

## ARE THE PROVINCIAL CAPITALS OF ĒRĀNŠAHR REALLY PROVINCIAL CAPITALS?

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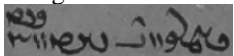
*Šahrestān has often been translated “provincial capital”, especially in works dealing with the history of Sasanian Iran. Through a painstaking analysis of Middle Persian occurrences of this word the author shows that it should be translated “city” or “fortified city”.*

Keywords: Sasanian Iran; administrative glyptics; *šahrestān*; Middle Persian; citadel

### 1. ŠAHRESTĀNĪHĀ I ĒRĀNŠAHR

In August 1931 Giuseppe Messina, who was then teaching at the Pontifical Biblical Institute of Rome, published from the Nachlass of Joseph Markwart the short geographical treatise commonly known as *Šahrestānīhā ī Ērānšahr* (ŠĒ).<sup>1</sup> The title of the work is not found in the only known independent codex of this work, MK. In fact, an earlier editor, Jivanji Jamshedji Modi,<sup>2</sup> chose to call the book *Šahrīhā ī Ērān* and so did Dastur Jamaspji Minocherji Jāmāspasa in his edition of the *Pahlavi Texts* based on manuscripts MK and JJ.<sup>3</sup>

The first occurrence of *šahrestānīhā* in the ŠĒ is in paragraph 1, where it is written that the cities (\**šahrān* or \**šahrīhā*) in Ērānšahr are described in this memorial.<sup>4</sup> The spelling

š(t)<r>('n)yh'  suggests the possibility of an older \*štr' n /šahrān/ and though not conclusive, the occurrence in line 12 of the sequence smlknd štr'st'n  where -st- is written above the line also speaks in favor of the older form.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Markwart 1931.

<sup>2</sup> Modi 1898.

<sup>3</sup> JamaspAsana 1897-1913, I, 18. The Pahlavi text was also edited by Nyberg (1964-1974, I, 113-117).

<sup>4</sup> MK f. 19r 8-11 š(t)<r>('n)yh' Y BYN zmyk Y 'yl' nštr' <k>rt Y(K)OYMWNYt ywdt ywdt YWM AYK kt' m slhw't d krt PWN gwk' n QDM ZNE 'dyb' tk' l npšt YKOYMWNYt. *Šahrānīhā ī andar zamīg ī Ērānšahr kard ēstēd jūd jūd \*ēn kū kadām sarxwadāy kard pad gōgān abar ēn ayādgār nibīšt ēstēd* “The cities that were built in Ērānšahr, in this memorial it has been written in detail which was the overlord who built each of them”. MK has YWM and no variant is reported by JamaspAsana (1897-1913, I, 18) and the reading has generally been accepted by earlier editors. My suggestion is based on the contents of the text, which seldom mention the year of foundation of each city and on the wording itself.

<sup>5</sup> See JamaspAsana 1897-1913, I, 18.

*Šahrestān* has been translated differently in the two main translations of the *ŠĒ*. Markwart<sup>6</sup> regularly uses “provincial capital”, while Daryae<sup>7</sup> has chosen to translate it “city”. The standard sentence in which the word is found in the *ŠĒ* is “*šahrestān ī X, Y ī Z kard*”:

- ŠĒ 11) *šahrestān ī marw-rōd wahrām ī yazdegardān kard.*  
 “Wahrām ī Yazdegardān made the city of Marw-rōd”.  
 ŠĒ 16) *šahrestān ī kāyēn kay-lohrāsp ī wištāsp pid kard.*  
 “Kay Lohrāsp, the father of Wištāsp, made the city of Kāyēn”.

The standard formula knows some variants, adding more details or assigning more than one city to the same founder:

- ŠĒ 14) *šahrestān <ī> tūs, tūs ī nōdarān <kard> 900 sāl spāhbed būd pas az tūs spāhbedih ō zarēr ud az <zarēr> ō bastwar ud az bastwar ō karzam.*  
 “Tūs ī Nōdarān made the city of Tūs, and was Spāhbed for nine hundred years, after Tūs spāhbedship went to Zarēr, and from (Zarēr) to Bastwar, and from Bastwar to Karzam”.
- ŠĒ 46) *šahrestān <ī> ohrmazd-ardaxšīrān ud šahrestān ī rām-ohrmazd ohrmazd <ī> nēw-šābuhrān kard.*  
 “Ohrmazd ī Nēw-Šābuhrān built the cities of Ohrmazd-Ardaxšīrān and Rām-Ohrmazd”.
- ŠĒ 47) *šahrestān ī šūs ud šūstar šīšindōxt zan ī yazdegard ī šābuhrān kard čiyōn dōxt ī rēš-galūta <ī> jahūdagān-šāh mād-iz ī wahrām ī gōr būd.*  
 “Šīšindōxt, wife of Yazdegard ī Šābuhrān made the cities of Šūs and Šūstar, because she was the daughter of the Rēš-Galutā, who is the king of the Jews, and also the mother of Wahrām ī Gōr”.
- ŠĒ 48) *šahrestān ī wandōy-šābuhr ud šahrestān ī ērān-kard-šābuhr šābuhr ī ardaxšīrān kard u-š pēlābād nām nihād.*  
 “Šābuhr ī Ardaxšīrān made the city of Wandōy-Šābuhr and the city of Ērān-kard-Šābuhr. He gave a (new) name to Pēlābād”.
- ŠĒ 49) *šahrestān ī nahr-tīrag pad [pad] duš-xwadāyīh [ī] aži-dahāg <ī> ped-šabestān kard ud zēndān ī ērān-šahr būd zēndān aškān nām būd.*  
 “Ažīdahāg the lord of the harem<sup>8</sup> made the city of Nahr-Tīrag, and the prison of Ērānšahr was there. The prison’s name was Aškān”.

