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«KING KABNEŠKIR SON OF KING KABNEŠKIR»

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SEPTUAGENARIO  
VIRO HUMANISSIMO ET DOCTISSIMO  
DE STUDIIS LITTERARUM LATINARUM  
NECNON SCRIPTORUM  
HISTORIAE ALEXANDRI MAGNI  
OPTIME MERITO

I

In Hozestan, in the environment of Izeh/Malamir, the memory of the ruling dynasty of Elymais, the Kamnaskires or Kabneškirs is preserved by several reliefs.<sup>1</sup> Of these reliefs, from the historical point of view, undoubtedly the relief of Hōng-e Nouruzi is most significant, which represents the homage of Kabneškir (Kamniskires) III to the Parthian King Mithridates I, who inaugurates him into the governorship of Susa.<sup>2</sup> About one and a half kilometres from Hōng-e Nouruzi, in a village named Hōng-e Yār-‘Alivand another relief can be found (Fig. 1), which is called *do țelesm* «two talismans».<sup>3</sup> The relief has been preserved in a very bad condition<sup>4</sup>, but with a careful observation several details of it can still be recognized (Fig. 2).

On the relief two figures standing side by side can be seen in front view. The figure on the left is represented with both feet on a slightly slanting level in half profile, while the figure on the right is standing with his right foot in half profile and with his left foot in quarter profile. The feet arranged this way create in the spectator the impression, as if the figure on the right would just step towards the left. This trick loosens the stiffness of the frontal

<sup>1</sup>The names of the rulers of the dynasty in Greek script: Kamniskires (= Kamnaskires I), Kaniskires (= Kamnaskires II), Kamnaskires, Kapnaskires, in Aramaic script *kbnškyr* = Kabneškir.

<sup>2</sup>J. HARMATTA: *Parthia and Elymais in the 2nd Century B. C.* Acta Ant. Hung. 29 (1981) 189 foll., in particular 221.

<sup>3</sup>For its discovery and publication research one can thank to W. HINZ: *Zwei neuentdeckte parthische Felsreliefs.* Iranica Antiqua 3 (1963) 169 foll.

<sup>4</sup>W. HINZ: *Iranica Antiqua* 3 (1963) 169 foll. could state only as follows: «Immerhin läßt sich erkennen, daß die beiden Gestalten gemeinsam einen Reif (ein Diadem) halten. Es dürfte sich somit um eine Belehungs-Szene handeln . . . Leider weist unser Relief . . . keine Inschrift auf. Die beiden stehenden Figuren sehen sich ähnlich — soweit ein Urteil heute möglich ist. Beide tragen ein bis über die Knie hinabreichendes Obergewand. Die Hosen liegen eng an, lassen also den typischen parthischen Faltenwurf vermischen. Trotzdem dürfte das Relief in parthische Zeit gehören . . . Da die Figur rechts die linke Hand so hält, als fasse sie einen Schwertknauf, stellt sie vielleicht einen parthischen Großkönig dar, während mit der Figur links entsprechend ein mit der Elymais belehnter heimischer Fürst gemeint sein könnte. Jeder Versuch einer Datierung des Reliefs bleibt mißlich; ich würde es noch in vorchristliche Zeit einreihen, vielleicht in das erste Jahrhundert.»



*Fig. 1.* The analytical drawing of the relief of Hong-e Yār-'Alivand and the picture of its inscription prepared with copying

representation. It creates a connection of movement between the two standing persons and animates the picture.

The person on the left wears a tunic reaching under his knees and an Elymaean, not Parthian, pair of trousers.<sup>5</sup> Above the tunic a pelerine clasped together on his chest in a triangle can be observed, which backwards reaches perhaps down to the middle of the thighs. On the neck of the figure a necklace can be seen with a big round part in the middle. On his waist he wears a belt, from which on the left a sword with cross-bar, and on the right, rather to be guessed, than to be seen, a dagger is hanging down. Similarly on the right still some bigger (longer and broader) object is fastened to the belt. This reaches a little lower than the tunic, and has a slightly curved form. Examining the picture of the relief more thoroughly, we get the impression that it consists of two pieces: of a narrower, more curved piece and of a broader, but straighter piece. It can hardly be questionable that these objects can be defined as a bow case and an arrow quiver, which were worn also by the horseman of the Elymaean relief of Tang-i Sarvak on the right side.<sup>6</sup> The figure puts his right hand on his dagger, and with his left hand he catches the diadem reached over by the person standing on the right. From the diadem ribbons are hanging down.

