



## FRAMADĀR

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**FRAMADĀR (FRAMĀTĀR)**, a Sasanian administrative title. In Old Persian the substantive *framātar* appears in royal titles and is always accompanied by the word *paru-* meaning “numerous, many”; it is generally translated as “master, lord [of many]” (Kent, *Old Persian*, p. 198). The title was used in set formulae by Achaemenid rulers (Kent, *Old Persian*, pp. 142, 147, 148, 150). *Framātar* is constructed from *fra* + stem *mā* = *farman/framan* “order” + agent suffix *tar* “who maintains.” The Achaemenids thus describe themselves as “givers of commands to many” (cf. Latin *multipotens*). The term was passed into Parthian in the form of *prmtr* in order to designate an office, probably that of the director of public supplies (e.g. wine, barley, etc.). The title is found on one of the *ostraca* from Qosha-Tepe dating from the first half of the first century C. E. (cf. Livshits, 1977, p. 179; Idem, 1980, no. 4, p. 237 and fig. 2).

The earliest evidence of this title under the Sasanians, dated in the year three of Šāpūr I, is a short inscription on a side of an altar at Barm-e Delak (q.v.) near Shiraz. It mentions two dignitaries, the second of whom is the *framadār Wahnām* (*whn'm ZY prmtr*; Gignoux, 1991, p. 11; Skjærvø, p. 159). Furthermore, in the trilingual inscription at the Ka'ba-ye Zardōšt at Naqš-e Rostam, carved after Šāpūr I's victory over the emperor Valerian (280 C.E.), two *framadārs* are mentioned in the list of the dignitaries: (1) Wahunām (Mid. Pers. 1. 32, Parth. 1. 26, Gk. 1. 62; Maricq, p. 327) and (2) Šāhpūhr (Mid. Pers. 1.34, Parth. 1. 28, Greek 1.66; Maricq, p. 331). The Wahunām of ŠKZ is definitely identical to the Wahnām of the Abnūn inscription, as pointed out by Philippe Gignoux (loc. cit). On the other hand, the existence of two holders of the same



office on ŠKZ indicates the existence of two *framadārs* (if not more) at the same period.

This title is also found on an undated Sasanian seal (Gignoux, 1978, p. 15) which mentions a *wāspuhragān framadār*. The Pahlavi term *wāspuhragān* was used specifically to denote “high nobility,” i.e., the seven great families of the Sasanian Empire. This accords with Heinrich Hübschmann (*Armenische Grammatik* p. 80 and particularly idem, 1904, pp. 262-63), which makes use of the title *wāspuhrakānhamanakar*, a title cited by the Armenian historian Sebeos (chap. 6, tr., pp. 31-32) = Mid. Pers. *wāspuhragān āmārgar* “tax-collector of the high nobility.” At the center of the same seal one can read *sph'n*, i.e., Isfahan. Thus the *framadār* had his seat at Isfahan, where he was a “giver of orders” (*framadār*) with a “collector of taxes” (*āmārgar*) as assistant.

According to certain Pahlavi texts (West, pp. 152 and 276; cf. H. Hübschmann, *Armenische Grammatik*, p. 183), the *framadār* held an important position within the Zoroastrian clergy. Thus there is the issue of the “director (*framadār*) of the community of priests in Fārs” (West, p. 152). It seems to apply to a high-ranking functionary within the Zoroastrian clergy and probably applied to certain civil functionaries as well as a certain category of Mazdean priests who administered the benefices.

*Wuzurg framadār* (the grand *framadār*). The *wuzurg framadār* appears to have been for a long time the highest ranking official of the Sasanian state, whose position was not unlike that later held by the grand vizier in the Islamic period. The following holders of the office are known to us:

1. Abarsām. According to Ṭabarī (Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser*, p. 9), Ardašīr I created this high position for a certain Abarsām, who was granted enormous power.
2. Ƙosrow Yazdegerd, whose title has come down to us in a Syriac transcription as *harmadārā rabbā* (Chabot, text, p. 21, tr. p. 260 and n. 2), was sent by Yazdegerd I along with the *argabad* Mehr-Šāpūr (cf. Labourt, p. 97; Christensen, *Iran Sass.*, p. 271) as high ranking officials to represent him at a council of bishops which had been convened on Yazdegerd’s initiative in Seleucia in 410.
3. Mehr-Narseh, a scion of the Esfandīārs, one of the seven great families, was a *wuzurg framadār* under Yazdegerd I and Bahrām V (cf. Christensen, *Iran*



Sass., pp. 277 sq.) and was noted for his hostility against the Christians. He appears with this title on an inscription, made at his own behest at Fīrūzābād (q.v.), commemorating the building of a bridge (cf. W. Henning, pp. 98-102; text of the inscription, p. 101 with pl.). He is designated as *hazarapet* by Armenian historians, a transcription from Pahlavi *hazarapat*, i.e. a chiliarch (for further references see Łazar P'arpec'i, 1891, pp. 73, 120, 134, 208, 262, 330 = Langlois, *Historiens*, II, pp. 278, 292, 293, 307, 313, 318; and Elišē, 1950, pp. 53, 198, 253, 265 = Langlois, *Historiens*, II, pp. 192, 225, 278, 292).

4. Suren Pahlav. This person, a member of one of the seven great families, was given the title *hazārapet* in Łazar P'arpec'i (1891, p. 73 = Langlois, *Historiens*, II, p. 270). He could thus have been a *wuzurg framadār* and may have been Mehr-Nasreh's immediate successor in this position under Bahrām V.

5. According to Sebeos (chap. 28, tr. pp. 89-90), one Ƙosrow-Ormezd, a *hramantar*, proposed marriage to the queen Bohr (Bōrān, q.v.; r. 630-31 C. E.) and was accepted. He was, however, killed by the guards while entering the palace at night. The circumstances suggest, therefore, that he may have been a *wuzurg framadār*, rather than an ordinary *framadār*. If so, he would have been the last to hold this title under the Sasanians. The anecdote is transferred to a different reign in Ʀabarī (Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser*, p. 394).

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