

Holiness of Izad Mah (God of moon) and its influence on klimwa cup

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Abstract: This research tends to investigate drawings of a famous cup named Klimwa based on sacredness of Izad Mah. Izad Mah appeared on Klimwa cup with such features regarding that Klimwa has satisfied their needs. This God created first pair of cows, as shown on the cup. Klimwa cup has been mainly used for a thanksgiving festival and for the use of the court during Sasanian era.

Key words: Izad Mah; Klimwa cup; Sasanian

1. Introduction

Izad Mah is one of the major Gods, respected by followers of the Zoroastrian religion. In religious texts including Avesta and Bandehesh, this God (or Izad in Persian) has been praised repeatedly. This is an explicit fact that this God is highly sacred for Zoroastrian people, especially those who believe to Zoroastrian religion of Sasanian era. It is to be noted that domination of Izad Mah on Sasanian era highly affected metalworkers' arts in Sasanian court, as shown on Klimwa cup. This research highly attends to this question that what is relation of Klimwa cup with Izad Mah and also what is main cause of relating Izad Mah to drawings of this cup? Assuming that thanksgiving festival is main relation of Izad Mah with this cup and also, considering religious texts and interpretations of cup drawings, this paper tends to investigate the above-mentioned issues. Sacredness of Izad Mah and his influences on Klimwa cup: Mah is a name for one of Zoroastrian Gods, pronounced in Avesta as Mavangah (Razi, 2012). Seventh Yasht of Avesta and 12th day of month belong to this God. In act 16, sect 57 «Farvardin Yasht» is mentioned that Farvahar Pakan shows ways of sacredness to moon, beside sun and stars (Yasht, 1977). This God is protector of fetus of horses and animals. Therefore, remained fetus of first pure cow was transferred to moon and after some changes, different types of animals were created of it. Two cows, one male and one female, were first animals created of this fetus (Dadegi, 1990). Therefore, according to this note of Bandahesh, Izad Mah was creator of first two cows and initialized life of quadruped animals. In Avesta, when praising this God, he is called as shining globe of sky (Razi, 2012). This light is also mentioned in Ardavirafnameh. It is to be noted that according to text of Ardavirafnameh, light of pure people in "basic moon", second floor of heaven, points to this feature

of Izad Mah (light) (Ardavirafnameh, 1993). Izad Mah is protector of quadruped animals and also God of fortune in a way that this God is protector of people and owns religious role, sacred and merited for needs and gifts of people. Zoroastrian people believe that moon, beside sun and stars, influences their life, sadness and happiness. This means that people vow for this God and he has satisfied their needs (Mohammadi, 2008). There are notes in Avesta about the above-mentioned case, as follows: "Izad Mah, the great, please increase number of powerful, dignified and handsome boys and daughters in our homes to make us powerful and winners of battles, not losers, and you let good prayers grow" (Avesta, 2012). Based on narrations in Bandahash about this God, as follows: Moon, or Mah in Persian, exhilarates the world and during first 15 days of each month, it increases goodness and then during second 15 days of each month, it becomes thin and thin, while accepting good works of people and adding their deeds to wealth of Gods. 1st to 5th day of month is called "Andar Mah", from 10th to 15th day is "Par Mah", considering increasing size of the moon but during second half of month which its size decreases, from 20th to 25th is called "Kashaftaki", which has three fifths of light and three fifths of darkness, considering that it relates to moon. During first half, waters increase and trees have better fruits and people believe that Mah Izad is source of lightness (Bandahash, 1990). Pourdavoud in his introduction on Yashts, notes a narration from Abu-Reihan Birooni about beliefs of Iranians for cart of Izad Mah which is pulled by a cow of light with two golden horns and ten silvery legs. This cart has been appeared on 16th of January of each year and people believed that their demands will be satisfied if they can see it (Yashts, 1977). It is to be noted that this belief of Iranians for cart of Izad Mah which is pulled by a cow of light with two golden horns is drawn on Klimwa cup by metalworkers of Sasanian era. This cup is available now and it has been kept by Armitage museum of Lingerad (Kristin Sen, 2006).

