



KAYĀNIĀN VIII. KAY LUHRĀSP, KAY LOHRĀSB

KAYĀNIĀN

viii. Kay Luhrāsp, Kay Lohrāsb

In the Avesta, Vištāspa's father is Auruuat.aspa, who is mentioned only once, when Zarathustra asks Anāhitā for the ability to make Vištāspa, son of Auruuat.aspa, help the *daēnā* along with thoughts, words, and deeds, a wish he is granted (*Yašt* 5.14-6). Elsewhere, *auruuat.aspa* "having fleet horses" is an epithet, most often of the sun.

The later form of the name recalls that of Lrouaspo (cf. Herzfeld, 1936, pp. 70-71), the Bactrian form of Avestan Druuāspā, goddess in charge of horses, but the precise development of *Lruwasp to *Luhrasp escapes us. The Bactrian spelling of /h/ by means of provides no obvious explanation of the form (see Herzfeld, 1936, p. 71, on Nyberg's suggestion that Luhrāsp might be from *rudrāspa "having ruddy horses").

In the Pahlavi texts, Luhrāsp is said to be the son of Ōj/ Ōz, son of Manuš, son of Pasēn, son of Abīweh, son of Kawād and the father of Wištāsp and Zarēr (*Bundahišn* 35.34-35; ed. Pākzād, p. 398, n. 233, wrongly assumes *Uzaw for <'wz'n'>). The name may be related to Avestan *aojīia*, found in an obscure Gathic passage (*Yasna* 46.12): "When he (=?) has come up among the descendents of Tūra, son of Friia, the Aojīias . . .," where *aojīia* may be a verb



meaning “worthy of songs of fame” (or similar) or else a patronymic or an ethnonym. A connection with the Gathic passage is also vaguely suggested in the *Čihrdād nask*, where the lineage Iranian, Turian, Salmian until King Kay Luhrāsp and the land-lord (*dahībed*) Kay Wištāsp are mentioned (*Dēnkard* 8.13.15; ed. Dresden, [MR 76]).

According to the *Mēnōy xrad* (26.67), Wištāsp was “fashioned from his body” (*az tan ī ōy brēhēnīhist*). He is said to have been a good king and pious; to have destroyed Jerusalem and scattered the Jews (*Mēnōy xrad* 26.65-66); and, according to the *Dēnkard* (5.1.4-5), to have sent an army to Hrōm and Jerusalem () with Bōxt-Narsē to disempower the evil laws and deeds and the demon-worship of the Banī-Srāyēl.

According to the *Wizirkerd ī dēnīg* (21.6), Zarathustra was born when Luhrāsp had ruled for 110 years; it also contains a brief story that Luhrāsp was ailing in body and did homage to the fire, when a voice came from the *xwarrah* of the fire, telling the king to be happy because his ailments would be healed by Zarathustra, who would appear during the reign of his son Wištāsp (21.13). He is also said to have founded Kāyēn (Qā’en; *Šāhrestānīhā ī Ērānšahr* 16, *Pahlavi Texts*, p. 20 [222]).

In Perso-Arabic tradition. Lohrāsb’s lineage varies little in the sources, which all make him a descendant of Kay Kawād.

In the Perso-Arabic texts, the name and lineage are variously distorted (some of the names often unpointed in the mss). Ḥamza (p. 36), who has the longest list, points out that Kay Lohrāsb was only the “nephew” of Kay Ƙosrow (*ebn ‘ammehe*). Differently, Hešām b. Moḥammad, cited by Ṭabari (I/2, p. 645; tr., IV, p. 44), has him as the nephew of Qabus (*ebn aḳi*, unless <’ḳy> is a rationalization of <’wjy>; see [Table 1](#)).

The Biruni ms. Ayasofia 2947 (only <-š-> pointed) has Kay-Lohrāsb b. Kay-Uji b. Ka-Manoš b. Ka-Miši b. Kay- <•h> b. Kay-Qobād. Ebn al-Balkī (ed. Le Strange and Nicholson, p. 47; ed. Behruzi, p. 56) has , variants unpointed and pointed . The *Mojmal al-tawāriḳ* (p. 29) has Kay-Lohrāsb b. Kay-Maneš b. Kay Pašin b. Kay-Qobād (ms., fol. 11r and).

Some of the sources describe the selection of Lohrāsb as Kay Ƙosrow’s successor as arbitrary: pressed to select a successor once he decided to relinquish power and turn ascetic, the king points at a person standing/sitting



nearby, but who happens to be his distant cousin (Ṭabari, I/2, p. 618; tr., IV, p. 19; cf. Bal'ami, ed. Bahār, pp. 617- 18). Ṭa'ālebi (p. 237), however, presents the selection of Lohrāsb as deliberate, since he was “of my (Kay Ƙosrow's) stock and a descendent of my uncles” (*men arumati wa abnā'e 'amumati*).

According to Dinavari, when Solaymān b. Dāwud died, the nobles gathered in order to select a new ruler, one from the line of Kay-Qobād, and their choice fell on Lohrāsb (Lohrāsf). Dinavari also reports that he lived in Sus (Šuš) and that the prophet Daniel stayed with him and died there (ed. Guirgass, pp. 25-26; see [DĀNĪĀL-E NABĪ](#)).

