

**About some geographical places in Shahnameh  
(Yazdansaray, Bahleh, Karestan, Manuy, Varigh, Duke)**

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**Introduction**

The Sassanid Empire is an important part of the Shahnameh. In this section, Ferdowsi, explains in detail the events of the reign of Khosrow Parviz, the revolt of Bahram Choobineh, Khosrow's escape to Rome and receiving an army from the Roman emperor, and his return to Azerbaijan to fight Bahram. According to the Shahnameh, in this route, Khosrow passes through places called Yazdansaray, Bahleh, Karestan, and Manuy, and enters the city called Varigh. In this city, he receives an army from the Roman emperor and returns to Azerbaijan, where he fights Bahram in the Duke Plain and defeats him. Because Muslim geographers did not have complete information about the territories occupied by the Roman Empire, the names of these places are either not mentioned in the geographical sources of the Islamic period or are mentioned in other names. In Shahnameh manuscripts, the names of

these places are written in various forms, which shows the ignorance of the scribes of these places.

### **Purpose of the study and Research Methods**

In this research, an attempt has been made to determine the geographical location of Bahleh, Karestan, Manuy, Varigh and Duke and in some cases their other names based on reliable sources. The research method is descriptive analytical using library resources.

### **Literature review**

For the first time, Monshizadeh (1975) researched the state of geography in the Shahnameh. In his research, he has studied the geographical location of Mazandaran and some other places in Shahnameh. The guide of the geographical map of Shahnameh is the result of the researches of Shahidi Mazandarani (1377) in the geographical names and also the names of the people in Shahnameh. Ghorbani and Zomorodi (1396), in a research in thirteen chapters, have analyzed the geographical names of Shahnameh; despite the efforts of the authors, in some cases, there is no comprehensive information in their research. Aslani and Purtaghi (1398) have also studied the geographical names of Shahnameh. They provide more complete information than Ghorbani and Zomorodi. Farhange joghrafiyaye tarikhiye Shahnameh, compiled by Seyedi (1399), is the latest research on the geographical names of Shahnameh in which all the geographical names of Shahnameh have been extracted and the changes of names and geographical places from the past to the present have also been expressed.

### Discussion

In Shahnameh, the escape route of Khosrow to Rome is described in detail. Ferdowsi called the first place that Khosrow enters "Yazdansaray". Yazdansaray was one of the monasteries close to Madain. Historical sources refer to several monasteries located in the south of Madain, and it is obvious that they were not located on the way of Khosrow to Rome. Normally, that monastery (YazdanSaray) should have been located in the west of Madain on the way of Rome. Then he reaches the Bahleh tribe near the Euphrates. According to Dinwari, Khosrow went to the monastery after entering the city of Hit, and then reached the Arab tribes that accompanied him to the banks of the Euphrates(Dinwari1371:115-121).

After crossing the Euphrates, Khosrow entered the city of Karestan, the first border city of Iran and Rome. Ferdowsi explicitly states that the Roman emperor called this city Karestan (Ferdowsi, 1393, vol8. P.81-82). So Karestan must be a Roman name. To determine the location of this city, the inscription of Shapur I is very helpful; because Khosrow, in order to go to Rome, must have passed through the same route that Shapur I had passed before him. After crossing Karestan, Khosrow reached the city of Manuy and then Varigh. Isidore of charax , in the description of the distance between the cities along the Euphrates River, mentions a fortress that was called *Mannuorrha Auyreth* (Isidore of charax , 1387: 35). Mannuorrha Auyreth brings to mind the names Manuy and Varigh, which are also mentioned in the Shahnameh. Shapur I also captured the city of Edessa at the end of his campaign. So varigh must also be near Harran, and Manuy must be a city between

Harran and Edessa. After receiving an army from the Roman emperor, Khosrow went to Azerbaijan and encamped in the Duke Plain.

According to Theophylact the battle of Khosrow and Bahram was in a mountainous area, near Ganzak and the Belarat River. He also writes that Khosrow's troops in this area were forced to divide into three groups and enter the battlefield in three ways (Theophylact, 1986: 180). Minorsky suggests that Duke is the Dule, an area East of Orumiyeh Lake near Maragheh (Minorsky, 1379: 12-14). Ferdowsi describes the battlefield as a mountainous area and also refers to the "Three Dukes Road" (Ferdowsi, 1393, vol8, p121).

### **Conclusion**

By examining the inscription of Shapur I, the sources of Byzantine historians and its correspondence with the reports of Muslim historians, the position of the mentioned areas in Shahnameh was determined. The Location of Bahleh tribe was between Hit and Raqqah and Khosrow reached this tribe between these two cities.

Karestan is the Roman name of the border city of Harran (Carrehae), which was changed to (Kar + Stan) in the Shahnameh. The name Manuy is derived from the combination Mannuorrha Auyreth and it is the name of the fortress in Edessa / Urhāy. Varigh / Urigh is another pronunciation of Auyreth =Irrite, the name of an ancient city located northwest of Mesopotamia, between Harran and Carchamishe, and today called Irridu / ordi. In Mazandarani language, Duke means difficult path, precipice and valley. Considering the division of the troops into three groups and the mountainous positions of Duke and Ganzak, Ferdowsi meant of Duke and Three Dukes Road, should be

that Khosrow crossed the three massive divisions through three difficult roads / Valleys and precipices. Also in Shahnameh, Duke Mountain, Duke Plain and Three Dukes Road refer to the hard road, Valleys and precipices of the battlefield.

**Key words:**

Bahleh, Duke, Geography of Shahnameh, Karestan, Manuy, Varigh.

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