

## Ἀργαπέτης

The title ἀργαπέτης recurs just twice in the territories ‘beyond the Euphrates’ in Roman times. We find it for the first time on a papyrus document from Dura Europos and dating back to 121 A. D.,<sup>205</sup> i.e. to a period during which the Hellenistic town, a centre of defence of the Parapotamic stretch of the ‘King’s Highway,’ was firmly in Parthian hands.<sup>206</sup> Then the term recurs for the second time in a group of Palmyrene inscriptions all referring to the same figure, Iulius Aurelius Septimius Vorōd,<sup>207</sup> and dating back to the 60s of the 3rd century.

This figure was one of the closest collaborators of Odainath, the most important person in Palmyra after the members of the family of the *rš dy tdmwr*, the Palmyrene man we know about from most inscriptions, neglecting the usurper Vaballath. We are thus not surprised that his figure should have attracted the attention of those interested in the Palmyrene vicissitudes. What is actually astonishing on the contrary is the fact that scholars interested in Palmyra have reflected very little on the function being discussed here and attested in three out of the nine inscriptions where Vorōd is mentioned.

A good example of the approach followed by scholars dealing with Palmyra is offered by Udo HARTMANN. He has extensively and deeply analysed the career of this figure,<sup>208</sup> although with regard to the title of ἀργαπέτης he limits himself to affirming irrefutably:

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<sup>205</sup> PDura 20, l. 4.

<sup>206</sup> MILLAR 1998a.

<sup>207</sup> PIR S 350; PLRE I 981. The same person is called also Septimius Vorōd or Iulius Septimius Vorōd; hereafter just Vorōd.

<sup>208</sup> HARTMANN 2001, 203-211 in particular, but also elsewhere in his work.

Der parthische Titel “Argapet” kann den Kommandanten oder Gouverneur einer Festung bzw. Stadt bezeichnen. Odaenathus übergab damit dem Vorodes die gesamte militärische und zivile Verantwortung in Palmyra.<sup>209</sup>

The evaluation of Vorōd’s career has been usually made regardless of any global evaluation of this Iranian title, thus invariably ignoring those works that have been dedicated to this first Parthian and then Sassanian aulic term. The ways followed by scholars in Iranology on the one hand and scholars in ancient near-eastern Roman history on the other have become more and more divergent and autonomous.

The history of the interpretation of the Iranian term *hargbed* started in the 70s of the 19th century when Theodor NÖLDEKE tried to explain the title *argabedh*, which occurred in the *Histories* by Ṭabarī,<sup>210</sup> as referred to the eunuch Tīrē, *argabedh* of Dārābgird, fortress in Fārs, where the very young Ardašīr stayed after his father Pābag had placed him in the care of Gōzihr, king of Istaxr. NÖLDEKE translated the term “Castellherr.” This time the recurrences of this word were a few and almost all were restricted to translations of the word into Semitic languages, particularly in the Jerusalem Talmud (*ʿrqptʿ*), in the Babylonian Talmud (*ʿlqptʿ*) and into Syriac (*ʿlqptʿ*),<sup>211</sup> obviously besides its translation into Palmyrene *ʿrgbtʿ*/Gk ἀργαπέτης or into Greek using various and more or less correct forms, but all this in late sources dating back to periods after the 5th century A. D.

Also MOMMSEN uses the words by NÖLDEKE and LEVY:

Die zahlreichen Inschriften des Septimius Vorodes gesetzt ... 262-267 bezeichnen ihn sämtlich als kaiserlichen Procurator zweiter Klasse, daneben aber theils mit dem Titel ἀργαπέτης, welches persische, aber auch bei den Juden gangbare Wort ‘Burgherr,’ ‘Vicekönig’ bedeutet, theils als δικαιοδότης τῆς μητροκολωνίας, was ohne Zweifel wenn nicht sprachlich so doch sachlich dasselbe Amt ist.<sup>212</sup>

<sup>209</sup> HARTMANN 2001, 208. The corresponding n. 163 explains the problem even better: the only work by an iranist he cites to explain the origin and the function of an Iranian title is the brief note by Richard FRYE to the edition of PDura 20, about which cf. *infra*.

<sup>210</sup> NÖLDEKE 1870; 1879, 5 n. 1.

<sup>211</sup> About the occurrences of the term in the various semitic languages cf. LEVY 1864, 90; TELEGI 1935, 228, 15; GREENFIELD 1987, 258b; SHAKED 1987, 260; CIANCAGLINI forthcoming, s. v., *ʿlqptʿ*.

<sup>212</sup> MOMMSEN 1894b, 434 n. 1.

The translation by NÖLDEKE very soon prevailed and more or less contemporaneously Christian BARTHOLOMAE and Ferdinand JUSTI adopted and refined his etymology.<sup>213</sup> In their opinion the term represented a compound composed of a non-attested OIr. \**arka* ('citadel, fortress') that later generated *arka* + *pati*- ('sir, lord'). According to JUSTI OIr. \**arka* was probably a late term that penetrated the lexicon of the Iranian courts as a loan-word from Lat. *arx*. At the same time Wilhelm DITTENBERGER, commenting the term ἄργαπέτην in *OGIS* 645, 4 (*PAT* 0289 = *CIS* II 3943 = *Inv.* III 6 = *IGRR* III 1043), wrote:

In exemplo lingua indigenarum composito *argabētâ* legitur, media *b* pro tenui *p* substituta secundum illam proprietatem linguarum Iranicarum de qua dixi [...] Nam Persicam origine esse vocem cum iam complures homines docti suspicati essent, luculentissime demonstravit Th. Nöldeke [...]; composita est ex *arg* (*arx*) et *pati* (dominus).

Two main difficulties existed in the interpretations of the term offered by NÖLDEKE and JUSTI: first it was most improbable that the Latin term *arx* would reach the ears of the Parthian and then Sassanian courts so early: a Roman frontier fortress would be called *castellum*, not *arx*;<sup>214</sup> second, examples for an early use of NP *arg* (or *ark*) were lacking. This term is unknown to Book Pahlavi and also to Manichaean Middle Persian, notwithstanding BARTHOLOMAE's claim.<sup>215</sup> Here the term *rk*, which recurs many times in the *Mahrnāmag*, will actually not be translated with 'Burg,' as the first editor of the text did,<sup>216</sup> but simply refers to a toponym.<sup>217</sup>

The etymology from NP *arg* might have been acceptable, with some caution, when JUSTI and BARTHOLOMAE were writing their works to explain the etymology of the term as a loan-word not deriving from Latin *arx*, but from Gk ἄργα, with the metathesis usual in *r*-groups, as SZEMERÉNYI has rightly

<sup>213</sup> BARTHOLOMAE 1904, 191 s. v. \**arka-dray*-. The year after a very long review by JUSTI 1905, 107 to the masterpiece by BARTHOLOMAE appeared. In it a different translation of the word was suggested. The proposal by JUSTI was accepted by BARTHOLOMAE 1906, 116.

