

Original Research Article

Comparative Study of the Griffin in Achaemenid Art and Seljuk Art*

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Abstract

Problem statement: The griffin is one of the composite creatures in ancient mythology that appears with the body of a lion, the ear of a horse, the head, and the wings of an eagle. This creature has been present during the historical periods of Iran, which shows its importance among Iranians. However, there are ambiguous points about how the griffin of the pre-Islamic era is related to the griffin of the Islamic era. Therefore, in this research, the griffin has been studied as a popular ornamental motif in two important historical periods of Iran; the Achaemenids in ancient times and Seljuk in the Islamic era.

Research objective: This article aims to study the manner of impressions, differences, and similarities between the griffin in Achaemenid art and Seljuk art by considering the comparative approach.

Research method: For this purpose, using the descriptive-analytical method, twenty-one artworks including the griffin in both historical periods were analyzed and compared in separate tables.

Conclusion: The results of the comparative study reveal that despite the differences, these motifs were often similar in terms of structural characteristics, physical posture, and visual features. Symbolically, they often had common concepts, such as the royal essence, power and wealth, and the guardian of the treasure and the palace. Influenced by religious beliefs, they were a symbol of goodness and blessing, magic invalidation, and protecting the tree of life. However, in some Achaemenid artworks, the griffin has been shown with a demonic aspect, in the conflict between good and evil. In general, the number of similarities and differences indicates that the griffin in the Seljuk period was affected by its similar motif in the Achaemenids, and factors such as political dominance, the authority of the monarchy, religious beliefs, and folk culture played a role in their formation and application.

Keywords: *Griffin, Eagle-head lion, Myth, Composite creatures, Achaemenid, Seljuk.*

Introduction

Being familiar with ancient history, culture, mythology, and beliefs can help to perceive Iranian art. In particular, although there are studies related

to Iranian art, ambiguity can be seen in some points.

One way to respond to the vagueness is the study of remnants and evidence of different historical periods as a pictorial history of Iran. Among the favorable

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motifs among Iranians which are used on the reliefs, seals, metalworks, and potteries throughout history, are composite creatures. These creatures, which are the result of human imagination, are depicted in the combination form of human beings, animals, plants, and objects with magical power. The most functional of them is Shirdal, in Greek: Griffin or Gryphon, which is considered one of the legendary birds in ancient mythology. Its unusual figure includes a lion's body and an eagle's head (MacKenzie, 1971, 24), and sometimes it is displayed with eagle wings, claws, and horse's ears. In some inscriptions belonging to middle Persia, the griffin is called Baškuč (Buyaner, 2005, 19), and it was a mythical creature used throughout Iran's history, both the pre-Islamic period and the Islamic period. The continuity in the presence of the griffin indicates its significance among Iranians and relevance to their beliefs and religious convictions, which needs more study to approve. By considering the influence of motifs used in the ancient periods on the Islamic motifs and the presence of the griffin in the most remarkable eras, which means Achaemenid as a pre-Islamic period and Seljuk as an Islamic period, concerning observed griffin motifs in the remnants obtained from mentioned periods, this question is raised that how much the griffin in Achaemenid art can impressed on the same motif in Seljuk art. Therefore, the subject of this paper is a comparative study of the griffin in both the Achaemenid period and the Seljuk period from the point of view of symbolism, and visual values, and the purpose is to find similarities and differences between these motifs, to recognize the process of the effectiveness and impressiveness to respond ambiguities related to references, factors, and motivators of their function. The factors can be inspired by culture, economy, politics, etc., by referring to these factors, the reasons for using the motifs to discover the connection between pre-Islamic art and Islamic art can be estimated.

Research Method

In terms of purpose, the study is fundamental research, and in terms of methodology, it is based

on a descriptive-analytical approach. In the end, a comparative method is used to analyze the results. The method of collecting information is the documentation library method, which includes the study of books and research papers and on-site work with taking notes to collect information. Therefore, by searching online websites related to museums and authentic auctions from all over the world, twenty-one artworks containing the griffin motif belonging to both historical periods of Achaemenid and Seljuk are randomly selected. To accomplish the research, firstly, a line drawing of the griffins on different items is depicted and the results are organized in two separate tables. In these tables, the authors will try to recognize the structural features of all items based on the descriptive method and the probable reasons for their application together, and concepts related to them are discussed using an analytical method. The obtained features, which include physical states, and other motifs depicted along with the griffin and the griffin symbology in both historical periods, are analyzed according to the comparative method. Similarities, differences, and the way to influence are determined. Moreover, to evaluate precisely, all items are visually studied and compared with each other.

Literature Review

Some Encyclopedias and books related to mythology and symbols indicate the origin of the griffin among ancient nations and its importance in people's beliefs. Some of these books include "Illustrated Dictionary of Symbols in Eastern and Western Art" written by James Hall (2001), "The Illustrated Book of Signs & Symbols" written by Miranda Bruce-Mitford (2015), "Bulfinch's Greek and Roman Mythology" written by Thomas Bulfinch (2000) and "The Encyclopædia Britannica, A Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and General Literature" written by DePuy (1892). Some researchers expertly studied the griffin characterizations; Taheri (2012) in "Gopat and Shirdal in the Ancient East" perused the archetype of the griffin in the ancient east till the end of the Iron Age. Doustshenas and Salehi Kakhaki (2012) in "The Role Of Composite Beasts In Saljuques Potteries" investigated the

presence of the griffin in the Seljuk art. Lerner (1991), in "Some So-Called Achaemenid Objects from Pazyryk" studied this composite creature in the Pazyryk carpet, and in "Origin and Influence Cultural Contacts: Egypt, the Ancient near East, and the Classical World" by Harper, Oliver, Scott and Lilyquist (1971), the authors researched the origin of the griffin from ancient Iran and Near East and its transfer to ancient Egypt and Greece. Considering all the mentioned research, it can be concluded that the mythical griffin motif used in both significant historical periods of Iran, the Achaemenid and Seljuk eras, has not been evaluated and their connection with each other is still unknown. Therefore, despite many published papers and books, analyzing the griffin motif established upon its concepts and appearance characteristics using a comparative method, according to cultural, social, political, economic, and religious factors existing in two given periods, methods made the current study distinguished from the other researches.

