



از هنی تا کیدین-هوترن فرزند کورلوش: نگاهی تازه به کاسه ارجان کیومرث علی‌زاده

چکیده

در پاییز سال ۱۳۶۱ خورشیدی در جریان ساخت و ساز جاده در نزدیکی سد مارون در بهبهان به طور تصادفی یک مقبره مربوط به دوره عیلام نو کشف شد که بعدها از آن با عنوان مقبره ارجان یاد می‌شود. از این مقبره واقع در ۱۰ کیلومتری شهر بهبهان اشیاء با ارزش متعددی به دست آمده که از آن میان می‌توان به کاسه ارجان اشاره کرد. مقاله حاضر با تأکید بر نقوش قسمت دوم بخشی از پروژه در حال انجام در مورد کاسه ارجان است. بررسی‌ها نشان می‌دهد که در قسمت دوم کاسه ارجان ما با یک مراسم قربانی سروکار داریم که در پژوهش‌ها و طرح‌های پیشین ناشناخته مانده بود. مقاله حاضر همچنین تلاش کرده تا ارتباط میان این مراسم قربانی را با نقوش برجسته عیلامی در کول فرح به ویژه نقش برجسته هنی نشان دهد. این یافته‌ها ضمن نشان دادن پیوندهای فرهنگی و آیینی که با تصاویر آکروبات‌ها، نوازندگان و مراسم قربانی روی کاسه تقویت می‌شود، درک ما را از مراسم‌های مذهبی در دوره عیلام نو روشن‌تر می‌کند.

واژگان کلیدی: مقبره ارجان، کیدین-هوترن، هنی، کاسه ارجان.

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From Hanni to Kidin-Hutran the son of Kurluš: a new look into the Arjān bowl*

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Abstract

In the autumn of 1982, a Neo-Elamite tomb, later identified as the “Arjān tomb,” was accidentally discovered during road construction near the Mārūn dam in Behbahān, Iran. This tomb, located approximately 10 km north of modern Behbahān, yielded significant archaeological materials, including the Arjān bowl. This paper focuses on the scenes depicted in the second register of the Arjān bowl, a subject of ongoing research. Recent investigations have revealed the presence of a previously unnoticed sacrifice event within this register. Additionally, this study explores the connections between the sacrifice ceremony depicted on the Arjān bowl and the Elamite rock reliefs at Kul-e Farah, with particular emphasis on that of Hanni. The findings suggest a cultural and ceremonial link, evidenced by the portrayal of acrobats and musicians accompanying the sacrifice on the bowl, thereby enhancing our understanding of Neo-Elamite ceremonial practices**.

Keywords: Tomb of Arjān, Kidin-Hutran, Hanni, Arjān bowl.

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*. This Project is funded by The Sarikhani Centre of Elamite Studies (CSEE) of the École Pratique des Hautes Études. This paper results from a larger project on the Arjān bowl, which will eventually be published in a monograph format including new line drawings. A preliminary version of this paper was presented to the *Ninth European Conference of Iranian Studies (ECIS 9)*, Berlin, 9-13 September 2019 and in the *Forschungskolloquium* on 21 June 2022, in the Institute of Ancient Near Eastern Studies, Freie Universität Berlin. The author would like to thank Wouter F. M. Henkelman and Mark B. Garrison for their comments on an earlier version of this manuscript. I am also grateful to Mark B. Garrison for granting me the permission to use the seal images from the Persepolis Fortification Project in this paper. The current analysis is based on the new photos of the Arjān bowl. The author had the chance to travel to Iran during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2021 and photograph the Arjān bowl, which remains out of view in the repository of the National Museum of Iran. The photos are taken by a Nikon camera d850 with a macro lens of 105 mm by Nimā Fakoorzādeh. My sincere gratitude also goes to Dr Jebrael Nokandeh, the director of the National Museum of Iran, Dr Yousef Hassanzādeh, head of the research centre of the National Museum, and Mrs Ninā Rezāe, the curator of the Arjān collection, who kindly facilitated the procedure for me to photograph the bowl.

** Following Towhidi and Khalilian, Álvarez-Mon (2010: pl. 3) also tried to pin down the location of the Arjān tomb on the bank of Mārūn river, however, the scale seems wrong; obviously it must be in m not km and the map also should be rotated about 90° clockwise. The location of the Arjān tomb has already been pin down by Gian Pietro Basello (map 1). I thank him for sharing his critical comments about Álvarez-Mon's map.

Introduction

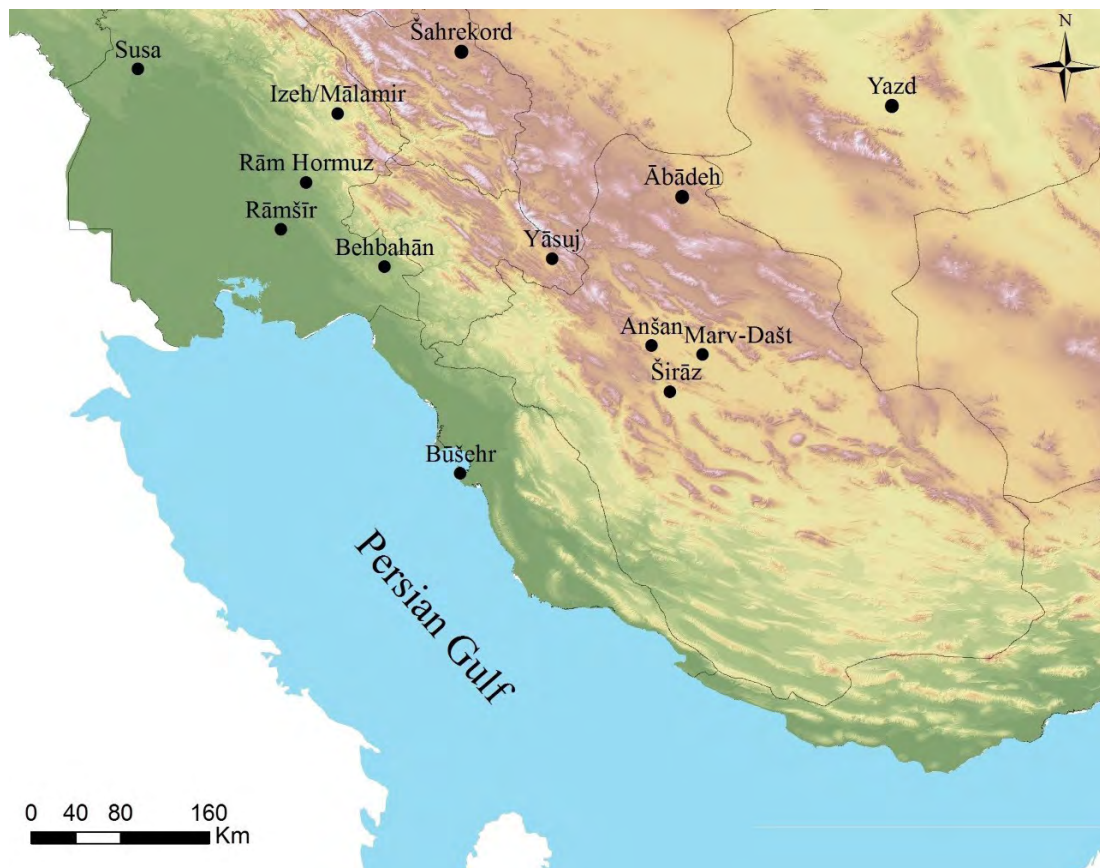
In autumn 1982, a Neo-Elamite tomb was found by chance during the construction of a road leading to the Mārūn dam in Behbahān. According to the initial report of Towhidi and Khalilian (1983: 233), to provide for adobe and make a level ground to install the concrete batching plants, the driver of the bulldozer of “Jihād of Construction” (Jahād-e Sāzandegī) was working on the bank of Mārūn river, about 10 km north of modern Behbahān. There, he found a cavity which was later identified as a Neo-Elamite tomb containing important archaeological materials. Subsequently, the tomb has become known as the “Arjān tomb.” In the maps prepared in 1983, the stone-walled chamber of the tomb is located on the bank of the Mārūn river, southwest of the Mārūn dam, and close to the modern Šohadā’s dike (the dike of martyrs) (ibid. 233 maps 1-3) (maps 1-2).

The deposits of the tomb quickly became the object of several studies, mostly focusing on the acculturation between Elamites and Persians in the Zagros’ southern foothills. These

were aimed, *inter alia*, at analyzing one of the most significant and equivocal objects of the tomb, the Arjān bowl (figs. 1-2). Study of this object has taken place against the background of the ascending view that the Elamite highlands and the southern Zagros foothills played a pivotal role in the emergence of what would eventually become the Persian empire.

