

## Original Research Article

# An Investigation of the Skeleton Inside the Bronze Coffin in the Castle to Determine Its Gender, Identity, and Time of Life

Mohammad Mehdi Tavassoli<sup>1\*</sup>, Amir Amirinezhad<sup>2</sup>, Ali Sajadi<sup>3</sup>, Mansoureh Nezaratzadeh<sup>4</sup>,  
Masoud Darabi<sup>3</sup>

1. Department of Archaeology, Faculty of Literature and Humanities, University of Sistan and Baluchestan, Zahedan, Iran
2. Faculty of Conservation and Restoration, Isfahan University of Art, Iran
3. Faculty Member, Khorramabad Cultural Heritage, Lorestan, Iran
4. Senior Expert in Conservation and Restoration, Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Lorestan, Iran

Received: 28/04/2025

Accepted: 03/08/2025

Available online: 01/01/2026

## Abstract

Approximately twenty years ago, in February 2005, archaeologists from the Lorestan Cultural Heritage General Office unearthed a bronze coffin containing human skeletal remains at a depth of 60 centimeters below the surface in Chubtarash Village, located 31 kilometers south of Khorram-ābād. The initial studies and preliminary report by the General Office of Lorestan Cultural Heritage identified the remains as belonging to a prince of the Parthian rulers, a powerful empire that prospered from 247 BC to 224 AD. Since that time, no further scientific information or reports have been published concerning this find. This study aims to verify the initial attribution and determine the biological sex, ethnic affiliation, and chronological placement of the individual. Accordingly, several primary research questions are posed: the burial rites and the presence of two gold ocular and oral covers placed over the face; the relevance of a coin found beneath the sternum, recovered only after the removal of sediment, clay, and vegetal matter from within the bronze coffin; the biological sex and identity of the individual; and ultimately, the temporal and social context of his life. The research methodology combines physical anthropology, laboratory and field studies, and a review of the ancient history of southwestern Iran, alongside detailed osteological observations and scientific analysis of cranial and postcranial sexual dimorphism, adhering to internationally recognized sources in bioarchaeology and biocultural anthropology. Through collaboration among a multidisciplinary team—including laboratory specialists, conservators, archaeologists, osteoarchaeologists, forensic anthropologists, historians, epigraphers, and numismatists—it has been determined that the remains belong to a young Iranian male of aristocratic elite status during the Elymaean period.

**Keywords:** *Khorramabad, Chubtarash Village, Coffin and Skeleton, Golden Blindfold and Coin, Elymian- Selucid Period.*

\* Corresponding Author: [tavassolimm@lihu.usb.ac.ir](mailto:tavassolimm@lihu.usb.ac.ir), 09123055173

## Introduction

In December 2023, Lorestan University invited an archaeological researcher to deliver a lecture on “Archaeological Perspectives and Novel Biocultural Anthropological Methods” in celebration of Research Week and to honor his academic contributions. Following the lecture, the university president was to recognize his two years of service and efforts to establish the archaeology program at Lorestan University. At the end of the ceremony, two specialists from the Lorestan Cultural Heritage conservation and tourism department invited him to examine remains discovered approximately twenty years earlier in a bronze coffin from Chubtarash Village, now housed in the conservation and restoration section of Castle, Khorram-ābād. Grateful for their invitation, he visited Shapur-Khwast Castle (known as) the following day with great enthusiasm to conduct a multifaceted investigation of the coffin and its skeletal contents. The initial and most challenging phase—the scientific conservation of all skeletal elements—had already been completed by experienced specialists at the castle laboratory, and the preliminary findings of that team were presented at the 2005 Iranian Cultural Heritage Congress in Tehran (Nezaratizadeh & Darabi, 2005, 329–339). From that date until December 2023, no further scientific study was undertaken to clarify the individual’s identity, chronological placement, or to confirm his / her biological sex. Therefore, a specialized multidisciplinary project in archaeological and biocultural anthropological studies was devised. This article presents the results of that collaborative research, undertaken voluntarily and with great dedication by archaeologists, researchers, and specialists. It is hoped that

this collective effort will illuminate a facet of the political, cultural, and civilizational history of Lorestan and Iran. The study is structured in three phases: first, determining the biological sex of the individual; second, establishing his/her identity; and third, ascertaining his/her chronological context.

