

Original article

SASANIAN TRADITIONS ON EARLY POST REFORM Umayyad DIRHAMS

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Abstract

The literary evidence states that the coinage reform happened in 76 (H) in the time of the Caliph Abdel Malik ibn Marwan (65-86 (H) / 684-704 (AC)). The first reformed Dinars, however, were struck in 77 (H), and the first epigraphical Dirhams back to the year 78 (H), which were struck in Armenia, al-Kufa, and Adharbayjan and other cities. Epigraphic Dirhams were struck in Khurasanin such cities as, Abarshahr, Marw, Marw al-Rudh, and Harat. Were the only places kept the Sasanian traditions, which existing in the way of writing the name of the mint. This study sheds the light on the political situation for Khurasan to explain this unique phenomenon, which happened only in Abarshahr, Marw, Marw al-Rudh, and Harat, apart from the rest of the Umayyad countries at that time. These Sasanian traditions had been repeated again during the Abbasids time during Haroon El Rashid's (170-193 H / 786-808 AC) caliphate, where the name of Abarshahr appeared once more on Dirhams with the name of Naysabur too. So this study gave us the reasons which made this phenomenon was continued in the Abbasid era.

Keywords: Reform, coins, Umayyad, Abbasid, Dinars, Dirham, Sasanian traditions.

1. Introduction

Literary sources state that the reform of coins (making coins or adjusting them according to the epigraphic pattern) in the year 76 (H) in the Umayyad period during the reign of Caliph Abdel Malik Ibn Marwan (65-86 H / 684-704 AC) [1]. The oldest reformed epigraphic Dinars date back to the year 77 H [2], and the oldest Dirham to the year 78 (H), which was struck in Armenia, Al-Kufah and Azerbaijan and other mint places [3]. Umayyad epigraphic Dirhams, which were struck in Khurasanin the mints Abarshahr, Marw, Marw al-Rudh, and Harat, were the only places kept the Sasanian traditions. in the

way of writing the name of the mint, where the name of Marw [4], Marw al-Rudh [5], Harat [6] mints appeared twice on the coins, once in Arabic language and another in Pehlevi in the year 79 to 84 (H) [7]. Bilingual issues stopped for the period between 84 to 90 (H), as far as we know [8], Then the name of Abarshahr (Sasanian name of Naysabur) appeared, then was swapped to the name of Naysabur in Arabic language on the Umayyad Dirhams since the year 79 to 100 (H) [9]. Then the name of Naysabur appeared as the mint of Khurasanin year 143 (H).

2. The inscriptions of the Umayyad Dirhams

2.1. Anonymous Dirham under the Umayyad' Abd al-Malik Ibn Marawān, Abarshahr mint, date 79 (H), (W. 2.64 gr., D. 27 mm.) [10].



الوجه:
مركز: لا إله إلا
الله وحده
لا شريك له

هامش: بسم الله ضرب هذا الدرهم بأبرشهر في سنة تسع وسبعين.

الظهر:

مركز: الله أحد الله
الصمد لم يلد ولم
يولد ولم يكن
له كفوا أحد

هامش: محمد رسول الله أرسله بالهدى ودين الحق ليظهره على الدين كله ولو كره المشركون.

Obv. Field, the first kalima was inscribed as usual traditional type of reform, on Obv. Circular margin: Mint and date formula, all within triple circle. And it was noticed that the mint

name is Abarshahr, the Sasanian name of Naysabur. On Rev. Field: Qur'ān 112 without the first word *قل*, on Rev. Circular margin: Qur'ān 48:29 + 9:33 or 61:9.

2.2. Anonymous Dirham under the Umayyad' Abd al-Malik Ibn Marawān, Marw mint, date 79 (H), (W. 2.65 gr., D. 26 mm.) [11].



الوجه:
مركز: لا إله إلا
الله وحده
لا شريك له

هامش: بسم الله ضرب هذا الدرهم بمر و في سنة تسع وسبعين.

الظهر:

مركز: الله أحد الله
الصمد لم يلد ولم
يولد ولم يكن
له كفوا أحد

هامش: محمد رسول الله أرسله بالهدى ودين الحق ليظهره على الدين كله ولو كره المشركون.

