

## Short Communication

## Formation of centralized power in Iran at Arshakids and Sassanids (III century BC - III century AD)

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**Abstract:** A prime example of a transitional period in the history of the countries of the East is the beginning of the 3rd century. ne - the decline of the Arshakid state in Iran and the uprising of Ardashir from the Sassanid dynasty in Pars province, the ancient homeland of the Achaemenids, as well as the main religious and ethnic center of Iranians. The study and analysis of the power tools of the early Sassanid allows us to understand the reasons that ultimately contributed to the formation of centralized control in Iran.

**Keywords:** Arshakid states, Sassanids, Iran, public education, Achaemenid Empire, Middle East, Parthian state.

The territory of Iran, on which the largest states of antiquity arose, is a vast highland, and the central part consists of deserts; "Only along the mountain ranges surrounding the highlands are located oases irrigated by small rivers and streams, favorable for agriculture." "From the west and southeast, the highlands are enclosed by Zagros and the South Iranian mountains, on the slopes of which the forests were green in ancient times".

A large state formation in this territory was the famous Persian Power of the Achaemenids, which was founded by Cyrus the Great, having conquered Media and Lydia around 559 and 547. BC. 3 A few years later, Babylon was annexed to the Persian state (538 BC). Son of Cyrus, Cambyses in 525 BC conquered Egypt. Under Darius I (ruled from 521 - 486 BC), the eastern borders of the state reached the Indus and Afghanistan and the western borders to Europe.

The grandeur of culture, the Behistun inscription, speaks of the greatness of the kings of the Achaemenid dynasty: "I am Darius, the great king, the king of Persia, the king of countries, the son of Vishtaspa, the grandson of Arshami, Achaemenid" (I, 1-3) All subsequent rulers of Persia wore the title of "king of kings. The decline of the Achaemenid Empire (330 BC) is associated with the name of the most hated man in the history of the Persian people, Alexander the Great, whose army "marched against Persia under the

pretext of avenging the reproach of the Greek shrines during the invasion of Xerxes in Greece." The last king, Darius III, a representative of the collateral branch of the Achaemenids, fled to Eastern Iran, where he was killed by the Bactrian satrap. The territory of the Persian empire now became part of the empire of Alexander. After the death of the "great" commander, the division of his inheritance began."

The Seleucid dynasty, which was founded by one of Alexander's commanders, Seleukom, seized power in the empire. "In Babylon, Seleucus quickly coped with the garrison of Antigone, and local grandees and townspeople met him as king: soon they obeyed Medes, Persid, and Susan. We were greeted everywhere enthusiastically, as he was kind and fair, now he only needed the royal title," says the ancient Greek historian Diodorus of Sicily.

However, several years after its formation, the Seleucid kingdom began to lose its lands. Already after the death of Antiochus III, the collapse of the Seleucid state became inevitable. The situation in Iran in these years has changed, this is due to the emergence of a new political force - the Parthians.

The existence of the Parthian state (from the middle of the 3rd century BC to the year 26 AD) in the history of Iran was an important epoch. Iranian sources, dating back to the Sasanids, retained almost no

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information about this period: "Their roots and branches were short, so no one can claim that their past was glorious. I have not heard anything except their names, and have not seen them in the annals of the kings," said the medieval Persian poet Ferdowsi. The most common view in historical science on the period of the Parthians' rule is the idea of "dark ages" in the history of Iran. Anyway, all researchers "throughout the XIX-XX centuries unanimously recognized that the beginning of the Arshakid state is a very dark period in the history of the Middle East.

The beginning of the history of the Parthians is almost unknown, many details and many dates remain unclear. The Parthians have been known since the time of the Achaemenids, when they occupied the territory of the modern region of Khorasan. Already after the death of Alexander the Great, "the movement of tribes in Western Turkestan occurred, as a result of which some Greek outposts in Central Asia were destroyed; Seleucus I and his son Antiochus restored these cities and established the power of the Seleucids."

Most likely, as R. Fry believes, among the displaced tribes were the boys who initiated the Parthian state. According to Strabo, the parnas are a tribe that was part of the Confederation of Dahees who roamed in the steppes between Oks and the Caspian Sea. Dahs were closely associated with the Massagets and other nomadic, sedentary tribes of Central Asia. At the time of Alexander dahi wandered in the steppes between the rivers Oks and Yaksart, but from the end of the 4th c. BC, the boys having broken away from the rest of the Dahi tribes, began to migrate in a westerly direction towards the Caspian Sea.

