



## BAHRĀM IV

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### **Bahrām IV**

Bahrām IV succeeded Šāpūr III and ruled 388-99. Ṭabarī (tr. Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser*, p. 71) calls him a son of Šāpūr II, but, according to Agathias (4.26), Ḥamza (p. 20), *Šāh-nāma* (Moscow, VII, p. 262) and others, he was a son of Šāpūr III, which is more likely (Nöldeke, *op. cit.*, p. 71 n. 2). Prior to his accession, Bahrām was governor of Kermān and bore the title Kermān Šāh (a name which may linger in that of Kermānšāh(ān), a town in western Iran; Nöldeke, *ibid.*, n. 3). An amethyst intaglio in the British Museum displays a masterly engraved bust of this prince as wearing a pearl-rimmed diademed cap and identified by a Pahlavi inscription: Wahrān Kermān Šāh, son of the Mazdā-worshipping Lord Šāpūr, king of kings of Iran and non-Iran, who is a scion of lords (see E. Herzfeld, *Paikuli I*, Berlin, 1924, p.78).

Bahrām negotiated with emperor Theodosius I over Armenia in 389, and they divided that land between their empires. But when Bahrām's appointee over the larger Persian section (called Persarmenia) went over to his co-religionist Romans in 394, he was replaced by Bahrām's brother Wahrānšāpūr (Bahrāmšāpūr, Arm. Vrāmšapuh). A year later a horde of Huns swept from North Caucasus into the south and were defeated and repulsed only on Mesopotamian soil (Nöldeke, *op. cit.*, p. 72, with references). A weak ruler, Bahrām fell victim to a conspiracy by powerful nobles and lost his life. A magnificently cut chalcedony intaglio in the British Museum represents this king, recognizable from his falcon-shaped crown (on which see R. Göbl,



*Sasanian Numismatics*, Brunswick, 1971, p. 48), javelin in hand and trampling the body of an unidentified fallen enemy (see A. D. H. Bivar, *Catalogue of the Western Asiatic Seals in the British Museum: Stamp Seals II: The Sassanian Dynasty*, London, 1969, p. 56, pl. 4: BCl).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Sources are listed in Justi, *Namenbuch*, p. 362, no. 12.

See further K. E. Güterbock, *Byzanz und Persien*, Berlin, 1906, p. 128; J. H. Schmidt, *Syria*, 1934, p. 22; Christensen, *Iran Sass.*, pp. 253f.