



'AMALA

'**AMALA** (literally: workers, retainers), the retinue of a tribal chief, and the name of a number of tribes. The clan of a tribal chief or the tribe of the chief of a tribal confederacy often bears the name 'Amala, since it is made up of individuals who serve the chief in various capacities. Because the chiefs generally pick their '*amala* from all of their subject clans or tribes, the resulting tribal unit is not a kinship group. When a local dynasty is overthrown or becomes extinct, or when a tribe or tribal confederacy disintegrates, the '*amala* of the chief sometimes retain their cohesion as a tribal group and become an independent tribe by the name of 'Amala. Several of these have been important in recent Iranian history.

The 'Amala of Lorestān. A Lur tribe, it comprised the retinue of the *wālīs* of Lorestān; the names of some of its clans indicated the type of work they performed: Āhangar (iron-smith), Mīrāk^vor (equerry), Jelowdār (groom), Qāṭeṛčī (muleteer), Sārbān (camel driver), Farrāš (pitcher of tents), Zīnbardār (saddle carrier; cf. Houtum-Schindler, "Reisen," pp. 85-86). The 'Amalas of Lorestān were established on the ancestral domains of the *wālīs* in the Pīš(-e) Kūh region: around Ṭarhān, Jāydar, Kūh(-e) Dašt and Qīlāb, as well as in the neighborhood of Ḳorramābād and Alaštār (Rabino, *Les tribus*, p. 28). Because they cultivated the lands of the *wālī*, they were exempt from most forms of taxation (ibid., pp. 28-29). According to de Bode, Āgā Moḥammad Khan Qājār moved them to Fārs; though most of them returned to Lorestān after his death, they were by then much reduced in number (*Travels* II, p. 289). Rawlinson, who traveled in the area in 1836, estimated them at 2,000 families ("Notes," p.



107). Layard visited Lorestān some four years later and gives the same figure (“Description,” p. 99). De Bode, whose data is contemporary with that of Layard, writes that they comprised between 2,000 and 3,000 families (*Travels* II, p. 290). When Fath-‘Alī Shah took away the Piš Kūh from the jurisdiction of the *wālī* of Lorestān and confiscated his lands in that region (ca. 1840), the ‘Amalas continued to cultivate these lands on behalf of the crown (Layard, “Description,” p. 4). Meanwhile, the descendants of the last *wālī* of Lorestān (Ḥasan Khan) were left with only the Pošt(-e) Kūh region, where they became the *wālīs* and acquired a retinue of Feylī Lurs. As a settled people, the ‘Amalas of Lorestān gradually lost the cohesion which they had once enjoyed. By the end of the 19th century, the tribe had thoroughly disintegrated. Today, only a few of its clans, such as Amrā’īs and the Čegenīs, still exist as independent tribes.

The ‘Amala of Kūzestān. A Feylī Lur tribe. After Ḥaydar-‘Alī Khan (a son of Ḥasan Khan, the last *wālī* of Lorestān) was killed around 1880, one of his sons, Ḥosayn-qolī Khan (d. 1900), was finally able to succeed him as *wālī* of Pošt Kūh. Another son, Bāqer Khan, who was one of the losing contenders, left the region with three clans of Feylī Lur retainers and bodyguards, settled down in the Šūš region in northern Kūzestān, and formed an independent tribe by the name of ‘Amala; they were later joined by nine more clans of Feylī Lurs from Pošt Kūh and of Arabs from around Šūš (J. Qā’em-maqāmī, “Ašāyer,” p. 21). Shortly after World War I, Wilson estimated their number at 800 families (cf. Field, *Contributions*, p. 189), and towards the end of World War II, Qā’em-maqāmī estimated their number at 1,600 families (“Ašāyer,” p. 21). Today, they are sedentary, make their living from agriculture, and are found to the north and south of Šūš.

The ‘Amala of the Qašqā’ī tribe. A Turkic tribe of Fārs, it is the chief tribe of the Qašqā’ī tribal confederacy. These ‘Amalas were originally warriors and workmen attached to the household of the *īlkānī*, or paramount chief; recruited from all the Qašqā’ī tribes they constituted the *īlkānī*’s bodyguard and retinue. In 1918, their number was estimated at 2,000 families (Magee, *Tribes*, p. 71). During the reign of Reżā Shah Pahlavī the Iranian army attempted to crush the Qašqā’īs and force them to abandon their nomadic way of life; as a result many of them perished and their *īlkānī*, Şawlat-al-dawla, was killed. At the same time many small, isolated groups of Qašqā’īs sought to save themselves by joining the relatively more powerful ‘Amala tribe, so in spite of its heavy losses, the tribe doubled in size. After Reżā Shah’s abdication in 1941,



Nāṣer Khan, the new *īlkānī* quickly reorganized the old confederacy. He extended his direct control by incorporating several of the member tribes of the confederacy into his own ‘Amala tribe—especially those tribes which had lost their *kalāntars* (leaders) under Reżā Shah’s harsh rule (*ibid.*). By 1956, the ‘Amala tribe comprised as many as 6,000 families (Oberling, *The Qashqā’i Nomads*, p. 223; Kortum, “Amala,” pp. 71-91). Two other groups of tribesmen in Fārs also bear the name of ‘Amala: A clan of the Darra-šūrī tribe of the Qašqā’ī confederacy and a clan of the ‘Arab Šaybānī subtribe of the Kamsa confederacy.

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