

Yuezhi (Kushans) and Tianzhu (Northwestern India) attacked and conquered them. This territory is several thousand *li* from east to west, and north to south. The men and women of this nation are all eighteen *chi* tall [mistake for 8 *chi* = 1.85 metres, or just over 6 feet, as in the *Hou Hanshu*]. They ride elephants and camels into battle. Currently they provide military service and taxes to the Yuezhi (Kushans).”

### 123 – Year ca. AD 250: Description of Yuezhi country and people

Nanzhou Yiwu Zhi 南州異物志 from the third century, quoted in AD 736 by Zhang Shoujie 張守節 on Shiji 123.3b; Zürcher 1968: 372:

在天竺北可七千里，地高燥而遠，國王稱天子。國中騎乘常數十萬匹，城郭宮殿與大秦國同。人民赤白色，便習弓馬，土地所出及奇瑋珍物，被服鮮好，天竺不及也。

“The country of the Great Yüeh-chih lies about 7.000 *li* [3000 km ed.] north of T’ien-chu. The land is high and arid, and far away. Its king is called “Son of Heaven”. The riding horses which in this kingdom are (used for warfare) number several hundred thousands. The city-walls and palaces are of the same kind as those of Ta-ch’in (the Roman Orient).

The people are of reddish-white colour; they are skilled in the (use of) bows and horses. The products of the soil as well as the rare gems and precious objects and the coverlets and clothes (made there) are not equalled by those from T’ien-chu.”

## Iranian dominance

### 124 – Year ca. AD 270: *Res Gestae Divi Saporis*

**Context:** Shahpur lists all countries he holds or which have to pay tribute. First, in §2, he lists in Middle Persian, Parthian and Greek language the centre with Persis and Parthia with the regions adjoining in the West, then follow in §3 the countries in the East in a counter-clockwise order around the centre of Afghanistan: Merv, Herat, Abaršahr, Kerman, Seistan, Turan, Makran, then he seems to turn north. The Middle Persian version is almost entirely destroyed here.

• *Šābuhr Ka’ba-i Zardušt* Parthian line 2; §§2-3 in Huyse 1999: 22-23:

Parthian: (...) skstn twgrn mkwrn p’rtn hndstn kwšnhštr *HN prhš* OL pškbwr W HN OL k’š swgd W ššstn [W MNhw (?)] Š[ΘR]A [Y]MA mzw[nh]štr

Middle Persian: (...) Sagestan, Tuγrān, Mak(u)rān, Pār(a)dān, Hindestān, Kušānšahr yad frašš ō Paškabūr ud yad ō Kāš, Surγd ud Čāčestān (...)

“(…) Sagestān, Tuγrān, Makrān, Pārdān, Hindestān, Kušānšahr bis vor Pešāwar (?) und bis nach Kāšγar (?), Sogdien und Taškent (...)”

Greek: (...) Σεγιστανήν, · Τουρ[η]νήν, · Μακα [ρ]α [ν], · Παρα[δι]νήν, · Ἰννίαν, · και Κουσην[δ]ν ἔθ[η]νη ἕως ἔμπροσθεν Πασκιβούρων · και ἕως Κας, · Σωδικηνῆς · και · / {και} Τσασηνες ὄρων, · (. . .)

“(...) Sagestān (= Sakastane), Tūrān, Makrān, Pārdān, Indian (= Hindestān), und (die) Kušānvölker bis vor Pešāwar (?) und bis zu den Grenzen von Kāšgar (?), Sogdien und / Taškent (...)”

• Kerdīr, Naqsh-i Rustam, line 36; MacKenzie §15; p. 43 and p. 58).

(...) [Wmlwy \*Whryw W`prštry] (Wtvr)[stn W]m(k)[wl'n] (W)[kwš'nš](try) 'D (pr'c 'L p)škp(w)[ly] p(ty)hwy (k)l[ty]

“(...) and Marw and Harēw and Abaršahr and Tūrestān and Makurān and Kušānšahr as far as Puškapur—I have made prosperous.”

**Note Durkin-Meisterernst:** This is a continuation of the list of lands very similar to that listed in ŠKZ above, as Kerdīr is associating himself very closely with the Sasanian king.

**Note ed.:** Huysse (1999,II: 36) on Shahpur stresses the fact that 'L indicates an exclusivity, so that *pškapwly* was just outside the conquered regions. The identity of this excluded site, spelled Πασκιβούρων on Shahpur's text on the Ka'ba-i Zardušt, with Peshawar/Puruṣapura is defended by Huysse (ibid.), although being aware of the phonetic difficulties. The Makran (Makurān) coast is well-defined in southern Baluchistan. Pāradān is the region north of it, today called Loralai, where the coins of the Pāratarājas are found. Continuing northwards he reaches Kabul and Bactria. Hindestān should include Multan and the Panjab which makes it difficult to understand how Peshawar could remain excluded.

**Note Grenet:** The same exclusivity applies to Sugd and Čačestān which acted as a confederation. The reality of this confederation seems to be confirmed by the early Sogdian inscriptions at Kultobe, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> cent. AD, cf. Sims-Williams, Grenet & Podushkin 2007: 1029-1030.

## 125 – Years ca. AD 293-296: Iran under Narseh (r. AD 293-302)

**Content:** At the end of his documentation, Narseh lists first kings and then dignitaries who “stayed by Our [advice and] council”. How far these rulers were independent of the Sasanian throne remains unclear. The list is arranged from East to West, and the Kushan is the first in the list of kings.

Paikuli, Parthian line 41 (the Middle Persian text is lost). Skjærvø 1983a: 70, line 41, translation p. 71:

W kwšn MLK [W --- --- (...)]

