

A Rare Samanid fils Struck in Bukhara in 358AH. Bearing the Name of Prince Al-Mansour Bin Noah

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Abstract:

This research is concerned in publishing and studying a rare Samanid fils (Arabic coin) which is firstly to be published and studied. This fils had been struck in Bukhara in 358 AH., in the name of prince Al-Mansour Bin Noah¹ and bearing the name "Fae'k", over the top inscriptions of the central obverse. It is preserved in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo. Its general shape has been accurately and scientifically described, and its inscriptions and decorative motifs have been analyzed and explained under the light of the different circumstances of the aforementioned Samanid prince. Also, the Samanid fulus that bear the name of Prince Al-Mansour bin Noah, which were struck in Bukhara in the year 358 AH, and carry the name "Fae'k"

with central inscriptions of the obverse have been classified into five prototypes, describing them, analyzing their inscriptions and comparing them. In addition to another comparison among the fils under study, and the five prototypes of those fulus was made to clarify the differences between them and the uniqueness of the fils under study which firstly to be published and studied. Thus, it represents a new addition to the Sammanid coins in general, and the fulus of the prince Al-Mansour Bin Noah that were struck in Bukhara in 358 AH bearing the name "Fae'k", particularly.

Key words:

Fils, Samanid, Mansour, Bukhara, Fae'k.

Introduction:

The Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo owns a rare¹ Samanid fils (Arabic coin) that had struck Bukhara in 358 AH., carrying the name of prince Al-Mansour Bin Noah (350-366 A.H./961-977A.D) (figure no.1) it has never been published or studied before, and it is published and studied at this research for the 1st time.

The general outlook of that fils is characterized by that its face include central inscriptions in 4 parallel lines included within a circle that is surrounded by inscriptions

In Thursday the 11th of Shawwal at the year 350 A.H. the prince Abd Almalek bin Noah the owner of Khorasan had fallen of his horse's back and passed away, then his prime minister Abu Mohamed bin Mohamed Al-Balaamy in agreement with the leader of the Sammanid army had announced the prince's son Nasr bin Abd Almalek to be the follower of his father, but the rest of the leaders and Sammanid princes and king's men didn't agree including prince Abu Alhassan bin Abd Allah Faeek and they attacked Abd Almalek palace and removed Nasr from the throne only one day later to his taking of the throne and they announced his uncle Abu Saleh Mansour bin Noah as the owner of the throne instead, Al-Balaamy agreed to that and he continued on his position as the prime minister and the prince Mansour bin Noah kept on running the Sammanid throne till he died in Bukhara in Shawwal at year 366 A.H/May 977 A.D.

in two margins that aren't separated by any circles. The outer margin inscriptions are surrounded from the exterior by another circle. While the back of the coin includes central inscriptions in 5 lines within a granular circle that is surrounded by inscriptions in only one margin that is surrounded from the outside by another circle.

Those inscriptions and motifs appeared as follows:

Face	back
Center:	center:
There is no god but only Allah who has no partner	Allah Mohamed the messenger of Allah
Internal margin: the struck of this fils is in the name of Allah.	
Margin: ordered by the prince, the master and the victorious king may he be supported by Allah.	
In Bukhara year three hundred and fifty-eight	weight: 4.44 gm.
External margin: everything is to Allah before and after	diameter: 24 ml.
That's the day when believers are happy with the victory of Allah.	

