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Author(s): Richard Burn
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Coins of the Īlkhānīs of Persia

By RICHARD BURN

(PLATE X)

IN 1930 the joint archæological expedition of Oxford University and the Field Museum, Chicago, examined the extensive ruins now known as Abū Sudaira, three miles south-east of the central mound at Kish. Mr. Reitlinger excavated this site at his own expense. A large city was discovered, which, although it contained no traces of Accadian culture, is of interest as being in the style of the Īlkhānī rulers of Persia and Mesopotamia. This attribution is entirely confirmed by the coins found on the site, which have been placed in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. They number altogether 100 (and some fragments), of which two are silver and the rest copper. Unfortunately they are in a bad state of preservation, and only about a third can be ascribed to definite rulers with some certainty. The earliest is (1) a small copper coin of the Khalīfas (wt. 32 grains, ·75″), but neither the mint nor the date can be read. Next in order is (2) a copper coin which Mr. Thorburn, who has examined part of the find, suggests may be a coin of the Seljūq ruler Kaiqubād (A.H. 616–634) (wt. 33 grains, ·85″), and the attribution, though not certain, is approximately correct so far as period is concerned.

The remaining coins which are capable of identification belong to the Īlkhānī rulers of Persia and 'Irāq. They may be classified as in the table on p. 832.

All the rulers of the regular line are represented except Gaikhātū (690–4), and Arpā and Mūsā (736). In addition there are coins of Muḥammad Khān and Sulaimān Khān, two of the later puppets set up by rival generals.

The history of the Mongol rulers of Persia and 'Irāq is well-known. In the middle of the twelfth century some of their troops had been called in by the ruler of Khwārazm to help in his rebellion against Sanjar, the last great Seljūq

king, but the dynasty of Khwārazm was short-lived and fell before the savage raids of its former helpers. In the first quarter of the thirteenth century Chingiz Khān devastated northern Persia. It was his grandson Hūlāgū Khān who returned south of the Oxus in 1256 and pursued his career of conquest and devastation through Persia and 'Irāq, sacking Baghdād and putting to death the Caliph, and sustaining no check till 1260, when he was defeated in Syria by the Mamelukes of Egypt.

Date of reign A.H.		℞	Æ
654	Hūlāgū		1
663	Abāqā [1]		4
680	Aḥmad	1	
683-690	Arghūn		2
694	Bāīdū		1
694	Ghāzān Maḥmūd		2
703	Ūljāītū		7
716	Abū Sa'īd		10
736	Muḥammad Khān	1	1
740	Sulaimān Khān		1
	Doubtful		4
		2	33

The dynasty of Īlkhānīs thus founded acknowledged the supremacy of the great Khān and lasted nearly 100 years before rival generals began to set up puppet rulers and divide the land. Though the Mongols were pagan, Chingiz Khān had been tolerant of both Christianity and Islam, and the coins of these rulers even before Aḥmad, third of the line, became a Muslim, bear the *kalimā*. And although their massacres were almost incredibly brutal, they selected from the survivors men of talent as their ministers and patronized learning in all its existing branches. Their coins are thus not without

[1] Names are transliterated from the coin inscriptions; literary forms sometimes vary.

taste, and except for those which bear inscriptions in Mongol character, are usually inscribed in Arabic. They present a great variety of types, and the influence of the Persian ministers who served the Ilkhānīs is marked by the Shi'a formulas used.

In a few years after the death of Abu Sa'īd, five minor dynasties ruled in Persia and 'Irāq till thirty years later Tīmūr swept all away.

As all the later coins which can be deciphered belong to the Ilkhānīs, it is reasonable to suppose that they were deposited soon after the latest dates of the rulers whose names are found on them. Muḥammad Khān was killed in 738, and Sulaimān, who married Sātī Beg, usurped power in 740. The find was thus probably buried between 1340 and 1350.

Ten of the coins show the place of mintage. Five were struck at Baghdād, three at Ḥilla, one at Sulṭānia, and one at Sulṭānia or Shīrāz. From the fact that most of these coins were struck in the neighbourhood it may be inferred that Abū Sudaira was a place of small importance with little trade.

