

The Relationship between Silk Road Currency and Religious Culture Communication

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ABSTRACT. *The Silk Road is not only a political, economic and cultural artery between the east and the West Asia, but also a mode of communication and blending of religious culture. Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism in India, Zoroastrianism in Persia, Nestorianism, Manichaeism, Islam in West Asia, Judaism in Israel, and Christianity and Catholicism in Europe all converge here. Therefore, the Silk Road is also called "The Religious Road" and "The Faith Road". Money, as a medium of communication and exchange of goods and materials on the Silk Road, has the clearest expression and reflection. The study shows that the various currencies in circulation on the Silk Road are not only the material evidence of the history, but also the window of spreading religion and culture.*

KEYWORDS: *Silk Road Currency, Religious Culture, Silk Road, economy, communication.*

1. Introduction

The Silk Road, with its broad mind of openness, inclusiveness and integration, has become a road of political, economic and cultural exchanges in ancient human history. Therefore, the Silk Road is also called "the religious road" and "the faith road". Along the Silk Road, Ancient Central Asia, West Asia and South Asia served as fertile soil and cradle for the birth of different human religions- Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, Manichaeism- which influenced the course of human civilization. Through the material and cultural exchanges on the Silk Road, the religious cultures of different countries and regions also spread and exchange in the form of art, culture and trade. [1] The ancient currency in circulation and use among countries and regions along the Silk Road is the best material evidence of its history and culture, the carrier of spreading religious culture and the window of unconnected civilizations. With the study of the currencies of the countries along the ancient Silk Road, we know that currency is the most frequently used pattern in economic and social life, and also the best carrier for the indirect dissemination of religious culture. Through the trading activities of

eastern and Western merchants and the development of Silk Road commercial markets were artificially brought to more distant countries and regions[2].

2. Silk Road currency is a window for the spread of religious culture

The Silk Road is not only a symbol of politics and economy among countries and regions, but also a window for peering into the cultural beliefs of different countries and regions. Through the Silk Road between the East and West trade exchanges between the East and West currency to achieve the exchange. Since the beginning of the last century, many Persian silver coins and Byzantine gold coins have been unearthed and discovered in Xinjiang, Gansu, Qinghai, Shanxi, Henan, Hebei and Guangdong provinces in China. While the ancient Chinese Han five-baht, tang Kaiyuan and other currencies have also been unearthed and founded in Central Asian countries. Thus, in the Silk Road Trade, Chinese and foreign currencies also played an important role in circulation. Gansu provincial numismatic society, Historical currency of Gansu Chinese currency, such as the Han five baht, Sui five-baht, Tang Kai yuan and so on, circulated from east to West, all the way to Samarkand in Central Asia. Western currencies, such as Byzantine gold coins, Persian silver coins, Sogdiana coins, Arabian gold and silver coins, Turkish coins, and so on, circulated from west to east, thus forming a vast area of exchange and accommodation. Indeed, the Silk Road was not only a road for economic and trade exchanges, a road for the circulation of money, but also a road for the spread of culture and belief [3].

Through the analysis and study of the ancient currency along the Silk Road, the culture and belief represented by the currency can be directly seen from its pattern connotation and artistic characteristics. Specifically, from the ancient Greek currency, Roman currency, Byzantine currency we can see the religious characteristics of Christianity and its branch Orthodox Church. For example, the money in circulation in western and eastern Rome (Byzantine Empire) had the king's head insignia and the Christian and Orthodox God insignia, the main Roman God (Janus) , the ancient Roman God of war (Quirinus) , the God of victory (Victor) , the Sun (Apollo) and other gods.[4].

From the Arab currency, we can see the information of Islamic culture, not only that, but also the nation influenced by Islamic culture spreads its religious culture in the form of currency economy. For example, the rulers of the four great khanates of Mongolia were assimilated by the Islamic culture of Central and western Asia, and the fierce Mongols became devout Muslims. The Mongolians put the cultural essence of Islam directly into the currency they used. We can read the contents of the Koran from the inscriptions on the Mongolian currency. This shows the piety of the Mongols and the remarkable influence of Islamic culture.[5] From the ancient Persian (Iran) on the currency signs of Zoroastrianism image were printed. On the front of the ancient Persian currency was the head of a king, perhaps influenced by the Roman Empire. On the back, there is a Zoroastrian Altar and a priestess holding an artifact. The Persian empire worshiped Zoroastrianism, from Cyrus and Darius to the Persian Sassanid Dynasty and the later period, the currency in Persia was the

promoter of the Iranian religious culture. So, this the people of other empires and give knowledge about a particular religion of the area.

