

Assimilation of Indo-Parthians in Indian Society: Effects and Results

Masoumeh Najafi¹

¹*Research Scholar, Department of Studies in Ancient History and Archaeology, University of Mysore, Mysore, India*

Dr. V. Shobha²

²*Assistant Professor, Department of Studies in Ancient History and Archaeology, University of Mysore, Mysore, India*

Abstract

Due to a dearth of relevant information, the Indo Parthian kingdoms are not well-known archaeologically or historically. They aren't mentioned in mythological history or historical records from the early Islamic period. They dominated the land ruled by Indo-Greeks and Indo-Scythians. Some researchers have failed to distinguish between Parthian and Scythian kings, and have made no obvious distinctions between the two countries' leaders. The goal of this research is to look into the history of the Indo-Parthian monarchy. By relying on numismatic sources and evaluating historical researches, the study's research technique is descriptive-analytical, and an attempt has been made to pay attention to the ambiguities and complexity of the Parthian control of India. The study found that the Parthians of India were politically independent of the Parthians of Iran, and that despite their seeming independence, the two governments had no antagonistic relations; rather, the Parthian rulers of Iran considered the Parthians of India as intruders in their domain. The following order of reign of kings can be considered in the sequence of Parthian kings of India according to numismatic documents: Gondophares (simultaneously with Orthagnes and Guda), Abdagases, Pacores, Sanabares I, II, and III, and other kings named Parhas and Semara who are known by their names on the coins.

Keywords: Gondophares, Indo-Pathian, India, Parthians and Kindgom.

Introduction

The Parthians ruled their government as a tribal monarchy. Their empire consisted of unions of cities. It was an autonomous and semi-independent autonomous kingdom. When the political situation was stable and calm, these kingdoms were independent and semi-independent which were completely under the influence and support of the Parthian central government; But whenever the political situation is chaotic political orientations and, in some cases, separatist tendencies arose among these kingdoms (Amad Fry, 1383). The number of satraps of the party period is seventy, and knows two satraps (Lucerne, 1387).

One of the kingdoms affiliated with the Parthian government is the government in the eastern parts of the Parthian territory was established. This government, known as the Parthian government of India, expanded its borders, which conquered the northwestern regions of India and conquered areas that the Achaemenids never succeeded in conquering. The government was eventually overthrown with the establishment of the Parthian government of India, Jenkins (1995). The Parthians of India ruled over a territory before India and the Greeks and then the Indians and Scythian Government they conquered (Gardner, 1886). India and the Greeks were not satrapies affiliated with the Parthian court, But Indo-Scythian rule, although subordinate to the Parthian monarchy, but it was primarily managed independently (Senior, 2006).

The earliest of the Indo-Parthian kings apparently was Maues, or Mauas, who attained power in the Kabul valley and Punjab about 120 B. C., and adopted the title Of “Great King Of Kings”, which had been used for the first time by Mithridates I. His coins are closely related to those of that monarch, as well as to those of the unmistakably Parthian border chief, who called himself Arsaces Theos. The King Moga, to whom the Taxila satrap was immediately subordinate, was almost certainly the personage whose name appears on the coins as Mauou in the genitive case. Vonones, or Onones, whose name is unquestionably Parthian, was probably the immediate successor of Maues on the throne of Kabul. He was succeeded by his brother Spalyris, who was followed in order by Azes (Azas) I, Azilises, Azes II, and Gondophares. The princes prior to the last named are known from their coins only.

Due to the scarcity of historical and archaeological evidence, we know very little about the process of this establishment. In general, documents about the eastern parts of Parthia are very scarce; Because the historical events in areas have received less attention from historians due to their distance (Strabo, 2003). In addition, the archaeological excavations in Eastern Iran have not been done much (Dubavaz, 1342), and of course, in these excavations, the Parthian rule of India has not received attention. Indian scholars have also, in recent years, seen the Parthian rule of India as a state that looked at strangers and was not very willing to study it. However, since the founders of the Parthian government were of Iranian Indian descent and belonged to the Parthian family of Iran. Recognition of this government and its position in the political history of the Parthians is an undeniable necessity. Despite such a necessity - according to researchers – there are still many scientific difficulties in studying the history of the Parthian rule of India (Bivar, 2004: 314). Our knowledge about this rule is based on the study of their coins (9,8: 1922, Bertram, (some Roman narrations, Greek histories) and Hindi, Christian Literature (592,563: 1922, Rapson (and Sanskrit) Unknown Author, 1988: 22) as well as inscriptions