While the coins add nothing to the political history of the dynasty, they are valuable in extending the knowledge of its numismatic importance. The silver coin of Aḥmad, with Mongol inscription, is not represented in the British Museum, which also has no copper coins from the Baghdād mint of Hulāgū, Bāidū, and Abū Sa'īd. The same mint is found here on the silver coin of Muḥammad Khān resembling B.M.C. 280, the mint name on which is obscure. While the Persian title of *pādishāh* or *bādshāh* was hitherto known only on coins of Abāqā and Arghūn, it now appears to have been borne by Ghāzān Maḥmūd also. Other matters are noted in the descriptions of the coins which follow.

Weights have been shown in grains and size in decimals of an inch. The coins of this series in the British Museum have not been weighed, and most specimens in this find are in such poor condition that it is not safe to base on them the scheme adopted by these rulers.

3. Hūlāgū
654–663

Baghdād. Date doubtful.

. . . . . Kalima in pentagon.
هولا گو الخان Margin illegible.
بغداد
. . . . .
. . . . . Æ. Wt. 59. ·85.
Margin illegible.

The last two lines on the obverse may read ست و خمسين و ست مايه, but this is doubtful. The coins differ from B.M.C. No. 38.

4–7. Abāqā
663–680

Date and mint illegible. Rectangular.

بادشاه محمد
عالم ايلخان رسول الله
الا عظم . . . . .
اباقا خلد Margin ?
Margin ? Rect. Æ. Wt. 76. ·8 × ·7.
69. ·8 × ·8.
62. ·75 × ·75.
60. ·8 × ·75.

Three similar coins are almost defaced, but one has صلى الله عليه below the Kalima. Cf. B.M.C. No. 58. A fourth (wt. 65, ·9) has [قاا]ن and باد. Coins of a rectangular shape are not mentioned in B.M.C., but No. 27 (*b*), p. 25, of the Constantinople Catalogue (A.H. 1318) is of this form.

8. AḤMAD

680–3

In Mongol characters—
Khaghana
(? d)arugha
Aḥmadu
deledkeguluk
sen.
Margin illegible.

الله
لا اله الا
الله محمد
رسول الله
وسلمه

Margin illegible.
Æ. Wt. 32. ·9.

This silver coin of Aḥmad, first read by Mr. Thorburn, appears to be unique. [Pl. X, 8.]

9. ARGHŪN

No mint or date.

In Mongol letters—
Khaganu
darugha
Arghunu
deledkeguluk
ارغون
Margin ?

الله
لا اله الا
الله محمد
رسول الله
و سلمه

Æ. Wt. 67½. ·9.
[Pl. X, obverse.]

The inscription on obverse is identical with that of a number of silver coins (cf. B.M.C. 60), but the name ارغون does not appear in Arabic letters in the only copper coin with Mongol inscription in the B.M. (No. 80).

10

Mongol inscription.

? Kalima in centre.
Margin illegible.
Æ. Wt. 58. ·9.

11. Bāīdū

694

Mint Baghdād. Date ?

In Mongol characters—
Khaganu
darugha (minister)
Baduin
deledkeguluk

بايدو

Kalima in circle.
Margin. . . . بغداد . . .
Æ. Wt. 57. ·85. [Pl. X, 11.]

Cf. B.M. 88*a*, which has no mint.

12–13. Ghāzān Maḥmūd

694–703

Mint and date illegible.

بادشاه غازن (?)
السلطان الا عظم
غزان محمود

Kalima (? in pentagon).
Right صلى
Above الله
Left عليه
Below وسلمه

Two specimens. Æ. Wt. 61, 60. ·8, ·9. [Pl. X, 13.]

