



CLIME

CLIME (*kešvar*), ancient division of the earth's surface. According to Iranian mythology the earth consists of seven concentric climes. In the Gathas they are referred to as *būmyā haptan̄ha*— “a seventh part of the earth” (*Y.* 32.3), with which one may compare Pahlavi *būm ī haft kišwar* “the earth of seven climes” (*Ayādgār ī Jāmāspīg* 4.25), and in the later Avesta as *karšvān yāiš hapta* “the seven climes,” which is the common expression in later times, comparable to Pahlavi *haft kišwar* and Manichean Parthian *haft kišfar zambūdīg/šahr* “the world of seven climes” (*Mir. Man.* III, p. 888). The seven climes are said to have been formed at the beginning of the creation, when the star Sirius (Av. *Tištrya-*, Pahl. *Tištar*) produced rain, as the result of which different seas appeared and the earth was divided into seven parts (*Bundahišn*, TD ₂, pp. 74.9-75.1; tr. Anklesaria, chap. 8.2, pp. 90-91; *Zādspram*, chap. 3.33-35).

The Avestan and Pahlavi names of the climes are: *Arəzahī-/Arzah* (east; see Henning, *Sogdica*, pp. 28-29), *Frada'afšū-/Fradadafš* (southeast), *Vīda'afšū-/Widadafš* (southwest), *Savahī-/Sawah* (west), *Vouru.ĵarəštī-/Wōrūĵaršt* (northeast), *Vouru.barəštī-/Wōrūbaršt* (northwest), and *Xvaniraθa-/Xwanīrah*, *Xwanīras* (central clime; *Yt.* 10.15; *Bundahišn*, TD ₂, pp. 75.1-76.5; tr. Anklesaria, chap. 8.3-7, pp. 90-93; *Mēnōg ī xrad*, ed. Anklesaria, chap. 16.10). The same names are attested in the Islamic sources (*Jāḥeẓ, Tarbī'*, p. 43; idem, *Ḥayawān* III, p. 370; “*Moqaddama*,” pp. 138f.; see also *Mēnōg ī xrad*, tr. Tafazzoli, commentary, pp. 112-13). The greatest and most prosperous of the seven climes is *Xwanīrah*, the central clime, said to be as large as the six surrounding climes together (*Bundahišn*, TD ₂, pp. 74.14-15, 75.12-76.6; tr. Anklesaria, chap.



8.1, 6, pp. 90-93). Ērānwēj, the mythical homeland of the Iranians, lies in this clime. The seven climes are separated from one another by water, forests, and mountains (*Bundahišn*, chap. 8.5), and it is only with the guidance of the gods or demons that one may pass through one continent to another (*Pahlavi Vidēvdād* 1.2; *Mēnōg ī xrad*, ed. Anklesaria, chap. 9.6).

According to a tradition related in the *Bundahišn* (TD₂, p. 105.13-15; tr. Anklesaria, chap. 14.32, pp. 132-33), seven pairs of twins (according to the *Indian Bundahišn*, text p. 37, tr. p. 21, but only six according to the *Iranian Bundahišn*) were born from Maši and Mašyāna, the first human couple. It is reasonable to suppose that in the original myth the seven climes were thought to be populated by the descendants of these seven pairs (Christensen, p. 119). According to another tradition (*Bundahišn*, TD₂, p. 106.6-9; tr. Anklesaria, chap. 14.36, pp. 132-35), however, of the fifteen human races produced by Frawāg and Frawāgēn, twin grandchildren of Maši and Mašyāna, nine inhabited Xwanīrah, and the other six emigrated to the other climes; this migration is attributed to the time of Hōšang (*Zādspram*, chap. 3.86) or Taxmūrap (*Bundahišn*, TD₂, p. 124.5-12; tr. Anklesaria, chap. 18.9, pp. 158-59) and is supposed to have taken place on the back of the mythical cow *Srīsōg (or Hadayōš; cf. also *Bundahišn*, TD₂, pp. 106.2-9, 153.9-14; tr. Anklesaria, chaps. 14.36, pp. 132-35, 24.22, pp. 196-97). From one tradition given in the *Bundahišn* (TD₂, p. 107.3-11; tr. Anklesaria, chap. 14.38, pp. 134-35) it may be supposed that originally only Xwanīrah was regarded as inhabited by men, the other climes being fabulous worlds (Christensen, p. 117).

Each clime is said to have a spiritual leader (*Bundahišn*, TD₂, p. 196.5-13; tr. Anklesaria, chap. 29, pp. 252-23), who will participate in the renovation of the world under the leadership of the last Zoroastrian savior, Sōšyāns (Av. Saošyant; *Dādistān ī dēnīg*, chap. 35.4-5; see Boyce, *Zoroastrianism* I, p. 284).

The Iranian concept of seven climes was combined with the Greek theory of seven in Islamic geographical and cosmographical works (e.g. Mas'ūdī, *Tanbīh*, pp. 31-32; see Christensen, p. 118).



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