

THE STORY OF ROSTAM AND ESFANDIYĀR IN AN IRANIAN DIALECT

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Nearly ten centuries have passed since Firdausi composed his monumental work, the *Shāhnāma*. Today, there is convincing evidence that such heroic legends and stories were current in various Iranian languages long before Firdausi's time. Both the content of the *Shāhnāma* and external sources provide evidence that oral traditions as well as written documents were known and available to Firdausi when composing his epic. Due to the literary merit of the *Shāhnāma* and the predominance of New Persian in Iranian society, it is generally expected that both traditions of *naqqāli* (narration) as well as *shāhnāma-khāni* (recitation of the *Shāhnāma*) be performed in New Persian. However, the story presented here, based on the *Shāhnāma* is in Davāni, an Iranian dialect of Fārs and as such, it may indicate the survival of the oral tradition in existence even before the *Shāhnāma* and therefore is of historical interest. It provides an insight into the folklore of the inhabitants of a village and is useful as a specimen of a dialect which is dying. It is hoped that this account will provide an incentive for further work on this dialect.*

THE STORY OF *Rostam O Esfandiyār* in Davāni was collected on tape during a trip to Davān, some seventeen kilometers northeast of Kāzerūn, in August 1975. A villager, ʿAli Bābā Sādēqi, 65 years old, blind and retired, volunteered to tell us a story in his mother tongue. His fellow villagers, familiar with his story-telling, insisted that he tell us the *Rostam O Esfandiyār* of the *Shāhnāma*.¹

ʿAli Bābā was illiterate. He had spent most of his life in the village and had made only occasional short trips, mostly during his youth, to Kāzerūn, Būshehr, and Shīrāz. He spoke Persian more or less fluently and seemed to enjoy reciting the *Shāhnāma* from memory. He claimed he had learned it from his father who recited legends from the *Shāhnāma* to him when he was a young boy.

* The author is grateful to Professors Richard N. Frye (Harvard University) and William L. Hanaway, Jr. (University of Pennsylvania); also to Ms. Jeannine Langdoc-Heny, who read an earlier draft of this article and made valuable comments.

¹ The tape of *Rostam O Esfandiyār* was transcribed and translated with the assistance of Miss B. Qāsemi, a Davāni, and former student of mine at Shiraz University. I would like to thank her and her family for the assistance and hospitality they gave me while visiting Davān on two occasions. My thanks also go to ʿAli Bābā Sādēqi and my other very hospitable Davāni friends who patiently answered my questions about their language and their native land and agreed to the recording of their conversations.

In a conversation with some village elders, we were told that ʿAli Bābā occasionally spent his spare time sitting in a corner of the main village square narrating stories of the *Shāhnāma* in Davāni, or reciting verses from the *Shāhnāma*, to a group gathered around him.

The present version of *Rostam O Esfandiyār* is much shorter than its original.² It lacks the detailed descriptions of the *Shāhnāma* version, as well as Firdausi's elaborate language and rich poetic imagery.³ It is

² Perhaps due to the fact that ʿAli Bābā was aware that his story was being recorded, he made it shorter than usual.

³ For an enjoyable English prose translation of Firdausi's *Rostam O Esfandiyār* see *The Epic of the Kings*, translated by Reuben Levy (Persian Heritage Series No. 2), The University of Chicago Press, 1967, pp. 194–211. The heroic characters of Rostam and Esfandiyār are the subject of a study by Marcia E. Maguire, *Rustam and Isfandiyār in the Shāhnāme*, (Ph.D. dissertation in Near Eastern Studies, Princeton University, 1973). There are also two studies on *Rostam O Esfandiyār* in Persian: M. A. Islāmī Nandūshān, *Dāstān-e Dāstānhā: Rostam O Esfandiyār*, (Anjuman-e Āsār-e Mellī, 94) Tehran, 1351/1972 and Shāhrokh Miskūb, *Moqaddima-i bar Rostam O Esfandiyār*, 2nd ed., Tehran, 1348/1969.

For a recent comprehensive study of *naqqāli*, see Mary Ellen Page, *Naqqāli and Ferdowsi: Creativity in the Iranian National Tradition* (Ph.D. dissertation, Oriental Studies, University of Pennsylvania, 1977). In this study Miss Page first discusses the historical background of storytelling in Iran, then on the basis of material collected in the years 1974–

narrated by a simple villager who has more or less adapted the *Shāhnāma* stories to his own personal experience in the village. Thus, the story told to us by ʿAli Bābā only covers the main theme of Firdausi's *Rostam O Esfandiyār*: Esfandiyār claims the throne from his father Goshtāsp. Goshtāsp tells his son he will entrust the kingship to him only if he brings Rostam in fetters. Esfandiyār goes to Zābol and fights with Rostam. Rostam is badly wounded in the first day of battle, but Zāl summons the Simorgh, who assists Rostam by showing him how he can kill Esfandiyār with an arrow from a tamarisk branch. Rostam follows the Simorgh's instructions and defeats Esfandiyār by blinding him.

