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Sacred Beads of Pearl Necklaces of Sasanian Kings Based on their Coins

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Abstract

The Avesta and Zoroastrian manuscripts, in Pahlavi language, have been studied, interpreted and translated numerous times over the past century. The study of sacred numbers, only based on the above-mentioned texts, has also been a part of printed scholarly works. The reference to the Indo-European background of the numbers can be seen frequently in past works.Although in the background of this research, reference has been made to textual studies such as Indo-Iranian sources, but archaeological evidences have received less attention.This paper deals with a specific topic that is the *sacred Zoroastrian numbers and entanglement with Sasanian coins*. For this purpose, the author stresses on the number of pearls (beads) of the necklaces, headbands, hangings of the royal hat, and shoulder stripes based on the coins. The author will focus on the known sacred numbers such as 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 18, 21, 24…to prove the claim. Also, the article draws a clear line between necklaces worn in the batllefield, on coins and in bas- reliefs (Royal Scenes). In addition, the presence or absence of the beads of the pearl stripes on the shoulders or chest have been suggested as gender sign as a key question of this article. This restudy will show a new part of religious aspects on the royal Sasanian art.The author believes that the *number of the pearls* on the kings' necklaces or headbands have followed a *systematic structure* from a single string to the two strings, from the rise to the fall of the empire. Also, I will briefly refer to texts to support archaeological evidences.

Keywords: Necklaces, Pearl Beads, Sacred Number, Sasanian Coins, Zoroastrianism.

Article Type: Research Article

Introduction

Obviously, Zoroastrian sacred numbers, based on the Avesta and Zoroastrian texts (in Pahlavi language), have been subject of the numerous scholarly printed works since the last century. Meanwhile, previous scholarly works have been done mostly based on the Avesta, Indic texts and Zoroastrian texts, in Pahlavi language (Benveniste 1973; Meskub 2019: 66; Mazdapur 1999: 78; Dustkhah 1991: 90). Those works have referred to the Indo-European periods as the background of the Zoroastrian sacred numbers (cf. Trikha 1991: 5; Martinez and De Vann 2014: 3). Unlike them, this paper focuses on sacred numbers but based on *Sasanian coins* as a case study (Akbarzadeh 2022: 38).

Clearly, Sasanian coins can be one of the most significant sources to study myths, art, economy, history, political issues, writing background, geographical administrative, metal analyzes, etc. This importance is more visible due to the coin minting time with each king.

In the paper, due to the big number of Sasanian coins, the author has chosen a small number as an example[1].Despite other Sasanian legacy such as bas-reliefs and silver works, the author will refer to the Avesta and Zoroastrian texts (in footnote) for each sacred number.

However, the Sylloge Nummorum Sasanidarum (SNS) series, without considering religious aspects, referred to kings'accessories where the rays of Bahram I's crown were explained as Mithraic

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heritage (Alram and Gyselen 2012: 122, 152, 223, Passim; Schindel 2005: online); also, the multiple flames on the reverse of the coins has considered in the way that it is unclear how or why the flames change from five to six or nine to ten; a significant change which reminds of us a regular religious structure. Furthermore, for some other cases, such as the absence of a pearl strings on the chest, the presence or absence of a pearl beads (strings) on the shoulders of minors (princes/princess), we cannot refer to an earlier source.

Materials

In the following, the author refers to the known sacred Zoroastrian numbers based on Sasanian coins (and of course based on other archaeological evidences) to show how accessories of the kings conformanced with a regular religious structure.

Obviously, number "five"[2] was one of the known Zoroastrian sacred numbers. For the number, there are many examples. Bahram I frequently appeared with the five Mithraic rays on his crown based on the coins (cf. his bas-relief). Also, he kept a necklace with five pearl beads. One of Bahram II's queens, on a coin, has a headband and a hanging from hat with five pearl beads. There are five flames on the reverse coin of Bahram II (Figure. 1); Shapur I , also, appeared with a beard form like a hanging flower with five petals (also see Harper 1981: 206-208) on his coins.



