

Study and Analysis of Symbolic Motifs of Elymais Bronze Coins (Based on Parthian Coins in Sari Museum)

Type of Study: Original Research

Ameneh Bishekolai^{1*}, Farah Zahedi²

Abstract

Understanding the elements and motifs is very essential in archaeology. The motifs on the coins play an important role in the knowledge of ancient religions, sects, and myths and illuminate the history of many religious events. Coins have a significant impact on the knowledge of art and, studying it can help, how art progresses and degenerates in different eras and ethnicities. The study of coins is of great importance in archaeology, especially in historical times. By reason of the usage of the motif elements of coins, we can discover government, ideology and economic systems in the past societies. The primary purpose of this study is to identify the symbolic motifs of 405 Parthian Bronze coins in the Kolbadi museum of Sari, which were discovered in 2011 in Babol. The main point is the unique motifs of these coins, mainly geometric and symbolic motifs, discovered in several Parthian coins. Most motifs on Parthian coins have been symbolic and human motifs and, religion had a significant impact in creating symbolic motifs of these coins. This research has used analytical – experimental method also, expert observation of these coins in the Sari Museum. The result shows that the prominent motifs of these coins are symbolic; especially the moon, star, anchor, royal ring and wheat, which these motifs are related to the religion of the Parthian period. The symbolic crescent moon is one of the elements of light and fire, and these motifs relate to the religion of the royal ring which are one of the sun symbols.

Key Words: Coin, Parthian, Symbolic motifs, Elimaeid

Introduction & Method

Due to the lack of written sources from the Parthian period, coins are considered the most important sources for studying and investigating the developments of the political and social history of the Parthians. Parthian coins are among the outstanding types in this respect in the ancient world, and the magnificent examples of these coins in terms of design and writing were minted during the time of Mehrdad II, the great Parthian ruler. The first coins of this kingdom are considered to belong to the dynasty of Arshak I. Arshak was from the "Parni" tribe of the Daheh tribe and attacked Parth around 238-239 BC and won over Andhra Goras (Volski, 2004: 59). After Ordwan I, Mehrdad II (123-88 BC) became a king who is considered one of the special kings of Parthia and the history of the ancient East (Shipman, 2010: 38). He defeated the rulers of Mishan and Elimai. Repelling Hospaosin's invasion was

1. Ph.D. Candidate of Ancient Languages and Culture of Iran, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran. Iran.

2. Assistant Professor of Ancient Languages and Culture, National Archives and Library of Iran, Tehran. Iran.

* Corresponding Author: Email: bishekolai@gmail.com

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also his work, and some of his oldest coins were re-struck on bronze coins of the invaders (Gorshasabi and Nasrallahzadeh, 1395: 145). Parthian kings usually engraved titles (words that come before the name of Arshak) and titles (words that come after the name of Arshak) on their coins, which is a reflection of the position and power of the owner of the coin. The first references to titles and titles of ancient Iran are in the tablets found in Persepolis and related to the years 509-494 BC. According to history, Mehrdad II (Ashk Nehm) was the most powerful king of the Parthian dynasty, such a way that he was given the nickname "Great" due to his authority in organizing all government affairs. In this article, by examining the titles of the coins of Mehrdad II as the most powerful Ashkanian king, it can be seen that with the passage of time and the increase in power and the expansion of the territory under his rule, the titles and titles engraved on his coins also become more prominent and transformative. It is assumed that with the passing of time and the increasing age of Mehrdad II, which is indicated by the aging of his face on the coins, the power of the Parthian government also increased, as a result, his titles on the coins became longer and more magnificent.

Research goals and necessity

The goal is to investigate why and how these titles and titles are traced, to investigate and follow the process of adopting them, and to estimate the approximate dates of the minting of these types of Mehrdad II coins and other obscure points in this regard.

Research question

In line with the importance of the topic, two questions were considered for this research. The research questions are: How the titles and titles of Mehrdad II Parthian and its change can be related to the specific historical events of that time? How is the approximate date of minting of these coins possible by examining these titles and titles?

Research method

The current research is based on the nature and method of historical research and information collection based on library studies. First, 12 types of coins of Mehrdad II are examined and defined based on the roles, titles and titles on the coins, then based on the titles and titles, the year of mintage is suggested for these types, and a connection is made between important political events and the titles on the coins. In this article, it is assumed that by comparing the chronology of the historical events of the Mehrdad II period with the order of using the titles and titles of the coins, relying on the knowledge of numismatics, it is possible to estimate the minting date of the coins as well as the acquisition of these titles and titles as much as possible. The research method is based on this hypothesis, first by categorizing the titles of this Parthian ruler, an arrangement of his titles is presented based on the political events of the government and conquests of that period, then by comparing these titles with historical findings and other archaeological findings, dates an approximation for the multiplication of different types of coins of Mehrdad II was proposed.

Identified Traces

The meaning of "title" is any word that comes before the family name of Arshak, and the meaning of "surname" is any word after the name of Arshak. About Mehrdad II, the situation is like this; The titles of the Parthian king along with the family name of Arshak in the order of the title from the beginning of his reign until his death are as follows: 1. Shah Arshak, 2. Great Shah Arshak, 3. Shahnesah Arshak and 4. Great Emperor Arshak. According to the author, the chronological order of different types of coins is based on the PI of the titles of a specific king - for example, Mehrdad II - according to the importance and magnitude of that

title, and it can be used as a rule; That is, the coin on which the Parthian king was called "Shah Arshak" was minted before the coin with the title "Shah Bozur Arshak". In this case, the titles that come after Arshak's name are at the next level of importance.

The rising course of the ruler's title can be compared and confirmed with Mehrdad II's growing beard on his coins and his aging, historical events also confirm this. In this research, this rule is called the "ruler's title rule".

Conclusion

As a result of this study, it was found that Mehrdad II adopted four titles, which became more magnificent as the country expanded under his command and with more conquests. According to the "ruler's title rule", his titles along with Arshak's family name, in the order of the title, from the beginning of his reign until his death, are as follows:

1. Shah Arshak (species 1 and 2).
2. The great king of Arshak (species 3-7).
3. King Arshak (species 8-10).
4. The great king of Arshak (types 11 and 12).

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