

Michael Witzel,
Harvard University

THE HOME OF THE ARYANS

§ 1. Homelands

The search for an Indo-European homeland has taken us some two hundred years by now. The discussion can easily be summarized, if somewhat facetiously, by: the homeland is *at*, or *close to* the homeland of the author of the book in question... The same applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to the homeland of the Indo-Iranians, or *Arya/Ārya*, as they call themselves. For this, we will have to look a little bit further afield, first of all, to the Urals. The main part of this paper, however, will be concerned with the supposed "mythical homeland" of the Iranians, *Airiianəm Vaējah*.

§ 2 Ural Aryans?

For, it is on the W. Siberian plains just east of the Ural mountains, on the rivers Išim and Tobol, that Russian archaeologists have found already some 20 years ago what might amount to some of the earliest attested traces of Aryan material culture -- and even of Aryan belief. This is not altogether unknown in the west but as it has found so little resonance in Indo-Iranian studies, that some of the evidence may be repeated briefly.

The Sintashta-Arkaim culture is found in the Chelyabinsk region east of the Urals with some 30 sites, all situated at a strategically chosen location at the bend of a river. It is part of the Andronovo cultural horizon of the steppe and forested steppe of Kazakhstan and surroundings, reaching up to the Yenessei and the high valleys of the Pamir and Tian Shan. This now includes some 250 sites (KUZ'MINA 1994). The typical short bow of horse riding pastoralists (SHISHLINA 1990) was introduced in this period, and contact between the northern pastoralists and the Central Asian oases was established.

One of the earliest attestations of this cultural horizon that incorporates herding and the use of horse-drawn chariots is that of the sites such as Sintashta (GENING 1977, 1979, 1992, G.B. ZDANOVICH 1992), and the triply circular city of Arkaim in the southern Urals (D.G. ZDANONICH 1992). They are dated to c.

2200/2100-1700/1600 B.C.¹ Derived from the Ukrainian and S. Russian Yamnaya culture, they belong to the formative stage of the Andronovo culture, which usually is regarded as representing the Indo-Iranians (KUZ'MINA 1994, ANTHONY 1998: 106) although we do not have any direct testimony that would allow for this identification. The Indo-Iranians could just as well have made out only a small part of this archaeological horizon (or they could even have only been loosely allied with it).

However, against the context of the Ṛgveda (GENING 1977) it is important to note that the Sintashta sites share some cultural features described in this text. These are simple settlements fortified with ramparts and ditches, with a circular or rectangular fence or wall built from unfired clay and wooden frames (*pur*, RAU 1976). And there are remnants of horse sacrifices (*aśvamedha*) and primitive horse drawn chariots (*ratha*, *raṭa*) with spoked wheels (ANTHONY and VINOGRADOV 1995). A real "*tripura*", Arkaim, was discovered in 1987 by G. ZDANOVICH. It has two circular walls and two circles of dwellings around a central square. The external wall was built from soil packed into timber frames before being faced with adobe bricks (**išt*).² The Sintashta-Arkaim sites have been explained as administrative and ceremonial centers³ for about 1,000-2,000 people and the aristocracy.

The settlements (70 x 120 m) consist of frame houses, slightly sunk into ground (which reminds of Ṛgvedic *kula* "hollow, family" (if this indeed be the etymology, see EWA I 373), with traces of copper (*ayas*) production. Apart from the development of the chariot, the Sintashta culture shows links with E. Europe both in pottery and bronze artifacts. The graves⁴ at Sintashta are mounds with burial pits and log and timber chambers (cf. the "clay house", RV

¹ L. KORYAKOVA 1998 (with illustrations) at: <http://www.csen.org/koryakova2/Korya.Sin.Ark.html>. Further, GENING 1977, 1979, 1992, ZDANOVICH 1992a,b, ANTHONY and VINOGRADOV 1995, ANTHONY 1998:105-6, MALLORY 1998: 188.

² Both settlements also remind of the circular and rectangular fortifications of the BMAC culture (PARPOLA 1987, 1998). But note the alleged occurrence of bricks, something unusual in the steppe region. Indeed, HIEBERT and SHISHLINA 1998, conversely, regard BMAC influence as possible. -- Ved. *iṣṭakā-*, *iṣṭikā*, since the early YV (MS 2.7.15, 2.13.16; KS 16.16, 29.9, TS 4.2.9.2.d, VS 17.2, 35.8 etc.), Av. *iṣṭiā-*, *zəməiṣṭuua-*, and O.P. *iṣṭi-* (cf. N.P. *hišt*), and perhaps also Toch. *iścem* "clay" point to a central Asian loan-word, **išt*.

³The cult buildings also contain piles of oxen and sheep bones. Weapons included bronze pikes and axes as well as stone maces.

⁴ GENING 1977, 1979.

7.89.1). Horse sacrifices have been made both inside and on top of the burial chamber. The graves also contain some light chariots with wheels up to 1 m in diameter and up to 10 spokes. These chariots still are very narrow in width, pointing to their origin from, by necessity narrow, oxen-drawn wagons (*anas*).⁵ Horse bits made of bone have also been found.

Most tellingly, perhaps, at the site of Potapovka (N. Krasnoyarsk Dst., near Kuybyshev on the N. Volga steppe), a unique burial has been found.⁶ It contains a human skeleton whose head has been replaced by a horse head; a human head lies near his feet, along with a bone pipe, and a cow's head is placed near his knees. This looks like an archaeological illustration of the R̥gvedic myth of *Dadhyañc*, whose head was cut off by Indra⁷ and replaced by that of a horse. The bone pipe reminds, as the excavator has noted, of the RV sentence referring to the playing of pipes in Yama's realm, the world of the ancestors (GENING 1977).

Recently, MALLORY (1998), ANTHONY (1998), as well as SHISHLINA and HIEBERT (1998) have proposed slightly differing integrated models for the spread into the steppe regions of the many variants of the bronze age culture of eastern Europe and western central Asia (Kazakhstan and neighboring areas). They underline that this diversity indicates local adaptation of existing societies rather than migrations of a "Yamna people" (i.e. Indo-Europeans or Indo-Iranians). To quote HIEBERT (1995: 202): "Now that linguists are moving away from models of cataclysmic invasions responsible for the spread of Indo-Aryan languages, archaeologists must try to present more realistic models for the crucial transitory period of the early second millennium B.C. in South Asia" (shown, e.g., in HIEBERT 1998). To which must be added, however: the question does not just concern the introduction of Indo-Iranian languages but the introduction of a *complete set* of spiritual and material culture from poetry to chariot building, that must be explained as well, -- not just the material

⁵ A broad and heavy wagon (*anas*) would have broken its long axle, and it would, in addition, have been impossible to pull as the archaic collars that would have choked a horse.

⁶ I. B. VASIL'EV, P. F. KUZNETSOV, A. P. SEMENOVA 1994: 115, fig. 1.

⁷ Note that there even nowadays there still seem to be hydronymic reminiscences of the Iir. in the area, an *Indar* lake on the S. Ural river, and *Indar-āb* in N. Bactria; however, *Andar-āb* north of Kabul is attested in this form (*an-*) already in Chinese Sources of the early first millennium AD, see KUWAYAMA 1889: 113

remnants discovered by archaeology; this has in part been answered by MALLORY (1998).

While the ultimate "home" of the speakers of Indo-Iranian thus seems to have been in or near the Greater Ural region, and while their trail up to the Bactria-Margiana Archaeological Complex (BMAC, see below) is clear enough, it is lost precisely there, as only BMAC impact is found all across Greater Iran and up to Harappa, but not direct steppe influence. At the present stage of research, neither the exact time frame, nor the exact trail, nor the details of the various movements of the speakers of Indo-Iranian and Indo-Aryan are clear. We can only state that some of them suddenly appear as a superstrate in the Mitanni realm of northern Syria and Iraq (middle of the second millennium BCE) and others as authors of the hymns of the Ṛgveda in the Greater Panjab (at about the same time).

A brief look at the BMAC therefore is in order. At the beginning of the 2nd mill. BCE, the culture of the Bactria-Margiana Archaeological Complex developed out of local cultures along the southern rim of Turkmenistan. It spread eastwards to Margiana, northern Iran and Bactria (HIEBERT and LAMBERG-KARLOVSKY 1992, HIEBERT 1995, SARIANIDI 1993, 1998), areas that linked ancient Mesopotamia with the Indus. It is found from the deltas of the Murghab to those of small rivers north and south of the Amu Darya in Bactria (HIEBERT 1995), that is in the desert oases along small rivers and deltas. Small canals were built for irrigation; the earth was tilled by wooden ploughs. At this time new cultivars and new domestic animals from Asia and Africa arrived in E. Iran: the summer crops rice, sorghum, millet (CLEUZIOU and COSTANTINI, 1981), and the first pack animals, i.e. asses and camels (MEADOW 1996, 1998). The distribution of horses in the BMAC has to be studied; so far neither their bones nor horse drawn chariots have been found. Only a few, sometimes doubtful representations in art exist (PARPOLA 1988: 288, 295).

Agriculture based on irrigation included wheat, barley, the newly introduced millet and grapes. Livestock was composed of cattle, sheep, camels, pigs and donkeys. BMAC smiths and jewelers made axes, sickles, mirrors, pins, and trumpets, originally in gold or silver, similar to the findings at Hissar which have been characterized by GHIRSHMAN (1977) as signal trumpets in chariot warfare. Importantly, the BMAC smiths produced a large number of weapons: swords, spears, and battle-axes.

The large scale production of copper arms and the fortresses point to a period of conflicts and to the development of a military elite, maybe due to a

threat of mobile pastoralists from the north (likely, the Indo-Iranians). However, PARPOLA (1988, 1998: 124) and SERGENT (1997: 152sq, cf. 173-4, 176-7, 180) simply ascribe an Indo-Aryan origin to the BMAC which, given the virtual absence of horses and of chariots cannot be correct. Rather, the BMAC people used the fairly untamable hemiod (half-ass), and the newly introduced donkey and camels; apparently they did not yet have the *leitfossil* of the IIRs, the horse.⁸

Like the Sintashta culture, the BMAC settlements are fortified but have, in their center, a fort with a shrine and with quarters of artisan specialists. The forts are surrounded by brick walls with towers (at Dashly, Gardai, Togolok, Sapalli, etc.) Sapalli has a fortress of 82 x 82 m with a mud brick wall and towers and two narrow corridors along the walls for animals (which immediately reminds of the description of Yima's *vara*, V. 2).

The walled fortresses may have been regarded by the immigrating Indo-Aryans as the *pur* of the Paṇi people (**Parna*, a northern Iranian tribe, still attested in Greek texts as *Parnoi*). The RV still sees the cattle-rich Paṇi, with their walled forts, as the traditional enemies. PARPOLA (1988, 1995, 1998) has suggested an identification of the local people with another enemy group, the *Dāsa* of the RV (N. Iran. *Daha*, attested in Greek texts as *Daai*, Latin *Dahi*, Avest. *Dāṇha*), but this has its problems, as *dasyu*, *dāsa* is related to IE **doselo* > Mycenaean *doero* > Greek *doulos*, cf. the E. Uralic loan-word *tas* "slave", Mansi *tas* "foreigner", just like Finn. *orja* "slave" < *arya*.⁹ Similarly, SERGENT simply identifies the BMAC with the Indo-Aryans (1997: 174).¹⁰

All such interpretations are, in my opinion, premature. What is clear is that there was a mixture in the BMAC of many cultural elements from

⁸ PARPOLA (1998: 124) mentions a cylinder seal from a more western location, at Tepe Hissar IIIc, depicting a horse drawn chariot (LITTAUER and CROUWEL 1977). Also note horses in Mundigak, period IV, and the domesticated donkey. In Central Asia, the domestic horse (and spoked wheels) are first found at Kelleli (Margiana) in a complex of c. Namazga V date (end of 3rd mill. BCE); a cylinder seal of Bactria *might* represent a mounted, bird-faced horse rider (FRANCFORT 1989: 452).

⁹ PARPOLA 1988; cf. also HARMATTA, in DANI 1992: 357-378, RÉDEI 1986.

¹⁰ SARIANIDI (1993, and earlier), however, thought of an Iranian origin and saw Iranian religious elements in Dashli, including a fire ritual; however, the fire cult is clearly of IIR origin. Togolok reportedly has some rests of Ephedra indicative of a Soma/Haoma ritual; for doubts on this, see PARPOLA 1998: 126-7. -- FRANCFORT (1989: 411-12) thought of an Elamian or Elamo-Drav. population, which is unlikely as far as we can judge from IIR loan-words such as **išt* "brick" that have been taken over from the BMAC level populations (see below).

Mesopotamia to E. Iran and the Indus. The so far unstudied linguistic evidence, too, points to a mixture of one or more substrates and an overlay (maybe late in the BMAC level) of IIr. elements.¹¹ In addition, one can easily imagine the participation by some groups that have brought the Nuristani (Kafiri) and the lowest, western IE. level of Bangani into S. Asia.¹²

¹¹ There is a host of so far neglected words in Indo-Iranian without Indo-European etymologies, some of them from Iranian/BMAC substrate language(s), notably the local words for the newly introduced domesticated camel and the ultimately Near Eastern donkey and wheat. The most likely BMAC words (cf. WITZEL 1995, 1999a,b; now also LUBOTSKY (forthc.)) are: **uštr* "camel", **khar* "donkey", **gant-um* "wheat" < *gant* + *um* (cf. Berger's reconstruction, Burushaski ***yund-um*); further: **parš* "sheaf", **bīj* "seed, semen", **ya(u)v(ī)yā* "stream, irrigation channel", **išt* "brick", **sthūnā* "pillar", **bhiš*, **bhiš-aj'* "to heal, healer", **vīnā* "lute"; -- ***kana/k'ana* "hemp", **bhang* "hemp", ***sinšap* "mustard", **ling* "mark", **kaεyap* "tortoise", ***pard/pandh* "spotted animal, panther", ***kart-ka* "rhinoceros"; -- **kapaut* "blue", **kadru* "brown"; of older, E. European or N. Central Asian origin may be: ***medh/melit* "sweet, honey", ***sengha/singha* "lion".

Further, there are a number of little studied local pre-Iranian names, rare in the Avesta but a little more frequent in the O.P. inscriptions. They include, next to the bulk of clearly Iranian names, Av. *Xnənta* < **khnanta* V. 1.9 (see now HUMBACH 1991; = *Vəhrkāna*, Gorgān < **khrinta*); *Suyda* (cf. SZEMERÉNYI 1980), and in O.P., starting in Media, the district *Kampanda*, and the fortress of *Sikaya(h)u-vati*; in Arachosia the fortress *Aršādā* and the district *Gandutava*; and in the Southeast, the name Cambyses (*Kamb(a)ū/ujiya*) (cf. MAYRHOFER 1979: II/23) ~ Ved. *Kamboja*, (cf. Arthaśāstra 2.30.9), the provinces *Karmāna* and *Maka* (modern Makran), and *Maciya* "a person from Maka" (cf. WITZEL 1980: 112 n. 76, EILERS 1982: 30 with lit.), and cf. in general WITZEL 1980: 112 n. 76, EILERS 1987, with lit. on place names, and MAYRHOFER 1979).

Such data could be amplified even by quite a number of verbal roots, (some of which, however, may be IE and have been preserved only in IIr.): **kan* "to find pleasure, please", **krap* "to whimper, plead", **kram* "to stride", **kraužd* "to harden", **kroε* "to shout", **kεā* "to regard, look", **kšad* "to serve food", **kšam* "to be patient", **kšā* "to burn", **kšaip* "to throw", etc. or the socially important **bhiš* "to heal". Among the Iranian words without IE etymology: **kaiš* "to apportion magically, to teach" or **kaufa* "mountain, hump (of a camel)".

The accumulation of such items allows for a so far unrecognized, strong substratum in Indo-Iranian somewhere in Central Asia, most likely -- as indicated by the word for "brick" -- the BMAC area. The reconstruction of the early IIr. presence in Central Asia and on the Iranian plateau, as seen in their linguistic, religious, social and (material) culture-related data is still outstanding (however add now also LUBOTSKY, forthc.).

¹² On Bangani see ZOLLER 1988, 1989, 1993, SHARMA and VAN DRIEM 1996, 1997; ANVITA ABBI (Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi) recognizes three layers in Bangani: words of the type *dəkrū*, *ləktə*, *gəsti*, the general NIA Pahari level, and recent loans from Hindi etc. According to H.H. HOCK, the following words are clearly western IE: *əgnə*~ "unborn" (not Skt. *a-ja*) and *gəṇə* "give birth" (not Skt. *jan*), *kətrə* "fight" (not Skt. *śatru*), *dəkrū* "tear" (not Skt. *aśru*); the initial *d-* is W. IE, cf. Gk. *dakru*, Engl. *tear*, as opposed to E. IE : Skt. *aśru*, Av.

The picture, therefore, is a complex one, and in this new century, the simplistic identification of a certain archaeological culture with a *particular* ethnic group speaking a *particular* language or dialect should finally be given up, unless we have clear (preferably written) evidence to this effect. All too often several cultures, diverse ethnicities and speakers of several languages have been shown to have shared one and the same material culture that was discovered by archaeology. In short, "*pots don't speak*," -- until we make them do so. In the present context, it is clear that there is some steppe influence on the BMAC, e.g. of Andronowo pottery (MASSON 1996, cf. SHISHLINA and HIEBERT 1998). However, "no steppe nomadic complex has been found on the Iranian plateau, not even evidence of indirect contact or interaction... The only evidence for interaction ... comes from the Central Asia desert oasis [= BMAC] cultures." (HIEBERT 1998:153). Indeed, BMAC influence is found all over the plateau, from Hissar and Susa in the west, to Shahdad and Yahya in the South, and to Quetta, Mehrgarh, even at sites of the Indus civilization, such as Mohenjo Daro and Harappa.