ʿAli Bābā at first ended the story with the death of Esfandiyār after Rostam has shot him in the eyes. His fellow villagers, however, insisted that he end the story in the "usual manner," that is, with the local conclusion.⁴ At first he refused, on the ground that the local version did not correspond with the *Shāhnāma*. Later he agreed to conclude the story as he had on other occasions: Esfandiyār asks Rostam to build a mosque for him in which he would spend the rest of his life. He wants to trick Rostam and take revenge on him by placing a big rock over the entrance of the mosque, in the hope of killing Rostam as he enters there. Rostam, however, is clever and has discovered the plot; he makes two entrances for the mosque, and Esfandiyār is killed in his own trap.

The mosque is, of course, impossible in the setting of the original *Shāhnāma*. It has simply been drawn into

the story by the generations of villagers who see the mosque as a central and natural part of village life.

The villager interjects his own experience in other episodes as well; an example is the manner in which Zāl summons the Simorgh. In Levy's translation of the *Shāhnāma* we read: "Prince Zāl climbed a lofty mountain, taking with him from the palace three braziers for fire and three resourceful warriors as escort."⁵ With the change of *mejmar* (brazier) to *majme* (Persian: *majma*⁶ a, tray), ʿAli Bābā's account goes: "(Zāl) himself went up to roof and took up a tray of ambergris and (other) things to the roof of the house."⁶

Another interesting difference between ʿAli Bābā's story and that of Firdausi is that in the *Shāhnāma*, the Simorgh with his beak pulls the arrows from the wounded bodies of Rostam and Rakhsh, and brushes their wounds with her feather to heal them.⁷ But in the Davāni version, the Simorgh heals Rostam and his horse by simply licking their wounds with her tongue.⁸

In the *Shāhnāma*, when the Simorgh instructs Rostam in how to make an arrow from the branch of tamarisk, we read in Levy's translation: "Choose a branch as straight as can be, one whose top reaches highest and whose length is supplest . . . straighten it in the fire and look for arrow-heads which are fine and old. Then fix three feathers on it and two arrow-heads. . . ."⁹ In the Davāni version, the instructions of the Simorgh, to Rostam are simplified to: ". . . cut this branch of tamarisk . . . and then put nine arrows on the ends."¹⁰

The Simorgh, on advising Rostam not to seek to kill Esfandiyār, warns him thus: "Fortune will sacrifice any man who spills the blood of the hero Esfandiyār; as long as life shall last in that man he will find no deliverance from torment nor will his prosperity endure."¹¹ In the Davāni story, the Simorgh tells Rostam that he will live for another five hundred years, but if he kills Esfandiyār, he will outlive Esfandiyār by only one year.¹²

In the Davāni story the secondary themes are missing: the events leading to the journey of Esfandiyār to

75, she describes and analyzes the present situation of professional storytelling in that country. Comparing the form and content of several stories of *naqqāli* with the *Shāhnāma* and other written sources, she concludes that oral and written literatures have been living side by side through the centuries and that the tradition of storytelling has remained continuously creative.

On *Shāhnāma-khāni* and its present condition in Iran, see Foroud Ismailbeigi Shirazi: *A Study of the Evolutionary Trend and the Current Atmosphere and Condition of Shāhnāmih-khāni in Iran* (Ph.D. dissertation in Theatre Arts, Wayne State University, 1973). Unfortunately, this study, although it contains some firsthand material, suffers from the absence of a systematic methodology and organization. Still, parts of Chapters II and IV seem to be informative and useful.

⁴ The villagers present were: ʿAbd al-Rasūl Mirzā³ī (25 years old) and his grandfather and grandmother, Hāj Qholām²ali Avazzāda and his wife (both in their sixties). All of them were illiterate, and all spoke Davāni fluently.

⁵ Levy, op. cit., pp. 206–207.

⁶ See Text, 41.

⁷ See *Shāhnāma* ed. Beroukhi, Vol. 6 (Tehran, 1935), p. 1704; also ed. M. Dabīrsayāghī, Vol. 3 (Tehran, 1335/1956), p. 1498; and Moscow, Vol. 6 (1967), p. 296.

⁸ See Text, 47.

⁹ Levy, op. cit., p. 208.

¹⁰ See Text, 64.

¹¹ Levy, op. cit., p. 208.

¹² Text, 49.

Zābolestān, and to the meeting of Esfandiyār with his mother Katāyūn; the astrological prediction of his death by Jāmāsp upon the order of Goshtāsp; and his meeting with Goshtāsp. There is also no reference to the evil intentions of Goshtāsp or to the personality traits of any other character in the story. The many happenings which intensify the animosity between the two heroes are also omitted, among which are: the attempt of Bahman to kill Rostam with a rock; the refusal of Esfandiyār to invite Rostam to a banquet, which angers Rostam; and the impromptu battle between the two armies which results in death of Esfandiyār's two sons, Nūshāzar and Mehrnūsh.

The only names mentioned in the Davāni story besides Rostam and Esfandiyār are Goshtāsp, Bahman, Zāl and Simorgh; the minor characters of the legend such as Zawāra and Farāmarz do not appear. There are references to Rostam's horse but his name, Rakhsh, is not mentioned.

