

## ARE BAHMAN, SON OF ESFANDIAR ROUINTAN, AND LONGIMANUS ARTAXERXES THE SAME PERSON?

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**Abstract:** Bahman bin Esfandiar Ben Goshtasb Kayani is mentioned with the title of King Artaxerxes in historical and literary texts. Most of early and late historians have equated him with Artaxerxes I. Through investigating the various living dimensions of the two mentioned characters, we intend to study the resemblance of their events and actions in their lives. This study sought to study the reasons for equating Bahman son of Esfandiar with Artaxerxes I in historical and literary texts, and to note the conflicting and non-conflicting opinions of scholars with this hypothesis.

**Keywords:** Bahman bin Esfandiar, Artaxerxes I, Longimanus, Kianian, Achaemenid.

### INTRODUCTION

Artaxerxes son of Xerxes was known as Longimanus Artaxerxes or Achaemenid king Artaxerxes I. After the murder of his father and his brother who was the legal successor of his father Khashayarshah, he gained throne by Ardavān, the leader of king guards. The Greeks used to call him Longimanus. Thus, in many books and resources, he is known as Longimanus. Since the time of Artaxerxes, the national history of Iran has been combined with its mythical history. In many resources, Artaxerxes I and Bahman Esfandiar are considered the same. In this regard, he pursued his grandfather Darius in encountering with the vanquished nations as well as cultural and religious policy. Eastern historians consider him the royal justice and the judiciary. Historians consider him a just and righteous king. He was kind toward defeated nations particularly the Jew. Freedom of the Jews, reconstruction of their temples and respect for their faith are some of his magnanimity toward the Jew. In addition, the Egyptian uprising can be mentioned as other events of the era. According to a record, Artaxerxes died by 425 A.H. and was king for forty one years in total. During his time, people lived in peace and welfare. After him, Khashayar II gained the throne.

Considering the fact that the Zoroastrian calendar is regarded as the common calendar in Pars kingship since Longimanus Artaxerxes, one can assume that, with respect to the demise of the independence and stability of Gostasb Dynasty and the conquer of central Asia by Hakhmaneshian as well as following the Zoroastrian religion by them, a synthesis occurred between the Kiani and Hakhmaneshian

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Dynasties. Then, Bahman Kiani is considered Artaxerxes Hakhamaneshi himself.<sup>1</sup>

We, in this paper, study the historical sources pertinent to this Achaemenid king and review his relationships with Bahman Kayani (the character being equated with him in the Iranian national and epic traditions as well as Islamic history sources). In addition, we attempt to respond the question “Are Bahman Kayani and the Achaemenian Artaxerxes the same person?”

### Literature

Various references exist to consider Bahman in Isfandiyar and Artaxerxes I identical either in historical texts or Avestan texts, but they all refer to that only in brief sentences. No evidence exists for the causes of such an issue. In the book “The history of Iranian people”, the prominent researcher, Zarrinkoub, mentions the reasons only in titles.<sup>2</sup> However, no independent research exists concerning the paper subject. In the following, the information of the available sources will be analyzed.

### Discussion

In which historical sources from old to new, has Bahman been considered as the same person as Longimanus Artaxerxes?

Greek Works: Hakhamaneshi Kings’ Inscriptions<sup>3</sup>

Islamic Works: Majmal-ol-Tavarikh, Moravvej-ol-Zahab, Tabari History, Balami History, Rozat-ol-Safa, The complete history and Ferdowsi’s Shahnameh.

In the following, we will state the existing narrations of the above-mentioned resources.

### Longimanus Artaxerxes According to Pahlavi Texts

The name of Bahman has not been stated in Avesta, but his story has been recounted in the Pahlavi texts. In Bundahishn, Dinkard and Bahman Yasht<sup>4</sup> have regarded him as one of the Kayani kings; however, the mentioned traditions seem contradictory in some cases. In Bundahishn, destruction of Iran has been discussed during the reign of Bahman. “In the same millennium, when Bahman Esfandiaran became the

<sup>1</sup> Arthur Christensen, *Kianian*, Translated by Dr. Zabihullah Safa, Translation and Publication of The Book Agency, 1964, pp. 181.

<sup>2</sup> Abdolhossein Zarrinkoub, *The history of Iranian people (pre-Islamic Iran scuffling with powers)*, AmirKabir Press, 2th Edition, 1989, pp. 169-176.

<sup>3</sup> *Greek Herodotus (Father of History)*, Translated and Edited by Vahid Mazandarani, Ministry of Culture and Art Press.

<sup>4</sup> *Yasht*, Translated and edited by Bahram Pourdavoud and Braham Farah-Vashi, Tehran University, 1968.

king, (Iran City) was destroyed. Iranians were destroyed by themselves and none of the royal family remained to be the king. They selected Homay daughter of Bahman, as the king.”<sup>5</sup> In *Dinkard*, however, his righteousness and wisdom were applauded so that he was regarded as one of the mightiest Zoroastrian kings.”<sup>6</sup> As from the lords, Bahman Esfandiaran (=Bahman son of Esdfandiar) that in the Avesta, it was mentioned about him: Bahman was the most righteous community of Mazdean (in other words, he gathered Mazdean better than all”.<sup>7</sup> In Bahman Yasht, reign of Artakhshir known as Vahuman, the son of Sepanddat (Esfandiar) has been also likened to the silver branch of life tree the universe and is mentioned as a goodperson.<sup>8</sup>

