



GREECE IV. GREEK INFLUENCE ON PERSIAN THOUGHT

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After the conquest of Ionia (OPers. *yauna*-, Mid. Pers. and NPers. *yūnān* “Greece”), Lydia, and other regions of Asia Minor by Cyrus II (558-29 B.C.E., q.v.), the Persians came into close contact with the Hellenes, their skilled artisans, renowned physicians, artists, statesmen, men-of-arms, and the like. In the following course of history the Persians benefited from their knowledge in various fields. The penetration of Persia by Hellenistic science and culture, after many vicissitudes, finally reached its zenith when, after a millennium of contact, Kōsrow I Anōšīravān (531-65 C.E.) opened a school of philosophy like the one Justinian (527-65 C.E.) had closed in 529, thus helping preserve the Hellenistic scientific tradition for the benefit of all humanity (Ebn al-Nadīm, ed. Tajaddod, p. 300).

In the Achaemenid period, as Ctesias remarks, Persia and Greece, however different and inimical, were not completely separated and held familiar intercourse (Sarton, pp. 326-27). Indeed, at one time there were over three hundred Greeks of various walks of life, high and low, attached to or frequenting the Achaemenid court (Boyce, *Zoroastrianism* II, [1982] p. 171). The Athenian statesman Themistocles and the Spartan fugitive king Demartus



(Herodotus, 7.101) as well as the physicians Ctesias (q.v.), Democedes of Croton (q.v.), and Apollonides of Cos were at times attendants to the king of kings ([COURT AND COURTIER](#) i). Hosts of young Greek eunuchs and beautiful slave girls attended the imperial harem and the person of the king (Herodotus, 7.101). Ionian and Sardian sculptors and stone-cutters were instrumental in the development of crafts and skills. They produced the magnificent reliefs of Pasargadae and Persepolis (Porada, pp. 811-12), the palace at Susa (DSf [§] 48; Kent, *Old Persian*, p. 144), and the rock-carving of Bīsotūn (q.v.). The Greek sculptor Telephanes also worked at Persepolis (Burn, p. 341). The subtle and resplendent Greek art, however, remained inimitable not only for the prosaic Achaemenids but for the ancients in general. The Persians were certainly captivated by the beauty of Greek art, which of necessity should have contributed to a widening of their aesthetic vision, as evidenced by parts of Greek statuary found in the ruins of Susa. Greeks made floating bridges for Darius in his campaign against the Scythians (Herodotus, 4.88); thousands of their hardy mercenaries were employed in the Achaemenian army (see [ARMY](#); [CYRUS](#) vi, [DARIUS](#) iii). The Daric gold and silver siglos, which in fact were a kind of bullion, were adopted from and minted in Sardis, by Darius I, or Cyrus II (Mallowan, p. 415; see [DARIC](#); [COINS AND COINAGE](#)).

In the domain of religion, in imitation of the myth of *Chronos apeiros* (Infinite Time), the father of Zeus, the Avestan *Zrvan akarana*– (Mid. Pers. *Zurwān akanārag*) “Infinite Time,” was elevated to the apex of Mazdean pantheon as the father of Ahura Mazdā (cf. *Yasna* 30.3; for a possible Babylonian influence, see Bivar, 1999, pp. 46-47); from the time of Artaxerxes II (404-339 B.C.E.), under the impact of Greek idolatry, cult images of Anāhita and that of Ahura Mazdā were set up in western regions of Achaemenid empire (Burn, p. 341; Boyce, *Zoroastrianism* II, pp. 255-56).

If Diogenes Laërtius (ca. 300 B.C.E.) is to be believed, Darius I (521-486 B.C.E.) took great interest in Greek intellectual activities, for, according to him, the king invited Heraclitus (ca. 540-470 B.C.E.) to his court in order to clarify some obscure points in his enigmatic book *perí tu pantos* “On the whole [i.e., the universe],” but the disdainful philosopher turned down the invitation (Sarton, p. 240). As a man of action who prided himself on his horsemanship and swordsmanship, Darius was perhaps apathetic towards philosophy. Nevertheless, the two letters quoted in extenso by Diogenes are plausible. The presence of celebrities as such evidently promoted the glamour of the Achaemenid court (q.v.). All these go to justify the keen observation of



Herodotus (1.135) that “of all men the Persians are the readiest to adopt foreign customs.”

