



AWAN

AWAN, name of a place in ancient western Iran, the nominal dynastic seat of Elamite rulers in the late third millennium B.C.; its location is unknown.

Three rulers of Awan form the fourth post-diluvium “dynasty” in at least four manuscripts of the Sumerian King List. Only the beginning of the third ruler’s name is preserved (Ku-u [l- . . .]). The King List attributes a reign of 36 years to him, and a total of 356 years of rule to the kingdom of Awan. One fragmentary copy may record an abbreviated tradition of only two kings of Awan (Jacobsen, *The Sumerian King List*, pp. 94f., iv.6-616; Kraus, “Zur Liste der älteren Könige,” p. 34 and n. 2; Nissen, “Eine neue Version,” pp. 1-5). The King List is a schematic and tendentious document (possibly compiled as early as 2100 B.C., though extant manuscripts are two to four centuries younger); and these numbers have no chronographic worth, but the context of the Awan section suggests that it was meant to refer to a period beginning ca. 2500-2400 B.C. Its historicity is questionable. No known ancient text provides an independent reference to this “dynasty” (V. Scheil’s suggestion [“*Dynasties élamites*,” pp. 8f.] that an exercise tablet from Susa does so is unverifiable.)

A second, shorter king list from Susa supplies twelve personal names, summarized in Akkadian as “twelve kings of Awan,” without indicating lengths of reign or filiation (Scheil, “*Dynasties élamites*” = Scheil, MDP 23, p. iv.1-13). The date of composition of this list is unknown; the unique manuscript of it dates from ca. 1800-1600 B.C. There is no point of concord between the Awan “dynasties” of the Sumerian King List and the Susa list; the latter probably refers to a second series of rulers, rather than an extension of



the tradition recorded in the former. Independent textual evidence dates the eighth ruler in the Susa sequence, Luḫḫiššan, to ca. 2300 B.C. and the twelfth ruler, Puzur-Inšušinak, to ca. 2100 B.C., but there is no assurance that the Susa list records a complete and uninterrupted series of rulers of equal stature.

An Old Akkadian votive inscription of Sargon of Akkad (2334-2279 B.C.), preserved in an Old Babylonian copy, commemorates military triumphs over Elam and Baraḫši, naming among Sargon's defeated opponents Luḫ-iššan, son of Ḫišiprašini, king of Elam, and referring to booty (?) taken from Awan (Hirsch, "Die Inschriften," p. 47, xii.10-13, 36-37). Awan is given no special emphasis to distinguish it from other toponyms similarly mentioned (Susa among them), nor does it appear in the Elamite ruler's title. The Luḫ-iššan of this text, however, is identical with the eighth king of Awan named on the Susa list, and his patronym, Ḫišiprašini, is an orthographic or grammatical variant of the ninth name on the Susa list, Ḫišepatep. (The discrepancy in the order of the names may reflect error in one of the sources, or the existence of two distinct but nearly homonymous individuals, or eccentricity in the royal succession at Awan.)

Old Babylonian copies also preserve two Old Akkadian inscriptions of Sargon's successor Rimuš (2278-70 B.C.), again commemorating victories over Baraḫši and the subjugation of Elam, without referring to a king of Elam or Awan, but mentioning the capture of enemy leaders "between Awan and Susa, on the middle (?) (or: upper) river" (*ibid.*, pp. 62f., xxiii.11-16, p. 67, xxv.50-56).

Two Akkadian stelae from Susa claim for Puzur-Inšušinak the titles "mighty one" and "king of Awan" (Scheil, MDP 11, pl. 3, 1a.3-5; 2.5-6; cf. Gelb, *Old Akkadian Writing*, p. 46; Boehmer, "Datierung," p. 345; Edzard, *Répertoire I*, p. 21). These are the only contemporary occurrences of the toponym in royal titlature from southwestern Iran. An unpublished Mesopotamian text (in Sumerian and Akkadian) indicates that Puzur-Inšušinak was a contemporary of Ur-Nammu of Ur (2112-95 B.C.; C. Wilcke, personal communication, citing 1 B 1537; despite Boehmer, "Datierung," p. 345).

