



Original article

## RARE SELJUQ DINĀR IN THE NAME OF SULTĀN SINJAR AND SULTĀN MAHMŪD MINTED ISBAHĀN 522H.

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### Abstract

*This research studies a rare dinār Minted Isbahān 522H. in the name of sultān Sinjar and sultān Mahmūd, the dinār was never published before, and it is preserved in Yahia Ga'far collection in the United Arab Emirates (W. 3,14 gr, D.22m m).*

**Keywords:** *dinār-, Isbahān, sultān Sinjar, Yahia Ga'far*

### 1. Introduction

After the death of supreme sultan (al-sultan al-a'zam) Muhammad ibn Malik Shah (r. 511-525/1117-1131) in 511/1117, his son sultan Mahmud was appointed to follow him. His uncle sultan Sanjar ibn Malik Shah (r. 511-552/1117-1158), the then (al-sultan al-mu'azzam) of the eastern Saljuq empire in Khurasan, disputed this succession. Thus Sanjar proclaimed himself supreme sultan (al-sultan al-a'zam) of all Saljuq territories including Iraq and western Iran, the immediate domains of sultan Mahmud, and started to interfere in the affairs of the western realm. Until his death Sanjar reigned as supreme sultan, presiding over the different territories of his empire, ruled by various family members. In 552/1157 Sanjar was defeated by the Ilak Khans or Ghuzz of Turkistan. [1]. In Jumada I 513/ September 1119 a war between sultan Sanjar and the then rival supreme sultan Mahmud broke out in which

Mahmud was defeated. His uncle sultan Sanjar ruled now undisputed over all Saljuq territories. On Jumada I 16, 513/ September 5, 1119, the Abbasid Caliph Al Mustarshid billah (r. 512-529/1118-1135) held the khutba (Friday sermon) in Baghdad in the name of sultan Sanjar. The inclusion of sultan Mahmud into the khutba was terminated. Sultan Sanjar sent envoys to him to negotiate, after the mother of Sanjar, grandmother of sultan Mahmud, had mediated between them. Sanjar promised Mahmud that he would be the heir apparent and sultan Mahmud agreed. Sanjar sent to all the territories he ruled- such as Khurasan, the lands of the Jayhun river, Iraq, Syria and others- that the khutba should be held in his own name followed by sultan Mahmud's (al-sultan al-mu'azzam) [2]. For the year 522/1128 narrative sources mention that sultan Sanjar went out from Khurasan to al-Rayy with a huge army. The reason

for this war was that Dubays ibn Sadaqa (501-529/1107-1134) went to sultan Sanjar, and persuaded him to come to Iraq and put this part of the empire under his direct control. Dubays told Sanjar that the caliph al-Mustarshid and sultan Mahmud were disobedient, and that Mahmud had agreed with the caliph to dethrone Sanjar. Dubays and Sanjar marched jointly toward Iraq, until they reached al-Rayy. At the time sultan Mahmud was in Hamadhan. Sultan Sanjar sent to him asking to see him. When the messenger reached him, sultan Mahmud hurried to his uncle sultan Sanjar. Sanjar ordered all his soldiers to meet Mahmud to welcome him. He came to terms with Mahmud and sat with him on the throne to honor him. Sanjar acknowledged sultan

Mahmud's intentions and that Dubays ibn Sadaqa was wrong in his allegations. Then Sanjar sent Dubays to Mahmud, and ordered Mahmud to be generous with Dubays and return him to the rule of his lands in the southern Iraq. He set the condition that the caliph might forgive him, and that he had to overthrow Zangi ibn Aqsunqur in al-Mawsil, in order to make Dubays also governor over these territories. Mahmud agreed, Sanjar returned to Khurasan, and sultan Mahmud and Dubays returned first to Hamadhan, then to Iraq [3]. There is a rare dinar reflecting this historical event. It is preserved in the collection of Yahya Ja'far in the United Arab Emirates (W.3, 14g, D.22m) [4]. This dinar is still unpublished.

