

Э.Ш. Хуршудян, *Государственные институты парфянского и сасанидского Ирана*, Алматы 2015, 400 с. ISBN 978-601-06-2009-5

Eduard Khurshudian is an author of the numerous works dedicated to the history of Armenia during the period of Iranian domination especially during the Sasanian.<sup>1</sup> He presented his interest in the problems of Iranian administration already in 1990 in his doctoral thesis submitted in Russian Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg.<sup>2</sup>

In 2015 a book by Eduard Khurshudian was published, discussing Parthian and Sasanid administrative organization: *Государственные институты парфянского и сасанидского Ирана*. The work is based on the translation into Russian of greatly important monograph of this Author published in 1998 in German.<sup>3</sup> It is not merely translation though. The discussed work has been supplemented with the results of the groundbreaking research of Sasanian sigillography of R. Gyselen.<sup>4</sup>

In the book *State institutions of Parthian and Sasanian Iran* Khurshudian presents the organization of bureaucratic system of Iran and analyzes particular administrative titles. The work is divided into 7 chapters, preserving the basic plan of the German edition. The first chapter *Governors and Rulers of the provinces* discusses the range of power of: *Bidaxš*, *Pāygōspān*, *Marzbān* and *Kanārang* (p. 21-100). The second chapter *Higher Ranks of the central civil administration* is dedicated mainly to analyzing of the functions of *hazārūft* (p. 101-119), somehow supplements with the information on particular counsellors (p. 120-131). The following chapters contain the presentation of the palace administration (III: *Higher officials of the court/palace*, p. 132-150), the officers responsible for financial matters (IV: *Financial officials*, p. 151-174) and organization of managing the cities (V: *City administration*, p. 175-194). Particular attention attracts chapter VI *Military administration* (p. 195-218) containing the most updated research of the organization of the Sasanian army. The last chapter is dedicated to the activities of widely-understood chancellory (p. 219-246). The work contains *Bibliography* (p. 252-290), *List of Iranian kings* (p. 360-369) and *Index* (p. 375-395). The novelty in comparison to German edition is thorough *Appendix* (p. 297-369). The Author has placed there the tables of the administrative titles known from sigillography together with literature and what is important also with illustrations.

The work was written based on rich and diversified source material. The Author concentrates his analyze on competent linguistic analyze of the terminology of Iranian administrative nomenclature. The research of etymology allows Khurshudian to determine the origin, the range of power and mutual relations of particular offices in the Sasanian administrative hierarchy.

Detailed remarks:

When analyzing the titles present in the early Sasanian inscriptions (ŠKZ, NPi) Khurshudian lists the house of Spāhbed and states: “рода Спахбедов здесь приводится, очевидно, название рода, а не должность”.<sup>5</sup> There was no Ispāhbudhān /Aspāhbed/ Spāhbed family. In my opinion Ispāhbudhān clan is a lateral branch of the Sūrēn one in fact. Ispāhbudhān /Aspāhbed/ Spāhbed is not the family name but rather mistaken form of the *spāhbed* title. On the basis of text, Hormozd (IV) killed the great *asparapet*, Parthian and Pahlaw, who was descended from the criminal Anak’s offsprings.<sup>6</sup> He was the father of Xusrō II’s mother and two sons, Beštām and Bendōy. Armenian tradition generally names the murderer as Anak, a member

<sup>1</sup> E. KHURSHUDIAN, *Sassanian coins of Armenia*, Almaty 2002; Э.Ш. ХУРШУДЯН, *Армения и Сасанидский Иран*, Алматы 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Э.Ш. ХУРШУДЯН, *Парфянские и сасанидские административные институты*, Автореферат кандидатской диссертации, Ленинград 1990.

<sup>3</sup> E. KHURSHUDIAN, *Die Parthischen und Sasanidischen Verwaltungsinstitutionen: nach den literarischen and epigraphischen Quelle. 3 Jh. v. Chr. – 7 Jh. n. Chr.*, Jerewan 1998.

