



ĀMĀRGAR

ĀMĀRGAR, a Middle and New Persian word designating a person holding a particular administrative post.

i. *Etymology.*

ii. *The post.*

i. Etymology

The term which yielded Middle Persian *āmārgar* is first attested in the 5th century B.C. as a loanword in two Semitic languages: [*h*]a-am-ma-ra-(a-)ka-a-r[*u*?], *am-mar-kar-ra*, *am-ma-ri/ru-a-kal* in Late Babylonian and *hmrk'* (later *'mrkl*) in Aramaic. Together with the later loanword in Armenian *hamarakar* these show only that the word began with an *h*-; the lengths of the vowels are uncertain. Since in Iranian the root **hmar* (cf. Skt. *smar*, IE. **(s)mer*) "think of" early and everywhere lost its first consonant directly before *-m-* (except when, after *i*, it was preserved as *-š-*), it is clear that the word must have been compounded of *ham* and a form of *mar* and not, as assumed by many writers, contain a form **hmāra*. This is corroborated without being proven by the Babylonian spellings, which all have *-mm-*. Later Parthian spellings with initial *ʿ* (Nisa *'hmrkr*, Paikuli *'hmrkr*) do not disprove it: cf. Mid. Pers. *'hmt'n*, Parth. *'hmtn* (and Armenian *Ahmatan*) < Old Pers. *Ha(n)gmatāna-*. Only in Mid. Pers. inscriptions (Paikuli *'m'lkly*) and seals (also *ḥm'lkly*) is the length of the second vowel revealed. Thus Old Pers. **hammāra-kara-* became **hammārgar*, then *āmārgar* in Mid. Pers., just as **ham* + *âš*□ *mauk* gave Manichaean Parth.



'mwxtn, 'mwc- against Man. Mid. Pers. *hmwxtn*, *hmwc-*, but later N. Pers. *āmōxtan*, *āmōz-* “to teach.”

BIBLIOGRAPHY

J. C. Greenfield, “*Hamarakara > 'amarkal,” *W. B. Henning Memorial Volume*, London, 1970, pp. 180-86.

See also the bibliography to part ii.

(D. N. MacKenzie)

ii. The post

During the Sasanian period the *āmārgar* was a sort of tax collector or chief fiscal officer. The function of **hamarakara* is referred to from the Achaemenid period, especially in the 5th century B.C. Elephantine documents (A. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.*, Oxford, 1923, 2nd ed., 1967, no. 26; G. A. Driver, *Aramaic Documents of the Fifth Century B.C.*, Oxford, 1954, 2nd ed., 1968, letters no. 8, 9, 10; R. T. Hallock, *Persepolis Fortification Tablets*, Chicago, 1969, no. 281; on the different duties of this Achaemenid functionary, cf. J. C. Greenfield, “Hamarakara > 'amarkal,” *W. B. Henning Memorial Volume*, London, 1970, pp. 180-86, and *Acta Antiqua Academia Hungarica*, 1977, pp. 115-16); the title is also attested in Akkadian (W. von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch I*, Wiesbaden, 1965, p. 44). An *āmārgar* (*'hmrkr*) is mentioned at Nisa in 81 B.C. (I. M. Diakonov and V. A. Livshits, *Peredneaziatskii sbornik II*, Moscow, 1966, no. 394, p. 146). Under the Sasanians, the *āmārgar* was essential to provincial administration; he could be assigned to one, two, or even three towns (which were undoubtedly chief district seats). The most important *āmārgar* could have an entire province assigned to him, e.g., Kermān (R. N. Frye, *Iranica antiqua* 8, 1968, p. 124, nos. 21, 22), Sind (*ibid.*, p. 128, no. 44), Fārs (*idem*, ed., *Sasanian Remains from Qasr-i Abu Nasr*, 1973, p. 63, D209), Beth Aramāyē or Asorestān (P. Bedjan, *Vie de Mar Iabalaha*, Leipzig, 1893, p. 210; cf. P. Peeters, *Recherches d'histoire et de philologie orientales*, Brussels, II, 1951, p. 121), Media (Ph. Gignoux, *Catalogue des sceaux, camées et bulles de la*



Bibliothèque Nationale et du Musée du Louvre, Paris, 1978, p. 91), Ādurbādagān (Pahlavi inscriptions at Derband; cf. K. Trever, *Ocherki po istorii i kul'ture drevnei Albanii*, Moscow and Leningrad, 1959, pp. 347f.), and *Vāspuragān (Sebeos, *History of Heraclius VI*, tr. F. Macler, Paris, 1904, p. 32; a different and more convincing interpretation is given by H. Hübschmann, *Die altarmenischen Ortsnamen*, Strassburg, 1904; repr. Amsterdam, 1969, p. 262: This refers to the tax collector of the *vāspuhrakān*, i.e., the “higher nobility”). In the 4th (?) century, Garamēa (Beth Garmāi) and Adiabene were served by the same functionary (A. D. H. Bivar, *Catalogue of the Western Asiatic Seals in the British Museum. Stamp Seals II*, London, 1969, p. 117). In one case, at the end of the 3rd century, *āmārgars* are mentioned alongside satraps and other officers (P. O. Skjærvø, *The Sassanian Inscription of Paikuli 3.1*, Wiesbaden, 1983, pp. 42-43). At the height of the Sasanian dynasty an *Ērān-āmārgar* was in charge of the financial services of the empire (Ya‘qūbī, p. 202). A. Christensen (*Iran Sass.*, pp. 524-26) proposes reading *ērānmārgar* in the *Fārs-nāma* of Ebn al-Balkī (p. 91), making the *Ērān-āmārgar* a deputy of the *wuzurg-framādār*. In the Sasanian period, the *āmārgar* was qualified to do property evaluation, handle real estate matters, etc. (*MHD*, ed. Anklesaria, Bombay, 1913, pp. 27.12-28.3; cf. A. Perikhanian, *Revue des études arméniennes* 5, 1968, p. 10; M. Macuch, *Das sasanidische Rechtsbuch “Mātakdān i Hazār Dātistān” [Teil II]*, Wiesbaden, 1981, pp. 190-91, 204). He also had to collect and store the taxes within his jurisdiction (e.g., the Isfahan collector under Ḳosrow II; Sebeos, *History of Heraclius XIII*, tr. p. 42). A Christian text refers to the trial of an *āmārgar* and to that of other provincial functionaries (*Synodicon orientale*, ed. J. B. Chabot, Paris, 1902, p. 77, tr. p. 329). On the seal of the *āmārgar*, see *MHD*, ed. Modi, p. 93.5. In recent times the term *āmārgar* has been revived by the Farhangestān with the meaning “statistician, census official.”

See also E. Herzfeld, *Paikuli, Monument and Inscription of the Early History of the Sassanian Empire I*, Berlin, 1924, p. 130, no. 51.

R. Altheim-Stiehl, *Epigraphica Anatolica I*, 1983, p. 17.