



HAŠTPĀY

HAŠTPĀY, name of a game from the Sasanian era which has not been precisely identified. The *haštpāy* [hštp'y] “eight feet” (more likely than *aštapād*) is mentioned together with other games in chapter 15 of the *Xusraw ud Rēdag* (*ud pad čatrang ud nēw-ardaxšīr ud haštpāy kardan az hamahlānfrāztar hom* “and in playing chess, backgammon and the *haštpāy* I am superior to my comrades” (Unvala, p. 16; Monchi-Zadeh, 1982, p. 65; Panaino, 1999, p. 51). Its name, as in the case of chess (Pahl. *čatrang* < Skt. *caturaṅga*-), is an Indian borrowing; it derives from Sanskrit *aṣṭāpada*- (cf. Pāli *aṭṭhapada*), originally referring to a game-board of 8 x 8 little squares. Such a board was used for various games (Murray, 1913, pp. 35-40; 1952, pp. 129-36), one of them played, according to the *Bālabhārata* (II, 5, pp. 10-13), with red and white pieces and a pair of dice. In many other sources the *aṣṭāpada*- was doubtless the chessboard and its name strictly associated with this game (MacDonell, p. 122; Jacobi, p. 228; Thomas, 1898, pp. 272; 1899, pp. 365; Thieme, 1984, p. 208). From the *Xusraw ud Rēdag* it is clear that the Sasanian *haštpāy* was distinguished from other popular games like chess and the variety of backgammon represented by *nēw-ardaxšīr*. The *haštpāy* could perhaps be associated, according to Semenov (pp. 16-20, 131; but see Panaino, 1999, pp. 153-56, 189), with a game-board (with three lines of eight squares) recently discovered in Paikend and with another one represented on a later Sasanian silver cup with a different but apparently comparable form.



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