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Now, considering fundamental question of this research, we tend to explain drawing of this cup. In center of Klimwa cup, there is a cart, pulled on both sides by four cows. These cows are in running mode and they are certainly showing two pair of male and female cows. Regarding the above-mentioned notes, Izad Mah created a pair of male and female cows from a purified fetus and sent them to earth. There is a narcissus flower on each wheel of this cart which is pulled by two pairs of male and female cows and this flower originally belongs to Izad Mah (Karbasiyan, 2012). This flower is drawn on cart wheels due to the above-mentioned reason. Down the cup and between cart wheels on the earth, there is a flourishing plant with three flowers which shows flourish of plants, originating from limbs of the sacred cow and the plants flourished after evil kill the cow. 55 types of cereals and 12 types of medicinal herbs all are of the above-mentioned type (Bandahash, 1990). It is to be noted that flourish of this plant may have another interpretation according to texts of Avesta, explaining flourish of plants under the light of moon (Avesta, 1970). Both interpretations seem wisely for drawing of this plant on Klimwa cup. In lower part of the cart and under its arc, there is a drawing of a man with a bow in one hand and an arrow in his other hand. Considering his cloth and hairstyle, he is a dignified man of Sasanian era. It is to be noted that this man probably is Khosro Parviz himself, because the arc roof above the bow holder is similar to the arc above famous throne of Khosro Parviz. Note that drawing of Izad Mah on top of this arc relates to drawing of moon above famous royal chair of Khosro Parviz (Matini, 1989). As said previously, there is a drawing of Izad Mah on top of this throne, located in center of an arc shape which is similar to cow horn. There are two moon arcs on shoulders of Izad Mah and these two moon arcs show Izad Mah like a cow with two horns at the first sight. This shows that Sasanian metalworkers try to show relation of Izad Mah with cow. There are two winged angles on both sides of the cart which shows throne of Khosro Parviz and these angles use their whips to increase speed of both pairs of male and female cows which pull the cart. On the other hand, it seems that these two angles come from heaven to protect Izad Mah and throne of Khosro Parviz.

Regarding the above detailed explanation of drawings on this cup, it can be said that content of this cup refers to drawing a mythical festival in combination with glory of the reign. It also can be a court player which made a cup in his metalworking workshop. According to notes of Arthur Kristian Sen, on 16th of January, there is a festival in Zoroastrian religion with two names that their pronunciations are not cleared currently. It probably was a compound name and its first word was cow. Origin of this festival goes back to myth of Fereidoon. It is said that on 16th of January, Fereidoon rode a cow and this in the same time with appearance of mythical cows. This shining cow has golden horn and silvery legs. The cow appears for an hour and then disappears as soon and everyone who sees the cow,

his needs will be satisfied. It is said that face of a white cow appeared on mountain. If the year was fertilized, the cow roars twice and for drought year, the cow roar once (Kristian Sen, 2006). It can be said that metalworker of Sasanian court tried to draw king of Sasanian reign (Khosro Parviz) with his throne on the cup according to his hearings of Fereidoon on the cart of Izad Mah but note to the difference that Fereidoon rode a cow but Khosro Parviz is sitting on an arc moon. It is narrated that the cow appears in a shining mode, representing Izad Mah; while in of Sasanian metalworker, the God itself is drawn on this silver cup. Beside all these explanations, drawings of the cup refer to thanksgiving festival of 16th January. This cup certainly was made in Khosro Parviz metalworking workshop to be used in thanksgiving festival of 16th January. It sounds that this cup was made in the same year with thanksgiving festival, because flourish of the above-mentioned plant shows fertilization in this year.

2. Conclusion

Consideration of role of Izad Mah in Zoroastrian religion shows place of this God in satisfying needs of believers. Zoroastrians vow a lot for this God. Also, note that representative and symbol of this God is a cow which has been appeared on different artifacts and myths of this God as an integral part. Drawing of Izad on famous cup of Klimwa, belonging to Sasanian era, is shown beside two pairs of cows and Sasanian king. This drawing relates to features of Izad Mah, referring to satisfying needs of believers. In fact, Klimwa cup is an especial cup made for Sasanian king to be used in thanksgiving festivals in fertilized years. This cup insists to show Khosro Parviz era, faraway from drought.

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