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*In dāstān*s

*Dāstān*s are fictional prose narratives with common structural and thematic characteristics rooted in the tradition of oral storytelling (see DĀSTĀN-SARĀʾI; FICTION i. Traditional Forms). Their composition and transmission are connected with the institution of professional or semiprofessional storytellers, who at different historical periods were known as *moḥaddeṯun*, *qeṣṣa-ḵˇānān*, and, more recently, since about the Safavid period, as *naqqālān* (see DĀSTĀN-SARĀʾI; Lesān, pp. 6-8). *Dāstān*s, voluminous works with branching plots, relate the heroic-romantic adventures of their eponymous heroes, often with a religious, Islamic emphasis. The writing down of the *dāstān*s most probably began in the 11th century; the tradition of their composition survived until the second half of the 19th century, while their dissemination in lithographic and in typographic print as "popular booklets" continued well into the 20th century (Marzolph, 1994, pp. 1-4). Extant works comprise *Samak-e ʿayyār*, *Eskandar-nāma*, *Dārāb-nāma*, *Abu Moslem-nāma* (see ABU MOSLEM ḴORĀSĀNI), *Jonayd-nāma*, *Firuzšāh-nāma* (this work was originally published under the mistaken title *Dārāb-nāma*, and later emended by the same editor to *Firuzšāh-nāma*; see Biḡami, II, pp. 765-66), the so-called Safavid *Eskandar-nāma* that came down in several disparate versions, some of which are

attributed to Manučehr Khan Ḥakim (see ESKANDAR-NĀMA; Yamanaka), *Ḥamza-nāma*, *Ḥosayn-e Kord-e Šabestari*, *Amir Arsalān*, *Salim Jawāheri*, and some others.

The subject matter

Šāh-nāma provides one of the sources for the Alexander (Eskandar) the Great story in the anonymous *Eskandar-nāma*. The episodes in common include the birth of Eskandar to the abruptly ended union of Dārāb (i.e., Darius; see DĀRĀ(B) (1) i) and Nāhid, the daughter of Filfus (i.e., Philip); Eskandar's strife with his half-brother Dārā (see DĀRĀ(B) (1) ii) and the latter's assassination; the combat with the Indian king Fur; Eskandar's visit to Mecca and the pilgrimage to the Kaʿba; his visit to Qaydāfa, the queen of Andalos; his encounter with *davāl-pāyān* (see DAVĀL-PĀ(Y)); Eskandar's voyage to the Land of Darkness in his search for the Water of Life (*Āb-e ḥayāt*; see ĀB ii: Water in Muslim Iranian culture). The episodes differ in degree of proximity to the *Šāh-nāma*. Whereas the stories of Eskandar and Dārā, Eskandar and Qaydāfa, and the visit to Mecca follow the main storyline of their counterparts in the epic, the other episodes borrow only the central motif and weave numerous new details around it (Rubanovich, 2004, pp. 157-58).

In addition to borrowing the Alexander subject matter, the influence of the *Šāh-nāma* is evident in the tales inserted into the main narrative of the *Eskandar-nāma*. In its initial form, the *Eskandar-nāma* comprised some thirty-seven stories, put together by the original compiler most likely in the late 12th century and eliminated or abridged by a medieval redactor probably in the 14th century (see Rubanovich, 1996, pp. 71-79; idem, 1998, pp. 235-37). Of this number, nine clusters of stories originate in the *Šāh-nāma* (for a full list and discussion of the stories, see Rubanovich, 2012, pp. 24-28). These are the only tales of an epic nature in the *Eskandar-nāma*. Of the nine clusters of stories, the redactor omitted or considerably abridged seven tales. True to his editorial strategy of retaining in full only those stories that are "rarer and briefer," while dispensing with the "lengthy and well-known" (*Eskandar-nāma*, pp. 129, 162, 201, 249), he left out the tales of Żaḥḥāk, Afridun (see FĒRĒDUN) and his three sons (Salm, Tur, and Iraj), Kay Ḵosrow, Afrāsiāb, Siāvaš, Goštāsp's adventures in Rum and his war with Arjāsp, the seven exploits (*haft ḵ̌ān*) of Esfandiār (see ESFANDIĀR (1)) and of Rostam, etc. The only two stories which escape this severity, because of their contemporary rarity, are those borrowed by the compiler from the Sasanian section of the *Šāh-nāma*. One is the story of King Ardašir and the daughter of Ardavān (*Eskandar-nāma*, pp.

