



## ABARŠAHR

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**ABARŠAHR**, name of Nišāpūr province in western Khorasan. From the early Sasanian period, Nišāpūr, which was founded or rebuilt by Šāpūr I in the first years of his reign, was the administrative center of the province. On a Sasanian clay sealing, the names of Abaršahr and Nišāpūr appear together. In the inscription of Šāpūr I at Naqš-e Rostam and in Manichean texts, Abaršahr is mentioned in various spellings. On Sasanian coins the Pahlavi form of Abaršahr appears abbreviated as *ʾpr*, and on Arab-Sasanian coins we find the form *ʾpr*, *ʾprš(t)*. Post-reform Omayyad coins bear the Arabic mint signature *ʾbršhr*, which can also be found on ʿAbbasid coins until about A.D. 825. But as early as about 772, the mint name *nysʾbwr* appears on Islamic coins, and it was used up to later Middle Ages. In Arabic texts, besides the common form of Abaršahr, Baršahr occurs; and the Persian geography of Ḥamdallāh Mostawfī mentions Abaršahra (variet. Abū-šahr, etc.) as the old name of Hamšahra near the Caspian Sea. The Arab geographers of the Middle Ages explained the meaning of the word Abrašahr/Abaršahr as “cloud city.” The older western interpretation of the name, “upper country,” which has been brought back into discussion recently, was rejected by E. Herzfeld and J. Markwart. Markwart concluded that Abaršahr means “the country of the Aparak” (one of the three Dahae tribes who founded the Parthian empire)—an opinion widely shared.

See also [KHORASAN](#) and [NĪŠĀPŪR](#).



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