

## The Aspects of Iranian Art in the Parthian Period

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**Abstract:** Alexander invasion in 331 B.C. and 150 years of Seleucid domination have made a deep gap in Iran's art. Thereafter, Hellenism emerged in Iran and caused a solstice in this art. During this period Greek language, culture and mores were outspreaded all over Iran. In fact Parthians were the heritor of a country whose all dimensions were immingled with Greek culture whether politically, militarily, economically or of religion. Considerable changes occurred in art, literature and religion. Parthian art was impressed by its adjacent civilizations from its neighbors to the plains of southern Russia and even China. They were inspired by Greek and Roman art and partial compositions are sensible in the art of this period which have been due to the cultural differences. However, Parthian art inspite of all problems, opened its way to future and succeeded to revive its ancestral heritages and delivered it to Sassanid. Generally, the tendency of this investigation is the general expression of art during this period and the influences of cultural interactions and Iranian traditions on Parthian art.

**Key words:** Hellenism • Parthian • Architecture • Metalwork • Statues • Painting

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### INTRODUCTION

Iran is the birthplace of ancient cultures. Its position along East-West trading routes brought rich artifice development. According to the archeological remains and historical sources, it's been illustrated that Iran hasn't schismatized from art in any period of time till now. However, during the history, historical events like wars and domination of some other civilizations have exerted different impressions on its art [1].

As for the Greek art dominations, they have caused their own special topics in Iran's history. In spite of past studies and investigative literature in this field, Parthian art has not been completely presented so far and still there is no comprehensive study that has scrutinizing this art from different view points such as: architecture, coinage, tissues, painting. The Present research is studying Iran's art according to the remains of Parthian period. Art in this period will be studied from different view points such as architecture, coinage, tissues, painting and other art indices. Unfortunately, different aspect of Parthian art in Iranian history are not well documented. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to scrutinize of the aspects of Iranian art in the Parthian period.

**Seleucid:** "Selucos Nicator" was the founder of Seleucid Empire. After beating (Antigone), entitled himself as "Nicator" that means "conqueror". He throned at 312 B.C. his enthronement is the origin of seleucidian date. Selucos's capital initially was "Selukia" city located in right coast of "Tigris" river which he built it himself; but after he built "Antakya" nearby Mediterranean Sea, he put it as Capital [2]. After his death at 281B.C. his son, "Antixeus the first" and then his son "Antixeus the second" throned. At Antixeus the second's time, in Parth territory a group by the leadership of an Arsaces, revolted against Seleucid dynasty and established Parthian dynasty at 250 B.C. [3].

**Hellenism:** Alexander's domination on Iran and the overthrow of Achaemenid dynasty changed the condition of Iran's culture and civilization. Political revolution and chaotic situation of the country necessitated an important literary revolution. Due to the domination of Alexander and his successors, Greek language and culture spreaded out over Iran and substituted Iran ancient culture. Greek sciences such as medicine, philosophy, poetry, literature and also Greek words prevailed all over Iran. This civic and cultural influence of Greek in Iran means Hellenism and Greek mores and civilization [4]. Seleucids, who ruled



Fig. 1: Iran tract in the Parthian period

for about 80 years, were the major factor for hellenization of the Orient. Seleucids built about 70 cities in Iran territory and attracted Greek immigrants to them.

**Parthian:** Parthians were a part of Parth People rose from states which now includes “Khorasan”; the name of this region has been mentioned in Darius inscription as “Parthua” which is “Pahlua” in “Pahlah” state; hence, it could be read as “Pahlavi” to attribute them to their territory. Parthian tribes initially habituated in the same region with “Daheh” people who lived in the east of Caspian Sea and thereafter migrated and habituated in Khorasan region [5] (Figure 1).

In 250 B.C, an Arsacid who was one of the Parthian commanders and lived near “Atrak” river’s valley, revolted against Antiochus the Second and collaborated with his brother “Tirdad” and founded the Parthian (Ashkani) dynasty. The name of “Ashkani”, essentially Arashkani, was derived from the name of “Arsacid” the founder of this dynasty. Arsacid was killed in 247 B.C. his successors titled themselves with his name and entitled him with “Epiphanes” which means brave and renowned [6].

