

Original Text in Farsi of

BORZKUH IN SHAHNAAMEH

By

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For

**Presentation to Harvard University Conference
on Firdausi to be held on March 25-26th, 1999
At Centre for the Middle Eastern Studies
Harvard University**

SYNOPSIS

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Firdausi has used the term "BORZKUH" in various occasions. One of them is at the beginning of the reign of Khosrow Anushirvan, at which time the king was to quell the Baluchi tribes

به سوی بلوچ اندر آمد به راه و ...
چو آمد به نزدیک آن بُرْزْکُوه
بگردید گرد اندرش با گروه

The war was struck and a large number of people were killed

By using the word BORZKUH, apparently the poet here must have meant a Kuh, which was Borz (high), (Dr. Molin's Lexicon explains that in Farsi literature BORZKUH has been mentioned to describe ALBORZ. In other words, Alborz and BORZKUH are literally the same).

But, here I must stress that in no place has Firdausi used the word BORZKUH to mean ALBORZ, for he has explicitly used the original name for Alborzkuh wherever he raised that subject.

A study of the ancient history brings us to the events of the subjugation of the warring tribes in the mountainous regions of Kerman, Tabari specifically mentions that at the end of the reign of Ghobad, the father of Anushirvan, large parts of southeastern section of the country had disintegrated, and it was because of this that Anushirvan, for his part, had to bring a large force to quell the uprisings. Anushirvan's forces came to Kerman, and from there the areas of Sind, Bost, Alrokhaj, Zabolistan, Tkharestan, Dahestan and Kabolistan were also attacked and subdued by him.

Meaning he executed a huge bloodshed upon a tribe, named BAREZ.

Ibn Khaldoun adds, Anushirvan scattered a great mass of the Barez people throughout the country, and enlisted a number of their men into his army. Noldke, on the other hand, mentions that in addition to the Barez tribe, Anushirvan also subdued the Shul people, and only left eighty of them alive, whom he later placed in Shahram Pirooz.

This tribe inhabited the mountains which are known today as Jebal Barez in Kerman Province. The mountains that start from the Northwestern Kerman and reach the Southeastern part of the province, in the proximity of Reegan.

Vaziri, the author of Kerman Geography, holds that the abundance of the natural resources of Kerman depends very much on these mountains.

Sir Mark Aurel Stein, is one of the first of the Iranologists, who arrived in Kerman in 1933 to study the patterns of their tribal settlement and history. He was our guest in these mountains and was the one who discovered the Sar Cheshmeh Copper Mines, for the first time.

Christensen, emphasizes that the present Barez tribe are the descendants of the ones that had encounters with Anushirvan.

Dameshghi in his book Nokhbatoddahr insists that in Kuh Barez iron and silver are to be found.

In my opinion, by BARZKUH, Firdausi means Barez Kuh, which in Arabic translates into Jebal Barez, and if this conjecture is to be true, we must read the word as BARZKUH and not BORZKUH.

In other place, Firdausi speaks of BARZKUH and that is at the time that he deals with the period of Kaikhosro when after killing Afrasiab, he experiences a drastic psychological change in his nature. At this time he appoints Lohrasb as his heir, and abdicates the throne in order to take refuge in a particular mountain where there was so much snow that "a pole could not fathom it". Kaikhosro built a temple there and set himself apart from the world and his companions:

سر هفته گشتند یکسر ستوه
چو از برف پیدا شود شاهراه

ببودند یک هفته بر برزکوه
مگر باز گردند و یابند شاه

Firdausi does not indicate where this mountain was, but Bal'ami, who has translated Tabari, mentions Abu Ja'far Zaratasht, the Magi of Motasem era, who has recounted the story of this self-containment of Kaikhosro, under the title of "Bashtasb son of Lohrasb".

He describes that Bashtasb "departed for Kerman and Sistan, and resided in the mountain called Tamidar and devoted himself to the worship and thanksgiving".

Ibn Asir also calls this mountain as "Tamidar".

