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Dolafid Maskukat in Hamadan and Isbahan

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Abstract

The maskukat (coins) of Dolafid were extremely essential for the governors as significant symbols of authority and power. Coins were considered instrumental media vehicle due to their wide usage and exchange among people. This paper addresses Dolafid dynasty coins; specifically, those minted during the period of the two governors Ahmad bin Abdulazziz and his brother Omar bin Abdulazziz. These coins were minted in some eastern Islamic cities including Hamadan and Isbahan, being the main centers for coin minting. The paper examines and analyzes the writings, engravings, and expressions on these coins as well as their weights of these coins; it also studies the link between the writings and the historical events associated with minting of these coins. The paper is divided into two sections and a conclusion. The first section introduces the Dolafid dynasty, the second examines the coins of the two governors, and the conclusion offers a number of remarks.

Keywords: Isbahan, Dolafid, Hamadan, Jibal Region, Maskukat.

Introduction

The Dolafid dynasty belonged to Abi Dalaf Al-Ijli who was Isa bin Idrees bin Ma'qil bin Umair bin Sheikh bin Mu'awiya bin Khuza'i bin Abdulazziz bin Dalaf, known as one of the leaders of Alma'mun (198-218 H/ 813-833 AD), and then later of the caliph Almu'tasim (218-227 H/ 833-841 AD).

This originally Arabic dynasty called Al-Ijlyin, who settled in Karj which is located between Hamadan and Isbahan, established a semi-autonomous governance in these two cities. Abu Dalaf and Isa bin Mahan (a military leader of caliph Alm'mun, 193-198 H/ 808-813 AD) went together to fight against Tahir bin Alhussain (a military leader of caliph Alm'mun, 198-218 H/ 813-833 AD). Isa was killed, and Abu Dalaf went back to Hamadan. Therefore, Tahir sent out to him calling him to give allegiance to Alma'mun, but he declined and said: (I am bounded by allegiance which I have no way to abandon. But I will remain in my place and I will be with none of the two parties if you stay away from me. Tahir responded to that and Abu Dalaf settled down in Karj).

When the caliph Alma'mun advanced to the city of Ray, he sent out to Abu Dalaf who came over to him. The caliph Alma'mun was generous to Abu Dalaf; he granted him security and high status. Abu Dalaf later died in Baghdad (255-260 H/ 839-873 AD) and his son Abdulazziz succeeded him (248-251 H/ 862-865 AD). During the times of *fitna* (turmoil) against the caliph Al-Musta'in bi-'llāh, Abdulazziz kept loyalty to the caliph Al-Musta'in bi-'llāh who appointed him for the governance of Isbahan and Hamadan. Quickly however, he came into dispute with

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1186 *Dolafid Maskukat in Hamadan and Isbahan*

the caliph Almutaz Bellah (251-255 H/ 865-868 AD) who sent Musa bin Bugha Alkabeer to fight him in (253 H/ 867 AD). Abdulazziz bin Abi Dalaf confronted him with twenty thousand fighters at the outskirts of Hamadan, but he was defeated, and his followers were killed. Then Musa came after him to the Karj and took over the city in the aftermath of a battle between the two sides. Abdulazziz escaped to Nahavand Castle and took it as a shelter till his death (260 H/ 873 AD):

Dalaf succeeded his father Abdulazziz (260-265 H/ 873-878 AD), but Alqassim bin Muhara revolted, killed him, and took over Isbahan (265 H/ 878 AD). Then, Dalaf's followers took revenge, killed Alqassim and handed the rule to Dalaf's brother, Ahmad bin Abdulaziz (281-285 H/ 894-898 AD) who occupied Isbahan, Nahavand, Karj, and Hamadan. His rule ended in (285 H/ 898 AD) and with that this dynasty governance came to an end. So, the Abbasid caliphate appointed other governors.

Silver and mint coins were minted during the era of the Dolafid dynasty in Hamadan and Isbahan during the reign of Ahmad bin Abdulazziz and his brother Omar bin Abdulazziz.

Section two: Dinar and Dirham of prince Ahmad bin Abdulazziz and his brother Omar bin Abdulazziz bin abi Dalaf.

First: Dinar and Dirham of prince Ahmad bin Abdulazziz (265-280 H/ 878-893 AD)

Ahmad bin Abdulazziz is known as abu Alabbas Ahmad bin Abdulazziz bin abi Dalaf; he became the governor of Isbahan in (265 H/ 878 AD). He minted silver coins in (271 H/ 884 AD) and inscribed the following texts and titles: weigh (3,30 gr), diameter (24 mm) (see figure (1).



