

A comparative study of the black and white symbolic horses in the Shahnameh of Ferdowsi

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Abstract

The horse especially those in black or white assume a much enigmatic stance in the Iranian culture and as we know, color plays the role of the decoder to a great number of concepts in legends. The black color represents often mourning and darkness. In Europe, the black color is viewed negatively. A person wearing black, or a black snake both are deemed as icons which represent dark and hopelessness. The dead are celebrated in black atmosphere within the church. Black, as opposed to white, was normally regarded as Ahriman and the forces related to him such as falsification, wickedness and evil throughout the ancient Iranian legends. From the very beginning of the "Legend of Creation", Ahura Mazda is in the bright Upper-World whereas Ahriman resides in the dark Lower-World. Nonetheless, in the same culture, black enjoys aspects of positive connotation such as in the black horses of the Kings in the Shahnameh which would signify their power. The color of the horse is often proportionate to the character of its rider in so far as the horses of heroes such as Kay Khosrow and Siyavosh are black ones too. Conversely, white in most cultures particularly in the Iranian one, is included within the colors which enjoy positive connotation notwithstanding a few exceptions. Among them, white horses and black ones have variant and significant stances and roles in the Persian Literature and Culture. The present article aims at a comparative study of the "black" and "white" horses in the Shahnameh of Ferdowsi.

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Introduction

The horse, which has been portrayed as a symbol of nobility and beauty, is one of the most flamboyant and the most original domesticated animals in pre – Islamic world, mythology of ancient Persia, ancient religious texts, Shahnameh (Book of Kings), historical periods and the works of that era. The horse played a very vital role, which has always been praised. And other than usual use of it as transportation and hunting, there was also ritualistic, economic, martial, lyrical, decorative and ceremonial functions. As the ancient Iranian asked Ahura Mazda goodness for themselves and their families, they also asked strength and vigor for their horses. In the Avesta, the horse is named as one of the most preferred animals, and even for the good horse care and maintenance, there are also instructions. The symbol has been regarded as a sign of purity, authenticity and importance in the Iranian culture. The importance of the horse in the world of mythology of Iran is to the extent that every Yazata (divinity) has golden chariot and Tiztak horses (speedster horses).

After Islam, by referring to the horse in some verses of the Holy Qur'an, Iranian – Islamic texts, and books and manuals dealing with horses and horsemanship (Faras – Nama), good nature and importance of this creature is emphasized. Historical and literary evidence reflects the deep-seated attachment of Iranians to the keeping and raising of horses and giving holy aspects to this noble and intelligent animal. Therefore, the most depicted animal in the epic texts of Khorasani Style, including Shahnameh is horse. Research Background: There have been valuable researches about the horse and its cultural and social backgrounds (which will be mentioned in the examples below), nevertheless, studies show that so far an extensive research under this title has not been done in the Persian literature. Azartah, Azarnoosh (Autumn 1998), Horse, Great Islamic Encyclopedia, V, Great Islamic Encyclopedia Center, pp. 92-111. Pourdavood, Ibrahim (2007), Ancient Iranian Culture, Tehran, Publishing and Printing Institute of Tehran University, pp. 220-297. Isavi, Ruzhan, (Spring 2010), A look at Horse and Riding in Iran, Journal of Iranian Studies, 17, pp. 155-133. Qolizadeh, Khosrow, (Autumn 2009), Horse in Indian and European Mythology, Journal of Iranian Studies, 16, pp. 220-230. Mahoozi, Mehdi, (Autumn 1998), Horse in Persian Literature and Iranian Culture, Journal of the Faculty of Literature and Human Sciences, p. 146, pp. 230-230.

Horse Background: The domestication of animals began at about fifth millennium BC. The horse is one of the animals that has had a special status among Aryan and the Iranian culture and beliefs. Aryans movement in the thousand four hundred years BC was occurred by horse and chariots, their significant use of horse and their famous chariots attracted the attention of historians more than anything else and they considered it as an important phenomenon. During the rule of Medes, in the year of 554-701 BC, cavalry unit played a major role in the warfare, that's why Kiakasar, the third king of Medes to confront the Assyrian army in Mesopotamia established cavalry unit (Abdul Reza Khani, 2012: 3).