### Longimanus Artaxerxes According to Greek Historians

Artaxerxes: “In Hakhamaneshi inscriptions, he is called Art-Xashtar- in the Babylonian version of the inscriptions he is called Khast-sar. In Ilami language, he is called Arte Khacharcheh. In addition, in the Egyptian Language on a vase, he is called Arte Khassh, Herodot Arta Kesrak Se, Ketz Yas arto Kesrek and Plutark Arta Kesres Maak Ro Khiz. The last name means Longimanus”<sup>9,10</sup>

In ancient Persian, Artaxerxes were named as Arte Khashtareh and in Pahlavi as Artakhshir combined of two words meaning righteousness and Khashtareh meaning kingship, referring to someone who had sacred kingship.<sup>11</sup>

### Bahman According to Islamic Historians

Bahman is the son of Esfandiar and grandson of Goshtasb, one of Kianian Kings. He was the king of Iran after Goshtasb. “Bahman in many history and literary books is a half legendary and half historic person and has been known identical with Artaxerxes.”<sup>12</sup>

In this regard, Islamic historians have also stated the name of Bahman as follows:

<sup>5</sup> Farnabagh Dadegi, ‘Chapter 18, Section 214’, *Bundahishn*, translated by Mehrdad Bahar, Tous, 1990.

<sup>6</sup> Azar Farnabagh Farrokhzadan, *Dinkard*, Glossary and notes from Mohammad Taghi Rashed Mohassel, Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies, 7th edition, 2010.

<sup>7</sup> Farnabagh Dadegi, ‘Chapter 7, Section 4.

<sup>8</sup> Farnabagh Dadegi, ‘Chapter 4, Section 2537.

<sup>9</sup> Pierre Brian, *the Achaemenian Empire*, Translated by Nahid Foroughan, Farzan Rooz Publishing and Educating- Ghatreh Press, 2001, Vol. 1, pp. 342.

<sup>10</sup> Hassan Pirnia, *The history of ancient Iran*, Doniaie Ketab, 7th Edition, 2010, Vol. 2, pp. 821.

<sup>11</sup> Sayed Kazem Bojnordi, *The Great Islamic Encyclopedia*, Hayyan Cultural Institute publishing, 1th Edition, 1996, pp. 494.

<sup>12</sup> Mehran Afshari, *Encyclopedia of the Islamic World*, Islamic Encyclopedia Foundation, 1998, pp. 846.

Bahman bin Esfandiar<sup>13,14,15,</sup>

Artaxerxes King and Ho Bahman bin Esfandiar bin Goshtasb King (Ibn Artaxerxes, 1991: 223)<sup>16</sup>

Bahman bin Esfandiar bin Goshtasb.<sup>17,18,19,20,</sup>

Bahman bin Goshtasb<sup>21</sup>

Tabari and Balami regarded Bahman as the son of Esfandiar and called him Longimanus Artaxerxes.

They said “Bahman Artaxerxes and this Bahman did so much prosperity in the world and lovely praying”<sup>22</sup>

After Khwandmir calls him Bahman Artaxerxes, mentions this about Bahman’s etymology for this name, i.e. Artaxerxes: “One day, Esfandiar was meeting Gashtasb and received the good news of the birth of his child. At that time, he saw a servant walking with a plate in his hand. Esfanidar asked him about his name, and the servant answered “Adreshir””.

Ferdowsi also calls Bahman with Artaxerxes name in several instances.

As Gashtasb saw his grandchild’s face

His face disappeared in his tears

He said to him that thou art Esfandiar and that’s all

His kind one cannot find in cosmos

As he showed intelligence and wit

From then he called him Artaxerxes

Artaxerxes died of disease

A pleasing girl nursed him

Bahman in Blood and she grieved

And life passed in taint<sup>23</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Abul Hasan Ali bin Hussein Massoudi, *Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems*, 1965, Vol. 1, pp. 225.

<sup>14</sup> Balami, *Tarikhe Balaami*, pp. 684.

<sup>15</sup> Abdul Malik bin Muhammad bin Ismail Salabi Nishaburi, *Tarikhe Salabi*, Translated by Mohammad Fazaiehi, Noghre Press, 1989, pp. 239.

<sup>16</sup> Mir Mohammad bin Syed Shah Burhanuddin Khodavand Shah Khandmir, *Rawzat as-safa (The Gardens of purity)*, the introduction was written by Abbas Parviz, Pirooz Press, 1959, pp. 626.

<sup>17</sup> *The Collection of histories and Tales*, Edited by Iraj Afshar and Mahmoud Omidsalar, 1th Edition, 1999, pp. 52.

<sup>18</sup> Balami, *Tarikhe Balaami*, pp. 684.

<sup>19</sup> Muhammad ibn Jarir al., Tabari, *History of Tabari*, Translated by Aboulghasem Paiandeh, Asatir Press, 1th Edition, 1973, pp. 721.

<sup>20</sup> Abolghasem Ferdowsi, *Shahnameh*, collected by Jallal Khaleghi Motlagh, Iran Heritage Foundation, 2005, pp. 367.

<sup>21</sup> Tabari, *History of Tabari*, pp. 721.

<sup>22</sup> Balami, *Tarikhe Balaami*, pp. 684.

<sup>23</sup> Balami, *Tarikhe Balaami*, pp. 487.

Researchers' mention of these verses of Shahnameh in which Goshtasb called Bahman Artaxerxes is owing to his power and courage, which can be regarded as one of the reasons of equating Longimanus Artaxerxes with Bahman, since Ardeshir or Ordeshir (Artaxerxes) is composed of Ard, which means rage or anger, or Ord, which means such and like, and the combination meaning of Ardeshir is also angry lion. Furthermore, the above-mentioned verses refer to the death of Bahman prior to Hoday, although Hoday was unwell and in bed owing to her sickness due to her pregnancy.

Most Islamic historians referred to Bahman with the title of "Artaxerxes", altering this name with this title across the world.

