

23 šābuhr vēzanagān, šābuhr mihrbzuzanagān. kē abar ardašēr šāhān šāh xvadāyif būd ahend: s' trp /sadārub/ abarēnag šāh, ardašēr mary šāh, ardašēr kirmān šāh, ardašēr sagān šāh, dēnag pābag šāh mād, rōdag ardašēr šāhān šāh mād, dēnag bāmbišnān bāmbišn pābagān, ardašēr bidaxš, pābag hazāruft, dēhēn varāz, sāsān sūrēn, sāsān andēgān xv adāy, paryōz kārin, 24 gōk kārin, abursām ardaxšērfarr, gēlmān dumbāvannz, raxš spāhbed, mard dibīruft, pābag nivēōpad, pāzīhr visfarragān, vēfarragān, mihrxv āšt b(a)rēsagān, hōm(a)frād mādagānbad, dirān zēnbad, shīrag dādšār, vardān ḥavarbad, mīrag tōsaragān, zīg zabragān, sagbus naxšīrbad, hudōg grastbad, zāhēn mađagdār. kē abar amāh xv adāyif būd: ardaxšēr nodšēragān šāh, ardaxšēr 25 kirmān šāh, dēnag mēšān bāmbišn dastgird šābuhr, hamazāsp viružān šāh, valayš vispuhr pābagān, sāsān vispuhr pad farragān dāšt, anī sāsān vispuhr cē pad kadōgān dāšt, narīsaf vispuhr paryōzagān, narīsaf vispuhr šābuhragān, šābuhr bidaxš, pābag hazāruft, paryōz aspad, ardaxšēr varāz, ardaxšēr sūrēn, narīsaf andēgān 26 x adāy, ardaxšēr kārin, vēhnām framadār, frīg vēandiyōgšābuhr xshahrab, sridō šāhmust, ardaxšēr ardaxšērxsnōm, pāzīhr tahmšābuhr, ardaxšēr gōmān xshahrab, cašmag nēvšābuhr, vēhnām šābuhrxsnōm, tīrmīhr xshārgard dizbad, zīg nivēōpad, ardašān dumbāvandīz, gundfarn aþygān razmyōd ud pābiž 27 paryōzšābuhr šunbīdagān, vārzan ī gaþ xshahrab, kardesrav bidaxš, pābag visfarragān, valayš ī selōkān, yazdbād bāmbišnān handarzbed, pābag ī safsērdār, narīsaf rind xshahrab, tiyānag ahmadān xshahrab, vardbad parištagbad, yōðmard rastagān, ardaxšēr vēfarragān, abursām šābuhr darīgān sārdār, narīsaf bardagān (barragān), šābuhr narīsafagān, narīsaf 28 grastbed, ohrmazd dibīrbad, nādūg zēndānīg, pābag ī barbad, pāsfard pāsfardagān, abdayš dizbadagān, kardēr ī ēhrbed, rastag vēhardaxšēr xshahrab, ardaxšēr bidaxšagān, mihrxv āšt ī ganzšār, šabuhr framađār, arštād mihrān pad fravardag dibīr, sāsān šābestān sāsānagān, virōð vāzārbad, ardaxšēr nērēz xshahrab, baydād ī vardbadegān, kardēr ardašān, zurvāndād bandagān, 29 vinnār sāsānegān, mānzag šābestān, sāsān dādšār, vardān nāspādagān, vardag varāzbad: ēv-bidān, ākbrid ēv, nayn ēv grīv ud panj mušt, mād caſār pās. avās cavāyōn amāh abar yazdān īr ud kardagān toxšem, ud yazdān dastgird ahem, ud pad yazdān aþyāvřif im avend xshahr vxāšt ud dāšt, nām ud nēvīf kard hav-iž kē paš až amāh bavā ud farnavx ahed hav-iž abar yazdānir ud 30 kardagān toxšed kū yazd aþyāvar bavend ud dastgird (dastgīrv?) karend. dastnibēg im man ohrmazd dibīr ſērag dibīr puhr.

Shapur I's inscription at the Ka'ba-ye Zartosht

Shapur I's Ka'ba-ye Zartosht inscription (shortened as Shapur-KZ, ŠKZ, SKZ), also referred to as The Great Inscription of Shapur I and Res Gestae Divi Saporis (RGDS), is a trilingual inscription made during the reign of the Sasanian king Shapur I (r. 240–270) after his victories over the Romans. The inscription is carved on the Ka'ba-ye Zartosht, a stone quadrangular and stepped structure located in Naqsh-e Rustam, an ancient necropolis located northwest of Persepolis, in today's Fars Province, Iran. The inscription dates to c. 262.