During the Parthian period, the horse played a very important role in commerce, both for transportation and for sale, they took the horses to the islands and lands with a coastline on the Persian Gulf and Arabs were buying horses against date fruits or they have provided their needs by robbery and stealing horses. Horse breeding was initially intended to sacrifice to the gods, but gradually they have been used as good sources of manual labor and transportation and communication. The role of domesticated livestock including horses in the lives of ancient people has been so highlighted that their designs were carved or painted in the pottery and varieties of seals. And even when a person died, his animal objects were also buried with him to accompany the dead in another world (Tajbakhsh, 1993: 10-14).

Importance and Functions : The significance of the horse in ancient world was so much that it was sacrificed to their gods, because the gods of every people were the most valuable and sacred to them, they thus sacrifice their dearest and most valuable asset, the horse to their gods. In the Tir Yasht 13-18, the Angel of Rain, Tištar (Tishtrya) descended in the form of the white horse is battling against Apaosha, Demon of Draught, who also turned into the horse shape, but a black and ugly horse, without mane and tail. Eventually, Tishtrya won the battle and was victorious in the war and the rain falls to the Iranian fields (ibid:250).

Horse which is in essence devilish gradually becomes solar and Ahuraee (divine). In the case of Ural – Altai, the sacred marriage of the earth and sky is represented by the mating of white horse and gray cow. Here, the male horse is the manifestation of divinity. The sun in a chariot pulled by two horses and they are dedicated to the sun. Horse is the symbol of Apollo, because Apollo is the Auriga (charioteer) of the sun (Chevallier, 2009: 157). In ancient beliefs, the horse has two divine and devilish aspects, which has been associated with the color of this animal. So that the white horse was considered as solar and sacred creature and a black horse as a symbol of death and it was believed that it is related to the other world. In ancient beliefs the white color is a sign of bright, purity, and generally is a color of Ahuraee (divine) and the black color is a sign of darkness that is itself a devilish symbol (Bahrami, 2006:27).

In our very ancient tradition, horse breeding and the art of horse – riding are considered to be important. Tahmureth was the first one to use horse, Bal'ami is mentioned this tradition as follows: "and He (Tahmureth) brought adornment of kings, horseback riding, and how to saddle a horse (Bal'ami, 1999: 1/99). Horse is also important in Islamic thought, so that the meat of the valuable animal is Makruh (disliked) to prevent its killing and thus prevent its extinction, particularly mare horse due to the foaling and the maintenance of generations has a special place. As the Prophet (pbuh) says: be upon you mare horses, their back is a fortified place, and their abdomen is a treasure (Fakhr Modbar, 1967: 176).

If we accept that the firsts are sacred, then the horses are holy beasts. Because according to Bundahish, the horse was one of the first animals to be created: "among horses, first the white horse with yellow year, brilliant hair, white eye was created. He is the horses head". Childbirth is among the most holy thing in Zoroastrianism, and after the horse and other beasts were created, the first one wanted to have birth were camel and horse (ibid: 206). Almost among all the ancient tribes, the horse is a solar animal, because the sun is the fastest star in the sky and the horse is the fastest beast that serve human. According to Herodotus "for the fasters gods, the sun, the fastest beasts, the horse must be sacrificed". In the German mythology, the white horse is a symbol of the day and of the sun (ibid., 2009: 207).

Horse's place: Horse has a special place in Persian literature and Iranian culture. In the Avestan texts and in the ancient Iranian literature, no animal such as a horse has been described in glory and beauty. Iranian poets in their book of poems have mentioned this noble animal in a praiseworthy way. Persian mystics in symbolic literature have considered the horse as an animal than could experience ascension and traverse the Throne of God and regarded it the noblest means for ascension of the most worthy human being, the Prophet (pbuh), as Saadi says:

One night he mounted and passes beyond the heavens,
Surpassing the Angels in authority and rand;
So hotly he galloped into the plain of Proximity
That Gabriel was left behind him at Sidra;

