

# Solving the Mystery of Mowbed Kird-ir's Journey to Heaven

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## Abstract

In this research, the journey of mowbed Kird-ir to heaven will be investigated. Kird-ir was a great Sassanid priest who has mentioned the description of his ascension in two of his inscriptions. These two inscriptions are Naqsh-i Rostam (KNRm) and Sar Mashhad (KSM). According to the findings of this research, after examining all the events that happened in the ascension of Kird-ir, it was determined that this ascension was based on Mani's religion. As it can be seen from the existing Manichaean texts, this ascension describes the events that happen to the soul of a righteous person after death in the Manichaean religion. According to the available documents, Kird-ir was the leader of Mazda-worshipper religion. He was from the royal family and from the Greater Khorasan, Wakhan region.

**Keywords:** Manichaean ascension, Kird-ir, Greater Khorasan, Shapur I, Kird-ir's inscriptions, Rag-i Bibi

## 1. Introduction

Kird-ir was the most influential Mowbed of the Sassanid era. It seems that he lived during the reign of seven Sassanid kings, Ardashir-i Babakan, Shapur I, Hormezd I, Bahram I, Bahram II, Bahram III and Narseh respectively. Kird-ir left four inscriptions of his own. The inscriptions of Kird-ir are located in Naqsh-i Rajab (KNRb), Sar Mashhad (KSM), Kaaba-ye Zardusht (KKZ) and Naqsh-i Rostam (KNRm). In the two inscriptions, Naqsh-i Rostam and Sar Mashhad, there is a description of Kird-ir's Ascension and its events, and Kird-ir states in these inscriptions that he ascended during the time of Shapur I, the king of kings. Mani appeared during Shapur's time and reached Shapur's presence and was allowed to propagate his own religion. Hormezd I also had an opinion of approval and support towards Mani, and sheltered him for a while in the royal land of Babylon, in his palace, from the persecution of the opponents. During the one-year reign of Hormezd I, the religious tolerance of his father, Shapur I, was still ruling, and it seems that the real power of Kird-ir and his opposition to Mani, starts from the time of Bahram I. Kird-ir finally caused the imprisonment and death of Mani in 276 AD, during the reign of Bahram I. Chasing, torturing, and persecuting the Manichaeans was one of Kird-ir's next actions, which continued until the end of Bahram III's reign. With the death of Bahram III, and Narseh's accession to the throne, Kird-ir's power ended and he passed away at an advanced age.

The main works on the explanations and interpretations of the Kird-ir's inscriptions have been done by MacKenzie (1989), and Gignoux (1968, 1972, 1973, 1984 and 1991). Gignoux (1983) has also discussed Kird-ir's life in the third volume (part two) of the Cambridge History of Iran. Especially about the language of the inscriptions, Skjærvø (1983, 1995 and 2012) have done the most important work. Jügel (2010) published a paper in which he tabulated the orthography of all four Kird-ir's inscriptions and wrote the transliteration of them in the table, and mentioned the meaning of each sentence in front of it in the table.

In Persian, various researches have been done about Kird-ir and his inscriptions. For example, Tafazzoli (1991) deals with Kird-ir's religious policies and highlights his role in the executive policies of Zoroastrianism, and considers the reason why his name is forgotten in Pahlavi, Armenian, and Syriac written sources is due to Kird-ir's excessive attention to politics, his name was removed from religious writings. For the first time, Rajabi (1971) directly translated Kird-ir's inscription in Zoroaster's Kaaba from Middle Persian into Farsi and published a detailed introduction about Kird-ir and the building of Zoroaster's Kaaba and its research background. Akbarzadeh (2006) in his book, in addition to dealing with Kird-ir's life and his petroglyphs and Inscriptions, also published the Persian translation of all Kird-ir's Inscriptions in Farsi for the first time in a coherent way, but since these translations are based on the works of Philip Gignoux and David Neil MacKenzie,

and the author did not directly use the Pahlavi principle, it also has shortcomings. Daryae and Malekzadeh (2015) have published a paper in which they discussed the ascension of Kartir. Jahanpour (2015) has published a paper about the ascensions in the Zoroastrian religion, in which she also has mentioned the ascension of Kartir.

In the researches that have been done so far, the researchers have not provided enough evidence to investigate the ascension of Kird-īr, and they have not carefully scrutinized the texts that can help in the investigation of the ascension of Kird-īr in order to solve this mystery correctly. In previous studies, researchers have stated many things based on speculation, and these things are very doubtful and cannot show the ascension of Kird-īr as it is.

In the present study, the author intends to solve the mystery of Mowbed Kird-īr's journey to heaven completely and correctly by examining sufficient evidence and various texts for the first time. During this research, the author intends to answer these questions:

- 1) Ascension of Kird-īr was done in the manner of ascension in which religion?
- 2) Which region of Iran did Kird-īr belong to and what is the meaning of his name?
- 3) What events do the Kird-īr's ascension inscriptions and the reliefs related to it tell?
- 4) Is there any text other than the inscriptions that contains information about the ascension of Kird-īr?

Each of these questions will be answered at each stage of the research. The hypothesis of this research is that Kird-īr did not write many of the contents in his inscriptions on purpose, so these hidden contents will be identified by searching in different texts.

## 2. Method

In this research, the library method has been used to investigate the ascension of Kird-īr. The data has been collected from various Zoroastrian Middle Persian texts and Manichaean texts, and then analyzed and investigated. The author of this article has tried to collect and examine all the texts that are effective in solving the mystery of the ascension of Kird-īr. For the transliteration of the Kird-īr's inscriptions, Boyce's method, which she used in the transliteration of Manichaean texts, has been used. So, the transliteration method is different from MacKenzie's transliteration method. Also, notes were mentioned for words and phrases that have ambiguity so that ambiguity can be removed from them. For the readings of these inscriptions, the author of the article has also considered the previous readings of the researchers and has included what she thinks is more appropriate in this research. In the transliteration, square brackets [ ] mark restored text, round brackets ( ) scarcely legible text and arrow brackets < > mark additions. In the translation, square brackets [ ] mark restored text, round brackets ( ) scarcely legible text and arrow brackets < > mark additions.

## 3. Investigation of the Ascension of Kird-īr in (KNRm) and (KSM) inscriptions

Kird-īr's Naqsh-i Rostam relief and inscription is one of the surviving works from the Sassanid period, which were carved in the area of Naqsh-e Rostam and behind the petroglyph of Shapur's victory over the Roman emperors. Around the year 280 AD and during the reign of Bahram II, by order of Kird-īr Mobed-i Mobedān, a piece of the mountain was carved behind Shapur's head and the bust of Kird-īr was added to it. Kird-īr is depicted without a beard and facing right, and his long half-cylindrical hat has a mark like a pair of scissors, which is known from his other motifs in Naqsh-e Rajab, the petroglyph of Bahram II and the courtiers, and in Sar Mashhad. He has extended the index finger of his right hand to Shapur as a sign of praise and has taken a respectful posture, his neck is decorated with a ring necklace, and he is wearing a half-length dress, and the two ends of his robe are connected with a ring buckle in front of his chest.

At the bottom of Kird-īr's body, an inscription in Inscription Pahlavi script and Middle Persian language has been carved, which is very damaged, but the name of Ardashir is mentioned at the beginning of it, and therefore it is believed that Kird-īr's work in the court started from the time of Ardashir. This writing has 79 lines, many of which are damaged. This inscription has two parts, like the Kird-īr's inscription in Sar Mashhad near Kazerun. The first part includes lines 1 to 49, which introduces Kird-īr, and the second part, from 49 to 73, refers to his ascension, and from line 73 to the end, it is the back of the inscription.

The Kird-īr's inscription in Sar Mashhad (Pandgān), on top of the relief of Sar Mashhad, is related to the Sasanian period and is located adjacent to the village of Sar Mashhad in Jereh and Baladeh District in Kazerun County, Fars Province. This inscription is the largest Pahlavi inscription in the world. Ghandjan or Khandjan is the name of the ancient city of this region, whose ruins are still left near the village of Sar Mashhad. This inscription is located 36 km from Jereh in Jereh and Baladeh District and about 100 km southwest of Shiraz. The (KSM) inscription is written above the relief of the scene of the killing of a lion by Bahram II Sasanian, in which this Mowbed is also seen, and it is difficult to access. The first part of lines 1 to 25 contains the following

contents: The introduction of Kird-īr and his titles during the time of Shapur I to Bahram II, a list of Iranian states where the words in this part of the inscription have been damaged, and this part is also mentioned in the Kird-īr's inscription in Zoroaster's Kaaba; And also the states that were not part of Iran and were captured by Iran during the time of Shapur I. Kird-īr's activities such as his struggle with other religions and his efforts to establish the Zoroastrian religion throughout Sasanian territory, the help he gave to the Zoroastrian clergy and the fire temples he built and the religious ceremonies he performed in these fire temples. In terms of content, the first part of this inscription is the same as the first part of his inscription in Naqsh-i Rostam and his inscription in Zoroaster's Kaaba. The second part of the inscription, lines 26 to 58, is about his ascension. Kird-īr's inscription in Sar Mashhad from line 52 onward ends with a verse in which, as in his inscription as Naqsh-i Rajab, Kird-īr repeats his request to the gods to show him the affairs of that world and asks the reader to be kind to the gods and Kings should be merciful and righteous and believe in the existence of heaven and hell, and finally he mentions his religious activities and gives his titles during the time of different kings.

The part of these two inscriptions that is examined in this research starts from the 57th line of the Naqsh-i Rostam inscription and the middle of the 32nd line of the Sar Mashhad inscription, but in this research this part is mentioned paragraph by paragraph and the paragraphs start from number 1.

