



BŪZĪNA

BŪZĪNA, monkeys. Other names for monkeys are: *meymūn* (common), *'antar* (vulgar), *kappī* (Mid. Pers. *kabīg*, borrowed from Indian *kapī*, Mayrhofer, *Dictionary* I, p. 157), also *būzana*, *abūzīna*, *būzanīna*.

Two myths of the creation of monkeys exist in the Zoroastrian literature. According to the first myth, monkeys are among those beings which arose from the seed of the first man Gayōmart (*Bundahišn*, TD₂, p. 107.4-7; tr. Anklesaria, 14.38, pp. 134-35). The second myth attributes the origin of the monkey to a sexual union between Jam and a demoness or maybe Jam's sister and a demon (*Bundahišn*, TD₂, p. 108.10-11; tr. Anklesaria, 14B.1, pp. 136-37; *Indian Bundahišn* 23, ed. Justi, p. 56; tr. West, p. 87; according to *Persian Rivayats*, ed. Unvala, I, p. 260, a monkey and numerous other animals were born from Jam's union with a demoness).

The Islamic sources, following a Jewish tradition (Katsch, pp. 67-70; Ginzberg, I, pp. 123, 180, V, pp. 152, 203, VI, p. 85), consider monkeys to be men whom God transformed into apes for their sins (Qur'ān 2:61-65; 5:65; 7:166; Ṭabarī, I, pp. 79-81, 433-34; Maybodī, I, pp. 23-224, III, p. 197), a view that persists in popular lore (cf. Massé, p. 185). In a passage commenting upon the question of how many contiguous persons will a dead man contaminate the Pahlavi *Vīdēvdād* (5.32) states that "the (case of) a monkey is in every way like that of humans" (5.107).

The image of monkeys presented in early Islamic sources is that of a semi-intelligent animal which understands human language and can be trained to



perform various duties and even crafts, such as entertainment (Jāhez, II, p. 179, VI, p. 219; Hamadānī, pp. 111-12), weaving, tailoring, and carpentry (Qazvīnī, pp. 422-23), goldsmithing and theft (Jazāyerī, p. 134), being a house boy and blacksmithing (Ebn Šahrīār, p. 67). Qazvīnī (loc. cit.) reports that a Nubian king sent several trained monkeys to the caliph al-Motawakkel (232-47/847-61), one of which was a master chess-player (see also Thomson, motif B298.1, and de Périers, no. 88). This custom of sending exotic animals such as monkeys as gifts to monarchs is attested as early as the Bible (I Kings 10:22). In the 'Abbasid period monkeys were kept as pets or for entertainment in the palace of some caliphs. Zobayda bent Ja'far (216/831), the wife of Hārūn al-Rašīd, had a favorite pet monkey and was quite saddened when the animal died (Ḥosrī, II, p. 962; Bahār, p. 364). The use of trained monkeys for public entertainment is still common in Iran, the trainer being known as *'antarī* or *lūṭī* (cf. *kapīdār* in Dehḡodā).

The monkey features throughout Persian literature, both written and oral, in stories many of which can be traced to Indian sources. Among the best known are the following four: 1. The story of the monkey who tries his hand at carpentry with disastrous result (Qarīb, p. 62). This tale, which has given rise to the proverb *būzīna-rā bā dorūdgarī ċe kār?* "What business of monkeys is carpentry?", is in *Pañcatantra* 1.2 (Ryder, p. 25; Penzer, V, p. 43 n. 2; Bødker, no. 1009) and is no doubt related to the Aesopic fable of the monkey who, while imitating some fisherman, gets caught in their net (Aesop, no. 203; Daly, p. 178; Perry, p. 460). 2. The story of the fox who tricks a monkey into touching a bait in a trap, trapping the monkey, and then safely eats the bait himself (motif K730.1). This tale is attested in Sogdian (Henning, pp. 178-79) and is also of Aesopic origin (Aesop, no. 81; Daly, p. 128; Perry, pp. 435-36). A version of it is included in the *Sendbād-nāma* (pp. 47-48), which is traced to Buddhist *avadānas* by Comparetti (p. 30). 3. The famous story of a group of monkeys that find a glow worm and mistake it for fire (*Pañcatantra* 1.28; Ryder, p. 183; Qarīb, p. 115; Bødker, no. 1019; versified by Rūdakī in the 4th/10th century, see Nafīsī, pp. 431, 532). 4. The story of a monkey whose heart is coveted by the wife of a crocodile or turtle and who pretends to his captor that he has left his heart at home and thus saves himself (Aarne-Thompson, type 91; Bødker, nos. 535, 678; also found in *Kalīla wa Demna*, see Qarīb, pp. 213-22; traceable to Buddhist *jātaka* stories, see Cowell, II, p. 111; III, p. 88; Penzer, V, p. 127 n. 1; and Schwarzbaum, pp. 357-58, for references; for oral tradition see Marzolph, no. 91). 5. The story of the war between the apes and the bears, according to which the ape causes his own people to maim him and then pretends to the



bears to be cast out by the apes. He offers to help them massacre the apes but instead leads them into the wilderness to die (Hertel, p. 199; Bødker, no. 16). This tale occurs in the classical Persian and Arabic sources with a change of cast from apes and bears to humans. It has further entered the historical narrative of early Classical authors such as Herodotus (3.153-60), Ovid (*Fasti* 2.691ff.), Livy (1.53ff.), and Polyaeus (11.8), as well Ebn Qotayba's (d. 276/989) *'Oyūn al-akbār* (I, pp. 117-18; about Pērōz). For other tales about monkeys see Marzolph, types 155[5], 160, 1539[2] and *461B[4]. 6. A tale which is attested in the *Nāma-ye Tansar* (Boyce, pp. 14-15, 54-59), *Tārīk-eṬabarestān* (Ebn Esfandiār, p. 33), and *Sendbād-nāma* (Samarqandī, pp. 80-83) about a troop of monkeys that reside near a city. One day the monkey king sees a ram playfully butting a slave girl and interprets this as a sign that the monkeys will be destroyed by the humans. His subjects do not heed his warning, but future events prove him right as one day the slave girl wards off the ram with a burning piece of wood which sets the animal on fire. The ram in turn sets on fire the elephants' stable (Samarqandī, p. 82) or the house of a nobleman (Ebn Esfandiār, p. 33; Boyce, p. 58). The physicians prescribe monkey fat (or gall) as a cure for the burns, and the king sends his army and routes the troop of monkeys. This tale is also attested in the *Pañcatantra* (Ryder, pp. 454-62; Clouston, p. 222) in connection with an incident in the story of the monkey king Hanuman in Indian sources, according to which he sets the city of Laṅkā on fire. Gubernatis states that monkeys were believed to possess the virtue of healing the wounds of horses that were scalded or burnt (II, p. 105 n. 2). For other tales about monkeys see Marzolph, types 155[5], 160, 153[2], and *461B[4].

Monkeys appear in few proverbs, the most common of which is *meymūn* (or *'antar*) *haṛčī zeštār-e adā aṭwāreš bīštār-e* "the uglier the monkey, the more playful it is," which is an almost literal translation of the classical Arabic proverb *al-qerd qabīḥ walākennaho malīḥ* (Jāḥeẓ, IV, p. 99). See also Dehḳodā (s.v. *meymūn*) and the proverbs quoted above.



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