OLD PERSIAN *MARĪKA-*, EUPOLIS *MARIKAS* AND ARISTOPHANES *KNIGHTS*

in memory of
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The little we know with certainty about Eupolis' *Marikas* can be summarised in a few lines. (1) The play was produced at the Lenaea of 421 B.C.[1] (2) The demagogue Hyperbolus was satirised under the name of Marikas, and was represented as a man of little or no culture (Quint. 1.10.18 = Eup. fr. 193 K. *Maricas, qui est Hyperbolus, nihil se ex musice scire nisi litteras confitetur*). (3) Marikas/Hyperbolus was a slave. This has been denied in the past,[2] but is now made clear by the commentary on the *Marikas* in *P. Oxy.* 2741 (no. 95, 145 f. Austin) πρὸς τ[ὸν] δεσπότην ὁ Ὑπέρβολος. (4) Aristophanes complained in the *Clouds* we possess (i.e. in the revised edition of this play) that Eupolis had availed himself of the *Knights* for his *Marikas* (*Nub.* 553 ff.), and it is in fact possible that the idea of Marikas as a slave was borrowed from the *Knights*, because some of his traits seem to correspond to those of the Aristophanic Sausage-seller.[3] (5) The play apparently had two semi-choruses, one of rich and one of poor people.[4]

The point of the name Marikas has long been debated. Ancient sources are at least agreed that it is 'barbarian'. Herodianus 1.50,12 Lentz does not go beyond stating that Marikas is an ὄνομα βάρβαρον παρὰ τῷ κωμικῷ (he refers to Ar. *Nub.* 553). Hesych. μ 283 Latte has more to offer: Μαρικᾶν· κίναιδον. οἱ δὲ ὑποκόρισμα παιδίου ἄρρενος βαρβαρικόν (so Meineke for βαρβαρικοῦ, rightly). Clearly μαρικᾶς was a term of abuse; strange as it may seem at first sight, there is no contradiction in its also being used as a term of endearment for a male child. We know that βάταλος (= κίναιδος, Hesych. β 317 Latte) could be used by a nurse in the same way,[5] and similar, if not exactly parallel, phenomena are not unknown to modern languages.[6] Like βάταλος, μαρικᾶς was apparently used as a proper name: the genitive μαρικᾶδος appears 'on the bottom of a skyphos' from the acropolis of Athens, and clearly indicates the owner.[7]

In his commentary on *Nub.* 553 Sir Kenneth Dover has tried to connect μαρικᾶς

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[1] ὕστερον τρίτῳ ἔτει...τῶν Νεφελῶν (sch. Ar. *Nub.* 553), i.e. in 421 B.C.; the Dionysia are out of the question because Eupolis produced his *Flatterers* at that festival (*hypoth.* 1 Ar. *Pac.*).

[2] E. Maass, *Der Marikas des Eupolis*, Festgabe f. H. Blümner (Zürich, 1914), 267–71, at 270: 'der Marikas des Eupolis war nicht Sklave'.

[3] Marikas' culture is confined to *litterae* (Quintil. loc. cit.), exactly like the Sausage-seller's (Ar. *Eq.* 188 f.). See also fr. 180 K. (but more can be said on that fragment; see below).

[4] See no. 95, 99 Austin and his commentary *ad loc.*

[5] We know from Demosthenes himself (18.180) that he was called βάταλος. Aeschin. 1.126 makes him say that this nickname comes ἐξ ὑποκορίσματος τίτθης. Even if Demosthenes did not actually say that, the linguistic usage it implies cannot have been invented. Of course Aeschines is suggesting that there are more serious reasons for Demosthenes being called that. See also H. Frisk, *Griechisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 1 (Heidelberg, 1960), s.v.

[6] See H. L. Mencken, *The American Language*⁴ (New York, 1977), 261 on *momzer* 'bastard; a general term of opprobrium, and also of affection as when used of a mischievous or clever child'. See also 398 on *bugger*.