§ 1 u-m [pad zamān ī] Šābuhr šāhān šāh ēwēn mahr kird, kirdagān ī yazdān ud xweš ruwān rāy, kū ardā hān ud agar druwand hān [ēg-iz az] yazdān [1-2 ww.] gīrān. Pad \*ēd-iz ēstād hēm kū, agar ardā hān u-m ašmā yazd nūn ō widardān [rōn] ardāyih nimāyēd ēg-iz ēn kēš ī ašmā yazdān \*dārān ud agar druwand hān u-m ašmā yazd nūn ō widardān rōn druwandih [nimāyēd ēg-iz] [1-2 ww.] az ašmā yazdān \*gīrān ud saxt dārān wisp-[zamān] pad [aβyād].

§ 1 And [at the time of] Shapur, King of Kings, I made the death of <my> “ā'īna”, for <the sake of> the customs of the gods, and my own soul, so that I will be righteous and if I should be unrighteous, then I will also accept from the gods. I have stood by this also (= I undertake this also) that if I should be righteous and you gods now show me the righteousness side of the deceased people, [also then] I will have (= I will keep) this religion of you gods, and if I should be unrighteous and you gods now [show] me the unrighteousness side of the deceased people, also, [then] I will accept from you gods, and I will keep <your religion> strongly in [mind] at all [times].

§ 2 ud rēhīg kē-m andar ēwēn \*mahr dīd hēnd awēšān ōh guft kū, “aswār-ēw šahriyār wēnēm \*spēdagān ud abar asp-ēw agrā nišīnēd, u-š drafš-[ēw pad dast 2-3 ww. ānōh] mard-[ēw paydāg] ud abar gāh-ēw zarrēn bazm ud xwad kird-īr hangirb paydāg u-š hamrahīg-ēw [2-3 ww.] ēstēd.”

§ 2 [And] the travelers whom I saw in the death of the ā'īna, they said like this, “we see a riding king, white-colored and he is sitting on a noble horse and has a robe [in his hand. 2-3 ww.? There a] man <is> [visible] and <is sitting> on a golden festivity throne, and the himself “similar to Kird-īr” appears and a fellow-traveller <accompanies him>, stands [2-3 ww.].

§ 3 “ud nūn zan-ēw paydāg az xwarāsān ōrōn āyēd, u-mān zan az ān agrātar nē dīd, ud ān rāh kū [ān zan āyād abēr] rōšn, ud nūn frāz [āyēd ud] ōy mard kē [ān] ōwōn čiyōn [kird-īr] hangirb, ōy sar ō sar \*nihēnd [2-3 ww.] zan ud ān mard kē ān ōwōn čiyōn kird-īr hangirb, awēšān āgenēn harw-\*dōnān dast \*grift ud pad ān rāh ī rōšn kū ōy [zan 1-2 ww. āmad ō] xwarāsān rōn \*raft, ud ān rāh abēr rōšn.

§ 3 And now a woman <is> visible, she is coming hitherward from Khorasan (= the east) and we have not <ever> seen woman more beautiful than her, and that road where [that woman is coming <is> very] bright. And now [she comes] forth and that man, who <is> just like “similar to [Kird-īr]”, they put head to head (= they kiss each other) [2-3 ww.] woman and that man who <is> just like “similar to Kird-īr”, held hands together and went towards Khorasan (= the east) towards the bright road [whence that woman came], and that road <is> very bright.

§ 4 ud pad ān rāh [kū ān mard ī kird-īr] hangirb ud ān zan šawēnd, ānōh šahriyār-ēw paydāg \*spēdagān ud abar gāh-ēw zarrēn bazm, u-š tarāzūg-ēw pēšē ēstēd ān ōwōn [čiyōn 2-3 ww. gīr]ēd. ud nūn ān zan ud ān mard kē ān ōwōn čiyōn kird-īr hangirb [pēš] ōy šahriyār ēstēd ud [2-3 ww.] rasēd.” u-šān ōh guft kū, “ān mard [ī] kird-īr hangirb ud ān zan tar ōy ī šahriyār frāz uzīd hēnd [3-4 ww.] ud hamēw rawēnd ō Xwarāsān rōn, ud pad ān rāh ī [abēr rōšn šaw]ēnd”.

§ 4 And on that road [where that man who <is>] “similar to [Kird-īr]” and that woman are going, a king is visible there, white-colored and <seated> on a golden festivity throne, there is a set of scales in front of him, the one who <is> just like “similar to Kird-īr” takes <it>. And now that woman, and that man who <is> just like “similar to Kird-īr”, stand [near] that king and [2-3 ww] arrives.’ And they said like this, “that man, “similar to

Kird-īr”, and that woman, ascended beyond that king [3-4 ww.] and they are going towards Khorasan (= the east) and they [go] on that [very bright] road.

§ 5 “ud nūn any šahriyār paydāg [spēdagān] ud abar gāh-ēw zarrēn bazm u-š čiyēn-ēw dast ud az awēšān agrātar kē-mān ahy dīd hēnd”. u-šān ka ōy [3-4 ww. -šān] ōh guft kū, “čiyēn \*ōrōndar paydāg, ōwōn čiyōn [čāh-ēw abēr pahn ī]-š bun nēst, ud mār ud k[azdumb 2-3 ww.] ud karbūg ud any xrafstar purr ēstēd.”

§ 5 And now another king appears, white-colored and <seated> on a golden festivity throne, and <he has> a pair of scissors <in> his hand, and <he is> more noble than those whom we saw before. And when [they ...] that [3-4 ww., they] said like this, “Closer to the scissors, [a well] is visible [so wide that] it has no bottom, and it is full of snakes and [scorpions 2-3 ww.] and lizards and other vermin.

§ 6 ōy \*rēhīg kē andar ān ēwēn mahr nišast hēnd, awēšān ka ān dušox-dēs ud mā[r] ī was dīd, ēg abēr \*wišēg būd hēnd u-[3-4 ww.]šān nē az [\*čiyēn] ud ānōh [3-4 ww. ? u-m] guft kū, “mā [tirsēd]. enyā-tān nē gad bē ašmā čē \*dīd ān gōwēd.”

§ 6 Those travelers who were seated in that death of the *ā’īna*, when they saw that like-hell and many snakes, then they were very scared, [and 3-4 ww.], them(?) not from the scissors and there, [2-3 ww. and I] said that, “Do not [be afraid]. It did not come to you other than this. But what did you see? tell it.”

§ 7 u-šān ōh guft kū, “ōy čāh dār-ēw [abar nihād] ōwōn čiyōn puhl ud ān zan ud mard ī kird-īr hangirb frāz [ō čāh raft] hēnd ud ānōh puhl [pēš] ēstād, ud ān puhl [abēr] pahndar būd ud nūn pad pahnāy meh paydāg kū čiyōn pad dranāy, ud ān zan ud mard [ī kird-īr hangirb 3-4 ww.] ēstēd.”

§ 7 And they said like this, “A two-bladed sword [has been placed over] that well, like a bridge, and that woman and the man who <is> similar to Kird-īr [went] to the well and there the bridge stood [in front of] them, and that bridge became [much] wider and now it appears so big in width that in length, and stands [2-3 ww.] that woman and the man who <is> like “similar to Kird-īr”.

§ 8 u-šān ōh guft kū, “any šahriyār paydāg \*spēdagān agrātar [{ud} az awēšān] {agrādar} kē-mān ahy dīd hēnd, ud az ān ārag frāz ō puhl āyēd ud nūn ō puhl rasēd, ud nūn [ō ēn ārag widerēd ud ān] zan [ud mard ī] kird-īr hangirb dast \*gīrēd ud ān šahriyār [ānōh? 1-2 ww] pad [ān] puhl frāz rawēd, u-š [ōy mard] ī kird-īr hangirb ud zan pasē šawēd, ud nūn uzīd hēnd puhl ō ān ārag ud hamēw ō Xwarāsān rōn [rawēnd 3-5 ww.] agrā ud \*huzēr.

§ 8 And they said like this, “Another king appears, white-colored [and] nobler [than those] whom we saw before, and from that side, he is coming towards the bridge and now he is reaching the bridge, and now [he passes to this side] and takes the hand of [that] woman and the man who <is> “similar to Kird-īr”. And that king [there 1-2 ww.] he goes forth onto [that] bridge, and [that man] who <is> “similar to Kird-īr” and the woman go after him. And now they went out to that side of the bridge and [go] on towards Khorasan (=the east) <on that very bright road> fine and beautiful.

§ 9 “ud nūn āywan-ēw paydāg [agrā ? 5-7 ww.] pad asmān paydāg ud ān šahriyār pēš, ōy mard ī kird-īr (h)angirb ud zan pas, ōy mard ī [kird-īr hangirb ca.10-12 ww. pad] dast ōy [āywan] andar šud hēnd.”

§ 9 And now a palace appears, [beautiful 5-7 ww.], it is visible in the sky and that king in front, that man similar to Kird-īr and the woman behind. That man who is [similar to Kird-īr with ca. 8-10 ww. in] his hand, they entered that [palace].

§ 10 u-šān ōh guft kū-“mān tis az ēn agrātar ud rōšndar [nē dīd 3-5 ww.]dom [2-3 ww.] ī [[7-8 ww.] abar bazm ud ān šahriyār šawēd frāz ud ōy āywan gāh-ēw zarrēn [andar] pēš abāz [3-4 ww.] u-m<ān> ān mard ī kird-īr hangirb [ca.5-8 ww.ōh guft kū] nūn ān mard ī kird-īr hangirb ud zan pad \*nox ō bālān ul rawēnd ud dūr ul [3-4 ww.] ud gāh-ēw zarrēn [3-4 ww.] xwadāy [4-5 ww. hangirb] abar [3-4 ww.] zan šud andar rōzan ī Wahrām nišast.”

§ 10 And they said like this, “We have not seen anything more beautiful and bright than this, [3-5 ww.] most [9-11 ww. ] And <that man who is “similar to Kird-īr” and the woman go> to a festivity, and that king ascends, and that golden throne of the palace in front <of him> re[turns]. And we <saw> that man who <is> “similar to Kird-īr” [8-10 ww.]. Now that man “similar to Kird-īr”, and the woman at first climb to the highest point and far up [3-4 ww.] and a golden throne [4-5 ww.] lord, and <that man> “similar to <Kird-īr” sat> on <the golden throne>, and the woman went and sat in the hole of Mars.

