Revisiting the Location of Pr̥ga in the Behistun Inscription on the Basis of its Etymology and an Examination of Historico-Geographical Texts

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A multitude of geographical names are referred to in the Behistun Inscription. Despite the fact that scholars have put considerable effort in locating the current sites of many of these places, there is a shroud of mystery hanging over some. A mountain called Parga, the battlefield of King Darius with Vahyazdāta, is one of them. Some researchers have identified it with Forg District which seems to be an erroneous assumption. This study, while convincingly refuting the aforementioned assumption, tries to propound and prove a new idea as regards the whereabouts of Prga. In reaching this goal, the authors have benefited from etymological and historical evidence and have examined the original inscription in Old Persian, Elamite, Babylonian, and Aramaic. The results of this study indicate that what is now called Shahrak-e Abarj in the Marvdasht Plain could be the real location of Prga referred to in the Behistun Inscription.

Introduction

The Behistun Inscription is a valuable monument from the Achaemenid period. In this inscription in which the accounts of King Darius's wars with the pretenders to the throne are presented, certain places are mentioned, the ancient names of which have disappeared. Perhaps, with a careful etymological analysis of these places and a consideration of historical sources and even local accounts, we can come to a better understanding of the whereabouts of these places referred to in ancient times. Pinpointing the places named in these inscriptions has so far been a matter of great interest and enthusiasm to the scholars in the field. One of the places referred to in the Behistun

Inscription is a mountainous place called Parga,[1] recorded in Old Persian as 𐎨𐎼𐎥 (Sharp 2003). Some have regarded it as the old version of the name of a district called Forg which is currently located in the south of Fars Province, along the road between Darab and Bandar Abbas (Henkelman 2012: 453; Tavernier 2007: 28). Nevertheless, for reasons that will be addressed below, one may doubt the veracity of such an assumption. Having said so, perhaps it can be substantiated that the aforesaid name, Parga, is actually the old version of the name of a mountainous region which is now called Abarj or Shahrak-e Abarj.[2] In order to dissect the issue further, first, we need to deal with the Behistun Inscription and see what it is all about. Afterwards, we can cite the reasons for not concurring with the proposed name of Forg for Parga. Finally, we will present sufficient evidence to suggest that this name is the old version of the name now known as Abarj. The whole story, based on the Old Persian version of the Behistun Inscription, specified in the 3rd column, lines 19 to 52, is as follows:

> *A Summary of the Battle between King Darius and Vahyazdāta*
> "A man called Vahyazdāta dwelt in a city called Tāravā, of a district in Pars named Yutiyā. Both places are supposed to be somewhere in Persia according to the same inscription. This man rebels for the second time in Pars against Darius and introduces himself to the people as Smerdis [Bardiya], the son of Cyrus. Then the Persian troops, having arrived from Anzan (Yadā), who were in the (vⁱθāpatiy) palace, collude with Vahyazdāta and revolt against Darius. Darius, as a result, sends forth one of his Persian subjects named Artavardiya to fight the rebels. The two sides confront each other at a place called Rakhā. Vahyazdāta loses the battle and flees thence with a few horsemen unto Pasargadae (Paišiyāʰ uvādā) from where he takes an army and again, for the second time, goes against Artavardiya to engage him in battle. At a mountain called Parga, they fight the battle which leads to the utter defeat of Vahyazdāta and his being seized. In the end, he is

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[1]DBIII.44.
[2]This *dehestan*/district is also recorded as Abraj in Wikipedia and numerous other on-line sources.

crucified in a city in Pars called Uvādaicaya" (Kent 2012: 423-424).

Examining the Places Referred to in the Aforementioned Part of Behistun Inscription

Fortunately, there exist two other written versions of the Behistun Inscription which are inscribed in Elamite and Babylonian. Moreover, the Persepolis Fortification Tablets in which many geographical names are referred to could themselves be of great help in the study of the places mentioned in those ancient periods. The account of the battle between King Darius and Vahyazdāta presented above is also recorded almost in the same way in the Elamite, Babylonian, and Aramaic versions though some differences do exist and these discrepancies are part of the evidence this study has utilized.

Tāravā, recorded in Old Persian as 𐎫𐎠𐎼𐎺𐎠, is written as *ta-ar-ma-* in Babylonian (Kent 1953: 156 ; Malbran-Labat 2010: 31). This city is also transcribed as [Da][3]-ra-ú-ma in Elamite (Schmitt 1991:64). In another report, it is transcribed as [Tur]-ra-ú-ma. The Aramaic form of it is Trw (Tavernier 2007:31). Some researchers such as Oppert, by referring to Rawlinson who believed that Tarouana (a city mentioned by Ptolemy, in the west of Kerman) is the site for Tāravā, have identified Tāravā with a city called Tāroun in Kerman (1879). Kent (1953) only mentioned that such a place exists in Persia. Hinz (1973) has taken it to refer to Tarom, which lies about one south of Forg. Schmitt (1991), citing Gershevitch, has also confirmed this notion. Schmitt (2014), in addition, points out that this place is taken to be the same as what we have in Greek as Ταρούava, believed to be a place in Kerman in Persia, which is similar to what is nowadays called Tarom in Hormozgan Province. Lecoq (2010) remarks that it has: "often been identified with what is called today as Tarom but without any substantiation".

