

The Fire Altar of Vispšād-farrdōš

The inscription¹, found near Barm i Dilak, was written by Abnōn, Master of ceremonies of the Šabestān, on the base of a fire altar, and dedicated on the occasion of the victory of Šābuhr over Gordian III at Misikhé. The end (death?) of Gordian is synchronised with Šābuhr's third regnal year: Mecheir (Mḥyr) 16 corresponding to February 15, 244 A.D. The first year of Šābuhr's reign will be in the year 242 (and according to the inscription at Šābuhr, the beginning of Šābuhr's single reign in the summer of 243).

On all four sides of this altar, Abnōn carved human busts and inscribed four personal names and also his own name:

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| <i>ardašēr šāhān šāh</i> | Ardašēr, King of kings |
| <i>aspiz ī darbed</i> | Aspiz, Minister of the Court |
| <i>vehnām ī framadār</i> | Vehnām, Governor |
| <i>šābuhr šāhān šāh</i> | Šābuhr, King of kings |
| <i>abnōn ī ped šabestān āyēnīg</i> | Abnōn, who is master of ceremonies in the Queen's palace |

- 1 *ēn ādurgāh abnōn ī ped šabestān
āyēnīg framād kē kird. ud ahī
framāyēn kū- "m agar dastan hē
ēg ādur-ē ēdar nišāyān. pas
ka abar sāl si šā-*
- 6 *-buhr šāhān šāh ka
hrōmāy abar pārs ud pahlav ā-
-yend, pas an ēdar ped
vispšād-farrdōš bavēn. pas kū ašnavēn kū hrōmāy āyend*
- 11 *pas an yazdān pāyvehēn kū
"agar šābuhr ī šāhān šāh cēr baved
ud hrōmāyīn zaned u-šān vattar kuned dā-n
ped bannagīh ēstend ēg nixvārān dā ādur-ē ēdar
nišāyān." pas kū ašnavēn kū hrōmāy rasīd*
- 16 *hend ud šābuhr ī šāhān šāh zad hend u-š vattar kird hend
pas ēn ādur ēdar
nišānd u-š panā-šābuhr-
abnōn nām kird*

¹ . R.N. Frye, "Historical Interpretations in Middle Iranian", W. Skalmowski & A. Van Tongerloo eds., *Medioiranica*, Louvain, 1993, 65-69

Ph. Gignoux, "D'Abnūn à Māhān: Etude de deux inscriptions sassanides", *Studia Iranica*, 20, 1991, 9-22

V.A. Livshits and A.B. Nikitin, "Some Notes on the Inscription from Našrābād", *Bulletin of the Asia Institute*, 5, 1992, 41-44

Prods O. Skjærvø, "L'Inscription d'Abnūn et l'imparfait en moyen-perse", *Studia Iranica*, 21, 1992, 153-60

M. Tavoosi (with notes by R.N. Frye) "An Inscribed Capital Dating from the Time of Shapur I", *Bulletin of the Asia Institute*, 3, 1989, 25-38, Fig. I-IV

‘This fire altar, (I), Abnōn, master of ceremonies in the Queen’s palace, ordered (to be made, and) who made it. First I declared, ‘If it is possible for me, then I shall set up a Fire here’. Then, when in the year 3 (of) Šābuhr the king of kings, when the Romans were coming against Persia and Parthia, then I was here in Vispšād-farrdōš. Then, when it was heard that the Romans were coming, then I implored the Yazata, “If Šābuhr the king of kings become triumphant and smash the Romans and defeat them, to the extent that they take to serve us, then I shall hasten to set up a fire here.” Then when it was heard that the Romans had arrived and Šābuhr the king of kings had smashed them and had defeated them, then I set up this fire here, and it was called Panā-šābuhr-Abnōn.’