Figure.1: *A: Bahram I (dinar) with five Mithraic rays (according to SNS but, in my opinion, five sacred flames); B: Bahram II (dinar) five flames; C: Bahram I (drachma) with a necklace with five pearls (Photo by S. Soheili); for schematic picture (see Alram and Gyselen 2012: 151).*

[1]The examples of coins in this article are from the collection of Reza Abbasi Museum, Tabriz Museum and the printed collection of Melli (National) Bank Museum.

[2]Avesta: "we worship the five seasons (Dustkhah 1991: 262); BD: "Hormazd first created the sky for forty days, Hormazd delayed for five days to that five days of Gahanbar" (Bahar 1990: 41). The author does not believe in the existence of a queen image on all Bahram II coins (cf. Akbarzadeh and Schindel 2021: 63); In addition to multiple queens and internal courtesans of the kings, what is called Shahbanu on the coins of Bahram II shows this dissimilarity even more. The nose, eyes, different hair styles, chest, different hangings on both sides of the hat, different make-up, different faces of what has been called the prince (face), at least strongly supports this assumption. Significant dissimilarities, except necklaces, can be seen about accessories of Bahram II and his queens from coins to reliefs (cf. Bahram II in Tang-e Qandil, Sarmashhad, Barm-e Dilak).

Just like the number five, the number "six"[1] also has many examples to prove it from the rise to the decline of the Sasanian period. The number of pearls in the forehead band and necklace of Yazdgerd I is the least evidence of this claim. Narseh's necklace also supports this idea. The author should also mention the necklace and forehead band of Bahram IV. Moreover, the six petals flower on the chest (and even on the diadem) of Ardeshir I cannot be ignored. This number can be understood on the shoulder stripes of Khosrow II (Figure. 2).

Below is the simple necklace of Ardeshir I in Firuzabad's bas-relief (also, his coins; Figure. 3) with six pearls (battlefield). In addition, a photo of a dancer-musician, with a necklace with six pearls, is visible there. Sasanian music-dance legacy was strongly impacted by regurlar Zoroastrian numbers.

Undoubtedly, the number "seven"[2] has been one of the well-known and most sacred Zoroastrian numbers. The headband of Hormizd II, number of the flames (reverse) on Bahram II's coins to the necklace of Shapur II (Figure. 4) reflect this idea. However, Anahita, in Naghsh-e Rustam (Figure. 5)[3], appeared with a necklace including seven pearl beads (cf. Harper, 1981: 35) which its form changed with Khosrow II, in Taq-e Bostan.

However, the number "nine"[4] has its most significant position in Zoroastrianism. One of the headbands of Khosrow II, necklace of Hormizd II and a necklace of Bahram V (Figure. 6) are a part of the claim (also, see Akbarzadeh 2022: 2).

In the following, Ardashir II (Taq-e Bostan) is (Figure. 7) clearly seen with a necklace including nine pearl beads, but Mihr (probably with 24 or 28 rays), like Hormazd without a pearl necklace[5] or simple (also, see Ardashir's investiture scene in Naghsh-e Rustam as a different case), has a different necklace (see later for necklaces sewn on silk, also see Les Perses Sassanides 2006: 90).



Figure.2: *A: Narseh with a necklace with six pearls;B: Ardashir I with a flower with six petals on the chest; C: Khosrow II with a shoulder stripes with six pearls each string (Photo by S. Soheili); for schematic picture (Narsi) (see Alram and Gyselen 2012: 296).*

[1]Avesta: "Azi Dahak three muzzles, three heads and six eyes… Zarathustra's six requested gifts from Hom…" (Dustkhah 1991: 303,138,140,348). BD: "Six priods of the Gahanbar…Hormazd created the six lands in the six years in the Khuvanirath" (Bahar 1990: 41,80).

[2] Avesta: "Yasn Haft Haat… It was because of Sorush' strength and wisdom that Amshaspandan came to seven countries (Dustkhah 1991: 2, 197, 225, 264). Minuy-e Kharad: "Those seven planets which are called after the seven Ahrman' Spahbeds" (Tafazzoli 1995: 26); BD: "…That Seven Amshasapand…Haft Oring…" (Bahar 1990: 47-57).

