



Martin Schwartz – University of California, Berkeley

On an Achaemenian and Sasanian Position

**grastapati-*, Old Avestan *grāhma-*, and Proto-
Indo-European $\sqrt{g^h}res^*$

In this article, I shall show the continuity of an Achaemenid title in Sasanian times, and I shall offer a new etymology for the compound's first element, whose root etymology I shall illuminate by taking forward a new methodological approach to Gathic composition.

A title ΓΡΑΣΤΑΠΑΤΙΣ (*grastapatis*) occurs in a 4th century B.C.E. Greek inscription from Mylasa in southwest Anatolia, most recently treated by Descat 2011,¹ who, restoring the text, translated it as follows: “Aux divinités bienfaisantes d’Hékatomnos et d’Aba, en étant grastapatis de Mausole, a consacré (les brasiers?) Artimès fils de Targélios.” Nothing more is known about Artimes, son of Targelios. It is clear, as Descat notes, that Artimes' title is a Greek rendition of an Old Persian noun **grastapati-*, nominative **grastapatiš*, in which *-*pati-*, as in many other compounds, means ‘chief, master, someone in charge of something (in this instance, **grasta-*).’²

Descat took **grasta-* as referring to provision of food, seeing in **grasta-* the equivalent of Vedic *grasta-* ‘something devoured’ (root *gras*), which has a variety of Greek cognates which refer to devouring or eating (by animals or people). Postulating an equivalent Iranian root **grah*, from which Humbach and Mayrhofer had taken the obscure Old Avestan noun *grāhma-* as ‘voraciousness,’ Descat tentatively proposed for **grastapati-* ‘chef des choses devorées, chef de ce qui est mangé.’ Thereby Descat envisaged two possibilities for the function of the *grastapatis*:

- Firstly, Descat called attention to the interest of the Hekatomnids in the raising of herds and the profits therefrom, which is well attested for the instance of Kondalos (Pseudo-

^{*}This is a somewhat expanded version of an article sent to the volume in memory of Gherardo Gnoli, ed. A. Rossi and E. Provasi.

¹ I thank Professor Pierre Briant for putting this article at my disposal, and Professor Raymond Descat for a lively online discussion of the data, and both scholars for their encouragement. I owe a special debt of gratitude to Dr. Hrach Martirosyan, whose generous and learned correspondence was inestimably important for the development of this article.

² For another example of an Old Iranian compound in *-*pati-* attested in late Achaemenid southwest Anatolia, see Schwartz 2005 [2009].



Aristotle, *Econ.* II.2, 14a), who was responsible for nourishing the animals belonging to the satrap. This activity is related to the central role of animal husbandry in the Achaemenid system, cf. the tax mentioned in Pseudo-Aristotle (*Econ.* II.1, 4, with Briant 1996, 453–456). In this environment *grastapati-* would refer to being in charge of the animals' eating.

— A second possibility mentioned by Descat is that the *grastapatis'* presidency over eating would consist of the provision of meals for the satrap.

However, the fact is that there is no evidence whatever for an Iranian root *grah* 'to eat, to devour'; words for eating and feeding are always from the root *hwar* in Iranian.

Beyond a mere root etymology, a far more secure basis of interpretation is the reflection, for Old Iranian itself, of the very noun **grasta-* in Armenian *grast* 'a pack animal,' which formally must derive from West Middle Iranian, *a priori* most likely from Parthian, since this is usually the source of Armenian borrowings from Iranian, and since **grast* seems not to be evidenced for Middle Persian.

Before further considering the prenoun **grasta-*, one must note the survival of **grastapati-* as West Middle Iranian *grast(e)bed*, attested as Pahlavi <glstpt> and Parthian <grstpty>, both in two passages of Shapur I's trilingual inscription at Ka'be-ye Zardosht, in each instance paralleled by Greek ΤΟΥ ΕΠΙ ΑΝΝΩΝΗΣ, the latter amounting to 'the one in charge of provisions of supplies (from the provinces to the capital)'.