The final conversation between the fallen Esfandiyār and the regretful and sorrowful Rostam, through which Bahman's education is entrusted to Rostam, is missing. Also, Firdausi's lengthy and much elaborated conclusion of mourning for Esfandiyār is summed up in a simple sentence by ʿAli Bābā: After the death of Esfandiyār his body was put in a box and was sent to Goshtāsp.¹³

In short, the legend is told in simple and vigorous language. More than half the story is narrated in the form of direct speech. There are no inconsistencies in the order of events, nor do we find the annoying repetitions which characterize some oral storytelling. ʿAli Bābā's occasional repetitions seem intentional, usually adding a forceful tone to the scene.

This is not the place to describe the grammatical features of Davāni as an Iranian dialect.¹⁴ However, to assist the reader in understanding the language of the text, it seems necessary to explain here briefly the various usages of the enclitic pronouns, as they occur in the story. The enclitic pronouns: *-m*, *-t*, *-š* (sg.), and *-mu*, *-to*^u, *-šu* (pl.) with the joining vowels, *e*, *ə*, *o*, are

attached to different parts of speech and they may act as one of the following:

a) Possessive: *pos-em* 'my son', *ser-eš* 'his head' (43); *dass-om* 'my hand' (13)

b) Object: "... *heḍa dass-e rostam huvene-š bā injā, ke-t ma tāj o šāi hāde*." 'go (and) chain Rostam's hand (and) bring him here, so that I give you the crown and the kingdom.' (10)

"... *bonā-š ke nasiyat-eš kerdan*..."
'... by him (=Rostam) the advice began to him (=Esfandiyār) ...' (18)

c) Dative for the verb, 'to be':

"... *to^u-t punsad sāl dē ʔomr hē*."
'... there is 500 years more of age for you.' (49)

d) Grammatical agent for past tenses of a transitive verb:

In this capacity the enclitic pronoun may be attached to any word before the verb. It may stand in isolation in which case it is joined to a particle *o-*. It may also be joined to the verb. If the agent is a noun or a pronoun, the corresponding enclitic pronoun may still appear, attached to the agent itself:

"*ame injā-š ejāza dā*" 'He came here and permission was given by him' (34)

"*pos-em-eš i juri var sar-eš avarse*"
'This is done to my son by them' (43)

"... *bonā-š ke nasiyat-eš kerdan*..."
'by him (=Rostam) the advice began to him (=Esfandiyār) ...' (18)

"... *o-š esfandiyār ersā*" 'and by him (=Goshtāsp) Esfandiyār was sent' (1)

go-š 'it was said by him' (4)

"*esfandiyār-əš eddeʔoy šāhi ke*" 'by him, Esfandiyār, the kingship was claimed' (2)

e) Subject pronoun for preterite intransitive verbs:

še-š 'he went' (8)

"*simorḡ-eš ame*" 'Simorgh came' (47)

c.f. "*simorḡ ame*" (41)

f) Subject pronoun for impersonal and indeclinable verbs: *mā* 'to want, to wish' and *šā* 'can, to be able':

¹³ Text, 86.

¹⁴ So far there have been three short studies of this dialect: G. Morgenstierne, "Stray Notes on Persian Dialects, II, Fārs Dialects-Davāni" in *Norsk Tidsskrift for Sprogvidenskap*, XIX, 1960, 123-129; C. Hasānzāda-Haqīqī, "Gūyeš-e Davān" in *Proceedings of the First Congress of Iranian Studies*, Tehran University, 1970, 77-98; and H. Mahamedī, "On the Verbal System in Three Iranian Dialects of Fārs" in *Studia Iranica*, VIII, 2, 1979, 277-97.

"to -t ne meišā dass-e ma huvene" 'You cannot tie up my hand(s)' (13)

"... agar-ət šāhi mā..." 'if you want the kingdom...' (18)

The system of transcription used is conventional and approximate and does not represent the exact phonetic values of the sound system of *Davāni*. The following features deserve attention:

Consonants:

Beside *č* [tʃ] there is also an unvoiced dental affricate [ts] as in *tse* [tse] 'what', in contrast to *čīn* [tʃi:n] 'China.' The fricative [ð] also occurs mainly after vowels: *bað* [bæð] 'bad', in contrast to *dass* [dæss] 'hand'.¹⁵ *k* and *g* have a tendency to appear as palatalized [k̟] and [g̟] before front vowels: *koka* [ko̟k̟æ] 'brother'; *bega* [be̟g̟æ] 'say', in contrast to *go-š* [goʃ] 'he said'.

Vowels

ə is a mid-unrounded short vowel.

a is similar to short *a* [æ] in Persian: *mard*.

ā is similar to 'long *a*' [a] in Persian: *āb*. Sometimes is pronounced as closed vowel *ô* word finally: *injā* [i:ndzô] 'here.'

The text here represents a transcription of the forms as heard on the tape; alternate forms of the same word appear (*koštās* and *goštāseb*, *čuy* and *čuv*). No attempt has been made to regularize these forms.