[7] See D. M. Robinson – E. J. Fluck, *A Study of the Greek Love-Names* (Baltimore, 1937), 142 f., quoted by V. Schmidt, *Sprachliche Untersuchungen zu Herondas* (Berlin, 1968), 50 n. 11. On Βάταλος as a proper name see Plut. *Dem.* 4.

with μαρίς, a Cretan word for 'sow' according to Hesych. μ 286 Latte.[8] But, apart from other difficulties, an explanation based on a clearly non-Greek term would be preferable.[9]

As a matter of fact, such an explanation had been put forward by E. Maass in an article published in 1914 (not mentioned by Dover).[10] Maass thought that the word was Persian, and quoted Geldner's authoritative opinion (possibly a private communication): 'Avestisch (also ostiranisch) MAIRJA "Schuft", mittelpersisch-westpersisch MAR "Schuft", "Verbrecher". Es könnte wohl im Altpersischen des fünften Jahrhunderts v.Chr. ein MARJA MARJAKA "Bube", "Schuft" existiert haben'.[11]

As far as I know, the problem of a Persian origin of μαρικᾶς has not been re-examined after Maass; and, strangely enough, nobody seems to have noticed that the word Geldner was looking for is actually attested in Old Persian, and in a form (*marīka-*) closer to the Greek. It is a vocative (*marīkā*) repeated two (possibly three) times in the final paragraph of the tomb-inscription of Darius I at Naqš-i Rustam (DNb 50, 55, 57);[12] the word is translated as 'menial' by Kent[13] and 'Untertan, Gefolgsmann' by Brandenstein–Mayrhofer.[14] Although DNb had already been published by Weissbach in 1911,[15] the first edition where *marīka* was read and commented upon was that of Herzfeld (1938);[16] clearly Geldner could not take account of it in 1914 or before.

The meaning of *marīka-*, which occurs only in that final paragraph of DNb, is a complex one. The word is usually connected with Sanskrit *marya-* 'jeune homme, amoureux' on the one hand, and Avestan *mairya* (from which Geldner started) '"jeune homme" pris en mauvaise part' on the other.[17] Referring to Avestan texts Benveniste says: 'En iranien, *marya* a pris un sens défavorable: c'est un jeune homme trop audacieux, un jeune guerrier fougueux, destructeur, et même un brigand'.[18] The 'negative' meaning apparently survives in Pašto *mrayai, maryai*, Ormuṛī *mrīk* 'slave',[19] and corresponds to the word by which *marīka-* is translated in the Akkadian version of the inscription, [lú]*qal-la* 'slave'.[20] This 'is in turn equated with Old Persian *bandaka-* "servant" used of any official'.[21]

On the other hand, it would seem that *marīka-* had not lost its original meaning 'young man'. Frye regards 'the Akkadian "servant" as a secondary meaning' and

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[8] K. J. Dover, *Aristophanes Clouds* (Oxford, 1968), 170.

[9] The Greeks knew well that Crete was inhabited by a mixture of races that spoke many languages (Hom. *Od.* 19.172 ff.), and Herodotus says (1.173) that the whole island had been in the hands of barbarians τὸ παλαιόν; yet I have strong doubts whether a recognisably Cretan word, or a word derived from it, could have been called 'barbarous' in Athens (moreover, we have no proof that μαρίς was actually known there at the time).

[10] See n. 2.

[11] Maass, op. cit. (n. 2), 269.

[12] The abbreviations are those of R. G. Kent, *Old Persian. Grammar, Texts, Lexicon*[2] (New Haven, 1953); DNb is edited and translated at pp. 138–40. A transliteration and an interpretative transcription of DNb 50–60 can now be found in N. Sims-Williams, 'The Final Paragraph of the Tomb-Inscription of Darius I (DNb, 50–60): The Old Persian Text in the Light of an Aramaic Version', *Bull. Sch. Or. Afr. St.* 44 (1981), 1–7.

[13] Op. cit. (see preceding note) 140.

[14] W. Brandenstein – M. Mayrhofer, *Handbuch des Altpersischen* (Wiesbaden, 1964), 132.

[15] F. H. Weissbach, *Die Keilinschriften der Achämeniden* (Leipzig, 1911), 92–5.

[16] E. Herzfeld, *Altpersische Inschriften* (Berlin, 1938).

[17] P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque* (Paris, 1968), 678, s.v. μεῖραξ.

[18] E. Benveniste, *Le vocabulaire des institutions indo-européennes* (Paris, 1969), 247.

[19] H. W. Bayley, 'A Problem of the Indo-Iranian Vocabulary', *Roczn. Oriental.* 21 (1957), 59–69 at 66 n. 42.

