



BARM-E DELAK

BARM-e DELAK, a site with a spring about 10 km southeast of Shiraz, where three panels bearing two Sasanian rock reliefs are carved in the mountain at a height of about 6.5 m above the ground. The place has been visited and described by several European travelers since the 17th century: for example, Tavernier, between 1632 and 1665; Kaempfer, the first to sketch the reliefs, in 1685; Flandin and Coste, who made some remarkable drawings, in 1840-41; and Andreas and Stolze, who took the first photographs of the site, at the end of the 19th century. Sarre and later Erdmann published the first scientific studies of the site.

1. The larger relief ([Plate VI](#)) measures 1.8 to 2.1 m (height) by 2.6 m and shows a man with a flower in his right hand which he presents to a woman, presumably his wife; the woman extends her right hand to the flower and her left hand, hidden in the sleeve, is brought to her mouth. A badly damaged Pahlavi inscription is carved under the arm of the male figure (Gropp proposed two variant readings of the inscription). The identification of the persons depicted in the relief and its overall purpose are still matters of debate. Various suggestions as to the identity of the two figures have been proposed: Sarre recognized in the relief scene the investiture of the queen by the god Ohrmazd (Ahura Mazdā), but this interpretation was rightly rejected by Erdmann, who proposed that the scene depicts the transmission of a fertility symbol by a great dignitary to the queen. More recently Hinz interpreted the scene as showing Prince Narseh (later Narseh I, 292-301), son of Šāpūr I (239-70), offering a flower to his niece Ardašīr-Anāhīd, wife of



Bahrām II (274-97), Šāpūr I's grandson and Narseh's nephew, who took the throne after his father Bahrām I (271-74), Narseh's brother; thus the flower would be a symbol of reconciliation. According to de Waele, who compared the relief to the one at Sarāb-e Qandīl, it shows a prince obtaining a flower from an Anāhīd priestess, while Lukonin recognized in the woman Bahrām II's wife Šāpūrduxtak, and in the man Prince Ardašīr, chiliarch (*hazārbed*) and son of Pābak. However, the man, although not wearing a crown, can also be a king, since the relief obviously does not represent an investiture scene or celebrate a great victory; Frye has suggested that the man is Bahrām II himself.

2. The smaller, badly weathered relief ([Plate VII](#)) covers two panels, the left panel measuring 2.75 (height) by 1.25 m, the right panel 2.08 by 1.25 m. It depicts two persons, King Bahrām II to the left and a high official to the right, separated by unworked rock and a deep fissure. Bahrām II is easily identified by his crown with eagle wings and *korymbos*. His right hand is brought to his mouth in a sign of veneration; the left hand rests on the hilt of a sword. The man to the right, facing the king, is represented in a nearly identical gesture and wears a high rounded hat. Erdmann, who sees in the unworked rock the outlines of a fire altar, thinks this is the high priest and according to Hinz it is none other than the famous high priest Kartēr (Kirdēr).

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