



BĒṬ LAPAṬ

BĒṬ LAPAṬ, the Syriac name for Vēh Antiōk Šāpūr (Gondēšāpūr), founded in ca. 260 by Šāpūr I in Kūzestān with the Roman captives from Valerian's army. The site has been identified with the ruins called Šāhābād, eight *farsak*s northwest of Tostar on the road to Dezfūl. Since there is no archeological evidence of pre-Sasanian occupation there, it is unlikely that it was a pre-Sasanian Christian diocese. The city was laid out eight streets square and was governed by a satrap under Šāpūr I. The form Bēlapat in Greek and Coptic reflects the local pronunciation and was corrupted into Bēl-Ābād, "establishment of Bēl," through folk etymology. According to Dīnavarī its name was Nīlāṭ in the Kūzī language, while its inhabitants called it Nīlāb. It was the capital of Sasanian Kūzestān, and on at least two occasions was the location of the Sasanian royal court. Mani was imprisoned and killed there because Bahrām (Varahrān) I (r. 273-76) had his court there. Šāpūr II also had his court there sometime after 336, for the *mōbad*, Pērōz-Tahm-Šāpūr, was sent to him there. The Christian bishopric of Bēṭ Lapaṭ was the metropolitanate of Bēṭ Huzayē (Kūzestān) and is attested in 410, 420, 424, 486, 497, 544, and 644. The Synod of Bēṭ Lapaṭ convened by Bar Šawmā ([Baršaumā](#)) in 483 was an important step in the creation of a separate Nestorian church in the Sasanian state. By the sixth century there were a famous hospital and medical school there that lasted well into the Islamic period.

The city was taken by Muslim forces under Abū Sabra in 17/738 when Abū Mūsā was governor of Bašra. It served as capital for Ya'qūb b. Layṭ al-Šaffār (d. 265/878), whose tomb could be seen there in the fourth/tenth century.



Although the city suffered from Kurdish attacks in the late fourth/tenth century, it was still a large town in the eighth/fourteenth century.

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