Lohrāsb institutionalized the military (*divān al-jond*; Ḥamza, p. 36; tr., p. 25), levying taxes to support the army. He was credited with founding (Ṭabari, I/2, p. 645; tr., IV, p. 43; cf. Bal'ami, ed. Bahār, p. 639) or expanding the city of Balk (Ṭa'ālebi, p. 244; Ebn al-Balki, ed. Le Strange and Nicholson, p. 48), which he called “the beautiful” (*al-ḥosnā*; Ṭabari, I/2, p. 645; tr., IV, p. 43; Mas'udi, sec. 544; cf. *Šahrestānihā ī Ērānšahr* 8 in *Pahlavi Texts*, p. 19 [221]: *Baxl ī bāmīg* “radiant Baxl,” founded by Spandyād; *Pahlavi Videvdad* 1.6 *baxl nek pad didan* “beautiful to look at”). Ebn al-Balki (p. 48) adds that he was the first to make a royal court (*sarāy parda*) and subdued the kings of the world from Rum to Šin (Čin), so that they sent tribute to him.

According to Ḥamza, Lohrāsb sent Boḳt-Naššar (son of Rehām or of Wiw son of Judarz) to Palestine to destroy Jerusalem, allegedly because the Jews had killed their king, a prophet descended from Dāwud (Ḥamza, pp. 36, 86-87; tr., pp. 25, 67; cf. Ṭabari, I/2, p. 646; tr., p. 44; Ebn al-Balki, ed. Le Strange and Nicholson, pp. 5-6; ed. Behruzi, p. 8).

According to Ṭa'ālebi (similarly Ṭabari; Ebn al-Balki, ed. Le Strange and Nicholson, p. 48; ed. Behruzi, p. 57), Lohrāsb appointed Boḳt-Naššar (Ebn al-Balki: Boḳt al-Naššar; Ṭa'ālebi, p. 244, and Ṭabari, p. 645, have Boḳt-Naššar, but give Boḳtarša as the Persian form) as commander (Ṭabari and Ebn al-Balki: *ešfahbod*) of Mesopotamia all the way to Rum, sent him on a campaign to the West, and made him sovereign over the Bani Esrā'il and destroyed Jerusalem (Ṭabari and Ebn Balki: *bayt al-maqdes*). The rest of Ṭabari and Bal'ami's accounts of the rule of Kay Lohrāsb are devoted to Boḳt-Naššar (see below).

In the *Šāh-nāma*, Lohrāsb is first mentioned when Kay Ƙosrow assigns to the heroes the various parts of Iran as their share in the great battle against Afrāsiāb. Lohrāsb receives the Alans and Ġoz-dez (various forms: <ḡzdr, ḡrjh>,



etc.) as his share (ed. Khaleghi, IV, p. 10, v. 113; ed. Mohl, III, pp. 420-23; tr., IV, pp. 14-15), and he is then mentioned a few times in connection with the battle. His succession to the throne is suggested by Sorōš, who appears in a dream to Kay Kōsrow, who follows his advice and bestows the kingship on Lohrāsb, to the consternation and anger of the Iranians, Zāl in particular. Kay Kōsrow, however, swears that Lohrāsb has all the qualities for becoming king, including the lineage, as he is descended from Hōšang via Kay-Kobād and Kay-Pašin, upon which he is hailed as king. After Kay Kōsrow's disappearance, he is crowned, like Ferēdun, at Mehragān (ed. Khaleghi, IV, pp. 336-48, 358-74; ed. Mohl, IV, pp. 228-43, 256-77; tr., IV, pp. 280-91, 300-313; the topos is again the same as that seen in the Paikuli inscription.)

Once king, he builds a city at Balk, in each quarter of which there was a place to celebrate Sada (see [sada festival](#)), as well as a fire temple, called Barzin (ed. Khaleghi, V, pp. 4-6; ed. Mohl, IV, pp. 278-81; tr., pp. 316-318). Similarly, Ta'ālebi (p. 244) points out that he did not neglect public works.

He is killed in the final assault by [Arjāsp](#) upon Balk, where there was no army other than the men in the bazaar, according to Ferdowsi (but where Lohrāsb had improved the defenses, according to Ta'ālebi, p. 244). He dons the Kayanid helmet and engages in battle, but, overcome by age, heat, and his wounds, he falls from his horse and is hacked to pieces (ed. Khaleghi, V, pp. 178-83; ed. Mohl, IV, pp. 448-55; tr., V, pp. 90-92; see also ix, below).

Predecessors of the Lohrāsb narrative. What the narrative about Auruuat_{asp} may have been we do not know, but, in the later literature, he is strongly associated with Mesopotamia through Boḳt-Našsar (Nebuchadnezzar). Louis H. Gray, discussing this connection, points out the widespread reports in Classical and Armenian sources that Nebuchadnezzar's army in the siege of Jerusalem contained Iranians and, in particular, Medes, while the Iranian sources associate him with the Bactrians. Gray suggests that the explanation might be that the respective authors chose the names for the Iranian contingents with which they were the most familiar.

Arjāsp's attack on Balk and the killing of the king evokes yet another ancient narrative associating Bactria with Mesopotamia, in which King Ninus and his wife Semiramis take Bactria by a ploy similar to that employed by Cyrus to end the siege of Sardis (see Herodotus, 1.84). The story was reported by [Diodorus Siculus](#) on the authority of [Ctesias](#) (ca. 400 BCE), according to whom Semiramis' adversary was called [Oxyartes](#) (Ctesias, tr. Auburger, pp. 33-35, see



also p. 145, n. 16; Jackson, 1928, pp. 154-55, 232-33; Fox and Pemberton, p. 30). From around 100 CE onward, it was Zoroaster himself who was depicted as a Bactrian king and a contemporary of Queen Semiramis of Babylon and the adversary of Semiramis' husband Ninus (see Jackson, 1898, pp. 155-57, with references). It is remarkable that Diodorus cites Zoroaster's name as Zathraustes (Jackson, 1898, p. 12; Clemen, p. 28), which, except for the initial Z-, would give a Middle Iranian form quite close to Lohrāsb. See also on Goštāsb, below.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

See at end of [KAYĀNIĀN XIV. THE KAYANIDS IN WESTERN HISTORIOGRAPHY](#).