157-62; cf. *Šāh-nāma* VI, pp. 194-204, vv. 15-159); the redactor, while identifying the source of the story in Ferdowsi's *Šāh-nāma* (see *Eskandar-nāma*, p. 162), mistakenly refers to the protagonists as Ardašir and the daughter of the Arab king Ṭāyer, thus conflating this episode with the tale of Māleka and Sasanian Šāpur II Ḏu'l-Aktāf (see *Šāh-nāma* VI, pp. 293-99, vv. 25-122). The other is the tale of Bahrām Gōr (see BAHRĀM vi. Bahrām V Gōr in Persian Legend and Literature) and the gardener's wife (*Eskandar-nāma*, pp. 239-40; cf. *Šāh-nāma* VI, pp. 468-76, vv. 672-772). While retaining the sequence of the main motifs and some verbatim formulations, the stories nevertheless are not borrowed intact from the epic. Apart from the changes conditioned by the difference of medium (prose vs. verse), they undergo a significant reworking to fit the new narrative context. The reworking is done in accordance with the conventions of the oral storytelling tradition and includes modifications in cultural realia, such as geographical setting (Yaman and Šām instead of Fars and Hend; Farḡāna instead of Fars), names and titles (Sarv instead of Šāpur; *wazir* instead of *dastur*; king of Farḡāna instead of Bahrām Gōr), as well as in the ideological texture, namely an Islamic coloring and a misogynous tendency, both absent in the original *Šāh-nāma* stories (Rubanovich, 2004, pp. 131-35).

Other *dāstān*s in which the exploits of the heroes held in common with the *Šāh-nāma* are treated, namely *Dārāb-nāma* and the Safavid *Eskandar-nāma*s, demonstrate only a weak connection with Ferdowsi's version. They replicate some core motifs, such as Homāy giving birth to Dārāb, his abandonment in a river and upbringing by a washerman; Eskandar's birth from the short-lived marriage of Dārāb to Philip's daughter; Eskandar's strife with his half-brother Dārā and the latter's assassination; the marvelous gifts of the Indian king Kayd(āvar); the ruse of the elephants in the battle with Fur; Eskandar's visit to Mecca and the pilgrimage to the Kaʿba; his voyage to the Land of Darkness in the search for the Water of Life. At the same time, however, the elaboration of these motifs, as well as the rest of the tale of Homāy, Dārāb, and Eskandar, possess an idiosyncratic character, diverging considerably from the *Šāh-nāma*. *Dārāb-nāma* contains a wealth of allusions to motifs and episodes pertaining to the exploits of other Iranian kings and heroes, including Faridun, Sām, Kay Ḵosrow, which have no parallels in the *Šāh-nāma* and which often display an Islamic coloring (Ṭarsusi, I, pp. 159-60, 236, II, pp. 252, 306, 307, 360-61; Rubanovich, 2004, pp. 172-74, 182-83; for a partial thematic comparison, see Hanaway, 1970, pp. 71-81, 102-8). *Dārāb-nāma* may preserve alternative epic accounts, extraneous to Ferdowsi's *Šāh-nāma* and rooted in

the tales of medieval folk storytellers nourished on ancient layers of Iranian oral tradition, and combining them with elements borrowed from Islamic folklore (Rubanovich, 2012, pp. 30-32).