<sup>214</sup> In *ŠKZ*, *dizpat* is actually translated with *καστελλοφύλαξ*, cf. HARNACK 1970, 540-544, particularly 542 and n. 20.

<sup>215</sup> BARTHOLOMAE 1916, 16; TELEGDI 1935, 228; WIDENGREN 1956, 158; CHAUMONT 1962, 12; HARNACK 1970, 542. Cf. on this problem SZEMERÉNYI 1975, 368-369.

<sup>216</sup> MÜLLER 1913.

<sup>217</sup> HENNING 1938, 565-566; SZEMERÉNYI 1975, 369. Cf. now also DURKIN-MEISTERERNST 2004, s. v.

emphasized.<sup>218</sup> It was possible by then to maintain that it might represent a late loan-word that had slowly caught on at the Sassanian court in late antiquity, but the following edition of the inscription of Paikuli and the discovery of the papyrus of Dura Europos compelled scholars to date the introduction of the term to the court of Ctesiphon at the height of the Parthian era, even at the beginning of the 2nd century A. D. It is highly improbable that JUSTI and BARTHOLOMAE would have maintained their etymology, if they had known these new recurrences of the term, which unequivocally showed that the original Iranian form was represented by the compound *harg* (and not *arg*) + *pati*.<sup>219</sup> However this incorrect etymology had a wide circulation among scholars of ancient history because of a rash explanation offered by Richard Nelson FRYE in the publication of the parchments of Dura.

Then in 1924 the great royal inscription of Narseh in Paikuli<sup>220</sup> was first published and in it the title MP *hrgwpt* Parth. *hṛkpty* occupies a position of absolute pre-eminence among Sassanian court titles, coming right after the members of the royal family thus ousting the *bidaxš* of the ŠKZ (which at that time had still not been discovered) from that position. The great novelty brought about by this occurrence in the Paikuli-inscription is represented by the fact that for the first time the name is attested in an Iranian language and presents an initial aspiration that admits no graphic ambiguities. The etymology by NÖLDEKE, JUSTI and BARTHOLOMAE from NP *ark* seemed to be definitively defeated, and so HERZFELD first expressed his sceptical position concerning the translation of the title as ‘lord of the castle,’ then proposing the explanation that *arka-* might be ‘the tribute owed by the vassal,’ and that *arkapat* could consequently mean ‘chief collector of taxes.’<sup>221</sup> This explanation of the term was not taken up in the following publication of this inscrip-

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<sup>218</sup> SZEMERÉNYI 1975, 374.

<sup>219</sup> Aware of such (ineliminable) difficulty is CHAUMONT 1962, who tries to explain the alternation *harg* / *arg* in this compound in favour of the traditional etymology, but in a completely unconvincing way: cf. *IBID.*, 11: “Interprétation (that by JUSTI) d’autant plus vraisemblable que nulle autre étymologie satisfaisante ne peut lui être valablement opposée.”

<sup>220</sup> HERZFELD 1924; cf. and already HERZFELD 1914. The surveys in Paikuli by HERZFELD took place in 1911 and 1914. Nowadays an Italian mission of the IsIAO headed by Carlo CERETI is operating in that area.

<sup>221</sup> Respectively HERZFELD 1924, 193A; HERZFELD 1947, 128.

tion by HUMBACH and SKJÆRVØ, who refused the etymology from NP *arg* too, without any further discussion.<sup>222</sup>

The discovery in 1929 of PDura 20, an antichretic loan dating back to 121 A. D., where in l. 4 the title ἀρκαπάτης recurs, had the unexpected result of extinguishing the discussion that had been produced until then.

In the reign of the king of kings Arsaces, benefactor, just, manifest god, and friend of Greeks, in the year 368 as the king of kings reckons, but 432 of the former era, on the 26th day of the month Daesius, in the village of Paliga of the subdistrict about Iardas, in the presence of Maetolbaessas, son of Men- and grandson of Menarnaesus, garrison commander and member of the order of first and chiefly-honoured friends and bodyguards, and of the witnesses who sign themselves below. A loan has been made by Phraates the eunuch, *arkapates*, one of the people of Manesus son of Phraates, member of the order of the *batesa* and of the Freeman, tax collector and governor of Mesopotamia and Parapotamia and ruler of the Arabs, to Barlaas, son of Thathaeus and grandson of Ablaeus [etc.]<sup>223</sup>

In 1931 Mikhail I. ROSTOFTZEFF and C. BRADFORD WELLES presented the new document to the learned public in a brilliant and long essay, thus commenting the term we are talking about:

The meaning of the title *arkapates* we know very well indeed. In the times of the Arsacids an *arkapat*, *argapet*, or *hargupat* was a hereditary holder of a city, a kind of feudal lord. Later in the times of the Sassanians, *arkapat* was the holder of the highest rank in the Empire. We know many *arkapatai* of the first type; i. e., of the Parthian period. One is Septimius Vorodes, the ruler of Palmyra in the troubled times of the third century. Note that he was both a Roman procurator and an Iranian *arkapates*. The other is the ancestor (by adoption) of the Sassanian dynasty [...]

It is more difficult to decide whether the title ἀρκαπάτης, as given to Phraates, implies a real office, corresponding more or less to the office of a

<sup>222</sup> SKJÆRVØ 1983, 95: 'an official.'

