"The Messengers are Called Sangandai": the Greek σαγγάνδης and its Relationship to ἀσγάνδης/ἀστάνδης

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This article examines the Greek noun σαγγάνδης 'messenger' which is attested in two lexica, dated to the Roman or early Byzantine periods: the *Cambridge Rhetorical Lexicon* by an anonymous author and *Difficult Words in the Attic Orators* by Claudius Casilo. In both works, σαγγάνδης appears together with three words of likely Iranian provenance: ὀροσάγγης 'benefactor of the Persian king; bodyguard', παρασάγγης 'parasang; messenger' and ἄγγαρος 'messenger, courier; workman, labourer'. The word σαγγάνδης is analysed in comparison with ἀσγάνδης/ἀστάνδης 'messenger' occurring for the first time in Plutarch's works and closely linked to the Achaemenid administration. According to the hypothesis put forward in the present paper, both σαγγάνδης and ἀσγάνδης (with its secondary variant ἀστάνδης) are connected to Manichaean Middle Persian/Parthian *ižgand* 'messenger', Sogdian *(a)žyand/(ɔ) žyand/ž(i)γant* 'id.', Jewish Aramaic *ʾîzgaddā* 'id.', Syriac *izgandā/izgaddā* 'id.', Mandaic *ašganda* 'helper, assistant, servant; the Messenger', and go back to Old Persian **zganda-* or to early Middle Persian/early Parthian **žgand-* (or **zgand-*) with the original meaning 'mounted messenger'. The reconstructed noun is derived from the Proto-Iranian root **zga(n)d-* 'to go on, gallop, mount', attested in Avestan (Younger Avestan *zgaδ(/θ)-* 'to go on horseback, gallop') and in some Middle and Modern Iranian languages. The original form of the loanword in Greek was probably **σγάνδης* which then underwent certain transformations.

Keywords: etymology, foreign words in Greek, Iranian loanwords, Greek lexicography.

The noun σαγγάνδης 'messenger, courier',[1] which has not been previously investigated is attested in two Greek lexica, dated to the Roman or early Byzantine periods: in the so-called *Cambridge Rhetorical Lexicon* (*Lexicon Rhetoricum Cantabrigense*) by an anonymous author, and in the *Difficult Words in the Attic Orators* (Τὰ παρὰ τοῖς Ἀττικοῖς ῥήτορσι ζητούμενα) by Claudius Casilo. The entries in both sources are almost identical (see Table 1).

The term σαγγάνδης appears three times in each text, but in Casilo's work two variants occur: once σαγγάνδ- and twice σαγγάδ-. The latter form is most probably an error like in some other words of the lemma. Apart from the errors in the sentences quoted above, Τίς instead of Τί and παρασάγγοις instead of παρασάγγας, there is also ὀροσάγκαι for ὀροσάγγαι and ἀγγάριον for ἀγγάρειον.[2]

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[1] LSJ gives two forms, σαγγάδης and σαγγάνδης. However, only the latter seems to be correct (see below).

[2] The manuscript is much better in the case of three other lemmas preserved, i. e., Ὀργάς, Ὀστρακισμοῦ τρόπος and Πενέσται.

Table 1. **The Greek term σαγγάνδης in the sources**

Lexicon Rhetoricum Cantabrigense, p. 22–23 (ed. by E. O. Houtsma = *Lexica Graeca Minora*, p. 82–83)	Claudius Casilo, p. 397–398 (ed. by E. Miller = *Lexica Graeca Minora*, p. 243–244)
Ὀροσάγγης καὶ σαγγάνδης καὶ παρασάγγης καὶ ἄγγαρος διαφέρει· (…). Σαγγάνδαι δὲ οἱ ἀποστελλόμενοι καλοῦνται. Σοφοκλῆς δὲ ἐν τοῖς Ποιμέσι καὶ Εὐριπίδης ἐν Σκυρίαις παρασάγγας αὐτοὺς κεκλήκασιν· ἐχρῆν δὲ εἰπεῖν σαγγάνδας· ὁ γὰρ παρασάγγης μέτρον ἐστίν. (…)	Τίς (read: Τί) ὁ ὀροσάγγης, καὶ τί σαγγάδης (read: σαγγάνδης), καὶ τί παρασάγγης, καὶ τί ἄγγαρος. (…) Σαγγάνδαι δὲ οἱ ἀποστελλόμενοι καλοῦνται· Σοφοκλῆς δὲ ἐν Ποιμέσι, καὶ Εὐριπίδης ἐν Σκυρίαις παρασάγγοις (read: παρασάγγας) αὐτοὺς κεκλήκασιν· ἐχρῆν δὲ εἰπεῖν σαγγάδοις (read: σαγγάνδας)· οἱ γὰρ παρασάγγαι μέτρον ἐστίν ὁδοῦ (…)
"*Orosanges*, *sangandes*, *parasanges*, and *angaros* differ from each other. (…) The messengers are called *sangandai*. Sophocles in the *Shepherds* and Euripides in the *Scyrians* have called them *parasangai*. They should use *sangandai*, for the *parasanges* is a measure unit."	"What is *orosanges*, and what is *sangandes*, and what is *parasanges*, and what is *angaros*? (…) The messengers are called *sangandai*. Sophocles in the *Shepherds* and Euripides in the *Scyrians* have called them *parasangai*. They should use *sangandai*, for the *parasangai* are a unit for road measurement."

