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SĀMĀNID DIRHAMS FROM RĀŠT

In the Oriental part of the Early Medieval hoard from Obra Nowa¹, among the coins from Sāmānid dynasty, there occurred a fragment of a dirham struck in Rāšt in the year 360 AH (photo 2). This is the third assemblage of coins found in Poland, after Zalesie² (2 specimens, photos 1 and 3) and Dzierznica II³ (3 specimens, photos 4–6), to contain a fragment of a dirham with the name of this mint. In the numismatic

¹ A monograph on the Oriental part of the Obra Nowa is in preparation.

² A. Kmietowicz and W. Kubiak, *Wczesnośredniowieczny skarb srebrny z Zalesia powiat Słupca*, Vol. I: *Monety arabskie* (Wrocław 1969), p. 98, no. 222, and p. 100, no. 225.

³ I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to Ms. A. Kmietowicz for making available to me the coins and their descriptions from the Dzierznica II hoard. (A catalogue of the coins from Dzierznica II is being prepared by Ms. Kmietowicz.) I am also grateful to Ms. K. Schubert and Mr. J. Bodzek for supplying photographs of the coins.

literature we find a description in Frehn⁴ of five specimens from 357, 360, 361, 364, and 366 AH, which were subsequently listed by Tiezengauzen⁵. Four specimens listed by Markov⁶ from the years 359, 361, and 364 AH are found in the Hermitage; one, struck in 364 and described by Østrup⁷, is among the holdings of the Copenhagen Museum; one specimen, from the year 360 AH, is listed by O. Blau in the collection of the museum in Odessa⁸; and one specimen from the year 366 AH possesses the British Museum⁹. Rāšt dirhams are not catalogued, however, in Swedish hoards¹⁰.

Arab sources locate the city of Rāšt in the province of the same name, to the east of Mā warā' al-Nahr (Transoxiana)¹¹. According to Le Strange¹², the Rāšt district was found in the upper basin of the Waḥṣāb River (a tributary of the Amu Daria): *The Waḥṣāb River (Waḥṣ) flows out of Turkish lands and through Pāmīr (Fāmīr), Rāšt, and Kumīd*¹³. The district or province of Rāšt, also known as Qarātīgīn¹⁴, stretched between two mountains, and as a border region of Islam became a gateway for the Turks, who along this route made their incursions into the Caliphate¹⁵. As a result, as early as the 8th century the Chorasān viceroy al-Faḍl ibn Yahyā ibn Ḥālid ibn Barmak fortified the city, surrounding it with walls¹⁶. The

⁴ C. M. Frehn, *Recensio numorum Muhammedanorum* (Petropoli 1826), p. 581, no. 291b; p. 583, no. 317a; p. 584, no. 321a; and p. 585, no. 322d.

⁵ V. V. Tiezengauzen, *O samanidskikh monetakh*, Zapiski Imperatorskago Arkheologicheskago Obshchestva, Vol. 6 (St. Petersburg 1853), pp. 219–220, 224–26, 228.

⁶ A. Markov, *Inventarnyy Katalog Musulmanskikh Monet Imperatorskago Ermitazha* (St. Petersburg 1896), p. 158, no. 1063; p. 159, nos. 1075–1076; p. 160, no. 1107.

⁷ J. Østrup, *Catalogue des monnaies arabes et turques du Cabinet Royal des Médailles du Musée National de Copenhague* (Copenhagen 1938), pp. 101–102, no. 1162.

⁸ O. Blau, *Die orientalischen Münzen des Museums der kaiserlichen historisch-archäologischen Gesellschaft zu Odessa* (Odessa 1876), p. 14, no. 177.

⁹ I am very grateful to Venetia Porter from the British Museum for particulars.

¹⁰ *Corpus Nummorum Saeculorum IX–XI qui in Suecia reperti sunt* (Stockholm 1975–1987).

¹¹ Al-Iṣṭaḥrī, *Kitāb masālik al-mamālik*, BGA Vol. II, ed. M. J. de Goeje (Leyden 1927), p. 286.

¹² G. Le Strange, *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate* (London 1966), p. 439.

¹³ V. V. Barthold, *Sochinienya*, Vol. I (Moscow 1963), p. 120.

