

DORYPHOROE IN CURTIUS 3.3.15 AGAIN

Curtius 3.3.15, describing the procession of the Persian forces as they set out to do battle with Alexander, mentions the ‘Spear-bearers’ (i. e., ‘Bodyguard’) of the King. *Doryphorae vocabantur proximum his agmen, soliti vestem excipere regalem* (‘On nommait Doryphores la troupe qui les suivait immédiatement; on leur confiait d’ordinaire la garde-robe du roi’, Bardou, Budé tr., vol. 1, p. 10; cf. ‘The troop next to these, who were accustomed to take care of the royal robes, were called Spear-bearers’, Rolfe, Loeb tr., vol. 1, p. 83).

In RhM 128 (1985) 366, I suggested emending the second half of the passage to read *soliti <ad> vest(ibu)l(um) excubare regale*, thus returning some dignity to the Persian Bodyguard. I now think that this solution is incorrect, though the error is still to be found in Curtius’ text. *Doryphorae*, the reading of the MSS., if it really does refer to ‘Spear-bearers’, should at any rate read *doryphoroe* (= δορυφόροι). But the Greek source, which Curtius followed and translated probably read δωροφόροι (lit., ‘Giftbearers’¹).

What all this means is explained by Aelian, VH 1.22, who describes the gifts customarily given by the Great King: ψέλλιá τε καὶ ἀκινάκην ἐδίδου καὶ στρεπτόν, χιλίων δαρεικῶν ἄξια ταῦτα, καὶ στολὴν ἐπ’ αὐτοῖς Μηδικήν· ὄνομα δὲ τῆ στολῆ δωροφορικῆ. Now, although Aelian is speaking of gifts given to Greeks and people from elsewhere (ἐτέρωθεν), it is clear that the same gifts were given to the most noble Persians²). Xenophon, Anab. 1.8. 28–29 describes Artapates in the following way: Ἀρταπάτης δ’ ὁ πιστότατος αὐτῶ [sc. Κύρω] τῶν σκηπτούχων

1) Possibly even δωροφορικαί, which might help to explain *doryphorae*.

2) The robes worn by the Persian nobles were probably of the sort adopted by Alexander’s *hetairoi*, on the King’s instructions: Curt. 6.6.7; Justin 12.3.9; Diod. 17.77.5; cf. Metz Epit. 2.

θεράπων λέγεται, ἐπειδὴ πεπτωκότα εἶδε Κῦρον, καταπηδήσας ἀπὸ τοῦ ἵππου περιπλεσὲν αὐτῷ. καὶ οἱ μὲν φασὶ βασιλέα κελεῦσάι τινα ἐπισφάξαι αὐτὸν Κύρῳ, οἱ δ' ἐαυτὸν ἐπισφάξασθαι σπασάμενον τὸν ἀνιάνκην· εἶχε γὰρ χρυσῶν· καὶ στρεπτόν δ' ἐφόρει καὶ ψέλια καὶ τάλλα ὡσπερ οἱ ἀριστοὶ Περσῶν... (cf. 1.5.8).

It is perhaps idle to speculate what the original Greek version said, or exactly how *doryphorae* (-oe) came to replace *dorophoroe* or *dorophoricae*. But it might be added that the phrase *doryphorae vocabantur proximum his agmen* is, in itself, a little odd if it refers to the Persian Bodyguard. Why would Curtius use *vocabantur* of a routine word like *δορυφόροι*? Curtius normally uses 'it is called' (or 'they are called' or 'they call') when the Greek source would have used οἱ καλούμενοι (or καλούμενος -η -ον), and it is highly improbable that a Greek source would have referred to οἱ καλούμενοι *δορυφόροι*, unless that was their official title – which it clearly was not. Cf. 3.3.13: *Proximi ibant quos Persae Immortales vocant* and 3.3.19: *Cidarim Persae vocabant regium capitis insigne*³). Curtius uses the expression whenever he gives the official name of a place, an institution or a thing, either preserving a barbarian or a Greek form (hence we have also at 3.3.23 a reference to the covered carriage used primarily by the Persian women, which the Greeks called ἀρμάμαξα – *quas armamaxas appellabant*). But *δορυφόροι* is such a common word for bodyguard that it is normally translated as *armigeri* or perhaps *custodes corporis*. To say that the unit which followed was called the *doryphoroe* would be as absurd as saying that the troops were called *stratiotae*. On the other hand, the word *δωροφόρος* or *δωροφορικὴ*, in the Persian context, does require an explanation, as is clear from the Aelian passage. Transliterated into Latin characters, the 'ω' ceases to be recognisable, and a later scribe could wrongly assume that *dorophoroe* was an error for the *doryphoroe*⁴).

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3) Similarly, Charidemus, describing the Macedonian formation to Dareios says *ipsi phalangem vocant* (3.2.13); cf. *locum, quem Amanicas Pylas vocant* (3.8.13); *gazam Persae vocant* (3.13.5); *Gangabas Persae vocant* (3.13.7); *Syriae, quam Coelen vocant* (4.1.4); *quam Palaetyron ipsi vocent* (4.2.4); *quae satrapea Sittacene vocatur* (5.2.1); *Pasitigrim incolae vocant* (5.3.1); and so forth.

4) I wish to thank my colleagues, Drs Martin Cropp and Michael Dewar for reading and commenting on this short note. Dr Dewar suggests to me that sense of *excipere* may perhaps be determined by the prefix, that it implies, possibly, the idea of receiving something directly from the king's hand (i. e., *ex regis manu capere*).

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