Carlo G. Cereti. “Are the provincial capitals of Ērānšahr really Provincial Capitals?”

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Carlo G. Cereti. "Are the provincial capitals of Ērānšahr really Provincial Capitals?", *Vicino Oriente* 24, 2020, p. 135-149.

- 1 The Middle Persian word *šahrestān* had often been translated as 'provincial capital'. Cereti examines an impressive corpus of texts belonging to the Zoroastrian tradition, such as *Šahrestānīhā-ī-Ērānshar*, *Bundahišn*, *Dēnkard*, *Kārnāmag ī Ardaxšīr ī Pābagān*, *Gujastag Abāliš*, *Šāyast nē-Šāyast*, *Yoišt ī Friyān*, the Pahlavi commentary to *Widēwdād*, the inscriptions of Šāpūr I and Kerdīr at the Ka'aba-e Zartošt and Narseh's one at Paikuli; the attestations in administrative glyptics; and Manichean Middle Persian texts. By comparing the occurrences, it seems that *šahrestān* was generically used to indicate a city or town. Intriguingly, in the sources of the 3rd century this term was mainly used referring to cities conquered by Šāpūr I. For these reasons, the author argues that the most exact translation is 'city' or possibly 'fortified city', as defined in a passage from the sixth book of the *Dēnkard*.
- 2 This paper contributes to our understanding of Sasanian concepts and the simple but effective methodology could be used in other similar studies to analyse other Middle Persian terms, for instance *šahr*.

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