



xšnaoθrahe ahurahe mazdā

Detail from above the entrance of Tehran's fire temple, 1286š/1917–18. Photo by © Shervin Farridnejad

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The Persian Gulf in the *Cosmographia* of the Anonymous Geographer of Ravenna, c. 700 AD

Daniel T. Potts
Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, New York University

Abstract

The Anonymous Geographer of Ravenna wrote his *Cosmographia* c. 700 CE. This paper examines that part of the work which lists the names of islands located in the Persian Gulf. It examines the sources of those names, their attestation in earlier sources (e.g., Strabo, Pliny, Arrian, Pomponius Mela, Stephen of Byzantium) and suggests identifications, wherever possible, with modern toponyms. Places located on the east coast of Arabia and in the Oman peninsula are also discussed.

Keywords: Persian Gulf Iran Anonymous Geographer of Ravenna historical geography
Arsatius Adfroditianus

Introduction

When the eminent Dutch jurist and scholar Hugues de Groot, better known as Hugo Grotius (1583–1645), died he left behind a manuscript dealing with the history of the Goths, Vandals and Lombards which contained three references to an unpublished, ancient chorography (d’Avezac 1888, 33) that allegedly included material drawn from the Ostrogothic writers Athanarid (c. 496–407), Marco-

mir and Heldebald (both pre-600) — all of whom may have been *Gothorum philosophi* (Wright 1861, 4) at the court of the Ostrogothic king Theodoric the Great (reigned 454–526; Staab 1976, 54) in Ravenna — as well as the late Roman writer Jordanes (6th century; Schnetz 1926). Just a few years after Grotius' death, the equally eminent Isaac Vossius referred in his edition of Pomponius Mela to the author of the same unpublished chorography as the Anonymous Geographer of Ravenna (Vossius 1658, 12, 29, 170, 197, 266, 268; hereafter Rav.), noting the frequent correspondences between his testimony and that of the late Roman world map known as the Peutinger Table, dated by some scholars to c. 300 AD (Talbert 2010, 123–32) and by others to the reign of Theodosius II (r. 408–50), since the depiction of Constantinople on the map appears to show the column of Arcadius which was completed in 421 (Weber 1976, 10; 2012, 367). The cryptic entry 'Descriptio Regionum totius Orbis. Ex codice Regio 1431' appeared in a catalogue of manuscripts relating to Classical antiquity and Biblical scripture published in 1653 (Labbé 1653, 49) but it was not until 1688 that the French Benedictine monk Placide Porcheron (1652–94), librarian of the Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés (d'Avezac 1888, 38), published an edition, dedicated to Louis XIV, of this Latin text which was in fact the very one referred to earlier by Grotius, Vossius and Labbé (Porcheron 1688).

Since that time only two further exemplars of this work have been identified, one in the Vatican (A = Vaticanus, Urbinas 961) and another in Basel (C = Basiliensis F.V. 6). Of the three, the Paris codex (B = Parisinus, bibliothecae nat. 4794) is both the oldest (13th century) and the best preserved. The other two are dated, palaeographically, to the 14th century (Schnetz 1920, 380; 1951, vii). For almost two centuries Porcheron's edition was used by scholars working on problems of historical geography in Europe and Asia. The great French Orientalist Antoine-Isaac Sylvestre de Sacy, for example, who wrote extensively on the inscriptions and antiquities of Iran (e.g. Sylvestre de Sacy 1793, 1815), owned a copy of Porcheron's work (Anonymous 1847: 35). In 1860 a new edition, based on all three codices (Pinder and Parthey 1860), was published and in 1940 yet another edition appeared (Schnetz 1940).

Rav.'s geographical breadth is astonishing. As he wrote (Book I.1.5),

'licet in India genitus non sim neque alius in Scotia neque perambulaverim Mauritaniam simul nec perscrutatus sim Scythian aut per quadrigines ambulaverim mundi, attamen intellectuali doctrina imbui totum mundum diversarumque gentium habitationes, sicut in eorum libris sub multorum imperatorum temporibus mundus iste descriptus est.'

'though I may not have been born in India or raised in Ireland, though I may not have wandered through Mauretania, investigated Scythia or travelled in the direction of all four cardinal points of the Earth, I have nevertheless gained, in the course of acquiring a theoretical education, knowledge of the entire world and the lands of different peoples, as described in books from the time of many Emperors.'