Griffin in Historical Periods

According to Dehkhoda's definition: "Gryphon (Shirdal) is a legendary animal which is a combination of the body of a lion, the head and wings of an eagle, a horse's ears and a crown similar to the floating organ of a fish" (Dehkhoda, 1994, s.v. Gryphon). The depiction and function of the griffin date back to 3000 BC and, based on most researchers, is symbolically linked to Near East art (Harper, Oliver, Scott & Lilyquist, 1971, 320). From the view of Hinz (2017, 151), the griffin is a noble Elamite invention and their imagination product. Elamites had an unusual tendency to think over spiritual issues and pay attention to the dark side of nature. This characteristic caused them to embody imaginary composite animals and exotic monsters. Like a bird, it builds its own nest and instead of eggs, it puts an agate stone inside the nest. According to Bulfinch (2000, 103-104), the griffins are native to India; they found gold from mountains and built their nests with that gold, which made their

nests tempting for fishermen and they had to take care of them. Herodotus believed that the griffin belonged to the Scythians who lived in Asia's land replete with gold and costly gems. When strangers came to take the treasures, these huge birds jumped over them and tore them to pieces. Therefore, among those people, the griffin was represented as retribution for people's vileness and greed (DePuy, 1892, 195). Some narratives from ancient times about protecting buried treasures by a dragon and a snake. According to Pliny, since eastern people had not any place to conceal their possession, the custom of burying their treasure inside the ground became common, then they created legendary narratives to scare depredators. Without a doubt, these stories, on arriving in the western world, combined with the knowledge of the existence of gold in the East mountains, gave rise to the narratives of the griffins (Pliny, 1855, 123). The griffin in Mesopotamia became common in the 14th and 13th centuries BC. This legendary creature was sacred to the Sumerian moon god, Sin, and in middle Assyria, it often was engraved on cylindrical seals (Hall, 2001, 65). In the study of discovered Neo-Assyrian ivories in Shalmaneser palace, the griffin is depicted with the head and open wings of a falcon, the body of a lion, in some cases with an Egyptian crown, adjacent to the tree of life or in conflict with a warrior (Taheri, 2012, 15-16). This mythical creature that was transferred from ancient Iran to Egypt, is rarely used in Egyptian art and its appearance looked different from the griffin in Near East. The Egyptian griffin has a head of a falcon and feathers surrounding its eyes is depicted in Egyptian style (Harper et al., 1971, 320). Undoubtedly, the griffin concept in ancient Egypt is related to Pharaoh. During the ancient kingdom, Pharaoh was displayed as a conqueror with the head of a falcon of Horus, the Egyptian god, on the body of a lion, which was a symbol of power and protection (Hall, 2001, 64). The Greeks came up with depicting the griffin in the late 8th and 7th centuries BC. Its appearance in Greece is a convex forehead, an upright horse ear,

and a split beak (Harper et al., 1971, 320). It was mostly used in architectural decoration, although, it is seen on bronze remnants, especially on Etrurian jewelry (Faza'eli, 2005, 172). The griffin was considered the same as Nemesis in ancient Greece. Nemesis is the goddess of revenge and justice and she is depicted with an apple branch in one hand and a wheel in the other hand. The wheel represented the origin of the solar year (ibid, 334). In the 7th century BC, the griffins appeared in a story inspired by Apollo, the god of light and the sun in ancient Greece and Rome. According to the story, Apollo traveled to the far North in search of the griffins which were protecting the gold (Herodotus, 2003, 203). Like the Minoan civilization, these creatures were the royal symbols and protectors of the dead in the Bronze Age (Reed, 1976). In Christian beliefs, the griffin also had similar functions as a royal symbol. In the Middle Ages and Byzantium period, the griffin's concept is related to Alexander with the uprising chariot toward the sky because of the effects of classical art and literature (Boardman, 2015, 314). Furthermore, in the Middle Ages, it was a popular symbol that was used as a family symbol. This creature evolved from a symbol of the sun, power, and revenge to a protection symbol and it turned to divine retribution in the encrypted manuscripts (Bruce-Mitford, 2015, 74).

Griffin During the Achaemenid Period

The griffin is found in various remnants of the Achaemenid period. It can be observed in the form of huge statues on columns in the architecture of Persepolis. The application of griffin on top of the Persian columns was holding the woody ceiling beams by their huge and upward ears, an approach which is applied nowadays in some Iranian village houses (Porada, 2018, 179). This legendary creature is used as a relief on the walls of Persepolis palaces. A relief in the Sad-Sotoon Hall illustrates the griffin conflicting with a brave king, symbolizing good and evil. On the wall of

the eastern staircase of Apadana palace, the griffin is engraved on an ornate vessel as a tribute to the king carried by a foreign delegation of subordinate countries (Curtis & Tallis, 2013, 81). One example of these tributes is an armband with the winged griffin at its end, similar to an armband discovered in Oxus Treasures. The reliefs engraved on the staircase of Apadana palace were the indication of stabilization and an emphasis on the power of the Iranian king and the extent of the Achaemenid Empire. The motifs related to the subordinated people who are offering their possessions to the central authority of the empire can indicate political dominance. The griffin in these reliefs is naturalistically depicted, known as the Persian style, to precisely display body muscles, wings, and feathers. Seals are the other remnants of Achaemenid art in which a mythologic griffin motif can be seen, sometimes individually and sometimes fighting with a king. Metalworks, such as many rhytons, are decorated by the griffin and its motifs can be seen on coins and gold and silver ornaments. The basis of using these motifs on precious ornaments is to show their possession of them by the Achaemenid kingdom. Based on ancient myth, the griffin has been the guard of the Altai gold mines. In Turkish, Altai means gold, and some researchers believe that Achaemenid kings imported gold and precious gems from the Altai region (Sudzuki, 1975, 74). Research on Taksay Kurgans in the west of Kazakhstan revealed that women's jewelry in this region was golden plaques with the griffin motif engraved on some of them, which was a symbol of the sun and sky and emphasized the hierarchy of power (Lukpanova, 2018, 30). Evidence confirms this region's cultural connection with Iran, Assyria, and other connections. Later, this region became a part of the Achaemenid Empire (Novozhenov, 2018, 17). Furthermore, the griffin can be seen in discovered remnants of Pazyryk. Although the items were discovered in Pazyryk Valley in the Altai Mountain chain, many scientists believe they

belonged to the Achaemenid period. The griffin on Pazyryk's carpet is depicted in a square zone and repeated sequentially on the inner and outer border of the carpet. Also, the griffin is observed on a saddle cover discovered in this region. Some outward features of the observed griffins are different from the griffins in Achaemenid art (Lerner, 1991, 11). In the following, the griffin motif in the twenty-one remnants of Achaemenid art is analyzed (Table 1).

Griffin During the Seljuk Period


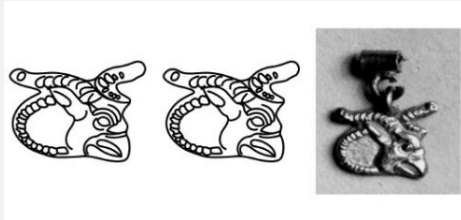

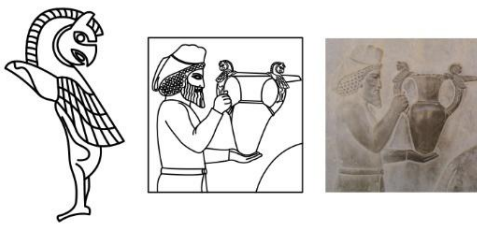
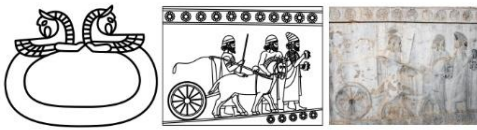