The earliest influx of northern steppe ceramics, found in the BMAC oases, has calibrated radiocarbon dates of 1950-1700 BCE, but they are quite rare. They increase in frequency only in the later phases, Tahirbay (1750-1500 BCE) in Margiana and in Bactria. There is, however, *continuity* of settlement in the BMAC oases down to the subsequent local cultures, those of Tahirbay, Molali, and Vakhsh.

As mentioned above, the areas south of the BMAC have not *directly* been affected by the steppe influences, as the older model of a massive Indo-Iranian or Indo-Aryan immigration would require; instead, the *impact of the oases transformation* is seen in E. Iran and Baluchistan Bronze Age deposits. After this, "these sites are all abandoned" (HIEBERT 1998:155). During this period, 1750-1500 BCE., we find complex regional variants: the Tazabagyab culture in Khorezm, the Zerafshan, Vakhsh/Bishkent cultures (c. 1870-1600 BCE), the Tahirbay and Molali cultures in Greater Bactria. On the southeastern Iranian plateau, the old cities of the third mill. BCE, Mundigak, Shahr-i-Sokhta and Shahdad are in steady decline. In Baluchistan there appear, in the last period of Mehrgarh, BMAC-derived items, and the rituals and metallurgy recall those of the BMAC as well.

In sum, during the 2nd mill., we find, in all the agricultural regions from the Kopet Dagh to the Eastern Iranian plateau, in Mesopotamia and in the Indus valley, a shift to a less stratified and complex organization, with an "almost synchronic development of the very expansionist BMAC adaptation throughout the desert oases of Central Asia, and the development of complex mobile herders on the Eurasian steppe" (SHISHLINA and HIEBERT 1998: 230). The major factor(s) in these changes remain unclear. Climate has played a role in the changes in the oases and also in parts of the steppes. Indeed, there was greater aridity in Transoxania at c. 2000 BCE. Future research should concentrate on these and related items (WITZEL, *forthc.* b). We have to look, however, for a *range of causes*, acting in concert.

It is into the cultural area of Greater Iran that the mobile pastoralist speakers of early Indo-Iranian and Indo-Aryan entered. The sudden decline of all cultures of the area, from Mesopotamia to the Indus and from Bactria to Bahrain and Oman, at the beginning of the second millennium is suggestive, but it cannot simply be explained by an "invasion of Aryan hordes". The situations in all areas concerned are too disparate and they also are geographically too distant (e.g. in Oman) as to allow such a simple, mono-causal explanation.

MALLORY (1998: 192-194) now proposes a new scenario, in part derived from GIMBUTAS' model of an expansion of the (Indo-European) Kurgan cultures. It is used to explain the adoption of the Indo-Iranian language by the BMAC people(s). This process he calls, half-facetiously, the effect of a *Kulturkugel*. This "bullet" is composed of three segments, that is a "tip" of material culture and a "charge", or body of language and social organization. In the BMAC case, a billiard-like effect started with the Andronovo *Kulturkugel* arriving from the north, entering the BMAC area, and immediately losing its "tip". In the BMAC, the linguistic and social residue acquires a new cultural "tip", that of the BMAC itself and spreads south to Susa, Baluchistan and the Indus (Mohenjo Daro). The fine details of this process need to be sorted out. For example, was the initial "*Kugel*" still Indo-Iranian or already (pre-)Indo-Aryan?

MALLORY's model is, in effect, a rephrasing of what EHRET had described in 1988 in more general terms (derived from Africa): an immigrating civilization joins the local one, transforms it by taking on many of its aspects and then sets in move a recurrent, billiard-like spread of this innovative culture. In the end, no one at the start of the process may be genetically linked to anyone at the end

of the process. (This is precisely what seems to have happened in the case of Aryanization of S. Asia).

To sum up, in the words of MALLORY (1998: 194): "the mechanisms ... [of the] Kurgan model - mobility (both economic and social), increased reliance on stock breeding, opportunistic seizure of territories during agricultural system collapse, formation of defended centers, establishment of military or religious sodalities, that attracted non-IE membership, etc. -- have hardly been explored in detail." This analysis indeed reads like a description of Indo-Aryan *landnama* in the Panjab.¹³

At this instance, I will have to leave this question open to a further detailed investigation elsewhere and will turn to the other major group among the Aryan tribes, the Iranians.

§ 3. Airiianəm Vaējah

Among the various countries known to Old Persian and Avestan texts, it is *Airiianəm Vaējah* that has captured the imagination of scholars most. Many regard it as the "mythical homeland"¹⁴ of the Aryans and have placed it anywhere from Choresmia¹⁵ on the Aral Lake in N. Uzbekistan¹⁶ to the equally unlikely *Ādurbādagān* (Azerbaijan),¹⁷ or to southern or northwestern¹⁸ Afghanistan.¹⁹

¹³ For details see my initial analysis of 1995, and cf. WITZEL 1999, and forthc. (b)

¹⁴ Thus, most recently SKJÆRVØ 1995: 166, HUMBACH 1991: 33 "legendary homeland of the Iranians".

¹⁵ MARQUART 1901: 155, BENVENISTE 1933/5, HENNING 1951: 44-5, cf. BOYCE 1975: 3-4, contra: HUMBACH 1991, MACKENZIE, *East and West* 38, 1988, 81 sqq., OETTINGER 1985: 373.

¹⁶ MARQUART 1901: 118, 155.

¹⁷ BARTHOLOMAE, *AirWb.* 1314, according to Bd. 29.12. Note that the Caēcasta lake, too, is located in Iranian Azerbaijan = Lake Urmia acc. to Bd. 22.2 is : *var-i cēcašt andar ādurbadagān*(!) Another early identification is that of the Arrān area (the present Karabagh Republic, inside Azerbaijan), by DARMSTETER etc., (BARTHOLOMAE, *AirWb.* 1314). All these are due to the frequent transpositions, caused by the spread of Zoroastrianism, of older East Iranian place names into western Iran, such as the *Harā Bərəzaitī* > Elbrus Mt. north of Tehran, Elbrus in the Caucasus. Note below, on *Raya*, *Uruuā*, etc. (cf. GNOLI 1980: 25, HUMBACH 1991: 33, SKJÆRVØ 1995).

¹⁸ HUMBACH 1984: 32 "the homeland of Zarathustrian religion must be sought ... on the Iranian side of Mozduran and Baghbaghu" [on the R. Kashaf, a confluent of the Tedzhen, on the Iranian-Turkmen border]. OETTINGER 1985: 374 agrees with the general area (cf. also Hoffmann-Narten 1989: 87 "Merw or Herat" for the Avestan corpus), and he rejects GNOLI's

These proposals are based on the shifting locations of Avestan names, both in the late/post-Avestan period as well as in the mind of scholars. These have vacillated between an eastern homeland of the Avesta (early on, W. GEIGER 1882), and, since the beginning of this century, a western one in Media/Azerbaijan, which follows in the footsteps of the more western location of the center of power in the Arsacide and the Sassanide realms, or a northern one in Choresmia. Since the evidence of Young Avestan place names so clearly points to a more *eastern* location, the Avesta is again understood, nowadays, as an East Iranian text, whose area of composition comprised -- at least -- Sīstān/Arachosia, Herat, Merw and Bactria.²⁰ The location of Zaratūštra's Gāḍic

Sistan theory. However, we need to distinguish between Zarathustra's homeland (and that of his language) on the one hand and the *Airyānəm Vaējah* of the younger Avesta and the Vīdēvdād on the other; see below, n. 48, 61, §10 (end). In addition, both HUMBACH and OETTINGER overlook or play down the extremely cold aspects of this land in V. 1.3.

¹⁹ According to SKJÆRVØ (1995: 166), GNOLI (1980: 227) situates *Airiianəm Vaējah* between the Helmand River and the Hindukush Mountains; this section of GNOLI's book, however, only refers to the *homeland* of Zoroaster which is the main aim of his book (see his statement at 1980: 18); GNOLI gives a definition of *Airiianəm Vaējah* in 1967: 88, 1980: 133, see below, n. 102. Rejected by OETTINGER 1985: 374 (for Sistan).

²⁰ I remember that this greatly irritated me as a student, in the late Sixties, as the evidence inside the Avesta so clearly pointed to E. Iran; fortunately, present day research has, after the lapse of a century, again agreed on E. Iran as the homeland of the (younger) Avesta, see: HUMBACH, MSS 3²: 278, GNOLI 1967, 1980 on Sistan (with exhaustive literature), note p. 45, WITZEL 1972: 170 and n.18 (Bactria, Herat, Sistan), WITZEL 1980: 112 n. 71, K. HOFFMANN u. J. NARTEN 1989: 87, K. Hoffmann 1991: 736 sqq, HUMBACH 1991: 30; summary by KELLENS 1991: 8 sqq.

Dialect features (K. HOFFMANN 1975-6: 736 sqq, especially 739; HOFFMANN and NARTEN 1989: 77 sqq.; HOFFMANN and FORSSMAN 1996: 35,107 sq.; WITZEL 1980, 91, 112 n. 71) point to Arachosia and Bactria for a part of the texts (K. HOFFMANN, 1975-6: 63, 196sq, 275, 319, 1992: 736 sqq, 868). For a summary of the discussion on dialect strata in Avestan, see KELLENS, in: R. SCHMITT, *Compendium Linguarum Iranicarum*, Wiesbaden 1989.

Local dialect forms include: *Bāxδīm*, compared to the (nearly) correct standard Y.Av. *Vāxəδrikā* mountains, Yt. 19.4, (*v-* must be dialect or mistake in transmission, cf. the Arachosian development of *intervocalic -b- > -uu-*) that is a name in proper Y.Av., but cf. non-Arachosian and non-Bactrian (*Bāxδī!*) dialect (WITZEL 1980: 111 n. 68sqq, n. 77, HINTZE 1994: 81); *Mōurum* for **maryum* (K. HOFFMANN, 1975-6: 327 n. 2, R. SCHMITT, *Sprachwissenschaft* 9, 1984, 203sqq); *Harax'aitīm* for **harax'haitīm* (K. HOFFMANN 1975-6: 641, 736sqq, 1992: 872b, 1996: 35, 107 sq.; cf. Elam. *har-ku(ut)-ti*, *har-ku-(ut)ti-iš*. On Y. Avest. dialects see also OETTINGER 1985: 323 (*vīspa*), and esp. p. 338-347.

Incidentally, the (mild) criticism of HOFFMANN's Arachosian theory by KELLENS (1991:10) is not understandable easily: HOFFMANN does not *deny* the possibility of a previous Avesta in Media (and the Persis?) before the Arachosian Avesta text was imported under the Achaemenids, he simply states that a "new" version of the text, the Arachosian one, was

dialect is much more difficult to establish and simply cannot be pinpointed to Arachosia, as GNOLI (1967, 1980) has done; some linguistic features of Old Avestan actually *contradict* an Arachosian homeland.²¹

The lands actually known to the speakers of (Young) Avestan are listed in *Vidēvdāδ* 1, and to some extent in Yt. 10.14 (cf. K. HOFFMANN and J. NARTEN 1989: 89). Even if some of the Avestan lands, such as Arachosia, Bactria, Merw or the Herat area, are easily located, others remain uncertain, and this is especially

imported and officially supported (i.e. as against a Median text, cf. O.P. *aniyāha bagāha*, see n. 21); this brought about the many Arachosian dialect features now found in the Avestan texts, from the *Gāḍās* to the *Vidēvdāδ*. Such political use of (even minor) theological differences is not exactly rare, cf. the cases of the Monophysite, Orthodox and Catholic versions of Christianity and their political champions in the later Roman empire, or of the various versions of Hinduism in India (Viṣṇuism, Śivaism, etc.), or Zoroastrianism, Zurvanism and Manichaeism in Iran. -- However, see now also KELLENS JA 1998 .

²¹ See KUIPER 1979: 5, 16, 21, not yet mentioned by GNOLI, concludes that Zoroaster's language is, to some degree, composed of features belonging to several dialects (not unlike *Ṛgvedic*); cf. the summary by KELLENS 1991: 8 sq, who believes that O.Av. goes back to a period when the differentiation and division of Iranian tribes are "well beyond investigation" (KELLENS, WZKM 78, 1978, 301) and "the question of "the cradle of the Avesta" and "the home of Zaratustra" of cannot be resolved and without doubt will never be." HUMBACH 1991: 6, 8, 30 thinks of "a traditional religious and ritual language which the prophet adopted for sacrificial purposes".

Importantly, Zoroaster's dialect also has some northwestern (= Median) connections (now summarized by HOFFMANN-NARTEN 1989), as in O.Av. *vīspa-* with nominal flexion (e.g., nom. pl. *-ā* in *vīspā*, or *-āṅhō* in *vīspāṅhō*) just as in the Mede formula in O.P. *aniyāha bagāha* (instead of O.P. **aniyaiy *bagā*); -- differently, with pronominal flexion, Y.Av. *vīspe* (*vīspe ainie aire* Yt. 5.69), RV *viśve* and Y.Av. *aniie*, O.P. *aniyaiy*, Ved. *anye*, cf. OETTINGER 1985: 323. (Similarly, the dat. sing.: O.Av. *ahurāiīā*, YH *yātāiīā*, etc. in *-āi*, *-āiī.ā* like RV *-āya*, but Y.Av. *-āi*, no form in O.P., see KUIPER III 8, 1964, 97sq, J. NARTEN 1986.) A further feature is transmitted by Indian texts. As is well known, Yāska's Nirukta and Patañjali's Mahābhāṣya quote *śavati* as a verb form for "to go" used by the Kambojas (in the Kandahar area of Arachosia, see n. 58,62), which corresponds, with its palatal *ś*, precisely to Y.Av. *šauua^īti* (~ Ved. *cyavate*), while Zaratustra's *Gāḍās* still have *šiiuuu^īti* [*šyavati*], cf. WITZEL 1989.

However, O.Av. *x̣-* in *anlaut* in unaccented syllables must be due to Arachosian pronunciation (HOFFMANN and NARTEN 1989: 79, HOFFMANN and FORSSMAN 1996: 107 sq.) as Arachosia functioned as an early area of Y. Avestan textual transmission, see K. HOFFMANN 1991: 736 sqq, 868. This linguistic development (always treated in step-motherly fashion by GNOLI) squarely *contradicts* an Arachosian homeland for Zoroaster (GNOLI 1967, 1980): the *anlaut* group has two syllables (*huu+voc.*) in Zaratustra's *Gāḍās*, where our Arachosian transmission has monosyllabic *x̣+voc.*; cf. below n. 53, 59. The same applies to the *śavati* quotation: the divergent (probably later) Arachosian pronunciation of our redaction (may) indicate, again, that Arachosia was not Zaratustras homeland.

the case in the case of *Airiianəm Vaējō*. O. SKJÆRVØ (1995: 166) simply throws up his hands: "I regard the identity of *airiianəm vaējō* "the Aryan expanse" as insoluble ... (HUMBACH 1984:15-23; GNOLI 1980: 38-51). As the mythical homeland of the Iranians, I think, it is quite likely that it changed "identity" as the tribes moved..." We can take a step beyond this agnosticism, I think, as there is evidence that has been neglected so far, and the problem may not be *quite* as unsoluble as it may seem, after some 150 years of discussion.

§ 4 Iranian lists of countries and their structure

To begin with, there are several lists of "Aryan" countries in the Avesta, the best known is the one in the comparatively late²² *Vīdēvdād*.

- V. 1. 1. *Airiianəm vaējō vaṅhūiā dāitiiaiiā*
2. *Gāum yim Suydō.šaiianəm*
3. *Mōurum sūrəm*
4. *Bāxδīm srīrəm ərəδβō.drafsəm*
5. *Nisāim yim aṅtarə Mōurum-ca Bāxδīm-ca*
6. *Harōiiūm yim viš.harəzanəm*
7. *Vaēkərətəm yim Dužakō.šaiianəm*
8. *Uruuəm pouru.vāstrəm*
9. *Xnəntəm yim Vəhrkānō.šaiianəm*
10. *Harax'aitīm srīrəm*
11. *Haētumaṅtəm raēuuəṅtəm x'arənaṅhaṅtəm*
12. *Rayəm θrizaṅtūm*
13. *Caxrəm sūrəm ašauuanəm*
14. *Varənəm yim caθru.gaošəm*
15. *+Yōi Hapta Həṅdu*
16. *Upa Aodaēšu Raṅhaiiā +yōi asārō aiβiiāxšaiieṅti* (SKJÆRVØ 1995)

Yt. 10.14 *ā-Iškatəm Pourutəm-ca, Mourum Hārōiiūm, Gaom-ca (Suydəm), Xvāirizəm.*

²² HENNING, JRAS 1942: 235 sqq. points to its Graeco-Roman measurement system, cf. also GERSHEVITCH, in: Handbuch der Orientalistik. Erste Abteilung, Der nahe und der mittlere Osten, 4. Bd., p. 27, HINTZE 1994: 43 sq.

Yt. 13. 125 *Muža*²³, *Raoždiia*, *Taniia*;

Yt. 13.127 *Aṛhī*, *Apaxšīra*.

Yt. 13.143-5 *Airiia*, *Tūra*, *Sairima*, *Sāina*, *Dāṇha*

The last three items are not a list of countries but of ethnicities, most of which remain unknown.²⁴ As has long been noticed, the western and northern Iranian areas, such as the Persis, Media, Azerbaijan, and the Central Asian desert oases are missing in such lists (though *xāirizəm* is mentioned once, at Yt. 10.14).²⁵

Though many proposals have been made for the localization of these lands, especially for those in V. 1,²⁶ it has not been considered to put them into the context of Avestan lists as such, that is the *system*, the very *structure* of such lists. This is not done all too often in Indian Studies as well, though such sunwise (clockwise, *pradakṣiṇa*) listings are legion, and are, in fact, well known in the texts and in living practice, from the Veda onwards (CALAND 1898).

