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BYZANTINO-IRANICA

I

Without doubt the Byzantine style sarcophagus, discovered in the course of the excavations of 1964 in district Çapa of Istanbul, on the cover of which a Middle Persian inscription can be read, represents one of the most striking archaeological finds of the last few years. As it was pointed out by J. P. de Menasce O. P., who first published the inscription, the sarcophagus stood very likely in a small cemetery or in the cemetery of a church outside the Constantinian walls, but within the Theodosian walls of the city.¹ Since the cemetery could come into being only outside the city walls, from the situation of the site M. Grabar concludes that the burial originates from a time before the construction of the Theodosian walls, that is before 430.² On the basis of this statement de Menasce believes that the inscription cannot originate from a later time than the reign of Varhrān V (420—438).³

Thus as regards its date, the inscription of Istanbul falls between the Middle Persian inscriptions of Persepolis and Firūzābad^{3a} and this circumstance already in itself renders it significant. The value of the inscription is even more enhanced by the fact that it came into being in ancient Byzantium and thus it can give an interesting glance into the history of Byzantine-Sassanian relations. On account of this fact it seems to be desirable to complete the reading and interpretation of the inscription, to make it more accurate and to attempt its historical appreciation.

The text of the inscription reads as follows:

pwsl ZY 'whrmzd'plyt

line 1 *ZNH gwł hawd't l'd 'YT 'YKš MRWH BR' 'mwlč'd MN m'n ZY
 'yl'n štr' MN lwst'k člk'n [MN M]T' hšt*

¹ J. P. DE MENASCE O. P.: L'inscription funéraire pchlevie d'Istanbul. Iran. Ant. 7 (1967) 59—76.

² A. GRABAR: Cahiers Archéologique 11 (1960) 73—92. Quoted by DE MENASCE, inaccessible for me.

³ DE MENASCE: *op. cit.* 59.

^{3a} [Or more correctly between the recently published Mishkinshahr and Firūzābād inscriptions, cf. G. GROPP: AMI NF 1 (1968) 149—158. — Additional note].

line 2 'YK HD ŠNT PWN 'wmyt' h w'štyglyh krt' 'D b'vwt' ZY msydy
ZY l'st' pyl(w)č PWN hwm BYN YHWWN'

Remarks on the reading

According to de Menasce the inscription consists of 3 lines, *viz.* he regards as line 1 the 3 words written above the line given by me as line 1, and as lines 2 and 3 the lines given by me as lines 1 and 2. This opinion, however, is incorrect with regard both to the form and to the contents. From the formal point of view these 3 words cannot be regarded as a separate line because in this case it ought to start in line with the other two lines. And from the viewpoint of the contents we cannot think about this possibility because in the beginning of an inscription there cannot stand the indication of the origin (*pwsł ZY 'whrmzd'plyt* = «son of Ohrmizdāfrīd») before the name. Without doubt line 1 of de Menasce is only a supplementing, *viz.* the stone-cutter left out the denomination of origin after the name (*hwld't*) and therefore he carved it subsequently above the line approximately at the place of the omission.

The reading of the inscription given by de Menasce is as a whole satisfactory, its transliteration, however, is full of contradictions and in many cases it is disputable or even unacceptable, *viz.* he transliterates *h* and *h* equally with *h* also in the logograms, he transliterates *p* sometimes with *f* and sometimes with *p*, *l* sometimes with *r* and sometimes with *l*, in the literal transcription, although this procedure is justified only in the phonetic transcription. The question of the transliteration of the pseudo-logogram *PWN* and the logogram *ZY* is worth mentioning. These appear in de Menasce's transliteration as *p*¹¹ and *y*. In the first case it is not clear, what he wants to express with the transliteration *p*¹¹. If he uses the sign ¹¹ conventionally as a sign of abbreviation, then we can by no means agree with the transliteration *p*¹¹, because according to the testimony of the inscriptions in Book Pahlavi the logogram *pnn* of the word undoubtedly developed from the form *PWN* (**pt*). The situation is similar also in connection with the transliteration *y* of the logogram *ZY*. The Book Pahlavi logogram can, of course, be interpreted as *y*, still it would be incorrect to transliterate the sign in question this way, because at the definition of its reading we must go back to the inscriptions and according to the testimony of these this sign developed from the logogram *ZY*. The form to be observed on the Istanbul inscription and on the seals shows well the transition between the clear writing *ZY* of the inscriptions and the Pahlavi Psalter on the one hand and the ideogram *y* of Book Pahlavi on the other hand. A similar development and shortening of the logogram can be observed also in the case of the logogram *KBYR*. In Book Pahlavi the form of this also could be read as *KBD*, but on Pahlavi papyrus

No. 12 of Berlin (line 4 *ŠRM KBYR LKWM*)⁴ we can still observe well the antecedent of this, which shows the same transitional form between the shape *KBYR* of the inscriptions and *KBD* of Book Pahlavi, as the sign *ZY* of the Istanbul inscription represents it between the *ZY* of the inscriptions and the *y* of Book Pahlavi.⁵

De Menasce regards the writing of the inscription as identical with Book Pahlavi, but he draws our attention to some characteristics (the forms of the *k* and the *s*), which are rather identical with the papyri or the inscriptions written in «Book Pahlavi». These observations are definitely correct, but from the viewpoint of the history of writing they do not at all determine the importance of the inscription. In fact, the Istanbul inscription is a great surprise from the viewpoint of the history of writing, inasmuch as inscriptions written in «Book Pahlavi» cursive script, were known so far only from the 6th and 7th centuries, and we reckoned also with the development of this form of writing only from the 6th century onwards.⁶ If the circumstances of discovery were not known, there would be hardly anybody, who would not date the Istanbul inscription to the 6th to 7th centuries. However, on the basis of the circumstances of discovery we have to date the inscription to the beginning of the 5th century, and thus the conception formed so far about the whole development of Middle Persian script needs revision. It is doubtless, first of all, that the coincidence of the letter forms, the development of the ligatures stand before us in the 5th century already as a finished process. Thus, this development took place in the course of the 4th century and its initial state dates back at least to the 3rd century. This means that the lapidary and cursive scripts coexisted side by side already as from the 3rd century onwards and influenced each other mutually. From this we can draw the further conclusion that the development of the lapidary script can no longer be reconstructed without taking into consideration the effect of the cursive script. Thus, all phases of the development of writing which were attempted to be defined by myself, by Henning and Lukonin,⁷ lose their force, because on the inscriptions the lapidary script is always realized more or less under the effect of the cursive script and does not reflect an independent, organic development. This becomes immediately clear, if we compare the

⁴ O. HANSEN: Die mittelpersischen Papyri der Papyrussammlung der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin. APAW 1937. Phil.-hist. Kl. No. 9. Berlin 1938. T. VI. For the correct reading see J. HARMATTA: Acta Ant. Hung. 5 (1957) 288.

⁵ Contrary to his earlier practice (H. S. NYBERG: Hilfsbuch des Pehlevi. I. Uppsala 1928. 36 and II. Uppsala 1931. 110) the *y* of Book Pahlavi is transliterated by H. S. NYBERG more recently (A Manual of Pahlavi. I. Wiesbaden 1964. 149), undoubtedly correctly, as *ZY*.

⁶ See the survey of W. B. HENNING: Handbuch der Orientalistik. I. Abt. IV. Bd. Iranistik. 1 Abschn. Leiden—Köln 1958. 46 foll.

