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A Rare Tulunid dirham minted in Misr 265 AH. In the name of Ahmad b. Tulun

درهم طولوني نادر باسم احمد بن طولون ضرب مصر سنة ٢٦٥هـ

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Abstract:

This reseach aims to study and analysis A Rare Tulunid dirham minted in Misr 265 AH. in the name of Ahmad b. Tulun, preserved in Mr. Adnan Jarwa collection in Aleppo. It is the oldest dirham of Tulunid in Egypt and bears the name Ahmad b. Tulun. Also it is a new addition to the Tulunid dirhams in particular and the Egyptian dirhams in general.

الملخص:

يتناول هذا البحث بالدراسة والتحليل درهم طولوني نادر ضرب مصر سنة 265هـ باسم أحمد بن طولون، محفوظ في مجموعة عدنان جروة بحلب، وهو يعد أقدم درهم طولوني ضرب بمصر ويحمل اسم أحمد بن طولون، وهو يعد إضافة جديدة للدرهم الطولونية بشكل خاص والدرهم المصرية بشكل عام.

Introduction:

An extremely rare Tulunid Dirham minted in Misr 265 AH. In the name of Ahmad b. Tulun, preseved in Adnan Jarawh Collection, Halab-Bierout, Inv.No.8866.Unpublished, published in this research for the first time. (Pl.1, Fig.1)
The design of this dirham comes in an obverse including inscriptions in the field, in

four lines written in floral kufic script. Its liner margin is followed by an outer one enclosed by a circle. Yet, between the inner and outer margins and the text of the field, there are no circles.

Concerning the reverse, the inscription of its field comes in six lines, surrounded by a circular line, and followed by a margin enclosed by a circle.

The inscriptions of this coin come as follows: (Plate 1)

	Obv	Rev
Field	لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له المفوض الى الله	الله محمد رسول الله المعتمد على الله أحمد بن طولون
Inner margin	بسم الله ضرب هذا الدرهم بمصر سنة خمس وستين ومائتين	محمد رسول الله أرسله بالهدى ودين الحق ليظهره علي الدين كله ولو كره المشركون.
Outer margin	الله الأمر من قبل ومن بعد ويومئذ يفرح المؤمنون بنصر الله	
		
Pl.1.AR Tulunid Dirham minted in Misr 265 AH. In the name of Ahmad b. Tulun, preseved in Adnan Jarawh Collection, Halab - Bierout, Inv.No.8866.Unpublished.		
		
Fig.1.AR Dirham minted in Misr 265 AH.		

In the center of the obverse, there are three lines bearing the testimony of Islam (the shahada), “there is no God but Allah, Who has no partner”. This phrase was found for the first time on the reformed coins of Abdel Malek Bin Marawan (65-86 A.H.), and lasted during the Umayyad Period¹, then during the Abbasid period², and was also found on the coins of other contemporary states in the east and west of the Islamic world, like Samanid coin³, Buwayhid⁴, Tulunid, Ikhshidid⁵, Fatimid⁶, etc.

In the fourth and last lines of the obverse’s center, the title “al-Mofawad ila Allah”⁷ can be found, which belongs to Gaafar Bin Ahmed el-Abbasi el-Hashimi el-Qourashi el-Baghdadi. In 260 A.H/ 873 A.D., the Abbasid caliph El-Mu’tamid ala Allah (256-279A.H./869-892 A.D.), appointed his son Gaafar as a crown prince over Egypt, Syria and the west, and entitled him “El-Mufawad Ela Allah”, at the same time he appointed his brother Abu Ahmed, crown prince over the provinces and entitled him El-Mawafaq Bi Allah⁸.

