



# Sasanian Silver Bowl at the National Museum of Iran, Indian Gypsies and Persian Gulf

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## Abstract

Sasanian Silver Bowl at the National Museum of Iran, known as the “dancer-musicians scene”, has been one of the museum’s most archaeological works for the past sixty years. According to Ali Sami, this bowl was purchased in 1334 (1955); it is attributed to the north of Iran (Kelardasht of Mazandaran). The palm-shaped head of this bowl shows four dancer-musician-singers with four different well-known musical instruments as well as a figure of a pheasant in the center. In all previous scholarly works, as well as in the many exhibitions in which this bowl has been displayed, this work has been referred to as the motif of the “female dancers-musicians”. However, doubtful interpretations of musical instruments of the motif can be found in the same scholarly works. Obviously Iranian scholars to the internally held exhibitions have followed previously mentioned works. The author will first challenge the “femininity” of these four dancer-musician-singers and will testify the view that three of them are only masculine. Secondly, I will present a new proposal to the readers with a different interpretation of these Iranian music instruments. Also, the author considers this bowl to probably be a heritage from the Persian Gulf (southern, not northern Iran). Furthermore, I will also focus on the identity of these dancer-musicians in such a musical group scene as “Indian gypsies” or at least inspired by such a musical style. The author will also refer to two other lesser-known similar bowls of the Museum. Meanwhile, the author will present a new perspective on the date of this silver object which is based on its motif details and two more Silver Works at the National Museum of Iran. In this comparative study, I will draw a line between the three motifs (of the bowls, especially two of them) based on the two seasons of “winter and spring (or summer)”!

**Keywords:** Sasanian Silver Bowl, National Museum of Iran, Musician-dancers Scene, Kelardasht, India Gypsy, Persian Gulf.

## Introduction

Much has been said and written about the Persian Gulf. Since more than 500 years

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ago until now, about cultural landscapes, art, music, clothing, food styles to different harbors and etc. through foreign travelogues and Iranian documents can be attributed to colorful valuable data on the Persian Gulf. Archaeology has also testified a large tangible data about Iranian identity over the Persian Gulf. Pre-historic objects to the valuable inscription of Darius the Great obtained from the Suez Canal to other archeological finds from Bushehr, Siraf, Kharg, Qeshm, Hormoz, etc., are proof of this claim. Zoroastrianism legacy in Saudi Arabia and especially Yemen to recent Sasanian coins from the United Arab Emirates, Sasanian fortresses in Oman (cf. Potts, 2012: online)... can be proof of our historical ownership of the Persian Gulf.

Nevertheless, the article stresses on a review of a Sasanian magnificent artistic relic in the National Museum of Iran. This masterpiece frequently has been referred for at least the last years. This significant object has been displayed in most of exhibitions from the inside to the abroad. This Sasanian heritage has been published in most of the catalogs of the National Museum of Iran and international exhibitions. This very beautiful Sasanian work, “silver bowl” known as the “scene of dancer-musicians” with registry number 1332, weight 575.7, diameter 22.55 cm, and height 7 cm, obtained from Kelardasht (?), Mazandaran.

