



GREECE XIII. GREEK LOANWORDS IN MIDDLE IRANIAN LANGUAGES

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Notwithstanding many centuries of at times intensive contact and confrontation between the Greco-Roman/Byzantine and Iranian worlds from Achaemenid through Sasanian times and even beyond, the number of loanwords borrowed from Greek into the pre-Islamic Iranian languages is far less impressive than the number of borrowings in the other direction. Thus, no Greek loanwords seem to have been preserved in any of the Old Iranian languages known to us, while only a limited number—sometimes borrowed themselves from Latin—have found their way into more than one Middle Iranian language, such as: Pahl. (ʿ)*sym* /*(a)sēm*/ ‘silver’ (MacKenzie, 1986, pp. 12, 74; Nyberg, *Manual II*, p. 31), cf. Bactr. *simino* ‘made of silver, silverware,’ i.e., unattested Bactr. **simo* ‘silver’ + suff. **-aina-* (Sims-Williams, 2000, 223b) < Gr. *ásēmon* ‘1unmarked > 2silverware, jewels’; Inscr. Parth. *dynr* (Huyse, I, p. 128), Pahl. *dynʿl* /*dēnār*/ (MacKenzie, 1986, p. 26), Bactr. *d(d)inaro* (Sims-Williams, 2000, p. 190), MSogd. *dynʿ(r)* /*dēnār*/ (Gharib, pp. 148b, 149a), Chor. *dynʿr* (Benzing, p. 265) ‘denar, gold coin’ < Gr. *dēnárion* (sc. *khrusoûn*) ‘(gold)



denar', in its turn borrowed from Lat. *denarius* (sc. *nummus*); Inscr. Mid. Pers./Parth. *dydymy* (Skjærvø, p. 93), Man. Mid. Pers./Parth. *dydym* /dīdēm/ (Boyce, p. 38), B/MSogd. *dyδm(h)* /dīdēm/ (Gharib, p. 148a) 'diadem, garland' < Gr. *diá-dēma* 'ribbon, diadem'; Man. Mid. Pers. *drhm* /drahm/ (MacKenzie, 1971, p. 27; Boyce, p. 35; Nyberg, *Man-ual* II, p. 65), Bactr. *d(d)raxmo* (Sims-Williams, 1996a, p. 649; idem, 2000, p. 190), SSogd. *δrγm(h)1* /draxm(a)/ (Gharib, p. 141b), Khot. *draṃmaa-* (Bailey, *Dictionary*, p. 166b; idem, 1982, p. 38) 'drachm' < Gr. *drakhmé* 'drachm'; Inscr. Mid. Pers. *kysly*, Inscr. Parth. *kysr* (Huyse, I, p. 140), Pahl. *kysl* /kēsar/ (MacKenzie 1986, p. 51), SSogd. *kysr*, CSogd. *qysr* /kēsar/ (Gharib, p. 204a) 'Caesar' < Gr. *Kaïsar*, from Lat. *Caesar*; Bactr. *oišoggo* '(cloth) made of linen or cotton', **oišo* 'linen, cotton' + suff. *-iggo* (Sims-Williams, 2000, p. 214), Sogd. *wšwyn'k*, with suff. *-yn'k* (Sims-Williams, 1996b, p. 51 n. 38) < Gk. *bússos* 'linen, cotton'; Pahl. *spy(y)hl*, Man. Mid. Pers. 'spy' 'sphere, sky, firmament, fate' (MacKenzie, 1986, p. 76; Nyberg, *Manual* II, p. 178), Man. Parth. 'spyr1 /ispīr/ 'globe, sphere' (Boyce, p. 22) < Gr. *sphaîra* 'round object, ball, sphere, celestial body'; Pahl. *styl* /stēr/ 'stater' (MacKenzie, 1986, p. 77), B/M/SSogd. *st'yr* /stēr/ 'stater' (Gharib 1995, 363a), Chor. *stycr* 'stater', *stryc(/)stryk* 'drachm' (Benzing, pp. 93, 584 f.), Khot. *satīra-* 'stater' (Bailey, *Dictionary*, p. 418) < Gr. *statēr* 'stater' (coin and weight); Pahl. 'wzmbwlt' /uzumburd/ (MacKenzie, 1986, p. 85; Nyberg, *Manual* II, p. 199b), MSogd. *mrktth* /markat/ (Gharib, p. 217), Khot. *ysimarye* (Bailey, *Dictionary*, pp. 351b-52a; idem 1982, p. 14) 'emerald' < Gr. *smáragdos* 'emerald'; Pahl. *y'knd/y'knt'* /yākand/ (MacKenzie, 1986, p. 96; Nyberg, *Manual* II, p. 225), Man. Parth. *y'kwnd* /yākund/ 'ruby' (Ghilain, p. 10 n. 9) < Gr. *hyákinthos* 'hyacinth; 2blue precious stone'.