<sup>223</sup> PDura 20, 1-5: Βασιλευόντος βασιλέως βασιλέων Ἀρσάκου εὐεργέτου, δικαίου, ἐπιφανοῦς καὶ φιλέλληνος, ἔτους ἡξτ' ὡς ὁ βασιλεὺς βασιλι[έων] | ἄγει, ὡς δὲ πρότερον βλ[υ'], μηνὸς Δαισίου ἕκτη ἐπ' εἰκάδι, ἐν Παλίγαι κώμῃ τῆς περὶ Ἰάρδαν ὑπαρχείας, ἐπὶ Μητολβαίσσα Μην. [.] | ΤΟΣΔΕ . Ο Ὑ τοῦ Μηναρναίου, φρουρά]ρχου καὶ τῶν πρώτων καὶ προτιμωμένων φίλων καὶ τῶν σωματοφυλάκων, καὶ τ[ῶν] | ὑπογε[γρ]αμμένων μα[ρ]τύρων. ἐ[δάν]εισεν Φραάτης εὐνοῦχος, ἀρκαπάτης, τῶν παρὰ Μανήσου τοῦ Φραάτου τῶν βάττησα καὶ τ[ῶν] || ἐλευθέ[.] .]ρων, παρα[λ]ήπτου καὶ στρατηγοῦ Μεσοποταμίας καὶ Παραποταμίας καὶ Ἀραβάρχου, Βαράκai Θεαταίου τοῦ Ἀβλαίου ....

phrurarch, or a sort of fief — a hereditary hold on a certain district handed over to the man by the king, or by his minor feudal lord. I am inclined to assume the latter in the case of Phraates. His fief he probably received from his patron, Manesus. As feudal lord of Paliga, he was probably a rich and influential man, and it was a trifle for him to buy over 400 drachmas the services of Barlaas.<sup>224</sup>

Many years went by before the parchments of Dura Europos were integrally published in a definitive edition. On that occasion the editors asked Richard FRYE for an opinion about the term and he affirmed:

We may tentatively conclude that the title ἀρχαπάτης originally meant the military commander of a (frontier?) fortress in Parthian times. With the rise in importance of the fortress in states such as Palmyra, Hatra etc., the title grew in importance. Under Ardašir and Shapur, the title had not reached the Sassanian court. After the capture of Valerian and close contact with Palmyra and other states in Shapur's westwards campaigns, the title came to be known at the court, and by the time of Narseh it had become an important title of the Sassanian court.<sup>225</sup>

In order to consider FRYE's explanation as acceptable it was necessary to think of the aspirated form occurring in the Paikuli-inscription as a spurious variant, maybe deriving from an hypercorrectness and thus to prefer the form without initial aspiration. That is exactly what both Marie-Louise CHAUMONT and David HARNACK<sup>226</sup> did, the latter even more explicitly.

Meanwhile, already since long before the definitive publication of PDura 20 Iranian philology had distanced itself from the etymology and the meaning the word had been attributed by NÖLDEKE and BARTHOLOMAE. ERNST HERZFELD traced back the compound *arka-* to Akkadian *ilku* which designated the obligation contracted with a feudal lord in the Assyrian feudal system.<sup>227</sup> In many passages Walter Bruno HENNING asserted the derivation of

<sup>224</sup> ROSTOVITZEFF, BRADFORD WELLES 1931, 55-56 and 58.

<sup>225</sup> R. N. FRYE in BRADFORD WELLES, FINK, GILLIAM 1959, 111-112, n. 15. Cf. also additions and corrections in FRYE 1962, 193-194, e 279 n. 56.

<sup>226</sup> CHAUMONT 1962; 1986, much more prudent: cf. 400: "The etymology of the word is uncertain. Two possible meanings have been suggested, fortress commander (cf. New Persian *arg*) and chief tax collector or taxation manager; the former seems much more likely;" HARNACK 1970, 540-544, in partic. 543: "Dem muß entgegengehalten werden einmal, daß im angenommenen Falle \*ἀρχαπάτης und nicht ἀρχαπάτης zu erwarten wäre, ebenso bei Tabarī \*ḥr'ğ (\*ḥarāğ), wofür jeder Hinweis fehlt; sodann zeigen die sicher überlieferten Formen des Titels keinen *h*-Anlaut."

<sup>227</sup> HERZFELD 1947, 128.

*arkapates* from MP *hark/harg* = MP *harāγ* ‘Steuer, Fron.’<sup>228</sup> This same etymology and meaning of the term have been accepted by Philippe GIGNOUX,<sup>229</sup> Oswald SZEMERÉNYI,<sup>230</sup> Rüdiger SCHMITT,<sup>231</sup> Edward KHURSHUDIAN,<sup>232</sup> Philip HUYSE<sup>233</sup> and Claudia CIANCAGLINI.<sup>234</sup>

After defending his interpretation of the term in a short article, FRYE himself radically changed his mind:

There were many officials under the satrap, especially accountants to care for the revenues, *’hmrkr*, the *hamarkār*. The chief collector of taxes was an important official called *hrkpty*, or *rkpty* and *hrgwpt* in Parthian, an office formerly mistakenly interpreted as *argbad* or ‘fortress commander.’ For the Parthian period we have no information about the position of the chief tax collector in the hierarchy, but presumably it was not high and only under the Sassanians does the office gain in importance.<sup>235</sup>

In vain. In the very recent *Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions* the Iranian derivation of the term is actually recognized, but the debate we have set out above is completely ignored. On the basis of a questionable bibliographical selection the meaning of “governor of a city” is taken for granted.<sup>236</sup>

On the basis of the meaning being most closely bound to the paretymology which would give as a result NP *arg*, Vorōd was by most scholars attributed a command over Palmyra also involving extensive military power, while some other scholars, influenced by the above mentioned (philologically groundless) intuition by MOMMSEN, opted for mere civil power for Vorōd which practically coincided with the title of *δικεσοδότης τῆς μητροκολωνείας* that the inscription ascribe to him. The latter position owes much to an important work by Daniel SCHLUMBERGER:

<sup>228</sup> HENNING 1935; 1938, 565-566; 1958, 41 and n. 4.

<sup>229</sup> GIGNOUX 1972.

<sup>230</sup> SZEMERÉNYI 1975, 354-375.

<sup>231</sup> SCHMITT 1982.

<sup>232</sup> KHURSHUDIAN 1998.

<sup>233</sup> HUYSE 1999; 2002, 209-210: “die wahrscheinlichste Deutung wohl die als ‘Chef des Steuerwesens’ ist.”

<sup>234</sup> CIANCAGLINI forthcoming, s. v. *’rgpt*’. She actually translates “chief of the army, general.”

<sup>235</sup> FRYE 1984, 223. TAFAZZOLI 1990, 303, in his analysis of the Sasanian title *arzbed*, continues to maintain that the meaning ‘citadel commander’ is preferable: “Until more conclusive evidence comes to light.”

<sup>236</sup> HOFTIIZER, JONGELING 1995, I, 103, s. v. *argapet*.