The coiffure of the figure is very interesting (Fig. 3). His hair is arranged around in two rows of spiral locks, which are upwards kept down by a diadem.



Fig. 3. Heads of two figures of the relief (reconstruction)

The undulating ribbons of the latter can well be observed above the two shoulders. This coiffure is well known from the coins of the kings of the ruling dynasty of Elymais bearing the name Kamnaskires/Kapnaskires. On these the ruler was represented in side view<sup>7</sup> and it can well be observed that the

<sup>5</sup> The most obvious difference between the Elymaean and the Parthian wearing of trousers is that while the Parthian trousers are horizontally rimpled (see *e. gr.* the bronze statue found at Sāmi), the crinkles of the Elymaean trousers are arranged perpendicularly (see *e. gr.* R. GHIRSHMAN: *Terrasses sacrées de Bard-è Néchandeh et Masjid-i Solaiman*. II. Paris 1976. XXV. t.).

<sup>6</sup> W. B. HENNING: *The Monuments and Inscriptions of Tang-i Sarvak*. AM NS 2 (1952) Pl. XX.

<sup>7</sup> G. LE RIDER: *Suse sous les Séleucides et les Parthes*. Paris 1965. Pl. LXXII. 11—18. CHR. AUGÉ—R. CURIEL—G. LE RIDER: *Terrasses sacrées de Bard-è Néchandeh et Masjid-i Solaiman. Les trouvailles monétaires*. Paris 1979. Pl. III.

coiffure was fastened down with the diadem so that it should create the impression, as if the king would wear a hat on his head (Figs 4—5). Among the finds of the lower terrace of Bard-e Nešandeh the bronze statuette of a king of



Fig. 4. The «hat-coiffure» of Kamnaskires, husband of Anzaze, on his coins

Fig. 5. The «hat-coiffure» of the last Kabneškir on his coins

Elymais wearing such a coiffure has also come to light.<sup>8</sup> On this the coiffure can be studied plastically. If we look at the statuette from the front, then the coiffure represented appears to be identical with that to be seen on the relief. If, however, we look at it in side view, then we recognize immediately that we have to do with the same «hat-coiffure», which was worn by the rulers of the Kamnaskires dynasty on the coin representations (Figs 6—8). The coiffure of the figure is important from the viewpoint of the historical interpretation of the relief, inasmuch as on the basis of the parallels reviewed we have to regard this person standing on the left side as one of the rulers of the Kamnaskires dynasty.



Fig. 6. The head of the bronze statuette of the last Kabneškir in right front view. Bard-e Nešandeh

Fig. 7. The head of the bronze statuette of the last Kabneškir in left front view. Bard-e Nešandeh

Fig. 8. The head of the bronze statuette of the last Kabneškir from the back. Bard-e Nešandeh

Between the two standing figures in head-height, a bird represented in flight, very likely an eagle can be discerned, holding in its beak a ring? (a diadem?), and in its claws perhaps a twig. The eagle is floating between the two heads flying towards the figure on the left.

The person on the right side wears an attire similar to that of the figure standing on the left side, viz.: a long tunic, on the lower border of which

<sup>8</sup> R. GHIRSHMAN: *op. cit.* Pl. XXXVII. 1—4.

traces of the rich ornamentation can still be observed, a pair of Elymaean trousers, and above the tunic a pelerine clasped together on his chest. His coiffure seems also to be similar to that of the person standing on the left side. He had very likely a «hat-coiffure». However, unlike the person on the left, the figure standing on the right side does not carry any weapons. With his right hand he presents the diadem to the figure standing on the left, and with his left hand before his body in hip-height, as if he would hold a bundle of sticks aslant, crosswise. The sticks can well be observed on the part in front of his left arm.

## II

The sense of the scene represented on the relief is clear: it eternizes the installation of the figure standing on the left into the royal power. The inauguration takes place so that the person standing on the right side hands over the royal diadem to the person standing on the left, towards whom at the same time, as one of the incarnate forms of the royal nimbus, the *xvarənah-*, an eagle is flying with a smaller diadem or ring in its beak and with a (palm-?) branch in its claws.