In the top of the inscriptions of the center of the face there is the name Fae'k and he is Abu Alhassan bin Abd Allah Faek who was known as Faek the special as he was one of the specially chosen to raise the prince Al-Mansour Bin Noah and he exerted much effort and played a major role in handing the throne to the prince instead of his nephew Nasr bin Abd Almalek. Abbas Ikb² narrated that story that when Abd Almalek bin Noah passed away, then his prime minister Abu Mohamed bin Mohamed Al-Balaamy in agreement with Al-Batkin had announced the prince's son Nasr to be the follower of his father, but the rest of the leaders and Samanid princes and king's men didn't accept that and they attacked Abd Almalek palace and removed Nasr from the throne only one day after him taking the throne and they announced his uncle Abu Saleh Mansour bin Noah as the owner of the throne instead, Al-Balaamy agreed to that that's why he remained in his position as the prime minister. The most one who was anxious to help Al- Mansour to be the ruler was the prince Alhassan bin Abd Allah Faeek who was originally one of the Roman boys and he was at the service of Mansour bin Noah since he was a child and he was one of his private and special educators that's why he was called Faeek the special. In the last 3 lines from line 2 till line 4 in the inscriptions of the center of the face, there was the full testimony of monotheism there is no god but only Allah who has no partner. Which started to be recorded at the center of the face of the Umayyad dinars and dirhams by the same formulation and arrangement since it had been translated into Arabic at year 77AH/696AD. by the Caliph Abd Almalek bin Marwan when he translated the money and the diwans into Arabic. The full testimony of monotheism continued to be recorded on money by the same formulation and arrangement at most of the Islamic countries till the end of the Mameluke era at year 923AH/1517AD. also on the money of the other Islamic countries whether east or west of the Islamic country³. Down to the 4th and last line in inscriptions of the center of the face there was a small obscured dot.

In the inner margin there was the incomplete (basmalah) as like that "in the name of Allah" which was firstly engraved on the Sasin Arabic dirhams such as dirham of Nahr Terry at year 31AH⁴. After the incomplete (basmalah) (name of Allah) came the category of the money as "that fils was struck" then the place and date of the coinage which were Bukhara year 358 AH. Bukhara⁵ was called many names and it was the most nourished country beyond the river and it was the capital of the Samanid kings of the east since year 279 AH/892 AD. When prince Ismail bin Ahmed (279-295 AH/892-907AD.) had taken it as his capital and continued as a

capital till the fall of the Samanid country⁶ and the city at the time of the mentioned prince was the greatest⁷ country in the Islamic world. Golden, silver and copper coins were struck in Bukhara and its money at the time of prince Mansour bin Noah was characterized by recording many names on it. The money that was struck at year 358 AH had the names of Abu Bakr Al-Mohzag or Bakr, other coins had the name of Fae'k, sometimes it was written with his own title (the special, Al-Khasa). At the outer margin of the face appeared the 4th and 5th verses of Surat Al-Rome "everything is to Allah before and after. That's the day when believers are happy with the victory of Allah." That Surat was aspired to prophet Mohamed when the Persian⁸ (Sassanids) had beaten the Roman (Byzantines) and the disbelievers were happy for the Persian victory as they were heathens so those verses came to grant Muslims that the Roman victory had become too close. Those parts of the verses first appeared on the money of the Abbasid Caliph Al-Mamoun (198-218 AH/813-833 AD). they first appeared on Marro dirhams that were struck at 199 AH., then Asphahan⁹ dirhams that were struck at 202 AH., also on the dinars that were struck at 206 AH¹⁰. The reason that encouraged Al-Mamoun to record those parts of the 2 verses is that he wanted to tell people that he was right when he disobeyed his brother Mohamed Al-Amin who separated him from being next to have the crown, so Al-Mamoun paid back by ordering never to mention his brother name on coinage or Friday's prayer speech, that's when a war started between the 2 brothers at year 195 AH/810 AD, that ended at year 198 AH/813 AD by killing Al-Amin and Al-Mamoun had inherited the throne of the Abbasid country¹¹. That Quran script of Surat Al-Rome kept on being recorded over the money of various Islamic countries till the end of the 8th century Ah/14th AD.

In the inscriptions of the center of the back, the word Allah was engraved at the first line, at the 2nd line was the word Mohamed while at the third there were the words "the messenger of Allah" and in the 4th and 5th lines there were the words Mansour bin Noah as in Thursday the 11th of Shawwal at the year 350 A.H. the prince Abd Almalek bin Noah the owner of Khorasan had fallen of his horse's back and passed away¹², then his prime minister Abu Mohamed bin Mohamed Al-Balaamy in agreement with Al-Baktin the leader of the Samanid army had announced the prince's son Nasr bin Abd Almalek to be the follower of his father, but the rest of the leaders and Samanid princes and king's men didn't agree including prince Abu Alhassan bin Abd Allah Faeek and they attacked Abd Almalek palace and removed Nasr from the throne only one day later to his taking of the throne and they announced his uncle Abu Saleh Mansour bin Noah as the owner of the throne instead, Al-Balaamy agreed to that and he continued on his position as the prime minister¹³ and the prince Mansour bin Noah kept on running the Samanid throne till he died in Bukhara in Shawwal at year 366 A.H/May 977 A.D¹⁴. as we mentioned earlier.