⁷ Cf. J. HARMATTA: Bull. du Musée Hongrois des Beaux-Arts 10 (1957) 19 foll.; W. B. HENNING: *op. cit.* (= Mitteliranisch) 45—52; V. G. LUKONIN: Иран в эпоху персских сасанидов. Leningrad 1961. 50 foll.

Istanbul inscription with the Fīrūzābād inscription, *viz.* the latter originates from a much later time but its letter forms are still more archaic and the script has preserved well its lapidary character. The Istanbul inscription has clearly shown that the cursive script had developed already long before the appearance of «Book Pahlavi» and just therefore it is incorrect to speak about inscriptions written in Book Pahlavi.⁸ The development of the Middle Persian script was a much more complicated process than we believed it before the coming to light of the Istanbul inscription, and as long as we do not succeed in getting acquainted with this process in its whole historical richness, we may use it for chronological conclusions only with a much higher caution than hitherto.

1. line. *hwld't* : *hwr . t* de Menasce. The reading of the signs between *l* and *t* is difficult. De Menasce thought about *m* or *t*, but none of the two readings can come into consideration. The reading is rendered difficult by the circumstance that the stone-cutter corrected the problematic second part of the word, *viz.* the letter strokes between *hw* and *t* stand too close to each other and besides this they do not give regular letter forms. This phenomenon can be explained by the circumstance that the stone-cutter originally carved in *hwld't*, he left out the *l* and afterwards he corrected the error by transforming the *d* into *l* so that he extended its vertical stroke both upwards and downwards. From the form *hwlt* brought about this way he formed *hwld't* by bringing the lower stroke of the *l* upwards between the two strokes of the original '. Thus the ' was transformed into the group of letters *d'*, which however does not have a regular form since the letter strokes are too close to each other and the form of the middle stroke is also different from the two side strokes, which had formed the original '. Besides, the whole letter group *d'* joins on the right side with the *l* (= originally *d*). The aforesaid can well be observed on the published photograph under a magnifying glass.

In the name *'whrmzd'plyt* the forms of the two ' and the *h* have been simplified into a simple horizontal line. This otherwise does not occur in the inscription.

MRWH : *MR'H* de Menasce. The latter reading has become fashionable since the analysis of H. H. Schaefer⁹, but the justification of it is most doubtful. According to Schaefer's conception the logogram *MRWHY* of the inscriptions must be read as *MR'HY* (this is, of course, possible from the palaeographic point of view) and this originated from the form *MR'Y* < *MR'Y* on account of the spreading of the orthography. This assumption cannot be proved at all, and in fact it would be very strange to suppose that from a series

⁸ The absurdity of the denomination «Book Pahlavi» was, most probably, felt also by W. B. HENNING, when in connection with inscriptions he used it in quotation marks, indicating the conventional character of the phrase, see *Mitteliranisch*, 47, 51.

⁹ H. H. SCHAEFER: *Iranische Beiträge I*. Halle (Saale) 1930. 42, note 1, and *Ung. Jb.* 15 (1935) 575—576, Note 5.

of historically and orthographically absurd forms, viz. **mr'y*, **mr'y* and **mr'hy*, finally a historically and orthographically correct form would develop. This difficulty of the conception of Schaefer was very likely seen also by W. B. Henning, and therefore he tried to derive the form *MR'HY* from the contamination of the forms *MR'Y* (< *MR'Y*) and **MR'H* (< **MR'H*).¹⁰ However, this assumption is also entirely unlikely, because there is no evidence to show the possibility of contamination between the elements of the Parthian and Persian logographic systems. The pair of forms *BRY* - *BRH* quoted from Henning as a parallel is also contradictory exactly to his own supposition, because no form **BRHY* arose from the contamination of these logograms. On the other hand, all signs point to the fact that the form *MRWHY* (**MRWHY*) is linguistically correct, because according to the testimony of the form *mryhm* of the Elephantine papyri we have to expect exactly the form **mrwhy*, and not **mr'why*, or **mr'hy*. Therefore, until the proving of the opposite we must hold the transliteration *MRWHY* correct.¹¹

hšt: 'št de Menasce. The latter reading, naturally, is also possible.

2. line. *hw'styglyh*: *xw'st'ryh* de Menasce. The latter reading is, of course, also possible, but from linguistic viewpoint it cannot be interpreted.

b'wt: *b'nt* de Menasce. This is a possible reading, but it cannot be interpreted.

msydy: *mysddb* de Menasce. No *y* can be seen between the *m* and the *s*. After the *s* we can read *yd* or *dd*. The last letter can by no means be *b*, but it can be regarded as the old, terminal form of *d*, which occurs also in Book Pahlavi. Here at the end of the word, after *d* it is obvious to interpret it as *y*.

pyl(w)č: *pyrč* de Menasce. The logogram of this word differs from what we can expect, inasmuch as at the end of the word *l* and *č* are written separately, although in the writing practice of the inscription the *lč* appears in ligature (see *'mwłč'd*). This phenomenon can be explained by the assumption that between *l* and *č* such a letter was left out, with which the *č* could not be linked up. Such letters are: *b*, *w*, *k*, *p*, *t*, among which, however, we can get interpretable word form only by restoring *w*.

II

The interpretation of the inscription does not involve any difficulty from the linguistic point of view. For de Menasce its text was rendered problematical and partly unintelligible by the fact that he did not recognize the character of the phrase *pwsł ZY 'whrmzd'plyt* as an interpolation. Thus he believed that «Öhrmizdāfrīd's son» is the son of the dead, who had a grave made for

¹⁰ W. B. HENNING: *Mitteliranisch*. 36.

¹¹ H. F. J. JUNKER: *Das Frahang i Pahlavik in zeichengemäßer Ordnung*. Leipzig 1955. 28 retains correctly the transliteration *MRW,ł* (with *him* = *MRV,ł*).

his deceased father. This assumption of de Menasce and his other assumptions connected with this one do not need any denial. It suffices to point out that the name of the deceased is not $\bar{O}hrmizd\bar{a}fr\bar{i}d$ but $Hord\bar{a}d$, consequently his son can by no means be called «son of $\bar{O}hrmizd\bar{a}fr\bar{i}d$ ». Besides, if we had to do with the denomination of the son of the deceased, then also the name of the son ought to appear in the inscription. All difficulties are solved by the recognition that the phrase *pwsl ZY 'whrmzd'plyt* is an interpolation, which was inserted after the name of the deceased. Thus the initial part of the inscription can be restored as follows: *ZNH gwł hwłd't pwsl ZY 'whrmzd'plyt l'd 'YT* «This grave is for $Hord\bar{a}d$, son of $\bar{O}hrmizd\bar{a}fr\bar{i}d$ ». The linguistic interest of this sentence is the word *gōr* 'grave', which was noticed already by de Menasce and which in all probability is connected with the fact that the inscription was carved on the cover of a sarcophagus. Thus the burial is not of Zoroastrian character, although the name of the deceased points to a Zoroastrian. This phenomenon can have two interpretations. The easiest thing would be suppose that in Byzantium the Zoroastrian way of burial was simply impossible and thus the dead was buried according to the Byzantine burial rites. The other possibility would be that $Hord\bar{a}d$ was a Persian who became converted to Christianity or stood close to Christianity, and thus, as a matter of course, he could be buried according to the Christian rites. The continuation of the inscription supports the latter assumption to some extent.

