



BAHMAN-NĀMA

BAHMAN-NĀMA, epic poem of about 9,500 lines recounting the adventures of Bahman son of Esfandiār (q.v.). The earliest mention of *Bahman-nāma* is in *Mojmal al-tawārīk* (ed. M.-T. Bahār, Tehran, 1318 Š./1939) which gives the author as Īrānšān b. Abi'l-Ḳayr (pp. 92, 463). The name is difficult to read and Bahār suggests the alternative form Īrānšāh, which has been accepted by most scholars. *Mojmal al-tawārīk* (p. 2) also mentions an *Aḳbār(-e) Bahman* which may be a different version of this tale. *Majma' al-foṣaḩā* (I, pp. 110, 494) mentions a *Bahman-nāma* by Jamālī Mehrījerdī, a contemporary of Lāme'ī Gorgānī (b. ca. 414/1023-24) but only a few scattered verses of this remain (see S. Nafīsī, "Jamālī Mehrījerdī," *Āyanda* 1, 1304 Š./1925, pp. 589-95). From references to historical events, and dedications to both Nāṣer-al-Dīn Maḩmūd b. Malekšāh and Ġiāṭ-al-Dīn Moḩammad b. Malekšāh, it seems highly likely that Īrānšāh b. Abi'l-Ḳayr wrote and revised *Bahman-nāma* between 485/1092-93 and 501/1107-08. Summaries of the story of Bahman can be found in *Mojmal al-tawārīk*, pp. 53-54, and in Malekšāh ḩosayn Sīstānī, *Eḩyā' al-molūk* (ed. M. Sotūda, Tehran, 1344 Š./1966), pp. 40-45. The earliest known manuscript is in the British Museum (C. Rieu, *Supplement to the Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts in the British Museum*, London, 1895, no. 201, dated 800/1397-98). Other manuscripts are in the Bodleian (*Cat. Bodleian*, no. 2544, undated), the Bibliothèqne Nationale (Blochet, *Cat. Bib. Nat.*, nos. 1192-93, 10th/17th cent.), and the British Museum (Rieu, *Supplement*, no. 197, dated 1252/1836-37). A lithographed edition was published in Bombay in 1325/1907-08.



The story, in summary, is as follows: Bahman, at the behest of Rostam, marries Katāyūn (or Kasāyūn), daughter of the king of Kashmir. Katāyūn is accompanied by a youth Lo'lo' who is secretly her lover. She persuades Bahman to place Lo'lo' in charge of the army and the treasury, whereupon Lo'lo' bribes the army to revolt against Bahman. Bahman flees to Egypt where he marries Homāy, daughter of the king of Egypt, raises an army, and returns to Iran. There he regains his kingdom and banishes Lo'lo'. Meanwhile, Rostam and his brother Zavāra have been killed by the king of Kabul. Bahman mourns Rostam's death and then sets out for Sīstān to take vengeance on Rostam's descendents.

Bahman and Farāmarz, who is now the ruler of Sīstān, fight three times and Bahman is defeated each time. Bahman wins the fourth battle and Farāmarz flees. Bahman conquers Sīstān, takes Zāl prisoner, and pursues Bānū Gošasp and Zar Bānū (daughters of Rostam) to Kashmir where he captures them. Farāmarz is killed in India and Bahman gains control of all the lands that Farāmarz formerly held. At this point, he sets out to destroy the tombs of Rostam and his ancestors. Āḍar Borzīn son of Farāmarz appears with an army to fight Bahman, and is captured. Bahman visits the tombs of Garšāsp, Narīmān, Sām, and Rostam, and at each tomb he receives a precious gift and a message from the deceased urging him to be merciful. As a result he proceeds to Sīstān where he forgives Zāl, frees him and Rostam's daughters, and rebuilds the palaces and cities there. He sends Āḍar Borzīn to the north of Iran.

In the north, Āḍar Borzīn meets Rostam-e Ṭūr, known also as Rostam-e Yakdast (Malekšāh Ḥosayn Sīstānī, *Ehyā' al-molūk*, ed. M. Sotūda, Tehran, 1344 Š./1966, p. 43), Rostam-e Ṭūr Ṭabarī (ibid., p. 44), and Rostam-e Ṭūr Gilī (*Mojmal*, p. 54). Together they raise an army to challenge Bahman. Bahman sends a daughter of Rostam to fight Āḍar Borzīn. After a series of battles Bahman and Āḍar Borzīn make peace. At the end of the story Bahman installs his daughter Homāy on the throne and he himself is devoured by a dragon while on a hunting expedition.

The present *Bahman-nāma* should not be confused with a *Bahman-nāma* written by Nūr-al-Dīn Ḥamza b. 'Abd-al-Malek Āḍarī Ṭūsī (d. 866/1461-62), which is a versified history of the Bahmanid sultans of the Deccan.



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Ḍ. Şafā discusses the date of composition of *Bahman-nāma* in his “Bahman-nāma,” *Āmūzeš wa parvareš* 14, 1323 Š./1944, pp. 136-43.

For discussions of *Bahman-nāma* in the context of Persian epic poetry, see Ḍ. Şafā, *Ḥamāsasarāʔ dar Īrān*, Tehran, 1333 Š./1954, pp. 289-94, 538-42.

Idem, *Adabiyāt* II, Tehran, 1339 Š./1960, pp. 363-64.

M. Molé, “L’épopée iranienne après Firdōsī,” *La Nouvelle Clio* 5, 1953, pp. 377-93.

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R. ‘Afīfī, “Bahman-nāma,” *Āyanda* 8, 1361 Š./1982, pp. 773-79.

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