¹⁴ V. Barthold, *Qaratigīn*, in *Encyclopédie de l'Islam*, Vol. IV, new edition (Leiden–Paris 1976), pp. 656–57.

¹⁵ Ibn Ḥurraḍādhbih, in *Hudūd al-'Ālam, The Regions of the World: A Persian Geography, 372 AH – 982 AD, translated and explained by V. Minorsky* (London 1937), p. 361.

¹⁶ Yāqūt, *Muḡam al-buldān*, Vol. II, ed. F. Wüstenfeld (Leipzig 1924), p. 733.

citadel (*al-qalʿa*) of Rāšt, the principal city of the province, identified with today's Garm in Tajikistan¹⁷, was about 80 farsaḥs¹⁸ from Tirmid¹⁹. Like all mountainous districts, Rāšt/Qarātigīn had its own rulers, who were called *Dihqān-i Rāšt*²⁰.

The Rāšt dirhams were struck in the years 357–368 AH (AD 967/8–978/9)²¹, i.e. during the reigns of two Sāmānid amīrs, Maṣṣūr ibn Nūḥ (350–366 AH = AD 961–976) and Nūḥ ibn Maṣṣūr (366–387 AH = AD 976–997)²². It is an interesting fact that this mint was active for only eleven years, and was not used by other dynasties. The arrangement of inscriptions on the obverse and reverse of the Rāšt dirhams is as follows^{23, 24}:

1. Maṣṣūr ibn Nūḥ, Rāšt, 35[7–9] = 967/68–969/70 (Photo 1)

Obverse

الدهقن
لا اله الا
الله وحده
لا شريك له
جعفر بن علي

Reverse

الله
محمد
رسول الله
المطيع لله
منصور بن نوح

Linear border

Inner margin:

بسم الله صرب [هذا ال] درهم
براشت [سنة ...] خمسين و ثلثمائة

Outer margin: Qur'ān XXX; 4–5: **الله الامر**

من قبل ...

Linear border

Margin: Qur'ān IX; 33: ... **محمد رسول الله**

¹⁷ Barthold, EI, Vol. IV, p. 656.

¹⁸ W. Hinz, *Islamische Masse und Gewichte*, Handbuch der Orientalistik, Heft I (Leiden 1955), p. 62. According to Hinz, one farsaḥ = 6 km.

¹⁹ Yāqūt, p. 733.

²⁰ *Hudūd al-Ālam*, pp. 120, 361.

²¹ E. von Zambaur, *Die Münzprägungen des Islams zeitlich und örtlich geordnet*, Vol. I (Wiesbaden 1968), p. 124.

²² E. de Zambaur, *Manuel de Généalogie et de Chronologie pour l'histoire de l'Islam*, Première Partie (Hanover 1927), p. 202.

²³ Cf. *Zalesie I*, p. 98, no. 222.

²⁴ Cf. Photos 3–6. Markov describes a dirham from Rāšt struck in 359, which above the kalimah on the obverse contains the word 'Alī, while under the kalimah there are two dots. Cf. Markov, p. 158, no. 1063.

2. Manṣūr ibn Nūḥ, Rāšt, 360 AH = 970/71 AD (Photo 2)

Obverse

على
آله الآ
الله وحده
آريك له

Reverse

لله
محمد
رسول الله
المطيع لله
منصور
بن نوح

Linear border

Inner margin:

بسم الله ضرب هذا الدرهم
براشت سنة ستين و ثلثمائة

Margin: obliterated

Outer margin: obliterated

Additional inscriptions, not encountered on other Sāmānid dirhams, appear in the field of the obverse, above and below the kalimah. On the obverse of dirham no. 1 there occurs the title *al-dihqān* (?) and *Ġa'far ibn 'Alī* (?). This is probably the name of the viceroy ruling at this time in Rāšt in the name of the Sāmānids²⁵. The only amīr of Rāšt known from sources is *Ġa'far ibn Šamāniqū* (mentioned by Gardīzī) who ruled this province in the year 337 AH = AD 948/49, i. e. during the reign of Nūḥ ibn Naṣr (331–343 AH = AD 942/3–954)²⁶. After the year 359 AH (AD 969/70), the inscription *'Alī* appears on the obverse, above the kalimah (dirham no. 2). According to Tiezengauzen²⁷, this is the name of the viceroy of the district of Badaḥšān, which included the city of Rāšt. It is also a likely hypothesis that the word *'Alī* is not the name of the governor of Rāšt, but rather a fragment of the Shi'ite formula *'Alī walī Allāh*, which does not appear on the Sāmānid dirhams, while it does occur on the Bāvendid coins²⁸.