The word σαγγάνδης bears a striking resemblance in phonetics, morphology and semantics to another Greek word for 'messenger', namely ἀσγάνδης/ἀστάνδης, and it is likely that they have the same origin. The latter word, known in two variants,[3] is attested for the first time in Plutarch and, according to Greek sources, is closely linked to the Achaemenid administration. The form ἀσγάνδης appears twice in all manuscripts of the *Life of Alexander* by Plutarch, although modern editors of this work correct the form to ἀστάνδης at both instances (this conjecture was accepted already in the 16th-century edition by H. Stephanus). Plutarch reports that Darius III was earlier a royal courier, i. e., ἀστάνδης (mss. ἀσγάνδης) ὢν βασιλέως "being a royal courier" (*Alex.* 18.7) and ἐξ ἀστάνδου (mss. ἀσγάνδου) βασιλεὺς γενόμενος "having become a king from a courier" (18.8; ed. by K. Ziegler).

In turn, the form ἀστάνδης is attested in all manuscripts of another work by Plutarch devoted to Alexander, namely, *On the Fortune or the Virtue of Alexander the Great* (*De Alexandri Magni fortuna aut virtute*). We learn again that Darius III was earlier a royal courier: Δαρεῖος ἦν σὸν ἔργον, ὃν ἐκ δούλου καὶ ἀστάνδου βασιλέως κύριον Περσῶν ἐποίησας (…) — "Darius was your handiwork: he who was a slave and courier of the king, him did you (*scil.* Fortune) make the mighty lord of Persia (…)" (*Mor.* 326e; ed. by W. Nachstädt, W. Sieveking and J. Titchener; trans. by F. C. Babbitt). Then, Plutarch writes the same about Arses (Oarses), the predecessor of Darius III: ἐπὶ θύρας αὐτῷ τὸ διάδημα τῆς Ἀσίας ἦλθεν, ὥσπερ Ὀάρσῃ διὰ Βαγώαν, καὶ στολὴν ἐκδυσάμενος ἀστάνδου περιέθετο τὴν βασιλικὴν καὶ ὀρθοπαγῆ κίταριν; "Did the royal diadem come to Alexander's doors, as to Oarses through the machinations of Bagoas, who stripped from him the garb of a courier and put upon him the royal raiment and the tiara that ever stands erect?" (*Mor.* 340b-c; ed. and trans. as above).

The form ἀστάνδης also appears in the editions of *Deipnosophistae* (3.122a/94) by Athenaeus of Naucratis in a passage enumerating some Persian words in Greek. Howev-

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[3] Probably not in three; see below on the controversial gloss ἀσκανδής.

er, we have here an emendation: τοὺς ἀστ<άνδας ἢ ἀγγ>άρους (edited and corrected by G. Kaibel),[4] whereas all the manuscripts provide only τοὺς ἀστάρους without any hint at a meaning. We cannot exclude the possibility that ἀστάρους is simply an early distortion of ἀγγάρους (a lapsus calami of ΑΣΤΑ- instead of ΑΓΓΑ- in majuscule is conceivable).