From the currency of Greco-Bactrian Kingdom (Batkolia) the currency of Kushan Empire Dynasty (especially the currency of Kushan Empire Kanishka), we can see the blending, intercommunication, radiation and influence of Greece, Roman culture and history of India Buddhist culture in Central Asia. For example, money in circulation in Greco-Bactrian Kingdom (or Bactria as it is known in Western history), established by the Scythians aborigines of Central Asia, was influenced by the Romanization, with the king on the front and the Gods on the back. In addition, with the characteristics of the region, the nation, Greco-Bactrian Kingdom currency goddess (Nana Goddess) is the ancient Central Asian people's indigenous beliefs. The Kushan Dynasty, founded by the Darwinian in Central Asia, was at the forefront of cultural exchanges between the East and the West along the Silk Road, where ancient Greek, Roman and history of India Buddhist cultures met and merged. The currency of the Kushan Empire Dynasty (especially in the period of Kushanga) is a true and vivid manifestation of this, as is the Roman currency, where the heads of the kings and the portraits of the Gods are represented, even images of Buddhist Gautama Buddha in history of India have been shown on Kushan Empire's currency. Inscribed next to the statue is an inscription in the Greek alphabet "Bodda" (meaning "Buddha"), which may be the earliest surviving image of the Buddha in the world. Thus, religious culture has a far-reaching influence on currency and the relationship between religion and currency [6].

The national currency of the western regions unearthed and discovered from the Silk Road in Xinjiang, China. For example, Kharas coins, turtle coins, Gao chang auspicious coins, Uyghur Khaganate currency, Sogdiana currency, Turkic people's currency, Mongolian khanate currency and so on, can be a very intuitive reflection of the existence and influence of the east and West in the western region of multiculturalism. The vast territory of China west of Xinjiang and Yumen Pass, formerly known as the Western Regions. The Story of Civilization is an important tectonic plate of Eurasia and plays an important role in the formation of the Eurasian continent. From the point of view of geographical area and historical origin, the western region is the meeting place of multi-ethnic and multi-religious cultures, as well as the melting pot of ancient civilization and culture. Ancient Greek-roman Culture, Islamic culture, history of India Culture and Chinese Oriental Culture Meet, collide and merge here, and then form the rich content, different styles, unique historical culture of the western regions. Indeed, along the Silk Road is the East and West National Migration, war, integration of the stage, but also the spread of various religious beliefs channel. The migration and change of the nationalities in the western regions are closely related to the spread of religious culture. The Silk Road promoted the spread of all kinds of religious culture with the unimpeded commerce and trade. Meanwhile, the race of the nationalities in the west region provided the opportunity for the spread and exchange of the culture in the west region. Therefore, it can be seen that Silk Road currency is the medium and window of national culture and religious culture [7].

3. The user of the Silk Road currency -- the role of the heathens of the western regions

The ancient Silk Road was linked not only by trade in goods, but also by ideas and culture. The most important ideas are God related, and the exchange of wisdom and religion is very active in the region, creating a melting pot of ideas that can learn from each other, influence each other, improve each other, and ultimately be renewed. Any religion does not exist in a vacuum, the need for the audience's faith, but also left the national and language of this carrier. Merchants and settlers brought their religion and culture from foreign soil. The alternation of nationalities, cultures and beliefs on the Silk Road reflects the complexity, diversity and variability of the national cultures along the ancient Silk Road. Along the Silk Road, the merchants of the western regions communicated with each other and also spread the religious culture. Sogdiana, for example, was a powerful Zoroastrian in Hexi Corridor. [8].

Hexi Corridor was the opening window of ancient China and the golden route of Silk Road Trade. The Hu people, mainly from Sogdiana, gathered in Dunhuang, Suzhou, Liangzhou, Lanzhou and other places in Hexi Corridor. The Sogdiana people came to China mainly in the form of overland trade groups, while the Sogdiana people engaged in highly organized business activities. They formed caravans to carry out large-scale trade in goods and precious commodities. And elected the leader of the caravan, Sambo. Experts have studied the word "Sabao", which was originally derived from religious activities and is equivalent to the identity of the organizers of religious ceremonies[9].

