

## Comparative study of the Achaemenian reliefs and Achaemenian metal objects

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### Abstract

The Achaemenians who were the heirs of the native and former races art, civilization and culture in Iran plateau and also conquerors of Medians, Babylonians, Assyrians and Egyptians naturally they had been influenced by the native, former cultures and civilization, art and culture of independent nations in their art and culture. They had used the ideas of the Assyrians, Egyptians and Greeks and other dependent nations their architectural lateral works in addition to construction of the monuments. This article aims to investigate this question that: Is this influence seen in the metal objects and their reliefs or not? Investigating all remained works in terms of artistic and aesthetic aspects is out of limit of this article so; we only studied some examples of the remained reliefs in Pasargadae and Metropolis with some metal objects and then investigated the common reliefs between Pasargadae reliefs and Metropolis reliefs with discovered object. The research methodology is historical, analytical and comparative and the research tools are Pasargadae and Metropolis reliefs and the world museums metal objects.

**Key words:** Achaemenians, reliefs, metal objects, Metropolis, Pasargadae

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### 1- Introduction

Cyrus the Great in 550 BC abolished Median government by victory on Astyages the Median king and by conquering on Lidia he could access to significant part of Anatolia peninsula and their culture and art that the outstanding effect of this influence is seen in the winged man in Pasargadae.

The successors of Cyrus followed his conquests and established a government ruled out from north of India to south of Europe and north of Africa, Egypt, Libya and Mesopotamia and all these nations were attended at the specific time of year in the Metropolis and offered gifts to the king that the reliefs of Apadana is an outstanding example of the splendor of the Achaemenians. The ever-increasing power of Cyrus and his planned domination on the dependent countries and taxing had caused to accumulation of significant wealth in his court.

Therefore, the Achaemenian kings began to carve these reliefs to showing their power in their courts by imitation of the Assyrians. Accumulation of wealth was expanded in all over the country by management based on economic development. Hence, attention to expensive metals caused to creation of metal objects and attraction of foreign artists and construction of workshops and supervision and management of Iranian specific art leading to creation of works different from other artists.

### 2- Comparative study of the Achaemenian reliefs and Achaemenian metal objects

#### 2-1- Reliefs

In analysis of all Achaemenian reliefs, generally, they are divided into separated issues as constituents of a scene including:

Human reliefs divided into six categories: king and successor, aristocrats and great men, soldiers and officers, dependent nations' representatives, servants and captives



Human figure (Sabuki, 2000, 262)

### 2-2- Plant reliefs

There are many evidences on the importance of the plants in the Achaemenian culture and art so that in the margin and texture of this period reliefs the plants have been curved. The plants seen this period reliefs are:

- a- Rosette flower that was seen mostly with twelve leaves and only was seen twenty four leaves in one case: it is symbol of sun and its protecting force on the earth (Lavi, 1976, 48).



Rosette flower (Sabuki, 2007, 87)

- b- Lotus: it is symbol of human growth and perfection and also sign of kingdom(Vaziri, 1998, 131)



Lotus figure (Sabuki, 2007, 177)

- c- Decoration palm: it is symbol of fertility, life, affluence and abundance(Lavi, 1976, 48)



Decoration tree (Sabuki, 2007, 200)

- d- Cyprus or pine: it is symbol of life, freshness, greenness, eternity and gratification (Soltanzadeh, 2001, 66)(Moradi Qyesabadi, 2000, 39).



Pine tree (Sabuki, 2007, 97)

### 2-3- Animal reliefs

Animal reliefs in this period are divided into two classes:

a-the animals which used by humans like horse, humpbacked cow or without humpback cow, ass, lion, duck, camel, ram, zebra, caribou and wild goat



Horse relief (Metropolis)

b-the animals curved without humans like cow and lion



Lion relief (Sabuki, 2007, 197)

The figure (a) was more common than figure (b)(Moradi Qyesabadi, 2000, 54).

