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Mesopotamian or Iranian? A New Investigation on the Origin of the Goddess Anāhitā

Arədvī Sūrā Anāhitā, a popular Zoroastrian yazatā, is celebrated in Yašt 5 (Ābān Yašt). Anāhitā is mostly believed to be an Indo-Iranian or Iranian deity who has absorbed influences from the creed and iconography of Ishtar, the Mesopotamian goddess, in the course of history. The type and the degree of such influences are still under debate. The paper places this goddess into the context of ancient Western Asia. Findings are presented in two sections: in the first section, the Indo-Iranian, Iranian and western Iranian origins of Anāhitā are questioned, and in the following section two points are clarified: first, the Mesopotamian origin for Anāhitā is more consistent with historical and archaeological evidence, and second, Anāhitā is the same as Annunit/Annunitum, Sippar—Amnamum's goddess of war and victory and the avatar of Antu, who was added to the list of his royal patron deities as a result of political and military developments early in the reign of Artaxerxes II.

Introduction

The lands delineated by the Indus and Syr Darya rivers to the east and Zagros Mountains to the west are considered homelands of people called "Aryans/Iranians" because of their common linguistic and cultural characteristics. The ancient homeland of this people are found in the eastern and northeastern regions of Iran (north Afghanistan and Central Asia), based on linguistic and archaeological evidence.[1] During the second millennium BC, they were gradually separated from the Indians who were of the same ancestry and entered these vast regions and settled beside the natives. Much later, in the third decade of the third century CE, by the time of Ardašir I, this territory, as a political idea, was named "Ērānšahr."[2]

The dominance of the oral tradition among the Iranian-speaking people, the influences of the neighboring cultures, the high diversity of (both Iranian- and non-Iranian-speaking) nations, climate and geographical variety, and syncretism are several important factors that make it difficult to precisely identify the cultural and religious characteristics of Iranians, especially when determining the origin of a reli-

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gious and/or cultural element. This paper investigates the origin of one of the religious and mythical components of Iranians: the goddess Anāhitā.

The dominant opinion concerning Anāhitā among scholars is that she is an essentially Indo-Iranian or Iranian deity. In what follows, various documents and pieces of evidence are cited to see if scholars like Rawlinson, Rapp, Moulton and Benveniste are correct in considering Anāhitā as a Mesopotamian Goddess.[3] To achieve this goal, first three geographical areas suggesting the provenances of Anāhitā (i.e. Indo-Iran, Iran and west of Iran) are studied respectively; then it is argued that Anāhitā may be the same Annunit/Annunitum, the goddess of Sippar-Amnamum, added to the list of the patron deities of his rule by Artaxerxes II following political and military challenges early in his reign.

In the present study, on the basis of "inference to the best explanation" principle, I have consciously reduced the dominant place of Avesta, from the basis of Iranian history, culture and civilization, to a document at the same level as other historical and archaeological documents, for the following methodological reasons: (1) the earliest surviving Avestan manuscript dates to the end of the thirteenth century; (2) this text is plainly a composite work that has grown during centuries of oral transmission;[4] (3) the chronology of this text is not accurate, and at least until the end of the Parthian era, only in Asia Minor,[5] no written form of it (maybe other sacred text) had been reported; (4) relying on the antiquity and linguistic originality of this isolated text, of which no more than two or three transcripts exist, cannot be a decisive factor in determining the exact period of its creation. More than a quarter of a century ago, Jean Kellens said that "the approach which consists in starting from the Achaemenid data to go to the Avesta can't be more sterile than the opposite approach."[6] Not only do I completely agree with this idea, but also I think that this approach provides better and more accurate results.

It should also be pointed out in advance that the present paper uses the term "Persian" to refer to Persian ethnicity, their cultural, linguistic and religious characteristics, and the Achaemenid dynasty (550-331 BC). Other Iranian-speaking nations (such as Medians, Parthians, Bactrians) and their common cultural and religious properties are referred to by the term "Iranian."

The Indo-Iranian Anāhitā

Ancient Persian texts allude to the name of Anāhitā only in inscriptions of Artaxerxes II (404-359 BCE), one in Hamadan (A^2 Ha) and two in Susa (A^2 Sa; A^2 Sa). Her name is Anah^ata in A^2 Ha and A^2 Sa, Anāhitā in A^2Sd,[7] Anāhitā in Avesta, Anāhīd and Anāhīt in Pahlavi scripts, Anāhīt in Armenian texts, and Nāhīd in New Persian. Its Babylonian form is a-na-ah-i-ṭu-u' or an-na-hi-uḏ-ḏa[8] and its Neo-Elamite form is ^dAn-na-hi-ud-da.[9]

The complete name for Anāhitā in Avesta is "Arədvī Sūrā Anāhitā." This name is composed of three components. The first one, Arədvī, has been taken by many scholars to refer to "wetness and moisture,"[10] but Weller says that the term means "flow,"[11]

and Kellens suggests that it should be translated as "the Competent One," or "She Who Succeeds."[12] The second component, Sūrā, is less problematic. Scholars generally agree that it means "mighty" or "powerful" in Avestan.[13] The third component, Anāhitā, means "holy and infallible" according to the majority of scholars,[14] but Kellens, based on Hertel and Gotō, suggests that the term should be translated as "unbound."[15]

In general, "Anaitis" is considered to be the Greek equivalent of the ancient Aryan "Anāhitā.[16]

The following considerations put the presented Indo-Iranian etymology into question:

1. The Avestan word "'āhita" is equivalent to Vedic "'āsita," both meaning "Polluted/impure/defiled." In Vedic Sanskrit, "'āsita" is the opposite of "sita," meaning "pure/chaste," as in almost all Iranian languages where "pāk" (pure) opposes "nāpāk" (impure). The question with this Indo-Iranian-based etymology is that, while simply "hita" could be used in opposition to "'āhita," an amalgamation of two tandem negative prefixes "ā" and "'an"—"'an-āhita"—has been used, which yields the unusual expression "non-non-pure," despite the fact that there is no equivalent to "'an-āsita" in Vedic Sanskrit.[17]
2. Arədvī Sūrā Anāhitā is the only Avestan name that is composed of three parts,[18] and, as Lommel states, this is relatively unusual.[19]
3. Parallel to each original Avestan deity, there usually is a counterpart in the *Vedas*; there are many illustrative examples, such as Airyaman = Aryamen, Hvar = Surya, Vivahvant = Vivasvant, Ushah = Ushas, Vāyu = Vayu, Haoma = Suma and Azar = Agni. However, Anāhitā has no Vedic counterpart.

Dumezil, Lommel and Duchesne-Guillemin argued that Arədvī Sūrā Anāhitā essentially corresponds to Sarasvatī, the Vedic goddess who has some mythical functions in common with Anāhitā,[20] and M. Witzel, accepting this relationship, suggested that from Indo-Iranian times these two goddesses, as celestial rivers, were associated with the Milky Way.[21] These hypotheses face some crucial problems. Contrary to these views, the Avestan counterpart of Sarasvatī is Harahvatī, who lacks any myths and never appears as a goddess.[22] The Old Avesta does not mention the Harahvatī, considered cognate to Sarasvatī. It is only the later parts of Avesta that mention the river goddess for the first time. These parts of Avesta are chronologically very late in comparison with Rigveda. Furthermore, these speculations do not explain why a link between Anāhitā and the Milky Way was no longer operative in the later Mazdean context, when Anahita/Anahid was connected with the planet Venus.