²³ Difficult to localize, cf. however RV *mauja-vant* and post-RV *mūja-vant*, of a mountain in the Himalayas, retained perhaps in the modern Uighur name *Mūz Tāgh Atā* "Mūz Mt. Father", a high mountain on the border of Tajikistan and Xinjiang; see discussion in WITZEL 1980: 104 n. 16 and 1999. On Y. Av. dialectal -ž- see HOFFMANN and NARTEN 1989: 83 sqq.; if the Pamir location of the *Muža* (~ Ved. *Mūja*, Bur. *Burušo*, in Tib. transcription *Bru-ža*) could be sustained, it may provide a hint as to the so far unclear localization of this feature of Y. Av. as a NE dialect, perhaps in Kabulistan and beyond. The name of the *Muža* man *Dāštāyni* (Yt. 13.125) with the unusual (= Ved.) *-agni* also points to an eastern land, bordering Vedic territory; note also the *Raoždiia* Yt. 13.125, and the *Taožiia* V. 1.19, who probably are to be located in the central Afghan mountains or the Hindukush.

²⁴ Are the *Sāina* connected with the *Upāiri.saēna* (Hindukush) mountains? Cf. Y. 10.11 Iškata *Upāiri.saēna*, Eilers 1987:26. Or just = *saēna* "falcons" (cf. MAYRHOFER 1979: I/73); for *Tūra* cf. MAYRHOFER 1979: I/81.

²⁵ On *xāirizəm*, see EILERS 1987: 50, with literature. O.P. *Bābiru* :: Y.Av. *Baβri*(?) at Yt. 5.29 (note *Aži Dahāka* -- with a North Iranian form of the name **Dasa/Dāsa* (Avest. *Dāṇha*), cf. HOFFMANN and NARTEN 1989: 85, MAYRHOFER 1979: I/34 -- in: *baβrōiš paiti daiṅhauue*) would require a special investigation, cf. N. OETTINGER 1985: 57 "im Lande des Bibers", cf. EILERS 1982: 15 n. 35, who denies identity with O.P. *Bābiruš* "Babylon".

²⁶ Most recently, SKJÆRVØ 1995, HUMBACH 1991: 33 sqq; GNOLI 1980: 23sqq; GNOLI's erudite book (quoted extensively below) contains practically all the literature on the topic of Avestan place names available in the late Seventies; the discussion, however, is somewhat marred by the conclusion (reached already in GNOLI 1967) that the Avesta contains only east Iranian names, specifically *south-east* Iranian ones. Other scholars do not agree (HUMBACH 1984, 1991, OETTINGER 1985: 371sqq).

There are, however, several others types of listings that have received scant attention. To mention just a few: a *counter-clockwise* one (usually inauspicious,²⁷ used for example banishing fever at AV 5.22/PS 12.1-2 (WITZEL 1980a, forthc., *On Takman*); or a *spiral* one, emanating from the center in centrifugal fashion;²⁸ or a *centripetal* one (GUTSCHOW 1982), or one with a *back-and-forth* movement from and towards the center (WITZEL 1992). There also are others, such as straight lines or meandering ones, usually found in ritual processions in South Asia, which do not need to deter us here (GUTSCHOW 1982). All these arrangements, beginning with the *pradakṣiṇa(-patha)*, the circumambulation around a sacred person, place or settlement, are found in modern Hindu rituals (WITZEL 1992). One should not be surprised to find some of them in ancient Iran as well. For example, the four directions of the sky are named, just as in India and in Indo-European in general, by looking eastwards, and the east is the first in such lists (WITZEL 1972). The Persian kings, too, arranged the lists of their provinces in *pradakṣiṇa* fashion as well: in the O.P. inscriptions, a number of countries (provinces) are listed as following each other on a trade route connecting them. However, the enumeration of these several *routes* is, leg after leg, a clockwise one.²⁹

²⁷ WITZEL, 1980: 88, 105 n. 26, and *On Takman* (forthc.)

²⁸ Witzel 1980: 106: n. 26, see Milindapañho, transl. Sacred Books of the East 36, p. 204.

²⁹ WITZEL (and OETTINGER) 1971, but not yet published, cf. WITZEL 1980: 105 n. 26, K. HOFFMANN 1975-6: 457. DSaa agrees, but has the two most outlying provinces (Cimmerians and Sattagydians) added as an afterthought. -- Xerxes' list in XPh differs considerably, though: its scheme is interrupted several times by a number of outlying provinces that are mentioned "out of turn" (while the "central" provinces Media, Elam, Arachosia(!), Armenia, Drangiana come first). The underlying order may be one of oppositions: N/S Media/Elam, E/W Arachosia/Armenia; NE/SW Drangiane...Choresmia/Babylon-Assyria; E/W Sattagydia/Lydia, W/E Egypt, Greece /Maka, SW/NE Arabia/Gandhara. One might also think of a counter-clockwise(!) centripetal arrangement in which the most distant provinces (Areia and Gandhara) come last. -- Note that G. WINDFUHR (1994: 265-281), has supplied many data indicating similar arrangements in DB, note especially the counter-clockwise one (W-S-E-N) on p. 274, and note also the division of Darius' provinces p. 272; -- finally, cf. the lists of P. LECOQ 1997: 132 sqq.; however, LECOQ only remarks that these are ordered geographically "assez cohérent" and that an order according to the Avestan theory of the seven Karšvars is not found. -- Herodotos' list (3.89 sqq) is curious, and not only for its omissions. It starts with the western provinces best known to the Greeks (Anatolia, Phoenicia, Egypt) but then seems to employ another, probably Persian arrangement: first come the provinces E/W Sattagydia / Susa, Babylon, and N/S Media (and beyond: Caspians, Bactrians, Armenians) / Paricanians, Indian "Aethiopians"; they are followed by outlying ones: N/S Scythians, Parthians / Matienians, Moschians, and finally E: India. (One might try again to list these, excluding the western ones up to Egypt, in a clockwise, centripetal fashion).

In similar fashion, the Avestan texts list the Iranian countries along the trails that one needs to travel across the various deserts and mountains, which everywhere divide the Iranian lands from each other. These trails are listed in clockwise order, at Yt. 10.14 (see above).

§ 5 Ideal divisions of the earth

However, there are also some arrangements of tribes and countries that are directly linked to the directions of the sky. In India, a clear one is that of found in AB 8.14 (WITZEL 1987). It is one of four directions with the addition of the most important tribe, the Kuru, in the center; however, it also mentions the Sindhu-Sauvīra as a sixth one in the southwest, beyond the Tharr desert (*maru*), and we may add information for the other intermediate directions as well. A similar scheme is apparently found already in the RV. The text frequently mentions the "Five Peoples" (*pañca kṛṣṭi*,³⁰ *kṣiti*, *carṣanya*, *jana*, *jāta*, *mānuṣa*, AV *mānavaḥ*): Anu-Druhyu, Yadu-Turvaśa, and the Pūru (RV 7.18, 1.108.8). While the exact location for most of them is not well known,³¹ it is clear that the Pūru (and their political heirs, the Bharata) were not located at the exact geographical center of the Ṛgvedic lands, in the Greater Panjab. As frequently seen in other cultures as well, the *ideal* center, spiritual or otherwise, must not be at the geographical center, but can even be found on the periphery. This is the case with the Ṛgvedic Bharata after the victory in the Ten Kings' Battle (RV 7.18) with their center of power at the eastern rim of the Panjab on the Sarasvatī, in the later Kurukṣetra.³²

Interestingly, the RV contains not only the preferred listing of five areas but also one of seven. At 8.39.8, the poet Nābhāka Kāṇva speaks of seven tribes,³³ and not, as usual, of five.

§ 6. The seven *karṣuuars* of Iran

³⁰ Cf. P. THIEME 1967, 233-258.

³¹ See MACDONELL-KEITH, Vedic Index, London 1912, reprint Delhi 1967.

³² See WITZEL 1997, and cf., for the local mythology and astronomy involved, WITZEL 1984.

³³ RV 8.39.8 *yó agnīḥ saptāmānuṣaḥ śritó víśveṣu síndhuṣu* which GELDNER translates as "sieben Menschenstämme". -- Nābhāka lives on the confluence of seven rivers (*sindhūnām upodaye sapta-svasā*, 8.39.8, cf. 8.40.5) and generally prefers the number seven (8.40.5, 8.41.2).

This scheme is precisely the one that the Iranians prefer. It is first mentioned by Zaratuštra himself at Y. 32.3: *būmiiā haptaiθē* "in (this) seventh (of the seven climes) of the world" (HUMBACH 1991: 30, cf. Yt. 19.26). The standard list, however, speaks of seven *karšuuar / karšuuān* "climes",³⁴ that is a central area and six outer ones surrounding it. Like the related Vedic term *kṛṣṭi*, the word is derived from **kṛṣ* "to scratch, to plough", while Y. 11.2 *karšū* means a smaller territorial area.³⁵ Apparently, the world is divided by (invisible) "scratched" lines, just as the Vedic term (*pra*)*deśa* "settlement area, country" refers to the areas situated between the four *diś* "directions of the sky" or the eight "intermediate directions" (*avāntaradiśā*, *avāntaradeśa*, *antardeśa*, or *upadiśā*) situated between the four directions (WITZEL 1972).

In Iran, the seven "climes" are: *arəzahī*, *sauuahī*, *fradaḍafšū*, *vīdaḍafšū*, *vo^uru.barəšti*, *vo^uru.jarəšti* and *x'aniraθa* (Yt. 12.10-14, 10.15, 10.133). Among them, *arəzahī* obviously refers to the west (*arəzah* "evening") and *sauuahī* to the east (**savah* "morning"). The other names are taken from the natural features³⁶ of the areas they describe, including the central "clime", *x'aniraθa*.³⁷

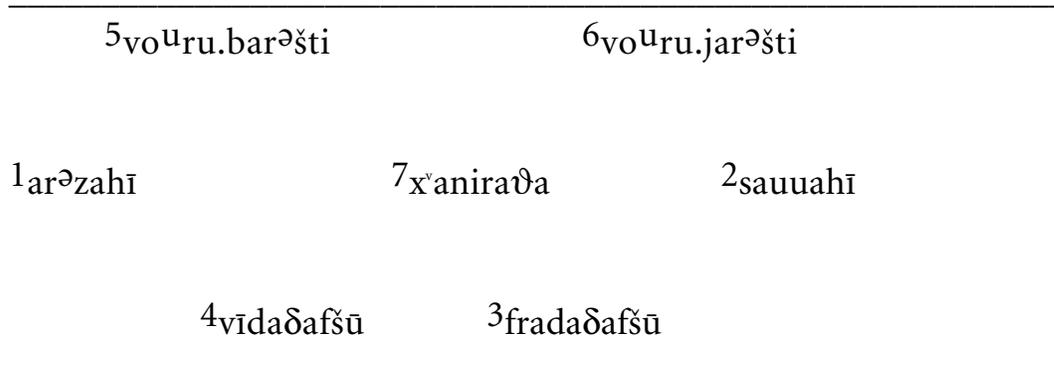
³⁴ BARTHOLOMAE *AirWb.* translates it with "continent", similarly, OETTINGER 1985: 57, 179, 181 (Yt. 5.5, 30) "sieben Erdteile"; GERSHEVITCH 1959, HUMBACH 1991, A. HINTZE, 1994 by "clime." -- Cf. already the discussion of the seven "continents" by GEIGER, 1982: 303 sqq. and his comparison with the Indian seven *dvīpas* (found already in the Skt. translation of the Avesta).

³⁵ Av. *karšū* "(agricultural) land" F. 5, "territorial area" Y, 11.2; cf. RV *pañca kṛṣṭi*, *jana*, etc.

³⁶ For similar designations of east and west, see WITZEL 1972; -- both *vīdaḍafšū*, *fradaḍafšū* "giving cattle" (without word division by the redactors), fit the SW and SE their winter pastures of Greater Afghanistan well (see BUCHERER-DIETSCHI and JENTSCH 1986: 194 sqq., 203); *vo^uru.barəšti* (NW) and *vo^uru.jarəšti* (NE), too, describe the mountainous northern areas well: "having wide, serrated peaks" (= Ved. *bhrṣṭi* "peak, tip"), "having wide "mountain tops?" (*jarəšti*), cf. Ved. *hṛṣ* "to make one's hairs stand up, to be exited", Yt. 14.20 *zarəšiiamna* "exited", EWA II 808.

³⁷ This word, too, is not divided by the Avestan redactors (cf. BARTHOLOMAE, *AirWb.* 1442 on the spelling), and has not been well explained so far. BARTHOLOMAE, *AirWb.* 1864, hesitatingly proposed *x'aini-raθa* "with beautiful chariots" or **sva-ni'ratha*; it could also be derived from **svanin*- "noisy" (cf. the - *in* stem in K. HOFFMANN and B. FORSSMAN 1996, par. 104bis): "having noisy chariots/wheels" (note the conjecture in Yt. 5.130 +*x'anaṭ.caxra* "dröhnende Räder" by Oettinger 1985: 125). -- Since the scheme of climes can be seen as arranged in the form of a wheel, and as *vīspe.aire.razurā* can indicate an "all-Aryan race track" lined by wooden railings, for example at the annual spring festivals (still held today in the Afghan highlands), one could deliberate a meaning based on the Ved. term *āṇī* "lynch pin (of a wheel)": **su-āṇi-ratha* "having a wheel with good lynch pins" (like *su-kha* "having a good

The system is found in the later text, Bundahišn 29.2 and is clearly explained at Bd. 11.2-6 and 65.8-9;³⁸ it is arranged as in the following figure.



This system is the standard one of the Avesta. The difference between it and the Vedic one obviously is the addition of two more sectors, probably the western and eastern ones (to which we will return). In both cases, however, the center -- or should we say the nave (*x^v-ani-raθa?*, cf. n. 37) -- is surrounded by sectors, carved up (*karš*, *kṛṣ*) by "furrows."

Such enumerations are most commonly arranged, in Indo-Iranian and even in Indo-European traditions,³⁹ in clockwise fashion. Thus the list of *karšuuars* at V. 19.39 and Yt. 12.10-14 and Yt. 10.15 start (unexpectedly) in the west but then continue in clockwise (*pradakṣiṇa*) fashion, ending with *x^vaniraθa*.

 NW: vo^uru.barəšti -->

NE: vo^uru.jarəšti

/

axle hole, lucky"). However, *ānī* is not found in Iranian and probably a local Indian loan word (WITZEL 1999a,b). -- It is much more likely, therefore, that *x^vaniraθa* is derived from **ram* (T. GOTō, by letter, June 1999), like Ved. *mano-ratha* "pleasure of one's mind, wish", cf. Y.Av. *rao-raθa* "bringing quick pleasure" (details in EWA II 430 s.v. *ratha*). The meaning "having its own (*x^va-*), particular (*ni*) pleasure" fits the conditions of this climate very well (see below §10). For its location, §10.

³⁸ The order of enumeration differs from that of the Yt. list, for astronomical reasons, in Bd 5.8-9, and with the reversal of W, E to E, W in Bd. 11 (cf. below n. 77).

³⁹ W. CALAND, 1898, 275-325, with many Vedic, Iranian and other Indo-European examples of clockwise and counter-clockwise movements.

It is not clear whether we have to read *ā* "towards" *Iškata* or *Aiškata* "belonging to *Iškata*" ("chamber of refreshment", a river valley? K. Hoffmann, pers. comm. 1971) (or even *iškata*?). As *Iškata* is linked to *Upāiri.saēna*, the name of the Hindukush Range,⁴² it has to be located somewhere to the east of Merw-Herat (*Haraēuua/-ōiuum*) and the Hare river.⁴³ In this way, we obtain an east-west-northeast movement, ending with Choresmia in the "extreme north" (perhaps an afterthought or addition). The result is a clockwise, *pradakṣiṇa* movement.

§ 7. The list of countries in V.1 and *Airiianəm Vaējah*

It is now time to take a new look at the list of countries in V. 1, using the list recently discussed by HUMBACH (1991: 33sq.) and translated again by SKJÆRVØ (1995: 164). Differently from the previously mentioned Iranian lists, this one is not arranged in *pradakṣiṇa* but in counter-clockwise (*apasalavi*) fashion.⁴⁴ It starts with *Airiianəm Vaējō* which is described as the first and best of all places and settlements (*asaṅhḡm-ca šōiḡranḡm-ca*) created by Ahura Mazda. But like all the other 15 countries, it has as its evils: ...*frākərənṡtāt aṅrō*

(*x'aniravḡa*) even today (see below §10, n. 94). (For **ā* "up to", cf. Ved. *ā* and BARTH. 221 *a-svar* "was bis zum Morgen hin reicht", 190 *a-iricay*, 101 *a-fra-sāh*, 54 *a'tāra*, 52 *a-caētar*, 51 *a-xšapan*, 2 *a-*, cf. 300 *ā-*). -- GERSHEVITCH 1959: 80, 176 has "X^vaniravḡa the land of settled dwelling and healthy village organization" -- which is not a characteristic of the highlands either.

⁴² As in Y 9.11; cf. the Greek adaptation *Paropanisos* (or *Paropamisos*) < **parā-upari-saina*, "the (province) behind the Uparisaina" = O.P. *Gandāra* in DB 1.16 (Akkad. transcr. *pa-ar-ū-pa-ra-e-sa-an-na*, Elam. [*pa-ru-ba-ra-e*]sa-na; cf. Vedic: JB 3.66, 3.270 *upari-śyena*, see WITZEL 1980: 117 n. 104. Detailed discussion of *Iškata Upāiri.saēna* in HINTZE 1994: 76, cf. GERSHEVITCH 1959: 184, EILERS 1987: 26.