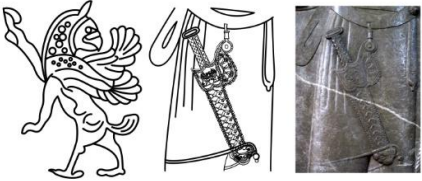
The griffin in the Seljuk period is mostly used as a motif depicted or engraved on objects rather than making statues and monuments. From the architectural point of view, the griffin motif is depicted on the tiles installed on the walls of the palace and mansion. The sphinx appears on the rectangular tiles due to a belief that these legendary creatures can protect the palace and king against all kinds of evil with their magical and supernatural power (Öney, 1984, 138). Also, the griffin along with arabesque motifs on the star-shaped tiles recalls the sky and heavenly world. In Islamic iconography, the griffin preserves its connection to the sun by combining other cosmic symbols, which is why it uses them on star-shaped tiles. In metalwork, the griffin is displayed on jewelry, mirror, dishes, etc., with various meanings and functions. This creature is illustrated on the items sometimes individually and sometimes along with the animal, vegetal, geometrical, and linear motifs. Ornamental motifs are an inseparable component of Islamic art, especially metalworks, and the diversity of motifs is a characteristic of Seljuk art that reflects urbane taste (Kuiper, 2010, 180). For instance, an incense burner is decorated with a griffin, a sphinx, arabesque motifs, and a Kufic inscription with the content of blessing wishes for the owner. To consider pottery and ceramics, the griffin sometimes appears as a sgraffito decoration or a large depiction on the bottom of the bowls and plates and sometimes as small patterns which are

repeated in the form of scrolls or stripes, and the decorative and arabesque motifs are sporadically and repeatedly observed. There is a ceramic bowl with courtly content depicting the griffin and the sphinx as the guards that encircled a loyal person. In addition, the griffin is represented on a page of the illustrated manuscript of *Daqa'i q al-haqa'iq* which is preserved at the national library of France. This book was written by Al-Nasiri, one of the Iranian scholars in the 13th century AD. His five treatises which are written in Persian, investigate the principles of astronomy, astrology, angelology, talismans, and magic. This illustrated manuscript was presented to Kay Khosrow III, one of the last Seljuk rulers, in his childhood (Al-Nasiri, 1272). The griffin, in that case, is depicted without wings and with a halo around its head which emphasizes its significance and status. The inscription is related to the incantation to protect the person against others, even the lion and leopard could not hurt him and it is also written to heal an insane person (1272, 9). During the Seljuk period, wealthy people wore silky and brocade clothes in addition to wearing jewelry. These kinds of textiles, reminiscent of the Sassanid period, represent society's wealth and power. Mostly, on these silky textiles, two griffins are symmetrically illustrated on two sides of the tree of life. In many Seljuk artworks, mythologic creatures like the griffin, the sphinx, and the harpy are used about the tree of life and its protection, indicating its importance of the tree of life. Based on Central Asian beliefs, the tree of life represents the road or ladder leading to the other world (Öney, 1984, 138). Also, researchers consider the pattern of these textiles as a perception of royalty or family symbols and ancient artistic customs (Alvand, 1972, 122). The griffin in most Seljuk artworks is displayed with many ornaments, which means the artist has used vegetal motifs and curved lines with whorls to depict wings and tails. In the following, the role of the griffin in the twenty-one remnants belonging to the Seljuk period is analyzed (Table 2).

Table 1. Functional role of the griffin and its specifications during the Achaemenid period. Source: Authors.

Image and linear drawing	Specifications
	<p>Silver Plaque, Helios Gallery</p> <p>In the Achaemenid era, courtly costumes were decorated with precious plaques. These emblems were part of the public display of the enormous royal wealth and the power of the Achaemenid Empire. The griffin is depicted surrounded circularly on the decorative plaque with many ornamentations and without any wings. It is turned back and looking at its raised tail. It evokes the portrait of a lion, although it has a beak.</p>
	<p>Golden Circular Plaque, British Museum</p> <p>This golden disc plaque belonged to the Oxus treasures. It was used to decorate royalty costumes. In the circular form of this plaque, the griffin is depicted animatedly. Its forelegs are for a lion and two rear legs are for a bird. The wing, tail, and, one of its claws are engraved upward.</p>
	<p>Golden Circular Plaque, British Museum</p> <p>This golden plaque with its robbed border belonged to the Oxus treasures and it was used to decorate courtly costumes. The griffin is depicted at the end of the sphinx's wing with a round eye, mane, and horse's ears. The sphinx turned its head back and stared at the griffin.</p>
	<p>Silver Coin, Apadana Palace</p> <p>This coin belonged to the coin collection, which is also discovered in the stone boxes containing royal inscriptions (Zournatzi, 2003, 6). The griffin engraved on the coin has a similar figure to the seated sphinx in the Persepolis with an upward claw and tail. Displaying a long ear, a hooked beak, and a broad wing, the griffin is demonstrated as a guardian of the treasure of the Achaemenid Empire.</p>
	<p>Golden Ring, British Museum</p> <p>The griffin is engraved on the flat and circular surface of the ring and probably has a protective aspect. The griffin has a knobby eye, a short mane, and a long ear like the horse's ears. It is shown with a broad wing and a feline body, walking while its two rear feet belong to a wild bird.</p>
	<p>Bronze Mirror, Private Collection</p> <p>This mirror is discovered in the Bajaur region, Pakistan, and belongs to the Achaemenid Empire. On the back of the mirror, the griffin is illustrated at the center of the medallion. Its wing, which is different from the other depicted griffins of the Achaemenid era, evokes vegetal motifs with its ornamental appearance. Based on the Achaemenid opinion, the griffin protected them against evil and magic powers. According to the function of this object, it has a protective role here.</p>
	<p>Golden Plaque, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston</p> <p>The ornamental plaque in the form of the griffin-head is used to decorate courtly costumes. The griffin is illustrated with a horse's ear and twisted horns like a bison's horn, which indicates its benevolent and wisdom aspect. There are some ornamentations around its neck and horns with a regular rhythm.</p>
	<p>Golden Plaque, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston</p>

Rest of Table1.

