



ARVAND-RŪD

ARVAND-RŪD, name given to the river Tigris in some passages in the Mid. Pers. books (*Zātspram* 6.20, 34.7; Pahlavi *Vd.* 1.19) and a verse in the *Šāh-nāma* (ed. Borūkīm, I, p. 51, see below; see also Bahār, *Asāṭīr*, p. 211). The use of this name to designate the Šaṭṭ al-‘Arab began in the later Pahlavi period and persisted after the revolution of 1357 Š./1978-79. The word *arvand* “swift” (Av. *aurvant-*, *AirWb.*, cols. 200-01) appears in New Persian personal names such as Arvand-asb and Arvand-dast, and in Armenian and Greek (Ervand and Orontes, see Hübschmann, *Armen. Etymologie*, pp. 39-40; Justi, *Namenbuch*, pp. 41, 42, 234), but no mention of a river by this name is made in the Avesta or in the *Bundahišn*, where, in the chapter on rivers, the river Tigris is mentioned by name (Diglat, *Bundahišn* 11.6); nor does it occur in the inscriptions of Darius the Great at Bīsotūn (Behistun), where the river Tigris is mentioned twice (DB 1.85, 88). Comparison of the passage in *Zātspram* (6.20) with an almost identical passage in the *Bundahišn* (11.1-2; tr. West, SBE 5, pp. 74-75) clearly points to a confusion of the rivers Arang and Arvand, either as a clerical error due to the virtual identity of the two names in the Pahlavi script (cf. Markwart, *Wehrot und Arang*, Leiden, 1938, pp. 136, 181ff.; idem, *Ērānšahr*, pp. 150, 157), or to a deliberate attempt to identify the Avestan river Raṅhā (**Arang**), said to flow westward, with a stream in the west, where the name Arvand/Alvand was already well known (cf. Ḥamza, apud Yāqūt, II, p. 551, where Ārang is given as the Persian name of the Tigris). However, a number of scholars have accepted the designation of the Tigris as Arvand-rūd in New Persian as correct (Markwart, *Ērānšahr*, *ibid.*; Pūr-Dāwūd, *Yašthā* I, pp. 223-24; West, SBE 5, pp. 172 n. 6, 216 n. 3, 223 n. 2), although there are strong reasons to doubt its



correctness.

In the geographical works of the early Islamic period the name Arvand/Alvand frequently appears, but it is never applied to the river Tigris, which is always called Deĵla (see Schwarz, *Iran*, s.v.). Only in the much later *Nozhat al-qolūb* (pp. 214-15), written in 740/1339-40, the Tigris and Arvand-rūd are equated on the authority of the *Šāh-nāma*. Moreover, the Greek, Roman, and Armenian authors, who were well-informed about the Tigris and the geography of Mesopotamia and knew the Orontes range (Alvand-kūh) in western Iran and the Orontes river in Syria, have never applied the name to the great Mesopotamian river (Pauly-Wissowa, XVIII/1, cols. 1160ff.). The theory suggested by Farahvaši that *arvand* was the translation of the Old Persian Tigrā (i.e., Deĵla) and gained currency as such in the Sasanian period, is based on no clear evidence (B. Farahvaši, “Arvand-rud,” *MDAT* 17/1-2, 1348 Š./1969, pp. 79-80; cf. Kent, *Old Persian*, pp. 31, 37).

According to the *Bahman Yašt* (3.8-9, 21, tr. West, op. cit., pp. 217-18, 223) the Iranians will fight three battles on the bank of the Arvand-rūd, which the author places in Assyria. The first battle takes place in the reign of Kay Kā’ūs, the second, called the battle of Spēdarzūr, in the reign of Kay Guštāsp, and the third, at the end of Zoroaster’s millennium, against the Turks, Arabs, and Romans in the plain of Nehāvand. The first two battles belong to mythical times, although E. Herzfeld (*The Persian Empire*, pp. 16ff.) identified *spytzwl* with the Islamic Šahrazūr (now Solaymāniya) in what is now known as Iraqī Kurdistan. The third battle is an obvious reference to the battle of Nehāvand which put an end to any concerted efforts of the Sasanian army to halt the invading forces of the Arabs.