In order to clarify the historical background of the installation scene, first of all, we ought to identify the royal person ascending the throne. On this purpose, to some extent, the «hat-coiffure» of the ruler represented may be helpful. This characteristic coiffure appears first on the coins of Kamnaskires and Anzaze minted in 82/81 B. C. (eventually in 79/78 B. C.) and it is characteristic of all Kamnaskires (Kabneškir) Kings, the latest dated coin of whose bears the date *toč* = year 377 of the Seleucid Era = 65/66 A. D.<sup>9</sup> Thus, it can be hardly doubtful that the ruler represented on the relief is one of the kings of the Kamnaskires dynasty, whose accession to the throne and reign, according to the above data, fall between 82 B. C. and 66 A. D.

This wide space of time, embracing more than a century, however, can still be narrowed down, if we include also the other figure of the relief into our research. The installation of King Kabneškir into the royal power can only be made by the Parthian «King of Kings» or by a deity. The first possibility can surely be excluded, because in the period under discussion Elymais was independent from Parthia. Moreover, in the course of the 1st century A. D. she even succeeded to retake also Susa, and as from 75 A. D. the kings of Elymais minted coins there again.<sup>10</sup> It also contradicts to such an assump-

<sup>9</sup> G. LE RIDER: *op. cit.* Pl. LXXIII. 2.

<sup>10</sup> G. LE RIDER: *op. cit.* 426 ff. U. KAHRSTEDT: *Artabanos III und seine Erben.* 1950. 46, his assumption, according to which Orodes I, king of Elymais, was the son of Artabanos III, who was made king of Elymais by his father between 18 and 35 A. D., after the monumental work of *Le Rider*, requires today already no refutation.



tion that the person handing over the diadem does not carry any arms, although the Parthian King would have been represented with arms in all probability. Thus, the only possibility remains that in the right side figure of the relief we should see the representation of a deity, who with the sacred bundle of sticks in his hand, with the *barəsman*, hands over the royal diadem to King Kamnaskires. That peculiarity of the representation is also in harmony with this interpretation that the person doing the installation does not carry any arms.<sup>11</sup>

Who can be this deity, from whom Kamnaskires takes over the symbol of the royal power, the diadem, and from whom the royal nimbus, the *xvarənah*-flies towards him in the form of an eagle? For this a clear guidance is furnished by the coinage of the Kamnaskires/Kabneškir dynasty. On the reverse of the coins issued by Kamnaskires and Anzaze in 82/81 B. C., the sitting Zeus Nikephoros appears, and this reverse is maintained also by the next Kamnaskires on his coins minted in 62/61 B. C. Zeus Nikophoros, on these coins is obviously the Hellenistic equivalent of the Elymaean main deity, Iuppiter Elymaeus—Öhrmazd—Bēl. His appearance on the coins of these two rulers very likely indicates that the source of royal power and the inaugurator of the Elymaean kings into royal power was seen in him.

On the reverse of a coin of a later Kamnaskires, minted in 36/35 B. C., however, the place of the sitting Zeus Nikephoros is taken by the bust of a bearded man. This wears the same «hat-coiffure», as the Kamnaskires Kings, instead of a pointed beard, however, we can observed on him a shorter full-beard (Fig. 9). Since on the coins of the former Kamnaskires rulers the



Fig. 9. The head of Öhrmazd-Bēl on the reverse of the coins of the Kabneškir dynasty

reverse served for the representation of that deity, from whom the royal power originates, it is obvious that in the bearded half-length portrait we must see the same deity, Iuppiter Elymaeus—Öhrmazd—Bēl who appeared on the reverse of the coins of the earlier Kamnaskires kings, in Hellenistic Greek formulation, as Zeus Nikephoros. Thus, as from 36/35 B. C. the Kamnaskires dynasty mints on the reverse of its coins the image of the chief deity of the Elymaean pantheon, Iuppiter Elymaeus—Zeus—Öhrmazd—Bēl, in a characteristic Elymaean formulation.

<sup>11</sup> Öhrmazd was represented without arms also on the Sāsānian reliefs.