“And the king of Kušān ...”

**Note ed.:** As in other cases, Kushan can here mean the land or its ruler. Neither the geographical position nor his political status is obvious.



**126 – Year ca. AD 380: The Kushans in retrospect**

Ammianus Marcellinus [ca. AD 330-400], Seyfarth 1970,III: 100+102 without lacunae filled (\*); Rolfe 1935-40,II: 378-381:

Marcellinus *Rerum gestarum* 23, 6, 55-60;

[55] *Proximos his limites possident Bactriani, natio antehac bellatrix et potentissima Persisque semper infesta antequam circumscitos populos omnes ad dicionem gentilitatemque traheret nominis sui, quam rexere veteribus saeculis etiam Arsaci formidabiles reges.*

[55] “The lands next to these [Margiani ed.] the Bactriani possess, a nation formerly warlike and very powerful, and always at odds with the Persians, until they reduced all the peoples about them to submission and incorporated them under their own name. In ancient times they were ruled by kings who were [p. 381] formidable even to Arsaces.”

[56] *Eius pleraeque partes ita ut Margiana, procul a litoribus sunt disparatae, sed humi gignentium fertiles, et pecus quod illic per campestria loca vescitur et montana, membris est magnis compactum et validis, ut indicio sunt cameli, a Mithridate exinde perducti, et primitus in obsidione Cyzicena visi Romanis.*

[56] “Many parts of this land, like Margiana, are widely separated from the coast, but rich in vegetation; and the herds which graze on their plains and mountains are thickset, with strong limbs, as appears from the camels brought from there by Mithridates and seen for the first time by the Romans at the siege of Cyzicus.”

[57] *Gentes eisdem Bactrianis oboediunt plures, quas exsuperant Tochari, et ad Italiae speciem crebris fluminibus inundantur, E quibus Artamis et Zariaspes ante sibi consociati, itidemque Ochus et Orgomanes, iuncti convenis aquis augment immania Oxi fluenta.*

[57] “Several peoples are subject to these same Bactrians, notably the Tochari, and like Italy the country is watered by many rivers. Of these, the Artamis and Zariaspes first unite, as well as the Ochus and Orgomanes, and when joined they increase the mighty flow of the Oxus with their combined waters.”

[58] *Sunt et hic civitates, quas amnes diversi perstringunt, his cedentes ut melioribus, Chatrachartae et Alicodrae et Astatiae et Menapilae et Bactris ipsis, unde regnum et vocabulum nationis est institutum.*

[58] “There are also cities here which are laved by other rivers, but they recognise these as their betters: namely, Chatracharta, Alicodra, Astatia, Menapila, and Bactra itself, from which the kingdom and the nation have derived their name.”

[59] *(\*Hinc Sogdiani agunt) sub imis montium pedibus, quos appellant Sogdios, inter quos amnes duo fluunt navium capacissimi, Araxates et Dymas, (\*qui per) iuga vallesque*

*praecipites, in campestem planitiem fluvii decurrentes, Oxiam nomine paludem efficiunt, late longeque diffusam. Hic inter alia oppida celebrantur Alexandria et Cyreschata et Drepsa metropolis.*

[59] “Next the Sogdiani dwell at the foot of the mountains which they call the Sogdii, through whose territories two rivers flow which are navigable by ships, the Araxates and the Dymas. These streams rush headlong over mountains and valleys into a level plain and form a lake, Oxia by name, which is both long and broad. Here among other towns Alexandria, Cyreschata, and the metropolis, Drepsa, are famous.”

[60] *His contigui sunt Sacae natio fera, squalentia incolens loca, solum pecori fructuosa, ideo nec civitatibus culta. Cui Ascanimia mons imminet et Comedus. Praeter quorum radices et vicum, quem Lithinon pyrgon appellant, iter longissimum patet, mercatoribus pervium, ad Seras subinde commeantibus.*

[60] “Next to these are the Sacae, a tribe of savages, inhabiting a rough country rich only for cattle, and hence without cities. It is overhung by the mountains Ascanimia and **Comedus**, along the base of which and through a village, which they call Lithinos Pyrgos, a very long road extends, which is the route taken by the traders who journey from time to time to the *land of the Seres*.”

## The Smaller (group of) Yuezhi and the Kidarites

### 127 – Year AD 356/7: Smaller (group of) Kushans and Chionite (Huns)

**Content:** In the time of the East Roman Emperor Constantius II (r. AD 337-361) the Sasanian King Shahpur II (r. AD 309-379) was campaigning in the East and spent the winter of AD 356/7 near the realms of Kushans and Chionites.

Ammianus Marcellinus 16.10; Seyfarth 1968: 174/5:

*dumque at Chionitas et Cusenos haec scripta mittuntur, in quorum confinibus agebat hiemen Sapor, tempus interstitit longum.*

“Während dieses Schreiben zu den Chioniten und Cusenern unterwegs war, in deren Grenzgebiet Sapor den Winter verbrachte, ging viel Zeit verloren.”

**Note ed.:** *Cusenos* is an emendation from *Eusenos* by Marquart (1901: 36, fn. 5) and generally accepted.

### 128 – Years after ca. AD 380: Kidara Kuṣāṇas take Gandhara and five kingdoms above it

**Content:** In the 5th century, Chinese chronicles again distinguish Large and Small (groups of) Yuezhi while speaking of different groups of Kidarite “Huns”. The one king mentioned by name in the Beishi is spelled Jiduoluo 寄多羅, reconstructed *kjie-ta-la*, and he calls himself *ki-da-ra* in monogram style on his coinage with the byname *ku-ṣa-ṇa*