

## ADMINISTRATION IN THE BODLEIAN ARSHAMA LETTERS

*This is an updated and slightly expanded version of my presentation at the third Arshama workshop on 5 March 2011. Once again, as with Introduction to Arshama, it is posted here as an invitation to correction, supplement and general engagement with the material.*

**Introduction**

If administration is understood to mean “public” or state administration,<sup>1</sup> we have, of course, a problem: the common thread of the Bodleian Arshama letters (hereinafter BAL) is Arshama’s estate and the activities of his *pqdyn*, not Arshama’s activity *qua* satrap. The Armapiya letter (A6.8) is one case that comes closer than most to breaching a simple private / public divide – and in a substantively interesting way: the deployment of military forces (part of the public sphere, one might think) to deal with issues in the estate sphere tells one something of the “manners” of the Achaemenid system (probably not something very surprising) and even problematizes the public/private divide. Something similar can perhaps be said of the Akhvamazda letters from Bactria. At the same time Armapiya’s (alleged) bolshiness towards Psamshek might say something about the feeling that some people may have had that the divide should *not* be casually breached. But, in any event, the Armapiya letter does stand out a bit.

Among the more particularly private-looking issues in BAL one might mention the punishment of thieving slaves belonging to the son of Arshama’s *pqyd* (A6.3) or the placing of an order for “sculptures” or “images” (A6.12). In the latter case it does depend a bit on what sort of “sculptures” they are. Some have thought we might be dealing with a seal-cutter – and seals are *inter alia* administrative tools, even if potentially in the private as well as public sphere. But I do not know whether the seal hypothesis should be sustained: why does Arshama not explicitly speak of seals if that was what was involved? One can say that if everyone knew Hinzani was a seal-cutter it would be unnecessary to spell it out; but that feels a little like special pleading. (If seals *were* involved, incidentally, the stress on horse and rider and on horsemen in the text contrast ironically with the fact that the surviving cylinder seal has a horse *without a rider*.)

Be all that as it may, what follows should be read more as a commentator’s riff on sundry details of the texts that, at a pinch, might be called administrative or revelatory of the general environment of Achaemenid rule than a systematic account of Achaemenid administration, and certainly not a claim that such a thing can be conjured out of the BAL. It interacts – perhaps even, to the percipient observer (if not the author), intertexts – with the *Introduction to Arshama* posted on the project web-site in the aftermath of the first workshop, but I am not making the bold assumption that you have all read that piece. Indeed, insofar as I have raided what was written there for what is said now, it would be as well if you had not.

Nearly a quarter century ago when writing on Achaemenid administration for an Oxford conference on coinage and imperialism in Athens and Persia (a memorable event that resulted *inter alia* in the temporary blacklisting of all present by the Turkish Republic), I grouped the material under the big headings of Geographical Divisions and Tribute,<sup>2</sup> and

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<sup>1</sup> The organs and processes through which the Achaemenid state – ultimately the King – expressed and exerted control over the inhabitants of the empire and, as appropriate, extracted resources from them.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. the (sub)divisions of imperial space that associate governance and manipulation of the population with larger or smaller geographical areas, and the extraction of resource (as money, material or service) for the benefit of the imperial state, especially (but not solely)

there will be an element of that here too.<sup>3</sup> But the focus on a particular set of texts raises issues of rhetoric and process that were not relevant (or had not occurred to me) before, and there are questions of a linguistic nature that I was not then competent to rehearse – and am scarcely competent to rehearse now: the sense of empowerment occasioned by five months' intermittent study of Aramaic is a thing to be distrusted. So the organisation of what follows is liable to be as random and the content is over-confident. Still, let me start in the spirit of 1987, with geographical divisions, specifically with provinces and the like.

### Provinces and the like

The general situation in BAL is that in Egypt we hear of Upper and Lower Egypt and elsewhere (in A6.9) we hear of “provinces” (*mdynh*).<sup>4</sup> Other Achaemenid era evidence for Egypt gives us (a) provinces (those attested by name are Tshetres, Thebes and ?Pamunpara<sup>5</sup>) – perhaps an Achaemenid era construct, and headed by a *frataraka*, a term also found in Bactria (though perhaps a different reference) but replaced elsewhere by *pḥh*,<sup>6</sup> (b) nomes or districts,<sup>7</sup> and (c) cities, e.g. Coptos, with governors.<sup>8</sup> The question of the *pqyd* of Thebes I shall return to later. Let me now dwell briefly on Upper and Lower Egypt.

That phrase literally translates the Aramaic terms used (*'lyt', thtyt'*: *'alyta, taḥtyta*) and represents a way of putting things that is not Egyptian: for Egyptians the two parts of the country were associated with plant types. Upper and Lower are, of course, familiar to us as a way of describing southern and northern Egypt formulated in terms of the upper and lower (particularly the Delta) stretches of the Nile. But is that what the Aramaic writer meant? In the descriptions of real estate at Elephantine “upper” and “lower” meant north and south, as it also did to the writer of the mid-8<sup>th</sup> c. Sefire inscription.<sup>9</sup> Could it be that when Arshama speaks of domains in lower Egypt he actually means the south, i.e. at least the Nile valley (and probably the Nile valley south of Memphis) as distinct from the Delta? Egyptians saw left and right back to front -- you viewed the Nile southwards, so the right bank was the west, not the east. Perhaps the Arshama texts are similarly (from our

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where the process is, ideologically speaking, figured as an expression of the payers' subjection.

<sup>3</sup> The earlier discussion appeared as Tuplin 1987.

<sup>4</sup> In one of the Bactrian letters (A4) the word is used (it seems) of a town (Nikhšapaya): see Shaked 2004, 28 (with fig.4).

<sup>5</sup> The last-named appears in A6.1. The reading is actually uncertain. Other possibilities are apparently Pasunpara, Nasunpara or Namunpara. It is perhaps a little disconcerting that an Achaemenid era province name should be so elusive. Most of the quite numerous appearances of the word *mdynh* are unaccompanied by a specific geographical name.

<sup>6</sup> Incidentally, the suggestion in Smith 1990, 296 that Saqqara S.H5-DP450 contains a reference to a “satrap of the south” has entirely disappeared in the definitive publication of that text in Smith & Martin 2010.

<sup>7</sup> CG 50060, Pap. Meerman-Westreeianum 44, Bothmer no.66 (chiefs); S.H5-DP 434 [2355] = published in Smith & Martin 2010, 31-39 (no.4) (scribes); CG 33174 (scribes and judges); P.Berlin 13552 (the *tš* of Osorwer); P.Louvre 9292, P.Loeb 41, P.Turin Cat.2127 (references to “Calasirians [soldiers] of the *tš*”). The word *tš* forms part of the traditional term Tshetres (“district of the south”) which becomes a province (*mdynh*) name in the Persian dispensation. More confusingly Egyptologists sometimes translate *tš* as “nome”, sometimes as “district”.

<sup>8</sup> Coptos: Posener 1936, nos.26,30 (*rp' Gbtyw*) – though some render this as nomarch.

<sup>9</sup> Elephantine: Kraeling 1953, 79, Porten 1968, 308-310. Sefire: Donner & Röllig 1966, no.222A

perspective) back to front.<sup>10</sup> In any event, the terms are not of course administrative ones *stricto sensu*; they simply conjure up an ancient idea of the kingdom (or, now, satrapy) as the union of two lands. When a *pqyd* or some Cilician workers are located “in my domains in Upper and Lower Egypt” (A6.4, A6.7), all that we can be sure about is that they are being placed “in Egypt”. When Nakhthor is associated with Lower Egypt (A6.10:11) that is because the situation there is germane to the letter; it certainly does not guarantee that he too could not be described as “*pqyd* in my domains in Upper and Lower Egypt”, and it may not guarantee that the estate for which he was responsible did not have components both in the Delta and the Nile valley.

### Estates

From land in largish amounts (provinces and bigger), to land in smaller amounts. Three texts refer to the bestowal of “estate” property (A6.4, A6.11, A6.13). The word is *bgʻ* (connoting share/division) in A6.11, A6.13, but *dšn* (connoting gift) in A6.4. Are these distinct or same thing by different names? The fact that A6.4 is already talking about *bgʻ* (those of Arshama) in saying that Ahhapi and Psamshek were *pqydy*n in those domains might be a reason for the scribe to have found a different word to designate the bit within them that the two officials were allocated – which favours the idea that there is no fundamental difference. Plural *bgʻ* constitute an estate (*byt*) (Arshama’s) – though in A6.13 *bgʻ* can apparently constitute a (singular) *bg*: at any rate Varuvahya initially refers to Arshama giving him a *bg* from which his rent is not being brought, but then asks Arshama to intervene so that he can get the rent from his domains (in the plural); so there is some linguistic looseness here – if not enough to make it likely one could speak of *byt* in the plural. *Dšn* = \**dašna* is at best scantily attested elsewhere in Achaemenid era texts. Tavernier’s claim of two cases at Persepolis is certainly incorrect (-*dašna* in these texts is part of the spelling of the name of Ahuramazda!),<sup>11</sup> but there are possible Aramaic examples at Nebi Yunis and Saqqara.<sup>12</sup> The former appears to refer to a monetary donation, and the latter is understood by Segal as an allusion to birthday (*ywmyld*) presents. (Tantalizingly the word *bgʻ* appears two lines earlier in the same text.) In the Arshama letters both *bg* and *dšn* are said to be “given”, but the *dšn* is given by the King and Arshama, whereas the *bgʻ* is given only by Arshama; this is counter-intuitive, in that it is the grant to a mere *pqyd* that is supposed to involve the King, where that to a fellow “son of the house” does not. Probably both grants could have been described in either fashion.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> The only more precise geographical marker in BAL of which any independent sense can be made (contrast Mizpeh in A6.7) is the indication in A6.15:6 that Nakhthor was (allegedly improperly) active in Papremis – if indeed that is the correct reading. The exact location of Papremis is disputed (see Lloyd 1975-1988, III 188, Ray 1981), but it is certainly in the NW Delta – an area appropriate, moreover, for the wine to which A6.15 refers. So that would put Nakhthor in Lower Egypt in the conventional sense of the term.