According to wise and witty people, horse is the symbol of consciousness and insight and the meaning of Tafars (intelligence) is derived from horse represent wise and intelligent people (Mahuzi, 1998: 210). From kings, emirs, and warriors perspective, horse represents the salvation and victory, and happiness. Iranian dihqan (a class of land-owning magnates) and practitioners saw it as blessings, abundance and capital of life, and warriors and militants, in the battlefield with the enemy regarded it as a source of auspiciousness, pride, hope and confidence. They live with it and admired it (ibid, 211). Khosrow Parviz says: "The king is the head of men and horse is the head of the beasts" (Khayyam, 1964: 52). In Qabus nameh noted that "philosophers have said that the world is based on the people, and the people are dependent on animals, the best animals are horse, and its ownership represent both sheriffdom and generosity" (Unsur Al – ma'ali Kikuas bin Iskandar, 1992: 147).

The veneration of the horse: The horse has an influential and valuable role in human life throughout history, these roles have made the horse as a deep - rooted and holy companion and helper for humans.

It is said that among livestock there is no better than a horse, he is the king of the grazers. The Prophet (peace upon him) said: "Goodness is located on both sides of the horse's forehead". And Keykhosro said: Nothing in my kingdom is more honorable than a horse (Khayyam, 1964: 51). The horse was one of the weapons of war, as Khayyam said in Nowruz – Nameh: "The horse is like the clouds of war, no rain except blood rain when shining sword" (ibid, 53).

By examining the contents of the Avesta on horse, we find that this very useful creature was very holy for Iranians. The horse was also associated with the sun, water, wind, and among the Yazata with the camp of Anahita or Aredvisura Anahita, Tištar (Tishtrya), Sun, Derav-Asb or Gush - posht, Soroush, Bahram and Mehr Iazid. In mythology of different nations, the features such as blessing, healing, prophecy, and so on were given to the horses (Qolizadeh, 2009: 205).

For many nations, the horse is a gift from the gods and it causes to conquer and triumph. The connection of the horse to the sun and the Yazata (goddesses) of the sun, the water and its related goddesses, as well as the connection of the horse to other gods and the gods of the various tribes are all the best reasons for the sacredness and veneration of the horse. In addition, this sacredness is due to the services that the horse has done to humankind for thousands of years. In Haoma Yasan (Yasan 11, paragraph 1-2), the horse is named as one of the three holy ones. Indeed, Three Immaculates curse: cow, horse and Haoma. The sacredness of the horse is so high that the unbelievers and demons do not deserve riding a horse (ibid., 206).

Horse as measurement scale of wealth: In the past, in the human societies, the base and the scale of wealth were livestock. When different goods and products were gradually produced, a measure for the material values of objects and even slaves was determined, that was the animal and even wages were based on animals. Some words like money, capital, and property in Latin and Sami languages are also derived from the livestock. As the "Pecuniya" of Latin "Pocón" means cattle and the livestock and capitalism derives from the word 'capital', that is, the head of the animal. In Persian, wealth (maal) means livestock, as the animals were called "maal badi" means vulnerable. Behind the Achaemenid "Daric" coins, usually irregular dents, squares, or square rectangles are found, in which there is a painting like a sleeping animal, head of horse, bird or fish (Tajbakhsh, 1993: 236). Horse has been very important in providing the economy of society and consolidating the foundations of political power of governments, because it shaped the fate of the wars (Gershman, 1970: 10-12).