The *Suda* mentions ἀστάνδης in two entries, namely α 4220 (ed. by A. Adler): Ἀστάνδαι· οἱ ἐκ διαδοχῆς γραμματοφόροι. οἱ δὲ αὐτοὶ καὶ ἄγγαροι. τὰ δὲ ὀνόματα Περσικά. — "*Astandai:* the letter carriers in relays. They are the same as *angaroi*. Both are Persian words.", and α 165 (ed. by A. Adler; = Phot. α 95, ed. by Ch. Theodoridis): Ἄγγαροι· οἱ ἐκ διαδοχῆς γραμματοφόροι. οἱ δὲ αὐτοὶ καὶ ἀστάνδαι. τὰ δὲ ὀνόματα Περσικά. (…) — "*Angaroi:* the letter carriers in relays. They are the same as *astandai*. Both are Persian words. (…)".[5] A very similar definition of ἄγγαρος is to be found in the reconstructed lexicon of Aelius Dionysius, i. e., α 16 (ed. by H. Erbse): ἄγγαροι· οἱ ἐκ διαδοχῆς γραμματοφόροι. οἱ δ' αὐτοί καὶ ἀστάνδαι. ἡ δὲ λέξις Περσική (…) — "*Angaroi:* the letter carriers in relays. They are the same as *astandai*. A Persian word (…)".[6]

Moreover, Hesychius lists two related entries in his lexicon, i. e., α 7683 (ed. by I. Cunningham): †ἀσκανδής· ἄγγελος — "*askantes:* messenger", and α 7814 (the same edition): ἀστάνδης· ἡμεροδρόμος. ἢ κράββαττον. ἢ ἄγγελον. Ταραντῖνοι — "*astandes:* long-distance courier. Or pallet. Or messenger. Tarentians". In the case of the latter gloss, there are no difficulties with the beginning of the lemma, which is crucial for our study: ἀστάνδης· ἡμεροδρόμος. In the second part of the definition, the case changes to accusative; for this reason we may presume that two words blended together, i. e., ἀστάνδης 'messenger' and ἀσκάντης 'pallet'. Therefore, it is likely that the ethnonym Tarentians does not refer to ἀστάνδης, but rather to ἀσκάντης.[7]

As for the gloss ἀσκανδής, the editors mark certain difficulties with a crux philologorum (as quoted above), as well as by means of an asterisk or parentheses: *ἀσκανδής· ἄγγελος (ed. by M. Schmidt), [ἀσκανδής· ἄγγελος] (ed. by K. Latte). The gloss is placed in correct alphabetical order between ἀσκάνη and Ἀσκανίη, but the word ἀσκανδής 'messenger' probably never existed.[8] It might be a result of a misunderstanding of an earlier source where ἀσγάνδης/ἀστάνδης 'messenger' and ἀσκάντης 'pallet', phonetically and morphologically similar, were compared.[9] It is difficult to say exactly how it happened, but, no doubt, it was entirely possible (cf. the gloss ἀστάνδης mentioned above, where the word κράββαττος 'pallet' occurs in its definition).

The context and definitions in the lexica indicate that both ἀσγάνδης/ἀστάνδης and σαγγάνδης might be of Iranian origin. As we have seen, ἀσγάνδης/ἀστάνδης in Plutarch is closely connected to the Achaemenid administration. Moreover, some lexica describe ἀστάνδης (along with ἄγγαρος) as a Persian word. Σαγγάνδης appears together with three

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[4] J. Schweighäuser in his edition from the beginning of the 19th cent. prints τοὺς ἀστ<άνδας καὶ ἀγγ>άρους.

[5] Cf. also *EM* 6.44 (ed. by Th. Gaisford): Ἄγγαροι· οἱ ἐκ διαδοχῆς γραμματοφόροι. οἱ δὲ αὐτοὶ καὶ ἀστάνδαι.

[6] Cf. Eust. *Comm. ad Hom. Od.*, vol. II, p. 189. 5–6 (ed. by J. G. Stallbaum): κυρίως δὲ κατὰ Αἴλιον Διονύσιον ἄγγαροι οἱ ἐκ διαδοχῆς γραμματοφόροι. οἱ δ' αὐτοί, φησι, καὶ ἀστάνδαι Περσικῶς.

[7] K. Latte in the apparatus criticus of his edition suggests that the Tarentine gloss was taken from Rhinthon (4th/3rd cent. BC). Cf. also Hsch. α 4554: ἀναρός· ἄγγελος. Ταραντῖνοι.

[8] Greek ἀσκανδής or, more often, ἀσκάνδης is commonly treated as a real word without indicating any problems; see e. g., Frisk 1960–72, vol. 3, 41; Huyse 1993, 276; Chantraine 1999, 127; Beekes 2010, 149.