Awan is conspicuous by its absence from routine contexts in Sumerian administrative texts from the Third Dynasty of Ur (2112-04 B.C.), but a date formula of the last Ur III ruler, Ibbi-Sin (2028-04 B.C.) names a "year in which Ibbi-Sin, king of Ur, roared like a storm in Susa, Adamdun, and the land of Awan, subdued them in a single day, and took their lords captive (cf. Sollberger, "Ibbi-Suen," p. 7), and the same phrase recurs in two votive



inscriptions of the same ruler (Gadd, Legrain, and Smith, *Royal Inscriptions*, pp. 210.4, 289 xiii.42; cf. Edzard and Farber, *Répertoire II*, p. 20).

The toponym *Awal* is not a variant of *Awan* (despite Goetze, “*Šakkanakkus*,” p. 5 n. 46; Edzard and Farber, *op. cit.*, p. 20) but the name of another place, now securely located in the Hamrin basin (Whiting, “*Tišatal*,” p. 180; Steinkeller, “*Early History*,” p. 164). The *Šaykān* inscription near *Qaṣr-e Šīrīn* may record a conquest of the “land of *Awan* (?) (or *Aban*),” but the reading of the toponym and the historical context of the inscription are wholly uncertain, and its date is later than that of any other text mentioning *Awan* (Herzfeld, *Persian Empire*, pp. 154f., n. 2; Gelb, *Glossary*, p. 293; Farber, “*Zur Datierung*,” pp. 47-50; Calmeyer, “*Ḥūrīn Šaiḥān*,” p. 504).

Only two of these references have geographical, rather than political import. The *Rimuš* texts that locate an event “between *Awan* and *Susa*” suggest that *Awan* indicates a place close enough to *Susa* to render such a phrase meaningful, and the *Ibbi-Sin* date formula, even understood as royal hyperbole, implies that *Awan* was a region that abutted *Susa* and its territory. Poebel and Goetze held that *Awan* was in *Elam* (by which they meant *Kūzestān*), not far from *Susa* (Poebel, *Miscellaneous Studies*, p. 40 n. 9; Goetze, *op. cit.*, p. 5; similarly *Miroschedji*, “*Le dieu élamite*,” p. 132; and others). *Hinz* proposed the vicinity of *Dezfūl* (*Das Reich Elam*, p. 62; “*Persia*,” p. 647). *Hansman*, supposing a meaningful complementary distribution between references to *Awan* and *Anshan*, suggested with reservations that *Awan* indicates a region of which the capital was *Anshan*, in the *dehestān Bayzā* in *Fārs* (*Hansman*, “*Elamites*,” p. 101, 115), and *Vallat* conjectures that the region of *Awan* applied to an uncertain extent of *Zagros* valley systems in *Lorestān*, perhaps as far north as *Kurdistan* (“*Suse et l’Élam*,” map 4).

The texts are sparing of information on *Awan*’s actual political role at any moment. The king lists take retrospective views of *Awan* as the enduring dynastic seat of the outstanding western Iranian state in Early Dynastic and Old Akkadian times. The Old Akkadian inscriptions consider the kings of this state to be the rulers of *Elam*, but they name *Awan* only as one of several defeated places, with no indication of political primacy.

Puzur-Inšušnak’s stela, like the king lists, use the place name to mark royal status, but the inscriptions themselves come from *Susa*. In the mid-third millennium B.C., at any rate, a state centered on *Awan* engaged in political and military competition with Mesopotamian city states, with enough success to



earn a place in the Sumerian King List. Awan may have continued to be the political center of leading Elamite rulers in the later third millennium, justifying the retrospective use of “King of Awan” in the Old Babylonian king list from Susa. Later rulers named in the Susa list were adversaries of Sargon of Akkad and his descendants; despite the Akkadian claims of early success, it was probably still a King of Awan with whom Naram-Sin of Akkad (2254-18 B.C.) concluded an entente and drew up a treaty, the Elamite text of which was found at Susa (Scheil, MDP 11, pp. 1ff.; cf. Hinz, “Elams Vertrag,” pp. 66ff.; Kammenhuber, “Historisch-geographische Nachrichten,” p. 180; Vallat, “Suse et l’Élam,” p. 5). During the period of interstate struggle that preceded the hegemony of Ur in Mesopotamia and parts of western Iran Puzur-Inšušinak of Awan brought Susa under his control, but subsequently Awan disappeared from the political scene, eclipsed and presumably absorbed by the state and “dynasty” of Šimaški. Ibbi-Sin’s use of the toponym is merely geographical, and probably already archaic.

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