## Literature Review

According to the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) News Agency in May 2018, in February 2005, a teacher from Chubtarash Village named Karami noticed fragments of ancient stones on the surface of the ground, which alerted looters of antiquities. Soon, the sounds of tools and shovels at night could be heard as they attempted to unearth artifacts. His wife promptly reported the matter to the Lorestan Cultural Heritage and Tourism Department, leading specialists in archaeology and conservation from Khorram-ābād to the site. After test trenches, at a depth of 30 centimeters, the rim of a bronze coffin appeared. Continued excavation on February 23 of that month yielded a bathtub-shaped bronze coffin with four handles resembling that found at ancient Arjan (modern-day Behbahan). Inside the coffin, the remains were in a semi-squatting–semi-fetal position with gold masks covering the eyes and mouth (Figs. 1 to 3).

After the skeleton was examined by Dr. Forouzanfar from the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts of Iran, it was determined that the body belonged to a young man aged 28-30, about 180 centimeters tall, who was probably injured by a sword wound in war and died from an infection. Two cultural heritage researchers wrote in their detailed research report to be presented at the 7th Conference on the Protection and



Fig. 1. Bronze coffin with skeletal remains and golden masks on the eyes and mouth. Source: Author's archive.



Fig. 2. Full image of the bronze coffin of Lorestan. Source: Author's archive.



Fig. 3. Arjan's bronze coffin. Source: Author's archive.

Restoration of Historical-Cultural Objects and Architectural Decorations in Tehran about this coffin and the body inside it, in the winter of 2004, following an emergency excavation in the Lorestan, Chubtarash Village, a bronze coffin was discovered next to a stonemason's table. In this coffin, a human skeleton was found in a semi-fetal state with a gold plate over the mouth and another over the eyes. Preliminary studies believed that the skeleton belonged to a 20-25-year-old man, about 170 cm tall, who was injured in the right knee by a sharp object and died as a result of infection of the wound (*ibid.*, 333).

Since gold is one of the rare elements in the mines of this region (Lorestan), it seems that the body inside the coffin belonged to a person who enjoyed a privileged position. The special method of covering the eyes and mouth with gold adds to the importance of the study of this collection. The mentioned coffin is completely broken symmetrically in four places, which may be due to the weakness of its construction method. The mentioned coffin is 183 cm long, the width of the opening with the upper layer is 92 cm, and the width of the bottom of the coffin is 78 cm (*ibid.*).

### Theoretical Foundations

One of the reliable documents and evidence in reconstructing historical trends, examining the evolution of art and its nature, recognizing religious and doctrinal beliefs, the quality and quantity of the economic conditions of the society, and the like, is the "coin". This small metal element, which has a special value among archaeological findings due to its durability and reliability, not only helps archaeologists in providing an absolute chronology of a layer or ancient site, but also enables them to provide archaeologists with

a lot of information in addition to what was mentioned. In 2003, one of the authors of this group, while cleaning the soil and waste materials inside the coffin to fully identify the skeleton inside it, fortunately came across a hard and solid ball of soil that was under the sternum. By washing and cleaning it thoroughly, she succeeded in discovering a coin that had an image of the Seleucid kings engraved on it with Greek script. This coin is a valuable guide for the analysis and interpretation of one of the hypotheses of this article. Also, by comparing the structure of this coffin with its counterpart found in Arjan (ancient Behbahan), an attempt has been made to provide scientific answers to three main questions in this research: In the first step, the researchers' effort is to determine the gender of the corpse based on detailed studies of biocultural anthropology. In the second step, the emphasis is on the identity of the corpse by carefully studying the coin discovered. In the third step, an attempt has been made to determine the time of life of the owner of the corpse by examining the ancient history of southwestern Iran.

### Research Method

The reliable and available sources for the proposed method in the first step are studies and books that have been published in the last one to three decades on such scientific activities, some (Tavassoli, 1999; 2000) with several reprints in the years 2002 to 2015. Also, the excellent work of Singh & Bhasin (1968) from the University of Delhi and the book of Mays (2021) are among the sources studied in this research, and to address the second and third steps of this research, we relied on the research of Amirinejad (2012) on the coins of the period under study.