[3]In this scene, the attendant, behind Narsi, unlike the king and the goddess, has a necklace sewn on silk. It seems that the size of pearls of the goddess' necklace is bigger than the beads of the king's necklace.

[4] Avesta: "nine groove...nine branch to pleasure of Amshaspandan…" (Dustkhah 1991: 222, 294); BD: "Ohrmazd to Ahriman: "Set a time this campaign for nine thousand years" (Bahar 1990: 35).

[5]In most of the bas-reliefs (Fars), Ohrmazd's left hand prevents the type of necklace from being seen (cf. Tang-e Chowgan, Naghsh-Rajab, Firuzabad and etc.); unlike this, see the kings i.e. Narseh in Naghsh-e Rustam, Bahram I in Bishapur, and etc. This issue (Hormazd relief) is completely different in Taq-e Bostan (cf. Aradashir II) as the new Sasanian artistic school.

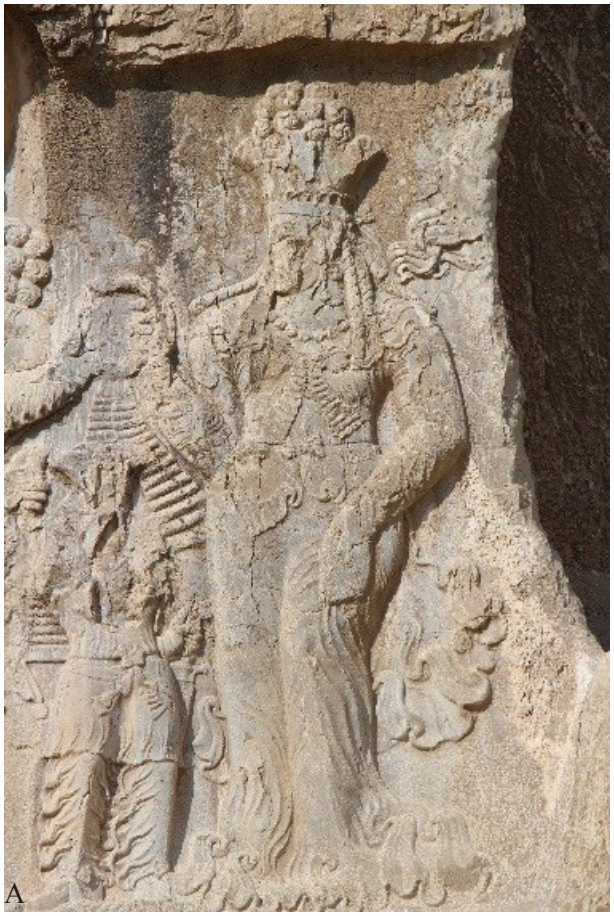




Figure. 3: *A: Ardashir I with a necklace with six pearls in the battlefield (Firuzabad, Photo by S. Arya);B: Sasanian bowl purchased from Kelardasht, at the National Museum of Iran; for schematic picture (Ardashir I) (see Alram and Gyselen 2003: 121).*



Figure.4: *A: Shapur II with a necklace with seven pearls; B:reverse of the dinar of Bahram II with seven flames; C: Hormizd II with a headband with seven pearls (Photo by S. Soheili and M. Asadpur); for schematic picture (Hormizd II with the same headband) (see Alram and Gyselen 2012: 385).*



A



Figure.5: *A: Anahita with a necklace with seven pearls (Fars) (Photo: by S. Arya); B: An unknown king with a necklace with 9-10 pearls and a headband with seven pearls (After: Les Perse Sassanides 2006: 53).*



A



B



C

Figure.6: *A: Khosrow II with a headband with the nine pearls; B: Hormizd II with a necklace with nine pearls (and a headband with 6 pearls); C: Bahram V with a necklace with nine pearls (Photo by S. Soheili).*



Figure.7: *A: Ardashir II with nine pearl beads (Kirmanshah Photo by Author); B: Kartir with the same necklace, in Naghsh-e Rajab (Photo by S. Arya); C: A Mobed with a necklace with nine pearls (After: Les Perse Sassanides 2006: 208).*

Furthermore, numbers such as 10,[1]12,[2]14,[3]15,[4] 16,[5]18[6] etc. had a specific importance in Zoroastrianism to the royal art. Khosrow II has been portrayed with a necklace including 5+5 pearl beads on a dinar[7]; one of Bahram II's queens kept a hanging from her hat with 10 pearl beads. One of Bahram IV's drachms (necklace) is a part of the claim. Also, see Harper (1981: 12) and what attributed to Shapur II (Figure. 8).