TEXT

- 1 ʔarz mišavad be hozur-e mobārak¹⁶ ke koštās bāve-ye esfandiyār <bi>, o-š esfandiyār ersā.
- 2 esfandiyār-əš edde?oy šāhi ke, go-š: tāj hune ser-e ma.
- 3 koštās-əš go: na, agar to-t bā ke šāhi ma hāda to beða dass-e rostam huvenā, o-š bā injā a pēš ma, ke-š oi zesse zer-e hokm-e ma, o-š emzā na-kerse ke ma šā bē.
- 4 go-š: ke hami?
- 5 go-š: hā!
- 6 go-š: xeile xo.

- 7 esfandiyār-əš vosse ame zābol, ame zābolessun qašang-e pākiza, o-š ersā, baʔman ersā a pei-ser-əš, pos-e esfandiyār, o-š go beða a rostam bega biyu
- 8 še-š a rostam go biyu.

9 rostam ame, goš: tse meigeye?

- 10 go-š: ma amesse, bāva-š hokm kerse, hokm-e šā. ma-m ne-meišā a-š kem o ziyāð bokore, va-š be ma gosse ke heða dass-e rostam huvene-š bā injā, ke-t ma tāj o šāi hāde.

11 go-š: bāva?

12 go-š: hā!

- 13 go-š ke, ʔarz mišavad be hozur-e mobārak¹⁷, ke: to-t ne-meišā dass-e ma huvene. ma agar tekateka beve to-t ne-meišā dass-e ma huvene. ma-š tā aso kasi dass-om na-basse, heska ham dar maqāvel-om na-vise. tamām-e irun o turun ba iyoy ma zendegi meikorən. ma aso meire dass-om huvene, o ke to-m bevere a pēs-e goštāseb?

14 go-š: hā, buð yā na buð o-t meivene.

15 go-š: to^u?

16 go-š: hā!

17 go-š: xeile xo!

- 18 bonā-š ke nesiyat-eš kerdan; goš: agar salāh meivene ma-ku, ma-ku ke asi-t bað meibu, agar-ət šāhi mā, bi-ke-t¹⁸ ma xom meikore šā. agar-ət ʔeir-a šāhi mā, bi-ke-t, ma xom har-tsi huvāt meide vo ma-ku ke asi-t bað meivutā.

19 go-š: na.

20 go-š ke aso-t si meigeye vali tā vaxt-eš.

- 21 go-š ke ma-š, tamām-e irun zamin o turun zamin-eš ontši šāhā-ye qadim o ʔeir-e qadim o i pahluvunyal bi, o-š čārey ma ma-ke; ke pišt-e ma a gel hunesetā, o aso to^u amesse meigey...

22 go-š: ma ruintane, to^u o-to^u unā-t tīr meizeren, meikošen. to^u xo tīr-et be ma'asar ne-meiku, ma ruintane, to-t ʔorza he ke-m... to^u čāre-ye ma meikore?

23 go-š: hami?

24 go-š: hā!

25 go-š: xo!

26 har-tsi-š nasiyat ke-š ini na-ši, koka.

27 bonā-šu ke jang kerdan: o-š ze, o-š ze, o-š ze, o-š ze, o-š ze.

28 rostam-e baðbaxt xo-š ham har-tsi meize o-š *tsisi-š *a *ser *ne-mame.¹⁹

¹⁵ There is also a voiced dental affricate [dz] as in *berendze* 'rice,' in contrast to [dz] in *tāj* [tādz] 'crown.' This does not appear in the speech of ʿAli Bābā (see Morgenstierne, op. cit., p. 125).

¹⁶ This phrase is Persian, not Davāni.

¹⁷ See above, note 16.

¹⁸ *bi-ke-t* seems to be a short form of *biyu-ke-t*: 'come, so that to you...'.

¹⁹ *tsisi-š *a *ser *ne-mame: is unclear on the tape. It is rendered by Miss B. Qāsemi.