Image and linear drawing	Specifications
	Another plaque with the griffin motif on it is used on courtly costumes of Achaemenids as a symbol of wealth. Two forelegs are the lion's legs and two rear legs are related to a bird. The iconography of this horned griffin is based on the Achaemenid art style and brings to mind Persepolis's reliefs.
	<p>Golden Pendant, The Walters Art Museum</p> <p>The head of this griffin is part of a necklace and a loop is attached to the head between the horns, allowing it to attach to another loop. The griffin is engraved based on the style of the Persia Empire which can be seen in the regular rhythm of the lines of its horn and mane. Horse ears and bison horns are this griffin's characteristics, representing the wisdom concept among Achaemenids.</p>
	<p>Bronze Band, The Oriental Institute of The University of Chicago</p> <p>In this bronze band, which is probably discovered in Persepolis, the griffins are engraved based on the naturalistic style of Achaemenid art, and represent the glory of the monarchy. The griffin is demonstrated with a robust lion body, horse's ears, broad eagle's wings, and incisive eyes. The two forelegs of this legendary creature are the legs of a lion and the two rear legs are the legs of an eagle, which helps it to hunt.</p>
	<p>Relief on the wall of the Eastern stairs of Apadana Palace</p> <p>In this relief, an Armenian dignitary is shown carrying an ornate vessel. Two symmetrical griffins are engraved on the hands of the vessel. Two griffins are carved with an eagle face, the body of a lion, the mane and ears of a horse, and the broad wing, and are staring at their backs. Like the other Apadana reliefs, this relief displays the empire's territory's glory, power, and political dominance.</p>
	<p>Relief on the wall of the Eastern stairs of Apadana Palace</p> <p>In this relief, foreign delegations, Lydian, are shown bringing tribute to the king. One of these tributes is a majestic armlet decorated with two symmetrical griffins, which look at their backs. The same golden armlet is discovered at the Oxus treasures which are now preserved in the British Museum. Using this kind of jewelry was common in the Achaemenid era.</p>
	<p>Relief on the Entrance wall of the Sad-Sotoon Hall in Persepolis</p> <p>The griffin with the diabolic role is depicted fighting with a hero-king. The king with his supernatural power is shown penetrating a dagger with his right hand into the griffin's head and another dagger with his left hand into the griffin's body. The conflict between the king and legendary creatures can be observed in many remnants of Achaemenid art, indicating the king's power and confronting good and evil.</p>
	<p>Relief, National Museum of Iran</p> <p>In this relief, two symmetrically griffins are depicted on a sword scabbard belonging to a Median warrior. With an eagle head, a horse ear, and a body of a lion, has stood on its two feet and raised its claw. Besides the griffin, five lotus flowers and nine ibexes decorated the scabbard with a regular rhythm. Unlike the similar motifs in the Achaemenid art, this griffin is displayed here with a short tail and two wings, which can consider Scythian origin based on the type of other illustrations, especially spirals on the side of the scabbard. By considering its application, it can be said that this griffin motif has an empowering aspect and protective role from the lotus.</p>
	Relief, Rijks Museum of Amsterdam

Rest of Table1.




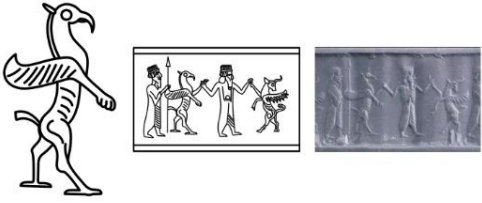

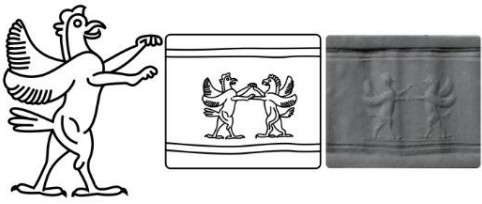









Image and linear drawing	Specifications
	<p>The relief of a horse rider and the griffin is from the early Achaemenid period. Considering the construction date, the difference between this relief and other Achaemenid reliefs is obvious. The griffin is demonstrated with a body of a robust lion, a long ear like the horse's ears, an upward tail, and a broad wing.</p>
	<p>Stamp Seal made of Chalcedony, British Museum</p> <p>On this stamp seal with an octagonal base, a king wearing a crown and an open skirt as a hero grasps the griffin by its throat and stabs it with a dagger. This confrontation between the king and the griffin, depicted in Persepolis's relief, indicates the contrast between good and evil. The griffin is displayed in a standing position with a short tail, a pointed ear like the horse's ears, and two wings. A cuneiform inscription on the left side of the seal can be observed.</p>
	<p>Cylinder Seal made of Agate, British Museum</p> <p>On this seal, the griffin is engraved based on Persia naturalistic style with an insect like a horse-fly. Although there is depicted the profile of the griffin face, however, its two knobby eyes can be observed. Two forelegs are for a lion and two rear legs are for a bird.</p>
	<p>Cylinder Seal made of Chalcedony, Christie's Auction Company</p> <p>On the cylindrical seal, a bearded Persian king has grasped a winged griffin in his right hand and a winged bull in his left hand. The king plays the role of a hero and is a symbol of good power in contrast to evil strength. On the left side of the seal, a guard is watching the fighting with a spear in his hand. The griffin has stood on its two bird-like feet, a short tail and a broad wing.</p>
	<p>Cylinder Seal made of Agate, British Museum</p> <p>On this seal, the legendary creatures are illustrated with each other and they narrate a mythological story. A winged creature like a centaur is observed on the left side of the seal. It is depicted with a bull, a wing that ends up to the griffin's head, and a face like the Achaemenid kings, which enhances the power of the portrait. This creature gripping a bow has aimed at bird motifs and an ibex which are leaning toward the Assyrian tree of life. The image of a winged circle is observed on top of the seal, which increases the mythological aspect of these motifs.</p>
	<p>Cylinder Seal made of Onyx, The Metropolitan Museum of Art</p> <p>On this cylinder seal, two griffins are symmetrically illustrated facing each other, while fighting to flaunt their power. They are depicted with the body of a lion, the legs of a bird and a tail, a hooked beak, a rooster comb, a short mane, and two broad wings.</p>
	<p>Saddle Cover, The State Hermitage Museum</p> <p>The griffin on this piece of saddle cover is represented by a face of an eagle, a hooked beak, a body of a lion, a short upward twisted tail, a broad wing, and a short mane. There are many ornamentations like pink drops. This motif is different from other Achaemenid griffins, due to its status of standing on four feet and jumping forward.</p>

Table 2. Functional role of the griffin and its Specifications during the Seljuk period. Source: Authors.

Image and linear drawing	Specifications
	<p>Bronze Pendant Plaque, Private collection, Sixbid Auction</p> <p>The griffin is depicted in this plaque's center of an enclosing circle. In its profile view, its eyes, and ears are not illustrated. The griffin is displayed with a body of a lion and a raised twisted tail. Its wing ended up with a vegetal motif, which can also be observed on its side. Considering its application to the mirror, the griffin probably had a protective role and elimination magic.</p>
	<p>Silver Seal Finger Ring, Private collection, Live Auctioneers</p> <p>In this seal finger ring, the griffin is solely displayed. This legendary creature is simply and linearly engraved on the ring. It has a hooked beak, a short mane with regular lines, and a raised tail with a bird-like leg. Since the griffin is depicted on a ring, it can be attributed to a protective role in this motif.</p>
	<p>Bronze Dish with Engraved Decorations, Barakat Gallery</p> <p>The griffin with a head like a peacock is centrally engraved at the bottom of the dish and unlike the detailed background of the dish, the griffin is shown without any special ornamentations. The radiations from the concentric circles at the bottom of the dish evoke the sun. Kufic inscriptions with arabesque motifs can be observed as decorative elements inside and outside of the dish. These inscriptions are prayers invoking the grace and glory of Allah</p>
	<p>Bronze Incense Burner, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston</p> <p>In this incense burner, the griffin is horizontally depicted along with some decorations in one frame. The sphinx can be seen on the other side of the incense burner. In addition, there are vegetal motifs and some Kufic inscriptions on this artwork, which are some good wishes to the owner. This work is signed by Abu'l-Munif son of Mas'ud.</p>
	<p>Handled Mirror made of Cast Steel, Topkapi Palace Museum</p> <p>The mirror contains a medallion with a mounted hunter in the middle encircled by other animals. The hunter is considered a dignitary due to a halo around his head. His round face, slanted eyes, long hair, and custom represent him as a Seljuk nobleman. A bird of prey on the upper left side and a fox on the right side indicate the hunting aspect of this scene. Besides, a dragon motif under a horse's foreleg evokes similar imageries in Central Asian frescoes. At the border frieze, animals are chasing each other. At the center of the upper border frieze, a pair of confronting dragons are biting the knotted part of each other's body. Furthermore, a griffin, a bear, and a fantastic creature like a centaur can be observed. Although a centaur is normally represented by the upper body of a man and the lower body of a horse, in this case, the lower body is of a lion. The griffin is depicted animatedly, while its wing and tail end up in vegetal motifs. Considering the motifs on the mirror frieze including the centaur and the dragon can conclude that the griffin is related to the constellations.</p>
	<p>Ceramic Bowl with Minai Decoration, The Benaki Museum</p> <p>Four The griffins are consecutively marching among the bowl which contains a medallion decorated with geometrical motifs. A vegetal motif is repeated between the griffins, and a bird can be seen adjacent to them. At the border frieze, the bowl is ornamented by arabesque motifs and some Kufic inscriptions.</p>
	<p>Ceramic Bowl with Minai, Brooklyn Museum</p> <p>Inside the ceramic bowl, the griffin is symmetrically illustrated along with royalty, three sphinxes, and arabesque motifs. The griffin and three sphinxes have encircled the royalty as his protector. The griffin is displayed with spotted skin, a raised tail, and a curved wing like vegetal decorations.</p>