The conquest of the Persian empire by Alexander the Great (q.v.) in 330 B.C.E., which laid the vast empire open to Hellenic immigrants, brought significant changes in its wake. Contrary to his teacher Aristotle, Alexander was a cosmopolitan dreamer who aspired to create a unified world (Plutarch, *Moralia*, p. 329) by eliminating his opponents and entrusting a share of administration to the docile nobility, by arranging extensive mixed marriages, and by building new cities (*poleis*) with mixed populations. But his dream faded away with his death. The Hellenes had neither incentive nor means to impose their idolatrous religion on sacerdotal Mazdeans and revealed Mazdaism, or a quasi-democratic way of life on absolutist Persians. The sole desire of the expatriate Greeks, who soon felt alienated from their homeland, was to adjust themselves to the new conditions, govern the land, and collect taxes. Hence, under their hegemony every aspect of Hellenization of the country developed gradually, fortuitously, and unevenly.

The emergence of the Seleucids, and in their train the Arsacids in Bactria (q.v.), in the mid-3rd century B.C.E., led to the partition of the country and the particularism of petty semi-independent states within the Parthian empire, with widely divergent cultural, social, and political features, ranging from total Greek autonomy in Bactria, to Persian sovereignty in Fārs, where at an early stage under the strong national sentiment the Greeks either left the country or were assimilated by Persians (Ghirshman, p. 23). The urban population of the mixed cities had perforce succumbed to certain aspects of Greek culture, whereas the vast rural and tribal folk, remaining outside the sphere of Greek cultural influence, retained their national mentality, traditions, and customs, thus forming an antithesis to Macedonian rule and Hellenization (Ghirshman, p. 231; Boyce and Grenet, *Zoroastrianism*, pp. 52-53).

A real process of Hellenization started after the Seleucids, however, with the Parthian Mithradates I (ca. 171 B.C.E.), the Philhellene, as he styled himself, when Persians embraced Greek wisdom with an open mind (Bickerman, p. 18). As a result of the friendly co-existence of the two ethnic groups in the multinational Parthian empire, religious bigotry was toned down markedly and freedom of worship was induced by diversity of religious doctrines. Social concord was reflected in mutual religious and juridical tolerance. Following Antiochus of Commagene (ca. 63-34 B.C.E.), the denominations of the Greek



and Iranian deities nominally coalesced (see [COMMAGENE](#)). Thus Zeus-Ohrmazd, Anāhita-Aphrodite, Mithra-Apollo, and the like, came into vogue. These gods were worshipped by both Zoroastrian Persians and Greeks alike; everyone, however, paid reverence to his own particular god. Cults of dead heroes, ancestors, and deceased members of the royal family became prevalent (Raditsa, p. 113; Colpe, p. 842). Thanks to the novel social relations, harsh class distinction and oppression was tempered, only to be fully revived with the rise of the Sasanians, allegedly already by the founder of the dynasty Ardašīr I (224-40, q.v.; see Ebn Esfandīār, tr., p. 39).

Imitating the divine appellations of the Seleucids, the Parthian kings also deified their own persons (Phraates *theos*; Artabanus II *theopatōr*; Mithradates II *epiphanes*, *theopatōr*; and the like, see Duchesne-Guillemin, p. 873; Bivar ,p. 42), a manner of style that continued even with the devout Sasanian monarchs who referred to themselves as *bay/y* “god” (figuratively: lord, majesty) or *kē čīhr az yazdān* “whose origin is divine” (Back, p. 291). The growing affinity of the Parthians with the Hellenes induced the Arsacids, starting with Mithradates I (ca. 171 B.C.E.), to avail themselves of the epithet *philhellene*.