The Arjān Bowl

The Arjān bowl measures 43.5 cm in diameter and is 8.5 cm deep (Vatandust 1988: 88). It contains five concentric registers around a sixteen-petalled rosette. There is also an inscription in Neo-Elamite reading as “^{DIŠ}ki-din hu-ut-ra-an DUMU kur-lu-iš-na/Kidin-Hutran the son of Kurluš” (Vallat 1984: 1; Henkelman 2003: 185-186 fn. 12). In the papers by Towhidi and Khalilian (1983) and Alizadeh (1985), at a time that the bowl was not treated yet by conservators, the importance of the bowl as an invaluable object in the field of Elamite-Persian studies remained unnoticed. Thanks to the drawing by Vatandust, it was in 1988 that the



Map 1. Topographical map of south and southwest Iran (Map courtesy of Karim Veysi).



Map 2. The location of the Arjān tomb, Behbahān (Google Map).



Fig. 1. Arjān bowl (Photo: Kiumars Alizadeh).

Arjān bowl came to the attention of the academic environment. The first attempt to clarify the importance of the Arjān bowl's scenes made by Sarraf in 1990, however, remained unsuccessful. Several other scholars also examined the bowl: Majidzadeh (1992), Álvarez-Mon (2004, 2010, 2021), Stronach (2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2005), and Jacobs and Rollinger (2020). Despite variation in some details, it is generally accepted that the registers (V-I) show the following scenes: hunting, drinking feast (V), a '(mock)-battle,' an enthroned king outside of a fort, date palms, marshlands, guards (IV), king and his official ranks, a procession of tribute-bearers (III), a banquet, dancing and musicians, acrobats, a (royal) kitchen preparing food for the guests (II), and alternating lions and bulls (I)¹.

This is not the place to recall and analyze all details seen in each register; the focus of this

paper will only be on register II. It is (widely) accepted that it depicts two parts of an inner-space banquet: 1) musicians, acrobats, and 2) a kitchen preparing food for the king and his guests.

The narrative in register II contrasts dramatically with the hieratic and formal organization of the tribute scene. Register II opens a window onto a lively informal party characterized by the almost total absence of a central focus. Instead, our attention drifts from the preparation of food and performances by musicians, dancers, and acrobats to a loosely arranged central event. Amid the display of a coordinated feast for the senses and panoply of sounds and smells, a cup bearer, the most trusted and loyal servant of the ruler, approaches the seated king while pouring a liquid into a bowl (Álvarez-Mon 2004: 224; idem 2010: 136)².

1. For the description of the bowl, see Álvarez-Mon 2004, 2010, and recently Wicks 2021.

2. Like Álvarez-Mon (2004: 224; 2010: 136), a group of scholars has interpreted the scenes in register II as a feast and a kitchen wherein the crew is preparing food for the enthroned king and his guests (Vatandust 1988: 96; Sarraf 1990: 26; Majidzadeh 1992: 133; Jacobs and Rollinger 2020: 475).

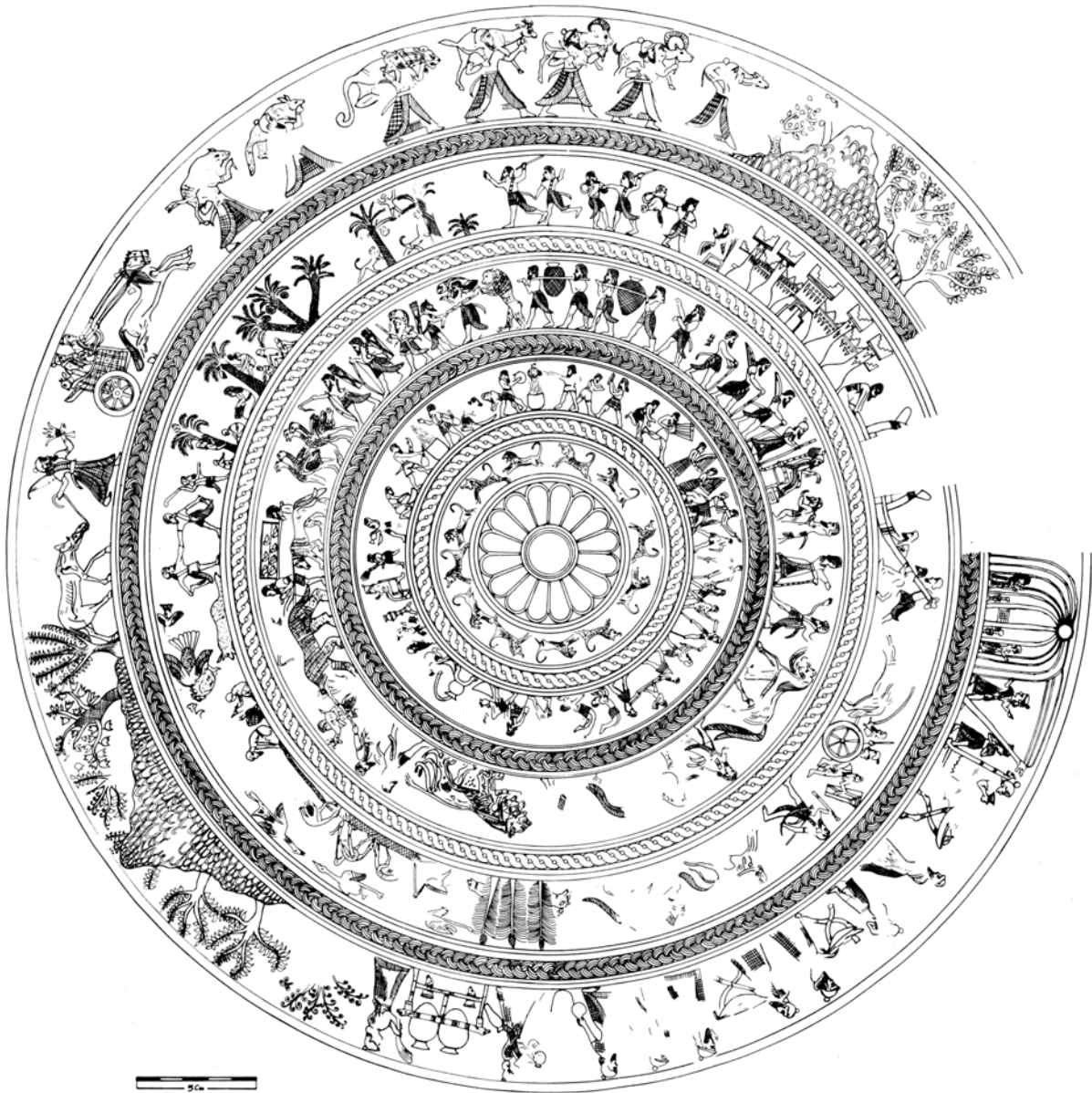


Fig. 2. The line drawing of Arjān bowl by Vatandust (after Majidzadeh 1992: 132).

It should be noted that the interpretations of the bowl's scenes are conjectural and careful treatment is always needed. Reviewing register II, the opportunity has arisen now to offer a new reading and modify the conventional view. But before going any further, a few words by way of introduction are necessary. For most commentators, it is evident that there is a close link between the Arjān bowl and Cypro-Phoenician metalworks; thus, it has been suggested that the bowl is "an excellent example of Phoenician art" and, despite "typical Assyrian themes and details," "in basic syntax and stylistic approach" is Phoenician (Majidzadeh 1992: 142). It is this matter that needs more clarification.

According to *The Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms*, the syntax is "the ordering of words, phrases and clauses in the structure of sentences: the 'left-to-right' principle of linguistic structure" (Childs and Fowler 2006: 233). It is also stated that "painting is language-like because it shares with written languages the notion of syntax" (Carter 1976: 112). Following this definition, Majidzadeh's reading of the imagery indicates that a set of rules, principles, and settings betrays a strong Phoenician influence. This reading, therefore, does not allow us to see the Arjān bowl as a faithful copy of the Phoenician examples. Comparing its local atmosphere and exceptional size with Phoenician



Fig. 3. The line drawing of a Phoenician bowl, now in the Louvre Museum, Paris (after Markoe 1985: 328).

examples (two times larger), it is reasonable to infer that the Arjān bowl is a local work, made somewhere in the southwestern Zagros yet affected by Phoenician bowls in both syntax and style (Majidzadeh 1992: 142; Stronach 2005: 185; Álvarez-Mon 2004: 208-210; 2010: 123-124; Jacobs and Rollinger 2020: 471-74).

