Sasanian Seals in the Moore Collection: Motive and Meaning in Some Popular Subjects

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The collection of stamp and cylinder seals gathered by Mrs. William H. Moore has been on loan to The Metropolitan Museum of Art since 1955. It includes a small number of Sasanian stamp seals. Although these objects were published in 1940 in the catalogue of the Moore collection, the data given were incomplete. Moreover, the interpretation of Sasanian seals has, since then, advanced considerably; and so it is appropriate to present this small but interesting corpus with full details.

The descriptions of the seals below are coordinated with the classification scheme used in the author's catalogue of stamp seals in the Metropolitan Museum's Sasanian collection. The identifying numbers assigned in that catalogue to various seal features are cited in parentheses, so that quick comparison may be made between the Moore seals and the larger body of material. The discussion of motifs below seeks to supplement and expand upon that given in the catalogue. One additional measurement is here introduced for the sake of precise description. It is termed the "proportion of the hole" and is determined by dividing the lengthwise diameter of the seal's perforation by the full length of the seal across that diameter. The other two measurements are of the sealing surface (its horizontal axis by its vertical axis) and of the height of the seal from sealing surface to back. The seals are identified with their Metropolitan Museum accession numbers, followed by their Moore inventory and Eisen's catalogue numbers.

ANIMALS REAL AND IMAGINED

1. L 55.49.107 (Moore 100/Eisen 112), Figure 1. SHAPE: Ellipsoid with thick profile, somewhat elongated, with tapered back (Stamp Seals, shape II.A.2). MATERIAL: Quartz, agate. DIMENSIONS: 16 × 12 mm.

A list of abbreviations is given at the end of this article.

1. The writer is grateful to Bishop Paul Moore, Jr., of the Episcopal Diocese of New York for permission to republish the present seals. On the collection and for examples of its materials, see Elizabeth Williams Forte, Ancient Near Eastern Seals: A Selection of Stamp and Cylinder Seals from the Collection of Mrs. William H. Moore (MMA, New York, 1976).


3. See the list of abbreviations at the end of this article under MMA and Stamp Seals.

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FIGURE 2
Profile and impression of Moore seal 100A. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, L 55.49.108

H. 20 mm. Proportion of the hole: .26 (6 ÷ 23 mm.). MOTIF: Bull zebu (Bos indicus) standing in right profile (Stamp Seals, motif 3 2a). DECORATION: Border of elongated beads. STYLE: Conventional, i.e., the rendering is clear but standardized; shape and modeling are slightly simplified in comparison with the naturalistic style, but details of the image are depicted accurately. The style tends toward the devolved. DATE: Fifth to early sixth century A.D.

2. L 55.49.108 (Moore 100A/Eisen 119), Figure 2. SHAPE: Ellipsoid similar to no. 1 (Stamp Seals, II.A.2). MATERIAL: Quartz, rock crystal. DIMENSIONS: 14 × 10 mm.; H. 16 mm. Proportion of the hole: .26 (5 ÷ 19 mm.). MOTIF: Bull zebu lodged in right profile (as in Stamp Seals, 3 ab), with, in place of a hump, a ram's head in left profile. STYLE: Conventional. DATE: Fifth to early sixth century.

Animals furnished numerous and diverse subjects for Sasanian art, as they had for Achaemenid and Arsacid. On seals they seem to be depicted largely for their own sake. Complex hunting scenes, such as are frequently found on silver vessels and sometimes observed on royal reliefs, are few; and this sparseness may be dictated by the popular nature of seals, reflecting their use by an extensive range of middle-class people, more than by the limited area of the sealing surface. The seal-cutting profession observed the artistic conventions of animal poses; and it is true that animals are most often shown singly, and only sparingly in pairs of the same or of two different animals. Thus, this medium would seem to lack the scope for intricate combinations of animal motifs and floral elements within a geometrical frame, such as occur on late and post-Sasanian silverware.6 But the "shorthand" patterns of knot, cross, and triskele (discussed below), whatever their further significance, surely reflect also the Sasanian aesthetic appreciation of animals.

Some animals on seals seem to have a purely aesthetic significance (e.g., peacock, pheasant, duck, crane) or an exotic interest (elephant). Such animals as the lion, eagle, stag, antelope, and bear held an import easily inferred from their natural qualities. The same may be said of the "Sen bird," which, although purely mythical, is treated with the same familiarity as a natural animal.6 Such motifs as the scorpion may be apotropaic, while others possibly have a folkloric meaning. The crow, for example, a beneficial scavenger and also "the cleverest of all birds," is often depicted; and the hare occurs, not only alone or with family, but also between the legs of larger quadrupeds.7 But most important were the animals most closely associated with human life and most highly valued—the bull, horse, and ram. Inevitably these animals acquired a religious significance in addition to their economic one. As partners with

4. The seal most similar in motif to the silver vessels (Pope, pl. 256d) was the property of a noble; it bears a proper name and, as title or honorific, the term Kay (kd) "prince." The more common, crude hunt scenes on seals (see Stamp Seals, motif 2 f) may well be mythic, rather than realistic. For hunt scenes on silver, see Prudence O. Harper, Royal Imagery on Sasanian Silver Vessels: A Source for the History and Culture of the Sasanian Period (MMA, New York, 1980); and the reference below in note 5. For the reliefs, see the discussion below of Sar Mashhad, and S. Fukai and K. Horiuchi, Taq-i Bustan, Toky University Iraq-Iran Archaeological Expedition Report 10 (Tokyo, 1969–72) 1 (plates).

5. See, e.g., Sasanian Silver, nos. 31, 32, 35, 39–41.

6. More precisely, it is mythical to the eye of the modern observer. The name Sen-muru (Avestan *saevnô maragho) in itself has a quite naturalistic ring. Compare the seemingly similar Middle Persian term frašt-muru ("peacock," in the text Xusraw ud rēdag 25; see J. M. Jamasp-Asana, Pahlavi Texts [Bombay, 1897] I, p. 29). Etymologically the name is "spotted bird" and may be of Avestan origin (*parsat.maragha; cf. H. W. Bailey, "To the Zambasp-Namak II," BSOS 6 [1930–32] pp. 596–597); an Avestan compound parsat.gav ("dappled cow") is used as a man's name in Yatī 13,66 and 127. But in Middle Persian the name frašt-muru was not more easily analyzable than Sen-muru; and it was not readily apparent that the former term contained a color designation, while the latter did not (see M. Mayrhofer, Kurzgefasstes etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindischen (Heidelberg, 1970) III, fasc. 22, p. 385). Cf. another name with a color term on seal no. 7 below.