To describe and clarify the historical time frame of the issue, reference is made to the research of Sarfaraz and Firouzmandi (Sarfaraz & Firouzmandi, 2009) in the book "Archaeology and art of the historical periods of mad.hakhamaneshi, Ashkani, Sasani." They believe that with the defeat of the last Achaemenid ruler (Darius III) in 334 AD by Alexander the Great and after the ups and downs on the way to Parthia (historical Khorasan), near the Satrap of Bactria, the Satrap's commander named "Bessus" wounded Darius and she died from that wound, and the Achaemenid Empire ended with the death of Darius III. Alexander died shortly after in 323 AD and after a decade when her possessions fell into the hands of her generals, one of her generals, named Seleucus, finally crossed the Karkh River and entered Mesopotamia and reached Babylon, where the people of Babylon welcomed her and she became the founder of the Seleucid government in Asia (ibid., 183-184).

### Discussion

In the first step of this research, a collective effort is made to describe the features and important points for identifying the sex of the skeleton. The state of preservation of skeletal remains depends on internal and external factors. While external influences represent environmental determinants such as chemical and biological characteristics of the soil, temperature and humidity of the surrounding environment, effects of plants and animals, as well as anthropogenic processes and intrinsic factors, they correspond to the sex and age of the individual. Bone type, bone size, and pathological conditions, and the recovery of well-preserved skeletal material are essential for a complete anthropological

analysis, since methods for estimating sex, age, and kinship affinities rely on the specific anatomical features of each region. Similarly, pathological and pathological analyses of trauma and injury may hinder correct identification due to the alteration of organic materials that are not visible in archaeological remains (Biehler-Gomez et al., 2022).

Studies examining the state of preservation of skeletal remains rely largely on the analysis of osteological remains, which can sometimes hinder the correct distinction between immature and mature skeletal remains. The bones most susceptible to erosion are those with the highest proportion of cancellous bone, such as the sternum, ribs, vertebrae, and the bones of both wrists and feet.

To determine sex, careful examination of most skeletal bones is essential. The angle between

the neck and shaft of the thigh bone (femur) is greater in males, usually between  $127^{\circ}$  and  $130^{\circ}$ , and is always obtuse, while in females it is smaller and more acute (Fig. 4).

The greater width of the female bony pelvis is manifested in several ways. One important area is the infra-pubic angle of the pubic bone, a part of the front of the pelvis. The infra-pubic angle is that which forms the lower parts of the pubic bones between the left and right inferior pubic horns. In women, it is wider and more U-shaped, while in men it is narrower (generally less than 90 degrees) and more V-shaped (Mays, 2021, 48) (Fig. 5). It can also be emphasized that several other features of the pubic bone are also useful in determining sex. Women usually show the development of the pubic arch, a bony protrusion that draws the anterior surface



Fig. 4. Femur of the skeleton inside the coffin with an obtuse angle (male). Source: Author's archive.



Fig. 5. The pelvis of a (male) corpse inside a coffin. Source: Author's archive.

of the pubic bone downward to merge with the border of the inferior pubic ramus. In contrast, men are distinctly lacking the pubic arch. At the same time, the pubic ramus, which generally shows a bulge in women, is paler in men (*ibid.*).

The next way to understand gender is the surface of the ear of the ilium (Fig. 5). This is the articular surface by which this part of the pelvis articulates with the sacrum. In young adults, its surface is wavy, but later it gradually becomes smoother. Eventually, this smooth surface becomes porous with bony edges (*ibid.*, 65).

Gender identification according to the skull by examining and paying attention to the upper margins of the eye socket, the mammary process, and the lower and lateral measurements of the skull, the skeleton of

men can be distinguished from the skeleton of women, especially by direct observation of the pelvis. The size of the skeleton in men is usually larger, and its structure is uneven; the supraorbital margin of the eye is rounded, and the mammary process is larger in men. The occipital bone in the male skeleton has muscle lines with distinct protrusions (Tavassoli, 2000, 47). The lower midpoint of the forehead in the male skeleton is bony, and the lower and lateral angles of the skull are square. The jaw in the male skeleton is larger and wider, resembling the letter "U" in Latin letters, and the occipital protrusions are larger. In the female skeleton, the sizes are smaller, the bone structure is smoother, and the supraorbital margin of the eye is flat. The mammary process in the female skeleton is smaller than in the male, and the muscle