In 245 BC Satrap Parthieny Andragor, declaring himself independent of the Seleucids, began to mint a gold coin with his name. Following this in 239 BC Bactrian governor Diodot proclaimed himself king and founded the independent Greco-Bactrian kingdom. In such a situation, the invasion of guys led by Arshak took place. Around 250 BC "The boys invaded Niseu, located in the valley of Atrek and later becoming the province of Astavena."

Inspired by the victory of the Bactrians, the boys raised a rebellion against the Seleucids. This event took place around 247 BC, "when the two brothers Arshak and Tiridat led a rebellion against the satrap of Antioch II." According to Strabo, Arshak was a Bactrian by descent, and being dissatisfied with the satrap Diodot he invaded Parthia, where he revolted. Arrian Flavius sets out another version, according to which the Seleucid king insulted one of the brothers, after which the latter entered into a conspiracy with five people, killed the satrap and revolted. Himself "Arshak was probably crowned in the city of Asaak (near Kuchan in the valley of the upper Atrek) in Astauen."

Events 247 BC became the starting point in the calendar of Arshakids. "By creating their own state, the boys challenged the Seleucid rulers, the masters of a great power, stretching from Syria to Central Asia." Further, in 239 BC the Parnes broke into Parthia, defeated Andragora there and a year later seized this area, which was inhabited by the Parthians, who were related to the fellows, sedentary tribes. Subsequently, the Parthians and the parnas merged. In 235 BC Arshak conquered Hyrkania and Comisen. When in 232 - 231 years. BC. the Syrian army entered Eastern Iran, the Bactrian king Diodot II and Arshak formed an alliance. When the army of Seleucus II entered the Parthian possessions, it "suffered some damage as a result of the sudden attacks of the fast cavalry detachments of the guys in their usual steppe environment; In the meantime, unfavorable news of dynastic strife came from the west, and Seleucus was forced to hastily leave the eastern frontiers and set off for Antioch with an army. But before leaving, Seleucus II, during negotiations with Arshak on vassal rights, recognized him as the ruler of Hyrcanus and Parthia. Most likely, Seleucus expected to return and get rid of him.

The absence of Seleucus II was used by Arshak to strengthen his position: the fortress Dara was built in Apavartikene. The center of the new public education was Parfiana, here "in the city of Nis until the 1st century. ne there were family tombs of his successors, kings of the Arshakid dynasty." 2. The city of Gekatompil became the capital of the state.

Arshak, after whom the whole dynasty of the kings of Parthia was named, died in approximately 217 BC. The successor of Arshak, Artaban I, "like all the subsequent kings of this dynasty, bore along with his name also the name of the founder of the dynasty, the former, perhaps, ancestral name" 3. The next Parthian king, Friapatius, reigned about 15 years 4. The heirs of Fraapatia were his sons: first Fraat I, who fought with the mountaineers of Elbrus, and Mithridates I, whose name is associated with the power of the Parthian kingdom. By the end of the reign of Mithridates I, the Parthian kingdom covered "almost all of Iran and all of Mesopotamia; Parthians went to the Euphrates.

After Dvorichie was in the hands of the Parthians, conflicts with the West became inevitable. The Syrian king Antioch VII "defeated the Parthian army, which had reinforcements from Saka mercenaries, occupied Seleucia and the Babylonian satrapy, and spent the winter in Ecbatan, but was expelled by Fraat II, son of Mithridates." Meanwhile, "the northeastern border of Parthia crossed the Saki, the troops of Fraat were defeated, he himself fell on the battlefield in 129 BC" 1 Uncle of Fraat Artaban reigned in 128 - 123. BC, died from nomads who captured Aria and Drangiana.

Of course, under the blows of the nomads, the Parthian state weakened. Ultimately the Parthian kingdom in the 20s. II c. BC. turns on the edge of death.

Only a successful solution of the urgent problems would probably ensure the existence of the Parthian kingdom. The situation stabilized during the reign of Mithridates II (123 - 87 BC). The main focus in the early years of Mithridates was Western territories: the Parthians were able to stop the advance of vassal Misen (Harakens), control was established over it. The Greek cities were relatively calm: deprived of support from Syria, they could not oppose the policy of Arshakids. For a certain period, it was possible to solve the Greek problem.