The headdress of the early Parthian kings was the same as the Greek bound *diadēma* (Mid. Pers. *dēdēm*, NPers. *deyhīm*), until Mithradates II (ca. 124/3 B.C.E.) reverted to the old Persian bound bonnet, thus setting a style for the future kings. Heracles depicted nude was combined by Antiochus of Commagene (ca. 69-34 B.C.E.) with Artagnes (Av. Vereθrayna, Mid. Pers. Warahrān/Wahrām) and Ares (Raditsa, p. 113), a circumstance that may have eventually inspired the legends of Rostam and Esfandīār, with their seven labors, after those twelve feats of daring ascribed to Heracles.

Immediately after the conquest of Persia ,on the strict order of Alexander, the children of the nobility were taught Greek. Plutarch obviously overstates the case when he observes that “Homer was commonly read and the children of the Susanians and Gedrusians [Baluchis] learned to chant the tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides” (*Of the Fortune of Alexander* I.5, quoted in Boyce and Grenet, *Zoroastrianism*, p. 56). Be that as it may, it is evident that the urban population would have spoken much Greek, whereas the peasantry and tribesmen hardly needed more than a few words. Greek and Parthian/Aramaic were concurrent mediums of communication in Seleucid and Arsacid times in many regions (see [CONTRACTS ii](#)). The only region where Greek became the official language and script was Bactria (q.v.), and the only province where the Greek language did not have a hold over the Persians was Fārs. That the



Parthian elite were well-versed in Greek literature is evidenced by the strange coincidence of Orodes II (ca. 57 B.C.E.) receiving the severed head of the Roman general Crassus while watching the *Bacchae* of Euripides at the court of Armenia (Bivar, p. 56). The Greek versions of the early Sasanian inscriptions as well as the eloquent Middle Persian translations of the abstruse Greek philosophical discourses in such works as *Dēnkard* III and IV demonstrate the continued currency of Greek among intellectuals (see [FALSAFA i](#)).

Throughout the Greek presence in the country the two legal systems remained distinct. Some practical procedures such as the system of sealing a rolled parchment (Frye, p. 175) and drawing up of documents in *scripta interiora* and *scripta exteriora* (see [CONTRACTS ii](#)) were adopted from the Greeks. The documents were drawn up in Greek as well as in Parthian/Aramaic and dated by the Seleucid and/or Arasacid eras (*ibid.*). With the exception of Fārs, the legends of the coins, themselves taken up from the Hellenes, were in Greek during the Seleucid and Parthian periods; however, from the reign of Vologases I (ca. 51-76 C.E.) additional legends appear in Parthian (see [ARSACIDS iii](#)).

During the Sasanian period, although the Persian monarchs considered themselves the legitimate heirs to pre-Parthian (in their view, Kayanid) culture and civilization, they were, in spite of their religious and nationalistic fervor, amenable to foreign and especially to Greek thought, which they greatly appreciated. On his accession, Šāpūr I (240-70 C.E.) declared that the secular (*az dēn bē*) teachings on medicine (*bizišgīh*), astrology (*star-gōwišnīh*), movement (*čandišn*), time (*zamān*), space (*gyāg*), substance (*gōhr*), accident (*jahišn*), becoming (*bawišn*), decay (*wināhišn*), transformation (*jadag-wihē-rīh*), logic (*gōwāgīh*), and other crafts and skills which were dispersed throughout India and the Byzantine Empire (*hrōm*) be collected and collated with the Avesta; and he further commanded that a copy be made of all those writings that were flawless and then deposited in the royal treasury (*Dēnkard*, ed. Madan, I, p. 412; Shaki, 1981, p. 119; Zaehner, p. 8). Further the *Dēnkard* (I, p. 425) reports the circumstances of these borrowings in the same vein: “That which was necessary was adopted from foreign lands such as various sciences, teachings, instruments of craftsmanship and know how (*hunar*) as well as the treasury of astronomy (*kāla koša*) of the Indians, the *Megistē* of the Greeks [i.e., Ptolemy’s work] and other writings of that sort which were collated with the fundamental book (*bun nibēg*) of the royal treasury; and whatever in them was reasonable . . . was presented to the respective seekers of that knowledge .