<sup>11</sup> Tavernier 2007, 407, citing PF 337, PFNN 366. But see Henkelman 2008, 527-528. Szubin & Porten 1987 discuss a number of Talmudic attestations of the word.

<sup>12</sup> (Insert references from commentary file.)

<sup>13</sup> Another royal grant (with different terminology) appears in B1.1, where the defension clause in a joint venture contract from 515 BC refers to the possibility that Padi, son of Daganmelech, might give to his partner Aḥa, son of Ḥapio, a field “from my portion from the king [*hlq lmlk*], except for a word of the king” (i.e. unless the king forbids it). The nature of this “portion” and its relationship to the other explicit or implicit grants visible in BAL and other Egyptian material is a matter for speculation on a later occasion.

There are two cases of continuity/succession: Ahhapi – Psamshek (one *pqyd* to his son and successor) & Pamun – Petosiri (the latter petitions for the former’s erstwhile holding). To compare small things with great, one might adduce some Persepolitan cases: at the second workshop Wouter Henkelman spoke of Irdabama’s Shullagi estate as an inheritance from an Elamite ancestor; there is also the Matannan estate, worked on for Cambyses by conscripted labour from Babylonia and later found in the hands of Darius’ wife (and Cambyses’ sister) Irtašduna. But the Egyptian continuities are not seamless. Petosiri has to petition for that which has become deserted and might have been sequestered and/or completely reassigned by Arshama; here there has been a real break. With Ahhapi/Psamshek this is less apparent; but there is a linguistic issue. TADE translates A6.4: 3,4 (with the verb *lmns’*) as “carry on” the grant; *ns’* is properly to “lift up” or “take away”, so “carry on” may have an inappropriately strong overtone of continuity, and “take up” (the term Driver used) would arguably be a less ambiguous rendering. If this is a distinction that can properly be drawn in Aramaic, the language is gently marking the break between the two holders, however transitory it may have been in practice: Arshama gives, and Arshama can take away – or fail to go on giving.<sup>14</sup>

This brings me to another linguistic issue. A6.11 describes Pamun’s situation and the one Petosiri aspires to with a particular word that is of some interest. Pamun had been *mhhsn* (holder). He requests *’hhsn* (let me hold). Arshama says *yhhsn* (let him hold). The situation involves an element of inheritance (father-son) and of abandonment (the estate was abandoned at the violent death of Pamun) – factors that evoke Szubin & Porten 1982, which sought to establish that *hhsn* connotes hereditary possession and did so *inter alia* in reference to a document about a once-abandoned house. Questions that arise include the cogency of that hypothesis in relation to the documents that originally gave rise to it (which did *not* include A6.11), its extensibility to other documents, and any wider ramification the word may have in the administrative sphere. The hypothesis depends heavily upon two things: (i) a view of the rhetoric of the final documents in the mini-dossiers relating to two pieces of real estate (B2.3, B3.12), viz. that the central figure Maseiah calls himself *mhhsn* to insist on an entitlement to possession for which there was no proper documentary paper-trail; and crucially (ii) lexicographic arguments drawn from outside imperial Aramaic (texts in the Bible and Targum). By contrast the concept of hereditary ownership does not seem a *necessary* postulate in other Egyptian Aramaic documents in which the verb appears – or indeed in an alleged, if uncertain, occurrence of *mhhsn* in one of the Makkedah ostraca (EN 199, with Lemaire 228). Why do I raise this? Because there are wider ramifications to *mhhsn* of a military-administrative nature, and for two distinct reasons.

First, Grelot (1974, 92, 184) and others have thought the term *mhhsn* could (at Elephantine) denote a military *colonus*. In this regard the recurrence of the term in connection with the boat whose repair at state-expense is the subject in a non-Driver Arshama document (A6.2) is pertinent. The *mhhsnn* there are current holders of something, viz. a boat, that *belongs* to someone else (the state) – and inheritance is not *prima facie* a significant issue. To my mind Pamun and Petosiris are in similar case in A6.11, and it is worth stressing again that Arshama could certainly have chosen not to give the land to Petosiris. Calling Pamun *mhhsn* does not alter that. I do not mean to make Petosiris a military *colonus*, of course. And if Maseiah was indulging in persuasive rhetoric about “his” houses (which may well be the case) we should not perhaps let him con us into making

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<sup>14</sup> This is solely an issue of language; it is agreed that the *dašna* is a grant of usufruct with “inherent legal connotations of revocability with the option of renewal or reassignment to another” (Szubin & Porten 1987, 43).

*mhḥsn* a technical term for military colonate or anything else. But I am inclined to think that, if the verb (when used of possessions) *does* have a special overtone, it is more to do with the administrative context of holding than the application of the hereditary principle.

Secondly, *mhḥsn* is administratively (even “politically”) interesting because in the late Achaemenid era the Caro-Lycian satrap Pixodarus used the term in a tricky but rather important passage of the Aramaic version of the Xanthus Trilingual, where it is part of the description or contextualisation of something he calls *data* or “law”. The matter is important because the text is relevant to the extension in use of the Persian term *data* beyond the Iranian heartland and has played a role in discussions of the relationship between local and putatively imperial law. But pursuing this further here would take us too far afield (albeit into a captivating topic), so I merely register the point, add a brief footnote<sup>15</sup> and pass on to taxation.

### Taxation

Having managed to get possession of his late father’s holding, Petosiri will have to pay a tax on it, described with the word *halak*. This word also appears in Ezra 4.13,20 and 7.24 as one of the taxes of Transeuphratene (along with *b<sup>o</sup>lo* and *minda*) and in one of the Bactrian letters in the complaint that Bagavant and his associates had extracted a land-related *halak* from certain camel-keepers in an improper fashion. The person who is going to be paying it in A6.11 has a title, *wršbr*, of admittedly uncertain import, which raises the possibility of some connection between that status and the relevant land-holding; but it is perhaps a problem that Pamun is not said also to have been *wršbr*. (The situation is different from the *dšn* of A6.4, held by successive *pqydyn*.) One of the interesting things about a tax is how much it is, so it is frustrating that no figure is given, perhaps because it is mechanically implicit in the size of the estate (30 *ardab*) -- and perhaps also because Arshama is not concerned with details of that sort. It is also frustrating -- but intriguing -- that the verb for paying this tax (*ḥsl*) is apparently all but unknown and of uncertain explanation.<sup>16</sup> The word *halak* inevitably evokes Akkadian *ilku*, though philologists worry about the niceties of the connection. *Ilku* is a portmanteau term, embracing various sorts of obligation – in Borsippa transport of the royal food supply, *urašu*-service, “the front of the bow” and *hišaru*, in the Murašu archive “soldier of the king, flour, *barra*, and the other dues of the royal house”. It is in essence representative of, even actualised in, personal service obligations, and the basis of liability – often unclear – can certainly include estate-holding: that is classically

<sup>15</sup> The relevant sentence is *dth zk ktb zy mhḥsn* and has been variously translated. The latest suggestion (Kottsieper 2002, 210) is “jenes Gesetz ist ein Autorisationsedikt” – a translation based on the view that, put more literally, the sentence means: “this law is a piece of writing which has provided confirmation”. If *hḥsn* is a haphel of *ḥsn* = “be strong”, it should mean “cause to be strong”. The shift from that to “provide confirmation” is easy and not open to immediate objection. It is, rather, the widespread use of *hḥsn* and *mhḥsn* to connote possession in BAL, at Elephantine, Saqqara and Wadi Daliyeh and in Donner & Röllig 1966, no.278 = Gibson 1975, no.36 (all the attestations can be found in Hoftijzer & Jongeling 1995) plus EN 199 (wit Lemaire 228) that seems to involve a more difficult leap. But even the simple verb, *ḥsn*, seems to mean “possess” in *Daniel* 7.18,22, so the problem is deep-seated. Perhaps “be strong” is taken to imply “be stronger than someone / thing else” or “have power over someone / thing else”, whence “be in control or in possession of someone / thing else”.

<sup>16</sup> In Egypt it appears otherwise in D14.7, apparently reading “Ezer 1 *ḥsl* 2” -- but qualified as uncollated, uncertain and of doubtful reading -- and (perhaps) in CG 156 and 200 (both equally uncertain).

the case in the Murashu archive, but also in other contemporary Babylonian contexts. There is certainly a broad analogy between Petosiris and people in Mesopotamia.

