



BANDAR

BANDAR “harbor, seaport; commercial town.” The word is presumably derived from the root *band* “to bind” (Pers. *bastan*), but probably not in the sense of “binding,” i.e., “mooring” (ships) but rather as the enclosed (bound up) area of the harbor, like Ar. *sadd* “jetty, mole.” Vullers (*Lexicon Persico-Latinum* I, p. 267) suggests that *bandar* may be from *band-dar* “gateway of the jetty/mole.” The word for harbor has not yet been found in Middle Persian.

The concept of *bandar* probably continues an old Oriental tradition. Its double meaning of “harbor” on a river or a sea and “town, center of commerce and communications” (also in the inland) agrees well with that of Akkadian *kārum* from Sumerian *kar* “fortification (of a harbor), break-water.” The *kārum* of Kāniš in Anatolia, the present ruin of Kültepe near Kayseri, was famous. At this site thousands of Old Assyrian cuneiform business documents from the 2nd millennium b.c. have been found (see W. F. Leemans, “The Importance of Trade,” *Iraq* 39, 1977, pp. 1-10). Note also that in Thessalian Greek, the word *limēn* “harbor” has also acquired the meaning of “market.”

In Neo-Syriac *šā(h)-bandar*, lit. “harbor king,” is used as a title meaning “(Turkish) consul” while in Arabic it is still used as a family name. Both title and office resemble the Arabic *malek-al-tojjār* “king of merchants,” i.e., head of the merchants’ guild and its official representative at a market place. This title recalls the Old Babylonian office of *wakil tamkāri* (cf. Ar. *wakīl* “representative”).