

**EXTENDED  
ABSTRACT****Influence of Neo-Elamite and Neo-Assyrian Illustrations on the Achaemenid Depictions of Levee  
A Case Study: Comparison of the Depictions of Levee in Apadana of Persepolis (from Achaemenid Civiliza-  
tion), Kidin Hutran Bronze Cup (from the Neo-Elamite Civilization Period), and Paintings of Til Barsip (from the  
Neo-Assyrian Civilization Period)****Ali Asghar Salahshoor<sup>1\*</sup>, Pouria Heydari Mehr<sup>2</sup>****1. Ph.D. in Archeology, Faculty of Letters and Humanities, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran****2. M.Sc. in Archeology, Faculty of Conservation, Art University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran****\*Corresponding author: Ali Asghar Salahshoor.****Email: aa.salahshoor@ut.ac.ir**

Received: 26.09.2019

Accepted: 21.11.2019

DOI: pyk.2019.15325/10.22055

**Introduction**

One of the fundamental characteristics of Achaemenid art is its combinatorial nature. Depiction of the levee in this period is a clear manifestation of this important feature. Since the use of visual media in the ancient world was limited, rock relief and wall paintings have been useful and efficient tools for showing the political power of the state. One of these scenes is the levee ceremony, during which the king let his subjects or their representatives come to the court in order to listen to their problems, issues, and political-economic conditions. The levee was also held when the king was given tributes by conquered states or decided to offer gifts. The rock reliefs depicting levee belonging to the Achaemenid Empire, especially in Persepolis, reflect these features very clearly. The authors of this paper believe that the artistic influences of Neo-Assyrians and Neo-Elamites on the Achaemenids are evident, especially in the representation of levee in Achaemenid architecture. This impact is particularly obvious in the hybrid animal motifs, such as Shirdal (Griffin), winged cows with human heads (lamassu), clothes, weapons, utensils, depiction of battle scenes (e.g., the battle of the royal hero with real and hybrid animals), porters, and fortification and treasury tablets. Therefore, the present research intends to compare the Achaemenid art with those of the Neo-Assyria and Neo-Elam. Regarding the temporal and spatial correspondence of Achaemenid with these two empires, the scene of levee depicted in Persepolis was compared with those of Neo-Elamite Kidin Hutran Bronze Cup and Neo-Assyrian paintings of Til Barsip. The aim was to identify the similarities and differences of these three civilizations and determine the extent to which the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Elamite civilizations influenced the depiction of the levee in Apadana of Persepolis. The present research aims to answer questions, such as what are the similarities and differences of the Achaemenid levee depicted in Persepolis and those depicted in Neo-Elamite Kidin Hutran Bronze Cup as well as Neo-Assyrian paintings of Til Barsip, and whether the royal levee scenes of Persepolis aimed to further political purposes and express the political power of the Achaemenids. In line with this study, Stronach in "Icons of Dominion: Review Scenes at Til Barsip and Persepolis" (Stronach, 2002) compared the scenes represented in Til Barsip and Persepolis. Moreover, he determined the legitimacy and power of the Assyrian and Achaemenid kings based on these scenes.

**Keyword:**Apadana of Persepolis  
Kidin Hutran Bronze Cup Levee  
Til Barsip

## **Methodology**

The present historical study described and analyzed the scenes of levee depicted in Apadana of Persepolis, and those of Til Barsip and Kidin Hutran Bronze Cup which probably served as models for Achaemenids. The basis of the analysis has been the careful examination of rock reliefs (Apadana), paintings (Til Barsip), and the engravings (Kidin Hutran Bronze Cup). Accordingly, the similarities and differences are shown more clearly through this analytical comparison. The required data of this study were collected through library resources.

## **Findings**

The levee depicted in Apadana of Persepolis was compared with the engravings of Neo-Elamite Kidin Hutran Bronze Cup and the Neo-Assyrian paintings of Til Barsip and their similarities and differences were analyzed. Based on this analysis, it can be said that they have general and in-detail similarities. The overall composition of the three scenes is identical to each other; in all the scenes the king is sitting on a throne and lets his subjects in. All the three levees depict the scene of presenting gifts or tributes to the king by his subjects who are being led to the king by the court guides. Furthermore, in all the scenes, high-ranking men, gunmen, commanders, and court attendants are standing behind the king to accompany him in this ceremony. In addition, in all three scenes, the kings have rested their feet on a pedestal and hold a flower in their hands. In general, all three scenes of levee aim to portray the important role of the king at the top of the power hierarchy, as well as the authority, order, and extent of Neo-Elamite, Neo-Assyrian, and Achaemenid empires. This is also indicated by the depiction of representatives from various nations bringing tributes (or gifts) for the king, the presence of the nobles, aristocrats, officials of the country and army, as well as their submission to the king and the monarchy.

## **Conclusion**

One of the most important illustrations of the Achaemenids which is a manifestation of their power and legitimacy is the scene of the levee. The Achaemenids, due to the expansion of their conquered territories and tribes, for the depiction of their power and legitimacy were strongly influenced by the art of their royal tribes, especially Assyrian and Elamites, that were the center of such concepts. The artistic and iconographic influence of Neo-Elam civilization is even more than Neo-Assyrian in some cases, such as the Achaemenid court dress, position of the Median prince, levee ceremony accompanied by giving tributes (or gifts), presence of animals, specifying the position of the prince behind the king, court guide holding a cane, backrest of the throne, and the pedestal on which the king rested his feet. However, the influence of Assyrian art should not be overlooked. The raised hands of the prince, cane and flower in the hands of the king, and presence of high-ranking men, nobles, gunmen, and commanders in the levee are signs of the influence of the royal levee scenes depicted in paintings of Til Barsip.

## **References**

- Stronach, David, (2002), Icons of Dominion: Review Scenes at Til Barsip and Persepolis, *Iranica Antiqua* 37: 373-402