BAL's other tax word is *mndh*, used of income received by Arshama and Varuvahya from their Egyptian estates. The word is known in other Achaemenid contexts from

- DB (Akkadian) where it is a word for royal tribute
- one of the Bactrian documents (A8), which refers to royal *mndh*
- Ezra, where it is one of the three taxes of Transeuphratene along with *belo* and *halak* (4.13, 20, 6.8, 7.24), but is also used alone in reference to the tax of that region or the King's tax owed by Jews (6.8)
- The Egyptian Customs Document (C3.7), where it is collected from ships and goes to the King's House
- an Elephantine document where it is apparently the income that could be had from leasing out a slave (B3.6)<sup>17</sup>
- a number of other fragmentary bits from Elephantine and Saqqara, two of which (C3.5, Segal 24) associate the word with the *hyl*, "garrison", but none of which is cogently lucid.

There is a temptation to suppose that the *mndh* paid by domains to their Iranian owners interlocks with the *halak* paid to those owners by people like Petosiris; the terms are kept distinct in Ezra (and perhaps in a highly fragmentary text in D6.13 which may read "*halak* and *mndh*"<sup>18</sup>), but that is all right, because they relate to different parts of the process of enriching Arshama and his ilk. Terminologically speaking one might even say *mndh* going to "sons of the house" matches *mndh* going to the King, and perhaps whether we choose to call it "tax" or (as TADE renders it) "rent" is a matter of somewhat anachronistic choice.<sup>19</sup>

Varuvahya's "rent" income is to be brought along with "the treasure (*gnz*) which Arshama has ordered brought to Babylon".<sup>20</sup> This evokes PFT 1357 (499 BC), which reports that Batteša, a colleague and 8 boys travelled from Susa<sup>21</sup> to Persepolis, carrying Babylonian treasure (*kapnuški Bapilira kutišša*) and, by association, another text in which Batteša is associated with the transfer of tax-related (royal) horses from Susa to Babylon. This means that the "treasure" of PF 1357 may be royal tax; and I have toyed with the idea that that might be true in A6.13 as well, i.e. that (for safety) the transfer of Varuvahya's cash is done at the same time as the transfer of Egyptian tax / tribute. The argument against this would be that Varuvahya's request was for his *pqyd* to be told to release the rent and bring it along with the rent that Nakhthor is bringing and that Arshama's response, that Nakhthor should tell Varuvahya's *pqyd* to release the rent and bring it and come with the "treasure" which Arshama has ordered brought to Babylon, should correspond one-to-one with that request – in which case the "treasure" is another way of describing Arshama's own rent. The counter-argument to this would be to say that Arshama is not replying directly to Varuvahya, so that the principle of symmetry need not apply exactly. Arshama alludes to a separate order already issued about transfer of "treasure" and this could have referred to

<sup>17</sup> The same might be true in Segal 21 = B8.11.

<sup>18</sup> D6.13 frag.d: here according to the concordance (Porten & Lund 2002, 222) we have *h]lk wmmndh*, though TADE prints only *]k mndh*; this gives *hlc* and *mndh*.

<sup>19</sup> But I am for the moment inclined to assume that the obligation on Hatubasti and Nakhthor to "release" (*hnpq*) the *mndh* is an obligation that lies upon them *qua* administrators, not *qua* individual leaseholders (*pace* Szubin/Porten 1987, 46).

<sup>20</sup> *Mndt* and *gnz* co-occur in a fragmentary document (B8.5), and indeed in the same lacunose line (3), with *gnz* also appearing in l.2, but nothing substantive can be gleaned.

<sup>21</sup> An inference from the authorisation being by Bakabana.

something different from (or bigger than) the mere transfer of “rent”. Varuvahya assumed in his request the obvious thing was to marry his rent-transfer to Arshama’s; Arshama may have known different.

This is perhaps the place to mention some ghost taxation. In A6.12 Arshama apparently designates some of his *garda* (workers) as *bdykrn* or *brykrn*. Driver wanted a parallel with the *kurtaš bazikaraš* of PT 41 (to whom we might add the *baziš*-handling Skudrian *kurtaš* in PFNN 2616), and that would give us tax-handlers of some sort. But the use of “d” (in *bdkyrn*) for j or z (*baji-* or *bazi-*) is unlikely; and it might seem a bit of a leap that Hinzani’s rations would be like that of tax-workers. What the text is talking about remains contentious, and to pursue that in detail here would be, like discussion of Pixodarus, a frank diversion. But let me make two quick remarks. (a) A current solution is that the *garda* are artists; the putative Iranian word appears (in Elamite form) in a list of treasury-workers at Shiraz – which is a sort of administrative environment.<sup>22</sup> Of course, Persepolitan treasuries were not purely bureaucratic places: still if Hinzani *were*, after all, a seal-cutter, I think he might well be in place. (b) David Taylor’s recent suggestion that *bdykrn* actually signifies “according to memorandum” – which I mentioned at the last workshop and on which I am still awaiting grammatical clarification -- *might* (I stress *might*) hint at the estate administration having a rations-checklist of some sort at its disposal.

### From workers to functionaries

Other workers in BAL are rather clearer than those of A6.12. The appearance of Cilician workers in three different contexts provides an angle on the ethnic mix of Achaemenid Egypt which is unexpected (in the absence of much analogical evidence – though the Cilician quarter in Ptolemaic Memphis quarter may be pertinent<sup>23</sup>) but perhaps should not be that surprising. Cilicia is not that far afield and the range of the taste for mid- to long-range deployment of workers is hardly exhausted by what we happen to see in the Persepolis Fortification archive (where there are no Cilicians, though there are Cappadocians, Carians and Lycians -- and indeed Egyptians!) The general individual anonymity of Persepolitan *kurtaš* makes the naming of the 13 Cilicians in A6.7 striking. Perhaps they are a special group: the circumstances in which we hear of them mark them as having had a special set of experiences during a period of turmoil; and they have a function-designation (*’bwšk*) – though we do not really know what it means -- and are said to be “appointed” or “counted” to “my domains”, which even sounds a little grand. Or perhaps the process of attaching new workers to the estate of which we read in A6.10 did, after all, regularly include not only the branding or tattooing on the body of an appropriate mark (“this one belongs to Arshama”?) but also the entry of a name in a register held somewhere in what Arshama calls the *trbš* (courtyard). Whether or not that is so, that document is in any case riveting for its articulation of the (may we call it administrative? or is it just greedy?) mission of estate-enhancement in times of trouble.

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<sup>22</sup> PF 865, 866, NN 1524. (The third text is not explicitly from Shiraz, but the parallels with the first two are such as to make this the natural assumption.) The Elamite term is *barikurraš* or *barekurriš*, interpreted as “Kunsthandwerker” by Hinz & Koch 1987. (Hallock took this word to mean just “attendant”, which is a rather anodyne category compared with the others listed in the three documents.) Oddly Porten/Yardeni print *bdkryn* but translate (albeit with an indication of uncertainty) “artists”, although no one has to my knowledge ever claimed to have identified an Iranian equivalent to *that* spelling with the meaning “artist”.

<sup>23</sup> CPJ i 5 n.14.

Talk of Cilician “pressers appointed to my domains” leads on to people with more straightforward titles – a natural resource for surveying the administrative landscape.

At the top of the pile we have “son of the house” and “lord”. The former I discussed in *Introduction to Arshama*. The essential point is that, not only do we have a Jewish *bar bayta* in the witness list of four Elephantine documents,<sup>24</sup> but Akkadian *mar biti* is not confined to high-status Iranians, but can apply to people with both Iranian and non-Iranian names who are the executive agents of higher status persons (with Iranian or non-Iranian names). Various problems supervene. One view might be that *mar biti* / *bar bayta* in a royal context as well as a non-royal imposes no requirement of genetic relationship between *mar biti* and principal and so does not actually signify more than “privileged courtier”. The case of Artahšaru = Artoxares the (alleged) Paphlagonian eunuch and *mar biti* does rather point in that direction.

As for “lord”, the word’s appearance in Elephantine legal formulae which envisage or preclude proceedings “before *sgn*’ or lord” or “before *sgn*’ or judge or lord” or “before judge or lord”<sup>25</sup> might seem formally to construct “lord” as a sort of function title.<sup>26</sup> But that may be a misleading way of looking at things, as not all “lords” are demonstrably administratively or judicially active. “Lord”, like “son”, is a word whose content depends on who is saying it about whom and why. The most important administrative thing about both “son of the house” and “lord” is probably that *they* appear and “satrap” does not. It is a system (and perhaps not unique) in which, the more important you are, the less your title needs to be re-iterated in all rhetorical contexts – a principle that in BAL perhaps extends to the mysterious Artavant. (In the *Introduction* I speculated that he was Arshama’s *mar biti* – to use Babylonian terminology – but this is only a guess. Perhaps he was *actually* his son!) It is also a system (and these really are administrative facts) in which the satrap can absent himself and in which he can hold office (or is that too bureaucratic a phrase?) for over four and a half decades.