7. On the crow (Stamp Seals, motif 4 i), see the Middle Persian Bundahišn XXIV.35, p. 155; 7 trans., p. 201). A notable depiction of the hare (Stamp Seals, motif 3 m) is Pirouzan 4.22; on Pirouzan 3.4 it figures between an antelope's legs; on a seal in a New York collection, it is between a water buffalo's.
man they assisted in the cosmic conflict against the evil adversary Ahriman and his demon forces. They were, additionally, linked with major divinities: the bull with Māh, the moon; the horse with Xwar, the sun; the ram with Xwarrah, Fortune. The ram was also the preeminent sacrificial animal; and, finally, the images of the bull and ram evoked the “wattery” (and therefore fertilizing) zodiacal signs of spring, Aries and Taurus.  

Seal no. 1 typifies the bull zebu image, defined by the large hump, horns of moderate length, and a stylized heavy dewlap. Other bovidae on seals are rare; a water buffalo (Bubalus bubalis) occurs on B.M. EM 1 and on the seal mentioned in note 7. The domination in Iran of Bos indicus, as opposed to the humpless, longhorn cattle of Scythian art, may already be signaled in the art of Amlash. Both types of bull occur in the art of Persepolis; but it is Bos indicus that is depicted in the realistic tribute procession on the apadāna stairway reliefs, while the humpless bull is found in the conventional combat motif with a lion (which seems symbolic in intent, rather than naturalistic). In the Arsacid period Bos indicus is shown on a bulla from Nisa and a coin of Walgaš I (ca. A.D. 147–191).  

Seal motifs utilizing knot, cross, and triskele patterns place Bos indicus, visually, in its zoological context and thus supplement the Middle Persian account of animal taxonomy in Bundahišn XIII. Bovines were designated, with sheep, goats, horses, and donkeys, as “cattle” (gōspā, Avestan gaospānā) in the widest sense of that term. But the Bundahišn more closely affilia tes bos, ovus, and capra as genera within the “family” (kardag, lit. “division”) of grazing animals, “tribe” (ewēnā, lit. “form”) of cloven-hoofed animals. This close relationship is expressed by a knot of alternate bull and ram heads on B.M. MA 1, MMA 81, and QAN D.25. A more general depiction of the “family” occurs on Pirouzan 5:9; there a knot joins the heads of a bull (large, domestic) and a stag (large, wild) on one side, and those of a ram (small, domestic) and an antelope (small, wild) on the other. A variety of other combinations may be observed (see Stamp Seals, motifs 6 b, 6 c); some of them include a human head, thus referring to the ends the animal kingdom serves and hence its full meaning.  

The motif of seal no. 2 shows a (so far) unique manner of imaginatively combining the two chief sorts of domestic, food-giving cattle. On Sassanian seals the usual alternative to the knot, cross, or triskele of heads was combination through the joining (usually inverse to one another) of animal foreparts (Stamp Seals, motif 6 a). This pattern seems to display a rotational principle, as do the cross and triskele; the knot, by contrast, is static, displaying simply a four-way division of space. The crossing of two animals (salient horses in MMA 189, rampant lions in Pirouzan 4 : 10 ) is a rarely used method of attaining another sort of static, four-cornered design. Of course,  

8. See further in Stamp Seals, motifs 3 a, b, e. The bull and horse occur with the vehicles of their associated divinities on the seals Gōbl 7 d (in Munich) and Pope, pl. 235 (Berlin). Sheep are allotted to fire temples in Šāpūr I’s Ka’ba-yi Zardushht (SKZ) inscription from lines 24 (Middle Persian), 19 (Parthian), and 44 (Greek); see Sprengling, p. 17; on blood-sacrifices, see M. Boyce, “Auta-zōhr and Ab-zōhr,” Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (1966) pp. 104–110. A ram forms part of an altar scene on B.M. BD 16, Berlin 1079, and Gōbl 46 (1). The ancient Iranian concept of Fortune is studied especially in H. W. Bailey, Zoroastrian Problems in the Ninth-Century Books (Oxford, 1943) pp. 1–77. The association with it of the ram appears in the text Kārmānag in Aarāšt i Pābagān, ed. E. K. Antia (Bombay, 1900) ch. III; the text is slightly emended by comparison with the Šāhšāna, V, pp. 290f., v. 27ff.  

9. See Stamp Seals, motifs 3 l, 4 c. The dog occurs chiefly with Gayūmārd, the primal man (a, d, e). On Foroughi 68 two cocks draw a vehicle; the bust above it is presumably the god Šrōš, whom both the dog and cock assist (Bundahišn XXIV, 48).  


11. The static design might refer, but only vaguely, to the cardinal points of the disk-shaped material world. It is tempting to view the rotational design as symbolizing the cycle of organic life, the determination of temporal fate by the movements of the heavenly bodies, or (more piously) the measured elapsing of the limited time designated for combat between good and evil. See Bundahišn I, V, V.A and, for the latter chapters, D. N. MacKenzie, “Zoroastrian Astrology in the Bundahišn,” BSOAS 27 (1964) pp. 511–529.
the attaching of animal protomes to projecting points of a main figure (shoulders, tail, antlers, etc.) is quite familiar on Luristan bronzes and, to an extent, in Scythian art. For example, a stag on a gold quiver cover in the Hermitage has a common form of stylized antlers with a row of curled prongs; the rear prong terminates in a ram's head. If *Bos indicus* had occurred in these earlier arts, it might well have been treated in the same manner as on the present seal, except that the added protome would probably be oriented in the same direction as the head of the main figure; compare a golden plaque showing a lion with a second head sprouting from its back.

3. L. 55.49.156 (Moore 148/Eisen 111), Figure 3. SHAPE: Carved ellipsoid of thick profile, with rounded back and large perforation (*Stamp Seals*, II.A.1.a.i). The back is shaped into five facets, which terminate at either end in a double scroll. MATERIAL: Hematite. DIMENSIONS: 13 × 11 mm.; H. 14 mm. Proportion of the hole: .41 (7 ÷ 17 mm.). MOTIF: A fantastic animal formed with a duck's body and a stag's head. SUBSIDIARY ELEMENT: A six-pointed sun-star is to the right, a moon crescent to the left. STYLE: Conventional. DATE: Fifth century.