Rest of Table2.

Image and linear drawing	Specifications
	<p>Bowl with Underglaze Slip-painted Decoration, Cleveland Museum</p> <p>In this pottery, the griffin is depicted in a circular zone with arabesque motifs, and Kufic alphabets without any wings in large-scale style. Its figure comprises a head profile, a hooked beak, a short tail, a round eye with eyelashes, and a decorated torque dangles from its neck.</p>
	<p>Large Turquoise Jar, The Metropolitan Museum of Art</p> <p>Decorations on the surface of this large jar are comprised of four sections including Kufic script, vegetal motifs, winged griffins, rhombus geometrical, and squamous motifs. In the second section, several griffins are consecutively moving in a scrolling background which are displayed with a head of a rooster along with the wattles, slanted eyes, two ears, a short wing, and a long tail.</p> <p>Although, the original function of this work is unknown, however, some similar ceramic jars have been used with grains and win and the griffin role on this jar was probably the guarantor of health.</p>
	<p>Ten-pointed Star Stucco Tile, The al-Sabah Collection, Kuwait</p> <p>The ten-pointed star tile with a relief of the griffin and vegetal motifs, which is an incarnation of the sun is used as a wall decoration. The griffin is engraved with a body of a lion, an eagle head, a curved beak, and wattles. Its wing is raised and its thin tail is pointed down.</p>
	<p>Eight-pointed Star Luster Tile, Sackler Gallery</p> <p>These kinds of luster tiles are among the favorite tiles used by Seljukian to decorate their mansions. In this given case, the griffin is engraved with two long elongated ears, the wattles, a hooked beak, a ring like a torque around its neck, a spotted skin, and a wing decorated with vegetal motifs.</p>
	<p>Eight-pointed Star Luster Tile, Harvard Art Museums</p> <p>In this work, two griffins are symmetrically illustrated along with vegetal motifs and a bird that represents the heavenly world. The griffins are standing in opposite directions and with turned heads are staring at each other. Their bodies are like spotted leopard and their wings end up separately to decoration motifs.</p>
	<p>Opaque Glazed Tile, Pergamon Museum</p> <p>An opaque glazed rectangular tile in the turquoise color is decorated by a winged griffin, a sphinx, a flower, and a plant in the form of relief. The griffin is engraved with two pointed ears, wattles, a curved beak, and with a raised wing similar to arabesque motifs. Considering the function of this object and the presence of the griffin associated with the sphinx, it can be assumed a protective role for mentioned motifs.</p>
	<p>Underglaze Tile, Walters Art Museum</p> <p>In this tile, the griffin is elegantly engraved along with a sphinx, a young man, and vegetal motifs. Both the sphinx and the young man have a halo around their head which indicates their high status and enhances the religious content of the work. The griffin and the sphinx are both depicted with similar portraits, spotted skin, raised wings, and a downward tail.</p>
	<p>Carved Sandstone Panel, Christie's Auction Company</p> <p>In this panel, the griffin is carved along with a sphinx, a dog, vegetal motifs, and an eight-pointed lotus. The griffin's head with torque around its neck is depicted as a profile and its body is semi-profile. Its wings and tail are raised and decorated with vegetal motifs. Considering the function of the artwork and the presence of a dog figure and a sphinx, the griffin has probably a protective role in this panel.</p>

Rest of Table2.

Image and linear drawing	Specifications
	<p>Relief, The Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts</p> <p>The griffin is engraved in a horizontal rectangular frame with a body of a lion, an eagle head, a hooked curved beak, and a torque around its neck. Its two wings are depicted similarly to vegetal motifs from the front view. It has star-like speckles over its skin while holding a plant with its beak.</p>
	<p>Illustrated Manuscript, The Metropolitan Museum of Art</p> <p>A golden griffin is illustrated without any wings with a halo around its head which represents the high status of this mythological creature. It is depicted with a profile face, a hooked beak, wattles, and a large curved ear which is a manifestation of a crown. Its tail is upwardly twisted similar to vegetal motifs. According to the book's contents which are about horoscopy and especially the manuscript written on this page, it can be concluded the griffin role is related to prayers and magic.</p>
	<p>Fragment of Silk Textile, Cleveland Museum of Art</p> <p>An exquisite fabric fragment, a display of the Seljuk dynasty's wealth, knitted with silk warp, cotton weft, and gold ink, is ornamented with the griffin motifs, fox, and some Kufic inscription. The griffin is illustrated with slanted eyes, a crown on its head, and wattles while its wing and tail are twisted upward.</p>
	<p>Fragment of Silk Textile, Sotheby's Auction</p> <p>In the center of the medallion, two griffins are symmetrically standing in front of each other and protecting the tree of life that is placed between them. On the border, some Kufic inscriptions can be observed. This monopoly of motif designing in the form of a geometrical pattern existed on the textiles belonging to the Sassanian period. In this textile, the griffins have a robust body of a lion with elegant ornamentations on its wing and neck.</p>
	<p>Fragment of Silk Textile, The Metropolitan Museum of Art</p> <p>This fabric belonging to a riding coat is decorated with motifs of birds, griffins, and plants, all of which have positive symbolic concepts. Two griffins without any wings are symmetrically sitting in front of each other while protecting the tree of life. They are depicted in a semi-profile face, a crown on their head, a curved beak, a wattle, and tail-like vegetal motifs. The griffin has raised one of its forelegs which recalls many of the mythological motifs in the pre-Islamic period depicted adjacent to the tree of life.</p>
	<p>Fragment of Silk Textile, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston</p> <p>On this silky textile, animal motifs such as a griffin, a peacock, and a fox are symmetrically depicted next to the vegetal motifs and the tree of life performing their protective role. Two griffins with broad wings and delicate feathers are standing in front of each other while turning their heads back.</p>

