



## APŌŠ

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**APŌŠ**, Middle Persian for Av. Apaoša, the demon of drought. He is the evil protagonist of Tištar (Av. Tišrya), the star Sirius. Earlier explanations of the name—\**apa-uša*- “burning away” (Justi, Bartholomae), \**apa-vrt(a)*- “stemming the waters” (Wackernagel and subsequently *communis opinio*, but impossible for phonetical reason)—are now superceded by Forssman’s \**a-pauša*- “unthriving,” cf. OInd. *póṣa*- “thriving,” possibly also Khotanese *pāṣa*²- “power” (Forssman, pp. 40f.). Tištar, by his heliacal rising, heralds the coming of rains but is menaced by summer drought. As recounted in *Yt.* 8.21-29, the God descended to the mythical Frāxkart (Av. Vourukaša) Sea as a mighty white horse. Apōš, as a deformed, black horse, defeated him and drove him from the sea, thus bringing woe to the water, plants, and the religion. Tištar, having prayed for greater worship, returned, did battle at noon, and repelled Apōš. Wellbeing was thus restored. *Yt.* 18.5-6 invokes as bringers of prosperity, besides Tištar, his assistants Wād (Av. Vāta) and Xwarrah (Av. X<sup>v</sup>arənah). Apōš there stands in contrast with “the numbing frost.”

Later Zoroastrian tradition added further detail and interpretation to the Avestan account. In the *Bundahišn* (ed. Anklesaria, pp. 57.7-58.4, 61.10-65.12), the battle over the production of rain is the second phase of the war between the material creations (with their guardians) and the Evil Spirit. Apōš was aided in the struggle by Spenjagr; the latter, however, was defeated by the club of the lightning. Tištar’s assistants were Wahman, Hōm, Burz, and the *fravahrs* of the faithful. The wind likewise had an important role, which is described with greater detail in the *Selections of Zātspram* (Anklesaria 3.7-16). In accord



with the astrological consciousness of later Zoroastrianism, a tendency existed to identify Apōš with the planetary opponent of Sirius, Mercury (Tīr); the demon is so identified in *Bundahišn* (p. 57.15), though elsewhere (e.g., p. 50.3, 11-12) kept distinct. Apōš's attempt to prevent the rain or render it harmful is further recounted in *Dādestān ī Dēnīg* 93, where a popular etymology of the name is given: "The demon is " apōš' by name, which is interpreted 'āb -oš," i.e., "(having) the destruction of water" (K 35, Fol. 200 r. 13-15).

See also [TIŠTRYA](#).

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