## III

In the background of this change very likely stands some important historical event or process. The orientation towards the Greeks in Elymais becomes weaker, the Greek inscription on the reverse of the coins becomes deformed and unintelligible, while finally the second Kamnaskires dynasty as from the time about 75 A. D. mints its coins, instead of Greek, with Elymaean Aramaic inscription. The iconographic formulation of Iuppiter Elymaeus—Zeus—Öhrmazd—Bēl on the coins and reliefs is visibly connected with the appearance and attire of the king of Elymais. The only difference between the image of the king and the representation of the deity can be observed in the form of the beard. The fact that they imagine the chief deity after the pattern of the ruler is clearly shown by the iconographic formulation of the figure of Öhrmazd also on the Sāsānian reliefs. On these monuments Öhrmazd appears in a similar attire, with his hair formed into a «globe», on horseback, just like the Sāsānian šāhānšāh, wearing the *corona muralis* on his head. The difference between the king to be inaugurated and Öhrmazd can only be observed in the form of the beard, the form of the crown and in the carrying or absence of arms. It occurs, however, that the Sāsānian šāhānšāh also wears a *corona muralis* and then the god and the king are represented with an identical crown, as Šāhpuhr I and Öhrmazd on the relief of Naqš-i Rajab.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, it seems to be almost natural that on the relief and on the coins the Kamnaskires kings and Zeus — Öhrmazd — Bēl appear in almost identical attire and with identical coiffure. This agreement, at any rate, narrows down the age of the relief between 36/35 B. C. and 66 A. D. (eventually 75 A. D.) since the representation of Zeus — Öhrmazd — Bēl with «hat-coiffure» occurs between these time limits.

It is very likely, however, that taking into consideration the development of the relief art of Elymais, we have to put the relief to the end of the period falling between the above time limits. Even if it is true that the relief of Ḥong-e Nouruzi dates from 139/138 B. C.,<sup>13</sup> but it stands isolated in the territory of Elymais and it is a work of not local but of Parthian initiation. All stone reliefs of Elymaean conception date from a much later time. The Elymaean reliefs of Ḥong-e Kamālvand, Tang-i Butān and Tang-i Sarvak are later at least by two centuries, or even more, than the Parthian relief of Ḥong-e Nouruzi.<sup>14</sup> If the most important works of the rock relief art of Elymais date

<sup>12</sup> F. SARRE: *Die Kunst des Alten Persien*. Berlin 1925. Pl. 71.

<sup>13</sup> L. VANDEN BERGHE: *Le relief parthe de Ḥung-i Naurūzī*. *Iranica Antiqua* 3 (1963) 167. J. HARMATTA: *Acta Ant. Hung.* 29 (1981) 189. foll.

<sup>14</sup> W. HINZ: *op. cit.* 172, A. D. H. BIVAR—S. SHAKED: *The Inscriptions at Shīmbār*. *BSOAS* 27 (1964) 272, W. B. HENNING: *op. cit.* 175. foll., L. VANDEN BERGHE: *Iranica Antiqua* 3 (1963) 167.

from the end of the 1st century A. D. and from the 2nd century, then it is unlikely that the relief of Ḥong-e Yār-ʿAlivand, in regard to time, could stand far from these monuments. Although the latter has been preserved in a very bad condition, that much still can be ascertained with surety that the king represented on it is a Kamnaskires, but by no means a ruler of the second Kamnaskires/Kabneškir dynasty (Vorōd, Fraāt, etc.). From this follows that the relief cannot be later than 75 A. D. but it cannot be much earlier either, because in this case it would stand isolated in the history of the relief art of Elymais.