It is worth highlighting that there are certain clues in ancient languages which enable us to distinguish a

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[3]The parts within the square brackets are reconstructed due to the illegibility of the inscription.

geographical place as a city, a greater district, or even as a mountainous region (Potts 2011: 36). The word *vṛdana* following Tāravā in Old Persian, the sign URU preceding the same name in Babylonian, and the sign (⌈ᴬˢHALᴹᴱˢ⌉) also preceding it in Elamite, all tell us something about the origin of this city, Tāravā (Henkelman,2012:453). Vahyazdāta's hometown according to the Behistun Inscription was the same as this city, and based on the same source, this city itself belongs to a larger area called Yutiyā. In Old Persian, the word *dahyāuš* which follows the name of Yutiyā tells us that this place has to be deemed as a region or the people (of a tribe) (Henkelman 2012:453). It is now vital to look more closely into this place, Yutiyā.

Yutiyā, recorded in Old Persian as 𐎡𐎢𐎫𐎡𐎹, is written as *ia-ú-ti-ia* in Babylonian, and as *ia-u-ti-ia-iš* in Elamite (Schmitt 1991:64). This city is also transcribed as Ywty in Aramaic (Tavernier 2007:32). Spiegel (1971) and Hinz (1973) have located this place as somewhere in the east of Pars and believe that Yutiyā refers to Utiioi which Herodotus, when referring to the Sagartians, mentioned as one of the Persian tribes. Toynbee (2000) suggests that it is not a place but the tribe to which Vahyazdāta belongs. Kent (1953) regards it as a district in Pars. Tavernier (2007), by making reference to Marquart, deems this place to be the same as what is introduced in Greek as Ούτιοι. Following Gershevitch's idea in regarding Yutiyā as a word derived from *aota-* meaning cold in Avestan, he then proposes "The Cold Land" as the meaning of Yutiyā. Schmitt (2014) has referred to the same thing, in addition. Lecoq (2010), however, adds: "even though this suggested proximity and closeness to Utiioi is intriguing, it is not sufficiently clear as it is the case with Tāravā, for the place is too far from Fars Province." As elucidated, all the events and battles take place in Fars Province. In another study, this name, Yutiyā, is compared to a tribe named Judaki which itself is one of the tribes of a nomadic clan called Posht-Kuh in the south of Khorramabad (Moini-Sam and bajdan 2010:139).

These two places are the area where Vahyazdāta belongs to and indubitably they can be considered his territorial realm. Adding to this, it is worth reminding that the Behistun Inscription makes it clear that the Persian army coming from

Anzan (OP: Yadā) joined Vahyazdāta to revolt against Darius. This account is related differently in Old Persian, Elamite, Babylonian, and Aramaic, all of which would be presented as follows:

> In Old Persian: "afterwards the Persian army which (was) in Anzan cast aside their loyalty; they became estranged from me (and) went over to that Vahyazdāta; he became king in Fars." (Kent 1953:423).
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> In Elamite: "Then the courtly Persian who had foregathered in Anzan beforehand fell away from my allegiance and went to him. He ruled the Persians." (Aliary Babolghani 2015:126).
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> In Babylonian: "At that time, all the Persian army, formerly assembled at Babylon, marched towards me from Anzan, mounted a rebellion against me and connived with *Umizdatu*;[4] he became the king of Persia" (Malbran-Labat 2010:57).
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> In Aramaic: "Then all the Persians who were in the palaces convened at lwk' which is in Anzan; they ceased their loyalty to me" (Aliary Babolghani 2015: 126).

Irrespective of any interpretation of these accounts, what is common in all of them is the name of Anzan and the relation which existed between this area and the troops. In other words, although Vahyazdāta belongs to the city of Tāravā and the region of Yutiyā, the events and incidents all took place around Anzan especially when we take into consideration that in the "Persian account, the scriber omitted the verb which is present in Elamite, Babylonian versions" (Lecoq 2010: 238).

Considering all these accounts together, perhaps we can presume that the Persian courtly army had already amassed in Anzan and had geared up to mutiny against Darius. The Elamite version does tell us of this preparation: "the courtly Persian who had foregathered in Anzan beforehand". The Babylonian version talks of the courtly Persians who had been in Babylon yet it is in Anzan where the insurrection transpired. The Aramaic version corroborates the aforementioned accounts in more detail. As regards the Old Persian version of the event, it does not contradict the other ones and it is on the basis of the

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[4]The other version of Vahyazdāta recorded in Babylonian inscription.

other three versions that one may suggest a reinterpretation to complete the incomplete Old Persian account of the event when it reads: "the Persian army which (had assembled) in Anzan". From this, it can be concluded that the first battle which will be discussed later must have occurred in an area around Anzan. The next part which reads "went over to that Vahyazdāta" in Old Persian, also the corresponding Elamite part, " … went to him", and even the Babylonian account, "and connived with *Umizdatu*", are all declarative sentences the meaning of which inform us of the allegiance of the rebels with Vahyazdāta. It is likely that this very part, i.e. "and connived with *Umizdatu*", has made some assume that the army might have joined Vahyazdāta in Tāravā and, therefore, the battle might have taken place somewhere near there, a place between Tāravā and Parga. They have identified Tāravā with Tarom and Parga with Forg, as a result. This sounds highly unlikely since the lines following this part, for instance in Old Persian as it reads "he became king in Persia, in Elamite "He ruled the Persians", and finally in Babylonian "he became the king of Persia", all clearly buttress this assertion that Vahyazdāta dominated the whole of Fars. It, furthermore, is likely that all the events unfolded in the north and north-west of Fars Province, an area which stretches from Pasargadae to Anzan, in particular areas surrounding the Kor River. It should be the case since if one wants to rule an area, he must first gain control over the center of power. The reference made to Paišiyāʰ uvādā, and especially if we accept that this place is the same as Pasargadae, and the presence of Vahyazdāta there where he took an army after his first defeat in Rakhā to again vindicate the aforesaid assertion. Vahyazdāta, by having control over two centers of the power, Pasargadae and Anzan, became the de facto King of Fars, especially when we take into account that Persepolis had not yet been renovated and chosen as the capital of power by Darius. Thus, it can be safely claimed that the confrontation between the two armies could have taken place around the same area. The scrutiny of the four other places referred to in the discussed inscription lead us into some remarkable conclusions.