This Dirham inscription is the same of no. 1 except the way of writing the name of the mint Marw, which

mentioned twice in both Arabic and Pehlevi.

2.3. Anonymous Dirham under the Umayyad' Abd al-Malik Ibn Marawān, Marw al-Rudh mint, date 79 (H), (W. 2.24 gr.) [12]



الوجه:
مرکز: لا إله إلا
الله وحده
لا شريك له

هامش: بسم الله ضرب هذا الدرهم بمرور الروذ في سنة تسع وسبعين.

الظهر:

مرکز: الله أحد الله
الصمد لم يلد ولم
يولد ولم يكن
له كفوا أحد

هامش: محمد رسول الله أرسله بالهدى ودين الحق ليظهره على الدين كله ولو كره المشركون.

This Dirham inscription is the same of no. 1 except the way of writing the name of the mint Marw al-Rudh,

which mentioned twice in both Arabic and Pehlevi.

2.4. Anonymous Dirham under the Umayyad' Abd al-Malik Ibn Marawān, Harat mint, date 79 (H), (W. 2.24 gr.) [13]



الوجه:
مرکز: لا إله إلا
الله وحده
لا شريك له

هامش: بسم الله ضرب هذا الدرهم بهراة في سنة تسع وسبعين.

الظهر:

مرکز: الله أحد الله
الصمد لم يلد ولم
يولد ولم يكن
له كفوا أحد

هامش: محمد رسول الله أرسله بالهدى ودين الحق ليظهره على الدين كله ولو كره المشركون.

This Dirham inscription is the same of no. 1 except the way of writing the name of the mint Harat, which mentioned twice in both Arabic and Pehlevi. Thus the name of the mints Abarshahr, Marw, Marw al-Rudh, and Harat mentioned twice in both Arabic and Pehlevi. Actually, the rulers of Khurasan who did so to gain the support of Khorasanies against Umayyad Caliph aiming at becoming independent of Khorasan's rule. This study sheds light on the political situation of Khurasan to explain this unique phenomenon, which happened only in the cities, Abarshahr, Marw, Marw al-Rudh, and Harat, apart from the rest of the Umayyad countries since then [14]. The region of Khurasan was dominated by political turmoil's in the first century of Hegira because of the conflict among the Arab tribes, especially after the battle of Marj Rahet, in which Al Dahhāq Ibn Qais Al-Fehri was defeated by Marwan Ibn Hakam (64-65 H / 683-684 AC). Also in the same battle The Yemini Arabs defeated the Madari Arabs which caused civil conflict between the north and the south [15]. Not only in The Levant countries, but also in Khurasan between Arabs and Sasanians. A lot of people in Khurasan were not so loyal to The Umayyad Caliphs, so some leaders started to set themselves as rulers and to dissent from the Caliphs' obedience. Others joined the Umayyad enemies, Elzobaireen. Khurasan was ruled by many governors whom their periods were full of upsets and political unsettlement, like Yazid bin Elmohallab who governed it after the death of his father Elmohallab bin abi surfa. (82 H / 701 AD) [15]. In the year (85 H) / (703 AC) Al Hajjāj exchanged Yazid Ibn El-Muhallab as governor of Khurasan with his brother Al-Mufaddal ibn al-Muhallab [16]. The reason for the replacement of Yazid ibn al-Muhallab was the problems in Khurasan because of the conflict