Some scholars have argued that the three components of Anāhitā's name are clearly epithets, not an actual name. According to Pirart, her name is Hī,[23] and Kellens proposes that her name is Āp, "The Water."[24] But these speculations do not solve any problems either, because, as a deity, neither Hī nor Āp has Vedic counterparts.

These abovementioned efforts have been made to prove the Indo-Iranian or even Indo-European provenance of Anāhitā. Manya Saadi-nejad, based on Ābān Yašt,

5.129, which states that Anāhitā's coat is made from the skins "of thirty beavers of those that bear four young ones," concludes that

> this particular aspect of Anāhitā's imagery could date back to at least around four thousand years ago, prior to the Indo-Iranian split, when proto-Indo-Iranians occupied the southern Ural region. References to beaver skins in the Ābān Yašt suggest that its author is quoting a very old oral tradition which cannot be, for example, from Mesopotamia. Rather, it shows that at least initially, Anāhitā was worshiped in lands with a cold climate.[25]

Firstly, wearing a coat made from beaver skin does not necessarily imply Anāhitā's provenance. The bones of this animal have been found in areas as far south as northern Syria and in mummified form in Egypt.[26] This luxury coat of Anāhitā, like silk, might have been brought into the Middle East through trade. Secondly, allusion to "Beautiful … arms, white (and) thicker than (the thighs) of a horse; Two beautiful *armlets she wore, thicker than (her) *delicate arms,"[27] and "wearing four-sided ear-hangings, she wore a golden brooch … upon that beautiful neck,"[28] clearly indicate that Anāhitā's arms and neck were naked. Furthermore, Yt.5.101 also states that "She … in each and every outlet stands a well-made home radiant with a hundred windows."[29] This manner of dressing and this architectural feature do not belong to lands with cold climates. The third point which is highly important and, as far as I know, has not yet been paid attention, is the allusion of Yt.5.101 to "well made [home] with a thousand columns, with ten thousand supporting beams."[30] From an archaeological viewpoint, it is not so difficult to answer the question of which area and era is implied by the architecture mentioned. Columns (in fact, a forest of columns) is the most characteristic feature of the Achaemenid architecture, not that of the fourth to second millennia BC in the southern Ural region.

To sum up, as a goddess, there is no indication of the name Anāhitā, Hī or Āp in Indo-Iranian texts and, according to Schwartz, the Indo-Iranian origin of this goddess is not demonstrable.[31]

The Iranian Anāhitā

Regarding the abovementioned facts, Gershevitch argued that Anāhitā may be a purely Iranian goddess: she is neither an Indo-Iranian, nor an Indo-European deity.[32]

However, this explanation also elicits three objections. First, the numerous inscriptions and tablets of Persepolis, in the heart of Persia, contain the names of many deities, but the goddess named Anāhitā, Hī, or Āp is not mentioned.

Second, nowhere in those areas which are thought to have been the provenance of the Iranians—i.e. north Afghanistan and Central Asia—are indications of the goddess Anāhitā (or Hī and Āp)[33] observed before the fourth and fifth centuries AD.[34] Evidence shows that this problem cannot be caused by the loss of evidence or lack of archaeological excavations.

During the early Common Era, the Kushan dynasty was gradually established in these areas. Evidence related to this kingdom play a critical role in our study. A survey on the coining trend of this dynasty reveals two coining stages during the reign of the most famous monarch, Kanishka. At first, the coins illustrate Greek and Mesopotamian elements, but in the second stage Iranian elements appear. For instance, Hephaistos is substituted with ΘΦΟΑ (fire); Helios is replaced by ΜΙΙΡΟ, ΜΙΟΡΟ, ΜΙhΡΟ and ΜΕΙΡΟ (Mithra). On the other hand, new deities appear in this period, such as ΜΜΑΝΑΟΒΑΓΟ (moon god), ΛΡΟΟΑСΓΟ (Drvaspa), ΟΦΛΑΓΝΟ (Verethragna), ΦΑΡΟ or ΦΑΡΡΟ (Xvarrna), ΑΡΛΟΧΦΟ (Ashi and kuhi), ΟΑΔΟ (wind), ΟΧΦΟ (Amu Darya) and ΜΟΖΔΟΟΑΝΟ (Mozdooano).[35] During Huvishka's reign, the same deities including ΜΙΙΡΟ and ΜΑΟ (the sun and the moon) emerge again, and Ahuramazda is illustrated as ΩΡΟΜΟΖΔΟ (Ōromozdo).[36] These extensive substitutions may give rise to the logical expectation that the goddess ΝΑΝΑΙΑ on the back of the early copper coins of Kanishka's reign would be replaced by Anāhitā. However, on later Kanishka coins ΝΑΝΑΙΑ is not substituted with Anāhitā, but with ΝΑΝΑ and ΑΡΔΟΧΡΟ (Ardochro = Ardoxsho). Once again in the coins of the second stage of Huvishka's coinage, when additional Iranian elements emerge on the coins, the same goddess ΝΑΝΑ from the first stage does not yield her place to Anāhitā, but to ΑΡΔΟΧΡΟ.[37] As it is apparent from her name, ΑΡΔΟΧΡΟ has an ambiguous relationship with Arədvī Sūrā, but not with Anāhitā, Hī, or Āp.

Lack of any indications of Anāhitā in these areas brings into question Meyer and Nyberg's theory that Anāhitā was originally the personification of the mighty Oxus itself.[38] It also rejects Hoffmann's assertion of the identicalness of Nana and Anāhitā,[39] because the Anāhitā absent in documents from eastern and northeastern Iran is clearly distinguished from Nana in western areas such as Armenia[40] and Palmyra.[41]

> The third problem with Gershevitch's explanation is that, in Avesta (Yasna 16), each of the thirty days of the month is dedicated to a particular deity, but no day is assigned to Anāhitā. The first, eighth, fifteenth and twenty-third days are named for Ahuramazda; Mithra takes the sixteenth day, and each of the many deities of less prominence has a specific day named after them.[42] In addition, the fifth Yašht of the Avesta and the eighth month of the Zoroastrian calendar have been denominated "Ābān," not "Anāhitā."[43]

Western Iranian Anāhitā

The absence of Anāhitā on the eastern side of Iran plateau led Boyce to form another theory. Boyce reconstructed the slightly variant form OP *Anāhiti from the consistent Greek one, Anaitis. She argued that *Anāhiti had been a western Iranian goddess since the Achaemenid era or even earlier who served as a bridge conveying the characteristics

of the Babylonian Ishtar (warlike with astral aspect as well as being worshiped as a cult statue) to the Avestan Arədvī Sūrā Anāhitā. Boyce, assuming a triad of Ishtar-*Anāhiti (a)-Arədvī Sūrā Anāhitā, stated that the Anahiti(a) illustrated on Artaxerxes II inscriptions who possessed Avestan, western Iranian and Babylonian characteristics was introduced into the religious tradition of Zoroastrianism through Achaemenids' authority, and gradually became compatible with it.[44]

There are also some objections to this viewpoint:

1. While there is no explicit and indisputable evidence for Zoroastrian belief among the Achaemenids, and assumption of their Zoroastrianism raises several as yet unanswered questions, Boyce, not only deems the Achaemenids to be Zoroastrians, but considers the Achaemenid court a strong supporter of this faith. Based on such speculation, Boyce uses the Zoroastrian religion and Avestan content to interpret the archaeological data of the Achaemenid period. From a methodological point of view, this approach raises counter-arguments because it builds a yet to be confirmed hypothesis on the basis of another unproven one.

