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THE MARḤAŠEAN TWO-FACED ‘GOD’: NEW INSIGHTS INTO THE ICONOGRAPHIC AND RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPES OF THE HALIL RUD VALLEY CIVILIZATION AND THIRD MILLENNIUM BCE SOUTH- EASTERN IRAN

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Abstract: This paper discusses a truncated-cone chlorite vessel currently held in the Miho Museum, Japan. It was probably produced around 2300-2200 BCE in the Halil Rud Valley or Jiroft region and comes perhaps from a grave. This vessel displays a fascinating iconography, including the depiction of a hybrid character combining bovine, human, lion and bird features. After discussing the hybrid characters which are observed on chlorite artefacts and glyptics in third millennium BCE south-eastern Iran, available textual data are considered for a narrative interpretation of the possible religious landscape of the polity called in Mesopotamian sources Marḥaši or Paraḥšum. It is also suggested that the so-called ‘Treaty of Naram-Sin’ might provide additional insights on the pantheon worshipped in Marḥaši around 2250 BCE.

Keywords: Iran, Bronze Age, Jiroft/Halil Rud Valley civilization, Marḥaši, religion, iconography, chlorite artefacts.

چکیده: مقاله پیش‌رو به بررسی ظرف مخروطی که در حال حاضر در موزه میهو ژاپن نگهداری می‌شود، می‌پردازد. ظرف مذکور احتمالاً در حدود سال‌های ۲۳۰۰ تا ۲۲۰۰ پیش از میلاد در دره هلیل‌رود یا منطقه جیرفت تولید شده است و به احتمال زیاد در یک گور کشف شده است. این ظرف منقوش به شمایل‌نگاری هیبرید انگیزی از موجودی مرکب از گاو، انسان، شیر و پرنده است. پس از بررسی ویژگی‌های موجود چند رگه‌ی منقوش روی ظروف و سایر آثار سنگی هزاره سوم پیش از میلاد در جنوب شرقی ایران، به بررسی داده‌های بدست آمده از متون برای رسیدن به تفسیری روایی از چشم‌انداز مذهبی دولت موسوم به مرهشی با پراشوم در منابع میان‌رودانی خواهیم پرداخت. همچنین این نظریه مطرح خواهد شد که قرارداد معروف به “معاهده نارام-سین” شامل اطلاعات زیادی از خدایان مورد احترام مرهشی در ۲۲۵۰ پیش از میلاد است.

کلمات کلیدی: ایران، عصر مفرغ، تمدن دره هلیل رود/ جیرفت، مرهشی، دین، شمایل‌شناسی، دست‌ساخته‌های کلریتی.

I. Introduction

Since the beginning of the 2000’s, many chlorite (dark soft stone) artefacts from third millennium BCE graveyards in the Jiroft or Halil Rud Valley, such as Mahtoutabad, Riganbar, and Nazmabad (see Fig. 1, for the location of the sites mentioned in the text), have reached antiquity markets and private collections all over


the world¹. According to Steinkeller², most of the southern Iranian Plateau, from the borders of Baluchistan to eastern Fars (and probably Western Fars, at a certain moment of its history), seems to have belonged to a powerful polity called *Marḥaši* in Sumerian, *Paraḥšum* in Akkadian and in Hatamtite³ perhaps *Maruḥša(y)*⁴, mentioned in Mesopotamian

¹ The geographical origin of this material has been shown by fieldwork in this valley, at Konar Sandal South, Konar Sandal North (Madjidzadeh and Pittman 2008), Mahtoutabad (Vidale and Desset 2013, Desset *et al.* 2013 and Desset *et al.* 2017), Hajjiabad-Varamin (Eskandari *et al.* 2020; Eskandari *et al.* 2021) and several surveys (for the recent surveys led south of Jiroft, see Pfälzner and Alidadi Soleimani 2015 and Pfälzner *et al.* 2019).

² See Steinkeller 1982, 1990, 2012 and 2014. This proposition is mainly based on the hymn of Išbi-Era (van Dijk 1978, 193-194) describing the extent of the territory controlled by Kintatu ca. 2000 BCE: “[from] Pašime, the ‘breast’ (i.e., the coast) of the sea, to the border of Zapša[lī], (and) [from] Arawa, the lock of NIM (ELAM), to the border of Marḥa[šī]”. Assuming that Kintatu was controlling then at least south-western Iran, this would locate Marḥaši east or north of this area. As Marḥaši is furthermore regularly mentioned in cuneiform sources either between Anzan and Meluhha or between Magan and Meluhha (Steinkeller 1982, 249), this would point at a southern location, not too far from the Persian Gulf.

³ In this paper, Middle chronology dates and labels recently proposed by Desset (2017 and Desset *et al.*, forthcoming a and b) are used: Hatamtite language instead of Elamite language, Early Proto-Iranian writing / Early PIW instead of Proto-Elamite

writing and Late Proto-Iranian writing / Late PIW instead of Linear Elamite writing. The following abbreviations are used: EIW, see Hinz and Koch 1987; MDP: Mémoire de la Délégation en Perse.

⁴ This would be the local original designation or autotoponym of this polity: see Desset *et al.*, forthcoming a and b, and the Late Proto-Iranian (Linear Elamite) inscription Q written on the Marv Dasht vessel, where this toponym is perhaps mentioned  = *ma-ra-p-š-ša-i*. However, the presence of the consonant /p/ in the root of the term vs. its absence in the Mesopotamian references, where is present instead the consonant /h/, remains at present unexplained:

/m-a-r-a -p- š-a(y)i/ (Hatamtite)

/m-a-r- h-a-š-i/ (Sumerian; spelled *mar-ḥa-šī*)

/p-a-r-a-h- š-um/ (Akkadian; spelled *pa2-ra-ah-šum*)

Because of the absence of distinction between voiced and voiceless consonants (plosives) in the notation of the Hatamtite language in Late PIW and cuneiform scripts, and as the voiceless series is more neutral and traditionally preferred in the Elamite/Hatamtite studies, the voiceless plosives *k*, *p* and *t* were favored in the transcription of Hatamtite words or names (instead of *g*, *b* and *d*). Geminated or redundant consonants were avoided

sources for more than 500 years, at least since the time of Sargon of Akkad, ca. 2300 BCE (in middle chronology). This polity was probably much older than this date, which approximately matches the expansion of the Mesopotamian geographical scope and the introduction in cuneiform texts of new toponyms such as Marḥaši/Paraḥšum, Magan or Meluhha. Written mentions of Marḥaši/Paraḥšum continued until Hammurapi's times, ca. 1750 BCE, when most of the urbanized world of eastern Iran (plus Central Asia and the Indus valley) experienced centuries of important devolution and localization processes.

In the third millennium BCE, the Jiroft plain, based on the still partial evidence of urbanization in the fourth millennium BCE (the Aliabad period), was the hub, or one of the main centers of ancient Marḥaši. During Old Akkadian (around 2300-2150 BCE) and Ur III times (2100-2000 BCE), Marḥaši/Paraḥšum was mentioned as a highly hierarchized society ruled by kings (such as Apalkamaš, Arpimazpi and Lipan-ūksapaš), judges (Kundupum) and generals (Sitkaū and Ūlūl), managing intensive diplomatic contacts with the west by the means of messengers or ambassadors. Cuneiform onomastics suggest that Marḥaši was a multi-linguistic and composite ethnic society, with probably a dominant Hatamite component. Its religion is unknown and may only be approached through iconography, notably of chlorite artefacts labelled 'Série Ancienne' by P. de Miroschedji (1973), 'Intercultural style' by P. Kohl (1975) and more recently 'Halil Rud Valley or Jiroft style'⁵.

The quantity of objects confiscated in the Halil Rud Valley made clear that most of the chlorite artefacts found in excavations all over the Ancient Near East were actually manufactured in this area, originally for local use. They were culturally relevant only in south-eastern Iran and only a few reached Mesopotamia, where they were probably seen as precious exotica

(Marchesi 2016). Paradoxically, the most ancient archaeological contexts available so far for these goods are documented in Mesopotamia, in Early Dynastic II layers (ca. 2700/2600 BCE)⁶. The most recent specimens were notoriously found in a peripheral site of the Halil Rud Valley civilization, Tepe Yahya (phases IVB4-1 and even in IVA layers, where these artefacts were interpreted as heirloom),⁷ dated around 2100/2000 BCE. We are thus dealing with some 600 years of iconographic, artistic, and craft tradition, whose evolution and history still need to be understood and described.

Many artefacts found in the Halil Rud Valley come from confiscations and having no provenience, cannot be precisely dated. They can only be provisionally ascribed (without mentioning the problems of forgeries) to between 2700 and 2100/2000 BCE, perhaps more specifically to ca. 2600-2200 BCE. The abundant chlorite vessel fragments and white inlays elements found on the surface or among the looters' dirt of graveyards in the Halil Rud Valley region, such as Mahtoutabad⁸, imply that these artefacts are funerary objects which might have played a specific role during funerals, maybe as branded containers for specific scented oils (J. Perrot⁹) or for the distribution of highly caloric sweets like halva or dates (S. Cleuziou¹⁰). Meanwhile, one should keep in mind that complete luxury artefacts are usually found in graves or hoards because such objects are simply not abandoned in domestic contexts due to their value. Consequently, that chlorite artefacts are mainly found in graves does not mean that they were produced to be deposited in graves. They could have been used before being deposited in graves as suggested by vessel fragments and inlaid elements recorded in domestic contexts as well as a near complete scorpion-man game board found at Konar Sandal South¹¹.

in the transcriptions of Hatamite words or names (Nahhūnte>Nahūnte) while *ñ* and *z* mean that their precise vocalic value is not yet established, hesitating between /o/ and /u/ (Nahūnte is to be understood either /nahonte/ or /nahunte/) and /e/ and /i/ (Kmtatu is to be understood either /kentatu/ or /kintatu/; see Desset *et al.*, forthcoming a and b, for these conventions).

⁵ As soon as 1986, Amiet had labelled this as "art de Marḥaši" (Amiet 1986, 138).

⁶ Delougaz 1960; De Miroschedji 1973, 25; Lamberg-Karlovsky 1988, 55-68; Potts T. F. 1994, 250 and 270; and Philips and Simpson 2018, 14. In Mesopotamian contexts, Halil Rud Valley style chlorite artefacts were mainly found in temples from ED II to Akkad/Ur III periods: Mari: temples of Šamaš, Eštar, Eštarat and Ninnizaza and in houses north and east of the Priests quarters (ED III contexts); Tell Agrab: temple of Šara (ED II/III); Khafajah-Tutub: temple of Sin (layer IX: ED II/III) and a fragment from a domestic context; Nippur: temple of Inanna (levels VIII, VIIB which are ED II-ED IIIA contexts and level IV); Uruk: in the Eanna area; Ur: in the Enunmah (in layers dated of the second half of the second millennium BCE); Susa: Šulgi's

temple of Insušinak. Notoriously, some come also from funerary contexts in the Royal Cemetery of Ur (in two graves including Pu-abi's tomb, where 7 plain and 2 decorated vessels were found) and domestic ones (in Ur, Mari and Khafajah). Some artefacts were also found in Abu Habbah, Adab-Bismaya, Fara-Šuruppak, Kiš, Tell Asmar, Kisurra, Larsa, Sippar, Obeid, Al-Hiba-Lagaš and Girsu-Tello (see the catalogue with bibliographical references in Lamberg-Karlovsky 1988, 55-68).

⁷ Notably a fragment of a plaque, probably a 'handbag' (weight?) (Lamberg-Karlovsky 1972, 92 and 1973, 41; Lamberg-Karlovsky and Tosi 1973, fig. 136; Kohl 2001, 214, 221-222 and 226 and fig. 9.10).

⁸ Vidale 2015, 16-17 and Vidale *et al.* forthcoming.

⁹ Perrot and Madjidzadeh 2005, 129.

¹⁰ Cleuziou 2003.

¹¹ Madjidzadeh and Pittman 2008, fig. 12 (on a floor in trench III, C14 dated between 2400 and 2290 BCE). Additionally, Roberto Micheli (personal communication) found a footed cup bearing two entwined snakes (one with turquoise, the other with red limestone inlays) while he was digging a house at the foot of the Konar Sandal South citadel.

This paper focuses on these chlorite artefacts, more specifically on an exceptional truncated-cone shaped vase from the Miho Museum (Japan) and additional objects from online auction sites and private collections. We believe that these objects come from the Halil Rud Valley and were sold over the past twenty to thirty years. We are well aware of the dire situation, our role, and the ethical problem in publishing unprovenanced artefacts (notwithstanding the publication of forgeries). Considering the hypothetical damage our paper could do compared to its actual benefit for Iranian history and cultural heritage, we firmly believe that the second exceeds the first in this particular case. As stated by Frenez and Vidale (2014, 7): “All archaeologists sooner

or later face the same dilemma about studying artefacts retrieved from the antiquary market. On one side, publishing antiquities illegally unearthed and exported for sale supports the market, eventually giving credit and enhancing the value of pieces that have been stolen and robbed forever of their archaeological and historical context. This choice possibly promotes further destruction. *On the other hand, there are exceptional pieces that are so relevant in themselves that ignoring them would only add damage to damage, by hiding forever important historical evidence*”. For this reason, we have decided to bring this important artefact to the attention of the scientific community.



Figure 1. General map of the sites mentioned in the text.

The main argument of this paper is based on two, still hypothetical, assumptions:

- Kerman area, including the Halil Rud valley, was in the third millennium BCE part of the polity of Marḥaši¹²;

- and the so-called ‘Treaty of Naram-Sin’ was established between Akkad and Marḥaši (see below, section IV.2.b.1).

These assumptions are the premises of a syllogism leading to the proposition that the ‘Treaty of Naram-

¹² Steinkeller’s proposition had been recently (and unconvincingly) challenged by Francfort and Tremblay (2010), notably on the arguments that Kerman was part of ‘Elam’ while Marḥaši is said to be in cuneiform sources outside of ‘Elam’ and that the period during which Marḥaši is attested in cuneiform sources (from Sargon of Akkad to Hammurabi of Babylon, ca. 2300-1750 BCE) corresponds to the chronological span of the southern Central Asian civilization (Bactria-Margiana Archaeological Complex/Greater Khorasan Civilization).

These arguments can both be refuted. First, ‘Elam’ is a Mesopotamian notion without any value from the point of view of the ancient inhabitants of the Iranian plateau (so Kerman area cannot be fundamentally part of ‘Elam’; Desset 2017), while the first attestations of Marḥaši/Paraḥšum in cuneiform sources around 2300 BCE are rather just related to the widening of the Mesopotamian geographical horizon at a time when other toponyms, such as Magan or Meluhha, seemingly also ‘appeared’.

Sin' may document third millennium BCE Kerman/Halil Rud valley and notably its iconography,

in an attempt to bring together texts and objects and bridge the gap between philological and archaeological data.



Figure 2. Pictures and drawing of the Miho Museum truncated-cone vessel.

II. Description of the chlorite vessel from the Miho Museum

The truncated-cone chlorite vessel currently held in the Miho Museum (Fig. 2) was purchased in London in 2001. It is 22 cm high and has a 13 cm base diameter and a 9.5 cm rim diameter. It bears wear traces in the bottom part of the bird (tail), corresponding also to cracks and a different color on the base surface, apparently due to post-depositional alteration. Its rim was chipped during the digging, and traces of pickaxe are visible on the rim and other parts of the vessel (on the left feline, the left lion and the bird in the battle scene). Most of the inlays fell out, but otherwise the vessel can be said to be quite well preserved.

The decoration of this vessel is a fascinating example of *horror vacui*. It is organized around two main themes: a

battle theme (Fig. 3a) and a theme that relates to the 'control of water streams' (Fig. 3b).