The Cypro-Phoenician bowls were treated carefully by Markoe in 1985. In his book, different aspects of bowls, including technique, format, iconography, motif, narrative, and adaptation, have been analyzed (Markoe 1985). Regarding this *corpus* which displays a wealth of iconography and format, several points should be highlighted:

- judging by well-preserved examples, Phoenician bowls are decorated with a central focal point, mostly a rosette, but geometric patterns, human, horse, and bull, are also attested.

- if there is a register showing alternating animals, it always stands close to the centre; in Phoenician bowls, alternating bulls hold the highest frequency, sometimes accompanied or replaced by a stag, horse, lion, and avian species.

- Phoenician bowls often contain two segments: central point and alternating animals (sometimes depicted in two or three registers); however, there also exist samples in which various scenes are depicted: monkey hunt episode, chariot hunt, city siege, military procession, pastoral and agricultural scenes, and banquet feast. As far as I can see, these scenes always are preceded by alternating animals (if available) and a central point.

- there is another motif which Markoe identified as “votive procession.” The votive procession scene occurs on a total of twelve known Phoenician bowls, often in its entirety,



Fig. 4. Silver bowl from Praeneste, Villa Giulia, Rome (after Markoe 1985: 278).

occasionally in excerpted form only (ibid. 56; cf. Tubb 2003: 122-125). Three out of twelve samples in Markoe's list (Cr 7, Cr 11, Cy 6) are fragmentary; it is impossible to speculate about their "central figure" and "alternating animals" (ibid. 56-58, 238-9, 252-3). Cy 3, G 3, and U 6 contain two parts: a central figure (Cy 3: a lotus; G 3: eight-pointed geometric star surrounded by eight six-petalled flowers; U 6: a lotus) and a votive procession.

Of particular importance in the context of the present discussion are the probable votive procession in G 8 (fig. 3) and U 7. G 8 is a bronze bowl reportedly from Sparta, now in the Louvre Museum (AO 4702). It contains two registers separated by a cable band, decorated with a rosette medallion at the centre. The first register depicts a file of six bulls moving clockwise. The second register shows a "bilateral votive procession toward an enthroned goddess. Approaching the goddess from behind is

a procession of four female musicians, three with the lyre and one with the tambourine. Behind them, facing in the opposite direction is a file of seven female dancers, their hands joined. Before the seated goddess stands an altar surmounted by victual offerings. To the right of the altar is a priestess or officiant of some sort, followed by a second altar or an offering table. To the right of this fixture is a procession of three female votaries carrying various offerings (unidentifiable)" (ibid. 207-208).

U 7 is a silver bowl of unknown provenance, now in the Cleveland Museum of Art (no. 47.491). Like G 8, it contains a figural medallion and two registers. The central figure shows two confronted female dancers. In the second register, five galloping ibexes are moving clockwise, and one of them is attacked from the rear by a lion. As noted by Markoe (1985: 218), the first register deals with a bilateral procession of female votaries converging on a ritual basin or fountain.

I would like to mention another Phoenician bowl, despite variation in pictorial syntax, which can be helpful for our discussion. E 2 is a silver bowl from Praeneste, now in the Villa Giulia, Rome (no. 61656) (fig. 4). Like G 8 and U 7, it contains two registers. The central medallion is figural scene combat, and the outer second register is surrounded by a serpent. In the words of Markoe (1985: 191), the second register “is an episodic narrative representing the exploits of a king on a journey from a walled city, illustrated in nine consecutive scenes.” A king aims at a stag and then skins it (Güterbock 1957: 69-70; Brown 1992: 13). In a narrative sequence, the king is depicted sitting on a throne with a canopy and footstool. His right hand is raised in front of his face and holds a round-shaped object. There are two high four-footed(?) objects before the king. The first one seems to be a stand topped by a “high bowl with ladle just beneath the crescent circle of sun and moon with the crescent on the left” (Hopkins 1965: 29). There is no question about the second object since the curved flames clearly indicate a fire stand. Furthermore, a winged deity hovers over the king, the offering table, and the fire altar. Perhaps the king makes offerings to this entity (ibid.).

The Phoenician bowls just described following the same syntax despite variations in some details. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in Markoe’s book. Writing on ritual procession scenes in Phoenician bowls, he points out the following:

A number of observations can be made about the procession as a genre scene. For the great majority of examples (...), the subject is clearly a ceremonial or votive procession in honor of a goddess, exclusively involving female participants. The goddess, seated upon her throne, is the recipient of a variety of food offerings (fruits, cakes, game, etc.) that are placed (under the head priestess’s supervision) before her on a tripodic offering table or on an altar (...). On several of the bowls, the food is accompanied by a variety of liquid offerings conveyed in various receptacles (Markoe 1985: 57-58).

He also writes,

The scene [votive procession] in its unbridged form typically consists of the following elements: a seated or enthroned goddess (or priestess) holding a lotus and a phiale or pomegranate, situated before a tripodic offering table or altar; a priestess alone or at the head of a procession of offering bearers; a file of musicians approaching the goddess from behind; and a chain of dancers with hands linked. Sometimes there is a secondary four-legged table with vessels upon it. All the participants are female (ibid. 56)³.

Given that the syntax of the two registers of the Arjān bowl is closely comparable to these Phoenician examples, i.e., register II immediately follows a register with an animal file and contains elements suggesting a votive procession, perhaps we should consider a related meaning yet adopted to local contexts.

Register II

Pictorial Content

The current analysis is based on the new photos of the Arjān bowl. The author had the chance to travel to Iran during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2021 and photograph the Arjān bowl, which remains out of view in the repository of the National Museum of Iran. The new photos gave the author the chance to compare Vatandust’s drawing, published in “Athar” quarterly journal in 1988, with the original engraving on the bowl. Comparing the drawing with photos of the original bowl suggests that one should use Vatandust’s drawing, which remains valuable, with caution, especially regarding register II.

Zone A

Thirty-eight human figures are distinguishable in register II⁴. In what I will call zone A, an enthroned king is depicted, wearing an ankle-length garment and a circular-knobbed headdress (fig. 5). It seems he holds his right

3. For female priests in Phoenician art, see Ackerman 2013.

4. The reason behind dividing the scenes in register II in Arjān bowl into different zones comes from this fact that there are several groups in the ceremony event in register II. It is not to show that they belong to different events.



Fig. 5. Zone A in register II (the enthroned kings and his courtiers) (Photo: Kiumars Alizadeh).



Fig. 6. Zone B in register II (Photo: Kiumars Alizadeh).

hand in front of his mouth, holding a cup or flower in his hand. His left hand is lying on his leg or the handle of the throne, and there are somewhat discernible remnants of something in his hand. Behind the enthroned king, two attendants are illustrated. One in front carries a flywhisk, and the one in the back has a jug in his right hand and a bowl in his left hand. There is a tripod object before the king, consisting of

three parts: base, shaft with a semi-circular section, and a vessel-like object on top. To the left of this object, poorly preserved, two men squat/sit on the ground. Like the enthroned king, the first man probably wears a circular-knobbed headdress. Behind him, the second person is shown with a headdress, but there is no sign of a protuberance on its top. Despite the difficulty of reading this passage, it is evident that they

hold their hands in front of their mouths, carrying a cup or a flower like the enthroned king does. These details are, too, missing in Vatan-dust's drawing.

Zone B

Further to the left of the enthroned king's entourage, there is a kneeling man with a vessel before him (fig. 6). This is a jar with a rather wide mouth installed on a tripod(?) pedestal to his left. An arched element, apparently a trink-rohr-like instrument, emerges out of the jar and flows into the bowl before the man to the right. The kneeling man appears to place his left hand in the vessel or grasp its rim. He holds the ending part of the curved object with his right hand. It is possible to argue that it was used to fill the vessel. To the left, three other individuals are shown. The first man wears a short kilt, bends forward and pours out the contents of a jar into a hemispherical basin. The second person also wears a short kilt and carries a bucket-shaped object in his left hand. He also holds a jug in his right hand. The third figure is poorly preserved, the upper body missing; for the moment, it is not feasible to determine his correlation with ei-



Fig. 7. Zone C (Acrobats in register II)
(Photo: Kiumars Alizadeh).

ther the scene to the left or right. He also carries bucket-shaped objects in both hands.

Zone C

There is a group of fourteen acrobats on the right of zone C, facing toward the enthroned

king (fig. 7). The first two acrobats, dressed in short kilt, are shown in handstand position. Five acrobats follow. Four of them hold a platform or even two sticks while the fifth one stands on it/them. The last also carries an object, probably a musical instrument. Only two people were distinguishable, even in the most recent drawing by Álvarez-mon (2021: 134 fig. 2). At the beginning, this gave me the impression that two of them are holding a rope or a narrow beam while the third person displayed his skills by engaging in an acrobatic routine. After closer inspection, I noticed that the Arjān bowl's artist had depicted four persons standing side by side, giving us a three-dimensional visualisation of the action that was taking place in this area of the bowl⁵. Farther to the left, there are two groups of three figures. Each group consists of a stilt walker, and two acrobats using sticks to assist him. Finally, a man at the left end of the acrobat group overlaps with the musicians (zone D) and performs a backhand spring⁶.