There isn’t much information about this period; having no available and authentic dating scale, findings become less useful, by the way, few present remnants betokened the gradual extrication of the art of this period from Greek and Roman’s impressions. In Parthian period, Iranian art was vastly inspired from and impressed by its prior traditions, nonetheless; this art accounts as Iranian, howbeit of technics and subjects have downfallen to some extent, but it seems that it has retained its national

identity. The artists of this period with time appropriateness by and by permitted the Greek works produced by Alexander and his successor and created a new Iranian art [7, 8].

Parthian dominance lasted for 476 years and 29 Arsacids ruled over Iran. Their Capital in their era was “Ctesiphon” and “Solukiyeh” near Tigris. In the beginning of the establishment of the empire, “Nisa city” near “Ashgabad” and Dara city near AbiVard region were the capital; sometime “Ekbatan”, sometime “Hekatum polis” in summer because of temporary durbar sites, when the king went to Mād, Parth and Gorgan. Feudalism was a reason for decentralization of power. Family conflicts especially those of this family and maybe mugeses’ hatreds and opposition who opposed Parth policy of tolerance, were some causes of their downfall. Grueling wars for five century in East and west and also dissatisfactions caused exorbitances of martial class among people [9].

It seems the kingdom succeeded to protect Iran against invasions of Eastern tribes and also to preserve territorial integrity of Iran against creeping invasions of Rome toward Eastern. Parth empirement was based on feudalism. Their kings Entitled theyself as “Basileus Basilion” which means themselves “king of the kings” in Greek language. Each Parthian’s eighteen fold states had its own king who was called as “Shah” and in Pahlavi language was nominated as “Kazak Khozay” which meant governor [10]. Except these eighteen fold states, the others had autonomous governments and their kings paid a tax to the great king annually and at war times aided him with armies and soldiers.

Some of the autonomous states like “Azerbaijan”, “Khūzestan”, “Armenia”... and many local kinglets like Pars and “Khuzestan” had mintage right; there were 70 Greek cities which their people were administrated according to their own rules, altogether those lead to propagation of Greek mores and manners.

At Parthian period considerable evolutions occurred in religion, art and literature; though all of these shouldn't be accounted as Parthian innovations. Nevertheless they created indelible works. The great difference between the beginning and the end of this kingdom, implicates advancement and evolution in culture and art of this period. Our knowledge about them is less than that of their priors, to wit Achaemenid, Greek and also Sasanian. Art had a special importance to Achaemenid as it is distinguishable from the few findings of this period.

#### **Parthian Art Could Be Divided into Three Distinct Periods:**

- Greek period and pastiche of prior eastern works.
- Second period: begins from first century B.C., Parthians gradually created their own idoneous style by synthesizing adoptive elements.
- Third period: begins from the second century A.D. to the end of Parthian period, during this period Parthian art degenerated, works of this period could be found in local governor's buildings and forths of border tribes [5].

Figures drawn in free and soft lines and imaginative space indicates the impression of Greek art on the first period [8].

Depicting rows of people composed of frontal and semi-frontal figures, all in vapid and arid postures, abnormal patterns garment, during first millennium before Parthian, were to become character of west Asian art. Parthians later were the first people who changed this background.

By the first century B.C., Parthian artists applied this old art or imitated Greek art. Naturally Greek works were accomplished by Greek artists who were settled in Iran and Iranian artists applied traditional designs [11].

Therefore, one of the important properties of Parthian art could be its frontal style. Although Parthian reliefs witnessed degeneracy in comparison to those of prior works, it could be percept from these works that the artists to some extent set themselves free from what Hellenism influenced in Iranian art.

Parallel to this movement, a powerful stream opened its way through “Iranian-hellenistic” and entered into “New Iranian”. Parthian was inspired by the art of these people and colorful, sheeny cameo was popularized in Iran; but despite artistic induction, because of their tribal and bellicosity spirit and also continuing war between them, Rome and their nonchalant pluralist spirit, cultural accretion didn't occur subsequently, also no united empirement and no coherent art appeared. Iranian art is different from Greek art. Parthian used some Greek features and arbitrarily changed them. There are some heterogeneous conflation, may be it wasn't due to incapability, rather it was because of geographical situations of different centers and their various social structures, contexts and ultimately the effort of artists to be set free from Greek art and Hellenism; whereas Parthian art rooted in Eastern art and not from what they took from Greek. Spiritual forms and motifs and interest in details in decorations originate from East and Achaemenid sources. They just took whatever they want from Greek Art. The general opinion that accounts Parthian as declined Greek art undoubtedly couldn't be true. by increasing our knowledge about Parthian and from new inscription discoveries it became more unfolded that there have been great developments in various dimensions in this period [1]. Greek language and civilization influence Iran, impressed Parthian and Western empirements. Parthian in the beginning of their control called themselves as philhellene, which means Greek advocate. To entice their Greek citizen who had established a semi-independent government, they tried to propagate Greek mores and language for a while and entitled themselves as: Epiphans that means Prestigious, or Sute which means savior. Eastern kings minted their coins with Greek writing and language and set their calendar's origin as the begging of the Seleucid period (312 B.C.).