II.1. The battle scene

A crowded, frantic scene of combat (Fig. 3a) shows a prominent hybrid character standing on the wings of a bearded vulture turned to the right. This central group fights against three pairs of animals, the raptor against two snakes, while the hybrid character is holding the paws of two lions and probably drives his horns into the rear body of the felines. This scene is broadly reminiscent of the 'Master of animals' theme, attested since the late fifth/fourth millennium BCE in Ubaid/Uruk Mesopotamia (man holding snakes or lions)¹³ and on the Iranian Plateau (horned man holding animal of preys or snakes on Susa I stamp seals)¹⁴.

¹³ Charvát 2002, 96.

¹⁴ Amiet 1972, 76-77, n°219-220, pl. 49 and 1980, 70-71, pl. 6 n°117-120.



Figure 3a and b. Miho Museum truncated-cone vessel scenes; A: the battle scene; B: the 'control of water streams' scene.

The snakes (Fig. 4) are covered with the two typical rows of oval white (limestone?) inlays (on the right snake, a light blue inlay may be turquoise) and bear two grooved lines in their terminal part. The heads display four small white inlays below the jaw. Fragile teeth are preserved in the jaw of the right snake (as well as for the

left feline). These reptiles, as usual in the Halil Rud Valley chlorite art, have ears carved like two inverted commas, and a very feline-like muzzle. Eyes were orange-colored disks set into white rings. Save for the zebus, the eyes of all the creatures present on this vessel were made in this same way.

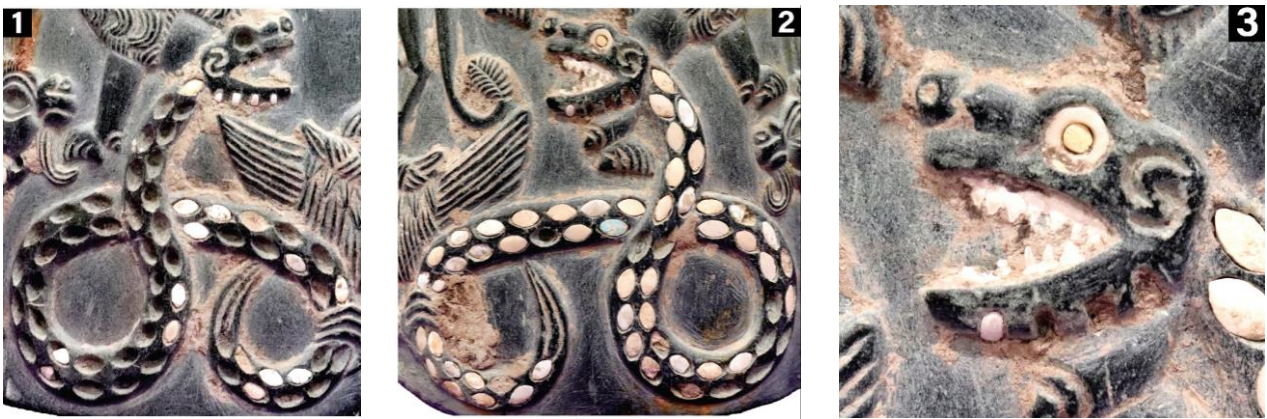


Figure 4. Miho Museum truncated-cone vessel; details of the snakes in the battle scene.

While inlays are used to depict the snakes' ocelli, feline pelage, the forepart of the zebus, the mountains, and the body and neck of the bearded vulture, the only inlaid decoration on the lions (Fig. 5, n°1-2) consists of a dark bluish circle in a white ring in their eyes (similar to the felines and hybrid character). The lions' manes are delicately treated with carved groups of three to four grooved

strands and parallel curvy bands on the belly (similar to the lion's part of the hybrid character), strongly contrasting with their smooth bodies and paws.

Their upper and lower jaws are decorated with parallel arcs. Teeth were probably present in their mouths. The tuft of the tail is an oval, leaf-like motif.

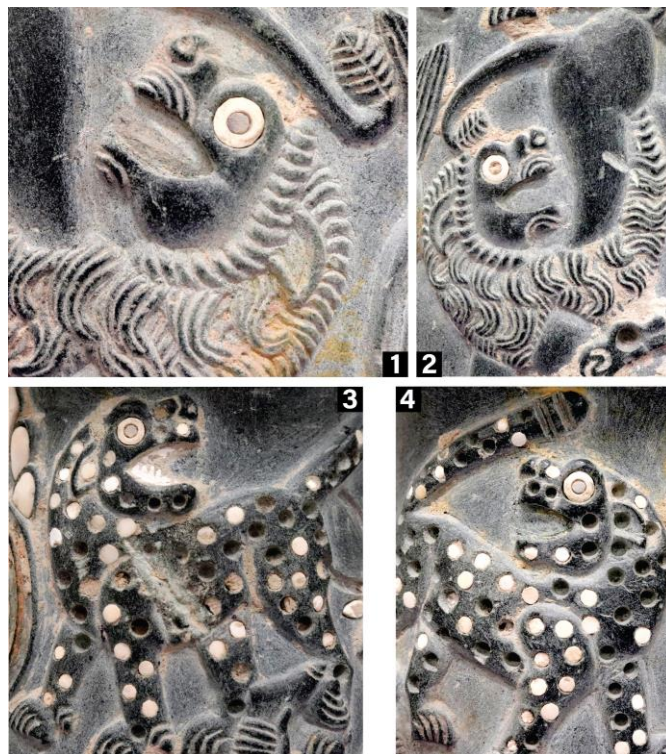


Figure 5. Miho Museum truncated-cone vessel; details of the lions (n°1-2) and the felines (n°3-4) in the battle scene.

The felines (Fig. 5, n°3-4) are possibly cheetahs (*Acinonyx jubatus*)¹⁵. They are completely covered with white circular (limestone?) inlays, more or less regularly positioned in quincunx (three on the muzzle, four on the lower jaw, one in the ear). Their teeth are made with a white material and their eyes with a bluish circle in a white ring (like lions). Their paws are designed with grooves for the claws and a circular element in the rear (as for the lions). Tails are straight (unlike the lions) and decorated with two parallel strips (also attested in other cases). In contrast to the zebus and like the lions, their external sexual organs are not displayed, either because it was omitted or they were meant as females.

The bird (Fig. 6, n°1-2) is, as in most cases in the Halil Rud Valley chlorite art, a bearded vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*). Although it looks like a hawk, it is not a bird of prey but rather a scavenger that feeds on carrions and bone marrow (although it may attack small animals such as tortoises and lizards). Its head, turned to the right (as a rule in Halil Rud Valley iconography), has two inlays, one for the eye (a disk within a white ring) and a white 'collar' on the neck (attested in other examples). The plumage on the head, body and claws are rendered with lozenges filled with two grooves. Parallel lines simulate the feathers of the wings and the tail rectrices. The

'shoulders' bear a woven pattern, and beard and beak are clearly outlined.

The making of the hybrid character (Fig 7, n°1) is based on the synoptical principle of *pars pro toto* involving substitutes and ligatures¹⁶. Standing on the bird, in the center, the hybrid has the lower body of a lion below a human torso with muscular arms holding the lions' lifted paws, thumbs up. It has two beardless heads, with long strands of hairs hiding the body on the foreground (but also visible in the background, below the chin) and strictly restricted to the human part. The eyes, as usual, are blue circles inserted in oval white rings; the nose is prominent above a small mouth. Bovine parts were added on top with whitish-greenish inlays standing for oval ears, and two pairs of symmetrically slightly arched, grooved horns¹⁷ that perhaps lost their inlays. These horns are clearly driven into the back of the felines. They depart from a headdress, shown as an oval green inlay (better preserved on the other scene; see Fig. 7, n°2). The hybrid is thus a complicated array of bovine, human, lion, and bird body parts¹⁸.

The different actors are arranged to fill the limited available field and caring, as much as possible, to avoid super-impositions, but the pattern also indicates a

¹⁵ Perrot and Madjidzadeh 2005, 137.

¹⁶ Winkelmann 2018, 91-93; Vidale 2015, 38.

¹⁷ The horns of goats and ibexes, on stone cups for example, are not depicted in this way. They are either straight (not arched) or following a parallel curve (not symmetrically opposed).

¹⁸ Surprisingly recalling the Ezekiel's four living creatures or *cherubim* (Ezekiel 1:10) and later the symbols used in Christian iconography for the four evangelists.

specific order among them. The felines are behind the lions, the lions and the bird behind the snakes (the left front paw of the left lion is thus completely missing), and the hybrid character behind the bird (its right leg is

behind the head of the eagle) but probably ahead of the felines. Perspective¹⁹ is indicated according to the position: the upper part is the background, the lower part the foreground.

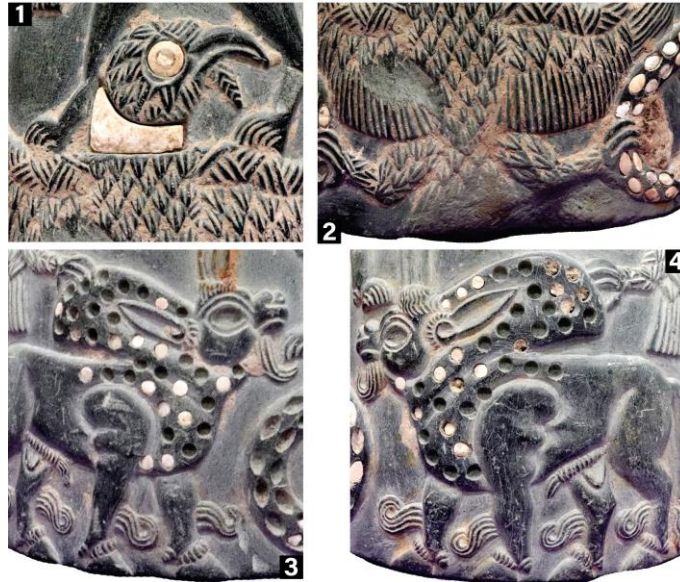


Figure 6. Miho Museum truncated-cone vessel; details of the bird (n°1-2) in the battle scene and of the zebus (n°3-4) in the 'control of water streams' scene.



Figure 7. Miho Museum truncated-cone vessel; details of the hybrid character in in the battle scene (n°1) and in the 'control of water streams' scene (n°2).

II.1.a. Hybrid characters in the Halil Rud Valley chlorite art

Scenes of clashes or domination are very frequent in the Halil Rud art, in particular between felines or birds and snakes; or among humans/hybrids and felines,

scorpions, scorpion-men or snakes. This vessel however displays the single scene known so far in chlorite art where lions are overpowered.

Hybrid (animal/human) characters²⁰ are always involved in fights or domination scenes (save for

¹⁹ As also remarked in Vidale 2015.

²⁰ On the hybrid characters in the Halil Rud art, see also Perrot and Madjidzadeh 2005, 140-142 and 2006, 106; Winkelmann 2014, 214-216.

scorpion-men, which appear also in isolation). Variable and complex, hybrids can be described in six separate characters:

- 1) the bovine/human/lion/bird hybrid character of the Miho Museum vessel is also observed on another vessel (Fig. 8, n°1) but here the rectrices feather and claws merge directly with a lion body, topped by two human heads and arms; while bovine ears and horns are not repeated for each head²¹. Another possible example is in Fig. 8, n°2 (the left character in the drawing, with bovine horns and ears, sitting on bulls and dominating snakes).

This character is probably also present on the 'handbag' from Fig. 10, n°5, where it is two-headed, with bovine horns and ears on each head, and a bovine lower part. It stands on two felines and holds snakes (the awkward position of the character standing on the felines, ensures that the bovine part is clearly seen in a restricted space)²². The bird and lion elements are surprisingly absent and replaced by a bovine one.

Fig. 8, n°3, from a private collection, depicts a variation of the bovine/human/lion/bird hybrid: a standing man, bare-chested, wearing a fluted skirt, with

clawed feet and a lion depicted behind him (probably to highlight the lion component). This character has bovine horns and ears and a small inlay in his hair-dress. He fights against snakes (it is reportedly represented twice, once with a lion, in the other case with a scorpion²³).

This character suggests that the man with clawed feet, fluted skirt, bare-chest, long hair, with or without beard, with or without any inlay on the chest or in the hair-dress, with or without bovine horns, fighting against snakes, felines or scorpions, is a graphic variation of the same bovine/human/lion/bird hybrid character depicted in several examples. These include: Fig. 8, n°4 (fake?: no ear for the snake, specific treatment of the hair and beard of the hybrid character)²⁴; Fig. 8, n°5 (hair treated differently, the fluted skirt was probably represented with a now disappeared inlay, snakes with three rows of oval inlays instead of the usual two rows); Fig. 9, n°1 (right character in the drawing), Fig. 9, n°4 (left character in the drawing); Fig. 9, n°5 (left character in the drawing), Fig. 10, n°1 (character on the left side).



Figure 8a. Hybrid characters on Halil Rud Valley chlorite artefacts 1.

²¹ See Perrot and Madjidzadeh (2006, 109) for a description of this vessel.

²² The other side of this 'handbag' represents couples felines and snakes, topped by a scorpion on both sides of the main scene: a man kneeling on the back of two zebus (cf. Fig. 8, n°2, merged for lack of space) holds streams of water flowing from the heads of the bovines (see below the 'control of water streams' scene).

<http://www.barakatgallery.com/store/index.cfm/FuseAction/ItemDetails/UserID/GVwcDbGFsmBWBGO/CFID/15>

[5226816/CFTOKEN/19113361/CategoryID/36/SubCategoryID/357/ItemID/44464.htm](https://www.auction.fr/fr/lot/vase-tronconique-aux-maitres-des-animaux-region-de-kerman-jiroft-iv-iiiie-13109909)

²³ <https://www.auction.fr/fr/lot/vase-tronconique-aux-maitres-des-animaux-region-de-kerman-jiroft-iv-iiiie-13109909>

²⁴ <https://www.timelineauctions.com/lot/bactrian-vase-with-god-holding-two-serpents/83462/>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=SeceUUwH_uU



Figure 8b. Hybrid characters on Halil Rud Valley chlorite artefacts 1.

- 2) a man with (bovine?) horns, wearing a skirt decorated with regularly spaced circular inlays, sometimes bearded (Fig. 8, n°1, 2, 6, 7), is often observed dominating snakes (or bulls in Fig. 8, n°2). Snakes are not grabbed by hands, but trapped under the arms.

- 3) a bull-man, is commonly seen fighting against the usual enemies (snakes, felines, or scorpions) and is frequently symmetrically associated to the hybrid character n°1 with the fluted skirt and clawed feet (Fig. 9, n°4-5; Fig. 10 n°1). He has a bovine lower part, with sometimes an inlaid red disk (pierced with five holes disposed in quincunx) on the thigh and orange lozenge inlays on the leg. He wears a belt, is bare-chested, sometimes has a blue inlay in his hair-dress or on the chest, and long hair with or without horns (Fig. 9, n°3²⁵, character repeated twice; Fig. 9, n°4, character on the right; Fig. 9, n°5, character on the right; Fig. 10, n°1,

character on the right²⁶; Fig. 10, n°2, where the five cavities in quincunx are directly pierced on the thigh instead of having a red disk. The other side of this 'handbag' is unknown).

Considering the regular association of the bull-man with the hybrid character n°1 as well as with the two-headed hybrid character shown with a belt and a lower bovine part in Fig. 10, n°5 and that the hybrid character n°1 displays bovine horns and ears, the bull-man may be interpreted as an emanation/avatar, or a variation of the hybrid character n°1.

- 4) scorpion-men are also depicted (Figs. 9, n°1 and 10, n°4; they also are very frequently represented on the 16/20 boxes game boards²⁷). They probably belong to the 'enemies', along with snakes, scorpions and felines.