. . He [i.e., the king of kings] did not neglect or avoid them because of their . . . foreign name” (*Dēnkard*, ed. Madan, I, p. 428; Shaki, 1981, p. 123). The *bun nibēg* (fundamental book) is also said to have been called *hangirdīg* “collected works” or *corpus liberorum*, which contained “every branch of knowledge “ (*abar hamāg saxwan*; *Dēnkard*, I, p. 429).

The edict of Šāpūr I reveals not only *prima facie* evidence of the Sasanian elite’s knowledge of foreign science, but ,what is more significant ,also their prevalence in Greek or Aramaic in the Parthian empire, at a time when those languages were common knowledge. Some of these books were still extant in Middle Persian and Greek until early Islamic times in the archives (*nāmagniyān*) or treasuries (*ganza-niyān*; see Benveniste, p. 307) of some fire temples or libraries, such as the one at the fort of Sārūya in the city of Isfahan (Ebn al-Nadīm, ed. Tajaddod, pp. 301, 335-36). When and how the Šāpūr’s edict was realized is not fully known; however, there is sufficient reason to believe that the first contact with Greek astronomy in the Sasanian period occurred after the conclusion of the Roman war in 260 C.E. (Taqīzāda, pp. 316, 322; Henning, p. 245).

Šāpūr I, Šāpūr II, and Kōsrow I Anōšīravān are known to have availed themselves of Greek artistry and craftsmanship at Gondēšāpūr, Weh-Ardašīr, and Ctesiphon (qq.v.; Ammianus Marcellinus 20.4.7; Pigulevskaya, pp. 43-46, 167, 171).

Although throughout the Sasanian period the Persians continued to benefit from the Greeks in various fields such as military devices (rams, ballistae, and moveable towers), the Byzantine model for tax reform brought about by Kōsrow I, and the proficiency of Byzantine physicians permanently attached to the Sasanian court (Garsoīan, pp. 571, 581, 587), it was the second contact with Greek thought towards the end of the 5th century and especially under Kōsrow I Anōšīravān (531-79 C.E.) that proved to be crucial to the vitality of science and philosophy, as abundantly reflected in the extant Middle Persian books as well as the Arabic translations of treatises and books originally written in the pre-Islamic period.

The influence of Greek science in Sasanian times was closely associated with the diffusion of Christianity among Persians. On closing the school of Edessa at the end of the 5th century, the Persian Nestorian philosophers returned to Persia (Christensen, *Iran Sass.*, p. 417) and Narse, a prominent Persian philosopher, founded a school at Nisibis, at which he taught many students.



These philosophers generally wrote in Syriac, occasionally in Middle Persian, translating and expounding the works of Aristotle. They even wrote a few treatises in Middle Persian on logic and philosophy (see [FALSAFA i](#)). Some of these scholars settled in Gondēšāpūr and founded a school at which Greek medicine was taught (Ebn al-Qeṭṭī, pp. 336-37).

When Justinian closed the Academy of Athens in 529 as a school of pagan and perverse learning, seven notable philosophers, namely Simplicius, Damascius, Eulamius, Priscianus, Hermias, Diogenes, and Isidorus, took refuge in Ctesiphon. They were received by Kōsrow I who, according to Agathias (q.v.), was a great admirer of the works of Plato and Aristotle (Christensen, *Iran Sass.*, p. 422). As a matter of fact, the fresh ardor for Greek science was in great part indebted to Kōsrow's own partiality for foreign culture and thought. This was an exceedingly significant event, for it was these men of learning who brought and implanted the seeds of Greek wisdom that were to germinate a few centuries later under Islamic patronage (Sarton, p. 400). Of these philosophers, Priscianus wrote a treatise on psychology, physiology, astronomy, natural history, and so on for the king, expounding on various subjects about which he had inquired (Ṣafā, pp. 27-28). The philosopher and Metropolitan of Nisibis, Paul the Persian, composed an abridged Aristotelian dialectics for Kōsrow I in Syriac and expounded various postulates on God, being, and universe, cogently arguing for the superiority of philosophy over religious dogma (Casartelli, p. 17, apud Christensen, *Iran Sass.*, p. 422). The philosopher and physician Uranius also taught Kōsrow Greek and philosophy and had a debate with the *mōbeds* in the presence of the king (*ibid.*, p. 423).

