



FĀRES

FĀRES (plurs. *forsān*, *fawāres*), the Arabic term for “rider on a horse, cavalryman,” connected with the verb *farasa/farosa* “to be knowledgeable about horses, be a skillful horseman” and the noun *faras* “horse.” Since in ancient Arabian society the owner of a horse was a comparatively rich man, often a tribal chief, *sayyed*, and since in the early Islamic *dīvān* (q.v.) system the cavalryman was entitled to a stipend double that of the infantryman, the *forsān* were a privileged class, and acquired some of the fighting qualities and chivalric attributes of the medieval European knight. Hence by later ‘Abbasid, Ayyubid and Mamluk time, the term *forūsīya* had evolved for the ensemble of moral qualities and riding and weaponry skills necessary for the cavalryman.

The *fāres* thus came in many ways to be the equivalent of the Persian mailed cavalryman, the Old Pers. *asabāra-* and the Middle Persian and early New Persian *aswār* (q.v.), later yielding *sowār*, *sovār*, the standard term for a cavalryman in, e.g., the Mughal army in Muslim India.

See also *asb*, [ASĀWERA](#).



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