2. The Avestan word Anāhitā does not correspond with Anaitis nor with the Pahlavi Anāhīd, both of which contain the long vowel ī.[45] Boyce uses Michael Back's solution to address this issue. Back uses the name "*nhyt*" as an example to argue that omitting the terminal vowel ā leads to elongation of the preceding short vowel ī.[46] Back believes that "The time of this modification cannot be exactly determined; it could be carried out *only* in Middle Persian language."[47] Other studies also note this modification as specific to Middle Persian.[48] However, Boyce places a parenthesis in Back's sentence, adding "and probably already in late Old Persian,"[49] thereby extrapolating this argument to the Achaemenid period.

3. The words of Strabo, the Greek geographer (64/63 BCE-ca. 24 CE), contain a point which, as far as I know, has not yet received any attention from researchers. When discussing the relationship of Cyrus' victory over the Scythians in Zela of Pontus with the Anaitis and Sacaea festival, he writes "and erected on it a wall, and established the temple of Anaitis and the gods who share her altar—Omanus and Anadatus, Persian deities; and ... "[50] In this phrase, which is followed by the explicit expression "this is the account which some writers give of the Sacae"[51]—and Strabo may have transcribed it from older historical resources—only Omanus and Anadatus are mentioned as Iranian deities, but not Anaitis. However, when Strabo describes contemporaneous issues and his own observations in Cappadocia, stating "I have seen this myself,"[52] we see that Anadatus is omitted and Anaitis and Omanus have their own separate temples.

4. Anāhīd stands out as an incongruous part of Zoroastrian worship, and in fact very little of the official priestly ritual of later times is directed to her. She sinks into a kind of oblivion in the Pahlavi books.[53] In these books, Ardwīsūr and Anāhīd are separate divinities, with Ardwīsūr as the personification of

the mythical river, and Anāhīd, the fertility goddess, identified with the planet Venus.[54] These texts reveal that the integration of Anāhitā with Zoroastrianism was not realized until the late Sasanid and early Islamic eras.

5. If the Anahiti(a) whom Boyce contemplated is supposed to be an Iranian goddess, it would naturally be expected that her name would have been mentioned on inscriptions in Kommagene, between the Parthian and Roman states, since the religion followed in this small kingdom is a straightforward example of intermingling the Iranian, Hellenistic and local faiths. Antiochus I, the ruler of this small state, boasted his descent from Seleucids and Alexander through his mother, and from Darius the Achaemenid through his father.[55] In the Nimrud Dagh monuments he lists his gods as "Zeus Oromasdes," "Apollo Mithras Helios Hermes," "Artagnes Heracles Ares" and "my motherland all-nurturing Kommagene."[56] As can be seen, an Iranian equivalent has been named for each Greek deity. However, contrary to what we expect, the name of Kommagene, the indigenous goddess of that state, has been mentioned instead of Anāhitā. Anāhitā does not appear in this inscription, or in other inscriptions within the territory of this state. Allusions have been made to Hera in Arsameia on Nympheus, to Artemis on Sofraz, to Argenden in Arsameia on the Euphrates, and to Kobaba on the Ancoz between Arsamia and Samosata.[57]

6. The Babylonian author Berossus (third century BC) writes: "Later, however, after many years, they began to worship statues (*agalmata sebein*). This practice was introduced by Artaxerxes, son of Darius Ochos. He was the first to have a statue of Aphrodite Anaïtis erected in Babylon, Susa and Ecbatana, and to order the Persians, the Bactrians, Damascus and Sardis to worship (*sebein*)."[58] Despite carelessness in many documents regarding translating and interpreting this passage, Berossus makes an explicit distinction between two groups of towns: group 1 (Babylon, Susa and Ecbatana) received the order to erect the Aphrodite-Anaitis' statues; group 2 (Persia, Bactria, Damascus and Sardis) received the order to worship this goddess.[59] If the Aphrodite-Anaitis mentioned by Berossus is supposed to be identical to the Anāhitā on inscriptions of Artaxerxes II,[60] if the Anāhitā on Artaxerxes II inscriptions is to be assumed an Iranian goddess, and if the order to perform rituals addressed the Iranians residing in satrapies,[61] then the abovementioned distinction leads to the unavoidable question: why is it necessary for Iranian Bactrians, Persians and Medes (Ecbatana) to be ordered to perform rituals for an Iranian goddess by a Persian (Iranian) king? While various documents attest to the religious toleration of Achaemenid rulers, is it likely that Artaxerxes II imposed reverence to an Iranian deity on the nations under the rule of Achaemenids (Babylon, Damascus, Sardis)? Why has no temple or statue of Anāhitā been found in any of the Achaemenid sites in Susa, Pasargadae and Persepolis? Why is not even a single allusion to the name of Anāhitā found among several thousands of published tablets at Persepolis—in the heart of Persia—while they bear the names of numerous other deities, great and small?

7. Actually, Anāhitā has no meaningful position in any of the Iranian (or Zoroastrian) calendars. In the calendar of western Iranians residing in Cappadocia, the eighth month has not been named after Anāhitā, but is named for Apomenapa.[62]

Based on the seven objections explained above, defining Anāhitā as an Iranian goddess is subject to serious doubts. Thus, the documents need to be re-investigated, from a different perspective.[63]

Anāhitā, a Mesopotamian Goddess

The above questions would naturally persuade the researcher to think of Mesopotamia, particularly the Semitic culture, because Iranian sources provide no documented answer to those problems. The proximity of Mesopotamia to the Iranian plateau and the Mesopotamian heritage of the Achaemenid culture is a well-established fact that deserves no particular mention here.

The most important Iranian documents regarding Anāhitā are the three inscriptions of the Artaxerxes II period (404-359 BC). After presenting the king's pedigree, all the three inscriptions allude to construction or reconstruction of some palace by him. This is followed by prayers addressing Ahuramazda, Mithra and Anāhitā to preserve the king and his achievements from any evil.[64] Unfortunately, these small pieces of information are not helpful in understanding the origin and character of Anāhitā. How so?

Herodotus—the oldest and the best-known source available—says: "Persians have learnt to sacrifice to Aphrodite Urania, having learnt it both from the Assyrians and the Arabians."[65] Strabo says that, after the victory over the Scythians, Cyrus' troopers "instituted an annual sacred festival, the Sacaea, which the inhabitants of Zela continue to celebrate to the present day."[66] According to the more credible information provided by Berossus, it was a Babylonian feast celebrated every year at the end of August/beginning of September.[67] Aelian's description that "in Elymais there is a sanctuary to Anaitis where tame lions roam the grounds"[68] also signifies a goddess with a Semitic character, because texts[69] and art works[70] from the Old Akkadian period (2334-2154 BC) show the lion as the animal of Ishtar *par excellence*. From the Old Babylonian period, the lion was the symbol of Annunitum (in Mari), Nana/Nanaia, Cybele, and of many other goddesses. In Iran, however, not only is this animal not a heavenly being, but, being regarded as a daevic animal and creature of Ahriman, never appears in Zoroastrian scriptures as a symbol of beneficent strength.[71] Furthermore, Zoroastrianism or any Iranian religion was not dominant in Elymais.[72] Elymaeans worshiped Semitic gods of Babylon and Assyria, possibly in combination with traditional Elamite deities.[73]

On the inscriptions in Palmyra, within a large collection of Semitic gods and other deities with different origins, a few allusions to the goddess *'nhyt* (Anāhitā, Anahit) can be observed. Of interest in this context is the Aramaic inscription engraved on a column drum: "In the month Elul of the year 293 (=September, 18 BC),