- 5) a cylindrical vessel displays a man fighting against felines, a clawed-footed man with a fluted skirt (see above, hybrid character n°1) fighting against

²⁵<https://www.barbier-mueller.ch/collections/collections/antiquite/proche-orient-au-iiiie-millenaire/>

²⁶ Considering Fig. 9, n°4 and 5 and Fig. 10, n°1, either these three artefacts come from the same workshop or they belong at least to the same period (look at the symmetrical posture of the felines with three

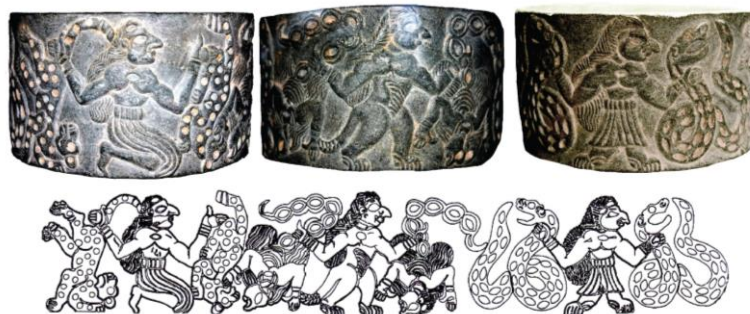
cavities on the jaw and the use of identically treated scorpions to separate the scenes).

²⁷ See Madjidzadeh 2003, 135; Madjidzadeh and Pittman 2008, fig. 12.

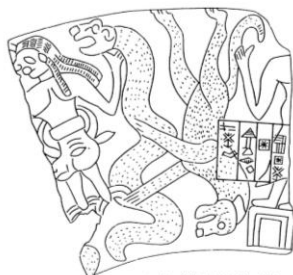
snakes, and a lion-man fighting against scorpion-men (Fig. 9, n°1; central character), the unique representation of this hybrid character known thus far (all with an inlay on the chest and in the hair-dress). An interpretation of this scene could be that, instead of representing three different characters, it illustrates the metamorphosis of the man into the hybrid character n°1 (represented only with his lion component) and the progression of the dominated creatures

(felines/snakes/scorpion-men). As in the case of the bull-man (see above, hybrid character n°3), the lion-man was probably a further variation of the bovine/human/lion/bird hybrid character n°1, with an emphasis on his lion component.

- 6) A 'handbag' bears the single depiction known at present of a feline-man (Fig. 10, n°3; the other side of this 'handbag' is not documented) who is seen fighting snakes.



1 Madjidzadeh 2003, 15-17
H : 8,7 cm ; DM : 12,2 cm



2 Amiet 1986, Fig. 73
private collection
H : 15,5 cm



3 *Le profane et le divin, arts de l'Antiquité. Fleurons du musée Barbier-Mueller, musée Barbier-Mueller & Hazan (éd.), 2008, 288-289.*
H : 12 cm
DB : 6,8 cm

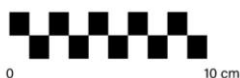


Figure 9a. Hybrid characters on Halil Rud Valley chlorite artefacts 2.



4 Piran and Madjidzadeh 2012, 117
H : 11 cm ; DM : 10 cm ; DB : 6 cm



5 Madjidzadeh 2003, 11-12
H : 14,5 cm
DM : 11,5 cm

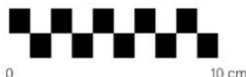
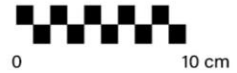


Figure 9b. Hybrid characters on Halil Rud Valley chlorite artefacts 2.



1 Piran and Madjidzadeh 2012, 65
H : 30,5 cm
W : 32,5 cm



2 Private collection,
unknown scale

3 Perrot and Madjidzadeh 2005, Fig. 12.g
unknown scale



4 Jiroft Museum
H : 24 cm
W : 25 cm



5 Barakat gallery
PF 6179
H : 28 cm



Figure 10. Hybrid characters on Halil Rud Valley chlorite artefacts ('handbags') 3.

These elements suggest that there was only one main hybrid character, with bovine, human, lion and bird components. The man with clawed feet and wearing a fluted

skirt, the bull-man, and the lion-man may be considered variations (depending on the specific period or area/workshop of production, or on a specific context or

purpose?) or avatars of the same character (bird-man depictions may also be expected; see below on seals). The man with (bovine?) horns, wearing a skirt decorated with regularly spaced circular inlays (hybrid character n°2; they are shown together in Fig. 8, n°1) and the scorpion-man (hybrid character n°4) may be considered distinct characters. It is difficult to interpret the single example of feline-man (hybrid character n°6).

Additional characters are particular cases that do not fit in the known Halil Rud repertoires, such as the creature from Ur, on Fig. 8, n°8, with multiple legs, short horns and a lion on the shoulder, fighting an ibex/goat(?), and the character on Fig. 9, n°2 with a bull head in the lower part and bird claws as feet, fighting snakes.

II.1.b. Hybrid characters in the Halil Rud Valley non-chlorite art

Fig. 11, n°1-5 depicts five copper alloy figurines from irregular excavations. N°2-4 are certainly from the Halil Rud Valley. These figurines are best understood with additional, unpublished, copper figurines representing men, women, and animals that probably had an important role in the Halil Rud Valley funerary furnishings²⁸.

These five figurines represent a two-faced character with bovine horns and ears (the horns in Fig. 11, n°5 are described as lioness heads), long hair represented by two triangular strands on his bare-chest (a male character save perhaps for Fig. 10, n°4 where a female chest seems to be

represented), bearded, wearing a simple skirt. This character has his hands on his hips, except on Fig. 11, n°1 where he holds a feline/lion and Fig. 11, n°5 where he holds a snake in both hands. These figurines probably represent the above-described bovine/human/lion/bird hybrid character n°1. They prove that this character was not two-headed but two-faced (as previously surmised²⁹) and was depicted, with variations, on different supports. Some of these figurines are reported with a cavity opening on the top of the head (Fig. 11, n°5 is described as a 'bottle') and were probably used as container (for perfume or cosmetics applied with a pin?). This character is also represented on two pinheads: Fig. 11, n°6 is a lapis-lazuli disk, displaying on both sides the upper part of a winged human with long hair (one-faced on one side, two-faced on the other) fighting against snakes; Fig. 11, n°7 is a silver pin that was regularly collected on the surface of the graveyard at Shahdad, depicting a kneeling/sitting character, bare-chested, holding (?) a snake in both hands, with long hair (a strand on the chest) and horns.

Lastly, Fig. 11, n°8-9 are exceptional objects from the Miho Museum. One is a human-bird figurine (Fig. 11, n°8; wings and claws) and the other probably a human-deer/cervidae(?) (Fig. 11, n°9; antlers and hooves). We cannot ensure that they belong to the Halil Rud Valley, although their prominent noses and eyes, long hair, and skirts seem to hint at the iconography of this area. They must consequently be taken into consideration when dealing with the Halil Rud Valley hybrid characters.

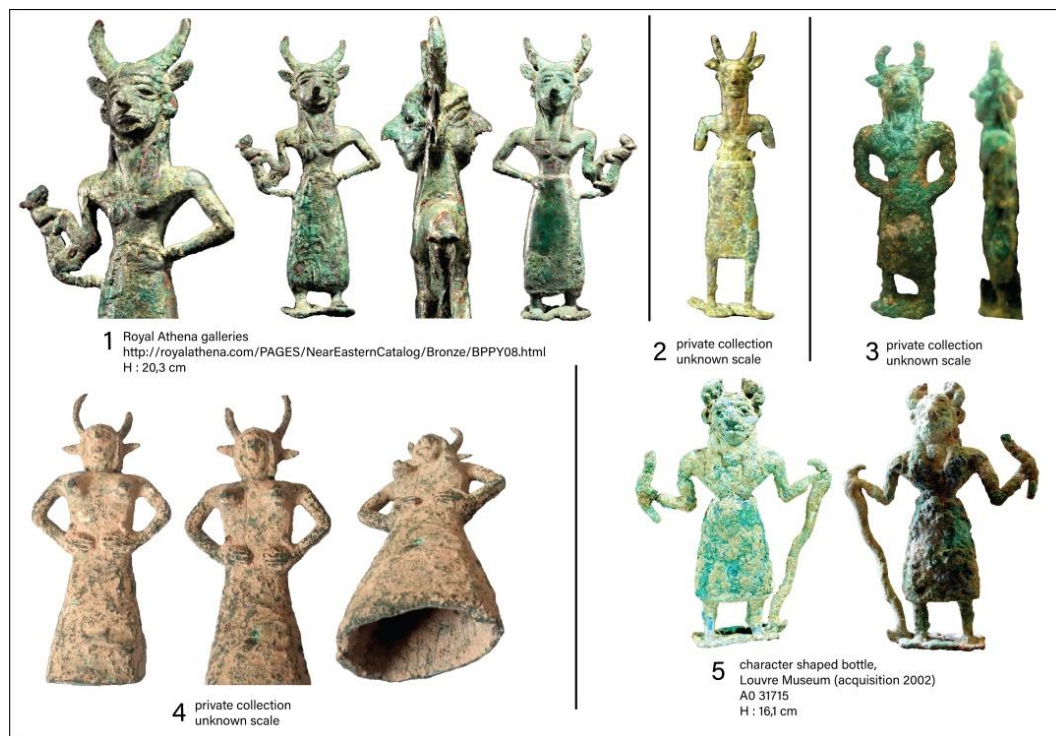


Figure 11a. n°1-5: Copper-alloy figurines of the two-faced hybrid character.

²⁸ See Eskandari *et al.*, forthcoming for the publication of a feminine figure holding a snake.

²⁹ “Le personnage est à double face (plutôt que bicéphale)” (Perrot and Madjidzadeh 2006, 109).



Figure 11b. n°6-9: Kermani depictions of hybrid characters (pinheads and figurines).

II.2. The ‘control of water streams’ scene

The second scene on the vessel from the Miho Museum (Fig. 3b) shows a hybrid character, probably the above-described bovine/human/lion/bird hybrid character n°1. It is on top of two male zebus, grasping their hump with its claws and clutching the flows which spring out of the animals’ heads.

The front parts of the humped bulls or male zebus (Fig. 6, n°3-4) bear white round inlays (like the felines) set in quincunx. There are no horns and the sockets of the oval eyes are empty. They have long ears (slightly different in the two cases) and unnatural curvy clumps³⁰ on each lower leg. Below the mouth a ‘beard’ hints to a water flow³¹. Sexual organs are emphasized. Between the hooves and the lower legs, around the base of the ears and above the head, parallel lines may evoke fur, while tails end in hairy tufts. From the upper part of the head of both zebus, a wavy band of three parallel lines emerge to frame the field where the hybrid character appears, topped by three groups of white inlaid scale-like mountains (three rows of three, two, and one ogive elements, thus depicted since the late 4th millennium BCE ‘Proto-Elamite’/ Urukian glyptics).

The central hybrid character (Fig. 7, n°2) is probably a variation of the character depicted on the other side. The lion part was probably skipped and the bird one directly ‘ligatured’ with the human element for the reason that

space is more limited on this side. The bird is here slightly different, with circular white inlays to fill the lozenges on the center of the body (instead of grooves).

The ‘irregularities’ in this scene, the mountain motif only on the left side, the missing horns of the zebus and the merging of the bird and human parts, suggest that the main theme of this vessel was the battle scene and that the ‘control of water streams’ (from now on designated as ‘CWS’) scene was carved as a secondary theme within the remaining space.

II.2.a. Parallels for the ‘control of water streams’ scene in the Halil Rud Valley chlorite art

Vidale (2015, 20-32) interprets this scene as a ‘flood’ scene, where zebus are sky creatures (with small wings attached to their legs), symbolizing thundering clouds emitting rain (bulls are frequently the symbol of the storm god Adad/Addu in the ancient Near East, particularly in Syria and Anatolia). Water spreads from their heads (or snakes in one case, consistently with the correspondence snake/water); this flood³² would later be stopped by a deity, the end of the storm being signaled by a rainbow in the sky.

Six additional representations of this scene are currently known (Fig. 12 a and b, n°1-6, plus the other side of the ‘handbag’ on Fig. 10, n°5). They usually depict two

³⁰ Interpreted as supernatural wings in Vidale 2015.

³¹ These curvy clumps can be found contemporaneously on the legs of bulls, human-headed bulls and bull-men depicted in the Mesopotamian ED IIIb/Old Akkadian cylinder-seals contest scenes (see for example the ‘jeweler’s seal’ contest scene in the lower register of Fig. 17a or Amiet 1980, pl. 77 bis N and pls. 81 to 84 and Rohn 2011, t. 10, n°70; t. 11, n°72a, 74) as well as (more surprisingly)

on some of the bulls depicted on the metallic vessels found in graves of the second half of the second millennium BCE Marlik culture (Negahban 1996, vol. 2, fig. 3.9; obj n°14698/7698 in grave 45 and Inagaki 2019, fig. 28).

³² Geomorphological analysis has shown that the Halil Rud Valley was regularly flooded (Fouache *et al.* 2005).

male zebus (with or without curvy water clumps on their legs; because of the lack of space, the zebus are merged in Fig. 12b, n°6 and Fig. 8, n°2), with an arched stream spreading out of their heads and in some cases a horizontal stream going backward parallel to their body (Fig. 12a, n°2) and/or a vertical downward stream spreading from their mouth (Fig. 12a, n°1 with stepped streams; Fig. 12a, n°3 and 5). In Fig. 12b, n°5 (the vase from Khafajah and probably the other side of Fig. 10, n°5), the streams spreading from the zebus' heads do not merge (probably because of the lack of space), indicating that the arched stream in other vessels should probably not be interpreted as an arch or a bow, but just as a stylized rendition of two merging streams. Fig. 12b, n°4, 6 and 7 (left side) display a variant in which the water streams are replaced by a snake or intertwined snakes (for the merging streams), which strengthens the view that a structural link exists between snakes and water streams/rivers. Fig. 12b, n°6 is a sealing. It shows that this scene was represented on supports other than chlorite vessels, although as discussed below, iconographies on chlorite vessels and seals are usually quite distinct in the Halil Rud Valley. One lapis-lazuli disk (Fig. 12b, n°7) shows a man sitting on zebus from whom snakes seem to spread out (while birds are surprisingly depicted in the upper part of this scene).

A human figure stands or kneels on top of the zebus, sometimes wearing a fluted skirt (Fig. 12a and b, n°2-4), in cases with an inlay in the hair-dress (Fig. 12a, n°3) and bearded (Fig. 12b, n°4), holding in both hands merged or separate water streams. Between the two zebus, there may

be a kneeling man, apparently the same character in a different moment, either holding zebus from the dewlap (Fig. 12a, n°2) or dominating two snakes (in Fig. 12b, n°4, perhaps a depiction of the vertical downward stream gurgling from animal's mouth).

The so-called 'CWS' scene overlaps with the domination-clash scenes so distinctive of the Halil Rud repertory, and its antagonistic iconography. Water streams/rivers/snakes emitted by zebus could well be interpreted as due to clouds or storms, but also to the mountains surrounding the Halil Rud plain. More than a 'flood' story, this scene evokes the threats that rivers posed episodically on the inhabitants and subsistence in the Halil Rud Valley, one of the greatest concerns of the early agricultural urban communities that were usually located along rivers or on foothills. In addition to this threat, it shows that these communities believed in extra-natural entities (perhaps divinities) that controlled natural forces and whose depiction possibly evolved over time. As illustrated by the artefacts in Fig. 12a and b, one of these divinities was probably involved in the control of water streams/rivers. Star (possibly the sun), moon crescent and mountain motifs (as well as vegetation and cloud motifs (?) in Fig. 12b, n°5) are also frequently represented. The astral motifs are usually near the character holding the arched merged streams (e.g., Fig. 12a and b, n°2, 4 and 5). These motifs are not always present so it is unclear whether they have a specific value or are just intended to represent a natural setting.