In one of the versions of the Safavid *Eskandar-nāma* ascribed to Manučehr Khan Ḥakim, the earliest MS of which is dated 1106/1694 (Ḥakim, p. 10), the story of Eskandar is treated in a picaresque manner and, unlike the Eskandar chapter of the *Šāh-nāma*, the prominent role is given to figures of *ʿayyār*s and acts of *ʿayyāri* (Maḥjub, "Eskandar-nāma," pp. 350-35; Yamanaka, pp. 185-88; see ESKANDAR-NĀMA). Another version of the Safavid *Eskandar-nāma* (MS C 127, dated 1256/1840, in the collection of the Oriental Institute of St.-Petersburg; see Akimushkin et al., p. 46, no. 114; the same as MS 614, dated 1244/1829, in the Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan; see Mirzoev and Bertel's, p. 271, no. 1746; and MS 10993, dated 1342/1923-24, in the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, see Voronovskiĭ, p. 95, no. 6844) recounts Eskandar's fantastic adventures in the lands of infidels and is replete with characters bearing the names of Iranian heroes from Ferdowsi's epic (e.g., Qobād, Gordāfarid, Tovorg, Jamšid, Barzin), who have nothing in common with their counterparts in the *Šāh-nāma*. An indirect influence of the epic on this version is manifested in the description of Eskandar's visitation of the tombs (*daḵma*) of Iranian kings and heroes, such as Borzu (see BORZU-NĀMA), Esfandiār, Narimān, Manučehr and others (Akimushkin et al., fols. 479a-90a; the subject was widely popular and treated as a separate story; see idem, p. 46, nos. 115-19; Karimov, pp. 114-22).

*Dāstān*s echo the *Šāh-nāma* on the level of discrete episodes and motifs as well (see Hanaway, 1970, pp. 197-205; Ṭarṭusi, I, Introd., pp. 155-57). Thus, Rostam's tricking of the cunning Akvān-e Div who casts him into the sea (*Šāh-nāma* III, pp. 292-93, vv. 58-79; see AKVĀN-E DIV) is repeated in Amir Ḥamza's encounter with the div in the *Ḥamza-nāma* (pp. 273-74). The motif of the hero's infiltration into a castle disguised as a merchant in the *Šāh-nāma* (Rostam into Dež-e Sepand, probably interpolated, I, pp. 277-79, n. 3, vv. 47-124; Esfandiār into Ruyin-dež, V, pp. 259-63, vv. 476-533, see DEŽ-e RUYIN; Ardašir into Dež-e Haftvād, VI, pp. 183-89, vv. 700-81; see HAFTVĀD) is taken up in the *Dārāb-nāma* (Ṭarsusi, II, pp. 437-43; Eskandar and his company of sages disguise themselves as salt and garment traders in order to enter an island fortress) and the *Firuzšāh-nāma* (Biḡami, II, pp. 437-60; the Iranians disguised as traders capture Estambol). Amir Ḥamza's encounters with Simorḡ, which end with the bird's death (*Ḥamza-nāma*, pp. 269, 277), are

reminiscent of the episodes of Zāl and Esfandiār in the *Šāh-nāma* (I, pp. 166-68, vv. 67-90, and V, pp. 241-42, vv. 252-69, respectively). The killing of the Košmayḥān tiger (*babr*) by Abu Moslem (Ṭarṭusi, I, pp. 581-85) is modeled on Geršāsp's combats with the wolf and the dragon (*Šāh-nāma* V, pp. 29-33, 42-47, vv. 380-435, 551-615) and Rostam's killing of *babr-e bayān* (an interpolated episode, found in MS Or. 2926, copied 1246-49/1830-1833-34, the British Library; see Ḵāleqi Moṭlaq, pp. 290-98 and n. 28; see BABR-e BAYĀN). Among frequently repeated epic motifs that may be traceable to the *Šāh-nāma* are also the description of the banners (*derafš*), a single combat, the inquiry about the name and emblem of the hero before the battle, attaching a sign to a new-born child and his subsequent recognition, passing through fire as a proof of innocence, etc. (for respective examples in the *Šāh-nāma*, see Sarrāmi, pp. 347-49, 438, 349-51, 535, 561, 936-37). The characters of Ḥamza, Abu Moslem, and Ḥosayn-e Kord, persistently identified as *tahamtan* in the eponymous *dāstān*s, were apparently formed with Rostam in mind (Hanaway, 1970, pp. 201-2; Ṭarṭusi, I, Introd., pp. 155-57; Marzolph, 1999, pp. 297-98, respectively).