These words were discussed by Bailey 1956, 99–100, who compared the prenoun with Arm. *grast* 'animal, such as a horse, mule, and especially ass, for carrying loads.' From the larger context of Shapur's trilingual it is clear that the two successive persons with the title *grast(e)bed* bore a unique imperial economic position. Given now that Armenian *grast* has as its antecedent **grasta-*, the prenoun of **grastapati-*, the latter term should originally have meant **chief of caravan (animal)s*, which came to designate a late Achaemenid satrapal post (attested at southwest Anatolia) and later a Sasanian imperial office.³ One must reject Bailey's (*loc. cit.*) derivation of **grasta-* from an alleged Indo-Iranian base **ghar-dh* 'to take up,' whence supposedly OAv. *gərəzdi-* (correctly 'pathway, approach, access,' to Latin *gradior*).

Given the presently known repertory of Indo-Iranian roots, the form **grasta-* could be, in theory, taken as a past passive participle (via **gr̥ṇtʰ-ta-* > *graθ-ta-*) from the Indo-Iranian root *granth* 'to tie a knot.' However, this root is manifest in Iranian only as the noun **granθya-*, > e.g. Sogdian *yranš*, Persian *girih* 'a knot,' and knotting generally has no notable role in the construction of pack saddles.

³ It is notable that on the eastern trade roads caravan chiefs, who were in charge of provision for the animals, occupied lucrative and prestigious positions, and the titles for this function underwent semantic expansion; cf. Dien 1962, Sims-Williams 1996, and Schwartz 2009 [2013]. The situation was similar for the *rēš šayyārtā* at Palmyra; cf. Dien 2004.



Etymological guidance for *grasta-* is provided by the Greek word for pack saddle, *σάγμα*,⁴ from the root *σακ*, pres. *σάττω* (**σακιώ*) ‘press, constrict.’ A parallel etymology would have **grasta-* ‘animal upon which a saddle pack has been imposed’ = past passive participle ‘subjected to pressure or constriction’ from a root *grah* ‘to press, constrict’ (like Av. *frašta-* from the root *fras* ‘to ask’).

Such a root *grah*, I shall try to show, is confirmed by Old Avestan *grāhma-*, which I take as meaning ‘oppression,’ with cognates in words in various Indo-European languages,⁵ from which, with OAv. *grāhma-*, I derive from a Proto-Indo-European root **gʰres* ‘to press, to constrict.’

The meaning ‘oppression’ accords with the passage which precedes the three attestations of *grāhma-* at Y32.12-14:

Y32.11 ‘...the wrongsome ones, who through the robbery of inherited property, show themselves off as milords and miladies with their grandeurs, as they tear the righteous away from Best Mind.’⁶

These evildoers are the *kauui-s*, the local warlord rulers,⁷ characterized as domineering tyrants (Y32.12 below), who are patrons of the corrupt priestly rivals of Zarathushtra. The three passages containing *grāhma-*, with their emphasis on the misuse of power, support the translation ‘oppression’:

Y32.12 *aiiāiš grāhmā ašāt karapā varatā xšaθrəmcā išanqām drujəm*

‘Through such things, via *oppression, the *karapan*-priest chooses domin(at)ion and the tyrants’ wrongness instead of Rightness.’

Y32.13a *yā xšaθrā hišasat̄ acištahiiā dəmānē manayhō*
b' *ayhāuš marəxtārō ahiiā*

‘Through such domin(at)ion, *oppression ties⁸ the destroyers of this existence to the House of Worst Mind...’

⁴ I have derived from this word the Khwarezmian word for ‘pack saddle,’ *sym f.* (= Arab. *rahl*, Pers. *pālān-i šutur* ‘camel’s pack saddle’) Muqaddimat al-Adab 47.5-6, 121.2, and 316.5 (first Schwartz 1975, 195 fn. 2), a point of cultural-historical interest. Note the also basic sense of bilateral girding for Pers. *pālān* (and Sogdian *pyrδn*) < OIr **pari-dāna-* ‘placing around.’

⁵ Cf. already Schwartz 2006, 461, fn. 4, dismissing connection with Vedic *grásate* ‘devours’ and [Henning’s] comparison with Middle Iranian forms for ‘wealth.’

⁶ This context would explain the glossation of *grāhma-* as Pahlavi *pārag*, Parsi Sanskrit *lañcā*, and Persian *rišvat* ‘bribe.’