However, in the following, Khosrow II kept a headband with 14 pearls in each string and a necklace with 24 pearl can be seen. He appears, also with a headband including 10 pearls (each string) and a necklace with 16 pearls in the neck (Figure. 9).

The same as the nine, the number "fifteen" was a known number in Zoroastrianism. The necklace of Shapur I (Figure. 10) in the following dinar supports this idea. Also, he appeared with two string necklaces among the first Sasanian kings (Alram and Gyselen 2003: 196).



Figure.8: *A: Khosrow II (dinar) with a necklace with ten pearls (most probably his headband is same) and shoulder stripes with ten pearls; B: the Queen (dinar) appears with a hanging to her hat with ten pearls; C: Bahram IV with a necklace with ten pearls and most probably with a headband with 6-7 pearls (Photo by S. Soheili).*

[1]Avesta: "I, Ahura Mazdah, offered the power of ten horses, the power of ten camels, the power of ten cows, the power of ten mountains, and the power of ten rough waters to Tishta" (Dustkhah 1991: 2010, 332, 335,359). Pahlavi Ravayats: "After ten years, on Khordad's day of Farvardin's month, Zoroaster descended from Spritual world to this material world with miracle and Farah" (Amuzgar and Tafzzoli 1991, 166). Minuy-e Kharad: "Ten types of earth" (Tafzzoli 1995: 18).

[2]Avesta: "compensation for the soul of the blue otter, giving twelve arms to the honest men... drawing twelve grooves... twelve famous mountains…(Dustkhah 1991: 45, 773, 20). Minuy-e Kharad: "Those twelve zodiacs move also with the help and the forces of the Haft-oring...the movement of the sun, the moon, and the twelve stars…" (Tafazzoli 1995: 66,73). "Twelve months..." (Bahar 1990: 42)

[3]Avesta: "He honestly should also give fourteen fire necesseries to honest men as a recompense for the blue otter's soul... He should cultive fourteen puppies and build fourteen bridges over the flowing waters. .. (Dustkhah 1991: 819, 822). Fourteen stanzas of poetry for seven amshaspands (Mazdapur, 1990: 126, 180).

[4]Avesta: "Bahram, who created by Ahura, to appear in the body of a fifteen-year-old young man…he must wash his body fifteen times with gomiz and rub it fifteen times with dry hands...(Dustkhah 1991: 434,769,798). BD: " Then he created the wind in the body of a fifteen-year-old young man... Hormazd created that dream in the body of a bright fifteen-year-old man (Bahar 1990: 39, 41,47,51, 147); also: (Mazdapur 1999: 211, 332, 324; Dabirsiyaqi 1959: 27).

[5]Avesta: "I (Ahura Mazda) created the sixteen lands full of peace and joy…" (Dustkhah 1991: 663, 769; same report in BD (Bahar 1990: 133, 135).

[6]Avesta: "The compensation for killing a blue otter should restore eighteen ruined stables, and feed eighteen honest men with a good party…" (Dustkhah 1991: 822). BD: "Those eighteen watery rivers..." (Bahar 1990: 75).

[7]Unlike the Goddess and Queens, image (from the front) of the reverse of this dinar (Akbarzadeh and Schindle 2021: 31, 183) has kept shoulder strips as well a headband with two strings. It is completely masculine.



Figure.9: *colourful types of necklaces, headbands and shoulder stripes of Khosrow II (Photo by M. Asadpur).*



Figure.10: *Shapur I with a necklace with fifteen pearls on a dinar (Photo by S. Soheili).*

Nevertheless, a comparison between Buran and Azarmidokht coins (Figure.11) shows some significant similarities and dissimilarties.