The next sentence was interpreted by de Menasce correctly, *viz.*: *'YKš MRWH BR' 'mclē'd* «that the Lord may forgive him». De Menasce says that the word *MRWH* = *χραδᾱy* 'Lord' can be used also in connection with $\bar{O}hrmizd$, and he thinks that the phrase does not suggest at all that the deceased would have been a Christian. However, the main thing here is not that the word *MRWH* occurs also in connection with $\bar{O}hrmizd$, but that this phrase appears here in itself with the meaning 'Lord, God'. This usage points undoubtedly to the Christian way of looking at things, as anybody can be convinced about this by taking a glance into the Pahlavi Psalter. However, not only the characteristic usage of the word *MRWH* points into this direction but the whole sentence, equivalents of which can be pointed out not only in Graeco-Roman but also in Persian Christianity. From the Pahlavi Psalter we can quote the phrase *'phš'dm'n MDM MRWHY* «have mercy on us, Lord!» (Ps. 122, 3)¹² and from a Middle Persian inscription from South India the phrase *MRWHmn mšyh' 'phš'd MDM dypd's* «our Lord Christ have mercy on Devadāsa!»¹³ can be cited. On the basis of these examples it seems to be doubtless that the sentence of the Istanbul inscription discussed above

¹² F. C. ANDREAS—K. BARR: Bruchstücke einer Pehlevi-Übersetzung der Psalmen. SPAW Phil.-hist. Kl. 1933. 1. Berlin 1933.

¹³ The reading of the inscription see W. B. HENNING: Mitteliranisch. 51 and note 4.

is based on characteristic Christian aspect and shows that either the deceased or the Persian compiler of the epitaph was Christian or a person standing close to Christianity. The source of the formula *raḥimahu 'llāhu* «God have mercy on him» of the Arabic epitaphs can also be seen in the Christian phrases of the Istanbul inscription and other Middle Persian inscriptions mentioned above.

The sentence discussed above is obviously an interjection, because it is followed by the denomination of the place of origin of the deceased, *viz.* *MN m'n ZY 'yl'n štr' MN lwtst'k člk'n [MN M] T' ḥšt* «from dwelling place Ērān šahr, district Zargān, village of Xišt». In the enumeration first of all the phrase *mān* is striking, which with the meaning 'house, abode' is well-known in Middle Persian and in the meaning 'familia' it also denotes the lowest unit of social organization, as this is shown by the enumeration *m'n 'wd wys ü znd 'wd dyh* «family and clan and tribe and village» (MM I eII R I 21 - 22). It is doubtless, however, that in the inscription this meaning of the word does not give a satisfactory interpretation because here the phrase *mān* is not the restricted but the broadest denomination of the place of origin. In accordance with the context the word *mān* must mean here the broadest concept of 'dwelling place' or 'country'. This usage of the word, however, is not justified either by the data compiled by de Menasce or by the other occurrences of the word examined by me. On the other hand, this usage of the word *mān* agrees exactly with the role played by the Latin word *domus* on the inscriptions in the formula of origin (cf. for example *domo Daciae regione Scodrihese* (CIL VI 2698), and just on account of this the question can be raised, whether we do not have here to do with the stylistic influence of the Latin inscriptions.

The closer definition of the place of origin is also a considerable problem. It is conspicuous in the first place that the denomination of the province is missing. Instead of this two phrases appear, *viz.* *lwtst'k (rōdistay)* and *MT'* (= *dēh*) convincingly restored by de Menasce. Without doubt both denominations must be interpreted as smaller administrative units.¹⁴ Unfortunately the territorial division and administrative organization of the Sassanian state are hardly known. The birth place of Ardašīr is defined by Tabarī as follows: village of Tīrudih, district of Xīr, province of Istaḫr. Since Istaḫr was one of the provinces of Fārs, here, within the country of Ērān šahr we can see a four-scale denomination. At the time Th. Nöldeke thought that within Fārs the Middle Persian denomination of the larger administrative unit was

¹⁴ This must be said with special emphasis in contrast to the conception of DE MENASCE (*op. cit.* 63). The fact that the Manichaean Parthian word *rwdyt'g* was translated by ANDREAS and HENNING as 'Provinz', has naturally, of no special significance, as it can clearly be seen from the context (see below) that the word denotes the smaller units of a certain province (*šhr*). In the glossary ANDREAS—HENNING give also the correct meaning 'Bezirk'.

šahr and that of the smaller one was *rōstāy*.¹⁵ However, already Zs. Telegdi drew attention to a passage of Yāqūt (I. 40), according to which the hierarchy of the administrative units was as follows: *istān* (*ōstān*), *rōstāy*, *tasūy*.¹⁶ These data can still be supplemented with the data of Manichaean Persian and Parthian, and the Pahlavi literary texts and inscriptions. In Kirdēr's KZ inscription we find the phrase *štry* 'L *štry gyw'k* 'L *gyw'k* «from country to country, from village to village» (2. line), which obviously wants to characterize the general organization of the Zoroastrian church comprising all administrative units by the denomination of the largest and the smallest administrative unit. This passage clearly refutes the conception according to which *gyw'k* means an uninhabited place.¹⁷ This phrase of the inscription occurs also in the Kārnamāy, viz.: 'lthšyl 'MTš PWN ZK 'dwynt dyt 'pyl PWN byš but WMN štr' štr' gync'k gync'k sp'h 'L BB' B' YHWNst «Ardašir, when he saw them in this condition, was in great trouble, and from all countries and all villages ordered troops to his court» (VI. 12). These examples clearly show that *gync'k* means 'smaller settlement, inhabited place', and from this view-point it can be compared with the phrase *dēh*.¹⁸ In the Kārnamāy the dwelling place of Mihray is denoted once by the word *gyw'k* (XI. 10: 'lthšyl hyšm W kyn' l'd ['L] *gyw'k* <ZY> mtr'k 'ZLWNt «because of anger and revengefulness Ardašir went to the village of Mihray»), and once by the word *MT*' (XII. 1: . . . YWM-y šhpwhl ZY 'lthšyl'n 'L ZK štr' Y'TWNt 'L nḥčyl 'ZLWNt W 'HL nḥčyl BNPŠH LWTH III III III 'swb'l 'L ZK MT' mt «one day Šāhpuhr, son of Ardašir, arrived in this province, he went on hunting, and after the hunting himself with 9 horsemen arrived in this village»).

For the denomination of the larger administrative units the phrases *šahr*, *paḏgōs*, and *avistām* (*ōstān*) occur: [*pd wy*]sp šhr 'wd p'ygwš «in all countries and provinces» (MM II M36 R 2); *myčrym p'dgws* «province of Egypt» (MM III d 7); *pd hrw šhr w rudyst'g* «in all countries and districts» (MM III b 159); *pd hrw šhr 'wt p'dgws* «in all countries and provinces» (MM III o 12); 'ndr 'wyst'm 'y ḥwḡyst'n w šḥryst'n čy byl' b'd «in the province of Xuzistān and in the provincial capital Bēlāβād» (MM III c 25-27). To these administrative units correspond the dignitary names *šahrdār*, *pāḏgōspān* (Šāhpuhr KZ parth. *ḥštdry W ptykwspn*), and *ōstāndār*. Thus, in final conclusion the hierarchy of the administrative organization comprises the following items: *šahr*, *pāḏgōs*, *avistām* (*ōstān*, *istān*), *rōdistāy* (*rōstāy*), *tasūy*, *dēh*, *gyāy*. It is very likely that

¹⁵ TH. NÖLDEKE: *Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden*. Leyden 1879. 3.

¹⁶ S. TELEGDİ: JA 226 (1935) 228.

¹⁷ Cf. DE MENASCE: *op. cit.* 63.