**2-4- Mythical creatures**

Mythical reliefs are divided into three groups in this period:

- a- human mythical role: we have only one example that belongs to the famous



figure of Cyrus or winged human.

Winged human (Dadvar, 2012, 236)

- b- human and animal mythical reliefs: they are creatures by combination of human and animal that three types are seen in the carvings: a creature with human head, with lion body and an

eagle wing: a creature like a man with tail of a fish(incomplete); the creature as a man with cow legs(incomplete)(Dadvar, 2012, 11)



The man with fish body (Dadvar,2012, 237)

- c-Animals mythical reliefs:** Three types are seen as: a creature with lion head and body and an eagle wing; a creature with lion head and body,

eagle wing, scorpion tail and horn of caribou; a creature with an eagle head and wing and claw, lion body and hippo horn.



Human and animal combinatory curving ( Sabuki, 2006, 45)

**3- Objects**

Generally, the objects seen in the reliefs of Achaemenian period are divided into three categories:

- a- metals(daily tools): the observed tools are as follows:  
fireplace, the container for burning lute, throne, ax, bracelet, stick, chair, the perfume container,

basket, curtain, fly, pitcher, wine cup, jar, cup, horses and camels bells, buttons, laces, sign of a carpet on the west entrance of the Hundred pillar north entrance that Tillie the Italian archeologist has repaired it. This carpet is similar to Pazyryk carpet and the only difference is using lion relief instead of cow (Qayebadi, 200, 62-63).



**Amphora relief** (Sabuki, 2006, 81)

- b- jewelries (decorative tools): include earrings in the shape of ring, bracelet and necklace, buttons and drag scabbard made of valuable metals(Qeyasabadi, 2000, 58).



**Bracelet relief** ( Sabuki, 2006, 84)

- c- Armaments include cart, drag, arrow, spear and shield that Mortazavi has divided them to oval, rectangular, half-circled and circular(Mortazavi, 1997, 118-119)



Sword figure ( Sabuki, 2006, 81)

**9-Winged globe:** this symbol is seen in three types in Achaemenian period reliefs:

- a- winged globe without human figure
- b- winged globe with human figure extorted from the ring
- c- winged globe with human figure that is not extorted from the ring

This symbol consists of a circle with two wings around, two hanging string that there is a tail under the ring that in most times a man has extorted as profile inside the ring(Shahbazi, 1998, 67).



Winged globe figure (Dadvar, 2012, 237)

**10- The battle of lion and cow**

This relief consists of a lion and a cow that it yet a puzzle for the archeologists. The lion fighting with a cow is seen only in Metropolis which a strong and fierce lion attacks on a strong cow

with a necklace with rosette flowers (12 leaves). Here the lion has put its paws on the back of the cow and the head of the cow is bent backward looking the lion (Qeyasabadim 2000,56)(Pourhagani, 1998, 42)





Lion figure ( Sabuki, 2006, 197)

**Decorative reliefs on the Achaemenian period metal objects**

The reliefs on the metal objects contain human, animal, plant or their combinatory and geometrical figures.

**4- Human reliefs**

These reliefs are seen as putting crown on head with louts on the hand.



Human reliefs (Pop, 1958, 110)

**4-1- Animal reliefs** including the battle of lion and cow, wild goat, dog, ram, buffalo, deer,

sheep, rooster, swan, horse, duck, snake, lizard and eagle



Sheep (author, 2014, Reza Abbasi museum)

**4-2- Plant**

Louts, eight sided flower, palm, 24 leaflets flower



24 leaflets flower (Ozgenm 2006, 134)

Combinatory: winged man, winged lion, horned lion, winged lion with Bath god head, horned cow, winged goat, winged bird, winged hen.



Winged man (Miho museum web)

Also horizontal and vertical lines or spot decoration are seemed on the metal objects.