It is worth mentioning that in the Iranian satire between Kaikhosro and Bahman, Bishtasb = Goshtasb, a sort of intermixture or infusion has taken place, and all this goes back to the time of Cyrus the great.

Kuh Tamidar, which is today known as Kuh Tanbur, is located about thirty kilometers to the east of Sirjan amidst the same Jebal Barez in the neighborhood of Chahar Gonbad, It was in this place that the army of Bani Aamer in the year 29 H or 650 A.D. was confronted with heavy snow as he and his army were passing through. They met the heavy snow as Kaikhosro, who could not "fathom it with a pole" did. The Arab Army could hardly survive the rigor of the snowy winter.

Firdausi speaks of BARZKUH for the third time when he relates of the interior wars of Khosro Parviz in which he was defeated by Bahram Chubineh, and Khosro Parviz's flight to Bizantium to receive help from his father-in-law, the Emperor. In the western mountains of Iran he comes across a Christian cloister, where he eats bread and fresh herbs, and drinks wine made of dates.

Here he contemplates his future.

جهانديده سوي سُف کرد روی	چو خسرو برفت از بر چاره جوی
بباید بُدن ناپدید از گروه	که اکنون شما را بدین برزکوه

The Christian clergyman apologizes for his simple reception

فطیر است با ترّه جویبار	سکویا بدو گفت کای نامدار
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This word سکویا is the pure Farsi form of سُف which today we call اسف.

A general was after them and

چو نزدیکتر شد بدان برزکوه	بباید دمان از میان گروه
..... الی آخر	به خسرو چنین گفت کای سرفراز

We disregard the conversation between the priest and Khosro Parviz, and also the fact that later the clergyman tried to convert Khosro Parviz into christianity, and Khosro's refusal to do that, and now we turn our attention to the fate of the struggle between Khosro and his general, Bahram Chubineh, who was eventually defeated by the King, and Bahram's ultimate flight to the East. In reading the story we come across BARZKUH in the West.

The Priest had informed Khosro that they produced wine from dates. This indication encourages us to think that the place must have been around the present Ghasr-e-Shirin, or in the neighborhood of Kurdistan.

Another word that gives us some encouragement to think that we are getting close to the right deduction is the word "BAARZANI", or the well known Kurdish tribe in the west of Iran. This tribe has lived in the land of Barzanjeh or Barzinjar for centuries, and they still live there.

Is it not scientifically correct here to infer that Firdausi's BARZKUH relates to this tribe and their land, and most probably, the existence of the cloister to be around Zab-e-Bozorg or Barzeman Castle near Haleb or Barzemahan (Barz Country) near Ghasr-e-Shirin ?

Many years later in history, we come across Habib-e-Ibn-e-Behriz, the prelate of Mosul, who may have previously been one of the residents of the same cloister.

Behriz, a small settlement near Baghoobeh, can further prove our point here. Firdausi had not even finished this story when the tragic event of his child's death unfortunately occurred, and he grieves for the loss of his child:

نه نیکو بود که بنام به گنج	مرا سال بگذشت بر شصت و پنج
براندیشم از مرگ فرزند خویش	مگر بهره گیرم من از پند خویش
ز دردش منم چون تنی بی روان	مرا بود نوبت، برفت آن جوان
نه بر آرزو یافت گیتی، برفت	جوان را چو شد سال بر سی و هفت

In any event, these words about BARZKUH in Shahnameh are presented to this conference at Harvard University by a man who himself is the native of a small settlement in the heart of Jebal Barez called PARIZ.

This settlement has played host to such distinguished scholars as Sir Mark Aurel Stein in 1933, as well as others, at various dates.

This speaker, Bastani Parizi, considers himself to be a descendant of the passionate Barez Tribe, who, one day even fought mighty Anushirvan. But, this descendant's once also fiery nature, true to his ancestor's tradition, has now transformed into the relaxed and quiet world of submission through passage of time. He is indeed proud to have been offered this opportunity to make his humble presentation at this noble gathering.