lines and protrusions in the occipital bone are not clear. The midpoints of the forehead and the bottom of the forehead in the female skeleton are flat, and the lower and lateral angles of their skulls are wider. The jaw in the female skeleton is smaller and parabolic, and the occipital protrusions are smaller than in the male skeleton. The male skull is larger and heavier than the female skull, and has a larger volume than the female skull (Kamali & Askari Khanaghah, 1993, 476). The occipital foramen of the male skull is larger, and their jaw bones are generally more voluminous, while in the female skull, the occipital foramen is smaller and the bones are thinner. The frontal bone of the male is sloping and sloping, and in the female skull, it is straight and then sloping. The rim of the eye socket in men is somewhat prominent and thick compared to women, and in women's faces, the eye socket is narrow and sharp. The upper arch of the eye socket is well developed in men, while it is less prominent in women. The dental arch of men is larger and rounder, and the teeth themselves are larger, but the dental arch and the teeth themselves are smaller in women than in men. The frontotemporal ridge is less prominent in the male skeleton, while it is more prominent in the female forehead. The facial width index is larger in men and smaller in women. The total facial bone is longer in the male skeleton compared to the width of the face, and smaller in women. The clavicle, the bone that forms the shoulder girdle and is shaped like the letter "S" lying open, is longer in the male skeleton and less collapsed than in the female skeleton (Fig. 6).

Below the skull is the jugular foramen, which is visible on both the right and left sides. The size of these foramina differs in terms of the

diameter of the opening, both on the left and right sides, and they are larger in the skull of men and smaller in the skull of women (Mays, 2021, 33-38) (Fig. 7).

The state of preservation of skeletal remains depends on both internal and external factors. While external influences represent environmental determinants such as chemical and biological characteristics of the soil, temperature and humidity of the surrounding environment, effects of plants and animals, as well as anthropogenic processes and

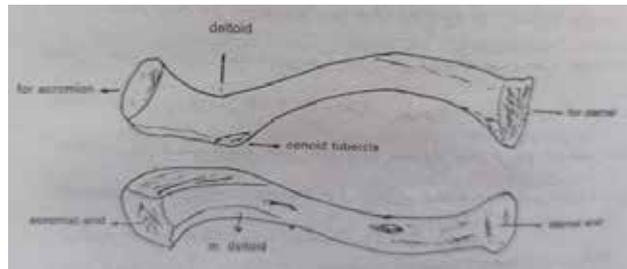


Fig. 6. Clavicle bone. Source: Tavassoli, 2000, 31.

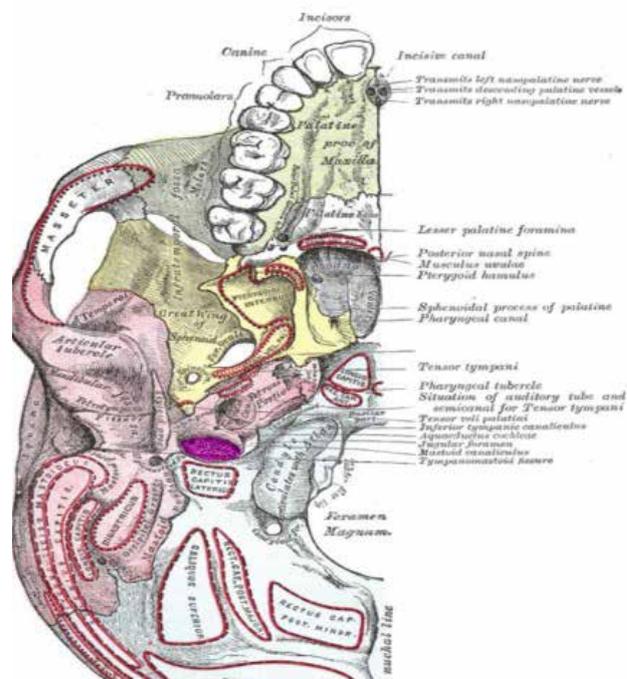


Fig. 7. The jugular fossa is marked in dark pink color under the skull. Source: <https://fa.wikipedia.org>

intrinsic factors, they correspond to the sex and age of the individual. Bone type, bone size, and pathological conditions, and the recovery of well-preserved skeletal material are essential for a complete anthropological analysis, since methods for estimating sex, age, and kinship affinities rely on the specific anatomical features of each region. Similarly, pathological and pathological analyses of trauma and injury may hinder correct identification due to the alteration of organic matter that is not visible in archaeological remains (Biehler-Gomez et al., 2022). Another important indicator of gender is the sciatic notch, which is stronger than the pubic bone and can generally be observed after excavation. The sciatic notch is wider and shallower in women, another manifestation of the wider pelvis in women, while the notch in the pubic bone in men is weaker and deeper (Figs. 8 & 9). Fig. 9 show the difference in the angle of the sciatic notch and the surface of the ilium.