<sup>6</sup> Markwart 1931.

<sup>7</sup> Daryae 2002.

<sup>8</sup> For this translation see Pahlavi Yasna 45, 11, where *ped* (**pt**) is glossed *xwadāy* (Dhabhar 1949, 198). Alternatively, it could be understood as “chief of the eunuchs”; for *šabestān* “eunuch” see Skjærvø 2007.

Examples that do not fit the meaning “Provincial capital”:

- ŠĒ 15) *šahrestān ī nēwšābuhr šābuhr ī +ardaxšīrān kard pad ān gāh kē-š pahlēzag <ī> tūr ōzad u-š pad ham gyāg šahrestān framūd kardan.*  
 “Šābuhr ī Ardaxšīrān made the city of Nēwšābuhr. When he killed Pahlēzag ī Tūr, he ordered the city to be made in that very place”.
- ŠĒ 17) *andar gurgān šahrestān ī dahestān xwānēnd narsēh ī aškānān kard.*  
 “In Gurgān, Narsēh ī Aškānān made the city that they call Dahestān”.
- ŠĒ 19) *šahrestān panj husraw ī kawādān <kard>: +Kay-husraw-šād <ud> husraw ī mūst-ābād ud wisp-šād-husraw ud hu-bōy-hūsrāw \*ud šād-farrox-husraw kard <ud> nām nihād” 20) U-š parisp-ē kē 180 frasang drahnāy ud 20 5 šāh ārešn bālāy <ud> 100 ud 80 dar <ud> kōšk [ud] dastgird andar framūd <ka>rdan.*  
 “Husraw ī Kawādān made five cities: Kay-husraw-šād, Husraw ī Mūstabād, Wisp-šād-Husraw, Hu-bōy-Husraw and Šād-farrox-Husraw and gave (them their) names. He ordered that a wall one hundred and eighty parasang long and twenty-five royal cubits high be built, and inside (the wall) one hundred and eighty pavilions and an estate”.
- ŠĒ 28) *21 šahrestān ī andar padīšxwārgar kard ēstēd az armāyīl enyā az framān <ī> armāyīl ud awēšān kōfyārān kard kē-šān az aẓīdahāg kōf pad šahryārīh windād ēstād.*  
 “The twenty-one cities that were made in Padišxwārgar by Armāyīl or by the order of Armāyīl, and those mountaineers made (these cities), since the dominion of the mountains was entrusted to them by Aẓīdahāg”.
- ŠĒ 32) *9 šahrestān andar zamīg <ī> gazīrag kard ēstēd ud āmtūs ud kēsar brādar-zād kard.*  
 “Nine cities were made in the land of Jazīra, \*Antoninus<sup>9</sup> and (?) the nephew of the Caesar made (them)”.
- ŠĒ 33) *24 šahrestān andar zamīg <ī> šām <ud> yaman ud frīgā ud kūfah ud makkah ud madīnag gāh kard ēstēd ast šāhān šāh ast kēsar.*  
 “Twenty-four cities were made in the lands of Syria, Yaman, Africa, Kufa, Mecca and Medīna, some by the King of Kings, some by the Caesar”.
- ŠĒ 35) *šahrestān <ī> raxwat rahām ī gōdarzān kard pad ān gāh ka-š aspwarz-nar ī tūr ōzad u-š yabbu-xāgān az ānōh stō be kard.*  
 “Rahām ī Gōdarzān made the city of Raxwat when he killed Aspwarz-nar ī Tūr, He defeated the Yabbū-Xāgān from there”.

The description of the Region of Ādūrbādagān contained in the final part of the *Šahrestānīhā ī Ērānšahr* is incoherent; interestingly, however, two *šahrestāns* are mentioned for Ādūrbādagān:

<sup>9</sup> Markwart (1931, 82) is probably right in identifying this character with Lucius Ceionius Commodus Verus Armeniacus, who in 162-166 led a military campaign against the Parthian Empire. However, the name renders \*Antoninus, and can thus be associated with any of the Emperors of the Antonine dynasty.

ŠĒ 56) *šahrestān* <ī> *ādūrbādagān ērān-gušasp ī ādūrbādagān spāhbed* <kard> 57) *šahrestān ī wan wan ī gulaxšān kard ud pad zanīh ō kay-kawād mad ud drubuštīh ī arwandāsp*<sup>10</sup> *tūr ī brādarōš ī karb pad jādūgīh kard pānāgīh ī gyān xwēš rāy.* 58) *pad kust* <ī> *ādūrbādagān šahrestān ī ganzag frāsiyāk* <ī> *tūr kard.* 59) *šahrestān ī āmōy +zandīg ī purr-marg kard. zardušt ī spitāmān az ān šahrestān*<sup>11</sup> *būd.* 60) *šahrestān ī baydād abū-jafar čiyōn-šān abū-dawānīg xwānd kard.*  
 “56) Ērān-Gušasp, Spāhbed of Ādūrbādagān, made the city of Ādūrbādagān. 57) Wan ī Gulaxšān made the city of Wan and it came to Kay-Kawād through marriage, and Tūr ī Brādarōš by magic (built) the Fortress of Arwandāsp, (for) the protection of his soul. 58) In the Region of Ādūrbādagān, Frāsiyāk ī Tūr made the city of Ganzak. 59) The heretic full of death made the city of Āmōy, Zardušt ī Spitāmān was from that city. 60) The city of Baghdad was built by Abū-Jafar, whom they call Abū-Dawānīg, (He) who stands in victory”.<sup>12</sup>