Color in the Legends: The color in myth is the key to decoding many of the concepts. For example, horse color is usually in agreement with the rider personality. Like the black horse of the kings in *Shahnameh*, which shows their power. Or the color of the character's cover that expresses their inner states, like a yellow color that is a joyful color and suitable for the wedding dresses, and sometimes burial shrouds, this color is proportional to the Zoroastrian belief, who believe that dead souls are present in their celebrations and parties and the dead are partners of their joys (Hinels, 1994: 176). The black color represents the complete subconscious, the color of mourning and darkness. In Europe, black is considered negatively and should not first be interpreted positively in dreams. A person wearing black, the dark house or a black snake are deemed as icons which represent dark and hopelessness. The dead are celebrated in black atmosphere within the church (Aeppli, 1992: 284). In most societies, black is the color of mourning, repentance and grief and often people wearing this color reject the society and opposes its standards (Luscher, 1994: 133). Black, as opposed to white, was normally regarded as Ahriman and the forces related to him such as falsification, wickedness and evil throughout the ancient Iranian legends. From the very beginning of the "Legend of Creation", Ahura Mazda is in the bright Upper-World whereas Ahriman resides in the dark Lower-World. Tištar (Tishtrya), the white angel of the rain in battling against Apaosha, Demon of Draught find him as a black and scary horse (Hinels, 2007: 47). The black color also correlates with the star of the Saturn planet and it is rooted in the Babylonian astronomy of the Sabaean culture, "Haran". Sabaean in Haran built a temple of black stones in a hexagonal form and hung black curtains across it. They showed the planet as the old Indian man (Ahmadnejad, 1990: 41). At the religious ceremony of the Japanese, the black horse was sacrificed for requesting rain from God and the white horse was sacrificed for good weather (Hall, 2004: 26). The connection between black wearing and mourning may be rooted in the evil aspect of death, because life belongs to Ahura Mazda and death belongs to Ahriman. In *Shahnameh*, the black color sometimes finds a completely positive aspect and reflects a kind of majestic magnificence. And this is especially striking about horse color of the kings. The black color is a sign of sadness, sorrow, fear, greatness, ambition and secrecy. This color "represents the absolute boundaries that behind of them, life stops" (Luscher, 1994: 198). Nonetheless, black enjoys aspects of positive connotation such as in the black horses of the Kings in the *Shahnameh* which would signify their power. The horses of heroes such as Kay Khosrow and Siyavosh are black ones too (Hassanli, 2007: 152). From another perspective, black is a mystical and praiseworthy color. "This color, which is the color of the night, is a sign of concealment and secrecy, and a mystic who is wearing a black cloak must hide his creed secrets" (Kashefi Sabzevari, 1971: 68).

Black is one of the oldest colors of the ancient era, which after Islam reveals itself in the first two styles of Persian poetry (Khorasani and Iraqi) with two different faces. In Khorasani style, this color is used with remarkable frequency in sensory analogies and naturalistic illustrations. But in the Iraqi style, it appears with a transformation of content that follows the change of attitudes of writers and poets of this period. In the later style, metaphorical and allusive color dependent interpretations is often expressed using black color, that in some works, such as *Masnavi Ma'navi*, and Rumi's lyrics, it takes educational, punitive and mystical concept. This period coincides with the Mongol invasion and the era of seclusion and the distancing the poets from the courts. Extroversion of Turkestani style has somehow turned into a doleful introversion; so it's natural that dark colors, including black, are more frequent.

White is within the colors which enjoys positive connotation notwithstanding a few exceptions. "The positive white side represents brightness, purity, innocence and timelessness and its negative aspect represents the death, horror, and impenetrability of the cosmos" (Ismail Pour, 1998: 22).

Today, in Tajikistan, white is considered the mourning cloth (Shamia, 1998: 2/665). During the Ghaznavids period, they wore white mourning clothes: "Emir was prepared to funeral rites and the other day when he gave admission, he was wearing turban and qabā (frock) and all kindred, servitors and Tajiks were wearing white clothes". (Beihaqi, 2009: 1/289). In Islamic narrations, the meaning of the خير الثياب or the best color is white. As kaqani says in qasida Mantiq al-tayr:

The branch of the tree is gemmed and it offers the best of the gems

The liliun flower is like a needle and sews the best colors

When your night passed, morning is the day of survival feast

Your fortune is sewn to you in the best of colors

In the mysticism, this color also seen symbolic and the white color represents easy, genuine and guileless heat of the cloak wearer. (Kashefi Sabzevsi, 1971: 67).

Black and White Horse in the Shahnameh Ferdowsi: Among the many nations, the white horse is solar, and is connected to the star's chariot and the because of the reign of the soul, the owner of the chariot, in all directions, it turns into a beautiful imaginative. The shining white of the horse is a symbol of majestic and dignified (Isavi, 2010: 19).

