

**EXTENDED
ABSTRACT****Comparative Study of the Sculpture of Lamassu in Assyrian and Achaemenid Art****Madonna Lia^{1*} Abolghasem Dadvar²**

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Introduction

There were numerous myths about animals in the ancient world and mythology, many of which were considered sacred creatures. The gods were sometimes portrayed as hybrid and strange animals to make the ancient human beings have a better understanding of their grandeur and holiness. Among the most important elements in the ancient world and mythology were the imaginary and mythical creatures that were created from the combination of two or more important creatures and were considered to be extraordinarily powerful. These imaginary beings reflected the beliefs of the artists that created them. Moreover, most of the Mesopotamia gods had an animalistic form so that they had a human's face and an animal's body or vice versa. Lamassu was one of the hybrid gods in the Assyrian civilization which was often considered to provide protection from evil and guard the palace.

The tradition of using this huge hybrid creature influenced the Achaemenid as well. The present study hypothesized that the traditions, rituals, worship of gods, and cultural and religious themes have a profound effect on the development of art in various civilizations. Therefore, the art of different civilizations cannot be considered the same due to their influences on each other. The present study aimed to compare two Assyrian and Achaemenid lamassu sculptures to show the development and perfection of the visual elements in the sculpture belonging to the Achaemenid art to raise awareness about the intellectual and cultural system of civilizations. In this regard, Abolghasem Dadvar and Roya Roozbehani (2016) in their study thoroughly introduced and described the hybrid animals and their classification and also compared the Achaemenid and Assyrian relief.

Fariba Foruzanfar (2013) in her article titled "Investigation on the Sculptures of Lamassu in Persepolis and Khorsabad Palace" mentions the similarities and differences of the meaning of the mythical sculptures of lamassu in Persepolis and Khorsabad palace. However, the aforementioned article lacks adequate figures and comparison tables. The distinctive feature of the present study was its emphasis on the differences and similarities of the sculptures of lamassu in all of the cases that could be found in "Nineveh", "Khorsabad", and "Nimrud". Furthermore, this study presented the subject differently way by focusing on the sculpture and comparing its significance in the myths of two civilizations by drawing a comparison table.

Keyword:Achaemenid art
Assyrian art
Comparative study
Human-headed winged bull
Lamassu sculpture

Methodology

This comparative study compared the Assyrian and Achaemenid lamassu sculptures to identify their differences and similarities and the level of influence of these two civilizations on each other. The research data were descriptive-historical which were collected through library research and document analysis using previously written sources.

Results

The faces of these animals are usually the result of the combination of visual shapes with various components inspired by natural models. They were found for the first time in Mesopotamia and Egypt. Shediu or lamassu was a manifestation of the servitude of man to God. Sculptures of these creatures were placed on the gates or at the entrances of the temples in the form of winged oxen. In addition to being guardians, the sacrifices were offered in their presence to protect people from war, disease, and death. The important point is that the head of this figure is human which indicates that besides possessing the power of an ox and the speed and sharp vision of an eagle, it is endowed with human wisdom, intelligence, and tact.

These giant creatures symbolized the power and wealth of the empire for the Achaemenids. They were created to show the glory and authority of the Achaemenid kings to the representatives and guests who came to Persepolis to attend the Nowruz ceremony, meet the king, and present gifts to him. In Achaemenid art, humans were not the criterion, therefore, their sculptures were not in the form of human, animal, or animal-human. The significance of lamassu for Achaemenids was never related to the worship of God. The history of the religious texts of Zoroastrianism dates back to the time before the advent of the Achaemenid Empire; however, it had a great impact on the emergence of Achaemenid art. One of the major differences between the Assyrian and Achaemenid lamassu is the attention paid to the proportions in Iranian art. The lamassu is a mythical and hybrid animal creature that consists of the human head, ox body, and eagle wings in both civilizations. Achaemenid art was a blend of common various elements during the development of its empire. It had borrowed many foreign elements; nevertheless, the result was a completely new Achaemenid art.

Conclusion

The Achaemenid sculpture is devoid of the violence of Assyrian art and offers an intrinsic rich life that cannot be found in the Assyrian artifacts. Achaemenid animals possess vital force, accuracy, softness, flexibility, and simplicity. Full-length sculptures are rarely seen in Achaemenid art and are largely dependent on architecture. In the Achaemenid faith, there is no place for ritual and religious figures, and the Achaemenid traditions do not seem to be inclined towards special sculptures for worship. Therefore, it can be said that the Achaemenids ignored the Assyrian tradition in this regard.

Sources:

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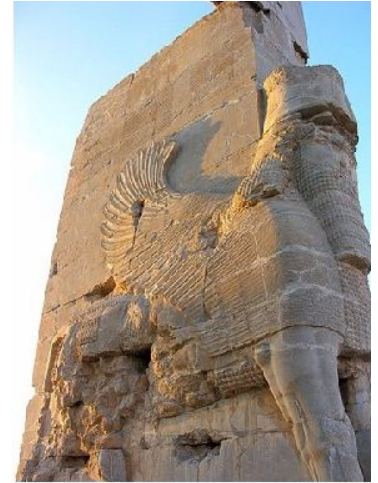


Figure 1
Lamassu, Gate of All Nations
source: www.Wikipedia.com



Figure 2
Head of lamassu with a round crown
source: www.metropolitan.com