



Extended Abstract

Vol 17, Issue 1, Spring 2025, Ser 63

An Analysis of the Transformations of Fereydoon's Narrative from Avesta to Naghali Scrolls

Mahmoud Rezaei Dashtarzhane * 
Seyede Zahra Malekpour 

Introduction

Fereydoon is one of the most prominent kings of the pre-Islamic period who, according to the *Avesta*, was born in Varneh, which in later sources is considered to be the same as Var, a village in Larijan, Iran. His most important feat is the victory over Dahaka, a three-headed, six-eyed dragon. Although in the *Avesta* he appears to have killed Dahaka, it is stated in Pahlavi narrations that Fereydoon, following Ormazd, refrained from killing him and imprisoned him in a cave in Damavand, lest various harmful creatures emerge from the dragon's carcass. (Dinkard, 2001: 548).

Since Fereydoon was one of the most important kings of the pre-Islamic period, both narratives related to him and the narratives of figures related to him, such as Zahhak and Kaveh have undergone transformations over time although they have the general structure of *Shahnameh*. This study attempts to uncover these transformations and show their evolution by analyzing the *Avesta* and pre-Islamic texts, the chronicles of the Islamic period, and the Naghali scrolls.

Research Method, Background, and Objectives

In this study, based on the descriptive analytical method, the narratives related to Fereydoon and his era have been analyzed with the aim of clarifying the extent of heterogeneity of his narratives in other texts compared to *Shahnameh*. Although many articles and works have been published about Fereydoon and the important events of his era, no independent work has yet appeared on the transformations of the narratives about him from the *Avesta* to the Naqqali scrolls; a matter that the authors seek to explain in this essay. Some works related to the subject of this essay are as follows: Mohammad Reza Amini (2002) considers Fereydoon and Zahhak to be different manifestations of the human psyche, and the process of individuality is formed by the balance between them. Mokhtarian (2008) has examined some aspects of Fereydoon's mythology in both pre-Islamic sources and in the chronicles of the Islamic period. Molaei (2009) believes that the name Fereydoon was associated with the three powers of combat, medicine, and enchantment, although Farzad Ghaemi (2010) rejects this hypothesis and correctly believes that the name Fereydoon comes from the fact that he is the third suppressor of the human being. Akbari Mafakher (2016) has mentioned Fereydoon's cow-riding aspect in the Kurdish *Shahnamehs*.

* Prof in Persian Language and Literature of Shiraz University, Shiraz, Iran. mrezaei@shirazu.ac.ir.

DOI: 10.22099/JBA.2024.47533.4407



COPYRIGHTS ©2021 The author(s). This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY-NC 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, as long as the original authors and source are cited. No permission is required from the authors or the publisher.

Discussion

Contrary to *Shahnameh* narrative, in the Naghali scroll of the *Shahnameh*, instead of Soroush, it is Simorgh Hakim that tells Fereydoon that Zakhak should be tied up in Damavand. On the other hand, in the *Shahnameh* scroll of Ferdowsi, it is narrated that when Fereydoon went to fight Zakhak, Zakhak first resorted to sorcery, but Fereydoon nullified his spell. On the other hand, contrary to the *Shahnameh* narrative, some scrolls refer to Zakhak being killed, which is represented based on an authentic and ancient narrative, because Zakhak's Indian counterpart, Vishvarupa, is also killed by Indra. On the other hand, in the *Shahnameh of the Narrators*, it is stated that Kaveh plots a friendship with Zakhak and finally, through a cunning plan, takes Zakhak to Damavand and, according to the order of Hum Abed, imprisons Zakhak in Damavand and establishes five spells on Zakhak. In the *Al-Buldan*, Ibn Faqih Hamadani refers to the flight of Zakhak and possibly Fereydoon following him, contrary to the *Shahnameh* narration. According to *Ferdowsi-Nameh*, the reason why Zakhak was not killed was the love of some people who prevented him from being killed. Although in *Shahnameh*, the cow Barmayeh gives Fereydoon milk and nurses him, according to the *Kushnameh*, a very wise person named Barmayen who is the minister of the palace teaches Fereydoon knowledge and awareness. Another point is that in *Ferdowsi-Nameh*, the birth of Salam and Tur is considered to be the result of Fereydoon's marriage to Zakhak's daughters, and Iraj is the result of Fereydoon's marriage to the daughter of Ganjur Zakhak, that is, the daughter of Bahram Abarkouhi. Fereydoon's other marriage is with the daughter of Hum Abed, and the result of this marriage is Falak Naz, the mother of Garshasb Pahlevan.

