



BARZAN

BARZAN, part of a town, quarter (*maḥalla*), street (*kūča*). The word is listed in the old dictionaries and is preserved in the common expression *kūy o barzan* “street and quarter.” *Loġat-e fors* (ed. Dabīrsiāqī, p. 153) quotes Rūdakī’s verse *parnīān gašt bāg o barzan o kūy* “the garden, quarter, and street became (like) colored silk” and Šams-e Faḡrī (p. 368) defines the word as *sar-e kūča o maḥallat*. Under Reżā Shah *barzan* became the official designation of municipal divisions of a city (Barzan-e 1, 2, etc.).

Barzan is a Northwest-Iranian form in Persian, corresponding to the genuine Southwest-Iranian form seen in Old Persian *vardana-* or *vrdana* (neut.) “town” and Pahl. *vālan* “community, settlement.” The corresponding Avestan forms are Gathic *vərəzəñā/ā-* (fem. and neut.), Young Avestan *varəzāna-* (neut.), “community” (a meaning Bartholomae deduced from the Pahlavi gloss *hamsāyak* “neighbor,” see *AirWb.*, col. 1425, last note). Gathic *vərəzəñā-* corresponds to Old Indian *vṛjāna-* (neut.) “surroundings, place, community,” also with zero grade of the root syllable (cf. *vərəzəñya-* “belonging to the community,” corresponding to Rigvedic *vṛjanyā*, Mayrhofer, *Dictionary* III, p. 243), while Young Avestan *varəzāna-* has the full grade of the root syllable (the long *ā* in *-āna* is found only in the YAv. form) also found in Pahlavi *vālan* (< **vardan*), Persian *barzan*, and Khotanese **balysana-* (see below). The Old Persian form is graphically ambiguous: *vardana-* or *vrdana-*.

Old Persian *vardana* “town” (Akkadian *uru*) contrasts in the inscriptions with *āvahana* “*settlement” (Akk. *ālum*, Elam. *hu-ma-nu-iš*, see, e.g., Brandenstein and Mayrhofer, p. 109) and *didā* “fortress” (Akk. *bīrtum*). The latter survived in



Persian in the forms *dez* (genuine “Northwest” form < **dizā-*) and *dež* (a pseudo-archaic form). In Darius’s Bīsotūn inscription nine *vardanas* “towns” are named, situated in Persis: Kuganakā (DB 2.9), Raxā (3.4.), (H)uvādaičaya (3.51), Tāravā (3.22); Parthia: Patigrabanā (3.4f.), Višpa^huzātiš (2.95f.); and Media: Kuⁿduruš (2.65f.), Māruš (2.22).

Old Indian *vardhana-* (neut.) “town” must be one of the loanwords from Old Persian in Indian dating from the Achaemenid period (J. Wackernagel, *Kleine Schriften*, Göttingen [1956], pp. 384f.; Mayrhofer, *Dictionary* III, p. 158; others are *lipi-* “script” from OPers. *dipi-*, *mudrā-* “seal”).

Further derivation of **v(a)rzana-* remains problematic. Connection with Av. *varəz-* (fem.), which according to *AirWb.*, col. 1378, means “habitation” but according to later research should be equated with OInd. *ūrj-* “libation,” is doubtful (cf. Kellens, pp. 361-64) and the root *varəz-* “to fend off” (*AirWb.*, cols. 1378, 1424f., cf. Gk. *wérgein*, *eirgein* “to constrict, close off,” Pokorny, p. 1168) may be *vəraz-* “to work, make.” The Pahlavi translations render Av. *vərazəna-* by *varzišn* or *vālan* and *vālanīh* (often written *v’ln’, v’ln’yh*, which Bartholomae transcribed as *vālūn-īh*), glossed as *hamsāyak* “neighbor” in *Y.* 33.4. This gloss recalls Khotanese *balysania-* (i.e., *balzania-*) “neighboring” (i.e., country), rendering (Buddhist) Sanskrit *sāmantaka* in the *Suvarṇabhāsasūtra* (Bailey, *Dictionary*, p. 272).

Semantically Iranian *vřzana-* and Old Persian *vardana-* belong to an Indo-European group of words whose meaning has evolved from “town” to “fence,” cf., e.g., Germanic *gard*, in Norwegian “farm” (note also *-gard* in names of towns) and “fence” and English town (cf. Swedish *-tun* in names of towns, Norwegian *tun* “central courtyard of a farm”) but German *Zaun* “fence.” Correspondingly, one would expect Middle Iranian *varzan*, *vālan* to designate fortified settlements, like Persian *kalāt*, Arabic *qaḷ’a*. The semantic narrowing of Persian *barzan* “*maḥalla*” is similar to that of Old Iranian *dahyu-* “land” > Persian *deh* “village” and Old Iranian *xšaθra* “realm” > Persian *šahr* “town.” Compare also Akkadian *mātum* > Aramaic *mātā* “village,” Arabic *welāya* > Persian *welāyat* “marketplace” (see Eilers, 1977, p. 285).

In modern Iranian place names the forms Varzan and Varzana are common. We find Varzan west of Tehran (Razmārā, *Farhang* I, p. 230), in Rūdbār (ibid., III, p. 316), in the Dašt-e Kavīr (Ade, p. 82 n. 62); and Varzana in Dastjerd near Qom, possessing a large, abundantly irrigated estate (*Tārīk-eQom*, p. 68; Razmārā, I, p. 230), in Bandpey, Bābol (ibid., III, p. 317), 24 km southeast of



Golpāyagān (ibid., VI, p. 364), in the Gāvkānī swamp, shortly before the mouth of the Zāyandarūd (ibid., X, p. 202; Schwarz, *Iran* V, p. 659), in Jāst (*Tārīk-e Qom*, p.138); in the *ṭassūj* of Jahrūd we find both Varzan and Varzana (pp. 119, 120, 122); there were a *qarya* Varzan in the *ṭassūj* of Dwr'k̄yr (p. 142) and a “Varzana-ye bā'era” (lit. “dilapidated V.”) in Farāhān (p. 141). Note also Varzana-ye Ayyūb in the *rostāq* of Sāva, *ṭassūj* of Fīstīn (pp. 86, 114, 140), Varzana-ye Aznāh in Sāva (p. 140), Varzana-ye Āša in Ṭabraš (i.e., Tabriš/Tabreš, present-day Tafriš/Tafreš; p. 139), and Arabicized Varzat al-Fāleq in Sāva (p. 140) and Varzat al-Ṣarm in Vāzagrūd (p. 137). Eilers (1954, p. 353) mentions the possibility that the place names Golnābād (a ruined town east of Isfahan near the road to Sagzī and a place between Kermān and Yazd) might contain a dialect form *Golan < *vr̄dan; cf. Vardanābād in the *ṭassūj* of Qāsāq (*Tārīk-e Qom*, p. 114).

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