Also in some modern research, although it is the conquest of some parts of India by Parthian kings; some state that the Parthians of India had not stayed in northern India (Azari Aal, 1350)

Apart from the mentioned shortcomings, the Parthian rule of India has been considered by some scholars in recent years has taken. Some of these scholars did not separate the Parthian and Scythian kings of India and were among the kings. These two governments have not set specific boundaries for studies (Dubaz, 1342, Mohammadi, 2016, Zarrinkub, 1376, Diakonov, 1378), but others separate the two Parthian Scythian governments of India into two governments. The recent group of sequences of Parthian kings of India (Bivar, 1383: 292,) provides general information about this Government (Khadmindoshan, Azizipour, 2012)

Objectives of the Study

Despite all the research done, there are still many ambiguities and complexities about the formation and collapse of Parthian kings of India. This study aims to clarify these ambiguities and aims to study the history of the Parthian rule of India.

1. To study the Parthian rule in India along with its political history.
2. To understand the sequence of the Parthian kings of India, based on numismatic evidence.

Due to the nature of the subject, a descriptive-analytical method has been used. Because coins are the main sources of studies are related to the Parthian rule of India, trying to rely on coin sources, cognition and research in historical research plays an important role in assessing the ambiguities and complexities of the Parthian rule of India.

Topics such as political geography, the origin and descent of the Parthians of India, political history and the fall of the Parthian government India are topics that are considered in order to achieve the research goal.

The political history of the Parthian kings of India

Coins are still the best for studying the political history of the Parthian kings of India and their relations with the Parthian kings of Iran are options; Coins of Parthian kings of Iran are rarely found in northwestern India. Also, some Parthian kings of India such as Gondofer, Ortagon and Pakur used the title of emperor on their coins. Citing these coins, Fry believes that the Parthian government of India was independent of the Parthian government and the coins of the Parthian kings of India are similar to the coins of the Parthian kings of Iran (Thomas, 1870).

Political Geography

The political geographical of the Parthian government of India from the time of its establishment until its complete rule became extinct by Ardeshir Sassanid and was accompanied by many changes. The Parthians of India though they could conquer the former lands of India and the Scythians; But in some cases the remnants of the Scythian rule of India entered the territory. The Parthian government of India attacked and temporarily recaptured some areas from the Parthians of India (Gotshmid, 1379). Their political territory at the height of their power, including Sistan, parts of Afghanistan and Pakistan and the

northwestern parts of India. This vast territory was ruled by the governors under their command – who were members of the ruling royal family (Khademi Nodooshan, Azizipour, 2012).



a) The territory of the Parthian government of India



b) Gundofer's deconstruction route

The Origin and Descent of the Parthians of India

There are various debates about the past of the Parthian kings of India. In Sanskrit literature specifically the name of Parthian rule of India is not considered; but the Parthians are referred to as invaders of India (Rapson, 1922). Hence, they are called the Parthians of India.

Some scholars considered the Parthian kings of India to be of Parthian descent and others to be kings attributed to the Scythians (Selwood, 1980 and Diakonov, 1378); Parthian Kings considered India as one of the branches of the Parthian family of Iran and Gardner (Gardner, 1886). The attribution of the Parthian kings of India than the Parthian kings of Iran makes them princes attributed to the family of Mehrdad I.

Bivar also believes that the Parthian rule of India is attributed to a landed Parthian dynasty that advanced on Indian territory and the repulsion of migrant Scythians had established its rule (Bivar, 2004); However Mechner considered the Parthians of India to be one of the branches of the Scythian tribes called the Sacarauca (Mitchiner, 1978).

Gondophares, the founder of the Parthian government of India, is one of the two Scythian kings of India who knew that they had expanded their territory to the northwestern regions of India and gained fame there. Yosti also considers Gundofer a Scythian (Justi, 2004).