The iconic image of the royal white horse, the steed of spiritual saint and heroes in the spiritual moments and ascension. As the termination of the Prophets, Mohammad Mostafa (pbuh) rides on the white horse to the ascension. All the great Christian characters are riding on a white horse. In the Buddhism, The white horse without a rider is the symbol and symbol of Buddha himself, in India, Kalkine is itself a horse. Vishnu visualize in the form of a champion on a white horse, with a kindled sword in hand, or manifest himself as a giant with a horse's head, or described as a white horse (Chevallier, 2005: 161).

Ancient people sacrificed horse in God's presence for the sun to preserve the continuance of the sky and sun's movement. The horse with wings represents the sun. In the most cases, the horse is praised along with the moon. In the Shahnameh, they ask Zal what are the two horses, one white and the other black, which are in vain trying to reach each other?

Then the second Mubid questioned him and said-

Thou whose head is high in air,

Rede me now of coursers twain;

Both are noble, swift to speed;

Black as storms in the night one steed,

The other crystal, white and fair,

They race for ever and haste in vain,

Towards a goal they never gain.

And Zal answered they are the same day and night:

Two shining horses, one black, one white.

That run for ever in rapid flight;

The one is the day, the other the night,

That count the throbs of the heavens height,
Like the hunted prey from the following chase
They flee, yet neither wins the race.

In one adjunct verse on some copies of Shahnameh, Sohrab' Horse also denoted sun.

Strength and behavior of his red - brown sharp horse (Tiz Boor) closely resembled a sun.

Essentially in the minds of Indo-European peoples, the horse was a special sign of the sun goddess and goddess of the moon and the goddess of wind. Bahram (Verethragna) in his third manifestation and Vishnu in his tenth manifestation appeared in white and beautiful horses. Psychoanalysts consider horse as a mental subconscious symbol. Black horse is also a subconscious mental symbol, as in Shahnameh Ferdowsi, Keykhosrou also find the horse of the hero Siyavash (his father), Shabrang Behzād, after years of disappearing near "water" and in fact, it is the rest of his heroic existence:

Herd of horses came to drink water, Behzad behold and saw Key, and he sighed heavily

,Keykhosrou found the horse of the hero Siyavash, a strong and high horse

After years of disappearing near "water" and in fact, it is the rest of his heroic existence

Horse is one of the most prominent symbols that donates instinctive life to the unconscious mind of man.

As it was said, the color of the horse is often proportionate to the character of its rider in so far as the black horses of the kings in Shahnameh showing their strength. Although the black color in the mythology goes back to the Ahriman; like Shabrang Behzād who came to Kay Khosrow is a metaphor of evil.

Such was the thought of the hero that Ahriman came to this young man

Of course, the black horse in the belief of ancient Iranians was a divine and auspicious creature. In the Shahnameh, the black color sometimes finds a completely positive aspect and represents a majestic glory:

Khosrow launched his black stallion, like a ship go to the court

The Black Horse is one of the most excellent horses in the wars. And it is also the name of the Esfandiyar horse.

The kings of Shahnameh all have black horses and the black in this case symbolizes the power and majestic glory. For example, during the transfer of power from the Parthian to the Sassanid, Ardashir, the founder of this dynasty take his favorite black horse, Ardavan with him. And this transfer of black horse can be a sign of power transmission.

Finally the black and white horses of the famous king were brought.

It is also the case when Bahram Chubin disobeyed Khosrow Parviz and was trying to dethrone Khosrow Parviz, black color in a way appears on his piebald horse and his baldric is described in the black.

O king behold that rider with piebald horse, with white frock and black baldric between the corps

Esfandiar believes that his victory against Rustam is dependent on his black horse and he says to Rustam: "If I put the golden saddle on the black and I put the royal hat on my head, I'll arrest you".

