

Endnote

1. "Parisho" is local dialect of Parishan.
2. Ramsar Convention, one of the most important international agreements emphasizing on environment and nature protection, was performed in the Iranian city of Ramsar by 158 country in 1971.
3. Anahita's temples were usually located beside rivers, springs, lakes and ponds with lots of birds and other animals living in the area. Some of these places were as hunting ground for Sassanid royalty, such as Tagh-e Bostan, Kangavar temple and Ray temple of fire.
4. Bohayreh which is an Arabic term means Lake.
5. Koureh is another term for province in Iranian ancient language.
6. Barisham is abbreviation for Abrisham which means silk and was another old name for Parishan Lake. While staying in Kazerun to attend a congress about Bishapur archeology, I decided to go to the lake at dawn, the lake was full of water and I went for sailing accompanying some friends, sunshine was reflected on water surface just like silver and golden silky threads making a magnificent scenery, perhaps it was the main reason for calling the lake Barisham which means silky.
7. Hitherto, first Sassanid Shapour and Anahita bas-reliefs in tangh-e Qandil located a few kilometers from Parisho and Bahram II Sassanid image in ancient city of Bishapur were found destructed by some unwary people (Hamshahri Newspaper, 2012, 5819: 7)
8. Ossuary is any kind of container, dredged or well which was used to contain bones of dead people in ancient era. Zoroastrian crypts. (Farehvashi, 1973: 50).
9. Some of remained images of Anahita are consistent with descriptions about her in Aban Yašt, such as Anahita in Naqsh-e Rostam and Tagh-e Bostan in Kermanshah and other images found in some bas-reliefs, stamps and dishes, Parisho is allocated to the latter.

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ed coins in mint house of Estakhr (Fig. 2). After the death of founder of the dynasty, Artaxerxes, (241-224 AD.), his son Shapour (272-241 AD.) developed Bishabor city and chose it as his capital and created the most luxurious Anahita temple in there (Fig. 3).

Figure 3 This reveals the importance of worshipping Nahid in Sassanid era. At the time of developing temple of Nahid in Bishapour, a bas-relief was made under Shapour' order in Tang-e Qandil in which Anahita, Shapour and Hormoz, who was Shapour's beloved son and his successor as well, are portrayed. In the image, king is in the middle and his left hand is on the hilt of the sword to show his respect for the goddess of water while receiving a flower from her by his right hand signaling felicity and domination. The flower is a blue lotus symbolizing fertility and felicity in relation to water (Fig. 4). (see Avarzamani & Javadi, 2009: 49).



Fig. 3. Anahita temple, Bishapour -Fars.
Source : www.flickr.com



Fig. 4. Relief of obtaining the blessing sign of Anahita-Shapur I, Tang-e Qandil.
Source: www.kherada.com/Hplace.aspx

Conclusion

The majority of Sassanid petroglyphs were found near rivers, springs and lakes highlighting the importance of water and its holiness in Sassanian rituals. Parisho is also one of bas-reliefs showing Anahit⁹, the goddess of water; its creation can be referred to the Artaxerxes or his son Shapour order concurrently with building Anahita's temple at Bishapor to fulfill people's request for blessing the lake and preventing drought. To answer this question that why Anahita's images has not been found around any other lakes in this region we must consider its vastness and fresh water as it is the vastest freshwater lake in Fars and in Iran as well.

The mage is one of the numerable bas-reliefs depicting goddess of water remarkably. Among rock engravings from Sassanid era, Parisho and Gouy-

om (image of Bahram II while praying) are very noticeable with some influential aspects.

Prishou seems to be a meaningful name for this bas-relief, an image with broken leg and hand, wounded face and dusty body in front of a dried lake by a dried reedy. Probably, so many magnificent ceremonies took place in front of the bas-relief and local residents of this area asked her help in blessing the lake for water filling and its survival by votive offerings and celebrating, but now, seeing this ancient image in turmoil can evokes Hafez remarks in his poetry:

Venus (Zohreh) is not playing happily seems her lute is not working

No one tend to love (drink) where are all those lovers (drinkers)

(Nasrollahzadeh, 2006: 105).

These ossuaries donot have any images, but some words or statements and date are written on them links them to Zoroastrians lived in Islamic era and the early stages of AH centuries and reveals their ancestral ritual and religious customs. Therefore, these images are not related to ossuaries since they do not contain any picture and also picturing was prohibited in Islamic early stages.

Creating these images in association with Parishan Lake

Rejecting the first hypothesis can strengthen the relation of the bas-relief and women role in holiness of water and Anahita who was goddess of water for people of early Sassanid era.