The Parthians were able to extend their power to the areas of Mesopotamia that remained under the control of the Seleucids. It was during this period that the Parthians began to actively intervene in the affairs of Armenia. So in 94 BC Mithridates put Tigran II on the Armenian throne, securing influence in Asia Minor and Transcaucasia. Josephus says that Mithridates interfered in the affairs of the kingdom of Seleucidus, which was reduced to the limits of Northern Syria.

"Seleucidus Demetrius III, who challenged the throne of Antiochus, was captured by the Parthians and sent as a hostage to Mithridates II."

During his reign, Tigran II annexed the principality Sofenu to his Armenian possessions and united these lands into a single state. In 93 BC he and Pontic king Mithridates VI Eupator were expelled from Cappadocia by Ariobarzan, a Roman henchman. In his place, Tigran planted a young son of the Pontic king. The following year, Sulla arrived in Cappadocia, returned Ariobarzan to the throne and began to negotiate with the Parthians. The meeting of the Parthian ambassador Orobaz and Sulla took place on the Euphrates. It is not clear exactly what decision the two parties came to, but it is known that Orobaz was executed.

The end of the rule of Mithridates II was also marked by internal complications. In 91 BC a certain Gotars, who in the Bisutun rock is called "satrap of the satraps," gained power in Babylonia. It can be assumed that Gotarz was viceroy in the western regions, and while Mithridates fought in the East, he seized royal power. Some time later, Gotars was recognized as the king of Parthia because he was closely related to Mithridates.

Under Mithridates, the problem of relations with the nomads was also solved, the direction of their movement was changed: they were moved away from the Parthian territories. "The Saki sat around Hamun Lake on the lands of ancient Arachosia and Drangiana." Later, local states will be formed here, which will be in

a certain relationship with the ruling dynasty of the Parthian state. According to MS Ivanov, "the inclusion of Saks in the system of Parthian statehood even contributed to the strengthening of the military potential of the country, since nomadic cavalry units became one of the components of the Parthian army".

In the conquered territories, Mithridates II retained a number of local dynasties, which ensured a certain degree of loyalty of the local nobility towards the Arshakids.

One of the main political processes that took place in the history of the Parthian kingdom is the constant wars with Rome at the turn of our era. The very first contact between the Romans and the Parthians occurred as far back as 92 BC. during the meeting of the Roman commander Sulla and the Parthian ambassador. Parthia did not interfere with the relations of the Romans with Pontic kingdom and Armenia, she did not realize the danger that Rome carried.

In 69 BC Roman commander Lukull began military operations with Armenia. The Parthian king Fraat III decided to maintain neutrality. Three years later, the new Roman commander Pompey concluded a neutrality agreement with the Parthians. The system of relations between Rome and Parthia, created by Pompey, ensured a political balance in the region, which was based on Roman hegemony. But the dynastic crisis in the early 50s. served as a prologue to the crisis in relations between the two states.

By that time, dynastic feuds broke out in Parthia itself: in 58-57. BC. Fraat was killed by his sons. The eldest son of Mithridates III, who was soon expelled for cruelty, according to the Roman historian Justin, then came to the throne, and then fled to the Roman proconsul Gabinius. The throne passed to his younger brother Orod II. Gabinius, on the orders of Pompey, hurried to Egypt to assist another exile Ptolemy XI. Mithridates III, being without the help of the Romans, ousted his younger brother from Dvorichka and Babylonia, but the commander Oroda II - Suren expelled Mithridates III from Seleucia, and then besieged him in Babylon and forced him to surrender. Orod ordered the execution of his brother.

Meanwhile, in the spring of 55 BC, at one of the meetings of the triumvirs in Luka, the question of the Parthian campaign of Crassus, one of the triumvirs, elected by the consul for one year was resolved. The war with Parthia itself was unpopular in Rome, but it was necessary for Crassus to achieve personal success against the background of the growing glory of Julius Caesar, the conqueror of Gaul and Pompey, the conqueror of the Near East.

In the spring of 54 BC Crassus arrived in Syria. Winter 54 - 53 years. BC. went to the preparation for the campaign. Crassus confidence in the victory was so great that there was no reconnaissance of the forces and plans of the enemy. "Instead, he led small operations all through the winter in Syria and Palestine, ending with the robbery of the Jerusalem temple."