## 2. The inscription is as follows:

### Obv. Field within one circle

	حافظاً	
	لا إله إلا	
١٠٠	الله وحده	٤٠٠
	لا شريك له	
	المسترشد بالله	

### Margin legend:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم ضرب هذا الدينار بأصبهان سنة اثني وعشرب (كذا) وخمسمائة

Rev. field within one circle

	من الله	
	محمد رسول الله	
١٠٠	معز الدنيا والدين	٤٠٠
	مغيث الدنيا والدين	
	سنجر ومحمود	
	قريب	

### Margin legend:

محمد رسول الله أرسله بالهدى ودين الحق ليظهره على الدين كله (sic) وكر (sic) المشركون

### Circle around obv. And rev.

The obverse field starts with the shahada " لا إله إلا / الله وحده / لا شريك له "

three lines, followed by the laqab of Al-Mustarshid bi-Allah "المسترشد بالله" in the

fourth. This is honorific title of the Abbasid caliph Abu Mansur al-Fadl ibn Abi al-‘Abbas Ahmad ibn al-Mustarshid billah [5] The margine is inscribed with a verse from the Qur'anic (12: 64) /الله خير حافظاً (tr. God is the best to guard). This is the first time this verse was used on Islamic coinage. May be sultan Mahmud, in applying this verse wanted to make sure God would protect him and Sanjar from the perils of a war that was about to take place between them, and feared that sultan Sanjar would dethrone him (as he did in 513/1117). The obverse Margin record the name of the mint and date, which is Isbahan in the year 522 H. We note that in the inscription Margin the letter "ن" is not engraved at the end of word "عشرين". The reverse inscription starts in the first line with the shahada "محمد رسول الله", and in the second with the laqab "Mu'izz al-Dunya wal-Din" "معز الدنيا والدين", This is the honorific title of Abu l-Harith Sanjar ibn Malik Shah, as the supreme sultan [6]. Ibn al-Athir mentions that sultan Sanjar had before the laqab Nasir al-Din, but when his brother Muhammad ibn Malik Shah

died, Sanjar changed to Mu'izz al-Din, a laqab also used by his father Malik Shah [1]. The third line provides the laqab "Mughith al- Dunya wa- al-Din" مغيث "الدنيا والدين". This the honorific of Abu l-Qasim Mahmud ibn Muhammad ibn Malik Shah, the subordinate sultan of Iraq.(8) The personal names (ism) of both Sanjar and Mahmud are recorded in the last line of the field. There is a striking correspondence between the names and titles on this dinar, and the political situation of the two Saljuq rulers, with Sanjar as the higher ranking supreme ruler followed by Mahmud as the subordinate sultan of Iraq with the agreement in 513/1119. The reverse field is surrounded by another Qur'anic verse (61:13) "نصر / من الله / وفتح / قريب" (help from God and a near victory). This verse from the surat al-Rum was often applied on coins in war situation. As for the reverse Marginal legend the usual Qur'anic verse (9:33) or the identical one (61:9) is applied. Some errors in the inscription should be mentioned. The word "ولو" is not inscribed, and the letter "هـ" in word "كروه" is not inscribed also.

### 3. Conclusion

*The described unpublished dinar was minted in Isbahan in 522/1128-9. The inscriptions record an important critical historical moment. The dinar is unique by virtue of its Qur'anic Quotation "الله خير حافظاً". Hence, this dinar adds to our knowledge of Islamic coins in general, and of Saljuq coins in particular.*

### References

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- [3] Ibn Al-Gawzy, *Op.Cit.*, Vol. 17, P. 249; Ibn Al-Athir, *Op.Cit.*, Vol. 9, pp. 247-248.
- [4] Many thanks to Yahia Ga'far who allowed to me to publish this dinār.
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Zambaur, Op.Cit., Vol. 1, p. 333; Stanley, Lane-Poole, Op.Cit., p. 319.

- [7] Ibn Al-Athir, Op.Cit., Vol. 9, P. 182.  
[8] Zambaur, Op.Cit., Vol. 1, P.334.



Pl. AV. A rare dinâr in the name of sultân Sinjar and sultan Mahmûd, Minted Isbahân 522H., and is preserved in Yahia Ga'far collection at united Arab Emirates (3.14gr, D22mm), and is unpublished.



Figure (1) A dinâr Minted Isbahân 522H.,