Or, comme l'a bien montré Marquardt, le mot *δικαιοδότης* signifie simplement gouverneur. Et l'on sait d'autre part que le terme d'*argapet* désigne, chez les Parthes, le seigneur d'une ville. La pénétration de Mommsen avait déjà reconnu l'équivalence des deux termes. Maintenant que la place de notre inscription dans la carrière de Worōd est fixée il n'est plus possible de douter que le grand historien n'ait vu juste.<sup>237</sup>

Although Vorōd was attributed by scholars either a military or a civil command, all recent researches concerning Palmyra have taken the erroneous meaning of the term *ἀργαπέτης* for granted like e.g. Jean STARCKY and Michal GAWLIKOWSKI,<sup>238</sup> Michael DODGEON and Samuel LIEU,<sup>239</sup> Fergus MILLAR,<sup>240</sup> Eugenia EQUINI SCHNEIDER,<sup>241</sup> Delbert HILLERS and Eleonora CUSSINI,<sup>242</sup> Maurice SARTRE,<sup>243</sup> Udo HARTMANN,<sup>244</sup> Ted KAIZER,<sup>245</sup> Jean-Baptiste YON,<sup>246</sup> Ernst WILL,<sup>247</sup> Michael SOMMER<sup>248</sup> among the most recent and important monographies and articles.

Thus it is necessary to reject any imaginary and alleged military command of Vorōd and to reconstruct this figure's career once more by starting from sure data to be inferred from his titles. Hereafter all known inscriptions where Vorōd is certainly mentioned are listed in chronological order, while any details in the discussions about difficult and controversial specific pas-

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<sup>237</sup> SCHLUMBERGER 1942b, 61.

<sup>238</sup> STARCKY, GAWLIKOWSKI 1985, 60: "gouverneur de la ville."

<sup>239</sup> DODGEON, LIEU 1991, 78: "Gk. *argapetes* = Pers. hargbed, commander of a fort" totally inadequately making reference to the comment to fr. 14 by Petrus Patricius (*FHG* IV, p. 189)

<sup>240</sup> MILLAR 1993, 170; 1998, 477: "garrison-commander."

<sup>241</sup> EQUINI SCHNEIDER 1993, 17: "governatore della città."

<sup>242</sup> HILLERS, CUSSINI 1995, 344, s. v. *'rgbt*: "governor (< Pers. commander of a city Chabot ad *CIS* II 3940)."

<sup>243</sup> SARTRE 1996, 395: "gouverneur."

<sup>244</sup> HARTMANN 2001, 208.

<sup>245</sup> KAIZER 2002, 49 and n. 69: "commander of a fortress."

<sup>246</sup> YON 2002a, 39: "gouverneur de la ville."

<sup>247</sup> WILL 1992, 180: "C'est là un mot iranien bien attesté que l'on traduit par "commandant de la forteresse." WILL 1996, 114.

<sup>248</sup> SOMMER 2005, 168, n. 99: "Stadtvorstehers," 174, n. 131: "Argapet war der Titel der Gouverneure der unter direkter Herrschaft stehenden parthischen Provinzen und Städte."

sages of the texts analysed in this work are reported in the footnotes.<sup>249</sup> The translations offered hereafter are always the results of crasis between the Greek and the Palmyrene versions of the inscriptions, and they are usually quite precise translations. Sometimes in one of the two versions some terms are missing, these cases are reported in the footnotes. An exception is represented by the inscription n. 3 where the Greek and the Palmyrene texts show very different syntaxes: in this case two separate translations have been preferred.

1. Base of statue in the tetraporticus of the Great Colonnade.<sup>250</sup>

Σεπτίμιον Αἰράνην | τὸν λαμπρότατον (υἱὸν) | Ὀδαινάθου τοῦ  
λαμ|προτάτου ὑπατικοῦ, | Οὐορώδης βουλευ|τῆς ....

To Septimius Ḥairān, *clarissimus* son of Odainath *clarissimus consu-*  
*laris*, Vorōd bouleutes.<sup>251</sup>

2. Honorary inscription from the Great Colonnade, engraved on a column situated next to the theatre and dated back to 258 A. D.<sup>252</sup>

Αὐρήλιον Οὐορώδη | ἱππικὸν καὶ βουλευτὴν | Παλμυρηγὸν  
Βηλά|καβος Ἀρσᾶ τὸν φί|[λον τ]ειμῆς χάριν | ἔτους οφ'  
*l' wrlys [w]rwd hpq' | wbylwṭ' 'bd | bl'qb br ḥrš' lyqrh | šnt*  
*5.100+60+10.*

To Aurelius Vorōdes, member of the equestrian order and Palmyrene  
bouleutes, friend Belakabos son of Ḥaršā (posed this text) to honour  
him. Year 570 (Sel. = 258 A. D.)

3. Honorary inscription from the Great Colonnade, engraved on a column situated next to the theatre and dated back to April 262 A. D.<sup>253</sup>

<sup>249</sup> *Inv.* III 3, about which cf. *supra* Chap. 2. 1, is not taken into consideration. This inscription, being not dated either, actually adds nothing to Vorōd's career.

<sup>250</sup> SEYRIG 1963, 161-162 and fig. 2. Cf. HARTMANN 2001, 103 n. 163, 204 n. 152, 468.

<sup>251</sup> This inscription is not dated, but the titles of Septimius Ḥairān and Odainath are identical in a dedication dated in 257/258 and posed by the *collegium* of the leather artisans on a console in the Great Colonnade: cf. SEYRIG 1963, 161-162 and fig. 1 = GAWLIKOWSKI 1985, 254 n° 5; HARTMANN 2001, 103 n. 162.

<sup>252</sup> PAT 0283 = CIS II 3937 = *Inv.* III 12 = IGRR III 1036 = OGIS 644. Cf. HARTMANN 2001, 204 n. 152.

<sup>253</sup> PAT 0284 = CIS II 3938 = *Inv.* III 11 = IGRR III 1041. Cf. HARTMANN 2001, 204 n. 153.

Ἡ βουλὴ καὶ ὁ δῆμος Σεπτίμιον | Οὐορώδην τὸν κράτιστον  
ἐπίτροπον [Σεβ]αστο[ῦ τοῦ κυρίου] | δου[κηνάριον ..... τειμῆς] ||  
χάριν [ἔτους γοφ' μηνεῖ] | [Ξ]αν[δικῶ].  
*šlm' dnh dy sptmyws | wrwd 'ptrp' dwqnr' dy | qsr mrn dy 'qym lh |  
bwl' wdmws lyqrh | byrh nysn dy šnt 5.100+60+10+3.*

The Senate and the people to Septimius Vorōdes, *vir egregius procurator ducenarius domini Augusti*, (posed) to honour him, [in the year 573, in the month] Xandikos.

