



ĀBĀN

ĀBĀN, Middle Persian term, “the waters” (Av. *āpō*). In Indo-Iranian the word for water is grammatically feminine; the element itself was always characterized as female and was represented by a group of goddesses, the *Āpas*. These evidently represented water apprehended in its diversity, whether as countless waves and droplets or as innumerable separate streams, pools, and wells. The link between them and the element they personified was very close. A Vedic poet, speaking of water, could say that the *Āpas* were wholesome to drink (see H. Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda*, 2nd ed., Berlin, 1917, p. 45). In *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti* (Y. 38.3.) the Waters are venerated as the *ahurānī*, wives of the Ahura (probably, in the original concept, *Apam Napāt* [see also *Ahura*]); they are also celebrated as easy to cross and good to bathe in. They are invoked in the *yasna*, and they preside over the tenth day of each Zoroastrian month. Acts of worship on that day are devoted both to them and to the river *yazatā* of *Arədvī Sūrā*; in general, the concept of the Waters tends to merge with that of *Arədvī Sūrā*. This development probably came about in relatively early times, encouraged by the increased prominence given to *Arədvī* under the Achaemenids. The existing *Ābān Niyāyeš*, the prayer to the Waters, consists almost entirely of verses from the Avestan hymn to *Arədvī*, which, in turn, has been given the name *Ābān Yašt*.

See also [ĀB](#), [ĀB-ZŌHR](#), [ĀBĀN MĀH](#).



BIBLIOGRAPHY

Gray, *Foundations*, p. 136. Boyce, *Zoroastrianism I*, pp. 71, 74.