

The Reign of Queen Āzarmīdukht



Sasanika
Sources

al-Ṭabarī, in full Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (born c. 839, Āmol, Ṭabaristān [Iran]—died 923, Baghdad, Iraq), Muslim scholar, author of enormous compendiums of early Islamic history and Qurʾānic exegesis, who made a distinct contribution to the consolidation of Sunni thought during the 9th century. He condensed the vast wealth of exegetical and historical erudition of the preceding generations of Muslim scholars and laid the foundations for both Qurʾānic and historical sciences. His major works were the *Qurʾān Commentary* and the *History of Prophets and Kings* (*Tārīkh al-Rusūl wa al-Mulūk*). Tabari's *Tarikh ar-Rusul wa al Muluk* was a source of information for generations of historians in the Islamic world. He made a great contribution to the consolidation of Islamic thought during the 9th century. His history became so popular that the Samanid Prince Mansur Ibn Nuh had it translated into Persian in ca. 963. He drew upon various sources for his historical reports such as classical poetry, genealogy and tribal customs.

-“al-Ṭabarī” *Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, 19 October 2011
<<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/579654/al-Tabari>>.

-“al-Ṭabarī” *Salam. Salam Biographical Dictionary Online*, 19 October 2011
<<http://www.salaam.co.uk/knowledge/biography/viewentry.php?id=114>>.

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Then there succeeded to the royal power Āzarmīdukht,¹ daughter of Kisrā (II) Abarwīz, son of Hurmuz (IV), son of Kisrā (I) Anūsharwān. It is said that she was one of the most beautiful of the women of the Persians and that she proclaimed, when she assumed the royal power, "Our way of conduct will be that of our father Kisrā, the victorious one,"² and if

¹ This is the Arabic form, virtually identical with that of the Syriac sources, Āzarmīdūkht, of the MP name Āzaemīgdukt.öldeke, trans. 393 n. 2, saw its etymology as being most probably "modest (*āzarmīg*) noble maiden"; Justi, *Namenbuch*, 54, gave no inon. However., Gignoux, in his *Noms propres sassanides en Moyen- Perse épigraphique*, no. 167, cf. no. 166, and in *EIr*, s.v. Āzarmīgdukt, renders it as "daughter of the honored, respected one," i.e., of her father Khusraw Abarwēz; both "honored maiden" and "daughter of the honored one" are possible translations.

² Arabic *al-manšūr* = MP *abarwēz*. According to Ḥamzah al-Iṣfahānī, *Taʾ-rīkh*, 55, Āzarmīgdukt was *jalīdah qasīmah*, vigorous and beautiful," and he records that she built a fire temple at a village called al-Q.r.ṭ.mān (?) in the region of Abkhāz (i.e., in western Transcaucasia).



anyone rebels against man of Persia was that at that time Farrukh Hurmuz, Işbahbadh of marriage to him. She wrote back, "Marriage to a queen is not permissible. I realize full well that your intention in what you are proposing is to satisfy your own [sexual] needs and lust with me; so come to me on such-and- such night." Āzarmīdukht ordered the commander of her guard to lie in wait for him on the night they had agreed to meet together and then kill him. The commander of her guard carried out her orders regarding Farrukh Hurmuz; and at her command, the latter's corpse was dragged out by the feet and thrown down in the open space before the palace of government. Next morning, they found Farrukh Hurmuz slain, and she gave orders for his corpse to be taken away and concealed from sight. It was generally recognized that he could only have been killed for some momentous deed. Rustam, son Farrukh Hurmuz, the man whom Yazdajird (III) was later to send to combat with Arabs,³ was acting as his father's deputy in Khurāsān, When he received the news (i.e., of his father's murder), he came with a mighty army, encamped at al-Madā'in, blinded Āzarmīdukht, and then killed her. According to other authorities, however, she was poisoned. Her tenure of royal power was six months.⁴

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³ That is, the Persian general vanquished some five years later at al-Qādisiyyah by the Arabs. See EI², s.v. Rustam b. Farrukh Hurmuzd (ed.).

⁴ Hence Āzarmīdukht's reign was even shorter than that of her sister Būrān, and would fall at the end of 631 and opening of 632; see Nöldeke, trans. 434. Coins issued by her, one from the mint of Shīrāz, with the effigy of her father Khusraw Abarwēz and with the legend of her own name, have been discovered and identified by M.I. Mochiri. See Selwood, Whitting and Williams, *An Introduction to Sasanian Coins*, 21, 169-70; Malek, "A Survey of Research on Sasanian Numismatics," 238-39.