Poetic interpolations from the Šāh-nāma

The interpolation of verses from the *Šāh-nāma* into prose *dāstān*s is a late phenomenon. The first narrative with considerable interpolation from the epic is *Firuzšāh-nāma* of Moḥammad Biḡami. The only known manuscript of the work is dated Ḏu'l-ḥejja 887/1483 and seems to have been copied from the autograph already in Biḡami's lifetime by a certain Maḥmud Daftarḵˇān (Rubanovich, 2004, pp. 108-13; an alternative, less plausible, suggestion is that the work was written down under Biḡami's dictation; see Biḡami, I, introd., p. 12, II, p. 768; Ṣafā, IV, p. 518; Biḡami, tr., p. 20; see BIḠAMI). The *dāstān* had at least one more volume, preserved in the late MS of 1201/1787 (Biḡami, ed. Afšār and Afšāri; Maḥjub, 1991; see FIRUZŠĀH-NĀMA). Most of the quotations in the *Firuzšāh-nāma* are taken from the parts of the epic, which form the so-called heroic cycle, with the stories from the reign of Kay Ḵosrow represented most generously. Within this reign a particular place is assigned to the tale of Kāmus-e Kašāni and the story of Rostam's campaign against the Ḵāqān of China (11 verses in each case). The sections of the *Šāh-nāma* which precede the period of Kay Kāvus and follow that of Goštāsp are meagerly represented: the so-called mythological period provides six verses, and the extensive historical portions, starting with the rule of Eskandar, add up to ten verses altogether (for the quantitative data and the identification of the verses, see Rubanovich, 2012, pp. 15-16, Table 1). The interpolations undergo two major

transformations: (1) de-contextualization, when the original context is either partially or completely disregarded, while the quotation itself is left almost unaltered; and (2) substitution, when the quotation is altered for the sake of plot adjustment (for discussion of the two types of transformation, see Rubanovich, 2006, pp. 253-59).

The quotations from the *Šāh-nāma* are characterized by fragmentation. A collage technique is used, mostly in set narrative contexts, when single verses from various sections of the *Šāh-nāma* are joined into one thematic string (discussed in Rubanovich, 2012. pp. 18-20). In *dāstān*s, Ferdowsi's verses often assume a formulaic character in accordance with the oral traditional aesthetics of this type of narrative (see Rubanovich, 2006, pp. 262-63; idem, 2012, p. 18). Moreover, quotations from the *Šāh-nāma* are distinguished by a high degree of instability, on the verge of disintegration of the original, particularly if compared with the minor variant readings encountered in the citations from the poems of Neżāmi Ganjavi and Asadi Ṭusi in the *Firuzšāh-nāma*. The lack of textual fixity contributes to fairly numerous idiosyncratic variants, not listed in any edition of the *Šāh-nāma* (for examples see Rubanovich, 2012, pp. 21-22; for a different treatment of quotations from the *Šāh-nāma* in works of courtly history, see Meisami, 1994; idem, 1995; idem, 1997, pp. 304-9; Melikian-Chirvani, 1988; idem, 1997). Besides quoting from the *Šāh-nāma*, although mostly with modifications, the *dāstān* compilers emulate the epic style, either interspersing *Šāh-nāma*'s verses with lines of their own making, or composing whole poetic passages in the *motaqāreb* meter (see ARŪŻ) and the *maṯnawi* form, which show a close connection with the prose narrative and often include direct references to dramatis personae (e.g., Biḡami, I, pp. 33, 48, 455, II, pp. 173, 182, 383, 386-87, 640, 650, 677; Ṭarṭusi, *Jonayd-nāma* I, pp. 301, 402, 437-38, 471, 508, 518; Ṭarṭusi, II, pp. 437-38, III, pp. 54-55, 86, 96, 107-8, IV, pp. 114-15, 136, 139, 148-49).