⁷ Schwartz 2013. To the Sogdian evidence should be added S. *kwy*, *kw'y*, *kw"y* discussed in Sims-Williams 1992, 54 and 75. Note the spelling *kw"y* in the personal name *wnkw"y* and Man. S. *sm'wtry kw"y* ‘sea giant,’ which shows that the Sogd. word is /kawāy/, from the OIr. strong-stem acc. **kawāyam*. The OAv forms *kāuuaiiasci* and *kāuuaiiascā* must have defectively placed ā. Cf. further Schwartz 2006, 495-496 on **kawaH-*.

⁸ For the meaning and etymology of *hišasat̄*, see Schwartz 2006, 461, fn. 5 and the cross-textual composition evidence in Schwartz 2010, 219 and Chart 1 on 221, and most recently Schwartz 2013, 72. For the relevant punitive and other ties, see Schwartz



Y32.14a *aḥiiā *gr̥hma⁹ ā.hōiθōi nī kāuuaiiascīt xratūš nī.dadat*

‘Through the *oppression of this [existence], the *kauui*-s indeed put their intelligence into ensnarement...’

It shall now be argued that *gr̥hma-* ‘*oppression’ retains an association with the idea of constriction posited above for *grah* as root of **grasta-*, and further that *gr̥hma-* itself is specifically associated with the constriction of animals seen in the form **grasta-*. We may proceed from the fact that at Y32.13a’ and Y32.14a’ *hīṣasāt* and *hōiθōi* (respectively) immediately follow derivatives of the root *hāy* ‘to tie (up)’ (which is in the same semantic field as ‘constrict, constrain’) and occur immediately after *gr̥hma-* ‘oppression,’ the agency responsible for the tying of the oppressors themselves. These derivatives of *√hāy* are in a series of forms of this root in the second half of Y32, with culmination at Y32.16c *aēnārjē dr̥guuatō ... aŋhaiiā* ‘may I tie up (*aŋhaiiā* < /ā hāyāyā/) the wrongsome ones for their harmfulness’

In Y32 the focus on tying proceeds from Y46 recalled backwards; specifically Y46.19-Y46.6 contributes a lexical and thematic basis for Y32.7-Y32.16,¹⁰ as shall be charted below. In this compositional recasting, Y46.7 *haēθahiiā* ‘of ensnarement’ has as positional correspondent Y32.16 *aŋhaiiā* ‘may I tie up’ from the same *√hāy*. At Y46.6, the wrongdoer is said to be doomed to enter the traplines of Wrongness: *dr̥jō huuō dāmān haēθahiiā gāt*. The next stanza, Y46.7, asks Mazda’s protection from the evildoer who would lay hold of Zarathushtra to harm him. The idea is then elaborated in the stanza which follows, Y46.8: ‘May the threat of him who plots harm against me ... not reach me ..., but may it come with matching enmity against his person, and keep him from good life....’ Here the themes of tying down and restraining go with statements of punitive reciprocity. This ideology of punitive reciprocity lies behind Y32.13 and 14, where *gr̥hma-* + *√hāy* may consequently be said to indicate that the latent constriction (*√grah*), which we have noted from **grasta-* as root notion of *gr̥hma-* ‘oppression,’ ties up the agents of oppression.

The following chart shows the aforementioned formal relationships between Y46.19-16 and Y32.7-16. The charting of the correspondences of formally related words also provides a collocative framework for recognizing words which are related purely semantically, within which items there is further evidence for the etymological connection between *grasta-* and *gr̥hma-*.

Y46.19 & Y32.7 *tu(uām) (...) mazdā vaēdištō* ‘Thou, Mazdā, most knowing’

Y46.18 & Y32.8 *vīciθa-* ‘decision’; *√xšn(a)u* ‘to satisfy reciprocatively’

2006, 460-466.

⁹ MSS. *gr̥hmō* by influence of Y32.14a’ *gr̥hmō*.

¹⁰ For the principle, see Schwartz 2002 [2006], 3-8, and the charts, with discussion thereupon, in Schwartz 2003 [2007], 2009, 2010, and 2014. The relationship between Y46.19 remembered backwards and Y32.7 seq. was first treated, in elaborate detail, by Schwartz 1991, 143 and 161.