Zone D

Beyond the acrobats, we see a group of six musicians: one with a lute, one with a pipe, two with harps, one with a lyre, and one with an unknown crescent-shaped instrument (fig. 8). There are two other individuals to the left of the musicians. Even farther to the left, a man in a short kilt raises both hands while holding an object. It is difficult to say whether it is a small rounded musical instrument like a tambourine since it is different from the tambourine on the right side in zone E. Before him is a bearded man with short hair, reaching his hands out to the right. The passage is very

5. On 7 November, 2023, I was co-author with Dr Lucia Cerullo of a talk titled "Danzatori, acrobati e musicisti sul piatto metallico della tomba neo-elamita di Arjān (Iran, ca. VII sec. a.C.)" at the conference "La danza nel mondo antico. Dal Mar Mediterraneo al Mar del Giappone," organised by Prof. Dr Simonetta Graziani. A separate work by the present author and Lucia Cerullo will address the acrobats and musicians in register II, focusing on the musical instruments, specifically the use of plectrum (Alizadeh and Cerullo forthcoming).

6. The acrobat band in register II has already been treated in detail by Jacobs and Rollinger (2020), showing its close link with Urartian metal works.



Fig. 8. Zone D (musicians in register II) (Photo: Kiumars Alizadeh).



Fig. 9. Zone E (Photo: Kiumars Alizadeh).

fragile and hard to read, but it can be distinguished that he holds something in his hands (cf. Jacobs and Rollinger 2020: 475-76).

Zone E

Seven men appear in two groups: four are standing, and three are sitting (fig. 9). There are two bearded individuals in short kilt on the right side. A squarish object stands between them, topped by the head of an animal. To the left, two bearded men face each other with a vessel between them. The individual at the left is sitting and places his hands inside the vessel. The one at the right bends over and reaches out his hands to

grasp the rim of the vessel or to put his hands in it, probably. Farther to the left, another group of two armed men stand to either side of a square object. On the left, a third man kneels down and puts his hands in a large low hemispherical bowl. He is probably barefoot.

Discussion

The standing object before the enthroned king

As noted above, an enthroned king in an ankle-length garment is shown with an object resting before him. On the left, two seated figures raise their hands. Due to the lack of de-

tails, the exact type of sitting is not clear; it is possible to be construed as a kneeling posture on both knees, however, a squatting posture should not be ruled out completely. What is clear is that they all raise hands to mouth level, carrying a cup or a flower; the enthroned king raises his right hand, and the seated men raise both(?) hands. In the words of Jacobs and Rollinger (2020: 475), “vor dem Fürsten befindet sich ein Gefäß auf einem Ständer, womöglich ein Räucher-, vielleicht aber auch ein Trinkgefäß.” The object deserves more attention since its importance has almost been overlooked until now. Judging by the new photos, it contains a tripod base, a cylindrical stem, and a rather long shaft with a circular section, topped by a vessel-like object, probably a saucer. Another dish is set on the saucer, however, a pomegranate on top is also possible. The shaft is decorated with three rings spaced almost regularly along with it. As for its nature, there is no reason to doubt that it is a candelabrum rather than a fire stand or other similar types (cf. Wigand 1912: pls. I-IV). A candelabrum from the Arjān tomb and “five further stands of simpler designs” from a Neo-Elamite tomb in Jubaji, Rāmhormuz (Shishegar 2015: 313 figs. b4.2.13-16, colour fig. b4.2.13; Wicks 2019: 135) are known. Despite variation in diameter and decoration, several identical Urartian samples, dated back to the first millennium B.C.E., are known, of which a bronze candelabrum at Toprak-Kale has drawn the greatest attention (Piotrovskii 1967: 34-36 fig. 20; Seidl 2004: 60-61). This bronze candelabrum (113 cm high) was discovered during the German Expedition from Toprak-Kale, in a building situated south of the temple of Haldi in 1898 (Azarpay 1968: 62-63 pls. 47-49). As described by Merhav (1991: 263-264 fig. 10a), “its narrow, hollow shaft, topped by a saucer, is decorated with five foliated rings spaced almost regularly along the shaft. The tripod’s arched legs are typified by a slightly flattened upper part and a lower part in the shape of bovine hooves which emerge from the open jaws of a lion” It carries an inscription stating that it belongs to Rusa king of Urartu, probably Rusa II son of Argišti (ca. 673-654 B.C.E.) or Rusa III son of

Erimena (second half of the seventh century B.C.E.) (ibid. 264; cf. Azarpay 1968: 62-65). To this group of candelabra should be added that of Menua (810-786 B.C.E.), consisting of a tripod base with three couchant lion statuettes doveled to each leg, a cylindrical stem, and a wide/flattened shaft decorated with six foliated rings (Wartke 1993: 154-155 pl. 84; Merhav 1991: 264; Seidl 2004: 60-61 pl. 3; Álvarez-Mon 2010: 149-150).

It is stated that candelabra may have served both secular and cultic purposes since they are found in citadel storerooms, palaces, temples, and tombs. In other words, they probably served as a temple and palace furniture, a type of utensil for illumination and ritual purposes (Wicks 2019: 135-137 pl. 68; Álvarez-mon 2010: 148; Merhav 1991: 267). Regarding its ritualistic function, I would like to mention a Neo-Assyrian modelled-style stamp seal on which a standing male worshiper faces a tall candelabrum. The male worshiper is bearded, wears an ankle-length garment, right hand raised, slightly cupped, thumb separate, facing to the right. The candelabrum consists of a tripod base, a high shaft, probably decorated with eight rings, topped by a “shallow plate with a lamp in it” (Ward 1909: 121 pl. xxxvii no. 286; Porada 1948: pl. cxx no. 796; Merhav 1991: 265-266 fig. 13; cf. Jakob-Rost 1975: 72-73 no. 241)⁷. This object and similar ones are related to Nusku, the god of fire and fire itself (Seidl 1989: 128-130, 234; Merhav 1991: 256-266; Álvarez-Mon 2018: 32). In Akkadian texts, Nusku is the courier of the gods, is invoked as a protective and beneficent deity, and is invoked as the “king of the nighttime,” “illuminator of darkness,” nemesis of the “malignant demon,” “protective guardian,” “lord of wisdom,” “courier of dreams,” and protector of the sleeping people (Foster 2005: 717-720).

The Arjān bronze candelabrum was among those objects found on the floor of the tomb

7. The same object is also presented on the *narû* of Marduk-zākir-šumi (mid-ninth century B.C.E.), now in the Louvre museum, on which a candelabrum is provided on the right side of two standing individuals (Thureau-Dangin 1919 pl. 1; Slanski 2003: 157 fig. 9).

and outside of the bronze coffin (Towhidi and Khalilian 1983: 234 figs. 21-22; Alizadeh 1985: 49 figs. 2b and 5), which may imply that it could be used as a symbolic sacred illuminator utensil in the tomb (cf. Towhidi and Khalilian 1983: 276 fig. 63; Wicks 2019: 135-137). The place of the candelabrum in register II of the Arjān bowl and the bronze deposits outside of the coffin may speak of the ritualistic function of light within Neo-Elamite ceremonies and funerary practices.

“Trinkrohr” in register II

Turning to the three attendants on the left (zone B), according to Sarraf (1990: 27), the kneeling man was responsible for filling the vessel on the ground through a pipe, the second person in a short kilt fills the jug, and, carrying a vessel, the third person serves the beverage. It is also stated that “Weiter links steht unter anderem Trinkbares bereit, wie ein großes Gefäß auf einem Untersatz erkennbar macht, aus dem ein großes Trinkrohr herabhängt” (Jacobs and Rollinger 2020: 475). Firstly, the posture of the middle person goes against Sarraf’s suggestion since it more likely shows a man trying to pour the liquid out of a jug into a vessel. Secondly, whatever its nature, the third man carries (a) pail(s) equipped with a handle, which does not seem relevant to serving beverages in a banquet. Finally, the possible existence of a “Trinkrohr” deserves more comments.