¹ El Hiyasat (Hala Abdel Karim Okasha), *Early Umayyad Coins Preserved in Mr. Ali Mohadeen*, a thesis for PhD, Cairo University, 2003, pp. 37-63, Al- Qasous (Nayef), *The Umayyad Coins in Syria, First Edition*, Oman, Jordan, January 1996, p. 51, No. 27/28, El Ush (Muhammad Abu El Farag), *Arabic Islamic Coins Preserved in National Museum of Qatar, Part One*, El-Dawha, 1984, pp. 125-210, Central Bank of Oman, *the Coins History of the Sultanate of Oman*, Maskat, 1990, p.12, No. 1-1, p. 14, No. 1-2, Al-Khazragy (Abdel Majid) and El Sharaan (Nayef Abdallah), *The Dinar through Islamic Ages*, Jiddah, 1422 A.H., pp. 9-24, No. 51-53, Nicol (Norman D.) & El-Nabarawy (Rafaat), *Catalog of the Islamic Coins, Glass weights, dies and Medals in Egyptian National Library*, Cairo, U.S.A. 1982, PP 2-12, Nos 44-48

² Al-Khazragy, *The Dinar through Islamic Ages*, pp. 25-80, Obaydet (Hossam Ali Abdallah), *The Coins of Caliph Abu El Abbas Ahmed El Mutamed ala Allah (256-279 A.H./ 869-892 A.D.)*, a thesis for Master Degree, El Yarmouk University, 1997, pp. 18-96, Norman & others, *Catalog of the Islamic Coins*, pp13-43, Nos 481-1600.

³ Norman & others, *Catalog of the Islamic Coins*, pp. 142-144, Nos 4462-4555.

⁴ Al-Khazragy, *The Dinar through Islamic Ages*, pp. 129-132, num. 1-9.

⁵ Al-Khazragy, *The Dinar through Islamic Ages*, pp.85-89, num. 1-11, p.103-105, num. 1-2.

⁶ Al-Khazragy, *The Dinar through Islamic Ages*, pp.112-127, num. 1-59.

⁷ Al Shehaby (Qutaiba), *a Glossary of the Titles of the Court of the Sultan in Islamic States*, Damascus, 1999, p. 116.

⁸ El Tabary (Abu Gaafar Muhammad, died 310 A.H.), *the History of Nations and Kings*, Part 9, Beirut, 1968, p. 514; Ibn El Atheer (Ezz El Din Abu El Hassan Ali Ibn El Karam, died 630 A.H), *the Complete in History, Part 7*, Beirut, 1982, p. 277.

The caliph El-Mu'tamid ordered to inscribe his son's name Ga'faar on coins and then entitled him El-Mufawad ela Allah¹. The name Gaafar was written on Abbasid dinars during the reign of the Abbasid caliph El-Mutamid ala Allah since 256 A.H until 263 A.H².

This clarifies what was mentioned before by Hossam Ubydat³, that the name of Gaafar was engraved on coins before 260A.H. This title, El-Mufawad ela Allah, was found on the Abbasid coins since 260A.H, the date in which he was given this title, also, it was found on Tulunid dinars and dirhams until 279 A.H, when his father dethroned him from the reign and appointed his nephew Ahmed Bin El-Muwafaq as a crown prince and mentioned his name after the caliph in Friday ceremony⁴.

It is noticed that the title of Gaafar "El-Mufawad ela Allah", was written on coins of Egypt and Syria since 260 A.H, while the title of Talha "El-Muwafaq be Allah" was written on the coins of the eastern provinces of the Abbasid state at the same time.

This comes as a reason of the caliph having a brother who competed against him and wanted to rule –who was Talha- and having a son –Gaafar- so he divided the provinces of the Abbasid state between them and appointed both as crown princes in 260 A.H., as it was mentioned before.

The relationship between Ahmed Ibn Tulun and El-Muwafaq Talha was bad, as Talha was not satisfied with Ibn Tulun and his son Khumaraweih, so Talha interfered in their matter and tried to exile Ibn Tulun of Egypt, but his trials failed and then they come to a reconciliation between them⁵.

¹ Ramadan (Atef Mansour Mohamed), *the Encyclopedia of Coins in Islamic World*, Cairo, 2004, pp. 255-256, Al-Khazragy, *the Dinar through Islamic Ages*, 60-133.

² Al-Khazragy, *the Dinar through Islamic Ages*, pp. 58-95, num. 127-132.

³ Obaydet, *Caliph Abu Al-Abbas coins*, p.185

⁴ Ramadan, *the Encyclopedia of Coins*, p. 256

⁵ El Rafee (Abdel Rahman) and Ashour (Saeed Abdel Fattah), *Egypt in the Middle Ages from Arab Conquest to Ottoman Invasion*, Cairo 1993, pp. 91-93.