A better attested method of imaginative invention on Sasanian seals (as compared with that on no. 2) is the combination of different parts from different animals. Such motifs seem purely whimsical in inspiration, and no symbolic interpretations suggest themselves. These inventions would be quite distinctive personal emblems, contrasting with the many routine naturalistic motifs; for some people not of a family entitled to a heraldic device, such original images may have been a happy alternative. The influence of gralli occurring on Roman seals is uncertain, although a Roman model may have inspired the more complex combination of B.M. MG 4. The closest analogy to the present seal is the duck body with ram's head of B.M. MG 3; compare the cock with ram's head of Berlin 1486. A human head may be introduced into such combinations, just as it may occur in knot motifs; a seal in the Foroughi collection joins a human head to a cock's body, while *MMA* 69 places one on, apparently, a hawk's body (Figure 4). These imaginative creations must be carefully distinguished from the putto, discussed below under "The Lady and the Tulip," who sometimes has animal features but is almost always clearly defined by his attributes of ring, diadem, or tulip.

**PORTRAIT BUSTS**

Three of the Moore seals fall within this motif category. First may be considered an example not genuinely Sasanian; it is presumably of early modern (nineteenth-century?) manufacture.

4. L. 55.49.157 (Moore 149/Eisen 107), Figure 5. SHAPE: Round ring bezel with slightly convex surfaces. The back edge has been cut to facilitate setting; and it is now framed in a gold ring. Shape and proportions are non-Sasanian. MATERIAL: Crypto-crystalline quartz. DIMENSIONS: 20 mm. diameter; 3 mm. thickness. MOTIF: Male bust in right profile; it is cut in a purplish layer of the stone, contrasting with the lighter, reddish surface. The style of the bust is vaguely Greco-Roman, with bare and modeled shoulders. The ragged beard is non-Sasanian, but there is

14. Also illustrated in J. Lerner, "A Note on Sasanian Harpies," *Iran* 13 (1975) pl. II, no. 6. For the duck, see *Stamp Seals*, motif 4 f. The curved wing tips, in contrast with the cock's blunt ones, are characteristic. A duck's feet are not distinguished from a cock's. Cf. the grazing animals, among whom the only differentiation in feet is between the single-toe hoof of horses and the cloven hoof of the *Artiodactyla* (bull, stag, ram, goat).
a clumsy representation of Sasanian hairstyling and the usual earring. **Style:** Approximates the conventional. **Inscription:** The most common of seal formulae is imitated: 'pst' n 'L yzd' n (abestān ḍ yzdān), "reliance on the gods!" An attempt is made to duplicate the inscriptive uncial style of Middle Persian script, but various distortions and errors occur. The letter "l" is added at the end of the inscription; before it is a blurred rendering of a four-pointed sun-star. In the Eisen catalogue, the seal was classified as Parthian, but the possibility that the inscription was a forgery was recognized.

The other two examples show normal Sasanian busts.

5. L 55-49-158 (Moore 150/Eisen 108), Figure 6. **Shape:** Dome (Stamp Seals, III.A.2), unperforated. **Material:** Quartz, chalcedony (cloudy). **Dimensions:** 19 mm. diameter; H. 15 mm. **Motif:** Male bust shown frontally, the head in right profile (Stamp Seals, motif 1 ad). The hair is in tight curls, bound above the forehead and gathered at the back of the head into a bunch on each side, only one of which is seen; cf. MMA 171. The figure is bearded and wears a two-bead earring. The depiction of the eye is rather uncommon. Usually the eyeball, whether shown as round or elongated, is placed within a triangular or oval orbit. Here a round eyeball sits within a small concentric circle. No necklace is worn; on the shoulders are shown stylized drapery folds. The lower edge of the bust is sharply defined, being cut deeply into the stone. A residual base is formed by three small and simplified palmettes. **Style:** Conventional. **Subsidiary Element:** Six-pointed sun-star to the right, moon crescent to the left. **Inscription:** Written in an intermediate style of Middle Persian script.

m'hngⁿsp 'pst' n yzd'n. "Māhān-Gušnasp. Reliance (on) the gods." The carver omitted the preposition 'L for reasons of space. The owner's name is quite familiar in the form Māh-Gušnasp (without the attributive, and patronymic, suffix). (a) One of the sons of Mihr-Narseh, the famous vizier for King Wahrām V (A.D. 420–438), was so named. He held the important office of wāstaryōštānār (chief of the administration of the produce tax) throughout this reign. (b) The name was also borne by a Sasanian Zoroastrian priest and commentator on the scriptures, whose date is unknown. He is cited in the Middle Persian translation and annotation of the Avesta, Yasna 9.10 and Widerōddād 3.40, 42; and is often referred to in the Nīrangistān.16

**Date:** Fifth century.

6. L 55-49-109 (Moore 101/Eisen 109), Figure 7. **Shape:** Carved ellipsoid with thin profile, perforation of moderate size (Stamp Seals, II.B.1.I). The shape of the back is essentially the same as on no. 3. **Material:** Quartz, chalcedony (cloudy to brown). **Dimensions:** 11 x 14 mm.; H. 18 mm. **Proportion of the hole:** .27 (6 + 22 mm.). **Motif:** Female bust with head in right profile (Stamp Seals, motif 1 be). It is deeply cut at top

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and bottom, thus giving a strongly convex impression. The woman's hair is in normal Sasanian style—straight on top and bound above the forehead; two ribbons float behind the head (see more clearly on no. 7, below). On the sides the hair is tied into four braids, two falling on each shoulder. The dress is shown with slight modeling of the breasts and routine indications of horizontal drapery folds. (Compare, generally, MMA 6 and 57.) STYLE: Devolved; general accuracy is maintained, but simplified cutting techniques lose detail and produce rough, schematized features. INSCRIPTION: A somewhat clumsy execution of the intermediate script style. It begins, abnormally, at 12:00 on the seal margin, rather than at 5:00; this led to a misreading of the inscription in the Eisen catalogue.