Rav.'s *modus operandi*, however, departed from that of other chorographers, creating what seems at first sight an extremely idiosyncratic order for the presentation of individual regions and their settlements. He described it as follows (Book I.1.9–10): 'All educated [people] know, that the good Builder of the universe, Christ, our almighty Lord, made everything from nothing and made great lights to adorn

the heavens, using which clever men can calculate divisions of time according to the will of the Creator. Therefore, since the sun moves throughout the day on the southern edge [of the world], according to the command of the powerful Creator, and every hour of the day is marked throughout its course for equinoctial time, like a sundial with its divisions, we can precisely describe all peoples and lands which lie in a wide arc of the impassable Ocean.’ In other words, as Franz Staab wrote in 1976, Rav. ‘visualizes all the land as one continent surrounded by the ocean, except in the Far East where it extends into Paradise. He then distinguishes a northern and a southern half of the earth’s disk. Up to this point, he agrees with the accepted ideas of his time. But then, he diverges by dividing the southern half, starting from the east, into twelve segments corresponding to the daylight hours, and the northern half, starting from sunset, into twelve segments corresponding to the night hours. In his descriptions of the single countries which follow his introductory explanations he tries to adopt the order of these segments’ (Staab 1976, 31; cf. Englisch 2002, 162–66).

Beginning in the east, Rav. places the Indian peoples in the first hour, and in the second hour the ‘land of the Persians, in which the very large Persian Gulf is inscribed, which belongs to the upper part of the southern section of the Ocean’ (Book I.2.2). Further on, Rav. devotes a paragraph to the Persian Gulf and its islands. It is to the elucidation of this material and its sources that the remainder of this paper is devoted.

Book V 17

The description of the Persian Gulf begins as follows:

‘In colfo vero Persico ex Oceano summae partis meridianaе pertinente sunt diversae insulae, ex quibus et nominare volumus, id est...’

‘Now in the Persian Gulf, which extends from the Ocean of the uppermost southern portion [of the world, *i.e.*, from the southern part of the world to the Ocean above] are various islands, of which we wish to name a selection, that is...’

After this 20 toponyms are listed (numbers are inserted here before each name for ease of reference:

[1] Ogiris, [2] Oracea, [3] Durcadena, [4] Racheros, [5] Orgina, [6] Casara, [7] Cataga, [8] Ostana, [9] Ciprusa, [10] Tagna, [11] Ilodes, [12] Morcanaxia, [13] Aspiate, [14] Cirta, [15] Tirus, [16] Mapi-lide, [17] Cersonis, [18] Per/Protarute, [19] Polea Ponessos, [20] Thilor.

Despite their sometimes variant orthography, Placide Porcheron recognized eight of the toponyms listed by Rav. in the works of much more ancient authors, including Pliny the Elder, Pomponius Mela, Arrian, Claudius Ptolemy and Stephen of Byzantium, and on the Peutinger Table (Porcheron 1688, 275). These are as follows:

[1] Ogiris – Pliny, *Natural History* 6.32, ‘Out at sea off this coast lies the island of Ogyris, famous as the burial place of King Erythras; its distance from the mainland is 125 miles and it measures 112 1/2 miles round’; Pomponius Mela 2.36, ‘A number of islands are located in the middle region of this gulf, but Ogyris is more famous than all the others because the funerary monument of King Erythras is on it’ (Romer 1998, 124).

[5] Orgina – Arrian, *Indica* 8.37, ‘Coasting along a rough and desert island, they anchored off another

island, a large one, and inhabited...The desert island was called Organa.’

