

STEPHEN ALBUM

NOTES ON THE COINAGE
OF MUHAMMAD IBN AL-HUSAYN AL-RAWWADI

In the history of Ādharbāyjān, the years between AH 369-420/AD 979-1029 have been rightly regarded as a «dark age». What sparse information has survived derives from textual accounts, of both Muslim and Armenian origin, that were at most peripherally concerned with events in that region. Now, however, the recent discovery of a small number of coins struck by the Rawwādid kings provides us with the first reliable and contemporary evidence for the history of Ādharbāyjān in this obscure age.

At this point, I should like to express my gratitude to the Cabinet des Médailles of the Bibliothèque Nationale for having kindly permitted me to publish the two Rawwādid coins preserved in their collection.

The earliest textual mention of the Rawwādids dates to the time of the captivity of Sallār Marzubān b. Muḥammad b. Musāfir, whose confinement covered the years 337-342/948-953¹. During these years, Muḥammad b. Ḥusayn al-Rawwādī seized some parts of Ādharbāyjān. Either he, or his son Ḥusayn, soon attained his independence in Ahar and Warzuqān. Ibn Ḥawqal informs us that in 344, the Rawwādid ruler of these two small cities forwarded an annual tribute of fifty thousand dinars, besides a variety of gifts, to the Sallār Marzubān, recently reestablished on his throne at Ardabīl².

Ḥusayn, who is known as Abū'l-Hayjā' in the Armenian sources (Ablhadzi), seized Tabrīz in 345/956 and made it his capital in

1. Minorsky, V., *Studies in Caucasian History*, London, 1953, p. 167.

2. Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kilāb Ṣūrat al-Arḍ*, ed. of Dār Maktabat al-Ḥayāt, Beirut, no date, p. 303.

350/961. He occupied Ardabīl and the rest of Ādharbāyjan in 373-374/983-984, after having captured the last Sallārid and driven out the Kangarid, Marzubān b. Ismā'īl b. Wahsūdān, who fled to his home territories of Ṭārum. Ḥusayn appears to have ruled until 378/988, when he was found dead in his tent during a Rawwādid offensive against the Armenian lord of Vaspurakan, following the murder of the Rawwādid governor of Khūy by an unnamed Armenian.³

Ḥusayn's son, Muḥammad, who also bore the *kunya* of Abū'l-Hayjā', appears to have already achieved a share in the royal authority prior to his father's death, for Munajjim Bāshī portrays him as the Rawwādid ruler already in 373/983, the year in which he defeated the last Sallārid ruler of Ādharbāyjan, Sallār Ibrāhīm b. Marzubān.⁴ Muḥammad, who was generally known by the Kurdish form of his name, Mamlān, became ruler in his sole right upon his father's death in 378/988. As for the year of his death, Munajjim Bāshī tells us that Mamlān died in 391/1000, and was succeeded by his son Ḥusayn, who in turn ruled for twenty-five years until his death in 416/1025 and was followed by his brother Wahsūdān (416-451/1025-1058).⁶

The numismatic evidence, however, shows us that Mamlān continued to rule long after 391/1000, for the two specimens in the Bibliothèque Nationale, both struck in al-Marāgha (present-day Maragheh), are dated 393/1002 and 405/1014. In addition, there is a specimen illustrated in *Hunar wa Mardum* struck in Ardābil in the year 400/1009.⁷ Although the patronymic of

3. Aḥmad Kasrawī, *The Forgotten Rulers* (Shahryārān-i Gumnān), second edition, Tehran, 1335 (1956), p. 163. Kasrawī's source is the history of Asolik (see v. II, pp. 71-73 of the French translation of Macler).

4. Minorsky, *op. cit.*, p. 164 and 168. Note that in the former citation Muḥammad is incorrectly named as the son of Ibrāhīm, a name not otherwise found in Rawwādid history. I had originally read the patronymic on the Paris specimens as Ibrāhīm, and sought to contrive an explanation for this anomaly, but the photograph of the Ardābil coin leaves me confirmed in my reading of the patronymic as al-Ḥusayn.