## Background

As mentioned earlier, Sasanian silver bowl, known as the “scene of dancer-musicians” of the National Museum of Iran, has received a great deal of attention over the past sixty years. In the Persian version of the catalog “7000 Ans d’Art Perse” (Seipel: 2000, 290-291) has been referred to the most important research background of this great Sasanian work (such as: Ghirshman: 1957; Vanden-Berghe: 1959; Henning: 1959; Harper: 1978) (before 1979). This silver bowl, after being displayed in the exhibition in Vienna, Austria (2000-2001) along with a number of other works of the National Museum of Iran (and other Iran’s museums) were exhibited in many countries around the world (such as Germany, Italy, Belgium, Switzerland, Croatia, Spain, France, Turkey, Japan, South Korea, Brazil ...). it has been a significant topic in all the printed catalogs of those exhibitions. This valuable archaeological masterpiece can also be found in many interior catalogs (as well as interior exhibitions) of the National Museum. Among them: “Exhibition of Iran and the Silk Road” (Catalog, 2011: 55), “Glory of Iran” (2010: n.p.), “Golden and Silver Works of Iran” (2013: 59), “Ancient Iran (Treasures of the National Museum of Iran)” (n.d.) ... Also, numerous international and Iranian scholarly articles (Aliei et al., 2020: 51; Mobini and Haghparast, 2019: 112; Sami, 1970: 29; cf. Harper, 1986: online;) can be referred. What was written about this valuable work by the first generation of Western scholars (such as Ghirshman, Vanden-Berghe...) was probably the basis of the exhibition catalog of Vienna (Austria), as well as other exhibitions/catalogs and articles. Readers will find a long list of research papers on this object by searching on websites.

**Questions and Hypotheses:** Of the most important questions: Can the Scene of this magnificent Sasanian bowl reflect female dancer-musicians (girls/women)? Could the

presence of female motifs on many of silver Sasanian relics be a reason for this object to be called the scene of “female dancer-musicians”? Isn’t the cover, makeup, face, limbs, and shape of these four dancer-musicians fundamentally different from those of other well-known silver objects? Are these four musical instruments properly enumerated by previous scholarly works? Can the attribution of this valuable Sasanian bowl to the Zoroastrianism or Roman legacy be defensible? Is the origin of this heritage the northern border of Iran? Is it possible to suggest a link between this wonderful Sasanian heritage and the shores of the Persian Gulf?

The author has reconsidered the interpretation of this bowl by carefully examining it, precisely studying its background, and more accurately comparing it with other Sasanian similar items. Furthermore, the author has referred to Sasanian written sources as well as the views of some well-known scholars.<sup>1</sup> I have also had access to two other Sasanian similar works to analogically examine it. The existence of fundamental dissimilarities between this object and other Sasanian similar Silver Works is the least excuse for writing this article.

### Discussion

As I mentioned before, in explaining and introducing the silver bowl of the National Museum of Iran (fig. 1), interpreting the catalog of the “7000 Jahre Persische Kunst: 2000” Exhibition in Vienna, Austria, was a meaningful chapter for following later works (2000 to present). The author has tried to put a new view on the readers by challenging that interpreting.

The catalog of the Vienna Museum (Persian version; 2000: 332) writes about this bowl “obtained from Kelardasht (?) dates back to the eight century AD”: “This incomplete hemispherical bowl has a meaningful motif on its back. Palm leaf decorations can be seen with four separate figures. In each part of the motif, a female is dancing under a grape tree. A pheasant is seen in the center of the object, with a ring pearl around it. The hair of the girls (females) is woven in an artistic style in parallel of the golden decorated forehead and the necklaces on the neck. On their arms are long handkerchiefs that hang in front of the body and reflect a kind of movement. Their faces are facing each other in pairs. The flutist looks at his right-hand neighbor who is playing the lute; Of the other two girls, one plays Arghanun and the other has castanets in the hands...” Also, the name of the owner of this silver object and its weight, in the Pahlavi, can be clearly seen among the motifs. The Vienna Catalog deals with this in detail. Moreover, the catalog has entangled this scene to Diaonysis scenes and finally to Goddess Anahita!

### Author’s Description

First, all four musical instruments in the hands of the four dancer-musicians of the bowl were very well-known instruments of Sasanian period: The wind<sup>2</sup> Arghanun: male (fig. 2), the lute: male (fig. 3), the sorena (especial type here): male and the based castanets (not just a simple castanet; like pliers with big heads): female are the four musical instruments on the bowl.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

Secondly, the author prefers to use the term “based chime” instead of the castanet (fig. 4). Small chimes are still valid, attached to the fingers or with short handles (which fits perfectly in the fists) in southern Iran, especially in Bushehr province to parts of Khuzestan and Baštak in Hormozgan and Siŝtan and Baluchestan. The chime may have Indian origin (Dervishi, 2004: 536). At least, the size, shape and melody of both are the same. However, this musical instrument has been used for instrumentation or a kind of rhythm.<sup>3</sup> Currently some females are skilled on chime melody in Persian Gulf regions.