"From Artaxerxes I, servant of God and agents of the servant of God"<sup>24</sup>

"From Artaxerxes, the worshiper and the servant of the Lord and of those who obey him" (Balami, 1969: 684)

"From The servant of those who care for the lord and the one who determines all your fate"<sup>25</sup>.

### **The Resemblance of Artaxerxes King, the Son of Esfandiar to Longimanus Artaxerxes**

We, in this section, elaborate on this issue that which factors and causes can be considered the reasons of equating these two characters.

#### **Similarity of Mothers' Name**

According to Islamic historical narratives, Bahman mother's name was Asnor or Astor or Astar.

The author of the Collection of Histories and Tales regarded the name of Bahman's mother as the Asnor the daughter of Talout,<sup>26</sup> and according to Tabari, she was Astor, the daughter of Shamie.<sup>27</sup>

Balami, about the name of the mother of Bahman says: "This Artaxerxes had a mother whose name was Astoria, one of the child of Talout, the King of Israel, she was a wisdom woman with and tact to vote."<sup>28</sup> Moreover, Ibn Artaxerxes knows Bahman's mother as a member of the family of Benjamin, the son of Jacob, but he has not noted her name (Ibn Artaxerxes, 1991: 223).

<sup>24</sup> Salabi Nishaburi, *Tarikhe Salabi*, pp. 235.

<sup>25</sup> Izz al-Din Ali, Ibn al-Athir, *The complete history*, Translated by Dr. Seyed Mohammad Hossein Rouhani, 1th Edition, Asatir Publisher, 1991, Vol. 1, pp. 223.

<sup>26</sup> *The Collection of histories and Tales*, pp. 53.

<sup>27</sup> Tabari, *History of Tabari*, pp. 720.

<sup>28</sup> Balami, *Tarikhe Balaami*, pp. 685.

Massoudi has also known Bahman mother as a member of Israel's family and one of the children of Talout King<sup>29</sup>.

### **The Mother of Artaxerxes**

Artaxerxes I was the fifth king of Achaemenian whose father's name is Xerxes and mother's name is Amestris. Amestris is the daughter of Otanes, one of the followers of Darius in the Gaumata event.<sup>30</sup>

In one section of the book of the Old Testament, the name of Esther, one of the mighty queens of Xerxes King, is mentioned. Most of historians maintain that this Esther and Asnor or Astor, the mother of Artaxerxes, are the same person. Esther was Jewish and impeded Jews' massacre in the period of Xerxes.

"Esther went to the king again and threw himself to his feet, and asked with crying about cancelling the Haman's decree to kill the Jews, then, Xerxes King said to Esther Queen and Mordecai: the Jew canceled ... Xerxes then said: I ordered that to hang Haman who wanted to kill Jewish people. In addition, I gave his property to Esther Queen".<sup>31</sup>

### **Etymology of Longimanus**

The Greek called Artaxerxes I, the son of Xerxes I with the title of "Longimanus" and this is the reason of the fact that the name "Adershir" was accompanied with this title in various texts and sources. In the Islamic history and Persian literature texts, "Bahman Esfandiar" was called with the title of "Longimanus". The etymology of this title is presented in different forms:

1. Artaxerxes had Longimanuss, as when he was standing, his hands would reach his knees.
2. Plutarch believed that Artaxerxes' right hand was longer than his left one.<sup>32</sup>
3. After calling him Artaxerxes, Al-Biruni believed that his title was "Maqarroshir" and stated that it meant "Longimanus".<sup>33</sup>

Ferdowsi describes Bahman in Shahnameh as follows:

He was sturdy, strong and heavy handed  
 He was amusing, sage and worshipper of God  
 When he was standing on his feet  
 His hands overreached his knees<sup>34</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Massoudi, *Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems*, Vol. 1, pp. 225.

<sup>30</sup> Pirnia, *The history of ancient Iran*, Vol. 2, pp. 822.

<sup>31</sup> Old Testament, *British and Foreign Bible Society*, London, 1904, pp. 278.

<sup>32</sup> Pirnia, *The history of ancient Iran*, Vol. 2, pp. 822

<sup>33</sup> Abu Rayhan Al-Birduni, *The Remaining Signs of Past Centuries*, Edited by Azizullah Alizadeh, Ferdows Press, 1th Edition, 1984, pp. 76.

<sup>34</sup> Ferdowsi, *Shahnameh*, pp. 437.

Hands overreaching the knees in the above-mentioned verses not only alludes to Bahman's long arms and reaching them below the knee in a standing position, but also can be a subtle ambiguity of Bahman's assaults and robberies to different lands and killing his people during his ninety-nine years of sovereignty. Bahman's greatest disgrace as the nominal hero of Bahmānameh of Iran written by Shah ibn Abi al-Khayr can be, in fact, his attempt to demolish Rustam's family, the world champion of Iran. The same hero who was similar to Bahman's father, being respected by all the Iranian kings and people. Therefore, he is considered the nominal hero and not the real hero of this epos, since he lacks heroism and chivalry characteristics.

Manouchehri also held that "Long-Handed" title had an appearance implication.