The words الله المنه, which appear on most of the copper coins of Ghāzān Maḥmūd in B.M.C., are not visible. The title بادشاه, which is clear, is used there only on coins of Abāghā, but Tiesenhausen notes that it also occurs on a coin of Arghūn (Collection of General Komaroff, p. 27), and No. 82 (p. 59), Constantinople catalogue, records it on a coin of Ghāzān Maḥmūd. The name appears to read غزان instead of غازان.

14. ŪLJĀĪTŪ

703–716

Mint, Shīrāz or Sulṭāniya.

In frame of uncertain shape.

ملكه ؟
اولجايتو
. . . . .
خلد الله

Margin illegible.

In circle.

. . . . .
عد
ليه
. . . . .

Margin illegible.

Æ. Wt. 26½. ·8.

Below the word عدليه on reverse is the letter س or ش followed by other letters, which may be part of Sulṭāniya or Shīrāz. The type differs from B.M. 165 and 170.

15

Mint and date illegible.

In octagon with curved sides.

. . . . .
. . . . .
غياث الدنيا . . .
والدين اولجايتو سلطا
خلد الله ملكه

Kalima and below.

على ولى الله

Æ. Wt. 51. ·9.

Cf. B.M.C. Add. 156*p*, p. 106.

16

Mint and date illegible.

In circle surrounded by dots.

اولجايتو
محمد السلطان (?)

Lion passant to right.

In square.

لا اله الا
الله محمد
رسول الله

Margin illegible.

Æ. Wt. 38. ·9.

17

Mint and date illegible.

اولجايتو س(؟)

(؟) محمد خلد الله ملكه

Kalima in square.
Margin illegible.

Lion to left. Setting sun above.

Cf. B.M. 162.

Æ. Wt. 23. ·8.

18

No mint or date.

In small circle, lion passant to left.

Margin (read from outside) in bold letters . . . خدا بنده . . .

Not in B.M.

In small circle, sun radiate.
Margin as on obverse

. . . ابو بكر عمر . . .

Æ. Wt. 29. ·75. [Pl. X, 18.]

19

In quatrefoil.

السلطا

الاعظم غياث الدنيا

والدين . . .

. . . . . .

Margin ?

? Kalima in area.
Margin ?

Æ. Wt. 31. ·9.

Mr. Thorburn suggests that the third line contains the name اولجايتو.

20

Mint and date illegible.

In quatrefoil.

. . . . . .

. . . اولجايتو

. . . خلد ملكه

Kalima in square.

Sun radiate.
Margin ?

Æ. Wt. 29. ·8.

Mr. Thorburn reads the obverse doubtfully as ابو معيد, but the name اولجايتو seems clear. The first word of the third line may be سلطان.

21. Abū Sa'īd

716–736

Baghdād, [7]3(?)1.

In waved lozenge.

. . . . . .
الا عظم . . .
سلطان . . .
بغداد
ضرب
Margin . . . احد و ثلثين . . .

Illegible.

Æ. Wt. 57. ·95. [Pl. X, 21, obverse.]

Not in B.M. catalogue.

22

Baghdād. No date.

Figure of bird or animal under arch.

Margin.

ضرب بغداد السلطان
الا (عظم ؟) ابو سعيد . . .

Kalima in circle.

سنه
Above . . . حـ
Right و سلمه

Æ. Wt. 46. 1.

This coin has probably been double struck, but the original impression cannot be deciphered.

23–5

Mint Ḥilla (?). Date (?).

In octagon

ضرب

السلطان الاعظم[1]

ابو سعيد بهادر

خان خلد ملكه

حله

Margin ?

Solomon's seal.

In centre الله

على ولى

In angles Kalima.

Æ. Wt. 48. ·95.
37. ·9.
44. ·9.

[Pl. X, 23.]

26

Mint ? Date 732 (?1).

In small circle. Inscription in two lines, very doubtful. The second line begins with . . . ح, which might stand for . . . ص in ضرب, in which case the first line would be a mint name, همدان or بغداد, or it may be . . . خ, the initial letter of خان, and the first line would be ابو سعيد.

In curved pentagon

الله

محمد

رسول

Margin

. . . ابو بكر و عمرو . . .