⁴³ Thus, not in the northeast, for example in Ferghana where Alexander's historians record names such as *Kyreskhatē*, *Alexandria eschata*; cf. also Arrian's *Pareitakai* (4.21.1) between the Oxus and the Yaxartes. GERSHEVITCH 1959: 174-6 situates *Iškata* south of the W. Hindukush, between Haraiva and Gandhāra, cf. p. 236. -- Note that HUMBACH (1991: 31 sq.), based on Yt. 10.14-15, wants to locate *x'aniravḡa* in the northeast next to Gauua and Sogdia, at least for a Miḡraic, non-Median tradition, with Gauua at its center (see above n. 41). The clockwise listing mentioned above contradicts such an identification (see below §10 on the lack of investigation in Iranian studies into systems of geographical arrangements and cosmographic schemes). -- On Harī Rūd, see EILERS 1982: 22.

⁴⁴ Is the direction anti-clockwise due to the Daivic counterparts in the "good settlements" listed in V.1? (see below §9 and n.81-82). -- For details on counter-clockwise movements see WITZEL 1980:105 n. 26. See below n. 75 for a discussion of other possibilities.

mainiiuš pouru-mahrkō, aḡim-ca yim raoditəm, ziiqm-ca daēuuo-dātəm... "Aḡra Mainiiu, full of death, created ... the reddish dragon and the demon-created winter." (SKJÆRVØ 1995: 164).

The important item here is the Daiva-created winter, for this is immediately explained further:

dasa auuaθra maḡhō zaiiana, duua ḡamina taē-ca ḡəḡti, sarəta āpō, sarəta zēmō, sarəta uruuaraiiā;
aḡa zimahe maiḡim, aḡa zimahe zarəḡaēm, aḡa ziiāas-ciḡ pairi.pataiti, aḡa fraēštəm vōiyḡanāqm.

"Ten are there the winter months, two the summer months, and even then [in summer] the waters are freezing cold, the earth is freezing cold, the plants are freezing cold; there is the centre of winter, there is the heart of winter, there the winter rushes around, there (occur) most inundations." (after HUMBACH 1991: 35).⁴⁵

Those who have favored Choresmia as the country intended here will have to explain how this, "the best Aryan country created by Ahura Mazdā", even though it is described as the coldest country on the Oxus, could have ten months of winter, and a cool or cold summer. Even a place as close to Siberia as Choresmia simply does not have ten months of winter. If one regards this

⁴⁵ BARTHOLOMAE-WOLFF: "Dort (gibt es) zehn Wintermonate, (nur) zwei Sommermonate, und (auch) die sind: (zu) kalt für das Wasser, (zu) kalt für die Erde, (zu) kalt für die Pflanze; und (es ist) des Winters Mitte, und (es ist) des Winters Herz, dann (wenn) der Winter zu Ende geht, dann (gibt es) sehr viele Überschwemmungen." HUMBACH's translation of *sarəta* by "freezing" is excessive, unless it refers to the highest, snow-clad peaks only --without plants! --, which is unlikely; rather the sentence can refer to frequent frost in the highlands in early and late summer, see below §10. HUMBACH explains *vōiyḡna* from **vaiiu-ḡna* "damage caused by storm"; "inundation" would fit the climatic conditions better (V. 1.3 *fraēštəm vōiyḡnanām*), see below §10. Perhaps HUMBACH's translation was inspired by his - correct - insight that this is "not a paradise region but high up in the mountains not far from the eternal ice" (which is found today only on a few peaks, mostly in the Hindukush, above 4-5000 m).

In addition, HUMBACH (1991: 35 sq) introduces another unnecessary difficulty, a supposed clash between the description of *Airiiānəm Vaējah* as a paradise in V 1.2. and the description of its evils in V 1.2-3, and complicates matters further by adding an Avesta fragment in the Pahlavi transl. which quotes: *ud pas ḡapta ḡəḡti ḡamina maḡhō, paḡca zaiiana* "and thereafter (it is said): seven are the months of summer, five those of winter." He regards this description - correctly - as the "climatic norm" as found in Bd. 25.9, attributing it to the "main part of Airyana Vaējah". But this is the norm of Greater Afghanistan, not of the Highlands with their "two months of summer", (BUCHERER-DIETSCHI and JENTSCH 1986: 201, BOWLBY 1978); for details on climate see below, §10 and n. 95.

descriptions as an exaggeration (as common with 100 or 1000 in poetical speech), it still would be impossible to account for the two cold summer months, as the continental climate of Central Asia results in very *hot* summers with temperatures up to 50• C (already Geiger 1882: 141).

This observation alone should have given pause to identifications of *Airiianəm Vaējō* on the Oxus and in Choresmia. But scholars were and still are fascinated with a hypothetical (northern) "homeland" of the Iranians, or even of all Aryans, for which they have sought in vain in the RV. One has all too easily assumed a northern homeland, at the northern fringes of Greater Iran.⁴⁶

§ 8 The fifteen other countries

However, we can also take a closer look at the other fifteen countries that are declared as "good" for settlement, and at their arrangement in the list. Some are well known but others have never been identified with certainty -- nor is this the aim here. One reason for the uncertainty is that the various schemes that are supposed to underlie the list of V.1, from MONCHI-ZADEH's (1975) several concentric half-circles surrounding Choresmia to GNOLI's localizations with their erratic shifts back and forth between various areas surrounding Afghanistan,⁴⁷ are set on certain, sometimes unexpressed premises and

⁴⁶ Most recently KUZ'MINA 1994, SARIANIDI 1994; see OETTINGER 1985: 373, and the older literature in GNOLI 1980: 23sq; note that the seven rivers flowing into the Balkhash lake have sometimes been compared as well.

⁴⁷ GNOLI 1967, 1980. He characterizes it, however, as "roughly from north to south and then towards the east" (1980:63). Note that these identifications are ultimately based on his erroneous belief (see above n. 21) that the home of Zaratustra was in Southern Afghanistan and the well-known observation that older Zoroastrian place names have been moved westwards towards Media, etc. However, even when the localizations he (1980) regards as uncertain (= "?") are excluded (i.e. *Xnənta*, *Uruuā*, *Raṅhā*, 1980: 39 sqq), they lead to a disorganized, and unmotivated back and forth in the list, summed up, 1980: 63, with the following localizations:

(2) *Gāuua* ("Sogdiana"), (3) *Maryu* ("Margiana"), (4) *Bāxδī* ("Bactria"), (5) *Nisāiia* "between Margiana and Bactria", (6) *Haraēuua* (Herat, Areia), (7) *Vaēkəṛəta* (Kabulistān), (8) *Uruuā* ("Ghazni region?"), (9) *Xnənta* ("between Iškāšim and Baghlan", in the N. Hindukush?), (10) *Harax'aitī* (Arachosia, upper Helmand and Farah), (11) *Haētumant* (Drangiana, Sīstān), (12) *Raya* (at the sources of the Helmand: "between Zamīn-dāvar and Qal`at-i Ghilzay"), (13) *Caxra* ("Lūgar valley", south of Kabul), (14) *Varəna* ("Buner", N. Pakistan, 1980: 48), (15) *Haṭta Həṇdu* ("Panjab"), (16) *Raṅhā* ("between Kabul and the Kurram"?, 1967: 77).

predilections,⁴⁸ and are, all too frequently, based on the intuition of the authors. A different approach will be tried here, one based only on the *internal* evidence of the texts.

It compares the Vīdēvdāδ list with another, *indigenous* arrangement of the world into seven "climes" or "continents". The two lists have -- to my knowledge -- never been juxtaposed. As we have seen, the list of the seven "climes" can be followed by the mentioning of the river *Haētumant* or by *Xvāirizəm*, and they are arranged in a clockwise (*pradakṣiṇa*) fashion. Applying this evidence to the Vīdēvdāδ list, we immediately notice that its order is reverse.

1. A counter-clockwise ordering is easily established: The list starts with number (2), *Gāuua* (Sogdia) and proceeds in a southwesterly direction to (3) *Margu* (Merw), then retraces to (4) *Bāxδī* (Balkh), and to the country situated between Merw and Balkh, *Nisāiia* (5).⁴⁹

In other words, this is an altogether improbable list of identifications, moving not "roughly from north to south and then towards the east", but according to Gnoli's own localizations, from:

extreme NE (2) --> extreme N (3) and in between (4,5),
 --> extreme W(6) --> extreme E(7) --> S (8) --> N(9)
 --> extreme S (10) and SE (11)
 --> NE (12) -->NE (13) --> NE (14)
 --> S (15) --> W (16)

⁴⁸ In GNOLI (1980), I think, three levels of historical development are uncomfortably conflated in favor of his (Greater) Sistan theory for the homeland of Zaratūštra: first, the (fairly meager) data available from Zoroaster's time (but see note 21); second, those of the Younger Avestan texts in general and the local, "patriotic" ones of Sistan (especially Yt. 19, cf. HUMBACH 1991: 32 sq, HINTZE 1994: 40 sq) in particular, and third, the still later sources in the Vīdēvdāδ (not to speak of Middle Iranian texts). Obviously, all have to be viewed from the point of view of their *own* times and the religious/political motives of their authors/redactors, especially those of Yt. 19 and V. 1 (see HINTZE 1994: 40 sqq.). They can be used for O.Av. times only with a large measure of circumspection and they do not automatically reflect the geographical and historical situation prevalent then (cf. n. 61). -- A similar conflation of historical levels is seen in HUMBACH 1984 (note his arguments referring to Airiianəm Vaējah and the Vēh/Oxus river, p. 18) and 1991, introduction (cf. n. 18).

⁴⁹ Note the the "red-shouldered horses" of the early Chinese sources, who suffer from the red horse fly (cf. V. 1.4!), see Chang Ch'ien's account, transl. by HULSEWÉ 1979; cf. earlier, the famous large Nisayan horses in Media, Herodotos 3.106, cf. 7.40, 9.20; EILERS 1987, 69 sq. derives the name from "to shine", mp. *nisāy-*; note also *Nisāya*, a *dahyu* situated in Media (DB 1.58, known even to the Pahlavi version of V.1). EILERS 1987: 50sq, 70 lists quite a number of places in modern Iran that can be derived from **Nisa-*. -- On *Bāxδī*, see detailed discussion in WITZEL 1980, on the etymology see EILERS 1982: 23; on the geographical situation and the

2. The next leg of the list moves from Balkh towards the southwest (4), to the neighboring country of (6) *Haraēuua* (Herat), continues via two other areas to (9) *Xnənta* "where the *Vəhrkāna*⁵⁰ live." Still moving counter-clockwise, this would establish another trail, one reaching out towards the northwest, from Herat to the southeast of the Caspian Sea, modern Gorgān (< *Vəhrkāna*⁵¹). This is a distant country, just as Sogdia (Gāuua), item (2). If the logic of the earlier arrangement (2-5) continues, we should expect that *Uruuā* and *Vaēkərəta* are located somewhere between Gorgān and Herat. An indication is found, at least for *Uruuā*, in the name of one of the rivers flowing into the Hamum Lake, the R. *Uruuā* (Yt. 19.67).⁵² According to the counter-clockwise (*prasalavi*) type list of

settlement history, including transhumance in the first millennium AD, see KUWAYAMA 1989: 111 sqq., 1992: 146 n 145.

⁵⁰ GNOLI 1980: 39 sqq., 235 has a long, somewhat tortured argument to place the *Vəhrkāna* in the east, though he concedes that "such place-names and ethnic names must have been widespread" (e.g., Gurganj in Choresmia), and though he, in fact, supplies ample evidence for locating (another) *Vəhrkāna* precisely where its O.P. and modern name locates it, on the Caspian Sea: DB 2.92 *Parθava uta Varkāna*. HUMBACH 1991: 34 n. 49 supposes a corrupted **xrəntəm* = *Xrəndoi* in Ptolemy 6.9.5 and the river *Kharindas*, the mod. *Hirand*.

⁵¹ Another possible western Iranian name is that of the *māzaniia* which is often thought to represent the people of later Māzanderān (BARTHOLOMAE, *AirWb.* 1169), the coastal strip south of the Caspian Sea. -- SKJÆRVØ (1985: 165) again follows GNOLI (1980: 44-50) in refusing to see a tribal name here and in taking *māzaniia* as meaning "gigantic". However, as the *māzaniia daēuua* (Yt. 5.22, etc.) are mentioned along with the *varəniia daēuua* "the *Varəna* demons" (BARTHOLOMAE, *AirWb.* 1373), it is more likely that both represent local *Daivas*, in the two areas at the western and eastern rims of the Zoroastrian world.

⁵² For these river names, see A. HINTZE 1994: 310 sqq, and 1994a, MONCHI-ZADEH 1975: 108-114, GNOLI 1980: 27 sqq, HUMBACH 1991: 33sq.; for other literary similarities between V.1 and Y. 19 (not involving the counter-clockwise arrangements), see HINTZE 1994: 41-45.

Yt 19. 67 has the following list: *xāstrā*, *huuaspā*, *fradaθā*, *x'arənaŋaitī*, *uštəuuaitī*, *uruuā* (*uruua-δca*), *ərezī*, *zarənumatī*, *haētumant*. The *Tarikh-i Sīstān* has the following list: *Hīrmand*, *Ruxxad*, *Xāš*, *Farah*, *Harrūt*, *Xušk*. The two lists of Yt. 19 and *Tarikh-i Sīstān* (transl. M. GOLD 1976: 12) agree in their counter-clockwise order; however, the Yt. list ends with the *Hilmand*, the *Farhang-i Sīstān* starts with it.

These rivers can be identified to a large degree: *xāstrā* = *Xāš-rūd*, (cf. SCHWARTZ 1986, 381 sq.); *huuaspā* = *Rūd-i Xuspās*, north of *Xāš-rūd* = *Khoaspa* of the Greeks, i.e. *huuaspā* "having good horses" (see HINTZE 1994: 30); *fradaθā* = *Farāh-rūd* and town of *Farah*; *x'arənaŋaitī* = *Harrūt-rūd*, the northern affluent of the *Hamum*; *uštəuuaitī* = *Xušk-rūd*, between *Farah* and *Harrūt Rūd*. All authors basically agree in their identifications down to this river.

However, Yt. 19.66 lets this list precede with: *yaθa gairiš yō +Usaδā*, *yim aiβitō paoiriš āpō*, *haṃ gairišācō jasəntō* "where mount *Usaδā* (is), around which from all sides the many

Sistan rivers in this section of Yt. 19, the *Uruuā must* be located to the

streams following along the slope come together" (HINTZE 1994a, discussion 1994: 309 sq). This indicates the central mountain (the Kuh-i Khwaja, see n. 70), in the Hamum area, towards which the streams mentioned above flow down. The rest of the rivers is expected to continue this counter-clockwise movement, to the west of the Hamum lake. But GNOLI 1980 leaves off with the Farah-Rūd and shifts all the way to the east, to the Arghandab. However, if we do so, the list no longer is one "where Mount Usaḏā is, around which from all sides the many streams ... come together. Into this (lake) come together Xvāstrā ... Haētumant." (HINTZE 1994a: Yt. 19.66-67). All these rivers are expected to flow directly into the Hamum, the very center of Sistan.

Indeed, it is a typical dialect feature of the area, (K. HOFFMANN, see n. 21, HOFFMANN and NARTEN 1989: 79), that Indo-Iran. **sv > x̄*, as is seen these local river names *x̄āstrā* (= Xaš Rūd), *x̄arənaitī* (Harrūt Rūd), *harax̄aitī*, (but also in *x̄āirizəm!*); otherwise, **sv > Av. huu*, as for example in the local river name *huuaspā* (*Xuspās*, see also HINTZE 1994: 312 n. 63, 30 n. 69 on the syllables in this verse). It owes its *huu-* to the Avesta redaction, which was influenced by the many words beginning with normal Av. *huu-*, such as the word *huuaspa* itself, with its usual meaning "having good horses." That *x̄-* was *sprachwirklich* is seen in the medieval and modern continuant, *x-* in *Xuspās*. This development probably excludes the Arghandab (*Aryand-āb*) area; if the name was indeed derived from *Harax̄aitī* one would expect **(H)arax-*.

The following names should represent, in continuation of the counter-clockwise movement, some small rivers in the NW, W and S of the Hamum Lake. Why is this "merely conjecture... highly debatable", as GNOLI 1980: 30 has it? It follows the *order* of Indo-Iranian geographical arrangements (which GNOLI, however, neglects throughout his book). They are:

- *+uruuā*, *uruua-ḏca* (F1), *uruua-ḏaca* J10, D, for *+uruuā-ca*, < **sruuā* "the flowing one", see HINTZE 1994: 312 who identifies the name of the river and the country; cf. HUMBACH 1991: 33 n. 47, 34, WZKSOA 4, 1960, 36-46; MONCHI-ZADEH (1975: 123-4) locates the river west of the Harrut, as tributary of the Hamum near Ṭabas; GNOLI's counter-argument (1980: 26, 31 ssq.) is based on *mythological* data (*Uruuāxšīia*, "King of Urvā", Y. 9.10, Yt. 15.28 etc.).

- *ərezī*, according to MONCHI-ZADEH (1975: 124), on the Zibr Rūd, a confluent of the upper Rūd-i Bandān, west of Kūh-i Xwāja; HERZFELD (Zarathustra V 93, GNOLI 1980: 27) wanted to identify it, against the counter-clockwise order of the list, with the Rūd-i Xar between the Xāš and the Xuspās.

- *zarənumatī*, acc. to MONCHI-ZADEH, 1975: 120 sqq. = R. Aryandāb = Dōrī = Ruxxad (<-- R. Lora, etc.), see GNOLI 1980: 29sqq.; this is unlikely, given the counter-clockwise order of the list (and there are other sources of gold, *zaran**, in Afghanistan, see BUCHERER-DIETSCHI and JENTSCH 1986: 40); it should rather be an affluent of the Gaud-e Zirreh/Gawd-i Zira, perhaps the Šīla (Shela, Shelāgh R.) that flows into the Zirreh depression from the northwest (now not connected at all to the Hamum, as GNOLI 1967, 1980: 35 holds; it starts on the *plain* south of the present Hamum, almost exactly at 30° 30' N, 61° E, and continues with a clearly marked bed).