Parthian Kings of India

Ortagon and Gundofer

The first ruler was Gundofer, the king of the Parthian rule of India; However, there are researchers who call the Ortahagones (Ghosh, 2016; Gardner, 1886; Cribb 1985)

The pre-Gondofar kingdom is known in the Parthian dynasty of India and is believed to be that of Gondofar, satrap of the Ortagon in Arachosia who eventually succeeded him (Simonetta; 1951, Marshal, 1922, Rapson, 1969) Ortagon who succeeded the Spalirises (Scythian king of India in the region) Darangiana had minted silver dirhams in Parthian style with a personal name and the title of emperor.

Ortagon coins in addition to his personal name Gondofar and Goda Guda. It can be said that he co-ruled with Goda and Gondofar (Dowall, 1965). It is also possible that Goda and Gondofar were brothers of the Ortagon (Khademi Nodoshan, Azizipour, 2012). There is no complete consensus among scholars about Gondofar's cyst and the beginning of his reign. Two plays on this idea Gondofar ruled Arachosia jointly with Goda during the Scythian rule of India until 19 AD, he invaded India and expanded his power in the northwestern regions of India (Dubaz, 1342). The year 19 AD is the same year that Venon was killed while fleeing through the mediation of the Third Army. At this time Civil wars created unrest in the Parthian realm and separatist tendencies among some satrapies affiliated with the government had emerged (Bivar, 2004: 169). It can be said that these disorders

Gondofar had a good opportunity to expand his power in the eastern parts of the Parthian government Pay and even capture parts of it. He started his kingdom from Sistan, then continued to conquer Arachosia and from there stood in the area above the lake (Istada-i-Ab) considering their territory. Gondofar reached the Kabul and Gandhara valleys via Arachosia and from there extended his kingdom to the regions Jammu-Pathnkot and also expanded and conquered parts of the Indus region (Mc Dowell, 1939). They took control of this area by accessing the port of Barbarikon provided for the Parthians of India. This port was connected to the Silk Road, at which time trade on that road from the way to the Persian Gulf was prosperous. This access and the resulting economic benefits bring great wealth to the government brought by the Parthians of India. Gondofar conquered these areas by minting copper coins according to the Indian standard as he painted his face on them with special earrings of Indians (Ghosh, 2016).

Gondofar coins - which are an important source of information about the events of his reign - from Herat, Sistan, Kandahar and the Kabul Valley and is rarely obtained from the Punjab. On the back of these coins, the image of the goddess Nikeh - which is a symbol of victory - was seen on the 12th of Ardavan II / III). This title was preceded by Arshak, the founder of the Parthian dynasty was also used. Translated by the absolute ruler (Selwood, 1980). Gondofar's name on its coins were written as Vnopase, Gondopherey and Nodofrey. This may be due to the fact that his name is pronounced in different places had been different (Khademi Nodoshan, Azizipour, 2012). Researchers have suggested that the name Gondofar is derived from the word Vindafarna (farna -Vinda Yarshater, 1383) which means it has an oven and glory) (Dubaz, 1342).

In addition to the coins, there is another evidence that testifies to the presence of Gondofar in the northwestern regions of India. Although for the last two sources Kharosti (Kharosti) is the throne and also the text of a Christian covenant, different dates are mentioned (Maddowall, 1965) However, despite the skepticism of many historians, 14 have been able to combine all these sources to date the reign of Gondofar between the years 20-46 AD (Simonetta, 1978).

Zarrinkub considered Gondofar to be one of the namesakes and not the founder of the Parthian-Scythian state of India; In his opinion after killing of Soren - Sardar Ard II - his

family based in Sistan, his connection with the Parthians of Iran were cut and expanded their borders in northwestern India, and eventually the Parthian-Scythian state. They founded India (Zarrinkoob, 1997).

Hertzfeld on the one hand bears a resemblance between Gondofer - the king of the Parthian rule of India - with Soren, and from the other side has established a similarity between the historical Soren and Rostam Shahnameh. Recent researcher, Rostam and Gondofer assumed a single character and even the ruins of Qala-e-Hostam in Sistan belonged to Gondofer (Hertzfeld, 2002) Although it is tempting to consider Soren and Gondofer as related, but the fact is that the date of Gondoff's accession to the throne was 19/19 (Simonetta, 1978).

