



FRĀXKARD

FRĀXKARD (Mid. Pers. of Av. Vourukaša with wide extending inlets, also called Warkaš in Mid. Pers.), name of the cosmic ocean in Iranian mythology. According to a myth preserved in the Pahlavi books, at the beginning of the creation the rain god Tištriia/Tištār made the clouds rain all over the earth. Then the spirit of Wind (*Mēnōg ī wād*) swept the scattered water and pushed it towards the end of the earth, from which Frāxkard was formed (*Bundahišn* [TD2] 62-63; *Zādspram* 3.12). It is said to be situated in the southern skirts of Harburz/Allborz (q.v.), occupying one third of the earth. One portion of Frāxkard stretches out round Xwanirah, the central clime (q.v., *Zādspram* 3.35). The mythical river Aroduuī Sūrā Anāhitā, probably representing older *Harahuditī (Boyce, *Zoroastrianism* I, p. 136), pours into this sea (*Yt.* 5.4). Frāxkard is said to consist of a thousand lakes (*war*) called “the springs of Ardīwsūr” or “the sources of the lake,” each being 1800 *farsangs* large (*Bundahišn* 81-82; *Zādspram* 3.12, 19; *Dādestān ī dēnīg* 92, nos. 2-3, tr. West, SBE 18, p. 262; *Pahlavi Rivāyat*, ed. Dhalhar, chap. 46.10, p. 130). From Frāxkard two great rivers named Arang and Wehrōd (qq.v.) flow out and after going round the world and being purified join back to the sea (*Bundahišn* 64.15-65.6). There is neither tide nor ebb nor movement in it (*Bundahišn* 113.9). Frāxkard is the principal reservoir of rain (*Vd.* 21.4; *Dēnkard*, ed. Madan, 108.5 ff.). When its waters go up to the lofty Hugar/Hukairiia, the peak of Harā (Allborz), there they become purified. One portion pours back to Frāxkard and another reaches the whole world by moisture and sprinkling (*Bundahišn* 191.9-11; *Dādestān ī dēnīg* 92.5, tr. West, SBE 18, p. 262i; cf. *Pahlavi Rivāyat*, ed. Dhalbar, chap. 46.12, p. 130; *Mēnōg ī xrad*, ed. Anklesaria, chap.



43.12-15, tr. Tafazzolī, p. 62). In the center of Frāxkard there stands the mountain Us.həndauua (Pahlavi Usindām) and around its summit gather the vapors which as rain-clouds are distributed over the earth (*Yt.* 8.32-33; Boyce, *Zoroastrianism* I, p. 136). According to one tradition, the waters that flow from Hugar to Frāxkard, first fall on this mountain (*Bundahišn* 77.11-13; 82.5-12; *Dādestān ī dēnīg* 92.5, tr. West, SBE 18, p. 262).

The White Hōm (q.v.) named also the Gākaran tree grew in the deepest part of Frāxkard (*Mēnōg ī xrad*, ed. Anklesaria, chap. 61.28, tr. pp. 81, 143; *Bundahišn* 149.10). A fabulous fish (two according to *Bundahišn*) called Kar (Av. Kara, *Yt.* 14.29) lives there whose task is to repel the frog created by Ahriman to destroy the White Hōm (*Bundahišn* 149.13-150.4; *Mēnōg ī xrad*, ed. Anklesaria, chap. 62.3, tr. p. 81, 143). Another mythical tree called “the tree of many seeds” (*was-tōhmag*), “opposed to harm” (*jud-bēš*), is said to have grown in Frāxkard (*Bundahišn* 67.10-12, 150.15-160.3; *Yt.* 12.17; *Vd.* 5.19). Besides, a fabulous animal called “the three footed ass” (*xar ī se pāy*) stands in the middle of Frāxkard (*Yt.* 42.4; *Bundahišn* 151.8 ff; *Mēnōg ī xrad*, ed. Anklesaria, 62.26, tr., pp. 81, 141). The ocean is protected by the *fravašīs* (q.v.; *Yt.* 13.59).

Frāxkard is the scene of some mythological events. The battle of Tištrīia/Tištār, the rain god, and Apaoša/Apōš, the demon of drought, took place in it (*Yt.* 8.20-29; *Bundahišn* 63). It was the refuge place of *xwarrah* (Av. *x^varnah*) “glory” when it fled from Yama/Jamšēd and Fraŋrasiian/Afrāsīāb (q.v.) struggled to obtain it, but in vain (*Yt.* 19.56-58; *Yt.* 5.42; *Dēnkard*, ed. Madan, 613.2 ff). In another occasion when it fled from Kayūs/Kāvūs, it took refuge into this ocean (*Dēnkard* 815-16). Kərəsāspa/Garšāsp overcame Gandarw (Av. Gandarəβa) at its coast, and Vandarəmainiš, brother of Arjāspa offered sacrifice to Arədvī Sūrā Anāhitā (qq.v.) at this ocean in order to be victorious over Vištāspa/Goštāsp (*Yt.* 5.116-117). Frāxkard may have been identified in certain historical periods with the Caspian Sea or the Black Sea, although no certainty exists in this matter (Boyce, *Zoroastrianism*, I, p. 143).



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