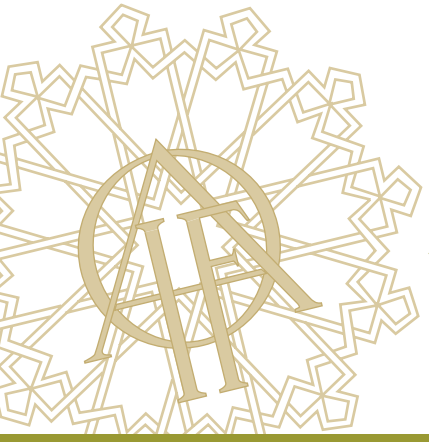
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Mahmoud Arafa

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Mahmoud ARAFA

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THERE is no doubt that the appearance of the Saljuks[1] is considered a turning point in the Islamic rule, for they played an important role in giving it a new life after it became weak, as they were able to establish one of the strongest Islamic governments in the East.

The Saljuks settled in the fertile area between Buḫāra and Samarqand after they found it necessary to emigrate from their homeland for economic reasons. Their grandfather, Salǧūq, and his followers embraced the Muslim religion and became Sunnites.[2] The Saljuks, by virtue of their Turkish nature which was distinguished by strength, courage and tribalism, in addition to their fidelity to their leader, their care for unity and solidarity, were able to form a military power prepared with war material and weapons in a few years capitalizing on the conflicts that led to wars between the Islamic forces in the East, the consequence of which was the division of the Samanid property between Ghaznavids, Qorakhanids after the decline of the Samanid rule in 389 A.H./998 A.D.[3]

The alliance of the Saljuks under the leadership of Isrā'īl b. Salǧūq b. Taqāq and ʿAlī Takkīn, the ruler of Buḫāra, and their victory over Elkikhan, king of the Khans in 418 A.H./1026 A.D.[4] are considered the real beginning of the rise of the Saljuks in the eventful arena of history, the fact that led to their conflict with Ġazna under the leadership of sultan Maḥmūd al-Ġaznawī who sent for their leader, Isrā'īl, to gain favour with him and tempt him with a meeting.[5] With the arrival of Isrā'īl and some of his confidants at the habitation of Sultan al-Ġaznawī the Sultan's men arrested them and exiled Isrā'īl in the castle of Kalingār in India and he was kept there to the time of his death.[6]

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[1] The Saljuks were a section of the Turkish tribes called "Qinîq". They lived in the farthest plains of Turkestan then dispersed in successive tidal waves of migration since the second century of the Hiğra calendar. They settled in Transoxania in the dawn of the fourth century of the Hiğra calendar. The Saljuks are named after Salǧūq b. Taqāq, the leader of the Turkish Al Ghozz and the General of the army in the time of Bayġū, king of the Turks. Cf. Ḥusaynī, *Aḫbār al-Dawla al-salǧūqiyya*. Muḥamad Iqbāl, éd. Lahour, univ. of Benjab, 1933, p. 3 ; Abū-l-fidā, *Al-Muḫtaṣar fi Aḫbār Al-Bašar* I, Cairo, 1325 A.H., p. 171-172 ; E. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*. London, 1909, p. 209-210.

[2] The neighborhood of the Saljuks. The Samanids and Ghaznavids led to their embracing the Muslim religion and becoming Sunnites, which was the religion of the rulers of the two states. The Muslim religion was embraced by the Turks, who found in it the simplicity that suited their simple nature and nomadic life in addition to the spiritual loftiness of Islam. Cf. Ibn Ṭabaṭaba, *Al-Faḫrī fi al-Adāb al-Sultāniyya*, Cairo, 1962, p. 213 ; Bartold, *A History of the Islamic Civilization*, Trans. Hamza Taher. Cairo, 1943, p. 120 ; Album, *Samanid Oversize Dirhams. Numismatic Chronicle* XVI, 1976, p. 251.

[3] Al-Rawindī, *Rāḥat al-Sudūr wa Āyāt al-Surūr fi Aḫbār al-dawla al-Sulǧūqiyya*, Cairo, 1960, p. 145.

[4] Ibn Al-Aṯīr, *Al-Kāmil fi-l-tāriḫ* VII, Beirut, 1978, p. 338.

[5] Al-Rawindī, *op. cit.*, p. 148, 149.

[6] Al-Bindārī, *Tāriḫ dawlat al-Salǧūq*, Cairo, The Encyclopedia Publishing House, 1900, p. 5.