Rather than dwelling on that, let us turn to some lowlier people.

The *wršbr* in A6.5 and A6.11 is puzzling. Tavernier’s attempt (2007, 434) to make him a worker-supervisor seems linguistically vulnerable. Reviewing some of the history of argumentation the question, one realizes that what one would like is for *wršbr* to be a defective version of *\*(h)uvaršabara* = Elamite *maršabara* or “quartermaster”. But I do not suppose that this can be allowed.

Of clearer meaning are the accountants, *hamarakara*. “Kenzasirma and his colleagues the accountants” appear several times as co-addressees with Nakhthor (A6.11-14). A6.2 (a document from Arshama’s administrative life as satrap) refers to “treasury accountants” (*\*hamarakara-* of the *\*ganza*), who play a role in resourcing boat-repairs, but Kenzasirma and his colleagues on the face of it belong purely to the estate-environment. They appear in letters that relate to the assignment of a domain within the estate, the disbursement of rations to Hinzani the sculptor and the payment/transport of estate “rent”. Porten 1968, 46 thought the BAL people were public officials who also worked in the private sphere, and there is certainly evidence elsewhere of royal accountants, whom one naturally assigns to the public sphere. But private business men had accountants too (as we see in the Murašū archive), and so did queens: Irtašduna writes in 500 BC ordering that a wine-ration be issued from her estate at Kuknaka to Kamšabana the accountant (*muššan zikira*: PF 1837); and Irdabama

<sup>24</sup> Someone about whom we can make no further judgments – while noting that he does not have a patronymic.

<sup>25</sup> We also get “before *sgn*’ or judge”.

<sup>26</sup> In a different jurisdiction we find preclusion of suits before “king, satrap or judge”: PBS 2/1 21.

writes to the “accountants at Šullakke”, instructing them to look at the sealed document *in re* a transaction involving a nurseryman and “do the accounting” (PFa 27). It seems to me possible that Arshama might have had accountants who were separate from the satrapal administration – always assuming that postulating such a thing is not a *petitio principii*.

Which leads us back to the *pqydn*. Driver thought the *pqyd* as represented in BAL was a major state-functionary. Given the estate-focus of BAL and the comparably located Babylonian evidence about *paqdus*, this was and is hardly the natural view to take. Still, we ought to try to grasp more about the status of a *pqyd* and the range of things the term might connote, even if we do not end up changing our mind about Ahhapi, Psamshek and Nakhthor. So here are some observations.

1. I do not think we can be sure how many *pqyds* there were in Egypt for the “domains in Upper and Lower Egypt”: Nakhthor’s uniqueness in relation to Arshama and the estate environment is not certain.

2. There is a theoretical possibility that Virafsha’s *pqyd* Masapata is mentioned in the Saqqara Arshama text.<sup>27</sup> Little can be said of this man, save that he has colleagues, is mentioned next to Harmeten and *his* colleagues and to the scribes of the nome, and (in another bit) next to some judges.<sup>28</sup> But on the whole I think it is a long shot that we are dealing with the same man here and in A6.13.

3. Artahay addresses Nakhthor politely in A6.16; that is specially notable if Artahay is identified as “man who knows the order” (a procedurally significant person – more on this later) in the Arshama Saqqara document. That Arshama does *not* address him politely for sure distinguishes him from an Artavant, but does not prove particularly menial status. The higher Artavant’s status, the higher Nakhthor’s can be.

4. Ahhapi, Psamshek and Nakhthor are not the only *pqydn* in BAL; there are also the men in A6.9 involved in providing Nakhthor with his travel-provisions. Who are *they*?

Their named locations are widely spaced; so, if Nakhthor and his fellow-travellers literally got rations a day at a time (which is what line 6 incites one to think) they got them from a much larger number of locations.<sup>29</sup> The document must have “worked” when read at unnamed places by people who are unidentified. So *either* the named officials issued subsidiary authorisation documents *or* the existing document was sufficient to work anywhere (so that, in effect, “to Bagapharna the *pqyd* who is in Salam” means “to whom it may concern in the province for/within which which Bagapharna at Salam is the *pqyd*”). The disadvantage of the former solution is that it requires that the *pqydn*’s location is always at the edge of the province (for a traveller moving east-to-west),<sup>30</sup> so one may prefer the latter view.

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<sup>27</sup> In current editions the man in Saqqara is understood as \*Miçapata, the one in A6.15 as \*Masapata; Tavernier 2007, 246-7 pleads for both being Miçapata (being unconvinced that Masapata is a satisfactorily attested Iranian name), though, since all we have in either case in Mspt, presumably they could theoretically both be Masapata. (If we want to bring in the Msšpt in Segal 13, however, we probably have to go for Miçapata.)

<sup>28</sup> In Segal 13 the name Msšpt is oddly not far from a reference to chiefs of the *datagara* (or so Segal thinks).

<sup>29</sup> Even if (against the norm in PFT and the apparent implications of l.6) they sometimes took supplies for several days at once, there would still surely have been more than just 7 supply-stations.

<sup>30</sup> For further discussion of the geography of the document see my paper for the *Travel and Empire* workshop.

A crucial characteristic of the *pqydn* is thus that their name and location together define a whole region.<sup>31</sup> Since the region is labelled “province” (whereas the Egyptian *pqyd* are linked with “Egypt”, “Upper and Lower Egypt” or “Lower Egypt”, none of which is technically speaking a “province” = *mdynh*), the simplest assumption is that they are provincial officials, whose writ runs systematically across a region in a way hard to imagine for estate-managers

The next question is: what are the analogies? The only certainly relevant Egyptian Aramaic texts are A4.2 and A5.5, both of which link the term with Thebes: more precisely, A5.5 refers to a “*pqyd* of Thebes”, while A4.2 speaks of “Mazdayasna the *pqyd* of the province” (*pqyd lmdyn*) immediately after an allusion to “the province (*mdynt*) of Thebes”. Both texts are fragmentary (particularly A5.5), but both have an official allure and even, in the cases of A5.5, a military one. The presence of the term “province” (*mdynh*) makes for a *prima facie* resemblance to the Mesopotamian / Levantine cases.<sup>32</sup>

The other potential source of illumination is Achaemenid Babylonia. In the Murašū archive the *paqdu* is always essentially in the estate management environment; there are so-called *paqdu*s of Nippur, but that is because Nippur was administratively construed as a *hatru* (estate-collective) and it is not a valid parallel to the *pqyd* of Thebes – especially since there is no call to regard Nippur as a *mdynh*.<sup>33</sup> Early Achaemenid documents produce more problems. There are several texts where the *paqdu* has been seen as a city-official, even a police-official.<sup>34</sup> Some could be construed as referring to temple officials,<sup>35</sup> but I am not sure all could; on the other hand some are linked to the names of relatively small communities (Šatmu, Šahrinu), so, if secular, they may be very local by the standards of Thebes (whether as city or province) or the places in A6.9. Since *paqdu* is simply the noun for the verb *paqudu* = “entrust, care for”, its field of application is, of course, no more etymologically guaranteed than is that of Aramaic *pqyd* (from *p<sup>e</sup>qad* = deposit, command).<sup>36</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Another feature is that Upastabara has *three* bases, whereas two people (Phradapharna and Hw[...]) share Damascus. If the *pqydn* are Arshama’s estate-officials we could perhaps say that his Syrian estates were very large in size (so needed two *pqydn*) but geographically quite concentrated around Damascus (so they could both be based there) whereas in heartland Assyria the estates were rather scattered but individually too small to justify more than a single *pqyd* to oversee them. Whether a comparable argument is equally easily available if the *pqydn* are state (provincial) officials I am not sure.

<sup>32</sup> Dupont-Sommer’s version of Clermont Ganneau 44 = D7.10 (Dupont-Sommer 1963, 54) gives us an officer ordering that a prisoner be deprived of bread and water. But Porten-Yardeni interpret *pqyd* as verb-form (“it would be commanded”), as well as inserting a “not”.

<sup>33</sup> Stolper 1985, 22, 54, 65-68, 82; Stolper & Jursa 2007, 255. Nippur as *hatru*: cf. Stolper 1988, 17-18. Rare other late uses include Seleucid era references to royal officials in AD -273 r.34 and the caretaker of a temple in Sarkisian 1974, 24, 59 no.1:16,23, and an occurrence in van Dijk & Mayer 1980, no. 118 recto 3 (a Seleucid era text from Uruk, which also mentions the Uruk assembly).

<sup>34</sup> CT 22.73 (Sippar?), BIN 1.169 (Uruk), YOS 7.137 (Uruk and Šatmu), Cyr.328 (Šahrinu), GCCI 3.125 (Uruk?).

<sup>35</sup> BIN 1.169 (cf. CAD s.v.*paqdu*), YOS 7.137, perhaps YOS 6.71 (Uruk), OECT 9.42 (Uruk).

