

# IRAN

## Sasanian Bas-reliefs at Tang-e Chogan under Invasion of Lichens and Fungi

At several places near the town of Bishapur, which was founded by Sasanian King Shapur I (241–272) and was situated on the road between Persis and Elam, the King also had the sides of the Bishapur River gorge decorated with huge historical reliefs commemorating his triple triumph over Rome. The six reliefs at Tang-e Chogan show scenes such as Shapur enslaving the Roman Emperor; the King and his courtiers; or rows of registers with files of soldiers and horses, in a deliberate imitation of the narrative scenes on the Trajan column in Rome.

The critical situation of these bas-reliefs is described in an article by CAIS (The Circle of Ancient Iranian Studies):

*Lichens and vegetation growing in the cavities and cracks of the Sasanian bas-reliefs at Tang-e Chogan, a part of the ruins of the ancient city of Bishapur in southwestern Iran, are gradually destroying these irreplaceable antiquities. The lichens and vegetation are clearly visible on all six bas-reliefs, which are located 19 kilometres north of Kazerun, reported the Persian service of the Mehr News Agency. One of the bas-reliefs depicts Shapur I, the Persian King of Kings who consolidated and expanded the fourth Iranian dynastic empire founded by his father, Ardashir I. It shows him seated on a throne, witnessing a triumph of his army. In the top row, he is flanked by nobles of the court, and the lower row contains soldiers who represent Roman captives and trophies of victory.*

*Another bas-relief portrays Bahram, one of the sons of Shapur I. During his father's reign, he governed the province of Atropatene (modern Azarbaijan Province). There is an inscription beside the bas-relief, which originally bore the name of Bahram, although his name was later erased by the Sasanian king Narses.*

*The Shiraz Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department (SCHTH) that is responsible for protecting ancient*



Sasanian bas-reliefs at Tang-e Chogan (photo: Pedram Veisi)

*site historical monuments in Fars Province, has made no efforts to save the ancient relics from the lichens and vegetation attacks.*

*The ancient city of Bishapur is also in peril by several other factors. The ruins are trampled on every day under the hoofs of livestock that are taken to the site for grazing. In addition, provincial officials have recently announced that they plan to expand the road north of the ruins. As a result, their plan may turn into another threat to the site.*

*In a report published in Persian media outlets in March 2010, experts warned about the growth of the various types of fungi, lichen and plants on the stone structures at Persepolis too. However, not surprisingly their warnings have not been heeded by the Islamic regime.*

[www.cais-soas.com](http://www.cais-soas.com), May 30, 2011



Sasanian bas-reliefs at Tang-e Chogan (photo: Pedram Veisi)