§ 11 ud nūn ōy mard ī kird-īr hangirb nān ud gōšt ud may [ca.8-9 ww.] ōy abar gāh [3-4 ww.] was [4-5 ww.] ān was frāz āyēd ud ān mard ī kird-īr hangirb hamēw baxšēd u-šān dahēd [1-2 ww.] ud ōy [ca. 10-12 ww.] ud ān

[šahriyār] pad [ ]išn ud ōy mard ī kird-īr hangirb rōn hamēw pad angust nimāyēd ud xandēd. ud ān [šahriyār ō ōy mard ī kird-īr hangirb? namāz] barēd.”

§ 11 And now that man who <is> “similar to Kird-īr”, [ca. 8-9 ww.] bread and meat and wine. He is on the < golden festivity> throne, so many [3-4 ww.], [4-5 ww.] so many comes forth and that man who <is> “similar to Kird-īr” distributes everything and gives it to them [1-2 ww.]. And that <man who is “similar to Kird-īr”> [6-8 ww.] and that [king] in [ ], and that man who <is> “similar to Kird-īr” is pointing the direction with finger and laughing. And that <king bows> down <to that man who <is> similar to Kird-īr>.

Here the ascension of Kird-īr is finished.

### 3.1 Commentary (Note 1)

Because this ascension took place in the form of Manichaean ascension, all its events are searched in Manichaean texts.

#### paragraph 1:

**1. u-m [pad zamān ī] Šabuhr šāhān šāh ēwēn mahr kird:** “And [at the time of] Shapur, King of Kings, I made the death of <my> “ā’īna””. Certainly, Mani made this for Kird-īr during Shapur’s time, but since Kird-īr does not want Mani’s name to be mentioned in his inscription, he attributed this work to himself. As it can be seen from Manichaean texts, Mani performed miracles similar to this during the time of Shapur. For example, the text (f), the Parthian text of *Mēšūn xwadāy Mihršāh*, which shows that Mani performed a miracle and showed Mihršāh, the brother of Shapur I, the Bright Paradise:

adyān ō frēštag wāxt ku andar wahišt kē tū nām barēh awāyōn bōdistān ahād čawāyōn im man bōdistān?

adyān frēštag zānād hō awāwarīg parmānag. adyān pad warž nimād wahišt rōšn, ad harwīn bayān yazdān ud wād anōšāg čē žiwahr, ud bōdistān wisp zanag, ud aniž gawānīg dīdan čē ōd (Boyce, 1975, pp. 37-38).

**Translation:** Then <Mihršāh> told the messenger that, is there such a garden, in the Paradise of which you speak, like this garden of mine? Then, the messenger knew that thought without belief. Then, with a miracle, he revealed the Bright Paradise with all the deities, gods and the immortal Air of life, and all kinds of gardens, as well as other desirable sights there.

According to the Manichaean texts, it appears that Mani had the ability to show the world after death to others, and since Kird-īr’s ascension took place during the reign of Shapur I, it is very likely that Mani performed this miracle for him.

**2. ēwēn or ēwēnag, “ā’īna”:** It is one of the five parts of people’s existence. It is stated in bundahišn:

fradom az mēnōgān Ohrmazd [u-š az gētīgān bun ī mardōm ō xwēš grift u-š ham-kār ān sē day] ēk gāh ēk dēn ēk zamān ud wisp Day nām kē ast mēnōg ī harwisp dahišn. u-š mardōm pad panj bazišn frāz dād: tan ud gyān ud ruwān ud *ēwēnag* ud frawahr. čiyōn tan ān ī gētīg ud gyān ān ī abāg [wād paywast ēštēd wēn āwarišn ud barišn ud ruwān ān ī abāg] bōy andar tan āšnawēd ud wēnēd ud gōwēd ud dānēd. *ēwēnag* ān ī pad *xwaršēd-pāyag* ēštēd. frawahr ān ī pēš ī Ohrmazd xwadāy pad ān čim ēdōn brēhēnīd kū andar ēbgatīh <ka> mardōm mīrēnd tan ō zamīg ud gyān ō wād ud *ēwēnag* ō *xwaršēd* ud ruwān ō frawahr paywast kū dēwān ruwān murnjēnīdan nē tuwān bawēd (Pakzad, 2005, pp. 47-48).

**Translation:** Ohrmazd is the first of the spirits. He took the foundation of people from the material world for himself. Those three Days are his colleagues; one place, one religion, and one time; The name of all is Day, which is the spirit of all creation. He created people in five parts: body, spirit, soul, *ā’īna*, frawahr; Like the body, which is matter; The spirit, which is connected with the wind, inhale and exhale. Soul, that which is in the body with Bōy; it hears, sees and speaks and knows. *ā’īna*, the one that stands on *the base of the sun*. The Frawahr, which is close to Ohrmazd deity. For this reason, it was created in such a way that in the onslaught of Evil, when people die, the body joins the earth, the spirit joins the wind, the *ā’īna* joins *the sun*, and the soul joins the Frawahr, that the demons not to be able to kill the soul.

In some Pahlavi texts, **kirb** ud **ēwēnag** “frame and *ā’īna*” have been mentioned together. For example, in Revayat ī Pahlavi, in the chapter dealing with Paradise, it says about the position of the **kirb** ud **ēwēnag** “frame and the *ā’īna*”:

**Kirb** ud **ēwēnag** ī āb ud zamīg ud <gyāh> pad star pāyag be dād ēštēd ud star ēk ēk and čand kadag-masāy pad rah-ē(w) āyēnd ud šawēnd u-šān rah-ē(w) asp āhanjēd **kirb** ud **ēwēnag** ī star čē az **kirb** ī xwēš ud **ēwēnag** ī xwēš enyā az ān ī āb ud zamīg ud urwar. **kirb** ud **ēwēnag** ī gōspandān pad māh pāyag dād ēštēd ud *pāšom axwān pad māh pāyag tā ō xwaršēd pāyag*... ud girdag ī māh hammiš dō frasang pahnāy ud rōšnih ī māh čē az tan ī māh enyā

az **kirb** ud **ēwēnag** ī gōspandān... girdag ī xwaršēd and čand Ērān-wēz ud Ērān-wēz and čand haft ēk ī xwanirah rōšnīh ī xwaršēd čē az mēnōg ī xwaršēd <sup>†</sup>enyā az **kirb** ud **ēwēnag** ī mardōmān. (The Pahlavi Rivayat, 1913, chapter 65).

**Translation:** The frame and the *ā'īna* of water, earth and plants have been given in the base of the star and each of the stars is the size of a house, they come with a chariot and their chariot is pulled by a horse. The frame and *ā'īna* of the star, in addition to being of its own frame and *ā'īna*, is also of the frame and *ā'īna* of water, earth, and plants. The quadrupeds' frame and *ā'īna* have been given in the base of the moon, and *Paradise is in the base of the moon up to the base of the sun*... And the circle of the moon, in general, is two miles long and two miles wide; and the light of the moon, in addition to being from the body of the moon, is also from the frame and *ā'īna* of quadrupeds... And the circle of *the sun* is as big as Iranwīj, and Iranwīj is seven times as big as Khoniras; and the light of *the Sun*, in addition to being from the spirit of *the sun*, is also from the frame and *ā'īna* of people.

From the earth to the base of the star is purgatory, and *from the base of the moon to the base of the sun is Paradise*, and from the base of the sun to the sky is the endless light and the Garodman. In the base of the star, there is the frame and *ā'īna* of water, earth, and plants, and in the base of the moon, there is the frame and *ā'īna* of four-legged animals, and in the base of *the sun*, there is the frame and *ā'īna* of people; and part of the light of celestial bodies is from them (Bahar, 2017, p. 293).

In these texts, **kirb** should not be translated as “body”, because “body” is found in these texts with the Pahlavi word **tan**. For example, **tan**, **kirb**, and **ēwēnag** have been mentioned together in Bundahišn, in the chapter of “abar rist-āxēz ud tan ī pasēn”:

nazdist ast ān ī Gayōmart ul hangēzēd ud pas ān ī Mašē ud Mašānē ud pas ān ī abārīg [kasān ul] hangēzēnēnd. <pad> [panjāh ud haft sāl Sōšyāns hamāg rist hangēzēnēd] ud harwisp mardōm abar hangēzēnd kē ahlaw kē druwand. mardōm har(w) kas az ānōh ul hangēzēnd kū-šān gyān be šud {ayāb nazdist ō zamīg ōbast hēnd} pas ka-šān harwisp axw ī astōmand **tan** ud **kirb** abāz wirāyēd ēg-išān **ēwēnag** be dahēnd. ud ān rōšnīh ī abāg *xwaršēd* nēm-ē(w) be ō Gayōmart ud nēm-ē(w) pad abārīg mardōm {be dahēnd} (Pakzad, 2005, pp. 378-379).

**Translation:** First, <he> raises the Gayōmart's bone, then <they> raise the Mašē and Mašānē's bone, and then the other people's bone. <In> fifty-seven years, Sōšyāns will raise all the dead; they will raise all the people, who are righteous and who are sinful. They raise everyone from the place where their spirits went, or where they fell to the ground first. So, when the body and frame of the whole material world is restored, then they give their *ā'īna*. And give that light of *the sun*, half to Gayōmart and half to other people.

And in the chapter “abar činwar puhl ud ruwān ī widardagān”, **tan**, **gyān** and **kirb** have been mentioned together, which shows that **kirb** does not mean “body” here:

agar ān ruwān druwand gōwēd ēn ān **tan** ud **gyān** ud **kirb** kē-š abāg pad dwārišn dwāriđ hēm pas az ēdar ō kū dwārēm? (Ibid., p. 347).

