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David Durand-Guédy. “Khargāh and Other Terms for Tents in Firdawsī’s Shāh-nāmah”, *Iranian Studies* 51.6 (2018), p. 819-849, online DOI: 10.1080/00210862.2018.1528866

- 1 Since his first publication on the subject: “The Tents of the Saljuqs”, in David Durand-Guédy (ed.), *Turko-Mongol Rulers, Cities and City Life*, Leiden (Brill) 2013, 149-89, the author has come back repeatedly to the question of what *khargāh* and other terms, in particular *sarāparda*, mean in Persian sources. In the first article already, he proved that *khargāh* in all contexts is the name of the “Turkish” trellis tent, better known to European non-specialists as a yurt, and that other types of tents are designed by other terms. A *sarāparda* in turn is not a tent properly speaking, but an enclosure marking off an area with limited access, often a royal preserve, where in turn royal tents may be pitched, among them trellis tents. In recent years, Durand-Guédy has added considerably to the analysis. Most notably, he has had a look at the pre-Seljuq situation in “*Khargāh*. An Inquiry into the Spread of the ‘Turkish’ Trellis Tent within the Abbāsid World up to the Saljuq Conquest (mid 2nd/8th – early 5th/11th Centuries)”, *BSOAS* 79.1 (2016), 57-85, proving that some of the pre-Seljuq dynasties used trellis tents, and that these tents conferred status and prestige on their owners. In his “Note about the Persian Word *ḥargāh* (Trellis Tent) in a Turko-Sogdian Context”, *Eurasian Studies* 15.1 (2017), 125-41, he underlined that the term never was used for anything besides the trellis tent, and in particular, he treated a Sogdian text from Turfan (Pelliot collection P.3), and came to the conclusion that the Sogdian term *xry’xh* is indeed related to

Persian *khargāh* and means the trellis tent. The discussion of the etymology involves Sogdian and Turkish terms.

- 2 In the current paper, David Durand-Guédy turns to the *Shāhnāmah* as a source. He lists over thirty occurrences of the term *khargāh*, which he analyses in context. He comes to a number of conclusions: First, in the epic poem as well, the term always means the trellis tent, or it is used metaphorically on the basis of that meaning. Second, in the text, the origin of the trellis tent is clearly located in Turan, where it is the dwelling of elite and commoners alike and is also used for ceremonial purposes. Third, and this is astounding, he discovers that Firdawsī has the trellis tent introduced into Iran during Kay Khusraw's reign, in Durand-Guédy's view the most Turanian of all the mythical rulers of Iran in the *Shāhnāmah*. Fourth, in Firdawsī's Iran, the trellis tent remained a status symbol in contradistinction from Turan where it is more widely spread.
- 3 The "other terms for tents" mentioned in the title, again, boil down to the *sarāparda*, and again, David Durand-Guédy proves that this term is used for an enclosure and not for a tent.
- 4 The results are convincing. We should get finally used to the idea that Iranian rulers, even before the coming of the Seljuq Turks, used the "Turkish" trellis tent as the mobile counterpart of a palace, as a dwelling as well as a place for ceremonies, and that a *sarāparda* is not really a tent but a structure surrounding a campsite, mostly a royal one.

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