Rakhā (Raxā), according to the Behistun text, is an area in which the first battle between Vahyazdāta and Darius took place and led to the defeat of Vahyazdāta. This place is recorded

as 𐎼 𐎣 𐏃 in the Old Persian cuneiform, *Ra-[aḫ]* in Babylonian, Rák-qa-an in Elamite, and [b]rḥ' in Aramaic (Schmitt 1991:64). Hinz (1973) while pointing out that this place must have been a city in Fars, finds it probable that this city, Rakhā, be the same as *aragān* which is referred to in Greek texts. Nonetheless, Schmitt (1991) contests the idea of being any relationship between the name of this city and the names suggested by Ptolemy and Ammianus, Aπακκα and Aracha in Shush respectively, and acknowledges the uncertainty surrounding this city. Kent (1953) introduces this city as a city in Fars. This place, Rakhā, is also named and referred to repeatedly in another source, Persepolis Fortification Tablets, which can play a pivotal role in deciphering the enigma wrapping the precise location of this city and plethora of other unknown places recorded in this part of the Behistun Inscription. (Lecoq 2010:239), when considering this city, observes: "an unknown place, but it must be an important one since it is referred many a time in the Persepolis Fortification Tablets". Tavernier (2007), in his book, provides us with a complete list of the instances when this place is mentioned in the Persepolis Fortification Tablets. Accordingly, he suggests three readings of this place based on the Tablets: "Ra-ak-ka₄-an, Ra-ka₄-an, and Rák-ka₄-an" (Tavernier 2007:75). Though he does not even allude to where it may be located, Arfaei (2008) states that reference to this place is made in twenty one texts of the Persepolis Fortification Tablets and all the evidence suggest that this place must have been somewhere in the propinquity of Persepolis. He adds that since this place supplied the water ration of Anzan and Matezziš, it can be construed that it was situated somewhere about 28 to 32 kilometers far from Persepolis and Matezziš. Finally, he remarks that based on the Islamic sources, Rakhā in Old Persian, or Rak-ka₄-an in Elamite, it must be what we these days call Zarqan, thirty five kilometers far from Shiraz. Henkelman (2007), while drawing attention to the significance of this place in the Elamite Persepolis Fortification Tablets, points out that five hundred people, including professional and foreign workers, those who washed the stones, and scribers, may have worked actively in this place. The Tablets, he continues, illustrate that this place must be close to Persepolis and that Sumner believed it to be somewhere in the Ramagird,

approximately twenty five kilometers far from the Persepolis.

Sumner's referrence to Ramagird is of overriding significance and is amongst the evidence utilised to support the proposition presented in this study. Besides, it is not totally unwarranted to identify Zarqan with Rakhā and this by itself can be another cogent reason reinforcing the idea that Pṛga Mountain is the very mountain located in Shahrak-e Abarj, Dorudzan District. Vahyazdāta, after all and losing the battle in Rakhā (Raxā) survived and fled to a place called Paišiyā[h]uvādā in Old Persian and na-áš-ir-ma in Elamite, the same place where, according to the Behistun Inscription, False Smerdis or Gaumata revolted from. Thence, he took an army and later decamped towards Darius's troops. Here, we should take heed of a very subtle-yet-significant point and that is that the Behistun Inscription apprises us of the return of Vahyazdāta for a renewed fight and not that the Darius's army chased him to Parga. Now, it is time to see what researchers think about Paišiyā[h]uvādā.

Paišiyā[h]uvādā, written in Old Persian as 𐎱𐎡𐏁𐎡𐎹𐎠𐎢𐎺𐎠𐎭𐎠, is treated by the Behistun Inscription as one of the key places where Darius's foes and opponents congregated. It is said to be so since in the same place and even before Vahyazdāta, Gaumata or False Smerdis had initially orchestrated an insurgency. More interesting, based on the same text from Behistun, Vahyazdāta also introduces himself as Smerdis, actually the second False Smerdis. The accounts pertinent to this place, Paišiyā[ˀ] uvādā, are also unclear and sketchy. This place is recorded as *pi-ši-'-ḫu-ma-du* in Babylonian, as *na-áš-ir-ma-* in Elamite, and as *pšyḫwd* in Aramaic (Schmitt 2014:224). Kent (1953), citing Justi, identifies this place with Pasargadae comprised of two parts, *paišyā* meaning 'writing' and *uvādā* meaning the 'house', which together give us something like a house for keeping or archiving the sacred texts. Spiegel (1971), quoting Oppert, considers it the same as Pasargadae known to the Greeks. Hinz (1973) introduces it as a place in Fars and offers another definition for it, the ancestral homeland. Tavernier (2007), also assenting to the definition of archive for the second part, *uvādā*, maintains that this term in Old Persian could not have referred to a city. Brandenstein and Mayrhofer (1964) have averred the

uncertainty clouding the etymological understanding of this word. The Persepolis Fortification Tablets are not extremely informative about this place and that is quite expected due to the fact that these tablets are primarily concerned about administerial organizations of Darius's reign (Brandenstein and Mayrhofer 1964:136). One might expect that this place, Paišiyāⁿ uvādā, being a center for staging riots against Darius, could have been damaged and detested by the King. Arfaei (2008) takes the Elamite name of this place, Batrakataš, referred to several times in the Persepolis Fortification Tablets, as the same for Pasargadae.