A

B

Figure.11: *A: Buran with a hanging from her hat with ten pearls (with a necklace with two strings as well as without shoulder stripes); B: Azarmidokht's drachm with a clear shoulder stripe pearl decorated (Photo by M. Asadzadeh).*

Morever, the author has kept silent about the number "eight" so fare. The question is why there is no place for the number eight in Zoroastrianism and in the royal art? The number also maintains a weak presence in the Avesta. Most probably the eight had an important position in Mithraic belief[1]. Therefore,

[1]Avesta: "Zarir asked Anahita: Grant me this success that I win the campaign of the world over "Hum-e-ek" demon-worshiper, open-forked who resides in "Oct-house…Eight of Mihr's companions are sitting on the top of the mounts, like Mihr's watchmen, over the towers, and they are worried about Mihrdrojan…" (After:Dustkhah 1991: 31, 384).

the author thinks that the eight Mithraic rays (belief) have been transformed into the form of five-seven flames in Zoroastrianism. This transformation cannot be related to the Sasanian period (maybe occurred under the Prophet, Zoroaster; cf. Avesta, Mihr Yasht and passim). However, Buddhism impacted Sasanian art especially the northeastern regions of the empire. This impact can be seen through Shapur II's coins (Figure. 12).



Figure.12: *A: Shapur II with a necklace and headband, both, with eight pearls; B: Same king with a necklace with eight pearls (Photo by S. Soheili).*

Apart from the above mentioned numbers, the author should stress on the number "three", the most sacred Zoroastrian number which has an important position on the doctrine of the religion. Obviously, good thoughts, good words and good deeds, the three thousand years in creation, nine/ten flames on the coins but in three rows, triple holy donkey, etc. reflect the number. Obviously, with Kawad I, who is famous for killing the Mazdakites, astrological symbols (Figure. 13) were added to the coin in 3h, 6h, 9h.



Figure.13: *A: Kawad I with three asclestial symbols; B: nine flames in three rows (Photo by M. Asadpur).*

Nevertheless, the four beads (pearl) on the shoulder of the bust on opposite side of Bahram II and his queen needs a revision (Figures. 14 and 15).



Figure. 14: *A: Bahram II's drachma and 4 pearl beads on the shoulder of the bust (Photo by: M. Asadpur and documentary photo by: M. R. Rokni); B: Bahram I (shematic picture) with a necklace with 4 pearls (where he appears with the five rays on the crown; the author did not have access to the original coin (type); (see Alram and Gyselen 2012: 175).*

Discussion

Clearly, pearl was one of the most functional precious stones in Sasanian Period. The story of *Pearl-puncher* in Sogdian texts, probably, reflects the significant its uses in ancient Iran. This precious stone has been entangled with all aspects of the Sasanian art, human to animal patterns. In the following, the entanglement of some sacred Zoroastrian numbers with the number of pearl beads,based on Sasanian coins, is discussed. However, Zoroastrian sacred numbers based on the coins show how a *regular structure* which has impacted Sasanian royal art from Ardashir I to Yazdgird III. In addition to kings, we cannot deny the influence of this art on the number of pearls in the necklaces of the Mobeds (i.e. Kartir), ministers, officials to the dancers. It seems that the application of this art had been very popular (generalisation).

Ardashir I has frequently appears with a single pearl string on the coins and in the bas reliefs. He has, mostly, a necklace on sewn, by which big-siz pealrs with seven beads in Firuzabad testify his simple accessory. Many of the first kings necklaces seem to have been sewn on some kind of cloth (also see: Bahram II in Sarab-e Bahram, Shapur I in Darabgard and etc.), presumably silk (cf. Alram and Gyselen 2012: 122); the width of the textile under the pearl beads (upper and lower margin) is indicative of this; in the later era, these pearl beads are found on coins in a threaded form. At least, if the first kings used both types (such as Shapur I), the later kings used one type of pearl beads decoration (threaded form) on coins only but they have used necklaces sewn on silk in bas-reliefs. Khosrow II's necklaces from his drachms to Taq-e Bostan reflect this proof (Fukai and Horiuchi 1969: XLVI, LXXXVII). Despite this, the use of sewn necklaces may have been done more for special occasions such as battlefield or hunting.