<sup>36</sup> Hence the “royal courtier who is installed in Eanna” (*ša rēš šarri ša ina ajakki paqdu*) and “the royal Aramaic-scribe who is installed in Eanna” (*sēpiru ša šarri ša ina ajakki paqdu*), in which titles *paqdu* is a verb-form meaning “installed” (cf. Kleber 2008, 30). HRETA 132 = Dougherty 1923, 20f is evidently something else again: “28 workmen (*šabe*), the *puquda*, who

The answer to the question about analogies for the A6.9 *pqydyn* (conceived as provincial officials) is therefore that the *pqydyn* of A4.2 and A5.5 might be such analogies, but it is not clear there is anything Babylonian of the same sort. Contrariwise, we might insist upon the fact that *mdynh*, though generally translated “province”, can also mean “city” (cf. n.4) and then take the Babylonian evidence to authorize identification of the men in A4.2 and A5.5 as a city-*pqydyn* – in which case the men in A6.9 become unique. Since that text is in any case unique (as an official Achaemenid document about travel-provisioning that does not come from the Persepolis archive) that might not be surprising – but it brings us back to questions of process and the question of whether the simple assumption (that the *pqyd* belong to provinces because they are provincial officials) is necessarily right.

Arshama was a satrap. He was in principle entitled to issue documents of the sort that PFT shows the King, Parnakka and other satrapal-status people issued. So *either* A6.9 is an example of just such a document<sup>37</sup> or Arshama has issued what is strictly a different sort of document, though one with a broadly comparable sort of effect.<sup>38</sup>

When reading PFT travel documents that end “PN was carrying a sealed-document of Parnakka” *vel sim.* one does not normally think about what that sealed-document said in detail. But the unspoken assumption is probably that it was rather curt: “Parnakka orders that PN shall be entitled to take such-and-such a quantity of such-and-such a commodity per day from state resources”. With the appropriate seal attached that ought to be sufficient to work anywhere in the system (and not just in the Persepolitan region); the result would be that food was disbursed and a debit was recorded against the food-supply account – not against the royal estate *sensu stricto*, as that was something distinct (at least so current doctrine holds), but against what I suppose one could call (tongue-twistingly) the state’s estate.

But Arshama’s document is *not* quite so curt, since it addresses a series of named officials over a wide geographical area); and – a crucial characteristic -- it says that the foodstuffs should come from “my estate”. So *either* the unspoken assumption about the contents of Persepolitan authorisation documents is misformulated or A6.9 is *not* exactly like the documents referred to in PFT. In the former case we shall certainly have to speculate explicitly about the mechanics of the interaction between the “state’s estate” (the proper sphere of *pqydyn* who are putatively public officials) and Arshama’s estate. In the latter case it might turn out after all that the *pqydyn* are more like Nakhthor & co. than we first thought.<sup>39</sup> One way of resolving the dilemma, of course, would be suppose that Nakhthor carried more than one provision-authorizing document – one to be used where

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in the mountains became free. These are the *puquda* whom their fathers gave to Innina of Erech and Nana for the *širkutu*”.

<sup>37</sup> Kuhrt 2007, 741 takes that view, following Whitehead 1974, 61.

<sup>38</sup> If we assume that Arshama was not in Egypt when Nakhthor set off on his journey the question would arise whether Arshama was entitled to do a Parnakka-like authorisation for a journey to his satrapy from somewhere else. If we were dealing with a Fortification text that said PN was travelling with a *halmi* of Arshama, we should normally assume PN was going *from* Egypt to somewhere else. On the other hand there *are* sometimes what seem to be “return trip” authorisations. So perhaps the answer to the question has to be yes.

<sup>39</sup> That was Whitehead’s view (1974, 64), but for him the *pqydyn* belonged to the estates of *other* princes, and he pictures their expenditure on Nakhthor’s food being reimbursed from Arshama’s estate “through the central accounting system witnessed by the Elamite tablets” (sc. in the Fortification archive). So on this view too the mechanics of the interaction between the “state’s estate” and the estates of individual elite-members become an issue.

resources could be got directly from Arshama's own estates, and another for use at "public" supply points. But some would say that that is to draw an unreal distinction.<sup>40</sup>

This – like the geography of the document (cf. n.30) -- will require more thought at the workshop on *Travel and Empire*. For the moment I shall return to the status of a *pyqd* like Nakhthor – though still without leaving A6.9. According to Arshama's instructions Nakhthor is to get 2 hophen of grade A flour (*hwry*), 3 hophen of grade B flour (*rmy* or *dmy*), 2 hophen of wine or beer and one of some other commodity (only one letter of the word survives); his servants and Cilicians get 1 hophen of flour; and there is fodder in accordance with (the number of) the horses.

How does this compare with the Persepolitan travel texts? The failure to specify an amount for the horses contrasts with the occasional appearance of specific amounts of grain (or even flour) allocated to horses, mules, camels – and even in one case dogs (PFNN 0317). The amounts vary -- and vary within single documents: some horses in a party get more than others -- and may represent a variably partial contribution to the animals' sustenance. The vagueness in the Nakhthor document (which unlike the Persepolis documents *precedes* the moment of allocation) may be to allow for various local conditions and the availability of grazing. But when we turn to the human consumers things are clearer.

1 hophen = 1 QA = 0.97 litres. In Persepolitan terms, Nakhthor is getting 5 QA of flour (even if of differential grade) and 2 QA of wine / beer, while his servants are getting 1 QA. Their ration is entirely normal; but Nakhthor's certainly is not. If one leaves aside occasional cases in which an individual is given a very large allocation because he is responsible for the subsistence of significant numbers of subordinates who are not registered in their own right in the official record – cases that are not parallel to Nakhthor because in his case we *are* told about his fellow-travellers – his daily flour rate is only comparable with perhaps three cases. Most exact is PFNN 0663 – Kampizza the Anshanite travelling Susa-Persepolis on royal authorisation with 51 companions in the 5<sup>th</sup> month of an unknown year gets 5 QA. Straddling the target are (a) PFNN 1859 which records a group of Indians, one of whom gets 12 QA (while the other 100 get the basic 1 QA), and (b) PFNN 2569 in which Titrakeš travelling on royal authorisation with 80 men, 30 horses and 88 mules in 494 BC gets 4 QA. Even if the 5 mixed-grade QA of flour were equivalent to only 3 Persepolitan QA, that adds only three more cases: (a) PFNN 0431 Zakurra the Gandarian, travelling with 190 companions, 12 camels and 31 mules from Gandara to Susa (early 501 BC); (b) PFNN 2047 Harmišda travelling with 160 companions in 494; and (c) PFNN 1944 Daukka, travelling from Susa in 500/499 BC (no companions mentioned).

Turning to wine and beer, the ration here is usually 1 QA or less. There are two other cases of a ration of 2 QA of beer (PFNN 2557, PFNN 2634) and up to eight with figures higher than that;<sup>41</sup> and there are 5 cases of a 2-QA wine ration and only two cases of a higher one.<sup>42</sup> Some of the people involved are connected with Indians; others have titles that may mark them as of importance – Aššašturrana "the quiver-carrier" (PF 1560) or Hašina, the *dattimaraš*

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<sup>40</sup> Compare the previous note. – Whitehead did in fact postulate that Nakhthor had two letters, but the second one was entirely for use in the stretch after Damascus.

<sup>41</sup> PFNN 0372 (3 QA), PF 1529, PFNN 2634 (4 QA), PF 1529, 1546, PFNN 2634, PFNN 2637 (10 QA), 1525 (20 QA). The last of these might be a quantity intended to be shared with others, as I assume is the case with the 356 QA for Aktama in PFNN 0716 and the 70 QA for Datis in PFNN 1809 (cf. Lewis 1980). In PFNN 2637 rather remarkably we have a group of 114 individuals each receiving 10 QA.

<sup>42</sup> 2 QA: PF 1552, 1559, 1560, 1562, PFNN 0622 (in the last case the *prima facie* figure of 1.905 must be an error for 2). Higher are PFNN 0937 (6 QA) and PF 1563-1564 (10 QA).

of the lanceman (PFNN 0937).<sup>43</sup> So: Nakhthor is doing fairly well for alcoholic drink, even if not quite as well proportionately as in his flour allocation. By way of further context it is worth noting that there are far more records for travellers receiving flour than for those receiving wine/beer. That *might* just be a quirk of documentary survival, but is much more likely to be because only a minority of travellers were allocated alcoholic drink in the first place; that is in line with the fact that Nakhthor's servants get no drink and it means we should not underestimate the status-significance of Nakhthor's two daily quarts. Taken together with his 5 QA of flour they signal that, as the *pqyd* of a *bar bayta*, he lives rather well – provided, of course, he does what he is told and keeps moving.

### Form and process

Let me turn now to some formal and linguistic characteristics of the letters as a collection and as a series of official utterances.

The letters were contained in a bag or bags -- or perhaps a bag inside a bag. The size of the bag (judged from the one specimen that is well preserved) was nicely calculated to fit the dimensions of a letter when folded. It is a different question whether either one of the bags would have comfortably contained all the letters at once, though Borchartd seems to have contemplated that the bag space exceeded what would be necessary for the surviving letters (raising the possibility that there had once been more letters).<sup>44</sup> In any event, it has been suggested that we are dealing with bags purpose-made for the conveying of letters – in fact, with objects that are in themselves part of the administrative process.