Y46.17 & Y32.9	<i>sə̄ngh-</i> ‘to declare’; $\sqrt{s}r(a)u$ ‘to hear’
Y46.16 & Y32.9	<i>išti-</i> + <i>vāŋhāuš manāŋhō</i> ‘the power of Good Mind’
Y46.15 & Y32.10	<i>dāθə̄ng</i> ‘lawful’ + $\sqrt{dā}$ ‘put, establish’
Y46.14 & Y32.11	<i>maz-</i> ‘great’
Y46.13 & Y32.12	$\sqrt{s}r(a)u$ ‘to hear’ + <i>marəta-</i> ‘mortals’
Y46.12 & Y32.12	<i>aēbiitō</i> ... <i>mazdā</i> ‘to them Mazda speaks’
Y46.11 & Y32.13	<i>xšaθra(iš)</i> ‘via dominations’; <i>ahu-</i> + $\sqrt{mark/č}$ ‘destroy existence’; <i>dəmāna-</i> ‘house’; <i>karapan-</i> ‘priest (pej.)’
Y46.10 & Y32.13	<i>ahiiā</i> ‘of this [existence]’
Y46.9 & Y32.14	<i>gau-</i> ‘cow’; <i>mrau-/mrāu-</i> ‘say’
Y46.8 & Y32.15	<i>jiiātəuš/jiiātōis</i> ‘of life’
Y46.8 & Y32.16	<i>āθ(r)iš</i> ‘threat’
Y46.7 & Y32.16	<i>aēnarjhe</i> ‘for harming’
Y46.6 & Y32.16	$\sqrt{hāy}$ ‘to tie’; <i>drəguuant-</i> ‘wrongsome’; <i>vahišta-</i> ‘best’

Now, in both corresponding stanzas with the most lexical correlations, Y46.11 and Y32.13, it is said that the *karapan*-s, ‘the destroyers of existence, via the domination(s),’ are doomed to the ‘House’ of Hell; in both the instrumental of *xšaθra-* ‘domination’ is immediately followed at Y46.11 by *yūjān* ‘they yoke/subjugate [mankind]’ and at Y32.13 by *grəhmā* ‘via *oppression.’ Not only does subjugation here semantically parallel *oppression, but the literal reference of *yūjān* to yoking would parallel the imposition of pressure, or constriction, posited above for the meaning of \sqrt{grah} in **grasta-* ‘having a pack saddle’ — and in *grəhma-*.

Furthermore, $\sqrt{y(a)ug/j}$ ‘yoke,’ in its basic reference to something which encumbers animals, has a parallel at Y32.15, immediately continuing the thought of the three preceding stanzas, which attest *grəhma-*: ‘Through these things the *karapan*-dom and *kauui*-dom are lost, together with those whom *they put into harness* (*aibī* ... *daiṇtī*); those latter, with the [former] two [groups], will not be brought into the House of Best Mind by Those Who rule over life as They wish.’ Here, again collocated with the theme of retributive impedance we have seen with *grəhma-*, *aibī* ... *daiṇtī* ‘they harness’ parallels *yūjān* ‘they yoke,’ both expressing the imposition of constriction, which, again with animals as object, characterizes *grasta-*, the meaning of whose root, *grah*, as ‘to put under pressure, constrict, constrain,’ is corroborated by the contextual and compositional details attending *grəhma-* < OIr **grah-ma-*.

The final support for the meaning of the latter root comes from broader Indo-European considerations, for which we may compare the Iranian exclusively with a series of Baltic forms, which, with the Iranian, point to a PIE verb root **gʰres*. OAv. *grəhma-*, with -*mV-* formant, com-