- *haētumant* is without doubt = Helmand; the list of Tarīx-i Sīstān, however adds, as no. 2, the **Harax̄aitī* = Ruxxad-Rūd = Arghandab (the latter, if indeed etymologically connected(?), without change *x̄ > x-*, *h-* as found in Sistan and with the very name of the *Harax̄aitī!* Cf. R. Arghestan?).

(north)west⁵³ of the river *X^varənaīti*, the modern Harut, which flows into the Hamum lake south of Herat. This results in an alignment of the section (7) Uruuā - (8) Vaēkərəta identical to that of (4) Baxδī - (5) Nisāiia.

However, Vaēkərəta has frequently been sought in the Kabul area.⁵⁴ Yet nothing, including the designation of Vaēkərəta as the country where the *Dužaka* live,⁵⁵ hinders us to insert it in the list at a northeast Iranian or Turkmenistan location, particularly at the time of the composition of the Vīdēvdāδ list. This does not exclude, it may be noted, that another (older?) *Vaēkərəta* indeed existed in the Kabul area,⁵⁶ for Iranian geographical names are frequently found in two or more different areas. There is, for example, a Bactrian *Nisāiia* and a Median area (*dahyu*) called *Nisāya* (O.P., DB 1.58); or, O.P. Pārsa (Persis) is echoed by an eastern Parśu land,⁵⁷ close to *Āraṭṭa* (Sistan) and

⁵³ Similarly HUMBACH 1991: 34 "valley of an affluent of the Hamūm-e Hilmand"; GNOLI 1980: 27 differs and places Uruuā, following up his location of Zaruštra in the Helmand area, further in the east. MONCHI-ZADEH (1975: 108-114), who had first understood the importance of the list, put the last few of these rivers east of the lower Hilmand. -- Note also the modern *Arvita* pasture area west of the Harut R., just NW of Qala-i-Doāb.

⁵⁴GNOLI 1980: 48, BARTHOLOMAE, AirWb. 1313, cf. Ptolemy, *Bagārda* on the Paropanisos north of Kabul, and also the *Vaikarṇas* of RV 7.18.11, a clan or tribe in the Ten Kings' battle, and the Yakṣa *Vaikṛtika* in the Buddh. Skt. text Mahāmāyurī. HUMBACH 1991: 34, however, derives it from **vaiiu-kərəta* "founded by Vayu" and rightly remarks "has been ... equated with Gandhāra ... but its place in the list does not favor this equation." If *Vaēkərəta* would be taken as an eastern land, the enumeration of the list would indeed become an unmotivated back and forth movement between east and west, for details, see below n. 75, cf. n. 47.

⁵⁵ Usually understood, following V. 13.2, as a denigrating term for the hedgehog (BARTHOLOMAE, AirWb. 755), which is otherwise called *spā vaṅhāpara*. Note however, the deviant modern Iran. forms: Baluchi *jajuk*, *dužux*, NPers. *žūža*, next to Ved. *jahaka* < Iir. **j'aj'a/uka*, which points to some kind of popular etymology involving *duž-* 'evil'. EILERS (1987: 63) understands the word as "porcupine". The list in V. 1., with its three compounds in *-šaiiana*, rather points to the name of a tribe, cf. the designations of the Sogdians and Vəhrkāna; cf. also *airiīδ.šaiiana* "(the land) providing settlement to the Aryans", Yt. 10.13. Incidentally, if HUMBACH's location of Zoroaster's homeland is correct, the *Dužaka* might just represent his "evil" enemies.

⁵⁶ For this localization, see GNOLI 1980: 47-50 (following S. L. ÉVY and HENNING), but contrast HUMBACH 1991: 34 n. 48.

⁵⁷ Pāṇini 5.3.117, BŚS 18.44, see WITZEL 1980: 120 n. 126, 1987 and 1995; for the Persians note the older (843, 836 BCE sqq.) Assyrian transcriptions *Parsuaš*, *Paršumaš*, *Parsamaš* of "kings" still located in the area of the Urmia Lake in northwestern Iran; cf. EILERS 1982: 9.

Gandhāra (the Kabul-Rawalpindi/Islamabad area) or the *Paraitakai* appear both in the Persis and in Sogdiana (Arrian 4.21-2).⁵⁸

3. The next two items are of interest: (10) *Haraxaitī* (Arachosia), and (11) *Haētumant*, the lands along the modern Helmand river.⁵⁹ Both represent another "leg" of the enumeration situated in the south(west), that is south of the Afghan mountain systems. Seen as another, separate section of the list, they

⁵⁸ BŚS 18.44 +*Parśavaḥ* (located in Afghanistan, next to Arāṭṭa/Āraṭṭa = Sīstān, see below n. 75), as well as the southeast Iranian land of *Kamboja*, situated in the Kandahar region according to Milindapañho, transl. Sacred Books of the East 36, p. 204 (see WITZEL 1980: 106 n. 26, 52, 81, 84); note import of horses into India from Kamboja, Bactria (*Bāhlika*, cf. also *Bāhlaveya*), *Sauvīra* at Arthaśāstra 2.30.9; and cf. the name of the Persian king *Kambūjiya* (already CHARPENTIER, ZII 2: 140-152, WITZEL 1980: 188 n. 108), probably "the Cambodian", cf. *Dauphin, Prince of Wales*. Note that Pāṇini 4.1.75 still knows of a king of the Kamboja.

⁵⁹ The extent of Arachosia has shifted over time (cf. also GNOLI 1980: 36), see the distinction in the O.P. inscriptions and Greek sources which distinguish between Arachosia and Drangiana; later on, Drangiana formed part of *Area/Haraēuua* (RE V 1665), Herodotos 3.89sqq., however, lists Drangiana (the Sarangians) together with the Sagartians and does not mention Arachosia. -- Strabo 11.560, on the contrary, has both Drangiana and Arachosia within one satrapy; the Avestan *Drangiana/Sistan and Arachosia indeed share the same *x* dialect, as is clear from the very name, *Haraxaitī*, with *-x-* and not usual Avestan *-huu*, see n. 21. The Avestan country *Haētumant* thus is not likely to have included the area of the Hamum Lake but must be sought further upstream. (Drangiana, O.P. *Zranka*, does not appear in Avestan). The "political" division of these lands obviously has shifted over the course of history and we cannot extrapolate from these sources for the situation at the time of the Vīdēvdāḥ list. -- However, if the shift of the "block" *W* --> *E* (below, §9) is compelling, the order *Haraxaitī* - *Haētumant* could be derived from it, and *Haētumant* might mean (with GNOLI) only the Sistan / lower Helmand area. -- Incidentally, GNOLI 1967: 88 curiously misunderstands the meaning of the designation *haētumant*. It does not mean "rich in dikes" because it provides the water for "canals" and irrigation, indicating elaborate water management (as Herodotos 3.117, famously, suggests for northeastern Iran). Instead, in Afghanistan and beyond, merely small ditches were and are used (cf. BOWLBY 1978: 26 sq), and therefore, *haētumant* is used in the sense of "having (natural) dikes [for the moment]", as they are built up by a river that carries a lot of sediments from the mountains, just like the Italian River Po. The river builds up its bed until it flows much higher than the lower lying plain, and it occasionally breaks the "dikes" and inundates the plain (just as the Po did before it was tamed by modern technology). Cf. HINTZE 1994: 314, correctly, about the Helmand which "sends down, on the lower lying land, many inundations"; and cf. EILERS 1982: 31 on the "category of river names designating fords, bridges and dams. -- The same applies, incidentally, to the famous dike breaking used in the The Kings' Battle at RV 7.18: the Bharatas could simply dig into the natural banks of the Paruṣṇī river (indeed, nobody has proposed that they built large river embankments!) and thus could flood all surrounding land, washing away their enemies.

continue the counter-clockwise direction of the enumeration; (note the possible interchange of SW/SE in numbers 10 and 11, see below § 9.)

4. But now the list suddenly return to the west with (12) *Raya*, if we assume that this the well-known town in Media, (O.P. *Ragā*), the modern Rai south of Tehran. In the Avesta, is described as having three tribes (*zantu*) and is (V. 19.18) called "Zoroastrian" (*zaraθuštri*).⁶⁰ GNOLI (1980: 42 sq), due to his predilection for a homeland of *Zaraθuštra* in S. Afghanistan,⁶¹ wants to locate *Raya* in the hills and the lower mountains north of the Helmand, near to *Caxra*, which he identifies with the town of Carx near Ghazna.⁶² However, HUMBACH (1991: 34) locates another Carx in Khorasan, as is indeed expected from the order of this list, and he deliberates the old identification of *Raya* with modern Rai near Tehran.⁶³ We will return to this question below.

⁶⁰ Note the Median aspects of *Zaraθuštra*'s language, see above n. 21, 52, and n. 70, and note K. HOFFMANN and J. NARTEN 1989: 90 and HOFFMANN 1992: 738 on the political and religious background of Median-O.P. *Ragā*, V. 1.15 *Raya*. -- GNOLI (1967: 78, cf. 23 sq), however locates the "Zoroastrian *Raya*" on the upper course of the Hilmand, from its sources up to the confluence with its major affluent (the Arghandab), from where the *Haētumant* country would begin (lower Helmand and the Hamum basin). For criticism of his position, see GNOLI's reply (1980: 15), and below, n. 63. In general, see below n. 74-75.

⁶¹ See n. 48 about GNOLI's (1967, 1980) amalgamation of at least three levels of historical development (OAvest., YAvest. and *Vīdēvdād*, post-Avest.); cf. n. 18.

⁶² *Caxra*, GNOLI 1980: 42sq. -- HUMBACH 1991: 34 locates Carx in Khorasan or in the Logar valley south of Kabul; unidentified in Humbach 1984: 22; note WITZEL (1980: 108 n. 47) on ŚB 12.9.3.3 Revottaras *Pāṭava Cākra* Sthapati, an opponent of *Balhika* Prātipīya in the restoration of a *Sṛñjaya* (Bharata) king, *Duṣṭarītu Paumsāyana*, carried out by Revottaras; cf. MACDONNELL-KEITH, *Vedic Index*, II 63. For *Balhika* as name of a king, identical to that of his tribe, see Pāṇini 4.1.175 on *Kamboja* (WITZEL 1980: 108, n. 47, and 1994). *Balhika* thus means "the Bactrian"; in these surroundings, *Cākra* could also mean "the one from Caxra"; the name of his descendent, *Uṣasta/Uṣasti Cākra* *yaṇa* BĀU 3.5.1 ChU 1.10.1, 11.1, looks foreign as well (MAYRHOFER, EWA s.v. "nicht klar"), cf. Av. *uṣas-tara*? --- This cluster of East Iranian names is suspicious, and is typical for many of the later immigrations of Iranians that brought, among others, the *Sakya/Śakya* tribe into northern Bihar (the ancestors of the Buddha; more on this topic in the future) and later on, the Maga "Brahmins" of the *Purāṇas*. *Pāṭava* however, does not look as if it could be derived from *Pārthava/Parḍava*, unless it is a popular etymology based on *paṭu* "sharp, pointed".

⁶³ K. HOFFMANN and J. NARTEN 1989: 90, HUMBACH 1991: 45sq.; SKJÆRVØ thinks of two different locations for *Raya* (1995: 165); the other one being the "country" (*dahyu*) *Ragā* that is mentioned in an Old Persian inscription, DB 2.71, 3.2 *Ragā nāmā dahayāuš Mādaiy*.

5. The next few countries, however, definitely are located in the East: *Varāna* has been identified by GNOLI (1980: 48) with Buner, an area between Swat and the Indus; rather, following the counter-clockwise arrangement of the list, it could be the country of *Varṇu* (Pāṇini 4.2.103), modern Bannu on the Kurram river, southeast of Kabul.⁶⁴ *Hapta Həṇḍu* is found still further east, as it is identical with the *Sapta Sindhavaḥ* of the Ṛgveda; in other words, it signifies the land of the Seven Rivers, the Greater Panjab, experienced by the Iranians with "exceeding heat".⁶⁵

6. Finally, there remains the area called (16) *Upa Aodaēšu Raṇhaiiā* "on the waters(?) of the River *Raṇhā*". This is, without doubt, the Vedic *Rasā*, which indicates both the mythical river or ocean at the end of the world⁶⁶ and a real though not readily identifiable river on earth, -- a tributary of the upper Indus, way up north of its confluence with the Kabul River (RV 10.75.6, WITZEL 1967, 1999, GNOLI 1967, 1980). This identification, too, would continue the counter-clockwise movement.

⁶⁴ Differently, HUMBACH 1991: 34 n. 51 who distinguishes between two different *Aornos*. First, a Bactrian *Aornos* (Arrian, Anabasis 3.20.1) that he takes to be *Varāna* (i.e. medieval *War-wālīš*, mod. Kunduz?) However, SIMS-WILLIAMS (1997 : 16), locates Bactr. *oarno* a little further west, at Kholm, which makes MONCHI-ZADEH's *Cartana tetragonis (sub Caucaso) < *oarina < varāna* (1975: 130) more likely (*pace* GNOLI 1980: 49). There also is modern Bannu on the Andar-ab; further, another *Aornos* known from Alexander's exploits in Indus Kohistan (Anabasis 4.28.1), equated with Skt. *Varṇu*, the name of another Yakṣa in the Mahāmayūrī, that GNOLI, in turn, takes to represent *Varāna*. -- Interestingly, OETTINGER 1985: 58 translates *varāna* + *caḍrugaoša* at Yt. 5.33 with "viereckige Burg/rectangular castle", which reminds of Yima's Vara (V.2) and of the large rectangular fortresses of the BMAC (see above, par. §1).

⁶⁵ Kabul River, Indus, and the other Panjab rivers up to the Yamunā; (for Ir. *hindu*, cf. EILERS 1982: 32). -- Strangely, HUMBACH (1991: 34 n. 52) identifies this land with the upper course of the Oxus (near Balkh), basing himself on Albiruni (transl. SACHAU 1888: 260) and referring to Y 57.29 "*yaṭciṭ ušastaire hiṇḍuuō ... yaṭciṭ daošastaire* "be it at the eastern river or be it at the western river". It makes no sense to refer to the two passages to India" (as BARTHOLOMAE-WOLFF have done). However, this passage has nothing to do with the Seven Rivers of India but describes the two rivers (or oceans) at the ends of the world, see WITZEL 1972, 1984. Ultimately, HUMBACH's identification with the upper Oxus area is contradicted by the description of the evils of *Hapta Həṇḍu* in V. 1.18 as *arəḍβiiā-ca daxšta arəḍβīm-ca garəməum* "unzeitige Körpergebrechen und unzeitige Hitze" (BARTHOLOMAE-WOLFF). The *garmsīr* lands along the upper Oxus simply do not have *exceeding* heat, but are as hot (or cold) as the neighboring Bactria, Nisāya or Merw.

⁶⁶ For details see WITZEL 1984.

The Raṅhā could also be entirely mythological at this passage,⁶⁷ as she often is; the same applies to her Vedic counterpart, the *Rasā* (and the *sindhu/Sindhu*). They are, in part, mythological bodies of water, notably the Milky Way (WITZEL 1984). Both conceptions converge and overlap in the famous list of Rivers in RV 10.75, where the Sindhu (Indus) has various small unknown tributaries on its right side, including the one highest up in the Himalayan/Pamir mountains, the *Rasā*. This corresponds to the mountaineous position of the *Raṅhā* in V.1.19, and both are indeed characterized, due to their location, by the evil of this country, the long winter. The expression "at the sources/on the waters" of the *Raṅhā/Rasā* would therefore, mean, in both texts, a mountaineous area such as that of the Pamir (upper Indus, Kohistan, Hunza, Waxān/Chitral with its Mt. Meru, the prominent Tirich Mir, 7708 m) or the Hindukus/Paropamisos mountain ranges. In these high mountain areas, difficult of access and inhabited by strange, "*an-airiia*" remnant populations, such as the Burusho of Hunza or the herb collecting Kirāta of the Atharvaveda (WITZEL 1999), reality and myth easily overlap.

The description of this area in V.1.19, and especially the translation of *aoda-*, have been discussed frequently. BARTHOLOMAE ("source, Quelle") saw it in opposition to *sanaka* ("mouth of a river, Mündung"), which Gnoli (1980: 51) rejects⁶⁸ while he prefers "on the waters". *Upa Aodaēšu Raṅhaiiā*, **yōi asārō*

⁶⁷ GNOLI 1967: 77, 1980: 50 sqq. locates it, in real geography, as a river of the Indus basin, however not in the Seven Rivers area proper but near the Kabul and the Krumu (Kurram) rivers. This is not correct as it is in clear contradiction to the famous list of RV rivers in RV 10.75 where the *Rasā* is a river *north* of the R. Kabul (WITZEL 1987, 1999). -- HUMBACH 1960: 41 sqq. thinks -correctly- of the *Həṅdu* as the ocean surrounding the world (see WITZEL 1984), but assumes that the *Raṅhā* would flow through it from North to South. OETTINGER (1985: 375), however, thinks of the old identification of the *Raṅhā* with the Volga (since KUHN KZ 28, 1885, 214), and takes the *Raṅhā* as a giant but distant river in the *West* opposed to the "Seven Streams (*hapta həṅdu*)" of the Panjab; he translates *Upa Aodaēšu Raṅhaiiā*, with HUMBACH 1960: 41 sqq, as "on the sources of the *Raṅhā*, which the Headless oversee," referring to the well-known topos of headless people living in the most in distant lands. This leads him to deny an identification of this *Raṅhā* with (the source of) the *Anāhita* on the top of the (central) *Harā* mountain (Yt. 10.13 sqq.) This procedure overlooks the fact that the highest mountains are as distant, difficult to reach, and "mythical" as far away lands (see above), cf. for example the *Mūjavat* (*maujavata*) with he best Soma, or the always "distant" *Himavant* mountains in the RV and later texts, inhabited by the foreign *Kirāta* (WITZEL 1994).