The inner margin has an incomplete basmala, then the kind of coin which is dirham. The name of mint in which the last two letters appeared صر shows that it is definitely the name of Egypt “Misir”, even though the first letter م is obliterated and not obvious on the dirham. Also, the last three letters of the word dirham are obliterated, then the struck date 265 appears, which means that this dirham was struck in Egypt in 265 during the reign of Ahmed Ibn Tulun.

In the outer margin of the obverse parts of the fourth and fifth verses of al-Roum Sura are engraved: "لله الأمر من قبل ومن بعد ويومئذ يفرح المؤمنون بنصر الله".

The first caliph who inscribed this Quranic text was the Abbasid caliph Abd-Allah El-Ma'moun (198-218 A.H), after his victory over his brother the caliph Mohammed Al-Amin (193-198 A.H), who was killed in 198A.H., then El-Ma'moun ascended the throne instead of him.

This text lasted on the Islamic coins until the fall down of the Abbasid caliphate by Hulagu in 656 A.H/1258 A.D, also this text was inscribed on the coins of the temporary Abbasid states until the eighth A.H/ fourteenth A.D century.

The text of the center on the reverse is composed of six horizontal lines engraved in floral Kufic script, "لله - محمد - رسول الله - المعتمد على الله - أحمد بن طولون", "lilaah-Mohammed - Rasul Allah- El-Mo'tamed ala Allah- Ahmed ibn Tulun", which means “for Allah, Mohammed is his Messenger, El-Mo'tamed ala Allah- Ahmed ibn Tulun”.

This phrase started to appear on the reverse from the Abbasid Age in replacement of the monotheism text adopted from the Holy Book Quran during the Umayyad Period, as the Abbasids took a slogan for themselves “Satisfaction of Muhammad’s Relatives”.

This slogan started on the Abbasid coins and contemporary states in East and West Islamic world. In the fifth line of the centre of the reverse the name of the Abbasid Caliph El-Mo'tamed ala Allah. He is Abu El-Abbass Ahmed ibn Gaafar El-Motawakel, who was enthroned in 256 A.H. after exiling Caliph El-Muhtadi bi

Allah¹, who ruled for 23 years and six months², and died in Al-Salaam city in 219 A.H. and was buried in Sammaraa. There was anarchy by the Turks during his reign and the niggers' revolution in the South of Iraq in 256 A.H. He entrusted his brother to get rid of them, which he succeeded in doing and defeated them, killing their leader in 270 A.H.³. During his reign, Ahmed ibn Tulun ruled Egypt as an independent ruler.

In the mid of the third century A.H. / ninth century A.D., the Abbasid caliphs were in bad state of weakness, while the Turk commanders controlled the affairs in the Abbasid caliphate. They had the power to assign and dethrone the caliphs, and in turn, the caliphs were very keen on getting their satisfaction by granting each one of them a province to run for his own interest and the Turkish commander used to stay in the capital of the caliphate. Fear of plots and conspiracies that may lead to his exile made him send a representative to run the province on his behalf⁴. That happened when Caliph El-Mo'taz bi Allah granted the Turkish commander Bak Bak Egypt in 254 A.H. He chose his stepson Ahmed ibn Tulun to be his Vice in ruling Egypt. When Bak Bak was killed, the Turkish commander Margoukh ruled Egypt, who chose his son-in-law Ahmed ibn Tulun to be his Vice as well⁵. Besides, he overcame Barqa and Alexandria. Upon the death of Margoukh in 258 A.H, Ahmed obtained all his privileges, which included engraving his name on coins, calling his name in Friday ceremony⁶. He declared his independence with the rule of Egypt, and ruled until he died in 270 A.H. Ibn Tulun used to memorize the Holy Book Quran and had a lovely voice and used to spend every month one thousand dinars on poor people as a charity.

¹ Al Massoudi (Abu elhassan Ali), *Morooj Al Zahab and Maaref Al Jawhar*, Part 4, Beirut, 1965, p. 111.

² El Samer (Faisal), *El Zing Revolution*, Baghdad, 1971, p. 176, Al Qaisy (Nahed Abdel Razek), *the Coins in Iraq*, Baghdad, 2002, pp. 218-219.