This is the statue<sup>254</sup> of Septimiōs Vorōd, *epitropos doukenarios* of Caesar lord,<sup>255</sup> that for him (have posed) the *boule* and the *demos*, to honour him, in Nisān in the year 573 (Sel. = April 262 A. D.)

4. Honorary inscription from the Great Colonnade, engraved on a column situated next to the theatre and dated back to December 262 A. D.<sup>256</sup>

Σεπτί[μιον Οὐορώδην τὸν κράτιστ]ον | ἐπίτρο[πον Σεβαστοῦ  
δ]ουκηνάριον | Ἰούλιος Αὐρή[λιος Νεβούζ]αβα[δ]ος Σοά[δ]ου τοῦ  
Αἰρῆ [στρατ]ηγὸς [τῆς] λαμπροτά[της] κολωνείας [τ]ὸν ἑαυτοῦ  
φίλον | τειμῆς ἔνεκεν ἔτους δοφ' μηνεῖ | Ἀπελλαίω.  
*sptmys wrwd qrtst's 'ptrp' | dwqnr' dy 'qym lyqrh | ywlyws 'w< >lys  
nbw'[z]bd br š'dw h'yr' | 'str< >g' dy qlny' r'hmh | šnt 5.100+60+10+  
4 byrh kslwl.*

To Septimius Vorōd *egregius procurator Augusti ducenarius*, Iulius Aurelius Nebouzabad, son of Šoadō, son of Ḥairān,<sup>257</sup> *strategos*<sup>258</sup> of

<sup>254</sup> The specification of the dedicated object (*šlm'* = statue) is quite rare in Palmyra: cf. YON 2000, 11.

<sup>255</sup> Palm. *mrn* 'lord' is grammatically referred to *qsr* 'Caesar.' As Odainath does not seem to have ever assumed the title of Caesar, it is impossible to derive that in this inscription *qsr mrn* might correspond to the *rš* of Palmyra, as on the contrary FÉVRIER 1932, 91 and ALTHEIM 1965, 255 maintain. Cf. HARTMANN 2001, 204 n. 153.

<sup>256</sup> PAT 0285 = CIS II 3939 = Inv. III 10 = IGRR III 1040. Cf. HARTMANN 2001, 204 n. 153.

<sup>257</sup> On this figure YON 2002b, 33, 244.

<sup>258</sup> The text of the inscription is very clear as far as its structure, which is identical both in Greek and in Palmyrene: a friend, a *strategos*, dedicates the inscription to Vorōd, *procurator* and *argapetes*. Jean-Baptiste CHABOT read the inscription in a wrong way in CIS II 3939, and he thought he could refer the title of *strategos* to Vorōd. He was followed by INGOLT 1976, 135; WILL 1996, 113 and SARTRE 1996, 393-394. Notwithstanding the lacuna in l. 4 of the Greek text, the rendering of the text is certain (the reading of the desinence at the nominative and not at the accusative has never be contexted by anybody) and it is confirmed also in the Aramaic version, where, if ever the transliteration of the term *strategos* at the beginning of l. 4 would have been understood as an apposi-

the *splendidissima*<sup>259</sup> *colonia*, to his friend to honour him in the year 574 in Apellaios = Kaslül (Sel. = December 262 A. D.)

5. Honorary inscription from the portico of the theatre in the Great Colonnade.<sup>260</sup>

Σεπτίμιον Ουορώδηγ | τὸν κράτ[ιστον ἐπίτρο]προν Σεβα[στοῦ  
δουκ]ηνάριον καὶ ἀργαπέτην | Ἰούλιος Αὐρήλιος Σε[πτιμ]ίος  
Μάλχος Μαλωχᾶ Νασσοῦμου ὁ κράτιστος τὸν φίλον καὶ προ-  
στάτην τειμῆς ἔνεκεν || ἔτους ςοφ´, μηνεὶ Ξανδικῶ.

*sp[ti]myws wrw]d qr[ts]tws | 'p[ti]trp' dqr' w'rg]bt' | ['qym ywlys  
'wrls sp[ti]my]ws | mlk[w br mlwk' nšwm qrtsts lyqr] || rhm[h wqywmm  
byrh ny]sn | [šnt 5.100+60+10+5+1].*

To Septimius Vorōd, *egregius procurator Augusti ducenarius* and *argapetes*, Iulius Aurelius Septimius Malchos, son of Malōkā, son of Naššūm,<sup>261</sup> *vir egregius*, to his friend and patron, to honour him, in Xandikos (Nīsān) in the year 576 (Sel. = April 264 A. D.)

6. From the portico of the theatre, in the Great Colonnade.<sup>262</sup>

Σεπτίμιο[ν] Ουορώδηγ | τὸν κράτιστον ἐπίτροπρον Σεβαστοῦ  
δουκηνάριον καὶ ἀργαπέτην || Ἰούλιος Αὐρήλιος | Σεπτίμιος  
Ἰαδῆς ἱππικὸς Σεπτιμίου Ἀλε[ξά]νδρου τοῦ Ἡρώδου | ἀπὸ  
στρατιῶν τὸν φίλλον καὶ προστάτην | τειμῆς ἔνεκεν ἔτους |  
ηοφ´, μηνεὶ Ξανδικῶ (578 Sel. = April 267 A. D.)

*sp[ti]myws wrwd qrtstws 'rtpr' | dqr' w'rg]bt' 'qym ywlys | 'wrls  
s[p]ti]myws yd' hpqws | br 'lks[nd]rws hyrn srykw lyqr || rhmh wqy-  
wmh byrh sywn dy | šnt 5.100+60+10+5 (Sīwān 575 Sel. = June 264  
A. D.)*

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tion not of the dedicating person but rather of the dedicatee, it had to be necessarily preceded by *w*, the necessary conjunction to link this title to the others that are listed before: *vir egregius* and *procurator ducenarius*. This point is a little delicate because it is right starting from this wrong reading of the inscription that WILL proposed the identity between the titles of ἀργαπέτης and στρατηγός, as if in this inscription Vorōd were called both *procurator* and *strategos*, while in the inscriptions n° 5 and 6 he is called *procurator* and *argapetes*, without any apparent rise in rank. But actually the inscription n° 4 cannot be adopted to prove any identity between the titles of ἀργαπέτης and στρατηγός at all. Cf. also HARTMANN 2001, 204 n. 153: “Dies ist m. E. kaum plausibel.”

<sup>259</sup> Missing in Palm.

<sup>260</sup> PAT 0287 = CIS II 3941 = Inv. III 8 = IGRR III 1042. Cf. HARTMANN 2001, 205 n. 156.