Summing up, many of the occurrences in the ŠĒ suggest a meaning in the semantic range of “city”, “built area”, in a few cases “fortified city”. Turning now to other Pahlavi texts, let us see what the evidence is.

## 2. OTHER MIDDLE PERSIAN TEXTS BELONGING TO THE ZOROASTRIAN TRADITION

### 2.1. Bundahišn

The two examples taken from the *Bundahišn* occur one in chapter nine, describing the nature and whereabouts of known mountains, and the other in chapter thirty-two, on the mansions of the Kayāns. The second passage falls between a first list of abodes made by Jam, Frēdōn, Kayōs, Dahāg, Siyāvaxš and Frāsyāb, and the more detailed description of these manors. Both passages show a hierarchy between *šahr* and *šahrestān*, the latter being used in a meaning that does not seem to be that of provincial capital.

*Bd. 9.23 bagēr kōf ān ī frāsyāb ī tūr pad drubuštīh dāšt u-š ān mān andarōn kard u-š im-rōz šahr ī rām-pērōz ud bēwar šahrestān abar abgand estēd.*

“Bagēr kōf is the one which the Tūr Frāsyāb held as fortress, he made that mansion inside it. In these days the province of Rām-Pērōz and a myriad cities are strewn out on it”.

<sup>13</sup>*Bd. 32.9 ēn ān ī pad abd-kardīh kard estēd tā abārīg was šahr ud šahrestānīhā ud mānīhā kard hēnd kē gōkān dagrand.*<sup>14</sup>

“These are those which have been made through miracle-working, while they made (also) many other provinces, cities and mansions, whose details would be long (to tell)”.

<sup>10</sup> Probably \**Drubušt ī Arwandāsp* the “Fortress of Arwandāsp”. Interestingly, here as in a passage of the *Dēnkard* (see infra), *šahrestān* comes together with *drubušt*, in a meaning close to the one known in New Persian of “fortified city”.

<sup>11</sup> Here *šahrestān* is written with the heterogram MDYNA.

<sup>12</sup> For a partially different reading of § 60 see De Jong 2008, 55-57.

<sup>13</sup> See Cereti 2004, 25, 26, 29, with a slightly different translation; cf. Pakzad 2005, 133.

<sup>14</sup> Pakzad 2005, 360.

## 2.2. Dēnkard 6

Dk. 6.234 *u-šan ēn-iz ōwōn dāšt ku harw čē \*ka andar ān tis ēstēd ī dahibed pad \*nē kardan framān abar dād ēstēd, ka rēš awiš rasēd ōwōn \*tōzēd čiyōn kē az dušmān anabīm ud pad kām ī xwēš nē ō \*šahrestān ī diz ī drubušt ī ābādān bē ō diz ī kahwan ī awērān kē kas andar nēst šawēd ud mīrēd ayāb zad bawēd pad margīh ud zadan ī xwēš xwad tōzēd.*

“They held this too: Whenever one perseveres in doing something which the ruler has issued and order not to do, he pays penance for that when suffering comes upon him in the same manner as a man who is unafraid of the enemy and by his own decision goes not to a fortified and populous castle town but to an old and deserted castle in which there is no one and he is killed or beaten. He pays penance (for his action) by being killed or beaten”.<sup>15</sup>

## 2.3. Ayādgār ī Jāmāspīg

AJ 16.30 *u-t ēn-iz \*gōwam kū: andar ān ē \*bawēd ōy <ī> abarwēz +xwadāy andar zamīg \*ī hrōm was šahr ud was šahrestān girēd ud was +xwāstag pad ēw-bār az zamīg <ī> hrōm āwarēd.*

“And this also I am going to tell you: In that <period> there will be one <man>, that Victorious king will conquer many provinces and many fortified cities in the land of Hrōm and will at once bring (back) from the land of Hrōm much property”.<sup>16</sup>

AJ A19 *šqzdahami īn ku var \*hašt ku pae sīštqni ba \*vas ǎt \*u \*zrahe šāheraštqñ āva ba bar ǎt hamā sīštqni pur āva bab ǎt.*<sup>17</sup>

The sixteenth is this that: there is a lake (*var*) that (is) in Sistan, it will open and the lake (*zrahe*) of the town\manor<sup>18</sup> will let water flow and the whole Sistan will be full of water”.