Figure 12a. 'Control of water streams' scenes in the Halil Rud Valley chlorite art.



Figure 12b. ‘Control of water streams’ scenes in the Halil Rud Valley chlorite art (n°6 and 7 are a sealing and a lapis-lazuli pin-head).

II.3. Relation between the battle and ‘CWS’ scenes

Most artefacts presented here display either a battle scene involving fighting hybrids or the ‘CWS’ scene. The Miho Museum vessel combines both, establishing a connection between them. Additional associations are worth mentioning (see Table 1):

- vessel Fig. 8, n°1 also combines fighting hybrid characters with ‘water zebus’;
- vessel Fig. 8, n°2 displays in its lower register a horned man with bovine ears, kneeling on bulls, controlling snakes as well as a horned man kneeling on felines, controlling bulls. The former is repeated twice on top, with a raptor struggling with a snake;
- in Fig. 10, n°5 (‘handbag’), one side shows a two-faced hybrid character with a bovine lower part standing

on felines, while the other side shows a kneeling man on top of two merged zebus, probably controlling water streams spreading out of the animals’ heads;

- vessel Fig. 12b, n°5 (from Khafajah) combines a man on top of two zebus holding water streams coming out of their heads, near a vibrant vegetation growth; in contrast, a similar human figure stands on top of two felines, and holds two snakes. A scorpion separates this group from a crowded scene of scavenging, where a lion and a raptor feed on a carrion bovid. From this third group, grow the same plants seen in the first group. A small unidentified animal stands erected under a palm-date tree;

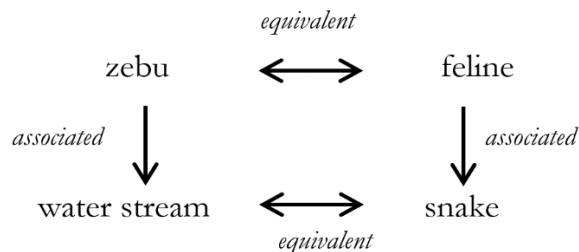
- Fig. 12b, n°7 (lapis-lazuli pinhead) displays a man sitting on zebus on one side and a woman (?) sitting on felines on the other. The *guilloche* motif on top of the latter side may represent stylized interwoven snakes or water flows.

	Character on zebus	Character on felines
Fig. 8, n°2	horned man with bovine ears holding snakes	horned man holding bulls
Fig. 10, n°5	man holding water streams (?)	two-faced man with bovine horns and lower part holding snakes
Fig. 12b, n°5	man holding water streams	man holding snakes
Fig. 12b, n°7	man water streams depicted with snakes (?)	woman (?) <i>guilloche</i> motif

Table 1: artefacts showing simultaneously characters on zebus and felines

Considering that Fig. 8, n°2 and Fig. 12b, n°7 are probably specific cases, Fig. 10, n°5 and Fig. 12b, n°5 establish the association between zebu and water streams, and between felines and snakes. Besides the

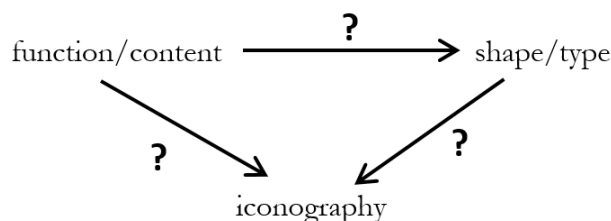
well-known equivalency water stream/snake, the zebus and felines are perhaps, in a way still to be determined, equivalent:



II.4. Preliminary considerations about the relations between the type/function of the Halil Rud Valley chlorite artefacts and their iconography

“L’ornementation d’un vase a pour but de lui donner un sens en relation avec son usage, avec sa place dans le rituel ; elle est supposée accroître l’efficacité du rite” (Perrot and Madjidzadeh 2006, 108).

Since virtually all the Halil Rud Valley chlorite vessels come from illegal excavations, we have no information about their content, spatial location in the graves, and associations with other artefacts. However, their shapes reflect probably their function (and content) while the decoration used may depend on their shape and consequently their function. A regressive method based on iconography and shape/type of vessels could perhaps help in determining the function and content of some of these containers.



In 2021, published³³ and unpublished artefacts in Jiroft and Kerman museums amount to 370 Halil Rud Valley carved chlorite artefacts, including 81 truncated-cone vessels, 84 ‘handbags’ and 84 cylindrical vessels (ca. 67% of the corpus). Among ‘narrative scenes’, besides clashes involving hybrid characters and the ‘CWS’ scenes, range the following:

- women hiding from snakes in big, decorated jars (four occurrences);

- a man bald, shaved, or with short-hair standing on the back of a bull tied to a menorah-like tree, or falling (three occurrences);

- scavenging scenes, either involving lions and fallen/dead zebu (as in the Khafajah vessel)³⁴, or felines and fallen/dead caprine (14 occurrences);

- architectural representations that Vidale (2017a) interpreted as related to the *vara*, an underground fort which, according to the Avestic version of a flood legend, was built by Yima to be used as a shelter (see below, section IV.2.a.1).

Among the 19 artefacts showing fighting hybrids, ten are on truncated-cone vessels, five on ‘handbags’, two on cylindrical vessels (including the vessel from Ur), one on a globular vessel (Fig. 9, n°4) and one on a footed cup (Fig. 9, n°5). Of the seven artefacts showing a ‘CWS’ scene, five are on truncated-cone vessels, one on a cylindrical vessel (from Khafajah, Fig. 12b, n°5) and one on a ‘handbag’ (Fig. 10, n°5). In this light, the truncated-cone vessels were the most common support for the fighting hybrids (along, less frequently, with ‘handbags’) and ‘CWS’ scenes. This tends to imply a connection between these scenes and the function(s) of these vessels.

Among the 81 decorated truncated-cone vessels, twelve bear geometric patterns (five with beveled squares, four with whirls, and three with mats). Five show rows of scorpions. On thirteen objects, felines fight snakes (among the 21 known cases, 13 are on truncated-cone vessels and seven on cylindrical vessels, and none on ‘handbags’). Five have birds against snakes (fourteen cases known, including eight on ‘handbags’, their favorite support, five on truncated-cone vessels, and none on cylindrical vessels). Four have scavenging scenes involving lions and dead zebus nearby a palm-date tree. Finally, as previously mentioned, ten are

³³ De Miroschedji 1973; Lamberg-Karlovsky 1988; Madjidzadeh 2003; Madjidzadeh and Pittman 2008; Perrot and Madjidzadeh 2005, 2006; Piran and Hesari 2005; Piran and Madjidzadeh 2012; Zarins 1978.

³⁴ Concerning the scavenging scenes involving lions and dead bovines, see Vidale *et al.* 2021.

decorated with fighting hybrids and five bear ‘CWS’ scenes.

Architectural patterns (45 scenes currently known) rarely appear on truncated-cone vessels. In contrast, 25 out of the 84 known cylindrical vessels and 17 out of the 84 known ‘handbags’ bear architectural motifs. Another strong relationship is between the pedestalled cups and groups of grazing ibexes, wild sheep and gazelles among shrubs (twelve scenes attested). Among the twelve cups currently known, nine are decorated with such scenes (one with a fighting hybrid, cf. Fig. 9, n°5, and two, with date-palms). Ceramic and bronze versions of these cups

also display scenes with ibexes or gazelles.

This review (see below, Table 2) suggests that truncated-cone vessels frequently hosted the scenes of ‘CWS’ and ‘fighting hybrids’, illustrating the coherency of the iconography depicted on the Miho Museum vessel. Unfortunately, as previously said, the precise function of this type of vessel and its placement in the grave still remain unknown as long as one is not found in a regular excavation and its content analyzed. Considering the tall closed shape, this container could have been used to store liquids, such as intoxicating drinks, perfumes or ointments (Perrot and Madjidzadeh 2005, 129).

truncated-cone vessel	‘handbag’	cylindrical vessel	pedestalled cup
scavenging scene involving lions and fallen/dead zebus with a date palm			
control of water streams			
fighting hybrids	fighting hybrids		
birds fighting against snakes	birds fighting against snakes		
felines fighting against snakes		felines fighting against snakes	
	architectural patterns	architectural patterns	
	date-palm		
			ibexes/gazelles among shrubs

Table 2: recurrent relationships currently known in the Halil Rud Valley chlorite art corpus between some types of artefacts and their decorative patterns (not all the types and decorative patterns are considered here)

II.5. Mesopotamian connections, comparisons and dating

The decoration of the Miho Museum truncated-cone vessel has numerous parallels in Mesopotamia. Relations between Kerman and the West are documented since the late fourth millennium BCE by the presence in the Halil Rud Valley of Uruk/Proto-Elamite-related materials at Mahtoutabad III (and Tepe Yahya IVC)³⁵. Mesopotamian ED I-III sealings dating to the first two thirds of the third millennium BCE were found in Konar Sandal South³⁶. These seals are:

- a Mesopotamian City seal on a door-sealing (trench XIV; cf. ED I/II Ur);
- seals with bovids emerging from both sides of a structure displaying standards with a hemispherical loop (symbol of Innana; this scene is attested from the Late Uruk to the Late ED Period);
- seals with contest scenes with animals (one notably very similar to exemplars from the ED IIIb Ur Royal cemetery).

When the Akkadian empire took shape ca. 2300 BCE, the Mesopotamian geographical scope widened, evidence of direct relations with Kerman dramatically increased and the first mentions of Parahšum/MarĦaši

(and Magan and Meluhha) appeared in cuneiform texts, mostly for military reasons. Current data suggest that Fars was at that time mostly void of settlements³⁷ and, as such, probably an obstacle to movement and communication. On the other hand, the Persian Gulf and its maritime (trade) route probably played an important role in the relationships between Kerman and Mesopotamia. The distribution of Halil Rud Valley chlorite artefacts and Kermani *Waagenophyllum* limestone artefacts (particularly at the time of the second dynasty of Lagaš) illustrates this³⁸.

If MarĦaši was the archenemy of Akkad in South-western Iran at the time of Sargon, Rimuš, and Maništušu (ca. 2320-2250 BCE), the situation changed dramatically at the time of Naram-Sin (ca. 2250/2230 BCE). With this ruler, MarĦaši was not mentioned anymore as an enemy. The so-called ‘Treaty of Naram-Sin’ may probably be interpreted as a peace-treaty between Akkad and MarĦaši (see below section IV.2.b.1, for the religious implications of this hypothesis), agreeing on their different spheres of influence in South-Western Iran. One of Naram-Sin (or Šar-kali-šarri)’s sons (perhaps Ubil-Eštar) went to MarĦaši to marry a MarĦašan princess and bring her

³⁵ Desset *et al.* 2013.

³⁶ Pittman 2012, 81-92; 2013a, 307-310; 2018, 26-32.

³⁷ *Contra*, see Miller and Sumner 2003.

³⁸ Desset *et al.* 2016; Desset, Vidale *et al.* forthcoming.

back to Mesopotamia. This is the first recorded instance of a royal wedding between ‘Mesopotamian’ and ‘Iranian’ dynasties, as it will be abundantly documented later (e.g., the wedding of Liwwir-mittašu, the daughter of Šulgi, with the king of Marḥaši in 2076/2075 BCE = 18th year of reign of Šulgi).

The alliance between Marḥaši and Mesopotamia proved to be surprisingly strong, surviving dynastic changes and continuing through the third dynasty of Ur. Both States probably shared common interests in South-Western Iran, considering Puzur-Sušinak’s military episode (ca. 2150-2100 BCE) and the subsequent emergence of Šimaški (2100-2000 BCE), as common enemies threatening respectively their western and eastern borders. Marḥašeian ambassadors and messengers are continually attested in the Mesopotamian cuneiform texts from Šulgi 46 to Ibbi-Sin 1 (2048-2027 BCE).

Gift exchanges were performed between the two courts³⁹ while an unprecedented direct military alliance is implied from the documented presence of Marḥašeian soldiers in Mesopotamia.

The Miho Museum truncated-cone vessel probably needs to be approached in the framework of these relations between Mesopotamia and Kerman.

Its two scenes are opposed in a general opposed triangular (VA) structure (Fig. 13). Such structure is observed as early as the late fourth millennium BCE on the sealing impressions on Early PIW tablets and on elite cylinder seals from Kerman such as one from the Rosen collection and a gold one from the Al-Sabah collection (the latter probably depicts the bovine/human/lion/bird hybrid character n°1; see below). These comparisons point at a common artistic background in the production of chlorite vessels and cylinder-seals.

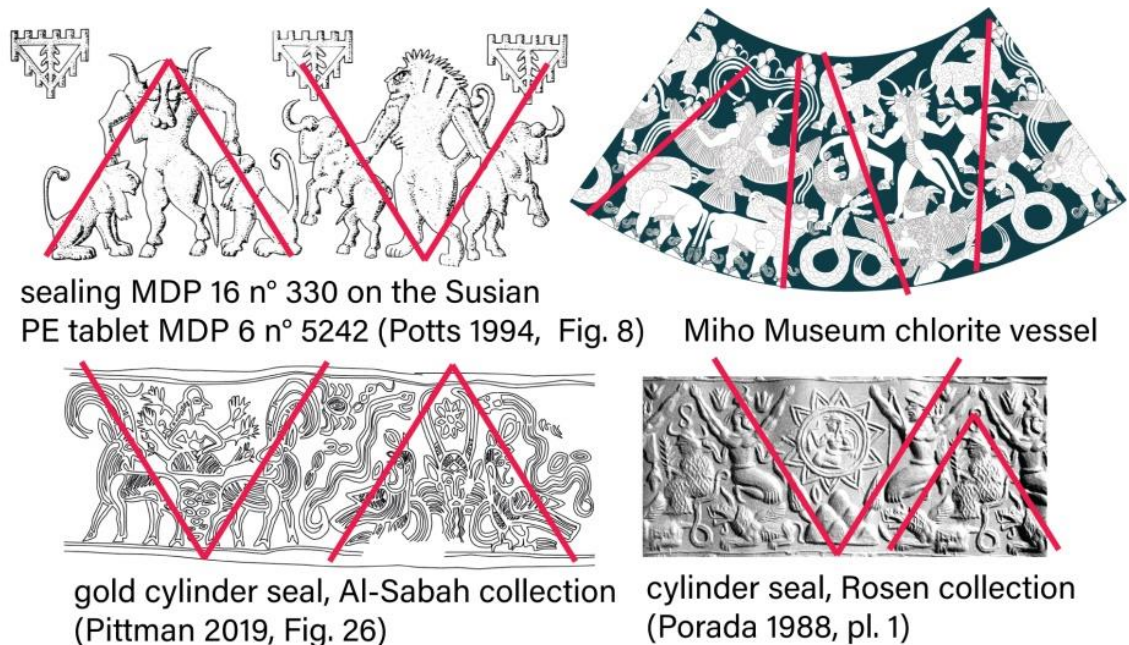


Figure 13. Comparisons of the opposed triangles (VA) structure in the articulation between two scenes.