Of the Syriac or Middle Persian books which have come down in Arabic translation mention should be made of the *Paranatellonta* on astronomy by Teucros (ca. 1st century C.E.), whose name in Pahlavi script has been misread variously as Tangelūš, Tankalūšā, and so on (Taqīzāda, pp. 317-19; Ebn al-Nadīm, ed. Tajaddod, p. 329; *Borhān-e qāṭe'*, ed. Mo'in, p. 522, n. 4). Two chapters on astronomy have survived in Middle Persian, one in the *Dēnkard* (ed. Madan, I, pp. 374-77, tr. Boyce in de Menasce, pp. 374-79), and the other in *Bundahiš*, tr. Anklesaria, chap. 25 (tr. Henning, pp. 229-48). Three treatises on logic by Aristotle were translated from Middle Persian into Arabic—*Categoriae*, *perī Hermeneias*, and *Analytica (priora, posteriora)*—as was Prophyry's *Isagoge* (Ebn al-Nadīm, ed. Tajaddod, pp. 303-5).

Apart from these there were many Pahlavi translations of Greek works on the art of war, veterinary medicine, and agriculture (Mid. Pers. *warz-nāmag*),



which were also later translated into Arabic (Ebn al-Nadīm, ed. Tajad-dod, pp. 436-38).

The Hellenization of pre-Islamic Persia, deep and extensive as it was, seems a modest prelude to the powerful movement that was instituted by a host of Syrian and Persian scholars who translated into Arabic the bulk of Greek scientific works in the early Islamic period. Of the translators of the 2nd/8th century, mention should be made of: Jorjīs son of Boktišūʿ (q.v.), the head of the hospital at Gondēšāpūr; Ebn al-Moqaffaʿ, a prominent man of letters, and translator; ʿIsā son of Čahār-bokt, physician and translator of the *Zij-e šahrīār* into Arabic; and Abū Yaḥyā Beṭrīq, the translator of the astronomical work *Quadripartitum* by Claudius Ptolemy (Ebn al-Nadīm, ed. Tajaddod, pp. 304-5).

The Middle Persian evidence. The Greek knowledge of Sasanian scholars has been abundantly reflected in the extant Middle Persian books, especially in the encyclopedic *Dēnkard*, as seen in some of its fundamental concepts. The philosophical terminologies are largely Aristotelian: *mādag* “húlē”; *gōhr* “substance”; *tōhma-gān tōhmag* “primal element”; *gard* “chaos” (*Dēnkard*, ed. Madan, I, p. 349; Shaki, 1984, p. 101); *zahāg* “element” (q.v.); *dēsag* “form”; *garm-xwēd* (lit. hot-moist) “substantial form, essence of the elements” (*Dēnkard*, I, p. 121); *bawišn* “being, genesis”; *būdag* (q.v.) “material genesis”; *bawišn ud wināhišn* “*geneseos kai phthoras*, becoming and decay”; the three stages of the development of the material world: *bawišn*, *bawišn-rawišnīh*, *bawišn-ēstišnīh* “being, the movement of being and the actualization of being” (*Dēnkard*, I, pp. 119, 207; de Menasce, pp. 125, 202; Shaki, 1973, p. 142); *nē ēč ēwē-nag az nēst bawēnīdan ud abāg ō nēst burdan šāyēd* “*ex nihilo nihil fit*, uncreatability and undestructability of matter” (*Dēnkard*, I, p. 345; de Menasce, p. 327); *mar-dōm ī hast gēhān hangirdīgīh* “Man is the epitome of the world” (*Dēnkard*, I, p. 140; de Menasce, p. 142) and *tan ī mardōmān handāzag ī gētīg* (*Bundahišn*, tr. Anklelsaria, chap. 28) “man is the measure of all things” (Protagoras in Sarton, p. 257), which is the principle of correspondence between microcosm and macrocosm; *gētīg dahiš-nān . . . xwadīh amarg* (*Dēnkard*, I, p. 43) “eternity of material creation” (Loomis, p. xxviii); categories of causal changes “*wardišn*” (*Dēnkard*, de. Madan, I, p. 418; Loomis, pp. xx-xxi); *gōwāgīh* “logic” (lit. power of speech) from *logikē technē* “art of reason”; *bar az bun* “a priori,” *bun az bar* “a posteriori” (*Dēnkard*, I, p. 185; de Menasce, p. 182); *āzād-kāmīh pad kunišn* “freedom of will” versus *ēw-āhangīh* (*Dēnkard* I, p. 241), *brēh* (*Dēnkard* I, pp. 241, 248), *baxt* “necessity, determinism” (Aristotle’s *epagoge kai apodeixis*; de Menasce, p. 271; Shaki,