On the other hand, in the Naghali scroll of the *Shahnameh*, the marriage of Fereydoon's sons with the daughters of the King of Egypt is done with the help of Garshasb the hero. The king of Egypt sets three conditions for the marriage of his daughters, and Iraj fulfills all three conditions, and all three brothers return to Fereydoon with the three daughters of the King of Egypt. On the other hand, in some scrolls, Fereydoon tests his three sons with bows and arrows and divides the world between them based on their abilities. Another point is that, unlike *Shahnameh*, in *Kushnameh*, it is Iraj who demands tribute from Salm and Tur, and for this reason Iraj's brothers enter into war with him. On the other hand, unlike *Shahnameh*, in some pre-Islamic texts, Fereydoon's ingratitude to Yazdan and his sins are sometimes mentioned, and he is not allowed to enter Minoo (paradise) because of this sin.

Conclusion

After analyzing the narratives in connection with the story of Fereydoon, it was concluded that although in cases such as Fereydoon's battle with Zakhak and the division of the world among his three sons, there is a significant alignment with *Shahnameh*, there are developments and transformations in these texts compared to *Shahnameh* that are either the result of the different sources of these narrations or the result of interference and manipulations that have found their way into these texts by moving away from the mythical context of the narration. For example, it is Simorgh that prevents Zakhak from being killed so that his final judgement would remain until the Day of Doom; or Kaveh plots a friendship with Zakhak and takes him to Damavand with a cunning plan; and according to the order of Hum Abed, he imprisons Zakhak in Damavand and establishes five spells on him. In another case, Zakhak flies away with the mountain he is tied to, and Fereydoon finds him again in the city of Bahrriz (Rey). On the other hand, it is Iraj who demands taxes from Salm and Tor and prepares the ground for enmity, and the division of the world is also carried out by means of a test of bow and arrow throwing; or, contrary to *Shahnameh*, it is Barmayen, the minister of Selkat, who bestows knowledge on Fereydoon.

Keywords: Fereydoon, Zakhak, Kaveh, Barmayen, Metamorphosis

References

- The Holy Bible (Old Testament and New Testament)*. (2004). (F. K. Hamedani & W. G., Trans.). Vol. 2. Tehran: Asatir Publications. [in Persian]
- Afshari, M. & Madaeni (2008). *Comprehensive narrative scroll (Heft Lashkar)*. Tehran: Research Institute of Humanities and Cultural Studies. [in Persian]
- Akbari Mafakher, A. (2016). The king of the cowherd. *Journal of Epic Literature*, 12, 13-42. [in Persian]
- Akhavan Aghdam, N. (1978). A comparative comparison of the story of Fereydoon in Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* and Shakespeare's *King Lear* with a mythological approach. *Iranian Studies*, 42, 1-27. [in Persian]