## 2.4. Kārnamag ī Ardaxšīr ī Pābagān

KAP 5.13 *az ān čiyōn xwarrah ī kayān abāg ardaxšīr būd, ārdaxšīr pērōzīh windīd, u-š ardawān ōzad, ud hāmōyēn xīr ud xwāstag ō dāst ī ardaxšīr mad, ud duxt ī ardawān pad zanīh kard, abāz ō pārs mad, šahrestān ī ardašīr-xwarrah xwānēnd kard, ud ān <ī> wuzurg kand, āb čahār jōy az-iš āwurd, ud ātaxš <ō> war nišāst, kōf <ī> stabr kand, rōd <ī> \*warāzag rāyēnīd, was deh <ud> dastgird ābādānīh kard, was ātaxš <ī> wahrām anōh framūd nišāstan.*

“Parce que la Fortune des Kavis était avec Ardashir, il obtint la victoire, il tua Artaban. Tous ses biens et ses richesses tombèrent aux mains d’Ardashir, et il prit sa fille pour femme. Étant revenu au Fārs, il bâtit la ville qu’on appelle Ardashir-

<sup>15</sup> Shaked 1979, 90-91. The expression \*šahrestān ī dēz ī drubušt ī ābādān clearly defines a fortified and prosperous city.

<sup>16</sup> See further Agostini 2013, 80-81, 112,190; the text is taken from the Pahlavi version of chapter sixteen of this multilayer text.

<sup>17</sup> See Agostini 2013, 169-170, who prefers to translate “Le seizième est celui-ci : les deux lacs qui sont dans le Sīstān s’ouvrirent et le lac de la province portera de l’eau et tout le Sīstān sera inondé”, changing the second *ku* in *du*.

<sup>18</sup> Possibly the reference is to the Hāmūn lake, at the center of which stands Kuh-e Kh’āja.

khwarrah («Fortune d’Ardashir»), il fit creuser un grand lac d’où furent dérivés quatre canaux, il établit un feu près du lac, il fit creuser une grosse montagne et y fit passer la rivière Warâzag, il mit en valeur beaucoup de villages et de domaines et il ordonna d’établir là beaucoup de Feux Wahrâm”.<sup>19</sup>

## 2.5. Kārnāmag ī Ardaxšīr ī Pābagān

11.16 *u-š ham gyāg šahrestān-ē, wāluxš-šābuhr xwānend, framūd kardan, ud dah ātaxš <ī> wahrām ānōh nišāst, ud was xīr ud xwāstag ō dar <ī> ādurān-šāh frestīd, ud was kār ud kirbag framūd rāyēnīdan.*

“Et en ce même lieu il ordonna de bâtir la ville qu’on appelle Wāluxš-Shâpur, et il y établit dix féaux Wahrâm, et il envoya beaucoup de biens et de richesses au palais du Roi des Feux, et il ordonna d’organiser beaucoup d’actions pieuses”.<sup>20</sup>

## 2.6. Gujastag Abāliš

GA 6.8 *Dādestān ī ēn ōwōn hōmanāg čiyōn šahrestān-ēw hamāg pēšag andar hēnd āsnkar ud kafš-kar ud drōd-kar ud darzīg ...*<sup>21</sup>

“The case is like a city in which there are all the trades: a blacksmith, a shoemaker, a carpenter, and a tailor...”.<sup>22</sup>

GA 6.15 *<pad> homānāg dušman-ēw ka ō šahrestān-ēw mad 16) ud agar-šān šahrdār ī ān šahrestān ō dast ayēd, girēd bandēd <ōy> nazdīg ī šahrdar ī xwēš barēd 17) ud agar-šān šahrdār ī ān ī šahrestān griftan nē tuwān 18) ān-ummēdīhā pad ham šahrestān andar šāwēd, 19) ud šahrestān awērān kunēd.*<sup>23</sup>

“It is like an enemy who has come into the city. If the king of that city falls into the hands of the enemy, the enemy seizes him and binds him and brings him into the presence of his own king. If they cannot seize the king of that country, they enter the city at an unexpected (?) place and lay waste the city”.<sup>24</sup>

## 2.7. Šāyast nē-Šāyast

ŠnŠ 2.74 *dar-ē kē nasā padīš paykōbēd pad dar ī dēh ud šahrestān ham-dādestān būd hēnd ku pad ham-kār be hilišn, pad dar ī bērōn jud-dādestān hēnd...*

“[As to] a gate on which *nasāk* impinges: about the gate of a village and a city they have been of the same opinion, that it is to be left for the same use; about the outermost gate they have been of different opinions...”.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Grenet 2003, 76-77.

<sup>20</sup> Grenet 2003, 106-107.

<sup>21</sup> Barthelemy 1887, 21 and 36. Barthelemy’s text is precious, since he presents the Pahlavi version together with the Pāzand and Parsīg ones, allowing for a better understanding of the Middle Persian text.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Skjærvø 2011, 245.

<sup>23</sup> Barthelemy 1887, 25-26,36.

<sup>24</sup> Skjærvø 2011, 246.

<sup>25</sup> Tavadia 1930, 57.

## 2.8. Yōišť ī Friyān

YF            *az šahrestān bhrōč.*  
               “From the town of Broach”.<sup>26</sup>

## 2.9. Pahlavi commentary to Widēwdād

Interesting is also the Pahlavi commentary to *Widēwdād* I.14, describing the fourteenth of the lands created by Ahura Mazda, *Varəna čaθru-gaoša*<sup>27</sup> “having four ears” possibly in the meaning “four-squared”.

