



GANZABARA

GANZABARA (treasurer), title of provincial and sub-provincial financial administrators in the Achaemenid empire, extended to workers attached to Achaemenid treasuries; title of financial administrators in Parthian and Sasanian provinces; title of temple administrators in post-exile Judaism and in Hellenistic Babylonia.

Title. The cluster *-nz-* (rather than *-nd-* or the unmetathesized *-zn-*) indicates that the common Old Iranian form was originally non-Persian, so-called Median. It does not occur in any Old Iranian text, but is reconstructed from loanwords and transcriptions in languages of the Achaemenid Empire and its successors: Achaemenid Elamite *kanzabara* (written *ka₄-an-za-ba-ra*, *ka₄-in-za-ba-ra*, *kán-za-bar-ra*, *kán-za-ba-ra*, *ka₄-za-ba-ra*, all in texts from Persepolis); Aramaic *gnzbr* (in texts from Persepolis, both on tablets written in the vicinity of Persepolis itself and its inscriptions on stone utensils probably written in Arachosia, q.v.) and *gzbr* (Ezra 1:7, 7:21), Babylonian *ganzabaru* (written *gan-za-ba-ru*, *gan-za-bar-ri*, *ga-an-za-ba-ra*, *gan-zu-bar-ra*, in texts from Babylon and Uruk). A Persianized form, **ganḍabara-*, is reflected in Achaemenid Elamite *kandabara* (written *kán-da-bar-ra*, in texts from Persepolis) and perhaps also in Aramaic *gdbr* (Daniel 3:2, perhaps reflecting internal Aramaic developments rather than Old Iranian dialect variation; see Mancini, p. 49, n. 68). Forms of the title in later Iranian languages include Parthian *gnzbr* and *gnbr*, Middle Persian *gnzwbr*, Book Pahlavi *gnčwbl*, Turfan Middle Persian *gnzwr*, Sogdian *yznbr*, and New Persian *ganjūr*. It appears as a loanword, for example, in Armenian *ganjavor*, Sanskrit *ganjavara-*, Syriac *gzbr* and *gyzbr*,



Mandaic *g'nzybr*, etc. (Hübschmann, p. 126; Lipiński, 1978, p. 237; Mancini, p. 40; S. Shaked in *EIr* I, p. 261).

Translations and synonyms in sources from and about the Achaemenid Empire include Elamite *kapnuškir*, late Babylonian *rab kāširi*, Greek *thēsaurophýlax* and Latin *custos pecuniae regiae*. The Septuagint of Ezra offers the transcriptions *gasbarēnos* and *ganzambraiou*, and Josephus refers to the treasurers mentioned in Ezra with the semi-translation *gazophýlax* (*Antiquitates Judaicae* 11.1.3), found again as *ganzophýlax* in the Greek version of the inscription of Šāpūr I on the Ka'ba-ye Zardošt at Naqš-e Rostam (ŠKZ, l. 66).

The conjecture that Lycian *gasabala*, a unique form in a Lycian inscription on a tomb of the mid-4th century B.C.E. at Limyra, is a transcription of Old Iranian **ganzabara*, is open to doubt (Schmitt, p. 386). The conjecture that *l'gz' mlk'* in Parthian ostraca from Nisa is a loan-translation or logographic writing of “royal *ganzabaru*” (Livshits apud Dandamayev, 1992, p. 62) is not commonly accepted (e.g., Naveh and Shaked, p. 451; Lipiński, p. 116).

Treasurers. A. Achaemenid Persia. Elamite administrative tablets from the Treasury at Persepolis name four men who held the title treasurer consecutively between 490 and 459 B.C.E., and a fifth man who appears in a comparable administrative role but without a title. The title is expressed both with the transcribed Iranian form *kanzabarra* and with the Elamite translation *kapnuškir*, and the holder of the title is sometimes qualified as treasurer “of Parsa” or “in the fortress,” both qualifications referring to Persepolis itself. The earliest of these treasurers also appears in the Elamite administrative texts from the Persepolis Fortification. The Fortification texts also mention two other men who occupied a comparable administrative role successively between 508 and 497 B.C.E., and who are occasionally identified as *kapnuškir*. In the Treasury texts, the later treasurers disburse silver in partial payment of rations for workers and set ration apportionments for groups of workers and craftsmen (stonemasons, woodworkers, metalsmiths, but also shepherds) active in the construction of Persepolis itself and at work in various settlements in the surrounding region. In the Fortification texts, the earlier treasurers apportion rations and assign groups of workers and craftsmen, often numbering in the hundreds, attached to nineteen or more “treasuries” (Elamite *kapnuški*) in the region around Persepolis, installations where precious items and raw materials were collected and kept and where craftsmen produced some finished goods. The administrative staffs at these



centers included men called treasury scribe (Elamite *tipirakapnuškima*, also called simply *kandabarra* “treasurer”) and supplier (i.e., of rations, Elamite *ullira*; Koch, 1981; idem, 1990, pp. 235 ff.; Lewis, p. 23).