³ Ibn Khaldoun (Abdel Rahman bin Mohamed), *Tareekh El Aaber wa Diwan Al Mobtada wa Al Khabar fi Ayaam Al Arab wa Al Ajab wa Al Barbar*, Al Sultan Al Akbar, Part 4, Beirut, 1992, p. 357.

⁴ El Rafee, *Egypt during Middle Ages*, p.87.

⁵ El Kendy (Abu Omar Mohamed bin Youssef), died 350 A.H., *Kitab al Wolaa wa Kitab El Qodaa*, Beirut, 1908, pp. 125-126.

⁶ Fahmy (Abdel Rahman), *Encyclopedia of Arabic Coins and Metrology Science*, Cairo, 1965, pp. 113-115.

Also, he used to order slaughtering cows and sheep to cook them in his house and then call who wants to come to the palace of the Prince to eat and to take with him whatever he wants. Ibn Tulun used to look at them to see their happiness and that used to please him, so he used to thank God for his blessings, as Al-Maqrizy mentioned in his book; *Al-Mwa'ez wa Al-Itibar*¹.

In the margin of the reverse, a quotation of the Holy Quran was taken, which includes part of verse 33 from al-Tawba Sura and a part of verse 9 of al-Saff Sura “Muhammad the Messenger of God sent him with guidance and the right religion to appear it on all doctrines even though the polytheists hate it”.

The Tulunid dirhams are very rare that Dr. Abdel Rahman Fahmy², who published the Tulunid coins preserved in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo, did not publish any dirhams dating back to Ahmed ibn Tulun. Also, Ibrahim El Gaber³, who published the coins of Ahmed ibn Tulun preserved in the National Museum of Qatar did not publish any dirham belonging to Ahmed ibn Tulun, but published some Tulunid dinars minted in al-Rafiqah in 266 A.H./267 A.H., Misr 266 A.H. / 270 A.H. / 286 A.H., so there are no Tulunid dirhams published dating back to 265 A.H. or before.

The oldest published Tulunid dirham minted in Misr dated 267 A.H. was published by Henry Lavoix⁴. That dirham bears the same texts except number 5 in the inner margin of the obverse in the dirham under study of Adnan Garwa, while in Paris dirham, the number in the margin is replaced by 7, so both dirhams bear the same mint which was Misr but the only difference in the date of minting. Thus, the dirham under study bears a date that is two years older than the Parisian dirham. This dirham is similar to another published by Miles and minted in Misr in 265 A.H., except that the former

¹ El Rafee, *Egypt during Middle Ages*, p. 87, 94.

² Fahmy, *Encyclopedia of Arabic Coins*, p.79-815, num. 2905-3016.

³ El Gaber (Ibrahim Gaber), *the Arabic Islamic Coins in National Museum of Qatar*, Part 2, Qatar, 1992, pp. 12-14.

⁴ Lavoix (Henri), *Catalogue des Monnaies Musulmans de la Bibliotheaques Nationale*, vol.111, Egypt et Syrie, Paris, 1887, p.6; Obaydet, *The Coins of Caliph Abu El Abbas*, p.115, weight 2,45 grams, 24mm.

includes six lines in the centre of the reverse, in which the sixth line has the name of Ahmed ibn Tulun beneath the name of the Abbasid caliph, while the other one has five lines only, and thus, does not include the name of Ahmed ibn Tulun¹.

Conclusion:

So, this dirham of Adnan Qarwa collection is considered as the first and oldest Tulunid minted in Egypt bearing the name of Ahmed ibn Tulun, either in Egypt's mint or any other Tulunid one. There are no equivalent Tulunid dirhams published before in Egypt, Syria, or Arabian Peninsula. Consequently, this dirham proved that Ahmed ibn Tulun minted dirhams in Misr mint since 265 A.H. under his name at least which was known before and published in this research for the first time, which is considered as a new addition to the Tulunid coins in general and Tulunid dirhams minted in Egypt in particular.

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¹ Obaydet, *The Coins of Caliph Abu El Abbas*, p.32-79, weight 2,82 grams, 25,5 mm.

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