Thirdly, the author is doubtful of using the term flute (reed alone) for another instrument (fig. 5). The width of this, the number of fingers of two long and bent hands to produce the melody must be a proof of the claim. In addition, there is a tongue at the top, between the player’s lips and the main body of the reed, which ordinary flutes lack. Its width and large head of this instrument, however, can be reminiscent of a

kind of Iranian “sorena” that has been very common in the southwestern regions (and of course other places).<sup>4</sup> Masudi narrates from Ibn Khordadbeh (Sami, 1970: 29) that: “The Iranians invented the flute (reed) that is played with the lute and the reed with two pipes (: a pair?) that is played with the tambourine.”



Fig. 4



Fig. 5

Zoroastrian texts in the Pahlavi also provide information on some of these instruments (see later). Although neither motif nor report of the “chime” has been found on the northeast borders of the Sasanian frontiers, instruments such as the lute and reed are well known through Manichaean and Sogdian legacies (Gulacsi; Gharib, 2004: 10395, 10956; Boyce, 1977: 60). Sorena, Nay-e Anban (?), harp and timbre also are known through the Taq Bostan bas-relief in Kirmanshah (Fukai and Horiuchi, 1969: XCVI, LXX).

Importantly, three out of four dancer-musicians of the bowl are not “females” absolutely due to the following reasons. It seems that the wind instruments such as wind Arghanun, bagpipe, sorena, probably the lute was played by the males and light instruments such as timbre or static harps by the females. The author believes that this key technical issue has never been carefully considered:

1. In all the Sasanian similar silver objects, including dancer-musicians motifs, their large and very visible breasts (mamma) either from the front or from the profile can be seen clearly i.e. Sasanian decanter of the National Museum (fig. 6), female dancer of Bishapur mosaic (fig. 7), famous Sasanian female harp-player (fig. 8), similar objects of Arthur collection, opal gemstone ring of the National Museum of Iran (Ayazi, 2005:97-99, 113), silver cup of the Metropolitan Museum (online)<sup>5</sup> and dancer-musician of the cup of Freer Gallery (Boardman, 2015: 211). This is the most important dissimilarity of the bowl with other similar silver objects. The right breast of the females is quite visible i.e. on the dancer figure of the mosaic and the next figure in the National Museum of Iran (where a female is sitting with a flower in the left hand), (fig. 8); the left breast of the harp-player and gemstone figure and two breasts of the decanter figure can be seen visibly.

2. There are significant dissimilarities between the hair style, form of the face and eyes, the lips, the size of the shoulders, the disheveled and hanging hair and decorated head of the four dancer-musicians and other similar objects. These four dancer-singers,

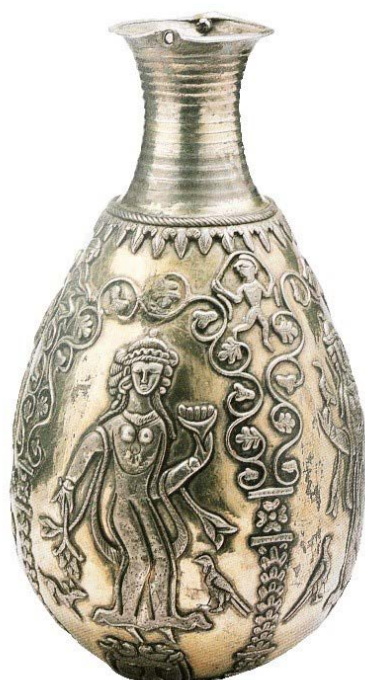


Fig. 6



Fig. 7 & 8

in pairs, have similarities and of course, slight dissimilarities that have never been noticed. The most important dissimilarity of these musicians is in their necklaces and even the decoration on their lace dress (see later) two by two. Two of them have a lace dress with the same decoration. Two dancer-musicians have a simple necklace (pearl) and the other two have a necklace with a hanging flower form (small pendant) on the neck. Both of these forms of necklaces (simple and with pendants) are known in Sasanian art (i.e. Kartir, Sasanian kings, dancers). An eagle-shaped nose is very much like two people (at least) as if they were members of the same family!