Obverse Center: There is no deity except the one) God alone He has no equal Abu Ahmad Alnassir lideen Allah Ahmad bin Abdulazziz	Reverse Center: To God Muhammed The Messenger Of God almu'tamid ala Allah (dependent on God)
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<p>Ahmad bin Abdulazziz Marginal Legend: In the Name of God. This dirham was struck in Isbahan in the year seventy-one and two hundred. To God is the will before and after and on that day the believers shall rejoice in God's victory</p>	<p>of the two ministries Margin: Muhammad is the messenger of God. He sent him with guidance and the true religion to reveal it to all religions even if the polytheists abhor it.</p>
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This type of darahim (plural of dirham) carried the inscription of the name abi Ahmad Alnassir li deen Allah and his title. He was abu Ahamd Muwaffaq bin Ja'far almutawakil a'la Allah, brother of the caliph Almu'tamid ala Allah (dependent on God) who used to have an absolute power of the caliphate and was entitled Alnassir li deen Allah (supporter of God religion) after defeating the movement of Sahib Al-zanj (270 H/ 883 AD). During that period, Abbasid caliphate witnessed many separatists' movements including that of Ahmad bin Tulun in Egypt and Damascus, and autonomy of Amrou bin Laith in Khorasan. One of the most prominent movements was that of Al-zanj in Basrah; it was successfully suppressed by Almuwaffaq Talha which helped to strengthen the Abbasid caliphate governance. Therefore, he used the title Alnassir li deen Allah on the coins. The caliph Almu'tamid ala Allah granted the title Alnassir li deen Allah to his brother Almuwaffaq in (261 H/ 874 AD) when he pledged allegiance after his son Ja'far. Almuwaffaq however, did not use this title on the minted coin before (270 H/ 833 AD). The title thi alwazzaratain (of the two ministries) was mainly assigned to the minister Saaid bin Mukhalad. This title was granted by Almuwaffaq Talha during the time of caliph Almu'tamid ala Allah in reference to holding the ministry during the reign of the two caliphs Almu'tamid ala Allah and Almuwaffaq. Saaid bin Mukhalad held the ministerial position in (265 H/ 878 AD) and died in (276 H/ 889 AD).

The name of Ahmad bin Abdulazziz and the title Sa'id bin Mukhalad were inscribed on these darahim in the after their victory against Amro ibn Al-layth Al-Saffari. Historic resources state that Sa'id bin Mukhalad moved his troops to fight the Saffarin. A war occurred between the caliph's army led by Ahmad bin abi Dalaf and Omar's army which ended with the defeat of Amro ibn Al-layth (271 H/ 884 AD).

The coins he minted in (272 H/ 885 AD) had the same shape, phrases, titles and scriptures as the ones minted in (271 H/ 884 AD). Prince Ahmad bin Abdulazziz also minted silver coins in Isbahan (273 H/ 886 AD). This type of coins uniquely inscribed Ahmad bin almuwaffaq billah's name on the back. The reason for inscribing the name of prince almuwaffaq billah was due to his vital role and participation along with his father Almuwaffaq Talha in defeating Sahib Al-zanj. Ahmad bin almuwaffaq billah inscribed his name on the coin because of his role and status in the Abbasid Caliphate which brought about his succession following the death of his father in (278 H/ 891 AD). Then the caliph almu'tamid ala Allah (256-279 H/ 869-892 AD) deposed his son Jaffar and gave allegiance to Abi Al-abbas, granting him the title al-Mu'taqid bi-llāh (seeking support in God) The design of these coins was as follows : weigh (3,78 gr), diameter (23,5 mm) (see figure 2):



<p>Obverse Center: There is no deity except the one) God alone He has no equal Alnassir lideen Allah almuwaffaq billah Ahmad bin Abdulazziz Internal Margin: In the Name of God. This dirham was struck in Isbahan in the year seventy-three and two hundred. Internal Margin: To God is the will before and after and on that day the believers shall rejoice in God's victory</p>	<p>Reverse Center: To God Muhammed The Messenger Of God almu'tamid ala Allah Ahmad bin almuwaffaq billah Margin: Muhammad is the messenger of God. He sent him with guidance and the true religion to reveal it to all religions even if the polytheists abhor it.</p>
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These types of coins were dated (274 H/ 887 AD). The prince Ahmad bin Abdulazziz minted golden dananir in Isbahan in (272 H/ 885 AD) which had the same pattern as the darahim, the only difference was inscribing the name of prince Ahmad bin Abdulazziz on the two centric sides from the right and left. The phrase power and overall were also inscribed on the right and left sides. The name Allah (God) was inscribed on the top back side to complete the Quranic text ﷻ ﷻ ﷻ ﷻ. This same quote appeared on the coins of the caliph Almu'tamid ala Allah (256-279 H/ 869-892 AD) following his victory against the Zanj movement which erupted in the south of Iraq. The pattern of these coins came in this way (figure 3)



<p>Obverse</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ahmad bin Abd</p> <p style="text-align: center;">overall</p> <p>Center: There is no deity except the one) God alone He has no equal Alnassir lideen Allah almuwaffaq billah Alazziz Internal Margin: In the Name of God. This dirham was struck in Isbahan in the year seventy-two and two hundred. Internal Margin: To God is the will before and after and on that day the believers shall rejoice in God's victory</p>	<p>Reverse</p> <p style="text-align: center;">power</p> <p>Center: To God Muhammed The Messenger Of God almu'tamid ala Allah Ahmad bin almuwaffaq billah Margin: Muhammad is the messenger of God. He sent him with guidance and the true religion to reveal it to all religions even if the polytheists abhor it.</p>
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This type of golden coins was first minted by the prince Ahmad bin Abdulazziz bin Dalaf in Hamadan (272 H/ 885 AD). They included inscriptions on the right and left side and in the front and back. In (275 H/ 888 AD), prince Ahmad minted another type of golden dananeer at the house of minting in Hamadan which included removing the name Ahmad bin Abdulazziz from the right, left and the center of front side. Also, the two words power and overall were removed from the center of the backside. The name Ahmad bin Abdulazziz was inscribed at the lower center of the backside. Similar to the previous types, it included the monolithic statement (shahada), the title Alnassir lideen Allah and almuwaffaq billah (Talha) who is a brother of almu'tamid bi Allah. The inscriptions were as follow:

<p>Obverse</p> <p>Center: There is no deity except the one) God alone He has no equal Alnassir lideen Allah</p>	<p>Reverse</p> <p>Center: To God Muhammed The Messenger Of God</p>
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almuwaffaq billah Internal Margin: In the Name of God. This dirham was struck in Isbahan in the year seventy-three and two hundred. Internal Margin: To God is the will before and after and on that day the believers shall rejoice in God's victory	almu'tamid ala Allah Ahmad bin Abdulazziz Margin: Muhammad is the messenger of God. He sent him with guidance and the true religion to reveal it to all religions even if the polytheists abhor it.
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Second: Dananeer and Darahim of the prince Omar bin Abdulazziz bin abi Dalaf (281-284 H/ 894-897 AD).

Prince Omar came to power after the death of his brother Ahmad bin Abdulazziz (281 H/ 894 AD). When the caliph Almu'tadid billah (279-289 H/ 892-901 AD) advanced towards Jibal region in (28 H/ 894 AD), Omar bin Abdulazziz assigned bin abi Dalaf to Isbahan, Nahavand, and Karj and then came back to Baghdad.

In (283 H/ 896 AD), a dispute erupted between prince Omar bin Abdulazziz and the caliph Almu'tadid billah. The latter dispatched his minister Ubaid Allah bin Sulaiman to fight Omar bin Abdulazziz. When he arrived to Jibal region, Omar pleaded the minster for safety. The minster granted him safety, gifted him, and took him to the caliph Almu'tadid who also gifted him and treated him well. He kept him as governor of Isbahan and Hamadan till his death (283 H/ 896 AD).

The coins minted by prince Omar bin Abdulazziz were silver darahim and golden dananeer at the minting house in Isbahan and Hamadan. He started to mint those coins immediately after coming to power as governor of Isbahan. Coins were sign of power and governance. Those minted in Isbahan included the silver darahim dated (281 H/ 894 AD) which included the following phrases 4: weight (3,04 gr), diameter (24 mm) (figure 4)

⁴ Tübingen University Collection in Germany, storage number: EA2C2. In possession of the assistant teacher Ahmad Dusuqi/ College of Archeology/Cairo.



<p>Obverse Center: There is no deity except the one) God alone He has no equal Omar bin Abdulazziz Internal Margin: In the Name of God. This dirham was struck in Isbahan in the year eighty-one and two hundred. External Margin: To God is the will before and after and on that day the believers shall rejoice in God's victory</p>	<p>Reverse Center: To God Muhammed The Messenger Of God almu'tamid ala Allah Margin: Muhammad is the messenger of God. He sent him with guidance and the true religion to reveal it to all religions even if the polytheists abhor it.</p>
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The second type minted in Isbahan (282 H/ 895 AD) was quite similar to the overall shape of the first. Prince Omar bin Abdulazziz minted the golden dananeer in Hamadan (281 H/ 894 AD) following his appointment as governor by caliph Almu'tadid billah in that year. The following inscriptions were found on the coins: weight (3,94 gr), diameter (22 mm) (figure 5)



<p>Obverse Center: There is no deity except the one) God alone He has no equal Omar bin Abdulazziz Internal Margin: In the Name of God. This dirham was struck in Isbahan in the year eighty-one and two hundred. External Margin: To God is the will before and after and on that day the believers shall rejoice in God's victory</p>	<p>Reverse Center: To God Muhammed The Messenger Of God almu'tamid ala Allah Margin: Muhammad is the messenger of God. He sent him with guidance and the true religion to reveal it to all religions even if the polytheists abhor it.</p>
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Examining the dananeer of Omar bin Abdulazziz and Ahmad bin Abdulazziz reveals a decrease in weight of the former's which is attributed to the wars and conflicts prevailing during that time.

Conclusion

Studying the Maskukat of the Dolafid's dynasty in some cities of jibal region shows that the caliphs quoted verses of the Quran that reflect their right in governance. These maskukat carries Abbasid caliphates titles to indicate subordination of the Dolafid. The Maskukat of Dolafid's dynasty in particular and Islamic coins in general during the reign of Almu'tamid ala Allah (256-279 H/ 869-892 AD), show the first inscription on both sides of the coins minted in Isbahan. The masukat are indicative of the Dolafid dynasty's role in military and political events and turbulences during their reign of Isbahan and Hamadan. The maskukat of Dolafid minted in Isbahan and Hamadan provide an insight about their foreign relations with the Abbasid caliphate and the Samanid.

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