I heard that when he was standing on his feet  
From his two knees his hands overreached  
Thy hands reaches to both west and east  
From Iqtisa of Madain to Midian<sup>35</sup>

Being Longimanus is a metaphor meaning high-powered and dominant on issues. He was called Longimanus owing to his high position in governing the country affairs. This interpretation is more in accordance with the Persian royal attitude.<sup>36</sup>

Concerning the etymology of Longimanus, Noldeke says: "Longimanus means the strength and power of hands."<sup>37, 38</sup>

Regarding the etymology of Longimanus, Pollux believes that Longimanus means a power spread all around.<sup>39</sup>

In Ibn-e Balkhi's Farsnameh, it is written: "Bahman Ibn-e Esfandiar... and he was called the Longimanus Adeshir Bahman, for he had conquered many countries and plundered Sistan..."<sup>40</sup>

In addition, the writer of Majma' Al-Tawarikh<sup>41</sup> says: "It is said that he was Longimanus because he plundered lands far from his reach in south, east and Rome." (Majma Al-Tawarikh, 1999: 30)

Strong-armed is used in Avesta with the virtual meaning of being skillful, dominant and powerful. Moreover, Mehabahou in Sanskrit has the same meaning.

<sup>35</sup> Manouchehri Damghani, *Poetry Diwan*, Edited by Mohammad Dabirsiaghi, Zavar Press, 2011, pp. 65.

<sup>36</sup> Zarrinkoub, *The history of Iranian people (pre-Islamic Iran scuffling with powers)*, pp. 165.

<sup>37</sup> Pirnia, *The history of ancient Iran*, Vol. 2, pp. 822.

<sup>38</sup> Theodore Noldeke, *The national epic of Iran*, Negah Press, 2000.

<sup>39</sup> Brian, *the Achaemenian Empire*, Vol. 1, pp. 894.

<sup>40</sup> Ibn al-Balkhi, *Fars Nameh (Persian Letters)*, Edited and Annotated by Guy Le Strange and Reynold Alen Nicholson, Asatir Publisher, 1th Edition, 2006, pp. 52.

<sup>41</sup> Collection of Histories

Darius the great, mentions the origin of this implication in Naqsh-e Rostam inscription: "If you wonder how many habitats Darius Shah had, look at these bodies carrying my cradle. Then it will be cleared that the Persian man goes to battle far from his home Pars". In addition, he states: "I Darius the great, the king of the great and vast earth." It is apparent that owing to the vastness of his lands and his dominance upon them, Darius the great was first called "Longimanus", and then this title was implied to his children and grandchildren."<sup>42</sup>

Thus, the adjective of "Longimanus" had a history resources as not only a physical trait but also a metaphor to describe the power of Artaxerxes.

### **\*Marriage to his Daughter**

Numerous historians narrated the marriage of Bahman, son of Efandiar to his daughter, Homay (Khumaneh or Homaneh) who gave birth to his son, Dara.<sup>43,44</sup> Ferdowsi maintains that this marriage is in accordance with the Pahlavi religion. In the last year of Bahman's life, he married Homay, his daughter. Bahman died after six months of Homay, pregnancy and Dara were the result of this marriage.

He had another daughter named Homay

Artist, knowledgeable and Nick rate

After birth, she was called Homay

He was happy because of her

He married to her

According to religion of Pahlavi

Homay who was lovely and like month

She became pregnant from the King<sup>45</sup>

In historical texts, it has been mentioned that Artaxerxes II married to two of his daughters, "Atessa" and "Amistris". Hence, another reason of equating Bahman with Artaxerxes is their marriage to their daughters.<sup>46</sup>

## **WAR WITH EGYPTIANS**

### **Egypt War in Artaxerxes I Era**

Egyptians rioted after Greece-Iran War in Artaxerxes in the Longimanus's era. Their accusation was the Iranian mayor's inappropriate behavior in Egypt. Someone named Inarous the son of Psameticus from Lybia started rebellion being backed by

<sup>42</sup> Ali Akbar Dehkhoda, *Dehkhoda Dictionary*, Dehkhoda Dictionary Institute Press, 1986, pp. 316.

<sup>43</sup> Balami, *Tarikhe Balaami*, pp. 687.

<sup>44</sup> Tabari, *History of Tabari*, pp. 721.

<sup>45</sup> Ferdowsi, *Shahnameh*, pp. 486-487.

<sup>46</sup> Zabihullah Safa, *Epic in Iran*, 3th Edition, Ferdows Press, 2004, pp. 539.



delta region, propelled the riot in all Egypt. Inarous asked for help from Greece as two hundred ships heading toward Cyprus changed their rout and headed toward Egypt, and Memphis became ready for war. As Artaxerxes became informed of Egyptian riot, gathered a large number of combatants from all parts of Iran, and ordered to gather a large marine navy. At first, Artaxerxes aimed at Egypt to quench the Egyptian riot, but as the courtiers did not find it acceptable, therefore, he appointed his uncle as the army's head. After Iranian entrance to Egypt, they clashed with Egyptian and Greek forces in a tough combat. Finally, Iranians defeated Egyptians by killing all of Inarous forces and many Greek forces.<sup>47</sup>

### **Egyptian War Story at the Time of Bahman Esfandiar**

When Bahman became a king in Balkh sent messengers to every city and state to declare his obedience from Bahaman. All kings, except the king of Israel, obeyed him. King of Israel killed Bahman's messenger. Bahman was angry due to this event and called Nebuchadnezzar and chosen him as the king of Babylon and Iraq, and ordered him to go to Levant in order to destroy Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar selected four ministers to assist him in this task. Darius ibn Mehri, Kei Rash ibn Kei keivan Khazan Bahman, Ahshavirarsh and Bahram ibn Ki Rash ibn Beshtasb were four people who Nebuchadnezzar selected them. When Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem. Finally, he destroyed that place and killed many people of Israel.<sup>48,49</sup>

Furthermore, "He enslaved many people that there were a hundred thousand child slaves except the elders, women and girls. Then, they filled their shields with soils and brought sands and threw toward the city of Jerusalem until hiding the city under the sand and no thing was reminded from it".<sup>50</sup>

Nebuchadnezzar returned to Iraq with all of Iran after the destruction of Jerusalem and sent that king who had killed Bahman's messenger, along with his children to Bahman and Bahman blinded them and gave Babylon and Iraq until the west border to Nebuchadnezzar.