*Wd.* 1.17.5 *čahārdahom az gyāgān ud rōstāgān ā-m pahlom frāz-brēhēnīd man kē ohrmazd (hom) waren ī 4-gōš \*padišxwārgar \*dēlam.*<sup>28</sup> *ast kē kērmān gōwēd. u-š 4-gōšīh ēn kū rāh 4 andar be ēstēd. ast kē ēdōn gōwēd ay šahrestān[īh] dar čahār ast.*

“Fourth amongst places and villages that I then created excellent – I who am Ohrmazd – (is) the four-cornered Waren – Padišxwārgar, Dēlam – one says Kērmān, its four-cornerness means that there were four roads inside (it), one says that is: the city has four doors”.<sup>29</sup>

Finally, these few passages taken from other texts belonging to Pahlavi literature show meanings that range from “town” to “city” “fortified and prosperous city” closely matching what one can observe in the ŠĒ.

## 3. INSCRIPTIONAL MIDDLE PERSIAN

3.1. *Early Sasanian inscriptions*

*Šahrestān* occurs also in a limited number of passages found in inscriptions dating to the early Sasanian centuries, namely in the long trilingual inscription that Šābuhr ordered to be engraved on the walls of the Achaemenid Ka‘aba-e Zartošt, in a long passage found in Kerdīr’s inscriptions and in a short and only very partially preserved passage from Narseh’s inscription at Paikuli.<sup>30</sup> Interestingly, both Šābuhr and Kerdīr use *šahrestān* to describe cities, not necessarily provincial capitals, that were conquered by the Persian army, while Narseh employs it to describe the otherwise unknown city where he held court.

<sup>26</sup> In YF *šahrestān* occurs in the colophon, referring to the Indian town Broach in Gujarat, Haug - West 1872, 246.

<sup>27</sup> On which see Gnoli 1980, 47-50.

<sup>28</sup> Or possibly *salm, kērm*.

<sup>29</sup> Jamasp 1907, 17.

<sup>30</sup> Gignoux 1971, 34 and 53.

- ŠKZ<sup>31</sup> § 10...*ud grift pad hō ē(w) yāwar až frōmāyīn šahr, diz ud šahrestān*<sup>32</sup> § 11 *Ānāt/Ānāt šahrestān ad parβēr hamgōs*<sup>33</sup> (...) *Sūrā šahrestān ad parβēr hamgōs, Bābāliš šahrestān ad parβēr hamgōs, Manbūg šahrestān ad parβēr hamgōs*, §12 *Halab šahrestān ad parβēr hamgōs, Kinašrā šahrestān ad parβēr hamgōs, Apōmiyā šahrestān ad parβēr hamgōs, Refauiyos šahrestān ad parβēr hamgōs, Zōmā šahrestān ad parβēr hamgōs, Umā šahrestān ad parβēr hamgōs*, § 13 *Gindaros šahrestān ad parβēr hamgōs, Armenāž šahrestān ad parβēr hamgōs, Selūkiya šahrestān ad parβēr hamgōs, Andiyōk/Andiyōk šahrestān ad parβēr hamgōs Kirros šahrestān ad parβēr hamgōs*, §14 *any Selūkiyā šahrestān ad parβēr hamgōs, Alesandariyā šahrestān ad parβēr hamgōs, Nikopolos šahrestān ad parβēr hamgōs, Sizar šahrestān ad parβēr hamgōs, Hamāt šahrestān ad parβēr hamgōs*, §15 *Aristōn šahrestān ad parβēr hamgōs, Dīkōr šahrestān ad parβēr hamgōs*, *Dūrā šahrestān ad parβēr hamgōs, Dōlōx šahrestān ad parβēr hamgōs, Kirkisiyā šahrestān ad parβēr hamgōs, Garmaniyoš šahrestān ad parβēr hamgōs*, §16 *Batnān šahrestān ad parβēr hamgōs, Xānar/Xānar šahrestān ad parβēr hamgōs, pad Kap(p)ōdakiyā Satal šahrestān ad parβēr hamgōs, Domān šahrestān ad parβēr hamgōs*, §17 *Artangiliyā šahrestān ad parβēr hamgōs, Sūš šahrestān ad parβēr hamgōs, Šūd šahrestān ad parβēr hamgōs, Frāt šahrestān ad parβēr hamgōs. Hamsāg šahrestān ad parβēr hamgōs* 37. “§ 10 Und (es wurden) genommen (= erobert) bei jener einen Gelegenheit aus dem Reich der Römer die (folgenden) Festungen und Städte: §11 *Ānāth/Ānāth*, die Stadt mit samt die umliegenden Gebiet(...) *Sura, Barbalissos, Hierapolis*, §12 *Berrhoia, Khalkis, Apameia, Rhephaneia, Zeugma, Urima*, §13 *Gindaros, (L)armenaza, Seleukeia, Antiokheia, Kyrrhos* §14 ein anderes *Seleukeia, Alexandretta, Nikopolis, Sinzara, Hamāth*, § 15 *Aristhia, Dikhōr, Dura, Dolikhē, Kirkēsion, Germanikeia*, §16 *Bathnai, Khānar/Khānar*; und in Kappadokien *Satala, Domana*, §17 *Artangilla (?)*, *Suisa, Suida, Phreata*. Gesamtzahl: 37 Städte mitsamt dem umliegenden Gebiet”.
- KNRm<sup>34</sup> § 15 *u-m padīz Anērānšahr ādur ud mowmard čē pad šahr ī anērān bud kū asp ud mard ī šāhān šāh rasīd andiyōk šahrestān ud sūriyā šahr ud čē abar sūryā nahang. \*Tersōš šahrestān ud kilikiyā šahr ud čē abar kilikiyā nahang. Kēsariyā šahrestān ud kapōdakiyā šahr ud čē abar kapōdikiyā nahang tā frāz ō \*Grāykiyā šahr ud Arman šahr ud Wiruzān ud Alān ud Balāsagān tā frāz ō Alānān dar Šābuhr šāhān šāh pad asp ud mard ī xwēš zad u-š wardag ud ādur sōxt ud awērān kard.* “§ 15 And also in the land of Aneran, the fires and magians which were in the land of Aneran where the horses and men of the king of kings reached - The city of Antioch and the land of Syria, which is attached to the province of Syria, the city of Tarsos and the land of Cilicia and what is attached to the province of Cilicia, the city of Caesarea and the land of Cappadocia and what is attached to the province of Cappadocia, up to the land of Graecia (= Pontus ?) and the land of