In addition to their trade activities, they also organize religious ceremonies. Because of Sogdiana's monopoly on the Land Silk Road Trade, Persian traders mainly traded by sea, so Persian traders mainly gathered in the southeastern coastal areas of China. Like the Sogdiana, the Persians also believed in Zoroastrianism, but differed from Sogdiana in terms of ritual and content. In the cities of Chang'an and Luoyang, where the Persians were concentrated, the people were Zoroastrians. Both the Sogdiana and the Persians were traders on the Silk Road, and there was conflict and friction over competing interests. The Sogdiana monopolized the overland trade to China. Persian Sassanid coins were found in the tombs of the Sogdiana people in Turpan, Xinjiang. The Persian Sassanids could only choose to come to China by sea. And cut off trade with the Sogdiana to the West. In order to gain economic benefits, Sogdiana frequently used Persian silver coins for exchange and trade. As an old Chinese saying, "all the world is bustling for profit, and all the world is bustling for profit. " The Sogdiana and Persians, as merchants from other lands, engaged in their own religious activities as well as trade.[10].

Religion was also a key factor for the commercial success of the Hu people in the western regions. Those practices were similar to the Hunza Valley of northern Pakistan, for example, people from the Sogdiana carved their names on rocks near statues to pray for the safety of the long journey. Apparently, it's a spiritual refuge for people who've been away from home. Thus, it can be seen that the Huren in the western regions are not only professional businessmen who are proficient in trade,

but also devout religious believers. Not only Sogdiana, but also the Persian and Arab merchants of the western regions along the Silk Road shared a common identity. It is true that Silk Road money was used by merchants from all over the Silk Road, and Silk Road Trade was the original driving force for the exchange and circulation of money across regions and long distances. Therefore, the circulation and use of Silk Road currency endowed with various religious thoughts and cultural connotations indirectly spread its religion and culture.

4. Characteristics of the Silk Road currency spreading religious culture

Silk Road currency is the medium and window of spreading religious culture. Through the analysis and study of the Silk Road Currency Patterns, symbols, characters, emblem and other materials can be very intuitive and clear to see the elements of a variety of religious culture. And the style is different, the form is diverse. Silk Road money is a fusion of cultural information, characterized by the following:

First, it has its own style. The Arab currency is the most unique currency in the Silk Road currency, its currency pattern, the pattern, the connotation receives the Islamic Culture Influence, the style is unique. For example, the Arabic currency on the text, mainly to express the purposes and values of Islam, and other currencies are completely different, its own style.

Second, radiation effects. Central Asia and West Asia are the areas of cultural exchange and collision between the East and the West along the Silk Road. For example, the currency of Kushan empire was influenced by Greco-Roman culture and Indian Buddhist culture, which showed a variety of religious and cultural characteristics. In addition, The Central Asian region of Gandhara was influenced by Hellenization, and its currency became the carrier of the Greco-Roman culture.

Third, learn from fusion. The Silk Road is the channel for the spread of religious culture, and the currency used by the countries and regions along the route has also become the carrier of Reference and integration of religious culture. For example, the auspicious Gao chang money unearthed in Turpan, Xinjiang, combines the style of eastern currency with the meaning of the Western Region's minority currency; This type of currency in the western region a lot of money, but also Han Qu body money, turtle body money, Kara-Khanid Khanate currency, etc. drawing on the integration of multi-cultural outfits.

Fourth, Conversational. The Silk Road is the platform of cultural exchange between the East and the West, and the "three platinum products" is the earliest material evidence of cultural exchange between the East and the West in Chinese history. For example, the "three platinum" dragon coins on the Hellenistic inscriptions. According to experts, the Greek inscription on the "Platinum three-grade" dragon coin means "king of Kings" or "king of kings". This was the Western countries and the Western Han dynasty political exchanges, the product of cultural integration.

Conclusion

It is true that Silk Road currency contains a lot of historical and cultural information. Rich in connotation and colorful, it is the medium of spreading religious culture. It is also a window showing the Oriental and Occidental Cultures and the multi-civilization of the western regions along the Silk Road. However, influenced by the Silk Road Trade, it is believed that the currency on the Silk Road was rich in variety and quantity, and the religious and cultural connotation was more abundant in the “The Great Leap” and the Silk Road During the period of turbulent separation and Silk Road closure, the currency circulation on the Silk Road was single in type and quantity, and the cultural connotation of currency tended to be conservative and backward. For example, Alexandre's crusade advanced the Hellenization and Romanization of Central Asia, West Asia, and India, and the westernization of Genghis Khan and the establishment and Islamization of the four khanates of Mongolia promoted the spread of Arab culture. The money in circulation along the Silk Road embodies this change vividly and intuitively provides evidence for our study of history of the cultural exchange through currency.

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