The murder of Soren, which took place during the time of Ard - in 53 BC - (Bivar, 1383: 152) has no consistent information. During the reign of gondofer, the borders of the Parthian rule of India expanded vastly; however, the monarchy was never a unified and centralized government. Many sub-governments in his reign is observed; also, the Hindu Scythians were not completely defeated by Gondofer and in some cases within his territory (Senior, 2001) The Kushans attacked the territory of the Parthian kings of India and invaded it. The re-stroke of the coagulase on the Gondofer coins is clearly indicated which gives Kojul Kadfis to the Parthian rule of India in Paropamisadae (Kabul and Bagram districts) and Gandhara had ended (Narain, 1980: 43; but this indicated the complete abolition of the Parthian rule in India.

However, Gondofer was still alive until 45 AD; but the date of his death is not clear (Dubaz, 1342). With power, Gundofar's successors reached India along with Scythian invaders and attacked Indian Parthian kingdoms. Small kings during Gondofer's lifetime ruled over part of his territory but after his death they quarreled with each other (Ghash, 2016).

The information about the kings who came to power in the territory of the Parthian kings of India after Gondofer – relatively is less clear, and their sequence is still largely debatable. This problem stems from the fact that the rule of the Parthian kings of India was not a centralized government and on every part of it the kingdom ruled. In addition, these kings are named after any significant political event or they changed their title (Dubaz, 1342) which makes the subject more scientifically complicated; Some kings shared common names. Historians tried to find titles and definitions about them. But there are still ambiguities and complexities about the sequence of each of these kings exist, the period of their rule and the scope of their rule. This prevents the exact history of the kings from being told about Parthian India.

Gondofer Substitutes

Pacores and Abdagases

Some scholars considered Pakur and Abdagases as Gondoff's successor (Mitchiner, 1978, Gardner, 1886; Mukharjee, 1969, Simonetta, 1974). Abdagases is seen on some coins of Gondofer (Dubois, 1342) Researchers considered this symbol as a symbol of known Tribes (Bopearachchi and Grenet, 1996) also known as Gondofer's nephew (Koch, 1990), although his father's name is unknown.

Gondofer ruled the Iranian provinces as Viceroy by his uncle; But he was not his successor. Ghosh introduces Abdagases as Gondoff's successor and attributes him as Gondoff's brother's

son. This was an attempt to legitimize Abdagass in the absence of a direct heir (Ghosh, 2016).

Abdagases must have been a powerful kingdom, because he conquered Arachosia and Parpamysad - which had lost control of the Indian Parthians after Gondofer, it was taken back from the Kushans (Khademi Nodoshan, Azizipour, 2012). The discovery of Abdagases coins in Aria (Herat) indicated that he was able to annex this region to the Parthian territory of India. However, his coins were not found.

The region was still under the control of the Kushans during his time (Puri, 1965). Mitchiner places the reign of Abdagases between 100 / 110-55 AD (Mitchiner, 1972). But according to McDowell during the reign of Abdagases in Bagram in the early reign of Kojulkadfis - King of Kushan - came to an end (Mac Dowell, 1965). Adequate information about Kojol Kadfis is not available

Coinciding with Abdagass, the coins testified the presence of another king in the Parthian kingdom of India. The King of Sases (Sases) was able to conquer part of Gandahara (Ghosh, 2016). Of course, there are scholars who mentioned Sassis as a kingdom after or at the same time as Pakur (Thomas, 1870). On his coins the titles that Gondofer had used on coins before him were used. The use of these titles on coins indicates that the king may have been able to control parts of Gandahara. Based on these titles, Ghosh considered Sass to be a kingdom before Pakur. He mentions these kings in order after Abdagass I, Ortagon, Ubouzanes Sass and then Pakur ruled (Ghosh, 2016); As McDowell stated, after Abdagass from Pakur and then Sanabars ruled northern India (Macdowall, 1965). Unfortunately, the name of Ortagon's father is also unknown to us; However, Mukharjee considers him from the Parthian royal family. His coins were found in Sistan and Gandhara (Mukharjee, 1969).