Belshuri son of Mogaimu who belongs to the Bani Zimra has offered this column to ṣbs and 'nhyt."[74] In addition to the Semitic etyma of the proper names Belshuri, Mogaimu and Bani Zimra, what attracts even more attention is that Anāhitā has formed a divine couple with Sebazius,[75] the Thraco-Phrygian deity equivalent to both Dionysus and Zeus.[76] This divine couple recalls the words of Herodotus and Origen about Arabs. Herodotus says: "Arabs believe in Dionysos and Urania alone."[77] Origen says: "Arabs' divinities are Dionysos and Urania."[78] Such divine couples were promulgated in many parts of the ancient Near East under various names. In Iranian traditions, especially in the Achaemenid pantheon, there is no trace of such a divine couple, but one finds their roots in Sumerian rituals related to the couple Dumuzi/Tammuz-Innana/Ishtar in the third millennium BC. In the Second Book of Maccabees we read that Antiochus IV Epiphanes entered the temple of Nanaya in Persia, i.e. in Susa, in the month of Kislev (IX) in the year 164.[79] It was his intention to acquire the considerable treasures of that temple by "marrying" the goddess and taking them as "dowry," but he was killed in the temple in an ambush laid by its priests. According to the report of Granius Licinianus, he had married the Syrian goddess Atargatis at Hierapolis-Bambyke with the same intention and better success.[80] These reports imply a Sumerian-Semitic tradition, rather than an Iranian one, because there is no Iranian text—Avesta, Achaemenid inscriptions, Sasanian inscriptions—recording anything comparable to the Mesopotamian literary tradition of hymns and prayers focused on the encounter (and not necessarily "intercourse") between the goddess and the king; and we can affirm the same for the Middle Persian literature of the Pahlavi texts—of late composition (ninth century AD) even if dating back to a more ancient period of conception.[81]

The Ābān Yašt constantly mentions the name of Anāhitā with the title "Maiden."

In Armenia[82] and in the Sasanian king Narseh's inscription (293-302 AD) at Paikuli, in Iraqi Kurdistan,[83] as well as in some other texts,[84] Anāhitā has gained the cult title of "the Lady." "Lady" is a characteristic Mesopotamian invocation of Ishtar and no Avestan equivalent is used in any Zoroastrian *yazata*.[85]

As a water-divinity, Anāhitā is worshiped as a bestower of fertility, who purifies the seed of all males, the wombs of all females, and makes the milk flow which nourishes their young.[86] She nurtures crops and herds; and she is hailed both as a divinity and as the mythical river which she personifies, "as great in bigness as all these waters which flow forth upon the earth."[87] She is also held to bestow upon her worshipers possessions such as chariots, weapons and household goods,[88] as well as victory in battle and the destruction of foes.[89] Anāhitā riding on a chariot with frenum in hand[90] denotes her warlike personality. In various sections of Ābān Yašt, many heroes resort to Anāhitā and make sacrifices to her, to help them triumph in wars. In addition, Sasanid kings sent the heads of their vanquished enemies to the Anāhitā fire temple in Estakhr.[91] Furthermore, the inscription of Narseh (293-302 AD) at Paikuli, mentions "Anāhīd, the Lady" in conditions of war. In the Pahlavi books Anāhīd, the fertility goddess, is identified with the planet Venus. In the *Greater Bundahišn*, in a paragraph concerned with the stars and planets (5.4), there is mention of "Anāhīd ī Abāxtarī," i.e. the planet Venus. But, as Boyce has correctly

questioned, "Why should a river goddess bestow victory in battle? And how is it that in Middle Persian her name was used for Venus, and that, as Nāhīd, it is so used in Persian today?"[92]

We continue our discussion by investigating the best-known goddess of war in the Near East, i.e. the Babylonian Ishtar.[93]

Ishtar—the Akkadian name of the Sumerian Innana—was the major Mesopotamian goddess of love, war and the planet Venus.[94] It is generally agreed that the names Aštar and Ištar can be traced back to a Semitic ʿAštar; a masculine god with the name ʿAṯtar appears in Ugarit and southern Arabia. Its grammatically feminine form was ʿAṯtart or ʿAštart.[95] Both deities were probably divine manifestations of Venus, as morning and evening star.[96] In the course of time, "Ishtar" became the generic name for "goddess" and "Iištarātu," a plural form of her name, for "goddesses."[97] In her visual representations, Ishtar is equipped with bow and arrows, and such titles as *Aštar-mu-ut* (Ishtar is my warrior) and *Aštar-qarrād* (Ishtar is a Warrior) are observed among the most archaic names from the Old Akkadian era.[98] Ishtar is "Flaming-Fire-of-Battle."[99] She is the lady of battle who smashes the bows of the enemies of Assyrian kings.[100]

In the course of second and first millennia BC, worship of this goddess became widespread throughout ancient western Asia, merging with local goddesses in each region. In Elam, this integration took place during the Akkadian and Ur III periods when the area was under the influence of Mesopotamia.[101] The list of Assyrian gods revered in the reign of Ashurbanipal considers the Elamite Pinikir as identical with Ishtar.[102] A fragmentary basalt stele of Nabonidus (556–539 BC), the last king of the Neo-Babylonian dynasty, mentions (col. III 43) "the Ishtar, the lady of Elam, the princess who dwells in Susa."[103]

This goddess was also widely revered in Media. One of the best-known images of Ishtar is the famous rock relief of Anubanini in Sarpel Zahāw (Sarpoli-Zahāb), the area that was part of Lullubum and later in first millennium BC became a part of Media, among the four reliefs of early second millennium BC. One southwestern Median area, maybe Ravānsar in Kermāshān (Kermānshāh) province, was called "Bīt-Ištar" by the Assyrians.[104]

The astral aspect of Anāhitā originated from Innana/Ishtar, and many of her other features are also taken from Ishtar. Nevertheless, contrary to Gnoli's opinion,[105] Anāhitā could not be considered exactly the same as Ishtar, because such an analogy would not explain where the name "Anāhitā" on the inscriptions of Artaxerxes II came from.

More importantly, this approach does not take into consideration the great changes and reorganization Mesopotamian theology underwent during the time of the Achaemenids, being fundamentally inconsistent with them.

From various standpoints, the first millennium BC is known as an age of antiquarianism (the study and revival of the past) in Mesopotamia.[106] One expression of such antiquarianism is survival of the divine couples and rituals pertinent to their sacred marriage. Originating from the Sumerian rites of Inanna and Dumuzi, of the third

millennium BC, these rituals reappeared throughout Mesopotamia from the eighth to the second century BC, after almost a thousand years.[107]

In the middle of the first millennium BC, there was another revolution in southern Mesopotamia which was both a sign and an outcome of the abovementioned antiquarianism: An, the divinity of heaven in the Sumerian religion, appears to have had no consort. By analogy the Semites devised a name for a consort for Anu by adding the Semitic feminine ending to the Sumerian name An, producing Antu.[108] During the Old Babylonian period Inanna/Ishtar became identified with Antu, the spouse of Anu, and occupied the place of Antu in the temple Eanna as Anu's spouse. She thus became the chief goddess of Uruk, and "Mistress of Eanna." During the latter part of the second millennium BC, this was enshrined in the bilingual composition "the Exaltation of Ishtar."[109]

Important in our argument is that during the century elapsing between the ascent of Darius I to the throne and that of Darius II (521-424 BC), local religious leaders reorganizing the pantheon of Uruk reestablished Anu and his consort Antu in the pre-eminent position and demoted Ishtar to a secondary position.[110] In this new position, Antu, being syncretized with Ishtar, became the major goddess of Uruk, and "Mistress of Eanna," and absorbed the attributes of Ishtar including warlike and astral aspects, and other goddesses became her names and epithets.[111]

What makes the above explications important is that the exaltation of Anāhitā's position and mention of her name alongside that of Ahuramazda in the inscriptions of Artaxerxes II are contemporaneous with the demoting of Ishtar to a secondary position and Antu's exaltation and mention of her name alongside that of Anu in the Uruk inscriptions. There is some evidence that this coincidence could be interpreted as an influence of Uruk and Mesopotamia on Persia.