3. The make-up of these four dancer-musicians-singers has not only followed a certain style or type, but has created a significant dissimilarity with other motifs of the silver objects. Unlike previous works, the author believes that each of these four people wears a head-band that is tied with a strip under the neck and basically their hair is not visible. Their long-braided hair is seen as a single branch on the shoulder. They have a special mark on their headband at the forehead (two by two), which is evidence of their affiliation with their artistic group or social class. It is quite clear that the musicians had an honorable position in the Sasanian period.

4. The cover of all known Sasanian dancer-musicians is very far from this silver object. On other objects, the dancer-musicians are covered with a thin (colored) lace on the garment (presumably silk or something as thin as that), while these musicians do not have any clothing under the lace (probably except for the female one who is portrayed significantly (fig. 4). It is obvious that morality (cover) was one of the most important features of Sasanian royal (and religious) art and naked women are not seen in the official art of this period (scenes of the kings and nobles). The author believes that the cover (and hair style) of these four dancer-musicians has strongly questioned their "Iranian identity or Iranian dance style".

5. The body shape of three out of four dancer-musicians-singers clearly testify to their "masculinity". Lace type, breasts completely masculine (clinging, not hanging form) musician (fig. 2, 3, 5); see also the breasts of two young people's plate of the Metropolitan Museum (Ettinghausen, 1972: 11), the lack of long hair and enchanting dangling is the least evidence of this claim. The non-protrusion of the breasts of the three people under the lace (which was not a difficult task) is another proof of this claim. Musician's wrinkled abdomen finds the fig 5. and navel (fig. 2-3) to mannish chest and shoulders (fig. 2) also support this idea. Moreover, the hands attached to the chest of each one holding the instrument have no distance with that part. However, this important detail has been a part of Sasanian art. Their hands can be easily seen in the upper part of the chest to hold the instrument.

6. The body shape of these four dancer-musicians is very thought-provoking. Except for one case with a wrinkled tummy (which may be due to the type of dance and rotation or even age), completely hairless faces, all handsome, with outstretched limbs, slender legs, straight arms, flat breasts (three) and in a word "with beautiful bodies" have been portrayed; they are never comparable to other similar such as harp-player or decanter of the National Museum Iran. These four dancer-singers seem to have been among the most professional musicians of their time, but the author also suspects that these musicians were courtiers. The portraits of these three men are exactly the opposite of the report of the Pahlavi texts (see conclusion).

7. The scene of this bowl reflects a "group of dancer-musicians", female-males. However, in other Sasanian music-dance legacies (except for very limited cases; see later), these singer-dancers are portrayed alone with the utmost prominence of the body and charm.

8. This scene has similarities with other scenes of the dance-music of the silver objects.  
a. The most important similarity is the use of the common "lace dress" in the dance-

music-singing scenes. In all the scenes, the lace covers (probably over a thin silk) from the neck (fig. 3, 7, 8), the lower part of the short necklace, to the leg (like a long dress). In other scenes, the lace has covered, on the silk, to the legs and moves in a wavy and beautiful way at the bottom. The elastic band or strap of these colored laces at the bottom (ankle), on the chest, around the neck and floral design on wrists, is quite clear to stand and resist during the dance. Colored floral (i.e. three petals: rosette) designs (i.e. wrists) can recall Indian henna works which has severely overshadowed the Persian Gulf coasts. This type of embroidery is still common in parts of Sistan and Baluchestan. The lace dress of two of the four dancers is meaningful with a square/rhombus design and the other two have laces with a three petals pattern.