[9] Cf. Hsch. α 7685 (ed. by C. Cunningham): ἀσκάντης· κράβατος, κλινίδιον εὐτελές; Cyrill. α 1154 (ed. by U. Hagedorn): ἀσκάντης· κράβαττος.

other words of possible Persian or Median provenance: ὁροσάγγης 'benefactor of the Persian king; bodyguard', παρασάγγης 'parasang; messenger'[10] and ἄγγαρος 'messenger, courier; workman, labourer'.

Since the end of the 19th century, scholars have juxtaposed ἀσγάνδης/ἀστάνδης with similar words from Near Eastern languages.[11] First of all, we have Manichaean Middle Persian and Manichaean Parthian *ižgand* (written as *'jgnd*) 'messenger'.[12] There are also some Sogdian forms attested in different scripts and/or different types of texts, i. e., *(a) žγand* (written as *zγʾnt(t)*; Buddhist texts), *(ɔ)žγand* (*ʾzγʾnt*; non-Buddhist texts) and *ž(i) γant* (*žγnt*; Christian texts) 'messenger'.[13] Moreover, the Iranian term was borrowed into some Semitic languages: Jewish Aramaic *ʾîzgaddā* 'messenger' and, without vocalization, *ʾzgd* 'id.',[14] Syriac *izgandā* and *izgaddā* 'id.',[15] as well as Mandaic *ašganda* 'helper, assistant, servant; the Messenger'.[16]

Concerning the etymology of Middle Persian and Parthian *ižgand* etc., Huyse (1993, 276) is probably right in deriving them from the Iranian root **zga(n)d-*.[17] According to Cheung (2007, 473–474) its basic meanings are 'to go on, gallop, mount', but the author does not mention the words for 'messenger', and reconstructs the root as **zgad-* without a possible variant containing an internal *n*. However, if we accept that *ižgand* etc. belongs here, we should reconstruct **zga(n)d-* as Huyse did.[18] A possible variant with an internal *-n-* is probably also attested in the Sogdian form *β(ə)žγand(-)* (see below). The root **zga(n)d-* itself has no related words outside the Iranian branch. It occurs in Young Avestan *zgaδ(/θ)-* 'to go on horseback, gallop' (cf. also *fra-zgaδ-* 'to go forth')[19] and has well-established descendants in Middle and Modern Iranian languages, e.g. Khotanese *ysgad-* 'to mount' (attested with preverbs *va-* and *ha-*),[20] Sogdian *β(ɔ)žγaδ-* and *βɔžγast-* (written as *βzγδ-* and *βzʾγst-*; Buddhist texts), *βɔžγaδ-* (written as *bžγδ-*; Christian texts), *β(ə)žγaδ-* and *β(ə)žγast-* (written as *βjγδδ-* and *βjγst-*; Manichaean texts) 'to mount', as

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[10] The meaning of 'messenger' in the case of παρασάγγης occurs only in these two lexica (= fr. 520 of Sophocles, ed. by S. Radt, and fr. 686 of Euripides, ed. by R. Kannicht). Besides, this meaning seems to be attested in a corrupted gloss of Hesychius π 658 (ed. by P. A. Hansen): παρασάγγη· <ἀγ>γέλῳ (cj.; ms. and M. Schmidt: παρασαγγιλόγῳ)· οἱ Πέρσαι τοὺς διαγγέλλοντας οὕτω λέγουσι — "*parasangēs:* messenger (dat.) (or *parasangilogō*): Persians call so messengers".

[11] See Horn 1893, 29, note 3; Happ 1963, 98; Frisk 1960–72, vol. 3, 41; Huyse 1990, 95 and 1993: 276–277; Mancini 1995, 85, note 15 and 1995–96, 213; Chantraine 1999, 127; Schmitt 2002a; Ciancaglini 2008, 105–106; Beekes 2010, 149. It is surprising that Brust (2008) does not include ἀσγάνδης/ἀστάνδης in his study of Indian and Iranian vocabulary in Greek.

[12] Durkin-Meisterenst 2004, 85.

[13] Gharib 1995, 91, 458, 459; Sims-Williams 2021, 240.

[14] Jastrow 1903, 46 (*ʾîzgaḏ and ʾîzgaddā*); Sokoloff 1990, 43 (*ʾzgd*) and 2002, 112 (*ʾîzgaddā*); Cook 2008, 7 (*ʾzgd*, attested only in the absolute plural form *ʾizgadîm*).

[15] Sokoloff 2009, 32–33; Ciancaglini 2008, 105–106.