- [6] Casara – Insula casara, *Tab. Peut.* XI [the number refers to the section of the Peutinger Table on which the name appears]; possibly Cassandra of Pliny, *Natural History* 6.28, ‘Off the coast of Persis lie the islands of Psilos, Cassandra and Aracha, the last with an extremely lofty mountain, and consecrated to Neptune.’
- [9] Ciprusa – Insula prusa, *Tab. Peut.* XI
- [11] Ilodes – Insula Yrodes, *Tab. Peut.* XI (Pyrodes? Christianopolus 1809, xvi)
- [15] Tirus – Tyros, Strabo, *Geography* 16.3.4, ‘On sailing further, one comes to other islands, I mean Tyros and Arados, which have temples like those of the Phoenicians’; cf. Stephen of Byzantium, *Ethnika* (Meineke 1849, 643)
- [19] Poleaponessos – Insula Pol apon nos, *Tab. Peut.* XI (Poliaponenos? Christianopolus 1809, xvi)
- [20] Thilor – Tylos, Arrian, *Indica* 7.20, ‘The other island was reported to be distant about a day and night’s sail for a ship running before the wind; it was called Tylos; and it was large, and neither rough nor wooded for the most part; but the sort which bore garden fruits and all things in due season’; Claudius Ptolemy, *Geography* 6.7.47.

With the benefit of nearly another two centuries of scholarship, Pinder and Parthey still only managed to add one further name, [17] Cersonis, to this list. They compared this with the toponym Chersonnesos (Χερσοννησος) in Claudius Ptolemy’s *Geography* 7.3 (Pinder and Parthey 1860, 390). The only ancient toponym identified with a modern place name was [1] Ogiris, which Porcheorn believed was Masira island off the southeast coast of the Sultanate of Oman (Porcheron 1688, 275).

Joseph Schnetz, who dedicated most of his scholarly life to the elucidation of Rav.’s work, suggested several emendations in his translation of the text without, however, making any actual identifications. These were as follows: [2] Oracea > Oracta; [7] Cataga > Catag i/a, [13] Aspiate > Appane; [17] Cersonis + [18] Per/Protarute > Cersonis pro[monturium] + Tarute; [19] Polea Ponessos > Polypo-nessos, [20] Thilor > Thilos (Schnetz 1951, 94). Schnetz did not propose any modern identifications and the question is, but there remains more to be said about Rav.’s Persian Gulf islands.

- [1] Ogiris – As noted above, both Pliny and Pomponius Mela refer to Ogiris/Ogyris, as does Dionysius Periegetes (Bernhardy 1828, 37, l. 606, Ὠγυρίς). Since the early 17th century Ogiris has been identified by many scholars with Jarun, i.e. Jazireh-ye Hormuz, in the Straits of Hormuz (e.g. Herbert 1634, 46; d’Anville 1791, 491; Hammer 1825, 253). As noted above, Porcheorn, possibly following Jean Hardouin’s annotations to Pliny’s *Natural History* (Harduinus 1685, 768), identified Ogiris with Masira island off the southeast coast of the Sultanate of Oman (Porcheron 1688, 275) and in this he had many followers (e.g., Ansart 1828, 713; Sprenger 1875, 100; Schiwiek 1962, 76; Tuplin 1991, 277). Others have identified it with Qeshm (Arrowsmith 1839, 605) or Larak (Goukowsky 1974, 122, n. 54). The great German geographer Carl Ritter could not decide between Hormuz and Qeshm (Ritter 1847, 990).

Many have taken Ogyris for a variant of Organa/[5] Orgina (e.g., Salmasius 1629, 1180). Aloys Sprenger, however, noted that while several manuscripts of Claudius Ptolemy’s *Geography* had Ὠγυρίς (Ogyris) as a gloss in the margin alongside Ὀργαῖνα (Organa), this should be interpreted as a substitution for Organa in Ptolemy’s text, not an equation between the two toponyms. Sprenger identified Ogyris with Masira, as Porcheron had done two centuries

earlier and believed, with others before him, that Organa, which was incorrectly inserted here in Ptolemy's text, denoted Hormuz island (Sprenger 1875, 100). Others expressed scepticism regarding this solution given the great distance (2000 stadia) between Karmania and Ogyris (*e.g.*, Mannert 1797, 57). Vincent, while favoring the identity of Ogyris and Organa, suggested that Organa should be emended to 'O-G'rana, or O-Gerana', in which he recognized the early name Jarun for the island of Hormuz (Vincent 1797, 319–20).