In storytellers' scrolls (*ṬUMĀR*)

A *ṭumār* is the written basic storyline of an orally performed prose narrative, occasionally interspersed with verse. *Ṭumār*s were compiled by professional storytellers (*naqqāl*) to be used in the process of apprenticeship or during a performance as a memory prop (Maḥjub, "Taḥawwol-e naqqāli," pp. 1099-100; Page, pp. 198-212; *Haft laškar*, Introd., p. 31; Omidsalar and Omidsalar, pp. 332-34; for a structural analysis of a *ṭumār*, see Yamamoto, pp. 29-52). Illiterate storytellers used to listen to the scrolls read aloud, memorizing them (*Dāstān-e Rostam wa Sohrāb*, Introd., p. 28, citing a testimony of a professional

storyteller in Isfahan; Omidsalar and Omidsalar, pp. 333-34). Performers who specialized in retelling the *Šāh-nāma* in prose, and from time to time also recited verses from the epic, were known as *Šāh-nāmaḵˇān*s (*Šāh-nāma* reciter; see Lesān; COFFEEHOUSE; for the difference in techniques of performance between a *naqqāl* and a *Šāh-nāmaḵˇān*, see an observation of Moršed Wali-Allāh Torābi, himself a professional storyteller, in *Haft laškar*, Introd., pp. 26-27).

The *Šāh-nāma* was a constant presence in the *naqqāli* repertoire in the Safavid and Qajar periods. After 1929, it entirely supplanted other traditional epic and prose works as a result of government control of folk entertainment, to the effect that today *naqqāli* is generally identified with the *Šāh-nāma* (Yamamoto, pp. 25-28, esp. n. 47; for a suggestion that the stories from Ferdowsi's epic were not part of the *naqqāli* repertoire before 1929, see Omidsalar and Omidsalar, pp. 332-33). The subject matter conventionally covered the stories from Kayumarṯ (see GAYŌMART) through Bahman (see BAHMAN (2) SON OF ESFANDIĀR). The story of Rostam and Sohrāb was given a particular place, culminating in a highly dramatic ceremony of *sohrāb-koši*, that is, performing the episode of Sohrāb getting killed by Rostam (*Haft laškar*, Introd., p. 27).

In *ṭumār*s, the *Šāh-nāma* subject matter undergoes abundant changes and variations. Plots branch off and side events are added to fill in the narrative gaps, the main resource for amplifying the story line being the Persian "Epic Cycle" (see EPICS; Van Zutphen, pp. 62-138). Thus, the stories of Jamšid and Żaḥḥāk and of Garšāsp (see *Haft laškar*, pp. 9-23, 40-52; ʿAnāṣeri, pp. 57-58) are mainly based on the *Garšāsp-nāma* of Asadi Ṭusi; the story of Sām (see *Haft laškar*, pp. 57-148) is derived from *Sām-nāma*, ascribed to Ḵˇāju Kermāni; the accounts of Farāmarz, Bānu Gošasp, Jahāngir, Borzu, and Bahman (see *Haft laškar*, pp. 197-224, 246-318, 480-570; *Ṭumār-e kohan*, pp. 751-69, 790-959) owe much to *Farāmarz-nāma*, *Bānu Gošasp-nāma*, *Jahāngir-nāma*, *Borzu-nāma*, and *Bahman-nāma* (qq.v.), respectively, etc. Numerous additional heroes are introduced, either newly-invented or borrowed from unrelated parts of the *Sām-nāma*, as well as from various *dāstān*s, notably *Alp Arslān* (on ALP ARSLĀN), while retaining their original narrative functions (see *Dāstān-e Rostam wa Sohrāb*, Introd., pp. 51-52). The narrative acquires a strong Islamic emphasis; there is a tendency to synchronize the national Iranian epic with Islamic history, creating a syncretic mixture of pre-Islamic and Islamic traditions (e.g., see *Dāstān-e Rostam wa Sohrāb*, Introd., pp. 50-51; *Haft laškar*, Introd., p. 44). Popular Sufi influences are also present. Epic narrative logic is

abandoned in favor of picaresque and romantic elements, with the acts of *ʿayyār*s and women protagonists given a prominent role. This brings about transformations in the motivation of characters' actions (e.g., see *Dāstān-e Rostam wa Sohrāb*, Introd., pp. 52-55).

