FIRST EVALUATION OF HAOMA CULTURE IN OLUZ HÖYÜK

OLUZ HÖYÜK'TE HAOMA KÜLTÜRÜNÜN İLK DEĞERLENDİRMESİ

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ABSTRACT

Oluz Höyük had made us distinguish some evidence regarding Anatolian Iron Age archaeology and ancient history that we haven't noticed until today. With detection of Achaemenid (Persian) elements on 2B and 2A Architectural Layers (425-200 BC) which were alien to the local Anatolian culture, a change of excavation strategy had become necessary. As a result of this changes, the evidence uncovered on the work intensified in 2B and 2A Architectural Layers had proved that the Achaemenid culture that characterized the Oluz Höyük Late Iron Age had serious impact on the Anatolian historical process on the basis of religion, military and archaeo-ethnicity. Due to the various ritual ceremony in ancient Persia and the continuation of these celebrations, it is now helpful to review and compare them with each other to clarify some issues. One of the materials used in the Zoroastrianism ritual ceremony is Haoma. In this article, the study of the use of Haoma is based on the archaeological data obtained from Oluz Höyük and its environment.

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ÖZET

Oluz Höyük'ün Anadolu Demir Çağı arkeolojisi ve antik tarihinde bugüne değin rastlanılmamış birtakım bulguları muhafaza etmekte olduğunu farketmemizi sağlamıştır. 2B ve 2A Mimari Tabakaları'nda (MÖ 425-200) yerel Anadolu kültürüne yabancı Akhaimenid (Pers) ögelerinin saptanması ile kazı stratejisinde değişikliğe gidilmiştir. Bu değişiklik sonucu 2B ve 2A Mimari Tabakaları'nda yoğunlaşan çalışmalarında açığa çıkmaya başlayan bulgular, Oluz Höyük Geç Demir Çağı'nı karakterize eden Akhaimenid kültürünün dinsel, askeri ve arkeoetnisite temelinde Anadolu'nun tarihsel sürecine ciddi etkiler yapmış olduğuna işaret etmeye başlamıştır.Antik İran'da ortaya çıkan dini törenler ve bunların sürekliliği ile ilgili olarak bunları birbiri ile karşılaştırmamız ve gözden geçirmemiz önem taşımaktadır. Zerdüşt Dini törenleri için önem taşıyan materyallerden biri de Haoma'dır. Bu makalede Haoma kullanımı, Oluz Höyük ve çevresinden elde edilmiş arkeolojik bulgular ışığında ele alınmış ve incelenmiştir.

INTRODUCTION

Prophet Zarathushtra, or Zoroaster, preached in ancient Persia around 628-551 BC. He preached the monotheistic religion of the One Supreme God, Ahura Mazda ("Wise Lord"). His message is positive, life affirming, and active-principled. He calls for reason and action. His ethic is based on personal responsibility. Zorastrianism stresses conscious decisions to choose the righteous path (Asha). A Zoroastrian is taught to lead an industrious, honest and charitable life. The down grading of the gods of earlier generations and their sub ordination to another force, that of 'Bad Thought', forms part of a system in which everything that exists is aligned either with the camp of good or with that of evil. These two distinct groups are mutually exclusive and diametrically opposed to one another[1]. In the Zoroastrian tradition, prayer and worship of the Almighty God include a special ceremony, as well as various celebrations and various ritual in this religion, in which there are many titles throughout the year. One of the materials used in some Zoroastrian rituals is Haoma.

HAOMA USE IN ANCIENT HEALTH & HEALING

Haoma - Avestan word for the chief of the medicinal plants in Zoroastrian-Aryan healing practice. Soma or Haoma derives from a common proto–Indo-Iranian language that existed before 1000 BC. Soma appears in the Hindu sacred book Rig Veda, and Haoma is used in the Iranian Zoroastrian sacred text called Avesta. As described in both books, Soma/Haoma is a plant, a drink, a God, and an offering to gods. As a plant, its juice is pressed out by a god also named Soma or Haoma to make a drink, which is then offered ritually to all the other gods[2].

The original Soma cannot have been alcoholic, because there would not have been time for the fermentation of the sap after the pressing; moreover, both the Rigveda and the Avesta contrast the effects of Soma-Haoma with the alcoholic súrâ. This plant grows in the mountains[3].

Nowadays ephedra use as known of Haoma ephedra and ephedra, like family of plants. A book of the Zoroastrian scriptures, the Avesta, which contains the liturgy for the preparation of the ab-zohr/Haoma extract, as well as the Gathas or hymns of Zarathushtra. Yasna (verses in Avesta) means service, prayers and dedications, words of worship. In Zoroastrian ritual, Havan is the mortar in which the Haoma stalks are pound[4].

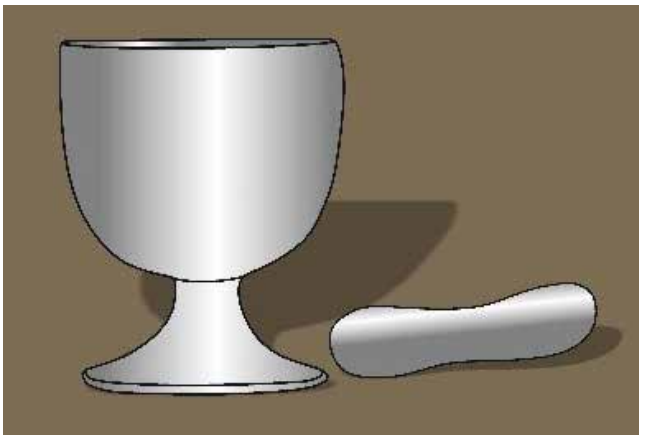


Figure 1: Mortar for Pounding Haoma in Ritual / *Ayinde Haoma Dövmekte Kullanılan Havan*

Haoma being a narcotic - something that is entirely bogus. There is no evidence what so ever of Haoma ever being a narcotic. Haoma used in Zoroastrian rituals is made from a small quantity of natural ephedra and pomegranate stems and the entire Haoma system is intended to promote health and vitality only[5]. The ritualistic practice of mixing and pounding together the ephedra and pomegranate twig and leaf to produce an extract preserves the process of synergistically bringing together the beneficial properties of the plants to promote physical health and healing. The ephedra and pomegranate extract is consumed as a mixture. The plants' extracts are not consumed alone or separately. In addition, bringing together plant life, water and animal milk while reciting a manthra, a prayer, promotes spiritual health as well. The Haoma twigs can be paired with different Barsam twigs to produce blends with specific healing and health giving properties. Zoroaster condemns for its stimulating and hallucinogenic qualities (muthrem ahya madahya) (Yasna 48.10). In the Yasnas it is stated that "Karapans break the rules, established for the herdsman's life" (51.14). "They train people to the evil matters in order to destroy life" (46.11). "With the aid of intoxicating abomination beverage, they intentionally fool people" (48.10).

All this may indicate that during the period of Zoroaster's activity, the hallucinogenic substances were used. As for the Peganum Harmala it could be theoretically used in a later period, however, for Achaemenid period it is unclear and demands additional proofs.

In ancient times, the Haoma twigs were probably part of the Barsam bundle. In Zoroastrian tradition, Haoma is the chief among the medicinal plants that can be pounded

[1] Hintze Zartoshty 2013:20-21.
[2] He 2011: 1.
[3] Jan 1913: 11.
[4] Eduljee 2015: 29.
[5] Sarianidi 2003: 22.

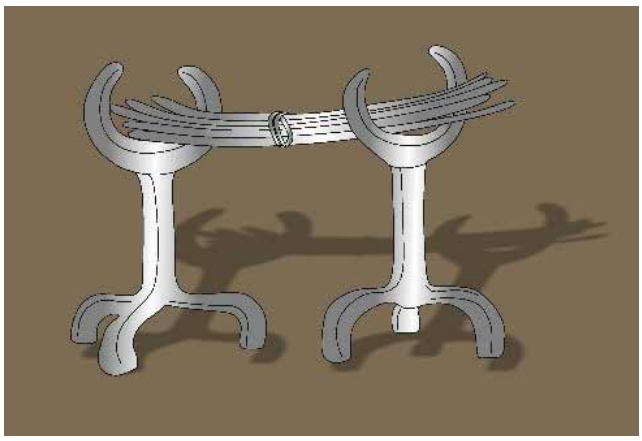


Figure 2: Moon-Shaped Metal Stands for Holding the Barsam (Mah-Ruy) / *Barsam Taşımakta Kullanılan Hilal Biçimli Metal Ayaklar (Mah-Ruy)*



Figure 3: Stone Carving Housed at the Museum for Anatolian Civilizations, Ankara. This Style of Clothing Identifies a Possible Magi Here Depicted Carrying a Barsam Bundle and What may be a Haoma Cup / *Ankara, Anadolu Medeniyetleri Müzesi'nde Bulunan Sunak Üzerindeki Kabartma Giyim Tarzı ile Olasılıkla Bir Magus Olarak Tanımlanan Figür Bir Elinde Barsam Diğer Elinde Haoma Kâsesi Olabilecek Bir Kap ile Betimlenmiş*



Figure 4: Investiture of Sassanid King Ardeshir Ii (379-383 Ce). Rock Relief at Taq-E Bostan Kermanshah, Iran. The Figure in the Center is Commonly Identified as Ardeshir Ii. Identification of the Other Two Figures has Spawned an Industry and We will not Contribute to the Speculation. The Image of the Left Figure Including His Clothing has Become a Model for Zarathustra's Modern Portraits. Our Interest is in the Barsam Bundle Held by This Individual and the Sun-Shine (Khur-Sheed)-Like Emanating from His Head / *Sasni Kralı Ardeshir Ii'nin (379-383) Tahta Çıkışı. Kaya Kabartması, Taq-E Bostan, Kermanşah, İran. Ortada Yer Alan Figür Genelde Ardeshir Ii Olarak Adlandırılır. Diğer İki Figürün Kimlikleri Tartışmalıdır. Soldaki Figür, Giysisi ve Görünümü ile Zerdüşt'ün Modern Tasviri Olarak Algılanır. Bizim Bu Figürde İlgimizi Çeken Bir Elinde Tuttuğu Barsam Demeti ve Başından Çıkan Güneş Haleleridir (Khur-Sheed)*

to extract their juice, the strained juice is then consumed in very small quantities. In addition to being the name of the main medicinal plant, Haoma is also the name given to the family of plant-based medicinal and health promoting extracts made from Haoma and other plants.

Zoroastrian priests, the magi, were renowned physicians and healers. The magi's code of setting aside their personal needs in order to attend to a person in need of medical help, made the magi respected throughout the region. The magi frequently carried the Barsam bundle with them, so much so, that the Barsam became the principle identifying symbol not just of the magi, but of the Zoroastrian faith as well. Carrying a bundle of different twigs like Haoma, the juices of which could be combined in different ways to treat a variety of different aliments, was in some ways the equivalent of carrying a modern-day physician's medicine bag[6].

The original plant has been forgotten as reformation of the religion and the ceremony. It is not in use in ritual after Zarathustra it has been replaced by a plant that does not have as strong intoxicating effects[7]. The original plant has been replaced by a plant that belongs to the family Ephedra and its Latin name is Peganum Harmala. The plant belongs to a family that consists of a half a dozen plants. This particular plant grows in the northern areas of the east Mediterranean to the northern part of India,

[6] Söderlind 1898: 16.

[7] Kotwal 1991: 6.



Figure 5: A Gold Sheet with an Engraved Image of a Man Carrying A Barsam (Perhaps A Magi). Part of the Oxus Treasures British Museum / *Altın Bir Plaka Üzerine Kabartma Tekniğinde Barsam Taşıyan Bir Kişinin (Olasılıkla Magus) Tasviri. Oxus Hazineler, British Müzesi*

Mongolia and Manchuria. Today Haoma worshippers pick the twigs from the plant and let them dry before the ritual.

If the worshippers originally used a fungus as the main ingredient, it has been replaced with a plant both in the teaching of Zarathustra and today's version of Soma. Ephedra is a plant with a sedative effect for the one who consumes it. Ephedra only grows in the mountainous areas of what today is Iran and the bush does not have any leaves. Since it only grows in that area that means



Figure 6 : Peganum Harmala[8].

that the worshippers in all the other parts of the world needs to import the dry twigs in order to be able to use them in their rituals[9].

The question of the relationship between Haoma and ephedra is further complicated as we learn that narcotic plants or substances are not necessarily related to the Haoma and the cultic rites of Zoroastrians and their predecessors. In the ancient world there are known examples of the use of narcotic drugs for medicinal, therapeutic, and ritualistic practices[10].

BACKGROUND OF HAOMA

MITHRA

The God Mithra was Ahura Mazda's greatest competitor, he was a God of the heaven and seems to be connected to the night sky. The stars was his all-seeing eyes and further on he came also came to be associated with the sky of the day and the sun. His name means "covenant" or

[8] flattery, Schwartz, 1989: 38.

[9] Hinnells 1975:127-128.

[10] Abdullaev 2010: 330.

"interpretation" and he represents the regularity by the law or the legal aspects of the rein function. He was the one who held together all the different social classes in society and was the God of social order. Apart from that Mithra was also the god of war and victory, which also makes him God of destiny. The humans imagined that Mithra travelled in a chariot shafts by white horses. The drinking of the Haoma and the sacrifice of a bull was very important in his cult. The Haoma sacrifice in the Mithras cult seems to the largest extent has taken place in the Persian Empire, even if it also is known from other places[11].

THE AVESTA

The Avesta is the holy script that is in use by the followers of Zarathustras today. Today the followers are spread all over the world, the largest group can be found in India, England and Canada. It also exist minority groups in the Caucasus and in the western world, like Sweden. Within the religion Haoma has three meanings; the Haoma ritual and its beverage, the Haoma plant as the base for the beverage and Haoma as a God or a legendary priest[12].

The 72 chapters are recited by the priest during a ceremony called Yasna, when the liquid from the Haoma plant (in the myths the immortality beverage in old Iran) is prepared and drunk by the priest. Among the Yasna texts the most important chapters can be found, the 17 songs (gathas) that is most likely written by Zarathustra. The Haoma anthem can be found in the most important part of the liturgy[13].

Some researchers think that the base in the Haoma could have been hops since Mithra are depicted drinking Haoma surrounded by hop plants. That depiction can be found on a drinking vessel found in Georgia[14]. Haoma and them that can be found in the Avesta. The Avesta is still used today by the followers and worshipers of Zarathustra[15].

EXAMPLES OF USING HAOMA IN ZOROASTRIAN

THE FIRST DRINK AFTER BIRTH

Formerly, a mother in child-birth first drank a few drops of the sacred Haoma juice, which was squeezed and consecrated in a fire-temple. The Persian Farziât-nameh of Dastur Darab Pâhlan says, that a new-born child should be made to drink a few drops of this juice. If the consecrated Haoma-juice may not be had, one may

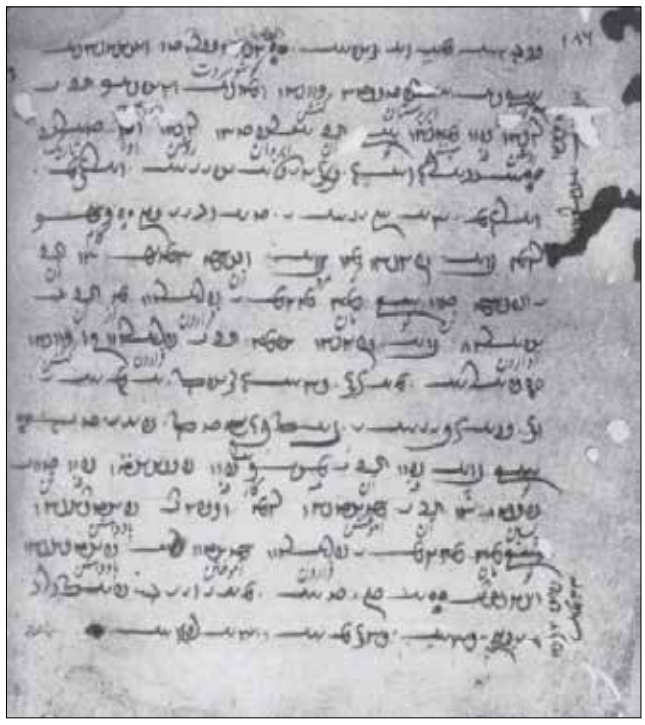


Figure 7: A Page from the Oldest Handwritten Manuscript that Exists to Day of the Avesta. The Text is Rendering Some of the Verses from the Gatha Songs, First in Avestan Script, Then in Middle Persian Translation ind in New Persian Version[16] / *Avesta'nın Günümüze Ulaşabilen En Eski El Yazması Örneğinden Bir Sayfa. Metinde Gatha İlahilerinden Bazı Mısralar, Önce Avesta Metni, Sonra da Orta Farsça ve Yeni Farsça Yer Almaktadır*

pound at home a few Haoma twigs and a few leaves of the pomegranate tree in water with the recital of an Ahunwar and give the juice for the first drink[17].

Communion with a few drops of the sacred Haoma juice. Since the God Haoma still is believed to be an immortal God, the Haoma beverage is given to newborn babies, then it is called white Haoma[18].

BEFORE DEATH

Up to a few years ago, a short time before death, a few drops of the consecrated Haoma juice were poured into the mouth of the dying person. The Haoma plant being an emblem of immortality, its juice is poured to impress an idea that, after all, the soul of a man is immortal. The Haoma plant reminds one of "The Tree of Life" of the Christian scriptures (Genesis, II, 9) in the Garden of Eden. As the Tree of Life is guarded by the Cherubim and the Sidra by 70,000 angels, so the Haoma-i saphid, or the White Haoma, is guarded by 99,999 Fravashis or the guardian spirits. Sometimes, instead of the juice of the Haoma plant, if it was not available at

[11] Seltzer 1987: 122-128.
[12] Jensen 1996: 116-124.
[13] Yasna 9-11.
[14] Gachechiladze Kandelaki, 2004: 67.
[15] Söderlind 1898: 16.
[16] Jensen 1996:116.
[17] Söderlind 1898: 6.
[18] Kotwal 1991: 110.

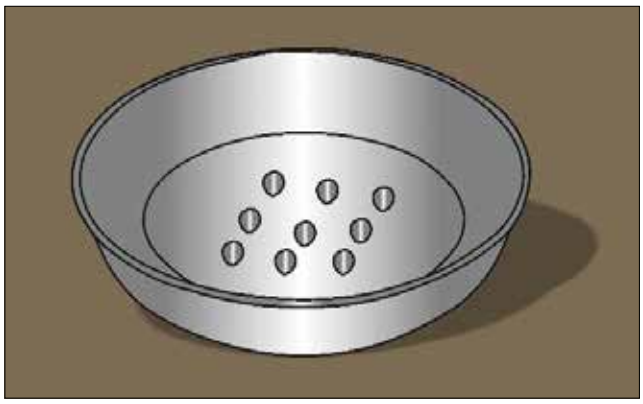




Figure 8: Nine Holes Filter and a Ring Made of Bull's Hair / *Dokuz Delikli Süzgeç ve Öküz Tüyünden Yapılmış Yüzük*

hand, the juice of a few grains of pomegranate, the leaves of which are considered essential in some of the Parsee ceremonies, is dropped into the mouth of the dying person[19].

THE YASNA CEREMONY

The most important of these requisites and though the ceremony of pounding and preparing its juice forms an important part of the Yasna liturgy, we will first describe the other organic requisites, because they are required for the Haoma ceremony and their preparation and purification precede that of the Haoma[20].

The ritual that is in use today have its roots from Zarathustra. The ritual is very complex and complicated. It consists of eight different part that are very important for the performance of the ceremony. The different parts are 1; the properties for the liturgy, 2; the rite to make the liturgical instrument pure and holy, 3; the rite for taking milk from a goat, 4; the rite to gather and collect date palm leaves and twigs from pomegranate trees and Haoma, 5; the rite for taking libation offering, 6; the rite to wash and bind the twigs together, 7; the rite to consecrate the twigs and 8; the rite to drink the white Haoma. The Haoma ritual in itself is part of larger ceremony that takes around two hours[21].

The Haoma is prepared three times during the ritual and the twigs from the Ephedera plant that are in use must be at least 13 months old and without any flaws. The first time the Haoma is prepared is before the ritual starts and it is prepared by the assistant. The assistant sits alone in the sacred and holy area and are pounding three twigs together with water in a mortar along with a piece of a twig from the pomegranate tree.

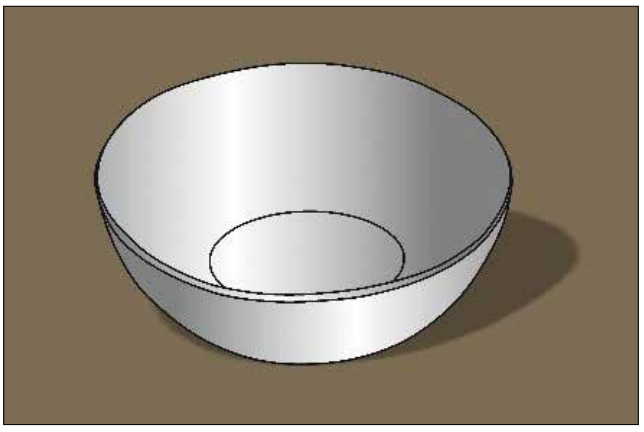


Figure 9: The Haoma Cup / *Haoma Çanağı*

From the crushed twigs he is squishing the juice and press it through a filer with nine holes before the juices passes through a ring made of bull's hair[22].

The beverage is immediately strain into the Haoma cup, the same cup the priest later drinks from. What is left of the twigs are thrown on the floor and will later be burned. The ritual burning of the Haoma plant along with incense are believed to be a remnant from the time when meat was burned along with incense. After this is done by the assistant the priest enters the sacred and holy area and start to recite the 72 chapters of the Yasna[23].

During the recitation the priest makes a pause and eats a holy bread and after that he continues with the recitation and drinks the first cup of Haoma. When the recitations starts again after the break the priest starts to prepare the second Haoma. This Haoma is poured into a well after that the ceremony is over. After pressing the twigs that has been blesses with holy water the beverage is

[19] Kotwal 1991:44.
[20] Jamshedji Modi 1937: 229.
[21] Kotwal 1991: 62-72
[22] Kotwal 1991: 72-79.
[23] Kotwal 1991: 79-80.

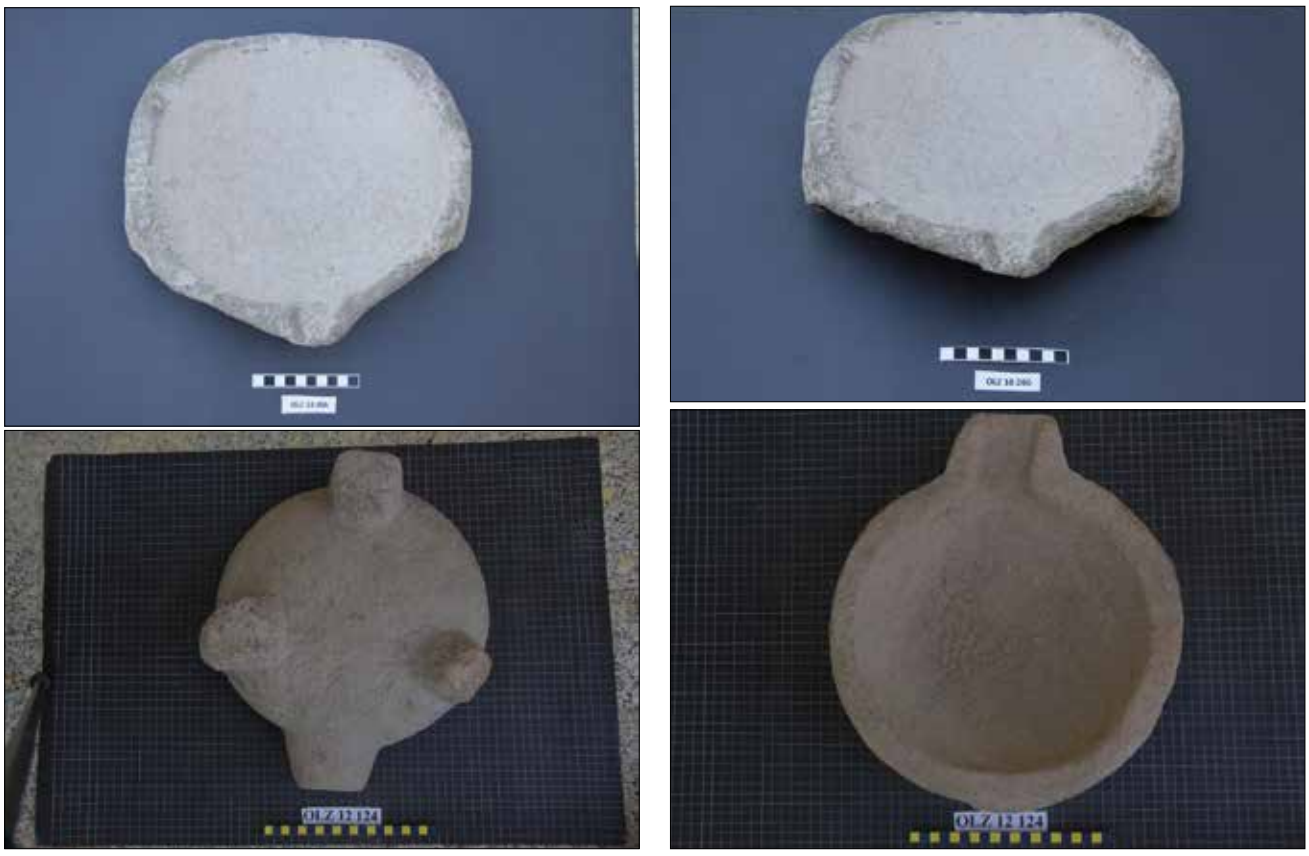


Figure 10: Mortars from 2B Layer (Oluz Höyük) / *2B Tabakasının Havanları*

strained through a filer which consists of a metal ring with a grating made by hair from a holy, healthy and not castrated white flawless bull. The Haoma beverage is then drank by the priest and his assistant. The ritual also consists of a third preparing of the Haoma[24].The final cleansing would come in a torrent of metal and fire and all who had lived a pure life would be allowed to enter in the immortal Gods paradise, the white Haoma paradise[25].

THE DATA OBTAINED FROM THE OLUZ HÖYÜK RELATED TO THE HAOMA RITUAL

Oluz Höyük with its dimensions of 280x260 meters and its height of 15 meters from the plains level is one of the largest mounds of the region. Undoubtedly, it is not possible to fully archaeologically research a mound with such proportions and multi-cultural stratigraphy including all of the cultures it contains in a span of eleven seasons of excavation. Additionally, a new excavation strategy has been devised in order to enable the maximum data and stratigraphy under the guidelines of excavation goals and strategy. Archaeogeophysics has been utilized extensively since the starting date of the excavation, 2007. With the collective use of the systems like georadar, geomagnetics and geoelectricity, the monumental architectural evidence dating especially to the 2B Architectural Layer, which is of the Persian (Achaemenid) culture were uncovered and the excavation strategy was changed accordingly. As a result of the excavations Trench A has become the largest trench of the mound (3500 m2). In addition, Trench B, excavated in the step trench technique which was started in 2007, was deepened in 2009 and 2010 seasons in order to correctly understand the stratigraphy of the mound. The listed periods have been uncovered by the excavations implemented with the strategy above.

Oluz Höyük 2nd Architectural Layer resembles Achaemenid (Persian) cultural characteristics in regards to its architecture, pottery and small findings, and its split into two phases, A and B. 2B Architectural Layer (425-300 BC) is architecturally characterized with a stone-pitched monumental road ranging from southwest to northeast in Trench A, the remains of a building complex to the north of it which we think either as a small palace or a mansion which's entrance was uncovered[26].

From this layer, which relates to the Achaemenid period, many data derived from the Zoroastrian tradition,

[24] Kotwal 1991: 79-85.

[25] Hinnells 1975:127-128.

[26] Dönmez 2017: 290-292.

especially the use of Haoma on the occasion of this ceremony. As argued above in the ritual pounding Haoma is the first step. In trench A (sub trench J/K 13) and also in architecture layer 2B it has found mortar that directly relates to this article discussion.

These are not the only data that shows being Zoroastrian ritual in this settlement in this period, but Due to the large amount of data and the breadth of this issue, so it will covers these examples in present article, just by these data.

HAOMA AT OLUZ HÖYÜK

As argued above the original plant has been forgotten as reformation of the religion and the ceremony. It is not in use in ritual after Zarathustra and has been replaced by a plant that does not have as strong intoxicating effects. the original plant has been replaced by a plant that belongs to the family Ephedra and its Latin name is Peganum Harmala. What is considered in this article is Peganum Harmala. It can be said that the whole surface of the hill is covered with Peganum Harmala plant.



Figure 11: The Peganum Harmalas on the Surface of Oluz Höyük / *Oluz Höyük'te Bulunan Peganum Harmala Çalıları*



Figure 12: Peganum Harmala Flowers, After Drying and its Seeds / *Peganum Harmala Çiçekleri, Kuruduktan Sonrası ve Tohumları*

This plant has 70 types of healing properties that have been used from the past to the present day. Peganum harmala belongs to Asian Origin and grows in the Middle East and in part of South mainly in India and Pakistan, is a plant of the family Nitrariaceae[27].



Figure 13: Dried Capsules of Peganum Harmala Use as Protecter in Turkey / *Nazardan Korunmak Amaçlı Kullanılan Peganum Harmala'nın Kurutulmuş Tohum Kovanları, Türkiye*

Plants extracts have been used since the dawn of civilization by mankind. The use of ethnobotanical preparations for various reasons, justified or not, is still continued by various cultures all around the world. Considering structural and biological diversity of terrestrial plants, they offer a unique renewable resource for the discovery of potential new drugs and modern medicine has developed a rational strategy for drug discovery which involves the study of plants and plant materials based on their ethnobotanical usage[28]. In Turkey, dried capsules from this plant are strung and hung in homes or vehicles to protect against "the evil eye"[29].

In Iran and Afghanistan, as well as some countries in the Middle East, including Azerbaijan, Syria, Iraq, and Jordan, dried capsules mixed with other ingredients are placed onto red hot charcoal, where they explode with little popping noises in a way similar to American popcorn. When they burst a fragrant smoke is released. This smoke is wafted around the head of those afflicted by or exposed to the gaze of strangers while a specific prayer is recited. This tradition is still followed by members of many religions, including Christians, Muslims, and some Jews[30].

CONCLUSION

The Zoroastrian sacred text is the Avesta ("Book of the Law"), a fragmentary collection of sacred writings. Compiled over many centuries, the Avesta was not completed until Persia's Sassanid dynasty. In Zoroastrian tradition, Haoma is the chief among the medicinal plants that can be pounded to extract their juice. The strained juice is then consumed in very small quantities. In addition to being the name of the main medicinal plant, Haoma is also the name given to the family of plant-based medicinal and health promoting extracts made from Haoma and other plants. The ritualistic practice of mixing and pounding together the ephedra and pomegranate twig and leaf to produce an extract preserves the process of synergistically bringing together the beneficial properties of the plants to promote physical health and healing. The ephedra and pomegranate extract is consumed as a mixture. The plants' extracts are not consumed alone or separately. In addition, bringing together plant life, water and animal milk while reciting a mantras, a prayer, promotes spiritual health as well. After Zarathustra it has been replaced by a plant that does not have as strong intoxicating effects. The original plant has been replaced by a plant that belongs to the family Ephedra and its Latin name is Peganum Harmala. The plant belongs to a family that consists of a half a dozen plants.

The chief ceremony, the Yasna, essentially a sacrifice of Haoma, is celebrated before the sacred fire with recitation of large parts of the Avesta. Due to the important of Haoma in the ritual and ceremonies, using this material in any settlement has a big role to provide the zoroastrism and its religion at that area. With all these correspondences, it would therefore like to propose that these data on Oluz Höyük and the existing of Peganum Harmala on the hill and all its environment, also planting pomegranate and the availability of these materials it proves that this site has been settled by the Zoroastrian people at Achaemenid period.

[27] Miraj 2016:163.
[28] Mahmoudian 2002: 4.
[29] Omidsalar 2012: 583.
[30] Van der Torn 1995: 730.

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