¹⁸ Of course, the word *gyw'k* is used also in the general meaning 'place', and thus it can also denote an uninhabited place. However, this does not affect the question of the meaning of the word *gyw'k* as a phrase denoting an administrative unit.

these denominations are partly overlappings or they are parallel with each other. In the first place the relationship of *šahr*, *pādgōs* and *ōstān* to each other, and also that of *rōstāγ* and *tasūγ* to each other is not clear. On the basis of the Armenian *ostan* with the meaning 'der Krone angehöriges Land od. Stadt' we could think that in the Sassanian State the word *ōstān* meant originally at least «royal land», that is a territory directly in the hands of the administration of royal property or some administrative unit of the same. We have several data indicating that the *ōstāns* were divided into *tasūγs*, viz. the *ōstān Šād-i-Pērōz* was divided into 5 *tasūγs* and the *ōstān Šād-i-Bahman* was divided into 4 *tasūγs*.¹⁹ This can point to the circumstance that the *tasūγ* was originally some unit of the territory of royal property, and not a smaller part of the *rōstāγ*, as later on after the Arab conquest. This is supported also by the uncommon fact that certain provinces, as for example *Aβaršahr*, were divided partly into *rōstāγs* and partly into *tasūγs*. Thus for example *Aβaršahr* was divided into 13 *rōstāγs* and 4 *tasūγs*.²⁰ In this case the ratio excludes the possibility that the *tasūγ* would have been part of the *rōstāγ*.

Thus we could presume that this complicated administrative terminology denoted the partly parallel constitutional units of the royal property and the estates of the landed aristocracy. Therefore we can think about the possibility that at least in the beginning of the Sassanian period the *ōstāns* were the constitutional units of the royal properties with *tasūγs* as sub-units. On the other hand, the «royal land» given for use or donated to the aristocracy was divided into *rōstāγs* (cf. for example the donation of such a *rōstāγ* in the *Kārnāmaγ VIII. 19*, viz.: *WZK gyw'k hwt'k-y PWN srd'lyh Wtkkhw'tdyh 'wbš d't* «and at this place (Ardašīr) gave a district to them as property of military commander and clan chief»), and its larger constitutional unit was the *pādgōs*. The word *šahr* could denote those parts of the country, which were governed by the members of the dynasty, the royal princes, the *šahrdārs* having the title *šāh*. Thus the *šahr*, the *pādgōs* and the *ōstān* originally could be parallel administrative units with different legal status. In the course of the Sassanian period several changes took place in the possession, and the original provincial division could also have been changed. This can be the explanation for the fact that in certain provinces *rōstāγs* and *tasūγs* appear side by side, and that in the same province beside the *pādgōspān* we also find simultaneously *ōstāndār*.

From the viewpoint of the definition of the place of origin appearing on the Istanbul inscription, from the above mentioned data we must stress first of all that the *rōstāγs* as royal gifts could become property of the Persian aristocracy. In *Hordād*, appearing on the inscription, on the basis of the appearance of the name of the father, we must presume a distinguished Persian,

¹⁹ J. MARQUART: *Erānšahr nach der Geographie des Ps. Moses Xorenac'i*. Berlin 1901. 22, 26, 41.

²⁰ J. MARQUART: *op. cit.* 74.

who thus owned also real estate. In this case the denomination *rōdistāγ* was sufficient for the definition of the origin, inasmuch as it could be partly or entirely identical with the property of the deceased. Thus it is very likely not a mere chance that the denomination of a larger unit of administration is missing from the definition of the place of origin, the denomination of *rōdistāγ* meaning the family estate could be entirely sufficient from the viewpoint of the distinguished Persian.

The omission of the name of the province, of course, renders the identification of the phrase *ĕlk'n rōdistāγ* difficult. De Menasce, as if a matter of course, read the name *Ćarkān* and identified it with *Ćarqān* situated in *Usrūšāna*, while *ħšt dēh*, which he read *Ašt*, was identified by him with *Ašt* situated in *Faryāna*. Unfortunately both identifications are equally impossible, because on the one hand, neither *Usrūšāna* nor *Feryāna* has ever belonged to the Sassanian Empire, and on the other hand, it is unimaginable that a *rōstāγ* should belong to one province, while a village situated in its territory should belong to another province. Luckily enough, there is also another possibility of identification. First of all we must note that the form *ĕlk'n* can have also several interpretations, viz. *Ćar(a)γān*, *Ćal(a)γān*, *Zar(a)γān*, *Zal(a)γān*. If we start out from the form *Ćalayān*, *Zalayān*, then this place-name can be compared with *Ćālakān* situated in *Sīstān* (*ĕlk'n*, *š'iq'n*, *jh'lk'n*).²¹ Another possibility of identification is rendered by the form *Zargān*, which can be identified with *Zarqān*, today *Zirgān*, situated in *Fārs*, in province *Istaγr*.²² The latter possibility is undoubtedly more obvious, because it is more likely to presume the presence in Byzantium of a Persian from *Fārs*, than that of a distinguished person from *Sīstān*. The assumption that the deceased was a distinguished Persian in the closer sense, originating from *Fārs*, is in harmony also with the form of his name.

Thus, even if we can look for the *rōdistāγ Zargān* or *Zirgān* in province *Istaγr* of *Fārs* at a high probability, the definition of the village *Xišt* or *Ašt* is an almost hopeless task. In fact the village names of the Sassanian State are very little known, a few of them have been preserved almost by mere chance. Thus we cannot define the old village names of the *rōdistāγ Zirgān*. In *Fārs* we know a village named *Xišt*, situated over 100 kilometres west of *Zirgān*. This distance is too large to permit the assumption that *Xišt* belonged to the district of *Zirgān*.²³ Therefore only that much seems to be likely that *Xišt* (or *Ašt*) was situated somewhere between *Šīrāz* and *Istaγr*.

Line 2 of the inscription includes more difficulties. Questionable is right in the beginning of the line the interpretation of the conjunction

²¹ V. MINORSKY: *Hudūd al-'Ālam*. London 1937. 110, 344.

²² P. SCHWARZ: *Iran im Mittelalter nach den arabischen Geographen*. 1896—1929. 25; V. MINORSKY: *op. cit.* 128, 379.

²³ P. SCHWARZ: *Iran im Mittelalter*. 36.

'YK. De Menasce holds that the meaning of this is 'where', what in itself would be possible, but then the content of the sentence ought to be referred to the village Xišt, but this is unlikely already in itself, and the content of the sentence beginning with 'D simply excludes this possibility. Thus it is most likely to think that the conjunction 'YK makes only a loose connection and appears in the meaning 'because, inasmuch as, namely'.

As for the next word, de Menasce wavers between the readings *III* and 'y ($\bar{e} = I$). The reading *III* is less likely, because in this case the third figure ought to be bigger than the first two and ought to stretch under the line. The reading 'y is possible, but it is to be considered, whether it is presumable, on the one hand, such a phonetic writing of the numeral 'one' in Book Pahlavi, and on the other hand, whether in the beginning of the 5th century we can already count so generally with the change $-\bar{e}v > -\bar{e}$ that it was reflected already in the archaizing literary orthography. Very likely, we must answer both questions in the negative. In the Manichaean orthography reflecting the phonological conditions of the 3rd century the written form of the numeral one is 'yw, and this clearly shows that its phonetic-form at the time of the development of the Pārsīy orthography was definitely still $\bar{e}v$. Thus if this word had a phonetic spelling in Pahlavi at all, then it could be only 'yw. Theoretically we can also count with the possibility that the orthographic form of the word in the course of time underwent certain changes, it can, however, hardly be presumed that this would have taken place already about the year 400. This assumption is rendered quite unlikely by the circumstance that the orthography of the other words ending in $-\bar{e}v$, as for example *grēv* (*glyw*), was preserved unchanged in Pahlavi. All these difficulties are solved, if the orthographic form *ddd* is read *IID*, which is the Aramaic logogram of the word $\bar{e}v$ 'one' in Pahlaviy and which in the orthographic form *HDwk'* of the word *ēvay* occurs also in Pahlavi. Thus we have here obviously to do with a similar case as in connection with the word *ZY*, the orthographic form of which undergoes such a change that finally in Book Pahlavi it can be read also *y*, and this reading corresponds exactly to the actual pronunciation of *ZY*. The orthographic form of the word *HD* can also be read already as 'y in Book Pahlavi and this covers the late phonetic form of the word. It is obvious, however, that from the viewpoint of history of writing in both cases only the readings *ZY* and *HD* can be taken into consideration.