**Translation:** If that soul is a sinner, he says: This is the body, spirit and frame with which I ran with the demonic running; So, where do I run from here?

These explanations were given for the word *ēwēnag* to state that in order for Kird-īr to ascend, his *ēwēnag* or *ā'īna* must reach the base of *the sun*. In the Pahlavi texts, the same thing has been mentioned about the *ā'īna*, that the place of the *ā'īna* is in the base of *the sun*. What makes the ascension of Kird-īr more likely by Mani is that Mani once revealed the Bright Paradise to MihrShah, Shapur's brother. Another thing is that in the continuation of this research, it will be seen that the method of this ascension was done according to the Manichaean religion, which will be explained in each part.

**3.** The word **mahr** means “death”, which in Manichaean texts, we find it in the combination of the word (a)mahrāspandān “the Bounteous Immortals” (Boyce, 1977, p. 10) and in Zoroastrian Pahlavi texts, it is found in the combination of the word amahraspand “a Holy Immortal” (MacKenzie, 1986, p. 7). \*mṛta- > mahra > mahr, from the root **mar-** “to die”. We should consider this word as **mahr** meaning “death”, because Kird-īr wants to travel to *the sun*, and to reach the base of *the sun*, his *ā'īna* must be separated from his body to reach that place by ascension.

**4. ardā** ud **druwand**: In the Manichaean texts it is also in the form of **ardāw** ud **druwand**; **ardāw** means “righteous” (Boyce, 1977, p. 14). and **druwand** means “sinful, wicked” (ibid., p. 35). In Manichaeism, **ardāw** also means “Elect <of the religion>” (ibid., p. 14) and **druwand** also means “non-Manichaean” (ibid., p. 35).

**5.** In this part of the inscription, Kird-īr begins to make a pledge and he states that:

Kū ardā hān ud agar druwand hān [ēg-iz az] yazdān gīrān.

**Translation:** so that I will be righteous and if I should be unrighteous, then I will also accept from the gods.

This means that after the ascension, Kird-īr cannot deny what happened, and whatever happens, Kird-īr will agree to it.

**6. ǝ widardān [rǝn] ardāyīh:** “the righteousness side of the deceased people”.

It is mentioned in Manichaean texts that: the deceased who is **ardāw** or **dēnwar** “one who is Manichaean and believes in Mani’s religion”, *Xradešahr yazd* makes him to stand on the right side during judgment, and the direction that belongs to them is the right side. As stated in the Manichaean text (z) entitled “abar dādestān ī merdān pūsar”:

u-š **dēnwar** gōwānd kū... mān xwadāy, agar-it passazag tis az hān čē druwandān pad amāh kird pēš tō gōwām. u-šān Xradešahr yazd passox ōh dayād, kū man wēnēd ud šād bawēd. \*anē kē pad ašmāh winast hād, hān-itān dādestān kunān, ud angām xwāhān. bēz harw čē ašmāh kāmēd pēš man guftan, hān an dānēm, gahēšān āfrīn kunad, u-šān dil wiwāsēnēd, u-šān **ǝ dašn ārag** ēstēnēd. ud \*hamag yazdān pad šādīh pahrēzēnd (Boyce, 1975, p. 78).

**Translation:** The religious people will tell to him that... <O> our God, if it is worthy of you, we will tell you about what the sinners did to us. *Xradešahr yazd* will answer them like this: See me and be happy. But he who has harmed you, I will judge that for you, and I will demand time. But whatever you want to say to me, I know it. Then he prays for them, and comforts their hearts, and makes them stand **on the right side**, and all the gods stand with joy.

**7.** In this part of the inscription, a commitment is given by Kird-īr, in which there is a conditional sentence:

pad \*ēd-iz ēstād hēm kū, agar ardā hān u-m ašmā yazd nūn ǝ widardān [rǝn] ardāyīh nimāyēd, ēg-iz ēn kēš ī ašmā yazdān \*dārān.

**Translation:** I have stood by this also (= I undertake this also) that if I should be righteous and you gods now show me the righteousness side of the deceased people, [also then] I will have (= I will keep) this religion of you gods.

Kird-īr here pledges that if the gods now show him the direction of righteousness of the dead, he will keep this religion. In the Manichaean texts, whenever Mani has revealed his miracles, the opposite person has accepted the Manichaean religion. For example, when Tūrān Šāh sees Mani’s miracle, he accepts Mani’s religion. The description of this event is given in the Parthian text (e) as follows:

frēštag ǝ ardāw pad andarwāz wāst. wāxt, čē burzistar? ardāw wāxt, man ispēr. frēštag wāxt, mas, aš im čē wuzurgistar? wāxt ku zamīg, kē harw čiš barēd. mas wāxt ku aš imīn čē wuzurgistar? ardāw wāxt ku āsmān... wāxt ku aš im čē wuzurgistar? wāxt ku mihr ud māh. mas čē rōšnistar? wāxt ku... žīrīft. ašyān Tūrān Šāh wāxt ku aš imīn harwīn tū wuzurgistar ud rōšnistar ay, čē pad rāštīft tū wxad but ay. paš hō dēnāšar ǝ Tūrān Šāh wāxt ku awāyōn karāh čawāyōn....

[a number of lines missing]

... šahrān āyad, kirkakkar ud bazakkar, ud kirdagān čē ardāw ud niyōšāg.

paš, kaš Tūrān Šāh ud āzādān im saxwan išnūd, šād būd hēnd. wāwarīft padγīrīft, ud ǝ frēštag ud dēn šīrgāmag būd ahēnd (Ibid., pp. 34-35).

**Translation:** The messenger (= Mānī) led the righteous man into space. He said: What is bigger? The righteous man said: My army. The messenger, then, said: What is bigger than this? He said that the earth, which carries everything. Then he said what is bigger than these? The righteous man said that the sky... He said that what is bigger than this? He said that the sun and the moon. So what is brighter? He said that ... wisdom. Then Turan’s king said that you are bigger and brighter than all these, that you are truly a Buddha. Then, the religious man told Turan’s king to do as....

[a number of lines missing]

They came to the cities, beneficients and evil-doers, deeds of righteous and Hearers.

So when Turan’s king and Azadan (=nobles) heard this utterance, they were happy. They believed, and became friends of the Messenger and religion.

In this text, a part of a sentence is missing, which is as follows:

paš hō dēnāšar ǝ Tūrān Šāh wāxt ku awāyōn karāh čawāyōn.... Meaning: Then, the religious man told Turan’s king to do as....

The continuation of this sentence can be considered as follows:

Then, the religious man told Turan's king to do as you promised.

After that, Turan's king and nobles believe and accept Mani's religion. It was also stated before that Mani miraculously revealed the bright Paradise to Mihrshah, who was the brother of Shapur I, and the ruler of Mishan at that time. After performing this miracle by Mani, Mihrshah accepts Mani's religion and joins his religion (ibid., pp. 37-38). Here too, Kird-īr makes a vow that if he should be righteous and the right side, that is, the righteousness side of the deceased people, will be shown to him by the gods, he will keep the religion of the gods.

**8. ō widardān rōn druwandīh:** “the unrighteousness side of the deceased people”.

It is mentioned in Manichaean texts that: the deceased who is **duskirdagān** “wicked” (Boyce, 1977, p. 37) or **druwand** “wicked, non-Manichaean” (ibid., p. 35), *Xradešahr yazd* makes him to stand on the left side during judgment, and the direction that belongs to them is the left side. As stated in the Manichaean text (z) entitled “abar dādestān ī merdān pusar”:

ud duškirdagānān az dēnwarān wizārēd, u-šān **ō hōy ārag** ēstēnēd. u-šān nifrīn kunad, ud ōh gōwēd kū mā drōwāxēz (?) ... hāmispiž bawād. čē \*hān-iz wināh īg ašmāh kird. \*u-tān zūrīg axšād kird hān-itān merdān pusar \*kird.... (Boyce, 1975, p. 78).

**Translation:** And he (= *Xradešahr yazd*) separates the evildoers from the believers, and makes them stand **on the left side** and curses them and says that they should not tell lie... will be wholly bright. Because the sin you did, and the deceitful troubled you did, you, the son of men, did it <against me>.

**9.** And the continuation of the oath of Kird-īr, which is stated in the inscription:

ud agar druwand hān u-m ašmā yazd nūn ō widardān rōn druwandīh [nimāyēd ēg]-iz [1-2 ww.] az ašmā yazdān \*gīrān ud saxt dārān wispiž-[zamān] pad [aβyād].

**Translation:** and if I should be unrighteous and you gods now [show] me the unrighteousness side of the deceased people, also, [then] I will accept from you gods, and I will keep <your religion> strongly in [mind] at all [times].

Kird-īr, before his ascension in the Manichaean manner, undertakes that whether he is righteous and the gods show him the right side, or whether he is unrighteous and the gods show him the left side, he will accept from the gods in either case and he will have the religion of the gods.

## paragraph 2:

**10. rēhīg:** here is the same as **rāhīg**, which exists in Farsi as “راهی” and means “a traveler” (Amid dictionary, 2010, below the word “راهی”). So, the meaning of the sentence will be: [And] the travelers I saw in the death of the ā'īna, they said like this...

**11. šahriyār:** “king” (Mary Boyce, 1977, p. 85). In Manichaeism, the word **šahriyār/šahrōār** refers to the angels who accompany the deceased person, and these šahriyārs are the saviors of the souls of righteous people.