Based on the above scientific reasons and a thorough examination of the skeleton under study, the gender of the corpse is undoubtedly male.

In the second step of the research, our attempt to identify the body is based on the discovery of a coin found under the sternum. With the death of Alexander around 323 BC, the war between his commanders began, known as the Diadakhoi; so that around 316 BC, a battle took place between two of Alexander's famous generals, Eumenes and Antigone One-Eyed, in Susiana and Media, which led to the victory of Antigone, who began minting coins in Susa in 316-18 BC (Bellinger, 1950, 45). Seleucus I conquered Mesopotamia in 312 BC and around 304 BC he fought the Battle of Ipsos with Antigone, where he was able

to defeat him, dominate Iran, and establish the Seleucid dynasty. In 281 BC, Seleucus handed over the rule of Asia to his son Antiochus and himself went to Macedonia, but was killed near the Dardanelles by Ptolemy Craonus, and a magnificent temple was built for him (Spiegel, 1878, 28). Antiochus I, known as Soter (Savior), was killed in Sardis in 261 BC while suppressing a local rebellion (Rajabi, 2002, 34). With the death of Antiochus, his son Antiochus II, known as Theos (God)<sup>1</sup>, ascended the throne in his father's place in 261 BC. This king was poisoned by his wife Laodice around 246 BC so that Seleucus II, known as Callinicus (the shining conqueror), could become king. His reign coincided with the beginning of the power and rise of the Parthians and the collapse of the Seleucids in Iran (Amirinejad, 2012, 12).

Justin describes the end of Seleucus II's life as follows: A fall from a horse ended the life of Seleucus II (Rajabi, 2002, 37), but this incident was the beginning of the short-lived reign of Seleucus III, who came to power around 226-224 BC. Antiochus III, nicknamed the Great, came to power around 223 BC. It was during his reign that Melon, the ruler of Media, raised the flag of rebellion and crowned himself with the approval of his brother Alexander, the ruler of Persis (ibid.). He easily managed to capture Babylon, the coastal areas of the Erythraean Sea (Persian Gulf and Sea of Oman), Susa (except for the Susa fortress), and almost all of Mesopotamia. The king, who saw the situation as bad, personally intervened to suppress Melon and defeated him near the city of Apolloniatis. Since Molon survived the battle, he could not accept defeat, and eventually he and his close associates committed suicide in 220 BC.



Fig. 8. The sciatic notch was found in the skeletal pelvis (right, shows the sciatic notch of the pubic bone from the Falak-ol-Aflak Castle skeleton, which confirms the gender of the body's owner - male). Source: Author's archive.

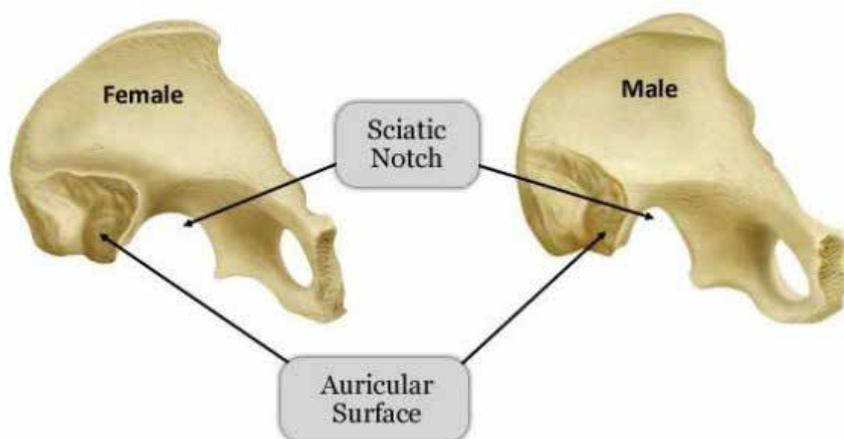


Fig. 9. Sciatic notch angle and ilium surface. Source: <https://anatomy.app/encyclopedia/hip-bone>

After this incident, Antiochus set off eastward and forced the Parthians to submit and make them his tributaries. But Antiochus's upward trend was coming to an end, as the Romans penetrated the mountains of Tartarus and created a huge empire (*ibid.*). Antiochus was defeated by the Romans in a battle around 190 BC at Magnesia or Magnesia (Anatolia) and was forced to accept heavy peace terms (188 BC). The conditions were so terrible that they destroyed the king's prestige and honor in the eyes of the people, and the king's

troubles became apparent one after another. The first cause of his anxiety was the empty treasury and the tribute that had to be paid to the Romans. To obtain wealth, Antiochus was forced to march on Susa in 187 BC and attack the temple of Bel or Baal at Elymae (*Holleaux, 1938, 254*). This attack cost the life of the Seleucid ruler, as Antiochus III died on 3 July 187 BC (*Sachs & Wiseman, 1954, 207*). Although the death of Antiochus III eased the pressure on the Elymae and gave them some space to seek independence, Seleucid coinage

continued in Susa until the time of Demetrius II (Nicator) (Houghton, 1983, 105-107).