<sup>31</sup> Huyse 1999, I, 29-33. The Parthian version is given, since the Middle Persian one presents large lacunae.

<sup>32</sup> Gr. καστέλλους τε καὶ πόλεις. See further Huyse 1999, II, 58, s. 10.3.

<sup>33</sup> Gr. Ἀναθιν πόλιν σὺν τῇ περιχώρῳ. See further Huyse 1999, II, 59, s. 11.1.

<sup>34</sup> MacKenzie 1989, 55; the same passage occurs in KSM and KKZ, see Gignoux 1991, 62-63.



Armenia and Iberia (= Georgia) and Albania and Balasagan up to the gate of the Alans, Shapur, king of kings, with his horses conquered them all...”.<sup>35</sup>  
 NPai<sup>36</sup> § 59 *MP* [pr'c OL ? štrdst'n ZY wlhl'mš?]hpwuhry  
*Pth.* [prhš OL ? wryhrmšhypwhr]y hštrst'n  
 “<Forth to> the city <Wahrām-Š>ābuhr”.

### 3.2. Sasanian glyptics

*Šahrestān* is well attested in primary sources dating to the late Sasanian period, more specifically in administrative glyptics.<sup>37</sup> Remarkably, the only offices attested are the *mowūh* “Office of the magi” and the *naxwar*, the latter being attested for the province of Frāx-kar-Pērōz in Sistan. From a formal point of view, we can distinguish a formula *Weh-Ardašīr šahrestān mowūh*, *Weh-Ardašīr* “Office of the magi, city of Weh-Ardašīr, (province) Weh-Ardašīr”, where the name of the city and that of the province may or may not be identical (A) and a second type *askēn-rōd mowūh, hamadān kust ī šahrestān* “Office of the magi of Askēn-rōd, Hamadān district of the city”.

#### A)

ATs4 *weh-ardašīr šahrestān mowūh, weh-ardašīr*.  
 ATs31 *tasōg ī zarang šahrestān mowūh, zarang šahrestān*.  
 ATb76a, ATb77a *weh-andiyōk-šābuhr šahrestān mowūh, weh-andiyōk-šābuhr*.  
 ATb78a *zarang šahrestān mowūh, zarang*.  
 ATb 290a *tēsfōn šahrestān mowūh, husraw-šād-kawād*.  
 ATb306a *...šahrestān mowūh, ērān-xwarrah...*  
 ATb355a *ganzag šahrestān mowūh, ādurbādagān*.  
 ATb 900a *rām šahrestān mowūh, ray*.

#### B)

ATs10 *āluh (?) mowūh frāx-kar-pērōz kust ī šahrestān*.  
 ATs24 *sād kust ī āb mowūh, hamadān kust ī šahrestān*.  
 ATs29 *zar ... mowūh, hamadān kust ī šahrestān*.  
 ATb285a, ATb287a, ATb893a *askēn-rōd mowūh, hamadān kust ī šahrestān*.  
 ATb 286a, ATb880a, ATb883a, ATb923a *askēn-rōd mowūh, hamadān kust ī šahrestān*.  
 ATb288a, ATb922a *hamadān-frāx-kar mowūh, hamādan kust ī šahrestān*.  
 ATb339a *anbōr-bārzand<sup>38</sup>mowūh, frāx-kar-pērōz kust ī šahrestān*.  
 ATb845a, ATb846a, ATb911a, ATb912a, ATb913a, ATb914a *kust ī šahrestān, frāx-kar-pērōz kust ī šahrestān naxwar*.  
 ATb864a *...kust ī (šahrestān) mowūh...*

<sup>35</sup> MacKenzie 1989, 58.

<sup>36</sup> Both the Middle Persian and Parthian versions present vast lacunae, see Humbach - Skjærvø 1979-1983, vol. 3.1, 54. On the identification of the city, otherwise unknown in primary sources, see Humbach - Skjærvø 1979-1983, vol. 3.2, 83, 94.

<sup>37</sup> Numbering of seals and sealings according to Gyselen 2019a. See Gyselen 2019a, 328-329; 2019b, 163-164.

<sup>38</sup> Gyselen 2019a, 434 [ ]nbwly-b[y]lcndy, *anbōr-birzand*.