b. Long shawls: This shawl (not a handkerchief) can be seen in most of the dancer-musician scenes of this type of silver relics. These shawls frequently cover part of the breasts of girls-women (females) and here the lower part of the body! This is a fundamental difference. Both ends of these shawls are seen in the form of flowers with multiple petals in the motif. Although the author does not deny producing shawls (or at least special dance handkerchiefs) in Sasanian period, but Indian shawls also had a special place (cf. Golabzadeh, 2011: 180; Talebpour and Khataee, 2012: 47). At least for now, handkerchief dancing is common on all the southwestern shores (Khuzestan, Fars, Bushehr, Hormozgan) of the Persian Gulf coast. It seems that the small design of this issue on (top part) the decanter of the National Museum has never been noticed.

9. It can also not be ignored that in the middle of the object, a pheasant can be seen in a pearl ring (cf. other objects, as well as Sasanian coins up to Sogdian artifacts). The ring contains 61 pearls. Black palm leaf markers are numbered “ten”. Unlike previous works, I do not believe that this decoration can be called Mina: enamel. Also, decorated grape branches are well known through other Sasanian artistic heritage. The number of pearl grains on the pheasant’s wings as well as the vine cluster is very significant.

The figure of a pheasant (birds/cattle) is not a strange subject in Sasanian art (Compareti, 2015: 40), but these birds with “long ribbons (in pairs) and a three-branches string in the beak” (symbol of the Glory, triple doctrine of Zoroastrianism or social casts) as a part of the Great Khorasan (to China, Dunhuang) artistic school has been widely seen. This ribbon, and especially the three branches in the beak (birds), has not been referred to any of the Zoroastrian gods in previous printed works!

## Conclusion

Undoubtedly, the Sasanian silver bowl at the National Museum of Iran can be studied from a new perspective. This view can challenge all previous scholarly works from two different aspects.

First, the musical instruments portrayed on this work can testify to its interrelationship with the shores of the Persian Gulf. For example, Castanet or Sinj is a typical instrument. There is a golden shipwreck’s photo (with eight musicians-singers), has some similarities with the silver bowls of the National Museum of Iran, on the website of Asian Civilizations Museum in Singapore.<sup>6</sup> According to the website, the work has

been discovered from a Persian Gulf bound ship drowned near Indonesia. However, the author has doubts about authenticity of this report!

Although there are few written archaic texts but these instruments have been valid from generation to generation in Iran as endorsed by sources in Sasanian, Post-Sasanian, oral history as well as archeological documents until they have reached our time.

Most Post-Sasanian sources have preserved valuable information about Arghanun, sorena, lute (barbat) and even chime.<sup>7</sup> Although Zoroastrian texts do not help on such a topic but the story of Khusraw ī kawādān ud rēdak (Oryan, 2004: 58) mentioned some of the best musicians: “harp-players, lute-players, wan players,<sup>8</sup> tambour players, and reed players.”

Chime (cf. Ibn Sina)<sup>9</sup> is one of the oldest musical instruments in southern Iran. The Haft-Joush (seven parts) chime was also one of the most common of these musical instruments; the Indian type of which (made of bronze) had a special reputation in Bushehr (Darvishi, 2004: 540,32). Type of the short handled and tied to the fingers have been (and still are) the most common chimes in southern Iran (for the same instrument, see: Gunter and Jett, 1992: 191).

Another important fact is that the production and control of the melody with these four instruments were very difficult for females (women); three of them (bowl) still considered male instruments. In Taq Bostān too, sorena and a kind of arghanun (or bagpipe, maybe nay-e anban) are played by men where females are depicted as tambourine and harp players (farmer, 1964: 96). Both of these latter instruments have always been depicted and described in this way (female).