- 29 enqadar-aš esfandiyār sad o panjā tīr o-š ze tu baḍan-e rostam, ke baḍan-e rostam bi hami mosl-e lāl-e xīn, ke-š degar hālātī na-vi bakolli.
 30 tā havoy pasīn, go-š: meiḍane tse?
 31 go-š: na.
 32 go-š: aso degar jang moqūf bokuru tā savā, ke-mu nemeisā tā savā, tā savā.
 33 go-š: xeile xo.
 34 ame injā-s ejāza dā, ejāza dā.
 35 as ke-š rostam ze ov, a rudxuna ame i teref-e rudxuna bā asp, ke tamām-e rudxuna bi a xīn, a xīn-e asp vo xīn-e rostam, ame, ra sesā, ame xuna.
 36 as ke-š zāl di bāve-ye rostam, go-š: axey ruzegār-e xot-ət vessiya ke.
 37 go-š: tse na bokore, onṣi nasiyat i ke, o-š čāra na-ke, heṣ.
 38 go-š: ʔamal-e ma xatmā. yak fekr-i be-hāl-e ma buku ke ʔamal ma xatmā. agar i jur bu, savā ma-m mā še jang, degar ma nise.
 39 go-š: xeile xo beḍa huxa.
 40 bā-š a tu xuna-š drāz vāke vo boše.
 41 boše rī bālā-xuna, o-š ya majme-ye ʔanbar o dasgā-yi bā rī bālā-xuna, o-š ya tiš-i vāke, o-š par-e simory tiš ze ke simory ame.
 42 simory-eš herekat ke ame: vaxti ame rī bon-e zāl²⁰ go-š: hā tse-t bise.
 43 go-š: ruzegār-om ve-siyā, pos-em-ešu i jur, i jur, i jur, var ser-e-š avorse. rostam koštesā, rostam deyar dar beyn ni.
 44 go-š: tse-juri bi, ki bi?
 45 go-š: esfandiyār.
 46 aso zāl zavon-e simory meifamet, ke-š a-pei-š bise. čun zāl zamān-i ke tavallod bi ya čik-i gušt-i²¹ bi-š, o-šu gossā unjā-š. simory vosse-š bā got ke, us-ke-š ke a ādam, usso ame injā. zāl faqat zavon-e simory meifamet, amre-ye ya gap meizeren gašang.
 47 simory-eš ame, ame-š i zavuš ze, o-š navā ke mosl-e marham tamām-e jāy i sado panjāh tīr-e xadang, tamām-eš bēter vāke, o-š navā ke, navā ke qašang-e pākiza, o-š gā: meiḍane tse?
 48 go-š: na.
 49 go-š: ey rostam to^u palavun-e dunyāye, vali čāre-ye i ne-meikore.²² ma meišā čāra-š bokore, vali agar-ət esfandiyār koštā, yak sāl bošter na-zendeye. ve-ellā agar-na to^u-t punsad sāl de ʔomr hē. hafsad sāl

- a ʔomr-et gozaštesse, punsad sāl-e de-t-am hē, i hezār o deveš sāl. agar-ət esfandiyār košt, yak sāl bošter na-zendeye baʔḍ-a esfandiyār.
 50 go-š: yak ābi, yak ābi pas az došman-e bad sagāl beh az ʔomr-e haftsad gozašte be sāl.²³ ma ya ov-i baʔḍ-a esfandiyār vāxore o-m xošterā.
 51 go-š: xo, xeile xo, degar be meile-e xotā. go-š: a pāy, bi-ke-t²⁴ si begey, savār-e asp beva, vazū.
 52 a pā vi, še savār-e asp bi a pei-ser-e simorḍ boše
 53 simory boraftā, o-š <bā> tā u lav-e daryā-ye-hā.
 54 an-u lav-e daryā-ye veisā, an lav-e daryā-ye čīn veisā.
 55 go-š: i mei ḍane tse?
 56 go-š: na.
 57 go-š: piyāḍa ba, a asp-et piyāḍa ba. asp-et huvenā a hami boney draxt-e, ke-š asp ne meišā, daryā-nā.
 58 o-š asp bassā boney draxt.
 59 simory ame duman, a rostam-eš gā: pāy ma bigi.
 60 rostam-eš pāy simory ge.
 61 o-š boland vāke, bā. o-š a daryā radd ke, a daryā-š radd ke-š bā tu jangal-e čīn.
 62 a tu jangal-e čīn go-š: meiḍane tse?
 63 go-š: na!
 64 go-š: biyu injā, i čuy-e gezi-ye bovor, iyo, iyo, iyo. i čuy-e gezenā, i čuy-e geze bovor: i juri hā; vo ī-š bā vo-š usso noto^u tīr beza ser-e-š. hami i beza, beza do^u toxm-e čiš-eš ke asar meiku, yeire a unjā-š asar nemeiku, ajal-eš hami hami īn.
 65 go-š: xeile xo.
 66 ame-š, rostam boše, o-š gašang o pākiza ču-ye gez bori, o-š vose-š avā, avā-s lav-e daryā.
 67 simory ame-š, pāy-e simory ge, simory a daryā rostam radd ke-š, nā u lave vā-boše.
 68 <rostam> savār-e asp-eš bi, vo-š rond, ame xuna, ame xuna tā savā.
 69 savā boše ʔang-e esfandiyār dovāra. savā boše ʔang-e esfandiyār o-š bonā ke ʔarr kerdan.
 70 avval-ešu xu^u tīr a ya ze vo-šu ʔarr ke, tā baʔḍ go-š:
 71 “seil ku ma-ku, agar salāh meivene ma-ku ke jun-et dar xatarā, va harki-t mā ma meiḍe. baxodā goštās-eš mā to^u a koštan haḍetā hā ī-š mā to^u a koštan hāḍet ke-š amr kerse beḍa dass-e rostam

²³ Cf. the following *bayt* from *Šāhnāma*:

damī āb-e sard az pey-e bad sagāl
 beh az ‘omre-e haftād o haštād sāl.

(A. A. Dehkhodā, *Amsāl va Hekam*, Vol. 2, Tehran, 1309/1930, p. 826.)

