

## FAROHAR OR KHVARENAH ON THE WINGED FIGURE?

**Dr. Kersey Antia 84, July 7, 2019; updated Sep 29, 2019**

The winged figure is so firmly embedded in the Iranian psyche as invariably representing Khvarnah from pre-historic times that the Iranian scholars unquestionably maintain it as such. Thus, Abolala Soudavar asserts that it has “a direct association with the Khvarnah” and supports it with the evidence from the *Karnamag-i Ardashir-i Papakan* and *Shahnameh*. The *Avesta* refers to the linkage of Khvarnah with falcons – when King Jamshid loses his Khvarnah, it turns into a falcon (*Varegna*) and in the *Bahram Yasht* (34-35) Zarathushtra is asked by Ahura Mazda to seek the feathers of a “falcon with spread-out feathers” as they possess much Khvarnah. (*The Aura of Kings*, Mazda Publishers, Costa Mesa, California, 2003, pp. 19-25). Despite of it, however, he maintains that the Achaemenid winged figure represents Ahuramazda bestowing power on the kings. His reasoning for it however has little in common with our thesis. Another Iranian scholar, however, Shapur Shahbazi strongly maintains that the Achaemenid winged figure represents Farnah or Khvarnah.<sup>1</sup> S. Shahbazi identifies the winged figure as Khvarnah. P. Lecoq, however, does not agree with Shahbazi, apparently as any connection of the Achaemenids with Khvarnah will make it easy to identify them as Zoroastrians which may be against his grain.<sup>2</sup> But scholars are increasingly claiming that the Achaemenians were Zoroastrian as already reviewed by me at length.

It is also noteworthy that Iranian Muslim writers, in striking contrast to European scholars, associate Farr or Khwareh with an Iranian monarch's divine legitimacy. As Jan Rypka observes: “The Iranian adapted himself easily to Islam but he moulded this faith according to his own nature. He no longer professed Sunna – on the other hand, Persian scholars had from olden times supported the theology of the Shi'a.” Many scholars have noted already certain similarities between Shi'a and Zoroastrian beliefs as noted and I intend to elaborate them, time permitting. Rypka posits this old-established inclination towards Shi'a” as leading Iran to nationalism and monarchistic legitimacy as expounded in “the ancient Iranian doctrine of FARR, the halo surrounding kings and heroes and endowing them with legitimacy.” Without this it is impossible to rule legally over Iran.

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1 S. Shahbazi, “An Achaemenid Symbol. II. Farnah '(God Given) Fortune' Symbolised,” *Archeologische Mitteilungen aus Iran*, band 13, Berlin, 1980, 181-185.

2 P. Lecoq, “Ahura Mazda ou Xvarnah,” *Orientalia J. Duchesne-Guillemin emerito oblata, Acta Iranica* 23, Leiden, 1984, pp. 301-326.

In this doctrine we also find expression of the conviction that at no time can humanity dispense with a leader. This may perhaps give rise to the impression that Shi'a, although not of Iranian origin, is nevertheless ultimately an expression of Iranian mentality. The concept of Farr or Khwareh is so deeply ingrained in the Iranian psyche from prehistoric times that it is inconceivable that the Achaemenian rulers did not hold it absolutely essential for legitimizing their kingship. Indeed, they did in the best way they knew – with the Near Eastern symbols they had become so familiar with and faithfully providing the quintessential Zoroastrian provenance beneath it with the talons of the Simorg so firmly representing Khwareh.