Therefore, we should look for *na-áš-ir-ma-*, an Elamite name, somewhere else rather than Pasargadae though not very far away from it, most probably a very crucial place before Darius took the helm and that is why some have identified with Pasargadae. It is worth stressing that based on the historical clues, Paišiyāⁿ uvādā or *na-áš-ir-ma* must have been positioned in a mountainous area owing to the point that this place, according to the Behistun text (DBI37), is related to a mountain called Arakadri, recorded as *ha-rak-qa-tar-ri-iš* in Elamite (Kent 1953:169). Vahyazdāta, after a while, a bit more than a month, staying in this place, left it to engage in a battle with the Darius's army for the second time. The two sides arrayed their troops in a mountain referred to as Parga for the battle which led to the defeat and capture of Vahyazdāta. The identity of the mountain and its location are the goals of the present study.

Parga, or Pṛga, written as 𐎧𐎼𐎥 in Old Persian, is undoubtedly a mountain in Fars. The Elamite, Babylonian, and Aramaic written form of it are *Bar-rák-ka₄*, *Pa-ar-ga-'*, and *[Pr]gʾ*, respectively (Tavernier 2007: 28). Kent (1953) has referred to it as a mountain in Fars which is written as Purg in New Persian. Spiegel (1971), by citing Justi, suggests that this name should refer to the city of Forj which is the same as Forg in Darab County, Fars Province. Oppert (1879) argues that this name refers not to a mountain in Persian but a city in Media and identifies it as the same place as what is called nowadays Forg in Kerman. Tavernier (2007) has also held the possibility that this place might be the same as Forg while asserting that the etymology of this name is unclear. Schmitt (2014), concurring with other scholars, approves of this identification.

As observed, the majority of the researchers, even though with some reservation, have chosen the current name of the Forg District for this place. Owing to the fact that today the village of Forg and Tarom Rural District are in proximity of each other, some have deemed Tarom referred to in Old Persian the same as today's Tarom, something which cannot be true given the events and the sequence of them. To repudiate this idea, first it must be noted that according to the Behistun Inscription in all the three languages, Old Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian, this name is presented as a highland and not a city, for instance in Old Persian as *parga:nāma:kaufa* which means a mountain called Parga (Kent 2012: 423). As manifestly obvious, reference is made to the name of a mountain. Besides, the Elamite phrase, ⌜ᴬˢ⌝ KUR ᴹᴱˢ⌝ ᴀš *pár-rák-ka hi-še* meaning "a mountain, Parga its name", substantiates the aforesaid notion (Aliary Babolghani 2015: 126-127). Particularly important, we should take into account that KUR was used in the past to introduce a mountainous area (Potts 2011: 36). The Babylonian record of this word corroborates the same presumption. To recapitulate, the name Parga points to a mountain whereas Forg or Forj, according to historical geography sources, has been recorded as a prosperous city (Schwarz 1993: 145). It is interesting that in all of these sources, this city has been followed by the name of Tarom and ergo misleading the researchers to identify Parga and Tāravā with Forg and Tarom, respectively.

The location of Prga based on the evidence of the present study

In spite of the fact that the recorded versions of the name of many places differ from their corresponding Elamite versions such as Yadā in Old Persian but Anzan in Elamite, meant to be Anzan, or Paišiyāʰ uvādā in Old Persian but recorded as *na-áš-ir-ma-* in Elamite, there are certain names where their recorded versions are singularly similar to each other. The name of Parga Mountain is one of them and since the Elamite version of the names is older than their Old Persian equivalents; it is not unlikely that scores of names in Old Persian and even in New Persian may have derived from Elamite names (Arfaei and Mazdapour 2004: 11). In other words, it can be safely concluded