⁶⁸ RV 8.41.2 *yāḥ śindhūnām úpodayé* seems to signify the confluence of seven rivers (with the Indus, in the lower of Panjab), see above n. 33. -- For *sanaka*, GNOLI prefers "source, spring", from *san* "to rise."

**aiβiiāxšaiieṅti* is (partially) translated by SKJÆRVØ (1995: 164) as: "Those who watch, *unprotected, on the -s of the Raṅhā".

The interpretation of the passage hinges on the meaning of *asāra-*. Several proposals have been made. BARTHOMOLMAE *AirWb.* 210 translates "without lord" (ohne Haupt, ohne Oberhaupt, ohne Oberherrn).⁶⁹ This would fit well the various transhumant groups in the mountains and on the higher ranges of the Hindukush and Pamir mountains that were not organized, in the fashion of the Younger Avesta, into *daṅhu* "countries" (and perhaps also not into *zantu* "tribes"). But, these *asāra* people *do* have *Taožiiā-ca* (+*taožiiqs-ca*) *daṅ huš.aiβištāra* "Taužian lords" or "plunderer lords" (GNOLI 1980: 52). This very combination makes an etymology *a-sāra* "without head, without lord" unlikely. The same applies to SKJÆRVØ's translation (above) "unprotected".

HUMBACH, WZKSOA 4, 1960, 34-46 (and later) thinks of the *Akephaloi*, mythical headless people that are usually found at the rims of the Oikumene of various cultures; indeed, the neighboring Indians also know of such strange people high in the mountains of the Himalayas (cf. Mahābhārata 10.70.21; GNOLI 1980: 51).

However, several other possibilities must be taken into account as well. First of all, *sāra* can also be understood as "mountain top", as in the mountain tops called *starō.sāra* "the Star Heads" at Y. 10.11. This would work well because the upper course of the Raṅhā/Ved. Rasā in the mountains is meant here (see above, cf. n. 67, 85). However, one would then have to read +*ā-sāre*/+*ā-sāra* "at the head (of the central mountains)." (For *ā-/a-* see above n. 41).

Or, it might refer to the "head" of a river, its source or head waters, as in the modern place name *Xāni-sār* "Quellhaupt" (EILERS 1982: 41), and we could read, again, read +*ā-sāre*/+*ā-sāra* "at the source." This would also fit well in the present context, that of the head waters of the (half)mythical river Raṅhā.

In all cases, the actual construction of the phrase remains uncertain. One would expect masc. pl. **ye* "those who (live/regard)", or if the country is intended, **yim*, or *(*asō*) **γəm*... "the (region) which". However, the preceding section, V 1.18, also has a nominative where we would expect accusative: *γō hapta həṅdu* "(the one) which (is) the Seven Rivers", where *γō ... həṅdu* stands for acc. pl. masc. *γē, ye, yā, *yq*. However, *γō* may be the usual corruption of *γē* found

⁶⁹ Cf. *jīrō.sāra* "with a quick, intelligent head" Yt. 19.42, *Auruua-sāra* "with a quick/valiant-head" a chieftain's name at Yt. 15.31 (BARTH. 200, MAYRHOFER, Namenbuch I/26), *pəšo.sāra* "whose head is doomed" Yt. 14.46.

in other contexts. The two formulations may have influenced each other and V. 11.19 *yō asārō aiβiiāxšaiieinti* would stand for a hypothetical **[tā]*, **ye *asāre aiβiiāxšaiieinti* "(I created) the ones who dwell/regard as *Asāras*." Skjærvø's **yōi* would be Old Avestan but is occasionally found also in Y.Av. (HOFFMANN-FORSSMAN 1996: 67-68 § 36ib).

Then, the form and meaning of the verb is not clear: BARTHOLOMAE, *AirWb*. 1706, reads *+aiβiiāxšaiieinti* from *šay* "to dwell", but this should be derived, with the frequent confusion in the MSS of *š/š̄/ṧ*, from *šay* "to dwell", thus *+aiβiiāxšaiieinti* (MSS: Pers. Vid. Sade: Jp1, Mf2 *•xš•*, other MSS *•xš̄•*).

Others (SKJÆRVØ, above) thinks of *+aiβiiāxšaiieinti* "to see"; the verb has been discussed by OETTINGER (1985: 189). There are two possibilities: from *ā-xšā* "to regard, to oversee, to rule", cf. inf. *aiβiāxštrāi*, *aiβiāxštar-* "overseer", or from *āxš* "to see". Note further, *āxšta* "pacified", *āxšti* "peace", thus, "live peacefully"?

The possibilities therefore include:

- *yō(i) asārō +aiβiiāxšaiieinti* "Those who watch unprotected / as the Headless ones ("unprotected one" is unlikely, see above)
- *yō *ā *sāre/a +aiβiiāxšaiieinti* "(those) who watch (from above?), from/at (Rāḡhā's) head / source"
- *yō *ā *sāra +aiβiiāxšaiieinti* "(those) who watch (from above) from/at the mountain top (of Mt. Harā)", better **ye *ā.sāre/a* (HOFFMANN-FORSSMAN 96: 119: §87); *a-sāra* "without mountain tops" would fit only the Pamir plateau and is is not likely.
- **ye *asāra/ā +aiβiiāxšaiieinti*. "(The waters), which the Headless inhabit". A decision does not seem imminent.

The Vīdēvdād passage continues with: *āaṭ ahe paitiārəm frākərəntat aṅrō mainiiuš pouru-mahrkō ziiqm-ca daaēuuō-dātəm Taožiiā-ca daijhuš-aiiβiš tara*. "But the much-damaging Aṅro Mainiiu created for it as adversary(?) the Daiva-created winter, and the Taožiiā overlords" (cf. GNOLI 1980: 52; cf. Yt. 13. 125 *Raoždiiā?*). Significantly, the list returns here to a *cold* country, just as found at the starting point of the list with (1) *Airiiānəm Vaējah* (cf. below §10, for details). This strongly suggests a mountainous climate.

In short, what we get in the Vīdēvdād list, is a view of the inhabitable world seen from (the center of) Greater Afghanistan, and we do *not* get, for example, a strictly local geography, seen just from Sistan, as in Yt. 19.67 (HINTZE

1994: 305 sqq, 40 sq.), with a predilection for the Hamum lake, the central *Usaδā* mountain, and the rivers of Sistan/Arachosia.⁷⁰

§ 9 The seven *karšuuars* and the sixteen countries

It is time now, to combine the evidence for the Avesta geography and to overlay the *Vīdēvdāδ* list of real, existing places and countries with the ideal model of the Avestan world, the theoretical division into the seven *karšuuars*.

<u>vo<u>u</u>ru.barəšti</u> ⁵	<u>vo<u>u</u>ru.jarəšti</u> ⁶
⁹ Xnənta ⁷ Vaēkərəta ⁸ Uruuā ⁶ Haraēuua	² Gāuua ⁴ Bāxδī ⁵ Nisāiia ³ Maryu

⁷⁰ Identified, since E. KUHN in 1893 (see HINTZE 1994: 309), with the prominent Kuh-i Khoda = Kuh-i Khwaja (1997 ft.) on a small island in the middle of the Hamum lake, dramatically rising 397 ft. or c. 330 m. from the surrounding Hamum, -- which makes a late Avestan identification with the central "world" mountain very appealing (i.e. the mythical *us.həndauua* mt. Yt. 8.32, in the middle of the Vourukaša, see WITZEL 1984). -- Note that even the "ideal" place for dwelling, Arachosia-Sistan (the center of the world for Yt. 19), has a fault: its people still bury their dead, a most un-Zoroastrian practice in the Young Avestan "heartland of Zoroastrianism"! This custom is severely denounced at V. 8-10, but it is precisely what the Achaemenid kings practiced (in modified form, with their grave made of stone or inside rocks), in whose time there was a close link with Zoroastrians from Arachosia (K. HOFFMANN 1991: 736-740); note also the treasurer "who is in Arachosia" and whose name is inscribed on Haoma mortars at Persepolis (K. HOFFMANN 1991: 739).

In continuation of the discussion by K. HOFFMANN (1991) and by K. HOFFMANN and J. NARTEN (1989: 80 sq.) of the officials at the Persepolis court as depicted in its reliefs, it is of great interest to note the "theological" name of such an official (in HALLOCK, *Persepolis Fortification Tablets*) which date from the reign of Darius I, 509-492 BCE). A certain *Masdayašna* is frequently mentioned (v.l. *•ya-iš-na*, *•te-aš-na*); he mostly is involved in apportioning grain to workers or receives it, see no.s 145, 409, 410, 701, 872, 959, 960, 961, 987, 988, 1797; -- 1843, 1842 in messages delivered to M.; -- 1942, ten times in a sealed document; 2011 next to a *Makuš!*; note the O.P. form *•yašna* instead of Av. *•yasna* (Yt 13. 121 *Mazdaiiasna*) for which see K. HOFFMANN and J. NARTEN (1989: 86, cf. MAYRHOFER 1979: I /61). All of this means that the name *Masdayašna* has already been Persianized by c. 500 BCE. - For the take-over in the Persis of the Arachosian Avesta text, see K. HOFFMANN and J. NARTEN 1989.

arəzahī ¹x'aniraθa ⁷sauuahī ²

16Upa
Aodaēšu
Raḡhaiiā

12Rayā

1Airiiianəm

14Varəna

13Caxra

Vaējah

15 Hapta Həḡdu

vīdaθafšū ⁴fradaθafšū ³

10 Harax'aitī

/ 11Haētumant

As the overlay indicates, according to the numbers of the Vīdēvdād list,

(a) no. 2-5 are NE :

Gāuua (with Suyḡa), Maryu, Bāxḡi, Nisāiia

(b) no. 6-9 are NW:

Harōiuua, Vaēkərəta, Uruuā, Xnəḡta (with Vəhrkāna)

(c) no. 12-13 are W:

Rayā, Caxra

(f) no. 14-15 are E:

Varəna, Hapta Həḡdu

Remain numbers (10) *Harax'aitī* and (11) *Haētumant*, which are located south to the central mountains of Afghanistan. In the above scheme therefore, they can represent the SW and SE (for their relative position see above, n. 59, 60):

(d, e) SW/SE 10: Harax'aitī, 11: Haētumant

Among the more problematic cases, *Vaēkərəta* and *Uruuā* should follow the arrangement that was seen in the NE clime, where we have a two-step movement from NE --> SW: from the Sogdian (*Suγδa*) country of *Gāuua* to Merw (*Maryu*), and then again from *Bāxδī* to *Nisāiia*, which lies *between* *Bāxδī* and *Maryu*.

If we apply this to the NW "clime", we get a movement from *Haraēuua* to *Vaēkərəta*, and another one from *Uruuā* to *Xnənta*.⁷¹

⁹Xnənta

⁸Uruuā

⁷Vaēkərəta

⁶Harōiuua

Fortunately, the position of *Xnənta* is clear, due to the mentioning of the *Vəhrkāna*⁷² as living there (*Vəhrkānō.šaiiana*): it is modern Gurgān (< *Vəhrkāna*), southeast of the Caspian Sea, on the Iran-Turkmenistan border (see above).⁷³

Vaēkərəta and *Uruuā* thus should lie between Herat and Gorgan, and in this part of Iran, there are indeed a number of areas that are not otherwise mentioned in the *Vīdēvdād* list: Khorasan, with its several subdivisions, and the desert oases at the foot of the Kopet Dagh range near Ashkhabad in Turkmenistan.

As for *Raya*, nothing speaks against a western location at Rai near Tehran;⁷⁴ the *Raya zaraθuštriš* (Y. 19.18 *rajōit*, main MSS: *rajōit* J2,K5, *razjōit* >

⁷¹ Or just a straightforward movement in one stretch, from ⁶*Harōiuua* to ⁹*Xnənta*. It is difficult to decide whether the argument of arrangement following a particular scheme is forceful enough here; however, the regularity in the rest of the list in V. 1 (see below) allows for this option, the insertion of ⁷*Uruuā* - ⁸*Vaēkərəta*, a mirror image to the Bactria/*Nisāiia* case.

⁷² Cf. RV 6.27.5 *vṛcī-vant*, which is derived by MAYRHOFER, EWA 572, from fem. *vṛkī* "she-wolf", a strange name of an area, if not taken metaphorically a tribe "having sorceresses, witches"; but note *Varcin* in the same context (RV 6.47.21 etc.); otherwise, see WACKERNAGEL-DEBRUNNER, Ai.Gr. II,2: 402, from **vṛc* in *varcas*; cf. WITZEL 1999.

⁷³ On Gorgan, see EILERS 1982: 19; -- a similar name, *Vṛcī-vant* RV 6.27.5, however, would point to the eastern Afghan area around the *Hariyūpiyā* (mod. *Hali-āb*) and *Yavyāvātī* (R. *Zhob*), see preceding note and cf. WITZEL 1967, 1999.

⁷⁴ Differently, GNOLI 1980, who insists on eastern locations (in Afghanistan) for all items in the V. 1 list, except for *Hapta Həndu*. This is in clear opposition to the *spirit*, i.e. the counter-

rajōit S₁; -- *razōit* L₂, O₂) and the *Raya* of this list seem to be identical with O.P. *Ragā*, a district (*dahyu*) in Media (DB 2.71, 3.2). There may also have been two different *Rayas*; similarly, geographically diverse locations for the same place name are found, e.g., with *Nisāiia/Nisāya* and *Parśu/Pārsa* (see n. 57, 58).

The counter-clockwise *Vīdēvdāδ* list,⁷⁵ therefore, represents an (almost) opposite alignment⁷⁶ to that of the *pradakṣiṇa* lists at Yt. 10.15, 12.10-14, and their adoption in the later texts, *Bundahišn* 29.2 and *Bahmān Yašt* 3.47. However, the related, clockwise list of Yt. 10.14-15 is preceded by one of countries which run from

clockwise arrangement of the list, which is not simply a vague north-south and then eastern alignment as he maintains (see below). -- K. HOFFMANN 1991: 738 identifies both places and finds its description of having "exceeding doubt" as an indication of its early importance as a spiritual center where (minute) theological details were discussed, see the summary by HUMBACH (1991: 46, 59).

⁷⁵ If we would try to list these countries consecutively, along a *strict* counter-clockwise path (cf. n. 39, 81 cf. n.44, 29, 52) some disruptions appear, beginning in the NE: ²Gāuua - -> ³Maryu, with retracing back to ⁴Bāxδī, ⁵Nisāiia, and immediately continuing with the NW: ⁶Haraēuua --> ⁷Vaēkərəta, ⁸Uruuā --> ⁹Xnəṇta (*Vəhrkənō.šaiiana*); but then, there is a jump to the extreme S: ¹⁰Harax'aitī, ¹¹Haētumant, and from there a jump to the extreme W: ¹²Raya --> ¹³Caxra, then one to the extreme E: ¹⁴Varəna --> ¹⁵Hapta Həṇdu, continued towards the north(west) ¹⁶Upa Aodaēšu Raṇhaiiā. This list thus "does not work" in the usual Ir. fashion (see above); one must apply the arrangement based of the seven *Karšuuars* to reach a solution. -- The same *non sequitur* applies to GNOLI's identifications: they meander back and forth (see n. 79), sometimes exceedingly, for example from *Vaēkərəta* north of the mountains to *Uruuā* south of them and the back to *Xnəṇta* north of them, jumping across the mountains all the way south to *Haētumant*, etc. Though this looks very much like a meandering river (imitating the course of the *Dāitiia* or of the *Heavenly River*? Note that the identification of countries with star groups (*nakṣatra*) is not unknown, see *Atharvaveda* *Parīṣiṣṭa* 1-2), the list as such does not make sense. -- Further, the question whether the back and forth movement might stand in any relationship to the apparent movement of the five planets would require a separate investigation. By the time of the *Vīdēvdāδ* such Babylonian influence may well have been important. One could divide the list of V. 1. into five segments, and the movements inside each segment would recall those of the planets; some of the descriptions of the countries involved also recall the character of their gods and roughly cover the same degree of the Avestan horizon as their counterparts in their apparent motion east and west of the sun in the night sky (*Merw* and *Bactria* are war-like as *Mars* with 137°, *Harax'aitī* and *Haētumant* are brilliant as *Venus* with 28°), but all of this does not (yet) add up to a system.

⁷⁶ Cf. the discussion in GNOLI 1980: 23 sqq, HUMBACH 1991: 33 sq.

[W-->] E --> [SE --> SW -->] NW --> NE --> N.

ā-Iškātəm Pourutəm-ca,

Mourum Hārōiium,

Gaom-ca (Suydəm),

XVāirizəm,

following, by and large, the course of the sun (~ Miθra) and of traditional Iir. lists; it continues with the standard clock-wise list of Karšuuars.

The the reasons of the curious arrangement of the Yašt, Bundahišn⁷⁷ and Bahmān Yt. lists quoted above, all of which start in the west, remain obscure, unless one would think of a compelling reason, such as a localization of Zaratūštra's homeland "in the west", e.g. in the lower Hari Rud/Tedzhen/Kashaf area (see below §10, and n. 18, 21) or a cosmographic and mythical cause.⁷⁸ Their arrangement seems to have influenced the Vīdēvdāδ list, which jumps from a NW location (9) Xnənta to a SW and SE one with (10) Haraxvaitī, (11) Haētumant respectively. Only then, unexpectedly, the W and the E are taken up with (12) Rayā, (13) Caxra, and with (14) Varəna, (15) Hapta Həndu respectively. This arrangement violates the otherwise strictly counter-clockwise order. It can only be explained as having been influenced by another factor, the *clockwise* listing of Karšuuars which proceeds from W --> E (and continues to the SE --> SW, then jumps to the NW --> NE, to end with the Center).⁷⁹ It

⁷⁷ The Avestan (Yt. 10, 12 and V.19) and Bundahišn lists do *not* agree is the position of the western Karšuuar at Bd. 5.8-9. However, this section is ordered according to astronomical data, that is according to the length of days during the year, and starts from *Savah* where the sun rises in the NE/SE on the longest/shortest days, to *Vouru.barəšti* and *Vouru.jarəšti* where it sets/rises in the NE/NW on the longest days. -- Bd. 8.3-5 and 11.2 also differs in its order; they deal with (later?) mythical geography: the central "continent" covers one half of total space, and is surrounded, similar to Indian cosmography, by an ocean; the other "continents" (E, W, etc.) share the other half; cf. the discussion by HUMBACH 1991: 31, who takes Bd. 8.3-5 for a lost Avesta passage and regards XVaniraθa "as the clime, or continent, to which Iran belongs, more or less identical with Iran itself... the actual location ... is still open."