[16] Drower — Macuch 1963, 40.

[17] Apart from Huyse, the connection of the words for 'messenger' to this root is accepted by Gershevitch (1954, 51, § 342, note 1; he suggests the root **zgn̥d-*) and Happ (1962, 198).

[18] Note that such an ambiguity occurs in Iranian roots, e. g., **dra(n)ǰ-* 'to fix, fasten, hold' or **θra(n)č* 'to oppress'; see Cheung 2007, 76 and 395–396.

[19] Cheung 2007, 473; see also Kellens 1984, 21 (*zgad-* 'se précipiter (à cheval)'), 108 (*zgad-* 'aller à cheval'), and 1995, 69 (*zgad-* 'galoper'). However, not all scholars accept these meanings; cf. Bartholomae 1904, 1698; Narten 1986, 219–220; Hintze 1994, 285.

[20] Bailey 1979, 355; Cheung 2007, 473.

well as *β(ə)žγand(-)* (written as *βjγnd-*; Manichaean texts) 'mounting, riding' (all forms go back to **abi-zgad-*),[21] Pashto *zγat-* and *zγās/št-* 'to run'.[22]

The initial vowel in the Iranian words for 'messenger' is a prothesis, added before clusters consisting of a sibilant and a stop (however, this does not mean that ἀ- in ἀσγάνδης/ ἀστάνδης has the same origin; see below). This is a common feature in the Middle and Modern Iranian languages. It occurred especially in Manichaean Middle Persian and Manichaean Parthian as *i-* (written as ʿ, rarely as ʾ), but also as *ə-* (ʾ) in the Parthian inscriptions (see Table 2).[23]

Table 2. **The prothetic vowel in Middle Iranian**

Languages	Forms[24]	
Middle Persian (Zor.)	*spāh* (*spʾh*) 'army'	*škōh* (*škwh*) 'poor'
Middle Persian (Man.)	*ispāh* (ʿ*spʾḫ*) 'id.'	*iškōh* (ʿ*škwḫ*, ʾ*šqwḫ*) 'id.'
Middle Persian (inscr.)	*spāh-bed* (*spʾḥpt*) 'army chief'	
Parthian (Man.)	*ispāδ* (ʿ*spʾd*) 'army'	*iskōh* (ʿ*skwḫ*), *iskō* (ʿ*skw(w)*) 'id.'
Parthian (inscr.)	*spāδ-bed* (*spdpty* and *spʾdpty*), *əspāδ-bed* (ʾ*spʾdp*[*ty*]) 'army chief'	

In linking the Iranian words for 'messenger' to the root **zga(n)d-*, we must deal with one more phonetic phenomenon. This is the change of the voiced alveolar fricative /z/ to the voiced postalveolar fricative /ʒ/ (transliterated as *ž*) before the voiced velar stop /g/ (or before the voiced velar fricative /γ/ in Sogdian, where the change of voiced stops to voiced fricatives is a common feature). This phenomenon is found only occasionally in Iranian, but we must keep in mind that the occurrence of the cluster /zg/ is itself very limited.[25] However, we can find confirmation for this phenomenon in the parallel cluster *sk*, where the voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ changes to the voiceless postalveolar fricative /ʃ/ (transliterated as *š*) before the voiceless velar stop /k/. This development may be illustrated by the reflexes of Proto-Iranian roots **skap/f* and **skarf* in Middle Iranian languages (see Table 3).

Other Near Eastern words have been linked by researchers with *ižgand*, *ašganda* and/or ἀσγάνδης/ἀστάνδης, etc., but these comparisons are less certain.[26] Some scholars

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[21] Henning 1936, 60; Gharib 1995, 103–104 and 121–122; Cheung 2007, 474; Sims-Williams 2021, 59.

[22] Morgenstierne 2003, 101 (*zγat-* : *zγās/št-* 'to run'); Cheung 2007, 474 (*zγāstəl-/zγal-* 'to run').

[23] On prothesis in the Middle Iranian languages see Skjærvø 1996, 531 and 2009, 201.

[24] The data are taken from: Durkin-Meisterenst 2004, 86 and 92; Gignoux 1972, 33, 47, 63; MacKenzie 1986, 75 and 80; Nyberg 1974, 177 and 187.

[25] Cf. Gray 1902, 232–233, § 933.