that the Elamite names chosen and assigned to the places by the Elamites, thousands of years before the Achaemenid Empire came into existence, have survived and continue to exist though with some changes over the course of time. It appears that the mountain in the Shahrak-e Abarj, Fars Province, a mountain with a record as old as history, is the same as the Parga referred to in the Behistun Inscription. To establish the validity of this idea, there are some immensely important linguistic and historical evidence that we can capitalize on. This place is currently situated in Marvdasht, Fars Province. From the linguistic point of view, first it should be noted that the transformation of the phoneme /g/ in the Middle Period to /ʤ/ in our time under the influence of Arabic (especially in the names of the places) is one of the principles observed in the transformation of the Persian language. Myriads of instances of this kind can be presented, as manifest in the change of Darabgerd to Drabjerd, Dastgerd to Dastjerd, Ramgerd to Ramjerd, and Gahrom to Jahrom. It can be construed, consequently, that the original name of this place, before its transformation into its present form, had been Aparg or Abarg. In other words, the name Parga in Old Persian, considering that the Old Persian root of this word is not clear, appears to be derived from the Elamite word Bar-rák-ka₄ that later may have entered into the Old Persian as a loanword. This way, we can come to the Pahlavi form of it, Parg. Hübschmann (2007) reports that the initial change of /p/ to /b/ is rare in Persian, yet in some words, such a change (/p/ to /b/) exists when a word becomes *muʿarrab* (Arabicized). It could also be argued that /p/ could have transformed to /f/ under the impact of Arabicization as in Pārs to Fārs. While the authors acknowledge that such argument could be valid, they reaffirm that the geographical evidence presented throughout this article supports the notion that /p/ transformed to /b/ rather than to /f/. Moreover, it must be added that though Hübschmann (2007) could be right in observing that this transformation /p/ to /b/ could have happened due to Arabicization, it could also have happened due to a linguistic process intrinsic to Persian. Below, some instances of such transformation are presented in Table 1.2 to support this idea:

Old Persian	Middle Persian	New Persian	Meaning
Pāpaka-	Pāpak	Bābak	a proper noun
Paridāta-	Pālād	Bālād	a kind of horse
Pati-	Pad	be	a preposition (with, to, in, …)
Păti-jaθra-	Pādzahr	Bādzahr	antidote
a-Pṛhā-	Aburnāy	(a)bornā	young
Patifrāθa-	Pādifrāh	Bādafrāh	punishment
Pati-dravatāt-	Padrōd	bedrūd	farewell
Pati-sauta-	Ps'w	Basūdan	to touch
Patidita-	padēd	badīd	obvious, clear, plain
Pati-baud-sa-	Payōs	Bayus	expectation, waiting
Pati-gāraka-	Payγārag	Bayγāre	reproach, sarcasm
Pati-Marsa-	Parmās-	Barmās	to touch sth

Table 1 Transformation of /p/ to /b/ in Persian.

In Fars-Nama-ye Naseri (Ḥosaynī Fasāʾī 2009: 1232-1233), with reference to Abarj it is said that: "Abarj originally was derived from Barah, then according to a rule in Dari Persian, an "a" was added to its beginning and it changed into Abrah. Finally, under the impact of an Arabic rule, it transformed into Abarj". The reference to the specific rule in Dari Persian, i.e. adding of an "a" to the beginning of a word, in the previous quote, can help us better understand the change of Parg in Middle Persian to Aparg, and then to Abarj due to Arabicization (/g/ to /ʤ/). As regards the adding of this "a" to the beginning of words, we can also refer to Brug in Middle Persian that changed to Abru in New Persian (MacKenzie 1971:20).

As noted above, this prothetic vowel /a/, we believe, could have happened based on a process called analogy in historical linguistics. To indicate that this process of analogy is valid, several examples existing in New Persian which confirm such change are presented in Table 2. In New Persian, the words derived are used either with or without this prothetic vowel and sometimes both are acceptable.

Old Persian forms (without the prothetic vowel /a/)	New Persian forms (with the prothetic vowel /a/)	Meaning
nār	anār	pomegranate
gar	agar	if
fozūn	afzūn	surplus
brū	abrū	eyebrow
barkūh	abarkūh	an area in the Northern East of Fars Province

Table 2 The presence of initial prothetic vowel /a/ in New Persian.

Moreover, in Elamite, the part relating to our discussion is as follows:

> [-pi-be] ᴅiš ir-du-mar-ti-ia [ir-ma-ši-in-nu-ik šá-pár-rák-um-me] hu-ut-ti-man-ra ⌜ᴬš KUR ᴹᴱˢ⌝ ᴀš pár-rák-ka hi-še ha-mi šá-pár-rák-um-me hu-ud-da-
> "came to confront Artavardiya. A mountain named Parga, there they fought" (Aliary Babolghani 2015:126-127).

In the above part, the Elamite term *šá-pár-rák*, used here to mean the 'battle', persuades the researcher to believe that the term Shahrak, used before Abarj in the current Shahrak-e Abarj, has an Elamite root and has not have been derived from *xšaça-* in Old Persian. The linguistic evidence supports such a claim. It is possible that the Elamite name *šá-pár-rák*, due to some sound changes in Old Persian, had been taken as a

loanword in the form of *šafrak(a)-*. If so, it is expected that this name was changed into *šafrak* in Middle Persian (Sasani Pahlavīk). According to another principle which some researchers, such as Hübschmann (1895), have mentioned, sometimes the Old Persian consonant /f/ has changed into /h/ in Middle and New Persian; a point that can be proved by some evidence at hand. The word *kaufa-* in Old Persian (the equivalent of *kaofa-* in Avestan), for example, has evolved into *kōf* in Middle Persian; and the word *kūh* in New Persian is derived from it (Kent 1953:178). In addition, numerous other examples of the kind can be presented as in *dahān* in New Persian taken from **dafan* in Old Persian (*zafan/zafar* in Avestan) (Hassandust 2014:II/1381), *bahman* (meaning 'avalanche') taken from *vafman* (related to *vafra* meaning 'snow' in Avestan, from the root of √*vaf* meaning 'to spread or to throw around'), *kahra* (a 'kid') from *kafra-* in Old Persian (compare this with *capri-* in Latin) (Hassandust 2014), *kolah* (a 'hat') from *kulāf* in Middle Persian (Mackenzie 2011), and so on. Having in mind this principle, one can extrapolate that the Old and Middle Persian forms of *šafrak* have changed to *šahrak* in New Persian, something originally derived from *šá-pár-rák*, a word existing long-before in Elamite.