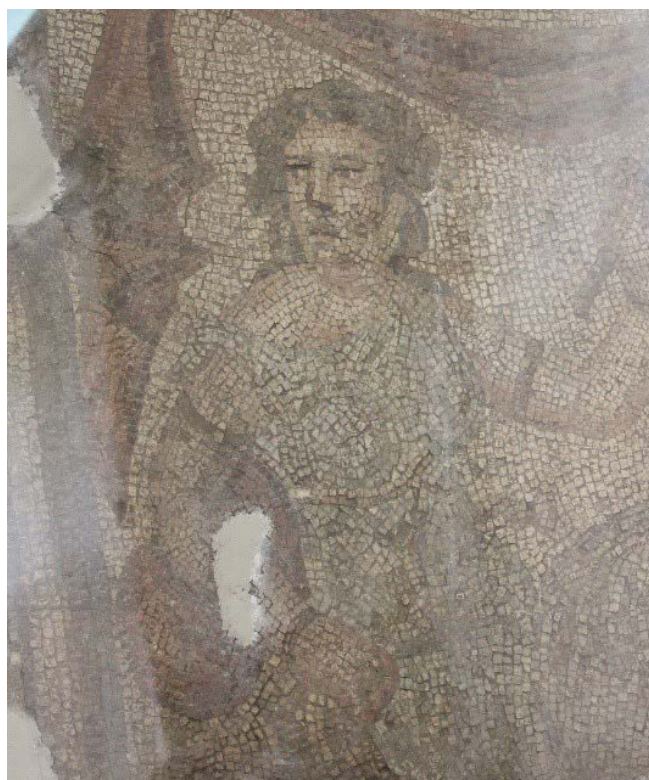
So, the gender of the musicians will be the second key point of this object. It is as if the previous works did not pay attention to the connection between the “type of instrument and the type of gender” which, according to the tradition, they were at least skilled players.

The story of “Khusraw ī kawādān ud rēdak” (Oryan, 2004: 96) describes “a sweet-singing-dancer and a beauty with big breasts, wasp waist, black and long hair ...”. Here are two questions:

1. Whether the female musician-dancer figures on the Sasanian silver legacy, with big breasts, slim waist and charming disheveled hair (National Museum of Iran, cf. fig. 6) cannot be a seal of endorsing the above-mentioned Pahlavi text? If that is the case, which I believe it is:

2. Isn't this (description) contrary to the motif of the musicians of the silver bowl at the National Museum?

This issue of course according to the type of make-up and body shape confirms that three of them are males. Therefore, in the dance-music scene of other objects, the shawl on the breast (or part of it such as Bishapur mosaic), from behind (such as the silver decanter at the National Museum) or above the head like a sunshade (fig. 9) can be seen. Here, the shawl is skillfully placed on privy parts (low body) by the craftsman in order to have observed Iranian ethics (of course with partial rotation of the body). If in other objects, the shawl plays a role in covering the breasts of women, here it covers probably



**Fig. 9**

their low bodies. This is not very compatible with Roman art!

In the Sasanian silver decanter at the National Museum, despite a kind of decorated forehead, the hair of the musician is hung from both sides towards the shoulders but here typical long-braided hair can remind us of Indian style which impacted the Persian Gulf coasts. However, no trace of the hair of the above mentioned musicians can be seen here, and they wear a head-gear (with two different logos on the forehead in pairs) that is fastened with a bandage under the throat (it is unlikely to be a hair strand). On this bowl, the whole body (with details) is portrayed in front and the head is turned to another side (profile), something that does not occur much with other works. The highly balanced and professional limbs of these dancer-musician-singers indicate their affiliation with a professional group. The beautiful and balanced body as well as the “hairless face” of these three male musicians plus one female, is thought to be one of the reasons for calling these four dancers females.

Furthermore, a theme rarely seen in Sasanian art is a “harmonious music group” (male and female) scene. Even in the royal hunting scene of Taq Bostan, less resemblance (coordinated group) can be found to this bowl. The musicians of Taq Bostan cannot be called a scene of a group performance.