**Parthian Architecture:** Five buildings have remained from Parthian period comprised of “Kangavar” temple, “Alkhazra” imaret (Hatra), little building of “Farash Abad”, crypt tomb of “Varkeh”, Babylon palace which has been built on the ruins of “Ardeshir's” durbar hall. Iranian art at the beginning of this period followed Greek styles, but thereafter tended to the traditional and national architecture [1]. At Parthian period, architecture adopted its principal bases from Parthian nomad's tenets. Central squared yards with quadripartite porch were taken to Mesopotamia as a symbol of Parthian architecture. Transformation of this architectural style could be seen as well in Islamic Architecture, particularly in Seljukian period [12].

In Parthian architecture after the advancement of the experiment, the view of building was much more considered and they tried to concentrate on the exposure of the walls, Wall painting and stucco with a complete sample of it, have been found in “Hamun” lake located in “Sistan”. Parthians used cradle vaults, rubble arch and stratification, ornamental reliefs and sometimes in-wall columns [13]. An architectural property of this period is the transmission of some artistic and architectural elements to Sasanian and Byzantine. Vaulty architecture which is well-known in Iran probably has begun at Parthian period and developed during Sasanian period [14]. The great vault located in hillside of “Pa-tagh” mount nearby “Kermanshah” to “Sarpol Zahab” route, shows a combination of cradle vault and constructional development technics in this period. Also Anahita temple in “Kangavar” located in “Hamedan” to “Kermanshah” route and belonging to Parthian period is a sample of Parthian architectural masterpiece [15] (Figure 2).

Some experts are still in doubt about the ascribing some remnants to this period. Parthian architecture, in which porch and vault had been applied, hadn't been inspired by Greek style, rather was completely an Eastern Art and only the facades were decorated in Greek and Roman styles. Because of warm and dry climate, people, as do nowadays, built simple buildings with adobes. But also sometimes they used brick for temples and rulers' buildings [16].

Only Stone used a lot if available or if financial situation let. Timber rarely was applied, since it was scarce and so expensive. House is still durable with stone without mortar (Veshka Chin) with a curved arch in the villages of “Avraman” which is located in Kurdistan Iran (Figure 3).

**Parthian Remains, out of Present Iran's Political Borders:** There are samples out of present Iran's borders in “Marv” and “Nisa” located in now Turkmenistan, “Hetra”, “Palmira” and “Dura Ereus” in Russia and Northern Mesopotamia.

Nisa was the First Parth's capital; after invading to Satrap, “Selukia” became their capital by Arsacid the First. But when Tirdad The first, added Tus, Herkania and South eastern coasts of Caspian Sea to their domain, the capital transferred to the Seleucidian city of “Hundred Gates” near Damghan [14, 16].

**Hatra:** The city of Hatra, also known as sun goddess is one of the few remains of Ancient world. Hand running relocation in borders is a natural phenomenon. During Iran,s history, political and cultural borders have changed



Fig. 2: Anahita temple in “Kangavar”



Fig. 3: Stone without mortar (Veshka Chin) in the villages of “Avraman”



Fig. 4: Hatra

frequently and have processed and recessed many times. Hatra is one of these cases which is far away from present political borders and is located inside Iraq. This city has been built by applying Iranian, Greek and Roman Architectures in which, Artistic syncracy is perceptible [17].

Geographical location, communicational and commercial roads, tollhouse and saber rattling are the elements considered by Parthian to build the city. The population contexts have been a compound of various ethnics and castes which are demonstrated by obtained individual names. Several temples also introduce the religious importance of the city [18] (Figure 4).

**Dura Ereus:** In the ruins of Dura Ereus city located in Northern coast of Euphrates, inscriptions in Greek language and wall paintings which betoken Parthian and Romans war have been discovered.



