



CARMANIA

CARMANIA, region east of Fārs province, approximately equivalent to modern Kermān. The Old Persian form (*k-r-m-a-n* = Kṛmāna- or Karmāna-, rendered as Elamite *h.kur-ma-na* [DSz 32], *h.kur-ma-an* [see now Hinz and Koch, pp. 525f. s.v.], cf. Mid. Pers. Krm'n, NPers. Kermān [q.v.], Ar. Karmān, Kermān) is attested only once in inscriptions, in DSf 35 (the corresponding passage is missing in DSz), where it is said that sissou wood, or wood of the *jaḡ* (OPers. *yakā-*) tree, was brought from Gandhara and Carmania for Darius's palace at Susa. In the Persepolis fortification tablets Carmania is mentioned fairly frequently in connection with travelers between there and Susa; a certain Karkiš (m.*kar-ki-iš*, apparently a high official of Carmania, is also named. The Old Persian ethnic name *K(a)rmāniya "Carmanian" is reflected in Elamite *h.kur-ma-nu-ya*, which occurs twice in unpublished tablets (Hinz and Koch, p. 526 s.v.), and in Greek Karmánioi (Lat. Carmāniī; on one occasion, Herodotus (1.125.4), referred to a Persian clan as Germánioi, reflecting confusion with the Germanic peoples), from which Karmaníā (Lat. Carmānia) is a back formation. The etymology of the name is disputed (see, most recently, Eilers, pp. 19f.), but a supposed connection with Iranian **kṛma-* and Mid. Pers. and NPers. *kerm* "worm" is obviously an instance of popular etymology.

Nothing specific is known about the boundaries of Carmania, which may have fluctuated throughout time. As it is never mentioned as a separate province in royal Achaemenid inscriptions, it is probable that it was considered part of Persis (though separated from it by deserts and mountains), at least under Darius I, for one of his pyramidal weights (Wb, now in the Hermitage,



Leningrad) was found in modern Kermān. At some point, however, Carmania must have been separated from Persis, for in the time of Alexander it was a satrapy on the Persian Gulf coast west of Hormoz; it was bounded on the east by Gedrosia. Some authors (e.g., Ptolemy, 6.5.1) called the northern deserts, which stretched as far as Parthia and Areia, *hē érēmos Karmaníā* “desert Carmania,” apparently to be distinguished from Carmania proper, which was a cultivated and fertile region (Strabo, 15.2.14; Arrianus, *Indikē* 32.4f.; Ammianus Marcellinus, 23.6.48).

Carmania was often mentioned in connection with Alexander’s expedition, which opened up this land for the first time, but not much seems to have been known about its inhabitants; for the most part, only *topoi*, curious “facts” (e.g., Strabo, 15.2.14, claimed that the people were cannibals), and tedious lists of names are provided. The Carmanians were a warlike people, who were said to live and fight like Medes and Persians, except that they used donkeys, even in war, because horses were so scarce (ibid., following Nearchus, who must also have noted the similarity in language; Arrianus, *Indikē* 38.1). A summary geographical description of Carmania was given by Strabo (15.2.14), and more topographical details on both the northern deserts and Carmania proper are found in Ptolemy (6.6, 6.8): Kármana is mentioned (6.8.13, 8.22.20) as the main city (*mētrópolis*) and Hármouza (6.8.5) as the principal seaport (old Hormoz, near present-day Mīnāb, see [bandar-e ‘abbās](#)). The medieval and modern city of Kermān, however, is on the site of Veh-Ardašīr, founded by Ardašīr I (224-40; see [beh-ardašīr](#)).

See also [KERMAN ii. Historical Geography](#).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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