

The Reign of Queen Būrān



Sasanika
Sources

al-Ṭabarī, in full Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (born c. 839, Āmol, Ṭabaristān [Iran]—died 923, Baghdad, Iraq), Muslim scholar, author of enormous compendiums of early Islamic history and Qur’ānic exegesis, who made a distinct contribution to the consolidation of Sunni thought during the 9th century. He condensed the vast wealth of exegetical and historical erudition of the preceding generations of Muslim scholars and laid the foundations for both Qur’ānic and historical sciences. His major works were the *Qur’ān Commentary* and the *History of Prophets and Kings* (*Ta’rīkh al-Rusūl wa al-Mulūk*). Tabarī’s *Tarikh ar-Rusul wa al Muluk* was a source of information for generations of historians in the Islamic world. He made a great contribution to the consolidation of Islamic thought during the 9th century. His history became so popular that the Samanid Prince Mansur Ibn Nuh had it translated into Persian in ca. 963. He drew upon various sources for his historical reports such as classical poetry, genealogy and tribal customs.

-“al-Tabarī” *Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, 19 October 2011

<<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/579654/al-Tabari>>.

-“al-Tabarī” *Salam. Salam Biographical Dictionary Online*, 19 October 2011

<<http://www.salaam.co.uk/knowledge/biography/viewentry.php?id=114>>.

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Then there succeeded to the royal power Būrān, daughter of Kistrā (II) Abarwīz, son of Hurmuz (IV), son of Kistrā (I) Anūsharwān.¹ It has been mentioned that she proclaimed on

¹ Also named as Buran-dukht and, according to Hamzah al-Isfahani, *Ta’rikh*, 54, a sister of Sheroy and the daughter of Khusraw Abarwez’s Byzantine princess wife, Maryam, daughter of Heraclius. Her descent on both sides would thus make her a very acceptable queen. The Anonymus Guide, tr. 32-33, describes Buran as not only Sheroy’s sister but also his wife, this being quite possible in Noldeke’s view, *ibid.* 32 n. 5. For the name Buran/Boran, see Justi, *Namenbuch*, 70; Gignoux, *Norms propres sassanides en Moyen-Perse epigraphique*, no.209, cf. no. 208, considered by him as a hypocoristic form * *bauraspa-*,



the day when she was hailed as queen, "I will pursue righteousness and ordain justice," and she entrusted Shahrbarāz's office to Fus Farrūkh and invested him with the office of her chief minister. She behaved kindly toward her subjects and spread justice among them. She gave orders for silver coins to be minted, and she repaired masonry bridges (al-qanāṭir) and bridges of boats (al-jusūr).²

She remitted for the people the arrears of land tax (ba-qāyā) due, and she wrote to them in general open letters concerning the policies of benevolence toward them that she intended to follow, and she mentioned the topic of the members of the royal house [of the Sāsānids] who had perished. At the same time, she expressed the hope that God would show them, through solicitude for their welfare and firm policies deriving from her elevated position, what would let them realize that lands were not subdued through the strength and energy of men, that military camps were not laid open to plunder through men's stratagems and hatred extinguished, but all that comes from God, He is exalted and magnified. She further exhorted them to be obedient and urged them to be faithful. Her letters brought together everything that was necessary (i.e., for the subjects' guidance and welfare). She restored the wood of the [True] Cross to the ruler of Byzantium through the intermediacy of the Catholics called Īshū'hab.³ Her tenure of royal power lasted one year and four months.⁴

-al-Tabari. *The History of al-Tabari: the Sāsānids, the Byzantines, the Lakmids, and Yemen*. Vol. 5. Trans. C.E. Bosworth. New York: State University of New York Press, 1999. 403-405. Print.

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"having bay horses." Al-Dinawari, *al-Akhbar al-tiwal*, III, mentions as ruling before Buran the child Juwanshir, son of Khusraw and Kurdiyah, the sister and wife of Bahram Chubin (see al-Tabari, I, 998, 1001, pp. 309, 316-17 above), whom Abarwez had married after Bahram's death; if this piece of information were true, presumably Juwanshir would have escaped Sheroy's massacre of his brothers, but in any case, must have died after a year. There is no trace of him in Sasanid coinage.

² Noldeke noted, trans. 391 n. 3, that Buran also built a fire temple at Istiniya (a village near the later al-Kufah, according to Yaqut, *Buldan*, I, 176, pace Noldeke that it was near Baghdad), according to al-Mas'udi, IV 86 = § 1412, cf. Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, 283.

³ Restoration of the True Cross had been a prominent point in the peace negotiations begun by Heraclius with Sheroy and dragging on into the times of Shahrbaraz or Buran, but the Cross was actually restored by Sheroy and was back in Jerusalem in late summer 629 or spring 630; see on the problem of exact dating here, n. 951 above. The Catholicos in question was Isho'yahb II of Gadala, formerly bishop of Balad in northern Mesopotamia and in office 628-46; hence he was head of the Nestorian Church when the Arabs arrived in Iraq. See Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, 341, 343-44. Isho'yahb and several other Nestorian bishops the Persian empire went on a mission to Heraclius in northern Syria as part of the peace negotiations. See Noldeke, trans. 392 n. 1; Labourt, *Le Christianisme dans l'empire perse*, 243-45.

⁴ In Noldeke's surmise, trans. 433, there was a short interregnum of intrigues and anarchy in the capital Ctesiphon after Shahrbaraz's assassination on 9 June 630. Buran's coins, extending over three regnal years, began with the regnal year 1, which would have ended on 16 June 630. Her reign must have extended over a year and four or six months, hence into autumn 631. The *Anonymus Guidi*, tr. 33, and the Nestorian *Chronicles of Se'ert* state that she was strangled, according to the latter source, by the general Firuz. Buran's name appears on her coins as BWL'N. See on her coins Paruck, *Sasanian Coins*, 69, 392-93, Plate XXII; Gobl, *Sasanian Numismatics*, 54-55, Table XIII, Plate 15; Sellwood, Whitting, and Williams, *An Introduction to Sasanian Coins*, 21, 166-68; Malek, "A Survey of Research on Sasanian Numismatics." 238; Jenny Rose, "Three Queens, Two Wives, and a Goddess. The Roles and Images of Woman in Sasanian Iran." 43-45.

The other Arabic sources for her reign include Ibn Qutaybah, *Ma'arif*, 666; al-Ya'qubi, *Ta'rikh*, I, 197; al-Dinawari, *al-Akhbar al-tiwal*, III; al-Mas'udi, *Muruj*, II, 233 = § 654; idem, *Tanbih*, 102, tr. 147; Hamzah al-Isfahani, *Ta'rikh*, 54; Ibn al-Athir, *Kamil*, I, 499. Of Persian sources, see Tabari-Bal'ami, tr. II, 349-50. Of modern studies, see Christensen, *Sassanides*, 498; Frye, "The Political History of Iran under the Sasanians," 171, 178; Elr, s.v. Boran (Marie Louise Chaumont).