## IV

Regarding the historical background of the relief of Ḥong-e Yār-ʿAlivand we have still another proof. This is the inscription explaining the relief. Contrary to the earlier opinion it seems to be doubtless that the highly damaged relief also had an inscription (Fig. 1). We can easily observe it, if we examine the rock surface under the relief with a magnifying glass, on the photograph. About 2 cm under the sole of the left foot of the left figure we see a dark hole. Further below by 1—2 millimetres, slightly to the right we can clearly observe even with the unaided eye an Elymaean *b*, right of which we find a similarly well visible Elymaean *k*. Examining the rock surface to the right and to the left from the *kb* letters one can discover still a few more characters, which can be read and restored as follows:

$s^{\text{f}}l^{\text{m}'} zn^{\text{f}}h^{\text{f}} zy kb^{\text{f}}n^{\text{f}}š^{\text{f}}k[y]r m^{\text{f}}l^{\text{f}}[k']$   
 «This relief is of King Kabneškir's»

If we examine the rock wall also under this line, then about 1 cm. under the *b* observed in line 1, somewhat to the right we can see a character ', to the right of which also a *k* is discernible. If now we try to find the beginning of this line under the character *s* of line 1, then we can read a faintly visible group of characters *br*, after which a hardly discernible *kb* can be seen. Then the remainders of several letters can be observed, which can be restored as *nš*. Hereafter a *k* and an *r* can be discerned well enough. Then the remainders of two letters follow, and the *k'* already read. Thus, the reading of the second line will be as follows:

$br kb^{\text{f}}n^{\text{f}}š^{\text{f}}k[y]r [ml]k'$   
 «Son of King Kabneškir»

Thus, the deciphered part of line 1 and line 2 of the inscription will read as follows:



line 1  $\mathfrak{s}^{\text{r}}\text{l}^{\text{m}} \text{zn}^{\text{r}}\text{h}^{\text{l}} \text{zy kb}^{\text{r}}\text{n}^{\text{l}}\mathfrak{š}^{\text{k}}[\text{y}]\text{r m}^{\text{r}}\text{l}^{\text{l}}[\text{k}^{\text{'}}]$

line 2  $\text{br kb}^{\text{r}}\text{n}^{\text{l}}\mathfrak{š}^{\text{k}}[\text{y}]\text{r} [\text{ml}]\text{k}^{\text{'}}$

«This relief is of King Kabneškir's,  
son of King Kabneškir».

On the basis of the photograph the possibility cannot be excluded that the inscription was longer. Line 2 possibly continued even after the word  $[\text{ml}]\text{k}^{\text{'}}$ , but it is also possible that there was also a line 3, of which perhaps a *g* (under the second *k* of the  $\text{kb}^{\text{r}}\text{n}^{\text{l}}\mathfrak{š}^{\text{k}}[\text{y}]\text{r}$  of line 2) and an ' (under the *m* of the  $\text{m}^{\text{r}}\text{l}^{\text{l}}[\text{k}^{\text{'}}]$  of line 1) are also discernible. Unfortunately, the photograph does not furnish a basis for the complete deciphering of the inscription. For this purpose a new photograph of larger scale and better quality and eventually a latex squeeze would be necessary.

The decipherable part of the inscription, at any rate, reveals so much that the king represented on the relief was «King Kabneškir, son of King Kabneškir», who is invested with the royal power by the god Ōhrmazd. Thus, it confirms the conclusion drawn from the royal coiffure, *viz.* that we have to do with one of the rulers of the first Kamnaskires dynasty. Since, judged on the basis of the coins, between 36 B. C. and 66 A. D. at least six kings bearing the name Kamnaskires/Kabneškir reigned (their average time of reign would be 17 years) one after on another, the «King Kabneškir, son of King Kabneškir» mentioned in the inscription in itself could be identified with any of the Kamnaskires. However, the chronological situation of the rock reliefs of Elymais definitely indicates that we have to do with the last Kabneškir, the predecessor of Vorōd, who about 75 B. C. started again to issue Elymaean coins in Susa.

## V

King Kabneškir, son of King Kabneškir, was in all probability an important historical personality. The occupation of Susa can be brought into connection first of all with his person. Recently, this event is put to 45 A. D.,<sup>15</sup> but there is nothing to prove that this event would have taken place at that time.<sup>16</sup> Even if it is true that the minting of Parthian coins ceases in Susa in 45 A. D. after the last issues of Vardanes, this fact alone however, does not prove that the city would have been occupied by the Elymaeans. In this case it would also be difficult to explain, why their kings started to mint coins in this important centre only three decades later, about 75 A. D. According to

<sup>15</sup> G. LE RIDER: *op. cit.* 426.