pares with Lithuanian *grėsmė, grasmė* ‘threat, compulsion.’¹¹ Allied Baltic forms are Lith. *gresiù, grēsti* ‘to threaten (Latvian *grasāt, grasīt* ‘id.’), to make loathsome’; *grasūs* ‘disgusting’; *grasā* ‘threat, restriction’; *gristū, gristi* ‘be bored.’ Sharing meanings found for Lith. *gresiù* and *grasūs*, Armenian *garšim* ‘I loathe, am disgusted’ (whence Arm. noun *garš* ‘loathing’) is easily seen as a cognate, < PIE passive **gʰṛ̥syé/ó-* ‘be *oppressed.’ With the Baltic and Armenian should belong Tocharian B *krās-* ‘to torment, vex’ and related B and A forms (for solution of vocalic problems of derivation from **gʰres*, an account of the history of this etymology, and mention of semantically less likely suggestions for cognates of *krās*, see ADAMS 2013, 231). Accordingly, the PIE root **gʰres*, giving PIr. **grah* ‘to put under pressure, press down, constrict,’ explains OAv. *grāhma-* ‘*oppression’ and its association with tying down, harnessing, etc., and thus also accounts for **grasta-* ‘(animal) upon which a saddle has been imposed,’ the latter paralleled by the derivation of the Greek word for ‘pack saddle’ from ‘press, constrict,’ as we have seen. One may readily compare, for the historical semantics, OIr **ubjya-* (Av. *ubjia-* ‘be pressed down,’ noun. **ubjyā* > Sogd. /üžbā/, /wižbā/ ‘fright, worry, anxiety’ Khwar. ’wzβ’hyd ‘bored, was tedious to’ (SCHWARTZ 1970 [1971], 299).

In conclusion, a late Achaemenid Old Persian title **grastapati-*, reflected in a Greek inscription of Mylasa, has as a later correspondent Middle Persian and Parthian *grast(e)bed*, whose Greek equivalent indicates the transportation of provincial supplies. From all these data one may trace the development of **grastapati-* as an important economic office originating from ‘chief of caravan animals,’ whose prepunder **grasta-* (> Armenian *grast*), referring to the imposition of pack saddles, is cognate with OAv. *grāhma-*, which, on the basis of Gathic contextual and compositional criteria, must mean ‘oppression, subjugation, constriction,’ from a Proto-Iranian root *grah* < Proto-Indo-European **gʰres*¹² (also attested in Baltic, Armenian, and Tocharian) ‘to put under pressure, constrict.’

Addendum

A novel explanation of OAv. *grāhma-* (or, theoretically, **grāhman-*) has recently been offered by HUMBACH AND FAISS, 50–51, who, comparing the Vedic root *gras-* ‘to devour, to graze,’ Greek γράστις ‘fodder, forage’ and Latin *grāmen* ‘leaf of grass’ < **grasmen*, take the OAv. word as parallel to English slang *grass*, Arabic *hašš* (‘grass’) for ‘cannabis,’ and suggest that the OAv. refers to some unspecified drug plant “and those gang of those who are addicted to it”. No such word for ‘grass’ is attested in (Indo-)Iranian, while analysis of Y32.12–14 points to a very different meaning and (inner-Iranian) etymology.

¹¹ Pokorny 445, under **ghers-*, **ghres-* ‘Widerwille, Abscheu, Ekel’ gives Av. *grāhma-* as ‘Sünder, Frevler’ but, although mentioning the other relevant Baltic forms, omits mention of Lithuanian *grėsmė, grasmė*. The PIE etymon **gʰres* is not represented by Rix *et al.* 1998.

¹² PIE **gʰres*, if essentially ‘to constrict, apply pressure from without,’ could be taken via **ghers* as extension of **gʰer*, whence also **gʰerdʰ* (**gʰredʰ*) ‘to enclose, gird’ (cf. Rix *et al.* 157) and further **gʰrebʰ* ‘to grasp, grip.’