Drinking through a curved pipe is a principal characteristic of a group of cylindrical seals from the early third millennium B.C.E. till the Neo-Assyrian period. Several examples are introduced in a study by Teissier (1984) on the cylindrical seals from the Marcopoli collection. They can be categorized into five types: 1) a seated figure drinks from a vessel through a drinking pipe (nos. 209, 336, 352, 594), 2) two seated figures drink through pipes from a vessel (no. 346), 3) a seated figure holds a drinking pipe from a vessel (nos. 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359), 4) a vessel with drinking pipe before a seated figure (no. 360), and 5) two figures sit on either side of a vessel with several drinking pipes in it (no. 345). I also would like to mention a bronze cup in the Bröckelschen

collection, acquired from Chešmeh-ye Sefid (white spring) in Iran, in which two seated figures drink through pipes from a vessel on a stand. The two seated figures drink through curved pipes and hold flagon-like objects in their hands. There is also a sun disk hovering between them. The left side of the cup is ornamented with a procession of musicians, dancers, and two “Faustkämpfer” (Calmeyer 1966: 93-95 fig. 1). A pail from Lorestān also shows two seated figures drinking through two curved pipes from a big jar while a crescent in disk hovers between them (ibid. 96 fig. 3). Calmeyer grouped Lorestān bronze beakers into 14 genres. Group A shares identical features with the bronze cup and pail. Calmeyer (1965: 8-17) took the scenes in group A as a banquet, showing seated individuals, musicians, fly whisk holders, male or female guests, servants, and tables with food and drinking vessels on top. The beakers in group A are of particular interest since six out of eleven (A 1, A 2, A 5, A 7, A 9, A 10) contain a vase with a skewed stream-like object, frequently identified as “Saugrohr” (ibid.; Amiet 1976: 43-45, 51-52 figs. 78-79)⁸.

As for the Arjān bowl, it is difficult to distinguish a “Trinkrohr” (cf. Sarraf 1990: 27). It is clear from the very rich surviving materials showing a curved pipe that these figures on bronze artefacts from Iran (cup, pail, and beakers) should be differentiated in some respects from that of Arjān bowl. As for the bronze cup and pail from western Iran, the seated figures drink through a pipe from a vessel, while in seals from the Marcopoli collection, the drinking pipe is shown in three contexts: once the seated figure drinks through a pipe; once the seated figure takes the curved pipe, bringing it close to his/her mouth, but does not drink; once the vase with a curved pipe is not positioned before the seated figure, but is separated by a standing object, a table, or a human person. The latter is also the case for bronze beakers in which the seated figures hold a cup, and the vessel with a curved pipe is inaccessible to him/her. In

8. For a critical view on their style, provenance, and authenticity, see Muscarella 1974.



Fig. 10. The square object in register II of the Arjān bowl (Photo: Kiumars Alizadeh).

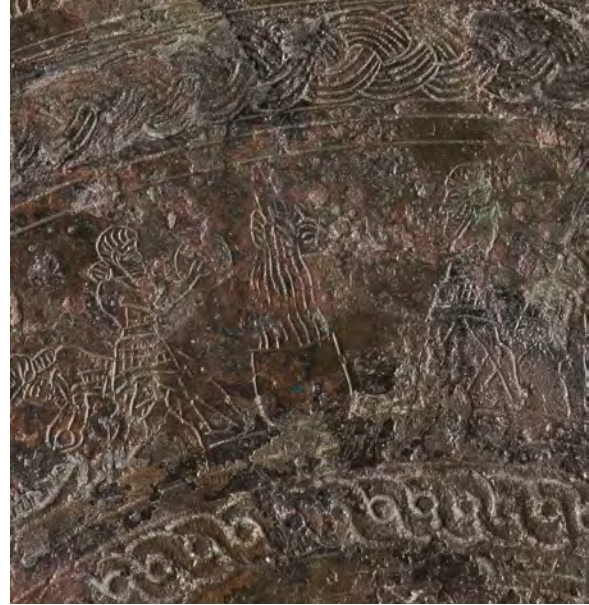


Fig. 11. The square object topped by an animal head in register II in the Arjān bowl (Photo: Kiumars Alizadeh).

contrast, on the Arjān bowl, a jar with a rather wide mouth is installed on a tripod(?) pedestal while an arched streamline moves out of the jar and pours into the vessel before the man to the right. Despite the poor preservation, the kneeling person seems to put his hand on the vessel on the ground or grab its rim; there is no sign of drinking through a pipe. He also holds the ending part of the curved-shaped instrument. The termination of the arched streamline in register II has a special form. In Vatandust's drawing, it is decorated with an animal head, most probably a lion head; however, due to the damage in this part of the bowl, it is very difficult to distinguish a lion-head termination. Majidzadeh (1992: 137 fig. 3d) misread this part of the bowl by confusing the hand of the kneeled person as the second part of a bifurcated ending. One may also notice the size of the curved pipe, larger than the pipes in the scenes on the cup, pail, beakers, and glyptic, thus allowing a large amount of liquid to flow into the tube and fill the bowl before the kneeling human figure in a shorter time; even as a facilitator and accelerator device, to help the individual to suck the water in the tube faster⁹. Thus, we need to discount the likelihood of a "Trinkrohr" in register II.

9. One can also compare this with the animal orchestra

From Hanni to Kidin-Hutran the son of Kurluš

On the right side of the enthroned king, his fly whisk holder and cupbearer, there are two more or less square objects, flanked by standing attendants, which have been interpreted as "dampfende kessel" in the royal kitchen of the king (zone E) (Jacobs and Rollinger 2020: 475) (figs. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13). There are many problems in accepting this reading. The first problematic issue is the arrangement of the scenes in register II. It is stated that a group of people is preparing food behind the enthroned king. A second group of the kitchen's crew is also identified to the left of the enthroned king, preparing drinks for the guests (Sarraf 1990: 27; cf. Jacobs and Rollinger 2020: 475). A kitchen is a place for preparing, cleaning, boiling, frying, baking, stewing, and roasting. Handling all this entails a separate building and should not be so close to the king's residence, let alone his throne since the smell, noise, and smoke would not be suitable for the king and his guests (Razmjou 2010: 233). The Arjān bowl is not a photograph but a condensed and idealized image. Nevertheless, the close proximity of the king and kitchen would be strange. Two of these

on a relief from Tall Halaf, where a seated figure hold a curved pipe (Mirelman 2014: 8 fig. 2).



Fig. 12. The applied line-drawing on Zone E (drawing by Lucia Cerullo).



Fig. 13. Detail of the sacrificial ceremony on Register II of the Arjān bowl (drawing by Lucia Cerullo).

individuals are armed, carrying daggers before the square structure; “it is difficult to believe that armed kitchen attendants would have been allowed to enter the private palace of the king” (Razmjou 2010: 233). Furthermore, how would the king and his guests have luxuriated in all delight and happiness presented by the acrobats and the musicians while a kitchen and its crew were intervening between them? A closer look also reveals that there is no sign of a dining and dining area, and any comestible and steaming cauldron are lacking. Instead, the scenes are more focusing on the act of performing. For this reason, we need to re-read the square objects in register II of the Arjān bowl.

In the group on the left, a man bends his body forward and puts his left leg forward. He raises his right hand and holds it in front of his mouth. The gesture can be described as follows: “hand, slightly cupped with palm turned toward the head, raised on flexed arm angled out away from head” (Goldman 1990: 46 fig. 2 no. 8). A dagger is under the belt on the left side of his body. He carries an object, probably an animal leg, consisting of a rear cannon, hock, and thigh, in his left hand, reaching it out in the direction of the square object. The second man raises his right hand but in a different gesture: “hand with fingers and thumb extended together, wrist flexed with hand an-

gled toward that which is acknowledged” (ibid. fig. 2 no. 6). He puts his left hand backwards, and, like the first man, probably carries an animal leg. This part of the bowl is very damaged, and exactly what he holds in his left hand is unclear. He is also armed, carrying a dagger under his belt. Regarding the striations over the square object, I am inclined that they are nothing but flames. Arguments against steam are the shape, the setting and the lack of firewood under the structure (cf. Hrouda 1965: 72 pl. 18 nos. 5-7). As noted above, both men on the left and right sides of the square object are armed, which seems indiscreet, letting armed kitchen attendants be so close to the residence and presence of the king (cf. Razmjou 2010: 233). Additionally, the hand gestures of two standing figures disprove the presence of any steaming cauldron. In other words, the hand gestures of two standing figures in register II are more of a symptom of reverence or salutation toward the fire atop the square object than two cooks flanking a steaming cauldron (figs. 10, 12, 13).