Fig. 5: "Kuhe Khaja" in Sistan

**Nisa:** In recent years around Nisa region located nearby Eshghabd in now Turkmenistan, a great archive comprised of financial documents written on terra cottas have been discovered, these documents have been written in Aramian and Parthian Pahlavi languages and als" similar documents on terra cottas have been discovered among the ruins of Dura Ereus city.

**The Main Manifestations of Parthian Art:** When Parthians established a new empire, a pragmatism reaction pro Eastern traditions appeared. In the first century A.D. Parthian art showed its own quiddity. Thereafter jejune standing figures adorned with various jewels, clad in Iranian garments with flat folds, symmetric stance and direct coherent look [19].

In ancient Mesopotamia, this technic applied only for figures which had great importance, but Parthians formulated it for almost all figures. A bronze figure obtained from Chemi temple, several low reliefs at Bistun Sarvak pass and also some murals of religious complex at "Kuhe Khaja" in Sistan have from this period tendency to manifest animals in bronze and silver objects [20]. Stucco was very vogue and its motifs were a syncretism of Greek and Achaemenid styles. The best Stucco works of this period have been discovered in Assyria, Iraq (Iraq) and religious complex at "Kuhe Khaja" in Sistan (Figure 5). The vogue of Stucco was because of its abundance and its easy usage which has created more propensities to apply this ornamental method. Plaster mortar was smoothed on wall easily and hardened rapidly, so Stucco makers could cover a wide surface with chained Stucco reliefs [21].

Someone correlate these frequent motifs to the similar motifs in nomad textures; handcraft also developed during Parthian period and this was an important factor in trading and commencing with Phoenicia's and Syria's. One of the major Parthian exports was textile which were adorned with motifs adopted from Iran and Greek mythology. Some

of them were ornamented with silver Paillettes and gilded yarns and motifs. There are several semi-sketched pictures on houses' walls remained from Mid-parthian age. There, ordinary people, horsebacks, caravanning, huntsmen and soldiers have depicted various scenes. Among them is an Iranian horseback, lance in hand, who is armored and so is the horse, also a memorial of a man belonging to heavy weapon cavalry unit [22] (Figure 6).

A mural known as "Konon" shows a religious ceremony of "Konon" family by two priests clad in white dresses and crowns on heads. The technique of watercolor painting with sticky materials as the primary sketches belonging to the first century A.D. is one of the most famous works of this period [20].

In spite of Mesopotamia, Semite and Greek current confluences, both of them are completely in Iranian style. Like Achaemenid style, there was no depiction of individuals. But spiritual tendency of a Mesopotamian Semite picture direct the look to the depth of infinity.

Lithographs and Small statues of baked clay and bronze statue of ivory which have been clumsily made are samples of this age's works (Figure 7). Parthian terra cottas are usually had some patterns and its simple and colored types aren't noticeably important. Glaze terra cottas in blue theme and Hellenistic motifs are accounted as Parthian works.

Parthian art depicts has a kind of realism which is in an apparent opposition with ideal style of Greeks, particularly in coinages. Little details are also regarded on coinage patterns.

In this period we can also see the development of cameo and mere utilization of metal (Figure 8), almost all utensil were made of metals, but generally thereafter metal works considered as decoration and metal works became a separate branch. Hence, patch works advanced considerably [15, 16].

Parthian paintings didn't indicate a unit an outstanding style, but the painting style of the post-Islamic originates in its development [12]. The "prey and hunterman" scenes frequently depicted in Iranian paintings are the symbols of war and defeat of Iranian earthy and spiritual enemies, which one of them have been discovered in the excavations of ancient city of Dor Europos in Syria which was under the domain of Parth empire. Also in the ruins of religious, complex at "Kuhe Khaja" in Sistan palace from the first century A.D. (Figure 9). Some paintings have been discovered and in spite of Greek influence, imply the 2-dimensional depicting with smooth colors and black penmanship [23].



Fig. 6: Parthian paintings, a man belonging to weapon



Fig. 7: Statue of ivory



Fig. 8: Cameo (metal dish)



Fig. 9: Parthian paintings, “Kuhe Khaja” in Sistan palace

The point is in this fact that thereafter these very Parthian arts in the beginning of Byzantine empire became the source of cathedral artists. Probably it was more matched with Christian courses.