The inscription is written in Middle Persian, Parthian, and Greek, containing 35, 30, and 70 lines, respectively. The Middle Persian variant is partially damaged, while the Greek and Parthian versions are better survived, although they are not exactly the same as the Middle Persian text. In this inscription, Shapur introduces himself, mentions his genealogy, enumerates the provinces of his empire, describes his campaigns against the Roman Empire and talks about the fire temples he built. The inscription is considered the most important inscription from the Sasanian era.

The relevant passage enumerating the territories part of Shapur I's empire:

...[I] am ruler of Ěrānshahr, and I possess the lands of [provinces; Greek ethne]: Pars [Persis], Pahlav (Parthia), Huzestan (Khuzestan), Meshan (i.e. Maishan, Mesene), Asorestan (Mesopotamia), Nod-Ardakhshiran (i.e. Adiabene), Arbayistan, Adurbadagan [i.e. Atropatene, 'twrp'tkn], Armeniā [Armin, 'Imny], Iberia [Wiruzān/Wručān, wlwc'n, i.e. K'art'lī], Segān [or Machelonia, i.e. Mingrelia], Arran ['Id'nm, i.e. Caucasian Albania], Balasagan, up to the Caucasus mountains [Kafkōf] and the Gates of Albania/of the Alans, and all of the mountain chain of Pareshwar/Padishkwar[gar], Mad (i.e. Media), Gurgan (i.e. Hyrcania), Merv (i.e. Margiana), Harey (i.e. "Aria") and all of Abarshahr, Kirman, Sakastan (Sistan), Turgistan/Turan, Makuran, Pardan/Paradene, Hind [India i.e. Kushano-Sasanian Kingdom], the Kushanshahr up to Peshawar/Pashkibur, and up to Kashgar[ia], Sogdiana/Sogdia and to the mountains of Tashkent (Chach), and on the other side of the sea, Oman (i.e. Mazonshahr).

In the inscription, Shapur I mentions his victories over Gordian III, Philip the Arab and Valerian. He relates that Gordian departed from Antioch and was killed in a decisive battle at Misiche in 242/4 on the border of Sasanian-ruled Mesopotamia. Shapur mentions that Misiche was subsequently renamed Misiche-Peroz-Shapur, which translates as "Misiche-(where)-Shapur-is-victorious". In relation to Philip the Arab; Shapur mentions that negotiations in 244 resulted in Philip being forced to pay 500,000 denarii to the Sasanians. In addition, the Romans promised that they would surrender Armenia to Shapur. However, Shapur relates that the Philip the Arab didn't keep his promise and tried to reinvade Armenia. As a result, another battle was fought in 252-256 at Barbalissos, against a 60,000-strong Roman army. Shapur was victorious, and he mentions that he captured 36 Roman cities. Shapur also mentions his major victory at the Battle of Edessa, which resulted in Valerian being captured by the Sasanian ruler, "along with the Praefectus Praetorio, senators, and chiefs of the army". He furthermore relates that Roman captives were settled in the province of Pars (i.e. Persis). The Oxford Dictionary of Late Antiquity notes that this particular part of the inscription, where Shapur mentions the capture of Valerian and his deeds in general, is reminiscent of the "Persian epic tradition".

In the following part of the inscription, Shapur mentions the Zoroastrian sacred fires he established under his rule to honor each member of the royal family. He also mentions detail of "sacrifices and ceremonies". The final part of the inscription contains valuable content about the Sasanian administration as well as the courtiers and nobles during the lifetimes of Papak, Ardashir I in addition to Shapur I himself.

7 december 328 The Namara inscription

(Arabic: نَقْشُ النَّمَارَةِ naqṣ an-Namārah) is a 4th century inscription in Arabic language, making it one of the earliest. It has also been interpreted as a late version of the Nabataean Arabic language in its transition to Arabic. It has been described by Irfan Shahid as "the most important Arabic inscription of pre-Islamic times" and by Kees Versteegh as "the most famous Arabic inscription". It is also an important source for the relationships between the Romans and the Arabs in that period.

The inscription is written in the Nabatean Aramaic script, but there are ambiguities, as the script has only 22 signs (some with added annotations), and the Arabic dialect had 28 or 29 consonants. The script has ligatures between some letters that show a transition towards an Arabic script. Some of the terms used in the text are closer to Aramaic than Arabic; for example, it uses the Aramaic patronymic "b-r", rather than the Arabic term "b-n". However, most of the text is very close to the Classical Arabic used in the Qur'an in the 7th century.