In the margin there were the words "ordered by" that statement was recorded on the money to clarify that the ruler or the Caliph or the prince is the only one who has the right to release that money. The Umayyad Caliphs kept the right to strike golden and silver coins while they left the right to strike fulus to the governors considering that fulus weren't the main currency of the country but it's a local one, can only be handled within the borders of the governorate or the region where it was struck. That's why governors competed in recording their names on the money that was coinage at their governorates and engraved the statement "ordered by" to ensure that the money was coinage under their supervision and declare their legal right to strike the money with their names¹⁵. That statement in the back margin is followed by "the prince, the

master and the victorious king” who was the prince Mansour bin Noah the Samanid who ordered the strike of that fils. The margin inscriptions ended with the prayer sentence” may he be supported by Allah” which means that Allah the almighty had supported the prince and gave him victory over his Bohin¹⁶ enemies, the sentence” may he be supported by Allah” is a prayer for its owner that Allah might provide him with his strength and grant him victory over his enemies. That particular sentence was written at the margin of the back of some money that was struck by the prince Mansour bin Noah in Bukhara particularly at year 358 AH, that’s why the prince Mansour had asked Allah for victory and support in his wars against his Bohin enemies especially that those wars continued for a long time among the Samanid and the Bohin around the irrigation province till a truce was declared between the Samanid prince Mansour bin Noah and the Bohin prince Rokn Al-Dawla which says that the prince Rokn Al-Dawla had to pay 100,000 dinars each year and his son Adad Al-Dawla must carry 50,000 dinars¹⁷ to the Samanid prince. Many of the Samanid money has reached us which carry the name of the prince Mansour bin Noah that was struck in Bukhara at year 358AH and carry the name Faek in the inscriptions of the center of the face. The money could be classified into 5 styles according to the following:

The first style:

This style includes central inscriptions in 5 parallel lines surrounded by writings in one margin in both the face and the back, those inscriptions appeared as the following:

Face	center:	back
Center:		
Faek		Allah
There is no God but		Mohamed
Only Allah		messenger of Allah
Has no partner		Mansour
The special (Al-Khasa)		bin Noah
Margin: in the name of Allah this fils was struck in Bukhara		
By the hand of Abu Bakr at year 358		
		Margin: what was ordered by the prince, the victorious king

Supported by Allah

That style is characterized from the other 4 styles by the presence of the name Faek in the top of the inscriptions of the center of the face and his nickname The special (Al-Khasa) in the bottom of the inscriptions themselves. It also includes the sentence “By the hand of Abu Bakr” in the face inscriptions which means that this fils was struck under the supervision of Abu Bakr. As far as we know, six prototypes of that style have reached us, which had been struck by Mansour bin Noah in Bukhara at year 358 Ah and carry the name Faek in the top of the inscriptions of the center of the face and have been acknowledged. The 1st model is kept at the home of Egyptian books in Cairo¹⁸, while the other 5 models are kept in Armitage museum in Petersburg¹⁹, Russia.

The second style:

It looks like the 1st style in its general appearance and the scripts of its writings and their arrangements except for the inscriptions of the margin of the face as it appeared like the

following: in the name of Allah, this fil was struck in Bukhara by the hands of Abu Bakr Al-Mohzag at year 358. This style resembles the 1st style in the inscriptions of the face center except for being characterized that it includes the full name "Abu Bakr Al-Mohzag" as the 1st style doesn't include the family title "Al-Mohzag". The 2 styles are considered the only ones of the 5 styles that carry the name of the one who ordered the coinage of the fil in Bukhara at year 358 Ah. written as "by the hands of Abu Bakr" in the 1st style and as "by the hands of Abu Bakr Al-Mohzag" in the 2nd style, in the inscriptions of the margin in the face. A model that was released by Lean Paul²⁰ and is kept in the British museum, London belongs to this style.