²⁵ Tiezengauzen, pp. 219–220; *Zalesie I*, p. 290.

²⁶ Cf. *Ḳaratigin*, in EI, Vol. IV, p. 656.

²⁷ Tiezengauzen, p. 226.

²⁸ See *Firīm*, in Zambaur, *Die Münzprägungen...*, pp. 185–86. Cf. N. M. Lowick, J. D. F. Nisbet, *A Hoard of Dirhams from Ra's al-Khaimah*, Numismatic Chronicle, Series VII, Vol. VIII (1968), p. 240; M. Gozdowski, A. Kmietowicz, W. Kubiak, T. Lewicki, *Wczesnośredniowieczny skarb srebrny z Maurzyc pod Łowiczem* (Wrocław 1959), p. 56, no. 86.

Unfortunately, none of the coins has been preserved in its entirety. Despite the incomplete inscriptions, mostly reconstructed, we have enough information on both the obverses and reverses to enable us to specify when and where they were struck. On dirhams 1 and 2 (Photos 1 and 2), in the inner marginal legend on the obverse, the name of the mint and the date have been preserved; on coin no. 3 (Photo 3) we can read the word *ʿAlī* on the obverse over the kalimah, and the date of 361 AH. Dirham no. 4 (Photo 4) contains only the name of the mint, while no. 5 (Photo 5) has the word *ʿAlī* on the obverse and a fragment of the name of the amīr [Man]ṣūr [ibn Nūḥ] on the reverse. The fragment of dirham no. 6 (Photo 6) is listed as uncertain; it corresponds typologically to those previously discussed, but only single letters have been preserved from the name of the mint – R[āṣ]t – and part of the date – [3]64 AH – which we can reconstruct on the basis of the fragment of the amīr's name on the reverse: [Manṣ]ūr [ibn Nūḥ].

The inscriptions, though obliterated in places, are done with care, and some words or single letters are even done in a decorative fashion, e.g. the stylized *ḥa* in the word *Muḥammad* (kalimah on the reverse), a device characteristic for the dirhams of Manṣūr ibn Nūḥ and Nūḥ ibn Manṣūr.

All the dirhams discussed above occurred in hoards from Greater Poland, and doubtless belong to rarities.

Translated by BRUCE MAC QUEEN

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Dirhamy Sāmānidów z Rāšt

Monety Sāmānidów z Rāšt zostały po raz pierwszy opisane przez Ch. M. Frehna w 1826 r. W późniejszej literaturze numizmatycznej znajdujemy je w katalogach V. V. Tiesenhausena, A. Markowa, J. Østrupa i O. Blau.

Niniejszy artykuł przedstawia 6 fragmentów dirhamów sāmānidzkich z Rāšt, wchodzących w skład wczesnośredniowiecznych skarbów polskich z Zalesia, Obry Nowej i Dzierznicy II (Wielkopolska) datowanych na 2. poł. X wieku. Dirhamy te, wybijane w latach 967/8–978/9, czyli za panowania Manṣūra ibn Nūḥ i Nūḥa ibn Manṣūr, generalnie nie różnią się od pozostałych srebrnych monet Sāmānidów.

Ich cechą charakterystyczną są dodatkowe napisy na awersie (al-dihqān, Ġaʿfarb. ʿAlī, ʿAlī), które nie występują na znanych nam dirhamach sāmānidzkich z innych mennic. Kontrowersje budzi postać Ġaʿfarb. ʿAlī nie poświadczona przez średniowieczne źródła arabskie i perskie. Przedstawione powyżej dirhamy, nie występujące nawet w skarbach szwedzkich, stanowią niewątpliwie rzadkość.



1



2



3



4



5



6