- [2] Oracea -- Schnetz suggested emending this to Oraċta and identifying it with the Ὀάρακτα (Oaraċta) of Arrian's *Indica* (37.2; cf. Oracla in Pliny, *Natural History* 6.28; Δύρακτα, Δώακτα [Dorakta/Doakta] in Strabo's, *Geography* 16.3.7; Δῶρα [Dora] in Stephen of Byzantium's *Ethnika* 250–1; Οὐοροχθα [Ouoroċtha] in Claudius Ptolemy's *Geography* 7.9.15). Oaraċta has been identified with Qeshm, the largest island in the Persian Gulf, since the 18th century due to the preservation of its mediaeval name, Broċt or Vroċt, as recorded by the Portuguese traveller Pedro Teixeira (Herbert 1638, 115; d'Anville 1764, 149; 1791, 492; Vincent 1797, 325; Heeren 1805, 841 and n. 1, made the same identification without acknowledging d'Anville and implying that he arrived at this and other identifications of toponyms mentioned in Nearchus' *Indica* by using the modern charts of C. Niebuhr and Delisle de Sales, because, apart from the Greek endings, many names were still recognizable; I can find no trace of this name on the charts of either Niebuhr or Delisle de Sales; cf. Potts 2011, 99)
- [3] Durcadena – This must be the same as 'Dorcados' on the Peutinger Table. Tomaschek considered Durcadena or [4] 'Racheros' to be the island of Larak (Tomaschek 1890, 47).
- [4] Racheros – see above.
- [5] Orgina – This has been identified with Claudius Ptolemy's Organa (Ὀργάνα) and Jarun, *i.e.* Jazireh-ye Hormuz (Tomaschek 1890, 46).
- [6] Casara – Müller compared Rav.'s Casara with Kaes [Qeys], a modern variant of Kish (Jazireh-ye Qeys) (Müller 1855, 360, n. 5). Tomaschek, however, noted a long, narrow, sandy island known in Arabic as Umm al-Qaṣār, called 'Casarusuend' by Balbi (Balbi 1590, 41), which he compared to Casara (Tomaschek 1890, 59).
- [7] Cataga – Schnetz's suggestion Catag(i)a recalls Arrian's Cataea (Καταία), 'a low-lying island, said to be sacred to Hermes and Aphrodite' (*Indica* 37.10). This has been identified by virtually all scholars with Jazireh-ye Qeys or Kish since the 18th century (d'Anville 1764, 152; Vincent 1797, 334; Müller 1850, 360, n. 5).
- [8] Oštana – This is undoubtedly the same as 'Apoštana', where Nearchus and his fleet anchored and of which Arrian wrote, 'many boats were anchored there, and there was a village near, about sixty stadia from the sea' (*Indica* 8.38). On the basis of Captain Simmons (*i.e.*, Capt. D. Simmons, commander of the *Royal Admiral*, Honorable East India Company, who was sailing off of southeastern Arabia in August, 1772; see Horsburgh 1817, 240,), Vincent identified Apoštana with a village called 'Shevoo' between Darabin and Cape Nabon, and derived the name with a hypothetical Persian name like Abuštān or Dahr-Asbān (Vincent 1797, 352–3; cf. Mannert 1797, 534, 'some miles east of Nabend or Cape Nabon, where however our charts show no settlement'). Thanks to a detailed comparison of the distances attributed to the individual segments of Nearchus' journey, F.C. Andreas was able to identify Apoštana as the bay of Nābānd (Andreas 1896, 176). He concluded, more-

over, that Rav.'s Oštana probably derived from a misunderstanding of Nearchus' account (Andreas 1896, 181). Oštana was also compared by Müller with Pliny's 'Stoidis' – 'Cascandrus, 50 miles out at sea, and next to it, with a strait flowing between, Stoidis, with a valuable pearl fishery' (*Natural History* 6.28) – and he suggested a Persian or Arabic forerunner like Abu-oštana (Müller 1855, 361, n. 7).