[26] The following forms have been compared: **1.** Akkadian (Neo-Babylonian) *Ašgandu* (not *ašgandu*), attested only as a family name; its original meaning of 'messenger' is not confirmed (it is based on a comparison especially with Mandaic *ašganda*); see Brockelmann 1928, 9; Henning 1940, 35; Happ 1962, 199 and 1963, 98; Drower — Macuch 1963, 40; von Soden 1965–81, 80; Powell 1972; Macuch 1976, 38–39; Zadok 1976, 66 and 1979, 41; Mancini 1995, 85, note 15; Tavernier 2007, 512; Ciancaglini 2008, 105–106; Beekes 2010, 149; cf. Kaufman 1974, 38; rejected by Gelb *et. al.* 1956–2010, vol. A. 2, 427; Huyse 1993, 276, note 34; Sokoloff 2002, 112; **2.** Jewish Aramaic ʾ*ysqwndry* (pl.) 'a game played with tokens (a kind of chess?)'; see Jastrow 1903, 57 (he gives three vocalized variants of the name: ʾ*îsqûndrê*, ʾ*isqûndrê* and *sqûndrê*); on the Aramaic word see Sokoloff 2002, 122; **3.** Armenian *astandel* 'to lead about, to lead up and down, to walk

have also adduced Iranian and Semitic words for 'messenger' to explain -τ- in the form ἀστάνδης: Manichaean Middle Persian and Manichaean Parthian *azdegar* 'messenger, herald',[27] Sogdian *āzdakrē* (written as ʾzʾtqry; Christian texts) 'announcer, herald',[28] as well as Official Aramaic ʾzdkrʾ (emph.) 'inspector' (commonly treated as an Iranian word with the original meaning of 'herald')[29] and Arabic *askdār* 'messenger, courier' (from Iranian, with a metathesis).[30] This hypothesis assumes a rather improbable contamination of two words, *azgand-* and *azdākāra*, which would have resulted in the form *azdand-*, rendered as ἀστάνδης in Greek.[31] The contamination would have taken place in an Iranian dialect.

Table 3. **The phonetic change of /s/ to /ʃ/ before /k/ in Middle Iranian**

Languages	Forms[32]	
Proto-Iranian	*skap/f* 'to split, make a crack, crack'	*skarf* 'to stumble'
Middle Persian (Zor.)	*škāf-* (škʾp-) 'to split, burst'	*škarw-* (šklw-) 'to stumble, stagger'
Middle Persian (Man.)	*iškāf-* (ʾškʾf-) 'id.', *iškafs-* (ʾškfs-) 'to split up'	*iškarw-* (ʾškrw-, ʾšqrw-) 'to stumble, lurch'
Parthian (Man.)		*iskarfišn* (ʾskrfyšn) 'stumbling'
Sogdian (Buddh.)		*(ə)škaruβ* or *aškruf*? (ʾškrwβ) 'trouble'
Sogdian (Man.)	*paškafs* (pškfs-) 'to be split' (*pa-* < *pati-*)	

However, in the case of both Iranian words for 'messenger', the etymology was rather transparent to native speakers, and therefore a blending of this kind seems to be unlikely. What is more, the Greek words ἀσγάνδης and ἀστάνδης are so similar to each other that it is hard to believe that they might be of different origin. The consonant -τ- must be explained rather as a miswriting.[33] Accordingly, the *lapsus calami* was committed quite

about' or *astandil* 'to rove, to ramble, to wander'; cf. LSJ s. v. ἀστάνδης; Beekes 2010, 149; rejected by Hübschmann 1897, 109 and Huyse 1990, 95–96; cf. also Happ 1962, 200, note 3; on the Armenian *astandel and astandil* see Bedrossian 1875–79, 65; **4.** Sogdian *əstānīk* (ʾstʾnyk; Buddhist texts) 'messenger' (treated as an etymon for Greek ἀστάνδης); proposed by W. B. Henning in Gershevitch 1954, 248, Add. to § 997; see also Schmid 1962; Huyse 1993, 277; on the Sogdian word see Gharib 1995, 66.

   [27] Durkin-Meisterenst 2004, 85.

   [28] Gharib 1995, 93; Sims-Williams 2021, 47. However, instead of this word, Happ (1962, 200), following Eilers (1961–62, 225), gives ʾʾztkʾr; *cf.* Chantraine (1999, 127), which quotes an incorrect form: *ztkʾr*. This word has a different etymology and meaning: *āzātkār* or *āzătkār* (written as ʾʾztkʾr in Buddhist and Manichaean texts and as ʾztqʾr in Christian ones) 'noble, nobility' (Buddhist and Manichaean) and 'soldier, military man, officer' (Christian); see Gharib 1995, 17 and 93.