Discussion

The study of twenty-one artworks belonging to the Achaemenid art and Seljuk art indicates that the griffin motifs are present on the metalworks, seals, reliefs, and textiles. Based on the results, ten metalworks including five ornamental plaques,

one bronze band, one coin, one ring, one mirror, and one golden pendant; five seals including one stamp seal and four-cylinder seals; five reliefs, and finally one piece of saddle cover are contained the griffin motif. During the Seljuk period, this mythical motif is used on metalworks, potteries,

tiles, textiles, and reliefs. Based on statistical results, five metalworks including one pendant plaque, one seal ring, one dish, one incense burner, one handled mirror; four potteries including three bowls and one jar; five tiles contained three star-shaped tiles and two rectangular tiles; four silky textiles; one panel, one relief and one paper of illustrated manuscript are decorated with the griffin motif. After evaluating of structural features and the functional role of mentioned motifs and organizing the results in the determined tables, the following results will be analyzed and compared with each other (Table 3).

Statistical Results of Structural Evaluation and Functional Role

• Studied Objects

Investigation of Achaemenid artworks shows that the griffin is depicted more on metalworks and in Seljuk art, the griffin is often present on metalworks and tiles, which indicates the functional similarities in the two distinguished historical periods.

• Physical states

The studied motifs reveal that the griffin in the Achaemenid period is depicted with a profile head and body, a hooked beak, a short mane, a horse's ear with round and knobby eyes, and a raised twisted tail. In most griffin motifs, two forelegs are for a lion and two rear feet are in the form of an eagle's feet, and in some works, it is seen with horns from the front perspective. It has broad wings and delicate feathers, battling while standing on four feet. In Persepolis's reliefs, the griffin motif can be seen in the symmetrical composition, and Achaemenid artists by using the Persian naturalistic method have illustrated the muscles and physical states of a lion along with an eagle's head. During the Seljuk time, the griffin is illustrated with a profile face and body, a curved beak along with wattles, slanted eyes, long ears like a crown, and a raised twisted tail. Its wings are often broad and sometimes short with feathers, although it appears without wings in a few artworks. Without horns and mane, it has

a torque around its neck and sometimes spotted skin. On the textiles belonging to Seljuk times, the griffin is symmetrically represented around the tree of life, and Seljuk artists have used ornamental illustrations with arabesque motifs to depict the griffin. The results indicate that the general state of the griffin is similar in both historical periods. However, they are different in detail and design style.

• Other motifs with the Griffin

In Achaemenid art, the griffin is depicted with a winged circle, vegetal motifs like the tree of life, lotus flower, animal motifs such as birds, the sphinx, the centaur, winged bull, ibex, horse, fly-horse, motifs on objects such as dishes (earthenware), armlet, chariot, dagger and human motifs such as a dignitary, a monarch, a horse rider and in addition the cuneiform script. In Seljuk art, the griffin is represented with arabesque motifs and vegetal motifs like the tree of life, lotus flower, a tree, animal motifs such as birds, the sphinx, the centaur, bear, fox, dog, peacock, human motifs such as a dignitary, a monarch, a horse rider and in addition the Kufic script. Although some of the motifs used with the griffin are similar in both periods, overall, the differences are more noticeable.

• Symbology

Since the griffin is a compound creature including several animals, therefore, it has some symbols related to composite animals and some other symbols of its concept. The lion is the indication of power and battle, which in the mythology culture of the nations is related to the sun and the eagle is the symbol of strength and victory, which in ancient times it is linked to the sky (Hall, 2001, 62-68). From the point of view of Chevalier and Gheerbrant, the griffin has common concepts with the lion and the eagle and this matter enhances its solar essence. The griffin has connected the terrestrial power of the lion to the celestial strength of the eagle; therefore, it has a relation with the sky and the earth (2006, 732). Among Iranians, the

Table 3. Comparison of structural features and functional role of 22 sphinxes in the Achaemenid period and 22 sphinxes in the Seljuk period. Source: Authors.

Objects	Achaemenid Often on metalworks		Seljuk Often on metalworks and tiles	
	Hooked beak	Profile face and body	Curved beak	Profile face and body
Physical states	Horse ear	Round and knobby eyes	Long ear	Slanted eyes
	The raised broad wings	Raised twisted tail	Often the raised broad wings	Raised twisted tail
	Horns in front view	Short mane	Without horn	Without mane, with torque
	Fighting in the stood position	Moving on four feet	With the wattles	Moving on four feet
	Two forelegs for lion and two rear legs for eagle		Spotted skin	
	Naturalistic drawing	Showing lion's body muscle	Not showing lion's body muscle	ornamental illustration with arabesque motifs
	Symmetrically on the reliefs of Persepolis		Symmetrically at two sides of the tree of life on the silky textiles	
Other motifs with the Griffin	Progressive rhythm and details in the design of the feathers on the wing		Progressive rhythm in the design of the feathers on the wing	
	The tree of life	Lotus flower	The tree of life	Lotus flower
	Winged circle	Bird	Tree	Bird
	Sphinx	Centaur	Sphinx	Centaur
	Winged bull	Ibex	Bear	Dragon
	Horse	Horse-fly	Fox	Dog
	Dish	Armlet	Peacock	Shamsa
	Chariot	Dagger	Geometrical motifs	Arabesque motifs
	Dignitary	King	Dignitary	Monarchy person
	Horse rider	The script (Cuneiform)	Horse rider	The script (Kufic)
Symbolism	Symbol of the royal wealth	Symbol of the power of the Achaemenid Empire	Symbol of the royal wealth	Symbol of the power of the Seljuk dynasty
	Symbol of the royal essence	Symbol of the artistic convention of the Persia Empire	Symbol of the royal essence	Symbol of the artistic conventions of the earlier times
	Empowering role on the weapons	Lotus protector	Protecting of royalties	Protecting the tree of life
	Benevolent Expression	Wisdom aspect	Symbol of blessing with prayers and Allah's names	
	Removal of evil and magic	The diabolic symbol	Removal of magic	
	Confronting the king and the griffin, the symbol of the contrast between good and the evil symbol of the sun on the golden jewelry		In conjunction with astrology and constellations and horoscopy	
	Guardian of the royal treasure		symbol of the sun at the middle of the medallion and star-shaped tiles	
			Guardian of palaces and mansions	

lion is the traditional symbol of power. In ancient Iran, as well, is considered an animal symbol of Mithra, the fourth case of steps of Mithraism, and the first case of super steps (Hinnells, 2017, 135-158). The eagle, also, the most powerful and fastest celestial bird, among Iranians, has been sacred with special respect, as if they used it as a symbol on the flag. Achaemenids carried a golden broad-winged eagle on the head of a spear at the beginning of the army division (Riazi, 1996, 141). The griffin