<sup>4</sup> Э.Ш. ХУРШУДЯН, *Государственные институты ...*, p. 275-276.

<sup>5</sup> Э.Ш. ХУРШУДЯН, *Государственные институты ...*, p. 51.

<sup>6</sup> Sebeos (1999) 14.

of the Parthian Sūrēn family.<sup>7</sup> By analogy it should be pointed out here that some source authors like Procopius<sup>8</sup> and Zachariah<sup>9</sup> mistakenly believe that the name of the Parthian clan Mehrān was a military title.

Discussing the powers of *hazārbed/ hazārufī* Khurshudian states: “При первых Сасанидах хазарбед принадлежал к членам царского дома”.<sup>10</sup> This idea does not seem to be well founded. Mehr-Narseh Sūrēn was *wuzurg framādār* during the reign of four Sasanian kings (Yazdgerd I, Bahrām V, Yazdgerd II and Pērōz).<sup>11</sup> This title given in text *Sūr ī saxwan*<sup>12</sup> is placed directly below the King and the princes of the blood. This is corroborated by the evidence of Ammianus Marcellinus saying about high rank of house of Sūrēn.<sup>13</sup> The dominant role in the young King’s court played *hazārufī* Suxrā of the clans Kārin, his maternal uncle.<sup>14</sup> Because it is impossible to determine the origin of the personages using that title in 3rd century we cannot conclude *argumentum ex silentio*, that they were the members of the royal family. Quite contrary, if in later periods the office belonged to the members of the Parthian clans it should be assumed that already in 3rd century they belonged to the families who supported the first Sasanian rulers in the struggle for the crown against the Arsacids.

In summary the enormous contribution of E. Khurshudian to the research of Parthian and Sasanian Iran must be highlighted. It must be pointed out how difficult was illustrating of the fluent transitions of administrative organization throughout nine centuries. This monograph will be a ground for further research on Iranian administrative system. Regretfully the book has not been yet published in English which would enhance its availability for the students of the history of Iran.

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<sup>7</sup> Agathangelos (1976) 13; Moses Khorenats’i (1978) 2.74.

<sup>8</sup> Proc. Bell. (1914–1928) I 13. 16: *But one general held command over them all, a Persian, whose title was "mirranes" (for thus the Persians designate this office), Perozes by name.*

<sup>9</sup> Zachariah (1919–1924) 9. 3: *the mihran and the marzbans assembled an army and came against Dara.*

<sup>10</sup> Э.Ш. ХУРШУДЯН, *Государственные институты ...*, p. 104.

<sup>11</sup> Tabarī (1999) 866, 868, 871, 872; P. POURSHARIATI, *Decline and Fall of the Sasanian Empire: The Sasanian-Parthian Confederacy and the Arab Conquest of Iran*, London / New York 2008, p. 60-70; R. GYSELEN, *Great-Commander (wuzurg-faramadār) and Court Counsellor (dar-andarzbed) in the Sasanian Empire (224-651): The Sigillographic Evidence*, Rome 2008.

<sup>12</sup> T. DARYAEE, *The Middle Persian Text Sūr ī Saxwan and the late Sasanian Court*, „Res Orientales”, 17, 2007, 65-72, esp. 68.

<sup>13</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus (1978) 30. 2. 5: *Surena potestatis secundae post regem*; K. MAKSYMIUK, *The Parthian nobility in Xusrō I Anōšīrvān court*, in: *Elites in the Ancient World*, v. 2, eds. D. Okoń, P. Briks, Szczecin 2015, p. 191.

<sup>14</sup> Ebn Esfandiār (1905) 94-95; Firdawsī (1915) 38. 1-2, 39. 2-3, 40. 1-2; Tabarī (1999) 877, 880, 885; K. MAKSYMIUK, *The Pahlav-Mehrān family faithful allies of Xusrō I Anōšīrvān*, „Метаморфозы истории”, 6, 2015, p. 168-169.

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