Meanwhile, unlike his father, Shapur has appeared a little different for necklaces and other decorations. His beautiful necklace through his statue in Bishapur (cave) should be cited in support of this claim. Although, he used the single and two strings necklaces, but his victory over the Romans may not have been ineffective in this diversification. The author supposes that Shapur's efforts on various holy fires, which is reflected in his inscription (Fars), can probably be understood through the coins of his son, Bahram I.

Unlike Alram and Gyselen (2012: passim), the author is suspicious of the *Mithraic aspect of the five rays* (on Bahram's crown); because the short period of Bahram I's reign was faced with events such as the coming of Mani and Mobed Kartir (:power); Moreover, in his investiture bas-relief in Bishapur, Bahram receives the ring of power from Hormazd only. Also, these five rays are more consistent with the sacred *five flames* on the reverse of his coin; in fact, there is no enough documents to attribute these rays to Mihr. Shapur I, Bahram's father, refers to a long list of *offerings to sacred fires* in the Ka'ba Zartosht inscription, where there is no

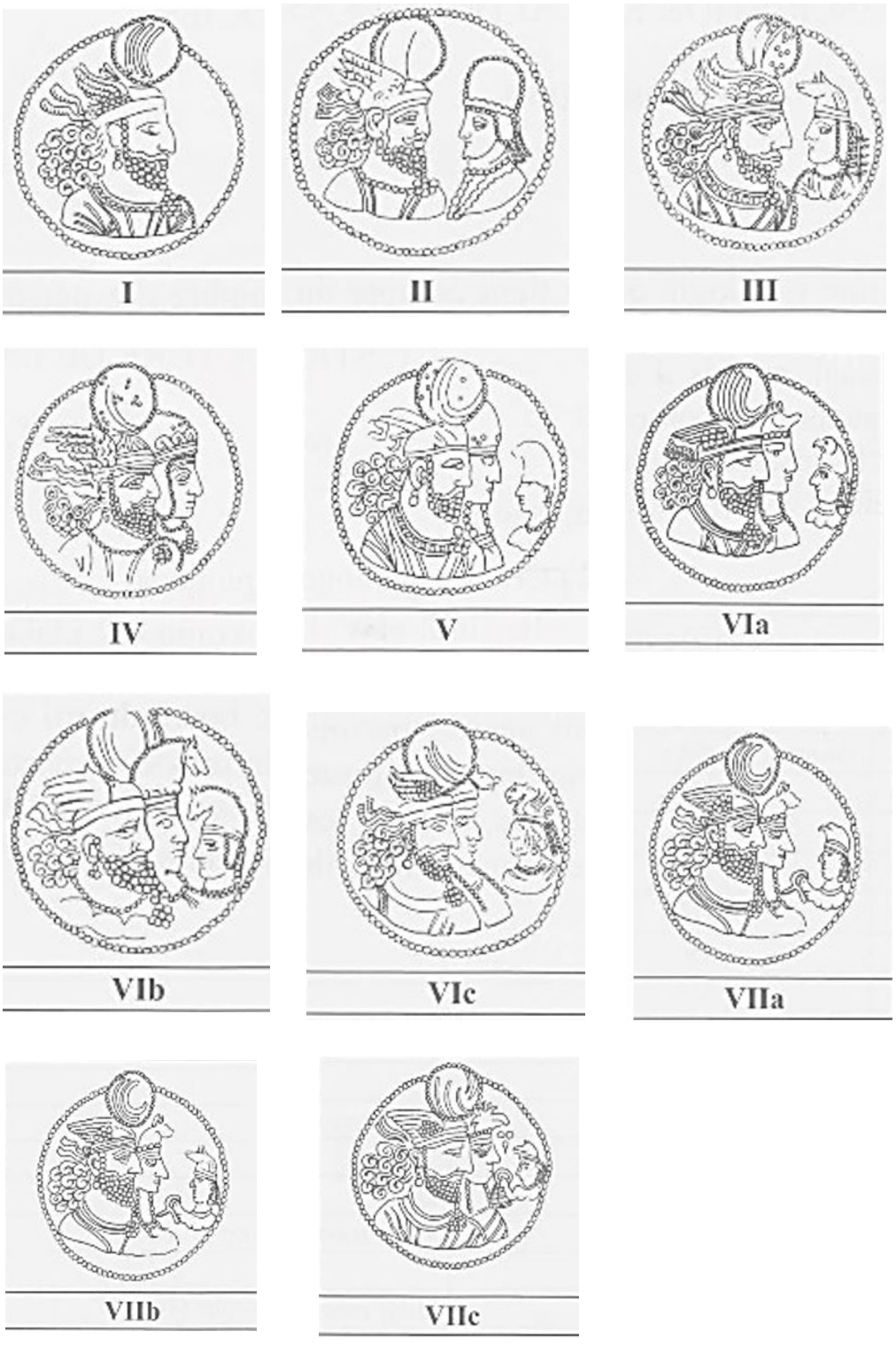


Figure. 15: *Typology of Bahram II's coins*
(After: Alram and Gyselen 2012: 208; also 236, 237).

mention of the god Mihr! He stressed on *Bahram's Fire* in the inscription (Akbarzadeh 2004: :43). It is interesting that Mihr in Taq-e Bostan, does not reflect traces of necklaces and shoulder stripes with specific numbers. Has this issue been a clear boundary between Zoroastrianism (sacred numbers) and Mithraic heritage in the minds of its engravers?

However, the situation changed under Bahram II. The royal women and girls were highlithed in Sasanian art. Something that can be seen in this period (Bahram II) significantly on coins and in bas-reliefs (cf. Sar-Mashhad and Tang-e Qandil). Interestingly, shoulder stripes cannot be seen on Bahram II's queens based on the drachms. This significant difference between males (kings) and females (queens/princess) can be seen until the end of the Sasanian period based on the coins.