Mani taught that the soul may be incarnated many times before it attains release through perfected virtue. There exist two accounts of its fate at death: 1) the soul goes before the Just Justice, and having been judged takes one of three paths, to “life” (the New Paradise), to “mixture” (back to the world) or to “death” (hell): 2) the righteous soul, leaving the body, is met by one of the redeeming gods, accompanied by three angels who bear the insignia of its victory, namely a garland, a diadem, and a heavenly robe. Having received these it ascends to the New Paradise by the Column of Glory, the moon and the sun. Sometimes the redeeming god appears in the form of a Maiden of light, reminiscent of the Zoroastrian daēnā (Boyce, 1975, pp. 7-8); as stated in the Manichaean text (dx):

bay burzist anōšag xwadayā, gāhdārān dōnān rōšnān, abzār zōrmand **Srōšahrāy**, bōzegar ī gyānān, **mānī xwadāwan**, yazdegird \*senān šahriyārān, lālmīn wryhr (?) **Yišō'zīndakkar**, \*gōnyāg agrāw **Kanīgrōšn**, āyāgān abardom **Wahman rōšn**, tahmātarān imēšān bān warzāwendān imēšān yazdān tahmīhā dayānd nōg yazdīg āfrīn wārišn ud nōg šādīh, ... xunakīh nōg bōxtagī.... (Ibid., p. 194).

**Translation:** The most high God, the deathless God, the two bright ones who are the holders of the throne, the mighty strong **Srōšahrāy**, the savior of the souls, *the Lord Mani*, the three Kings made by the gods, *Jesus*, the eternal savior wryhr, the beautiful, fine *Maiden of light*, the supreme of the comers, the bright *Wahman*, the most powerful, these miracle-working gods will powerfully give the new divine pray for rejoicing and new happiness, fortune..., new salvation.

In a Manuscript text that is Parthian and a part of it has been lost, the text (bk), it is stated:

āfrīd bawāh pad was āfrīwan ō rōžānīg **Rōšnšahr yazd**. — frihum tū ay, **Rōšnšahr yazd**, huaxšādīg bay, ō man bōž. — būd paydāg **drafš** ud nišān ud fradāb až dwādes bar. ... **šahrōār** ay, kē dahēd dāšn, dīdēm **drafš** ud nišān ispēd. tū tū ay rōdwar **šahrōār**, abar man-iž rōd ud āmužd kar. Nām tawān čīd wifrāsām, ō man-iž bōž, čē nizāwar



hēm (Ibid., pp. 117-118).

**Translation:** Praise be to you with many prayers, to the bright-faced *Rōšnšahr yazd*. — you are my friend, *Rōšnšahr yazd*, merciful god, save me. — It was visible a *drafš* (= robe) and a sign and radiance from the twelve gates.... You are the *King* who gives gifts, diadem, *drafš* (= robe) and white sign. You, you are the sympathetic *King*, have sympathy and mercy on me too. I will always teach your name, save me too, because I am weak.

According to what is stated in this text, the first king in the ascension of Kird-īr is *Rōšnšahr yazd*. The first king, *Rōšnšahr yazd*, corresponds to *Aštād yazd* in Zoroastrian religion. These two gods both have female symbols.

**12. drafš:** Here it does not mean “banner”, but rather “robe”. **drafš** means “The فوطه that they wrap on top of their turbans and helmet on the day of war, which is called دولغه in Turkish” (Borhān-e Qāṭè) (Dehkhoda Dictionary, 1997, below the word “درفش”); and فوطه means “robe”, and is arabicized form of the word فوته: It is a garment that is brought from Sindh (منتهى الارب) (Dehkhoda Dictionary, 1997, below the word “فوطه”). Cf. Middle Persian: **drap-** “to dress” (Bailey, 1954, p. 147), Sanskrit **drāpi-** “dress, garment” (cf. **hīraṇya-drāpi-** “golden garment”) (Mayrhofer, 1956-1980, vol. II/ p. 72, 77; id., 1986-2001, vol. I/ p. 755).

**13. [... ānōh] mard-[ēw paydāg] ud abar gāh-ēw zarrēn bazm:** “[There a] man <is> [visible] and <is sitting> on a golden festivity throne”. Simultaneously with the arrival of the first King who is riding a horse and holding a robe, that is *Rōšnšahr yazd*, there appears a man sitting on a golden festivity throne, that man is Mani who is accompanying a person who is similar to Kird-īr. Only the first King is on a horse in the Ascension of Kird-īr, and the rest are on the golden festivity throne.

**14. Kird-īr:** No one has ever found the meaning of this name. For the first time in the world, I want to explain it with evidence in a scientific way. This name means “made by the sun”; The first part of this name, **kird**, means “made, built” and is from the Old Iranian form \***kṛta-**, past passive participle, from the root **kar-** “to make, build” (Cheung, 2007, pp. 236-8); The second part of this name, **īr**, means “the sun” in the *Vakhi* dialect (Morgenstierne, 1938, vol. II/p. 554) and is from Old Iranian **h(u)var-** “the sun” (Horn, 1893, p. 505; id., 1898-1901, p. 68; Hübschmann, 1895, p. 57). The *Vakhi* dialect belongs to a region called *Vakhan* or *Wakhan*.

**وُخَان:** ناحیتی است [به حدود ماوراءالنهر] و از در تبت بدانجا شوند و رختجب دهی است از این ناحیت و اندر وی **گبرگان** وخی اند و سکاشم شهری است مستقر ملک و خان و از حدود وی روی نمودن و تیروخی خیزد. و خمداد که بتخانههای وخیان در آنجاست از این ناحیت است.

(from (حدودالعالم) (Dehkhoda Dictionary, 1997, below the word “وُخَان”).

**گَبَرِک** or **گَبَرِک:** This word means “Magi (Jahangiri), magus, Zoroastrian by religion: Hērbeḏ, adjacent to the fire temple and Judge of ghebres. (منتهى الارب) (Dehkhoda Dictionary, 1997, below the words “گَبَرِک” and “گَبَرِک”).

As is clear, this dialect belongs to the Zoroastrians who lived in *Wakhan*. *Kird-īr* was also one of the people of this region, that is why he has this name. Now-a-days *Vākhān*, also spelled *Wākhān*, or *Wakhan Corridor*, is a mountainous region and panhandle in the Pamir Mountains of extreme northeastern Afghanistan (<https://www.britannica.com/place/vakhan>). **Kird-īr** “made by the sun” is similar in meaning to **Mihr-dād** “created by the sun”. But in *Mihr-dād*, the first part, *Mihr*, means “the sun”; The word *mih*r means “the sun” in Middle Persian and it comes from Old Iranian \***miθra-**. Compare with the Avestan of *Miθra* - “(god) *Mihr*”, which is the god of light and overseer of the covenant, and later it was identified with the sun and got the meaning of the sun (Bartholomae, 1961, p. 1183; Horn, 1893, p. 1000; id., 1898-1901, p. 94; Nyberg, 1974, p. 132). The second part, *dād*, is from Old Iranian \***dāta-**, a past passive participle, and it means “created” and is from the root **dā-** (\***dhā-**) “to place, put in” (Horn, 1893, p. 521; Mayrhofer, 1956-1980, vol. II/p. 14), which in Middle Persian, *dādan* means “create” (MacKenzie, 1986, p. 23).

**15. hangirb:** In Manichaean texts, it is in the form of **hāmdēs** and means “having the same shape, being in the likeness” (Boyce, 1977, p. 44).

Ibn-i Nadim mentioned in the book *Al-Fihrist*, in the first part of the ninth article, in the chapter « قول المانوية في » that:

قال ماني: اذا حضرت وفاة الصديق، أرسل اليه الانسان القديم إليها نيراً بصورة الحكيم الهادي، و معه ثلاثة آلهة، و معهم الركوة و اللباس و العصاية و التاج و اكليل النور، و يأتي معهم البكر الشبيهة بنسمة ذلك الصديق، و يظهر له شيطان الحرص و الشهوة و الشياطين، فاذا رآهم الصديق استعاث بالآلهة التي على صورة الحكيم و الآلهة الثلاثة، فيقربون منه، فاذا رأتهم الشياطين ولت هاربة، و أخذوا ذلك الصديق و ألبسوه التاج و الاكليل و اللباس، و أعطوه الركوة بيده، و عرجوا به في عمود السبح الى فلك القمر و الى الانسان القديم، و الى النهنهة أم الاحياء الى ماكان عليه أولاً في جنان النور.

(*Al-Fihrist*, ninth article, pp. 468-9).

**Translation:** Mani said: If death comes to a righteous person, *Ohrmezdbay* sends a god to him as a wise guide, and he is accompanied by three gods who have a jug of water, a robe and an anadem and a diadem of light with

them. And along with them comes *a maiden* similar to the soul of that righteous person. The Ahremen, Āz dēw, and other demons also appear to him, and as soon as *the righteous person* sees them, he asks for help from the god who is as a wise and three other gods. So they approach him, so when the demons see them, they (= the demons) start to run away. They (= gods) take that righteous person with them, cover him with anadem and diadem and robe, and put a jug of water in his hand and take him through the *Column of Glory* to the moon, <the sun> and to *the Bright Paradise* near *Ohrmezd* and *the Mother of Life*, to the place where he was in the beginning, in *the Bright Paradise*.

Here, **kird-ir hangirb** means “similar to Kird-ir” and according to Mani’s religion, because Kird-ir was righteous, during his ascension, “similar to Kird-ir” accompanies the kings.

### paragraph 3:

**16. zan-ēw:** “a woman”. Here “zan” is **Kanīg rošn** or “the Maiden of light”, which accompanies “Kird-ir hangirb” or “similar to Kird-ir”. In the inscription of Kird-ir’s ascension, the adjective **agrā** is mentioned for **zan**, and in the Manichaean texts, the adjective **agrāw** is mentioned for Kanīg rošn, in **gōnyāg agrāw kanīg rōšn** (See note number 11); **agrāw** means “fine, noble” (Boyce, 1977, p. 9).