In folktales and legends

A vast collection of folktales and legends based on the *Šāh-nāma* was gathered and published by Sayyed Abu'l-Qāsem Enjavi Širāzi in three volumes (*Mardom wa Ferdowsi*; *Mardom wa Šāh-nāma*; *Mardom wa qahramānān-e Šāh-nāma*; repr. in a three-vol. set as *Ferdowsi-nāma*). Rooted in the *Šāh-nāma*, the folklore material in the collection also draws abundantly on the Persian Epic Cycle and shares much subject matter with *ṭumār*s. The bulk of the folktales, with a considerable number of variants, is devoted to Rostam, Sohrāb, and their kin (Enjavi, 1990, I, pp. 74-230, II, pp. 3-176, 213-20, III, pp. 73-80). Likewise, there is a substantial representation of the stories of Siāvaš (Enjavi, 1990, II, pp. 229-61, III, pp. 101-34), Kay Ḵosrow (Enjavi, 1990, II, pp. 265-97, III, pp. 139-82), Esfandiār (Enjavi, 1990, I, pp. 203-14), and Anušervān (Enjavi, 1990, II, pp. 339-66). The proportion of etiological legends is high, notably in connection with Rostam and Kay Ḵosrow (e.g., Enjavi, 1990, II, pp. 161-76, 261, 271, 275-76, 291-95, 296-97, 360-66, III, p. 24-25, 134, 168-77). *Šāh-nāma* episodes are typically fused and amended, for instance, see the amalgamation of Bahrām Gōr's encounters with Lonbak, the water carrier (*ābkaš*), and Barāhām the Jew and with Māhyār the jewel seller (*gowharforuš*; VI, pp. 424-36, vv. 119-259 and pp. 484-500, vv. 889-1127, respectively) in a Persian folktale cited in Qāżi, pp. 43-52); motifs are reshuffled and rethought (e.g., the invulnerability [*ruyin-tani*] of Esfandiār and his strife with Rostam in a tale from Darvāz; see Rozenfel'd and Rychkova, pp. 191-92, no. 77; cf. Enjavi, 1990, II, pp. 23-25, 27). There is a strong tendency to introduce Islamic themes and motifs (e.g., numerous versions of Rostam's rivalry with ʿAli b. Abū Ṭāleb and Solomon, followed by Rostam's explicit or implicit acceptance of Islam; see Enjavi, 1990, II, pp. 107-27; Rostam, being a Muslim, recites a Muslim prayer before subduing the White Demon; Rostam recovers Solomon's stolen ring; it is believed that Rostam and Kay Ḵosrow will fight at the side of the Hidden Imam at the time of his coming; Enjavi, 1990, II, pp. 88, 160-61, III, p. 177).

In addition, folk tales are replete with motifs common to the *Šāh-nāma*: the king's daughter chooses the stranger Prince Ebrāhim as her husband by throwing an apple at him (Enjavi, 1976, III, pp. 87-100; cf. *Šāh-nāma* V, pp. 19-22, vv. 230-83, Katāyun choosing Goštāsp); an abandoned child is rescued

from a stream and brought up by an old woman (Bolvin and Chocourzadeh, II, no. 11 "Eskandar," pp. 35-37; cf. *Šāh-nāma* V, pp. 489-97, vv. 22-125, the story of Dārāb). Whether Ferdowsi's epic is the source for these and other motifs or whether they are part of the lore (see Boyce, pp. 1189, 1192-93) cannot be established with certainty.

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