Amphora (Miho museum web)

**3- Comparative study of the Achaemenian reliefs and Achaemenian metal objects**

These reliefs are divided into two groups:

**4-3- Objects or epigraphs with common reliefs:**

**4-1-1-Human reliefs**

Among all reliefs used in the epigraphs only a king with long beard and louts in his hand is seen.



Human relief (Pop, 1958, 110)(Sabuki, 2000, 262)

**4-1-2-Plant reliefs**

There are many evidences on the importance of the plants in the Achaemenian culture and art so

that in the margin and texture of this period relief the plants seen in these period reliefs are:

3-1-2-1- Rosette flower that was seen mostly with twelve leaflets and o twenty four leaflets





Rosette flower (Sabuki, 2007, 87)(ozgen, 2006, 134)

**4-1-2-2-Lotus**

Lotus (Sabuki, 2007, 177)(Simpson, 2005, 121)

The containers with animal reliefs are seen in epigraphs

**4-1-3-Animal reliefs**

**a- lion**



Lion figure (Sabuki, 2007, 197)(Kirshman, 1992, 245)

**4-1-3-2-Cow**



Cow figure (Sabuki, 2007, 28)(America, Art museum)

**4-1-3-3-Horse**



Horse (Metropolis)(Ziaypour, 1957, 190)

**4-1-3-4-Goat**

Goat is seen in Metropolis only in one case with sword sheath of the Median soldier.



Goat (Miho museum)

**4-1-3-5-Ram**



Ram (Sabuki, 2007, 82)(author, 2014, Reza Abbasi museum)

**4-1-3-6-Sheep**



Sheep (Sabuki, 2007, 82)(author, 2014, Reza Abbasi museum)

**4-1-3-7-Duck**

Duck is seen in reliefs at the end of a man bow that it is hardly distinguished.



Duck relief (Dadvar, 2012, 62)

**4-1-3-8- Snake**



Snake (Dadvar, 2012, 236) (Pop, 1959, 125)

**5-Combinatory creatures**

Combinatory motifs are divided into three groups in this period:

5-1-Human mythical figure is seen only in one case and it belongs to Cyrus or winged man.



Winged man (Dadvar, 2012, 236)(Miho museum)

Among combinatory figures with human head only human head with lion body and eagle wing is common in reliefs and metal objects.

**5-2-Human and animal mythical figures**



Combinatory figure of human and animal (Sabuki, 2007, 45)(Pop, 1959, 179)

**5-3-Combinatory lion and other animals' figures**



Combinatory lion and other animals' figures (Qayesabdi, 2000, 55)(Armitage museum)

## 6-Metal objects seen in the epigraphs

### 6-1-Amphora



Amphora (Sabuki, 2007, 79)( Sabuki, 2007, 81)



Amphora (Miho museum)(Powel Gate museum)

### 6-2-Semi-circular cup





Semi-circular cup figure (Sabuki, 2007, 79)( Miho museum)

**6-3-Shallow cup**



Shallow cup figure (Sabuki, 2007, 85)

**6-4-Bracelet and arm strap**



Arm strap figure (Sabuki, 2007, 84) (Sabuki, 2007, 81)



Arm strap figure (Kirshman, 1992, 249)(Akbarzadeh, 2012, 33)

**6-5-Cart**



Cart figure (Sabuki, 2007, 121) (Akbarzadeh, 2012, 57)

#### 6-6-Censer



Censer figure ( Sabuki, 2000, 262)

#### 6-7-Earring



Simple earring (Ziaypour, 1957,191)(Sabuki, 2007, 177)

#### 6-8-Sword

Sword figure (Sabuki, 2007, 81) (Akbarzadeh, 2012, 88)

#### Conclusion

The past nations and dependent races arts were influential in the Achaemenian period. Their art was not merely imitation of the past people and

dependent nations and mostly animal figures on epigraphs are seen on the metal objects. No narration is seen in any metal objects in this period. In contrary to reliefs there is no combinatory scene in metallic objects. Human figures are seen less in metallic objects in contrary to epigraphs.



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