   [29] Hinz 1975, 52; Hoftijzer — Jongeling 1995, 25.

   [30] Eilers 1961–62, 225–226.

   [31] See Happ 1962, 200 (he follows unpublished suggestions by W. P. Schmid); Schmid 1962; Huyse 1990, 95–96 and — not so decidedly — 1993, 277. Cf. also Chantraine 1999, 127.

   [32] The data are taken from: Cheung 2007, 344–347; Durkin-Meisterenst 2004, 86 and 92; Gharib 1995, 69 and 301; MacKenzie 1986, 80.

   [33] This is one of the explanations given by Huyse (1933, 277; following a suggestion by R. Schmitt). Cf. Happ (1962, 199), which is against this hypothesis; he emphasizes that the form ἀστάνδης is too well attested in the sources.

early, so that it could spread in the Greek lexicographical tradition. We can theorize that the form ἀστάνδης already existed in one of the influential ancient dictionaries, such as the comprehensive lexicon, consisting of 95 books, by Pamphilus of Alexandria (1st cent. A.D.). There is no doubt that the writing of ΑΣΤ- instead of ΑΣΓ- in the majuscule is palaeographically possible. An important cause of such an error may have been the fact that the Greek language does not have any other words beginning in ἀσγ-, whereas there are many examples for ἀστ-, e.g., ἀστήρ 'star', ἄστυ 'town', etc.

We can thus assume that both ἀσγάνδης and ἀστάνδης, as well as σαγγάνδης, go back to an Iranian noun with the original meaning 'mounted messenger', based on the root *zga(n)d- 'to go on, gallop, mount'. The next question is when and from which language the word was borrowed. Admittedly, the Greek word is attested quite late, only in the Roman period; however, Plutarch and other authors may have followed some earlier sources. Therefore, it is possible that the term already existed in the Hellenistic or even in the Classical period. If so, the word may have been adopted either from Old Persian (alternatively, but less probably, from Median) or, later, from a Middle Iranian language, presumably from Middle Persian or Parthian.

The period and source language cannot be ascertained on the basis of the morphology. All three Greek forms, ἀσγάνδης, ἀστάνδης and σαγγάνδης, belong to the same class of first-declension masculine nouns in -ης. This morphological feature is quite common in Iranian titles, names of functions, personal names and ethnonyms that were adopted by the Greeks from the Classical to the Early Byzantine periods. Especially nouns ending in -ā or -ă (nom. sg.), as well as — in the case of later borrowings from Middle Iranian — those without a final vowel, were adapted to this class; for example:

ὀροσάγγης, -ου m. 'benefactor of the Persian king; bodyguard' (since the 5th cent. BC): derived commonly from Old Iranian *v(a)rusanha- 'widely known';[34]
σαλάνης in ἀδρασταδάραν σαλάνης, -ου m. 'a Sassanid title of a high civil and military official' (6th cent. A.D.): Middle Persian artēštārān sālār 'id' with the basic meaning of 'leader of soldiers', where σαλάνης stands for Middle Persian sālār 'leader, master'; Greek -λάν- comes from -lār-, probably due to a dissimilation of l … r > l … n;[35]
Ζωροάστρης, -ου m. 'Zoroaster' (since the 5th cent. BC), also Ζαθραύστης (hap. leg. in Diod. 1.94.2): Old and Young Avestan Zaraϑuštra- m. (nom. sg. Zaraϑuštra) 'id.', Middle Persian Zardu(x)št 'id.';[36]
Ξέρξης, -ου m. 'Xerxes' (since the 5th cent. BC): Old Persian Xšayaṛšan- m. (nom. sg. Xšayaṛšā) 'id.';[37]
Πέρσης, -ου m. 'Persian' (since the 5th cent. BC): Old Persian Pārsa- m. (nom. sg. Persa) 'id.', as well as Pārsa- (adj.) 'Persian'.[38]

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[34] See Brust 2008, 494–497.
[35] See Börm 2007, 145–146; Brust 2008, 45–48 and 569–571 (with an improbable claim that Greek σαλαν- comes from the plural form *salārān, used in the function of the pluralis maiestatis, as a result of a haplological shortening); Sundermann 1986. The Middle Persian title artēštārān sālār is attested in Kārnāmag ī Ardašīr ī Pābagān, i. e. Book of the Deeds of Ardashir, Son of Papak, and, in an Arabic transcription, in the History of the Prophets and Kings by al-Tabarī.
[36] Schmitt 1996, 91–98 and 2002b.
[37] Schmitt 2000 and 2014, 285–285.
[38] Schmitt 1996, 88–89 and 2014, 227.