The word *hw'styglyh* was correctly brought by de Menasce into connection with the Manichaean Persian words *xw'styy* 'Friedlichkeit; Wohlfriedenheit' and *xw'stwrz*, *xw'stygr* 'die Wohlfriedenheit bewirkend', however he could not interpret the form read by him *hw'st'lyh*. The derivation of the word becomes clear at once, however, if we read the word in the proposed way, which, of course, is also possible. In this case only the spelling is conspicuous,

inasmuch as we could expect the orthographical form *-klyh* instead of *-glyh*. However, the inscription under discussion renders also two other examples for this kind of «phonetic» writing. One of them is the name *hwld't*, the orthographic form of which in Book Pahlavi is *hwrdt* and on a seal *hwrdt*,²⁴ while its historical orthography would be **hrwt't*. The other one is the verbal form *'mwlc'd*, the ending of which appears in Book Pahlavi in the form *-t'*. Thus the written form *-glyh* instead of *-klyh* is not especially striking in the inscription. Nor is it quite impossible that in the writing *dd = yg* we have to do with such a degradation of the letter group *yk* as in the case of the ending *-yk* in Book Pahlavi.

The meaning and etymology of the word *hw'styglyh* is clear. The basic word is Old Iranian **āχšti-* (cf. Avestan *āxštay-* 'Friede, Friedensvertrag; Übereinstimmung, Einklang mit —'), which is compounded with the Old Iranian word **hu-* or **χvā-* 'good'. The meaning and etymology of the word are rendered by the Manichaean Persian phrases *'wr pd 'št 'y hm'g xw'styh* «here for peace, (Thou) who (art) entirely good peace» and *pd xw'styh 'wd pd r'styh gwptn* «to speak peaceably and justly» (MM II 317).²⁵ To the basic word *χvāštīh* the word *kar|gar* 'doer, maker' is attached so that the meaning of the compound *χvāštīyar* is 'engaged on peace'. It is worth while to refer to the fact that the word *χvāštīh* has become actually the denomination of Manichaean religion and the word *χvāštīyar* that of the Manichaeans.²⁶ Even if it were somewhat exaggerated to conclude from the use of this phrase in the Istanbul inscription that the deceased was Manichaean, at any rate the word, in a certain degree, points to a religious sphere. The form *χvāštīyarīh* is the abstraction of *χvāštīyar*, and thus its meaning is 'engagement on peace'. Thus the first part of line 2 can be interpreted as follows: «(Because) for one year in (good) hope he displayed activity on peace».

The syntactic structure of the second half of line 2 is clear: *'D . . . PWN lwm BYN YHWWNt* «while . . . he was in Rōm». The orthography *lwm* in place of *hlwm* is striking. It is true that de Menasce could quote a form *lwmyk* from the Great Bundahišn (33, 27), this, however, can be a distorted, erroneous form, so that it does not change anything on the fact that the standard form of the name of Rome, and later on Byzantium, used in Middle Persian was *hlwm*. Thus we can rather think of the possibility that the use of the form *lwm* on the Istanbul inscription is based on a more accurate knowledge of the Byzantine Greek pronunciation. The fact that in the inscrip-

²⁴ A. MORDTMANN: ZDMG 18 (1964) 9.

²⁵ The interpretation of the Manichaean Persian word *xw'styh* is resting on these contexts, and not merely on the authority of SALEMANN and HENNING, as this is maintained by DE MENASCE: *op. cit.* 64.

²⁶ F. C. ANDREAS—W. HENNING: *Mitteliranische Manichaica aus Chinesisch-Turkestan*. II. SPAW Phil.-hist. Kl. 1933. Nr. 7—9. Berlin 1933. 317.

tion under *Rōm* we must understand Byzantium is rendered doubtless by the circumstance that the burial came to light in Byzantium.

Thus, for the time being, only the phrase *b'l'wt' ZY msydy ZY l'st' pyl(w)č* remains problematic. It can hardly be doubtful that this phrase defines more accurately, in what quality the deceased stayed in Byzantium. The second part of the phrase consists of the well-known words *rāst* 'true' and *pērōz* 'victorious'. These two words could be interpreted also as a compound proper name *Rāst-Pērōz*. In this case the meaning of the whole phrase would be as follows: «As the *b'l'wt' ZY msydy* of *Rāst-Pērōz*». This interpretation contradicts the circumstance that after the presumable name *Rāst-Pērōz* we do not find either a denomination of origin (patronymicon), or a name of dignity, in spite of the fact that, as we can conclude from the context, *Rāst-Pērōz* must have been a person of higher rank than the deceased. Thus it is more likely that the word *rāstpērōz* must be regarded as the attribute of the phrase preceding it.

As regards the first two words, the orthographic forms of these point to foreign origin. It is true that the word *msydy* could eventually be read *masī* and interpreted *masih*, and this would be the abstraction of the word *mas* 'great'. The orthography of the word *hw'styglyh* contradicts however, this interpretation, and besides this there are also semantic difficulties. Consequently, we must reckon with the possibility that both words *b'l'wt'* and *msydy* are of foreign origin. Because the inscription was prepared in Byzantium and since Byzantine (Roman) influence could be stated also in the part of the inscription discussed so far, it is obvious to look for the origin of these two words also in Greek or in Latin. Apparently we have to compare the word *b'l'wt'* with the Greek word *βουλευτής* 'councillor', which occurs as a Greek loanword in the Talmud in the forms *bulwēws*, *bulbwēts*, *bulwēts* and in plural *bulwōwty*, and in Syrian in the forms *bulwēts*, *bulwēf'*, *blwēf'*. The Persian form *b'l'wt'* fits fairly well into the series of the orthographic variants of this loanword, only the rendering of the first syllable is striking. However, the rendering of the vowels in Middle Persian frequently shows quite considerable differences. Thus in the Parthian version of the inscription of Šāhpuhr KZ, *Apameia* occurs in the form 'pomy' (Aβumiya), *Pannonia* occurs in the Middle Persian version in the form [pn]dny'y (*Panniniya*), and similarly in the Middle Persian variant *Mopsuestia* occurs in the form *m'mssty'y* (*Mamsistiya*). The latter transliteration is a good parallel of the Persian equivalent *b'l'wt'* (*balōda*, eventually *balafṭa*) for the word *βουλευτής*.

If the above mentioned interpretation of the word *b'l'wt'* is correct, then it is obvious to look for some Greek phrase also in the form *msydy*. If we interpret the word as *masīdi* or *mesīdi*, then we can collate it with the Greek adjective *μεσίδιος* 'mediating'. Thus the phrase *b'l'wt' ZY msydy* can be translated as 'mediating councillor', and the interpretation of the whole second

line will be as follows: «(Because) for one year he carried out activity in (good) hope and peace, while he was true (and) victorious mediating councillor in Byzantium».