Nebuchadnezzar "selected hundred thousand and four thousand slaves of the Israelites and children of prophets and children of elders that Daniel (PBUH) was one of them who was child".<sup>51</sup>

Nebuchadnezzar was the king of that land for forty years and after his death, his son succeeded his father. Alwardouh died after being king for 23 years and his son, Batashasar, succeeded him, but Batashasar did not obey Bahman after one

<sup>47</sup> Igor M. Diakonoff, *The Cambridge History of Iran*, Translated by Teimor Qaderi, Tehran, Mahtab, 2008, Vol. 2, pp. 436.

<sup>48</sup> Balami, *Tarikhe Balaami*, pp. 670-672.

<sup>49</sup> Tabari, *History of Tabari*, pp. 720-723.

<sup>50</sup> Balami, *Tarikhe Balaami*, pp. 672.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid

year and Bahman dethroned him and selected Dariush Mazi, one of four ministers of Nebuchadnezzar, as the king of that land. Bahman dethroned Dariush Mazi after three years and selected Keirash al-Ghilmī as the king of Levant and Iraq and ordered him to be merciful to the Israelites.<sup>52,53</sup>

Among Islamic historians, Muhammad ibn Jarir Tabari and Balami explained the event of Bahman's campaign to Egypt in detail, but in the rest of historical books, only a statement concerning Bahman's campaign to Egypt and Rome was mentioned.

In the History of Salabi, it was noted that Bahman after the avenger from Faramarz, returned to the center of his power, cities and built mansion and went to war to the west until arrived in Rome and dominated everywhere and expanded the Zoroastrian religion.<sup>54</sup>

Khandmir also mentioned the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon by Bahman.<sup>55</sup>

Ibn Artaxerxes also pointed out the war of Bahman with the Romans in a phrase: "Bahman sent one thousand (one million) into the inner warrior (western Rome). Kings of the world sent for him and he was the most prominent and sober king of Iran" (Ibn Artaxerxes, 1991: 223).

In Meadows of Gold, Bahman's war with the Romans is mentioned. "Homo (Bahman) sent Nebuchadnezzar the Iraq border guards towards Israel and fought with them."<sup>56</sup>

### Considering Jews and their Return to Jerusalem

Jews' return to Jerusalem occurred at the time of Artaxerxes, being assigned to Bahman period in national narratives. Historians of East Land considered Artaxerxes as a justice king, and they mentioned that Artaxerxes was kind with defeated nations especially the Jews. In any case, Longimanus Artaxerxes in national traditions of Iran as well as Greek sources is described as "epicurean, justice, courage and chivalry, and this status is reflected in his private life".<sup>57</sup>

One of the major reasons for Artaxerxes' loving behavior towards Jews is his mother. Artaxerxes' mother was named Esther in national traditions and Amestris in Greek sources was one of the Jews of Israel and Artaxerxes was also influenced by his mother, Amestris. Therefore, he had appropriate and kind behavior toward Jews so that this issue may be owing to Artaxerxes' interest in peace.

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid, pp. 673.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, pp. 725.

<sup>54</sup> Salabi Nishaburi, *Tarikhe Salabi*, pp. 241.

<sup>55</sup> Khandmir, *Rawzat as-safa (The Gardens of purity)*, pp. 628.

<sup>56</sup> Massoudi, *Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems*, Vol. 1, pp. 225.

<sup>57</sup> Zarrinkoub, *The history of Iranian people (pre-Islamic Iran scuffling with powers)*, pp. 167.

In a number of resources, it has been expressed that Nebuchadnezzar was deposed from king of Babylon, and Rome before his death. This was due to his numerous oppression toward Jews.

In relation to the issue, Khandmir said: “Bahman at the time of his reign, dethroned Nebuchadnezzar from being the king of Babylon and selected Cyrus, who was a descendant of Lorasib and his mother was the daughter of one of the sons of Israel, as the king of that land and ordered Iran to send Israelites to Jerusalem and to select everyone as the king who they want, Cyrus collected them and introduced Danial as the king of Israel”<sup>58</sup>

Ibn al-Athir regarded Artaxerxes as a humble and well-mannered man who was honorable for the Iranian people and mentioned that Bahman’s mother was from the race of Benjamin ibn Jacob. He also noted that Artaxerxes was dethroned Nebuchadnezzar from Jerusalem and presented it to Cyrus to allow Jews to return to their lands and settle there.<sup>59</sup>

However, the story narrated by Muhammad ibn Jarir Tabari and consequently, by Balami is slightly different. They maintain that Nebuchadnezzar was the king of that land for forty years and after his death his son, Almardouh, succeeded him for 23 years and after that, his son, Batashasar, became king, but he did not obey Bahman and Bahman dethroned him and appointed Dariush Mazi as the king of that land. Then, Bahman dethroned Dariush Mazi after three years and appointed Keirash al-Ghilmī (Cyrus) as the king of Levant and Iraq and ordered him to be kind to the Israelites.<sup>60,61</sup>

In the Old Testament, Artaxerxes’ good behavior toward Jews has been noted several times. Nehemiah was the Jewish butler of Artaxerxes. Artaxerxes loved her very much. When Nehemiah was informed of the existing condition of Jerusalem and the state of the exiles, she became extremely distressed. After a while, when she gives the cup of wine to Artaxerxes, he finds she is sad and asks about the reason. She answers: “King, live forever! When the city where my ancestors are buried, was destroyed and all its gates burned how can I not be sad?” (The book 17, Section 9) Artaxerxes appointed Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem, the city of her ancestors.