Among the proto-cuneiform texts from various cities at the turn of the fourth millennium, there is a distinctive group of tablets each of which bears a seal on which the names of several cities are recorded and each of which concludes with lines tallying offerings sent to Inanna in Uruk. What this evidence seems to indicate is that, in the earliest period, there existed a pan-Mesopotamian religious league centered on Uruk and its chief deity, Inanna.[112]

The aforementioned divine couple *'nhyt-ṣbs* in Palmyra, the hierogamy of Antiochus IV Epiphanes with Atargatis at Hierapolis-Bambyke and his abortive measure for marriage with Nannaya in Susa,[113] and various divine couples in different cities of Mesopotamia and the Middle East[114] indicate that the antiquarianism and revival was been confined to Uruk or even Mesopotamian cities, but had also permeated Syria and western Iran in Elymais. This suggests that Uruk might have retained its pan-Mesopotamian religion until the first millennium BCE, exerting its effect on vast regions within the Middle East.

On the other hand, from 539 BCE until the Sasanid downfall (651 CE), Mesopotamia had almost always been a province of Iranian empires, with Babylon its most prosperous and most celebrated city, frequently being the capital. These relations were strengthened in the Achaemenid era when Artaxerxes I (465-423 BCE) married Babylonian women, thereby rendering the Achaemenid court half-Persian,

half-Babylonian. Artaxerxes II was born in such a court, with his both patrilineal and matrilineal grandmothers being Babylonian.

Despite Artaxerxes II (404-359 BCE) ruling longer than any other Achaemenid king, documentation of the events of his reign is minimal, other than the battle in Cunaxa (401 BCE) with his brother, Cyrus the Younger, over succession. This relative lack of documents regarding the four decades of Artaxerxes' dominion may indicate that the most important event during his reign was indeed this battle for succession. On the basis of the critical importance of the battle of Cunaxa in the life and political destiny of Artaxerxes II, as well as Plutarch's report of his crowning in the temple of a "warlike goddess,"[115] one can, in accord with Gnoli and Boyce,[116] interpret Anāhitā's appearance on Artaxerxes's inscriptions and the relevant Berossus passage,[117] in the context of Artaxerxes' contention with and triumph over Cyrus. In the following, I will attempt to clarify this relationship.

Based on numerous available documents, we already know that respect for the gods and the religious traditions of the empire's subject nations was, in general, Achaemenid policy.[118] We also know that to achieve victory in battle the Achaemenid kings sacrificed to the gods—especially the war god—revered in the particular region in which the war was to occur. This was performed before the start of battle, and, if victorious, they expressed their gratitude to the same god(s). The following accounts demonstrate this practice.

Herodotus: "Before departure for battle, Xerxes sacrificed a thousand heifers in Pergamon to Athena of Ilion and the magicians poured libations in honor of the heroes therein."[119] Xenophon:

> In such conversation Cyrus and Cambyses arrived at the Persian frontier. And when an eagle appeared upon their right and flew on ahead of them, they prayed to the gods and heroes who watch over the land of Persia to conduct them on with grace and favour, and then proceeded to cross the frontier. And when they had crossed, they prayed again to the tutelary gods of the Median land to receive them with grace and favour.[120]

On the statue of Udjahorresnet, who was the Egyptian commander of Cambyses and Darius' navy, one reads that Cambyses went in person to Sais, prostrated himself before the goddess Neith, and presented his offerings, "as any beneficent king would do."[121] The same document tells that Darius continued the work of Cambyses, who had manifested a pronounced piety toward the goddess Neith, and restored the entire sanctuary of Neith[122] at Sais.[123] On the east wall of the hypostyle hall B at the temple of Hibis (El Khārga), paintings are seen depicting Darius amongst Egyptian gods and goddesses, with inscriptions on the paintings which describe the scenes. The inscriptions tell Darius: "Words spoken by the great Neith, the divine mother, lady of Sais who presides at Hibis," and "Take, O youth, her nipples with your mouth; she is the powerful one who heads Sais." The same scene is repeated in room L of the sanctuary: "Words spoken by the great Neith, lady of Sais: 'I suckle

your body with [my] milk, in such a way that you gather the Double Land with all the subject peoples to your breast, O my son!'."[124]

With such evidence, if we accept the existence of a convention according to which the Achaemenid rulers performed thanksgiving to the god(s) worshiped in the region where they had overcome their enemies, then we would need to identify the exact place of the battle of Cunaxa and determine the war deity there.

The site of Cunaxa traditionally has been identified with Tell ʿAqar Konaysa (Kanīsa, Konayša), about 57 miles north of Babylon on the left bank of the Euphrates; Mufraz, northwest of Sippar; or Falluja. Richard Barnett, however, made strong arguments for locating it at Nasiffīyāt (< [*Kū]neise-safyat[ib]), about 50 miles north of Babylon and on the right bank of the ancient course of the Euphrates, between Sippar and Durkurigalzu.[125] Thus Cunaxa is placed 11 miles north of Sippar-Jahurum (Tell Abuhabah), approximately 7-8 miles north of Sippar-Amnanum (Tell ed-Der). Tell ed-Der is the location of temple É-ulmash, the major cultic center of the goddess Annunitum.[126] Annunitum is the one goddess blessed with all Ishtar's characteristics, many of which have transferred to Anāhitā (e.g. warlike, astral[127]). She is also consistent with alterations which occurred during the Achaemenid period in the theology of Uruk, and consequently throughout Mesopotamia. In the cuneiform sources, Annunitum was originally an epithet used to emphasize Ishtar's warlike aspect.[128] The name ᵈINANNA-*annunitum*, which is well attested since the times of Narām-Sîn (ca. 2254-2218 BC), means "Ishtar, the skirmisher."[129] On an inscription, Narām-Sîn introduces himself as *Narām-Sîn mu-ut* ᵈ*Ištar An-nu-ni-um*, meaning "Narām-Sîn, warrior of the martial Ishtar."[130] In the hymn to Ishtar she is "anūnītum of battle."[131] Westenholz correctly points out that the warlike aspect of Ishtar is not attested until the reign of Sargon of Akkad (c. 2334–2279 BC), and that this feature is explicitly connected with the appearance of Ištar-*annunitum* in Akkadian inscriptions.[132] This implies that INANNA/Ishtar became a goddess of war just when she was entitled *annunitum* in the inscriptions. After the Akkadians, this goddess, as an avatar of Ishtar, became an independent deity.[133] During the Old Babylonian period she was the major goddess of Mari where she periodically moved among three shrines.[134] Temples to this goddess were located in Sippar, Nipur, Uruk and Ur.[135] Shar-kali-sharri (2217-2193 BC), the Akkadian king, built a temple to this goddess and the god Il-Aba in Babylon.[136] Her name has been mentioned as *an-nu-ni-tu*ᵐ on the Code of Hammurabi in Sippar,[137] as ᵈ*A-nu-ni-te* in the battle report of Tiglath-Pileser I (1114–1076 BC) when alluding to Sippar,[138] and as *an-nu-ni-tu* on the cylinder of Babylonian Nabonidus (556-539 BC) found in Sippar.[139] In summary, reverence of Annunitum was prevalent in Mesopotamia from the third millennium BC until the beginning of the Hellenistic era.[140]