²⁴ See above, note 18.

²⁰ There are two unclear words on the tape here.

²¹ There are several unrecognizable words on the tape here.

²² There are the following extra words on the tape here: *agar ham esfandiyār*.

- huvēnā, vāllā ne-meīšāta; va ma-t xom meikore šā.
be irūn o tūrūn torā šā konam.²⁵
ma-t an irūn ham tūrūn to^u meikore šā, baḏbaxt
maku, maku.”
- 72 har *tsi* lāba meige o-š čāra ne-meiku, *hets*.
73 go-š: ne-meikore?
74 go-š: na!
75 go-š: xo, *hets* degar.
76 ame bonā ke i kerdan; bonā-šu ke jang kerdan,
folān kerdan.
77 rostem-eš-am har *tsi* eltemās ke vo-š eltemās-e
esfandiyār <ke>, ke maqsūd be hamu ?omr-eš bi
hā! o-š qavūl ne-ke, qavul-eš ne-ke.
78 uso-š, uso-š a-dar avā čov-e gezeku-š, a dar avā, o-š
tīr ze ser-eš: tīr-e xadang; o-š ze ser-e u vo-š nā-š a
kamun-əš, ze bar tū do^u toxm-e čīš-e esfandiyār, ke
boše ser-eš kot vāke, i juri a ri zīn; o-š tīr-əš kiši a
dar. tīr-əš kiši a dar ke xīn ame mosl-e daryā, o-š
ser-eš nā a ri zīn-əš.
79 go-š: hā! *tse* juri bi, hā?
bexordam sado šast tīr-e xadang
nanālidam az bahr-e nāmūs o nang
to^u xordi yeki pār čūb-e gazi
sarat rā nehādi be gārpūs-e zīn.²⁶

²⁵ Cf. be īrān o tūrān to-rā šāh konam
ze to dast-e bad-xāh kūtah konam
(*Shāhnāma* (B) Vol. 5, p. 1674; and (D) Vol. 3, p. 1472).

²⁶ Of five editions of the *Shāhnāma* consulted for comparison of the two versions of the story, only the Nāderī edition, Bombay, 1829, p. 327, had the following *bayts*, which are close to the lines read by ʿAlī Bābā:

man az to sad o šast tīr-e xadang
be-xordam na-nālidam as nām o nang
be-yak tīr bar gaštī az kārzār
be-xoftī bar-īn bāra-ye nāmdār
be-xordī yakī tīr-e čūb-e gazīn
sarat bar-nihādi be qārbus-e zīn

In other editions of the *Shāhnāma* the first *misrā*^c of the first *bayt* has two alternate forms: *man az to sad o šast tīr-e xadang* (*Shāhnāma*, ed. Turner Macan, Vol. 3, p. 1505) and *man az šast-e to hašt tīr-e xadang* (*Shāhnāma* (D) Vol. 3, p. 1505; also Moscow, Vol. 6, p. 305). The third *bayt* is found only in a few editions, with the following variant of the second *misrā*^c: *nihādi sar xīš bar piš-e zīn* (Turner Macan edition, *ibid.*). In (B) only the second *bayt* is given in the text. The other two *bayts* are recorded in footnote (*op. cit.*, p. 1712). According to the Moscow edition, the third *bayt* as cited

- 80 <esfandiyār> kūr vāvi; ame, inā amēdenā: bahman
pos-e šā ke xoḏe vazīr-eš o inā hama amēdenā,
vāse-šu a asp oftā duman vo vāse-šu bā tu čāḏar,
qašang-e pākiza.
81 mordā?
82 na, na-mordā. go-š: aso ke-t i *tsini* a ser-om avorse
ya ma?jjet-im si deres buku ke a tu-š hučiya.
83 mase-š rostem bokošetā be ī vāseey ke ham xo-š
<a beyn> hurovetā, ham rostem: ya?ni ya sang-i
an bār-e dar hunesetā, ke vaxti xo-š o rostem a dar
meišen dāxel boftet a-ri ser-e dikei-šu.
84 vali rostem-eš ?āqeli ke diko-š dar dārās ke, xo-š a
ya dar-e de boše dāxel.
85 rostem a u ray-e a-dar še qašang-e pākiza, o
<esfandiyār> xo-š a zer-e i vāvi o esfandiyār
mordā.
86 esfandiyār mordā-šu foran nā sanduq, o-šu ke bār-
e asp, o-šu bā a si koštās. i degar āxer-eš bi.
87 i na en šānumanā, en xumunā hā.

