



## AKVĀN-E DĪV

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**AKVĀN-E DĪV**, the demon Akvān, who was killed by Rostam. According to the *Šāh-nāma* (ed. Mohl, vol. 3, pp. 270ff.) Akvān first confronts Rostam in the shape of a wild ass, large, powerful, with a yellow hide and a black stripe from mane to tail. Rostam chases him on horseback for three days and three nights, but whenever Akvān is in danger, he conceals himself by magic. In the end, Rostam tires and falls asleep, whereupon Akvān, who has been watching him from a distance, approaches and, cutting away the earth around him, lifts him up to the sky. He then asks Rostam whether he should throw him upon a mountain or into the sea. Rostam prefers the sea but, realizing that the *dīv*'s mind is perverse, asks to be thrown onto the mountain. As Rostam surmised, the *dīv* throws him into the sea. Having rescued himself from the water and found his horse Raḳš, Rostam again confronts Akvān; this time, he snares him with his lasso and beheads him. Akvān is described as having a head like an elephant, long hair, a mouth filled with tusks, blue eyes, black lips, and an extremely ugly body.

Spiegel (*Erânische Altertumskunde* I, Leipzig, 1871, p. 637) observes the resemblance between the names “Akvān” and “Akōman”, but Nöldeke (*Das iranische Nationalepos*, Berlin and Leipzig, 1920, p. 10, n. 7) goes a step further and considers it probable that, in Ferdowsī's sources, the Pahlavī Akōman could have been transformed mistakenly into Akvān, or that Ferdowsī himself either read it erroneously as Akvān or deliberately changed it to this form. Nöldeke's view is supported not only by the resemblance between the two names, but also by the fact that Akvān's mind is perverse, something which is



also true of Akōman (the name itself meaning “evil mind”). In fact, the elements of the above story must be considered as an attempt to represent this abstract term symbolically. The reason for Akvān’s cutting the earth all round Rostam may be said to be his fear of touching his armor, known as *babr-e bayān*; according to one account, the original of this garment came from heaven (*Loğat-e fors*, s.v. *babr-e bayān*) and in the story itself (v. 85), Rostam falls asleep wearing it.

In the story of Bīžan and Manīža, after Afrāsīāb throws Bīžan into the pit, he covers it with a heavy stone called “the stone of the demon Akvān,” which Akvān had hurled from the sea to the forests of China. Later Rostam removes the stone, casting it again into the forests of China (*Šāh-nāma*, vol. 3, p. 330, vv. 453ff.; p. 390, v. 1155). This short reference indicates that there were other legends concerning Akvān which have not come down to us.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Given in the text.