In her important work on Sasanian glyptics, Rika Gyselen<sup>39</sup> regularly translates *šahrestān* “capitale provinciale”. However, the French author reports some occurrences where cities that are known to have been provincial capitals are not accompanied by *šahrestān*, such are *Nēw-Šābuhr* and *Gōr*.<sup>40</sup>

On a more general note, in administrative glyptics the term *šahrestān* qualifies only a very limited number of Sasanian towns; in fact we know only: *Ērān-xwarrah-Šābuhr šahrestān* (one *mowūh* seat?) *Weh-Andiyōk-Šābuhr šahrestān* (one *mōwuh* seat); *Weh-Ardaxšīr šahrestān* (one *mowūh* seat) *Zarang šahrestān* (two *mōwuh* seats) *Ganzag šahrestān* (one *mowūh* seat) in *Ādurbadagān*, *Tēsḥōn šahrestān* (one *mowūh* seat) in *Husraw-šād-Kawād*, and *Rām(-Pērōz) šahrestān* (one *mowūh* seat) in *Ray*. The locution *Kust ī šahrestān* is attested only for *Frāx-kar-Pērōz* (two *mowūh* seats and one *naxwar*) and *Hamadān* (four *mowūh* seats).

#### 4. MANICHAEAN MIDDLE PERSIAN TEXTS

According to Durkin Meisterernst’s dictionary of Manichaean Middle Persian and Parthian *šhryst’ n* occurs in the possible meanings of “province, provincial capital, city”.<sup>41</sup> However, the only one to translate it “provincial capital” was Henning in *Mitteliranische Manichaica* ii and iii for *Holwān* and *Bēlābād* and he himself chose to use “city” in a later work.<sup>42</sup> The occurrences are the following:

MMii, RI 35<sup>43</sup>

34) *dwdy k’ prystgrwšn* 35) *’ndr hlwn šhryst’ n* 36) *bwd*.

“Als dann der Gesandte des Lichts in der Provinzhauptstadt *Holvān* war”.

MMiii, C 26<sup>44</sup>

23) ... *pd cf’r sxt šhryyw[r]* 24) *m’ḥ šhrywr rwc dwšmbt* 25) [*’wd ’y*] *wnds jm’ n’ ndr’ wst’ m* 26) *’y hwjyst’ n u šhryst’ n* 27) *cy byl’ b’ d*.

“...am vierten des Monats Scharewar, am Tage Schahrewar, Montags, zur elften Stunde, in der Provinz Chuzistan und in der Provinzhauptstadt Belabad”.

Kaw A 106<sup>45</sup> 106) ... *’c šhryst’ n šhryst’ [n...*

“...from each city ...”.

<sup>39</sup> Gyselen 2019a.

<sup>40</sup> Gyselen 2019a, 24-25: “On peut remarquer que le nom de *Nēw-Šābuhr*, habituellement considéré comme capitale provinciale d’*Abaršahr*, n’est pas suivi de la spécification *šahrestān* «capitale provinciale». On peut évidemment évoquer un oubli de la part du graveur ou la manque de place sur le sceau, sans pour autant évincer d’autres explications. D’ailleurs, ce n’est pas le seul cas où le terme *šahrestān* n’apparaît pas alors qu’on s’y attend – peut-être à tort. On peut citer comme parallèles *Gōr / Ardašīr-xwarrah* (ATs12, ATb95a), *Nēmāwand / Māh-kust-ī-Nēmāwand* (ATb205a). Aussi dans ces cas *Gōr* et *Nēmāwand* sont censés être des capitales provinciales et on serait attendu à les trouver sous la forme *Gōr-šahrestān* et *Nēmāwand-Sahrestān*”. See also Gyselen 2019a, 41.

<sup>41</sup> Durkin-Meisterernst 2004, 318.

<sup>42</sup> Henning 1943.

<sup>43</sup> MP; Andreas - Henning 1933, 11 [199], original transliteration in Hebrew.

<sup>44</sup> Pth.; Andreas - Henning 1934, 16 [288].

<sup>45</sup> MP; Henning 1943, 58 and 62 [120 and 125].

A.R. VIIa/14b<sup>46</sup>

- 14b *u bwd ( 'y)y wygndg pd hrwyn šhryst 'n.*  
 “Thou hast suffered ravage among all cities”.

KPT 804<sup>47</sup>

- 803) *c 'wn n 'mg pd tyr [ 'w] 804) šhryst 'n whynd.*  
 “Wie man einen Brief mit einem Pfeil [in] eine Stadt schießt”.

MKG 105<sup>48</sup>

- 104) *[p](š š)wd 'hym[...]* 105) *[š](h)rys[t 'n ...]*  
 “[Da]nach ging ich [...St]adt...”.

MKG 656<sup>49</sup>

- 654) *...kw kd 'm 'h 655) pydr 'c hyndwg 'n 'gd 'wd 656) 'w ryw 'rdxšyhr šhryst 'n 657) gd.*  
 “...als unser Vater aus Indien kam und in die Stadt Rēw-Ardaxšīhr gelangte”.

MKG 667<sup>50</sup>

- 665) *... 'dyn kd 666) qyrbkr bdyg y 'wr ( ')[n](dr) 667) ryw 'rxšyr š(hry)st 'n bwd.*  
 “...Als dann der Wohltäter ein zweites Mal (in) der Stadt Rēw-Ardaxšīhr war”.