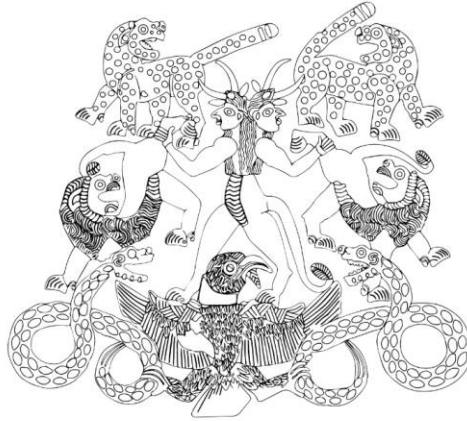
The depiction of the hybrid character in the ‘CWS’ scene parallels representations of the Mesopotamian leontocephal bird Anzu/Imdugud, which is frequently shown grasping lions, deers, or ibexes in a similar way since the ED I(?)–II Periods⁴⁰ (ca. 2800-2700 BCE; it is abundantly represented on ED IIIb 1st dynasty of Lagaš-related artefacts, such as the silver vessel of Entemena; see also two representations on chlorite pots, one from Mari and one from Tarut). Since representations of Anzu in Mesopotamia are earlier, they may have influenced that of the hybrid character in

the ‘CWS’ scene on the Miho Museum vessel. The overpowered lions in the battle scene on the Miho Museum vessel can be directly paralleled to Mesopotamian cylinder seals from the late ED IIIb/Old Akkadian Period (Fig. 14; parallels are also observed on Central Asian glyptics)⁴¹. Parallels with Mesopotamian late ED IIIb/Old Akkadian glyptics for the position of the dominated animals are observed on other Halil Rud Valley chlorite artefacts which show animals turned upside down, the back towards the dominating character and held by the tail and hind legs (Fig. 15).

³⁹ Potts 2002.

⁴⁰ Braun-Holzinger 1987.

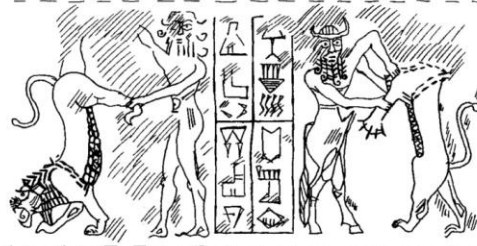
⁴¹ The position of the dominated animals is attested as early as the late fourth millennium BCE (Winkelmann 2000, 47-48).



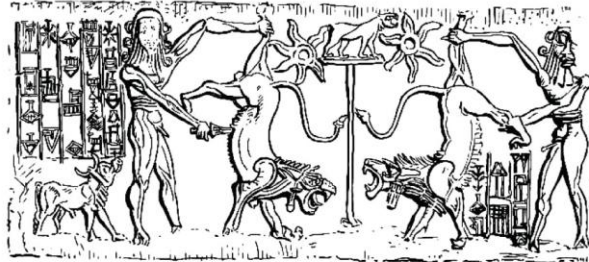
Miho Museum chlorite vessel



cylinder seal, Gonur Depe; Sarianidi 1993, Fig. 9 Christie's London, 14/04/2011, lot n° 321



cylinder seal; late ED IIIB/early Old Akkadian period, Rohn 2011, n° 358



cylinder seal; Old Akkadian period, Boehmer 1965, n° 158



cylinder sealing found in Susa, early Old Akkadian period
Amiet 2005 Fig. 1, n° 127 (Sb 6664, Delaporte S.424)
Pézard 1911, 117, Fig. 127

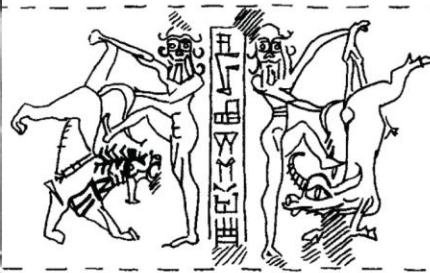
Figure 14. Similar position of the dominated animals (turned upside down, belly oriented towards the dominating character and hold by back legs) comparisons.



Halil Rud Valley chlorite artefacts



cylinder seals; late ED IIIB/early Old Akkadian period
Rohn 2011, n° 290



cylinder seal; late ED IIIB/
early Old Akkadian period
Rohn 2011, n° 386



cylinder seals; late ED IIIB/early Old Akkadian period
BNF Paris and AssyOnline

Figure 15. Similar position of the dominated animals (turned upside down, back oriented towards the dominating character and hold by the tail and back legs) comparisons.



cylinder-seal of Adda the scribe (British Museum)
early Old Akkadian period (ca. 2300-2200 BC)

Figure 16. The cylinder-seal of Adda the scribe.

These similarities are reinforced through comparisons with the Mesopotamian (Sippar?) cylinder-seal of Adda the scribe, dated around 2300-2200 BCE (Fig. 16). Mountains here, take the form of the same scale patterns as on the Miho Museum vessel as well as on the cylinder-seal from the Rosen collection (attributed by Porada to the Old Akkadian period, 23rd century BCE⁴²). Streams of water and muscular bodies of the characters are also depicted in a similar fashion. The bicephaly of the hybrid character n°1 in its most recent attestations on chlorite artefacts is probably a graphic convention showing that he is two-faced (as proven by the copper figurines; see Fig. 11, n°1-5). This convention relates to the depiction of the Mesopotamian god Isimud/Ušmu (e.g., the seal of Adda, on the right, see Fig. 16), the messenger of Enki/Ea, the god of the underground sweet water (*apsû*), who emanates streams of water from shoulders. This could be one of the attributes of the Halil Rud Valley region bovine/human/lion/bird hybrid character n°1 too, as shown in the ‘CWS’ scenes. The earliest representations in Mesopotamia of the two-faced god Isimud/Ušmu date to the Old Akkadian period⁴³.

The parallels with the seal of Adda and Mesopotamian iconography in general for the depiction of dominated lions, mountains, streams of water, bodies, and two-faced characters suggest that the Miho Museum vessel date to the early Old Akkadian Period, ca. 2300-2200 BCE. Consequently, it likely belongs to the recent phase of the Halil Rud Valley chlorite art. Furthermore, the fact that representations of dominated

upside-down lions are more frequent in Mesopotamia suggests an influence of Mesopotamian glyptics. On the other hand, it is unclear whether the Halil Rud Valley bovine/human/lion/bird hybrid character, in its more recent two-faced representation phase (see below section III.2), is older or more recent than the depiction of the Mesopotamian god Isimud/Ušmu.

III. Supernatural iconography of Bronze age Kerman

III.1. Based on glyptics

Kerman glyptic iconography (see Fig. 17a and b) does not overlap with the Halil Rud Valley chlorite art. Kermani seals very rarely share the motifs carved on chlorite. Exceptions are a ‘CWS’ scene in sealing Fig. 12b, n°6 or the bovid/human/lion/bird hybrid on the al-Sabah collection gold seal (see also a seal from Gonur Depe in Fig. 17a). Chlorite artefacts, in turn, never show the scenes or actors which commonly appear on seals. In particular, they completely exclude goddesses who are paramount in seal imagery⁴⁴.

A number of supernatural entities and/or divinities are represented on third millennium BCE Kerman glyptic art. These are observed on: seals and sealings from Kerman province (Konar Sandal⁴⁵, Shahdad, and Tepe Yahya); materials originating from or related to Kerman found at other Iranian sites such as Susa and Jalalabad (Fars); materials from Gonur Depe and the southern Central Asian civilization (Bactria-Margiana Archaeological Complex/Greater Khorasan Civilization) in general, largely influenced by⁴⁶ or

⁴² Porada 1988, 141.

⁴³ Boehmer 1976-1980.

⁴⁴ Female characters, in general, are exceedingly rare on chlorite artefacts; the motif of women (with a very specific buckle-bun hair style) hiding in large, decorated jars are unique. Females are also

portrayed in copper figurines and in ‘couple’ scenes on the copper or lapis-lazuli heads of copper pins.

⁴⁵ For the sealings and seals found at Konar Sandal, see Madjidzadeh and Pittman 2008, 95-100; Pittman 2012; 2013a; 2013b; 2014a; 2014b; 2018, 21-33; 2019.

⁴⁶ “As the Kerman culture is older than the Bactrian one and both cultures partly overlap chronologically, one may assume that the

imported from Kerman⁴⁷; and objects from private collections⁴⁸. We list below these characters (see Fig. 17a and b for all the documents used here and their references):

- 1) a vegetation/grain goddess with vegetal branches growing from the body, sitting on two ibexes (or on a snake in one case) or standing, rarely winged (two cases);

- 2) a horned, winged goddess, standing or sitting (sometimes on a chair), in some cases associated with snakes;

- 3) a less defined goddess on the Rosen collection seal. She sits on two horned lion-dragons, wears a kaunakes-like robe with a horned cap, and holds a vegetal element⁴⁹. An eight-like sign appears on the head. This goddess is also represented on Central Asiatic metallic compartmented stamp seals (e.g., Fig. 17b), sitting on a dragon or standing by lions, wearing a kaunakes-like robe, and winged in some cases or with animals springing from her arms. She could be a variation of a previously described goddess. This character probably achieved important success in the southern Central Asian civilization (BMAC/GKC);

- 4) what appears to be a male divinity sitting on a chair/throne or standing with snakes emanating from shoulders (Fig. 17b)⁵⁰. Three images are known, respectively in the Foroughi collection, the former Bailey collection, and from a seal said to come from Jalalabad. In this last example⁵¹, the god stands with multiple arms transformed into snakes, worshipped by three bent women in a kaunakes dress. The seal from the Foroughi collection shows a bull-head above the head of this god. He resembles the kneeling character with snakes emanating from his arms and capped with a bull-head (and ‘tulips’) on the Rosen seal and the sitting figure on the left side of a large cylinder-seal from Konar Sandal South (Trench V) with a bull-head above his head and a snake behind him. In the Bailey collection seal, the chair of the god is on a platform very similar to that of Insušinak or Napireša on the so-called ‘stele of Šir-ūktūh’ and the seal of Tan-Ūlī dated to the first half of the second millennium BCE (Fig. 17a). The three worshipping women on the Jalalabad seal remind the three standing ones in front of the god on the Bailey collection seal, while a bird (maybe on the shoulder of the god on the Jalalabad seal), a lute/lyre (played or not)

and tulips seem to be regularly associated with this divinity;

- 5) four images show a god sitting or kneeling in a halo (two seals in the Rosen collection, one in the Foroughi collection, one from Gonur Depe), all of them associated with goddesses. In two cases, he holds a snake or a bow, and in two cases he is probably wearing a horned cap. In the Rosen seal, the halo rises on a scale-like mountains motif like those in the ‘CWS’ scene on chlorite artefacts (e.g., Miho Museum vessel, Fig. 12a, n°1-2), with two trees. The halo is framed by two kneeling males raising their arms, one bearing a hat (with a lion-head?) and a quiver and a bow, the other with snakes protruding from his arms and a bull-head cap. In the Foroughi collection seal, this god sits on an arched platform with animal legs, framed by two halves of a bovine and rope-like elements on both sides (probably as a depiction of the halo). A character kneels in front of him, holding a snake or bow. In the sealings of a large cylinder-seal found in Konar Sandal South (Trench V), the sitting character on the left is holding a bow and an arrow and could be assimilated to this figure. As he faces the god with a bull-head cap (see above, character n°4), the Trench V sealing can be compared to the Rosen specimen. The halo may identify him as a sun-god (rising on mountains in the Rosen seal), while the bow and arrow could hint to solar beams. If this is correct, he might be Nahūnte, the ‘Hatamtite’ solar god, equivalent of the Mesopotamian god Utu/Šamaš;

- 6) the bovine/human/lion/bird hybrid character previously described in chlorite art is probably represented on two cylinder seals from the al-Sabah collection and Gonur Depe. The bird component of this character is here more emphasized; his body is that of a bird, and his head is that of a horned human with curved beard (Fig. 17a). The Al-Sabah gold cylinder-seal shows the head of the god with a sun-motif between the horns, flanked on both sides by a human-headed bird (two-faced characteristics?) and a snake, the animal he is usually dominating. On this last seal, it accompanies the vegetation goddess n°1, and an upward oriented lunar crescent. The association of goddesses and lunar crescent is attested in other cases; these astral representations are exactly similar to the moon crescent and star/sun displayed in some ‘CWS’ scenes (see Fig. 12a and b, n°1, 2, 4 and 5). On the seal from Gonur Depe, the same god may appear with two bird-heads

Iranian Kerman culture has also influenced the Bactrian culture in the field of religion” (Winkelmann 2014, 200).

⁴⁷ According to Pittman (2019, 272), the 5 cylinder-seals found in Gonur Depe were all imported, one from Mesopotamia, the four others from Kerman.

⁴⁸ See Winkelmann (2000, 70-80; 2014, 202-216) for a similar reconstructive attempt and the identification of five different divinities

⁴⁹ This representation is very close to the statue of the goddess found in Susa commissioned by Puzur-Sušinak and which can now

be identified as *Bēlat-ekallim*, the “Lady of the palace”, a well-known byname of Innana/Eštar thanks, to the decipherment of Late Proto-Iranian writing (Desset *et al.* forthcoming a and b; inscription I: 1, *pe-l-ti-ka-liš-m*).

⁵⁰ See Eskandari *et al.* forthcoming, for a discussion of snake imagery in third millennium BCE iconography.

⁵¹ See Vidale *et al.* 2021.

(see below). On the sealings of a large cylinder-seal from Konar Sandal South (Trench V), the figure standing on the right has horns and could also be ascribed to this character;

- 7) one of the most ancient depictions of the (double) bird (vulture)-headed (winged) entity, sometimes with claws instead of feet, may be recognized on the upper register of the 'jeweler's seal' from Susa (Fig. 17a)⁵².

He appears on two cylinder seals from Gonur-Depe (probably originally from Kerman), and many additional representations of this character or an analogous deity or demon are recorded in Central Asia on stamp-seals, ('amulets'; see Sarianidi 1998, 171, 173), axes, and a circular

gold seal with a Late PIW inscription (G'). Muscular, wearing a short skirt and a pendant, he is usually shown overpowering snakes, scorpions, ibexes, a dragon, or a wild boar. He may be a variation of the bovine/human/lion/bird hybrid character/god (they share a similar bicephalic/two-faced feature), although his bird (vulture) component is emphasized (compare the depiction of the lapis-lazuli pin-head Fig. 11, n°6 with the cylinder-seal from grave 1393 at Gonur Depe). This character, like the goddess associated with dragons or lions, underwent a specific development in Central Asia. On the contrary, it could be also hypothesized that both are from Central Asia and arrived later in Kerman.