Coins found in Iran from the Seleucids show that the Seleucid kings in Iran (Shusa and Ecbatana) minted coins, such that the coins minted by Antiochus III, minted in Ecbatana, are in perfect similarity with the coins found in the discovered bronze coffin (Figs. 10 & 11).

Considering the historical events during the reign of Antiochus III, it is possible to examine the available information in detail in order to be able to identify the unknowns and ultimately determine the identity of the deceased. Available information includes: 1. Location of discovery: Choubtarash village, 31 kilometers from Khorramabad; 2. Cause of death: It seems to be a sword blow to the thigh 3. Age: Male between 25-35 years old; 4. Coin: Antiochus III; 5. Type of coffin: Mesopotamian/Mesopotamian type (bathtub-shape).

#### • Bronze coffin discovery site

The village of Choubtarash is the site of the discovery of the coffin, which is located 31

km from Khorramabad, 130 km from Susa, and 160 km from Ecbatana. This direct distance between the discovery site and the important settlements of the Seleucid period in Iran indicates that the burial site was in the center of Antiochus' power in Iran, and this centrality allowed the Elymian elite to enjoy the greatest acceptance among the Elymian communities (Fig. 12). Therefore, the discovery site is evidence of the fact that the Elymian elite affiliated with Antiochus III could best support the Seleucid political entity in Iran.

#### • Cause of death

The cause of death of the deceased, according to the physical evidence left behind, shows that death was caused by a sword blow to the thigh. Considering the political conditions in the period of Antiochus III in Iran, it can be assumed that the Elymaean elite were wounded during the war in support of Antiochus III and died due to severe wounds, blood loss, and infection of the wound site. He was buried royally in this place, which was the center of Antiochus' power in Iran. Another detailed



Fig. 10. Obverse and reverse of a coin of Antiochus III, minted at Ecbatana. Source: Amirinejad, 2012.



Fig. 11. Coin discovered in a coffin. Inscription in front of Apollo on the back of the coin in Greek script: Selucus. Mint mark next to the image of Apollo: Ecbatana. Behind Apollo: Basileus (meaning king) (The dark images are related to the coin inside the coffin). Source: Amirinejad, 2012, 43-45-50.

study of the cause of death is necessary and requires a paleoanthropologist and related facilities, which will be carried out if the appropriate opportunity arises.

#### • Age

According to biological anthropological studies, the body inside the bronze coffin shows that the deceased was male and between 25 and 35 years old. It can be assumed that the deceased could not have been one of the Seleucid kings and princes, given his age, and on the other hand, the Parthian kings in this region during the reign of Antiochus III did not have much power to confront the Seleucid rule in Western Iran and enter into a serious war; therefore, considering the aforementioned cases, as a result of the conclusion of this research, the body is considered to belong to one of the Elymian elders who supported the Seleucids in Iran.

#### • Coin

The coin found in the bronze coffin belongs to Antiochus III and was minted in Ecbatana. This coin is very important in relative dating as this coin dates back to before 187 BC; we know that the first coins of the Elymian kings were minted around 147-145 BC by Comnoscercus I (Megas Soter 147-145 BC) (Salaris, 2017). Therefore, the best date of the deceased could be between 187 and 147 BC. However, considering the coin minted by Demetrius II (Nicator) in Susa, it is possible that the deceased was killed during the reign of Antiochus III and the civil wars in the region. The coin found bears a striking resemblance to the coin of Comnencus I, whose coin depicts the king in a Seleucid manner, facing right, with a beardless face, a ribbon surrounding the hair as a diadem, tied at the back of the head, and the end of the ribbon hanging at the back of the head. The king's image is surrounded by the radiating