<sup>261</sup> On this person cf. PIR<sup>2</sup> I 194; YON 2002b, 49.

<sup>262</sup> PAT 0286 = CIS II 3940 = Inv. III 9 = IGRR III 1044. Cf. HARTMANN 2001, 205 n. 156.

To Septimius Vorōd *egregius procurator Augusti ducenarius* and *argapetes*, Iulius Aurelius Septimius Iadē, member of the equestrian order, son of Alexander, son of Herod son of Soraichou,<sup>263</sup> ex-official (in the Roman army),<sup>264</sup> to his friend and patron,<sup>265</sup> to honour him,<sup>266</sup> in the year 267 A. D.<sup>267</sup>

7. From the portico of the theatre, in the Great Colonnade.<sup>268</sup>

Σεπτίμιον Ουορώδην | τὸν κράτιστον ἐπίτροπον Σεβαστοῦ  
δουκηνάριον καὶ ἀργαπέτην || Ἰούλιος Αὐρήλιος Σάλμης |  
Κασσιανοῦ τοῦ Μαεναίου | ἵππεὺς Ῥωμαίων τὸν φίλον | καὶ  
προστάτην, ἔτους ηοφ', μηνεὶ Ἐανδικῷ.

*sptmyws wrys qrtstws | 'ptp' dqn'r' w'rgbt' | 'qym ywlys 'wrls šlm'  
| br qsyn' br m'ny h'pq' | lyqr rḥmh wqyw[mh] | byrh nysn šnt  
5.100+60+10+5+3.*

To Septimius Vorodes, *egregius procurator Augusti ducenarius* and *argapetes*, Iulius Aurelius Šalmē, son of Cassianus, son of Maenaïou, member of the Roman equestrian order, to his friend and patron, to honour him, in the year 578, in Xandikos = Nisān (Sel. = April 267 A. D.).

8. From the Great Colonnade, next to the theatre.<sup>269</sup>

Ἡ βου[λή] καὶ ὁ δῆ[μος] | Σεπτίμ[ι]ον Ουορώδην] τὸν κρά[τι]στον  
ἐ[πί]τροπον] Σεβαστοῦ | δουκην[ά]ριον, δι[κ]εοδότην || τῆς μη-  
τρο[πο]λι[τι]κῆς, καὶ ἀ[να]κομίσαν[τα] τῆς συνοδίας | ἐξ ἰδίων,  
καὶ μαρτυρηθέντα ὑπὸ τῶν ἀρχεμπόρων | καὶ λαμπρῶς στρατη-  
γῆσαντα || καὶ ἀγορανομήσαντα τῆς αὐτῆς | μητροπολιτικῆς,  
καὶ πλεῖστα | οἰκοθεν ἀναλώσαντα, καὶ ἀρέσαν[τα] τῆ τε αὐτῆ  
βουλή καὶ τῷ δήμῳ | καὶ νυνεὶ λαμπρῶς συμποσιαρχον τῶν τοῦ

<sup>263</sup> The last agnatic name is missing in the Greek version. On the family of Iadē cf. YON 2002a, 277 “famille de Shoraïkō et Alaïnê.”

<sup>264</sup> He had thus accomplished the *tres militiae equestres*: cf. YON 2002a, 49-50, 288.

<sup>265</sup> Inscriptions n° 5, 6 and 8 show the qualification τὸν φίλον καὶ προστάτην/*rḥmh wqyw-mh*, as referred to Vorōd: about which cf. SOMMER 2005, 220-222.

<sup>266</sup> On this formula (*lyqr rḥmh*), being completely unusual in Semitic epigraphy and occurring also in the inscriptions n° 6, 8, cf. YON 2002a, 147.

<sup>267</sup> The datings of the Greek and Palmyrene texts do not coincide. On the basis of the comparison with n° 6 (April 265) and n° 8 (April 267) the Greek dating of the text (April 267) is maybe preferable.

<sup>268</sup> PAT 0289 = CIS II 3943 = Inv. III 6 = IGRR III 1043 = OGIS 645. Cf. HARTMANN 2001, 205 n. 156.

<sup>269</sup> PAT 0288 = CIS II 3942 = Inv. III 7 = IGRR III 1045 = OGIS 646. Cf. SCHUOL 2000, 89-90; HARTMANN 2001, 205 n. 154.

θεοῦ] Διὸς Βήλου ἐιρέων, ἀ[γνείας καὶ] τειμῆς ἔνεικεν, ἔτ[ρους  
εοφ' μη]νεὶ Ξανδικῶ.

Of the Palmyrene text just a few traces are preserved.

The Council and the People to Septimius Worod, *egregius procurator Augusti ducenarius, iuridicus* of the *metrocolonia* who has brought back caravans at his own expense and been given testimony by the chief merchants, who has brilliantly acted as *strategos* and *agoranomos* of the same *metrocolonia* and spent greatly of his own resources and been pleasing to the Council and the People, and who now brilliantly acts as *symposiarch* of the priests of the god Zeus Bel, as evidence of his integrity and honour, in the year ...,<sup>270</sup> in the month Xandikos (transl. YOUNG, with adaptations).<sup>271</sup>

9. Votive relief now preserved at the Museum of Palmyra and dedicated from ‘Vorōd *argapetes*.’<sup>272</sup> Two figures abreast almost without heads are represented as inserted in a niche. The figure on the left is armed with spear and sword, while the one on the right, being armed with a sword too, with his right hand offers a small votive dish on a small fire altar between them. Those who have seen this work affirm that “the shapes of the heads on the stone allow to recognize the typical Irano-Parthian hairstyle,”<sup>273</sup> but from the photograph published by Harold INGHOLT I think that nothing can be said about the hairstyle of the figure on the right while the one on the left shows wider traces somewhat recalling a *nimbus/x'arənah*, thus confirming the impression it

<sup>270</sup> Its dating is completely lost. CHABOT e CANTINEAU (*CIS* and *Inv.*) have integrated ζοφ' (577 = 266 A. D.) on the basis of the fact that the inscription was set on a console between n° 5 (dated back to 264 A. D.) and n° 8 (dated back to 267 A. D.). Such proposal is customarily accepted and all in all preferable to the other ones. However the chronological order is not always respected in the arrangement of the statues, as SCHLUMBERGER 1942b, 60 n. 7 and MILIK 1972, 270 have already emphasized. On the basis of this fact and of the fact that in n° 4 to be dated in December 262 Vorōd is only a *procurator*, while in n° 5 dating back to April 265 Vorōd is *procurator* and *argapet*, and in n° 8 he is not *argapet* yet, his ‘Laufbahnschrift’ should be dated between these two chronological extremities, thus “wohl 264” HARTMANN 2001, 205 n. 154 and 206 n. 158. In this case the integration shall be εοφ' 575 = 264 A. D. For a diverging interpretation of his ‘Laufbahnschrift’ and more generally of Vorōd’s career cf. *infra*.