in the Achaemenid period represents mystical concepts because Achaemenid art does not have any tendency to create realistic scenes and is often displayed as a symbol. This mythological creature in Achaemenid art has a royal nature and its figure on the golden and ornamental plaque is the symbol of the wealth and glory of the Achaemenid Empire. One of the most significant characteristics of the griffin is its huge enthusiasm for gold, and in metalworks belonging to the Achaemenid, the

griffin is mostly displayed on golden objects. By considering two issues, that gold is a symbol of the sun and also, in the mythology of ancient nations, the griffin is dedicated to the god of the sun, it can be clarified that this connection is rational. The griffin motif on the coin indicates its role as a guardian of the Achaemenid Empire's treasure. Its illustration on the ring and mirror has a protective role against evil and magic and on the sword, the scabbard has both an empowering aspect and the protection role of the lotus flower. In some Achaemenid artworks, the griffin is displayed with a twisted horn which represents wisdom and respect and, in Persepolis, reliefs indicate the power and political domination of the Achaemenid over the other nations. However, the benevolent manifestation is not permanent, and sometimes it has a diabolic aspect; in some reliefs and several seals, the griffin is considered a symbol of mutual contrast of good and evil by illustrating it conflicting with a Persian king. The griffin in Seljuk times represents the royal essence as well, and the precious textiles and brocade fabrics are a symbol of the wealth and power of the Seljuk court. It protects the imperial palaces by being depicted on the panels and tiles and it evokes the sun and heavenly world when it is depicted at the center of star-shaped tiles along with arabesque motifs. In many textiles and pottery, the griffin has a protective role on two sides of the tree of life, along with a royal person. This legendary bird has been a symbol of good and blessing by being depicted on objects with religious contents and devotions, and sometimes it is a health guarantor and invalidator of magic and spells. Furthermore, the presence of the griffin associated with the centaur and the dragon confirms the relationship of this motif with constellations. By considering the implemented studies about symbology, we can assert that there are many semantic similarities between the griffins in both historical periods, besides some differences.

Visual Comparison of the Griffin in Both Achaemenid and Seljuk Periods

After the study of structural characteristics and functional role of the griffin in both the Achaemenid and Seljuk periods, to investigate more precisely, its visual elements will be analyzed. The items under the study contain twenty-one griffin motifs in Achaemenid art and twenty-one griffin motifs in Seljuk art as well, which are organized in two distinguished tables. In these tables, there are some columns to investigate their visual features such as the motif frame, the type of line, dominated direction, dominated rhythm, and composition type in addition to the kind of the role (Tables 4 & 5).

The results of visual statistics: After the visual investigation of the griffin motifs in Achaemenid art and Seljuk art, the results are compared in a separate table (Table 6).

Motif frame: Each motif or image has a physical area. Sometimes this area is objective and sometimes subjective, and each of them can be geometric or figured (Pahlavan, 2011, 19). The griffin motifs in both historical periods have objective figured areas. However, they can be analyzed based on the objective geometrical area in the form of circles, square, horizontal, and vertical rectangular. The results indicate that griffin motifs in Achaemenid art contain eight motifs with horizontal rectangular margins and, after that, vertical rectangular and circles with six motifs have the most motif area. On the other hand, in Seljuk art, the griffin motifs often have horizontal rectangular scopes including eleven motifs, which indicates the similarities of the griffin motif frame in both historical periods. Based on the physical structure of the griffin motif, the dominance of mentioned areas of the motif is rational. According to symbology principles, a rectangular is the symbol of terrestrial substances, body, and reality (Jung, 2010, 379), and has weight and stability. The horizontal axis represents silence and peace as

Table 4. Visual examination of the griffin during the Achaemenid period. Source: Authors.

Motif and its location	Subject and material	Motif frame	Dominant line	Dominant direction	Dominant rhythm	Composition
	Silver Plaque	Circle	Curved	There is not one.	Regular repetition	Asymmetric
	Golden Plaque	Circle	Curved	Vertical and diagonal	Regular repetition	Asymmetric
	Golden Plaque	Circle	Curved	There is not one.	Regular repetition	Asymmetric
	Silver Coin	Circle	Curved	Vertical and diagonal	Regular repetition	Asymmetric
	Golden Ring	Circle	Curved	There is not one.	Irregular repetition	Asymmetric
	Bronze Mirror	Circle	Curved	There is not one.	Progressive repetition	Asymmetric
	Golden Plaque	Horizontal Rectangle	Curved	There is not one.	Regular repetition	Asymmetric
	Golden Plaque	Horizontal Rectangle	Curved	There is not one.	Progressive repetition	Asymmetric
	Golden Pendant	Horizontal Rectangle	Curved	There is not one.	Regular Repetition	Asymmetric
	Bronze Band	Horizontal Rectangle	Curved	There is not one.	Progressive repetition	Asymmetric
	Relief	Vertical Rectangle	Curved	Vertical and diagonal	Progressive repetition	Asymmetric, Symmetrical with a motif on the object
	Relief	Horizontal Rectangle	Curved	Horizontal	Progressive repetition	Asymmetric, Symmetrical with a motif on the object
	Relief	Vertical Rectangle	Curved	Vertical and diagonal	Progressive repetition	Asymmetric
	Relief	Vertical Rectangle	Curved	Vertical and diagonal	Progressive repetition	Asymmetric, Symmetrical with a motif on the object
	Relief	Square	Curved	There is not one.	Regular repetition	Asymmetric
	Stamp Seal made of Chalcedony	Vertical Rectangle	Curved	Vertical	Progressive repetition	Asymmetric
	Cylinder Seal made of Agate	Horizontal Rectangle	Curved	There is not one.	Progressive repetition	Asymmetric
	Cylinder Seal made of Chalcedony	Vertical Rectangle	Curved	Vertical	Regular repetition	Asymmetric
	Cylinder Seal made of Agate	Horizontal Rectangle	Curved	diagonal	Regular repetition	Asymmetric
	Cylinder Seal made of Onyx	Vertical Rectangle	Curved	Vertical and diagonal	Progressive repetition	Asymmetric, Symmetrical with a motif on the object
	Saddle Cover	Horizontal Rectangle	Curved	diagonal	Progressive repetition	Asymmetric

Table 5. Visual examination of the griffin during the Seljuk period. Source: Authors.






