**17. az xwarāsān ōrōn:** “From Khorasan (= the east) to this side”. Khorasan or the east is the place of New Paradise, Ohrmezd and gods in Manichaeism. As stated in the Manichaean text (y):

Pas Rōšn-šahryazd ō Nōgšahr-āfuryazd framād kū šaw, ud parrōn az zamīg ud āsmān hāmkišwar, ud bēdandar az hān panz dušox ō ērag pādḡōs-rōn az ānōh ōrrōntar abar tam dušox, az **xwarāsān** dā ō xwarniwār pādḡōs, hassār wahištāw ēg dēsmān īg nōg dēs. ud mayān awē dēsmān, āz ud ahremen ud dēwān ud parīgān rāy, bannestān ēw hōstīgān kun. ...

ud abar hān dēsmān ī nōg, hān wahištāw ī nōg kun, kū Ohrmezd ud imēšān yazdān kē pad xwēš warz ud rōšnī āz ud ahremen ud dēwān ud parīgān grift ud bast, ud amāh gāh ud.... (Boyce, 1975, p. 66).

**Translation:** Then, Rošnšahr yazd said to Nōgšahrāfur yazd to go, and beyond the cosmos of earths and heavens, and outside those five hells in the south quarter, nearer (?) than there, upon the darkness of hell, from Khorasan (= the east) to the west region, corresponding to Paradise, build a new building. And in the middle of that building, build a firm prison for Az, the Devil, demons, and she-devils. ...

And in that new building, build that New Paradise, which <will be> a place and ... for Ohrmezd and these gods—who, with their miracles and brightness, captured and closed Az, the Devil, demons and she-devils,— and for us ...

[...ō] **xwarāsān rōn:** “Towards Khorasan (= the east)”. Also, because *similar to Kird-ir* and *the kings* want to reach the *New Paradise* through the *Column of Glory* and they must reach *the sun*, so they must move towards the east, which is Khorasan.

**18. ud ān rāh abēr rōšn:** “and that road <is> very bright”. This very bright path is the same Column of radiance “bāmistūn” which is also called Srōš-ahrāy or the Column of Glory, through which the righteous soul ascends to the moon, the sun, and the New Paradise; In the Manichaean text (p), which is about Mani’s death, it is stated that:

pad wuzurg šādīft, ad bayān rōšnān kē az dašn ud hōy šawēnd, pad šang ud srōd cē šādīft frawašt pad warž bayānīg, čawāyōn wirōž tirγ ud dīdan nisāg niḡfurdag, ō **bāmistūn šībah rōšn**, ud māh wardyūn, amwardan bayānīg. ud angūd ad pidar Ohrmezdbay (Ibid., p. 47).

**Translation:** And with great joy, with the bright gods, who go from the right and the left, with a harp and a song of joy, he flew with a godlike miracle, like a fast lightening, and <with> a bright, swift apparition, to *the bright path of the Column of glory*, and the chariot of the moon, assembly attributed to the gods. And remained with the Father Ohrmezdbay.

The kings, “the similar to Kird-ir” and the Maiden of Light, will move on the bright path of the Column of glory, until they reach the New Paradise.

In the Zoroastrian religion, the soul of a deceased person goes to the base of the star, the base of the moon, and the base of the sun through the ladder that *the Daēnā Maiden* guides that person to. In Manichaeism, the soul of a righteous person ascends through *the Column of Glory* to reach the moon and the sun, but in Zoroastrian religion, for ascension, the soul of a righteous person climbs *a ladder that has three steps* to reach the sun; As stated in the 15th chapter of Bundahišn:

ēn-iz gōwēd kū kē pad rādīh ahlaw būd ēštēd ka-š ān wād ō padīrag rasēd andar ān wād kanīg kirb wēnēd ān pursišn kunēd u-š ān kanīg pad rāh-nimāyīh ō srat-ēw barēd kē-š sē pāyag padīš ud pad ān srat ō garōdmān šawēd

pad sē gām ī ast humat ud hūxt ud huwaršt. nazdist gām tā ō star-pāyag ud dudīgar tā ō mäh-pāyag ud sidīgar tā ō xwaršēd-pāyag kū garōdmān ī rōšn (Pakzad, 2005, p. 350).

**Translation:** <Religion> also says that, when a person has been righteous in giving, when he is welcomed by that wind, he sees in that wind “like a maiden”, he asks that question, and that maiden guides him to a ladder that has three steps, and with that ladder, with three steps—which are good thoughts, good words and good deeds—he goes to the Garodman. The first step <goes> to the base of the star, the second step to the base of the moon, and the third step to the base of the sun, which is the bright Garodman.

**paragraph 4:**

**19. šahriyār-ēw:** “a king”. The second king, *Yišō’* or *Yišō’zīndakkar* or *Xradešahr yazd*, corresponds to *Rašn yazd* in the Zoroastrian religion. Just as *Rašn* in Zoroastrian religion measures the deeds of the deceased people after death and judges them, in Manichaeism, *Yišō’* judges the deeds of deceased people (see notes 6 and 8).

**20. tarāzūg-ēw:** “a set of scales”. The second king, *Yišō’* or *Xradešahr yazd*, has a set of scales in front of him, because he has come to calculate the good deeds and bad deeds of Kird-īr.

**u-š tarāzūg-ēw pēšē ēstēd ān ōwōn [čiyōn <kird-īr hangirb> gīr]ēd:** “there is a set of scales in front of him, the one who [<is> just like “similar to Kird-īr”] takes <it>”. The second king, *Xradešahr yazd*, has a set of scales in front of him, because the arbiter in Mani’s religion is *Xradešahr yazd*, and he has come to judge the actions of Kird-īr. After the judgment, he will show him the right side, that is, the side of the righteous, or the left side, that is, the side of the sinners.

**paragraph 5:**

**21. any šahriyār:** “another king”. The third king, *Wahman wuzurg* or *Wahman rōšn* or *Manohmēd rōšn*, corresponds to *Mihr yazd* in the Zoroastrian religion. Examples of Manichaean texts are given below, which show that the order of kings in the Manichaean religion is mentioned in the same way in the texts:

āfurīhād wihih yōjdahr, *Yišō’ ispixtān*, *Kanīgrōšn* ud *Wahman wuzurg*, bōxtārān nēwān, murdāhēzān ī dēn yōjdahr. (Boyce, 1975, p. 155: Text cu).

**Translation:** Praise be to pure wisdom, *Jesus the Splendour, the Maiden of light* and *the great Wahman*, brave saviors, raiser of the dead of pure religion.

ō tō āfurām, *xwadāy mānī*, *Yišō’*, *Kanīg* ud *Wahman*, ud gāh ī huzihr, ud frēstagān. (ibid., p. 154: Text cu).

**Translation:** I praise you, *Lord Mani, Jesus, the Maiden* and *Wahman*, the beautiful place, and the angels.

az *frēstagrōšn* ud az *Yišō’*, *Kanīg* ud *Wahman*: dōšārmī, bōxtagīh ud yazdegirdīh, rāy mastī, rāy ud wihih az pidar, pusar ud az wāxš yōjdahr. (ibid., p. 150: Text cr).

**Translation:** From *the angel of light* (=Mani) and from *Jesus, the Maiden* and *Wahman*:

love, salvation, godliness, wisdom, wealth and wisdom from the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

**22. čiyēn:** This word means “scissors” and is derived from the root *kay-* or *čī-* “to cut” from \*čiyāna-/\*čayāna- and means “a tool that causes cutting”; In Pahlavi language *čēlān* means “dagger” (MacKenzie, 1986, p. 22) and apparently it is derived from the root *kay-*: *čī-* “to cut” (Bailey, 1967, p. 84; id., 1979, p. 103). The third King has a pair of scissors in his hand. In Persian language, scissors are called “دوکارد” which means “two knives”. (Dehkhoda Dictionary, 1997, below the words “قیچی” and “دوکارد”). In Avesta, *miθra-* (= *Mihr*) also has a thousand well-made two-bladed steel hatchets. As it is stated in *Mihr Yasht*, i.e. 10th *Yasht*, verse 130:

hištaite aom vāšahe

miθrahe vouru.gaoyaoitōiš

hazaṅrēm čakušanam

haosafnaēnaṃ bitaēyanaṃ hukərətanaṃ;

mainyavasā vazənti

mainyavasā patənti

kamərəde paiti daēvanaṃ (*Yasht* 10, 132; Gershevitch, 1967, p. 138).

**Translation:** There, on grass-land magnate Mithra’s chariot, are in readiness a thousand well-made, two-bladed hatchets of steel; hailing from supernature they fly, hailing from supernature they fall, on to the evil head(s) of the evil gods.

The Persian word “توکارد” is found in the Avesta in the form of bitaēya-, which is used only once in the Avesta and only in verse 130 of Mihr Yasht (Bartolomae, 1961, p. 963); a pair of scissors at the hand of the third king is a symbol of the two-bladed hatchet, that Mithra has in the Avesta. blade “تغ” in Farsi also means “knife”, as a result “توکارد” also means “two blades” (Dehkhoda Dictionary, 1997, below the word “تغ”), so what Mithra has in the Avesta is *čiyēn*.

**23. čiyēn \*ōrōntar paydāg, ōwōn čiyōn [čāh-ēw abēr pahn ī]-š bun nēst:** “Closer to the scissors, [a well] is visible [so wide that] it has no bottom”.

It is stated in the Manichaeon teachings that the New Paradise will join the Bright Paradise and all will be united like a light. Ahremen sinks into the well of his darkness and is imprisoned at the bottom of a well, on which a stone the size of the world will be placed so that he cannot come out (Esmā’ilpour, 2017, p. 189). The well, closer to the scissors, is the well where the devil will be imprisoned at the end of the world and a very large stone will be placed on it.

#### paragraph 6:

**24. gad:** This word is the past participle and is from the past passive participle \*gata- from the root **gam-** “to come”. *nē gad* means “did not come”. In Parthian Manichean texts, exactly this word is used in the form of **gad** and it is past participle and means “went, came” (Boyce, 1977, p. 41).

#### paragraph 7:

**25. dār-ēw:** “a small two-bladed sword”. **dār** or **dahra** means “a small sword with two blades and its head is like the head of a spear, narrow and sharp. (Nazim al-Atab’a) (from Ghiyath al-Loghat)” (Dehkhoda Dictionary, 1997, below the word “دهره”). The word **dār/dāra** is from \***dhāra** and from Old Iranian \***dāθraka-** “داره” from the root **dā-** “to cut, separate, divide” (Salemman, 1974, vol. I/1 p. 261; Horn, 1898-1901, p. 18, 94).