<sup>16</sup> G. LE RIDER: *loc. cit.* he himself also recognizes this.

the description of Pliny (*loc. nom.* VI. 135) Susiane is still delimited from Elymais by river Eulaeus, accordingly Susa did not belong under the authority of the Elymaeans. Pliny's description cannot be referred to a time before 45 A. D.<sup>17</sup> because he himself stresses that he received his data from the commander of the war against the Parthians and from the kings and prince hostages arriving in Rome (VI. 23 *nunc reddatur ingens in mediterraneo situs, in quo multa aliter ac veteres proditurum me non eo infitias, anxia perquisita cura rebus nuper in eo situ gestis a Domitio Corbulone regibusque inde missis supplicibus aut regum liberis obsidibus*). Thus, the data of Pliny, in all probability, reflect the actual situation about 65 A. D., and so Susa could come under the power of the kings of Elymais only hereafter, eventually just about 75.

It is possible that the reason of the discontinuation of the Parthian coinage in Susa in 45 A. D. was that the city became independent in the disturbed times following the death of Vardanes, just like Seleukeia liberated itself for some years from the Parthian authority towards the end of the reign of Artabanos II (*Tac. ann.* XI. 9). While, however, Vardanes succeeded to force Seleukeia again to recognize his power, the occupation of Susa again was not rendered possible to Gotarzes by the fight against Meherdates, to Vonones by the shortness of his rule, and to Vologases by his fights for Armenia, then by his fights against Izates, afterwards against the Dahas and the Sakas, then by the revolt of Hyrcania and finally its secession, in 75 A. D. At the same time this situation furnished an excellent possibility for the occupation of Susa to Kabneškir, who could ascend the throne between 70 and 75 A. D.

Very likely, this event — the occupation of Susa — could give incentive to Kabneškir to have his relief prepared and by this to put the monumental relief art in the service of the royal ideology of Elymais. The model to this was very likely furnished by Parthian art. The influence of the Parthian social ideas and culture can be seen also in the fact that of the kings of Elymais Kabneškir was the first to give Parthian names to his sons,<sup>18</sup> and by this he became the founder of the second Kabneškir dynasty, the rulers of which thereafter had Parthian names.

The last Kabneškir could have an important role also in the development of the cultic places of Elymais. In Bard-e Nešandeh, in the coin hoard hidden in the sanctuary built on the lower terrace, the coins of the rulers of Elymais essentially start with the tetradrachmas and drachmas of the last Kabneškir. The composition of the treasure is as follows:<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> G. LE RIDER: *op. cit.* 355, 426.

<sup>18</sup> The inscription of Ḥong-e Kamālvand mentions the fire priest Fraāt, son of Kabneškir, W. HINZ: *op. cit.* 171.

<sup>19</sup> CHR. AUGÉ—R. CURIEL—G. LE RIDER: *op. cit.* 157 ff.

| Ruler                    | Tetradrachma | Drachma |
|--------------------------|--------------|---------|
| Kabneškir (last but one) | 1            | —       |
| Kabneškir (last)         | 11           | 50      |
| Voröd I                  | 12           | 714     |
| Voröd I or Fraät         | —            | 28      |
| Fraät                    | 4            | 431     |
| Fraät or Voröd II        | —            | 228     |
| Voröd II                 | 34           | 511     |
| Kabneškir Voröd          | 19           | 392     |

As is seen from the table, the first ruler, whose coins in the coin hoard accumulated from sacrificial gifts, are represented in high numbers, is the last Kabneškir. This fact shows that the sanctuary of the lower terrace must have been built under his reign. Thus, obviously he was the ruler of Elymais, who has the lower terrace built and the Miθra-Anāhita sanctuary on it. Perhaps the memory of this is preserved by the small bronze statuette, which once could belong to the sacrificial gifts of the sanctuary (it has come to light before the ruins of the sanctuary in the course of the excavations).<sup>20</sup> This represents a king with «hat-coiffure», with a cornucopia in his left hand and with a stole on his shoulder,<sup>21</sup> he lifts up his right hand to homage towards the deity. The «hat-coiffure» can refer to any of the Kabneškir Kings between 82 B. C. and 75 A. D. Since, however, the sanctuary was caused to be built by the last Kabneškir, the statuette very likely represents this ruler.