As for the second squarish object, two bearded men in short kilts attend it. The arms of the man at the right are damaged; probably,

he extends both hands in the form of praying diagonal arms towards the square object. He probably holds something in both hands, but due to the very damaged condition of this part of the bowl, it is difficult to identify it. A bearded man in a short kilt is on the left. He wears a short-sleeved garment and holds a circular-shaped object. Despite the unclear context, it is probably a tambourine-like musical instrument that he holds in the left hand and hits the membrane head skin with the right hand. As for wavy lines on top of the square object, again, they are clearly nothing but flames. There is also an object on top of the fire flames. In the drawing prepared by Vatandust, it is rendered as an elliptical object attached to another small rounded object. Thanks to the new photos of this part of the bowl, it is quite evident that what we are dealing with here is actually an animal head. The shape of the horns and the muzzle suggest that it is the head of a big-horn mountain sheep (ram). Now, we have the chance to reconstruct this part. Both arms of the individual on the right side are bent, and, judging by the diagonal form of his hands, one can say that he extends both arms towards the



Fig. 14. The presumed double fire pot/stand close to the KF IV (Photo: Kiumars Alizadeh).

fire flames and the head of the mountain sheep while carrying an unspecified object (figs. 11-13).

As far as I am aware, depicting square objects with flanking attendants like those in the Arjān bowl is not rare in Elamite art. There are some unparalleled Neo-Elamite period contexts which share some interesting similarities. Several Elamite rock reliefs exist in the mountain valley of Izeh/Mālamir in southwest Iran, among them Kul-e Farah I, III, and IV (hereafter KF I-IV) are quite relevant here. KF IV depicts a ‘communal banquet,’ including an enthroned king, weapon bearers, archers, and musicians, on a vertical rock-cliff surface of about 100 sq. m (ca. 17.7 m wide × 6 m high) (Álvarez-mon 2018: 47-58). There is also a “less known double fire altar (or fire bowls) carved in a boulder near Kul-e Farah IV, a sacrificial platform surrounded by a “sacred circle” of boulders (including KF II and III) in the centre of the gorge, and a (natural) basin with a water conduit at its end” (Henkelman 2011: 128; see also de Waele 1973: 41-44; idem 1981: fig. 7; idem; 1989: 32) (fig. 14). De Waele linked this

double fire pot/stand to a group of five priests in KF IV. He suggested that the five priests,

Ce sont les cinq personnages du groupe 1. Ils se distinguent de l’ensemble par leur longue robe exceptionnellement unie et par leurs cheveux rassemblés en un chignon dans la nuque. Ils sont tournés vers un bloc de rocher aménagé en autel du feu (pl. IX. A-B), situé à côté d’eux.

Leur représentation doit vraisemblablement être mise en relation avec cet autel, puisqu’ils se trouvent assez loin, à l’écart de tous les autres personnages de Kūl-e Farah IV, comme si c’était l’autel du feu qui avait précisément déterminé leur emplacement (de Waele 1976: 178-79; see recently Álvarez-mon 2018: 54 fn. 15).

There are many problems in calling these forms fire altars since their shape and setting are not like the common fire altars during the Achaemenid and post-Achaemenid periods. But while I avoid the term ‘fire altar,’ I am still inclined to connect them with sacred fire in its general context. It would be safe to call them stone fire bowl or stone fire stand. As noted



Fig. 15. KF III and the stone monument with a big hollow on top (Photo: Kiumars Alizadeh).

by Garrison (1999: 613), “Fire altar is a term adopted by modern researchers to designate the stand upon which sacred fire was placed. Strictly speaking, the designation “fire altar” is incorrect since the structure was not used to receive a sacrifice, but simply to hold fire for the purposes of veneration, probably contained within a metal or clay bowl.” The hollow forms in the rock at the KF IV are more like modern stone fire bowls; the Elamite priests put fire woods or other burning materials on them during the religious ceremony in the mountain valley of Ayapir. Their placement next to the KF IV suggests a conceptual linkage with the relief. Their shape may also suggest a linkage to the objects on the Arjān bowl in register II. Like the fire bowls close to KF IV, a rather big stone monument close to the mountain and the seasonal river in Kul-e Farah can also be related here; it is possible that it was part of the procession and animal offering in KF III (personal communication with Wouter F.M. Henkelman) (fig. 15). The eastern face of the panel of KF III depicts a group of four individuals in profile at the bottom. Three zebus are present in

the middle, and above the zebus are eighteen horned sheep, orienting to the right (Álvarez-mon 2018: 65-66). A ruler is standing on a podium, a group of people carries him, and a large body of individuals in the procession are also presented at the southern and northern faces of the boulder. Not far from the southern face of the boulder, there is a rather squarish stone monument with a big hollow on top. Nor its dimension nor the function of this stone monument are available in previous publications. Its proximity to KF III cannot be accidental. Its shape suggests that it was probably carved and turned into a squarish object in an earlier time. It is possible that this stone monument carries fire or other offering objects on its top at the time of the actual ceremony. In other words, a standing ruler, a large group of individuals in procession, animals, and this stone monument in the vicinity of the boulder, may suggest that KF III depicts an actual ceremony in the mountain valley of Ayapir. As noted by Álvarez-mon (2018: 65-66), the event in KF III implies a sequence of rituals involving a journey, an organized body of peo-



Fig. 16. The ram heads in Kul-e Farah I, Izeh/Mālamir (Photo: Kiumars Alizadeh).



Fig. 17a. The rock relief of Hanni in Kul-e Farah, Izeh/Mālamir (Photo: Kiumars Alizadeh).

ple (and animals) advancing in a ceremonial manner (a procession), and the possible ascent of a ruler atop a platform. The presence of a raised platform on which a ruler may have stood encapsulates the rationale of the reliefs. By no longer existing as an instrument of transportation and acquiring a transcendent value of its own, it brings an additional symbolic dimension to the ritual. As such it was transformed into a platform of exaltation, enabling the ruler to oversee ritual activities in an open space with fitting solemnity.

I believe the presumed fire stones in KF IV, KF III and those of the Arjān bowl belong to the same context; they were part of an actual event during a ceremony which was once taking place in Elam. More support is also found in the pictorial and written evidence from KF I. The scenes in register II in the Arjān bowl share more similarities with KF I. In the following pages, I will argue that it is probable that the rock relief of KF I and the scenes in the Arjān bowl of Kidin-Hutran, actually belong to the same context in the Neo-Elamite period.

The KF I is sculpted within a rectangular 1.68×1.35 m panel in a vertical niche about 5.50 m above ground level (figs. 17a-b). It depicts two high-rank officials, the upper individual in a short kilt and the lower one in an ankle-length kilt, standing behind the large-scale figure of Hanni, who presides over an animal sacrifice and a fire offering made by a priest. The event takes place against a background of music. Three female musicians are depicted on the right side, standing before Hanni and above the sacrifice scene (Álvarez-mon 2018: 85 pl. 68). The relief also carries a long inscription (EKI 75), reporting Hanni's military operations and performing a sacrifice. The relief itself can be construed as the visual representation of the final part of Hanni's heroic adventure (reported in EKI 75), depicting Hanni with his courtiers while performing a sacrifice to the Elamite gods and his image after all rebels were quelled by him. For this reason, it will be helpful to have a brief look at EKI 75; however, there are many obscurities and hurdles in the current translations of this text. After expressing his gratitude and reverence to the Elamite



Fig. 17b: Close view of the rock relief of Hanni in Kul-e Farah, Izeh/Mālamir (photo: Kiumars Alizadeh).

gods, Hanni introduces himself as the son of Tahhi and *kutur* of Ayapir. He also tells us that in this place, he built his image (*zalmu*) and performed sacrifice before it. EKI 75 also reports that he repressed the insurgent people¹⁰.

This part especially shows an interesting correspondence with register V in the Arjān bowl, where a hunting episode is presented. There, the ruler and his companions are depicted while all carrying live animals on their shoulders, returning from hunting in the mountain and joining a drinking party which takes place in front of a yurt. The king is depicted inside a chariot where two horned animals and a char-

iot driver are also presented. His chariot also follows a suite of seven individuals, each carrying an animal, some of them are horned, on their shoulders (Álvarez-mon 2010: 124-25). The king's heroic adventure in the Arjān bowl finally ends with a ceremony in register II therein he celebrates a feast and performs animal offerings to the gods. Like Kidin-Hutran, the patron of the Arjān bowl, Hanni and the other presented kings in Kul-e Farah also probably went for hunting and then sacrificed the animals to the Elamite gods. There is a sacrificial scene in the lower part of KF I on the right side of Hanni, which gives more credit to this affinity. Four individuals are presented in this part of the relief. Three of them carry two horned animals, most probably, taking them to the fire stand. One of them wears a short kilt

