

HASHTPĀY

By: Antonio Panaino

Name of a game from the Sasanian era which has not been precisely identified. The haštpay [hštp'y] "eight feet" (more likely than aštāpad) is mentioned together with other games in chapter 15 of the Xusraw ud Redag (ud pad Chatrang ud new-ardaxšî r ud haštpay kardan az hamahlan fraztar hom "and in playing chess, backgammon and the haštpay I am superior to my comrades" (Unvala, p. 16; Monchi-Zadeh, 1982, p. 65; Panaino, 1999, p. 51). Its name, as in the case of chess (Pahl. Ch < Skt. caturangga-), is an Indian borrowing; it derives from Sanskrit astapada- (cf. pali atthapada), originally referring to a game-board of 8 x 8 little squares. Such a board was used for various games (Murray, 1913, pp. 35-40; 1952, pp. 129-36), one of them played, according to the Balabharata (II, 5, pp. 10-13), with red and white pieces and a pair of dice. In many other sources the astapada- was doubtless the chessboard and its name strictly associated with this game (MacDonell, p. 122; Jacobi, p. 228; Thomas, 1898, pp. 272; 1899, pp. 365; Thieme, 1984, p. 208). From the Xusraw ud Redag it is clear that the Sasanian haštpay was distinguished from other popular games like chess and the variety of backgammon represented by new-ardaxšî r. The haštpay could perhaps be associated, according to Semenov (pp. 16-20, 131; but see Panaino, 1999, pp. 153-56, 189), with a game-board (with three lines of eight squares) recently discovered in Paikend and with another one represented on a later Sasanian silver cup with a different but apparently comparable form.

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