Apropos the place named Tāravā which has been identified by many a researcher with Tarom, the authors of this article tend to believe that in order to pinpoint the real location of this place we need to take heed of its Elamite recorded form which is [*Da*]-*ra-ú-ma* or [*Tur*]-*ra-ú-ma* even though it has been said that "the reconstruction of the Elamite form of it, due to the uncertainty surrounding its initial syllable ([*Da*] or [*Tur*]) is not fully well-grounded" (Tavernier 2007: 31). However, by taking into consideration the other phonemes of the same word, our knowledge of linguistics, and the chronology of the story narrated according to the Behistun Inscription, we can identify the present location of Tāravā. Particularly so, when we bear in mind that the first battle between Vahyazdāta and Darius's army occurred in a place called Raxā, in Old Persian, which is the same as Rák-ka$_4$-an in Elamite and is called Zarqan these days (Arfaei 2008: 44). As regards Tāravā, we can presume it to be what we today call Kharameh which is situated on the last branches of the Kor River. As described in

historical geography, its name used to be *xorramma* that belonged to Tasuj Rural District and was one of the states of Istakhr (Schwarz 1993: 53). According to Schwarz (1993), both Tasuj and Istakhr were deemed to be in the cold regions of Fars Province. Based on the Behistun Inscription, Vahyazdāta belonged to Tāravā and the region of Yutiyā which are two intertwined areas; and interestingly enough, Gershevitch considers the initial Y in Yutiyā as prosthetic and adds that this word together with the Avestan form of *aota-* is related to a cold place. Gershevitch, consequently, defines the word [Y]utiya as a cold region (as cited in Tavernier 2007: 32). What more we know is that Forg and Tarom, on the other hand, are both believed to be positioned in the hot areas of Fars Province. In Fars-Nama-ye Naseri (Ḥosaynī Fasāʾī 2009), when elaborating on these two places, it is stated that: "its weather and water quite hot and inclement" (p. 1352). In the same source, mention is made of the cold regions in Fars such as "Istakhr, Beyza, Abarj, Kamfiruz, and Kharameh" (Schwarz 1993: 37). From long before until now, Kharameh has always been regarded as one of the most important cities in Fars Province, a city used to enjoy a significant castle and a rampart (Ibn Balkhi 1964: 163). It appears that the current name of Kharameh is taken from *huramag*, its Middle Persian form (Zare 2008: 86). The change of H to X is normal in New Persian, as in the transformation of *hu* in Middle Persian to *khub* in New Persian, also the change evident in Hu-čihr to Khub- čihr, or Husraw to Khusraw. If so, it can be safely opined that the phoneme H present in Middle Persian is taken from ç in Old Persian, and this phoneme, ç, itself from T in Elamite. Notwithstanding the fact that the two initial phonemes of Tāravā are broken and thus illegible in the Elamite version, it is likely that the present form of Kharameh is the evolved version of the Elamite [Tur]-ra-ú-ma. It is worth mentioning that Henkelman (2012) has also suggested the reconstructed word Bardija* for Vahyazdāta or the second False Smerdis.

The geographical place of the mountain of Shahrak-e Abarj and its historical background

    Shahrak-e Abarj is situated in the northwest of Shiraz; it is a village in Dorudzan Rural District, Marvdasht, Fars Province, Iran.

The Kor River is just one km from the Mountain of Shahrak-e Abarj. The geographical position of this mountain is n 30° 10' 58'' w 52° 29' 51''. The distance of this mountain from Shiraz is approximately 60 kilometers and 40 kilometers from Persepolis. Dorudzan District has three rural districts (dehestan): Abarj Rural District, Dorudzan Rural District, and Ramjerd Rural District. This district, together with all its villages, lands, and the mountain ranges enclosing it, is surrounded on the north by Eqlid (Sivand Mountain), on the west by Kamfiruz District (Henkelman 2008: 116-118), a significant area in the Persepolis Fortification Tablets, on the south by Zan Mountain and Beyza District (where ancient Anzan is located), on the east by Marvdasht County, Central District (Persepolis is located here), and on the northeast by Seyyedan District (on the road leading to Pasargadae). With the remarkable information that historical geography provides us, it seems that all the lands which today belong to Dorudzan District was once known as *khvrh* or Abarj and was regarded as part of the Istakhr Region (Ibn Khordadbeh 1991; Istakhri 1968; Ibn Balkhi 1964; Muqaddasi 1988; Ibn Hawqal 1987). What can be concluded from the sources and information provided by historical geography and also the present geographical information at hand is that this area, enclosed between three ancient points, i.e. Persepolis, Anzan, and Kamfiruz, was a cold and mountainous place as portrayed in various sources as follows:

> "Abarj is a large village located to the end of a mountain which is its shield. Many houses carved in that mountain and a stream of water runs through the mountain and supplies the water of that area." (Ibn Balkhi 1964:150).
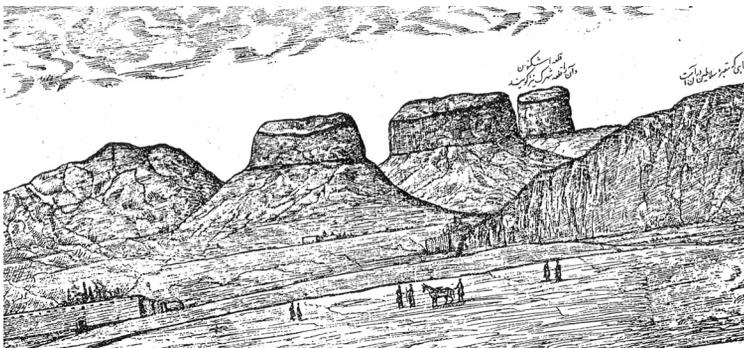

Figure 1. An old portrait of the Three-Gonbadan (Abarj, Istakhr, and Shekasteh) and the wall of Naqsh-e Rustam (Ḥosaynī Fasāʾī 2009: 1621).

All the sources conclusively inform us of the presence of the Kor River and high mountainous areas with unreachable castles in this area. Three mountains, in particular, are referred to as the source of protection for Iranians; three mountains that if looked at in a line may look like separate towers. These three mountains are known these days as Shekasteh Mountain (the broken mountain), Istakhr Mountain and the Mountain of Shahrak-e Abarj (Figure 1). Talking about the same issue in Ibn Balkhi's (1964) *Fārs-Nāma*, it is said, "…and built three castles {Jamshid}, first of them is Istakhr Castle, second Shekasteh Castle, and third Shaknavan Castle, in the middle of the city; and they were called Three-Gonbadan" (p. 150). In reference to these castles of Istakhr, in Ibn Balkhi's (1964) *Fārs-Nāma* it is noted: "… and three castles all in the plain of Marvdasht and Abarj" (p. 254). Ferdowsi, regarding the same castles, says:

نشستنگهِ شاهِ ایران‌زمین   به سه گنبدان ستخرِ گُزّین

In *Fars-Nama-ye Naseri* (Ḥosaynī Fasāʾī 2009), it is said: "the first is called Ashknavan located in an area called Abarj" (p. 254). About Ashknavan Castle, we are told that: "Ashknavan is in Abarj… and that I had seen it in a historical book recorded as Gozin and that what is said about it:

گل است و سپیدو ستخر و گُزّین   پناه دلیرانِ ایران‌زمین

What is meant by Gozin Castle is a castle in Abarj which is also known as Ashknavan and the distance between this castle to the Shekasteh Catle and Istakhr Castle is roughly three Parasangs" (Forsat-ol-Dowleh 1983: 220-222). The location of this castle is in the same mountain known from long before now as Abarj Mountain or the Mountain of Shahrak-e Abarj. This mountain, which is 2 kilometers from Dorudzan village, is within the area that myriads of historical objects and places left from the Achaemenid period have been found (Nicol 1970; Bergner 1937; Sumner 1986). An Achaemenid monument attributed as Bardeh-Borideh and identified as the Achaemenid Point D in Nicol's (1970) archaeological excavations is precisely located in the foothills of the same mountain. Nicol (1970)

specifies that: "from the top of the Mountain of Shahrak-e Abarj, one can behold Naqsh-e Rustam Mountain. In between Point D and Persepolis, there is a vast plain on which two mountains called Castle and Istakhr have ascended to the sky" (p. 281). He also, alluding to the Gates of Pars referred to in a host of Greek historians' works, identifies Abarj with the Gates of Pars and asserts that: "if these remained ruins are the same as the Gates of Pars, then Alexander the Great must have entered from the south, from the plain next to the Mountain of Shahrak-e Abarj, the Castle Mountain and Istakhr Mountain" (Nicol 1970: 281). The Mountain of Shahrak-e Abarj, reaching for the sky, is left abandoned. It is enclosed from the northwest by the Dashtak mountainous region, from the south by the ancient Anzan, from the west by Kamfiruz (an area with a history equaling that of Persepolis Fortification Tablets), and from the east by the lands of Ramjerd, Marvdasht, and Persepolis (see Figure 2 and Map 1).

Figure 2. The Mountain of Shahrak-e Abarj and one of the three enormous mountainous castles of Istakhr (http://wikimapia.org).

In addition to the many reports apropos this mountain and this castle, some of which are cursorily referred to in this article, present in the oldest sources of historical geography, there are certain stories, narrated by the local people, which bear some on our understanding of events of the remote past. In the north of the Mountain of Shahrak-e Abarj, where the foothills of this mountain joins with the walls of Dashtak
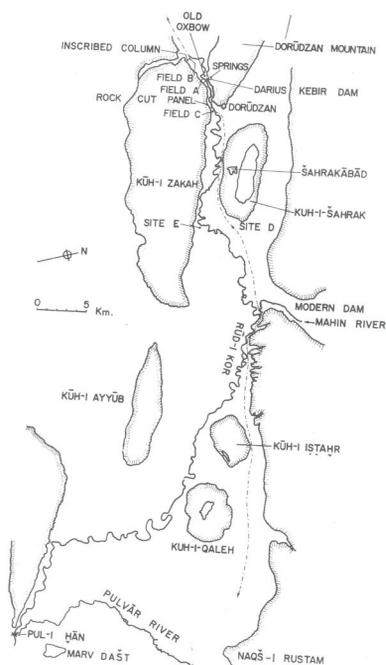
Map 1. Map of the three mountainous castles in the catchments of the Kor River (Nicol 1970: 248).