The Parthians were preparing for resistance. Plutarch in Comparative Biographies (biographies of Crassus) tells us that before the beginning of the campaign to the Crassus, the Parthian ambassadors arrived who wanted to know whether the campaign against them was a private enterprise of Crassus, or was an order of the Roman government. The ambassadors said that in the first case the Parthian king could let Crassus go, based on his age, and in the second case the Parthians would fight mercilessly. Crassus replied that he would explain it to the king in Seleucia. Then the ambassador, holding out his hand palm up, said: "rather, the hair will grow here, than you will see Seleucia."

The Parthian King Orod II was confident that the Romans would choose the path through Armenia. Therefore, taking the command of the Parthian army, he invaded Armenia to prevent the formation of the Armenian king and Crassus. The defense of Mesopotamia was entrusted to Suren.

Passing the Euphrates from Zevgma, Crassus decided to cross Mesopotamia, following the departing Parthian army of Suren, in order to defeat her. The four-day transition of the Romans through the desert very tired of the Roman soldiers, undermining their trust in Crassus. "On May 6, the detachments reached the river Balih, in a place located below the city of Carra (Harran)." Upon learning that Surin was nearby, Crassus moved on without giving the legions any rest. At this moment the Parthians appeared. The Romans built in the square were immediately surrounded by their cavalry. "Horse archers galloped on a quick pace around a square, falling asleep on a defenseless opponent with arrows. The first attempts of the Romans to counterattack the enemy were unsuccessful. " Crassus ordered his son Publius to attack the Parthians with the forces of thirteen hundred cavalry, five hundred archers and eight infantry cohorts, about four thousand men. Wishing to lure Publius into the steppe and tear him away from the main forces, the Parthians began to falsely retreat. Publius, not knowing the tactics of the nomadic steppe, rushed after them. As soon as he was away from the main forces that could have come to the rescue, the Parthians "rushed to the careless Publius and his detachment and exterminated everyone." Crassus, having learned of the danger that threatened his son, immediately hurried to help him, but it was too late. The Parthians attacked until darkness. Crassus was so distraught that the order to retreat was given by his assistants. The main body of the Roman army approached Carr on the defense of the walls. "The next

day, the Parthians finished off the wounded left by the Romans on the battlefield, and destroyed small groups wandering in the desert."

Crassus decided to move north into the possession of his ally Artavazda. Legatus Octavius, with 5,000 legionaries, made his way to a hill near Sinnaki, near Carr. Suren proposed negotiations to the Romans, and Crassus and Octavius marched towards the Parthian commander. What happened next is unclear. Some say that the cause of the events was a pure misunderstanding, others say that Crassus fell victim to the perfidy of the Parthians, who specially prepared the trap to their opponent. One way or another, but Crassus and Octavius died at the hands of the Parthians, the remnants of the Roman troops scattered across the desert, many were captured and then settled in the Merv area.

The Parthian king Orod agreed with the Armenian king Artavazd and sealed their union with a dynastic marriage, having married his son Pakor in an Armenian princess. During the holiday, when the whole company watched the play "The Bacchae" by Euripides, the messengers arrived with the head and hand of Crassus — the terrible trophies of the battle of Carr. Plutarch writes that "when proclaiming victory, the head of Crassus was thrown onto the stage."

N.K. Dibvoise notes that "the Crassus fiasco should have put Parthia on a par with, if not higher with Rome, in the eyes of people from the Mediterranean to the Indus." The lands east of the Euphrates now belonged to Parthia, and the Euphrates became the border between the two states up to 63 AD. The Parthians did not continue their further advancement, despite the fact that Cassius, who became commander-in-chief of the Roman troops in Syria, had few people. And it is unlikely that Cassius would be replenished, because a declining Roman Republic was threatened by civil war.

Thus, aspects of centralization in its various manifestations can be seen in the activities of the early Sassanids in Iran.

So, using the same mechanisms and management tools as the Parthians, inheriting from them the main aspects of foreign policy, the Sassanids managed to create a single and centralized state. The tendencies towards the formation of centralized control were manifested in the activities of Ardashir and his son Shapur. They suppressed every manifestation of discontent on the part of the vassal rulers and, in alliance with the Zoroastrian clergy, strengthened the royal power in "Iran and non-Iran." Ardashir and Shapur continuously proved their strengths and abilities by overcoming trials, combining the state mind, authority and talent of the commander. It was the role and activity of the early Sassanids that was one of the

leading factors in the formation of centralized power in Iran.

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