



## DĀRĀ(B) (1) I. DĀRĀ(B) I.

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### i. DĀRĀ(B) I

Dārā(b) I was the son of the Kayanid Bahman Ardašīr. According to most of the sources, his mother was Homā Čehrāzād, who married her own father, Bahman (*Šāh-nāma*, Moscow, VI, p. 352; Ṭabarī, I, p. 687; Bal'amī, ed. Bahār, p. 687; Mas'ūdī, *Morūj*, ed. Pellat, I, p. 272; Ta'ālebī, *Ġorar*, p. 389; Meskawayh, p. 34; Gardīzī, ed. Ḥabībī, p. 15; Ṭarsūsī, pp. 10-11). In one tradition, however, this marriage was denied, and it was maintained that Homā died a virgin (Ebn al-Balkī, p. 54). Nevertheless, the former version, which accords with the old Iranian tradition of next-of-kin marriage, is certainly authentic. According to this legend, Bahman died before Dārā was born and appointed Homā his regent. When Dārā was born she did not reveal the news of his birth but had him laid, together with precious jewels, in a casket and exposed on the river Euphrates (*Šāh-nāma*, Moscow, VI, p. 356; Ṭarsūsī, p. 11), the Tigris (Maqdesī, *Bad'* III, p. 150), the Kor river in Fārs (Ṭabarī, I, p. 689), the Eṣṭaqr (i.e., Polvār) river in Fārs (Ta'ālebī, *Ġorar*, p. 392), or the Balk river (Ṭabarī, I, p. 690). The child was found by a fuller (*Šāh-nāma*, Moscow, VI, p. 356; Ta'ālebī, *Ġorar*, p. 392; *Mojmal*, ed. Bahār, p. 54; Maqdesī, *Bad'* III, p. 150; Ṭarsūsī, where his name is given as Hormaz) or a miller (Ṭabarī, I, p. 690; Bal'amī, ed. Bahār, p. 690), who called him Dārāb, because he was found in the water (*āb*) among the trees (*dār*; itfo Ta'ālebī, *Ġorar*, p. 394; *Šāh-nāma*, Moscow, VI, p. 358; Ṭarsūsī, pp. 13-14; Bal'amī, ed. Bahār, p. 690: *dār* "hold, take").

This story seems to be based on popular etymology. A similar etiological legend is told about Kawād, the founder of the Kayanid dynasty (*Bundahišn*,



TD2, p. 231; Christensen, 1931, pp. 70-71; idem, 1933-35; Bailey, pp. 69 ff.). It belongs to a type of legend “which is generally associated with the change of dynasties, the end of an era, or a major shift of power” (Yarshater, p. 522; cf. Christensen, 1933-35). In spite of the discontent of his foster-father, who wanted the boy to become a fuller, Dārā, eager to receive an aristocratic education, was first handed over to scholars, who taught him the Avesta and its commentary (*Zand o Estā*); then he was trained in archery, horsemanship, polo, and similar skills. Dārā, who doubted his relationship to the fuller and was curious to find out his true origin, compelled the fuller’s wife to reveal his descent. As he was ambitious to reach high positions, Dārā entered the service of Rašnavād, Homā’s commander-in-chief (*Šāh-nāma*, Moscow, VI, pp. 358 ff.; Ta’ālebī, *Ġorar*, pp. 394 ff.; Maqdesī, *Bad’* III, p. 150; Bal’amī, ed. Bahār, pp. 690-91; Ṭarsūsī, pp. 27 ff., with different details). Eventually Dārā was introduced to the queen, who after a reign of thirty years (thirty-two according to *Šāh-nāma*, Moscow, VI, p. 371 v. 312) abdicated in his favor.

Dārā reigned for twelve years (*Bundahišn*, TD2, p. 240; Ḥamza, p. 13; *Mojmal*, ed. Bahār, p. 55; Ebn al-Balkī, p. 55; Dīnavarī, ed. Guirgass, p. 31; Mas’ūdī, *Morūj*, ed. Pellat, I, p. 272). During his reign he fought with Šo’ayb, the Arab commander from the Qotayb tribe (*Šāh-nāma*, Moscow, VI, pp. 374-75; Ṭarsūsī, pp. 354-72). He also campaigned against Filfūs (Philip) of Rūm (i.e., Greece), who was defeated and compelled to pay tribute and agreed to marry his daughter Nāhīd (*Šāh-nāma*, Moscow, VI, p. 377; Ṭarsūsī, p. 380) or Halāy (Ṭabarī, I, p. 697) to Dārā. Although pregnant, she was soon sent back home because of her foul breath. In Rūm she bore Eskandar ([Alexander](#); *Šāh-nāma*, Moscow, pp. 375 ff.; Dīnavarī, pp. 31-32; Ta’ālebī, *Ġorar*, pp. 399 ff.; Ṭabarī, I, pp. 696-97; *Mojmal*, ed. Bahār, p. 54; Ṭarsūsī, pp. 390 ff.). This last episode represents an obvious attempt to provide a link between Alexander the Great and the Persian royal house by making him a half-brother of [Dārā II](#) (Yarshater, pp. 522-23).

The introduction of the Persian postal system was attributed to Dārā I (Ṭabarī, I, p. 692; Ḥamza, p. 39; Ta’ālebī, *Ġorar*, p. 398; Gardīzī, ed. Ḥabībī, p. 16), apparently reflecting a historical fact: the introduction or reorganization of the postal system by [Darius I the Great](#). The foundation of the city of Dārābgerd in Fārs was attributed to him in most of the sources (Ḥamza, p. 39; Ṭabarī, I, p. 692; Bal’amī, ed. Bahār, p. 692; Ebn al-Balkī, p. 55; Ta’ālebī, *Ġorar*, p. 398; Gardīzī, ed. Ḥabībī, p. 16; *Mojmal*, ed. Bahār, p. 55; Ebn al-Balkī, p. 55; Ṭarsūsī, pp. 353, 452; see [Dārāb ii](#)), though in some others Dārā II was credited



with its foundation (*Pahlavi Texts*, ed. Jamasp-Asana, p. 22; *Tārīk-e gozīda*, ed. Browne, p. 99). Babylon was mentioned as his residence (Ṭabarī, I, p. 692; Mas'ūdī, *Morūj*, ed. Pellat, I, p. 272), which shows the general tendency in the tradition to link the exploits of the last Kayanid kings with western Iran.

Dārā was supposed, according to the late sources, to have had a son called Fīrūzšāh, whose exploits are related in the popular Persian romance *Fīrūzšāh-nāma*, published under the title *Dārāb-nāma* by Ḥājī Moḥammad Biḡamī (ed. D. Şafā, Tehran, 1339-41 Š./1960-62).

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