



## ARTĒŠTĀR

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**ARTĒŠTĀR** (Middle Persian), a learned calque on and translation of the Avestan *raθaēštā* “warrior, war-hero” (Bartholomae, *AirWb.*, col. 1506), which is a *-tar* formation, based on an original *raθaēštā*, literally: “in chariot standing, i.e. charioteer” (J. Kellens, *Les noms racines de l’Avesta*, Wiesbaden, 1974, pp. 231f.). This explanation of the Avestan forms is supported not only by the existence of the Sanskrit word *ratheṣṭhā* “charioteer” but also by the proper name *Ratešda* appearing in the Persepolis tablets, which must be its Old Persian equivalent (see M. Mayrhofer, *Onomastica Persepolitana*, Vienna, 1973, no. 8.1423). In the Middle Persian form, the long *ā* of the last syllable can be derived either from the accusative or from a secondary thematicization of the *tar-* stem (see Kellens, loc. cit.); and the initial *a* is attributed to analogy with *artīk* “fighting” by H. S. Nyberg (*A Manual of Pahlavi II*, Wiesbaden, 1974, p. 30, and *Hilfsbuch des Pehlevi II*, Uppsala, 1931, p. 2). The reading *artēštār* (with *art-* rather than *arat-*) is supported by New Persian *artēšdār* “soldier” (“miles” in J. A. Vullers, *Lexicon Persico-Latinum I*, repr. Graz, 1962, p. 76), though *aratištār* is found in Pāzand (Nyberg, *Manual*, loc. cit.), and *ratēštār*, which is nearer to the Avestan form, appears in the Pahlavi translation of the Avesta (B. N. Dhabhar, *Pahlavi Yasna and Visperad*, Bombay, 1949, p. 107; D. D. Kapadia, *Glossary of Pahlavi Vendidad*, Bombay, 1953, p. 268). If Nyberg’s theory is correct, the word *artēštār* must have been invented before the form of the word for “fighting” changed from *artīk* to *ardīg*, i.e. before the Sasanian period. The form *nīsārīān* in the *Šāh-nāma* (F. Wolff, *Glossar zu Firdosis Schahname*, Berlin, 1935, p. 832) was emended by E. Benveniste to *artēštārī* (“Les classes sociales dans la tradition avestique,” *JA* 221, 1932, p. 133).



Having entered the New Persian language in the form *artēšdār* (metrically *artēšadār*) or similar variants, the word was misunderstood as “*artēš*-having” (with *-dār* from *dāstan* “to have”).

The Farhangestān (Iranian Academy) established in Reżā Shah’s reign was misled by this misinterpretation of “*artēš-dār*” to see in the first component a Persian word *arteš* meaning “army.” This solecism was officially approved, and the Iranian army has been called the *arteš* ever since (Bozorg Alavi, *Geschichte und Entwicklung der modernen persischen Literatur*, [East] Berlin, 1967, p. 183; W. Eilers, *Der alte Name des persischen Neujahrsfestes*, Wiesbaden, 1953, p. 41 n. 1).

Archeological research has shown that use of chariots in the Iranian lands began in the 3rd millennium B.C. (R. Ghirshman, *L’Iran et la migration des Indo-Aryens et des Iraniens*, Leiden, 1977, pp. 15f.). The Avesta still speaks of charioteers, whom it calls *raθaēštā*, etc., cf. *Yašt* 10.112. In *Yašt* 10.11, however, the word must mean “warrior on horseback,” whence I. Gershevitch convincingly inferred that “the word had been generalized in the sense of “warrior”” (*The Avestan Hymn to Mithra*, Cambridge, 1958, p. 170). In *Vidēvdāt* 14.9, a list of 12 items of equipment required by a *raθaēštā* is given, with the implication that the word denoted any heavily armed rider and not any warrior. It is in this sense that *raθaēštā* is used in the Avesta as an aristocratic appellative of martial gods, such as Miθra, Sraoša, Ātar, and the Fravašis, *Raθaēštā* also denotes the second social class, the military nobility in the Avestan hierarchy, and it appears as an epithet of Zoroaster, who is already made to embody the virtues of all classes as the *téleios ánthrōpos* (K. Barr) “the perfect man,” being the first priest, warrior, and cultivator (*Yt.* 13.88-89; see also below).

All these aspects of the Avestan *raθaēštā* are echoed in the descriptions of the *artēštārs* in the Pahlavi literature. Their clothing and equipment are portrayed in the *Ardā Wirāz-nāmag* (ed. M. Haug and E. W. West, chap. 14.7-10). The Avestan comparisons of particular deities with *artēštārs* are further developed, especially in the case of the Mēnōg ī Āsmān (Spirit of Heaven) who protects the world of light and whose solid armor, consisting of the heavenly spheres, is likened to the armor of an earthly warrior (*Bundahišn*, pp. 18.15-19.2). Similarly the *frawahrs* of the just who throned the heaven are warriors “who ride dashing steeds and wield lances” (*Bundahišn*, pp. 60.15-61.3; *Wizīdagihā ī Zādspram*, ed. B. T. Anklesaria, chap. 3.3). The first to wear the attire of an *artēštār* was the valiant Wāy ī weh (*Bundahišn*, p.



235.8-13). *Artēštār* (and *artēštārīh*) continued to denote the nobility in Zoroastrian terminology (e.g. *Škand Gumānīg Wizār*, ed. J. de Menasce, 1.22, 27-28). Duties, virtues, and failings of *artēštārs* are discussed in several Pahlavi texts (e.g. *Dēnkard*, book 3, ed. Madan, p. 325, ed. M. Dresden, [248-49]; *Mēnōg ī Xrad*, ed. E. W. West, 31.2.9, and 59.3.81). A chapter of the Sasanian Avesta, *Artēštāristān* “warrior code” (West), is set forth at length in book 8 of the *Dēnkard* (ed. Madan, pp. 729.12-732.12, ed. M. Dresden, [554] (last line)-[557] line 13; cf. *Wizīdagīhā ī Zādspram* 28.4). In the Sasanian period the revered fire-temple of Ādur Gušnasp (Taḵt-e Solaymān) in Azarbaijan was considered to hold the special fire of the *artēštār* class; as in the Avesta, Zoroaster was depicted as the perfect priest, warrior, and cultivator (M. Boyce, *Zoroastrianism*, p. 278; *Dēnkard*, book 7, ed. M. Molé, *La légende de Zoroastre selon les textes pehlevi*, Paris, 1967, 1.41; *Wizīdagīhā ī Zādspram* 31.5), and his son Xwar-čīhr was regarded as the “first” warrior and the eschatological army commander of Pēšōtan (*Bundahišn*, p. 235.8-13). It is also stated, however, that before Zoroaster, Jamšēd, the primeval king, possessed the good qualities of all the classes (*Dēnkard*, book 7, ed. Molé, 1.20); and this statement accords with the New Persian-Arabic literary tradition, which makes Jamšēd the founder of the class system.

The *artēštār* concept alone, however, played no practical part in Sasanian society, where only the office of the *artēštārān sālār* had any real importance.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Given in the text.

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