Also, on the type VIIc(1), it cannot be called a shoulder stripe (a part of decorations only,in my openion). However, it seems that the young person (bust), opposite to the king and queen, (i.e. type III (1) or VIa(4); cf. Alram and Gyselen 2012: 248, 250, 252) has not kept shoulder stripes; Also, he/she, on other types, has been portrayed with (different) necklaces. The author assumes that the pearl beads on the soulder of the bust can be a part of the typology, as a variant under above mentioned types. The photo (Figure. 14) shows the same bust (prince/princess) with a clear shoulder pearl string including four beads. Can this apply to *gender* difference?

Furthermore, there is a significant different between *Buran's drachms (female) and males in the late Sasanian period.* On Azarmidokht's coin (who followed Khosrow II), due to the male portrait, *shoulder stripe is the same as others but with Buran it is missed* (from shoulder to the chest). However, Bahram IV, among the first kings, had more diversity of the accessories than others. He appears with colourful neclaces, big size pearls to the small size. His reign can be compared with Khosrow II, in the six century.

It seems that the accessories entered into a specific period with Shapur II. Unlike Zoroastrian tradition (regular sacred numbers on the coins), Shapur II has appeared with two traditions: the first one is that he has kept Zoroastrian sacred numbers on his necklaces. The second is that he has kept an *innovative necklace with eight pearl beads* on his coins.Unlike *Hormizd I*, Shapur II has appeared with colourful types of coins for these types of the drachms. Buddhist *Kushans* have clearly influenced the coins of Shapur II. Although, Buddhists (the same as Christians, Manicheans, Jews) were persecuted and punished at times during the Sasanian period, but they were free in Great Khorasan to China; with the Kushans, this religion restored its significant position[1].

In Manichean art, Buddha (and high officials) have been portrayed with eight rays over heads or they have sat on a lotus with eight petals (Gulacsi 2001: 147). So, the influence of Buddhist heritage on Iranian art has a clear background. Therefore, the impact of such legacy on Shapur II is not strange (Akbarzadeh and Schindel 2021: 64; Schindel 2016: online).