The central treasurers at Persepolis sometimes acted on orders from the king, at other times on instructions from a superior who is not clearly identified in the texts, perhaps the chief administrative officer of the Persepolis region. The motifs and inscriptions of the treasurers’ seals, which sometimes stayed with the office when it changed hands, suggest that the administrative and social rank associated with the office was high, an implicit status commensurate with the de facto power attributed to Tiridates, the treasurer (*custos pecuniae regiae*; Quintus Curtius, 5.5.2) who had been left in control of Persepolis as Alexander the Great approached (Diodorus Siculus, 17.69.1) and who surrendered the city and its treasure and was confirmed in his office when Alexander left (Quintus Curtius, 5.6.11).

The treasurer’s political role may be reflected in a survival of the Elamite term *kapnuškir* in Kamnaskires, the name or sobriquet of rulers in Parthian Elymais (Aramaic *kbnhzkyr*, *kbnhkyr*, *kwmškyr*, *kbnškyr*; Greek *KAMNISKEIROU*, *KAMNISKIROU*, *KAMNASKIROU*, *KABNAS[KIROU]*, Akkadian *mKa-am-ma-áš-ki-i-ri*, *mQa-bi-na-áš-ki-i-ri*, entitled “king of Elam” (LUGAL NIM.MAKi), [*mKa-a*] *m-na-áš-ki-i-ri*, called “the Elamite enemy” (LÚ.KÚR LÚ.NIM.MAKi; see Henning, 1952, p. 165; Alram, pp. 139-53; Sachs and Hunger, pp. 98-99, No. -143 rev. 20-21, pp. 230-31, No. -132 D2 rev. 16’, pp. 502-3, No. -77B rev. 13’).

B. Achaemenid Arachosia. Aramaic inscriptions on chert mortars, pestles, and plates found in the Treasury at Persepolis name two other men who held the title treasurer (*gnzbr*) successively, each sometimes called treasurer “who is in Arachosia” (*bhrḥwty*), at least seven men who held the title subtreasurer (*ḥpgnzbr*, transcribing Iranian **upaganzabara*), and three or more places characterized as “fortress” (*byrt*). The treasurers are associated with all three fortresses, the sub-treasurers with one fortress each. Commentators are largely agreed (although the editor of the texts held otherwise) that these officials served at the named places in Arachosia, where the texts were written before the vessels were sent to Persepolis. If so, the texts imply a regional organization in Arachosia comparable to the one that the Elamite tablets reflect in Persia, with a central treasurer charged with overseeing several local installations, and the vessels on which the texts were written are examples of valuables moved between provincial treasury administrations.



C. Achaemenid Babylonia. Similar procedures perhaps lie behind the biblical account of Cyrus the Great's restoration of the vessels that Nebuchadnezzar had taken as plunder from Jerusalem; the king is said to have ordered an enumeration of the treasure and a record of the transfer to be made at Babylon by the treasurer (*gzbr*, *gazophýlax*) Mithredath (Ezra 1:8; Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae* 11.1.3).

Achaemenid Babylonian legal texts from the reign of Darius I the Great (q.v.) express the title treasurer, given to a man named Bagasāru, both with the Iranian loanword *ganzabaru* and its Babylonian counterpart, *rab kāširi*. They tell nothing of the treasurer's official functions, but record commercial operations connected with fields near Babylon that were granted to him, as similar properties were to other Achaemenid officials and aristocrats, and left under the management of a major domo (*rab bīti*; see Dandamayev 1968; idem, 1992, pp. 60-62). A text from the reign of Darius II mentions in passing an estate manager or bailiff (*paqdu*) of another treasurer (*rab kāširi*), whose name is not given (Clay, p. 68).

The last Achaemenid treasurer at Babylon, Bagophanes, who also controlled the citadel (*arcis et regiae pecuniae custos*; Quintus Curtius, 5.1.20) collaborated with the governor Mazaeus in opening the city to Alexander and surrendering the citadel, but unlike Tiridates, his counterpart at Persepolis, he was not continued in office but ordered to join Alexander's entourage (ibid., 5.1.44).