⁷⁸ An orientation beginning with this "Zoroastrian Mecca", could explain a starting point in the west. In the case of the Vīdēvdāδ list, one may add the course of the underground night sun (see text above): we deal with a counter-clockwise list here, not the clockwise daytime course of the sun; the jump from NW to SW that precedes the insertion of the W-E listings is necessitated by this insertion. -- If GNOLI 1967: 77, 1980: 23 sqq were right in placing Rayā in the east, then the above scheme would still hold, though not with much symmetry. In that case, Xnənta would represent the West (see n. 79).

⁷⁹ It may also be indicative, as has been assumed by GEIGER (1882) of an early (already Gāθic), but secondary insertion, such as that of the western and eastern clime, into a simple list of four plus the center. -- Note also the counterclockwise arrangement of Sistan rivers at

may also imitate the movement of the sun, from its setting in the west and its underground journey to the rising point in the east to its highest position in the south and its complete disappearance in the NW (or SW in winter).⁸⁰ However, the *counter-clockwise* Vīdēvdāδ list *begins* with Center (see §10), moves to the NE/NW, jumps to the SW/SE, continues with W and E, to end with a distant and/or mythical location, perhaps above the Center. Obviously, the "block" *W --> E* has been retained, at its original location next to the SE/SW in the Karšuuar list, at the same position in the Vīdēvdāδ list (the probable exchange of SW/SE, Arachosia/Helmand, see n. 59, 60, is probably due to the same influence). Schematically:

Vīdēvdāδ list	Avestan Karšuuar list
center	
NE	W --> E
NW	
SW --> SE	SW <-- SE
W --> E	----- NW --> NE
center?	center

In view of the preferred clock-wise arrangements, the counter-clockwise arrangement of the Vīdēvdāδ list of "good countries" created by Ahura Mazdā is

Yt. 19.67 (see n. 52 and cf. §10). -- If we assume that the counter-clockwise movement (cf. n. 75) continues from ⁶Harōiuua onwards, and would assume, with GNOLI, that ¹²Raya and ¹³Caxra are in the East, we end up with the several problems listed in n. 47: where to put ⁷Vaēkərəta and ⁹Xnənta? GNOLI puts them in the eastern mountains of Afghanistan, but in continuing his localizations, he has suddenly to return westwards to reach his ¹²Raya, and worse, much further southwards, to reach ¹⁰Harax'aitī and ¹¹Haētumant (11-12), -- then, he must turn east *again* for ¹⁴Varəna and ¹⁵Hapta Həndu. These localizations, therefore, do not work: GNOLI's arrangement would create two separate lists, the first forming a rough (anti-clockwise) circle from ²Gauua to ⁹Xnənta, and the second one a strange a back and forth movement from ¹⁰Harax'aitī to ¹⁵Hapta Həndu and ¹⁶Upa Aodaēšu Raṅhahiā..

⁸⁰ For details, see WITZEL 1984.

somewhat unexpected. It is, nevertheless, set in a potentially *inauspicious* context, that of the many evil and impure counter-creations of the Evil Spirit. As pointed out above, inauspicious or evil items require a *counter-clockwise* order.⁸¹ In addition, the main topic of the *Vīdēvdāδ* is -- not unlike much of the Vedic *Gr̥hya-* and *Dharmasūtras* -- the various types of impurity and how purification can be achieved.

Furthermore, the list is found in the context of Yima and his creation of the underground *Vara* (V. 2), itself an answer to the evil *Daiva*-created winter. It reminds of the position of the Vedic god *Yama*, the lord of death and of the *nether world* of the ancestors, something inauspicious like everything that is concerned with death and burial.⁸² Though *Yima* in V. 2 is not the Lord of Death and the Nether World as he is in the *Veda*,⁸³ he nevertheless is one who has become evil, having fallen prey to *Druj* (Yt. 19.33, 34, Y. 32.8, see HINTZE 1994: 36).

The list of V. 1 clearly has its inauspicious aspects: it stresses, throughout, the evils of the country in question, even of *AiriianəmVaējah*: *azəm daδqm ... asō rāmō-dāitīm, nōit̄ kudat̄.šāitīm*; -- *yeidi-zī azəm nōit̄ daiδiiqm ... asō rāmō-dāitīm, nōit̄ kudat̄.šāitīm, vīspō aṅhuš astuuā airiianəm vaējō *frāšnuuiāt̄...* "... I have created ... a peaceful place, not *lacking happiness. For if I had not created

⁸¹ For the counter-clockwise order in inauspicious contexts, see CALAND, *Een indogermaans lustratie-gebruik* 1898; and note the various Vedic customs related to the ancestors that necessitate the use of the left side; see WITZEL 1980: 105 n. 26.

⁸² Note the overlap of the idea of a paradise-like world in *Yima's Vara* with that of an underground place such as *Yama's Nether World* of the departed ancestors. It needs to be lit "artificially" (V. 2.38) by *Yima's* arrow, but the lights in the *Vara* turn out to be the stars, the moon -- and the sun. All of this clearly is a realm *below* the earth and, at the same time, *above* the heavens (cf. Yt. 5.90, below n. 83, WITZEL 1984), see next note (and cf. the heavenly voyage of *Pāuruua*, Yt. 5.60 which is quite similar to one in the Taoist canon that takes, however, a whole year). -- For *Yima* as an original lord of the Nether World see KELLENS, 1984: 267-281, 1988: 329-334. -- The Nether World may be referred to by Yt. 5.41 *haṅkaine paiti aṅhā zəmō* "at (*Fraṅrasiian's*) pit of this earth here", that apparently is surrounded by copper, cf. BARTHOLOMAE, *AirWb.* 1769, which reminds of the Vedic copper fortresses of the *Asuras*.

⁸³ On the contrary, he is described as offering on the mountain *Hukairiia* (Yt. 5.25). However, it must be observed that, as so often in other Eurasian mythologies, the realm of *Yama/Yima* is moving along with daily (and yearly progress of) the Milky Way from its daytime position beneath the earth to one at the top of the sky at night (WITZEL 1984, and in more detail in my book, in preparation, on comparative mythology, 'Origins'). -- OETTINGER (1985: 377) sqq., thinks, instead of the Heavenly River -note Yt. 5. 90!- which "flows higher than the sun", of a *Anāhitā* as a planetary figure; see, however, n. 85.

... a peaceful place, not *lacking of happiness, the entire material existence would have gone forth to *Airiiianəm Vaējah*" (transl. SKJÆRVØ 1995: 165).⁸⁴ A. HINTZE's translation (1994: 45) makes more sense: "I have created, as a restful (area also) that area that does not have peace (emanating) from anywhere..." [Ich habe erschaffen... als eine ruhegewährende (auch) die Gegend, die nicht von irgendwoher Frieden hat...] This would imply that *Airiiianəm Vaējah* is somehow threatened by adversaries of various types, which may not just mean human enemies but also demonic ones such as the Daiva-created winter, but *still* has its beneficial aspects.

In short, I regard the match between the Karšuuars and the Vīdēvdāδ list close enough for serious deliberation. In the Vīdēvdāδ we find quite a regular, numerical arrangement of the countries listed; they come in clusters:

1 -- 4+4 - 1+1 - 2+2 --1

that is,

1--	Center
4+4	NE, NW
1+1	SW/SE
2+2	W, E
--1	Center

(or Heaven above the Center?),⁸⁵ the regularity of which, again, is a feature that speaks in favor of the correspondence of the Vīdēvdāδ list with that of the seven

⁸⁴ The logic of the preceding passage (V.1.1) presents some problems. One would expect: I, Ahura Mazda, made a (perfect) place providing rest and peace. - The phrase *nōiṭ kudaṭ.šāitīm* (BARTHOMOLAE: "nicht... irgendwelche Freude bietend") obviously does not fit this description; BARTHOMOLAE escapes the dilemma by translating adverbially: "I made the country not possessing any pleasures into a pleasurable one (*rāmō-dāitīm*)." Similarly HINTZE 1994: 45, by adding "auch" (see above). Taking the sentence in this way, it would imply that Ahura Mazda created (an)other area(s) to keep people out of *Airiiianəm Vaējah* (the threat of overpopulation in the fragile oasis climate of Iran is stressed in V. 2 as well). --- The addition of *nōiṭ kudaṭ.šāitīm* may also be due to the redactors who needed to underline the evil items of the sixteen countries to be listed in the context of the Vīdēvdāδ.

⁸⁵ Is the last country, Upa Aodaēšu Raṅhaiiā meant to signify a return to the center, i.e. *Airiiianəm Vaējah*? Note that it shares the Daiva-created winter with *Airiiianəm Vaējah*. In that case, the mythical river *Raṅhā* (N.Iran. *Rahā* in Greek *Rhā*, Ved. *Rasā*) would represent, just as the "good *Dāitiā*", the terrestrial counterpart of the heavenly river *Arəduuī Sūrā Anāhitā* and its "lake", *Zraiiāh Vouru.kaša* with its many "bays" and "confluences," cf. OETTINGER 1985:

Karšuuars. (Note again, that the insertion of the "block" $E \rightarrow W$ (and $SE \rightarrow SW$?) explains the inversion of the expected order 4+4, 2+2, 1+1).

§ 10 Airiianəm Vaējah

This still leaves the identification and actual geographical position of the first country, *Airiianəm Vaējō*, unresolved. It cannot have been in Choresmia, as the description of its climate just does not fit the realities of Choresmia (see above §2)

Then, where could it be located? Prima facie, one would expect it in the geographical continuation of the *Vīdēvdāδ* list, that is in the extreme northeast beyond Sogdia, on the Balkhash lake and its many confluent, such as the Ili.⁸⁶ This area, however, does not fit the description of the *Vīdēvdāδ* either: just like Choresmia, it does not have ten months of winter and two months of summer. Rather, applying the the model of the Avestan world, the scheme of the seven Karšuuars, one has to search for *Airiianəm Vaējō* at the very center of all "Aryan lands"⁸⁷ known to the Avesta: the Central Afghan highlands, situated north and

374, who identifies it, in real geography, with the Aral Lake (which was much smaller at the time, as the Oxus flowed - in the bed of the now dry, modern Usboi - into the Caspian Sea). The problem of the terrestrial representation of the *Vouru.kaša* is in need of a separate investigation; as so often mythical and geographical facts are mingled; -- contrast HINTZE 1994: 41 sq. -- And, just as the heavenly *Sarasvatī*, the Milky Way, was seen as the terrestrial Indian river *Sarasvatī* (in Kurukṣetra), and its terminal lakes (*saras!*; cf. *parīṇah*, *parisravaka*) in the desert as the reflection of the heavenly "lakes" of the Milky Way (WITZEL 1984), the terminal Hāmūm lakes of the Hilمند in Sistan may have been regarded (by the time of Yt. 19.66 sqq) as reflection of the *Zraiiāh Vouru.kaša* (and its "glory" (*xʾarənah*), cf. Yt. 9.29 Kauui Vīštāspa on the *Dāitiā*). If this "astronomical" interpretation is correct, it would strengthen the theory of an original Indo-Aryan mythology of the **Sarasvatī*/ *Haraxaiti*-Sistan area which, later on, has been transplanted into the area of the Indian *Sarasvatī*, Kurukṣetra (WITZEL 1984, 1997).

⁸⁶ Or rather, taking into account the cold climate of the territory, on the (salt) lake Issyk Kul, at 1609 m, in the Kirgiz mountains. Though such a location would agree climatically, including the description as having many floods at the end of winter (V. 1.3 *fraēštəm vōiynanām*, see Bowlby 1978: 12), this very limited pastoral territory along the lake immediately surrounded by steep wooded mountains of some 5000-6000 m altitude is not particularly apt as the "mythical homeland of all Aryans." The area has sometimes been mooted as the "homeland of the Aryans" in Indian publications. GEIGER 1882 thought of a land beyond Sogdia, similarly HUMBACH 1991: 31, on *Airiianəm Vaējah* as conceived in the Miθraic passage of Yt. 10.13-15.

south of the Paropanisos (and, to some extent, the Hindukush). This location meets all requirements of V. 1.1 (see immediately).

In the same way, the list of V. 1 can be interpreted: it begins with the center, the highlands of Central Afghanistan, moves to the traditional starting point of Indo-Iranian geographical listings, the northeast (WITZEL 1984, 1980, 1980a), and it continues in a counter-clockwise fashion until it reaches the east (*Varəna*, *Hapta Həndu*). It closes with a return to the starting point, the central Afghan highlands and their (half-)mythical rivers *Raṅhā*, *Vōhu Dāitiia*, *Arəduuī Surā Anāhitā* (Yt. 5), the "lake" *Vouru.kaša*, and the mountains *Harā* (EILERS 1982: 42), *Hukairiia* Yt. 5.3, 121 (and *rəzifiia* Yt. 5.45?; note the early position in the list of Yt. 19.2). Some of its highland aspects, such as the cold climate of the central mountains, are items of *real* geography (cf. OETTINGER 1985: 317). Others, such as the origin and the movement of *Arəduuī Sūrā Anāhitā* in the sky (Yt. 5.3-4) and her subsequent course towards all the seven climes (Yt. 5.5),⁸⁸ -- which are quite similar to that of the Ved. *Sarasvatī*⁸⁹ -- belong to ideal cosmography and, straightforwardly, to myth.

OETTINGER (1985: 371sq.) regards at least part of *Airiianəm vaējō vaṅhuuiiā Dāitiiaiiā* "the Aryan rapid of the good Dāitiia" as a real geographical area, close to Zaratustra's homeland, which he locates in the northwestern corner of Afghanistan on the lower Hare River (Tedzhen; cf. K. HOFMANN and J. NARTEN 1989: 85 n. 32). HUMBACH had come, more or less, to the same conclusion, based on his interpretation of V.1 and post-Avestan place names such as Masdoran/Mozdurān on the head of a pass between Iran and Turkmenia. He locates it in the Tedzhen area, especially on its confluent, the Kashaf Rud, the "Tortoise River" (1984: 18, 25; cf. MONCHI-ZADEH 1975: 160). GNOLI (1967,

⁸⁷ Cf. the expression Yt. 15.32 *vispe.aire.razurā*, and Ved. *yatrāryā vāc vadati...* Kauṣ.Ār. 8.9, cf. WITZEL 1989: 101. Later (post-)Vedic expressions differ: *kurukṣetra*, *āryavārta*, etc. in *Manu* 2.

⁸⁸ Cf. the four streams flowing down from the central mountain, (Su-)Meru, in Indian mythology, see WITZEL 1984; they are identified with the Ganges, Indus, Vakṣu (Oxus) and the Sitā (the Tarim river of Xinjiang); see the following note.

⁸⁹ WITZEL 1984, cf. OETTINGER 1985: 371sq. -- Note that the designation *Airiianəm vaējō vaṅhuuiiā dāitiiaiiā* does not necessarily refer to *Airiianəm vaējah* as a sub-set of the *Vōhu Dāitiia*, as Gnoli (1967: 86) assumes. It can just as well signify the "Aryan spring" (or rapid) of precisely this river, as opposed to its slow lower course or as different from highland rivers. That *Airiianəm vaējah*, and not just *vaējah* or **sāra* (see n. 69), has been used is due to its character as fixed formula. (One could also think of another section of this river, with an **an-airiianəm vaējah*, inhabited by relict, non-Aryan populations such as the Burusho, cf. also, for more recent times, n. 91).

1980) had placed it, as referred to above, in the Hilمند area of Arachosia/Sistan.

However, they and their predecessors all overlook (or minimize) the aspect of extreme cold and the long winter of the description in V. 1.3. HUMBACH, for example, must take recourse to a *supposed* older version of V. 1.3, some of which may be preserved in the Pahlavi version, which refers to only five months of winter (see above, n. 45)

In contrast to all proposed identifications is, however, the central Afghan highland that agree with the description of V.1 perfectly, that is, -- according to the old Indo-Iranian schemes of geographical arrangements, and according to various other aspects of *Airiianəm Vaējah*, ranging from climate to physical geography and language.

• Climate:

Central Afghanistan is a highland area of more than 1500 m or 4500 ft, mostly situated between 2-3000 m. It surrounds the high mountains of Afghanistan (Bayan and Koh-e Baba range, c. 3000-5000 m, continued eastwards by the somewhat higher Hindukush Range) that divide it into a northern and southern section. It is of interest that a Sogdian text locates *Airiianəm Vaējah* at the foot of the central mountain of Indian mythology, the *Sumeru*.⁹⁰ These highlands are cut through by the river valleys of the *X^varnah* (Farah) and Helmand (*Haētumant*) in the south, and by the Amu Darya (Vaksh/Panj, Oxus) and Balkh-āb (Bactria, *Bāxδī*) and Murgh-āb (Merw, *Maryu*) and Harē (Herat, *Haraēuua*) in the north. In these rivers valleys and at various other irrigated locations agriculture is possible.