Motif and its location	Subject and material	Motif frame	Dominant line	Dominant direction	Dominant rhythm	Composition
	Bronze Plaque	Circle	Curved	There is not one.	No rhythm	Asymmetric
	Silver Ring	Circle	Curved	There is not one.	No rhythm	Asymmetric
	Bronze Dish	Horizontal Rectangle	Curved	There is not one.	No rhythm	Asymmetric
	Incense Burner made of Bronze, Gold, Silver	Horizontal Rectangle	Curved	Horizontal and diagonal	No rhythm	Asymmetric
	Steel Handled Mirror	Horizontal Rectangle	Curved	Horizontal and diagonal	No rhythm	Asymmetric, Symmetrical with a motif on the object
	Ceramic Bowl	Horizontal Rectangle	Curved	Horizontal and diagonal	No rhythm	Asymmetric
	Ceramic Bowl	Horizontal Rectangle	Curved	There is not one.	Irregular repetition	Asymmetric
	Ceramic Bowl	Circle	Curved	There is not one.	Regular repetition	Asymmetric
	Clay Vase	Horizontal Rectangle	Curved	There is not one.	No rhythm	Asymmetric
	Ten-pointed Star Stucco Tile	Circle	Curved	There is not one.	Progressive rhythm	Asymmetric
	Eight-pointed Star Luster Tile	Square	Curved	There is not one.	Irregular repetition	Asymmetric
	Eight-pointed Star Luster Tile	Vertical Rectangle	Curved	Diagonal	Irregular repetition	Asymmetric, Symmetrical with a motif on the object
	Ceramic Tile	Horizontal Rectangle	Curved	There is not one.	No rhythm	Asymmetric
	Ceramic Tile	Horizontal Rectangle	Curved	There is not one.	Irregular repetition	Asymmetric
	Sandstone Panel	Square	Curved	Vertical	Progressive rhythm	Asymmetric
	Relief	Horizontal Rectangle	Curved	Horizontal	Irregular repetition	Asymmetric
	Illustrated Manuscript	Horizontal Rectangle	Curved	There is not one.	No rhythm	Asymmetric
	Silk Textile	Square	Curved	There is not one.	No rhythm	Asymmetric
	Silk Textile	Vertical Rectangle	Curved	Vertical	Progressive rhythm	Asymmetric, Symmetrical with a motif on the object
	Silk Textile	Vertical Rectangle	Curved	There is not one.	No rhythm	Asymmetric, Symmetrical with a motif on the object
	Silk Textile	Horizontal Rectangle	Curved	There is not one.	Progressive rhythm	Asymmetric, Symmetrical with a motif on the object

Table 6. Comparative Comparison of Visual features of 21 griffins in the Achaemenid Period and 21 griffins in the Seljuk Period. Source: Authors.

Visual elements	Types	Achaemenid		Seljuk	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Motif frame	Horizontal Rectangle	8	38%	11	52%
	Vertical Rectangle	6	28.5%	3	14.5%
	Square	1	5%	3	14.5%
	Circle	6	28.5%	4	19%
Dominant line	Curved	21	100%	21	100%
Dominant direction	Horizontal	1	5%	1	5%
	Vertical	2	9.5%	2	9.5%
	Diagonal	2	9.5%	1	5%
	Horizontal and diagonal	0	0	3	14.5%
	Vertical and diagonal	6	28.5%	0	0
	There is not one.	10	47.5%	14	66%
Dominant rhythm	Regular repetition	9	43%	1	5%
	Irregular repetition	1	5%	5	24%
	Progressive rhythm	11	52%	4	19%
	No rhythm	0	0	11	52%
Composition	Asymmetric	21	100%	21	100%
	Symmetrical, with a motif on the object	4	19%	5	24%
	Asymmetry with a motif the on object	17	81%	16	76%

well. All these results demonstrate that many of the given motifs, besides the terrestrial feeling, are also imbued with a sense of peace and silence.

• Dominant line type

line as a visual element has a significant role in the primary visualization of any visual artwork. The line is an implement for a pictorial representation that does still not exist in the real world and it is just in human imagination (Dondis, 2010, 74). This element can represent various forms, including straight, curved, and crossed to express different states. The results of studies of the line forms to depict the griffin show that Achaemenid artists and Seljuk artists have only used curved lines to illustrate the griffin. The results indicate the similarities of the griffin motif based on the

dominant line used in both historical periods. The meaningful superiority of curved lines to illustrate the motifs induces a gentle visual sense. Especially in Seljuk art, the griffin motifs are displayed with convoluted arabesque motifs.

• Dominant direction type

According to the visual knowledge principles, illustrations or forms have a direction that has importance to expressing the visual message and the states. The studies confirm the similarities between the griffin motifs used in both the Achaemenid period and the Seljuk period due to the absence of a prevailing direction to depict the motifs.

• Dominant rhythm type

Rhythm is defined as the repetition of equal or

similar units associated with emphasized or de-emphasized intervals. Rhythm has a connection between composition factors which is developed based on repetition (Jansen, 2011, 110). Under the visual effect, the repetition can be associated with both the ordered and identical intervals and disordered and disparate intervals. Although, sometimes, the repetition elements are formed in a progressive and growing way. The results of rhythm studies on the griffin motifs demonstrate that in the Achaemenid era, the dominant rhythm in the griffin depiction is the growing rhythm, including eleven motifs, and, succeeding that ordered rhythm, in nine motifs, is the dominant rhythm. However, most of the griffin motifs in the Seljuk era do not have any specific rhythm, which can confirm differences between the griffin motifs in both historical periods based on their dominant rhythm. The existence of rhythm in Achaemenid art is due to the naturalistic depiction that Achaemenid artists used to display the details of wings and feathers.

• Composition type

In addition to the functions mentioned for all visual elements, all these elements must perform as an assist of the composition displays. In visual art composition, balance can be achieved in both methods, symmetric and asymmetric (Dondis, 2010, 158). The results illustrate that all the griffin motifs in both historical periods are asymmetric, which is representative to confirms similarities between the composition of the griffin motifs. Besides, the griffin on four Achaemenid and five Seljuk objects are symmetrical with their similar motifs.

Conclusion

The griffin is a composite creature that represents various definitions and implications in the history of world mythology and Iranian have used this mysterious concept during the pre-Islamic and Islamic periods. Its motifs are observed on the metalworks, especially golden

jewelry, and seals and reliefs; in Seljuk art, they are often seen on the metalworks and tiles used in the palaces and mansions. The conducted studies on the structural features, visual characteristics, and functional role of the griffin assert the similarities and differences between using the griffin in both historical periods. Considering structural features, the physical states of the griffin motifs are generally similar. However, in detail they are different. These details are most influenced by the artistic characteristics related to each determined historical period. For instance, Achaemenid artists depicted the griffin based on the naturalistic style and Seljuk artists used ornamental depictions based on arabesque motifs. In most works related to both periods, other motifs along with the griffin are different and according to the visual features including motif area, dominant line type, dominant direction, and composition, the motifs have similarities. However, the results of the dominant rhythm indicate the differences between the motifs. From the perspective of meaning and symbology, in both the Achaemenid and Seljuk periods, the griffin represents the royal essence associated with wealth and power concepts, which is used as a protector of treasure and possession of the king. Based on ritualistic and ideological concepts, the griffin protects the tree of life as a sacred plant and it is considered a symbol of good as a supreme creature that invalidates evil and magic with its power. Although, with the mentioned similarities, the griffin displays a diabolic aspect against the Persian king, therefore, differs from the griffin in the Seljuk period, which has a positive essence. In general, it can be said that the amount of structure and the conceptual similarities between the griffin motifs in both historical periods are more than their differences, which indicates the indicator of the griffin in Seljuk art from the same motifs in Achaemenid art. Although, there is the possibility of some works being used as an

ornamental object, in the function of these motifs can be observed the influence of politics, wealth and power of the king, religious beliefs, and folk convictions. In the end, it can be asserted that this mythologic motif throughout history, from the pre-Islamic period until the Islamic period, based on society's demands and beliefs, has undergone many changes and, in response to their needs, societies have depicted them.

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