The letters were written on leather. One (Pell.Aram.XIV = Driver 12 = A6.15) is on a piece of leather created by stitching together two bits (one large, one small). It is an exceptionally neat piece of work, when viewed from the upper side at least, but interestingly was used for Varafasha's letter to Nakhthor: Arshama perhaps insisted on more perfect materials.<sup>45</sup> The use of leather recalls the Bactrian Aramaic letters, though in their case we are apparently dealing with rough copies, not final drafts. Use of leather is not kept for best, though inasmuch as some of them are palimpsests I suppose we are contemplating careful use of resources. (Palimpsest writing certainly arises in the case of a scrap of a leather document from Elephantine in D6.1-2; but the date and meaning of this item are problematic topics.) Darius spoke of disseminating the Behistun text on clay and parchment (DB §70), and Ctesias believed in royal (quasi-historiographical) *diphtherai* (688 F5 [32.4]), but most impressively there is a lot of (indirect) evidence for writing on leather in the Persepolis Fortification archive in the shape of references to leather documents and those who write them.<sup>46</sup> I single

<sup>43</sup> On “lancemen” cf. Henkelman 2002. I hope to discuss them elsewhere in the context of the search for soldiers in the Persepolis Fortification archive.

<sup>44</sup> “Ob dieser Sack für das Vorhandene nicht zu gross war, weiss ich nicht. Der Fund könnte also geteilt worden sein” (Borchartd 1933, 47).

<sup>45</sup> There is also a possibility that the odd-man-out stamp-seal *bullā* belonged to this letter.

<sup>46</sup> Documents: PF 323, 1986. Writers: 1808, 1810, 1947, PFa 27, PFNN 2486, PFNN 2493. In PFNN 2493 Dada the writer-on-leather is said in one entry to have “counted the workers (*kurtaš*)”. He is travelling with one Mananda, a “lanceman”, who is also attested both in another entry in this document and in PFNN 1747 as counting workers (in the latter case royal workers). So here we see a parchment-scribe associated with a particular administrative task. Most of the parchment-writers in other texts are “assigned” by Parnaka or Ziššawiš, i.e. are part of the extended staff of the men right at top of the administrative structure reflected in the Fortification archive. – The quite numerous texts referring to animal hides (characteristically going to a treasury) may reflect the arrival of the raw material for parchments.

out particularly an Aramaic epigraph on an unpublished cuneiform tablet (2178-101), reading *nsh ʾl mšk 1* = “copied (literally “removed”) onto a leather document”. An abbreviation of this, just the word *nsh* = “removed”, occurs on nearly 100 other documents, mostly journal and account texts. (I owe this information to Annalisa Azzoni.<sup>47</sup>) We see here evidence of systematic use of leather in parallel to (? in replacement of?) clay. By comparison with Arshama’s letters these would be relatively utilitarian documents, as would much else that is reflected in the sources cited in n.46; the use of leather in these contexts as well is striking. It is, in any event, certain that the carrying material of the BAL bespeaks their Persian, not their Egyptian, documentary environment.

The letters when written were characteristically folded more than once to produce a relatively narrow strip on which an address and content-summary was written and to which a seal was then applied. The protocol is similar in the Bactrian Aramaic letters, though there is one irritating difference: the Bactrian letters sometimes carry dates; the BAL, alas, never do. Perhaps this difference reflects the differentially public character of the respective sets of letters – though not everyone is sure about the public/private divide in the Bactrian material either. One BAL (Pell.Aram.VIII = A6.9) was not folded in the standard way, and may perhaps have been rolled. Since the letter in question is Nakhthor’s “passport”, a document that required frequent opening, this makes sense.<sup>48</sup> A further speculation is that Bulla 8 (which has no sign on the back of having been impressed on a folded letter and has an unusual string arrangements) might be the seal that was associated with A6.9. A certainty is that there was no external address / subject summary. This too makes sense in the circumstances.

Some of the letters open with respectful greeting formulae (“I send you abundant greetings of welfare and strength”; sometimes expanded to continue “And now it is well with me here; may it also be well with you there” or “Here it is well with me; also there may the gods grant you welfare”). Some do not. This is again a phenomenon reportedly visible in the Bactrian documents. Driver (1965, 44-45) thought the formulae had a Persian allure, but Whitehead was unpersuaded (1974, 254; 1978, 134).

A number of the letters also end with a particular, more procedural formula, which records that so-and-so knew the order, while someone else was the scribe. The recurrence of such a formula *mutatis mutandis* in A6.2 (Arshama’s letter about the boat), the Bactrian letters, an early fifth century Demotic satrapal letter to the Khnum priests of Elephantine and numerous letter-orders at Persepolis makes a link between the manner of correspondence in the public and private sphere. There is no doubt that these subscriptions are related to the multiplicity of languages in use (Persian, Aramaic, Demotic, Elamite) and the distinctions between the authorisation, drafting and actual writing of a document, some but not necessarily all of which functions will thus be recorded as performed by a particular individual (see Tavernier 2008). We are very close to administrative process here, and it is a process in the course of which the wishes of a person in authority, expressed orally in Persian, are transmuted into an authorised written form in another language. It is therefore interesting that the subscriptions are *not* found in A6.3-6.7 and A6.14-16. What A6.3-7 have in

<sup>47</sup> Published examples include PF 1955, 2005, 2075, 2084.

<sup>48</sup> This observation was already made in Whitehead 1974, 14 n.1, 60, 157 n.2. He draws attention to the “open letter” in *Nehemiah* 6.5, a missive from Sanballat (in his own hand) to Nehemiah, accusing the latter of rebellion and asking for the fifth time for a meeting – clearly a different sort of context from A6.9. It has been variously suggested that Sanballat wanted to ensure that the threatening content of the letter was widely disseminated or was expressing contempt for Nehemiah (since a letter to such a person ought to have been properly folded, sealed and bagged).

common is being addressed to Artavant; and A6.14-16 are not written by Arshama. So the subscription only appears when Arshama writes and it is to people other than Artavant. In some sense the annotation – or the substantive process it represents – marks the document as comparatively “official” and gives it an allure of formality (even potentially threatening formality?) that is inappropriate in the other cases. It is also interesting that two of the people who “know this order” appear or may appear elsewhere. Bagasrava brought Hinzani to Susa, while Artavaya perhaps recurs as (a) Artahaya, the author of a respectful letter to Nakhthor (A6.16) about what appears to be a private matter, and (b) the person mentioned in the Demotic Arshama text from Saqqara (Smith & Martin 2010) in the phrase “Artaya knows this order”: this is not in a subscription but seems to be part of Arshama’s citation of one of his own letter-orders. Since the Saqqara document belongs in the satrapal part of Arshama’s activity, it looks as though elements of his secretariat operate wherever needed. That makes sense, since we are dealing here with practicalities of authorised (and filed?) communication that will apply equally to any context in which Arshama cares that things are done right and in accordance with his wishes. There is perhaps a further small reflection of that cross-over in the occasional presence of Demotic annotations in the BAL (A6.11-A6.12); once the subject-content annotation is in Demotic instead of in Aramaic, and twice the single name Hotephep appears. These are all documents for which Rašta is named as scribe, but since he did not actually write all, or perhaps any, of them (the handwriting varies), the bits of demotic must emanate from someone else.

### Iranian vocabulary in BAL

I end with a different sort of linguistic point. Readers of the BAL (as of other Egyptian Aramaica) quickly become conscious of the intrusion of Iranian words. Some of these plainly reflect facets of administration or process that naturally remained in the master language: *pithfa* for rations / provisions, *hamarakara* for accountants, *garda* for workers are reasonably obvious cases. (Note that, so far as the last is concerned, its Babylonian equivalent *gardu* is pre-eminently associated with the Crown Prince Estate in Nippur, indicating that it is a word that, outside the heartland anyway, belongs to a specially delimited realm of work – which is a conclusion appropriate to BAL as well.) Another example, from the military rather than administrative sphere, is *handaiza*, a term alluding to the concentration of troops in a particular place, which is simply dropped into an Aramaic text as a grammatically unadapted technical term.

The question is, how much further can one take this? The workshop on Language and Empire will perhaps tackle this issue more systematically. I shall just mention a small number of possible cases.

Nakhthor is told in A6.9 to get his rations “according to the *\*advan-* (route) from province to province until he reaches Egypt” – and not to expect to go on being fed if he stays somewhere more than a day. Is this just saying “whichever road he happens to follow” (but only if he keeps moving) or does the use of an Iranian term hint that he will be using a particular established – and administratively defined / controlled – route? In other words, is the word Iranian because the concept is administrative?<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Greenfield 1982, 10-11 postulates a connection between *\*advana-* and later Aramaic *'awana*, which means “station, dwelling, resting place (including in funerary sense)” in most cases, but in Babylonian Aramaic is limited to references to measurement of distance (by so-and-so-many stations) or reference to a place where food can be got along the way. All of these uses have resonances with the road as a managed entity, but I do not know how reliable a sign this might be of the associations of *\*advana-* or *'dwn* in the late fifth century BC.