Anahita, an Iranian female deity, was the symbol of holiness of water in Sassanid era and also one of mother goddess whose statues can be found in so many places in Iran. She was praised not only in Iran but also anywhere people used to focus their attention on the ancient world. Anahita enjoyed of such importance and validity that fifth Yashti of the Bible and ancient Avesta (Abban Yashti) dedicated to praise Anahita officially. "She is such a strong, bright, gushing and ebullient lady just like ever-flowing water on earth." (Doostkhah, 1976: 141) There are some evidences which illustrate the global fame of mother of goddess and her active and crucial role in life of ancient people in Iran and other places around the world.

Background of worshipping Anahita

Praising Anahita was very common at the time of the Achaemenes, particularly during the Achaemenian Artaxerxes II (404-361 BC) as goddess were at the very peak of people's attention. Anahita's name is mentioned in the inscriptions of the ruler for the first time; more importantly, her name is mentioned right after Auramazda's name but it proceeds the Mehr (Mithra) highlighting her high status in that era.

Iran was under the control of federal and autonomous government in Parthian era when freedom of religion was one of the basic principles, so among religious beliefs and thoughts praising and wor-

shipping Anahita was very popular.

A famous Greek historian, Poly Beaus, from second century BC, discussed about magnificence of Anahita's temple in Ekbatan (Hamedan) in his book; "Even the pillars of the temple was covered with sheets of gold." The Roman historian, Poly Beaus who died in the year 79 AD, also talked about Nahid's temple in Susa; "there was a huge statue of Anahita which was made of gold and was plundered by Romans in the war between Roman generals and Parthian Farhad IV (31 BC - 2 AD.). (Pourdavoud, 1977: 169-171) Such news reveals the importance and holiness of the goddess who was praised and glorified by people in Parthian era. Sassanian dynasty raised her importance. Sassanians were from a spiritual family. Papak and Sasan, who were Artaxerxes's father and grandfather respectively, were headmaster of the Estakhr temple, so besides ruling the country, they also held Religious Affairs leadership. According to Ibn al-Athir; "Sassanid ancestor, Sasan, was living in Estakhr at a fire temple naming Temple of Nahid at the time, and then Papak who was born and raised in his house undertook administration and visiting people after father." (Ibn Athir, 1986: 54). Similarly, praising Nahid was a strong public interest due to the long-lasting traditions of religion in Persia at the early years of Sassanid Empire; and Anahita's temple in Estakhr, where Artaxerxes's grandfather and father were its custodian respectively, was the holiest and biggest temple among Anahita's temples in Persia and Iran, as kings of Sassanian dynasty until the last ruler, Yazdgerd III monarchy (632-651 AD.), crowned in this temple and mint-



Fig. 2. Yazdgerd III Coin, the last king of the Sassanid, Mint of Estakhr city. source: <https://finds.org.uk/medievalcoins>.

be blamed on some irresponsible unwary people which made drastic harms to the image unintentionally or even intendedly. Right now, only a half of the statue is remained showing a lady dressed in Sassanid magnificent style (Fig. 1).

Considering different color of some separated parts obviously confirms that some parts was recently cutout intentionally from the image and then has been demolished by mallet and hammer. Likewise ,the form of face ,legs and left hand has been drastically damaged⁷.

Research background

Parisho, a newfound bas-relief, was found and reported by Professor Imad Al-Din Sheikh Al-Hokamaie for the first time in 2004. The bas-relief is located in northern west of Parishan Lake curved at a rock not more than 30 meters above the lake and shows a dressed up lady with a long skirt putting one hand over her head which is turned to the left staring at a part of mountain.

Archaeologists who have visited the bas-relief referred the work to early Sassanid era. (Ettelaat newspaper, 7: 13/09/2009). This bras-relief was registered in Iranian National Heritage list by number 27585 on 29/03/2009.

This Historical and valuable bas-relief, Parisho, is one of the numerable samples of ancient Iranian females which was left unattended and without any physical protection (Bahar newspaper



Fig.1. Relief of the water goddess -Anahita, near Lake Prishu-Fars. source: <http://www.mehrnews.com>

18/04/2014). Milad Vandaiee, an archaeologist who observed the image accurately, has explained that recognizing the image is very difficult; “Parisho is related to the pre-Islamic era. However, due to some reasons including dressing style which is different from the style of Sassanian women, this work cannot be related to Sassanid era. Likewise, none of bas-reliefs remained from Sassanid era contains a lady alone. And finally, in cultural point of view, the method of curving in this precious bas-reliefs was not common in that period of time. Jafari-Zand, an archaeologist, believes: “Considering some photographs of this precious work I have seen, it can be a man related to one of Sassanian local princes.” Hitherto, Doctor Siamak Alizadeh, Den of antiquities, stated in an interview with Amordad newspaper; “Due to its sturdy physique, this bas-relief might be a man from Sassanid or even Elamite era, however further investigation is required to answer the question.” (Amordad, 23/6/2014)

The motivation and origin of Parisho

Since the motivation and origin of Parisho has not been explored yet, we try to verify the case:

Parisho shows no similarity to those artistic work belong to Elamite, Achaemenid and Parthian eras, and in the other hand in Islamic period human bas-relief especially picturing women’s image was strictly prohibited; however compared to images previously found on rocks, dishes, stamps and coins it shows some similarity to the early period of Sassanian Empire works. Considering that making bas-reliefs in Sassanid era was based on certain purposes, studying this artistic works can provide the opportunity to discuss the cause of their creation and can pave the road of reasoning to establish a logical hypothesis. Relating Parisho to Sassanid era works can make the opportunity to discuss the relation of its location to the river in two different perspective:

Creating Parisho in association with Sassanian ossuaries

In the region of Kazerun city and area around Parishan Lake, there are some ossuaries⁸ which the most important one is named “Kazerun 2”

Introduction

Bas-reliefs have been always known as pictorial documents of history and art in Iranian long-standing culture starting right from the very beginning of its historical stage and continued to Sassanid era magnificently. Some stone reliefs exist in Fars province of Iran which belong to the periods of Elamite, Achaemenid, and especially Sassanid empire and also the periods of some local rulers in Fars; and the most important part of these stone reliefs illustrates ritual and religious ceremonies.

By advent of Islam, this kind of art was forgotten at the perforce of forbidding human depiction, however some distant imitation of these images from the period of Qajar monarchy illustrating hunting sceneries and kings and princes gathering has been found in some regions of Iran especially in Fars. This article focuses on investigating a bas-relief that was found near Parishan Lake in the city of Bishapour and Kazerun in Fars province and was given by an unknown Iranian art-lover,

Hypothesis

“Parishoo” is the image of Anahita, the goddess of water.

The importance of Parishan Lake

Considering the relationship between “Parisho”¹ and Parishan Lake, first we give a brief description about the lake:

Parishan is the largest freshwater lake of country located at the upper side of Kazerun, in a district of province covering an area of 4300 hectares, about 820 meters above mean the sea level, with a catchment area of 266.5 km² and the area of the lake turns to its widest size in Ordibehesh (April). This lake was registered as an international wetland in “Ramsar Convention”² but nowadays unfortunately most of its area has turned to a desert. The most important reasons led to drying the lake include road constructing, digging deep wells, closure of the majority of its water sources, improper constructing operation, and burning a vast area of its reedy by irresponsible people, also drought in recent years. It is called by some other names including Kazerun, Barisham, Tavaz, Farshouvieh, Famour, mour and etc. Parishan Lake is a suitable environment for a variety species of fishes namely Perciform, Bream fish, Lamprey, some kinds of aquarium fishes, Barbel fish, Grass carp and so on. It is also a proper breeding place for some birds such as herons, variety of ducks, pelicans, geese, and some other species. Burning its reeds due to the

road construction has subjected its vegetation to dander leading to the death of thousands of its turtles and birds (Mehr News).

Ahmad Al-Muqaddasi, a geographer lived in the fourth century AH and the author of the *Best Divisions for Knowledge of the Regions*, noted in his book; “Kazerun Lake is two miles in width and has so many branches, it is a proper place for hunting³ with some other benefits.” (Al-Muqaddasi, 1982:664). Abu Ishaq Ibrahim Estakhri in his book “*Masalek and Mamalek*” also mentioned; “Tavaz Lake⁴ is close to Kazerun city in Shapour province⁵, it is located 10 miles from Movaragh ..., and is a suitable place for fishing.” (Estakhri, 1961:109). Forsat Shirazie, a well-known historian archeologist poet from Qajar era, called the lake as Farshoyeh or Barisham⁶: “Two miles from Kazerun, there is a bridge named Abgineh. The bridge was made by Haj Moshir Al-Malek; on the outskirts of the city and there is a thicket and reedy which ends to a lake named Farshouvieh or Barisham with so many fishes suitable for fishing.

Parisho (Parishan) relief is depicted at the mountainside of Nabak, 17 km from Kazerun and at the distance of 30 km from Parishan Lake in the north-west of the lake, at the height of 7 meters from lands in that area. Due to some natural erosion factors, the relief has been eroded seriously, but the major cause of its destruction can

A Study to Recognize Unknown Role of Parisho

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Abstract

A bas-relief was found near Parishan Lake in 2004 and was registered in Iran's national heritage list. Due to its features, it is assumed to belong to the Sassanid dynasty. Since the purpose of creating the relief and its subject was unknown, it was analyzed by comparing with other Sassanid coins and stones. Considering the existence of reedy and lake in the area and its location on the top of the mountain, also a woman's image depicted on relief, we can come to this conclusion that this image belongs to the Anahita, goddess of water, and like other Sassanid reliefs is situated close to springs, rivers and is related to their rituals. Anahita was "Goddess of Waters" and hence is associated with fertility, felicity in Iranian ancient culture.

Keywords

Water, Lake, Holiness of water, Anahita, Bas-relief, Sassanian.