

## Analysis of the Political Propaganda of Shapur I of Sassanid and the Study of the Title “Emperor of Iran and Aniran,” With an Analysis of Two Unique Coins; Inscriptions and Reliefs

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### Abstract

Sassanid Shapur I (242-270 AD) was able to defeat three Roman emperors in numerous battles with the Roman Empire. Considering the fact that political-religious propaganda is one of the must-haves of the works left over from the Sassanid era, Shapur I decided to celebrate his victories by creating prominent motifs and even minting two-dinar coins and make it immortal. In the meantime, a new title of Shapur I, that is, the title "Emperor of Iran and Aniran" is seen in inscriptions, especially the inscription of Zoroaster's Kaaba; Although this nickname is applied on two unique coins, it raises the questions for this research: How was the creation of the title of "Emperor of Iran and Aniran" during the Sassanid era of Shapur I and the creation of a publicity atmosphere around it? Why is it that despite Shapur I's use of political-religious propaganda in reliefs and inscriptions, the title "Emperor of Iran and Aniran" has not been used on all official and common coins? This article aims to examine the main reasons for Shapur I not using the title of Emperor of Iran and Aniran on coins by examining historical texts and numismatic evidence (perceptual archeology and historical approach). The result of this research made it clear that in addition to the victories of Azina in the Western Front, which were mentioned by some researchers, probably the silver coins had only domestic uses and the gold coins were not common coins that could be used by the public. therefore, only a limited number, which today are only limited to two coins, two commemorative Dinars and one silver Dirham from eastern Turkey, have been multiplied for promotional purposes.

**Key Words:** Shapur I, Numismatics, Relief, Iran and Aniran, Sassanians

### Introduction & Method

Shapur I, the powerful Sassanid emperor, was able to defeat three emperors in numerous battles with the Roman Empire and force this ancient ally to pay ransom and tribute. And in order to celebrate his glorious victories, he created the final scenes of these victories on numerous prominent motifs in different parts of Fars province. It was at this time that Shapur I added the title of "King of Iran and Aniran" to his name for the first time and engraved it on the wall of Zoroastrian Kaaba. Therefore, the title "Emperor of Iran and Aniran" is based on

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two unique coins, i.e. two dinars and a single dirham from eastern Turkey, but the non-publicity of this title is on the most important propaganda element of that era, i.e. coins and political propaganda debate. Regarding this title, Shapur I forms the central issue of this research by relying on the inscriptions and prominent motifs. This research leads to two main questions: 1. How was the creation of the title "Emperor of Iran and Aniran" during the Sassanid era of Shapur I and the creation of a publicity atmosphere around it? 2. Why is it that despite Shapur I's use of political-religious propaganda in reliefs and inscriptions, the title "Emperor of Iran and Aniran" has not been used on all official and common coins? The approach of this research is based on the use of perceptual archeology and the historical approach, and in the studies related to the Sassanid period, where there are many material evidences and historical texts, it can be the main and proper foundation, so it is in line with the goals. Research by analyzing historical texts, reliefs, inscriptions and coins and relying on two approaches of perceptual archeology and historical approach, this article was written.

#### Identified Traces

The great victories of Shapur I over Rome in the ancient world should have been given a huge effect and its memory should have been done in a proper way for subsequent propaganda. Shapur I managed to carry out such propaganda well and used the media as a prominent role in different parts of Pars state. These prominent motifs, which depict the summaries of consecutive battles as well as Shapur I's victories in the battle with the Roman enemy, are depicted in places such as Darabgerd (Darab), Bishapur Tang Chugan (Kazron), and Naqsh Rostam. Marvdasht) have been created. The noteworthy point of this research is the lack of use of the term "Emperor of Iran and Aniran" in Shapur's silver coins, and this is despite the fact that such a phrase has been seen in the inscriptions of Zoroaster's Kaaba, Haji Abad Cave, and Naqsh Rajab of Shapur I. It seems that the spirit of Sassanid dirhams, which had a domestic and not an international function, was one of the assumptions of such lack of political (and not religious) propaganda of Shapur I. One of the few coins on which Shapur used the title of the Emperor of Iran and Aniran is a unique two-dinar coin in a private collection (Britain) that Alram and his colleagues introduced and confirmed its authenticity. As we know, the theme on this coin is taken from the numerous reliefs of Shapur I (Darabgerd reliefs, Bishapur 1-3, and Rostam reliefs). The minting place of the mentioned coin is not known, but it must have been minted in the eastern lands (probably Merv). The minting time of the said coin, if as Alram and his colleagues say, after 260 AD. and as it is from the inscriptions of Zoroaster's Kaaba belonging to the year 262 AD. We also know that Shapur deliberately removed the title of Marushah in a part of the inscription, and this shows the new political developments and the direct rule of Shapur with new envoys over this state, so it is possible to conquer Maru from He considered Shapur as the final point of earning the title of "Emperor of Iran and Iran". Recently, a silver coin (dirham) of Shapur I was found in one of the museums in the east of Turkey (Elazig Museum), on which Shapur I introduced himself as the emperor of Iran and Iran. The strange style of saj' on the coin and the use of the title in question seems a little strange to the researchers, but it should be known that such dirhams (although we know they had domestic uses) because they were minted at the end of Shapur's life, they must be limited or multiplied in small numbers; Therefore, the lack of sufficient opportunity for Shapur cannot be a reason for not minting the title of Emperor of Iran and Aniran on the coins.

#### Conclusion

The powerful Sassanid emperor, Shapur I, with full vigilance, used the political-religious propaganda space of the two Iranian and Roman societies to display his authority and superiority in all fields. Among these, the trampling of the lifeless body of the Roman emperor, the kneeling of other emperors, as well as the Roman goddess who gives the ring of

power to Shapur, can be mentioned in this context. This attention to religious-political propaganda by Shapur shows him to be more passive in the form of propaganda in small works of art such as coins; Although, from time to time, news is heard about the discovery of coins with the theme of using Shapur's political propaganda under the title of using the title of the emperor of Iran and Aniran, but the lack of these data led to the formation of a relatively stable idea that Shapur actually He did not use the titles of the emperor of Iran and Aniran in silver coins (although two examples of these coins have been seen). Several reasons were mentioned for this, including the lack of time, lack of space on the coin, and incomplete engraving on the coin, as well as the victories of Azineh, the Arab Amir of Palmyra, were more significant. These reasons; Although they are significant, none of these reasons could prevent Shapur from writing the titles of the Shah of Iran and Aniran on the official silver coins. - It is a domestic religion and less attention is paid to international political propaganda in them, and few commemoratives and not economic coins of Shapur gold are considered to be indicative of international political developments and propaganda, which two commemorative dinars with the nickname Shahneshah of Iran and Aniran and another dinar that showed his victory over the Kushans are considered among these evidences without using the mentioned title.

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