**26. puhl:** “bridge”. Here, the man who is “similar to Kird-īr” has to cross the bridge, which is the same bridge as the Činwad bridge in Zoroastrian religion. The well that was closer to the scissors, turns into hell and is placed under the Činwad bridge. The third king, who is *the Great Wahman* and plays the role of *Mithra/Mihr* in the Ascension of Kird-īr, places the *čiyēn* “scissors”, now in the shape of a **dār** “double-bladed sword”, on the well and that **dār** expands to the extent that it covers the top of the well. *Čiyēn* is actually the same as *Čyān* and another name of *Činwad Puhl*, which appears as *Čyān Widarag* in Zoroastrian religious texts (For the word *Čyān Widarag*, see Faravashi, 2011, p. 125). **dār** is similar to scissors, but its blades do not open and close. In this sense, *Čiyēn* or *Čyān* in the shap of a **dār** is placed in the form of a bridge, because **Činwad bridge** has sharp edges like a sharp razor.

**27. ān puhl abēr pahndar būd:** “and that bridge became [much] wider”. In the 19th chapter of Sūdgar Nask, which is about the fate of souls after death and Činwad Bridge, it is stated that:

u-š azēr mayān dušox dar ī widār ast ī hamāg ahlaw ud druwand ud tar ahlawān widār nō nēzag pahnāy ēk ēk dagrandīh sē ēw frāxīhēd pad druwandān widār čiyōn awestarag tēx bawēd (Goshtasbi Ardakany, 2020, p. 76; Madan, 1911, p. 809).

**Translation:** And under the middle of it, is the door of hell, which is a passage for all the righteous and sinners, and the passage of the righteous is nine spears wide, so that the length of each spear will be widened one-third. For sinners, the passage is like a sharp blade.

*Čiyēn* or *Čyān* in the shap of a **dār**, which is placed in the form of a bridge, turns to its sharp blade for sinners to cross, and for the righteous, it turns to its wide side to cross.

#### paragraph 8:

**28. any šahriyār:** “another king”. The last king is Ohrmezd bay. As stated in a Manichaeon text:

... pas abdom padīrāy xōy, pusag, dīdēm az **pidar Ohrmezd bay** andar wahišt rōšnā. (Boyce, 1975, p. 150).

**Translation:** So finally you will accept *the helmet, the anadem* and *the diadem* from **the Father Ohrmezd bay** in the Bright Paradise.

#### paragraph 10:

**29. rōzan:** “hole” (Dehkhoda Dictionary, 1997, below the word “روزن”).

**rōzan ī Wahrām:** “the hole of Mars”; The hole was discovered by chance in 2011 on images of the dusty slopes of Mars’ Pavonis Mons volcano taken by the HiRISE instrument aboard the robotic Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter currently circling Mars. The hole, shown in representative color, appears to be an opening to an underground

cavern, partly illuminated on the image right (look at Figure 1). Analysis of this and follow-up images revealed the opening to be about 35 meters across, while the interior shadow angle indicates that the underlying cavern is roughly 20 meters deep. Why there is a circular crater surrounding this hole remains a topic of speculation, as is the full extent of the underlying cavern. Holes such as this are of particular interest because their interior caves are relatively protected from the harsh surface of Mars, making them relatively good candidates to contain Martian life. These pits are therefore prime targets for possible future spacecraft, robots, and even human interplanetary explorers (<https://science.nasa.gov/hole-mars>)

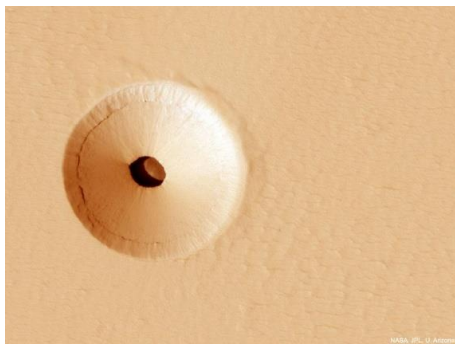


Figure 1. The hole of Mars

It is not clear how the woman went and sat in the hole on the planet Mars, but as it turns out, the travelers who gave Kird-ir a moment-by-moment report of the ascension events, saw that woman sitting in the hole on Mars.

#### paragraph 11:

**30. ud ōy mard ī kird-ir hangirb rōn hamēw pad angust nimāyēd ud xandēd:** “and that man who <is> “similar to Kird-ir” is pointing the direction with finger and laughing”.

Because during the time of Kird-ir, to show the events that happened during his ascension, there was no other possibility than to carve an inscription and make a relief, Kird-ir has shown the events in the inscription as well as in reliefs. His finger, which is pointing in the reliefs, shows the last event of his ascension.

#### 4. A Manichaean text about the ascension of Kird-ir

Now the author of this article wants to surprise the readers, because the ascension of Kird-ir is mentioned in a Manichaean text. In this text, Kird-ir’s name has not been mentioned and he has been mentioned as the leader of the Mazda-worshipper religion and has been highly respected. Unfortunately, some parts of this text have been lost, but what remains clearly shows that the ascension of Kird-ir was a Manichaean ascension and he was elected by the three comers, Jesus, the Maiden and Wahman. This text states:

pēšōbāy ī dēn māzdēs. tū nōg hammōzāg ī Xwarāsān, ud rāyēnāg ī wahedēnān, čē zād hē pad \*farrōj axtar andar tōhm īg šahriyārān. wizīd hēnd senān āyāgān, *Yišō*, *Kanīg* ud *Wahman* ...

[several verses missing]

... šahriyārān pēših-ut nizāyānd, framān-ut padīrānd, āfrāh-ut niyōšānd. harwispān išnūg pad namāz pad nizāy pēš tō āwarānd. frēstagān-ut pērōzēnānd abar wispān hambāwān. wāxšān-ut ... frihān-ut .... (Boyce, 1975, p. 149).

**Translation:** The leader of Mazda-worshipping religion! You, the new teacher of Khorasan (= the east), and the guide of those who have the best religion, what kind of birth are you in the lucky star in the family of kings? <You> were elected by the three comers, *Jesus, the Maiden and Wahman*...

[several verses missing]

... Kings will honor you with a loud voice, <they> will accept your command, <they> will hear your teaching. Everyone will kneel before you with reverence, for bow. Angels will make you victorious over all foes. Tutelary spirits <will> ... you..., friends <will> ... you...

#### 4.1 Commentary

**1. pēšōbāy ī dēn māzdēs:** “The Leader of Mazda-worshipping religion”= “the Leader of Zoroastrian religion”. Kird-ir lived during the reign of seven Sassanid kings, Ardashir-i Babakan, Shapur I, Hormezd I, Bahram I,

Bahram II, Bahram III and Narseh respectively. From the time of Ardashir-i Babakan until the end of Bahram III, Kird-ir was the Leader of the Mazda-worshipper religion in Iran. This text is definitely and 100% addressed to Kird-ir.

**2. nōg hammōzāg ī Xwarāsān:** “the new teacher of Khorasan (= the east)”.

It was also said before that, Kird-ir was from Khorasan and he was from Wakhan region. The meaning of Khorasan is the Greater Khorasan. To have a clearer idea of Greater Khorasan, look at (Figure 2). Kird-ir was from Wakhan region, which has been shown on the map. Now, to know exactly which part of Wakhan Kird-ir belonged to, look at (Figure 3). Figure 3 shows the territory of the Sassanid dynasty.

**hammōzāg:** “Teacher”. In Manichaeism, there are 12 Teachers, and one Teacher is one of the 12 chief dignitaries of manichaean church (Boyce, 1977, p. 45). At the head of the Manichaean community was its Leader, Mani’s successor, with his seat in Babylon. Under him were five grades: 12 Teachers, 72 Bishops, 360 Elders, the general body of the Elect (to which women were admitted), and the Hearers (Boyce, 1975, p. 11). The phrase **nōg hammōzāg** in this text indicates that Kird-ir has been recently chosen as a Teacher by Mani.

The very important point is that, this text must have been written during the time of Shapur I, because the ascension of Kird-ir happened during the time of Shapur I, and the three comers, namely Jesus, the Maiden and Wahman, have chosen Kird-ir. And the more important point is that, during the time of Shapur I, Kird-ir was a hērbēd; **ēhrbed/hērbēd** means “Teacher-priest” (MacKenzie, 1986, p. 43).



Figure 2. The Greater Khorasan and Wakhan Corridor

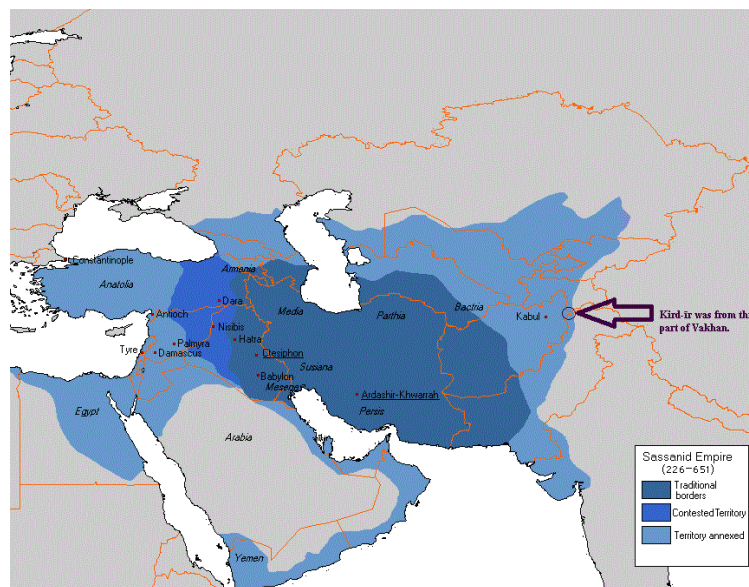


Figure 3. The territory of the Sassanid dynasty

Among Sassanid kings, Shapur I, Hormezd I, Bahram I and Bahram II ruled Khorasan before reaching the throne. When the princes of the royal family took over the government of Khorasan, they were given the title of Kushan Shah. The presence of Sasanian rock-cut relief of Shahpur I in present-day Afghanistan shows that, the Great

Khorasan was very important for Shapur I during the Sasanian period. This relief is called “*Rag-i Bibi*” today. Look at (Figure 4), the location of the Shahpur I rock relief is shown.

