



HORMOZD II

HORMOZD II, Sasanian great king (r. 303-09 C.E.). In his Middle Persian inscription at ʤāq-e Bostān, Šāpur II (r. 309-79) calls himself “son of the Mazda-worshipping Majesty (*bay*), Oḥrmazd, king of kings of Ērān and Anē-rān,” grandson of Narseh (Herzfeld, I, p. 123; Back, pp. 490-91). Agathias (4.25), ʤabari (I, pp. 835-36), and others confirm this descent (Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser*, p. 50 and n. 4; see also Justi, *Namenbuch*, s.v. Ahura-Mazdāh, no. 7). In the “investiture” relief of Narseh at Naqš-e Rostam in Fārs (Herrmann, pp. 9-11, Pls. 8-13), the figure standing behind the king probably represents Hormozd as the crown prince, since his headgear is shaped as an animal protome (horse?), a type normally associated with Sasanian heirs (Shahbazi, p. 268; Wiesehöfer, p. 70). It is unlikely that he participated in his father’s war against Rome, which ended in Narseh’s crushing defeat, the capture of his wife and several children, and the ceding of several provinces in Armenia and Mesopotamia for their return (for Narseh’s war, see Ensslin, pp. 37 ff.; Winter, pp. 152-231; Felix, pp. 111-28).

Upon his accession, Hormozd assumed a crown very similar to that of Bahrām II (q.v.). It represented the *varəγna*, the royal falcon (the bird symbolizing the god Vərəθraγna-/Bahrām), supporting a pearl-studded globe (characteristic of Sasanian royal headgear) and holding a pearl by its beak (Erdmann, p. 99; Göbl, pp. 45-46, Pl. 5, nos. 80-87).

Very little is known of Hormozd’s reign, which allegedly started harshly before he turned mild, wise, and benevolent to the weak (ʤabari, I, pp. 835-36). According to Abu Rayḥān Biruni (*Ātār*, pp. 17 ff.), he resumed the persecution



of the Manicheans. The establishment of a rural district (*rostāq*), called Kurang or Wahišt-Hormoz, near Iḏaj in the Rām-Hormozd district (*kura*) of Ƙuzestān is attributed to him (Ḥamza Ešfahāni, p. 51). According to Bal'ami (ed. Bahār, p. 904), he sent troops into Syria demanding tribute from the Ghassanids, who turned to Rome for support. The Ghassanid king was killed before Roman assistance could arrive; but then his men surprised Hormozd as he was hunting in the desert, fatally wounding him, and plundered the outskirts of Ctesiphon. More probably, the magnates found an opportunity and killed him in a remote area, because they wished to deprive his sons of the throne (see [ARDAŠĪR ii.](#)). The evidence for a civil war comes from a rock-relief left by Hormozd himself at Naqš-e Rostam in Fārs. It depicts him on horseback toppling with a long lance a mounted foe in full armor, whose helmet bears the family device of Pāpak, the viceroy (*bitaxš*) of Albania under Bahrām II and Narseh (for this monument see Herrmann, p. 9; von Gall, pp. 6 ff., Pls. 1-7; for identification see Hinz, pp. 135-36, pls. 133, 133a, 133b; for Pāpak the *bitaxš* of Albania, see Henning).

The 11th-century *Chronicle of Se'ert* (IV, p. 255) asserts that Hormozd II waged a war against the Romans to avenge his father's defeat; and the *Chronicle of Arbela* (q.v.; tr., p. 200) says that when Hormozd observed the persecution of Christians by the Roman Caesar, he collected a large army, invaded Roman territory, and pillaged many cities. The authenticity of the latter work is questionable, and the report in the former is not corroborated elsewhere; one may only surmise that it is probably a reflection of Hormozd's alleged raid into Syria.

Hormozd was survived by eight sons (see [ARDAŠĪR ii.](#) and ĀDURFRĀZGERD), of whom Šāpur II reigned from 309 to 379. One of his daughters, Hormozd-doḵt, is said to have married the Armenian prince Vahan Mamikonian (Faustus, 4.50, 59, tr. Garsoïan, pp. 168, 180).

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