About Parthian jugs and pots, initially there was a sequacity of western and Seleucid terra cottas at first and then gradually, Greek delicacy had decamped and became rough. Embellishments in the form of flutes, beautiful head-shaped forms and patterns appeared. Glazes were often blue and green and sometimes yellow or brown. Toy terra cottas and tills with coin slits have been discovered in “Selukia” and a marble pot also has been found in Sus.

In “Nisa” and “Damavand”, also some corneous cups have been found. These cups are not only patch worked and ornamented with glasses, but also figures show Greek myths and sometimes rows of faces were depicted. Below this horn-shaped cups, there have been also depicted a carved figure, a centaur, a lion or a goddess. It’s the point where two artistic traditions were combined together. The form of the horns has been adopted from Achaemenid. Greek mythological scenes have been appeared in Greek style, but an ornamental row of heads, is an Iranian phenomenon, which are also observable around Lanai vault of “al hazara” temple. What were found of Greek art consists of two Hellenistic statues, goddess and the head of Hercules [20].

**Textiles:** Some textiles have been found in 1967 searches in “Qūmes” city. The search has been accomplished by two non-Iranian archeologists “David Strubach” and “John Hatsman” during 1967 to 1970; before these findings, almost all opinions about carpeting in Parthian period were based on Arab historians. “Qūmes” city located in a dry desert in east northern of Iran (nearby Damghan). Archeologists believe this city developed during the third century B.C. the third century A.D, in Parthian period when the Greeks and Romans tried to conquer Iran. Silk Road was nearby “Qūmes” and converging East spicery and silk to the west and Roman glasses and horses to the East was a profitable trade [23].

Tus textiles were discovered in some three-stored places which were used as cemetery; burying the dead bodies in such buildings instead of underground cemeteries refers to a Zoroastrian rite not to pollute the earth. Archeologists attribute the oldest one to the first century B.C.; this one consist of a brown woolen felt and a piece of a sleeved-facket; this felt along with a neck-sized silky strap, probably belongy to a child. But the most outstanding piece which was discovered in “Qūmes” excavations is a frizzy fuzzy piece of textile which in spite of its malformed appearance is probably the oldest fuzzy carpet in Iran (Figure 10).



Fig. 10: Parthian textile in “Qūmes” city



Fig. 11: Parthian coin

**Coinage:** Parthian coins were made only of silver and brass and money imported through trade (Figure 11). Their monetary unit was “drachmae” which is a Greek word and thereafter turned into “Drham” and “Dram”. Parthian language and handwriting used in their mintage were Greek [24].

Numerow The title which the Parthian kings minted on their coins were, one of them, “Theos” means God, “Epiphans” means famous and “philohellen” means lover of Hellen (Greece). On the coins, we can see kings’ Faces sitting on thrones, holding bow in hands and pulling bowstrings. Some coins show the Greek goddess’s faces. Parthian coins dated according to Seleucidian which its origin was the date of Selucos Nicator enthronement (1312 B.C.) [23, 24] from the first century A.D by and by the coins language and writing became “Aramian”, quality decremented weather in metal or stuff. Parthian silver coins comprise of one drachma 4 drachmae which most of them have been minted in Mesopotamian Greek cities [2].

Distinction between Greek and East style is clear in the primary Parthian coins which show the transformations of the artistic style. In the time of

“Mehrdad The First” these were at least 4 styles. His coins were minted apparently in northeast of Iran. Head in side view, without beard and with “Sacciaian” hat. The coin’s subject was Iranian but is different from the moderated style of Greek similar to that of central parts [26, 1].

Also, another style which had Greek method under the influence of western coins was used in regions occupied by them [24]. Finally when he came to “Suluccia”, he used Demetus moulds to mint the silver coins [4].

**Language and Writing:** After two ancient languages of “Avestan” and “old Parthian”, Iranian language was greatly endamaged by Alexandar invasion and its consequences. Greeks were forced out of Iran and Iran was dominated by “Parthians”. Then another language developed and it was “Median Parthian” or “Middle Parthian” which today we refer wit as “Pahlavi” and “Northern Pahlavi” according to Iran experts. Northern Pahlavi is Parthian (namely Ashkani) language and southern Pahlavi is Parsic or Sasanian Pahlavi [27].

There is no doubt that the Pahlavi was the Parthian language. And it was a region comprised of Northern Khorasan; these people dominated Iran and thereafter added “Ray”, “Hamedan”, “Fars” and “Dinavar” to their empirement. The Pahlavi language which was from “Khorasan”, developed over “Isfahan”, “Hamedan”, “Ray”, “Zanjan” and “Nahavand”.

