A Rare Dinar in the name of Abu ‘Ali Mansur Al-Ḥākim bi Amr Allāh, the Fatimid Caliph (386- 411AH/ 996- 1021 AD) Minted in Zawílah 404 AH*.

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Abstract:

Zawílah is considered one of the Moroccan mint house that issued minted coins during the Fatimid period, but the coins we have received from mint house is very rare, so this research aims to study A Rare Dinar in the name of Abu ‘Ali Mansur Al-Ḥākim bi Amr Allāh, the Fatimid Caliph (386-411AH/ 996-1021 AD) minted in Zawílah 404 AH., and it considered the only specimen, and the second specimen of the coins of Zawílah during the reign of Fatimid caliph Al-Ḥākim bi Amr Allāh.

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The name of Zawílah started as a mint house during the region of Fatimid Caliph Al-Ḥākim bi Amr Allāh in 397 AH\(^1\).

About this dinar, which I'm going to study in this paper, minted in "Zawílah" and dated 404 AH, hasn't published before, and Nicol hasn't published a similar to this dinar, and considered the only specimen so it a unique till now from this mint, and the second specimen of the coins of Zawílah during the reign of Fatimid caliph Al-Ḥākim bi Amr Allāh, as we have a unique dinar dated 397 AH. The inscriptions of this dinar as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Obv</th>
<th>Rev</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Field, within circle</td>
<td>Field, within double circle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>محمد رسول الله</td>
<td>الحاكم بأمر الله</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>علي ولي الله</td>
<td>أمير المؤمنين</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>لا الله الا الله وحده لا شريك له</td>
<td>عبد الله وولي المنتصر أبو علي الإمام</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>يسمن الله عضب هذا الديم بزو(بليمة ) سنة سبع</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>تبليغه علي الدين كله ولو كره الشيركون</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Al-Ḥākim bi Amr Allah, the Fatimid Caliph struck three different types of dinars. The first, was struk immediately after his accession, known from only two mints, was minted in Misr 386AH. and Al-Mahdya 387H. These type had four-line field legends and double circular legends.

The second type - which the first dinar minted in "Zawílah", dated 397 AH, was attributed -very well-known coinage had two-line field legends and double circular legends. This was struck from 387 to 401AH.

The third type– which this dinar minted in "Zawílah", dated 404 AH, was attributed- was a great improvement over the second, with a large field and a single

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circular legend on each face of the coin⁴, From 401 to 404 AH. the Caliph's name was mentioned alone, while from 404 to 411 AH. the name of his heir apparent was added beneath his own name².

This dinar of "Zawīlah" dated 404 AH. is preserved in the private collection of Mr. 'Adel 'Abd Allah in Tripoli in Libya (W.3.76 gr.D.24 mm,pl.1,fig.1,3)³. The inscriptions of this dinar as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Obv</th>
<th>Rev</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Field, within circle</strong></td>
<td><strong>Rev</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>على الله للا حماية ولا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له محمد رسول الله ولي الله وله الدفء الممرض</td>
<td>ولله المصبر أبو علي الإمام الحاكم بأمر الله أمير المؤمنين</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Margin, within circle</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>محمد رسول الله هو الله الراص في الحق ليظهره علي الدعوت كله ولو كره المشركين</td>
<td>بسم الله ضرب هذا الدينار برفقة سنة أربع وأربع مائة</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pl.1: AV dinar "Zawīlah" dated 404 AH. preserved in the private collection of Mr.'Adel 'Abd Allah in Tripoli in Libya.

Fig.1: AV dinar "Zawīlah" dated 404 AH.

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¹ This dinar attributed to type N1 in Nicol, Nicol, A Corpus of Fāṭimid Coins, p.121,type N1.
² (Robert Darley-Doran), THE Coinage of Islam, Collection of William Kazan, Beirut 1983,p.44.
³ Many thanks to Mr. 'Adel 'Abd Allah in Tripoli in Libya.
So, this dinar minted in "Zawílah", dated 404 AH, is considered an important addition to the coinage of Fatimid caliph Al-Ḥākim bi Amr Allāh, and the coinage of Zawílah, which we have only one issue from the period of Al-Ḥākim bi Amr-Allāh, which dated 397 AH, as I mentioned, but the important note we like to discuss it now that, Zawílah town:

The former scholars in numismatics mentioned that, this town is Zawílah Al-Mahdya, which founded by Fatimid caliph Al-Mahdi Bi-Ilah (297 AH. 910 AD. – 322 AH. 934 AD.) to inhabit the common people when he founded his town "Al-Mahdiya". In Baldwin's Islamic Coin Auction 19, 25 April 2012; Lot 113, we find this comment about Zawílah mint: Zawila is a market town outside the walls on the landward side of al-Mahdiya. Presumably this mint was established as a convenience for merchants.

But we must take that opinion carefully because Al-Mahdya had a main mint house, so there was no reason to build a new one in Zawílah side, as the heavy production of coins of Al-Mahdya was enough for commercials deals in Al-Mahdiya and Zawílah also, some point of views suggested that Al-Mahdya mint or Baraqa produced this coins in the name of Zawílah.

But if we have a look to the other towns named Zawílah, we will find another town was important, splendor, and flourished during Fatimid period, called Zawílah lied in southern Libya. In this paper I will introduce this new opinion in the light of the information referred to geographical sources, so it is quite better at beginning of this study to mention the historical geographical sources which talk about “Zawílah”.