In A6.10 Arshama wants workers of all kinds, *višpazana*, to be acquired for his domains. The Persian word is at home in royal inscriptions (the king rules a world containing all kinds of men) but also in the fortification archive in reference to grain (1223), birds (1747-1749, PFNN 0574, PFNN 0790, PFNN 1544, PFNN 1664, PFNN 1674), horses (PFNN 0726) and indeed workers (PT 79).<sup>50</sup> As with *handaiza*, the word is given no endings in Aramaic, i.e. remains grammatically unnaturalized. That might seem odd for a word with mundane sense (unlike *handaiza*). So one wonders whether “assorted workers” was actually a sort of technical phrase – or cliché – in Persian bureaucratic parlance.

Something similar seems appropriate with *'sprn* = *\*usprna* “in full” and *hd'bgw* = *\*hadabigava-* (“with increment”), in reference to payment of the *mndh* in A6.13; payment of financial dues is an area always liable to create its particular turns of phrase. More remarkable, perhaps, is to find the phenomenon in the sphere of praise and blame – or perhaps not: we have all lived with Quality Assurance long enough to know the lexical formalisation it induces. So when Artahay tells Nakhthor that he is very much to be praised he sticks with the Iranian word *\*patistava-* (A6.16); the errant slaves of A6.3 are to suffer *sraušyata*, “punishment” (perhaps even specifically flogging). And, perhaps most interestingly, both Armapiya and Nakhthor are told that, in the event of further complaints about their behaviour, “you will be strongly questioned and a *gasta* *\*patigama* will be done to you”. *Gasta* and *\*patigama* are certainly two Iranian words but questions have been raised about their meaning and a little discussion is therefore necessary. There are two (in principle separate) issues: (a) how should we translate *gst ptgm* and (b) what does the phrase signify.

*Gasta* is directly attested in OP and can properly be translated “evil”. Like the English word “evil”, it can apparently be used both as a noun and as an adjective.<sup>51</sup> It figures in various royal inscriptions in reference to the evil from which the king wishes to be protected or the evil that the reader should *not* think the command of Ahuramazda to be.<sup>52</sup> This is ideologically high-level stuff, but those drafting the Akkadian and Elamite versions reached for pretty ordinary words for “bad”,<sup>53</sup> and we need not be too surprised at *gasta* re-appearing in satrapal threats – though it would not be a great problem if the word *did* have some special semantic connotations.

Unlike *gasta*, *\*patigama* is not directly attested in OP, but is reconstructed from its reflections in Elamite, Aramaic, Hebrew and Armenian as well as from later forms of Iranian. In texts from or directly related to the Achaemenid era it characteristically

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<sup>50</sup> *Marrīp mišbazana* (so Hinz & Koch 1987, s.v.; Cameron 1948 originally took it as the name of the “Gateway of All Races”), though they are not here called *kurtāš* but *marrīp*. (Oddly A6.10’s phrase, *grd 'mnn wšpzn*, “workers [consisting?] of craftsmen of every sort”, actually has in *'mnn wšpzn* a rather exact parallel to *marrīp mišbazana*.)

<sup>51</sup> See DNa §5 (noun) and §6 (adjective).

<sup>52</sup> DNa §5 and §6, XPh §7, A<sup>2</sup>Sa §3 and AHa (at the end).

<sup>53</sup> In almost all cases the Babylonian equivalent is *bišu* and the Elamite *mušnuk* or *mišnuk*, though in DNa §6 the Babylonian version renders the original more loosely: “let the command of Ahuramazda not seem *gasta*” becomes “let what Ahuramazda commands not cause you annoyance”, using the verb *marāšu*, a very general word for causing concern, annoyance, trouble, illness or the like. (Oddly enough the examples cited in CAD include YOS 3.63, a neo-Babylonian document in which someone complains that his representatives are not doing what they should be. He tells them to give some cattle to Eanna, threatening that otherwise “there will be trouble for you” (*janu inna muhhikunu imarruš*) – very similar to the DNa phrase but also oddly evocative of Arshama threatening Nakhthor with a *gasta patigama*!) None of these translations suggests that in itself *gasta* had a very special set of overtones.

designates something that is said or sent as a “report”, “message”, “answer” or “order”.<sup>54</sup> The suggestion that in Daniel 3.16 and 4.14 it means “affair” or “matter” does not in itself seem specially cogent<sup>55</sup> and the claim could not in any case stand against the unanimous impression of the many other texts that are much more directly relevant to BAL.

In the light of all of this it seems natural to understand *gst ptgm* as referring to some sort of bad verbal communication, and this is reflected in the translations of *gst ptgm yt'bd lk* (literally “*gst ptgm* will be done to you”) as “thou wilt be ... reprimanded” (Driver) or “a harsh word will be directed at you” (Porten-Yardeni). But other translations have, nonetheless, been proposed.

One approach is to change the relationship between *gst* and *ptgm*. This is exemplified by Whitehead’s translation, “sentence will be passed on you for your crime”, in which *gst* is treated as a noun, not an adjective. The argument for this<sup>56</sup> is based on a parallel with *Ecclesiastes* 8.11. That text reads *asher ein na'asah pitgam ma'aseh hara'a meherah*, which is literally something like “because not is-done a *pitgam* of the deed-of-evil quickly” and is normally understood to mean “because sentence against an evil deed is not given / carried out quickly”.<sup>57</sup> The suggestion seems to be that *pitgam ma'aseh hara'a* is actually a reflection of *gst ptgm*<sup>58</sup> and therefore dictates how the latter phrase ought to be translated. *Ecclesiastes* certainly reached its current form late enough for this to be possible, but I cannot help feeling that, since *gasta \*patigama* is an Iranian phrase (and one used by an Iranian speaker, viz. Arshama, albeit transmitted through an Aramaic environment) and since *gasta* can certainly be a adjective, we are entitled to wonder whether we need the Hebrew Bible to explain it to us – or at least whether it does so reliably.

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<sup>54</sup> Elamite: *battikama(š)*, appears in many Persepolis Fortification texts in the local version of the letter-subscriptions discussed above. In that context its effective Aramaic equivalent is *t'm*, another word for “order”. Egyptian Aramaic: B8.8, D1.28, D1.32, D7.39. All these texts are very fragmentary, but at least three have allure of officialdom: interrogation and a possible Persian name in B8.8; imprisonment in D1.32; a reference to Pherendates – presumably the early fifth century satrap of that name – in D7.39. The co-presence of *ptgm* and interrogation (the same verb *s'l* found in the first part of the sentence of which *gst ptgm* in BAL) in B8.8 is notable. Bactrian Aramaic: the word apparently appears in A1, describing something issued as a consequence of interrogation (*s'l* again). Biblical Aramaic: *Ezra* 4.17, 5.7, 11, 6.11. (In 6.11 it is contextually synonymous with *t'm*. In 4.17, 5.7, 6.11 the reference is to reports or orders by a king or a satrap, whereas in 5.11 it describes the response of the Jews to satrapal questions about the authorization for temple-reconstruction, though whether that means it has to be translated “answer” is perhaps debatable.) In post-Achaemenid Aramaic and in Syriac *ptgm* becomes a standard and fully naturalized word.

<sup>55</sup> For *Dan*.4.14 see below. In *Dan*.3.16 cannot the text (*la ḥšḥyn 'nh nh 'l dnh ptgm lhtbwtk*) mean “we do not need to respond to this command” or (more plausibly?) “... return a *ptgm* to this” (cf. *Ezra* 5.11) – in both cases preserving the association of *ptgm* with verbal communication? – An apparently similar view, that *gst ptgm* means “bad thing”, is cited by Greenfield 1960 from Kutscher 1944/45 (*nondum vidi*).

<sup>56</sup> Derived from Rabinowitz 1960. (Greenfield 1982 also discussed *Eccles*.8.11 in this context: see below.) Rabinowitz also claimed that *ḥsn tšt'l* means “accused of violence”, rather than “strictly questioned”.

<sup>57</sup> The Massoretic accentuation would give “because sentence is not carried out, the work of evil is quick”, but it is widely agreed that this accentuation must be emended. See e.g. Seow 1997, 286-7.

<sup>58</sup> Rabinowitz 1960, 74 spoke of the author of *Ecclesiastes* using a legal cliché.

A different approach is found in Greenfield 1982, whose view is that *gst ptgm* should be translated “punishment”. The argument runs as follows.<sup>59</sup> (a) The sentence in A6.8 and A6.10 containing the phrase *gst ptgm* (“you will be strictly questioned and a *gasta patigama* will be done to you”) must signify more than reprimand because the letters in question are already reprimands;<sup>60</sup> and even Driver acknowledged that, in “you will pay for what you took and will be questioned”, A6.15 “you will be questioned” might really mean “you will be punished” (though he translated it “called to account”). It follows that *both* parts of the sentence in A6.8 and A6.10 mean “you will be severely punished”. (b) *Ecclesiastes* 8.11 indirectly demonstrates that *gst ptgm* ‘*bd*’ means to “execute punishment”. (c) *Daniel* 4.14 seems to mean (fairly literally) “by decree (*zgrt*) of the watchers (was) the *patigama* and (by?) the word (*m’mr*) of the wise (was) the *š’lt*” Since the reference of this sentence is to the preceding dream-vision description of Nebuchadnezzar’s punishment, both *ptgm* and *s’lt* must mean “penalty” or “punishment”; and, since the co-appearance of *ptgm* and the root *slt* recalls A6.8 and A6.10, the passage confirms that those texts must work in the same way.