Margin . . . سنه اثنين و ثلثين و سبعمايه.

Æ. Wt. 18. ·8.

Mr. Thorburn reads احدى for اثنين and there is ground for either reading.

[1] This line is clear on one coin. Ḥilla is known as a silver and copper mint of Uljāītū, but is new for Abū Sa'īd.

27

Mint ? Date 7 x x.

In wavy circle.

السلطان

ابو سعيد

Below lion passant to right.

Kalima in square.

Above ضرب.

Right وسبعميه

Æ. Wt. 31. ·9.

In B.M.C. the only copper coins of Abū Sa'īd with a lion (Nos. 264–5) show lion to left, not to right.

28

No mint. Date 7 x x.

السلطان

ابو سعيد

Lion to right. Star below.

Kalima in square.

Above ضرب.

Right سبعميه

Æ. Wt. 46. ·9.

[Pl. X, 28.]

Not in B.M.C.

29

. . . . . [1]

ابو سعيد

. . . . . .

الله

رسول محمد

?

Margin illegible.

Æ. Wt. 26. ·7.

30

No mint or date.

In ornamented octagon.

السلطان

ابو سعيد

خلد ملكه

Kalima in square within outer circle.

In upper segment ابو بكر.

Æ. Wt. 43. ·85.

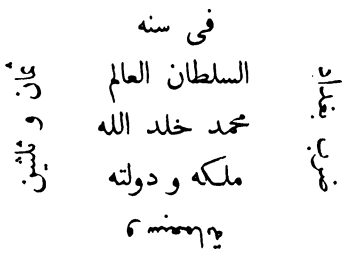
A broken coin. Reading of obverse uncertain, but the coin resembles B.M. 274.

[1] Mr. Thorburn suggests السلطان الا عظم. The type appears to be unpublished.

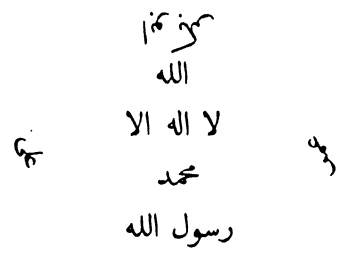
31. Muḥammad Khān
736–8

Baghdād. 738.

In scalloped border with six loops, enclosed in circle, surrounded by dots.



In scalloped border without loops, in circle, surrounded by dots.



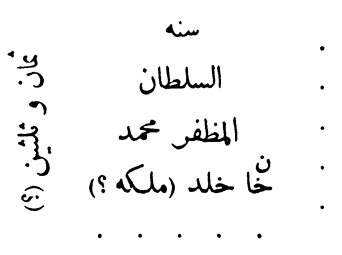
Æ. Wt. 20½. ·75. [Pl. X.]

Cf. B.M. 280, the mint on which, however, is not legible.

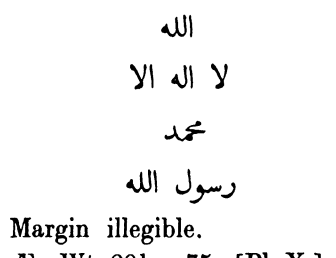
32

Mint illegible. (7)38.

In circle of dots.



In small circle.



Margin illegible.

Æ. Wt. 28½. ·75. [Pl. X.]

There is no coin resembling this in B.M.C., and the *laqab* المظفر is not found on coins in the B.M., which present only العالم and العادل for Muhammad Khan.

33. Sulaimān Khān

743–4

In circle سلطان سليمان

Margin ?

In small circle. Bird. (? Peacock to right.)

Margin . . . محمد رسول . . .

Æ. Wt. 18½. ·6. [Pl. X.]

Not in B.M.

34. Anonymous

Mint Sulṭāniya. No date.

In circle, surrounded by dots, enclosed in double plain circle with another circle of dots outside.

سلط

انيه

Kalima in Kūfī.

Æ. Wt. 5. ·75. [Pl. X, 34.]