Another similar silver bowl (fig. 10) with the same motif (four dancer-musicians from Kelardasht) at the National Museum of Iran published by S. Ayazi (2005: 92-93) already. These two bowls differentiate each other by some significant details which have never been studied. In the second bowl, the relatively “thick cover” of the musicians



Fig. 10

along with the figures of the “birds” is very significant. It seems, to me, that the first one reflects summer or spring season but the second one clearly recalls the winter season. Figures of different birds (which can be discovered in the spring season) is a part of the claim (the second one). There is also a third bowl with the same scene, in the National Museum, which I will write about in more detail in the future.

The author believes that the motifs of these three bowls are merely radiant of a “simple secular feast” (cf. Boyce and Farmer, 1990: 55; also: Gunter and Jett, 1992: 200). Obviously, the Sasanian heritages can never have been recorded without religious traces, which subconsciously ruled the artist’s mind. Hence, the meaningful name of the owner of the first bowl (Farrokh-hormozd not windad-hormozd) to the design of the black “ten” leaves of the palm branch, the pearl ring around the pheasant in the middle of the object, the number of pearls of the pearl ring, two ribbons and also the three branches in the beak (Glory, triple social casts or the doctrine of the Zoroastrianism) are part of this claim.

Although the existence of motif of birds and animals in Sasanian art (rock, art, bullae, etc...) is a normal subject, but the figure of a pheasant (center of the bowl) can remind us of the “Khorasan Art School” that goes as far as China (Akbarzadeh, 2020: 267).

The author believes that there is no connection between this scene and the one from Roman legacy of Dionysian or the goddess Anahita (Catalog of Wien, 2003: 233; Gunter and Jett, 1992: 27), as mentioned in all previous works. The following reasons can support me to challenge the previous works: “the typical oriental type of dance of these dancer-musicians, which is evident from their body shape, the pheasant figure most unrelated to the Zoroastrian goddess, the partial nudity dancers, which is not compatible with the officially known Sasanian art (but they are covered on the second bowl), their instruments, the absence of any bold religious symbols etc... supposedly for their body shape (type of dance), type of head-bands, shawl pattern, typical southern chime (with base, like pliers), dancer-musicians in group scene ...” Also, the author points the finger at India, not the Roman heritage for such a coordinated group performance that Sasanian art lacked (cf. Boyce and Farmer, 1990: 60).

The Indians have always been known as female-males dancer-musicians in group form (unlike individual Sasanian dancer-singers). Also, the figure of the peacock (bowls 2-3) can support this claim. Moreover, the presence of Indian musicians-dancers in the Sasanian period is a well-known issue. It is obvious that Bahram V (Gur), after treating the mental condition of the Iranian society, ordered many musicians from India to come to Iran and play in public. These musicians are known as “gypsies” in the history of Iran.<sup>10</sup> In fact, the author evaluates this group of naked (and partly-covered) dancer-musicians (with a completely different body shape) on these Sasanian bowls as Indian gypsies. Their half-nakedness cannot be an Iranian tradition in dance. In a work, about such instruments, attributed to Ibn Khordadbeh (Mallah, 1963: 28; Sami, 1970: 49) narrates that: “Iranians usually played the lute with the flute and the tambourine and the sorna with the dohol (drum) and mastaj (chime) and the senj.”

The author also believes that due to the to the accuracy in construction and high technic of these valuable bowls and the processing of artistic symbols, especially such a dancer-musicians in group scene, its attribution to the eighth century AD., Post-Sasanian period (given the socio-political situation of Iran), is questionable. If this bowl(s) was made in the geographical boundary of Sasanian Fars province (including parts from Khuzestan to Fars and the whole of present-day Bushehr province) (which is strongly believed to be the case), the eighth century AD. was the most difficult period of this part of the Persian Gulf. Furthermore, the artistic details of these objects are never less, if not more beautiful than the objects of the sixth century AD. (cf. Lawergren, 2009: online). The skill in the inscribed needle-shaped of the owner’s religious name, the exact size of the body of the musicians, the branches of the grape, colored lace and other details indicate that the creation of this work can be even brighter than the eighth century AD.