<sup>271</sup> YOUNG 2001, 170-171, 266 A. D.

<sup>272</sup> PAT 0063 + 0453 = CIS II 4105ter.

<sup>273</sup> INGHOLT 1936, 93-95 and plate. 19, 1; PARLASCA 1989; citation from EQUINI SCHNEIDER 1993, 138-139, plate 39; HARTMANN 2001, 206 n. 157.

might be the representation of an Iranian warrior god. On the right, next to the relief on the frame of the niche there is an inscription:

*wrwd ʾrgbtʾ*

I find the statement by HARTMANN “der Bêl oder einem iranischen Gott opfernde Palmyrener ist zweifellos Septimius Vorodes”<sup>274</sup> possibly too optimistic as also more readings of the relief are possible, such as the representation of a divine couple like Aglibōl and Malakbēl who are frequently represented abreast next to a fire altar.

Regarding the more delicate problem of the reconstruction and interpretation of the political role Vorōd played in Palmyra during the 50s and 60s of the 3rd century A. D. a controversial point is represented by inscr. n° 8, the so-called ‘Laufbahninschrift’ of Vorōd. While all other texts have been located as usual in Palmyra in given circumstances to which they explicitly make reference, so that they usually do not allow any reconstructions of true *cursus*,<sup>275</sup> in this inscription the various functions Vorōd was attributed are mentioned. To crown it all, this inscription is one of the few texts mentioning this person that has completely lost its dating.

Any attempt to date inscr. n° 8 moves from the assumption we are in the presence of a traditional *cursus* listing in a descending scale all functions Vorōd held. From this point of view two are the datings usually proposed: 1) before group n° 5-7, as in n° 8 Vorōd is not *argapetes* yet.<sup>276</sup> 2) Given the equivalence of the titles ἀργαπέτης and δικεοδότης inscr. n° 8 might conveniently be set at the end of the career of Vorōd.<sup>277</sup>

As far as the inconsistency of the motives supporting the second dating is concerned, I have already expressed an opinion above, but also the first dat-

<sup>274</sup> HARTMANN 2001, 206.

<sup>275</sup> YON 2002a, 11-12: “À Palmyre, les textes conservés sont surtout des résumés sur les bases de statues, et ce sont presque uniquement ces bases qui ont survécu, contrairement à d’autres cités, en particulier dans l’ouest de l’Asie Mineure. On a sans doute très rarement jugé utile de faire graver en entier des décrets qui honoraient un bienfaiteur de la cité, comme cela arrivait par exemple à Pergame, à Xanthos ou à Priène. Sauf dans quelques cas exceptionnels, les textes sont en fait simplement les légendes qui servent à donner un commentaire minimum aux statues qui ornent les espaces publics de la ville.”

<sup>276</sup> HARTMANN 2001, 205 n. 154: “wohl 264.”

<sup>277</sup> FÉVRIER 1931, 90; ALTHEIM, STIEHL 1965, 255; BALDINI 1976, 36.

ing encounters various difficulties: to set n° 8 right after the inscriptions n° 1-4 and before the group of inscriptions n° 5-7 undoubtedly implies a clear-cut jump in the career of this person, simply classified as curial and member of the equestrian order, before he was suddenly entrusted with the procuratorian duenary office. In the inscriptions n° 1-4, no mention is made of all those functions such as *agoranomos*, *strategos* and his activity in favour of the caravans - not to mention his office as *iuridicus* - he was probably attributed with before the inscriptions n° 5-7 and after n° 1-4 were posed. It is exactly the absurdity of situating all these functions between April 262 and April 264 A. D. that has led many to support the idea by MOMMSEN of the equivalence of the title *iuridicus* and *argapetes*, thus giving Vorōd's career a wider range.

Neither chronology is actually substantiated. I really doubt that the inscription n° 8 can be considered as a true *cursum*, i.e. that it mentions the various magistratures Vorōd held in a chronological order. It sounds very strange in this case that the inscr. n° 1-3 do not mention any of the 'minor' magistratures Vorōd had held before he reached the heights of his career, but just qualify this figure simply as a βουλευτής, a title he shared with all curials in the town.

It is actually the true meaning of the term *argapetes* that allows us to understand fully the role Vorōd played during the crucial years of Palmyra, first of all by making a clean sweep of any eventual 'military' office he was supposed to have held at any time in his career. None of the functions mentioned in n° 8 explicitly hint at any involvement of Vorōd either with the 'Palmyrene army' - whose existence was evidently necessarily easier to imagine than to supply with documentary evidence - or even less with the Roman army. What emerges with absolute clarity is the image of a person deeply involved in the economic and financial life of Palmyra. Agoranomy, strategy (both held λαμπρῶς) and to some extent also the following symposium of the priests of the shrine of Bel are all functions indisputably connected with the financial characteristics of the town and such as to hint at the economic status of Vorōd, just as both the duenary procuratorship and, as already demonstrated, the title of *argapetes* demonstrate.

Incidentally this kind of career clearly shows that we are in the presence of a completely 'local' and to some extent 'municipal' career, which is very different from that of the other *equites*, who on the contrary, as they worked for the central government of Rome, used to travel across the empire holding

a wide range of offices. Unlike the customary procurators, the role of Vorōd emerged in a purely local context and continued to develop that way, while the Roman empire confined itself to contracting out to him some particularly significant functions in the field of caravan trade. He practically found himself in a position to manage the correct development of the activities of Palmyrene caravans by means of a twofold function of interface between the two great preternational empires. Towards the imperial *fiscus* he was the chief of the *portorium* in Palmyra, while as far as Sasanian Iran was concerned he was an *argapetes*, i.e. ‘Chef des Steuerwesen.’ Vorōd’s characteristics may be summed up as follows:

1. He was very rich, as the civic financial functions he held *ad abundantiam* testify, just like his procuratorian office.
2. He held a unspecified procuratorship in Palmyra although he was *in primis* involved in the municipal life of the metrocolony.
3. He was a Roman citizen as his complete name testifies: Septimius Aurelius Vorōd.