Annunitum was also a famous name in Elam. In his last years, Atta-hušu, the Elamite king, built a temple to Annunitum, who was the counterpart of the Elamite Narundi.[141] During the Old Elamite period, there existed an expansive temple field in Susa which belonged to Annunitum, and which the priests rented on her behalf.[142]

When the local theologians of Uruk reorganized the pantheon of the city during the Achaemenid period, reinstating Anu and Antu as sole patron gods of the city and demoting Ishtar to a secondary position, Antu, being syncretized with Ishtar, was named "Ninsianna," meaning "illuminator of heaven." Ninsianna was the Sumerian deity of the planet Venus, venerated as the morning and evening star. Originally female, she sometimes appears as male in later texts under the influence of Semitic theology in which Venus deities were usually male.[143] Ninsianna was the astral manifestation of Inanna/Ishtar as the planet Venus. The idea of Ninsianna as illuminator of heaven is expressed as early as the Old Babylonian period, as the *kalamāḫu* of Annunitum in Sippar-Amnanum.[144]

The result of the syncretism between Antu and Ishtar in the late Achaemenid period was that Annunitum, who until then was an avatar of Ishtar, became the avatar of Antu, with her name becoming "another name for the goddess Antu, especially in Sippar."[145]

Conclusion

What is proposed here is mainly based on historical and mythological analyses. Linguistic analysis does not yield plausible evidence, except for the superficial similarity among the names Antu, Annunit(um) and Anāhitā. This demands further linguistic analysis.

The major Mesopotamian goddess of love, war and planet Venus is known primarily by the Sumerian name Inanna and the Akkadian name Ishtar. Starting in the late third millennium, with the reign of the Akkadian Narām-Sîn, Ishtar/Inanna was called/known as "Annunitum" to emphasize her warlike aspect. After the Akkadians' downfall, Annunitum, who was an avatar for Ishtar, gradually became an independent goddess. Probably from the time of Darius I, the Achaemenids adopted Ishtar's cult perhaps for political reasons. According to the Uruk documents, dating to the later part of the dynasty (i.e. Darius II and the three Artaxerxes), Antu occupied Ishtar's position and so was syncretized with Ishtar. Consequently, Annunitum, also the avatar of Antu, with her name became one of Antu's names or epithets, specifically in Sippar. The vital event in the political life of Artaxerxes II—his conflict with his brother, Cyrus the Younger—took place in September 401 BCE in Cunaxa, 7-8 miles north of Sippar-Amnanum, and was thus within the territory of the religious authority of the goddess Annunit(um). In praise of the deity he held responsible for his triumph in the battle of Cunaxa, Artaxerxes II, like his predecessors who worshiped the local divinity of whichever territory they had achieved victory over, added Annunit/Annunitum, Sippar-Amnamum's goddess of war and victory and the avatar of Antu, to the list of deities that supported his rule. Thus, he added the name of Annunit/Annunitum as Anāhitā, as well as the names of Ahuramazda and Mithra.

Based on the surviving Iranian texts, this new member of the Iranian pantheon was dealt with in three ways from the Achaemenid until the early Islamic period: (1) epigraphs mention only "Anāhitā"; (2) Pahlavi books allude to "Anāhīd" and "Ardwīsūr"

as two separate goddesses; and (3) Avesta mentions "Arədvī Sūrā Anāhitā" as an individual goddess.

This plurality can be explained as followed: Antu/Annunit(um), the Mesopotamian goddess of warfare and the planet Venus, was introduced to the Iranian pantheon as Anāhitā. Consequently, authors of the younger Avesta tried to create a goddess consistent with Zoroastrian beliefs by unifying her with Arədvī Sūrā, the Iranian river goddess. However, according to the documents from the Sasanian and early Islamic periods, this union was either unsuccessful, or it might have been confined to a specific time interval or a particular group of people.

Notes

1. This paper does not accommodate the details of Iranians' inhabitation of the Iran plateau. The question of Iranians' immigration is elaborated in Yarshater, "Iranian national history"; Gnoli, *The Idea of Iran*; Kuz'mina, *The Origin of the Indo-Iranians*; Lamberg-Karlovsky, "Archaeology and Language".
2. See Gnoli, *The Idea of Iran* and *"Iranian Identity"*.
3. Rawlinson, "Persian Cuneiform Inscription," 96; Rapp, *Religion und Sitte der Perser*, 61-3; Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism*, 238ff.; Benveniste, *Persian Religion*, 39.
4. Boyce, "The Lady and the Scribe", 279.
5. Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 5, XXVII, 5-6.
6. Kellens, "Questions préalables", 86.
7. Kent, *Old Persian*, 154-5.
8. Reiner, "The Elamite Language", 113.
9. Tavernier, "Iranians in Neo-Elamite Texts", 219.
10. Lommel, "Anahita-Sarasvati", 411; Bartholomae, *AltiranischesWorterbuch*, 194-5; Boyce *et al.*, "ANĀHĪD", 1003; and Malandra, *Introduction to Ancient Iranian Religion*, 117.
11. Weller, *Anahita, Grundlegendes*, 73-4.
12. Kellens, "Le problème", 322.
13. Lommel, "Anahita-Sarasvati", 411; Boyce, *History of Zoroastrianism, II*, 202; Boyce *et al.*, "ANĀHĪD", 1003; Malandra, *Introduction to Ancient Iranian Religion*, 117; and Kellens, "Le problème", 322.
14. Lommel, "Anahita-Sarasvati", 411; Bartholomae, *AltiranischesWorterbuch*, 195-6; Boyce, *History of Zoroastrianism, II*, 202; Boyce *et al.*, "ANĀHĪD", 1003; and Malandra, *Introduction to Ancient Iranian Religion*, 117.
15. Kellens, "Le problème", 322-3.
16. Bartholomae, *AltiranischesWorterbuch*, 125; Boyce *et al.*, "ANĀHĪD", 1003.
17. Kerr, "An-āhītəm", 73-4.
18. Some scholars have considered all the three components, Arədvī, Sūrā and Anāhitā, as adjectives (Pourdāvoud, *Yashthā*, 164; Skjærvø, "Persia and the Bible", 502), some as epithet (Kellens, "Le problème", 324). According to Wolf and Bartholome, "Arədvī" is a noun and the other two parts are adjectives (Lommel, "Anahita-Sarasvati", 411).
19. Lommel, "Anahita-Sarasvati", 411.
20. Dumezil, *Tarpeia: cinq essais*; Lommel, "Anahita-Sarasvati"; Duchesne-Guillemin, *La religion de l'Iran ancient*, 1962. Translated into Persian as *Dīn-e Irān-e Bāstān*, 236.
21. Witzel, "Sur le chemin du ciel", 226.
22. Lommel says that the Harahvatī's lack of mythicization is due to missing documents, but this view also raises some objections. See Boyce, "The Lady and the Scribe".
23. Pirart, "Avestique hīm", 156-9.
24. See Kellens, "Le problème", 322.

25. Saadi-nejad, "Iranian Goddesses", 62.
26. See Witzel, "Sur le chemin du ciel", 52.
27. See Yt.5.7 in Skjærvø, *Introduction to Zoroastrianism*, 71.
28. See Yt.5.127 in: ibid, 81.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid., 79.
31. Schwartz, "Religion of Achaemenian Iran", 671.
32. Gershevitch, *The Avestan Hymn to Mithra*, 18-25.
33. As truly expressed by Mary Boyce. In this case, citing evidence from her Avestan hymn does not help because this text, like other Younger Avestan texts, is plainly a composite work that has grown during centuries of oral transmission (see Boyce, "The Lady and the Scribe", 279).
34. During the fourth and fifth centuries, a few allusions to Anāhitā were made in Sogdian personal names and on coins of this region, because of borrowing from Sasanian Iran (Boyce and Grenet, *History of Zoroastrianism, III*, 187-8).
35. Duchesne-Guillemin, *La religion de l'Iran ancient*, 305.
36. Ibid., 306.
37. MacDowall, "The Role of Mitra", 146-9.
38. Meyer, "Anaitis"; Nyberg, *Die Religionen des Alten Iran*, 260f.
39. Hoffmann, *Auszuge aus syrischen*, 155.
40. There were numerous shrines in Armenia to Anahit, but the temple of Nanē at Til (Agathangelus, *History of the Armenians*, 786) is the only center of the cult of this goddess (Russell, *Zoroastrianism in Armenia*, 241). In addition, in Armenia Aramazd is the "father of all" (Agathangelos, *History of the Armenians*, 785), Anahit is called his progeny, Mihr is his son and Nanē is his daughter (ibid., 53, 790, 786).
41. On Aramaic epigraphs, Anāhitā or Anahit (*'nhyt*) is distinguished from NANAI (*nny*). See *Dijkstra, Life and Loyalty*, 91-2.
42. See Boyce, *History of Zoroastrianism, II*, 245-6.
43. No list of these occurs in the Avesta, but the names are known from the Pahlavi books, from the various regional Zoroastrian calendars of the Sasanian period, and from living usage.
44. Boyce, *History of Zoroastrianism, II*, 29, 201-4; and "The Lady and the Scribe", 282.
45. Benveniste, *Persian Religion*, 63.
46. Back, *Die sassanidischen Staatsinschriften*, 70.
47. Ibid. (my emphasis). Back's sentence is this: "Pleneschreibung [<y>] weist auf eine sekundäre Dehnung eines altir[anischen]. kurzen /ĭ/ hin, wobei aber der Zeitpunkt nicht feststellbar ist; es könnte sich durchaus auch um einen **erst** (emphasis mine) in mittelpersischer Zeit erfolgten Vorgang handeln".
48. See Korn, "Lengthening of *i* and *u* in Persian".
49. Boyce, "The Lady and the Scribe", 281.
50. Strabo, *Geography*, XI, 8, 4-5: "εἰς βουνοειδὲς σχῆα ἐπέθηκαν τεῖχος καὶ τὸ τῆς Ἀναΐτιδος καὶ τῶν συμβώμων θεῶν ἱερὸν ἱδρύσντο, Ὠμανοῦ καὶ Ἀναδάτου, Περσικῶν δαιμόνων, ἀπέδειξάν τεπανήγυριν κατ' ἔτος ἱεράν".
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid., XV, 3, 15.
53. Shaked, *Dualism in Transformation*, 97.
54. Boyce, "The Lady and the Scribe", 278; Boyce *et al.*, "ANĀHĪD"; and Goviri, "Anāhitā", 1038. The phrase "*ardwīsur ī anāhīt, pi dud mād ī ābān*" in *Bundahishn* has been translated by Anklesaria as "Aredvi-sur *and* Anahit, father and mother of waters" (Anklesaria, *Zand-Ākāsīh*, III, 17; my emphasis). However, in an attempt to make the data consistent with her hypothesis, Boyce has omitted the relative particle "and" from between *ardwīsur* and *anāhīt*, to translated it as "Ardvīsūr Anāhīt, the father and mother of waters", counter to Pahlavi grammar, as Boyce herself also confessed. See Boyce, "The Lady and the Scribe", 278.
55. Benveniste, *Persian Religion*, 59.

56. Beck, *Religion of the Mithras*, 230.

57. Duchesne-Guillemin, "Iran and Greece in Commagene", 191f.

58. FGrH 680 F11: *ap.* Clemens Alexandrinus *Protrepticus* 5.65.4. Quoted by Briant, *Histoire de l'empire perse*, 695.

59. See Briant, *Histoire de l'empire perse*, 696.

60. Maria Brosius suspects that Aphrodite-Anaitis is identical to the Anāhitā on inscriptions of Artaxerxes II, "since Berossus, does not actually name Anāhitā, but refers to the Greek goddess Aphrodite, with whom Anāhitā may or may not have been identified in the Hellenistic period" (Brosius, *The Persians*, 66).

61. E. Kuhrt and P. Briant believe that Artaxerxes was addressing his decree to the Persians who had settled in the various provinces of the empire. See Briant, *Histoire de l'empire perse*, 698; and Kuhrt, "Problem of Achaemenid 'Religious Policy'", 124.

62. See Boyce and Grenet, *History of Zoroastrianism, III*, 279-80.

63. Evidence which has, to a large extent, led researchers to speculate about the Iranian origin of Anāhitā mostly belongs to recent periods, and has inconsistently been obtained, not within Iranian lands but from Asia Minor, and concern this territory. A fourth/third century BC funerary inscription of unknown origin (maybe Hypaepa) from Asia Minor has "Artemis the Medan and the Ephesian and all the gods" (Oikonomides, "Artemis Medeia"; Sherwin-White, "Median' Artemis"). Another from Cappadocia gives Anaitis the Iranian appellative *Barzokhara* (Αναειτιδι βαρ-ζοχαρα) (Harper, "Dedication to the Goddess Anaitis"). Plutarch has mentioned cows devoted to Persian Artemis in Sophone by the Euphrates in Armenia (*Lucullus*, XXIV. 6); Pausanias has pointed to the temple of Persian Artemis in Lydia (*Description of Greece*, 3, XVI.8); and Tacitus has mentioned the Persian Diana temple in Hierocaesaria in western Lydia (*Annals*, 3.62). In addition, there are numerous votive epigraphs available in many Lydian cities, including Hierocaesaria, Philadelphia, Hypaepa and particularly Maeonia, in which allusions to Anaitis has been made under titles such as Anaitis, Thea Anaitis, Artemis Anaitis, Aphrodite Anaitis, Meter Anaitis and Megale Anaitis (Boyce and Grenet, *History of Zoroastrianism, III*, 242-3). The civic coins belonging to the Roman Empire found in this area could also be added to the evidence.In another paper, which I hope will be soon accessible for scholars, I discuss these documents in detail and argue that they do not provide a rationale for the Iranian root of Anāhitā. Professor Brosius ("Artemis Persika") argues that the cult of Artemis Persike does not imply a Hellenization of Anāhitā but rather a Persianization of the cult of Artemis. Sympathizing with this view, I think that the term "Persian" should be reinterpreted.

64. Lecoq, *inscriptions de la Perse*, 269, 273-4.

65. Herodotus, *Histories*, I, 131.

66. Strabo, *Geography*, XI, 8, 4.

67. Athenaeus XIV639c.

68. Aelian, *De Natura Animalium*, XII, 23.

69. Selz, "Five Divine Ladies", 32.

70. Cornelius, "Iconography of Ishtar", 23, fig. 4.

71. Boyce, *History of Zoroastrianism, II*, 106; Zaehner, *Zurvan. A Zoroastrian Dilemma*, ix.

72. For detailed discussion see Boyce and Grenet, *History of Zoroastrianism, III*, 35-48.

73. See Hansman, "The Great Gods of Elymais".

74. Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty*, 91.

75. An Aramaic inscription on the drum of a column; It emerged from the debris northwest of the Great Colonnade in the proximity of the theatre.
    byrḥ ʾlwl šnt 200
    93 qrb blšwry
    br mqymw dy mn bny zmrʾ
    ʿmwdʾ dnh l-ṣbs w-ʾnhyt
    ʾlhyʾ ʿl ḥywhy w-ḥyy
    bnwhy w-ʾḥwhy

'In the moth Ilul of the year 293 (= August 19 BC) BêlSuri son of Moqîmû who belongs to the Beni Zimra has offered this column to ṣbs (≈ Sabazius) and Anahit, the gods, for the life of himself and the life of his sons and his brothers.' See Bounni and Teixidore, *Inventaire des inscriptions de Palmyre*, 22; and Dijkstra, *Life and Loyalty*, 91.

76. Kosmetatou, "Cistophori and Cista Mystica", 13.
77. Herodotus, *Histories*, III, 8.
78. Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 294.
79. II Maccabees, 1:13-17.
80. Nissinen, "Akkadian Rituals and Poetry", 103.
81. Piras, "Mesopotamian Sacred Marriage", 249.
82. Boyce *et al*., "ANĀHĪD".
83. Humbach and Skjærvø, *Sassanian Inscription of Paikuli*, 14.
84. For some references see Boyce, "Bibi Shahrbanu and the Lady of Pars", 36 ff.
85. Boyce, *History of Zoroastrianism, II*, 203; Boyce, "The Lady and the Scribe", 280.
86. *Ābān Yašt*, 2.
87. Ibid., 3.
88. Ibid., 130.
89. Ibid., 34ff.
90. Ibid., 11.
91. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa-al-mulūk*, 584.
92. See Boyce, "The Lady and the Scribe", 279.
93. That the concept of Anāhitā/Anaitis owed much to that of Ishtar was first suggested by Gressmann, Archiv f. Religionswlssenschaft XX, 35 ff., 323 ff. This viewpoint is now a generally accepted opinion, despite some debates over the quality and quantity of Ishtar's impacts on Anāhitā/Anaitis.
94. Abusch, "Ishtar", 452.
95. Roberts, *The Earliest Semitic Pantheon*, 39; Abusch, "Ishtar", 452; and Selz, "Five Divine Ladies", 32.
96. See Selz, "Five Divine Ladies", 32.
97. See Abusch, "Ishtar", 452.
98. See Selz, "Five Divine Ladies", 32.
99. *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* (CAD), 7: 229a.
100. Cornelius, "Aspects of the Iconography of Ishtar", 27.
101. Majidzādeh, *Tarīkh va Tamadon-e Ilām*, 52.
102. Ibid., 59.
103. Potts, *The Archaeology of Elam*, 294.
104. Radner, "A Median Sanctuary at Bit-Ištar", 128.
105. See Gnoli, "Politica religiosa e concenzione della regalita" and "Politique religieuse et conception de la royauté".
106. See Beaulieu, "Mesopotamian Antiquarianism".
107. See Nissinen, "Akkadian Rituals and Poetry", particularly 95–109.
108. Langdon, *Tammuz and Ishtar*, 95.
109. Beaulieu, "Theological and Philological Speculations", 203.
110. See Beaulieu, "Antiquarian Theology" and "Theological and Philological Speculations".
111. Beaulieu, "Theological and Philological Speculations", 189, 204.
112. Westenholz, "Inanna and Ishtar", 335.
113. The interesting point in these cases is the role of the king, which brings to mind the crucial role of the Sumerian king in the sacred marriage of Inanna and Dumuzi. See Nissinen, "Akkadian Rituals and Poetry", 103.
114. Nissinen, "Akkadian Rituals and Poetry", 93-136.
115. Plutarch, *Lives XI, Artaxerxes* III. This historian says Artaxerxes II "made an expedition to Pasargadae, that he might receive the royal initiation at the hands of the Persian priests. Here there is a sanctuary of a warlike goddess whom one might conjecture to be Athena" (ibid.). This passage indi-

cates that there has been a traditional rite in obtaining legitimacy in Persis, according to which the Achaemenid kings were crowned in a temple of a warlike goddess. This goddess was Ishtar (Gnoli, "Politique religieuse et conception de la royauté", 134).

116. Gnoli, " Politique religieuse et conception de la royauté ", 126ff.; Boyce, *History of Zoroastrianism, II*, 201-4.
117. See FGrH 680 F11: *ap.* Clemens Alexandrinus, *Protrepticus* 5.65.4. Quoted by Briant, *Histoire de l'empire perse*, 695.
118. In addition to Marduk which was worshiped by Cyrus (as stated on the Cyrus' Cylinder), the tablets in Persepolis mention the Persian gods as well as the name of mountains, rivers, lakes, Elamite and Babylonian gods and other deities with unknown provenance. They also received a ration of viands (meat, wine, flour etc.) for accomplishing the rituals. See Henkelman, *The Other Gods Who Are,* 239-318, 407-56; Boyce, *History of Zoroastrianism, II*, 133-44. Garrison has collected the names mentioned on those tablets. See Garrison "Visual Representation", 23-4.
119. Herodotus, *Histories*, VII. 43.
120. Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, II, I.
121. Briant, *Histoire de l'empire perse*, 69.
122. Neith was a goddess of battle and hunting; her emblem, which also symbolized the city Sais, was two arrows depicted on her shield in Cruciform (Fleming and Lothian, *The Way to Eternity*, 62). Neith was considered identical to Athena from the Achaemenid era. Greek intellectuals such as Herodotus (*Histories*. II 28. 59. 83), Plato (*Timaeus*, 21) and Diodorus Siculus (Book V, 57), who had visited Sais, thought of Neith and Athena as identical. These were not the only men who believed the two goddesses to be identical, but this was a public viewpoint during the Greco-Roman age.
123. Briant, *Histoire de l'empire perse*, 489-90.
124. Ibid., 492.
125. Barnett, "Xenophon and the Wall of Media", 16-17.
126. Harris, *Ancient Sippar*, 11.
127. On astronomical tablets of the first millennium BC, the stars making up Pisces and the central part of Andromeda formed the constellation Annunitu. It was occasionally called Annunitum "lady of heavens" (Rogers, "Origin of the Ancient Constellations II").
128. Selz, "Five Divine Ladies", 29.
129. Jacobsen, "Ancient Mesopotamian Religion", 476, no. 6; Roberts, *Earliest Semitic Pantheon*, 145.
130. Selz, "Five Divine Ladies", 32, 44.
131. Lambert, "Ishtar of Nineveh", 38.
132. Westenholz, "Personal Names in Ebla", 105.
133. Roberts, *The Earliest Semitic Pantheon*, 147.
134. Sasson, "The Posting of Letters", 303.
135. See Roberts, *The Earliest Semitic Pantheon*, 147.
136. Sasson, "King Hammurabi of Babylon", 901.
137. Van Wyk, "agreement New Translation", 335.
138. Harris, *Ancient Sippar*, 14.
139. *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* (*CAD*), 257.
140. Alexander ordered the temple of this goddess in Eridu to be reconstructed (Van der Spek, "Darius III, Alexander", 301, 328). Worship of this goddess in Uruk seems to have continued until Seleucid period (Beaulieu, *The Pantheon of Uruk*, 311).
141. Vallat, "Elamite Religion".
142. Scheil, V. *Actes juridiques susiens, Mémoires de la Délégation en Perse* 22, Paris, 1930, no. 101. Quoted by Majidzādeh, *Tarīkh va Tamadon-e Ilām*, 55.
143. Heimpel, "Catalog of Near Eastern Venus".
144. Beaulieu, "Theological and Philological Speculations", 201.
145. Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia*, 317.

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