



BŪŠĀSP

BŪŠĀSP (Young Av. *Būšyqsta-*, Pahl. *bwš'sp*, Man. Mid. Pers. *bwšy'sp*, NPers. *būš(y)āsb/p*, *gūšāsb/p*, *būšyās*), the name of a demon in Zoroastrianism. The final *p* of the Mid. Iran. forms is presumably due to popular etymology. The name occurs several times in the Younger Avesta as a proper noun and is grammatically the abstract noun in *-tā* of the future participle *būšyant-* from *bav-* “to become,” lit., “what-will-be-ness,” understood as the name of the *daēvī* of slothfulness and procrastination. Feminine in gender, she is smitten by Miθra with his club (*Yt.* 10.97, 134) and is destroyed by X^varənah, the Mazdā-created Fortune/Glory (*Yt.* 18.2); she threatens always to overcome the whole material world with her evil lethargy at break of day, when Sraoša's herald, the cock Parōdarš, cries out a warning at dawn (*Vd.* 18.15f.). Nyberg saw her as in origin a divine being, goddess of trance and oracles, who was transformed in Zoroastrianism into the demon of slothfulness. Darmesteter sought to link her to Xnaθaitī and Jahī as female storm demons and explained Būšyqsta's epithets *zairina* (yellowish) and *darəyō.gava* (long-handed) as reflecting the lightning-flash of Xnaθaitī. Būšāsp endures in the *Bundahišn* and other books extant in Pahlavi as a formidable, if not principal, agent of the Evil Spirit. She creates laziness (*Bundahišn*, chap. 27.32, tr. Anklesaria, pp. 238-39; TD₂, p. 185.12) and shortness of breath (*Dādestān ī dēnīg*, pt. 1, chap. 36.51), and is “most indolent and oblivious” (*aṅgahāntar ud framōšēntar*, *Pahlavi Texts*, ed. Jamasp-Asana, p. 90.1); as such she poses a threat to religious observance when she comes twice nightly to the material world (*Šāyest nē šāyest*, suppl., chap. 13.43, pp. 52-53). In *Dēnkard*, book 3, it is said that Būšāsp is the third demon, after Akōman “Evil Thought” and Āz “Greed,” to attack humans at



birth (ed. Madan, p. 356.8). According to the *Bundahišn*, whereas Ohrmazd created restful sleep (*xwāb ī āsānīh*) in the form of a youth of tall stature, 15 years old, for Gayōmard (tr. Anklesaria, chap. 1a. 13, pp. 26-27, TD₂, p. 21.12-15), the Evil Spirit mortally afflicted Gayōmard with, among other demons, Būšāsp, (chap. 4.19, pp. 50-51; TD₂, p. 43.10-11), yet the latter's female demonic individuality is not mentioned (cf. the wicked whore Jeh in chap. 4.4-8). Asmussen has shown how, in the Pahlavi books, the demonic personality of Būšāsp diminishes as the word becomes a common noun "sleep, lethargy, dream." However, though it is true that in several texts *būšāsp* is "de-demonized" in this way and passes into Persian and Judeo-Persian as a synonym of *k^vāb* "sleep, dream," nevertheless in Zoroastrian texts on piety and observance the evil connotation of such crepuscular wastefulness remains and is emphasized by Būšāsp's identification with the delusions and pollutions of dreams. In the *Persian Rivayats*, *būšāsp* is the term for nocturnal pollution, also called there *šayṭān-bāzī* "being cheated by Satan" (ed. Unvala, p. 607.11ff., tr. Dhabhar, pp. 390f.).

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