- [9] Ciprusa – This name is the Cyprusa of the Peutinger Table (Müller 1855, 360, n. 5).
- [10] Tagna – Müller suggested that Rav.'s Tagna was a contracted form of the toponym known to Claudius Ptolemy and Ammianus Marcellinus as Tabiana (Ταβιάνα) (Müller 1855, 360, n. 5) and Marcian (fl. c. 400 AD) as 'Taxiana' (Schoff 1927, 20). Tomaschek believed that these names were reflected in the hydronym Tab (mod. Jarrahi) which appeared to preserve the first syllable of Tabiana (Tomaschek 1890, 72–3).
- [11] Ilodes – This is undoubtedly the same as *Pyloides kolpos* (χόλπος Πηλώδης) of Claudius Ptolemy (Tomaschek 1890, 75) and Irodes/Pyrodes on the Peutinger Table (Müller 1855, 360, n. 5). Tomaschek identified this with the marshy area at the mouth of the Karkheh, near Khor Musa (Tomaschek 1890, 75).
- [12] Morcanaxia – This may be Arrian's Margastana (Μαργάστανα), 'a small island' (*Indica* 41.2). Tomaschek read 'Morca' and 'Naxia' as two different names, and pointed to a dubious similarity between Morca and Margān, the name of a sand bar at the mouth of Khor Bahmā(n)šīr (Tomaschek 1890, 73).
- [13] Aspiate – Schnetz suggested emending this to Appane without, however, proposing an identification. Tomaschek considered it an island in the northern Persian Gulf close to the mouth of the Euphrates (Tomaschek 1896).
- [14] Cirta – unknown.
- [15] Tirus – This is probably a duplication of the same toponym represented by [20] Thilor/Tylos (see below). Thus, in his entry on 'Tyros', Stephen of Byzantium wrote, 'island in the Erythraean Sea which Artemidorus calls Tylos with an -l' and Strabo used the same form (Bowersock 1986, 400).
- [16] Mapilide – unknown.
- [17] Cersonis – see below
- [18] Per/Protarute – Schnetz suggested that [17] Cersonis and [18] Per/Protarute represent the division of a single toponym and its prefixes 'peninsula-promontory (Gr. *chersonēsos* + Lat. *pro* [*promonturium*]) Tarute.' To my knowledge, this is the earliest attestation of the toponym Tarut. Nearly contemporary Nestorian documents, such as Canon 21 of the Acts of the Catholicos Mar Isaac in 410, mentions the ordination of a Metropolitan named Paul for the islands 'Ardī' and 'Twdwrw' (Braun 1900, 33). It is possible that this refers to Arados [mod. Arad, the northernmost of the Bahrain islands] and Tarut. On the other hand, 'Ardī' or 'Ardai' is a variant of Darai/Deirīn (Chabot 1902, 666, 671) and the acts of a synod held in May, 676, refer to Bēt Ḳatrāyē, a collective term applied to the entire northeast Arabian region, and the island of 'Dīrīn' (Braun 1900, 331), where the synod was held. In contrast to Chabot, who identified this with one of the Bahrain islands, we recognize in Dīrīn (mod. Darīn) the name of the principal town on Tarut. Other toponyms mentioned in this context are 'Mešamhīg' (cf. mod. Samaheej on Bahrain) and 'Tlwn' (cf. Tilmun, the Akkadian name

for Bahrain; Braun 1900, 333).

- [19] Polea Ponessos – As noted above, Schnetz suggested this toponym represented something like Polypo-nesos, *i.e.*, an island (Gr. *nēsos*) named after ‘polyphen’, *i.e.*, multi-limbed hydra or octopus (Schnetz 1951, 94, ‘Tintenfischinsel’). Marcian mentioned ‘an island called Pola’ off the coast of Karmania (Schoff 1927, 23). This may be a corrupted form of Pylora, ‘a desert island’ (Arrian, *Indica* 37.8) which has long been identified with Jazireh-ye Farur (*e.g.*, d’Anville 1764, 152; Tomaschek 1890, 51), a few kilometers to the west of Bandar-e Lengeh.
- [20] Thilor – Schnetz’s suggestion that this represents Thilos, *i.e.*, Tylos, identifies it with the largest of the Bahrain islands (Sprenger 1875, 116; Oppert 1880, 91; Tomaschek 1890, 49).

Other toponyms in the Persian Gulf mentioned by Rav.

