



## HŌMĀN

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**HŌMĀN**, son of Vēsa, and one of the most celebrated heroes of Turān. His name, spelt *Ḳomān* in Ṭabari (I, p. 610), is explained by Ferdinand Justi (*Namenbuch*, p. 132) as “derived from Hom < Haoma” (q.v.), which, despite the attestation of Hōm in Sasanian proper names (Gignoux, pp. 96-99), seems unlikely. According to the *Šāh-nāma* (IV, p. 33, v. 502 [all references are to *Šāh-nāma*, ed. Khaleghi, unless otherwise stated]), he was a descendant of Tur, son of Ferēdun (q.v.; see further [AFRĀSĪĀB](#)). Hōmān was, next to Pirān, the leading member of the Vēsa clan (IV, pp. 31, 99) and the highest ranking Turanian commander. His bravery, loyalty, and chivalry caused admiration even among his Iranian foes (III, p. 129; IV, pp. 52, 85, 107). He had already fought several battles with Rostam (II, p. 180, v. 787). When Sohrāb’s fame reached Afrāsiāb, he sent Hōmān (together with Bār-mān, q.v.) with magnificent gifts and an army of 12,000 men to Sohrāb in order to urge him to invade Iran. Hoping that Sohrāb would kill Rostam without knowing his identity, Afrāsiāb instructed Hōmān to prevent Sohrāb from recognizing his father (II, pp. 128-29). Acting as Sohrāb’s field aid, Hōmān witnessed his triumph over Hojir (q.v.), Kay Kāvus, and even Rostam (II, pp. 130-53, 167-75). He misled Sohrāb by hiding Rostam’s identity from him (II, p. 180) and was disappointed when he defeated Rostam but spared him, seeing in it an ill omen for Sohrāb (II, p. 183). On his deathbed, Sohrāb secured from Rostam a pledge of safe conduct for Hōmān and his army (II, pp. 188-90). In the *Jahāngir-nāma*, a later epic composed by the obscure poet Qāsem Mādeḥ, Hōmān played a similar role again when he was sent by Afrāsiāb to move Jahāngir, another son of Rostam, and lead him against Iranians. Jahāngir triumphed over many Iranian paladins, but he finally



recognized his father in time and joined his side (for *Jahāngir-nāma*, see Şafā, pp. 324-35).

Hömān had no part in the killing of Siāvoš, but he distinguished himself in the wars that followed his murder. Once he rescued Afrāsiāb from Rostam by pounding the latter with a heavy mace; he also prevented Afrāsiāb from rashly invading Iran (II, pp. 402-3, 449-50). On several occasions, Hömān courageously and masterfully assaulted the Iranian armies under Tōs and Fariborz (q.v.), forcing them to flee in disgrace (III, pp. 84-85, 120). He fought Tōs to a draw and rallied the Turanians to victories near or on the mount Hamāvan (III, pp. 116-23, 126, 128, 134-45, 185). When Rostam and Fariborz brought a new army to the aid of the besieged Iranians, Hömān reconnoitered their camp (III, pp. 176-77) and went in disguise to Rostam, whom he had recognized as the anonymous paladin who had captured Kāmus (q.v.). He found out from Rostam that, save for Pirān, no Turanian heroes, including Hömān himself, could expect quarter (III, pp. 199-203). Always a good tactician, he advised Pirān against pursuing the war (III, pp. 203-4, 216), but the latter did not listen and suffered crushing defeats. Then followed what has become known as the episode of *Davāzdah rok* (q.v.; III, pp. 115-16 and Khaleghi's note, p. 3, n. 1; *Mojmal*, ed. Bahār, p. 49). Hömān commanded the center of the Turanian army (IV, p. 24) and valiantly attacked the Iranians. When Bēžan/Bižan urged Gōdarz (qq.v.) to fight the enemy or permit him to do that himself, Hömān likewise demanded that Pirān should attack the Iranians or let him conduct the war, but Pirān persuaded him to wait for a better opportunity (IV, pp. 28-30). Nevertheless, Hömān went alone to the Iranian camp and challenged Rahhām, Fariborz, Tōs, and other paladins to single combat, but none accepted, citing as an excuse a royal order to stay put and not engage in battle (IV, pp. 31-39). Only Bēžan volunteered to fight him and begged for and received the unequalled armor of Siāvoš for extra protection (IV, pp. 40-46). Their dramatic duel is vividly described in a sensational episode that counts among the masterpieces of Persian literature. The two mounted knights met in a plain far removed from the opposing hosts. Each was accompanied by a single attendant, whom the other warrior pledged not to harm if triumphant. They gallantly fought for a day and a night, first showering each other with arrows, then engaging hand-to-hand with spears, swords, and maces. Finally they grappled with each other on foot for a long time until they were worn out. "Although Hömān was superior in strength to Bēžan," good fortune left him and he was slain (IV, pp. 48-53; cf. Ṭabari, I, pp. 609-10). The slaying of so brave and illustrious a hero greatly strengthened the



Iranian morale and profoundly disheartened the Turanians (IV, pp. 53-57, 61, 67, 78), who never recovered and went on to suffer repeated defeats.

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