Central Afghanistan, however, is a country of alpine mountain pastures that is now inhabited by the various tribes of the Chahar Aimaq, the Hazara in the modern Hazarajat district and other tribes in Ghorat⁹¹ and north of the

⁹⁰ HENNING, *The Book of the Giants*, p. 68 sq.: 'ry'nwyjn [Aryān Vēžan], cf. GNOLI 1967: 88. Note that this mythical mountain is still found a little further east, as the *Tirich Mir* (7708m), the highest mountain of the eastern Hindukush; cf. also Yt.12.25. -- Some mountain pastures of the Hindukush may actually have made out part of *Airiianəm Vaējah*, see below n. 95 on the summer territories of the transhumance pastoralists of Afghanistan. Cf. n. 89 on the Pamir/Himalaya area as center of the mythology of medieval India and the origin of its four major streams.

⁹¹ Some of them, the Moghol near Herat, are the remnants of the thirteenth century Mongol invasion, and the Hazara, too, are Mongoloid in appearance, see BUCHERER-DIETSCHI and JENTSCH 1986: 147 sq.

central ranges. This land is ideal for alpine type transhumance, that is summer pastures in the mountains (*sardsīr*) and winter pastures in the warm lowlands (*garmsīr*). The highlands north of the mountains have grasslands, the ones south of them even wooded steppes that change into grasslands at higher elevations (3050 - 4270 m, BOWLBY 1978: 20 sqq, 29 sq). The same must have been the case in Avestan time as the Avestan calendar knows of a day of the return of the herds: *ayāθrima*, the 210th day of the year.

These highlands have, of course, a very cold winter: while even Ghazni has a January average of -4.6° C, southwestern Afghanistan one of 6° C, and the northern plains one of 3° C (varying between freezing temperatures and periods with 18° C!), the mean January temperature is -13° C in the Central Highlands. The highlands also have, at c. 3000m/9000 ft, a short and cool summer: in the high valleys with day time temperatures of 25° C, but at night close to 0° C, and a mean July temperature of just 10° C; even Ghazni has a 13.7° C July average.⁹² The snow line is at 4-5000 m in summer (and at 1800 m in winter, which automatically includes all of central Afghanistan; note heavy snow in the Hindukush, Arrian 3.28, Diodorus 1.41.7). The situation is aptly summed up by the geographers: "the high mountains are snow covered for a long period and can only be used for grazing during *the two months of summer*,"⁹³ --- which is exactly what V 1.1 says.

- Central location.

As expected from the superposition of the Karšuar list on the Vīdēvdāδ list, the identification of *Airiianəm Vaējah* situates it, geographically, at the very center of all Iranian lands, except for that of the distant Medes, Persians and perhaps the Choresmians, -- all of whom do not, or hardly, appear in the Avesta. It is also centrally located in terms of Avestan economy: all *Airiia* could use it during the

⁹² BUCHERER-DIETSCHI and JENTSCH 1986: 44-45, BOWLBY 1978: 12. Note the early and correct description by GEIGER 1882: 141 sqq.

⁹³ (italics are mine), BUCHERER-DIETSCHI and JENTSCH 1986: 201; contrast this direct description with the various "escape routes" taken by philologists and linguists (HUMBACH, GNOLI, see above) who try to reinterpret or dismiss the clear description of V. 3. -- As a note of caution it might be added that the prehistoric climate of this area still is little known; however, that of neighboring areas does not seem to have been very different from what is seen today, cf. BOWLBY 1978: 16 sq "... appears to have been similar to that of today and sometimes more arid ... About halfway through the last millennium B.C. the climate seems to have shifted from a more arid phase to the modern pattern."

two months of summer as pasture, just as the modern Afghanis still do.⁹⁴ The Highlands are, typical for early societies, not exactly a no man's land, but are a *common* territory, used, with partially overlapping pasture rights, by all Airiia, -- they are, as Yt. 15.32 has it, a true *Vīspe.Aire.(-Razurā)*.⁹⁵ As such, the land of the central alpine meadows of Afghanistan is a separate territory that does not belong to, nor is inhabited by any particular tribe or people.⁹⁶

- Language.

⁹⁴ ..."used pastures only during the two months of summer", BUCHERER-DIETSCHI and JENTSCH (1986: 201). They start shortly after the begin of the new Year (now March 21) from the winter camps in the low land steppes all around the Central Highlands, and even from the Indus plains, along traditional trails, reaching the Central Highlands around 3000 m (with snow melt and spring in April) only at the beginning of summer. They use the fresh grass that has sprung up after the snow melt for their millions of goat and sheep, and among the Hazara also of cows; cf. Arrian's description, 3.28. 5-6 of the -- "mostly treeless" -- Hindukush ("Kaukasos") with sheep and cow herds, and contrast the large corniferous forests in the Sogdian mountains, at 4.21.3; cows are also found among the Wakhan and Pamir tribes (GEIGER 1882: 344). These pastures belong, even today, not to certain tribes but to the state, which has devolved grazing right to the nomads, among them the Pashtos only in the 19th century. Other rights have been in existence for times immemorable (BUCHERER-DIETSCHI and JENTSCH 1986: 194 sqq., 196, 198, BOWLBY 1978: 29). BOWLBY 1978: 20 shows the distribution of the highland steppes and grasslands, and her map on p. 31 displays the transhumance movements, from the areas surrounding the central highlands (and the Hindukush) converging on the summer pastures in the highlands. -- On transhumance in Bactria and the surrounding highlands in mid-first millennium AD, see KUWAYAMA 1989: 111, 114 sqq.

⁹⁵ Cf. German *Allmende*, Engl. "*Common*". -- If *razurā* indeed means "wood, forest" (cf. etymology by DE LAMBERTIES, *Revue de la Philologie* 49, 1975, 249; NYMAN, *KZ* 97, 1984, 85 sqq.) it could refer to common forests used by all *Airiias*. One also goes, according to the Avest. texts, to the mountains to collect wood; indeed, at lower altitudes there are forests of oak, some walnut, alder, ash, juniper, and at higher altitudes woods of pine, cedar, fir, larch, yew, willow, poplar; they begin only above 900 or 1000 m in the south, and from 600-800 m in the north, with various types of pistacia. -- Yt. 15.32 seems to indicate a forest of a particular kind of *spaētita*, *spaētini* "white" tree, either the birch (found in neighboring Kashmir above 2500 m) or, rather, the white Saxaul (*Haloxylon persicum*) of the Central Asian deserts with their Saxaul forests (BUCHERER-DIETSCHI and JENTSCH 1986: 71). Interestingly, the king offering in the white forests at Yt. 15.32 is *Auruua-sāra* "quick-head" (BARTHOLOMAE *AirWb.* 200), cf. n. 69.

⁹⁶ This does not exclude that certain grazing areas are (now) limited to certain tribes, cf. the modern distribution of pastures among the Afghani population, see BOWLBY 1978: 31, BUCHERER-DIETSCHI and JENTSCH 1986: 136 sqq, 140 sqq, 406.

This area, naturally, has a lot of inundations in the spring, due to the melting snow of the (higher) ranges.⁹⁷ The etymology of its designation agrees: *vaējah* has been connected with Ved. *vij* "to move quickly (said of the nuts used for dicing), to dart"; *vega* "violent agitation, stream, flood, current", AV+ etc. Both Avest. *vaējah* and *vōiynā-* "flood"⁹⁸ belong to the root *vij* "to move quickly, to heave, to flood", and they can designate inundations, such as in the description of frequent floods (BOWLBY 1978: 24) of the Helmand in Yt. 19.67 (*paoiriš vōignā*), V. 2.24 or V. 1.3 *fraēštəm vōiynanām*, or any rapid movement of water, which is the way K. HOFFMANN and J. NARTEN (1989:85 n. 32 "*Wasserschwall, Stromschnelle*", K. HOFFMANN in HINTZE 1994: 44 n. 125, OETTINGER 1985: 372) translate it.

Airiianəm Vaējah, thus, should be translated as "(the country) of the Aryan Springs" or "Aryan Rapids", a good designation of the quickly running springs and streams⁹⁹ of the mountain pastures of the Central Afghan Highlands. This identification, incidentally, also agrees very well with the interpretation of the central Karšuar, *x'aniraθa*, as **sva-ni.ratha* 'having a particular pleasure of its own / having a pleasurable stay of its own' (see n. 37), especially when compared to the unbearably hot summer months of the plains (at 45• C!).

In short, the various aspects of this problem -- appearing in philology, in nature and climate, in linguistics, and in the traditional methods of organizing space used by the Indo-Iranians (the ideal, abstract systems of arrangements and the more practice-orientated enumerations of geographical regions) -- all point

⁹⁷ BUCHERER-DIETSCHI and JENTSCH 1986: 52.

⁹⁸ HUMBACH 1991: 33 also compares Pahl. *wēxtan* "to swing, brandish, throw, pour out" and Baluchi *gēj* "to swing, rush, throw"; BENVENISTE, BSOAS 7, 265: **vaig /vaēg* "se déplacer d'un mouvement rapide, (se) projeter, (s')épandre", cf. *vōiynā*; cf. also WIKANDER 1941: 141 sqq.; HENNING, BSOAS 11, 117 n. 184, however, connected it with *vōiynā* "famine". -- K. HOFMANN and J. NARTEN (1989: 85 n. 32) think of the periodically inundated areas south of the Aral Sea which could still have been "just within Aryan territory;" the same would apply to high mountain areas, as favorite area of refuge by original populations, to this day (see n. 67, 23).

⁹⁹ Cf. BUCHERER-DIETSCHI and JENTSCH 1986: 52. -- Note the description of the arm-thick sources of the *Arəduuī Sūrā Anāhitā* at Yt. 5.7. -- Note also that the description of *Arəduuī Sūrā Anāhitā* as having an equal amount of water in summer and winter (Yt.5.5) does not allow to take her as a real river at this passage (the Afghani rivers carry most water in the spring and summer, due to snow melt) but as a half-mythical one, descending from the night time sky (WITZEL 1984).

the same solution: *Airiianəm Vaējah* signifies the central Afghan highlands. This includes the Ghorat-Hazarajat highlands south, and the highlands north of the Qasa Murg, Bayan and Baba ranges (the Paropanisus); it probably includes some areas north and south of the actual Hindukush Range as well.¹⁰⁰ As described in the Avesta, the Central Highands are a land of mountain pastures, watered by many small streams and great rivers, and affected by inundations, -- a country that is cold during the long winter and cool in the short, two month summer, a pastoral area that is *central* to all the Iranian tribes of the Avesta. It could be called a **vīspe.aire. (vouru.)gaoiiaoitiš*.

Against this background, GNOLI, 1980: 133 is wrong in identifying *Airiianəm Vaējah* with just the Helmand area, vaguely characterizing it, in rephrasing his earlier statement (1967: 87sq),¹⁰¹ with: "the peculiar relationship ... between Airyana Vaējah and the region - or part of the region - crossed by the Hilmend on its way from the Hindūkuš to the delta of the Hāmūm." This description, influenced by his predilection for the Helmand area as the homeland of Zoroaster, encompasses only the *southeastern* part of the *sardsīr* Highlands. It excludes the *southwestern* areas along the upper courses of the Farah and Hare Rud, and it competely ignores those *north* of the central ranges, that is the highland pastures on the upper courses of the Murghab and Balkhab; worse, GNOLI's definition includes much of the lower lands *not* characterized by the description of V.1, because the area around Hamum lake belongs to the *garmsīr* areas and has few winter frosts (at night), but extremely long and hot summers.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ For various maps of these highlands, see BOWLBY 1978: 19-21, BUCHERER- DIETSCHI and JENTSCH 1986: 67.

¹⁰¹ "L'Airyana Vaējah va allora identificato con la regione bagnata da questo fiume [the Hilmand], dall'Hindūkuš all'Hāmūm-i Hilmand o, se s'inclue anche lo Šīla, al Gaur-i Zira [= Gaud-e Zirreh depression in S. Sistan, cf. GNOLI 1980: 33], oppure con una parte di essa, verosimilmente con la sua parte più settentrionale... Tale identificazione dell'Airyana Vaējah col paese che ha origine presso a poco dove nasce l'Hilmand e che s'estende a mezzodì..." He also identifies the (upper course) of the Helmand with the mythical Avestan river, the *Vaṇhī Dāitiā* (1967: 88), cf. above, n. 85, OETTINGER 1985: 374.

¹⁰² See BUCHERER-DIETSCHI and JENTSCH 1986:44 sq., (cf. p. 194 sq.), areas with average temperatures in winter *above* the freezing point such as Kandahar 5.3• C, even in the northern *garmsīr* areas such as Mazar-i Sharif with 3.89• C, Herat 4• C, Kunduz 4.2• C. and cf. the maps in BOWLBY (1978: 14-15). -- On the other hand, GNOLI (1967: 88, cf. also HUMBACH 1991: 35, 37) is *close* to the mark when he writes "... una caratteristica dell'Airyana Vaējah: il freddo intenso che dura per dieci mesi all'anno ... una tale particolarità climatica

SKAERVØ's, as usual, rather sceptical if not agnostic summary (1995: 166) of GNOLI's several investigations into the problem also does not fit the facts: "GNOLI concludes from his discussion of the expression [*Airiiianəm Vaējah*] that it was simply an invention by priests who wished "to place their Prophet at the centre of the world." The physical and economical *realities* of the Avestan lands described above clearly contradict this, and the traditional (O.P., Avest., Indian¹⁰³) methods of enumerating geographical regions weigh against it even more than the ideal, schematic arrangement of the Karšuuar list (whose very idea, incidentally, is much older¹⁰⁴ than the *supposed* wish of any Zoroastrians).

In sum, the list of V. 1 is based on old Indo-Iranian concepts of arrangement of space and of listing geographical areas. All other accounts produced until now do not take this crucial point and (most of) the facts of geography and climate into account. Therefore, they remain, at best, incomplete or, at worst, idiosyncratic.

§ 11. Epilogue

In retracing our steps to the beginning of this investigation, it may be asked what the evidence presented here teaches us. It is obvious that instead of looking, in the Avestan texts, for a "mythical homeland" of all Iranians (or even of all Aryans/Indo-Iranians), we need to take the texts seriously, at their *own* word.

A *paradigm shift* is necessary: we have to give up ideas to find an "Aryan homeland" in the Avesta, and we have to investigate, rather, at how the earlier

meglio s'adatta alla regione dell'Hindūkuš." However, as described above, he limits this to the Helmand area. (Incidentally, GNOLI always calls the Baba Range (Koh-e Baba) west of Kabul by the name of the mountains north and northeast of Kabul, the Hindukush, that is to be distinguished from the Badghish-Bayan-Baba ranges.) -- HUMBACH (1984, 1991), too, is close but as he limites Zoroaster's homeland to the northwestern corner of Aghanistan, he is at pains to account for the mountain climate of *Airiiianəm Vaējah* (see §10). Rather, his use (1991: 35) of the climate data from the Avesta with five winter months, reflects the usual description of the *garmsīr*! See n. 45.

¹⁰³ See above notes 27-33, and note such Old Indian lists as that of the 16 countries (*janapada*) of northern India in Pāli texts (MALALASEKARA, 1937, II 494), presaged by a more regular scheme (like that of the Arthaśāstra) of four countries surrounding one's own (i.e. the Kuru land), and of another four of *prati-pratirājans* surrounding these, in Vādhūla Brāhmaṇa 3.69 = W. CALAND, *Kleine Schriften*, p. 355. We have old lists of four or more countries (see above), and a divergent list of seven at RV 8.39.8, above n. 39.

¹⁰⁴ Note, again, the various Indian schemes mentioned above, notes 27-35.

(Y. 32.2, "the seventh [clime]") and the later Avestan texts *themselves* look at their own territory. The Vīdēvdāδ list obviously was composed or redacted by someone who regarded Afghanistan and the lands surrounding it as the home of all Aryans (*airiia*), that is of all (eastern) Iranians, with *Airīianəm Vaējah* as their center. Similarly, the list of mountains in Yt. 19.1-6 seems to indicate, quite differently from the Vīdēvdāδ list, a clockwise arrangement, a *pradakṣiṇa* scheme that cannot be dealt with here.¹⁰⁵

However, for several parts of the Avestan texts, the geographical center is a much more geographically limited, a local one. This is clearly seen in Yt. 19.66-67 which describes the "holy land" of Arachosia,¹⁰⁶ with Lake *Kāsaōiia* (Hamum) and the Haētumant (Hilmend) as *the* center.¹⁰⁷ The list is inspired by local sentiment, a local patriotism that may go back to early state formation in the middle of the third millennium BCE.¹⁰⁸ At that time the great city of Shahr-ī Sokhta was built on the southeast coast of the Hamum lake, the Avestan *zraīiah Kāsaōiia*, from where, typically, the Savior (*saošiant*) will arise.

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¹⁰⁵ Note their clockwise arrangement: *Vāiti.gaēsa* (Badghish, northeast of Herat, cf. WITZEL 1972), ... *Iškata Upāiri.saēna* (Hindukush), ... *Vāxəδrikās*,... (Bactrian mountains, see WITZEL 1980: 111 n. 69, HINTZE 1994). Note that the list of Sistan rivers is arranged in counter-clockwise order (see note 52). Probably, this list of mountains is a spiral one of several concentric circles, cf. the Kashmirian the list of Nāgas in the Nilamata Purāṇa, WITZEL (forthc.).

¹⁰⁶ As K. HOFFMANN 1991: 736-740, HOFFMANN and NARTEN 1989 have pointed out, Arachosia is the "homeland" of the late Avesta, from where the Avesta was introduced into the Persis. For a discussion of the Hamum area see HINTZE 1994: 40 sqq.

¹⁰⁷ HINTZE 1994: 40 sq. and OETTINGER (1985: 374 n. 69) stress the relatively late date of the identification of the Lake Kāsaōiia and the Hamum Lake.

¹⁰⁸ Summary in DANI and MASSON 1992. - For the *saošiant* in Sistan, see HINTZE 1994: 21.

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