5. Munajjim Bāshī confirms Kasrawī's determination that Mamlān is a local Ādharbāyjanī corruption of Muḥammad, for he states explicitly that Mamlān "is a distorted Kurdish form for Muḥammad." V. Minorsky, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

6. Minorsky, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

7. Qahramānī, Abū'l-Faṭḥ, "Sikke, Nishān-i Qawmiyyat wa Āzādagi", in *Hunar wa Mardum*, no. 104 (Khurdād 1350 = June 1971), pp. 9-31. The coin of Ardābil, 400, is illustrated in the left-hand plate on p. 22, the obverse bottom center, the reverse upper right-hand corner of the plate. The coin is mentioned in the text, but not adequately discussed, on p. 27. As the coin was in the collection of Dr. Jazayeri, now in the possession of the Bank Sepah, it is to be sought in the latter institution. As I only discovered the existence of the coin a few days prior to the deadline for submitting

Mamlān (Muḥammad is the form of his name engraved on the coins) is virtually illegible on both of the Paris specimens, the name «Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn» is quite clearly distinguishable in the photograph of the Ardabīl coin. All three specimens have the name Rawwād clearly readable below the name Muḥammad (=Mamlān), so that there can be no doubt that all three coins were struck by the same individual, identical with the Mamlān of history.

Further evidence for the incorrectness of Munajjim Bāshī's chronology is found upon a coin of Wahsūdān b. Mamlān («Wahsūdān ibn Muḥammad Rawwād» on the coin), struck in an uncertain mint in 407/1016.⁸ This coin, which I intend to publish at some future date along with other coins of the same ruler, shows us that Wahsūdān must have succeeded to the throne at some time between 405 and 407. Then the person called Ḥusayn, son of Mamlān and brother of Wahsūdān, either ruled ephemerally during this brief interval, or did not rule at all. I am inclined to suspect, as Kasrawī inferred from the verses of Qaṭrān, court poet to Wahsūdān, that Wahsūdān succeeded his father directly and that Ḥusayn never properly occupied the Rawwādid throne. As for the report of Munajjim Bāshī that Ḥusayn succeeded Mamlān in 391/1000 and ruled until 416/1025, we can no longer accept this at face value, in light of clearly controverting numismatic evidence, and must seek some alternative explanation for his existence. It is conceivable that he was assigned a portion of the kingdom as his personal appanage, where he ruled jointly with his father and then with his brother, until his death in 416, but this possibility must be regarded as conjectural until further evidence is at hand.⁹

We can thus see the importance of numismatic evidence for the history of the «forgotten rulers» of Ādharbāyjān. I have become aware of the discovery of additional specimens, but have been unable to examine them, or acquire descriptions of them, in time for inclusion in this paper. I intend to follow this brief report with a discussion of Wahsūdān's coins, and other contemporary Ādharbāyjānī coins which have come to my attention, and would be most appreciative of any communication concerning additional coins of this region and this period.

this article, I was unable to view the coin with such short notice. I hope to be able to utilize this and other coins partially illustrated in the same plate in a future article.

8. This coin resides in the author's collection, which is at present inaccessible in bank storage in Vallejo, California.

9. The sole textual reference to this Ḥusayn is that of Munajjim Bāshī, as given above. There is no other evidence of any sort for the existence of this individual.



Fig. 1

DESCRIPTION OF THE COINS

No. 1: Al-Marāgha, 393. Base AR dirham, 8.05 gm. Bibliothèque Nationale. Fig. 1.

Obverse, area: (top line unread and rather vague on the coin)

لولى (؟)
لا اله الا
الله وحده
لا شريك له
القا.... بالله

inner margin:

بسم الله ضرب هذا الدرهم بالمراغة سنة ثلث وتسعين وثلثمائة

outer margin, Koran XXX/3-4 as usual.

Reverse, area:

لله
محمد رسول الله
صل الله عليه وسلم
الامير الاجل
محمد بن
رواد

margin, Koran IX/33, as far as: كره الـ



Fig. 2

No. 2: Al-Marāgha, 405. Base AR dirham, 8.95 gm. Bibliothèque Nationale. Fig. 2.

Obverse, area:

.....

لا اله الا

الله وحده

لا شريك له

القادر بالله

محمد

inner margin :

بسم الله ضرب هذا الدرهم بالمرآغة سنة خمس و اربعمائة

Note: الدرهم is written as الرهم, and اربعمائة is written as اربعمائة.

outer margin, as on no. 1, but rather defectively written.

Reverse, area:

لله

محمد رسول الله

صل الله عليه وسلم

الامير الاجل

محمد بن سين

رواد

margin, as on no. **1**, as far as: كره المشركو .

No. **3**: Ardabil, 400. Presumably base AR dirham, weight not given. For location, refer to note 7 above.

Obverse area:

لا اله الا
 : الله وحده :
 : لا شريك له :
 القادر بالله
 ه

inner margin:

بسم الله ضرب هذا الدرهم باردبيل سنة اربعمائة

outer margin, as on no. **1**, end portion obscured.

Reverse, area:

لله
 محمد رسول الله
 صل الله عليه
 الامير الاجل
 محمد بن الحسين
 رواد

margin as on no. **1**, but end portion obscured.