10. For general description of the text and relief, see Stolper 1988; Henkelman 2008: 8-10. *šá-ah-ši-ik-me-me* in EKI 75 is hardly penetrable. Formerly, it was assumed that after defeating his enemies, Hanni went for hunting and captured animals. For this reason, various translations were suggested for *šá-ah-ši-ik-me-me*, however, it is difficult to follow many of these suggestions: "Ziegen?" (Bork 1933-34: 296; cf. idem 1941: 13); "Ziegen, Bergziegen?" (König 1965: 159, 216); "Bergziegen," "Gewiehtier(e)?" (Hinz 1962: 109; EIW 1121); "prisoners or booty?" (Stolper 1988: 277). To Hinz and Koch, "Da das Vorderglied des Wortes zur elam. Wurzel *šá-ah-ši* schnitzen gehört, könnte man an Tiere mit Geweihen denken, da letztere wie geschnitzt wirken; dies bleibt

aber unsicher. Immerhin scheint es sich um Tiere zu handeln" (EIW 1121). The previous translations originate from the notion that *šá-ah-ši-ik-me-me* refers to the slaughtered animals in KF I probably. It is attested two times in Acropole texts from Susa to refer to an administrative position in Neo-Elamite period: S 105 rev. 1-2 and S 134 ob. 8 (PAP ^{BE}*ku-du-ip a-raš šá-ah-ši-ik-ra ... du-iš*). S 59 may also be relevant for it has [*ša*]-*ah-ši-ka* as verb (3rd person singular, conjugation I).

and stands before the fire stand, holding his hands above the fire flames. Three ram carcasses and their heads are also presented (fig. 16). They all have similar horns and muzzles. Their horns are big and very curved and have short muzzles, proving that they are rams but not ewe which have more slender and less curved horns. Rams are best known for their large and curved horns. Their horns even can grow over 90 cm long with a more than 30 cm circumference at the base¹¹.

Also, the relationships of the three kneeling individuals to the whole event in this part of the Arjān bowl, especially their poses and the relationship of these figures to each other and to the objects before them, should not be overlooked (figs. 9, 12, 13). Although they are in a very damaged situation, the traces of some objects inside the bowls before them are still distinguishable, suggesting that what they

11. The carefully carved and smooth space in front of Hanni rock relief in Kul-e Farah may also support the argument that by *tipp-e šalhubah* (EKI 75: 16 *za-al-mu ú-me hu-ut-tah a-ak ti-ī[b]-be šá-al-hu-ba-ah*), Hanni actually indicates an actual event; the animal offering and dedication to the Elamite gods in the valley of Ayapir (figs. 16a-b) (For AE. *tibba*, see Henkelman 2010: 682-84 with references). This platform is 55 cm wide (de Waele 1976: 49), and its right part is broken. One can still imagine that it was once a full-preserved platform. The existence of a small but carefully carved hollow in front of Hanni's feet and the person behind him may also attest to this. The traces of the metal object are still distinguishable, suggesting it was not created naturally. Although the side parts of the relief were probably restored at a later time to protect and prevent further damage, it seems that the proximity of this neglected hollow next to the feet of the people present in KF I is not accidental, and the Elamite word *tibba* in the text explains this well. Without denying that the platform was once used by artisans working on relief, it was probably associated with the religious ceremony in KF I, although this needs further investigation. The horizontal platform (5 x 2 m) in front of the Elamite rock relief in Kurangun, where an actual religious procession was taking place before the Elamite gods on top of a mountain, can support this also. For a bibliography and discussion of the Kurangun open-air sanctuary, see Álvarez-Mon 2018. Verb *šalhubah* can also mean "to order, to command." In an inscription from Šilhak-Inšušinak I in the Middle-Elamite period (EKI 45), it collocates with *haštu* ("tomb"): "May I order the *haštu* for you" (Tavernier 2013: 477). One can still argue that "to order" can also convey a sense of 'offering' and 'dedication.' For previ-

are doing is actually part of the animal sacrifice in the register II. The barefoot figure on the left side kneels down and evidently puts both his hands inside the large low hemispherical bowl and above a rather unspecified round-shape object. On his right, two bearded men face each other with a vessel between them. The left individual sits and places his hands inside the vessel. The one at the right probably bends over and reaches out his hands to grasp the vessel's rim or to put his hands in it. The traces of an object inside the bowl are still present. Evidently, these all together illustrate what Elamite religious practices in the valley of Ayapir or southern Zagros foothills during the Neo-Elamite period looked like, however, it is still regretful that it is hardly penetrable to identify what happened in the Arjān bowl with one of the Elamite religious practices attested in the Kul-e Farah or Elamite Royal Inscriptions.

Before making the concluding remarks, I also would like to mention some evidence from the Achaemenid period, which shares interesting aspects with the presented discussion here. Several seals preserved at Persepolis Elamite archives may show similar objects like square objects in the Arjān bowl. Garrison (2017) calls them the stepped and the tower structures. There are several scenes in which seated and standing figures flank these structures. Here I do not attempt to identify the square objects in the Arjān bowl, specifically with Persepolis' stepped and tower structures. Still, the general 'idea' and composition could make for an interesting comparison as another way to show that the scenes in the Arjān bowl (register II) do not depict a royal kitchen but a ceremony and an animal sacrifice episode. In other words, I do not intend to argue that the square structures in register II and the stepped structures in Persepolis glyptic attest to the same religious practices in

ous literature on *šalhubah*: Sayce 1885: 685, 691, 696, 718, 744 ("I collected, I assembled, I ordered, I completed, accomplished"); Hüsing 1914: 463 ("bitten"); Labat 1951: 29 ("prier"); König 1965: 99 fn. 8, 216 ("schmücken, herrlich gestalten!"); Grilhot-Susini: 1971: 234 fn. 31 ("j'ai voué?"); idem 1977: 19 ("été consacrée par moi"); idem 1983: 214 ("j'ai sanctifié?"); *EIW* 1113, 1126 ("ich gebot, gebietend, verfügungsberechtigt"); Tavernier 2013: 477; idem 2021: 1070 ("to command, to order").



Fig. 18. PT5 0971 (Schmidt 1957: 45, Pl. 16; Garrison 2017: 140-41).

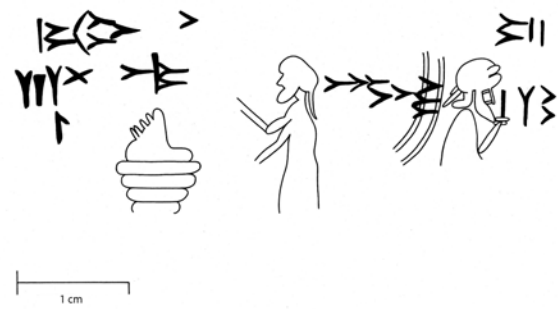


Fig. 19. PFS 0790 (Courtesy of the Persepolis Seal Project and the Persepolis Fortification Archive Project).

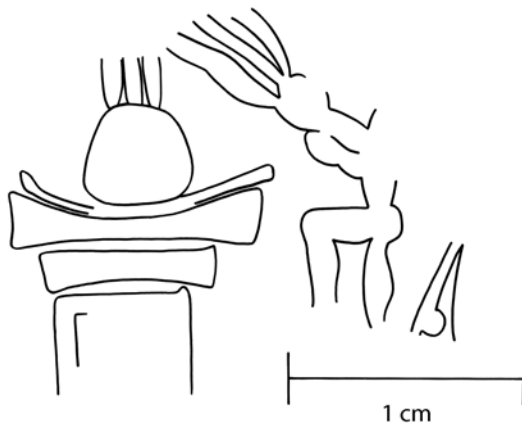


Fig. 20. PFUTS 0154 (Courtesy of the Persepolis Seal Project and the Persepolis Fortification Archive Project).

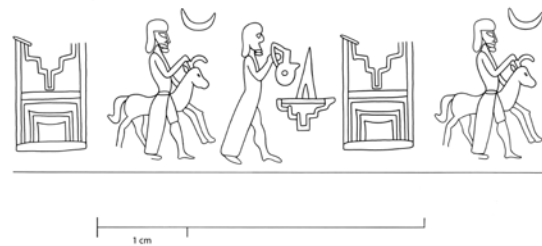


Fig. 21. PFS 0075 (Courtesy of the Persepolis Seal Project and the Persepolis Fortification Archive Project).

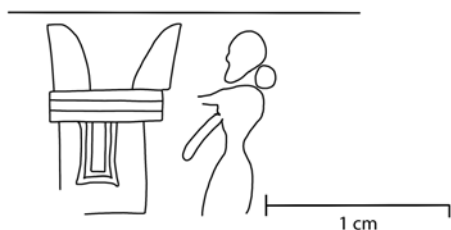


Fig. 22. PFATS0354 (Courtesy of the Persepolis Seal Project and the Persepolis Fortification Archive Project).



Fig. 23. Achaemenid-era hematite cylinder seal (left).
Fig. 24. drawing of a cylinder seal from Egypt, Ashmolean museum, Oxford (right).

western Iran. So, I would point to the Persepolis material as having compositional analogues but concerning different structures and contexts.