The dignitary name *βουλευτῆς μεσίδιος* could not yet be pointed out in the Greek sources relating to the period. Thus, if the above recommended interpretation of the phrase *b'l'wt' ZY msydy* of the Istanbul inscription is correct, then the original Greek denomination must be regarded as an office for a single occasion, which had never become a systematic element of Byzantine state organization. Whatever the contents of the function of the «mediating councillor» might be, this denomination is obviously in organic connection with the phrase «he carried out activity in peace» of the preceding sentence. Since in the inscription elements relating to Christianity (eventually to Manichaeism) can be observed, it can be presumed that the mediating activity of the deceased directed to peace, was first of all directed to the settlement of religious or ecclesiastic questions. In the literal sense of the word we can think that Hordāδ, son of Ōhrmizdāfrīδ, a distinguished Persian, who was Christian himself or stood close to Christianity, stayed officially in Byzantium to act there as a conciliating, mediating councillor in the settlement of religious questions existing between the two countries.

On the basis of the above explanations we can give the following interpretation of the whole inscription:

line 1 «This grave is for Hordāδ, son of Ōhrmizdāfrīδ — that the Lord may forgive him — from dwelling place Ērān šahr, from district Zargān, from the village Xišt;

2 (because) during one year he carried on activity in (good) hope for peace, while he was a true (and) victorious mediating councillor in Byzantium».

III

The site, circumstances of discovery and contents of the inscription imperatively demand a historical interpretation. This was also felt by de Menasce. He discussed in detail those historical data, which inform us about Persian delegates, spies and emigrants in Byzantium or Byzantine territory. Among these historical data, however, none can be brought into connection with the Istanbul inscription.

If in spite of these difficulties we try to elucidate the historical background of the inscription, then first of all we must determine more accurately the time of its origin. As we have mentioned, in connection with this de Menasce accepted the argumentation of A. Grabar, according to which the burial cannot be later than the year 430, the construction of the Theodosian wall. This

argumentation seems to be correct, only the date of the construction of the Theodosian wall needs correction. In one of his more recent works, Grabar dates the construction of the Theodosian wall to a time between 413 and 440.²⁷ In fact, the data of the historical sources render it doubtless that the construction of the Theodosian wall was made in two phases, *viz.* the wall protecting the city from the side of land was caused to be built by Anthemius in 413, while the construction of the wall on the side of the sea is connected with the name of Cyrus and took place in 439.²⁸ From the viewpoint of the Middle Persian inscription, naturally, the first date means the *terminus ante quem*, even if the building work was eventually not completed in 413. Thus the origin of the inscription must be dated at any rate before 413.

From the epigraphic point of view, however, the inscription cannot be dated to a much earlier time than this, because the cursive script in it appears already in its full development. Besides this, the fact that the deceased was Christian or stood close to Christianity, and at the same time his official reconciling and mediating assignment in Byzantium can be imagined only in such years when, on the one hand, the state of the Christians was favourable in the Sassanian Empire, and on the other hand, friendly relations existed between Byzantium and the Sassanian State. Thus the period of the reign of Šāhpuhr II (309–379) and the reign of Ardašīr II (379–383) can be excluded already in advance. An improvement in the state of the Christians ensued only under Šāhpuhr III (383–388) and the conclusion of peace between the East Roman Empire and the Sassanian State took place at the same time. The friendly relations and good will towards the Christians continued also under Varhrān IV and Yazdgird I (388–399 and 399–420 respectively).²⁹ Thus such conditions under which the coming into being of the Istanbul inscription is imaginable, can be presumed in the period from 383 to 413.

It is doubtless, however, that even this period of three decades can be further restricted. According to the clear evidence of the historical sources exactly in the years between 408 and 413 such relations developed between the East Roman Empire and the Sassanians, for which earlier there had been no example in the history of the two states.³⁰ Both Byzantine and Eastern sources attest that Emperor Arcadius in his will named Yazdgird I as tutor of the still minor aged Theodosius II.³¹ According to the Byzantine historical

²⁷ A. GRABAR: *L'âge d'or de Justinien. De la mort de Théodose à l'Islam*. Paris 1966. 83. For getting acquainted with it I am indebted to my friend J. GY. SZILÁGYI. GRABAR slightly overestimates the personality of Theodosius II, when he writes: «Vraisemblablement, c'est à la suite du sac de Rome par Alaric, en 410, que Théodose II décida de protéger sa capitale du Bosphore par une enceinte nouvelle . . .». Theodosius II was 10 years of age in 410!

²⁸ See for example E. STEIN: *Geschichte des spätrömischen Reiches*. I. Wien 1928. 376, 440, with further literature.

²⁹ Cf. TH. NÖLDEKE: *Geschichte der Perser und Araber*. 70 ff.

³⁰ See E. STEIN: *op. cit.* 376.

³¹ Cf. E. STEIN: *loc. cit.* with note 1; NÖLDEKE: 76.

sources it was to be ascribed exactly to the attitude and pressure of Yazdgird that Theodosius, who was still only 8 years of age at the time of the death of Arcadius, could take over the heritage of his father without any difficulty. These events brought about lively relations between the East Roman and the Sassanian Court, *viz.*: μεταξὺ Ῥωμαίων καὶ Περσῶν συνεχεῖς δὲ πρεσβεῖαι γίνονται — Socrates (7, 8) writes about the period. The Byzantine and eastern sources equally underline that these years resulted in the broad spreading of Christianity in the Sassanian Empire. In Ktesiphon a large Christian church could have been built, in 410 the Christians of the Sassanian Empire in Seleukeia, at a synod held under the leadership of a bishop from the Roman Empire, formed their overall organization for the first time. Yazdgird I employed Christian high priests for the accomplishment of important foreign and internal political missions and negotiations. Apparently this protection of the Christians is reflected in the hostile Zoroastrian tradition relating to Yazdgird, which attached the attribute *bazargkar* 'evil-doer' to his name. At the same time in the eyes of the Christians according to a contemporary source he was «the good and kind-hearted King Yazdeger, the Christian, the blessed one among the Kings . . .».³²

On the basis of these data the summarizing characterization given by Theophanes on these years can be held justified, *viz.*: καὶ ἦν εἰρήνη ἀναμεταξὺ Ῥωμαίων καὶ Περσῶν, μάλιστα τοῦ Ἀντιόχου πολλὰ ὑπὲρ Χριστιανῶν γραφοντός καὶ οὕτως ἐπλατύνθη ἐν Περσίδι ὁ χριστιανισμός, Μαρορθᾶ, τοῦ ἐπισκόπου Μεσοποταμίας, μεσιτεύοντος (A. M. 5900). About Antiochus mentioned in the report a whole legend came into existence in the Byzantine historical tradition. According to the narrative of Theophanes (*loc. cit.*) and Zonaras (XIII, 22), after the death of Arcadius, Yazdgird, sent Antiochus from among his eunuchs, to the East Roman court in order that he should be there the custodian and tutor of minor aged Theodosius. Antiochus in the dignity of the *praepositus sacri cubiculi* for several years had great influence in the East Roman court, while later on, on the occasion of the marriage of Theodosius, he was discharged of his office and was put in a monastery in Chalkedon, where he died soon thereafter.³³ Since according to the testimony of Synesios (*ep.* 110) in the court of Arcadius already in 405 besides the senior Antiochus there was also a junior Antiochus, who had a considerable influence on the Emperor, and who, in all probability, is identical with the eunuch Antiochus acting on the side of Theodosius since 408, it seems to be doubtless that the story of Antiochus in this form cannot correspond to reality.