The name Arvand-rūd is mentioned in the *Šāh-nāma* on two occasions; once in the story of Ferēdūn’s rise against the usurper Žaḥḥāk (ed. Borūķīm, I, p. 51; III, pp. 741, 754), where, on his way to destroy the tyrant, Ferēdūn had to cross the Arvand-rūd. In this passage the verse that equates Arvand-rūd with the Tigris (*Agar pahlavānī na-dānī zabān, Be tāzī to Arvand rā Deĵla k’vān* “In case you do not know the Pahlavi language, call Arvand Deĵla in Arabic”), which is often referred to as the main evidence for the equation of Arvand-rūd with the Tigris, as well as the verse following it (vv. 325-26) are manifestly spurious, as noted in the Moscow edition (I, p. 67). The second passage is in the account of Šāpūr II, where Arvand-rūd is the river on which the royal palace at Ctesiphon stood (ed. Borūķīm, VIII, p. 2029). Comparison of this passage with another section of the *Šāh-nāma* makes it doubtful whether Arvand-rūd is the name of



the main artery of the Tigris at all. In the account of the reign of Hormoz IV, the son and successor of Ƙosrow I Anōšīravān, it is stated that he spent the four seasons in four different places: summer at Ešṭaḳr, autumn in Isfahan, winter in Ctesiphon, and spring in the Arvand Dašt, i.e., Arvand Plain (ibid., p. 2579). According to Ṭa'ālebī (*Ġorar*, p. 641) Hormoz spent the summer in 'Erāq and the winter in Fārs; Ṭabarī (I, p. 989; Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser*, p. 265) states that he went to Media in the summer, whereas according to Dīnawarī (p. 81) and Baḷ'amī (*Tārīḳ*, p. 1071) he spent the winter in Sawād, i.e., Mesopotamia, and the summer in Dīnawar (about 38 km to the west of Kangāvar) and Nehāvand. The well-known royal residences of the late Sasanians in Iraq, other than Ctesiphon, were Dastgerd (Artemita, Daskarat-al-malek of the Arab geographers) in winter, and Qašr-e Šīrīn and Ḥolwān in summer (Ṭabarī, I, p. 1041; Dīnawarī, p. 105).

The construction of the palace at Qašr-e Šīrīn on the river Alvand (i.e., Ḥolwān river) is credited to Ƙosrow II Parvēz (Christensen, *Iran Sass.*, pp. 455-56; R. Ghirshman, *Persian Art*, New York, 1962, p. 200). Dastgerd, situated at about 16 leagues northeast of Baghdad, was the favorite residence of the later Sasanian kings, so much so that Ƙosrow II Parvēz spent the last twenty years of his reign and kept much of the royal treasure there (Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser*, pp. 295 n. 1, 296 n. 1; Christensen, *Iran Sass.*, pp. 454-55). The early Islamic works attribute the construction of the Sasanian palace at Dastgerd to Hormoz I (Ḥamza, p. 49; Ṭa'ālebī, *Ġorar*, p. 499; *Moǧmal*, p. 64; cf. Yāqūt, II, p. 575) but Herzfeld apud Christensen, (loc. cit.) thinks that Dastgerd was favored by the Sasanian kings after Ƙosrow I Anōšīravān, though probably before Ƙosrow II, i.e., during the reign of Hormoz IV. The town belonged to the province of Ƙosrow-šād-hormoz.

The Arvand Dašt mentioned in the *Šāh-nāma* and consequently the Arvand-rūd must be located in an area where a major Sasanian royal palace stood, i.e., either in the area of Dastgerd or further northeast in the plain of Qašr-e Šīrīn and Ḥolwān, both well to the east of the river Tigris. Dastgerd stood on the left bank of the river Dīāla, along the course of which the Khorasan road proceeded through Jalūlā, Kāneqīn, and Qašr-e Šīrīn to reach Ḥolwān (the present-day Sar-e Pol-e Dohāb), often considered the final stage of the road in Iraq, where it crossed the Zagros range to enter the Iranian highlands (Le Strange, *Lands*, pp. 61-63, 191). Formed by the confluence of a number of streams rising in the hills of western Iran (one being the Alvand [Arvand?] river flowing through the plain of Qašr-e Šīrīn and Sar-e Pol) and breaking



through the Jabal Ḥamrīn gorge, the river Dīāla enters the plain of lower Mesopotamia (Dīāla plain)—an area of great strategic and economic importance throughout its history—which has been characterized as “the heartland of Sasanian strength” (R. M. Adams, *Land Behind Baghdad*, Chicago, 1965, pp. 69-83 and passim; Herzfeld, op. cit., pp. 52-54). The account of the *Bahman Yašt* must have been inspired by the sack of Dastgerd by Heraclius in 628 and the disastrous defeats of the Sasanian army at the hands of the invading Arabs at Jalūlā (situated on a tributary of Dīāla draining the Sahrazūr valley, cf. above) and at Nehāvand.

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