Rav.’s paragraph on the Persian Gulf does not completely exhaust his coverage of the region. Speaking of Arabia Eudaimon in Book II 6, he tells us, ‘That here there were very many cities, I have read in [the works of] many scholars. But I want to describe some of them according to the aforementioned Castrorius.’ In a list that begins with Leucecome (*Leuke kome*, on the Red Sea coast of northwestern Arabia), he proceeds to list several more west Arabian toponyms followed by ‘[a] Carcha, [b] Gera, [c] Taboca, [d] Romanis, [e] Matramis, [f] Tabam, [g] Omme, [h] Samematride, [i] Castrillum Amarium.’ Schnetz’s suggested emendations were as follows: [b] Gera > Geraei, [c] Taboca > Chotar, [d] Romanis > Omanis, [e] Matramis > Matra<sa>mis or Matra<sama>mis, [f] Tabam > <Ca>tabani, [g] Omme > Omna, [h] Samematride > <Ma>sani Oman id ē, [i] Castrillum Amarium > Castra Omani<t>arum (Schnetz 1951, 28).

Schnetz wrote his 1920 doctoral dissertation on Arabia in the Rav. and as such his discussions of the abovementioned names are extensive. As these names have scarcely been considered by other scholars (for the toponyms in Oman see also Potts 1985, 85–8) it may be useful to review his commentary.

- [a] Carcha – Schnetz identified this as a Latinized form of Aramaic *karḥ*, *i.e.*, ‘fortified city’ or simply ‘city.’ He identified this with the settlement called Haḡar, ‘city’, by Arab geographers, namely modern Hofuf in what is today eastern Saudi Arabia (Schnetz 1920, 399).
- [b] Gera – Schnetz identified this with Gerrha of the Greek and Roman sources, a site likely to be identical to the large archaeological site of Thaj, c. 90 kms west of al-Jubayl in northeastern Saudi Arabia (Potts 1984).
- [c] Taboca – Through a careful analysis of both palaeography and repeated copyist’s errors, Schnetz was able to convincingly argue for the systematic replacement of certain letters and letter combinations in Rav. In this way he deduced that the underlying form of the name here was Chotar which he identified with Arabic *Ḳaṭar*, the peninsula better known today as Qatar, off the east coast of Arabia, near Bahrain (Schnetz 1920, 400).
- [d] Romanis – Porcheron compared this with Coromanis (Porcheron 1688, 50, n. c), *i.e.*, the Koromanis (Κορομανίς) of Claudius Ptolemy (Pinder and Parthey 1860, 57, n. 19), a name interpreted as ‘Khor [lagoon/creek] Omani’ and identified with mod. as-Sabiyah on the bay of Kuwait (Miles 1878, 160). Schnetz rejected this and instead suggested emending Romanis to Omanis in which he saw the coastal port of Omana described in Pliny’s *Natural History* 6.32 (Schnetz 1920, 400, ‘the town of Omana which previous writers have made out to be a famous port of Karmania’) and in the anonymous *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* (§36, ‘Sailing through the mouth of the Gulf, after a six-days’ course there is another market-town

of Persia called Ommana'). The designation of Om/mana as an emporium of Persia could mean that it lay on the Iranian coast or it could be that it was on the Arabian coast somewhere but controlled or largely peopled by Persians. In the latter case, as the *Periplus* dates to the mid-1st century CE, it may have been under Arsacid control and the site of ed-Dur, in the emirate of Umm al-Qaiwain, where large quantities of imported goods, including Roman glass, glazed Parthian pottery and Characene coins, have been found, is a likely candidate (Potts 1988, 155).