1973, pp. 160-61); the hard egg-shaped heaven (*Mēnōg ī xrad* 43.8; Zadspram, p. 120; cf. Empedocles in Sarton, p. 247); the pure world of fixed stars (*axtarān*) encompassing the world of mixture of the moving planets (*stāragān*, *starān*; *Bundahišn*, tr. Anklesaria, 2.9); the sub-lunary sphere of genesis and decay versus the etherial heavens (Aristotle, Plato; Sarton, pp. 509-11); the deification of the zodiac (*bagān ī nēkīh baxtārān*) “Gods apportioning goodness” (*Mēnōg ī xrad* 8.13); the divinity of the stars (Pythagoras, Aristotle, etc.; Sarton, p. 510); *ēwāz ī pad niwāg ī xwaš* “the sweet melody of heaven” (*garōdman*; *Bundahišn*, tr. Anklesaria, 28.3), the music of the spheres (Homer, Pythagoras, Aristotle and many others; Sarton, p. 510).

The Mazdean scholars must have studied Aristotelian meteorology because, following the Greek philosopher, they similarly explained the rainbow (Mid. Pers. *sad-kīs*) as the “the refraction of light from aerial moisture” (Loomis, xxix; Sarton, p. 518). The Empedoclean doctrine of cosmic attraction (*philotēs*; Sarton, p. 247) may be detected in the Islamic mystics’ concept of all-pervading “love.” It is highly interesting that Persians knew of the sphericity of the earth (*girdīg ī zamīg*; *Dēnkard* I, p. 17) as pronounced by Eudoxus, Callipus, and Aristotle (Sarton, p. 510). They were aware of sophism (Mid. Pers. *sōfistāgīh*) as a fallacious doctrine ranking with dahrism “materialism” (Mid. Pers. *dahrīg/daharīg*, q.v.; *Dēnkard* I, p. 250).

The fundamental medical principle of the Persians was, until recently, based on the equilibrium of the four natural elements, of their qualities, and especially of the four corresponding humors (*isonomía dynameōn* “equilibrium of forces”). Significantly enough, medicine was defined as “the knowledge of the nature of humoral combination” (*bizišgīh dānišn ī abar čihrag ī gumēzagīh*; *Dēnkard* I, p. 158); thus, *xūb-āmēzišn* (lit. proper complexion) denotes “in condition,” and *wad-āmēzišn* (ill-complexion) “indisposed” (*Dēnkard* I, pp. 397-98; Shaki, 1973, p. 137). Of humors, Gr. *phlēgma* “phlegm” has been adopted in Middle Persian as *blgm*, *blagm*, New Persian *balg* /*ḡam* (Shaki, 1973, p. 138). On the evidence of the *Dēnkard* (I, pp. 158-70; de Menasce, pp. 158-68) the Sasanians predominantly practiced the Galenic methods of treatment.

Although Greek moral philosophy does not seem to have permanently affected Zoroastrian ethics, singular cases of asceticism or cynicism are reported by the *Dēnkard* (I, p. 574; Shaked, p. 186; see [DARVĪŠ](#)). However, Diogenesian asceticism, Pythagorean vegetarianism, the brotherhood of all men and simplicity of life, as well as the Platonic community of property and women



were conducive to the widespread sect of Drīst-dēnān or Mazdakism (Christensen, 1925; idem, *Iran Sass.*, pp. 311-[3]57; Yarshater; Shaki, 1978, pp. 289-306; idem, 1985, pp. 527-43; idem, 1993, pp. 28-53).

