



Imperien Eurasiens
1000 v. – 1000 n. Chr.

im Rahmen des Forschungszentrums ANCIENT WORLDS STUDIES AND ARCHAEOLOGIES (AWOSA)

Einladung zum Vortrag

FROM GREAT KING TO KING OF KINGS: THE DEVELOPMENT OF IMPERIAL TITLES IN THE SELEUCID AND PARTHIAN EMPIRES

The Old Persian imperial titles Great King and King of Kings (*xšâyaθiya vazraka* and *xšâyaθiya xšâyaθiyânâm*) disappeared after the Macedonian conquest of the Achaemenid Empire in 330 BCE. But ca. 125 years later, the title Great King returned in a Greek version: *basileus megas*. That title was adopted around 205 BCE by the Seleucid emperor Antiochos III and several of his successors. Antiochos III moreover was given the title of Megas, 'the Great', even before Alexander of Macedon was awarded that epithet. The adoption of these titles marked a major shift in Seleucid Imperial politics, and can i.a. be associated with the increasing significance of Iranian elites in the empire.



Silver drachm of Mithradates I from Ekbatana, ca. 140 BCE

In the mid-second century BCE, the Parthian ruler Mithradates I (who is also known as 'the Great') adopted the title of *basileus megas*, too. He did so after his conquest of Media and Mesopotamia. The adoption of this title coincided with the introduction of a fundamentally different iconography on Parthian royal coinage. Not long afterwards another Parthian king, Mithradates II, switched to the title King of Kings (*basileus basileôn*) – yet another major break with the immediate imperial past.

In this lecture we will investigate what these titles signified, and how they can be related to political change. We will also look into the question how far these titles referred to earlier imperial dynasties, especially the Achaemenids.

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