[20] W. von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch* 2 (Wiesbaden, 1972), 894 (s.v. *qallu*(*m*) 5 d 'Sklave').   [21] Bayley loc. cit. (n. 19).

sees in *marīka*- 'the young adult Persian male, the head of his small family, and able to bear arms'.[22] It may well be that the primary meaning 'young male' coexisted with a depreciatory second one, 'menial, slave'. As is well known, in many languages the same term is used for 'boy, young man' and 'attendant, servant';[23] sometimes the term in question develops the meaning of 'rogue', as in English 'knave'.[24] E. Maass recalled the case of German 'Bube, das sich zum Lotterbuben verstärkt'.[25]

It may well be that *marīka*- reached the West, probably Asia Minor before Greece, with a strong pejorative meaning. Such modifications en route from Persia to Greece are not surprising: Old Persian *upastā*- 'Beistand, Hilfe'[26] reached Greece as ὀπαστόν in the more specialized meaning of ἐφόδιον (Hesych. o 983 Latte ὀπαστόν· τὸ ἐφόδιον. Πέρσαι).[27] As to μαρικᾶς, it should be remembered not only that 'ce qui s'adresse à la malignité passe facilement d'un peuple a l'autre',[28] but also that imported terms of abuse are not necessarily such in the language they stem from.[29]

The suggestion that the Athenians got to know *marīka*- through the Greeks of Asia is supported by the presence of the suffix -ᾶς, which is Ionic in origin.[30] Also typical of Ionia and Asia Minor at large is the declension -ᾶς, -ᾶδος attested in the proper name Μαρικᾶδος I mentioned above.[31] It is interesting to recall in this connection that Hyperbolus' 'barbarian' origin is traced by comic authors to Anatolia and the East (Lydia, Phrygia, 'Syria'), not e.g. Thrace.[32]

As to the length of the /i/ (*marīka*- in Old Persian, μᾰρῐκᾶς in Greek),[33] two things should be borne in mind: (1) the cuneiform script employed for Old Persian does not make use of different signs for ĭ and ī, and *marīka*- is due to the conclusions of modern linguists;[34] (2) granted that these conclusions are correct, a change of quantity en route is not surprising, especially if, as it seems, the word had travelled through Asia Minor.[35] Where we possess (or believe that we possess) enough evidence

[22] R. N. Frye, *The Heritage of Persia* (Cleveland and New York, 1963), 50.

[23] Greek παῖς, Latin *puer*, Elamite *puhu* (R. T. Hallock, *Persepolis Fortification Texts*, Chicago, 1969, 39, 42), Aramaic *'lym* (S. Segert, *Altaramäische Grammatik*, Leipzig, 1975, 546 'Knabe > (junger) Sklave'), French *garçon*, Italian *garzone* (but 'young man' only in literary Italian). See also N. Oettinger, 'Probleme phraseologischer Interferenzen zwischen orientalischen und klassischen Sprachen', *Glotta* 59 (1981), 1–12 at 7 (a reply to D. Fehling, 'Lehnübersetzungen aus altorientalischen Sprachen im Griechischen und Lateinischen', *Glotta* 58, 1980, 1–24 at 15).

[24] See the *Oxford English Dictionary* 5 (Oxford, 1933), 725, which gives the following meanings: 'A male child, a boy' (late medieval), then 'a male servant or menial in general' and 'a base and crafty rogue'.

[25] Art. cit. (n. 2), 268.

[26] Brandenstein–Mayrhofer (op. cit. in n. 14), 148.

[27] See H. C. Tolman, 'Persian Words in the Glosses of Hesychius', *Journ. Am. Or. Soc.* 41 (1921), 236 f.

[28] M. Bréal, *Essai de sémantique*, 42, quoted by G. Björck, *Das Alpha impurum und die tragische Kunstsprache* (Uppsala, 1950), 78.

[29] Björck ibid. (see preceding note).

[30] Björck op. cit. (n. 28) 268 ff., 49 ff.

[31] See V. Schmidt, op. cit. (n. 7), 47 ff. and 50 n. 11.

[32] See Pl. Com. fr. 170 K., Polyzel, fr. 5 K., Sch. Ar. *Pac.* 692. Σύρος or Σύριος might also mean 'Cappadocian' or 'Babylonian': see the basic study of T. Nöldeke, 'Ασσύριος, Σύριος Σύρος, *Hermes* 5 (1871), 443–68; see also *Zeitschr. Assyr.* 1 (1886), 289.

[33] Ar. *Nub.* 553, Eup. frr. 190 and 192 K.

[34] See e.g. A. Meillet – E. Benveniste, *Grammaire du vieux-perse* (Paris, 1931), 50 'seule la comparaison permet d'en retrouver la quantité'. *Marīka*- is usually taken to be the result of the contraction of *marya-ka*.

