



FŪLĀD-ZEREH

FŪLĀD-ZEREH “[possessing]steel armor,” is the name of a hideous demon in the story of Amīr Arsalān (q.v.). This name was probably borrowed by the author of the story from an older prose epic, *Romūz-e Ḥamza* (see Mahjūb’s introduction in Naqīb-al-Mamālek, p. lxi). Fūlād-zereh was a huge horned afreet (*‘efrīt*) of great physical and magical power, capable of flight, and fond of beautiful women, whom he spotted during his aerial wanderings, kidnapped, and tried to seduce (Naqīb-al-Mamālek, pp. 263 f., 265 f., 301, 303).

Early in his career he was the chief general of the fairy king, Malek Kāzen, who ruled over the land of Zahr-gāh. However, shortly after his master’s death, Fūlād-zereh, who had fallen in love with the queen, usurped the throne by magically transforming the rightful heir and many of his attendants to stone in a fortress appropriately called Qal’a-ye sang “the stone fortress” (p. 303).

His mother, a powerful witch in her own right, had put a charm on Fūlād-zereh’s body that made him invulnerable to all weapons except the blows of a specific sword called *Šamšīr-e zomorrodnegār*. This blade originally belonged to King Solomon, and was carefully guarded by Fūlād-zereh, not only because it was a valuable weapon, and indeed the only weapon that could harm the demon, but also because wearing it was a charm against magic (pp. 301 f., 314). A wound inflicted by this sword could only be treated by a special potion made from a number of ingredients, including Fūlād-zereh’s brains (pp. 304, 320). Amīr Arsalān was the man who was destined to slay the demon, and Fūlād-zereh, who knew this fact, was understandably anxious to find and kill



the hero (pp. 303, 305). At the end, however, both Fūlād-zereh and his mother were slain by Amīr Arsalān, who burned their corpses, mixed their ashes with water, and resuscitated their petrified victims by spraying the concoction over the stones (p. 386).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Moḥammad-ʿAlī Naqīb-al-Mamālek, *Amīr Arsalān-e Rūmī*, ed. M. J. Maḥjūb, Tehran, 1340 Š./1961; German tr. R. Gelpke as *Amīr Arsalān: Liebe und Abenteuer des Amir Arsalan*, Zurich, 1965.