



## DRVĀSPĀ

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**DRVĀSPĀ** (or *Drwāspā*, *Druuāspā*, lit., “with solid horses”), Avestan goddess. Her name suggests that she must have been a divinity responsible for the health of horses. From the time of [James Darmesteter](#), it has been customary to compare her to the Celtic Epona (*Avesta*, tr. Darmesteter, II, pp. 431-40). Nevertheless, despite the clarity of her name and the anchoring of her function in Indo-European tradition, she remains enigmatic, for she is a strangely discreet goddess. Although in Avestan Mazdaism the *Druuāsp Yašt* (*Yt.* 9), consisting of thirty-three sentences in seven *karde*, was dedicated to her, the formulary material contains no original elements. Rather, the text reproduces, with the necessary substitution of the proper name, sentences 27-52 of *Yašt* 17, dedicated to *Aši*, in which the notable votaries who had officiated for the goddess in the past are enumerated. Only in the first two sentences are specific epithets connected to *Druuāspā*, as the object of *yazamaide* “we sacrifice.”

Otherwise the goddess is mentioned only in the *Sīrōza* (1.14), in which *gōš*, the fourteenth day of the month, is said to be under the patronage of three divinities responsible for protecting the animal world, *Gəuš Tašan*, *Gəuš Uruuan*, and *Druuāspā*; this association is confirmed by the fact that the Pahlavi title of *Yašt* 9 was *Gōš Yašt*, which led Darmesteter to claim that *Druuāspā* “is *Gəuš* guarding the horse.” On the other hand, Mary Boyce thinks that the word *druuāspa-* could originally have been an epithet for *Āši*, from which it eventually developed into the name of an independent divinity (*Zoroastrianism* I, p. 82).



Outside the Avestan tradition the name appears in the masculine form DROOASPO beneath the image of a male god on the reverse of a Kushan coin. This form is to be identified with the Middle Persian name Lwhl'sp/Lohrāsp of the father of Vīštāspa, though the identification is somewhat problematic as, in the Avestan tradition, the latter is called Auruuat̄.aspa- “of the rapid horses” (Davary, p. 220).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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