Thus, one of the reasons of the importance of Artaxerxes in historical texts and attributing important events such as the migration of Jews to Jerusalem to him that was originally conducted on the order of Cyrus, has been the attention of Jewish sources to him.

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<sup>58</sup> Khandmir, *Rawzat as-safa (The Gardens of purity)*, pp. 628.

<sup>59</sup> Ibn al-Athir, *The complete history*, Vol. 1, pp. 325.

<sup>60</sup> Balami, *Tarikhe Balaami*, pp. 725.

<sup>61</sup> Abu Ali ibn Muhammad Balami, *Tarikhe Balaami*, Translated by Mohammad Taghi Bahar, Complation with Mohammad Parvin Gonabadi, The administrative office of writing of the Culture Ministry Press, 1962, pp. 673.

### **Proponents of the Hypothesis of Equating Bahman Esfandiari with Artaxerxes I**

A group of orientalist lists and interpreters equated the Kianian Dynasty with the Achaemenid Dynasty and attempted to create a relationship between these two dynasties' kings so that one is fictional and half historical and another is historical, considering them same. In this regard, one reason is considering a number of the kings of the Achaemenid Dynasty such as Dara and Big Dara as the recent kings of Kianian by Islamic historians, since Iranian according to their information on the story of Alexander and his war with Darius III, the king of Achaemenid and their information about Kianians who were prominent as the last ancient kings of Iran; however, Alexander's war occurred with the last king of this dynasty whose name was Dara, the son of Dara (Safa, 2004: 469).<sup>62</sup> In addition, a group of orientalists like Johannes Hertel and Ernst Herzfeld stated that Kianians dynasty was the Achaemenid dynasty, attempting to equate the Kianian kings with Achaemenid kings. Hertel maintained that Zoroaster lived during the reign of Goshtasb. He assumed that the Kianian kings from Kei Ghobad to Kai Khosrow were of Western Kings of Iran with historical or mythical and fictional characters, but he considered other Kianian kings the same as the Achaemenid ones.<sup>63</sup>

The orientalist Nöldeke confirmed the assumption of the existence of a relationship between the Achaemenid dynasty and Kianian dynasty by comparing and equating the stories of Cyrus king with Kai Khosrow and Astyages, the king of Medes with Afrasiab and Harpages, the minister of Astyages with Piran Viseh, the minister of Afrasiab (Nöldeke, 2000: 3).

Hassan Pirnia is also one of the historians who accepted this hypothesis. He maintained that Bahman was Longimanus Artaxerxes, the fifth king of Achaemenian, but things that are attributed to Bahman are related to three Artaxerxes of Artaxerxes I, Artaxerxes II and Artaxerxes III. "In fact, there has been a story about Artaxerxes in which his name has been Bahman and his nickname has been Longimanus and has married with his daughter, and from history, we know that of Artaxerxes of Achaemenid, the name of Artaxerxes III has been Hoka and the nickname of Artaxerxes I has been Longimanus and according to Plutarch, Artaxerxes II has married with his daughter Atessa."<sup>64</sup> In fact, he maintained that an Artaxerxes was replaced by three Artaxerxes. The origin of Bahman is Vohu Manah, being changed to Vehuka over time. Using the name of Homa as the name of Bahman's wife and daughter is originated from here that is based on Avesta Homa that was the name of Ghoshtasb's daughter. Furthermore, in collecting the stories during the Sasanian era, this name was more familiar and closer to people's minds than the name of

<sup>62</sup> Safa, *Epic in Iran*, pp. 539.

<sup>63</sup> Ernest Emil Hertefeld, *Archaeological History of Iran*, London, 1935, pp. 54-75.

<sup>64</sup> Pirnia, *The history of ancient Iran*, Vol. 2, pp. 150.

Atessa. Although, Hota Aussa was the name of other girl of Goshtasb, but the first name was familiar and shorter than the second name. Moreover, another reason of mixing these three persons is the long reign of Artaxerxes that means the measures of three Artaxerxes were gathered in life of Artaxerxes I and this Artaxerxes was settled as three Artaxerxes.<sup>65</sup>

Dr. Zarrinkoub has confirmed the equating of Bahman and Longimanus Artaxerxes. He emphasizes that Artaxerxes had appropriate and loving behavior toward Jews and this was owing to his strong interest of peace and the fact that he liked the city of Babylon as the same as Susa and this may be one of the reasons for strengthening this assumption that Artaxerxes and Bahman were the same person in the national traditions.<sup>66</sup>

In a research concerning the Iranian mythology, Dr. Bahar said “Kian family is divided into two categories: from Kai Ghobad to Kai Khosrow and from Lorasib to the end of Kiaanians that the second category, from Lorasib to Bahman is related to the Kiani family of Central Asia and from Artaxerxes or Bahman is related to the Achaemenid dynasty”.<sup>67</sup>

Bahar maintains that Bahman Esfandiari in the Zoroastrian mythology is considered the son of Esfandiar or Artaxerxes, the king of the Achaemenid rising to power after Xerxes. This means that according to mythological stories and several historical documents, Zoroastrianism was spread since this time on the Iranian plateau: “That time is the reign of Kiani Artaxerxes that is called Bahman Esfandiari who separates demon from people, and spreads the religion in all the world”.<sup>68</sup>

### **Opponents of the Hypothesis of Equating Bahman Esfandiari with Artaxerxes I**

Among contemporary scholars, Dr. Zabihullah Safa, Arthur Christensen, a famous orientalist, and Dr. Bahman Srkarati strongly opposed with the assumption of equating fictional characters of the Kian kings with the Achaemenid kings so that had several reasons to refute this hypothesis.