The successors of the last Kabneškir, *viz.* Voröd I, Fraät, Voröd II and Kabneškir Voröd could build further and could shape the final form of the upper and lower terrace in Bard-e Nešandeh and could adorn also Masġid-i Solaiman with those reliefs, the fragments of which have come to light in great numbers in the course of the excavations. Thus, the history of these cultic places also reflects that this significant royal personality opened a new era in the social-economic and cultural development of Elymais.

## APPENDIX

### THE «HAT-COIFFURE»

The «hat-coiffure»<sup>22</sup> appearing first on the coins of Kamnaskires and Anzaze in 82/81 B. C. and to be observed on the coins of the Kabneškir dynasty up to about 75 A. D. is undoubtedly a royal coiffure. This is proved first of all

<sup>20</sup> R. GHIRSHMAN: *op. cit.* 47.

<sup>21</sup> It is unlikely that he would have held some weapon in his right hand already because of this. The putting on of the stole excludes the carrying of arms.

<sup>22</sup> The various descriptions of the «hat-coiffure» see R. GHIRSHMAN: *op. cit.*, 47, CHR. AUGÉ—R. CURIEL—G. LE RIDER: *op. cit.* 56.

by its occurrences known so far, all of which were found on royal portraits. Besides the coins, we can see this also on a small bronze statuette, which has come to light in Bard-e Nešandeh, on the lower terrace before the ruins of the sanctuary of Miθra and Anāhita, but in all probability this also can be the representation of a king, and just that of the last Kabneškir. Besides this the same «hat-coiffure» can be observed between 36 B. C. and 65/66 A. D. on the reverse of the coins of the Kabneškir dynasty, on the bust of Zeus-Öhrmazd-Bēl. This occurrence of it is in harmony with the social attire-value to be drawn up on the basis of the other data.

The «hat-coiffure» was obviously fashioned so that first the hair arranged in locks was tied round with a diadem and on the top the locks were shaped slightly angular, so that the upper part of the hair received a flat cylindrical shape. Hereafter of the locks hanging down under the diadem in front and on the sides one or two strong curls were formed, which created the impression of the thick brim of a hat. Behind as many rows of curls were formed, as was permitted by the length and thickness of the hair.

The odd thing of the historical appearance of this royal coiffure is that it replaces the Greek coiffure of the first Kamnaskires Kings, then after one and a half centuries it makes place to the different variants of the Parthian royal coiffure and crown. Thus, here we have to do with a process of history of culture, in which the «hat-coiffure» means the connecting link. The problem of its origin is raised just by this characteristic historical situation of it.

Following the conquests of Alexander the Great, Hellenistic states came into existence in the territory of the one-time Old Persian Empire. The Iranian aristocracy imitated the attire, the coiffure and court ceremonies, and also the symbol system and power ideology of the rulers of these states. It mixed them with its own traditions. The ruling dynasty of Elymais, the Kabneškirs had also their own traditions, which went back to the Old Persian Age. This is testified most clearly by their name, which derives from the Elamite term *qa-ap-nu-iš-ki-ra* 'treasurer' (= Old Persian *ganzabara*-). Thus, their origin obviously goes back to a distinguished Elamite family, whose members were the treasurers of the Old Persian province *Uvaja* (\**Hvaja*-, eventually \**Hūja*- > *Hozestan*) during the reign of the Achaemenian dynasty. They preserved their power position in the hardly accessible mountainous region of Hozestan very likely also after the conquests of Alexander the Great, and then after the weakening of the Seleucids they started to gain ground. First they came into conflict with the Seleucids in 187 B. C., when Antiochos III wanted to sack the rich sanctuaries of Elymais. This was frustrated by Kamniskires/Kabneškir, founder of the dynasty, and this attempt cost Antiochos III his life.

The founder of the dynasty very likely assumed at this time the title 'King' beside the title *kabneškir* 'treasurer', which already had become a name. Kamniskires I in 147 B. C. occupied already also Susa. Thus, now already

a significant population of Greek and Aramaic languages belonged to his kingdom, and in regard to his claims to power and culture he stepped in the rank of the Hellenistic rulers. This, obviously rendered necessary the development of a suitable state organization and administration, the starting of coinage and the introduction of the use of written records. All this stood ready at his disposal in the Seleucid Kingdom. Thus, he issued his first coins after the model of the coinage of the Seleucid rulers. On these he had himself represented in Greek attire and with Greek coiffure. He assumed Greek royal titles and minted his coins with Greek legends. He published his royal edicts also in the form of inscriptions incised in stone. Where Aramaean scribes were available, there he availed himself of them for the purpose of state administration.

