

Editor's letter

Some discussions have been introduced in “Neo-theories” workshop series on Persian Mithraism; meanwhile, some common beliefs among different Iranian races have been also analyzed. In addition, sacred places were also studied respecting ancient Persian beliefs and existence of Mitra in symbolic figures of Persian rug and other arts was mentioned. Mitra was also compared in Iran and Armenia. These meetings on Persian Mithraism have led to the extraction of the present papers. Scholars have investigated all extant ancient Mithraism beliefs and the forums have attained successful conclusions and new solutions. Mithraism has been analyzed in terms of anthropology, history, archeology, architecture, customs, folklore, as well as decorative symbols in artistic works; further, how Mithraism has survived so far was also explored. The papers are the onset of finding religious origins and getting more knowledge of the present customs and beliefs, which can be achieved through relying upon different disciplines including history and archeology, sociology, folklore, literature and poetry, architecture, linguistics, symbolism in decorations and different arts. According to earlier studies, as far as we know, there have been no other studies assessing ancient belief survival, especially Persian Mithraism through a new point of views. It is hoped that further studies are conducted on this area. On the present religions stemming from Persian ancient beliefs, the Mandaean article has been provided. “Arabestani” explained Mandaean attitudes in terms of anthropology and sociology, and studied its contribution in the present Iranian society. He also noted the valuable points in introducing and studying the ritual structures of this people. At the end of the meeting, comments were presented by “Shohreh Javadi” and “Fereydoon Avarzamani” based on many similarities between the Mithraism traditions and Mandaean rituals which shows that the beliefs of this people are an altered form of the ancient followers of Mithras and in the continuation of the same beliefs and customs.

“Avarzamani”, historian and archeologist, introduced Izadi or Yazidis stemming from old Mithraists and analyzed the Mithraism symbols that have been survived in this nation including mysticism, concealed prayers in the circle of companions, ablution and purification before entering to the temple to be prepared for the rituals, bull sacrificing inspired by Mithraism bull sacrifice, as well as seven spiritual steps with difficult instructions.

“Daryaei”, art historian, mentioning the need to review art history to find our identity, asserts that the figure is a written decorative and artistic language manifested in the form of symbolic signs and figures in Persian rug. She also unveils historical presence of Mitra or Mehr in Persian rug.

According to Javadi, the rituals and art scholar, the extant sacred places are regarded the continuance of Mithraism respecting architecture and traditions among people. In fact, he scrutinized a transformed tradition in the new religion and its survival from past to the present. Therefore, case studies of Imamzadeh, grandees' tombs, and sometimes mosques have been provided that earlier were Mehr or Anahita temples turning into Islamic places over time.

“Nikouei”, a historian, showed the old solidarity between Iran and Armenia regarding shared Mithraism mythologies. Research findings showed the presence of Mehr deity among Iranians effectively contributed in Iranian-Armenian interrelations within Christianity and Islamic era. Moreover, according to Ferdowsi in Shahname and relying on Islamic philosophers and thinkers, Mehr or Mitra has been explicitly present over Persian history.

“Jalaliyan”, art and literature scholar, studied Mithraism culture and reflection through Persian and world's decorative figures in several art disciplines.

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