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Qābis: A New Fatimid Mint

قابس: دارسك فاطمية جديدة

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Abstract:

The present paper adds a new Fatimid mint, which has not been highlighted yet, namely Qābis, by studying and publishing a dinar minted in Qābis dated 416 AH. in the name of the Fatimid Caliph Al-Zahir li-I'zaz Din Allah, kept in the Collection of Mohamed Khalil Ibrahim, UAE. It restudies a dinar minted in Qābis dated 418 AH. in the name of the same Caliph and preserved in the National Museum of Qatar, which was published in 1992, but Nicol misread the minting place as Aleppo. The paper corrects the wrong reading and demonstrates the correct one of the mint as Qābis. Consequently, Qābis is added to the Fatimid mints.

Keywords: Fatimid caliphate, mint, Qābis, Al-Zahir li-I'zaz Din Allah, Dinar, Shi'a, Qatar, Khalil Collection, Banu Hilal, Banu Rashid, Banu Jami, Banu Hafs, Banu Zirid.

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الملخص:

يضيف هذا البحث إلى المسكوكات الفاطمية دار سك جديدة لم تكن معروفة من قبل، وهي قابس وذلك من خلال نشر ودراسة دينار ضرب قابس مؤرخ بسنة ٤١٦هـ باسم الخليفة الفاطمي الظاهر لإعزاز دين الله، محفوظ بمجموعة السيد محمد خليل إبراهيم بالإمارات، كما يقوم هذا البحث بإعادة دراسة دينار ضرب قابس مؤرخ بسنة ٤١٨هـ، باسم الخليفة الظاهر أيضاً محفوظ بمتحف قطر الوطني تم نشره في سنة ١٩٩٢م، وقام نيكول بقراءة مكان السك حلب، وهي قراءة غير صحيحة وتم في هذا البحث تصويب هذه القراءة الخاطئة وتأكيد القراءة الصحيحة لمكان السك على أنها قابس ومن ثم إضافة دار سك جديدة وهي قابس لدور السك الفاطمية من خلال هذه الدراسة.

كلمات مفتاحية: الخلافة الفاطمية، دار سك، قابس، الظاهر لإعزاز دين الله، دينار، الشيعة، قطر، مجموعة خليل، بنو هلال، بنو رشيد، بنو جامع، بنو حفص، بنو زيري.

During the Fatimid caliphate, many mints were established in several affiliated cities and provinces because the Fatimid caliphs paid due attention to employing coins to play its economic role as a means of interaction, on the one hand, and its media and propaganda role, on the other. The Fatimid monetary system largely relied on main mints, as shown in the several successive coins they minted. The coins of other mints were used to perform a media and propaganda role for the Fatimid caliphate and its Shi'a doctrine. These coins were few but documented the role of these mints in issuing Fatimid coins.

Qābis was one of those Fatimid mints that produced coins rarely in the Fatimid era, especially al-Zahir li-I'zaz Din Allah (411-427 AH/ 1020-1035 AD).

Unfortunately, the most important publications about Fatimid Coins by Norman Nicol: *A Corpus of Fāṭimid Coins*. Nicol did not consider a Fatimid dinar minted in Qābis dated 418AH (3.43gr- 23.5mm). In the name of Al-Zahir li-I'zaz Din Allah preserved in the National Museum of Qatar, was published by Ibrahim Aljaber in 1992¹.

¹ Aljaber, Ibrahim; *Arab Islamic Coins, National Council for Culture, Arts & Heritage*. Doha, Qatar, 1992, p.113, No. 2514.

Nicol wrongly reread Qābis (قابس) mint as Aleppo (حلب) and recategorized it under the dinars of Aleppo in the reign of Al-Zahir li-I'zaz Din Allah¹. He added a note: mint misread as,² قابس , that Ibrahim Aljaber read the mint of this dinar wrongly as Qābis. Unfortunately, Coins Qatar Museum Site No. G989 (plate 1, fig.2) classified it under an unknown mint³.

	Obverse in three circles	Reverse in three circles
Field within a circle	محمد رسول الله علي ولي الله	الظاهر لإعزاز دين الله أمير المؤمنين
inner margin within a circle	لا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له	عبد الله ووليه علي أبو الحسن الامام
outer margin within a circle	محمد رسول الله أرسله بالهدى ودين الحق ليظهره على الدين كله ولو كره المشركون	بسم الله ضرب هذا الدين بقابس سنة ثمان عشر وأربعماية

(Plate 1) A Fatimid Dinar, Al-Zahir li-I'zaz Din Allah, minted in Qābis in 418, preserved in the National Museum of Qatar, No. G989.



Reviewing the image published by Aljaber in the Catalog illustrates that the mint is undoubtedly Qābis, and it was misread by Norman Nicol as Aleppo.

In this paper, we publish a rare dinar preserved in the collection of Mohamed Khalil Ibrahim (UAE), minted in Qābis (قابس) dated 416AH (4.15 gm - 21 mm, 6H, plate 2, Fig 1) in the name of Al-Zahir li-I'zaz Din Allah.

The inscriptions as follow:

	Obverse in three circles	Reverse in three circles
Field within a circle	محمد رسول الله علي ولي الله	الظاهر لإعزاز دين الله أمير المؤمنين

¹. Nicol, Norman Douglas; *A Corpus of Fāṭimid Coins*. Gilio Bernardi, Trieste 2006, p.193, No. 1394.