The animal motifs discussed above have suggested that some degree of individual expression emerged in the popular art of seals in the Sasanian period. It is not known to what extent such expression was predetermined by prospective seal-owners rather than the seal-cutters. In any case the proliferation of Sasanian portrait seals (and of representations of heraldic devices) points to the importance of the seal impression as a statement of the owner's identity. The “Document of 1,000 Decisions” (Mādiyān i hazār dādīstān) refers to a “document with the seal of judges or mobads”; and an affidavit (saxwannāmag) is said to be made official by a seal. It seems clear from this source that private individuals, in addition to officials, had frequent need of seals; a great variety of contractual arrangements (e.g., business partnerships, loans, marriage and divorce, estate settlement) would have to have been certified. The complex family relationships of Sasanian Iran no doubt gave abundant scope for litigation; and any propertied person, in addition to the overlapping classes of the landed aristocracy and the clergy, would be involved in legal transactions such as the above. There is a recurrent seal inscription, ruwān did (“seen by [my] soul”), which seems to refer to the witnessing function of seals as directly as do personal names and portraits (see Stamp Seals, inscription 10). The artistic innovation of widespread portraiture is not observed at Arsacid Nisa (first century B.C.); and it presumably reflects the cumulative impact on Sasanian Iran of Hellenistic and Roman art as disseminated through Mesopotamia—the economic heart of the empire and the source for much of its administrative talent.

If a seal implies that its owner was a propertied person, then the occurrence of female portraits is of added interest. Such portrait seals, and other women's seals of the same type as no. 7 below, must usually have belonged to chief wives. These were designated as “authoritative” (pādīstāyiha) wives, and they held a legal and social status as “the family's mistress of the house” (dūdag kadagbānūg) which sharply distinguished them from subordinate (tiagar) wives. The text of a model marriage contract in Middle Persian, even though late, probably reflects Sasanian usage accurately; it relates to a prospective “authoritative” wife, and in it the future husband pledges to support the woman and to maintain her “secure as mistress of the house” (pad kadagbānūgīn awestvār). An "author-


18. MHD, p. 67.10ff.; Bartholomae, III, p. 23. Royal female portraits had an additional function, that of confirming the authority of officials in their service. See examples in note 31.

19. West, Pahlavi Texts, I, p. 142.5–6; D. N. MacKenzie and
itative” wife by no means attained legal equality with her husband, any more than in her father's house she had been her brothers' legal equal (see Bartholomae, I, pp. 27ff., and V, pp. 9–10). But, once married, she stood in a much more complex position in regard to property; and a seal showing her portrait or juxtaposing her figure (or bust) with her husband's would clearly indicate her changed status and confirm the promise of the marriage contract. An “authoritative” wife—or at least one who was actually allowed to exercise some authority—would require her own, or a joint, family seal. She might be a party to legal contracts and obligations; e.g., if she took out a loan together with her husband, she could be held liable for the entire amount (Bartholomae, I, pp. 13–14, 25–26; III, p. 36; IV, p. 25). The “Document of 1,000 Decisions” cites a rather strong text:

When [a man] seals a decision in reference to his authoritative wife to the effect: “I hold you as partner,” that man's goods become that woman's own. They come to that woman through that authorization, and she is empowered to dispense them (MHDa, p. 6.14–16; Bartholomae, I, p. 27).

This statement seems to give considerable theoretical scope for women's economic activity; presumably it was sometimes carried out in practice. Moreover, a woman might gain control of property in other ways—by a divorce settlement (the amount having already been specified in the marriage contract) or, as a widow, from her husband's estate.20 A woman was also entitled, if authorized by her father, to administer an estate as the stür or legal trustee (MHD, p. 36.9–12; Bartholomae, V, p. 11). Thus it is evident that, while fewer women than men can have entered into legal relationships regarding real property, crops, commercial goods, etc., those who did must have needed and employed seals in precisely the same manner as men.

THE LADY AND THE TULIP

7. L 55.49.155 (Moore 147/Eisen 110), Figure 8. SHAPE: Carved ellipsoid of thick profile, with rounded back and large perforation. (Stamp Seals, II.A.1.a.i). The back is carved with a design of two stemmed tulips (Figure 9); a similar design is found on B.M. BD 3 (p. 143 of the B.M. catalogue). MATERIAL: Quartz, chalcedony (cloudy to brown). DIMENSIONS: 18 × 21 mm.; H. 24 mm. Proportion of the hole: .30 (9 + 30 mm.). MOTIF: A woman stands in right profile, raising to her face a tulip which is grasped between thumb and forefinger of the right hand (Stamp Seals, motif 16). Her hair is arranged in a style similar to that on seal no. 6. She wears a triple-bead earring. Her long dress, flaring at the ankles, is belted at the waist; both vertical and horizontal folds are depicted, and the train of the dress is grasped in the woman's left hand. A necklace with a single large pendant is worn; and a cloak descends over the woman's back, only its border being visible. A quite similar figure is on Berlin 2168 (Figure 10). STYLE: Naturalistic; shape and contours are carefully indicated, and an attempt is made to show an individualistic image. INSCRIPTION: Written in uncial style.


A woman's full name, like a man's, consisted of a personal name and a patronymic; their order seems optional, but the few seals with a woman's full name prefer to give the patronymic first. A man's patronymic was formed of the father's name plus the attributive suffix -ān; while a woman's was a compound of the father's name plus the word dux, “daughter.” Apparently the father's title or epithet would do just as well as his proper name. Foroughi 74 is inscribed (g)zylypondwhty hwmtly, “Humihr, daughter of the gazābed” (i.e., the administrator of the gazā [Arabic jizya], the empire's head-tax). The fourth-century B.M. seal CC 1 bears the name “Arminduxt,” literally “daughter of Armenia,” which may be understood as a shortening of “daughter of the Arminānšāh” (king of the Armenians). The viceregal title Arminānšāh is well attested in the fourth century, having been borne by the princes Hormizd-Ardashīr and Narseh before


they attained the Sasanian throne.  The present seal contains a patronymic with warāz ("boar"), a word common in the Sasanian period both as a name and as an epithet indicating courage. With the literal "daughter of Warāzān" (or "daughter of the Warāz family") attested here one may compare the figurative sense of Warāzdxt, a daughter of King Xusraw II (A.D. 591–628). The personal name Börasp ("Having bay horses") is of ancient Iranian lineage. The Sasanian name might have been drawn from scriptural tradition (Avestan *Bawrō.aspa, cf. the name Bōrgāw, "Having bay cattle," from scripture); but it may equally well derive from a continuous, secular Median tradition (cf. the hellenized Scythian form, Bōraspos).