between Qais and the Azad... What made the situation worse was that Yazid Ibn El Muhallab was allying to el-Azad. Therefore, El Hajjāj tried to get rid of Yazid, but he was afraid of the Azd revolution in Khorasan, so he gave it to Al Mofaddal Ibn Abi Sufrah in the year (85H / 703 AC). Al Mofaddal was weaker than Yazid, so he was driven out by Al Hajjāj; Al Hajjāj hired Moslem Ibn Amr for Khurasan to satisfy the Qais people, as he was from the same tribe. El Hajjāj hired Qutaiba Ibn Moslem instead of Al Fadl in the year (85 H) / (704 AC) before the death of The Caliph Abdel Malek [17]. This showed how the situation in Khurasan was full of commotion because of tribalism, and the Umayyad leaders were trying to settle the situation down. It is noteworthy that Sasanian soldiers in the army of Qutaiba decreased, but Arab soldiers increased because of the fanaticism of the Arab soldiers about the leadership on Sasanian soldiers' account. Hence, Khurasan's army consisted of 47000 Arab soldiers against 7000 of Sasanian ones [18]. As a result, the conflict and hatreds increased in Sasanian soldiers against Arabs, who became now in the front and tried to seize everything from the Sasanians. After the death of Caliph Abdel Malik Ibn Marwan (86 H) / (704 AC) in the year (86-96 H) / (704-714 AC), his son Al Walid Ibn Abdel Malik became the Caliph. Qutaiba was still ruling Khurasan during his reign, but he was hired through Al Hajjāj Ibn Yousef [19] until Al Hajjāj died in the year (95 H) / (713 AC), Qutaiba kept ruling till the death of Al Walid in the year 96 H / 714 AC, which was the same year Qutaiba ibn Moslem himself died in Khurasan [20]. It is also worth mentioning that the imitation of the tradition of the mint in Pehlevi name is connected with the idea of gaining the support of Khurasani people, to remind them how great their ancestors were.

This tradition had been repeated again during the Abbasids time during Haroon El Rashid's (170-193 H / 786-808 AC) caliphate, where the name of Abarshahr appeared once more on Dirhams with the name of Naysabur too. We have a Dirham which was

struck in (192 H) during Haroon El Rashid's time and appeared on its margin the mint as "the city of Abarshahr". Also, on the first line of the reverse centre appeared the name of the mint of Naysabur, and its writing came as follows:

3. The inscriptions of the Abbasid Dirhams

3.1. Abbasid Dirham, under the rule of 'Haroon El Rashid', Abarshahr mint, dates (190 H) [21].



الوجه:
مركز: لا إله إلا
الله وحده
لا شريك له

هامش: بسم الله ضرب هذا الدرهم بمدينة أبرشهر سنة إثننتين و تسعين ومئة.

الظهر:
مركز: نيسابور
محمد
رسول
الله
نصر بن سعد

هامش: محمد رسول الله أرسله بالهدى ودين الحق ليظهره على الدين كله ولو كره المشركون.

That means, it was, for the first time on the Islamic coins this dirham has the two mint names the Sasanian and the Arabic name of the city, and maybe this came with a view to satisfying both Arabs and Sasanians in Khurasan from the part of the Khorasani rulers [22]; particularly when the Khorasanees saw the influence of Arabs in their countries. So, the Khorasani ruler revive the name of Abarshahr or Naysabur on the Dirhams to satisfy Khorasanees people and emphasize the respect of their country and its traditions and to cool them down towards Arabs, whom influence was on the increase, On the last line of the reverse field of the dirham, the name of

Nasr Ibn Sa'd appeared for the first time. Historical resources did not mention anything about Nasr Ibn Sa'd. Maybe he ruled after the banishment of Ali Ibn Issa Ibn Mahan, whom his name appeared on a dirham of Balk [23] and Harat [24]. Other very similar Dirhams were struck and the two names: the Sasanian and the Arabic, and the year of their strike (193 H) [25]. Such Dirhams came to revive the interest in Sasanian culture and to support Al Ma'mun (198-218 H / 813-832 AC) against his brother Al Amin (193-198 H / 808-813 AC). The name of Abarshahr appears again in the same reason on the coins during the conflict. After Al Ma'mun (198-218 H / 813-832 AC)

invested his commander Tahir ibn Al-Husain (205-207 H / 820-822 AC) to rule over Khurasan in the year 205 H-820 AC, and attributed to him all the East, Tahir ibn Al-Husain tried to be independent from the Abbasids

3.2. Dirham of Taher ibn Al Hussein, striking of Suradeq Abarshahr, Date (206 H) [27].



الوجه:
مركز: لا إله إلا
الله وحده
لا شريك له

هامش: بسم الله ضرب هذا الدرهم بمدينة بسرادق أبرشهر سنة ست ومائتين

الظهر:
مركز: الإمام المأمون
محمد
رسول
الله
ذو اليمينين

هامش: محمد رسول الله أرسله بالهدى ودين الحق ليظهره على الدين كله ولو كره المشركون.