There is no coin like this in B.M.C. It has no trace of the name of a king or date. Kūfī letters are found on coins of Abū Sa'īd, cf. B.M.C. No. 173.

35. ?

No mint. Date [6]87 [? 9].

In circle: Goose to left with head turned back over body.

Margin و (or تسع) سبع . . .

. . . عما(ين)

Illegible.

Æ. Wt. 18. ·55. [Pl. X, 35, obv.]

36. ?

Kalima.
Margin illegible.

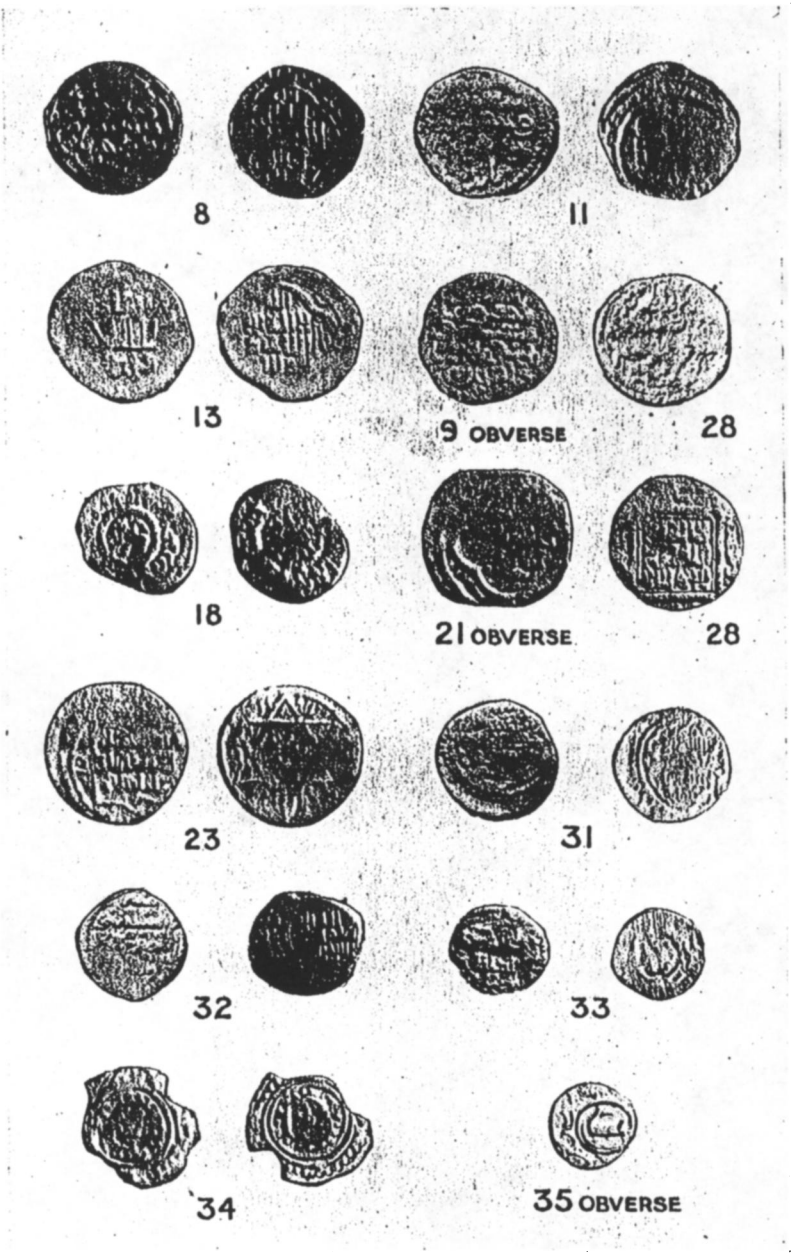
Kalima.
Margin illegible.
Æ. Wt. 35. ·9.

The coin has the appearance of being double struck.

37. ?

Centre illegible.
Margin بغداد

Centre illegible.
Margin ميه . . .
Æ. A quarter of a coin.



[*To face p.* 844.