Vorōd’s characteristics are identical to those Fabienne BURKHALTER-ARCE recently identified for the arabarchs who manage the collection of customs duties in the Egyptian desert:

ce sont des personnages extrêmement riches, qui entretiennent des relations étroites avec le pouvoir romain, et ont souvent occupé eux-mêmes des postes importants de l’administration romaine dans la province; ils ont de gros intérêts commerciaux [...] Les arabarques sont pratiquement tous des citoyens romains.<sup>278</sup>

Vorōd’s functions, although they represented diversified realities as inscr. n° 8 testifies, were actually all centred around the twofold hinging function this person held as a chief of the most important customs station in the whole Roman Near East at that time. Thus he was first of all *argapetes* and *procurator ducenarius*. In this regard it is extremely significant that he should decide to sign his self-portrait as *argapetes* (*wrwd ʾrgbtʾ*) on the votive relief n° 9. If we were to give inscr. n° 8 the value of a true *cursus* with the listing of different functions held in sequence, it would be really difficult to imagine that this person, while representing himself as an offering figure in front of a divinity, should sign the relief with *argapetes* and not with ‘symposiarchos of the priests of Bel’ as in inscr. n° 8.

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<sup>278</sup> BURKHALTER-ARCE 1999, 53.

Thus despite all other functions, Vorōd was considered first of all an *argapetes* and as such he used to consider himself. Also about in this regard the comparison with the case of the Egyptian arabarchs and particularly with the one of the more famous Tiberius Iulius Alexander is cogent: he too like Vorōd was ἐπίτροπος, but in any case he remained ‘Alexander the alabarch.’<sup>279</sup> It is evident how a person possessing this kind of characteristic was able to cope egregiously with all those subjects that pertained to the jurisdiction of the *iuridicus*: in particular the matters of private law involving hereditary estates.<sup>280</sup>

This was ultimately the function held by Vorōd in Palmyra: he was no brilliant commander of camel troops, just as he was no chief of a mysterious Iranian ‘colony’ in Palmyra.<sup>281</sup> His role of financier but at the same time also of administrator and diplomat able to guarantee by means of money, but not only, the passage there and back of the caravans along the increasingly unsafe roads given the grim international situation in the region was thus possible only thanks to the deliberately indeterminate position of the town of Palmyra between the two empires. Furthermore Vorōd represents in many ways the most evident denial of the supposed institutional normality of Palmyra inside the Roman empire. The town certainly belonged to some extent to the provincial context of the Roman empire and was surely considered by Rome as one of the most important towns in Syria Phoenice. This role came to the town with its nomination as *colonia splendidissima* and thus *metrocolonia* using a term that was conceptually most probably of Semitic origin. To be a colony, to have an imperial cult (which is attested with certainty but which is hardly recognizable in the field) to have even hosted at least from time to time a Roman garrison and at last to have guaranteed the military service of its own citizens in the Roman army did not

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<sup>279</sup> Joseph., *Ant.* XIX 276-277: (Claudius) λύει δὲ καὶ Ἀλέξανδρον τὸν ἀλαβάρχην φίλον ἀρχαῖον αὐτῷ γεγονότα καὶ Ἀντωνίαν αὐτοῦ ἐπιτροπεύσαντα τὴν μητέρα ὀργῆ τῆ Γαΐου δεδεμένον. “He further liberated Alexander the alabarch, an old friend of his, who had acted as guardian for his mother Antonia and had been imprisoned by Gaius in a fit of anger” (transl. FELDMAN). BURKHALTER-ARCE 1999, 42-43. On the equivalence between ἀλαβάρχος e ἀραβάρχος cf. WILCKEN 1899, 350, BURKHALTER-ARCE 1999, 42 n. 4.

<sup>280</sup> KUPISZEWSKI 1953, 198-201.

<sup>281</sup> WILL 1957; 1996.

prevent Palmyra from being considered as an autonomous town external to the empire and its merchants being declared ‘Palmyrenes’ and not ‘Romans’ in the commercial centres of Vologesias, in Mesene or elsewhere.

As seen from Ctesiphon, first of all Palmyra considered the Sassanians as a very precious source of wealth. The role played by Palmyra in the transactions between the two empires was never jeopardized by the Sassanians, for whom it would have been very easy to interrupt the commercial traffic enriching Vorōd and Palmyra. But they did not. Even in the hardest periods of war free-trade areas guaranteeing reinvestment and transactions involving huge amounts of money are very useful and always respected by the belligerent parties, as was the case of Switzerland during the two world conflicts that stained Europe with blood during the 20th century.<sup>282</sup> Even if the outcome of the wars was different for Switzerland than for Palmyra it is also because the latter suddenly failed to maintain its role as an interested neutral party. It thought it could fill the power vacuum that arose in the East after the disastrous capture of Valerian by the Sassanians. Palmyra failed to keep its position as a ‘purification’ point of the conflict; on the contrary it suddenly took the place of one of the warring parties. Notwithstanding the effectiveness of its action, instead of Rome’s gratitude the complex situation that had risen in the East and the attempt at reconciliation between the two initial belligerents led to the marginalization of its role and thus to the elimination of Palmyra by those in favour of whom the town had once renounced its neutrality.

Given these premises the last aspect of Vorōd’s career awaits clarification. It is a known fact that in the great triumphal inscription where Šābuhr the Great celebrated his victories over the Romans a Vorōd *agoranomos*<sup>283</sup> is mentioned, one of the few persons to be listed without any patronymic or ‘aristocratic’ elements. Even the rank of this figure is not very high. Notwithstanding his title, which perfectly matches that of the Vorōd *argapetes* we are talking about, a chronological problem prevents us from identifying Vorōd from Palmyra with Vorōd in ŠKZ. The only chance of a good match with the personality of Vorōd, as we have delineated it in this work as well

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<sup>282</sup> Similar considerations already in CUMONT 1926, about which cf. BONNET 2003 with an excessive criticism, in my opinion.

<sup>283</sup> Favourable to this identification SCHLUMBERGER 1972, who however dates the question of Vorōd in a different and, in my opinion, unacceptable way.

as the role Palmyra played on this occasion, resides in the fact that the court ceremonial from which the list mentioning Vorōd *agoranomos* was taken was derived one decade earlier than the period when the inscription was engraved. ŠKZ actually is usually dated to 270 A. D., while Vorōd is attested for the last time in 267, and he was unlikely to have survived his main political sponsor, Odainath. On the other hand it is clear that the inclusion of the Palmyrene Vorōd in the Sassanian court ceremonial would be possible only before the ‘lion coming from the East, envoy of the Sun’ started roaring on the banks of the Euphrates.