It should be noted that Greek doctrines were employed by Mazdean scholars in drawing up various syncretic ontological accounts, which in some cases lack consistency owing to the incompatibility of certain Mazdean and Greek tenets (see [ELEMENTS](#)). There are, however, a few philosophical chapters in the *Dēnkard* which seem to be pages from a scholastic textbook on rudiments of Aristotelian philosophy (*Dēnkard* I, p. 207; de Menasce, pp. 201-2; Shaki, 1970, pp. 281-82).

In the *Dēnkard* (ed. Madan, IV, p. 429) the Mazdeans, after delineating the main Greek philosophical principles, display their satisfaction of foreign knowledge in the following words: “Of Greek philosophers (*hrōm fīlāsōfā*) . . . and other wise and knowledgeable men (*dānāg ud šnāsag*) those are held in higher esteem who have proffered subtle teachings (*gowišn ī nēzūmānīg*), which the wise men of Ērānšahr have appreciated more.”

The range and categories of Greek loanwords in Persian exhibit the period and the extent of Greek influence in Persian culture. The following may be assigned to the Arsacid period: the names and denominations of coins: NPers. *derham*, Mid. Pers. *drahm*; Gk. *drachmē* (see [DIRHAM](#)); Mid. Pers./Parth., *stēr*, NPers., *estīr*, *sīr*, “stater” Gk. *statēr*, *statēros*; NPers. *dīnār*, Byz. Gk. *denāriōn* (see [DINAR](#)); NPers. *pūl* “money,” Gk. *obolos* (see [COIN AND COINAGE](#)). The measures for short distances already used in *Vīdēvdād* and *Nērangestān*: Parth./Mid. Pers. *angust* “finger-breadth,” Gk. *daktulos*; Mid. Pers. *bačak* “joint of a finger,” Gk. *kóndulos*; Av. *ašti-* “palm” (*AirWb.*, col. 261). Other terms: Mid. Pers. *katas*, Manich. Mid. Pers. *kahas*, NPers. *kat-*, *kahrīz*, *kārīz* “subterranean canal,” Gk. *kádos*; NPers., Mid. Pers. *daftar* “book,” Gk. *diphthēra* “hide, by extension book” (Herodotus, 5.58); Mid. Pers. *mītrag* “atmospheric phenomena,” Gk. *metēoros* (Shaki, 1986, p. 261; see below, the explanation of the rainbow); NPers./Parth. *ark/arg* “fort,” Gk. *arkos* “shelter” (Szemerényi, pp. 366-74); NPers./Ar. *aštorlāb* (q.v.), Gk. *astrolābos*; NPers., Mid. Pers. *kālbod* “form, frame,” Gk. *alopódion*; precious stones and metals: NPers. *almās*, Mid. Pers. *almāst*, Gk. *adámas* “diamond”; NPers./Ar. *zomorrod*, Gk. *zmáragdos* “emerald”; NPers. *sīm*, Mid. Pers. *asēm*, Gk. *asēma* (silver); NPers./Ar. *qānūn*, Gk. *kanōn* “law”; NPers. *nāmūs*, Gk. *nómos* “law, custom”; NPers. *oqīā-nūs*, Gk. *ōkeanos* “ocean”; NPers. /Ar. *eqlīm*, Gk. *klima* “clime”; NPers., Mid. Pers. *morwārīd*, Gk. *margaritēs* “pearl.” Arabicized denominations of hundreds of



medical herbs, drugs, and the like: New Pers. *taryāk*, Ar. *teryāq*, Gk. *theriaka* “opium”; New Pers. *oštoqoddūs*, Ar. *ostūkoddūs*, Gk. *stoichas* “Lavandula stoechas”; NPers./Ar. *hūfārīqūn*, Gk. *hyperikum* “klamath weed, St.-John’s-wort”; NPers./Ar. *esqīl*, Gk. *skallion* (a kind of bulb), and many others (see Moʿīn, svv.).

See also [BYZANTINE IRANIAN RELATIONS](#); [FALSAFA](#) i.

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