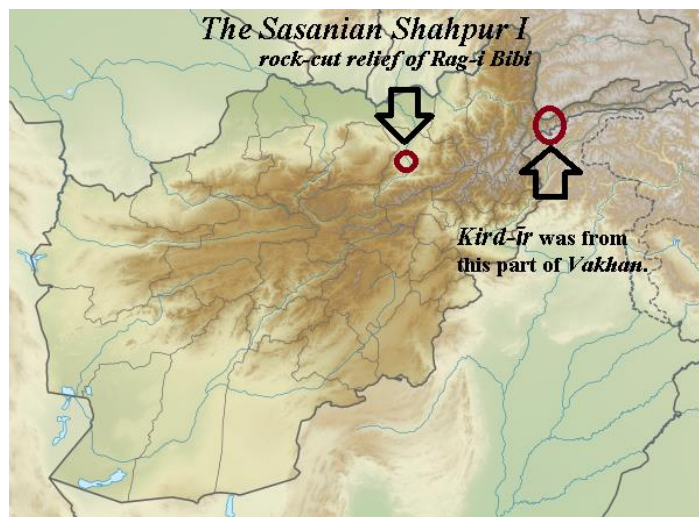


Figure 4. The Sasanian Shahpur I rock-cut relief of *Rag-i Bibi*

**3. Rag-i-Bibi:** (Vein of the Lady) refers to a Sasanian rock-cut relief on a cliff in modern Afghanistan. It is located about a kilometre south of Shamarq and 10 km south of Pul-i Khumri. The modern name Rag-i Bibi is given by Shi'a Muslim locals. They believe Fatimah, the favourite daughter of Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam, riding a horse.

The relief shows a Sassanian king hunting an Indian rhinoceros. The king reins in a galloping horse. His figure would be about 2.4 meter high if it were standing upright. Three figures stand around the king. Behind the ruler's horse, another two can be made out, which are poorly preserved. The upper portion of the relief shows a band of poorly preserved architectural features.

The king's head is particularly severely damaged by the Taliban. The crown might enable an identification with a historical king; some stylistic details suggest that Shapur I is depicted. Stylistically, the relief contains Sassanian features, but also local Gandhara ones (Grenet, Lee, Martinez, & Ory, 2007; Levin & Plekhov, 2019).

**4. rāyēnāg ī wahedēnān:** “the guide of those who have the best religion”. Here, Kird-ir is mentioned as the controller and guide of those who have the best religion, Zoroastrianism.

**5. čē zād hē pad \*farrōj axtar andar tōhm īg šahriyārān:** “What kind of birth are you in the lucky star in the family of kings?”

As it can be seen from this text, Kird-ir has been born in the royal family. This issue is very important, because Kird-ir has been born in the royal family, and for this reason, he is present in the reliefs of the royal family. In this text, it is not specifically mentioned what relationship Kird-ir had with Shapur I, but he must have had a very close relationship with the kings of his time, that is why Kird-ir always accompanied them.

**6. wizīd hēnd senān āyāgān, Yišō', Kanīg ud Wahman ...:** “<You> were elected by the three comers, *Jesus*, *the Maiden* and *Wahman*...”

In this text, it is mentioned that the leader of the Zoroastrian religion was chosen by Jesus and the Maiden and Wahman. See notes 11 and 21 of the inscription in the previous section. These three comers are the saviors of the souls of the dead in Manichaeism. After his ascension, Kird-ir has been elected as a righteous person (= **ardāw**) by Jesus, the Maiden and Wahman.

Kird-ir has shown the gifts he received from Manichaean gods in his petroglyphs. Look at (Figure 5), the events of Kird-ir's ascension and his gifts has been marked on this figure. *drafš* or the robe he is wearing and he has got it from *Rōšnšahr yazd*. *čiyēn* or the scissors, which he has got it from *Wahman rōšn*. *xōy* or the helmet, *pusag* or the anadem and *dīdēm* or the diadem, which he has got them from *Ohrmezdbay*. *pusag* or the anadem, resembles a pearl necklace in some petroglyphs, and a jeweled collar in others. His finger, which is pointing, shows the last event of his ascension.

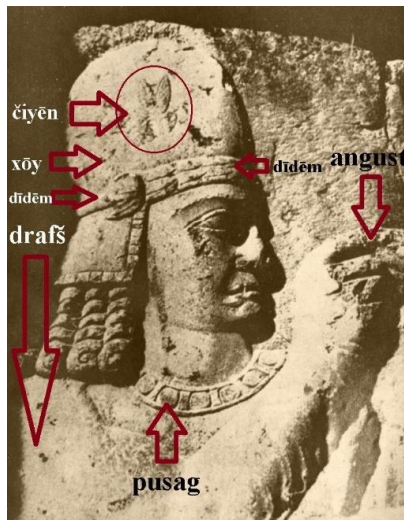


Figure 5. Kird-īr in the Relief of Bahram II - Naqsh-i Rostam

**7. dīdēm:** The word *diadem* derives from the Greek διάδημα *diádēma*, “band” or “fillet”, from διαδέω *diadēō*, “I bind round”, or “I fasten” (Liddell, & Scott, 1940). Diadem is an often decorated ribbon tied around the head, used as a symbol of royal dignity (Lendering, 2020). Some diadem examples are given below. Diadems were either tied directly on the head, or they were tied on a wig or helmet.



A persian nobleman



The **Nineteenth Dynasty of Egypt** (notated Dynasty XIX), also known as the **Ramessid dynasty** wig with diadem (British Museum)





Ardashir I of Sassanian Persia wearing very elaborate diadems

8. In the Kird-īr's relief in Sar Mashhad, the three comers, namely *Yišō'*, *Kanīg* and *Wahman* are seen along with Kird-īr hangrib (= similar to Kird-īr), and in this relief, Wahman is killing lions with a sword in his hand. Look at (Figure 6), the sword that he is holding is the same *dār* "double-bladed sword" that was mentioned earlier in the article. Instead of Wahman's face, Bahram II's face is seen in the relief, which must have been carved according to Bahram II's order. In the inscriptions of the Ascension of Kird-īr, there is no name of the kings who accompanied Kird-īr's soul on the journey to heaven and saved his soul. It is safe to say that this has been done on purpose, because Bahram II ordered it so that it would appear that Bahram II has saved Kird-īr's soul. Even the name that Bahram II gave to Kird-īr during his own reign and called him **Kird-īr ī bōxt-ruwān Wahrām** clearly indicates that Bahram has saved Kird-īr's soul. It is certainly for this reason that Bahram II allowed Kird-īr to record inscriptions and reliefs during this period to make it appear to everyone that he was the savior of Kird-īr's soul, which, of course, is not true.



Figure 6. The three comers, *Yišō'*, *Kanīg* and *Wahman*, along with *Kird-īr hangrib* in Sar Mashhad Relief

The first person who proposed the existence of a connection between the Sar Mashhad Relief and the Sar Mashhad inscription was Peter Calmeyer. This view was followed by Skjærø but later rejected by researchers including Gignoux (Skjærø 2012). But according to the findings that we reviewed in this article, it was found that Calmeyer and Skjærø were right in thinking that this relief is related to the inscription.

## 5. Conclusion

In this research, the events that happened in the ascension of Kird-īr, which he mentioned in his inscriptions in Naqsh-i Rostam and Sar Mashhad, were examined one by one, and based on the reasons and documents and existing texts, it was determined that the ascension of Kird-īr has been done in the manner of ascension in the

Mani's religion. From the beginning of the ascension, to the end of the ascension of Kird-īr, the phrases that were ambiguous, or the words that were not clear before, what exactly they meant, were explained in notes. It seems that during the time of Shapur I and Hormezd, the son of Shapur I, Kird-īr had no enmity with Mani and even showed a desire for Mani's cult rituals, that he decided to go to the ascension in the manner of the ascension in the Manichaean religion. According to the obtained evidence, it was also determined that the relief of Kird-īr describes the stages of his ascension and the gifts he received from the gods of the Manichaean religion. His robe, helmet, scissors, anadem, diadem, and his pointing finger tell the different stages of his ascension. In the Kird-īr's relief in Sar Mashhad, three comers, namely *Yišō'*, *Kanīg* and *Wahman* are seen along with Kird-īr hangrib (= similar to Kird-īr), and in this relief, Wahman is killing lions with a sword in his hand. But instead of Wahman's face, Bahram II's face was carved in this stone carving because Bahram II ordered it so that it would appear that Bahram II had saved Kird-īr's soul. Kird-īr's name means "made by the sun", and as mentioned in a Manichaean text, he was a Teacher and a native of Khorasan (= the east). The presence of Sasanian Shapur I rock-cut relief of *Rag-i Bibi* in present-day Afghanistan shows that Great Khorasan was very important for Shapur I during the Sasanian period. From the existing Manichaean text about the ascension of Kird-īr, it is also clear that Kird-īr was born in the royal family and was highly respected, and everyone honored him after his ascension.

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## Note

Note 1. For the comments of previous researchers, see Prods Oktor Skjærvø "KARTIR" *Encyclopædia Iranica*. Vol. XV, Fasc.6, 2012, pp. 608-628 and David Neil MacKenzie, *IRANICA DIVERSA*, Vol. 1, ROMA, 1999, pp. 266-270.

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