References

- ADAMS, D.Q. 2013, *A Dictionary of Tocharian B: Revised and Greatly Enlarged*, Amsterdam.
- BAILEY, H.W. 1956, “Armeno-Indoiranica,” in *TPS* (1956), pp. 88-126.
- BARTHOLOMAE, C. 1910, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch*, Strassburg.
- BRIANT, P. 1996, *Histoire de l'empire perse de Cyrus à Alexandre*, Paris.
- DESCAT, R. 2011, “Autour de la tombe d'Hékatomnos. Nouvelle lecture d'une inscription de Mylasa,” in *Zeitschrift der Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 178, pp. 195-246.
- DIEN, A.E. 1962, “The Sapao Problem Revisited,” in *JAOS* 82.3, pp. 335-346.
- DIEN, A.E., “Palmyra as a Caravan City,” <<http://www.silkroadfoundation.org/newsletter/2004vol2num1/Palmyra.htm>>
- HUMBACH, H., FAISS, K. 2010, *Zarathushtra and His Antagonists*, Wiesbaden.
- POKORNY, J. 1959, *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, Bern and München.
- RIX, H., KÜMMEL, M., ZEHNDER, T., LIPP, R., and SCHIRMER, B. 1998, *Lexikon der indogermanischen Verben*, Wiesbaden.
- RONG XINJIANG, “New Light on the Sogdian Colonies along the Silk Road,” <https://edoc.bbaw.de/files/841/IV_01_Rong.pdf>
- SCHWARTZ, M. 1970 [1971], “On the Khwarezmian Version of the Muqaddimat al-Adab as edited by Johannes Benzing.” In: *ZDMG* 120, pp. 288-304.
- SCHWARTZ, M. 1975, “Proto-Indo-European $\sqrt{\text{gem}}$,” in *Monumentum H.S. Nyberg II*, Tehran and Liège.
- SCHWARTZ, M. 1991, “Sound, sense, and ‘seeing’ in Zoroaster: the Outer Limits of Orality,” in *K.R. Cama Oriental Institute Proceedings (5th-8th January 1989)*. Bombay, pp. 127-163.
- SCHWARTZ, M. 2002 [2006], “How Zarathushtra Generated the Gathic Corpus: Inner-textual and Intertextual Composition,” in *BAI* 16, pp. 1-8.
- SCHWARTZ, M. 2003 [2007], “Women in the Old Avesta: Social Position and Textual Composition,” in *BAI* 17, pp. 53-64.
- SCHWARTZ, M. 2005 [2009], “Apollo and Khshathrapati, the Median Nergal, at Xanthos,” in *BAI* 19, pp. 45-50.
- SCHWARTZ, M. 2006, “The Gathas and Other Old Avestan Poetry,” in *La langue poétique indo-européenne. Actes du colloque de travail de la Société des Études Indo-Européennes*, Paris 22-24 octobre 2003, ed. G.-J. PINAUT, D. PETIT, Leuven and Paris, pp. 459-498.
- SCHWARTZ, M. 2010, “Pouruchista’s Gathic Wedding and the Teleological Composition of the Gathas,” in *Exegisti Monumenta: Festschrift in honour of Nicholas Sims-Williams*, ed. W. SUNDERMANN, A. HINTZE, F. DE BLOIS. Wiesbaden, pp. 429-448.
- SCHWARTZ, M. 2010, “Lexical Cruces of Yasna 29 and the Cross-textual Composition of the Gathas,” in *Ancient and Middle Iranian Studies: Proceedings of the 6th European Conference of Iranian Studies*, ed. M. MACUCH, D. WEBER, D. DURKIN-MEISTERERNST. Wiesbaden, pp. 429-447.



- SCHWARTZ, M. 2013, “Avestan *kauui-* and the Vocabulary of Indo-Iranian Institutions,” in *Gifts to a Magus, Indo-Iranian Studies Honoring Firoze Kotwal*, ed. J. CHOKSY, J. DUBEANSKY, New York, pp. 63-76.
- SCHWARTZ, M. 2009 [2013], “*Sārtha-* and Other Caravan Words,” in *BAI* 23, pp. 179-80.
- SCHWARTZ, M. 2014, “Gathic Composition and Lexicology,” in *Iran Nameh, A Quarterly of Iranian Studies* 29/2, pp. 22-28.
- SIMS-WILLIAMS, N. 1992, *Sogdian and Other Inscriptions of the Upper Indus*, London.
- SIMS-WILLIAMS, N. 1996, “The Sogdian Merchants in India and China,” in *Cina e Iran da Alessandro Magno alla dinastia Tang*, ed. A. CARDONNA, L. LANCIATTI. Firenze, pp. 45-47.

Arta

Directeur de la publication : Pierre Briant

arta.achemenet@louvre.fr

ISSN 2110-6118

© Musée du Louvre / Achemenet / Martin Schwartz