,000, 100, and 10 men; to these Xenophon added commanders of 50 and 5 men (*Cyropaedia* 2.1.23). The chiliarch of the Corps of the Immortals had the duty of watching over the safety of the king of kings at all times and was in fact the second most important person in the realm (Diodorus, 18.48.4-5; Nepus, "Conon" 3.2; cf. Benveniste, pp. 53, 67). The chiliarch's responsibilities did not (as was supposed by scholars like Ernst Herzfeld, Josef Marquart, and A. T. Olmstead; see Szemerényi, pp. 378-82) include presentation of guests to the king or management of the royal finances.

E. Benveniste (pp. 67-71) has shown that neighboring peoples like the Armenians, as well as the Germans and the Greeks of Alexander's army, were influenced by this system, and he concluded that the relevant terms found in the four languages must have originated from Achaemenid Persia. Some of



these terms also appear in the Elamite tablets from Persepolis, however. More recently O. Szemerényi (pp. 354-94) has found evidence of the existence of a similar system in the Akkadian empire. It therefore seems likely that the Achaemenid army organization had an Akkadian source.

Although the office may well have been revived in the Parthian period, it is not attested until the 3rd century c.e., under the Sasanians. The Middle Persian term *hz'lwpt* and its Parthian equivalent *hzwpt* appear in the inscription of Šāpūr I on the Ka'ba-ye Zardošt at Naqš-e Rostam (ŠKZ). The title was held under Ardašēr (Ardašīr) I by a certain Pābag, who is named immediately after the members of the royal family and the deputy (*bthšy*; see [bidaxš](#)) of the king (ŠKZ Mid. Pers. line 29, Parth. line 23; ed. Back, pp. 350-51). Pābag retained the office under Šāpūr I (ŠKZ, Mid. Pers. line 31, Parth. line 25; ed. Back, p. 357). Under Wahrām (Bahram) II and Narseh I, according to Narseh's inscription at Paikuli, a certain Ardašēr was the chiliarch (NPi Mid. Pers. line 16, Parth. line 14; ed. Humbach and Skjærvø, III/1, p. 41, cf. III/2, pp. 40-41). At that time the office, though important, may no longer have been military, but civilian. Later in the Sasanian period, on the evidence of the Armenian historians Elišē and Łazar Parp'ec'i, it was equivalent to that of a prime minister. According to Elišē, it was equivalent to that of *wuzurg framadār*, or prime minister. Thus Elišē calls Mihr-Narseh, the *wuzurg framadār* of Yazdegerd I (late 4th cent.; see Herzfeld, p. 188), both "great *hazarapet* of the Iranians and non-Iranians" (*mec hazarapet arik' ew anarik'*; 22.7) Middle Pers. *hazārbad* miswritten *hazār-banda*; Shaki, p. 258 n. 16; and "great commander of Ērān and Non-Ērān" (*vzruk hramatar eran ew aneran*; 20.5).

Armenian *hazarapet* has other meanings, as well, however. In Mark 6:21 it renders Greek *khilíarkhos*, retaining its military meaning, and in other works it denotes an intendant or a guardian (Genesis 43:16, 44:1, 4). The Armenian form *hazarawuxt* is comparable to Middle Persian *hazāruft*, but with *xt* for *ft* as in Bactrian *uazarox(t)o*, the title of the Kushan king Kidara's prime minister, whose first name was *Farnvistāx (Bivar, pp. 209-10; Davary, pp. 287-88; Göbl, I, pp. 233, 243; Henning, p. 81).



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