Despite this, a fundamental problem will remain and that is the type of cover of the dancers on these three bowls. This coverage can mean a “seasonal difference”, that is likely to be the case. Based on this one, we should focus on the eighth century AD. The author suggests that the second bowl (covered dancers) can be a reminder of Mihragan Festival at the beginning of winter and the first one (naked) can be reminiscent of Nowruz Festival (or a summer fest). This six-month gap (between two

seasons) is the least reason why the two group of the two objects can be considered the same. If we cannot opine about the time of Mihragan Festival, but the time of Nowruz Fest was not fixed at the beginning of spring in the Sasanian calendar. This event is related to the early Islamic periods and this one does not contradict the eighth century. In short, that discovery of this bowl (for whatever reason) from northern Iran will never be an excuse to consider its origin as northern, and of course this is not surprising in archeology.

### Endnote

1. I highly appreciate Matteo Compagni (Italy), Prof. Michael Alram (Vienna), Prof. J. Lerner (New York University) and Dr. Amit (Arts Academy of Delhi). Also, I sincerely thank Master Mohammad Reza Darvishi for his comments and encouragement. I appreciate the National Museum of Iran for photos, especially Dr. J. Nokandeh (the Director) and Mrs. Z. Akbari, the Curator of Historical Studies Dep. Furthermore, I am thankful to Mr. Mirzakhani.

2. I am thankful to Master M. Reza Darvishi for this technical term.

3. The Indians currently hold the chime together by tying a thread and hold it in their hands at the time of producing melody. The based castanets that the author has called as the based chimes are attributed to the arrival of African slaves after the 18th century in the book "People of Mourning: Sounds and Rituals of Mourning in Bushehr" (2005: 91) without providing any historical documents. On the contrary, the connections of Iran through the Persian Gulf with Africa go back to the Sasanian era (Daryae, 2003: 102).

4. The author is uncertain in attributing it to "Ney Jofiti: coupling flute" (Khuzestan, Bushehr, Hormozgan) due to the width of this tool. The "pair reed" consists of two sound pipes, and those two wooden pipes are connected with wax (sometimes with a strap); there are five to six holes on each pipe; the two pipes (two reeds due to being pairs) are connected to a thin wooden appendage at the top for playing (producing the sound). The pair reed players can breathe through the nose while playing the reed. It is clear that the ordinary "flute" in its basic structure does not require an independent appendage (between the body of the straw and the lip) and less in its background, can be referred to this appendage. The flute produces the sound by the air blown into its oral edge.

5. <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/325865>.

6. I tried to obtain photo of the object from the Asian Civilizations Museum but to no avail.

7. The existence of these four instruments doesn't mean the production of the melody at the same time. It is very difficult and almost impossible to adjust the melody of these four different instruments together as M. R. Darvishi claimed over the phone.

8. "wan" (lute) is called "vina" (Apte, 2006: 272) in Sanskrit and in Hindi. In Sogdian (Gharib, 1374: 10395) it is called "vina" also. Master Darvishi in "Encyclopaedia of Musical Instruments of Iran" (2004: 28) by accurately enumerating the narrative areas of this instrument, especially the coast of the Persian Gulf, has dealt with the precise classification of lute and tambourine with exact reference to Farabi and other valuable sources such as the works of Abdolqader Maraghi.

9. Darvishi (2010: 520-530): "senj" (: Bushehr), "sharing" (: Hormozgan), "qashoqak" (castanet: Siestan), "katra" (: Gilan), "shaq Shaq" (: Khuzestan).

10. The author remembers well the neighborhood of the gypsies or Indians in Borazjan (Dashtestan) City in Aliabad region (near the old gas station). The locals, if they needed a reed player and a dancer, would turn to these Indians and use them to set up their happy assembly (marriage, circumcision or circumcission). These Indians (with different limbs) had the right to marry only among themselves.

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