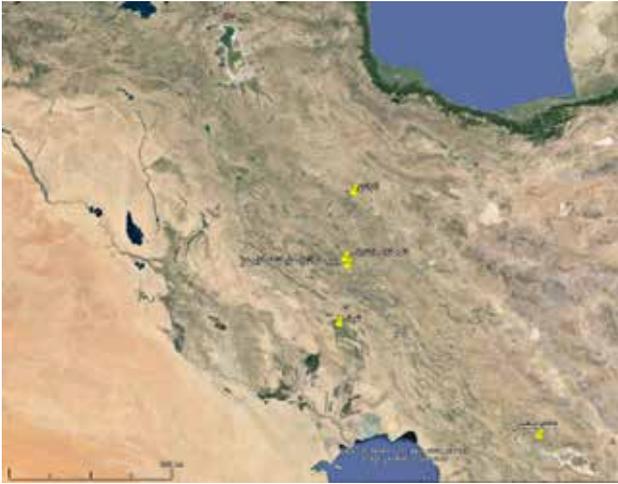


Fig. 12. The yellow dots on the map show Ecbatana from above, the village of Choubtarash in the middle, and Susiana below. Source: Authors taken from Google earth.

dots at the top. On the reverse of the coin, the half-naked figure of Baal or Apollo, seated on a platform or throne (Omphalos), holds an arrow in his right hand and a bow in his left. On both sides of the figure of Apollo, an inscription in Greek script introduces the king (Figs. 8 to 10).

#### • Type of coffin

The type of coffin found is of the Mesopotamian bathtub-shaped, examples of which have been found in Arjan (modern Behbahan) and the region from the Neo-Assyrian to the Parthian periods (Wicks, 2015). Considering the type of coffin, it is likely that the deceased was not from the Seleucid family but from the natives who had a religious affiliation with the Elymian realm. This assumption allows us to introduce the deceased from the Elymian elite who supported the dominant Seleucid power under the reign of Antiochus III.

In the third step, there is a brief analysis of the life of the owner of the body, and an attempt has been made to clarify this question using reliable sources. With the defeat of the last Achaemenid ruler, Darius III, in 334 BC by

Alexander the Great and after several ups and downs on the way to Parthia, near Damghan, the Bactrian satrap named Bessus wounded him, and Darius succumbed to that wound (Sarfaraz & Firouzmandi, 2009, 113). With the death of Darius, the Achaemenid Empire fell apart, and Alexander marched to India but made no progress and was forced to surrender in 325 BC. He returned to Susa and ordered the disobedient Greek soldiers to be dismissed and only those who were worthy to stay with him, pretending that he no longer intended to fight, and therefore made Susa his capital and, in accordance with Persian custom, married an Iranian girl. At that celebration, he ordered ten thousand Greek soldiers to marry Iranian women, thus fulfilling his long-standing desire to unite the two worlds of the East and the West (ibid., 181). Finally, Alexander moved his capital to Babylon and died in 323 BC at the age of 36 (ibid., 182). His possessions fell into the hands of his generals. One of his generals, Seleucus, captured Babylon and then annexed Susiana (Susa) and its neighboring regions, Elam, to his territory, and founded a dynasty (from 311 BC to 302 BC) that mixed Iranian and Greek blood. Seleucus, in 271 BC, was murdered by the son of Ptolemy, king of Egypt, and his reign passed to Antiochus (ibid., 185).

#### Conclusion

A thorough study of this finding shows that the ancient history of Iran is full of scientific and solid evidence for a glorious era that has been constantly invaded by tribes and peoples from its western and sometimes eastern lands in various circumstances. Sometimes, because of its abundant wealth, sometimes because of its vast lands suitable for agriculture, abundant water and forests, and sometimes

for numerous other historical reasons. Certainly, in such circumstances, many tribes and peoples around its vast borders have set their eyes on this land and have achieved their goal by fighting and fleeing, and sometimes by seizing part of its territory. During the time in question, the Greek and Macedonian tribes from the west and the Scythians and yellow-skinned tribes from the east invaded the borders of this vast, rich, and prosperous land, and sometimes, when the power of the Achaemenid Empire weakened, they considered themselves the owners of part of this land. At such a time, they not only minted coins in their name, but also left many works of art and public buildings, and sometimes called themselves Iranians and made great efforts to unite the Greeks and Iranians. The Selucians are the best example of this claim. The body and the unique bronze coffin discussed in this article show that the figure lying in the coffin was Iranian and one of the great and elite of Elamite/ Elimean, who had close relations with the Secuicians and was buried in their style. The golden masks on his eyes and mouth, as well as the silver coin under his sternum, which dates back to the Seleucid period, prove this claim. The complete presentation of gender identification, which is the result of the team's many years of scientific and practical experience, can be a suitable guide for future researchers.