TRANSLATION

- 1 As I may humbly present to you, Goshtāsp was the father of Esfandiyār and he sent Esfandiyār (to fight against Rostam).
- 2 Esfandiyār (had) claimed the kingship, demanding: "Crown me king."
- 3 "No," said Goshtāsp, "If you want me to surrender the kingship to you, you (must) go and bring Rostam in fetters before me, for he has not obeyed my order(s) and he has not accepted that I am the king."
- 4 "Is that all?" said (Esfandiyār).
- 5 "Yes," said (Goshtāsp).
- 6 "Very well," said (Esfandiyār).
- 7 Esfandiyār set out (and) came to Zābol. He arrived pleasantly in Zābolestān. He sent his son Bahman after Rostam, saying, "Go and tell Rostam to come (here)."
- 8 (Bahman) went and asked Rostam to come.
- 9 Rostam came (and) said (to Esfandiyār), "What do you (have to) say?"
- 10 (Esfandiyār) said, "I have come on (my) father's order. It (is) the king's command, and I cannot do more or less than that. He has ordered me thus: "Go and chain Rostam's hand(s) and bring him

above also appears in a manuscript of the Oriental Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Union, referred to as MS. VI (see Moscow edition, *op. cit.*).

- here (and) then I will give you the crown and the kingdom."
- 11 "(Your) father?" asked (Rostam).
- 12 "Yes!" said (Esfandiyār).
- 13 As I may humbly present to you, (then Rostam) answered, "You cannot chain my hands. (Even) if (you) cut me into pieces, still you cannot bring me in chains. Until now, no one has (been able) to chain my hands, and no one has challenged me. All (in) Irān and Tūrān live on account of my (bravery). Now am I to let (you) chain my hands and take me to the presence of Goshtāsp?"
- 14 "Yes!" said (Esfandiyār). "Whether or not (that is true), I will bind you."
- 15 "You?" said (Rostam).
- 16 "Yes!" said (Esfandiyār).
- 17 "Very well!" said (Rostam).
- 18 (Rostam) began to advise him, saying: "If you think it right, do not do (this), do not do it, for it will turn out badly for you. If you want the throne, come and I myself will make you a king. If you want (something) other than kingship come and I will give whatever you want to you—and do not try (this), it will turn out badly for you."
- 19 "No," said (Esfandiyār).
- 20 "Now I tell you, but (you let it go), until the time comes," (Rostam) said.
- 21 (Again) said Rostam: "(No one) in the entire land of Irān and the land of Tūrān, (none) among the old or the new kings, and (none) of the heroes was ever able to challenge me, or pin my back to the ground—and now you have come to tell me. . . ."
- 22 (Esfandiyār) said: "I am brazen-bodied. You and (those like) you are killed by a stroke of an arrow, (but) your arrow will not work on me. I am brazen-bodied. Are you capable of (killing) me? Can you do away with me?"
- 23 "Is that so?" said (Rostam).
- 24 "Yes!" said (Esfandiyār).
- 25 "Well!" said (Rostam).
- 26 (My) brother(s), no matter how (Rostam) warned him, it was no use.
- 27 They started to fight: Crash, bang, crash, bang, bang!
- 28 Poor Rostam, no matter how much he hit (Esfandiyār), he could not hurt him at all.
- 29 Esfandiyār hit Rostam with as many as 150 arrows until Rostam's body looked like a red tulip and until there was no more strength left in him at all.
- 30 At sunset (Rostam) asked (Esfandiyār): "Do you know what?"
- 31 "No," said (Esfandiyār).
- 32 He said: "Let us stop the battle now until tomorrow; for we cannot (continue) until tomorrow, until tomorrow."
- 33 "Very well," said (Esfandiyār).
- 34 (Esfandiyār) came forth and gave consent, gave consent.
- 35 Now, as Rostam went to the water on horseback, to the other side of the river, the whole river became blood-red from his blood and the blood of the horse. He reached home and (rode up) to the house.
- 36 Now, when Zāl, the father of Rostam, saw him, he said: "Oh, you have brought darkness to your days!"
- 37 He said: "What could I do? All the advice I gave him was of no use at all."
- 38 (Rostam) continued: "My days are finished, find a solution for me since my days are finished. Tomorrow I will go to battle, but in this condition, I shall be no more."
- 39 "All right, (now) come inside," (Zāl) said.
- 40 (Zāl) took him into the house and laid him down.
- 41 (Zāl himself) went up to the roof and took up a tray of ambergis and (other) things to the roof of the house. He lit a fire and he burnt a feather of the Simorgh; just then, the Simorgh came.
- 42 The Simorgh moved forward and came (near). When (the bird) came on to the roof of Zāl's home, it asked, "What is (wrong) with you?"
- 43 (Zāl) said: "My days have turned dark. They have brought about this and that to my son. They have (almost) killed Rostam, (and) he (will) no longer be with us."
- 44 (The Simorgh) said: "How did it happen? Who did it?"
- 45 "Esfandiyār," said (Zāl).
- 46 Now, Zāl understood the Simorgh's language, for he had (lived) with it. When Zāl was born he was (only) a piece of flesh . . . and they left him out there. The Simorgh took him and raised him. When it turned him into a human being, Zāl came back here (i.e., Zābal). Only Zāl understood the language of the Simorgh; they chatted with each other properly.
- 47 The Simorgh came, came and licked (Rostam). Like salve, it healed all the wounds of one hundred and fifty white poplar arrows. (The bird) soothed his whole body. It healed him, healed him properly. (Then) it said to (Rostam): "Do you know what?"
- 48 "No!" said (Rostam).
- 49 (The Simorgh) said: "O Rostam you are the world's hero, but you are not able to do away with