Some scholars consider Pakur to be the successor of Abdagass and others consider him a king who replaced Gondofer (Dubois, 1342). Pakur is a Parthian nickname meaning turquoise. Simonta gave him a child Gondofer (Simonetta, 1974).

Mitchiner (1973) stated that after the reign of Abdagass, Pakur coins in Abarshahr, Merv, Herat and Taxi were obtained. The image of the goddess Nikkeh on those clean coins obtained from taxis is a symbol of victory. These coins clearly show that Pakur had succeeded after expelling Kadfis - the king of Kushan - from the taxi and rule this region himself (Dubavaz, 1342).

The absence of Pakur coins from Kabul convinces that he, like Abdagass, could not rule the area. Pakur is the last Parthian king of India to rule Gandahara (Rapson, 1922). After him the process of the fall of the Parthian kings of India began.

Another king is called Sanabares. The two kings appeared to be in two different regions; Pakur ruled over Abarshahr, Taxal and Herat, and Sanbars probably ruled in Sistan (Macdowall, 1965).

Various kings named Sanabars ascended the throne at the end of the Parthian rule of India, Simonetta (Selwood traces the reign of the first Sanabars between 60-50 AD) (Selwood, 1980).

The coinage of his coins were found in Sistan on the one hand with the use of the Greek script on the other hand. It shows that he was able to rule this region (Nikintin, 1994). After the first Sanabars, probably Sanabars II and III ruled in Merv. According to coins at the end of the Parthian rule of India kings, such as Parhas I and II, and Samara, ruled the declining

territory of the Parthian kings of India (Khademi Nodooshan, Azizipour, 2012); But there is more information about these kings than the name on the coins.

The end of the Parthian rule of India

The rise of the Kushan rule can be considered the main factor in the fall of the Parthian rule in India. Although the Kushans established their monarchy in 25 AD during the reign of Gondofar; but in early period, the political power of the Parthians in India had limited them. With the coming to power of Kojol Kadfis – King Kushani - During the reign of Pakur, the Kushans' encroachment on the Parthian territory of India is clearly visible (Mukherjee, 1978). The Kushans liberated Arachosia and Taxial from the Parthians of India. Although Pakur was able to temporarily retake these areas from the Kushans; But over time, the Kushans were able to rule the Parthians which restricted India to a region south of the Indus River (Dubavaz, 1342). Ghosh believes that the Parthian rule of India was overthrown by the Kushans under the leadership of Kojulkadfis. It is believed that Kojulkadfis re-struck on Gondofar coins that Kojul - King of Kushan – ruled the Parthians of India in Parpamisad (areas of Kabul and Bagram) and Gandahara after small silver coins found in taxis. In this treasure, coins of rulers Parthian India, Sassan (Sarpedanés) and Sarpedanés (Sarpedanés) as well as coins from Kojulkadfis have been found. Kojulkadfis coins are the last coins minted in this treasure which clearly indicates the end of the Parthians of India (Ghosh, 2016). However, the Kushans conquered the eastern part of the Parthian kingdom of India in the first century AD, but the western regions remained in the hands of the Parthians of India until the rule of Ardashir Sassanid.

The Parthian government of India became completely extinct. Mitra was a governorship ruled by Ardashir in 230 AD. His coins bear a resemblance to coins previously minted by the Parthians of India in Arachosia and Sistan. However, on the coins of Ardemiter minted by the rulers of India and the parthians, the role of the sun temple can be seen (Macdowall, 1965). Considering coins minted by Ardemiter is a sign of the end of the Parthian power of India.

Conclusion

The Parthians of India were a branch of the Parthian family that sparked riots and civil wars in the territory. The Parthians expanded their borders from eastern Iran to northwestern India. Finding the number of few coins of the Parthian kings of Iran in the territory ruled by the Parthians of India on the one hand and usage of the title of the Parthian kings of India on the other hand indicates that the Parthians of India belonged to the Parthian rule.

Gondofar is the true exalter of the Parthian power of India over his coins from the word autocrat used the meaning of absolute ruler; Gondofar also wears special Indian earrings on his coins. It can be imagined that by doing so he wanted to bring himself closer to the Indians. However, it seems that the effort was useless; Because in Sanskrit literature the Parthians are referred to as invaders.