Zabihullah Safa in his famous book, *Epic storytelling in Iran*, notes that mixing the Kian kings and the Achaemenid kings is clearly wrong and states: “Based on several historical evidence and researching on the Zoroastrian, Kayani Kings, some of those mentioned in Avesta as Cui that the last of is Cui Vishtasb belong to the older time than Zoroastrian time and they include the well-known heads of tribes of the East and North East of Iran, who has been nicknamed Cui, while the kings

<sup>65</sup> Pirnia, *The history of ancient Iran*, Vol. 2, pp. 151.

<sup>66</sup> Zarrinkoub, *The history of Iranian people (pre-Islamic Iran scuffling with powers)*, pp. 176.

<sup>67</sup> Mehrdad Bahar, *From myth to history*, Cheshmeh Press, 2007, pp. 16.

<sup>68</sup> Bahar, *From myth to history*, pp. 196-195.

of Medes and Achaemenids have been the kings of the West and North West and south-central of Iran according to the numerous historical evidence. This group in terms of time are also after the Zoroastrian that those persons, who have tried to equate Vishtasb the father of Darius with Cui Vishtasb the patron of Zoroaster, have done a mistake”.<sup>69</sup>

Arthur Christiansen, the famous orientalist mentioned some reasons for the rejection of Hertel and Herzfeld’s words and maintained that the claims of two orientalists concerning the issue that Vishtasb, father of Darius and Cui Vishtasb that Zoroaster emerged at his time and supported Zoroastrianism, should not be combined. He points out that it is the case that in accordance with what can be inferred from Avesta, Goshtasb is the patron of Zoroaster and Zoroastrianism, but there exists no evidence that the mentioned Goshtasb is Vishtasb, the father of Darius I and Longimanus Artaxerxes ancestor and it is evident that historians rely on their speculation in this area.<sup>70</sup>

Moreover, Christensen to refuse the assumption says: “The religion of the Achaemenid as described by two Greek historians and inscriptions of Darius, is not Zoroastrianism, but it is the old religious of Iran that has not been renewed and reformed still. If we accept this theory, the issue of equating Dariush’s father and the patron of Zoroaster is ruled out automatically”.<sup>71</sup>

Dr. Bahman Sarkarati also noted the unreliability and weakness of Hertel and Herzfeld’s votes and maintained that historicism in the research field of epic and too much emphasis on the historical background of the heroic poems as well as a conscious effort to show the important role of history in processing epics were the result of a certain mind tendency, emerging in the early decades of the twentieth century.

“Many researchers who do not like myth and legend telling, have turned to history and tried to find an excuse for all the mythological narratives and epic with historical basis. Gradually, it was thought that the whole heroic narratives have or should have a historical basis. And this is a false assumption.”<sup>72</sup>

He presented an interpretation on the basis of the existence of dualism in Indo-Iranian worldview, regarding the universe based on two contrast origins of good and evil.

Unlike historians, mythians attempted to distinguish the mythological link between traditions of various sectors instead of searching the historical symmetries and attempted to link quality and historical structure as well as historical-liked structure of epic to the mythological worldview.

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<sup>69</sup> Safa, *Epic in Iran*, 2004, pp. 471.

<sup>70</sup> Christensen, *Kianian*, pp. 7-10.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, pp. 9.

<sup>72</sup> Bahman Sarkarati, *Hunted shadows*, Ghatreh Press, 1989, pp. 11-10.

Dumezil demonstrated the Indo-European root of Kavoos and used it to reject the historical aspects of Kianian and study the Christensen hypothesis concerning the reconstruction of this series as the historical kings.<sup>73</sup>

Mayrhofer presents a different picture of these ancient clergies by studying Indian and Iranian aspects of identity associated with “Kavi” and “Karpan”, having a clear contradiction between their equating with a part of the history of Iran.<sup>74</sup>

Wikander, based on Dumezil’s hypothesis and by studying the similarity between Persian and Indian epics, offered a mythical interpretation for the general design of Iran’s national epic based on the triple nature of social classes and said “Pishdadian are considered as epic portrayal of the priest class, Kianian kings from Kaighobad to Keikhosrow are considered as the portrayal of warriors and Kianian kings, Lohrasb and Goshtasb are considered as the epic portrayal of farmers class”.<sup>75</sup>

Khaleghi intended to find the descriptions of common costumes of history and myths traditions in the Iranian ancient culture.

These theories are valuable owing to the fact that cannot change the mythical interpretation of the final structure of Shahnameh stories and contrary to their processors’ claims, they have no ability to undermine the possibility of historical roots in the mythological parts.

One of the main problems of the mythians’ work is that they were extravagant to show structures of the symbolic characters of Shahnameh, making unsuccessful attempt to deny the historical veins of the story.

It should be noted that the emergence of Zoroaster and Goshtasb’s support for him, the link between some historical events of the Achaemenid and Kianian Dynasties, and the use of the Parthian kings and heroes in the Kianian stories are all signs of causing doubt about the mythological root of the story, if it means denying its historical value. Among the mythians, John Hinnells maintained that all stories of Shahnameh repeat concepts of the world war between good and evil<sup>76</sup>, but unlike others, he did not attempt to put myth and history in opposition, considering an implicated interpretation of history spaces for mythological secrets.<sup>77</sup>

Maintaining the identity of Shahnameh’s kings stagnant in a period was another problem of these theories and the actual distance between them was neglected,

<sup>73</sup> Jorge Dumezil, *Mythe et epopée*, Paris, 1970, pp. 137-238.

<sup>74</sup> Manfred Mayrhofer, *A Concise Etymological Sanskrit Dictionary*, Heidelberg, 1953-56, Vol. 1, pp. 570-571.