- Amini, M. R. (2002). Analysis of the hero myth in the story of Zakhak and Fereydoon based on Jung's theory. *Journal of Social and Human Sciences of Shiraz University*, 2(34), 53-64. [in Persian]
- Amouzgar, J. (1995). *History of Iranian mythology*. Tehran: Organization for the Study and Compilation of Humanities Books. [in Persian]
- Amouzgar, J. (1994). Notes on the allusions of Khaqani's *Shahnameh*. *Literary Studies*, 4, 7-36. [in Persian]
- Anjoi Shirazi, S. A. (1989). *Ferdowsi-Nameh*. Tehran: Elmi. [in Persian]
- Ardestan Rostami, H. R. (2018). *Zakhak Shahnameh*. Tehran: Negah Moaser. [in Persian]
- Ardestan Rostami, H. R. (2021). On the gnostic foundation of the sin (ignorance and ingratitude) of Fereydoon. *Shahnameh and Persian Language*, 17-46. [in Persian]
- Arzhang, K. (2019). *Study and analysis of sources of common stories in the comprehensive narrative scrolls and Ferdowsi's Shahnameh*. Doctoral thesis, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad. [in Persian]
- Asadi Tusi (1975). *Garshasb-nameh*. (H. Yaghmaei, Ed.). Tehran: Tahmoori. [in Persian]
- Avesta*. (1389). Report and research by J. Dostkhah. Tehran: Morvarid. [in Persian]
- Aydenloo, S. (1999). *From myth to epic*. Tehran: Sokhan. [in Persian]
- Aydenloo, S. (1992). *Scroll of narratives of Shahnameh*. Tehran: Behnegar. [in Persian]
- Aydenloo, S. (1995). Some narratives and oral narratives in the appendices of manuscripts and editions of *Shahnameh*. *Popular Culture and Literature*, 3(5), 50-100. [in Persian]
- Aydenloo, S. (2008). Some important themes and rituals of marriage in Iranian epic literature. *Journal of the Faculty of Literature and Humanities of Mashhad*, 160, 1-23. [in Persian]
- Aydenloo, S. (2006). The relationship between myth and epic based on the *Shahnameh* and Iranian sources. *Iranian Studies*, 10, 1-31. [in Persian]
- Bahar, M. (1999). *Research in Iranian mythology*. Tehran: Agah. [in Persian]
- Daraya, T. (1997). The contribution of Indo-European sources in understanding the *Shahnameh*: The identity of Kaveh Ahangar. *Iranology*, 9(34), 279-284. [in Persian]
- Dinuri, A. H. (1985). *Akhbar-al-Tawwal*. Tehran: Iranian Cultural Foundation. [in Persian]
- Dumezil, G. (2004). *The fate of the warrior* (M. Baghi & S. Mokhtarian, Trans.). Tehran: Qesseh. [in Persian]
- Christensen, A. (2005). *Kaveh Ahangar and Darfesh Kaviani* (M. Ahadzadegan Ahani, Trans.). Tehran: Tahoori. [in Persian]
- Eslami Nadushan, M. A. (2006). *Life and death of heroes in Shahnameh*. Tehran: Sherkat Sahami. [in Persian]
- Ferdowsi (2011). *Shahnameh*. (J. Khaleghi Motlagh, Ed.). Tehran: Academy of Persian Language and Literature. [in Persian]
- Ghaemi, F. (2010). Why is Fereydoon the third? *Linguistic Essays*, 2, 338-360. [in Persian]
- Hawkes, J. (1998). *Dictionary of the Holy Bible*. Tehran: Asatir Publications. [in Persian]
- History of Sistan*. (1973). Correction by M. al-Shu'ara Bahar. Tehran: Khavar Institute. [in Persian]
- Homer (1999). *Iliad*. (S. Nafisi, Trans.). Tehran: Translation and Book Publishing House. [in Persian]
- Ibn Faqih Hamadani. (1960). *Al-Buldan*. (H. Masoud, Trans.). Tehran: Iranian Culture Foundation. [in Persian]
- Iranshan Ibn Abi al-Khair. (1997). *Koushnameh*. (J. Matini, Ed.). Tehran: Elmi. [in Persian]
- Jafari Dehghaghi, M. & Pourahmad, M. (2013). Freydon's ungrateful mace and its origin. *Persian Literature*, 2, 39-56. [in Persian]
- Jalali Naeini, S. M. R. (1993). *Selected poems of the Rig Veda* (Researched, Translated and Introduced). Tehran: Noqreh. [in Persian]
- Kahrizi, K. (2010). The sin of Fereydoon. *Ayeene Miras*, 67, 32-52. [in Persian]
- Khatibi, A. (2011). Was Fereydoon ungrateful to God? In *A collection of articles of the Shahnameh Millennium Conference* (pp. 183-200). Tehran: Persian Language and Literature Farhangestan. [in Persian]
- Khwandmir, G. al-Din. (2001). *Habib al-Sir*. (J. Homaei, Ed.). Tehran: Khayyam. [in Persian]
- Marashi, Z. (1966). *History of Tabaristan, Royan and Mazandaran* (M. H. Tasbihi, Ed.). Tehran: Asatir. [in Persian]
- Marzban Farsi, R. (2010). *Faramarznameh Kouchak* (A. Khatibi & R. Ghafouri, Eds.). Tehran: Dr. Mahmoud Afshar and Sokhan Publications. [in Persian]