Mountain, there is a mountain pass which is famous even today as Du-Shahi alleged to be the place where the two Kings (Darius and Vahyazdāta) confronted each other. According to the same report, the king coming from Persepolis triumphed over the other. The importance of this local narrative becomes clearer when we take into consideration that exactly a few hundred meters away from this place (Du-Shahi), down the mountain of Shahrak-e Abarj and attached to the walls of Dashtak Mountain, stands an ancient Tower (Figure 3) of Silence, the presence of which is an indication of the Achaemenid period.

Conclusion

We can now, by bearing in mind all the points elaborated, expounded, and alluded to in this article, reconstruct the nebulous parts regarding the very event, talked about from the
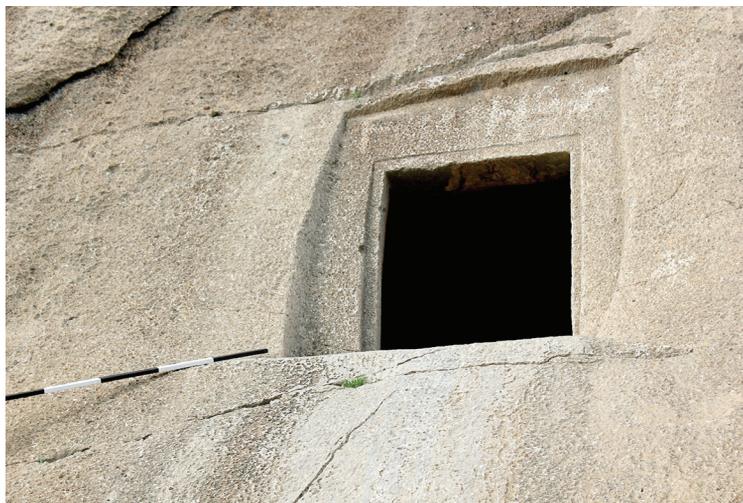
Figure 3. A tower of silence used for the exposure of the dead in Dashtak Mountain, across from the Mountain of Shahrak-e Abarj (picture taken by the author).
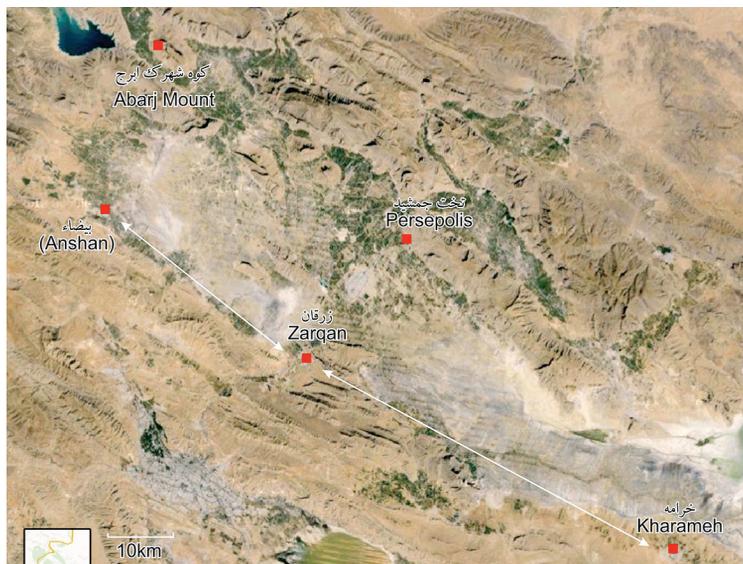
Map 2. Kharameh, Zarqan, Anzan, and the Mountain of Shahrak-e Abarj.

commencement of this article, in the Behistun Inscription. Vahyazdāta, according to the inscription, is from Tāravā and Yutiyā, both places in the neighbourhood of Central Fars (perhaps Kharameh), and becomes the king of Persia and his being the King of Persia is confirmed by the assent of the whole court of Anzan. Darius deputes Ṛtavardiya to go and fight Vahyazdāta. Not far away from Anzan and somewhere between Anzan and Tāravā, the first battle transpires in Rakhā (either Zarqan or Ramjerd) (see Map 2). Darius's army overwhelms the enemy and Vahyazdāta flees to the mountainous areas in Fars, Paišiyāʰuvādā, which should not be too far from Pasargadae. After nearly a month, Vahyazdāta advances towards the Darius's army for the second time; he is defeated again in a place called Parga, possible Abarj in Fars, and is captured. Afterwards, he is sent to Uvadaicaya, an exceedingly critical place near Persepolis and the most significant city before Persepolis had been built, and is crucified there (Arfaei 2008).

Map 3. Shahrak-e Abarj and its distance from other sites.

In this article, an effort has been made to pinpoint the real whereabouts of Parga Mountain referred to in the Behistun Inscription when dealing with the story of Darius and Vahyazdāta. With the relatively substantial amount of evidence provided throughout this article, it can be safely deduced that this mountain, Parga, referred to in the Behistun Inscription, is the same as the Mountain of Shahrak-e Abarj. On the other hand, certain reasons corroborated by historical geographical information have been presented to refute the idea which identifies the current city of Forg with Parga and Tarom with Tāravā. Ultimately, it should be underlined that all the events described in the Behistun Inscription considering the battle between Darius and Vahyazdāta must have occurred somewhere near the central and northern parts of Fars, i.e. the main areas in the reign of Pars in ancient
Times (Map 3).

Acknowledgments

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