



AŠKAŠ

AŠKAŠ, an Iranian hero in the reign of Kay Kōsrow. According to Ferdowsī's *Šāh-nāma* (Moscow ed., IV, p. 28, verses 318f., and V, p. 241, verses 108f.), he fought in Kay Kōsrow's campaigns to avenge Sīavoš, conquering K'vārazm at the king's command and forcing Afrāsīāb's son Šīda to flee to a hiding place in Gorgān (or Kallak) (V, p. 357, verses 2065f.). Among other services, he helped in the rescue of Bīžan from the Turanians (V, p. 20, verse 887 and passim).

This man's name appears as Aškas in Bondārī's Arabic translation of the *Šāh-nāma* and in the *Moǰmal* (p. 91), and as Aškan in 'Abd-al-Qāder al-Baǰdādī's *Gozīda-ye loǰāt-e Šāh-nāma* (nos. 73, 107, 633). There are also differences concerning his lineage. In most texts of the *Šāh-nāma* (including the Moscow ed., IV, p. 28, verse 319 and note 11), he is said to be a descendant of Homāy, but in the Cairo manuscript dated 796/1394 to be a son of Qobāb and in the *Moǰmal* (loc. cit.) to be a son of Qobāb son of Kāva.

The *Šāh-nāma* also contains a statement that Aškaš was the commander of the Kūč and Balūč who were armored from head to foot, on whose helmets stood a crest like a cock's comb (*Loǰat-e fors*, s.v. *kūč*), and whose banners bore a leopard emblem (IV, p. 28, verses 320-22). He is several times described as sharp-eared and sharp-witted, perhaps because he held appointments such as vanguard commander and rearguard commander with responsibility for intercepting any surprise attacks which the enemy might attempt (V, p. 255, verse 336) or any spies and strangers who might try to slip into the Iranian ranks (V, p. 73, verse 1118).



There may well be a connection between the name Aškaš and the name Ašš or Ass the Hero (al-Jabbār) mentioned as the son of Sīavoš and the ancestor of the Aškānīān (Arsacids) by Ṭabarī (I, p.710), Mas'ūdī (*Morūj*, ed. Pellat, I, p. 276), and Bīrūnī (*Āṭār al-bāqīa*, p. 114); the question is examined in Justi, *Namenbuch*, p. 43.

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