Khosrow II has displayed necklaces with twelve small and large pearls, shoulder stripes with six to ten pearls for the first time; a colourful collection of diverse necklaces, shoulders stripes and headbands, but all these accessories followed systematic structure of the sacred numbers. Although, the first Sasanian kings have been portrayed on the coins mostly with a *single string* necklaces and headbands including 5-15 pearls but this one (tradition) arrived to a specific change in the sixth century. A comparison between necklaces of Khosrow II and kings after him such as Ardashir III with Ardashir I, Bahram I-II is a part of the claim.

In addition to the kings, Mobeds, officials and the musicians-dancers followed the same numeral structure. Seals, bullae, golden and silver objects are a part of the proof. They were mostly displayed with a single string. Most probably single-string necklaces with six, seven, nine, ten to fiftheen pearls not only had more beauty, due to their simplicity, but could cause fewer problems in *performance* for musicians-dancers (even Mobeds). Also, it is impossible to ignore the type of necklaces and their connection with the type of "season" or "the place and the person's position".

Obviously the numbers of the pearls on necklaces, headbands, hangings, flames, diadem, and belts of attendants, number of hair twists, etc. reflect a

[1]Already, the author (in a lecture at Dunhuang Academy) referred to the Buddhist heritage of "Forty Caves" (Busher Province) and the number "Eight" in the Palace of "Eight Behesht" (Isfahan). I have interpreted both as the influence of Buddhism on Iranian heritage during the Safavid era. (cf. Hasht Behesht: Sohrab Sepehri).

religious systematisation on the coins, bas-reliefs, dishes, etc. The number of the flames (reverse) has such order and structure that puts an end to any hesitation. While the fire was in one row with five, six and seven flames under the first Sasanian kings but with significant changes they were transformed to the new structure: 4 + 3 + 2 = 9 flames or 3 + 3 + 3 + 1 = 10 flames. Zoroastrian Pahlavi manuscripts and Post-Sasanian sources have clearly referred to the triple and quadruple sects and related fires in the period.

Conclusion

Obviously, Zoroastrian sacred numbers, based on the Avesta and Zoroastrian texts (in Pahlavi language), have been subject of the numerous scholarly printed works since the last century. This political-religious heritage can be understood both through archaeological evidences and textual studies. The Sasanians, for whatever reason, came up with the policy of "national religion, national government"; also, they drew a semantic border between "Iran and none-Iran" as well as they gave this policy a special flavor. The term ‘‘afzon’’, ‘‘xwarrah’’, ‘‘Mazdesn-bag’’ can be a reflection of their basic religious politics (cf. Daryaee 2009: 5). So, entanglement between *Zoroastrianism and accessories (of the kings) on the coins* such as the numbers of the pearls of the necklaces, headbands and shoulder stripes seems natural. This religious aspect of the royal art (through the Silk Road via Sogdians and Manicheans) reached to the East. Dunhuang caves have kept this legacy.

Apart from China, Nara’s courtains are proof of this claim. In the lion-hunter scene from Nara (at Kyoto National Museum, Japan), numbers 5+5+5+5= 20 reflects a significant concept. Also, see Symorgh decorated textiles: 6+6+6+6= 24 or winged horse scene: 5+5+5+5= 20 in Textile Museum of France (Les Perse Sassanides 2006:166,180).

Already, D. Akbarzadeh (2016: 2), unlike Master I. Afshar, have referred fully to the flowers with 3, 5,6,7,9,12 petals that these flowers are used instead of dots in Zoroastrian manuscripts. Systematisation of the number of the petals can be compared with the same on the coins.

These sacred Zoroastrian numbers, with the collapse of Sasanian Empire, impacted the next periods as a part of *national identity*. These sacred numbers have been a significant wall between Shiites and Sunnites! Clearly, the numbers such as 3, 5,9,12…72…can be seen through shrines and normal buildings (residencies) with 3, 7, 9,12… gates (3 dari (:three gates), panj dari (:five gates) to intangible heritages.

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