8. L. 55.49.106 (Moore 99). The seal which at present bears these numbers replaces the two illustrated under Eisen 114; the latter, whose present location is unknown, shows a spray of three tulips. Figure 11. SHAPE: Dome (Stamp Seals, III.A.2). MATERIAL: Quartz, carnelian. DIMENSIONS: 9 × 10 mm.; H. 10 mm. Proportion of the hole: .17 (2 + 12 mm.). MOTIF: A single tulip (cf. Stamp Seals, motif 7 b). The conventional depiction of three visible segments of the perianth is carefully done. Flanking the tulip from the stem are two long, thin leaves; the stem ends in a base, from which a ribbon rises on either side. Cf. especially Pirouz 4-30. STYLE: Conventional. DATE: Fifth to sixth century.

The tulip, when depicted alone, may be regarded as a purely aesthetic motif; the same seems true of

21. SKZ 23 (Middle Persian), 18 (Parthian), 40–41 (Greek); Sprengling, p. 17. See the remains of Narseh’s Paikuli inscription in E. Herzfeld, Paikuli (Berlin, 1921) lines 2, 6 (Middle Persian).
other illustrations of flowers on seals or on Sasanian stucco.\textsuperscript{24} For the Sasanian period one is dependent on the art for indications of esteem for the tulip's beauty, but in Islamic Iran many literary references occur as well. The tulip is a standard part of the \textit{Šahnâmâ's} springtime imagery; and the epic's rather conventional formulations may well go back to Middle Persian oral literature:

\begin{quote}
\textit{\ču ĕmad bahār u zamīn gāšt sabz}  
\textit{hama kūh pur lāla u dāšt sabz}  
\textit{havač pur sabr u zamīn pur za xwīd}  
\textit{jahāni pur az lāla u sambālād}  
\end{quote}


When spring came and the earth turned green,  
All the mountains were full of tulips and the plains of green.  
The air filled with clouds and the earth with verdure,  
The world was filled with tulips and fenugreek.

A demon sang to Kay Kā'ūs an alluring "song of Māzandarān":

\begin{quote}
\textit{ki dar bōstān-iš} hamīša gul-ast  
\textit{ba kūh andarān lāla u sambūl-ast}  
\textit{Day u Bahman u Ādar u Farwardin}  
\textit{hamīša pur az lāla bīnī zamīn}  
\end{quote}

\textit{\textit{Šahnâmâ}, I, p. 488, vv. 30, 35)

In whose gardens are always flowers;  
On the mountains, tulips and hyacinths.  
[Whether in the months] Day, Bahman, Ādar, or Farwardin,  
You will always see the land filled with tulips.

Apart from poetic conventions, a notable example of the appreciation of tulips is furnished in the memoirs of the Mughal emperor, Bābur. Discussing the region around Charikār (north of Kabul in modern Afghanistan), he says:

Tulips of many colours cover these foot-hills; I once counted them up; it came out at thirty-two or thirty-three different sorts. We named one the Rose-scented, because its perfume was a little like that of the red rose; it grows by itself on Shaikh's-plain, here and nowhere else. The Hundred-leaved tulip is another; this grows also by itself, at the outlet of the Ghūr-bund narrows, on the hill-skirt below Parwān.\textsuperscript{25}

If a analogy is drawn between classical (and modern) Iranian sensibilities and those of the Sasanian period, then the primary significance of the tulip is its intrinsic beauty; and its primary associations are with fertility, growth, and general prosperity. The frequent occurrence on seals of woman, man, and putto figure with a tulip likewise argues for these associations; they are in harmony with such common seal inscriptions as \textit{abzōn} ("prosperity"), as well as with the general tenor of Zoroastrian religion. The tulip might, secondarily, be assigned specific symbolism. Thus the Middle Persian \textit{Bundahšīn} names it as the special flower of the divinity Aštād ("Rectitude"), and the \textit{Šahnâmā} relates it to the virtue of patience.\textsuperscript{26}

The depictions of the full female figure, with which the tulip is often associated on seals, comprise an involved and varied group. Without a systematic study of them and analogous male figures, it is impossible to identify their meanings with assurance. In spite, however, of the rarity of evident divinities on seals (see note 8, above), the woman standing or sitting in right profile has been freely regarded as the goddess Anāhīd. Presumably this tendency is due to Anāhīd's prominent place in the Sasanian dynastic cult, the vivid and unique description of her in the Avesta (\textit{Yast} 5. 126–129), and her undoubted Sasanian images in other media. Of these, the earliest is on a \textit{dāram} coin of King Hormizd I (A.D. 273). His investiture is depicted on some reverses either with the god Mihr or with Anāhīd; the latter is shown with a high crown and, as in the Avesta description, holding the ritual \textit{barsom} bundle.\textsuperscript{27} A more detailed image occurs on the investiture relief of King Narseh (A.D. 293–302) at Naqsh-i Rustam: it is Anāhīd, instead of the high god Ohrmazd, who extends to the king the characteristic ring;\textsuperscript{28} she wears typical Sasanian formal dress and a fluted crown. Finally, the late (sixth-century) investiture relief in the higher grotto at Taq-i Bustan depicts her with a smaller coronet but with her hair all the more prominently gathered in a bunch on top of the head. She holds the jewel- or pearl-studded ring in

\textsuperscript{24} See \textit{Stamp Seals, motifs 7 a–c.}

\textsuperscript{25} \textit{Bābur-Nāma (Memoirs of Bābur)}, trans. A. S. Beveridge (London, 1921) p. 215. The occurrence of the wild tulip in Afghanistan is now rather reduced, and the flower was officially protected under a law of the Republic of Afghanistan (1973–78).


\textsuperscript{27} R. Göbl, \textit{Sasanidische Numismatik} (Brunswick, 1968) nos. 36 and 37 (with Mihr), 38 (with Anāhīd).

her right hand; with the left she pours a libation from a water-jug.29

These three illustrations imply a consistent, queenly iconography for the goddess; and the attempt to identify her in female figures on seals must ignore the significant absence of a crown in the latter and their clear similarity to the portrait seals. Such an approach is exemplified by E. Herzfeld’s comparison of Berlin 1116 (Figure 10), showing a man, woman, and child, with Narseh’s investiture relief; Herzfeld also found Anāhīd on Berlin 2168, whose motif is nearly identical with that of no. 7 above, and even cited the double portrait seal B.M. BB 1 for support.30 The problem of classifying the seal images is clearly demonstrated in Göbl, group 12: the various motifs of a woman alone or with a child are shown, and described variously as “Anāhīd, Potnia Thērōn [presumably meaning the goddess Nanaia], goddess, queen, lady, dancer, worshipper.” The “Anāhīd” is apparently no. 7 above. The “Potnia Thērōn” is indeed a high noble or princess; her hair is bunched, and she holds the beribboned ring; above her head is a common subsidiary motif, the moon crescent. The remaining seals, setting aside the dancer, have evident elements (pose, gesture) in common with the first two; and the basis for distinguishing divine from human remains undefined.