Al- Ya'qūbi (d.292 H)1, the first Geographer who gave some details when he talked about “Zawílah” saying that:

ورأى ودان مما يلي القبلة بلد زويلة وسكانها قوم مسلمون اباضية، ويبها اخلات من اهل خراسان والبصرة والكوفة.

Al-Bakri (d.487 AH.)2 said that:

\[\text{Reference 1: } \text{Al- Ya'qūbi (d.292 H), Al-Buldan, Leiden 1860.p.123.}\]
\[\text{Reference 2: } \text{Al- Bakri (d.487 AH), Al-Mughrib, Cairo.nd.p.10.}\]
( زويلة مدينة غير مسورة في وسط صحرا، وهي أول حي بلاد السودان، وبها جامع وحمام، وأسواق يجتمع بها)

الرافق من كل جهة منها، ومنها يفتقير قاصدهم وتتهرب طرفيهم، وهم ينخل ويبسط للذرو سقي الاباء.

Al-Idrisi (d.564 AH.)¹ gave more details when he talked about “Zawilah” saying that:

زويلة بناها عبد الله بن خطاب الهواري، وسكنها هو وبنو عمه في سنة 306 هـ، وهي مسورة لهذا الرجل، وله إشتهار اسمها، وهي الآن عارية، وهي مدينة صغيرة، وبها أسواق ومنها يدخل إلى جمل بلاد السودان، وشرب أهلها من أباد عذبة، ولهما نخل كثيف، وهم السافرون يأبونها بابنها، الفرقة من جماعتهم، وهم يمرون من أمر يحتاج إلى.

The Author of Al-Istebsar book (6 century AH)² said that:

مدينة زويلة مدينة كبيرة قديمة في الصحراء.

Yaqut (d.626 AH.)³ gave different details when he talked about “Zawilah” saying that:

( زويلة مدينة كبيرة قديمة في الصحراء يشعرين فيها قبل المxes، ولهما نخلة صلبة، وهم السافرون يأبونها بابنها، الفرقة من جماعتهم، وهم يمرون من أمر يحتاج إليه).

Al-Qazwini (d.682 AH.)⁴ gave the same details when he talked about “Zawilah” saying that:

مدينة بآفريقيا غير مسورة في أول حدود السودان، ولاهلها خاصة عجيبة في معرفة آثار القدم، ليس لغيرهم تلك الخاصية حتى يعرفوا أثر قدوم العرب والبلدي والرحيل والمرأة والعبد الآبق والأمة.

Al-Hemyary (d.8 century AH.)⁵ gave more details when he talked about “Zawilah” saying that:

زويلة: مدينة كبيرة قديمة في الصحرا، بقرب بلاد كنمن السود، وأهلها يقال زويلة ابن خطاب، وبينها وبين سوقها ابن منكود ست عشرة مرحلة، وهي صغيرة بها أسواق، ومنها يدخل إلى بلاد السودان، وشرب أهلها من آباد عذبة، وهم نخل كثير نمرهما حسن، والإمراء تجول بواجهها وتم jane بأهلها، وكان بها عبد الله بن خطاب.

¹ Al- Idrisi (d.564 H), Nuzhat Al-Mushtaq, Leiden 1866.p.231
² Al- Istebsar fi 'Ajaeb al- Amsar, Baghdad.p.146.
⁴ Al-Qazwini, Ather al-Bllad ,Beirut.nd.p.94.
So, why we leave this important information which were mentioned by different sources regarding this town “Zawílah” when we study the coinage of “Zawilah” to be minted in that important town which played a very important role in trade during that time?

Besides that, “Zawilah” was lying on the borders of Sudan the main source of gold to produce Fatimid coins in north Africa, so, why there was no mint house was working in “Zawilah” during that time to offer coins for the merchants and “dealers”?

Last I’d like to point to this new opinion needs more study and research but, I try to open this door here before the scholars to review their opinions in studying the coinage of “Zawílah” again, and not to depend on the inherited point of view from a scholar to another always, without scientific review discussion for this information knowledge.
I hope to find enough knowledge in future to help us to make sure in which town named “Zwelah”, these coins have been minted, “Zawilah" of Al–Mahdy or “Zawilah" Beni Al–Khatab.

It is worth to mention that; “Zawilah" produced more dinars and dirhams during the region of Fatimid caliph Al –Zahir (411AH-1021AD - 427 AH.1036AD.) in 414 AH.\footnote{Zambaur, E.V., Die Munzpragungen des Islams. 1 Band. Wies Baden 1968.p.134, Nicol, A Corpus of Fāṭimid Coins, p.194, No.1402-1403,type A1.} and 415 AH.\footnote{Baldwin's Islamic Coin Auction 19, 25 April 2012, Lot. 113(4.12g).Zeno,No. #109292.} (pl.2,fig.2)which was the last year , in which we have coins belong to that town during Fatimid period.

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|}
\hline
Obv & Rev \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}


Fig 2:AV dinar " Zawilah " dated 415 AH.
Fig. 3: The name of "Zawílah" mint, AV dinar "Zwelah" dated 404 AH.

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- Sotheby, 14-10-1981.