The Greek words for 'messenger' may come either from an Old Persian noun with a nominal suffix -*a*- added to the root, or from a Middle Iranian form without a final vowel. Accordingly, we can reconstruct two possible source words: Old Persian **zganda*-, with the nom. sg. **zganda*,[39] or Middle Persian/Parthian **žgand*. In both approaches, the most difficult question is the presence of the vowel ἀ-/-α- in the first syllable of ἀσγάνδης/ ἀστάνδης and σαγγάνδης. If we had only the forms with ἀ- in the initial position, we could assume that they originated in Middle Iranian **əžgand* with the prothetic vowel ə-, attested in the Parthian inscriptions (cf. *əspādbed* 'army chief' quoted above). Incidentally, it is likely that this Middle Iranian form was borrowed into Mandaic as *ašganda*.[40]

However, the form σαγγάνδης cannot be explained in this way. It seems more likely that both σαγγάνδης and ἀσγάνδης/ἀστάνδης go back to Old Persian **zganda*- or to early Middle Persian/early Parthian **žgand*- (or **zgand*-, before the change of /zg/ to /ʒg/) without a prothetic vowel. It is reasonable to claim that the primary form in Greek was **σγάνδης*. Since the initial cluster σγ- /zg-/ was surely difficult to pronounce, a short vowel was added: either as a prothesis before the cluster σγ- or as an anaptyxis between the consonants. Thus, two independent variants came into existence, namely ἀσγάνδης and **σαγάνδης*, which then underwent further transformations.

As discussed above, the variant ἀστάνδης comes from ἀσγάνδης as a result of miswriting. In turn, the form σαγγάνδης developed from **σαγάνδης*. The distortion of σαγ- / *sag*-/ into σαγγ- /*saŋg*-/ was probably caused by the influence of the following cluster -νδ- /-*nd*-/. It may have been a kind of anticipatory assimilation: -αγ- … -ανδ- > -αγγ- … -ανδ- (/-*ag*- … -*and*-/ > /-*aŋg*- … -*and*-/). However, we cannot exclude the possibility that it was, again, not a phonetic change, but only a miswriting in a source used by both the *Cambridge Rhetorical Lexicon* and the work by Claudius Casilo. The letter -γ- /*ŋ*/ could be added due to analogy to other words with -γγ- (even with -σαγγ-) mentioned in the same entry: ὀροσάγγης, παρασάγγης and ἄγγαρος.

To conclude, it is important to note that the Greek nouns ἀσγάνδης and σαγγάνδης developed independently from the form **σγάνδης*, which goes back to Old Persian **zganda*- or early Middle Persian/early Parthian **žgand*- (or **zgand*-) with an original meaning of 'mounted messenger' (derived from the Proto-Iranian root **zga(n)d*- 'to go on, gallop, mount'). The initial ἀ- in ἀσγάνδης is a prothetic vowel, while σαγγάνδης received an anaptyctic vowel -α- and, additionally, -γγ- /-*ŋg*-/ instead of the expected -γ- /-*g*-/ due to an assimilation or a miswriting. The form ἀστάνδης is a secondary variant that comes from ἀσγάνδης, presumably because of an early *lapsus calami* of ΑΣΤ- for ΑΣΓ-. It is noteworthy that the Greek words exhibit some different features from their counterparts in Semitic: Jewish Aramaic ʾ*îzgaddā* and ʾ*zgd*, as well as Syriac *izgandā* and *izgaddā*, originated in Middle Persian or Parthian *ižgand* (with the prothetic vowel *i*-), whereas Mandaic *ašganda* was borrowed from Parthian (or, less probably, from Middle Persian) **əžgand* (with the prothetic vowel ə-).

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[39] In the history of research, the Old Persian noun is reconstructed as **ažganda*- (Mancini 1995, 85, note 15; cf. Ciancaglini 2008, 105–106) or, more often, as **žganda*- (e. g., Zadok 1976, 66 and 1979, 41; Tavernier 2007, 512).

[40] Cf. Macuch 1976, 38–39; Mancini 1995, 85, note 15; Ciancaglini 2008, 105–106.

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