- him. But I can do it. If you were to kill Esfandiyār, you would live for only one more year. But if not, you will live for another five hundred years. You are seven hundred years old and you will still go for another five hundred years, all together one thousand and two hundred years. (But), if you killed Esfandiyār, you would outlive him by one year only."
- 50 (Rostam) said: "A sip, a sip of water, after the vicious enemy is better than seven hundred years passed in life. (That is), I shall be happier (to live long enough) for a drink of water after Esfandiyār."
- 51 "Well, very well," said (the Simorgh), "it is your own choice." (Then) it continued: "Get up, come and I will tell you something, get on (your) horse and turn (this way)."
- 52 (Rostam) got up, went (and) sat on (his) horse and followed the Simorgh.
- 53 The Simorgh went and took him to the edge of the sea.
- 54 (The bird) stopped at the shore of the sea. It stopped at the shore of the China sea.
- 55 "Do you know what?" the Simorgh (said).
- 56 "No!" (Rostam) said.
- 57 (The Simorgh) said: "Get down, get down from your horse. Tie your horse to the trunk of this tree, for a horse cannot (pass); it is the sea."
- 58 (Rostam) tied the horse to the trunk of the tree.
- 59 The Simorgh came down (and) told Rostam: "Hold on to my foot."
- 60 Rostam seized the Simorgh's foot.
- 61 (The Simorgh) picked (him) up (and) took (him away) and flew with him over, over the sea. It carried him over the sea and took him into the forest of China.
- 62 In the forest of China (the Simorgh) said: "Do you know what?"
- 63 "No," said (Rostam).
- 64 (The Simorgh) said: "Come here, cut this branch of tamarisk, this one, this one, this one. This is a tamarisk tree; cut a branch off of it in this way and take it; and then put nine arrows on the ends. Shoot (Esfandiyār) with them. Shoot him through his eyeball, where it works. Except for these, it will not work. His doom will come only in this way, only in this way."
- 65 "Very well," (Rostam) said.
- 66 (The Simorgh) left (and) Rostam went and properly cut a tamarisk branch; (then) he took it and brought it to the shore of the sea.
- 67 (Then) the Simorgh came (down). (Rostam) held the Simorgh's foot and the Simorgh took Rostam over the sea, (and) put him down on the other side of the sea, (and) went away.
- 68 (Rostam) mounted his horse and rode home. He came home, came home (and rested) until next morning.
- 69 (That) next morning he again went to fight Esfandiyār and he began to battle.
- 70 First they shot at each other a good deal and fought, then afterwards (Rostam) said:
- 71 "Look, don't do this, don't do this, do not if you see it right, for your life is in danger. I shall give you whatever you want. I swear to God! Goshtāsp wants to have you killed. He wants to kill you; this is why he has ordered you to go and chain Rostam's hands. In God's name, you cannot do this, but I myself can make you a king. I will make you the king of Irān and Tūrān. I will make you king of Irān and Tūrān too. Don't do it, unlucky one, don't do it."
- 72 As much as he entreated him, it did him no good at all.
- 73 "Will you not stop?" (Rostam) said.
- 74 "No!" (Esfandiyār) answered.
- 75 "Well. Then nothing more," (Rostam) said.
- 76 (Esfandiyār) came (forward and) began to fight. They started the battle doing this and that.
- 77 However much Rostam begged and begged Esfandiyār, by which he meant to save his life, still (Esfandiyār) refused; he refused.
- 78 Then, then (Rostam) took out the tamarisk branch; he took it out and fastened the arrow, the poplar arrow, on the end. He drew the bow and shot Esfandiyār right through both eyeballs. (Esfandiyār) lowered his head like so on the saddle, and pulled the arrow out. When the arrow came out, blood gushed out like a sea. He lowered his head on his saddle.
- 79 "Yes? What happened, huh?" said (Rostam). "(When) one hundred and sixty poplar arrows hit me, I did not groan, so as not to disgrace my honor. You were hit only by a piece of tamarisk and you put your head on the top of the saddle."
- 80 (Esfandiyār) was blinded. They came, Bahman, the king's son (i.e., Esfandiyār's son) together with his vizier. All came and raised (Esfandiyār), raised (him) from the ground, (where) he fell from the horse, and took him inside the tent properly.
- 81 Did he die?
- 82 No. He did not die. He said to (Rostam): "Now that you have done this to me, build me a mosque where I can stay."
- 83 This way, he wanted to kill Rostam, to destroy

Rostam himself. That is, a big rock was to be placed on the top of the mosque's door, so that when he and Rostam were to go inside, the rock would fall on their heads (and kill them) both.

- 84 But Rostam was wise and built (a mosque with) two doors (and) he entered (the mosque) from the other door.

85 Rostam went in properly by the other way and Esfandiyār went in under the (rock) and died.

86 Esfandiyār died, and they put him right away in a box and took him to Goshtāsp on a horse. (And) this was the end of it.

87 This (part) is not from *Shāhnāma*, it is by our own local people.