If I put the golden saddle on the black horse and put the royal hat on my head,

I'll kill your horse and arrest you to the king, so there was no fight, no enmity,

I would be told that you are guiltless, I would beg him and adjudicate on this dispute

Ardashir together with Golnar departs from their place at night as quickly as possible and they do not use ordinary horses, because they know that the speed and the strength of the royal horses is higher. Here, the selected horses are black and white, which indicate the value and importance of both types of horses in

Shahnameh. That is why Ferdowsi has created a beautiful antonym between white and black in the second verse.

That groom came to Ardeshir inopportune time
Then he brought the best black and the white horses of the famous king
He commended to Bahman and spoke to him
He said to sit on the black horse and wear Chinese silky cloak

The black horse in Shahnameh is a symbol of vigor, strength and power. When Bijan killed Haman to take vengeance for the murder of Siavash, fastened his head to the girth strap of his horse, Shabrang. Because of huge power of his horse, Bijan uses Shabrang strap for decapitated human and boars.

When haman was beheaded, he fastened his head to the girth strap of his horse

In this verse, Shabrang is a powerful and vicious horse, because only the vicious horse be able to do it. The Black Horse also symbolizes the speed in Shahnameh, so that Šīd-Asb rode a horse that is like Nile River, run like a fast deer, and its body is like a strong and big elephant.

Šīd-Asb like moon come back again, he rode on a horse that is like Nile River, run like a fast deer, and its body is like a strong and big elephant, he goes to the field and fetch spears and turn back with a black horse.

In shahnameh, the white horse is a symbol of originality, nobility and blessedness. The white horse gave birth a foal for Alexander. (The royal horses were of original horses and they did not accept any foal). A foal that his breast was like a lion and legs were short.

That same night, the white horse gave birth a foal that his breast was like a lion and legs were short. Caesar asked his son, Shabgir to adorn the mare's mane and brush the foal

White horse in the Shahnameh is fortunate and propitious, Soroush Angel with green clothes riding on a white horse came to Khosrow Parviz.

The moment mountain roared, the angel Soroush was appeared
All his garments were green with a white horse, when Khosrow saw him, he became brave
When Soroush approached, took Khosrow's hand, this is not surprising by pure Yazdan
Angel took him away malicious enemy, easily bring him other place
Khosrow asked what is thy name, he was speaking and crying
Angel said my name is Soroush, you're safe, get away from the roar
From here on, you'll be king over the world, you should be a pious person
After eight and thirty you'll take the throne

Charmeh is a white horse that Ferdowsi has described him such attributes as swift, speedy, pacer, and the stone color. Zal sent an envoy from Kabul to Sam with two horses. If one cannot continue his path, take the other one. And the second one is like a hard and strong steel.

The envoy with a swift and strong white horse run like wind

Manouchehr furiously ride swift horse (Charmeh). In these verses, Ferdowsi shows a clear picture of the army that Manouchehr caparisoned his horse and with that white horse went around the army quickly.

New leader was filled with hatred and enmity, sitting on the white horse

He caparisoned his horse and with that white horse went around the army quickly.

The horse in the funeral ritual is a symbol of death and takes away the soul of the deceased², especially the black horse, Epona – divine Celtic horse – widely praised in Europe as a funerary goddess. In the ancient burial ceremony, including Scythian rituals and ceremonies, the horse was considered as a valuable property of the deceased and was buried with him. In *Shahnameh*, the catacomb described by Ferdowsi for burial of Rostam is very similar to the Scythian catacomb. Particularly, in the front of the catacombs, a grave were dug for Rakhsh' burial and the animal is buried standing in the grave. This kind of interment of the hero's horse standing beside him represent the horse's expectation for his rider:

They hold two coffins, they thought of the masses like the wind
 They built a cave in the garden and raised his head to the cloud
 They equalize these two golden coffins and laid like a fortunate man
 They buried Rakhsh in the grave, like a standing horse

Black horse has a dual nature in Iranian mythology. In the Avestan sources, it is a symbol of Div (demon), and in the later sources can be a good beast. In public opinion, the black color is the result of combining harmful and bad humors. In some sources, the black horse has a demon character and adapts to Black Div. in the eight Yasht (Tištar Yasht, paragraph 21) (Tishtrya), Apaosha, Demon of Draught appeared as a black and scary horse without mane and ear and with a black and short tail fights with Tištar. In Switzerland, seeing a black horse is an indication of the imminent death of the sick person. Still in Russian beliefs, the black horse is the herald of death (Qoli Zadeh, 2009: 226). Black horse in Ferdowsi's *Shahnam* is sometimes a symbol of death, one of the most famous figures in Iran is Siyavash, who was passing through the fire during the trial of innocence and purity riding on a black horse, and he was killed prematurely and unjustly. This could be a confirmation that black horses were a symbol of death and mortality.