- **PT5 0791**: a cylinder seal found near the Treasury building in Persepolis by Schmidt (1957: 45). An enthroned figure is to the right side of a stepped structure, holding one arm bent and extending it outward at shoulder level. Holding the other arm straight, he extends it downward to grasp an “hourglass-shaped object,” probably a vessel, near the base of the fire on the stepped structure (Garrison 2017: 140; cf.

Schmidt 1957: 45) (fig. 18).

- **PFS 0790**: cylinder seal preserved as impressions in the Persepolis Fortification archive. Despite poor preservation, there is a stepped structure topped by fire and flanking individuals. The standing figure at the right “holds one arm bent and extends it outward at shoulder level toward the top of the fire on the stepped structure. He holds the other arm straight and extends it downward in front of his lower body” (Garrison 2017: 130) (fig. 19).

- **PFUTS 0154**: cylinder seal preserved as

impressions in the Persepolis Fortification archive. An attendant stands before a stepped structure. He faces to the left toward the stepped structure. He appears to hold both arms straight, extending them together upward diagonally in front of his chest. He holds three long thin objects that extend upward diagonally toward the fire on the stepped structure (Garrison 2017: 134-135) (fig. 20).

- **PFS 0075:** cylinder seal preserved as impressions in the Persepolis Fortification archive. Two attendants, one leading an animal, move toward a stepped structure, on which there is fire and a tower structure. The first attendant stands to the left of the stepped structure. He holds his right arm bent and extends it outward in front of his chest to hold a pitcher by its handle. The pitcher is poised over the fire on the stepped structure (Garrison 2017: 222-224) (fig. 21).

- **PFATS 0354:** cylinder seal preserved as impressions in the Persepolis Fortification archive. An individual stands on the right side of a tower structure. His upper arm is straight, extending it outwards at shoulder level toward the tower structure. Holding his lower arm straight, he extends it downward diagonally toward the tower structure (Garrison 2017: 156) (fig. 22).

I would also like to add two more seals to this group. The squarish objects in the Arjān bowl may also be linked with an object shown on a presumed Achaemenid-era hematite cylinder seal, dated to 500-400 B.C.E (fig. 23). As described by Ward (1909: 118 pl. xxxvi no. 278; 1910: 340, 367 nos. 1145, 1263), “a bareheaded worshipper, in a long simple garment, holds a branch, or baresma, before what appears to be the image of a god supported on a low stand. The deity appears to have a short beard, a low cap with a plume, long Persian trousers, tassels falling from under the shoulders, and to hold a ring in the hand.” Most importantly, behind the deity is a stepped structure on which there is a fire, topped by a round-shaped object looks like a “great eye” (ibid.; cf. Yamamoto 1979: 34-35 pl. 26). To this may be added a cylinder

seal bought in Egypt about 1890, now in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (no. 1892-1416), on which there are depicted attendants flanking a structure (fig. 24). They raise hands at head level, holding circular objects. The structure also has two large “horns,” between which lies an animal downward (Buchanan 1966: pl. 45 no. 698; Moorey 1975: 35 pl. xxiv; 1979: 221-222 fig 3b; Yamamoto, 1979: 35 pl. 28; Houtkamp 1991: 43).

A few observations

- like several stepped structures in glyptic imagery from Persepolis, the square objects on the Arjān bowl show fire. In Persepolis glyptic fire is occasionally indicated by inverted V-shaped elements that are stacked one above the others, forming a conical shape (Garrison 2017: 248-251 figs. 4.1, 4.3). As for the Arjān bowl, fire is also indicated by a group of vertical wavy lines, forming a conical shape on top of the square objects.

- attendants carrying objects toward the structure with fire. Attendants in Persepolis glyptic sometimes carry vessels: once extended downward near the base of the fire on the stepped structure, once upward toward the top of the flames. This is also the case for the Arjān bowl, wherein standing attendants at each side of the square objects carry a vessel, animal body part and a musical instrument. The attendant on the left side of the first square object moves an animal leg downward near the base of the fire on the square object. One of the standing figures flanking the second square object plays a musical instrument while the other one stretches hand(s) out toward the flames and the ram head on top.

- regarding the ram head on top of the second square object in the Arjān bowl, it holds a close link with the Persepolis glyptic, the Achaemenid hematite cylinder seal, and the cylinder seal acquired in Egypt; all an animal offerings.

- the standing attendants flanking the first square object in the Arjān bowl also raise hands at head level. One of them holds his hand in front of his mouth, whereas the other person extends his right hand toward the top of the flames. These gestures should be

construed as reverence or salutation toward the fire on top of the square structure rather than cooking.

- the armed attendants at the left and right sides of the first square structure recalls those in Persepolis glyptic and two gold votive plaques in the Oxus Treasure. There are several examples of armed figures before a stepped structure or a tower structure, holding a (rampant) caprid by the horn with one hand and a weapon in the other, presumably in the act of killing the caprid (Garrison 2017: 274-280). Furthermore, in a rectangular plaque in sheet gold from the Oxus Treasure, a standing figure with a barsom in his right hand is shown wearing an *akinakes*. In another golden plaque from Oxus Treasure showing the same scene, the attendant also carries a jug with a lid in his right hand (Razmjou 2005: 166-167 nos. 213, 227).

To summarise, more generally, I would like to stress that despite a set of codes and settings typical for Phoenician bowls, the Arjān bowl is not a faithful copy of the Phoenician bowls. Comparing its local atmosphere and size with Phoenician samples, two times larger, it is reasonable to infer that the Arjān bowl is a local work, made somewhere in the southwestern Zagros yet having Phoenician influence.

In my view, the scenes in register II do not, in contrast with conventional interpretations, depict a simple banquet with food preparation. The wavy lines rising from both of the squarish objects, the composition with flanking attendants, their hand gestures, and especially the head of a big horn ram on top of one of the squarish objects suggest not a cooking scene with steaming cauldrons but rather an actual religious event involving fire and animal sacrifice. The Arjān bowl and also the Elamite rock reliefs (KF I-IV) have a detailed association, as demonstrated in previous pages. The geological circumstances of the Mālamir area, particularly the presence of seasonal rivers, large intermountain plain bordered on all sides by mountains and hills, have created a unique scenario in this region. The depiction of assorted animals in several reliefs in Kul-e Farah, demonstrates that Mālamir has had a long-term

role in the Elamite monarchy. It is possible that the Elamite monarchs moved their courts to the valley of Ayapir at specific periods of the year to perform religious rituals and spent a part of the year there. Hunting, without a doubt, held a novel position in these times. By capturing wild creatures alive, they tell us that they were not merely hero warriors but also dexterous and experienced hunters. Also, the royal hunt was not only for entertainment but also for a deeper understanding of spiritual power and its symbolic significance within the Elamite culture¹². The royal hunt was, in reality, a part of a detailed plan by Elamite rulers probably, with hunting in the hilly areas next to Mālamir and sacrificing the captured animals to Elamite gods occupying a special place in it. One can say that they sacrificed the prey to the Elamite gods so as to complete their quests in the valley of Ayapir. This can be when the link between the Arjān bowl episodes, particularly registers V and II, and the Elamite rock reliefs in Kul-e Farah becomes clearer than ever. After returning from the royal hunting and capturing wild animals in the mountains along with his courtiers, Kidin-Hutran offered them to the Elamite gods during a ceremony attended by the king himself, musicians, courtiers, and priests. This is a genre well documented by Elamite rock reliefs at Naqš-e Rostam, Eškaft-e Salmān, Kul-e Farah, and now in the Arjān bowl, on which Elamite kings, local rulers, and their official ranks and family members are presented in private ritual plays and performances, accompanied by musicians, fire stands, animal sacrifices, priests, and prayers. We do not know the names of these religious practices, and it is not clear what happen in the Arjān bowl and the Elamite reliefs in Kul-e Farah or even Neo-Elamite Royal Inscriptions like EKI 85 (Tepti-Huban-In-šušinak), where a list of cultic personnel receiving sacrificial animals, refer to one or several different ceremonies in the theophoric world of Elam¹³. However, the blatant aspect of the religious ceremonies in the Arjān bowl and that of

12. For the possible royal feast in Ayapir during the Neo-Elamite period, see Henkelman 2011: 128-33.

13. For EKI 85, see Henkelman 2008: 8, 14, 362, espe-

the Elamite reliefs in Kul-e Farah is the issue of the invisible gods, who receive sacrifices for the prosperity of the royal family. From this point of view, the Arjān bowl and Elamite rock reliefs in Kul-e Farah open a new window to the issue of invisible gods in the Elamite religion, whose importance and influence during the Achaemenid period still deserves much research¹⁴.

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14. cf. Álvarez-Mon 2018: 98-99.

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