D. Achaemenid Syria-Palestine. The order of Artaxerxes to "all the treasurers who are in the Transeuphrates" (*kl gzbry' dy b'br nhrh*) to co-operate in the reconstruction of the temple at Jerusalem, quoted in Ezra 7:21, envisions many regional centers in a satrapy, charged both with disbursals of the king's treasure and with levying and collecting tribute, a situation that is at least historically plausible in the light of other information on Achaemenid treasurers and treasuries. An Aramaic ostrakon excavated at Arad, assigned on paleographic grounds to the mid-fourth century B.C.E., perhaps records a treasurer's (*gnzbr*) order for the disbursal of supplies (Aharoni, p. 166, no. 37; Stern, pp. 44-45).

E. Parthian and Sasanian. Ostraca from Nisa, on the Parthian marches in Turkmenistan, refer often to a royal treasury (*gnz mlk'*) to which deliveries of wine are made, but apparently only once to a treasurer (*gnznr*), not as an administrator of the treasury but as payer of wine "on his own account," as



officials with military titles are in similar documents (Diakonov and Livshits, pp. 100-101, no. 925 [50 C.E.]). The administrative relationship, if any, between this treasurer and the men entitled accountant (*ʿhmrkr*) is a matter of conjecture (see Chaumont, pp. 23-24)

Ostraca from early Sasanian rule at Dura Europos in the mid-3rd century C.E. include administrative records of deliveries of grain to the governor (*ḥštrp*) of Dura, including deliveries from at least two men entitled treasurer (*gnzbr*), but they offer no information on the treasurers' locations or administrative domains (Harmatta, p. 90 no. 1, p. 111 no. 2, p. 136 no. 5, p. 162). A treasurer at the early Sasanian imperial court is named in the "Res gestae" of Šāpūr I, in a list of dignitaries and aristocrats for whom offerings are to be made (*gnzwbr/gnzbr/ganzophylax*; ŠKZ, ll. 34//28//66; Back, p. 365, cf. *ibid.*, p. 214).

Treasury Workers. In the Persepolis Fortification texts, most of the few occurrences of the transcription *kanzabarra* and the many occurrences of its Elamite equivalent *kapnuškir* (pl. *kapnuškip*) do not refer to supervising treasurers, but to members of the administrative staffs of local treasuries (e.g., the "treasury scribe," above) or, more often, to workers and craftsmen assigned to local treasuries (e.g., in the phrase *kurtaš kapnuškip* "treasury workers"). The workers appear in groups ranging from less than 10 to almost 700 individuals, including men and boys, women and girls, sometimes post-partum women. Like the other workers mentioned in the Fortification texts, they were people of low status and limited freedom, drawing subsistence rations on a scale of low rates (details in Koch, 1981; *idem*, 1990, pp. 235-39; Kawase).

Groups receiving travel rations are described as carrying treasure (Elamite *kapnuški*) between provinces (Hallock, 1969, PF 1357; *idem*, 1978, PFa 14, cf. *idem*, 1969, PF 1342, a treasurer [*kazabarra*]carrying silver from Susa to the vicinity of Persepolis), and a single text uses a transcription of another Iranian word in a comparable context (*kanzaba* < Ir. **ganzapā*-; Hallock, 1969, PF 1358). The same underlying Iranian term recurs in the Latin *gangabae* (Quintus Curtius, 3.13.7), explicitly presented as the Persian term for the porters who carried the royal treasure of Darius III (*gaza*; *ibid.*, 3.13.5), workers whom Quintus Curtius characterized by implication as men of the meanest condition (*humillimi*; *ibid.*, 3.13.7; see Gershevitch, 1969, p. 172; Mancini, pp. 46-48).

Aramaic texts on two tablets from the Persepolis Fortification group mention



individuals entitled *gnzbr*. One of the texts is dated to 499/98 B.C.E. Neither named *gnzbr* is one of the central treasurers known from the Elamite texts; both may be administrators or workers at subtreasuries.

Temple Personnel. Two Babylonian texts from Hellenistic Uruk, in Babylonia, refer to “treasurers” in the temple administration, once specifically to a group of “treasurers of the temples” (LÚ *ganzubarra* meš ša *bīt dingir*.meš OECT 9 62:3. [155 B.C.E.]; see McEwan, 1981, p. 34). Similarly, the Mishna mentions administrators in the Jerusalem temple with titles drawn from Achaemenid (or Parthian) civil administration, groups of treasurers (*gzbryn*), acting together with groups of temple accountants (*mrkl* < Iranian **hamarakara*; see Greenfield, 1968, p. 183).

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