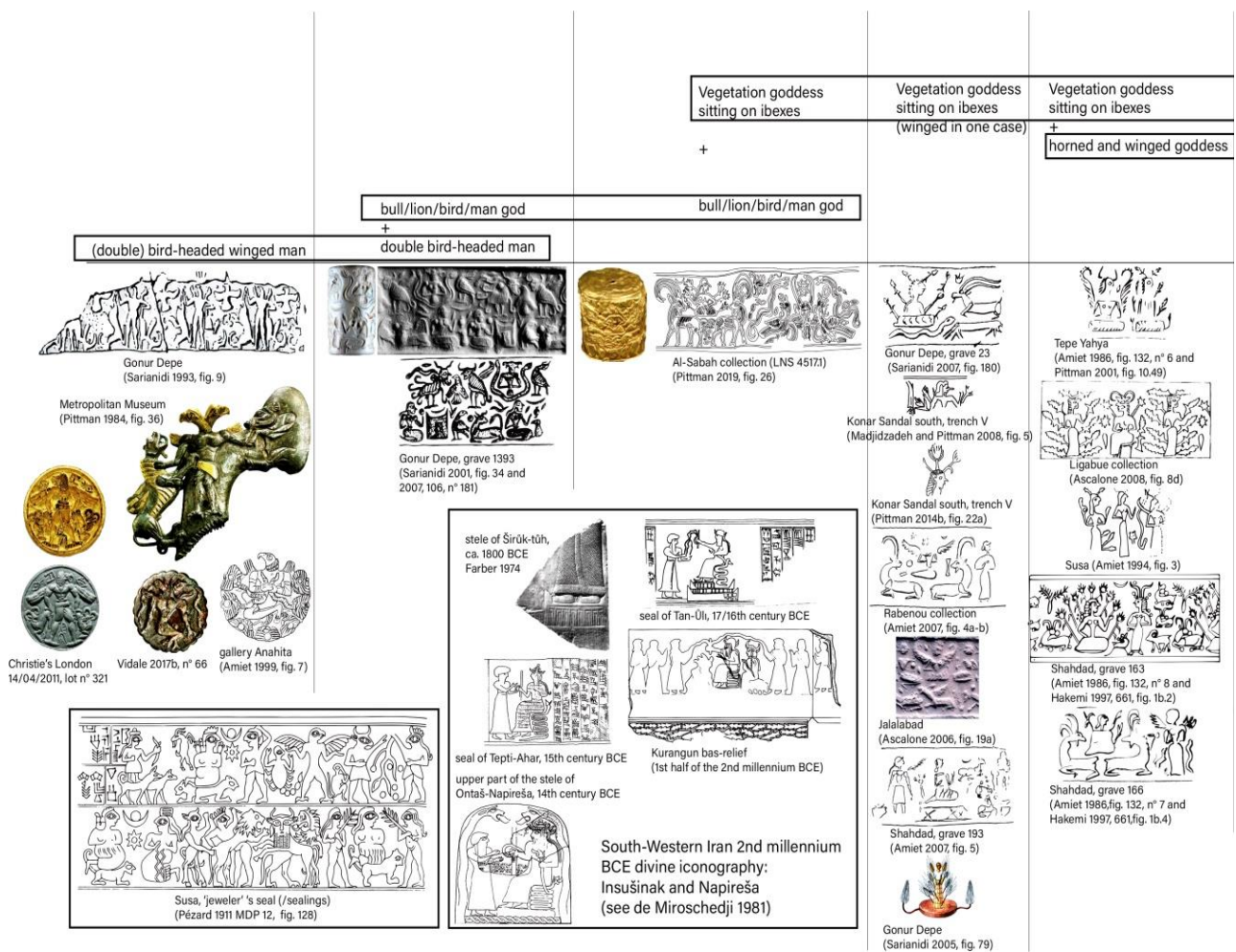


Figure 17a. Third millennium and early second millennium BCE Kermani and Central Asiatic divine iconography on glyptics and comparisons.

⁵² This fascinating seal mixes Mesopotamian elements (cuneiform inscription and the contest scene on the lower register) with typically Eastern-Iran/Kerman ones. It may have belonged to an Eastern-Iranian (Marḥašean) person, acculturated to Mesopotamian iconography probably in Susa where he/she lived or was active (this is a door-sealing). As cuneiform writing was probably adopted in Susa with the Akkadian annexation of the city by Sargon, this could be a terminus *post quem* for the dating of this seal to be attributed then to the 23rd century BCE, like the Miho Museum vessel (it is

usually dated earlier: Winkelmann 2000, 45 and 67: 2500-2350 BC/EDIII; *contra* Pittman 2002, 219 and 229: "while the specific iconography belongs to the middle of the [third] millennium according to Mesopotamian development, it could as well have been copied into the Early Old Akkadian period, perhaps as much as 200 years later. [...] It was carved during the period between 2400 and 2200 BC".

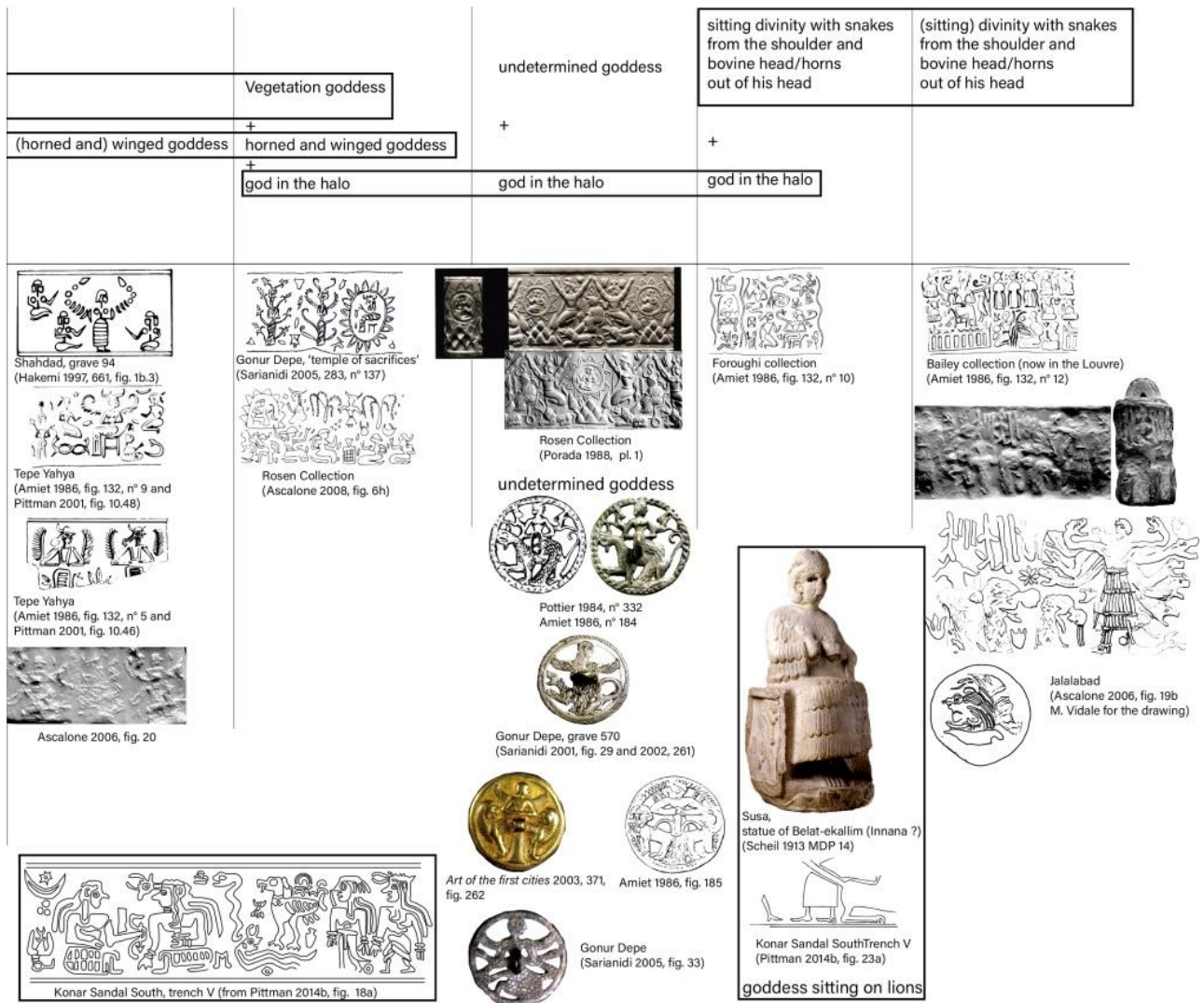


Figure 17b. Third millennium and early second millennium BCE Kermani and Central Asiatic divine iconography on glyptics and comparisons.

III.2. Synthesis and iconographic evolution of the bovine/ human/ lion/ bird hybrid character/god

The above review suggests that goddesses are most common on glyptic art⁵³, while specific divinities, also displayed in glyptics, are represented on chlorite objects, whereas goddesses are not. Since there is very little overlap between the chlorite and glyptic arts iconographic spheres, this dichotomy may be explained in the following terms: 1) chlorite artefacts are essentially containers, implying that a specific content could have been associated to particular divinities; 2) considering the probable funerary context of most chlorite artefacts from the Halil Rud Valley region, and tentatively hypothesizing that they were made to be

deposited in graves⁵⁴, we might assume that the divinities and stories or myths potentially illustrated on them relate to death.

Many characters in the Kermani supernatural imagery are horned, wear horned caps, or are topped by bull-heads, birds or scorpions, reflecting the hybrid animal/human character associated with their extra-human/divine status. This might be linked to the horned cap used in Mesopotamia as a distinctive headdress for divinities since ED IIIa times (ca. 2600-2500 BCE)⁵⁵, although it is impossible to tell whether this motif appeared first in Mesopotamia or in South-Eastern Iran. The Mesopotamian horned cap may be seen as a local interpretation of the animal/human hybrid divinities typical of South-Eastern Iran, who are

⁵³ As previously stated by Winkelmann (2000, 78): “If this interpretation is correct we have here the central figure of the Southeast Iranian pantheon: a main goddess”.

⁵⁴ See Vidale and Micheli 2012 about the funerary function of the chlorite ‘handbags’.

⁵⁵ Boehmer 1972-1975 and Braun-Holzinger 2013, 148 (“Die Hörnerkrone als allgemeines Göttermerkmal ist daher eine ‘Erfindung’ der jüngeren frühdynamischen Zeit”).

directly horned characters or have animal heads or head-dresses. Animal/human hybrid characters are observed since the fifth millennium BCE (animal-headed humans)⁵⁶ and during the late fourth millennium BCE Uruk Mesopotamia/Proto-Elamite Iran, with characters that combine lion and bird of prey attributes, and animals engaged in human activities. A shared imaginary substrate must have existed, upon which the third millennium BCE hybrid creatures were elaborated, on a relatively limited scale in Mesopotamia (leontocephal bird Anzu, human-headed lion, bull-man, human-headed bull, scorpion-man, bird-man, boat-god) and in the Indus (Harappan ‘chimaera’, attested on 31 seals, combining cobra/snake, tiger, unicorn, markhor goat, elephant, human face and zebu⁵⁷). It probably developed on a much larger scale in eastern Iran (and of course Egypt), where human/animal hybrids could stand for divinities.

The iconographic evolution of the bovine/human/lion/bird hybrid character between ca. 2700 and 2200 BCE, whose Miho Museum vessel depiction is probably among the most recent examples, reflects this tendency to take animals to represent divinities (perhaps for distancing them from the human sphere). We propose here a tentative reconstruction of the different stages of this iconographic evolution (Fig. 18), based on a hypothetical unilinear ‘complexification’ process (simpler = older; more complex = more recent):

- 1) a simple horned man;
- 2) bovine legs or lion feet are added;
- 3) the animal part gains more importance with a full-lion/bird (on seals) body on a (horned) human-headed character;
- 4) the two-faced aspect appears;
- 5) the most recent representations of this character combine bovine, lion, bird and human attributes with human upper body and a two-faced head.

A feline/bird/human character depicted on metallic vessels from the Marlik culture is probably worth mentioning (Fig. 19) as a potential continuation of the third millennium BCE Kermani bovine/human/lion/bird hybrid character into the second millennium BCE. One silver vessel from tomb 50 at Marlik displays a winged character with a lower bird part, an upper human part, and two animal (feline?) heads, controlling two sphinxes (winged lions with a woman-head) (vessel n°21; Fig. 19, n°1)⁵⁸. One electrum goblet at the Louvre Museum (AO 20281),

probably from Marlik culture, displays a winged character with a lower (reptile?) twisted part with bird claws, an upper human part and two animal (feline?) heads, controlling two ibexes/gazelles (Fig. 19, n°2).

The position of the ibexes/gazelles is very similar to that the dominated animals in Fig. 14 and seems to be a direct loan from late third millennium BCE iconography.

IV. Third millennium BCE South-Eastern Iran / MarĤašean pantheon

IV.1. Iconographic data

The above review of glyptic and chlorite iconographic evidence suggests that three female and six male super-natural entities, that we hypothetically interpret as goddesses and gods, are represented in third millennium BCE South-Eastern Iran:

- a) a vegetation/grain goddess (in glyptics);
- b) a horned and winged goddess (in glyptics);
- c) a goddess sitting on or associated with horned lion/dragons, wearing a kaunakes-like robe and a horned cap, and holding a vegetal element (in glyptics);
- d) a god sitting on a chair, kneeling or standing with, in some cases, snakes emanating from his shoulders and arms, and a bull-head emanating from his head (in glyptics);
- e) a god sitting or kneeling in a halo (Nahunte?; in glyptics);
- f) a bovine/human/lion/bird hybrid god (mainly attested on chlorite artefacts but also in glyptics), fighting against animals (mainly snakes) and probably controlling streams of water (/snakes) originating from zebus. Its image probably evolved between 2700 and 2000 BCE, as his two-faced characteristics probably only appeared ca. 2300 BCE. The bull-man, the lion-man, and the man with clawed feet wearing a fluted skirt may be considered variations or avatars of this character;
- g) a (double) bird-headed (winged) man, sometimes with claws instead of feet, fighting against various animals (in glyptics);
- h) a god with (bovine?) horns, wearing a skirt decorated with regularly spaced circular inlays, fighting or controlling snakes (in chlorite art);
- i) in the chlorite artefacts corpus, scorpion-men are also attested. It is not certain if they represented a specific divinity, just a genius, or a manifestation of negative forces.

⁵⁶ Pittman 2014a, 630-631.

⁵⁷ Frenéz and Vidale 2012.

⁵⁸ Negahban 1996, vol. 1, 81-82.

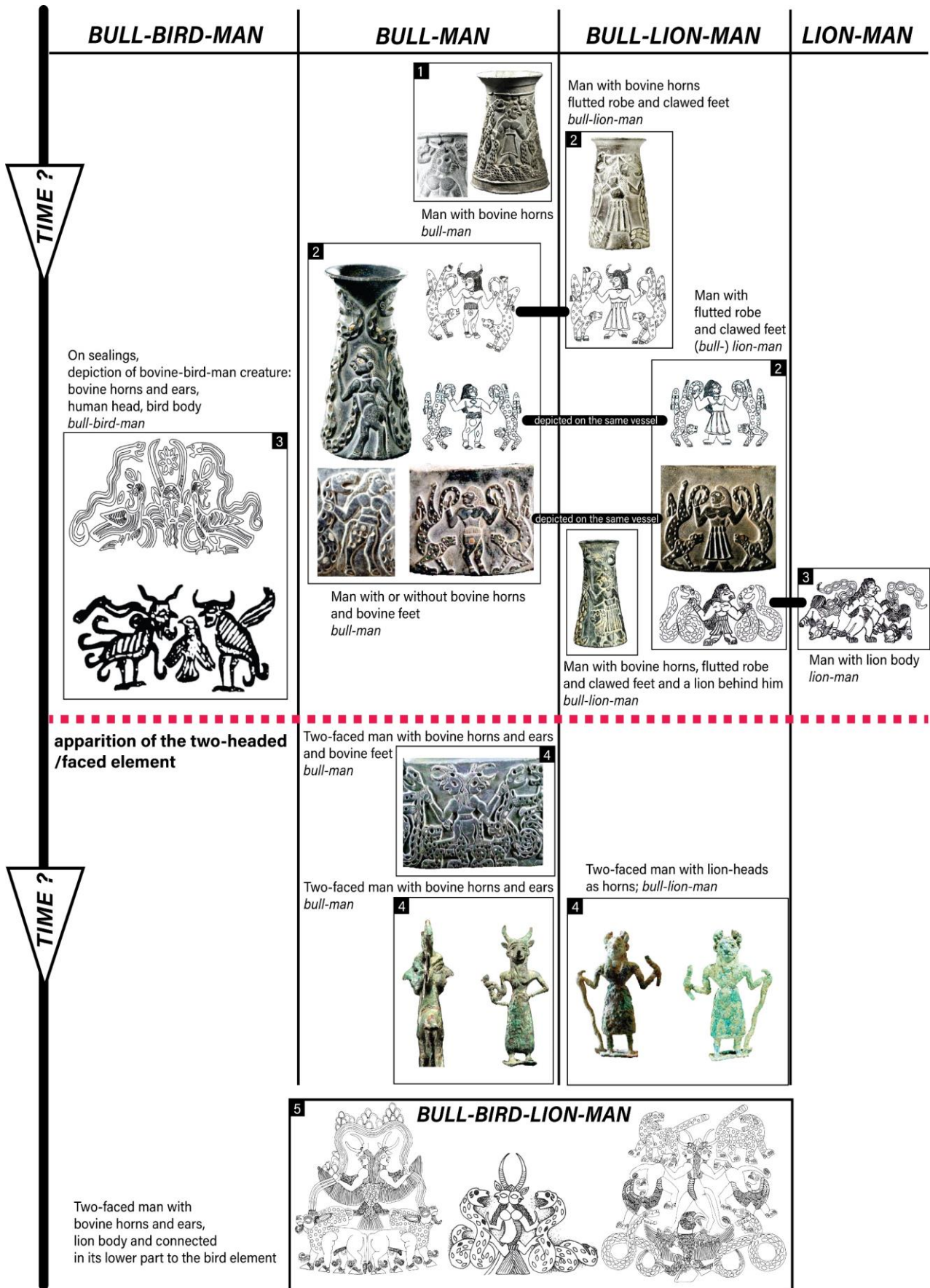


Figure 18. Hypothetical iconographic evolution of the bovine/human/lion/bird hybrid (two-faced) god.



