



ABSTRACTS

Influenze dell'arte sasanide nell'Occidente mediterraneo: alcuni episodi decorativi Laura Pasquini

Per spiegare e comprendere il fenomeno dell'irradiazione dell'arte sasanide nell'Occidente mediterraneo si possono seguire percorsi differenti. Già da tempo battuta è la 'via della seta', che identifica nei tessuti di pregio i principali vettori di innovativi modelli iconografici e di un gusto per l'ornato tipicamente iranico. D'altra parte, la scelta elettiva dello stucco come materia principe all'interno dei progetti decorativi prima partecipi, quindi sasanidi e la ricchezza dei motivi ornamentali, che attraverso questo materiale trovarono espressione innovando radicalmente i modi della scultura decorativa, ci convincono a seguirne lo sviluppo anche nell'Occidente tardoantico e medievale. Se dunque le preziose stoffe seriche furono i veicoli principali di quella cultura figurativa che andava raffinandosi, sperimentando nuovi messaggi ornamentali, anche lo stucco, facile da plasmare e da adattare alla parete, animato sovente da vivaci colori, diviene una scelta consapevole, dovuta a precise esigenze decorative, dominate da un gusto per l'ornato che si espande all'infinito, ripetendo, con geometriche simmetrie e colori smaglianti, simboli e immagini di un'arte senza tempo. Vale dunque la pena di seguirne lo sviluppo in Occidente, percorrendo in definitiva una 'via' parallela a quella della seta, che aiuti comunque a rilevare in tale contesto le appropriazioni di iconografie e modalità decorative di gusto sasanide, ovvero del vocabolario ornamentale di un'arte immutabile nelle sue simmetrie, atemporale nei suoi messaggi simbolici, che senza principio né fine ripete instancabilmente il magico valore delle immagini.

The Role of Gold and Silver in the Sasanian Economy Andrea Gariboldi

It's a common opinion among modern scholars that the Sasanians coined only a few gold coins and for celebrative purposes, without an effective gold circulation. It's also believed that there wasn't a relation between gold and silver, or at least that this relation is unknown as weights used by Sasanians. The scarcity of gold objects and vases seems to confirm this framework, contradicted only by some Arab sources that, perhaps with vivid fantasy, tell us about great amounts of gold at the Court of the King of Kings.

This paper aims to focus on the function of gold and silver in the Sasanian economy. First of all, we have to make a difference between celebrative and propagandistic gold coins (*dēnār*), on the base of legends and iconography, and "canonical" or normal ones, similar to silver drachms (*drahm*). There is no reason to think that they haven't never circulated in the Sasanian empire.

Another important aspect to be considered is the weight-system of the gold coins, which follows very closely the Byzantine weights, while the drachms are fixed on the Attic foot: this means that the two gold coinages were changeable. The sources say that huge quantities of gold and silver were given as tributes or subsidies between the Byzantines and the Sasanians, and it's foolish to repute that in a developed society there wasn't a *ratio* of exchange.

If, without a doubt, the real coin in the Sasanian economy was the silver *drahm*, as we can judge even from ostraca, papyri and pahlavi documents, there were surely also coins "of account" to express high values. One of these is the Greek *stater* (*stēr*), worth four times more than the drachms, as is testified by a lot of inscriptions on silver vessels.

Sasanian primary sources are silent about the relationships between different weights, but an Armenian author of the Seventh Century, *Anania Širak 'i*, wrote a book *On Weights and Measures*, comparing Byzantine and Sasanian weights, providing us with the names of the coins "of account". The coherence of the Sasanian monetary weights, compared with the Byzantine or even the Arab system, suggests that there was a theoretical relation between the gold and silver coin of 1: 20, and a swinging relation between the weighted gold and silver from 1: 12 to 1: 18, depending on political and economical circumstances.

The recent publication of the seal of a *zarrbed*, "Master of the Gold", title until now unknown, compel us to reflect upon the real function of the gold, in coins or raw, in the Sasanian economy.