<sup>75</sup> Stig Wikander, *Sur le Fonde Commun Indo- Iranian des epopées de li perse et. de Inde*, La Nouvelle Cho, 1950, pp. 320-321.

<sup>76</sup> John Hinnells, *Knowing Iranian mythology*, Translated by Jaleh Amozgar and Ahmad Tafazoli, Babel: fountain and thyme, 3th Edition, 1994, pp. 23.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, pp. 167.



so that it was attempted to interpret only the final form of this work based on the background of their own mentality. However, many interconnected narratives of Shahnameh have separate origins, which cannot be corresponded to regular periods of mythians so that many links of Avesta have been simplified in Shahnameh.

## CONCLUSION

Islamic historians equated Bahman ibn Esfandiari with Artaxerxes I. The most common reason for the equating among Islamic historians was the nickname of Longimanus that each of historians have also mentioned an appellation for this. In addition, the especial reason of Islamic historians to emphasize their words is the use of the name Artaxerxes in addition to the name of Bahman. Furthermore, the especial reason of Islamic historians to emphasize their words was using the name of Artaxerxes next to the name of Bahman. Bahman and Artaxerxes' marriage to their daughters was also another reason for the assumption of equating these two persons.

Among Islamic historians, Muhammad bin Jarir al-Tabari and Balami have described Bahman bin Esfandiar's life in detail, but some historians only pointed to wars of Bahman with Faramarz, the son of Rustam and his relationship with the West, they mentioned only a short sentence that "Bahman also campaigned against Russia".

In the chronicles and Greek sources, Bahman was known as Artaxerxes and they did not focus on the reasons of this issue and as this source was written by the Greeks, they only wrote about the campaign of Artaxerxes against the West not about the situation of Artaxerxes in the East. Pahlavi sources also had a different view to Bahman depending on their resources, indicating a combination of true and false stories about him that led to various judgments.

Among contemporary researchers of Iran, Mehrdad Bahar, Zarrinkoub and Hassan Pirnia accepted the hypothesis of equating Bahman Esfandiar with Artaxerxes I and among orientalist, Hertel and Herzfeld accepted that Goshtasb was Darius I so that we know that Goshtasb Kiani was the father of Achaemenid Darius I (Vishtasp) and Gshtasb was Bahman's ancestor and Vishtasp was also the father of Dariush and ancestor of Achaemenid Artaxerxes I. However, Arthur Christiansen, Zabihullah Safa and Bahman Srkarati rejected this hypothesis and maintained that mixing the epic Kiani kings with the historical kings was wrong. These three great men denied any historical and epic match in this regard.

In matching information and investigating the present documents, three approaches and different traditions were observed in the Greek, Jewish and Pahlavi sources that they led to diversity in the information available in the Islamic sources influenced by all of three above-mentioned sources. The approach of the Greek sources was historical report and the approaches of Pahlavi and Jewish sources



were religious-political judgment with different ideologies. Meanwhile, a number of the characters in the Jewish and Pahlavi sources had a completely different place. In this term, Artaxerxes was only comparable with Alexander that the Pahlavi sources denounced him and Jewish sources praised him. Thus, a variety of these traditions were effective in forming a semi-fictional and semi-actual character of Pseudo Alexander in the Islamic sources. The similarities between the Kianian mythological characters in the Zoroastrian tradition and Achaemenid historical characters whose exact information exist only in Greek sources, sometimes led to mixing news of some historical and mythological characters and in cases where characters were also extended to Jewish sources, this mixing was more prominent. Concerning Bahman Kiani and Achaemenian Artaxerxes, this mixing was also observed. The Kiani Kings had three parts:

1. First part, Kaighobad, Kavous and Keikhosrow who had fully mythological aspects and were ideological holy characters in the Zoroastrian culture.
2. Second part, Lohrasb, Goshtasb, Esfandiar and Bahman were the representative of a religious history for the emergence of Zoroaster.
3. Third part consists of Bahman, Hoday, Darab, Dara and Alexander that were the remained memories of the Achaemenid period, being added to the religious and mythological history of ancient Persia during the Sassanid period.

Definitely, Bahman, the son of Esfandiar was a part of the religious history that had no relation with Achaemenian Artaxerxes. The presence of mixing between historical narratives and religious legends as well as ancient mythology during the Parthian and Sassanid periods and weaknesses of historical memory of Persians led to mixing the reality and myth at different times. Regarding the characters who were interested in Jewish sources, this mixing was more notable. Concerning Bahman and Artaxerxes, these factors were effective in equating these two characters with each other and assigning traditions of each of them to other one and or even falsifying stories of forgotten historical characters (like Cyrus) and assigning them to this character. This fact that one of the Achaemenid kings was known as Bahman and the son of Esfandiar (devoted champion of Zoroastrianism) also had the same name led to mixing the two characters to integrate two disparate periods into each other. In addition, Bahman, in the history sources of the Sassanid era, was located between two important parts (the second and third parts of Kiani kings) and plays the role of an intermediate ring so that this has resulted in observing the diversity of narratives more attributed to him. In fact, Bahman Kiani, son of Esfandiar was the epitome of the second part of the Kiani history and Achaemenid Bahman was the representative of the third part of the Kiani history, attracting the remained memories of the Achaemenian period. Two different characters in the Sassanid resources and their translation in the Islamic period were gradually converted into one character.

*Notes:*

1. Referring to Article of Hertzfeld in the collection of Modi Memorial Volume published in 1930 in Mumbai.
2. Referring to the book of Kianin by Christensen that is a research case on ancient Persian religion of Zoroast. From page 26 onwards.