The rare crowned figures on Sasanian seals do not, in fact, encourage the Anāhīd thesis: (a) a seal formerly in Milan presents an unidentified royal image; (b) a seal in the Bibliothèque Nationale may show the wife of a Sasanian Kūšānṣhāh; (c) while Queen Dēnag (wife of King Ardašir I, A.D. 226–240) is shown with a modest diadem.31 A Transoxanian queen on B.M. BB 2 wears a distinctive, rayed crown. All are realistic, secular portraits. The restrained coiffure of Dēnag may be compared with that of a royal lady on the Barm-i Dilak relief of Wahrām II (A.D. 276–293). Apparently the queen, she is said to be identified by an inscription as “Ardašir-Anāhīd, daughter of Wahrām [I].”32 Wahrām II is noted for the depiction of his consort beside him on coin obverses, facing him on reverses. The queen is also shown, wearing a high kulāf headress, on his Sar Mashhad relief; and this figure has recently been asserted to be Anāhīd.33 Such an identification ignores Sasanian conventions for the juxtaposition of human and divine figures. The king familiarly holds the queen’s arm, while, with his back to her, he attends to the attacking lions. She stands, with equal familiarity, in front of two nobles.34 The significance of this relief may more easily be found in its literal representation than in alleged recondite symbolism. The Hajjīabad inscription of Sāpūr I (A.D. 242–272), commemorating his exceptional bowshot in the presence of his court, is a reminder of the importance of prowess in the arts of hunting for royal prestige.35 The numerous hunt scenes on Sasanian silverware further underscore this aspect of traditional Iranian ideology. Wahrām is shown on the Sar Mashhad relief as having already dispatched one an-

imal, as is often the case with the image of a king on silverware. In the presence of the queen and an abbreviated cutting stroke, this too is a convention familiar in the art of silverware. The presence of the queen would emphasize her importance and so be in harmony with Wahrám's coins.

One suggested basis for viewing at least some of the ladies on seals as the queenly Anáhid is the presence of an enclosing pillared arch (Figure 12; see, e.g., A.D.H. Bivar in B.M., p. 25). While this detail is significant, it occurs on only seven of the eighty-six seals listed below and cannot outweigh the considerable continuity between the female images. The arch is otherwise observed on seals framing a fire altar, with or without attending priests (Göbl 4b); clearly, in this context, it indicates a temple. The arch is also found on the problematic B.M. BE 5, which shows a nude, hirsute male figure walking in right profile and carrying a stylized tulip or plant. This image is probably a variant of the putto (Stamp Seals, motif 2a), who usually occurs in this pose and shares with the woman the attributes of ring or tulip. His arch probably has the same significance as the lady's. It might designate the house of which she is mistress; this would not be inconsistent with the interpretation of the woman as praying, for it could be an apt illustration of a woman's kadaghbahnûzh to show her reciting the "grace before meals" (bâj i nân). Or if her prayer is for offspring, as is here suggested, then the context of the house which seeks the blessing is as appropriate as that of the temple which receives an offering.

The woman is occasionally seen to pray explicitly with hands raised in the manner of priests; cf. Berlin 1994, Berlin 1998 (Figure 10), and perhaps B.M. CC 13 with the men of B.M. BD series. The armed bust of B.M. BA 6 is clearer; it seems a compromise between the simple portrait (which does not specify, in itself, any pious context) and the full-length figure. The woman extends her hands, palms upward, and is accompanied by an inscription: "I invoke you for the name of Mnwl-Nanâ; my hands are yours" (or "my Fortune is yours"). This seems clearly a prayer for bearing children. Another invocation occurs on B.M. CC 5: the woman holding a tulip is named as Rôsn-Pand, and there follows the phrase "may the god be mindful" (yazd andêštâd). Such inscriptions seem to sharpen the message intended, in contrast to the rather general "reliance on the gods" (abestân ô yazdân) which is found so abundantly. The latter could also express the hope for offspring, but additional meanings are conceivable—for example, the pledging of true witness.

The pose with a tulip is itself unhelpful to the Anáhid theory. The gesture is a generalized one, not restricted to women, which expresses salutation or propitiation directed to a partner or superior. The gesture may be religious; compare the offering and exchange of flowers in the Zoroastrian afrînagdân rites. But it also has a wider social function. Thus


the queen at Barm-i Dilak is saluted by a prince who raises toward her a flower (possibly, but not certainly, a tulip). The front-rank nobles attending Šāpur I on the Dārāb relief hold flowers or sprigs of plants between thumb and forefinger in the conventional manner. On seals, the lone noble of MMA 25 (Figure 13) makes the same gesture, as does the armed bust of QAN D.48. A man may make the gesture in a domestic context, e.g., reclining on a couch (Leningrad 132, B.M. BE 4)\textsuperscript{42} or holding a ring in his other hand (Foroughi 73, inscribed “Bābē; reliance on the gods”). Thus, whether explicitly praying or holding a tulip, the woman is shown in a manner that has analogies in quite human and male figures.

If no attribute defines the lady with tulip as Anāhīd, her meaning must be determined from the sum of her seal imagery. The following table, chart, and catalogue organize the data for eighty-six published seals. These show the following features:

(a) The woman may occur alone (57 examples), with one or more children (9), juxtaposed with a man (19), or with both man and child (1). See examples in Figure 10.

(b) When a man is not present, the woman may (i) stand in right profile, against a plain background (42) or within an arch (6), or (ii) sit in profile (plain background, 7; arch, 1). One example is a bust with head in profile. Accompanying a man, the woman may also be found in left profile (e.g., MMA 44, Figure 14).

(c) The woman always wears “formal” dress, as on no. 7, above.

(d) She is usually characterized by a comotif, sub-

\textsuperscript{41} L. Trumpe\l{}mann, *Iranische Denkm\a{a}ler*, Lieferung 6, Reihe II, B. *Das sasanische Felsrelief von Dārāb* (Berlin, 1975) pls. 1, 11.