The Parthians of India overcharged the coins of the Parthian kings of Iran; But, there are blemishes on the face of the Parthian king and these coins did not use silver. On this basis, it can be said that the hostile relations between the two governments might have been there. However, when the Parthian kings of India were attacked by Kushans, they did not receive

any help from the Parthians of Iran. It is true that at the time when Kushans invaded the Parthian territory of India, the Parthian government of Iran itself was facing many internal problems. It should however not be overlooked that there is no report of Iranian Parthian support for the Indian Parthians against the Kushans attacked. In connection with the sequence of the Parthian kings of India based on numismatic documents, this sequence can be considered: Gondofer (simultaneously with Ortagon and Goden), Abdagass, Pakur, Sanabars I, II and III, other kings named Parhas and Samara, of which only their names are on the coins. It is unfortunate that the coins refer only to the areas ruled by Gondofer; but there is no evidence giving the time of rule over these areas.

References

- Assar, G.R.F. (2005), "The Genealogy Of The Parthian King Sinatruces 93/2-69/8 B.C". *The Journal of The Classical and medieval Numismatic society (Canada)* June 2005, Ser 2. Vol 6(2):16-23.
- Bertram, Richard (1922), "Pre Mohammad coinage of north western India", *Numismatic notes and monographs*, Issue 13, American numismatic society, New York.
- Cribb, J. (1985), *New evidence of Indo-Parthian Political history. Coin Hoards VII:282-300.*
- Gardner, P. (1886), *Catalogue of the Indian coins of the British Museum, Greek and Scythic kings of Bactria and India*, London.
- Ghosh S. (2016), "Indo Parthian kingdom", *The Encyclopedia of empire*. pp1-4.
- Grenet F. and Bopearachchi O. (1996), "Une monnaie en or du souverain Indo - Parthe Abdagases II", *Studia Iranica* Vol 25:219-231.
- Jenkins, G.K. (1995), "Indo-Scythian mints, *Journal of the numismatic society of India*, XVII: 1- 26.
- Justi F. (2003), *Iranisches Namenbuch*, Tehran:Asatir.
- Koch, H. (1990), *A Hoard of coins from eastern Parthia*. New York, American numismatic society notes and monograph.
- Mac Dowall, D.W. (1965), "The dynasty of the later Indo-Parthian", *The numismatic Chronicle and Journal of the royal Numismatic society*, Seventh series, Vol.5:137-148
- Marshal J. (1951), *Taxila*. Cambridge
- McDowell, R.H. (1939), "Indo – Parthian Frontier", *American historical Review*. Vol 44.No 4. pp: 781-801.
- Mitchiner M., (1978), *Oriental coins and Their values: The ancient and classical worlds:600B.C.A.D.650*, London .
- Mitchiner M. (1973), *The early coinage of central Asia*, London.
- Mukharjee B.N. (1969), *An agrippan sources; a study in Indo-Parthian history* , Calcutta: Pilgrim publisher.
- Mukherjee B.N. (1978), *Kushan coins of the land of five rivers*, Calcutta
- Narain. A. K. 1980. *The Indo Greek from Alexander to Kanishkan*, (Dehli).
- Nikitin, A.K. (1994), "Coins of the last Indo-Parthian king of Sakastan" (a Farewell to Ardimitra)", *South Asian Studies* 10,67-69.
- Puri B.N. (1965), *India under The Kushans: Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan*

- *Rapson, E.J. (1922), "The Successors of Alexander the great", The Cambridge history of India, Vol.1, pp:540-561.*
- *Selwood. D. (1980), Introduction to the coinage of Parthian, London.*
- *Senior, R.C. (1991), "More Gondophares, Less Azes and Just Who Met St Thomas." Oriental Numismatic Society, Occasionnal Paper 25: 1-12.*
- *Simonetta, A. (1974), "The Indo Parthian coinage and Its significance in the chronology of the Kushans", Central Asia in the Kushan period, Vol I.Moscou:283-288.*
- *Thomas, E. (1870), "Indo Parthian coins", The Journal of the royal Asiatic society of great Britania and Ireland. New series Vol. 4, No. 2, pp: 503-521.*