The third style:

It looks like the 1st style in the general appearance and the back inscriptions and their arrangements, but it differs in the face inscriptions which appeared as the following:

Face	back
Center: Faek	the same as the first style
There is no god but	
Only Allah	
Has no partner	
Bakr	

Margin: in the name of Allah, this fil was struck in bukhara at year 358.

That style is characterized from the other 4 styles (the first, second, fourth, fifth) by the presence of the name Faek at the top of the inscriptions of the face center in the 1st line, and the presence of the name Bakr down to those inscriptions.

There are two models which have been related to this style and were released, the 1st one is kept at the home of Egyptian books in Cairo²¹, and the 2nd model is among the collection of MR. Abd Allah bin Jassem Al-Motery in Dubai²².

The fourth style:

It looks like the 2nd style in the general appearance and the back inscriptions which appeared as the following:

Face	back
Center: Faek	the same as the first style
There is no god but	
Only Allah	
Has no partner	
Al-Mohzag	

Margin as in the third style.

That style is characterized from the other 4 styles (the first, second, third, fifth) by the presence of the name Faek at the top of the inscriptions of the face center in the 1st line, and the presence of the name Al-Mohzag down to those inscriptions at the 5th line, two fulus that are being kept in the Armitage museum in Russia²³ are belonging to this style.

The fifth style:

This style is characterized by the presence of a shape that looks like a triangle with its base directed to the top and the head is directed down in the face center, inside the triangle there is the name Faek and at the top of the base there is the sentence "there is no god but" written from the right to the left. Parallel to the right side from down up written the sentence "has no partner". There are other inscriptions around the center inscriptions in one margin such as in the 4th style. While the back inscriptions and their arrangements are the same in all of the five styles.

This style differs from the other 4 styles in having a triangle with the name Faek inside of it. A fil that had been released by Michener²⁴ belongs to this style and is kept at one of private collections.

Comparing the fil under the study with the fulus of the five styles that had been struck by prince Mansour bin Noah in Bukhara at year 358 AH and carry the name Faek on top of the inscriptions of the face center. We can determine that the fil under the study resembles the fulus of the 5 styles in the back inscriptions and their arrangements, but differs in the face inscriptions only. As the face of the previously mentioned 5 styles includes central inscriptions in 5 lines, while the fil under the study includes only 4 lines at the top of them there is the name Faek and there are no other names below those central inscriptions.

Also the inscriptions of the face center are surrounded by only one margin at all of the 5 styles, while the fil under the study has 2 margins around the center inscriptions. The inner margin has the incomplete "Basmalah" "in the name of god" then place and date of the coinage. The outer margin has parts of the 4th and 5th verses of Surat Al-Rome "everything is to Allah before and after. That's the day when believers are happy with the victory of Allah." That part of the mentioned verses doesn't exist in the fulus belonging to the previously mentioned 5 styles.

It is worth mentioning that the fifth style is the only style that has only the name Faek at the inscriptions of the face center so it is the most resembling one to the fil under study, but they differ in the position of the name as in the 5th style the name was inside a triangle surrounded by the full testimony of monotheism while the name Faek was at the top of the inscriptions of the face center in the studied fil. The 5th style fulus also resemble the studied fil in having no other names but Faek in the inscriptions of the face center.

From here aroused the significance of the fil, the main subject of this research paper as it is considered a whole different style from the fulus of the other five styles and represents a brand new, unknown style. In particular that this fil has never been released before or anything like it, so it is considered a new style and new addition to the Samanid money in general, and in particular, prince Mansour bin Noah money that had been struck in Bukhara at year 358 AH. and carry the name Faek.

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Face



Back

Figure no.1

Samanid fil for prince Mansour bin Noah, that had been struck in Bukhara at year 358 AH.

It has been kept at the Islamic art museum in Cairo.

No. of registration: