

Structure and Meaning in the Design of Various Types of Furniture Engraved on Silver Dishes of the Sassanid Period

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
Article type: Research Article	Based on the obtained visual evidence, the use of sofas and chairs in the ancient governments of Iran had a special design, role and importance in any period, and their practical and semantic importance can be examined from different works of art. This research aimed to identify the visual structure of the types of furniture engraved on the Sassanid period silverware and investigate the meaning and effects of the engraved designs on the furniture in order to represent the specific visual aesthetic point of view of that era. The research method of this article is fundamental in terms of its nature and descriptive-analytical in terms of its method, and the image data were selected based on the designs and shapes of the furniture engraved on the Sassanid period silverware. The results indicate that the court furniture in this period is depicted in three forms: bed or couch, mat and back, and bed and mat in the plates. and it was meant to instill the power and dignity of the king and they were executed in accordance with the occasions of war and battle and it was found that the meanings of the mentioned motifs were more important than their historical or narrative concepts. It was a sign of the power and importance of the king and the courtiers, and it was one of the means of propagandizing and spreading the Sassanid culture.
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Introduction

Archeological records and documents left from ancient cultures in various lands show that the chair as a means of sitting has existed in different forms since thousands of years ago. Most of the furniture has a functional or decorative aspect in the place where people live, and furniture as it is today did not exist in the old Iranian culture. However, Herodotus believes that the ancient Iranians eat and sleep at the table, although Herodotus' reports of Iranian customs and traditions, according to his life history (425-484 B.C.), are comparable to the two Achaemenid kings Khashayar Shah and Ardeshir I. The method he used for his historiography is a narrative method and it is possible that what he wrote was transmitted to him by the narrator. But according to historical documents, in the period when Iranians sat on carpets and Iranian homes were very simple; Usually, a zilo or felt was spread on the floor and one or more mats, along with pillows for sitting or sleeping on it, and short tables or stools for placing dishes, were installed in the rooms. This type of furniture was the arrangement of the normal lifestyle in ancient Iran. However, according to the images engraved on the works of art of ancient Iran, especially in the Achaemenid and Sassanid eras, the preparation of suitable furniture, beds and footstools was considered one of the requirements of court life. Of course, examining the evolution of the ways and customs of sitting and leaning on the chair on the throne and the court for kings has an ancient history alone that requires a separate topic. However, in this article, the visual structure of the design and the role and cultural meanings of the types of furniture engraved on the Sassanid period silverware and their location are examined.

Research Method

This research is fundamental in nature and descriptive and analytical in terms of its method, and materials and images have been collected and analyzed from reliable library sources and internet sites. Also, appropriate drawing programs have been used to analyze the designs. The statistical population of this research includes all Sassanid period silver vessels that were used from the beginning to the end of the kingdom of this period and includes motifs related to various types of furniture, and in this article, about twelve selected samples are examined.

Research Background

During the investigations carried out on the history of furniture in ancient Iran, only short references have been observed in some books. In the book "Survey of Iranian Art, from Prehistory to Today" by Arthur Upham Pope, in the sixth volume of the seventh section, there is a brief reference to household furniture, beds, and sofas (Pope and Ackerman, 2008). Mohammad Reza Namdari, in the book "Style and History of Furniture" (2015), in the first volume, has mentioned the styles of furniture in ancient Iran in a short text. In the book "Art of Iran during the Parthian and Sasanian eras" written by Roman Girshman (1992), motifs and symbols used in

Sasanian silver dishes and plates are introduced. Also, in the book "The Influence of Sassanid Art on Islamic Art" written by Abbas Zamani (2013), various arts, including the art of metalwork and Sassanid plates, were introduced and analyzed, and its influence on Islamic arts was stated. High-quality images of works and visual proofs of furniture designs are also available on reputable websites, such as the sites of the "Victoria and Albert" and "Cleveland" museums and other museums in the world.

Throne and Court in Ancient Iran

According to the existing written and pictorial sources, a chair has been used as a means of sitting since several thousand years ago in various lands and civilizations of the Middle East and West Asia. One of the prototypes of a chair is a simple stool for sitting. The available documents show that the oldest four foundations in the ancient Iran area are related to the archaeological excavations of "Tepe Cheshme Ali 1". This stool belongs to the second half of the 6th millennium BC, it is made with a mixture of clay and straw, and its cover is red (Figure 1).

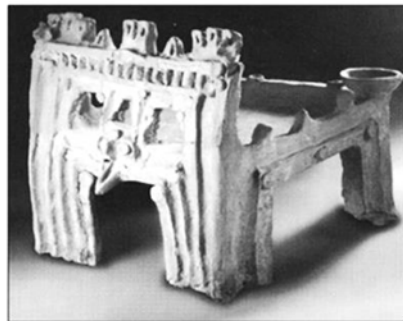


Figure 1. A clay tripod, belonging to the second half of the sixth millennium BC. National Museum of Ancient Iran (Source: Esfandiari, 1998)

Also, many examples of the structure of furniture, which is a proof of the use of chairs and beds in Elam civilization, can be seen on the patterns of cylindrical seals left from this era. For example, a piece of bituminous plaque, which is considered one of the most beautiful works of art in New Elam, is known as the Spinning Lady. This tablet made of bitumen paste is 13 cm long and 3.9 cm wide. The mentioned tablet shows the image of a woman holding a spinning wheel and sitting on a chair or a four-legged stool in the oriental style, which has legs in the shape of a lion's paw. In front of the spinner lady, there is a stool with legs in the shape of a lion's paw, on which there is a container containing a fish with six round fruits (Figure 2) (Ameh, 2011: 112).



Figure 2. Piece of bituminous plaque made of bituminous paste, 13 cm long and 3.9 cm in Elam period.

In the Achaemenid period, furniture with only a little more detailing than in the Elam period can be seen in works of art, which is perhaps considered one of the best examples of furniture, beds and chairs in ancient Iran. Unfortunately, the originals of these works have not been found in archaeological excavations. However, examples of thrones and chairs are carved and visible on the prominent reliefs of Persepolis, such as the public scene of Darius in the Treasury of Persepolis, the scene of King Xerxes sitting on the royal throne, or the motifs above the tomb of Darius in Rostam Naqsh. In one example, Darius is sitting on the throne and the representatives of 28 nations are holding the said throne on their heads. Behind him stands the crown prince of Xerxes. On top of the bed there is a cover that has many ornaments" (Girshman, 1992: 199). According to Roman Girshman, the furniture in the Achaemenid period is mostly in the form of chairs, which have bases of animal symbols such as lions and eagles (Girshman, 1992: 382) (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Dariush's public scene. Achaemenid period. Throne of Jamshid. (www.parsiandej.ir).

After the Achaemenians, Parthian art is of particular importance due to its great influence on the formation of Sassanid art and depiction of the Islamic period. The Parthians were able to rule the land of Iran for more than five centuries. The silver and bronze coins of the Parthian kings are considered to be the most important documents of Iranian history, culture and artistic masterpieces. On the back of most of the coins, the images of the Parthian kings sitting on chairs are beautifully engraved (Figure 4) (Shakuri Far and Nasrollahzadeh, 2015).



Figure 4. Farhad II Parthian coin, the queen sitting on a chair. (www.tamadonema.ir)

But in the Sassanid period, Iranian civilization reached its maximum prosperity and prosperity in terms of artistic achievements. As a result of trade relations and continuous wars between Iranians and Romans, Roman art penetrated Iran, and these influences are clearly visible in Sasanian metalwork art, such as the images of dancing women engraved on Sasanian silver vessels (Figure. 5). In this period, the mass production of metal objects, along with other arts, led to the expansion of trade and, as a result, economic progress. The art of metalworking was a courtly art, and next to the royal palaces, there were workshops for making these precious and luxurious objects. In these workshops, silver was used to make various dishes and gold was used to gild them. Folk art has also been influenced by court art, and in cases where it was not possible to use gold and silver metals to make dishes, artists used low-cost alloys and created beautiful works by following the same luxurious method (Pope and Ackerman, 2008: 180).

The art of metalwork in the Sassanid period

In the Sassanid period, advanced techniques were used to make Zarandod silver dishes. The technique of two shells, welding a piece of gold on the surface of silver, drawing a thin shell of silver on the prominent parts of the container, and using casting are among these techniques. During this period, bronze alloy was also used a lot to make various objects, such as war weapons, small statues and kashuk-shaped containers. At the end of the Sassanid period, the use of silverware to make dishes received more attention, because the color of silverware is as transparent as gold and silver, and those classes who could not use silver, replaced it with vessels made of silverware. (Figure 5 and 6).



Figure 5. Teng with patterns of musicians and dancers, silver Hermitage Museum (Moslehi, 2018: 83)



Figure 6. Silver plate with the image of an eagle holding a woman in its claws, Freire Museum (Fariyeh, 1995: 348)

But the most important metal works that have remained from the Sassanid period are silver vessels, some of which are gold-plated. According to the observations of the works in the museums, some of these silver containers have different shapes, the most common of which are: tights, hemispherical bowls, rhytons and plates. Tangs are very diverse in terms of shape and most of them are decorated. For example, tights with a pear-shaped body, an opening with a beak-like spout, a long handle with a decoration on the top of the handle, a long circular or funnel-shaped base. Also, tights without handle and base, the mouth of which is simple and without a drain, and various motifs are drawn on them, such as mixed animals, dancing women, and traditional motifs in the Sassanid period. Also, Sasanian metal bowls with various motifs such as musicians and dancers along with symbolic motifs inspired by Roman art have been common. Rhyton or Tekuk were also glass-like containers that were used to drink liquids and were made in the shape of animals or composite creatures. Making such dishes was popular since the pre-Sasanian era. Plates with short walls are one of the most abundant examples of Sassanid metalwork art and are often decorated with various images such as the hunting of kings, the king and queen sitting on the throne with attendants and mixed animals. The background of the plates is also engraved with ivy, hair leaves, pomegranate bush, birds and common symbols in Sasanian art.

It is necessary to explain that "due to the wars that happened between Khosrow II and Heraclius, the Roman emperor, and also after the Arabs entered Iran, a large number of silver and gold objects were looted or melted down to make coins. For this reason, the number of silver objects obtained from the Sassanid period is very limited. Most of the silver vessels of this period have been discovered outside the current borders of Iran, and for various reasons, the correct date and origin of those found in Iran is not known (Pope and Ackerman, 2008: 182).

The use and types of furniture in the Sassanid court

Iranians in the Sassanid period often preferred to sit on all fours on the ground, but in the surviving images of Sassanid art, courtiers often sit or lie on a bed decorated with backs of patterned fabrics. This method of sitting has been common throughout the Near East for several centuries. Also, for more comfort, mats were placed on the floor and flat mats were stacked on

one side to lean on. In other examples, there is a short chair on which a mattress and a pillow are installed. In examining the structure of furniture in the documents left over from the art of the Sassanid era, the use of beds and courts decorated with symbols and beautiful motifs can be seen. The construction of the beds in this period is mostly flat and rectangular with thick bases and an hourglass appearance. Also, in one sample, their middle part is decorated in the form of a vase, and on another bed there are two khorjins and decorative "friezes". The court figures are sitting and leaning on these couches in such a way that they convey the impression of a comfortable look to the viewer.

The structure of the furniture in this period is the continuation of the Parthian style of Roman origin, but the idea of placing the royal throne on top of animals, which were the symbols of the king in any case, is left over from the ancient East. Examples of this style can also be seen in the Sumerian and Achaemenid kingdoms. Apart from this, the shape of the supporting pillars of the eastern Sassanid thrones are mostly in the form of imaginary animals, lions and winged horses, all of which are seen as symbolic motifs in most Sassanid period arts (Durant, 2011: 330).

Descriptive analysis of types of design and role of furniture

On an example of a gold-plated ceramic plate, there is a scene of royal revelry and joy, the king is sitting on a mat with patterned backs and drinking, and in front of him is the queen sitting on the mat, talking to him. Behind the king, a man is standing respectfully and a group of musicians are playing music, one of them is playing an instrument and produces sound with his mouth, and another musician is playing a stringed instrument. At the bottom of the plate, a stove is lit and cooking food, and a tree with a bird sitting on its branch fills more than half of the edge of the plate (Mohammad Panah, 2006: 190). The king and queen are slightly larger than the others and are drawn in the center of the image to emphasize their dignity and position (Figure 7).



Figure 7. Sasanian silver plate. 7th century AD. Qatar 19.7 AD Leningrad Museum (Source: www.tamadonema.ir; Sketch: author).

On another cement vessel, Bahram Gur, one of the prominent Sassanid kings, is seen presenting a "royal ring" to a woman, a sign of royalty and a symbol of Yazidi fur. The woman wears a crown with ram's horns, among the horns of the crown is a pomegranate, which shows

her connection with the goddess of fertility with the flower pattern carved on the woman's dress. Bahram and the queen are sitting on the throne, on one side of the throne there are pillows with plant and geometric motifs, this throne is the seat of the king, which was also called royal orang. The legs of the bed are in the shape of an hourglass. The presence of three heads of pigs at the bottom of the Majlis is related to Nowruz celebration, where it was customary to present offerings (Kristen, 2003: 86). The placement of the king's head and hand while offering an offering to the queen; It is an imitation of the Sasanian reliefs with the theme of presenting the royal ring by Ahura Mazda to the king in the Sasanian period, which both shows the king in the position of Ahura Mazda and gives credibility and sanctity to this assembly (Figure 8).



Figure 8. Sasanian silver plate. Bahram and the queen on the throne. 6th and 7th centuries AD. Diameter: 23.3 cm. Baltimore Art Gallery. (Kristen, 2003).

In the center of another gold-plated silver plate, a royal banquet is depicted. In this scene, the king, leaning on the carved backs, bestows the Shahriari symbol on the queen. The legs of the bed are narrowed like an hourglass in the center and decorated with a golden clasp. A ram's head can be seen under the bed. In Zoroastrian texts, the ram is associated with royal glory, and the ram's head, which is designed in most of the works, is a symbol of the heroic aspect of the royal banquet (Hall, 2004: 136). In this plate, in terms of structure, composition and meaning, the act of bestowing the Shahriari symbol on behalf of the king to the queen, like the reliefs of the dedication of the royal ring, has a sacred aspect (Figure 9).



Figure 9. Sassanid silver plate, diameter 19 cm. Location: Smithsonian Museum (Source: www.tamadonema.ir; Sketch: the author)

In the decoration of the inner part of another Zarandod silver plate, the compatibility and cultural influence between the eastern Mediterranean regions and Iran can be seen. In the center of the picture Dionysus, the Greek god, is shown in a female form and the smaller figure sitting behind the god is the princess Ariadne. On his right, Hercules is seen standing. Under the throne are two angels, on both sides of a circle that symbolizes the sun. This bed was probably mobile and was used to carry the queen. The image carved on the vessel shows the scene of the triumphal entry of Dionysus, which was a popular theme in Roman art and was transferred to Sasanian art (Holmes, 1969: 224). This plate belongs to the late Sassanid period because the female figure has a material and earthly aspect, like the mosaic works of Bishapur Palace in Fars province; Although it represents Greek mythology and the presence of Roman angels also shows the influence of Roman art on Sasanian art. The sitting style of Dionysus and the three-faced facial expression in this plate and other works from the late Sassanid period had an effect on the painting art of Iran after Islam (Figure 10).



Figure 10. Silver dish, Sasanian period, 7th century AD. Diameter 21 cm. Smithsonian Museum (Source: Holmes. 1969; sketch: the author)

Another silver plate from the Sasanian period, in the Hermitage Museum, shows the king seated on a throne, with musicians playing wind, percussion and stringed instruments (harp), and a singer singing with his hand under his ear. Behind the king, someone is standing with his hands on his chest in a respectful manner. An angel on top of the stage is sealing the atmosphere, and the symbols of flowers and hearts are carved on the background. The king stretches his legs on the bed and rests on three pillows with the same flower motifs and is smelling a lotus flower branch with a cup in his hand. The mat on the bed is engraved with plant motifs and grapes. The presence of the king in the center of the plate shows the importance and authority of the king while accompanying the people in the Bazam ritual (Figure 11).



Figure 11. Sassanid silver plate, 6th century AD. Qatar, 16.2 cm. Armitage Museum (Source: www.kherada.com; Sketch: the author)

Inside the silver plate, the king with a crown in the form of ram's horns is seated on a throne in the center of the royal hunting scene and, turning his head, looks at the scene of the deer being hunted by the lion. Another deer is lying at the bottom of the bed. The ground of the dish is carved with vegetation and a flowing stream. The king wears a long dress over loose trousers. The king is leaning on a pillow on a throne decorated with a mattress of repeating geometric patterns, behind him is a person standing on the throne fanning him. The bed has two legs, as if the other leg was removed due to the limitation of the drawing space, but the placement of the bed is maintained. Unlike the previous examples, the bed bases are curved towards the outside of the bed (Mohammad Panah, 2006: 184).

The crown of Shapur I with a toothed ring as a sign of royalty and as a sign of the layers of heaven and heaven is on the king's head, in the golden point of the plate. The king's licking on the back and his sitting on the mat while the flycatcher is standing behind him is an emphasis on the king's dignity and power (Figure 12).



Figure 12. Sasanian silver plate, Shapur I Bartakht. 7th century Diameter 23.2 cm. The Armitage Museum. (Source: Mohammed Panah, 2006; Sketch: author)

On another silver plate with a gilded background, the king is depicted as the main figure, larger than the others, on a short throne, leaning on three backs while crossing one leg over the

other. The legs of the bed are in the shape of a winged horse. A winged horse is a sign of magical connection and a sign of nobility, magnanimity and chivalry. The edges of the bed are also spiral.

This scene shows a Sasanian-style party and an example of oriental narration. Like other Sassanid kings, the king wears a crown on his head and a cup, which is a symbol of power. Musicians are playing with different musical instruments and an angel is flying over the stage giving blessings, which shows the influence of Roman art on Sasanian art (Figure 13).



Figure 13. Gold-plated silver plate. King Bartakht. Diameter 24 cm. 8th century AD. Smithsonian Museum (Source: www.ariai.com; Sketch: author)

In another Sassanid silver tray, Khosrow Anushirvan is shown with four nobles in a state of respect. At the bottom of the dish, the scene of hunting rams is carved by his son Hormuz IV (Holmes, 1969: 229). The king with a sword between his legs is depicted as if he is standing in front of the throne instead of sitting; His throne is like a bench that rests on two winged horses in front, the winged horses at the legs of the throne face the king like men behind the king. On the bed, there are patterned pillows, and on the edges of the bed, a circular pattern in the shape of a pearl is designed. Here, the coldness and dryness of the king's sitting position on the sofa has a religious meaning, as well as the decorations of the bed and furniture have a ritual and symbolic function (Figure 14).



Figure 14. Sasanian silver tray. Khosrow I (579-531 AD), diameter 28.3 cm. Hermitage Museum (Source: www.tamadonema.ir)

Data Analysis

In this section, the furniture or thrones and court carved on Sasanian silver vessels are analyzed and examined in terms of their relationship to the motifs, their structure and composition in the plates, and the meanings of the various patterns drawn on them:

A- Subjects engraved on Sasanian silver vessels

Sasanian court silver vessels mainly contain subjects such as scenes of royal feasts and official ceremonies. In some plates, the king is seated on the throne while officials and high-ranking officials, and sometimes musicians, are present on the scene. Subjects such as the granting of the royal ring, victory over the enemy, or battle scenes that exist in Sasanian stone carvings are not seen on court silver plates. On the surface of most Sasanian silver plates, scenes of hunting and royal feasts are seen, which have a symbolic aspect because the ancient allegory of hunting and war means the defeat of worldly and spiritual enemies. Also, in the scenes of the feasts of kings and musicians playing; the king is sitting on the throne alone or with the queen. Some of these motifs have a formal aspect or indicate a symbolic narrative of victory in war or the celebration of the awarding of the royal badge. Similarly, the design and pattern of the furniture are also designed in an allegorical way in line with these ceremonies and narratives. Therefore, the design of the narrative and events in the Sassanid plates can be followed in an allegorical way in the Sassanid silver plates, and the reality is not objectively but is taken from the current customs of that period and is recorded in a symbolic way.

B- Types of furniture engraved on silver dishes

The design of furniture in the Sassanid silver plates has several different types. In most cases, it is in the form of a bed and a couch, which is believed to be made of high-quality wood and has symbols, metaphors, and ornaments common in Sasanian art. In other cases, it is seen in the form of mats decorated with designs and patterns appropriate to the ceremony in which the king and sometimes the queen or prince are present. In some cases, mats and backrests decorated with geometric or plant motifs are placed on a wooden bed. Most of the beds are flat and rectangular with thick, hourglass-like bases, and in some cases, they are vase-shaped and designed with the influence of Sasanian arch architecture. The bases of some royal beds also include statues of animal bodies such as a ram, griffin, winged horse, lion, or other mythological animals that had a symbolic aspect that held the bed on top and were mainly known as the king's protectors and guardians or sources of good and blessings. The crescent moon pattern above the king's throne or crown also had the same meaning. The angel pattern on the base of one of the thrones is also influenced by Rome and mostly related to the late Sassanid period, possibly carved by Roman prisoners, like the one carved on the entrance of Taq-e Bostan in Kermanshah from the Sassanid period. Some of the thrones were also smooth and the wheel pattern below them was more

functional, although it may be linked to the seal or sun wheel according to ancient Iranian tradition.

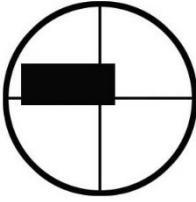


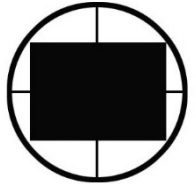
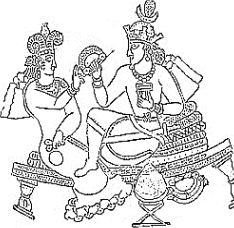

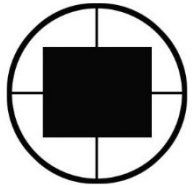


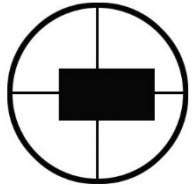


C- The location of furniture in silver dishes

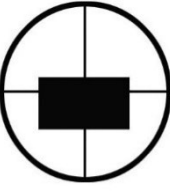
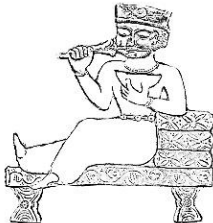




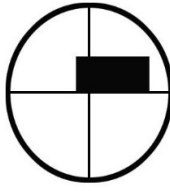


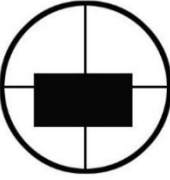





The location of the furniture, the throne or the mattress, which is the seat of the king and queen, is mainly in the center of the circular frame of the plate to emphasize the importance of the king's dignity and position. In some plates, the king also spreads his legs symmetrically and sits on the throne to emphasize more on the center of the image, which is himself. On the other hand, the depiction of the bodies and faces of people in a frontal or frontal position in ancient Iranian art indicated a dry, formal and religious state. In Sasanian art, especially in metal plates and rock reliefs, "mirrorless symmetry" is considered a special element of Iranian composition, which both emphasizes the center of the image and, by making the image different and larger, creates a "official perspective", except in subjects such as the promenade, where the king and queen are depicted in a dynamic manner and lack formal expressions; the mat on which the king and queen are sitting is depicted near the edge of the circle of the plate, and of course, in most cases, except for one case to show the king's family dignity, it is depicted in the upper corner of the plate.




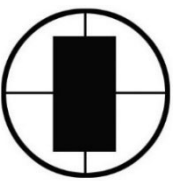





D- Designs drawn on beds and mats

The main designs drawn on beds and mats are plant and geometric or spiral designs that have a decorative aspect and are considered a signature and representative of the specific style of Sasanian art due to the influence of other Sasanian arts such as stucco, reliefs, fabric designs and architectural decorations. In addition, the influences of Roman designs and Greek mythology such as angels, especially in the late Sasanian period, were used in the design of plates to promote and advertise religious customs and rituals as well as to demonstrate the authority of the Sasanians. Based on what has been stated, Table 1 shows the types of designs and patterns carved on twelve selected silver plates from the Sasanian period, as well as the subjects or occasions and the location of the beds or mats on the dishes.

Table 1. Descriptive analysis of the design and pattern of Sasanian silver plates (Source: author).

Placement of the bed on the container	Motifs		Topics, structure and meaning	Linear design of various types of furniture	Sasanian silver dish	Row
	Mattress	Flat				
	Geometric plant motifs	Simple without base	Subject: A royal feast scene with courtiers, dancers, and musicians present. Meaning: Promoting customs and rituals, the king's companionship with the masses, and a display of the king's authority and sanctification.	Silver plate 		1
	Geometric plant motifs	Geometric plant motifs	Subject: Informal royal banquet, Bahram bestowing the royal insignia on the enthroned queen. Structure and meaning: The sacredness of the ceremony, the authority and dignity of the king's position.	Silver plate 		2
 قطریشقاب: ۱۹ س.م	Geometric plant motifs	Geometric plant motifs	Subject: Informal royal banquet, the king bestowing the insignia of royalty on the queen. Structure and meaning: pomp, royal grandeur and authority, symbolism, promotion of culture	Gold-plated silver plate 		3
	-	Simple, without decoration. Circular base with two angels.	Subject: Mythological victory ceremony of Dionysus. Structure and meaning: Symbolic and ritualistic dynamic influenced by Rome and Greece.	Gold-plated silver plate 		4

	plant motifs	Geometric plant motifs	Subject: Royal feast scene with dancers and musicians. Structure and meaning: Image dynamics, royal authority, decoration and ritual	Silver plate 		5
	-	Geometric plant motifs	Subject: The Shah's hunting lodge with his retinue. Structure and meaning: Dynamic, symbolic and informal, a display of authority	Silver plate 		6
	-	The bed legs are in the shape of a winged horse and the edges of the bed are spiral-shaped.	Subject: Royal feast scene with musicians playing. Structure and meaning: Image dynamics, spatial, symbolic and ritual perspective, and sacredness	Gold-plated silver plate 		7
	Geometric patterns	Bed legs in the shape of a winged horse	Subject: Royal feast and hunting scene. High-ranking officials and attendants stand respectfully by the throne. Structure and meaning: Symmetry, facing and religious, sanctity	Silver tray 		8
	-	The bed bases are two mythical winged creatures.	Subject: The scene of the royal ring taking. Structure and meaning: Asymmetrical symmetry, royal authority, ritual and religiousness, and sanctity	Silver plate 		9