[35] For the 'Ausgleichung der Quantitäten' in the Greek of Asia Minor see E. Schweizer (= Schwyzer), *Grammatik der Pergamenischen Inschriften* (Berlin, 1898), 94.

(mostly in proper names), Persian quantities are sometimes retained in Greek and sometimes not. Aeschylus allows himself considerable freedom in the *Persians* (e.g. Φαρανδάκης is – – – – in 31, ◡ – ◡ – in 958[36]); and if Δᾱρεῖος has the same /a:/ as *Dārayavauš*, 'Ἐκβάτανα corresponds to *Hagmatāna-*.[37] Babylon is Βᾰβυλών in Greek (Akkadian *Bābilu*, Old Persian *Bābiru-*, Hebrew *Bābel*).[38]

But let us return to Eupolis. It is highly probable that he chose for Hyperbolus the name of Marikas because it was a term of abuse that sounded 'Asiatic', and it is possible that the meaning 'slave' was still present to the Athenians of that period. The analogies with Aristophanes' *Knights* are striking, because there Cleon is presented as the PAPHLAGONIAN slave of Demos. Some years ago D. M. Lewis[39] put forward the interesting suggestion that the reason why Aristophanes called his character a Paphlagonian might 'owe something to knowledge of the greatest Paphlagonian of the day', Artoxares, the influential eunuch of Darius II, 'rather than simply to the desire to find a suitable barbarian ethnic which will allow a pun on the word παφλάζω'. It would be very tempting to assume that Eupolis took his cue from Aristophanes and made Hyperbolus/Marikas the debased and yet powerful chief servant of a Demos portrayed as the King of Persia. Of course this cannot be proved, and we have to content ourselves with hypotheses. It should be remembered that fr. 192 K. πεπέρακεν μὲν ὁ περσέπτολις ἤδη Μαρικᾶς is a direct parody of Aesch. *Pers.* 65 ff., which refers to the passage of the Persian army from Asia to Europe across the Hellespont; it would be very pointed if Marikas acted in the name of a 'King of Persia'. Another puzzling reference to Persia occurs in the papyrus commentary on this comedy, no. 95, 44 Austin.[40]

Before concluding, I should like to point to another intriguing possibility. In fr. 180 K. somebody, in all likelihood Marikas himself, says:

καὶ πόλλ' ἔμαθον ἐν τοῖσι κουρείοις ἐγώ
ἀτόπως καθίζων κοὐδὲ γιγνώσκειν δοκῶν.

This fragment is quoted by sch. *ad* Plat. *Phaed.* 60b, p. 8 Greene, for an unusual meaning of ἀτόπως, 'without being suspected' (τάττεται δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ ἀνυπόπτου). Apparently Marikas assembled a good deal of information by sitting inconspicuously in barbers' shops and pretending not to notice. Let us turn now to the papyrus commentary on the *Marikas*, no. 95, 78 ff. Austin: ἀλλ' ὦτα μὲν μ[...] παρὰ τὴν παρ[οιμίαν...] δῆμος αυτημε.[...].[41] Line 79 παρὰ τὴν παρ[οιμίαν...] (a virtually certain supplement) makes it clear that the preceding line – which is a quotation of the actual text of the comedy, being preceded by a *diple obelismene* – must be a

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[36] See H. D. Broadhead, *The Persae of Aeschylus* (Cambridge, 1960), 231 'the quantitative variations...are natural enough in the case of a foreign name'. On the 'metrische Nötigung' in the case of the name 'Ἀρτεμβάρης see J. Wackernagel, *Kleine Schriften* (Göttingen, 1953), 428. On the problem of the Persian names in Aeschylus see now R. Schmitt, 'Die Iranier-Namen bei Aischylos', *Sitzsb. Österr. Akad. Wiss.*, Philos.-hist. Klasse, Bd. 337 (Wien, 1978).

[37] 'Ἐκβάτανα: see E.g. Ar. *Ach.* 64, *Eq.* 1089. *Hagmatāna-*: Brandenstein–Mayrhofer (see n. 14), 122.

[38] *Bābilu* and *Bābiru-*: see Brandenstein–Mayrhofer (n. 14), 109 (Βᾰβυλών e.g. Ar. *Av.* 552).

[39] *Sparta and Persia* (Leiden, 1977), 21.

[40] τοὺς Πέρσας[...] παρεδέξαντ[...] γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἐπι[...]. Was there question of Persians being admitted to citizenship of some Greek *polis* (LSJ s.v. παραδέχομαι 3)? At 38 Δ]αρεικ[οί (or other cases of the same word) would be possible.

