



BARMĀYA

BARMĀYA, the name of a cow associated with Ferēdūn and eventually killed by Žaḥḥāk. The form Barmāya is found only in the *Šāh-nāma*, while an earlier form, Barmāyūn, is found, e.g., in the poetry of Farālāvī and Daqīqī (Lazard, *Premiers poètes*, pp. 43, 143), in the *Loğat-e fors* (ed. M. Dabīrsiāqī, Tehran, 1336 Š./1957, p. 161), and in Ta‘ālebī’s *Gorar* (pp. 31, 35). This form corresponds to Avestan *barəmāyaona*, the epithet of an ox (*Yt.* 17.55; see K. Geldner, *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung* 24, 1879, p. 147) and indicates that the form Barmāya was created by Ferdowsī in place of Barmāyūn for metrical reasons.

The *Šāh-nāma* (Moscow, I, pp. 57-60), on the one hand, states that Barmāya suckled Ferēdūn for three years, but on the other seems to imply that Barmāya was born after Ferēdūn. Perhaps the original tale was that Ferēdūn and Barmāya were born at the same time and that Ferēdūn was suckled by Barmāya’s mother. In the *Dēnkard* (book 9, ed. Madan, pp. 814-15, tr. West in *Pahlavi Texts IV*, SBE 37, pp. 218, 220) *gušn ī barmāyūn* occurs, meaning “bull,” but in the *Bundahišn* (tr. Anklesaria, chap. 35. 10, pp. 294-95, TD₂, p. 229.11)

Barmāyūn is the name of Ferēdūn’s brother, who also appears in the *Šāh-nāma* (I, p. 65 v. 256) with the same name (in some manuscripts, Pormāya); this demonstrates a relationship between the name of this bull and Ferēdūn’s brother, perhaps also based on an original tale that had Ferēdūn and Barmāya/Barmāyūn born at the same time. It should also be noticed that in the chapter on the race and genealogy of the Kayān in the *Bundahišn* all of Ferēdūn’s ancestors have names ending in -gāw (Pur-gāw, Sōg-gāw, Bōr-gāw,



Syāh-gāw, Spēd-gāw, etc.; tr. Anklesaria, pp. 294-95; TD₂, p. 229).

Lending additional strength to the conjecture that Ferēdūn and Barmāya/Barmāyūn were born at the same time is the ancient belief that the births of prophets, certain kings, and famous heroes were accompanied by marvels. Since the birth of Barmāya, who was said to be a cow “of exceeding beauty, with a multi-colored pelt the likes of which had never been seen before,” represented such a miraculous event and at the same time augured well for Ferēdūn’s birthday, one can surmise that the cow’s birth was the marvel that accompanied the hero’s birth. Thus when Ferēdūn fought with the snake-shouldered tyrant Žaḥḥāk, he was avenging not only the murder of his father, Ābtīn, but also that of Barmāya (*Šāh-nāma* I, p. 57). The cow-headed mace that Ferēdūn took into battle against the tyrant is a possible allusion to his bovine birthmate.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Given in the text. See also J. Kāleqī-Moṭlaq, “Barmāya yā Pormāya?” *Īrān-nāma* 5/2, 1365 Š./1987, pp. 376-77.

J. Matīnī, “Rewāyāt-e moḳtalef dar-bāra-ye dawrān-e kūdakī o javānī-e Ferīdūn,” *Īrān-nāma* 4/1, 1364 Š./1985, pp. 87-132.

Š. Meskūb, “Ferīdūn-e farroḳ,” *Īrān-nāma* 5/1, 1364 Š./1985, pp. 26-27.

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