The reason which made Tahir ibn Al-Husain allow the strike of such Dirhams was his desire to gain the support of Khorasanians by mentioning their Persians traditions by striking the Pehlevi name for Naysabur city, which came on such dirham as “Sordaq Abarshahr”, and to get the independence of Khurasan away from the Abbasids Caliphate. However, Tahir ibn Al-Husain died in the same night he interrupted his sermon according to historical resources [28]. It was noticed that the inside margin of the obverse of that dirham of Tahir ibn Al-Husain was struck with the mint named “Suradeq Abarshahr”, which means the tent that surrounds everything [29]. Therefore, we can say that “Sordaq Abarshahr” is the place or the tent which was built for

Caliphate and was entitled Zi Al Yamenain [26]. Accordingly, and struck a Dirham was struck in the year 206 H with the mint name “Suradeq Abarshahr”.

Tahir ibn Al-Husain when he arrived to Naysabur Perhaps this Suradeq was at the Suburb of Naysabur [30]. As for the outside margin of the same Dirham of Taher Ibn Al Hussein, it got the name of Mohammed Ibn Hamid because he was one of the followers of Taher Ibn Al Hussein. So, he wanted to show his loyalty for Tahereds (followers of Taher), by mentioning the word El-Taherey [31]. Regarding the reverse field of the dirham, it was struck with “Al Imam Al Ma’mun” on the first line, then with the title “Dhu Il Yaminain” on the last line, which is the title used to be for Tahir ibn Al-Husain [32]. Talha ibn Taher (207-213 H / 822-828 AC) struck Dirhams in the mint of Abarshahr for the same reason given before.

3.3. Dirham striking of Abarshahr in the year (210 H) [33].



الوجه:

مركز: لا إله إلا
الله وحده
لا شريك له
الطاهري

هامش داخلي: بسم الله ضرب هذا الدرهم بمدينة بسرادق أبرشهر سنة عشر ومائتين
هامش خارجي: لله الأمر من قبل ومن بعد ويومئذ يفرح المؤمنون بنصر الله.

الظهر:

مركز: الله
محمد
رسول
الله
طلحه

هامش: محمد رسول الله أرسله بالهدى ودين الحق ليظهره على الدين كله ولو كره المشركون.

4. Conclusion

In the light of the historical events happened in Khorasan, this study can explain why the cities of Marw, Marw al-Rudh, Harat, and Abarshahr were the only cities of striking the coins as per the Sasanian traditions on the reformed Dirhams during the Umayyad and Abbasids time:

- Keeping the Pehlevi inscriptions on Dirhams of the cities of Marw, Marw al-Rudh, Harat, and Abarshahr during the Umayyad Caliphs time was due to satisfying the majority of Sasanians staying in Khorasan, especially after they felt the increase of the Arab influence in their countries.
- Probably, keeping the Sasanian traditions on the coins that were struck in the cities Marw, Marw al-Rudh, Harat, Suradeq Abarshahr, and Abarshahr was planned by Al Muhallab Ibn Abi Sofrah and his sons, whom ruled Khurasan since 79 H / 698 AC till 85 H 703 AC, which was the same period of time that the two cities name Marw and Abarshahr were struck on coins to satisfy Khorasan' people and to gain their support against Umayyad people .
- Khorasanees tried to get their power back in their country after the increase of the Arab influence, which made Arab rulers try to gain the Khorasanees satisfaction and support by striking the names of the cities Marw, Marw al-Rudh, Harat, in both languages: Arabic and Sasanians, and to let the appearance of the name Abarshahr as well, which is the Sasanian name of Naysabur.
- During the Abbasids time, Al- Ma'mun, the caliph, was keen to appreciate the Sasanian traditions on the dirham which were struck in the cities Marw, Marw al-Rudh, Harat to gain the support of Khorasanees in his conflict with his brother Al Amin .
- Tahir ibn Al-Husain tried to satisfy Khorasanees by striking their cities name on Dirhams to satisfy them and to gain their support when he intended to rule Khurasan as an independent ruler .
- It is also probable that the engravers of the mint were Sasanians, so they struck the names of the cities with Sasanian traditions, trying to emphasize the glory of their ancestors .

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