The Parthian national writing was Aramian which was also Achaemenids. Some of their kings like: Mehrdad The Fourth, Balash The First and Ardavan The Fifth, minted their coins in Pahlavi language and Aramian writing.

Among the documents of this period, there is a deed of vineyard vindition in Pahlavi language and Aramian writing in “Avraman” located in Kurdistan<sup>1</sup> (Figure 12). So we can conclude that the forth evolution of Iranian language, is Pahlavi. After Avestan, Madic and Ancient Parthian, Pahlavi appeared as the fourth language and its formality began when the Parthians forced the Greeks out of Iran and transferred their capital to the center of Iran [28].

**Religious Art:** Parthians left some religious works. It has been used to ornament the “Bel” temple which opened at April 5<sup>th</sup> in Palmir. Hypostyle Lanai or hypostyle yard around the temple, with big poplar beams which held the Lanai ceiling previously. Two ends of the beams carved and ornamented with a low relief of a religious scene [29].

<sup>1</sup>This deed is recently detected



Fig. 12: A deed of vineyard in Aramian located in Kurdistan

Apparently in the beginning of front portraiture, it used to distinct a god within religious scenes in order to create a relation between the god and observer. The others, with lower status appeared in side view; but after a while they were depicted with a new style. The political conditions of the West also accelerated it. According to the Mesopotamian Semite local gods bestowed on them a great victory, because the Seleucid gods couldn't protect their worshipers and so the Seleucid empirement ended. But the Semite "Bel" overcome, so nationalism, self confidence, new religious and philosophic nations mixed together and increased Semite tendency to create closer relations with their gods through icons [28].

Some religious scenes of "Bel" temple are rather complicated, for example a relief which shows the handshaking of Luna (moon goddess) with Demeter (agriculture goddess). Their power was depicted by their dual altars and also earthy crops. The masculinity of "Aglibol"<sup>1</sup> has been carved only on a stone roof. But the "moon goddess" of Greek was female and this point had been probably forgotten [16].

In "Bistun", on a separated slab, there is a Parthian prince near a fireplace and doing a religious rite. It is frontal low relief in a situation resembling the one of the "Konon" in Dura Europos.

The aim of artists was flaunting the local gods against some Greek gods like Zeus and Hercules. But long peaked crown on a big statue's head of Hercules indeed is an Iranian crown; its cloak around the wrist of Apolo relief, Armenian royal hat and king's Iranian suit, all are a reflection of the life of this period.

These reliefs are not the only innovation of this period. Handshaking of god with a king, a relief in which Antixeus is giving his son and his successor a semi-crown, all illustrate the appearance of a new subject in art and it's the conveyance of kingdom or crown prince nomination ceremony [7].

In the Parthian period, people initially worshiped the natural phenomena like moon and sun and were loyal to Mazdaism; the available documents suggest that Parthian kings adopted this religion and many fireplaces were built by them, but also they were not strict and were accompanied by the other religion believers.

## CONCLUSION

Iran art has had so many sources that some experts believe it is just a syncretistic art derived from other arts. However, it may be considered as an elective style which is fresh, new and different from its original arts.

Parthians were the heritors of a Hellenistic Iran and gradually set themselves free from Greek art and culture. They innovated the Iranian-Greek art and developed a new style; they used other style and also they brought some skillful workmen from the others. One of the important features of Parthians kingdom was the internal complete independency of tribes. Each one controlled a part of Iran but completely dependant on the king in foreign issues. This caused the growth and presence of local art and synthetic heterogeneous art in which Iranian motifs were developed.

Parthians adopted most parts of Greek culture and also held the Iranian traditions. The beginning of Parthian empirement was Hellenistic and philhellene period; and the end of it was the reaction of Iran against Greek culture.

In spite of adoption of methods which approximated Parthian art to its Iranian bases, we shouldn't forget that the Parthian domain never accreted culturally. This tendency to attain a united and coherent art in Sasanian period reached its summit and Greek elements largely faded.

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<sup>1</sup>An ancient (Palmarene) moon-god who forms a powerful triad with Yarhibol and the supreme god Bel. His name means "calf of bel" he is portrayed with the lunar disk on his forehead and sometimes on his shoulder

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