MKG 981<sup>51</sup>

- 979) *...kw ( ')[2-4] 980) 'nd(r ) 'wh(rmyzd) 981) 'rdxšyh(r šhr)yst[ 'n] 982) [p](t) m 'nyst 'n (qdg) 983) [ 'gw]št (?)*  
 “...daß [...] in der Stadt Ohrmezd-Ardaxšīhr war er [i]m Klostergebäude [verbor]gen”.

MKG 1897<sup>52</sup>

- 1896) *byd kd fryštg [ '](ndr) wyh( r)[dhšyr] (?) 1897) šhryst 'n (b)[wd ...].*  
 “Als dann der Apostel (in) der Stadt Weh-Ar[dahšīr] w[ar ...]”.

CPar 147<sup>53</sup>

- 145) *(q)[ 'w 'n (?)] 146) 'st pt bwn ( c)[y smyr](w) (?) qwf 'w 147) hwr 's 'n 'rg (š)[wynd ( ')]w š(h)rystn.*  
 “<Die Rede> [von den Giganten ??] ist am Fuße des [Sumer](u?)-Berges zur Ostseite (sie gehen ? zur) Stadt”.

<sup>46</sup> Pth.; Boyce 1954, 166-167.

<sup>47</sup> MP; Sundermann 1973, 44.

<sup>48</sup> Pth.; Sundermann 1981, 23.

<sup>49</sup> Pth.; Sundermann 1981, 56.

<sup>50</sup> Pth.; Sundermann 1981, 57.

<sup>51</sup> Pth.; Sundermann 1981, 70.

<sup>52</sup> Pth.; Sundermann 1981, 116.

<sup>53</sup> Pth.; Colditz 1987, 298-299.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Summing up, Pahlavi literature uses the term *šahrestān* to indicate a city or town, and there is some evidence to show that at least in some of the occurrences the reference is to a fortified city. More specifically, the author of the *ŠĒ* widely employs this word to define cities, also when talking in rather generic terms (§§ 28, 32, 33) and once applies it to what seem to be the five inhabited areas of a yet unidentified royal compound (§ 19). In primary sources dating from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century *šahrestān* is mainly applied to the cities that were conquered by the triumphing armies of Šābuhr I in his campaign against the Roman Empire; some, but by no means all of these cities were provincial capitals. The evidence provided by Narseh's inscription points to the possibility of using the term also for Sasanian cities, indeed for the one where he held court, but the passage is extremely corrupt. In administrative glyptics *šahrestān* is employed to describe a city, or an inhabited area, but we have no proof that it is specifically used to design a provincial capital, since we know cases of cities that definitely were provincial capitals but were not called *šahrestān* on seals. In Manichaean texts *šahrestān* has the meaning of city, large town, while "provincial capital" would only fit some of the occurrences. In fact, Henning translated "Provinzhauptstadt" in his earlier works,<sup>54</sup> where the word respectively qualified the two large cities Holvān and Bēlābād, then shifted to "city" in the edition of the Book of Giants,<sup>55</sup> a meaning that was kept by Boyce, Sundermann and Colditz.<sup>56</sup> Finally, I believe that *šahrestān* should be translated by "city", possibly "fortified city", later even "town" or densely populated area; perhaps the original meaning was "inner city" or even "citadel". In fact, the best definition of the term in Middle Persian is the passage from the sixth book of the *Dēnkard*: \**šahrestān ī diz ī drubušt ī ābādān* "šahrestān, a castle and fortress which is also an inhabited place" i.e. "a strongly fortified and populous town", a meaning that includes but is not limited to provincial capitals.

## ABBREVIATIONS

A.R.	<i>Angad Rōšnān</i> see Boyce 1954, with strophes as assigned there.
Bd.	<i>Bundahišn</i> see Pakzad 2005.
Dk.	<i>Dēnkard</i> book 6, see Shaked 1979.
CPar	Colditz 1987, with line numbering as assigned there.
GA	<i>Gujastag Abāliš</i> , see Barthelemy 1887 and Skjærvø 2011.
KAP	<i>Kārnāmag ī Ardaxšīr ī Pābagān</i> , see Grenet 2003.
Kaw	<i>Book of Giants</i> , see Henning 1943 with letters and line numbering as assigned there.
KNRm	Kerdir's inscription at Naqsh-e Rostam, see MacKenzie 1989, cf. Gignoux 1991.
KPT	Sundermann 1973, with line numbering as assigned there.
MKG	Sundermann 1981, with line numbering as assigned there.
MMii	Andreas - Henning 1933 with letters and line numbering as assigned there.
MMiii	Andreas - Henning 1934 with letters and line numbering as assigned there.
NPai	Narseh's inscription at Paikuli, see Humbach - Skjærvø 1979-1983.
ŠĒ	<i>Šahrestānihā ī Ērānšahr</i> , see Markwart 1931 and Daryaei 2002.

<sup>54</sup> Andreas - Henning 1933; 1934.

<sup>55</sup> Henning 1943.

<sup>56</sup> Respectively: Boyce 1954; Sundermann 1973; 1981; Colditz 1987.

- ŠKZ Šābuhr I's inscription on the Ka'aba-e Zartosht, see Huyse 1999.  
 ŠnŠ Šāyast nē-Šāyast, see Tavadia 1930.  
 Wd. *Widēwdād*, see Jamasp 1907.  
 YF *Yōišť ī Friyān*, see Haug - West 1872.

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