



## ARDAŠĪR SAKĀNŠĀH

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**ARDAŠĪR SAKĀNŠĀH**, a vassal king of the first Sasanian king of kings, **Ardašir I**. The trilingual inscription of Šāpūr on the walls of the Ka'ba-ye Zardošt starts the list of "those who lived under the rule of king of kings Ardašir" with four East Iranian rulers: Sātārop king of Aparēnak (i.e., the Nīšāpūr region), Ardašir king of Marv, Ardašir king of Kermān, and Ardašir king of the Sakas (Sakastān; Sīstān) (see A. Maricq, *Classica et Orientalia*, Paris, 1965, p. 322). An eastern campaign of Ardašir I is said to have taken him, probably in 225, as far as the city of Marv, where kings of eastern Iran came to him to offer their submission (details and references in G. Widengren, "The Establishment of the Sasanian Dynasty in the Light of New Evidence," in *La Persia Nel Medioevo*, Rome, 1971, pp. 717, 721, 728, 745-48). The exalted rank of the East Iranian kings is thus explained by their having joined Ardašir of their own accord in return for retaining their dynastic privileges (V. G. Lukonin, *Kul'tura Sasanidskogo Irana*, Moscow, 1969, pp. 36-38).

There exist some rare copper coins of eastern Iranian provenance which show on the obverse a ruler, identified by a Parthian inscription, who wears a snood similar to that worn by Pacores, the later Indo-Parthian king, while the reverse depicts a fire altar flanked by two incense burners, a motif characteristic of the reverse of the coins of Ardašir I. In weight the coins give the same denomination as the later Indo-Parthian tetradrachms. All these indications point to the reign of Ardašir I (D. W. MacDowall, *NC*, 1965, p. 145, pl. XII no. 11; Lukonin, *op. cit.*, p. 40). E. Drouin first read the ruler's name as Ardamitra (in *Revue numismatique*, 1895, p. 52, pl. 2), and numismatists have followed him



since (e.g., E. J. Rapson, *JRAS*, 1904, pp. 678-79; A. de la Fūye, *Revue numismatique*, 1926, pp. 158ff.; MacDowall, op. cit., pp. 138ff.; M. Mitchiner, *NC*, 1969, pp. 301ff.; but cf. E. Herzfeld, *Paikuli*, Berlin, 1924, I, p. 38). However, W. B. Henning (“Mitteliranisch,” p. 41 n. 2) read the ruler’s name as Zyky (?) son of Artyn (?), but warned that insufficient differentiation of several letters render these names almost unrecognizable. Lukonin, who personally examined better preserved specimens, read the legend as *bgy ’rt’syry sk’nMLK’ ’rt’ . . .* “Lord Ardašīr , King of Sakas, [son of] Arta . . .,” and remarked that should this reading prove sound, the coins can be attributed to the Ardašīr Sakānšāh of Šāpūr’s inscription (op. cit., p. 40 and *VDI* 2, 1969, p. 25, where the name is more correctly read as *’rthštry*). He further identified this ruler with the patron of the monument at Kūh-e K̄vāja (q.v.) in Sīstān, and interpreted one of its panels as representing the investiture of Ardašīr Sakānšāh (*Kul’tura*, p. 40); but these interesting attributions remain unproven.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Given in the text.

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