1 Marlik, silver pot n° 21, tomb n° 50 (detail)
Negahban 1996, vol. 1, p. 70, illus. 9, n° 21
and vol. 2, Fig. 5, n° 21 and pl. XX.D



2 Electrum goblet
Louvre Museum AO 20281 (acquisition 1956)
Löw 1998, Fig. 87a (for the drawing)

Figure 19. Later iconographic comparisons available for the bovine/human/lion/bird hybrid (two-faced) god.

This list should be considered at the best tentative and not comprehensive, because: 1) it may superimpose and mix different periods and areas along with the risk of interpreting actual variations of the same figure as distinct entities (or actual distinct entities as the variations of the same figure); 2) it is based on selected objects that come from different periods and regions, which implies the possibility that the iconographic themes did not necessarily always reflect the same meanings. Of specific concern here is the sharing of iconographic themes between south-eastern Iran and Central Asia in the second half of the third millennium BCE, as apparent similarities might have been the expressions of different ideologies. The iconography of south-eastern Iran in the third millennium BCE, on which this preliminary list is proposed, nevertheless hints at a religious landscape including different feminine and masculine entities, probably identified by specific symbols and attributes and playing specific roles in distinct myths.

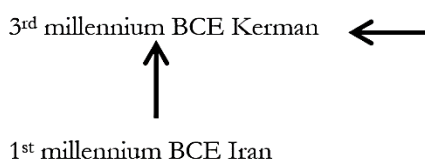
From this point of view, it seems to correspond to a 'typical' Near-Eastern-type pantheon, characterized by specific hybrid characters.

At this point, only textual information could lead us to break the surface of the images and move beyond this very general statement to reach the underlying, lost narratives.

IV.2. Textual data and narrative interpretation

IV.2.a. Indirect approaches

In the absence of solid knowledge about the Iranian Plateau during the third millennium BCE, later Iranian narratives (*Avesta*) and third/second millennia BCE sources from Mesopotamia and South-Western Iran provide important information that help in understanding third millennium BCE Kermani iconography.



3rd / 2nd millennia BCE Mesopotamia
and South-Western Iran

IV.2.a.1. Later Iranian evidence: an Avestic text

Considering that basic mythemes survived in the same territory and could be traced as a Proto-Indo-Iranian substrate/heritage in subsequent religious conceptions, Vidale (2017a) hypothesizes that the architectural representations on the Halil Rud Valley chlorite art are models of the *vara/var* known in the Avesta. *Vara/var* is a walled space built by Yima (Videvdad, Fragard 2, 22-43) under divine instructions as a shelter for mankind, plants and animals when threatened by the ice of a deadly cataclysmic winter (it could be a variation of a substrate myth from which the Mesopotamian flood myth, as documented in the epic of Atra-Ḫasis, also sprung). The reference to palm dates in the quoted Avestic passages seems to support a south-eastern Iranian scenario for the narrative.

However, an important issue with this approach is that the toponyms in the Avestic texts usually correspond to territories located north and east of Kerman, in current North-Eastern Iran, Central Asia, or Afghanistan⁵⁹. This issue could be overcome if one considered that the third millennium BCE Kerman region influenced the late third / early second millennia BCE southern Central Asian civilization (BMAC/GKC), a possibility suggested by certain aspects of its glyptic art (see above). This latter area, from the points of view of presumed times and locations, could be considered as sharing or overlapping the possible religious substrate of the Avestic texts. In this perspective, a southern Central Asian civilization (BMAC/GKC) substrate, itself influenced by Kermani templates, might have been fragmentarily reflected in archaic cores of the Avestic texts. Although this scenario remains problematic, it seems logically possible.

3rd millennium BCE Kerman/Marḡaši



Late 3rd / early 2nd millennium BCE southern Central Asian civilization (BMAC/GKC) proto-Indo-Iranian substrate



Avestic texts

IV.2.a.2. Contemporary and later evidence from Mesopotamia and South-Western Iran (Susiana and Fars)

“Dans la recherche concernant la spiritualité de l’Orient «pré-historique», nous avons été trop souvent portés à nous satisfaire de notions tirées de la littérature

mésopotamienne du II^{ème}, voire du I^{er} millénaire; c’est-à-dire de notions anachroniques qui faussent toute tentative d’interprétation”⁶⁰.

An alternative to the first approach considers that contemporary societies in direct contact might have shared similar religious conceptions, through influences, and/or a common religious background. As such, Mesopotamian narratives may help in explaining the Halil Rud Valley iconography⁶¹. The myth of Etana, including the initially independent tale describing the opposition between the bird and the snake, recalls the abundant fighting scenes between birds (bearded vultures) and snakes in the Halil Rud Valley chlorite art. Also, the scenes of ‘CWS’ may be related to the Mesopotamian flood myth (Vidale 2015).

Third and second millennia BCE cuneiform texts document also South-Western Iranian/Susian (‘Elamite’) religion⁶², characterized by the cults of Insušinak and Napireša. Late third millennium BCE Susa is characterized by the temples of Insušinak and Ninḡursaġa, built on the Acropolis on both sides of the early fourth millennium BCE *Haute terrasse* and restored by Šulgi in the 21st century BCE. We know from the texts that:

- Ešpum, the Akkadian governor of Susa at the time of Maništušu (ca. 2260 BCE), dedicated a statue to the goddess Narūte;

- the local ruler Puzur-Sušinak (ca. 2150-2100 BCE) mentioned in his texts Insušinak, Šamaš, Enlil, Enki, Innana/Eštar, Sin, Ninḡursaġa, Nergal and Narūte to which list we may add Šimot (probably the equivalent of Nergal) from the Late PIW text D⁶³. He described specific rituals for the gate of Insušinak, dedicated statues to AL.UR₄?KA? and Bēlat-Terraban, and votive ‘nails’ to Insušinak. He also commissioned the statue of a goddess (previously wrongly identified as Narūte), designated in the Late PIW inscription (I) written on it as *pe-l-ti-ka-li₃-m*, Bēlat-ekallim, a byname traditionally reserved in Susa for Innana/Eštar (this identification is confirmed by the lions carved on the throne of the goddess and under her feet). Additionally, Puzur-Sušinak built or restored the temple of ŠU-GU (an unknown god). Insušinak is probably local to Susa (his name in Sumerian would mean “the lord of Susa”), whereas all the other gods mentioned by Puzur-Sušinak seem to have Mesopotamian origins, save for Narūte and Šimot (and maybe ŠU-GU);

- late third millennium BCE onomastics at Susa reflect an even more Mesopotamian-related pantheon, since people’s names are almost always those of Mesopotamian deities, especially Ea, Šamaš, Erra,

⁵⁹ Lecoq 2016, 57-58 (geographic scope of the Avestic texts) and 124-125 (hypotheses about the life of Zarathuštra and where his prophetic career could have been led).

⁶⁰ Perrot and Madjidzadeh 2006, 99.

⁶¹ See Winkelmann 2014, 211-213; 2018; Vidale 2015, 32-38.

⁶² Vallat 1998; Quintana 2018, 729-731.

⁶³ See Desset *et al.* forthcoming a and b.

Adad, and Eštar/Innana, as well as Amal, Enzu, Nabium, Nisaba, Enki, Ningirsu and Nindar. Besides Narûte and Manzat, few Hatamtite/highland divine names are attested in Susian onomastics, which suggests that the late third millennium BCE pantheon in Susa was already syncretistic with a main local/tutelary god (Insušinak), a major Mesopotamian component (Enlil, Enki, Ea, Šamaš, Innana/Eštar, Sin, NinĦursaġa, Nergal, Adad, Ningirsu, etc.), and a minor highland component (Narûte, Šimot, Manzat);

- early second millennium BCE school tablets from Susa record only Mesopotamian divinities, especially those of the pantheons of Lagaš, Ur, Isin, Nippur and Kiš, such as Bau, Ningirsu, Ningišzida, Nanna, Šulpae(a), Sin, Nin-gal, Ninkarrak, AN-a-ba, Zababa, Adad (IŠKUR) and Nergal as well as (In)Sušinak (Tsujita 2016). More than just a reflection of the religious landscape prevalent at that time in Susa, these gods probably betray the importance of the Mesopotamian scribal practices in the cursus of the Susian students.

Some additional information for areas further east of Susiana is provided by a text mentioning the cult of Rûhû-rater (or Rûhû-razer) in Hûhnûri, probably located at Tappeh Bormi, near Ram Hormuz, at the time of Amar-Sin of Ur (ca. 2040 BCE)⁶⁴. With the recent decipherment of the Late PIW, the corpus of *kunanki* vessels from Kam-Firuz has shed light onto the relationships of the Šimaški/early Sukkalmah rulers (ca. 2000-1880 BCE) outside of the Susian context, at Anzan, with Napireša, Nahûnte (assimilated to Utu/Šamaš) and Pinekir (assimilated to Innana/Eštar). Later, according to an inscription of Šimot-wartaš (18th century BCE), we witness a specific relation between the goddess Kirreša and Liyan (Bushehr)⁶⁵. In Western Susiana, the patron god of Pašime (Tell Abu Shija) was probably Šuda⁶⁶ (at least during the Old Akkadian Period and probably during the Ur III Period).

IV.2.b. Direct approaches

Important textual data that inform us directly on the South-Eastern Iran/Kerman and MarĦašean religious landscape in the second half of the third millennium BCE deserve mention. In order of importance, we may use the so-called ‘Treaty of Naram-Sin’, Late PIW inscriptions from Kerman or relating to Kerman, and MarĦašean onomastics.

IV.2.b.1. The ‘Treaty of Naram-Sin’⁶⁷

In the Old Akkadian Period, South-Western Iran (corresponding to the Mesopotamian geographic concept of NIM/ELAM⁶⁸) was probably under Mesopotamian control (Khuzestan) or influence (Fars). As said above, with Naram-Sin’s accession (ca. 2254-2218 BCE), there was probably a modification in the Akkadian Eastern diplomacy since, after him, MarĦaši was never mentioned any more as an enemy. For this reason, it seems reasonable to consider MarĦaši as the counterpart of Akkad⁶⁹ in the so-called ‘Treaty of Naram-Sin’ found in Susa.

This peace-treaty is one of the most ancient documents written in Hatamtite language, dating to ca. 2240/2230 BCE. Its purpose was to phonetically record the oath pledged by the counterpart of Naram-Sin, probably a MarĦašean ruler (notably “the enemy of Naram-Sin shall be my enemy, the friend/ally (?) of Naram-Sin shall be my friend/ally (?)”). This document is introduced by a long series of divinities invoked to guarantee it (see below, Appendix 1). If the hypothesis of a peace-treaty between Akkad and MarĦaši proves to be correct, it would give then an exceptional insight into the MarĦašean pantheon around 2240/2230 BCE (i.e. roughly at the time the Miho Museum vessel was produced), resulting from a long history already characterized by the adoption of foreign divinities.

At least half of the divinities invoked in this text are mentioned only here (another proof that this treaty is not related to the Susiana/South-Western Iran religious landscape). Among the others, eleven had cults in Susa or Fars at some point and probably already shared in the third millennium BCE a pan-Iranian/Hatamtite status: Pinekir, Hûmpan, Nahûnte, Insušinak, Šimot, Hûtran, Siašûm, Manzat (?), Narûte, Niarzina, and Kirwasir (Kirwaš).

The absence of Napireša (and Kirreša) in this text, as well as in Susa before 2000 BCE, is remarkable. The most ancient attestation of this god known at present is in a cuneiform Hatamtite inscription written on the *kunanki* vessel of Kintatu (ca. 2000 BCE; Mahboubian 2004, 46-47; Desset *et al.* forthcoming b). Probably initially related to the Šimaškian polity, he appears in the inscriptions left by the Šimaški/Sukkalmah rulers in the graveyard of Kam-Firuz in Fars. His cult, possibly centered on Anzan, was widespread into Susiana around 1350 BCE at the time of Ontaš-Napireša’s reign. At the time of the ‘Treaty of Naram-Sin’, either he did not exist

⁶⁴ Mofidi-Nasrabadi 2005; 2018.

⁶⁵ Pézard 1914 MDP 15, fig. 15, pl. 13, n°4-5.

⁶⁶ Hussein *et al.* 2010.

⁶⁷ Scheil 1911 MDP 11, 1-11 for the original edition. See also König 1965, 29-34, Hinz 1967, 91-95, Koch 2005, 283-287 and Quintana: <https://www.um.es/cepoat/elamita/?cat=81>

See also the transliteration in the CDLI internet site : https://cdli.ucla.edu/search/archival_view.php?ObjectID=P4806_21

⁶⁸ Desset 2017.

⁶⁹ See also Steinkeller (2018, 189) who reached a similar conclusion.

yet, or his cult was restricted to what would become the cradle of the Šimaškian dynasty (the earliest mention of Šimaški dates back to the time of Puzur-Sušinak, ca. 2150-2100 BCE).

The mention in the Treaty of Mesopotamian divinities (NIN.URTA and NIN-Karak, as well as maybe Ilaba, Maziat and Išhara) and of the god of Susa, Insušinak, suggests that this pantheon was a syncretistic construction where the diversity of local gods was rationalized to develop a unified religious landscape (like in Susa around the same time), maybe not spared yet by any overlapping phenomenon with similar attributes and functions shared by distinct gods. As gods listed as Hatamtite may have been worshipped in different locations of the Iranian Plateau, it remains difficult to identify proper Marḥašean divinities. Divinities only mentioned here, such as *Sir-napir*, *Hūsa*, *Ūke[Ⓢ]kaḫna*, *Imitka*, *Tūlat*, *Hūrpi*, *Kūku-mūktir*, *Hūmšat*⁷⁰, *Rūbū-išna*, *Rūbū-sa-[-?]*, *Lan/mpani*, *Hūr-pabur*, *Nitūtir*, *Tiuk* and *Simit-sara[ra]*, apparently absent from any other Susian texts, could be good candidates. We may reasonably consider them as eastern Iranian deities, and perhaps more specifically Kermani deities. However, their ranks in the ‘Treaty’ suggest that they were probably not the main deities.

At the time of Puzur-Sušinak (ca. 2150-2100 BCE), the ‘highland’ divinities *Narūte*, *Šimot* (=Nergal?) and *Manzāt* were present in Susiana while *Šamaš* may have already been equivalent to *Nabūntē*, and *Innana/Eštar* (*Belat-ekallim*) to *Pinekīr*. The other paramount gods *Hūmpan*, *Hūtran*, *Niarzina* and *Kirwasir* (/Kīrwaš?), not present then in Susa, could be considered, too, as originating from eastern Iran.