- [e] Matramis – Assuming a substitution of *-m-* for *-b-* and the omission of the syllable(s) – *sa/sama-*, Schnetz suggested that Matramis in fact masked Batrasavave, 'the town of the Omani' mentioned just before Omana by Pliny (*Natural History* 6.32) (Schnetz 1920, 400–1). Miles suggested that Batrasavave might have been derived from 'baṭḥa ('river bed in a sandy area') Sib', a place close to Muscat (Miles 1878, 164). Matramis also recalls mod. Maṭrah (Muttrah), also located in Muscat (Potts 1985, 87).
- [f] Tabam – An apparent outlier, this was understood by Schnetz as <Ca>tabani, *i.e.*, the Qatabanians (Schnetz 1920, 401). Although this was one of the main groups in South Arabia (mod. Yemen), Schnetz suggested that the original homeland of the Qatabanians lay between the frankincense-producing area of eastern Yemen and the western part of Oman, though there is no evidence to support this conjecture.
- [g] Omme – This was identified by Schnetz with Homna of which Pliny (*Natural History* 6.32) wrote that it was one of the 'towns said by our traders to be now the most frequented ports in the Persian Gulf' (Schnetz 1920, 401). It is possible, however, that Homna and Omana were repetitions of one and the same entry, mis-recorded by Pliny (Potts 1985, 87).
- [h] Samematride + [i] Castrillum Amarium – Schnetz saw the Latin plural noun *castra* ('castles/fortifications') in Castrillum; Samematride he parsed as <Ma>sani + *ematr*, in which, on analogy with other copyist's errors, he saw initial *-o-* instead of *-e-*, and *-n-* instead of *-tr-*, hence 'maṣāni', 'fortifications'; and Amarium as masking a corrupted 'omani->arum', hence 'maṣāni' 'Omān, *id est castra omanitarum*', 'maṣāni' 'Omān, *i.e.* fortifications of the Omanis' (Schnetz 1920, 402; Potts 1985, 87).

Rav.'s sources on the Persian Gulf

Rav.'s sources have been much discussed. In Book II 11.3 Rav. declares:

'Quas diversas provincias multi descripserunt Philosophi, ex quibus ego legi Arsatium & Adfroditianum, Persos, qui lingua Græca Orientem descripserunt, & Caſtorium Romanorum Cosmographum.'

'Many philosophers have described these various provinces, among whom I have read the Persians Arsatius and Adfroditianus, who described the Orient in the Greek language, and the Roman cosmographer Caſtorius.'

If we begin with Caſtorius, it is noteworthy that he was cited 38 times by Rav., making him the most heavily referenced source in the work and accounting for information on over half of all the toponyms

named (Beazley 1897, 305). Yet he is otherwise unattested in ancient sources and, although he was once considered the ‘creator’ of the Peutinger Table, this view has long since been abandoned. Rather, he was perhaps the author of a geographical work based on multiple sources, including an itinerary map like the Peutinger Table (Bon 1950, 185).

More intriguing from an Iranological perspective is Rav.’s reference to ‘the Persians Arsatius and Adfroditianus’. When Miller suggested that Arsatius ‘sounded genuinely Armenian’ (Miller 1898, 44, ‘Arsatius klingt echt armenisch’) he may have been reminded of a name like ‘Aršak.’ This, however, is in fact an Iranian borrowing, cf. Old Persian *Ršaka-*, Parthian *Aršak* (Hübschmann 1904, 299, 405–6; Schmitt 1989, 326, 330), generally Latinized as Arsaces. As Peter Stockmeier noted, however, the name Arsatius or Arsacius could just have well belonged to a Persian or Parthian as an Armenian (Stockmeier 1977). The most famous Arsatius is certainly Saint Arsatius. According to legend he was a follower of Saint Ambrose, became Bishop of Milan and died in 399. His relics were brought by two Bavarian noblemen, the brothers Adalbert and Ottokar, to IImmünster in Bavaria, where they founded a Benedictine monastery in 746 (Mayer 1868, 112–13). Thanks to the close ties between the Papacy and the Carolingian empire, an ever increasing number of saints’ relics were transported from the Roman catacombs to Bavaria. In addition to those of Arsatius (IImmünster), the remains of Quirinus (Tegernsee), Tertullin (Scharnitz-Schlehdorf), Sixtus (Schliersee) and Castulus (Moosburg) were brought to the region (Prinz 1978, 29). In 1494 Pope Alexander VI granted approval for the removal of Saint Arsatius’ relics to Munich by Albrecht IV (1447–1508), Duke of Bavaria (Appl 2011, 69, 97, 94), and there they remained until they were returned in 1846. Some scholars have suggested that Saint Arsatius may be the Christian ‘man of Persia’, mentioned in the incipit of the *Passion of Quirinus (Passio Quirini Tegernseensis)* (Stockmeier 1977), who came to Rome with his wife and children (‘Temporibus Claudii [Claudius II, i.e. Marcus Aurelius Claudius Gothicus, r. 268–70 AD] venit quidam vir de Persidae partibus cum uxore sua et filiis, Marius, Martha, Audifax et Abacuc, christianus vir cum uxore sua et filiis ad orationem apostolorum’ [Mayer 1849, 291]) and who, with his family, discovered Quirinus in a prison in Rome, remaining with him for eight days, prior to his beheading in 269 AD (Ziegler 1978, 103). The *Acta SS. Marii et Marthae*, however, identifies the anonymous Persian *pater familias* in the *Passion of Quirinus* as ‘Marius’ (Jacobsen 1965, 26).