All in all, the Iranians rather preferred to translate Greek religious and philosophical terms with an Iranian neologism than to take them over as such (for a detailed study of a range of such calques and loan translations see Bailey, *Zoroastrian Problems*, pp. 78-119). At any rate, not even the presence of the Greeks on the Iranian soil during Seleucid and Greco-Bactrian times caused a significant increase of Greek loanwords and many seem moreover to have been borrowed into one language at a time only, mostly into Middle Persian or Parthian (for Greek loanwords in Parthian Manichaean texts see Ghilain, p. 10 n. 9; in Sogdian texts see Yoshida, p. 171 f.). They include: Pahl. 'łm's(t)' /almās(t)/ (MacKenzie, 1986, p. 7; Nyberg, *Manual* II, p. 14), Man. Mid. Pers. 'rm's' /armās/ (Boyce, p. 15) 'hard metal, steel, diamond' < Gr. *adámas* 'hard metal, steel, diamond'; Man. Parth. 'wnglywn /ewangelyōn/ 'Evangel, Gospel' (Boyce, p. 17) < Gr. *euangéllion* '(reward for) good news, Gospel'; Man.



Parth. *ʹskym* /iskēm/ ‘form, shape’ (Boyce, p. 21) < Gr. *skhēma* ‘form, shape, attitude, position’; Man. Parth. *ʹspyr2* /ispēr/ ‘troop of soldiers, army’ (Boyce, p. 22) < Gr. *speîra* ‘1spiral; 2enrolled object; 3troop of soldiers, corps’; Man. Parth. *ʹstrtywt* /istratīyōtā/ ‘soldier’ (Boyce, p. 23) < Gr. *stratiôtēs* ‘soldier’; Man. Parth. *bʹym* /bēm/ ‘(feast of the Bema)’ (Boyce, p. 26) < Gr. *bēma* ‘1step; 2raised surface > orator’s platform’; CSogd. *brbrʹyq* /βarβarīk/ ‘barbarian’ (Gharib, p. 108a; see esp. Sundermann, pp. 25-27) < Gr. *bárbaros* ‘foreigner, barbarian’; Inscr. Parth. *hykmwn* (Huyse, I, p. 136), Man. Parth. *hygmwn* (Boyce, p. 49) /hēgemōn/ ‘ruler, governor’ < Gr. *hēgemôn* ‘guide, commander’ (Sundermann, pp. 27 f.); Pah. *dptl* /daftar/ ‘register, account book’ (MacKenzie, 1986, p. 23) < Gk. *diphτέρα* ‘prepared hide, piece of leather’; Sogd. *myδʹmβn* ‘medimn’ (a measure used for grain) < Gr. *médimnos* ‘medimn’ (Sims-Williams, 1996b, p. 51); Pahl. *kʹlpwtʹ* /kālbod/, Man. Mid. Pers. *kʹlbyd* /kālbid/ ‘body, shape, form’ < Gr. *kalopódion* ‘shoemaker’s last’ (MacKenzie, 1986, p. 48; Nyberg, *Manual* II, p. 110a); Man. Sogd. *qpyδ* ‘shop, stall’ < Gr. *kapēleîon* ‘shop, stall’ (Sims-Williams, 1996b, p. 51 n. 39); Man. Parth. *qtrywn* /kattriōn/ ‘centurion’ < Gr. *kentoríon*, Lat. *centurio* ‘centurio’ (Boyce, p. 53); Khot. *lakāna-* ‘vessel’ (Bailey, *Dictionary*, p. 370; idem, 1982, p. 14) < Gr. *lekánē* ‘basin, tub’; Khot. *phalau* ‘flat dish, bowl’ (Bailey, *Dictionary*, p. 261; idem, 1982, p. 14) < Gr. *phiálē* ‘cup, bowl’; Pahl. *pylʹwswkpʹy* /filāsōfā/ ‘philosopher’ (MacKenzie, 1971, p. 32; Sundermann, pp. 15 f., 32 n. 8), borrowed from Gr. *philósophos* ‘philosopher’ over Syr. *pylyswpʹ* /filisōfā/ (see Bailey, *Zoroastrian Problems*, p. 86 n. 1); Inscr. Parth. *sʹntwr* /sānatōr/ ‘senator’ < Lat. *senator* ‘senator’ (Huyse I, p. 164); Pahl. *swkpstʹkʹ* /sōfistā/ ‘sophist’ (MacKenzie, 1986, p. 75; Sundermann, pp. 16-25), borrowed from Gr. *sophistēs* ‘sophist’ over Syr. *swpystʹ* /sōfistā/ (see Sundermann, p. 20).

On the other hand, the words Pahl. *mwlwʹlytʹ*, Man. Mid. Pers. *mwrwʹryd* /morwārīd/ (MacKenzie, 1986, p. 56), Man. Parth. *mwrgrʹryd* /morγārīd/ (Boyce, p. 58), Sogd. *mryʹrt(h)* (Gharib, p. 217a), Khot. *mrāhe* [pl.] ‘pearl’ (Bailey, *Dictionary*, p. 341a-b) were most probably not borrowed from Gr. *margarītēs* (as is stated for example in Nyberg, *Manual* II, p. 134), but the borrowing may rather have functioned the other way around (see Gershevitch). Finally, Bactr. *(a)xšono* ‘(calendar/regnal) year’, khot. *kšuna-* ‘section, period of time’ (Bailey, *Dictionary*, p.69) is possibly a loanword from Gr. *khrónos* ‘(period of) time’ (as was already suggested by A. Thierfelder *apud* Humbach, p. 24; cf. Sims-Williams 2000, p. 233).



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