	-	The bases of the floating bed have decorations in the Sassanid architectural style.	Subject: Mythological narrative scene of the god of rain sitting on a moving throne in the shape of the moon. Structure and meaning: dynamic and symmetrical, religious and ritualistic, mythological, authority and sacredness.	Gold-plated silver plate 		10
	-	The bed inside the crescent is located on four wheeled pillars.	Subject: Mythological narrative of the rain god with war implements on a moon-shaped floating throne. Structure and meaning: dynamic and symmetrical, religious and ritualistic, mythological, authority and sacredness.	Gold-plated silver plate 		11
	Geometric patterns	The bed legs are in the shape of two falcons.	Subject: Royal feast of the granting of the royal ring. Structure and meaning: symmetrical and static, symbolic, ritual and religious, and sacredness	Oval silver bowl 		12

Conclusion and Suggestions

By examining the art of metalwork and Sasanian silver plates, it was determined that Iran had the most valuable artistic achievements during the Sasanian period. The tradition of patterning in all the surviving works of art of the Sasanian period was directly related to the ritual and religious beliefs of the Sasanians, and in a way, the arts were the representatives and propagators of their religion, culture, and religion. With the development of the art of metalwork and the advancement of manufacturing techniques and various methods in decorating vessels, the Sasanian period is considered one of the most influential periods in the spread of metalwork art. In fact, most of the visual symbols of Sasanian art are also reflected in the designs of the vessels. For example, on most of the metal vessels, the official image of the kings with special signs of royalty, crowns, and special ornaments, can be seen sitting or reclining on the royal throne. By examining the designs and symbols on Sasanian vessels, the apparent structure of furniture in this period was mostly in the form of royal beds and couches, and in some vessels, beds are seen as chariots for carrying mythological gods. This furniture is mainly carved on vessels in three forms: beds, mattresses, and mats, and beds and mattresses together, and has symbolic designs and arrangements appropriate to the themes and occasions of feasts and battles. The seats of the beds were flat and covered with mattresses made of patterned fabrics or animal skins, and pillows with beautiful and symbolic designs were designed on them. The bases of some beds are simple

and sometimes designed in the form of an hourglass or spindle, but the court beds, which are often engraved on plates during the crowning ceremony, have bases with symbols of mythological animals and more decorations. The symbolic themes of the motifs in Sasanian art are more important than their historical or narrative meanings. Thus, Sasanian decorative motifs, including birds, animals, and plants with allegorical and symbolic motifs such as angels, horses, winged cows, and mythological animals, engraved on the throne, court, and mats, can be interpreted as visual metaphors that narrate the social, ritual, and religious rituals of the Sasanians. On the other hand, the intricate motifs on metal plates, like other Sasanian arts, can be considered a crystallization of the power and authority of the Sasanian kings and the propagation and dissemination of Sasanian culture in the ancient world, because placing the king, queen, and courtiers in the center or the best place in the image visually and occasionally showing them larger among the individuals is a repeated emphasis on the power and importance of the king and his family. The images engraved on the plates can be categorized into two general types in terms of the design structure, which also influenced the type of furniture display: "static" which includes purely religious narratives and mainly shows the king in the center of the image, and "dynamic" which includes musical and informal narratives emphasizing the king's companionship with the people and religious customs while maintaining authority. The authority of the king's sitting on a mat in informal situations and his placement somewhere other than the center of the frame also implicitly represents the king's theatrical companionship with the people who, during the Sasanian period, mainly sat on mats and on the ground. The king placing himself on the same level as myths and alongside the gods, such as the scene of receiving a royal ring from Ahura Mazda, was also intended to express the credibility and legitimacy of the Sasanian king's rule over the people. However, basically, the throne and the couch were always associated with power, and the court's purpose in displaying furniture on silver plates should be considered an expression of power. In the design of silver plates, motifs and symbols influenced by Greek and Roman art are sometimes seen, such as the humanization of Ahura Mazda and angel motifs in the late Sasanian period. In the continuation of this research, it is suggested that the design and pattern of furniture be studied from semiotic and iconological aspects to reveal newer aspects of Sasanian art that had its roots in the dynamic culture and society of ancient Iran.

Author Contributions

All authors contributed equally to the conceptualization of the article and writing of the original and subsequent drafts.

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Ethical considerations

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Conflict of interest

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