- Mehdipour, M. (2011). A comparative study of the story of Hazrat Yaqub (AS) and Fereydoon and their children. *Gohar Goya*, 5, 99-124. [in Persian]
- Mir Fakhraei, M. (2010). *Pahlavi narrative*. Tehran: Institute of Humanities. [in Persian]
- Miskawayh, A. A. (2003). *The experiences of nations and the pursuit of the divine*. (S. K. Hassan, Researcher). (Volume 1). Beirut: Daral Kitab Al-Ilamiyah. [in Persian]
- Mokhtarian, B. (2010). *An introduction to the mythological structure of the Shahnameh*. Tehran: Agah. [in Persian]
- Molaei, C. (2008). The triple power of Fereydoon in mythological narratives and epic traditions of Iran. In Z. Zarshenas V. Nadaf (Eds.), *Dr. Badr al-Zaman Gharib's celebration* (pp. 159-185). Tehran: Tahoori. [in Persian]
- Molaei, C. (2008). The mysteries of Zahhak in the religious and epic traditions of Iran. In *Celebration of Professor Esmaeil Saadat*. Tehran: Academy of Persian Language and Literature. [in Persian]
- Molaei, C. (2009). The meaning of the name Fereydoon and its connection with his three forces in the mythological and mystical traditions of Iran. *Literary Essays*, 167, 151-174. [in Persian]
- Molaei, C. (2010). A study of the narratives related to Zahhak and the cow in the desert in Iranian texts. *Letter of the Farhangestan*, 3, 107-129. [in Persian]
- Mujam al-Tawarikh va al-Qasas* (2010). (A. Nahovi, Ed.). Tehran: Sokhan. [in Persian]
- Nahvi, A. (2006). About some Arabic names in *Shahnameh*. *Shahnameh Pajuhi*, 1, 1-11. [in Persian]
- Nouri Osmanov, M. (1975). *Khoday-Nameh* and *Shahnamehs* from Ferdowsi's source. In *Memorandum of Muhammad Parvin Gonabadi*. Tehran: Toos. [in Persian]
- Rashed Muhsal, M. T. (2009). *Dinkard*. Tehran: Research Institute of Humanities and Cultural Studies. [in Persian]
- Saeedi, M. & Hashemi, A. (1998). *Scroll of Ferdowsi's Shahnameh*. Tehran: Khoshnegar. [in Persian]
- Safa, Z. (2005). *Epic writing in Iran*. Tehran: Amir Kabir. [in Persian]
- Tabari, M. (2006). *History of Tabari* (A. Payandeh, Trans.). Tehran: Asatir. [in Persian]
- Tafazzoli, A. (1997). *History of Iranian literature before Islam*. Tehran: Sokhan. [in Persian]
- Varavini, S. (2009). *Marzban-Nameh*. (K. Khatib-Rehbar, Ed.). Tehran: Safi Ali Shah. [in Persian]
- West, E. W. (1885). *The sacred books of East* (Vol. 24) (M. Muller, Ed.). Oxford: University Press.
- Zariri, M. A. (2017). *The Shahnameh of the narrators*. Tehran: Ghoghnoos. [in Persian]
- Zhiran, F., Lacouet, G. & Delaporte, L. (1996). *Dictionary of Assyrian and Babylonian mythology* (A. Ismailpour, Trans.). Tehran: Fekr Rooz. [in Persian]