². Nicol; *A Corpus of Fāṭimid Coins*, p.193,

³. <https://coins.collecto.art/>, No. G989.

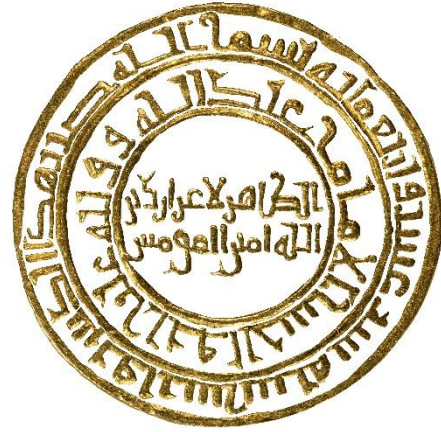
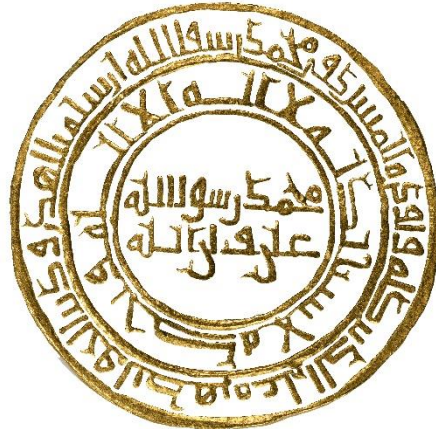
inner margin within a circle	لا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له	عبدالله ووليه علي أبو الحسن الامام
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outer margin within a circle	محمد رسول الله أرسله بالهدى ودين الحق ليظهره على الدين كله ولو كره المشركون	بسم الله ضرب هذا الدين بقابس سنة ست عشر وأربعماية
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(Plate 2) A Fatimid Dinar, Al-Zahir li-I'zaz Din Allah, minted in Qābis in 416, preserved in the collection of Mohamed Khalil Ibrahim (UAE).



(Fig 1)



This issue was reproduced, among others, by al-Zahir li-I'zaz Din Allah during his reign. Al-Zahir had three different styles of dinar. Between 411 and 420AH, there was one which copied the second type of coinage of al-Hakim(386-411AH / 996-1020AD): two-line field legends with double marginal legends. This is by far the best-known type of the reign, which is consistent with the style of these dinars minted in Qābis(قابس), From 421 to 424AH, the dinars copied the second type of coinage of al-Mu'izz (341-365AAH/ 952-975AD), the "three circle" type. They did, however, have either single letters or the word 'adl, "just", in the small central circle on each phase. From 425 to 427AH, the dinars copied the type of al-Mansur (334-341AH/ 945-952AD), except that the mint and date formula was placed in the obverse margin surrounding the kalima.

This dinar was minted in the same type as the previous dinar minted in Qābis(قابس) 418AH, but they only differ in date. This dinar is the first issue of Qābis(قابس), dated 416AH, followed by the other, dated 418AH. Both issues confirm that Qābis(قابس) was the Fatimid mint in the reign of Al-Zahir li-I'zaz Din Allah, as other mints that produced rare issues.

The activity of Qābis(قابس) mint in the reign of Caliph Al-Zahir li-I'zaz Din Allah is closely related to historical narratives on the significant economic and commercial importance of this city in the Fatimid era, as reported by Alhemiari¹:

Qābis is a city in Ifriqiya. It is four stages from Qairouan. It is a Jaridi land. Moreover, it is eight days from Tripoli. Qābis is a large ancient city with a great rock wall. It has a strong fortress and vast suburbs. It contains hotels and baths. It is encompassed by a large trench, to which they flow water if they are attacked by an enemy to provide great protection. Qābis has a valley to irrigate its orchards, land, and farms, which originated from Ain Khararah in a mountain between the south and the west and flows into the sea. Qābis is three miles from the sea, where most of its gardens exist. These gardens are fruitful, e.g., fennel and bananas. It is the only land in Ifriqiya with bananas. It has many mulberry trees and much silk, which is the best and finest in Ifriqiya. It is a desert sea city because the desert is close. It is reported that in Qābis only three opposite things could be combined on a table: Fresh fish, fresh deer meat, and fresh dates. It is the capital and center of this region. Moreover, people used to say that Qābis is the Damascus of Morocco.

Qābis(قابس) played a key and influential role in the history of the Fatimid caliphate in the reign of al-Mustansir Billah (427-487AH / 1035-1094AD), where the Banu Hilal tribes resided, as Al-Mustansir Billah sent them to take revenge from Al-Mu'izz ibn Badis (406-453AH / 1015-1061AD), who separated himself from the Fatimid Caliphate. Banu Hilal minted dinars in the name of Al-Mustansir Billah to

¹ Al-Himyari (Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Abdullah bin Abdul-Muneim 866 AH/1461 AD): *Al-Rawd Al-Mu'tar fi Khabar Al-Aqtar*, edited by: Ihsan Abbas. Beirut, 1984 AD.

announce its return to the Fatimid Caliphate. Later, it was reactivated as a mint during the reign of Banu Rashid or Banu Jami in Qābis(قابس), and the sixth Hijri century witnessed its maximum activity during the reign of Banu Hafs.



(Fig 2) A Comparison of the two dinars of Qābis 416 & 418 and stressing the name of the mint based on form.

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- <https://coins.collecto.art/>, No. G989.

