



The Study of the Role of Women in the Achaemenid, Parthian and Sassanid Periods Based on the Surviving Coins

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Abstract

The present research aimed to study the role of women in the Achaemenid, Parthian and Sassanid dynasties by examining the coins left over from those periods. The study universe included the written historical references and other related works about the status of women in the Achaemenid, Parthian and Sassanid dynasties. The sample subsumed the coins left over from those periods. The research method was descriptive - analytical. To collect data library procedure by using written documents and authentic resources was implemented. The data was analyzed via content analysis. The findings showed: while a coin is a tool for economic exchanges, a sign of independence, and the representation of the nationality of each ethnicity but at the same time it is a valid document that indicates the social, cultural, political, and ancient history of nations and provides useful information about the status of women. The images, names and titles of royal women, images of goddesses and related symbols that engraved on Parthian and Sassanid coins, indicated the high position of women in those periods. Although the surviving artworks from the Achaemenid period provide valuable information about the women of this era, but in the coins of this period, like other works, the image of a woman is not seen. Achaemenid, Parthian and Sasanian court women played a role in politics and society as examples of powerful, resourceful and strong-willed women. In general, women in these periods reached a position equal to that of men (kings), and their names and images have been preserved on coins.



Extended abstract

Introduction: Coins are mainly circular metal pieces with a certain shape, thickness, weight, material, carat and value. Numismatists trace the invention of the first coins to the land of Lydia and the 6th century BC. They attribute that the Achaemenians minted the first coins in Iran during the time of Darius I, imitating them. By examining the coins, it seems that one can understand many facts about political and social realities, ways of thinking, feeling, art and life records of people and the status of women in societies. Although many studies have been conducted in the field of coins and their relationship with the position of women, so far, comprehensive research has not studied the position and presence of Achaemenid, Parthian, and Sassanid women in connection with their image and name on their surviving coins. The present research aimed to study the role of women in the Achaemenid, Parthian, and Sasanian periods based on the surviving coins.

Method: The research design was descriptive-analytical. The research universe included historical written resources and other related works on the position of women in the Achaemenid, Parthian, and Sasanian dynasties. The sample of this study subsumed coins left over from the Achaemenid, Parthian, and Sasanian periods. The data was collected via library method using the content analysis method. In this way, the written documents and authentic books and resources, written texts related to the Achaemenid, Parthian, and Sasanian periods were studied, described, and analyzed. In the second stage, the coins of the mentioned three periods were excavated and finally, the data of the research were analyzed and explained.

Results: The findings of the current research showed that, although the coin is a tool for economic exchange, a sign of independence, and a representative of the nationality of each nation, at the same time, it is an authentic document that provides helpful information in social, cultural, political, and ancient history. It shows nations and the status of women. Images, names, and nicknames of royal women, images of goddesses, and symbols related to them were engraved on Parthian and Sassanid coins, expressing the high status of women in these periods. Although the artistic works left from the Achaemenid period provide valuable information about the women of this era, the coins of this period do not show the image of a woman like other works. Achaemenid, Parthian, and Sasanian court women played a role in politics and society as examples of powerful, resourceful, and strong-willed women. In general, women in these periods reached a position equal to that of men (kings), and their names and images have been remained on coins.

Conclusions: During the Achaemenid period, a woman had dignity in terms of presence in the community and family, and the most important thing that caused respect for a woman was the category of childbirth. The women of the upper classes enjoyed more respect, power, and prosperity and could participate in national and political affairs. Although the artistic works left from the Achaemenid period provided valuable information about the women of this era, the coins of this period do not show the image of a woman like other works. Perhaps the reason is that the minting of coins in this era was still going through its growth and maturity period, and it was far from the phase of women's role on coins. Regarding the value and respect of women in the Parthian and Sassanid periods, it is necessary to pay attention to the role and presence of goddesses such as Anahita, that



enjoyed specific respect and dignity, which was effective in men's view of women in the extent that their image engraved on the coins of these periods. The presence of women in the remaining coins showed the real characters who managed to rely on their power, including Reno, the mother of Farhad II, who ruled on his behalf until her son reached legal age. After Reno, Musa is the only woman to rise to power as queen, as well as Queen Anzaza, whose image is minted on coins. Also, Purandekht and after him, Azarmidekht sat on the throne independently and officially as queen. Image of Anahita-Artemis engraved on Parthian and Sasanian coins. The face of Anahita on the back of Bahram II coins is the same as the face of the Iranian ladies. Symbols associated with the goddess Anahita, other than the image of the king, which is a male symbol, authority and material power, elements such as the star, moon, eagle and ram, which engrave on Parthian, Elimian, and Sasanian coins, are symbols of fertility, It has been life and fertility. Women such as Queen Musa also have been introduced as goddesses. Therefore, the existence and spiritual presence of women in the life and society of ancient Iranian people has been quite noticeable. It is obvious that whatever is important and valuable for man, he tries to record it by any means possible. In the periods under study, on the one hand, women had a high position and dignity due to having natural existential possibilities such as fertility and the manifestation of divine beauty and were elevated to the highest status of goddesses, and on the other hand, due to the high status of goddesses in society, they were respected. have been looked at and on the other hand, although the position of women has had ups and downs in crossing the passageways of history, the women of the court family are examples of powerful, resourceful and strong-willed women who succeeded in the field of politics and to played a role in society, they reached a base equal to the base of men (kings), and their name and appearance were preserved on coins. The truth is that the essence of a woman's existence, her talents, and her capabilities have played a role in determining her base and status.

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