But this argument is not decisively cogent. (a) In 6.8 and A6.10 Arshama is indeed criticizing Nakhthor, but he is also offering him another chance to get things right. There is nothing about the logic of the situation that precludes that the phrase means “you will be questioned and a *gasta patigama* will be done to you” – two separate elements of a future eventuality – or that the second of those elements consists of some sort of more formal critical statement. Similarly the crucial sentence in A6.15 says what will happen in the future if Nakhthor does not do what Virafsha is now telling him to do; and what will happen is that he *will* return the wine and grain that is in contention (i.e. Virafsha’s current instruction *will* eventually be enforced) *and* that he will undergo something further. That something might be punishment – or it might be further interrogation or accounting (with, no doubt, the prospect of punishment). The logic of the situation does not require one rather than the other, and the lexical meaning of *tšt’l* points to the latter.<sup>61</sup> Since *tšt’l* in A6.15 does not have to mean “punished”, the argument that *gst ptgm* must also mean “punished” (on the grounds that “punished and reprimanded” would be bathetic) does not work. (b) The claim here is that in *Ecclesiastes* 8.11 the Hebrew phrase ‘*sh ptgm*’ is an abbreviated equivalent of Aramaic phrase *gst ptgm* ‘*bd*’. But neither this nor anything else establishes that *ptgm* cannot mean “sentence” or that we are forced to abandon the association of *ptgm* and verbal utterance.<sup>62</sup> (c) In *Daniel* 4.14 Greenfield himself concedes that *ptgm* might be “sentence” and there seems no obvious reason why *s’lt* should not be “accounting”. The fact the preceding verses give a metaphorical (dream-vision) account of Nebuchadnezzar’s punishment does not rule out the possibility that this verse is entirely

<sup>59</sup> To some extent this is an interpretative gloss on Greenfield’s discussion, which is succinct and slightly obscure at some points.

<sup>60</sup> Grelot 1972, 305 n.d. makes a similar point and translates *gst ptgm* as “une sanction”, though he continues to think that the first part of the sentence means something different (“tu en rendras compte”).

<sup>61</sup> For the word (here in the form *š’ylt*) in a slightly different procedural context (and one that is more plainly formally legal) cf. B7.2: 6. Here too it means “question” or “call to account”, though Rabbinowitz 1958 gave it the more specific sense “accuse”.

<sup>62</sup> Note that Greenfield’s point about *Ecclesiastes* 8.11 is different from Whitehead’s (above p.16). Whitehead is concerned with the relationship between *pitgam* and *ma’aseh hara’a* and does not doubt that *pitgam* means “sentence” (i.e. is a species of verbal utterance), whereas Greenfield is wanting *pitgam* to become “punishment”. But usage of the verb ‘*asah* (do, make) does not seem to require this.

concerned with the decreeing of that punishment. If there is an element of tautology, it is not one about which Greenfield could complain, since he himself is content to postulate tautology.

If, then, we should stick with the basic translation “bad report/order” for *gst ptgm*, there is still the (separate) question of what this signifies. Is this a threat to issue a formal reprimand or to issue an order for Nakthor to be punished in some particular fashion (the nature of which would be specified in the *ptgm*)? Granted that *ptgm* connotes verbal utterance, what sort of utterance is it – statement or order?

One thing that has influenced answers to this is the verb *yt'bd*. In both A6.8 and A6.10 the threat is that “a bad word will be done to you”. “Done” is rather non-specific, but the fact that it is a doing-word, not a saying-word, might seem to indicate that something more than saying is involved – something in which Nakthor will be the victim of hostile *action* not just of hostile words. But a moment’s reflection suggests that this is not necessarily correct. One could just as well hold that *'bd* is a relatively neutral word and takes its content precisely from the saying content of *ptgm*. To treat *yt'bd* as settling the issue between “reprimand” and “order-for-punishment” (*alias* “sentence”) is to beg the question.

In A6.8 and A6.10 *gst ptgm* occurs together with a threat of interrogation or being called to account (*t'stl*). That conjunction may have occurred in the now fragmentary B8.8; the document certainly contained references to interrogation and used the word *ptgm*, but the inclusion of both ideas in a single sentence (so that someone is questioned and a *ptgm* is then uttered) is the result of editorial restoration. A more effective parallel occurs in one of the Bactrian letters, where the result of questioning seems to be the uttering of a *ptgm*. But it is not a *gst ptgm* and its precise content is not clear. The word *ptgm* is used because it is an appropriate word for any authoritative utterance by a satrap. That is true in Arshama’s case as well, but it does not get us any further. One might be inclined in the light of evidence from Saqqara and Bactria to say that there is a certain formulaic (or cliché) quality to the conjunction of *s'l* and *ptgm*.<sup>63</sup> But that only underlines the extent to which the force of the cliché in this particular case depends on the precise import of adding *gst* to *ptgm*.

Because *gst ptgm* (unlike *t'stl*) is Iranian it is tempting to take the observation about formulaic quality a step further and identify *gst ptgm* as a cliché or technical term in its own right, one whose content is a given for the author and recipient of the letter but not necessarily capable of being inferred by an outside observer. The use of *yt'bd* (“will be done”) rather than *yt'mr* (“will be said”) could certainly be seen as another sign of this: the more *gst ptgm* is (virtually) a code for something, the easier it is to understand that the operative verb means “do” or “execute”. At the same time, though tempting, this approach is not perhaps absolutely necessary. Part of what is at issue here is the question with which this section of the paper started: what is the nature of the “rules” that govern importation of Iranian words and phrases into the Aramaic text? Should we start from the presumption that what causes the composer of the Aramaic text to retain Iranian phraseology rather than translating it is normally that it has some technical quality? I think the answer to this is essentially in the affirmative, but that does not preclude occasional exceptions or half-exceptions. Is it possible, for example, that in the present case the *point* about *gst ptgm* is that it is opaque, a turn of phrase that might mean reprimand or might portend something

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<sup>63</sup> This also, incidentally, draws one’s attention to the distinction between A6.8/10 and A6.15. In the latter case Virafsha threatens Nakthor with interrogation but not the utterance of a *ptgm* (bad or otherwise). Is that because he actually has no real authority over Nakthor (who is Arshama’s *pqyd*) and therefore feels inhibited from threatening the determination of the case (in the form of a *ptgm*) that is Arshama’s sole prerogative?

nastier -- a choice about which Nakhthor would be (precisely) in the dark. The best argument against this is probably that Arshama uses it twice. But perhaps that only proves that it is a cliché still in the making.

The upshot seems to be, then, that we can translate *gst ptgm* but not absolutely sure what it means. The strongest argument in favour of “order for punishment” is that the alternative, “formal reprimand”, seems to entail that Nakhthor is a functionary with a service-record on file into which some sort of formal black mark can be entered. I do not find it impossible to imagine that there were parts of the administrative environment in which such a thing can be envisaged. But I am unsure whether someone like Nakhthor belongs in one of those parts.<sup>64</sup> In the spirit of the suggestion made at the end of the previous paragraph one could, of course, speculate that, in threatening Nakhthor with a *gst ptgm*, Arshama was deliberately mixing categories and thereby leaving his *pqyd* uncertain about what he really meant. I suspect, however, that such speculation would be thought unreasonably imaginative. The safer conclusion is probably that Arshama was threatening to issue an order for Nakhthor to be punished.

### **Envoi**

A small linguistic oddity of the critique of Nakhthor in A6.10 is that, although the letter is formally addressed just to him, the author intermittently uses second person plural verbs and does so in particular when issuing the threat to question and “do a *gst ptgm*”. There is no polite plural in Aramaic, so the complaint and threat embrace more people than are explicitly present in the document. It is, so to say, Nakhthor and his staff who are in the firing line. Whether that staff includes e.g. Kenzasirma and the accountants who are his co-addressees in other letters is impossible to say. Given the imputation in A6.14 that the responsibilities of a *pqyd* might be carried out by a brother or son (and the fact that the function of *pqyd* might pass from father to son), the unspoken objects of threat might even include family members. But there is perhaps a wider issue here. The locution “PN and his companions” (*akkayaše*) is very frequent in the Persepolis texts, and has its analogues in Aramaic ones (Kenzasirma and his colleagues the accountants, for example, but also Jedaniah and his colleagues the priests in Elephantine in A4.7). It is so familiar that even the miscreant slaves in A6.3 are resumed as “Psamshekhasi and his colleagues”, for all the world as though they were an official body. They are not, of course, and it is a useful reminder that there may be many cases in which “and his colleagues” should not be over-reified – or to put it another way the use of the English word “colleague” introduces inappropriate overtones. All the same, in the administrative world individuals are not always entirely individual. Arshama has his secretariat, who do not always get their names into the documents. Nakhthor has an entourage who share his vulnerability but are only visible in a verbal ending. It is a complex world and there may be many more complexities yet to be spotted. The purpose of this paper has been to give a taste – if not a surfeit – of some of them.

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<sup>64</sup> In A6.10 the threat encompassed people besides Nakhthor (see below), but that is not true in A6.8 so the appropriateness of a black mark on a personal file does have to be assessed in relation to Nakhthor.

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