[41] αυτημε. (not αυτημ. as Austin prints) is the correct reading; see E. Lobel, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* vol. 35 (London, 1968), 57 (col. 2, 41, and the photograph, Pl. VI).

proverbial expression: and in fact Ed. Fraenkel put forward the brilliant suggestion that ἀλλ' ὦτα μὲν M[ίδα should be supplemented, comparing Ar. *Plut.* 287 νὴ τοὺς θεοὺς Μίδας μὲν οὖν, ἢν ὦτ' ὄνου λάβητε and the scholia on this line.[42] There we can read an interesting explanation of the reason why Midas was said to have ass's ears: the ass 'has keener hearing than every other animal except the fly: and Midas had many spies (ὠτακουστάς)' which he used, as we read in another scholion on the same line of the *Plutus*, in order to know πάντα...τὰ ἐν τῇ ὑπ' αὐτῷ χώρᾳ λεγόμενά τε καὶ πραττόμενα.[43] There was apparently a proverb, Μίδας ὦτα ὄνου ἔχων, ἐπὶ τῶν μηδὲν λανθανόντων.[44] Was a personified Demos (see δῆμος at 1.80) said to have 'Midas' ears' because he had a net of informers, among them Marikas? Or had Midas' ears been bestowed, so to speak, on Marikas/Hyperbolus himself, the man who would sit in barbers' shops and gather information pretending not to notice? This would not be the only connection we know of between Hyperbolus and Midas. A scholion on Lucian's *Timon* (115.1 ff. Rabe = Pl. Com. fr. 170 K.) states that in the *Hyperbolus* of Plato Comicus Hyperbolus was said to be a Lydian, Μίδα γένος (these words are not in Kock, who quoted from Iacobitz's edition).[45]

Spies and informers are typical of all kinds of tyrannies, as Aristotle knew well (*Polit.* 5. 1313b11 ff.), and a Demos τύραννος worth this name would not have denied himself some, especially if he was portrayed as an oriental despot. King's Eyes and King's Ears were very familar to the Greeks; and the hypothesis of Marikas as a comic *gaušaka-*, οὖς βασιλέως, has its attractions.[46]

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[42] *Apud* Lobel op. cit. (see preceding note), 59.

[43] A similar explanation can be read in Conon's *Diegeseis* (*FGrHist* 26 F 1, 1). It seemed 'euhemeristisch' to Eitrem (*RE* 15, 1932, 1531), but nothing proves that it is not very old. For the keen hearing of the ass Eitrem ibid. quotes Arist. *G.A.* 5.2, 781b13. The alternative interpretation offered by the scholion, ὅτι κώμην Φρυγίας κατέσχεν, ἥτις Ὦτα ὄνου ἐλέγετο, seems to me nothing but a crudely material interpretation of the sentence Μίδας ὦτα ὄνου ἔχει: there is nothing proverbial about it (see following note) that could be applied to people different from Midas himself.

[44] Suid. μ 1036 Adler (3.393, 19 and 27 f.). Here λανθάνω means 'not to perceive', a late usage; see E. A. Sophocles, *Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods* (New York, 1887), 705.

[45] Δ (Vat. gr. 1322) has μῆδον τὸ γένος, surely a mistake by the 'auctor recensionis quintae' (see H. Rabe, *Scholia in Lucianum*, Lipsiae, 1906, VI). Midas, the mythical king of Phrygia, appears as King of Lydia and lover of Omphale in Clearch. fr. 43 a Wehrli (= Ath. 12.515e); see Roscher, *Lex. Myth.* 3.881 ff. Did Clearchus draw on a comic source?

[46] On King's Eyes and King's Ears see now Lewis (op. cit. n. 39), 19 f.; the *locus classicus* is Xen. *Cyr.* 8.2.10–12. *Gaušaka-* is not attested in Old Persian, and was conjectured on the basis of *gwšky* in an Elephantine papyrus (A. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.*, Oxford, 1923, nr. 27, 9). See A. Pagliaro, 'Riflessi di etimologie iraniche nella tradizione storiografica greca', *Rendic. Acc. Naz. Lincei* 9 (1954), 133–53 at 139 and W. Hinz, *Neue Wege im Altpersischen* (Wiesbaden, 1973), 98 f. – This paper owes a good deal to the help and encouragement of Dr D. M. Lewis: μεγάλα χάρις αὐτῷ. I am also indebted to Dr Gianfranco Fiaccadori and Dr Deborah H. Roberts for suggestions and corrections.