At this point the question is raised, which are the real elements of the stories of the Byzantine sources woven around Yazdgird and Antiochus. From the whole story in fact only that assertion seems to be inconsistent

³² See for all this TH. NÖLDEKE: *op. cit.* 75.

³³ O. SEECK: PWRE I. Stuttgart 1894. Sp. 2491—2 s. v. Antiochos No. 52.

with reality according to which Yazdgird sent Antiochus as his personal representative to Byzantium and acted there as official Persian delegate. This contradicts, on the one hand, the fact that Antiochus, in all probability, acted in the Imperial Court already under Arcadius, and on the other hand, the way he was deprived of his power. In fact, if Antiochus had acted in Byzantium as the personal representative of Yazdgird, then at the most he could have been sent back to Yazdgird, but he could, by no means, have been locked up in a monastery. If Antiochus had really been the personal representative of Yazdgird, then his putting aside would very likely have caused the deterioration of good relations between the East Roman Empire and the Sassanians. This, however, took place only much later, when at the end of his life, Yazdgird was compelled to pursue the Christians.

However, it can be regarded as a historical fact that Yazdgird in some way or the other guaranteed the East Roman throne for Theodosius II or at least exercised diplomatic pressure in interest of Theodosius, after the death of Arcadius, he maintained friendly good relations with the East Roman Empire in the years after 408, promoted the spread of Christianity in his country, he permitted the relations between the Persian and East Roman Christians, he maintained close diplomatic relations with Byzantium, where eventually he had also a permanent representation and he employed also Christians in important foreign and internal political duties. All these historical facts in the years 408 to 413 render proper possibilities for the coming into existence of the Istanbul Pahlavi epitaph. With the exception of the period of the accession to the throne of Xusrō II, there is hardly any other such period of the Byzantine-Sassanian relations, when a Persian «mediating councillor» could carry on reconciling activity in Byzantium for a longer time.

Returning now to the question of Antiochus, we must also point to the possibility that the story connected with him is eventually not a mere error or invention. It seems namely likely that Yazdgird after the death of Arcadius really sent a diplomatic mission of more permanent character to Byzantium for the support of Theodosius II. The Istanbul inscription, which on the basis of the circumstances of discovery originates from a time previous to 413 and on the basis of the historical situation, from the years after 408, shows at any rate that a Persian distinguished person acted at least for one year as «mediating councillor» in Byzantium at this time. Since in the historical sources no trace of a list of this Persian diplomatic representation has been preserved, it is obvious to think that in the course of the 5th century the diplomatic representation of Yazdgird in the court of minor aged Theodosius II was linked up with the person of Antiochus, who exercised significant influence on the policy of the Imperial Court for a long time and who was an active supporter of Byzantine-Persian good relations in interest of the Imperial Court.

Perhaps it is not impossible that Antiochus himself spread such news according to which he was acting on behalf of the Sassanian ruler as tutor of Theodosius II, with almost full powers. In those years when Yazdgird's support was of vital importance for the Imperial Court, the position and influence of Antiochus could be consolidated considerably by such a belief. However, we have to point to the fact that the prosopographic conception of O. Seeck and E. Stein on Antiochus is, to some extent, in contrast to the data of Theophanes. In fact, Theophanes mentions Antiochus in three passages, *viz.* for the first time at the year 5900 (= September 1st 407 to September 1st 413). According to him Antiochus arrives in Byzantium in this year. For the second time Antiochus is mentioned at the year 5905 (= September 1st 412 to September 1st 413). Theophanes reports here already about his death or his removal (or eventually his departure).³⁴ Antiochus is mentioned for the third time at the year 5936 (= September 1st 443 to September 1st 444), where Theophanes reports about the removal of Antiochus, the *praepositus* and *patricius*. It is obvious that the data of Theophanes contradict each other and can hardly be related to one particular Antiochus. Theophanes himself did not identify Antiochus mentioned in the first and second passage with Antiochus mentioned in the third passage, because he mentions the first one by the name «Antiochus the Persian» and the second one by the denomination «Antiochus the *praepositus* and *patricius*». Zonaras, who used also Theophanes, keeps silent about the death of the Persian Antiochus, but he dates the removal of Antiochus the *praepositus* to the time of the marriage of Theodosius, what, however, according to Theophanes, took place in the year 5911 (= September 1st 418 to September 1st 419). Thus Zonaras identified the Persian Antiochus obviously with Antiochus the *praepositus*.

At any rate, if we identify the two Antiochi mentioned by Theophanes, then it will be very difficult to explain, how the three different dates of his removal came about in the historical sources. The confused character of the different reports is easier to understand if we presume that there was really also a Persian Antiochus, who from 407/408 to 412/413 stayed in the East Roman court as a representative of Yazdgird. Also in this case there remains the contradiction between the two dates (443/444 and 418/419) of the removal of Antiochus, the *praepositus* reported by Theophanes and Zonaras, respectively, which are too much apart from each other to be regarded as a simple error. At any rate, we can state that the date of the removal of Antiochus *praepositus* reported by Theophanes coincides with the coming to power of Chrysaphius,³⁵ who in many respects played a role similar to that of Antiochus, in the following years on the side of Theodosius. Thus the year 443/444 could

³⁴ The Greek phrase permits all the three interpretations.

³⁵ See for this E. A. THOMPSON: A History of Attila and the Huns. Oxford 1948. 99—100.

be taken as a logical historical construction for the date of the removal of Antiochus. In fact, it is difficult to imagine that Antiochus would have preserved his influence in the Imperial Court up to the year 443. In the meantime, according to the reference of Theophanes (at the year 5905), the directing of the affairs was for some time also in the hands of Pulcheria. Thus a certain likelihood can be attributed to the datum of Zonaras, according to which the fall of Antiochus, the *praepositus* took place at the time of the marriage of Theodosius. In 443/444 Crysaphius had to fight first of all against the influence of Cyrus and Pulcheria, what clearly shows that Antiochus must have been removed much earlier.

Whatever our judgement about the date of the removal of Antiochus may be — the inadequacy of the sources renders the unambiguous solution of the question impossible —, that much seems at any rate likely that besides Antiochus, the *praepositus* and *patricius*, whose role in the Imperial Court lasted approximately from 405 to 418/419, there was also a «Persian» Antiochus, who stayed in the East Roman capital as a representative of Yazdgird from 408 to 412. From the same period originates also the Istanbul Middle Persian inscription, which presumably eternalizes the memory of one of the members of the Persian legation and diplomatic mission sent by Yazdgird to Byzantium in 408. The circumstance that this Persian legation consisted mostly of Christians or persons standing near to Christianity, is rendered well intelligible by the work and tasks they were expected to accomplish in Byzantium. The Istanbul Middle Persian inscription is in all probability a precious historical monument of this Persian mission.

[Additional-note. — After my study has been delivered to press, the paper by H. S. Nyberg entitled L'inscription pehlevie d'Istanbul (Byzantion 38 (1968) 112—122, according to the note to be read on it the issue appeared on the 28th December 1968 in Brussels) became available for me. This also deals with the interpretation of the Istanbul Middle Persian inscription published by J. P. de Menasce. Nyberg's doubtless merit is that he too correctly recognized the Christian character of the inscription. As regards the details, however, the reading and interpretation of the inscription given by him mean a step backward as compared with the publication of de Menasce. Nyberg gives the following interpretation of the inscription: «Le fils de Hormezdâfrîd: (1) Ce tombeau est pour le bienheureux — que le Seigneur l'ait en miséricorde! — qui était du pays d'Éran-chahr, du district de *Tcharakan, du village de *Acht, (2) qui pendant 60 ans — espérant que notre Sauveur Messie le Juste le marquerait de son sceau — fut prêtre à Rome (= Byzance, Constantinople).» As we can see from this translation, Nyberg did not recognize the character of a subsequent insertion, shown by the phrase *pwsl ZY 'wħrmzd'plyt*, and as a result of this he could not arrive at a correct result in regard to the structure of the inscription either. Thus he received such a text of the grave inscription

in which the deceased is not mentioned by name, although his other circumstances of life are enumerated in it in a rather detailed form. Besides this, in the beginning of the inscription there stands independently the phrase «son of Öhrmizdāfrīd», which in this form, alone, has no meaning whatever.