\textsuperscript{42} Cf. Göbl, no. 16a(2), where the reclining man simply makes a gesture, his hand raised and held palm inward.
"parasol"; it is held up by a man and woman together and perhaps was a ritual object of the wedding festivities. (On B.M. CG 4 it is seen in a context of dancing.)

(e) Inscribed seals which show a woman or woman and child usually bear a woman's name. The motif thus appears to be especially appropriate to women, which would not necessarily be the case if the figure were Anahid.

The table at the right gives the overall frequency of this imagery.

The chart below shows the parallelism (substitutability) of the submotifs. Vertical relationships indicate the thematic overlap between complex combinations, while the horizontal levels align element combinations that are similar in complexity. Each box cites the motif or accessory elements which are present in a depiction in addition to the posed woman; accessories are distinguished by parentheses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>seals with:</th>
<th></th>
<th>woman</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>alone</td>
<td>with man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>submotif</td>
<td>tulip</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>gesture</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hands clasped</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ring</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>branch</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accessory</td>
<td>child</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>couch</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>parasol</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no attribute</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The catalogue below indicates the precise distribution of submotifs and accessories. Except where noted, the woman is shown standing and against a plain background. Inscriptions are given in parentheses; and the abbreviation "r.o.g." is used for the formula "reliance on the gods."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Submotif</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tulip</td>
<td>ANS B.5 (&quot;Farnbag&quot;). Berlin 1097 (&quot;r.o.g.&quot;). Birmingham 82. B.M. CC 2 (effaced).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tulip: B.M. CC 2. MMA 122, 141. Moore no. 7 (see above). Within arch: B.M. CB 1 (&quot;Pērōzduxt, Mihr-Sarēnān-nazd[?]&quot;).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ man</td>
<td>Pirouzan 5,6, 5,7 (both &quot;r.o.g.&quot;). Busts: Foroughi 80.44 With couch (both holding tulips, sitting): MMA 44.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ hands</td>
<td>B.M. CG 6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ ring</td>
<td>With children: Berlin 1115 (&quot;Gušnasp Anāhīd&quot;). With child and couch (sitting): B.M. CD 1 (&quot;Hūpand, r.o.g.&quot;).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ring</td>
<td>ANS C'.2 (&quot;seal of Bag[cihr]&quot;). Foroughi 76 (&quot;Spandarmad the pious&quot; [klpkwyny]). Göbl 12a(2) with a short inscription. Leningrad 115 (&quot;righteousness [is] best&quot;). Mordtmann, pl. iii/84 (&quot;true&quot;). With child: Göbl 12b(1) with inscription.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ gesture</td>
<td>Gōbl 17a(3) with inscription. With child: Berlin 1116 (proper name plus &quot;there is reliance&quot; [&quot;ps't n'YT&quot;]). With couch (the man sitting): B.M. CF 1 (&quot;r.o.g.&quot;).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>branch</td>
<td>B.M. CC 10 (or tulip). Within arch: Geneva 98.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>branch + man</td>
<td>With parasol: Foroughi 62.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>man + parasol</td>
<td>With parasol: Berlin 265, 1111.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no attribute</td>
<td>Within arch: B.M. CB 2. MMA 121. With child (sitting): B.M. CD 2. Göbl 12b(4). Mordtmann, pl. iii/26. (&quot;Tīrdād the scribe&quot;).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

43. The reading suggested here for the word after the patronymic is mtrs(l)y(n)nzd(y), possibly a legal term meaning "next of kin of the Mihr-Sarēn family." It would be formed by analogy with the term nabānāzdšt, "next of kin," which renders Avestan nabānāzdišt in Yasna 1.18, etc. Such a term might indicate that the owner of the seal was acting as trustee (stur) in the administration of an estate. As observed above, a woman could perform this function with her father's permission; thus the
the proper name "Rāymad," with Stamp Seals, inscription 25). This seal recalls the ring wreathed with tulips on B.M. CD 1 which is grasped by a child held by a woman on a couch. On MMA 39 (Figure 16) the diadem occurs with three tulips and a fourth replacing the ring in the center. The spray of five appears again on B.M. CH 7, but within the diadem a right hand makes the gesture of salute with thumb and forefinger touching. The gesture often occurs as the sole motif or is further specified by the tulip. Usually the left hand is shown, with palm out (e.g., B.M. CH series and MMA 49, Figure 17). But examples with the right hand do occur, e.g., Foroughi 56 and 57. The latter shows two tulips and bears the interesting inscription "true perception" (bôy i râst).

Through these submotifs the depiction of the woman alone or with a child is closely interrelated with that of a man and woman, a type commonly thought to represent a matrimonial scene. The sharing of a ring by a man and woman seems analogous in meaning to the royal investiture reliefs of Ardašīr I, Šāpūr I, Wahrām II, and Narseh, in which a divinity holds out a ring to the king. The coins of Wahrām II show the ring grasped either by a young prince (on the obverse) or by the queen or both queen and prince (on the reverse). Already the Parthian stela from Susa establishes the authentic authority of the satrap, Xwasak, by presenting him as receiving a ring from the king; and the reclining ruler shown at Tang-i Sarwak prominently displays a ring.46 All these situations have in common the delegation of (or succession to) authority; hence the ring may be regarded as most immediately expressing the notion of contract (mihr) involved in each case: between god and king, king and prince or official, and husband and wife. The idea of "Fortune" (zwarrakh) may well be associated with these situations (especially with regard to the king); but its symbolization seems limited to animal forms. These are the hawk (see the Avestan Yasht 19.35–98; it is also a form of the god Varārthužna, "Victoriousness," in Yasht 14.19) and the ram (in the Middle Persian Kårnmag i Ardašīr i Pâbagân). It is not clearly manifest in these scenes.

If depictions of a man and woman on seals commemorate a marriage and perhaps seek divine blessing on the union, they also seem intended for use by either husband or wife, since they may bear the names of both. A woman's own seal, showing her in a context of prayer and offering, should signify an aspect of marriage that is her special concern. This can scarcely be anything but the safe bearing of male offspring.47 As in traditional Islamic societies, the wife needed sons to secure the marriage and fulfill the expectations of the husband and his family. Only as a

![Figure 16](image1.png)

Impression of MMA 39. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, 86.11.44

![Figure 17](image2.png)

Impression of MMA 49. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Dodge Fund, 36.106.5

mother could her role as authoritative wife be successful and her status and future security guaranteed. The frequency of the “lady and tulip” motif would thus be quite natural, and the depiction of a child with her would add the element of thanksgiving for past blessings. Such a brief inscription as “may the god be mindful” (B.M. CC 5) would be quite explicit in this context.