### Wede Clear That

This research work has written for the first time by the authors, and those references, have written in bibliography.

### Endnotes

1. The title of Theos was given to Antiochus by the people of the Greek city of Melite (Melitha) after he freed them from a tyrant named Timarchus.

### References List

- Amirinejad, A. (2012). پژوهشی بر سکه‌های فرتارکه و الیمایی در دوره اشکانی [A study on Fartarke and Elima coins in the Parthian period] [Master's thesis, University of Sistan and Baluchestan]. Iranoc. [in Persian]. <https://ganj.irandoc.ac.ir/#/articles/7fd0b98e0ecbacbaa0348aefbbe1d45>
- Bellinger, A. R. (1950). *An alexander hoard from Byblos*. Berytus.
- Biehler-Gomez, L., Mattia, M., Mondellini, M., Palazzolo, L., & Cattaneo, C. (2022). Differential skeletal preservation between sexes: a diachronic study in Milan over 2000 years. *Archaeological and Anthropological Sciences*, 14(8), 147. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12520-022-01616-0>
- Holleaux, M. (1938). *Études d'épigraphie et d'histoire grecques*. E. de Boccard
- Houghton, A. (1983). *Coins of the Seleucid Empire from the collection of Arthur Houghton*. American Numismatic Society.
- Kamali, M., & Askari Khanaghah, A. (1993). انسان‌شناسی زیستی [Biological Anthropology]. Toos Publications. [in Persian]
- Mays, S. (2021). *The archaeology of human bones*. Routledge.
- Nezaratizadeh, M., & Darabi, M. (2005). کشف، انتقال و اقدامات حفاظتی صورت‌گرفته بر تابوت فلزی چوتاش [Discovery, Transfer, and Conservation Measures Taken on the Chotash Metal Coffin]. In *Collection of Articles of the Seventh Conservation and Restoration of Historical-Cultural Objects and Decorations Related to Architecture* (pp. 229-338). Mirat Cultural, Tourism, and Handicrafts Publications. [in Persian]
- Rajabi, P. (2002). هزاره‌های گم‌شده [The Lost Millennia]. Toos Publications. [in Persian]
- Sachs, A. J., & Wiseman, D. J. (1954). A Babylonian king list of the Hellenistic period. *Iraq*, 16(2), 202-211. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4199591>
- Salaris, D. (2017). *The Kingdom of Elymais (ca. 301 BC-224 AD): a comprehensive analysis (archaeological, artistic, and textual) of one of the most important minor reigns in southern Iran* [Doctoral dissertation, Macquarie University]. <https://doi.org/10.25949/19442270>
- Singh, I. P., & Bhasin, M. K. (1968). *Anthropometry-A Laboratory manual of biological anthropology*. Kamla Raj Enterprises.
- Spiegel, F. (1878). *Eranische Altertumskunde*. Leipzig.
- Sarfaraz, A. A & Firouzmandi, B. (2009). *Archaeology and art of the historical periods*

of mad.hakhamaneshi, Ashkani, Sasani. Marlik Publications.

• Tavassoli, M. (1999). *Paleoanthropology of Iran*. S.T. Printers.

• Tavassoli, M. (2000). *Introduction to osteology*

and topography for archeologists. S.T. Printers.

• Wicks, Y. (2015). *Bronze 'bathtub' Coffins in the Context of 8th-6th Century BC Babylonian, Assyrian and Elamite Funerary Practices*. Archaeopress Publishing.

#### COPYRIGHTS

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with publication rights granted to journal of Art and Civilization of the Orient. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).



#### HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE

Tavassoli, M. M., Amirinezhad, A., Sajadi, A., Nezaratizadeh, M., & Darabi, M. (2026). An Investigation of the Skeleton Inside the Bronze Coffin in the Castle to Determine Its Gender, Identity, and Time of Life. *Journal of Art & Civilization of the Orient*, 13(50), 62-75.

DOI: [10.22034/jaco.2025.519812.1472](https://doi.org/10.22034/jaco.2025.519812.1472)

URL: [https://www.jaco-sj.com/article\\_235360.html?lang=en](https://www.jaco-sj.com/article_235360.html?lang=en)