Thus, we can regard it as natural that the first Kamnaskires Kings appeared on their coins in the attires of the Hellenistic Greek rulers and with their royal symbols. However, in 140/139 B. C. Mithridates I, the Parthian king, afflicted a decisive defeat to Kamniskires (Kabneškir II), sacked the sanctuaries of Elymais and occupied also Susa and Soloke. Although Kamniskires III could have kept the earlier occupied territories,<sup>23</sup> as Parthian governor of Susa and vassal, however, after the death of Mithridates I an Iranian aristocrat, Tigraios brought about an independent kingdom in Susa. Thus, the Kabneškir dynasty was pressed back to the mountainous region of Elymais for a long time.

This meant the collapse of the state organization and administration built up earlier. A clear sign of this is that the Kabneškir Kings issued no coins either for more than half a century. King Kamnaskires and Queen Anzaze struck coins again only in 82/81 B. C. These coins have Greek inscriptions and also on their reverse the chief god Ōhrmazd appears in the figure of Zeus Nikephoros. However, the King and the Queen wear already no longer the attires of the Greek rulers and their wives. When the Kamnaskires rulers were pressed back to their former territories, which originally had stood under their authority, they obviously had to return to their Old Iranian traditions. This is also shown by their attire to be seen on the coins, the ornate breastplate or waistcoat and the «hat-coiffure».

It seems to be doubtless namely that the «hat-coiffure» was essentially an Achaemenian heritage in Elymais. This hat-shaped coiffure can frequently be observed on the Old Persian reliefs, but it can perhaps be studied best on a head of a statue found in Persepolis, which obviously represents a young royal prince (Fig. 10).<sup>24</sup> Here we can observe the arrangement of the hair in just the same curls, as in the case of the «hat-coiffure» of the Kabneškirs, but

<sup>23</sup> J. HARMATTA: *Acta Ant. Hung.* 29 (1981) 189. foll., in particular 211.

<sup>24</sup> R. GHIRSHMAN: *op. cit.* Pls. II, LXXIII 3.



Fig. 10. Portrait of an Old Persian royal prince from Persepolis

the diadem is replaced by a crown (*corona muralis*). The «hat-coiffure» of the Kabneškirs obviously goes back to this Old Persian royal coiffure and the one-time wearing of the crown explains, why in the case of the Kabneškir rulers wearing only a diadem, the locks on the top of the head were arranged into a cylindric shape that is to the form of a crown, or a tiara.

The family of the Kabneškirs could preserve the tradition of this royal coiffure since the fall of the Old Persian Empire, and when they were pressed from the Hellenistic Greek world back to their ancient mountains, they returned to their old, traditional «hat-coiffure», which we could now perhaps more correctly call a «crown-coiffure». The weakening of their relations with Greek culture led to the deformation of the Greek coin inscriptions and since 36/35 B. C. to the replacement of the figure of Zeus Nikephoros with the bust of Ōhrmazd wearing the «crown-coiffure».

When about 75 A. D. the last Kabneškir succeeded in taking possession of Susa again, a good number of the Hellenistic states formed in the territory of the one-time Old Persian Empire were already replaced by kingdoms organized by Iranian dynasties. Among these the Parthian Empire of the Arsacids appeared mostly as a factor of power and as a vehicle of the Graeco-Roman syncretic culture after the Old Persian Empire and the Seleucid Kingdom. Accordingly, at this time the Kabneškir dynasty already orientates towards the ideas and culture of the Parthian Kingdom, even if it preserves its independence. The Kabneškirs assume Parthian names, adopt the Parthian royal attire, the crown, the coiffure and several elements of Parthian art. This is how also Elymais gradually adapts itself to the great cultural circle, which took shape in the territory of the one-time Old Persian Empire in the framework of the Parthian Kingdom and also outside it during the 1st and 2nd centuries A. D.

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