Turning to Adfroditianus, Josef Markwart believed that the name was borrowed from that of the homonymous ‘hellenistic philosopher’ who appears in *De Gestis in Perside*, a 5th-century Syrian Christian text, written in Greek (Markwart 1927, 829–30; for the text see Bratke 1899), which concerns a fictitious Sasanian king named Arrhinatus and Aphroditianus, a Zoroastrian, who is called on to adjudicate a theological dispute between pagans and Christians. Rav.’s Adfroditianus has received little attention. Afrodisius (Ἀφροδίσιος), the name of an Egyptian city prefect (*dux civitatis*) attested in the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, dating to the 8th century, is thought by some scholars to reflect an awareness of Aphroditianus (Ἀφροδιτιανός) in the West (Usener 1889, 37, n. 23; Bratke 1899, 194; Heyden 2009, 1, n. 2) though there were any number of individuals in antiquity named Aphrodisius (e.g., Aphrodisius, Bishop of Bézier; Aphrodisius, Bishop of the Hellespont; Aphrodisius the Athenian sculptor, etc.) and, despite the similarity of Aphrodisius and Adfroditianus, or Aphroditian as it is sometimes written, there is no reason to conflate the two names. Nor is there any evidence to suggest that the otherwise unknown Adfroditianus who served as one of Rav.’s sources is the same as the, almost certainly fictitious, Aphroditianus of *De Gestis in Perside*, although the possibility has been raised hesitantly (Bratke 1899, 238). The name, however, is not fictitious and in Adfroditianus we may have a Latinized version of an

hypothesized Middle Iranian name such as *Vādfradāt/*Wtprdt*, commonly Graecized to Autophradates (Ἀυτοφραδάτης), as in the name of at least three Persid rulers (Alram 1986, 168, 170, 172, 180; Wiesenhöfer 1994, 110ff.; Tavernier 341, 2007 s.v. *Vātafradāta-); Engels 2013, 79), rather than Middle Persian Vādfrāhād (R. Zadok, pers. comm.).

Regardless of the impossibility of linking Arsatius and Adfroditianus with any historically known figures, there is no reason to think that Rav. invented them as sources. Miller first argued that Arsatius and Adfroditianus were Persians or Persarmenians, members of the *Numerus Armeniorum*, *Persarmeni*, a Persarmenian military unit stationed in Ravenna in the late 6th/early 7th century CE (Miller 1898: 44) and attested in a number of contemporary documents (Marini 1805, 148–9 [from 639 CE], 169 and 187–9 [from 591 CE]; on the *Numerus armeniorum* at Ravenna cf. Brown 1984, 90; Mutafian 2002, 34–5). If so, they may well have been in a position to provide Rav. with the names of cities in Iran as well as islands in the Persian Gulf.

Conclusion

Since the 17th century, when the first printed edition of the *Cosmographia* was first printed, the Anonymous Geographer of Ravenna has attracted the attention of many scholars. Rav.'s contribution to the historical geography of the Persian Gulf, however, has scarcely been studied. As this paper has demonstrated, Rav.'s sources were many and varied, and correspondences with names contained in more well-known works by Pliny, Claudius Ptolemy, Strabo, Arrian and other writers makes it clear that knowledge of the region, bolstered by the later testimony of Caistorius, Arsatius and Adfroditianus, was available in Ostrogothic Ravenna around 700 CE. Rav. constitutes a bridge between the Classical geographical tradition of the sources drawing on accounts from the time of Alexander; those of late Antiquity; and the emerging world view of the early Mediaeval period. His work provides an important demonstration of the fact that, in the West, the knowledge acquired roughly a millennium earlier, in the wake of Alexander's conquests, was still very much alive for Christian scholars of the Mediterranean. Rav. is thus an important source to consider in any study of the historical geography of the Persian Gulf.

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