Siyavash rode on undaunted, and his white robes and ebon steed shone forth between the flames
 And their anger was reflected upon his helmet of gold.

In *Shahnameh* Ferdowsi, in some other cases, the Black Horse is spoken, one is in the wars of Turanian with Kay Goshtasb, in this war, Zarir, the brother of Key Goshtasb, rides on a black horse and goes to war and is killed by the hands of the Biderfsh and his black horse is captured by Biderash. Then Zarrir kills Biderafsh in revenge slaying of his father and returns the black horse to Key Goshtasb's family and in the battle of Rostam with Esfaniyar, Esfaniyar commanded:

He commended to saddle the black horse and returned it back to the king

The white horse in *Shahnameh* is sometimes a symbol and a sign of death, as in the story of Yazdgerd, the father of Bahram Gur, who according to prescribing physician goes to the side of "Su" spring to treat his nose bleeding and then a white horse come out of the river. After domestication of the white horse by the king, suddenly it kills Yazdgerd by kicking and goes to the spring again and hides.

When he arrived near the Spring of Su
 He came out of his cradle and saw the sea
 One white horse got out of the sea
 With corpulent backside like grave and short leg
 Roared and kicked him on his head
 His head and diadem fell to the ground
 Yazdgerd came from the soli and buried beneath earth
 What are you looking for in the high seven heavens?!

Discussion

The black horse in the mythology of many tribes has a positive, negative aspect and dual nature. On the one hand, they are the herald of death and ruin and drought and on the other hand, they represent glory, splendor, strength, speed, victory and ..., these attributes can also be found in Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*. This study addresses and compares these issues. As in this valuable work, the black horse has been one of the finest and greatest horses that played a special role in wars and the kings of *Shahnameh* all have black horses, and the black in this case symbolizes the power and majestic splendor. In *Shahnameh* Ferdowsi, the white horse is sometimes a sign and a symbol of death. As in the story of Yazdgerd, the father of Bahram Gur, who according to a prescribing physician goes to the side of "Su" spring to treat his nose bleeding and then a white horse came out of the river. After domestication of the white horse by the king, suddenly it kills Yazdgerd by kicking and goes to the spring again and hides. And this white horse will cause the king to die. Similarly, the black horse in the *Shahnameh* of Ferdowsi is sometimes a symbol of death, one of the most famous figures of Iran, Siyavash, who was passing through the fire during the trial of innocence and purity riding on a black horse, and he was killed prematurely and unjustly. This could be a confirmation that black horses were a symbol of death and mortality.

According to attestation of an eyewitness and also, according to Fraser's report, in Ireland during the fire festival of John the Apostle, after all the villages jumped over the fire, a wooden chamber with 2.5 meters in height was appeared, there was a horse on one side of it. The chamber was covered with a white sheet and the person carrying it was hidden under the cover. The audiences welcome the chamber with loud cries: White horse! White horse! The chamber with a horse's head jumped the fire, then threw the head on the audience. When the narrator asked what the horse's head meant, he answered that the horse's head means all the livestock. In this way, this spirit of wheat, with its dynamism, its productive power and its courage, is a symbol of affluence and prosperity.

Occasionally in the burial art of Christians of the ancient times is found a horse in the Roman vestibules, which represents soul guide to another world. From the point of view of the Christians, the meaning of pictorial horse on some of the burial art is that: The time has come for me to depart, I have been participated in the competition, and I have finished the route. The death horses are black, such as Carus the Greeks' goddess of death (Chevallier, 2005: 145).

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