‘Shahrālānyōzān’ appears in several Greek and Middle Persian papyri from Egypt, as well as a couple of ostraca in Greek and at least one parchment in Middle Persian.1 John Rea has published two of the Greek papyri as *P.Oxy.* 3637 and 3797, and noted that *P.Oxy.* 1843 (from vol. xvi), which does not mention Shahralanyozan by name, is in the same hand and deals with the same transaction as *P.Oxy.* 3637.2 During the publication of this new material, Poethke confirmed that Shahralanyozan also appears in *BGU* II 377, and Worp suggested that he could also be found in *SPP* X 251 (in the Louvre), a suggestion confirmed by Gascou.3 The Oxyrhynchite material contains more or less precise dates and from this it is clear that this official, whoever he was, was active in Egypt in the 620s, a period when the country was under Persian occupation. The Greek material is also better preserved and more substantial in content than any of the published Persian papyri or parchments. Three of the Greek papyri are about the payment of large sums of gold, due for shipment out of Egypt, in a twelfth indiction which is dated 623/4. A fourth one, and possibly a fifth one as well, is part of the internal administration of a large Fayyumic estate that had passed into Shahralanyozan’s control. One of the Fayyum documents, an account involving disbursements of cash, refers to the *oikos* of Shahralanyozan.

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1 *P.Oxy.* I 3637 (19(?).x.623); LV 3797 (26.iv–25.v.624); *SPP* X 251 (626/7; 7c. in *BL* 9.343), and *BGU* II 377 (7th century) contain references to someone called Σαραλανεοζαν, transliterated ‘Saralaneozan’ in *P.Oxy.*, while the presence of the same individual is implied in *P.Oxy.* xvi 1843 (6.xi.623, *BL* 8.250). The most interesting *published* Middle Persian documents that mention Shahralanyozan are *cii* Nos. 5, 58, and 81 in Weber, *Ostraca* 118, 161, and 185 respectively), P. 136 and P. 172 in Weber, *Berliner Papyri*, and the leather parchment Wien P.Pehl. 373a (Weber, Eine spätassanidische 185 ff.).

2 Rea, *P.Oxy.* 3637.14n (li, p. 103 f.), with Gershevitch’s suggestion that ‘Shahrālānyōzān’ should be seen as a title with the (tentative) meaning ‘most powerful of commanders.’ Here Gershevitch derives -yozan from Av. aojah-, ‘power,’ e.g. Kellens and Pirart, *Les textes* 2:198, which I find an odd interpretation in view of his commentary on Yasht 10, 36, see Gershevitch, *The Avestan hymn* 187. Contrast my explanation below.

3 Ibid., and 3979.9n (lv, p. 78).
and refers to the estate as an *ousía*.\(^4\) It also mentions someone who appears to be his wife or one of his wives, calling her *endoxotatē kyría*.\(^5\) She was based in Alexandria. In contrast to all of this, the Middle Persian documents, which are also from the Fayyūm, are simply scraps of papyrus or parchment and do not directly concern the affairs of Shahralanyozan.\(^6\) The picture would probably have been different, perhaps even radically different, if the very substantial collection of Middle Persian papyri acquired by the Nationalbibliothek in Vienna in the late nineteenth century had not disappeared, almost in its entirety, following its loan to Berlin in the 1930s.\(^7\)

To sum up, the Greek material falls into two groups: Oxyrhynchite documents, almost certainly from the former Apion estate,\(^8\) involving substantial payments of gold, upwards of 150 lbs from just two districts, and the two Fayyūm papyri which are less overtly public in tone. Now the most striking feature of the Greek papyri and the two ostraca from Hermontsis is that Shahralanyozan is described as *paneuphēmos* in almost all of them. I believe this is a fairly strong clue that papyrologists have failed to pick up on. Absolutely no one but the most powerful and wealthy section of the Byzantine aristocracy described themselves in this way.\(^9\) In other words, if we approach the issue of the identity of this mysterious individual in a purely abstract, logical way, to begin with, he would have had to have been a high-ranking Sasanian official with sufficient stature to justify the extraordinary step of deploying the one epithet that distinguished the élite sections of the Byzantine aristocracy. This restricts the choice to a handful of the highest ranking officials in charge of the Sasanian occupation of the eastern provinces.\(^10\) Of course, one can always assume that not all

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4 \(spp \times 251a.2, \ οῖκος \ Σαραλαν\( \), b.7, το\(ι\) κέλαρ\(̓\) (του) τ̄̄ ὁ ς αρουρ\(̓\) (δων) τ̄̄ ὁ ς ὁυσί\(ας\).\)

5 \(spp \times 251b.1, δ(ιὰ) ἐπιστά(λματος) τῆς ἐνδοξ(οτάτης) κυρᾶς.\)

6 Wien P.Pehl. 373a (Weber, Eine spätsassanidische 185 ff.) mentions the “seal of Šahrālān-yōzān” in l. 10 (*gilēnag pad muhr i Šahr-Alānyōzān āwišt*).


8 I cannot prove this, but the consolidation of the Oxyrhynchite and the Cynopolite for tax purposes otherwise occurs only in Apion documents.

9 E.g. Flavius Strategius son of Flavius Apion I, his son Flavius Apion II, and Flavius Athanasius from the sixth century; Flavius Strategius (the Fayyūm Strategius), Flavius Apion III in the seventh, including some lesser known aristocrats such as Leon in *P.Laur. 111 110* (615); an epithet typical of *patricii*.

10 On the military side, the chief rival to Shahrvaraz appears to have been the Sasanian commander called Kardarigas by Theophanes, *Chronicle*, 421 etc. *AM 6097*. Although titles like this came to be used as personal names, there is no indication in the sources of who this person was. On the name, cf. Theophylact Simocatta, *History*, 32. 1.9.6), “This [the Kardarigas] is a Parthian title; the Persians like to be called by their titles, as if they consider it