IV.2.b.2. Decipherment of Kerman and Kerman-related late PIW inscriptions

The recent decipherment of the Late PIW (Desset *et al.* forthcoming a and b) sheds new light onto the inscriptions from Shahdad (text S) and Konar Sandal South (texts B', C', D' and E') in Kerman. Among them, the possible appearance of the theophorous name *Tinra-?-r* with the theonym *Tinru* in inscription S is noteworthy (cf. ^d*te-en-ru* / *Tenru*; see Zadok 1984, 44, 247b).

Five Late PIW inscriptions on metallic vessels (M', A'/O', N' and W) are thought to have been redacted east of western Fars and maybe in Kerman. This hypothesis is based on the shape of these vessels and the sign variants used on them (similar to the inscriptions from Shahdad and Konar Sandal, and different from the inscriptions found in south-western Iran, at Susa, Kamfiruz, and in Marv Dasht). Vessels M' and O' were dedicated to god *Šikwat* (cf. the god *Šikat*, EIW: 1155,

and Zadok 1984, 39), A' to *Hūmpan* (the dedicator of inscription M' is *Hūmpar-intata*, in which a version of the theonym *Hūmpan* may be recognized), while *Insušinak* was invoked in blessing and curse formulae in A' and O'. It is worth remembering that *Hūmpan* and *Insuš(ī)nak* are both mentioned in the ‘Treaty of Naram-Sin’, in the 3rd and 7th positions respectively (in contrast, *Šikwat* is not mentioned in this text).

The title of the dedicatee on the Marv Dasht vessel bearing Late PIW inscription Q suggests that she may come from the East. The beginning of the inscription reads: *za-na | ma-ra-p2-š-ša-i-r | šu-wa-r-a-su*, “(I?) the lady of Marapša(y)i, Šūwar-Asu”. First, this inscription may reveal the Hatamtite name (autotoponym) of Marḥaši: *Marapša(y)i* (see above, footnote n^o5). Secondly, the name Šūwar-Asu is probably to be understood with the theonym *Asu* (like for Napir-^dAsu, the wife of Ontaš-Napireša; see Zadok 1984, 7, n^o17). Considering that this Šūwar-Asu is said to be from Marḥaši/Marapša(y)i, it seems possible that the goddess *Asu* was also worshipped there.

IV.2.b.3. Marḥašean onomastics through cuneiform texts

Paradoxically, although many individuals are qualified as coming from Marḥaši or Parahšum in the late third/early second millennia BCE Mesopotamian cuneiform sources, theonyms are rare in this onomastic pool. Examples include Ta(n)-Hūmpan (*Da-Hunban*, attested at the time of Amar-Sin of Ur) with the mention of the god *Hūmpan*, as well as maybe a (Hurrian?) god **Kfī*, as proposed by Francfort and Tremblay (2010, 179).

IV.3. Preliminary attempt at identification of the bovine/human/lion/bird hybrid (two-faced) god

In the list of nine supernatural beings displayed in south-eastern Iranian Bronze age art, none seem to match the south-western Iranian depictions of Insušinak (in Susa) or Napireša (in Fars) as attested since the early second millennium BCE on the glyptics, on the reliefs of Kurangun and Naqsh-e Rostam, and the steles of Šir-ūktūh and Ontaš-Napireša (Fig. 17a). These gods ‘*aux serpents et eaux jaillissantes*’, like Mesopotamian divinities, wear a horned cap and a robe. Their distinct attribute was indeed probably the snake (sometimes with a bearded human head, sometimes horned). They sit on a coiled snake throne (sometimes on top of a stepped platform very similar to that of the god with snakes emerging from shoulders in the Bailey/Louvre seal) and bear in their left hand a snake

⁷⁰ Read up to now *Hūmkat* (^d*bu-um-kaš²-at²*), it may be corrected as *Hūmšat* based on Late PIW text Q (*bu₂-m-š-ša-t*).

as a scepter (a coiled snake is sometimes above their hat)⁷¹.

The identity (or identities) of the hybrid two-faced being (if actually it was a god, and not an accessory manifestation of a deity) on the Miho Museum vessel could be searched for among Sır-napir, Hûsa, Ūk^okapna, Imitki, Tûlat, Hûrpi, Kûkû-mûktir, Hûmšat, Rûhû-išna, Rûhû-sa-[-?], Lan/mpani, Hûr-pahir, Nitûtir, Tiuk, Simit-sara[ra]r, Hûmpan, Hûtran, Niarzina, or Kirwasır (Kirwaš?). However, considering his preeminence in chlorite art, this list could be hypothetically reduced to Hûmpan, Hûtran and Kirwasır (Kirwaš?; while Niarzina can probably be excluded as she is a goddess). Hûmpan is a good candidate as he is mentioned in the Late PIW inscription A' and is present in MarĦašean onomastics (Hûnpar-intata? and Ta-Hûmpan). On the other hand, supposing that the depictions of the bovid/human/lion/bird (two-faced) hybrid on chlorite artefacts (and the copper alloy figurines) were meant for graves (which currently cannot be proven), this funerary character could relate to Šimot, acknowledged as equivalent of the Mesopotamian underworld god Nergal⁷².

The goddess Pinekir may be one of the two major goddesses represented on Kerman glyptics (either the vegetation/grain goddess or the horned and winged goddess). Indeed, Pinekir is the first divinity mentioned in the ‘Treaty of Naram-Sin’ and should be considered the paramount character in the MarĦašean pantheon around 2240/2230 BCE. Hatamtite Pinekir was considered the equivalent of the Mesopotamian goddess Innana/Eštar (see above) and is described by Vallat (1998) as the “goddess of love and procreation, who was worshipped throughout Elamite History and had an AŠTAM, or temple of fertility” built in Dur-Ontaş (Chogha Zanbil) by Ontaş-Napireša⁷³.

V. Conclusion

MarĦašean onomastics in the late third millennium BCE seem to reflect a multi-linguistic/ethnic society, with probably a main Hatamtite linguistic component including also Akkadian, Sumerian and still undetermined anthroponyms⁷⁴, plus a probably important Amorite presence in the Persian Gulf.

This linguistically composite onomastic pool suggests a multi-cultural society which might have worshipped a syncretistic pantheon. The Persian Gulf, as a ‘commercial highway’⁷⁵ connecting MarĦaši to Mesopotamia, Susiana, the Arabian Peninsula (Magan and Dilmun), and Meluhha, played an important role in this cosmopolitanism, creating a kind of Persian Gulf proto-*koine* during the third millennium BCE. On the other hand, the relationship between MarĦaši and the southern Central Asian civilization (BMAC/GKC), and a hypothetical iconographic (and religious?) influence from the former on the latter, may only be explained through the existence of relatively more difficult inland connections through Sistan and oases in and/or along the Kavir and Lut deserts.

Even though a definitive identification of the MarĦašean bovid/human/lion/bird (two-faced) hybrid is still impossible, it might have been the representation of deities such as *Hûmpan*, *Hûtran*, *Kirwasır* (*Kirwaš?*) or *Šimot*. Considering that the archaeological remains in the Halil Rud valley were only brought to the full academic attention in the beginning of the 2000’s (in spite of the pioneering survey led by A. Stein in 1932-1933⁷⁶), one should admit our ignorance and the need of being cautious in formulating hypotheses in the ‘name game’. Those that we offer here have been built upon the perspective that the History of ancient Iran should be written with an emphasis on the Iranian sources. This perspective is fully in line with the proposal that the Mesopotamian notion of ELAM should be dismissed and that the more emic (but still poorly understood) concept of *Hatamti* be promoted⁷⁷. Little by little, the light shed on third millennium BCE Iran will contribute to *de-mesopotamianizing* the History of the Ancient Near East, making it more representative of its complexity.

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⁷¹ See de Miroschedji 1981.

⁷² Zadok 1984, 40.

⁷³ According to Malbran-Labat 1995, 195 and footnote n°311: “Dans l’aštam ont été recueillies des figurines marquant son caractère de déesse de la procréation et de la fécondité. Le mot aštam évoque la prostitution sacrée”.

⁷⁴ Glassner 2005, 14: “au sein des élites sociales de MarĦaši, certains membres portent des noms se rattachant à une langue inconnue

alors que d’autres portent des noms aisément interprétables en une langue sémitique ou en élamite”.

⁷⁵ Steinkeller 2013, 413.

⁷⁶ Stein 1937, 137-157; see 149-150 for the first descriptions of the southern and northern tepes of Konar Sandal and Qaleh Koutchek.

⁷⁷ Desset 2017.

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Appendix
Divinities mentioned in the so-called ‘Treaty of Naram-Sin’

Rank	Name	mentioned only in this text ?	god /goddess ?	Origin ?	Mesopotamian equivalent
1	<i>Pinekir</i> <i>pi2-ni-kir</i>	no	goddess	maybe linguistically Hatamtite, <i>kir</i> > “goddess” (Zadok 1984, 34-35)	Innana/Eštar
2	<i>Paha kikip</i> <i>pa2-ha ki-ki-ip</i>	rarely mentioned, EIW: 473	?	linguistically Hatamtite, <i>paha kiki-i-p</i> > “celestial protectors”	?
3	<i>Hū(m)pan</i> <i>hu-pa2-an</i>	no	god	interpreted as linguistically Hatamtite by Zadok (1984, 11-12)	according to Zadok, identified with Enlil
4	A.MAL <i>a-ba4</i> transcribed: - <i>Amba</i> by Hinz, - <i>Aba</i> by Quintana (cf. the king Apalkamaš ?), - <i>Il-Aba</i> by Lambert 1991, 54, Stève <i>et al.</i> 2002, col. 426 and Koch 2005, 284	?	?	if <i>Il-Aba</i> , Mesopotamian	?
5	<i>Zit/ Sit</i> <i>zi-it</i>	mentioned only here as a divinity	?	probably linguistically Hatamtite, <i>zit</i> > “salvation, luck” (EIW: 1294; Zadok 1984, 48)	?
6	<i>Nahūti</i> (probably <i>Nabūnte</i>) <i>na-bi-ti</i>	no	god	interpreted as linguistically Hatamtite by Zadok (1984, 29-30), <i>nabūnte</i> > “sun”	Utu/Šamaš
7	<i>Insušinak</i> NIN.NINNI.ERIN / NIN.ŠUŠIN	no	god	Susian, but maybe linguistically Sumerian (<i>en susin ak</i> > “the lord of Susa”)	no
8	<i>Šimot</i> <i>si-mu-ut</i>	no	god	interpreted as linguistically Hatamtite by Zadok (1984, 39-40)	according to Zadok, identified with Nergal
9	[S]ir-napir <i>[sɪ̄]-ir-na-pi5-ir</i>	mentioned only here	?	linguistically Hatamtite, <i>s/šir</i> (Zadok 1984, 40, EIW: 1077), <i>napi</i> > “god”	?
10	<i>Hūsa</i> <i>hu-sa</i>	mentioned only here	?	probably linguistically Hatamtite, <i>būsa</i> > “tree, wood” (EIW: 702); “Gott des Haines” for Koch 2005, note 14.	?
11	<i>Ūk^(?)kapna</i> (or <i>Ūkapna</i>) <i>uk-gab-na</i>	mentioned only here	?	?	?
12	<i>Imitki</i> <i>im̄-it-ki</i>	mentioned only here	?	?	?
13	?	?	?	?	?
14	<i>Tūlat</i> <i>tul-la-at</i>	mentioned only here	?	?	?
15	<i>Hūrpi</i> (<i>Hurp</i> for Koch 2005, 285) <i>hu-ur-pi</i>	mentioned only here	?	?	?
16	<i>Hūtran</i> <i>hu-ut-ra-an</i>	no	god	interpreted as linguistically Hatamtite by Zadok (1984, 15)	?
17	NIN.URTA NIN.URTA	no	god	Mesopotamian	no
18	<i>Siašūm</i> <i>si-a-šum</i>	rarely mentioned	goddess	? (EIW: 1069)	?
19	<i>Mazi[?]</i> <i>ma-si-[...]</i> - <i>Maziat</i> according to Hinz and Lambert 1991, 54 - <i>Manzat</i> according to Koch 2005, 285	no	if <i>Manzat</i> , goddess	if <i>Maziat</i> , Mesopotamian, if <i>Manzat</i> , Hatamtite (EIW: 853)	?

20	NIN-Karak NIN.kar-ak	no	goddess	Mesopotamian	no
21	Narūte na-ru ₁₄ -de ₃	no	goddess	interpreted as linguistically Hatamtite by Zadok (1984, 32)	?
22	Kū[...kū?]-mūktir ku ₈ -[...-ku ₈ ?]-mu-uk-ti-ir	mentioned only here	?	probably Hatamtite, <i>mūk-ti-r</i> (for <i>mūk</i> , see Zadok 1984, 29)	?
23	Hūmšat (Hūmkat) hu-um-ka ₄ -at	mentioned only here and in Late PIW text Q	?	?	?
24	Rūhū-išna (<i>Rubušna</i> for Koch 2005, 285) ru-hu-iš-na	mentioned only here	?	linguistically Hatamtite, <i>rūhū</i> > “child, progeny” (EIW: 1044)	?
25	Rūhū-sa[?] (<i>Rubu-sak</i> for Koch 2005, 285) ru-hu-sa-[-...]	mentioned only here	?	linguistically Hatamtite, <i>rūhū</i> > “child, progeny” (EIW: 1044)	?
26	?	?	?	?	?
27	?	?	?	?	?
28	?	?	?	?	?
29	Nīarzina ni-ar-zī-na (probably later spelled <i>na-ir-si-na</i>)	no	goddess	?	?
30	Lan/mpani la-am ₃ -pa ₂ -ni	mentioned only here	?	?	?
31	Kirpisir/Kirwasir (maybe <i>Kirwaš</i>) kir-pi-si-ir	no	god	interpreted as linguistically Hatamtite by Zadok (1984, 20-21)	?
32	Hūr-pahr hu-ur-pa ₂ -hi-ir	mentioned only here	?	probably linguistically Hatamtite, <i>pab/paba</i> > “protection” (EIW: 1044, Zadok 1984, 33)	?
33	Ašhara aš ₂ -ha-ra - <i>Išbara</i> according to Hinz, Steinkeller, Lambert 1991, 54 and Koch 2005, 285	mentioned only here	if <i>Išbara</i> , goddess	if <i>Išbara</i> , Syro-Mesopotamian	?
34	Nītūtīr ni-tu-ti-ir	mentioned only here	?	?	?
35	Tiuk ti-u ₂ -uk	mentioned only here	?	?	?
36	Šumit-sara[ra]r si-im-it-sa-ra[-ra?]-ar	mentioned only here	?	linguistically Hatamtite (Zadok 1984, 37) <i>šumit</i> > <i>Šimot</i> (?); <i>sararar</i> > Zadok 1984, 37	?
37	?	?	?	?	?
38	Su-[?]-īpa su-[-...]-i ² -pa ₂ - <i>Subsipa</i> according to EIW: 1099	very rarely mentioned	?	?	?
39	[?]-abaš [-...]-ab-aš ₂ - [?]-i ² šū for Scheil; according to Hinz, n ^o 39 is not the name of a divinity	?	?	?	?
40	Napi (<i>Napir</i> for Koch 2005) na-ap-ir <i>Napi</i> is not mentioned in the opening list of divinities but appears several times after that along with Nahiti (<i>Nahūnte</i>), <i>Insušinak</i> , <i>Siašūm</i> and <i>Narūte</i> .	?	?	linguistically Hatamtite, <i>napi</i> > “god” (EIW: 1044)	?