The inscription was found on 4 April 1901 by two French archaeologists, René Dussaud and Frédéric Macler, at al-Namara (also Namārah; modern Nimreh) near Shahba and Jabal al-Druze in southern Syria, about 100 kilometres south of Damascus and 50 kilometres northeast Bosra, and 120 kilometres east of the Sea of Galilee. The location was near the boundary of the Roman Empire at the date it was carved, the Limes Arabicus of the province of Arabia Petraea. Al-Namara was later the site of a Roman fort.

The inscription is carved in five lines on a block of basalt, which may have been the lintel for a tomb. It is the epitaph of a recently deceased Arab king of the Lakhmids, Imru' al-Qays ibn 'Amr, and dated securely to AD 328. Imru' al-Qays followed his father 'Amr ibn Adi in using a large army and navy to conquer much of Iraq and the Arabian peninsula from their capital at al-Hirah. At this time, they were vassals of the Persian Sassanids. Raids on Iran triggered a campaign by Sassanid emperor Shapur II which conquered the Iraqi lands, and Imru' al-Qays retreated to Bahrain. He moved to Syria to seek help from the Roman emperor Constantine. Imru' al-Qays converted to Christianity before his death in Syria and was entombed in the Syrian desert. His conversion is mentioned in the Arab history of Hisham Ibn Al-Kalbi, but not mentioned in the inscription itself; equally there is no mention of any pagan belief.

The first tracing and reading of the Namara inscription was published in the beginning of the twentieth century by René Dussaud. According to his reading, the text starts by informing the reader that this inscription was the burial monument of the king, then it introduces him and lists his achievements, and finally announces the date of his death. Many other scholars have re-read and analyzed the language of the inscription over the last century but, despite their slight differences, they all agreed with Dussaud's central viewpoint that the Namara stone was the burial monument of King Imru' al-Qays. In 1985, James A. Bellamy offered the first significantly different tracing of the inscription since Dussaud, including a breakthrough tracing correction of two highly contested words in the beginning of the third line (pointed out on Dussaud's original tracing figure as words 4 and 5). However, despite Bellamy's new important re-tracings, his Arabic reading fully agreed with the general theme of Dussaud's original reading. Bellamy's widely accepted new translation of the inscription reads:

This is the funerary monument of Imru' al-Qays, son of 'Amr, king of the Arabs, and (?) his title of honour was Master of Asad and Nizar. And he subdued the Asadis and they were overwhelmed together with their kings, and he put to flight Madhhij thereafter, and came driving them to the gates of Najran, the city of Shammar, and he subdued Ma'add, and he dealt gently with the nobles of the tribes, and appointed them viceroys, and they became phylarchs for the Romans. And no king has equalled his achievements.

Thereafter he died in the year 223 on the 7th day of Kaslul. Oh the good fortune of those who were his friends!

Below is Bellamy's modern Arabic translation of the Namara inscription, with brief added explanations between parenthesis:

تَيْ (هَذِهِ) نَفْسُ (شَاهِدَةٌ قَبْرٌ) امْرُؤُ الْقَيْسِ بْنُ غَمْرَاوِي

	<p>ملك العرب، ولقب وملك الأسددين ونزار وملوكهم وفُرُّب مذحج عكدي (كلمة عامة تدمج الكلمتين "عن قضي" ، بمعنى بعد ذلك) وجاء (اي امرؤ القيس) يزجها (يقاتلها بضراوة) في رُّتّيج (ابواب) نَجْرَان، مدينة شَمَر، وملك معد (بني معد في اليمن) وتنبل بنته الشعوب (عامل نبلاء هم باحترام ولطفة) وكلهن (اي عين نباء هم شيوخا للقبائل) فرأسو لروم</p> <p>The mention of the date – the 7th of Kaslul in the year 223 of the Nabatean era of Bostra – securely dates his death to the 7th day of December in AD 328.</p> <p>Parts of the translation are uncertain. For example, early translations suggested that Imru' al-Qays was king of all the Arabs, which seems unlikely after he moved to Syria. It is also not clear whether he campaigned towards Najran while he was based at al-Hirah or after his move to Syria and, in either case, whether he did so alone or with assistance from the Sassanids or the Romans.</p> <p>The inscription is now held by the Louvre Museum in Paris. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Namara_inscription</p> <p>Imru-l-Qays</p>	
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