It is a familiar Zoroastrian dictum that marriage is preferable to nonmarriage (Wisêwedâd 1.47). The social pressure to produce offspring is expressed in, for example, the prayer: “May [the day] Frawardin give you offspring who will carry the name of the lineage”; and since the virtuous deeds of the children bring merit to the parents, one is exhorted “to be active in the begetting of children.”48 Pressure was greater on a woman:

A man, if he does not take a wife, is not a “mortal” sinner. A woman, if she does not take a husband, does become a “mortal” sinner. Because, except by her intercourse with a man, a woman has no offspring; and no lineage proceeds from her. But when a man not in contact with a woman recites the Avesta (as it is stated in the Wisêwedâd), a lineage to the Future Body issues forth.49

Thus a man’s ultimate duty in the situation of cosmic conflict envisaged by Zoroastrian tradition could be fulfilled ritually, as well as by proxy; but a woman’s accomplishment of duty rested with the fact of child-bearing. The “Document of 1,000 Decisions,” with its careful enumeration of cases and rulings relating to marriage, inheritance, and other aspects of family life, illustrates the legalistic aspect of the concern in Sasanian times for the stability of the family and the continuity of the lineage. The close involvement in this concern of a woman’s ambition and self-esteem may reasonably be viewed in the whole body of seals for which the “lady and tulip” theme is typical; their flashes of ritual and fragments of prayers are not incompatible with the frequentation of saints’ shrines by women in modern Iran and Afghanistan.

Apparently associated with the whole category of “marriage contract” motifs is the putto. This variable figure (immature or adult, human or half bird or with animal hair) is usually consistent in his pose. He walks in right profile, bearing a tulip, ring (usually with ribbons), or diadem (Figures 18, 19).50 Whether viewed as a mythical messenger or a guardian spirit (fruwahr) of the unborn son, he may be understood to carry the symbol of the marriage compact divinely blessed with the promise of offspring. The putto seems, interestingly, to have an affinity for the motif of Gayomard, the primal man (Stamp Seals, motifs 2 d, e). The latter is an ithyphallic, semianimal figure, who may occur

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48. Ibid., XXII.19 and XII.15.
49. Sāyast-nē-šāyast X.19, here slightly revised from the translation of J. C. Tavadia (Hamburg, 1930) p. 136. A systematic study remains to be made of changes in the status of Zoroastrian women and of matrimonial mores between the Sasanian period and the eighth to ninth centuries A.D., when most of the Pahlavi texts were compiled. The idea of a wife’s punishment in hell by a hedgehog, for instance, “if she withholds herself and bites” (ka gāzēn bē hunēd uḏ abāz awistēd), is clearly old. It occurs in the Middle Persian Yasna 59.7 (just quoted) and Dēnḵard IX, II, p. 806.8ff.; trans. West, Pahlavi Texts, IV, p. 205; from this scriptural tradition it entered Arda Wirāz Nāmag LXX (ed. and trans. Destur Hoshangji Jamaspji Asa and Martin Haug [Bombay/London, 1872]). But the power of a man to marry his sister or daughter by force is a later innovation (B. T. Anklesaria, The Pahlavi Rivāyat of Aturfarang and Farhang-Srōf [Bombay, 1965]; I, pp. 206–207; the translation in vol. II, p. 56, is evasive). The Sāyast passage probably represents an old tradition developed on the narrow basis of Wisêwedâd 18.46–51 (see Tavadia’s comment, Sāyast-nē-šāyast, p. 136).
50. Stamp Seals, motif 2 a. See B.M. BK 6.7 for the part-bird figures, MMA 60 (Figure 19) for one with animal hair. Cf. the Victory figure on Parthian coins and sealings, who apparently may bestow a ring instead of the more usual diadem (Masson and Pugachenkova, “Ottiski,” nos. 42, 45).
alone, with a dog (Figure 20), or in group scenes involving animals and a dancing human couple (Figure 21). One might view all these as having eschatological meaning. Yet primal man, the ultimate source of all human life, may also have been a fit person to invoke for fertility. The occurrence together of both putto and Gayomard motifs on MMA 60 would then share a common motivation.

The motif of the dancer (Stamp Seals, motif 1 bb, Figure 22) occurs sparingly on seals; and she too has been termed "Anahid." She is depicted (a) alone; (b) nude or in tight, transparent garments, but also in formal dress (as also on silver vessels); (c) in motion; (d) carrying a long scarf above the head or else a flower (on Foroughi 75). This seems to be a man's motif; at any rate B.M. CA 1 carries the name "Buxt-Šāpūr." The few examples (see also B.M. CB 3, 4 and Leningrad 113, 114) can be compared with the much more complex and varied images on silver vessels.

The general theme which emerges both from these seals and from the silver vessels would be in harmony with the marriage motifs, although it probably applied to all festive occasions.

**ABBREVIATIONS**


Bartholomaeæ—C. Bartholomaeæ, "Zum sasanidischen Recht," parts I–V, in *Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Phil.-Hist. Klasse (1918) Abh. 5 and 14; (1920) Abh. 18; (1922) Abh. 5; (1923) Abh. 9


Göbl—R. Göbl, Der sasanidische Siegelkanon (Brunswick, 1973)
MHD—Mādīqān-i-Hazār Dādīstān (Bombay, 1901)
MMA—C. J. Brunner, Sasanian Stamp Seals in The Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, 1978). This abbreviation is used to refer to seal catalogue entries; see also Stamp Seals
Sasanian Silver—Sasanian Silver: Late Antique and Early Medieval Arts of Luxury from Iran (Ann Arbor, 1967)
Sprengling—Martin Sprengling, Third Century Iran: Sapor and Kartir (Chicago, 1953)
Stamp Seals—C. J. Brunner, Sasanian Stamp Seals in The Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, 1978). This abbreviation is used for reference to text discussion; see also MMA
Yāst—see Avesta
Yasna—see Avesta
Widewdād—see Avesta
Yasna—see Avesta
Yašt—see Avesta