In respect of the reading and the interpretation we make the following remarks:

'whrmzd'plyt -- In this name Nyberg holds the absence of the älif before the *p* striking. In fact, however, as we have pointed this out earlier, the älif is not missing, but it is represented by the same even line, as in the beginning of the name. The fact that between *-mzd* and *plyt* we have to reckon with one more letter, is clearly shown by the circumstance that the *d* is not connected to the *p* by a straight line, but after the *d* the line is broken even twice, and then going along horizontally it joins the *p*. It is obvious that the section of line following the second break must be held an älif simplified into a straight line, because otherwise the *d* ought to join the *p* direct by a straight line.

hwld't -- Nyberg's reading is *hw'l't*, against which we refer to the above explanation of the reading *hwld't*.

'YK -- Nyberg presumes that this conjunction stands instead of the relative pronoun *kē* in both lines. In line 1 this can by no means be correct, because there the context demands the conjunction *kū* 'that'. In the beginning of line 2 Nyberg's interpretation would considerably facilitate the interpretation of the word *'YK* and would render the connection of the sentence with the preceding one closer. However, it is rather doubtful that we can accept Nyberg's assumption. This, in fact, would involve the assumption of early New Persian linguistic circumstances already in the beginning of the 5th century, in which *ke* = 'that' and 'who', and thus *'YK* = *ke* 'that' and *MNW* = *ke* 'who' can be confused with each other. For this, however, we have no basis for the time being, and the interchange of the particles *'YK* and *MNW* does not occur even in the much later Pahlavi Psalter. Thus, however tempting Nyberg's assumption may be, we must reject it.

MRWII -- Fortunately, Nyberg also adheres to this transliteration. It is a pity, however, that he does not take sides in connection with the conceptions of Schaeder and Henning.

BR' -- This word was simply left out by Nyberg from the text.

'mwlč'd -- Nyberg's reading is *'mwlč'y*, held by him 3rd person singular subjunctive. According to him this would be a Parthian form in Middle Persian. The reading *'mwlč'y* is of course possible, but the assumption of Parthian verbal forms in Middle Persian, and especially in the beginning of the 5th century, is rather unlikely and entirely unprovable. It is more obvious to explain the few occurring verbal forms ending in *'y* (= *'d*) to be occasional phonetic writing (instead of *'t*). Unfortunately, the argumentations on the ending

-y were written by Nyberg without the consideration of W. B. Henning's detailed relevant analysis.

m'n ZY 'yl'n štr' — Nyberg has correctly observed the special character of the use of the word *mān* in this context. He is very likely right also in the assumption that the use of the word *mān* to be observed in the inscription can be explained only with some foreign influence. His conception, however, that here we have to do with the influence of the Syrian phrases like *bēθ ārāmāyē* etc. is by no means convincing. First of all we must point out that the Middle Persian equivalent of the element *bēθ* 'house' of this Syrian phrase was the word *šahr* (cf. e. g. *bēθ rōmāyē = ḫrw'm'dyn štry*) so that these Syrian phrases do by no means explain the use of the word *mān* in the context *m'n ZY 'yl'n štr'*. Besides this we cannot disregard the circumstance either that the word *BYT'* was well known from the Frahang i Pahlaviγ for all educated Persians (and the compiler of the Istanbul inscription was also such an individual!) as the equivalent of the Middle Persian word *χānay* 'house', and thus if he wanted to translate the word *bēθ*, then it would have been obvious for him to use this Middle Persian word. Thus in the beginning of the 5th century in Byzantium we can count at a much higher probability with the influence of the local official usage, the more so, as the other elements of the inscription point also in this direction.

'YKš MRWH BR' 'mwlč'd — Nyberg also stresses the Christian character of this formula. He discusses the South Indian Cristian Pahlavi inscription, referred to also by me, in the same context, but unfortunately he disregards Henning's relevant remarks also in this case.

HD — Instead of this Nyberg recommends the reading *XX XX XX* that is to say he interprets the written form *ddd* this way. This in itself would be possible, but a sojourn of 60 years in Byzantium for a Persian seems to be too long and it would require at least some historical explanation. The written form *ddd* is interpreted recently also by D. N. MacKenzie (Notes on the Transcription of Pahlavi. BSOAS 30 (1967) 27) as the logogram *HD*.

hw'styglyh — Nyberg's reading is *'w'st'lyh*, which is also possible. This is explained by him to be the substantival derivative of the verb *āvaštan* 'seal, corroborate', with the meaning 'sealing, marking'. Both the reading and the interpretation deserve consideration. The phrase *'w'st'lyh krt'* could namely be referred to the sealing or corroboration of documents, or to the verification of the same, and thus we could see in the deceased a chief of cabinet bureau. In this case, however, the use of the phrase *PWN 'wmyt'* «in (good) hope» is difficult to be understood.

krt' 'D — Instead of this Nyberg recommends the reading *krt'n' ZY*. This seems to be possible, and only the circumstance contradicts it that the sign read as *ZY* is much shorter than the signs occurring in the inscription to be read definitely as *ZY*. If we accept Nyberg's reading, then line 2 of the

inscription can be interpreted as follows: «in the hope that he can carry on the conciliating activity of a true and victorious mediating councillor, he spent one year in Byzantium». However, it must be noted that the structure *hw'-štyglyh krtn' ZY b'l'wt' ZY msydy ZY l'st' pyl<w>č* is ponderous and unusual.

b'l'wt' ZY msydy – Instead of this Nyberg gives the reading *B'LVKN' MŠY'Y*. About the *t* of the first word he says «ne peut nullement être un *t*, elle est *k + n*». For the writing of the *k + n/r* we have an example just in the previous word *kr't'*. A short comparison can convince anyone about the unacceptability of Nyberg's assertion. The word *ZY* is simply left out by him. The reading *MŠY'Y* is also unacceptable. The inscription clearly distinguishes *s* and *š* from each other, and it cannot be doubtful even for a minute that in this word *s* has to be read. It is obvious that together with the readings Nyberg's interpretations are also discarded. We want still to add to this that it would be difficult to interpret line 2 in the way Nyberg interprets it even if all his readings were acceptable, because '*w'št'lyh krtn'*' is an active and not a passive phrase.

pyl<w>č – Nyberg maintains the reading *pylč* and he thinks that the word *pīr* is «clairement» the Greek *πρεσβύτερος* equivalent of the Syrian word *qaššisā* 'priest'. However, he does not prove this assumption. Thus we only note that in the Manichaean hierarchy to the Greek *πρεσβύτερος* the Middle Persian *mahistay* corresponds, as a further equivalent of which the Fihrist gives the Arabic word *qissīs*. Since the Manichaean hierarchy is based in many respects on the Christian hierarchy, it is likely that the denomination *mahistay* originates from it. Thus it seems unlikely already from the very beginning that the word *pīr* would have had the meaning 'Christian priest'.]

Budapest.