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After the death of Isrā'īl, his brother, Mīḫā'īl b. Salğūq, became the leader of the Saljuks and they settled in Khurāsān, between Nasa and Baward after crossing Gayhūn. That was the beginning of the second stage of the struggle of the Saljuks to extend the domain of their Power, particularly after the death of Sultan Maḥmūd al-Ġaznāwī in 421 A.H./1030A.D.[7] They became such a power in the different parts of Ḫurāsān that Sultan Masʿūd Al-Ġaznāwī was forced to authorize their rule in the regions they captured in 426 A.H. /1034 A.D.[8]

Afterwards, the Saljuks and the Ghaznavids signed a peace treaty and each of their leaders was given rule over a province (a vilayet), an official ordinance (commission), a brigade and a robe of honour so that Bayġū reigned over Nāsā, Ṭuġril over Frāwah, Dā'ūd over Dāhistān, and Sultan Masʿūd returned back to Ġazna.[9] The Saljuks found in Mas'ūd's return to Ġazna an opportunity to extend the domain of their power so the Sultan's officials and office holders (Rulers or Valis) wrote to him seeking his support, complaining, and warning him against leaving the Seljuks causing havoc and ravaging the whole country with no one stopping them. In their letters they said : "The indifference to the importance and safety of Ḫūrāsān is welcomed by the Saljuks as it allows them to get the whole country under their power, then Ġazna will be their next target".[10]

When Sultan Masʿūd Al-Ġaznawī realized the danger of the increase of the power of the Saljuks and of the extending of their dominions, he wrote to the Prince of Ḫūrāsān commanding him to raise war against them to force them out of the lands under their power. The *sultān* also sent him aid and when the warriors of the two forces met at the gate of Sarḫas, towards the end of the month of *šaʿbān* in 429 A.H. / June 1038 A.D., the Saljuks won victory over the forces of the Ghaznavids, which resulted in the supremacy of the Saljuks, who, consequently, aspired to reign over Persia and Ḫūrāsān. Commenting on the event, Ibn-al-Aṯīr said : "That event led to the rule of the Saljuks over Ḫūrāsān and their incursion into the metropolis".[11] In the month of *Ḏu-l-Qiʿda* of the same Hiğrī Year, Ṭuġril b. Mīḫā'īl, the leader of the Saljuks, left to Nisabur, entered it and ascended the throne of Sultan Masʿūd Al-Ġaznāwī. He commanded the Muslim preachers to pronounce his name in their *ḫutba* (Friday Muslim Sermon) on the *minbar* (The pulpit), which led to the increase of the power of the Saljuks who became strong, showed signs of seizing power and of the pride of reign.[12]

Sultan Masʿūd Al-Ġaznāwī did not stand helpless before the loss of Nisabur but prepared a great army consisting of about 50 000 cavaliers (horsemen) and men of the infantry, as well as 300 elephants in the forefront. They all went from Ġazna to Ḫūrāsān with the aim of punishing the Saljuks and teaching them a lesson. There were many battles between the two parties, which ended with the decisive battle of Dāndānqān in which the Saljuks won overwhelming victory over the Ġaznavīds who, helpless and empty-handed, fled, where the Saljuks had seized their war material, weapons and riding animals, in addition to numberless captives. That was in the month of *Ramadān* 431 A.H. / July 1040 A.D.[13]

[7] Ibn-Ḫaldūn, *Al-'Ibar wa Dīwān al-Mubtada' wa-l-ḫabar* IV, Beirut, 1979, p. 378.
[8] Al-Rawindī, *op. cit.*, p. 155, 156. Al-Ḥusaynī, *Ibid.*, p. 9-10.
[9] Al-Bayhaqī, *Tāriḫ al-Bayhaqī*, 1956, p. 528.
[10] Al-Bayhaqī, *op. cit.*, p. 660.
[11] Al-Ḥusaynī, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
[12] Ibn Al-Aṯīr, *op. cit.*, part. 8, p. 35.
[13] Al-Bayhaqī, *op. cit.*, p. 663.

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The victory of the Saljuks was attributed to their being well-prepared for their battle with the Ghaznavids, for the Saljuks settled in the desert between Sarḫas and Merv, in the place which gave the battle its name.

As for the Ghaznavids, they exhibited weakness despite their massive war material. According to al-Bayhaqī, "Sultan Masʿūd rode to Merv and was followed by the warriors, who were so weak that they seemed to hesitate. It was a very hot day and their provisions were scarce. There was no forage and their riding animals were skinny. After the battle, there was confusion, there was disorder, and the Ghaznavid fled, each of them caring only for his own safety. Defeated, Sultan Masʿūd and his men went to Ġazna … furious and upset, as though it were doomsday".[14] It was the battle of Dāndānqān that put an end to the power of the Ghaznavids in Ḫurāsān and caused the decline of the Ghaznavids and the rise of the Saljuks who started to establish their government and build their estate. Their leaders held a meeting under the leadership of Ṭuġril Beg and swore to uphold their unity, solidarity and fidelity to their leader, Ṭuġril Beg,[15] who commanded the preachers to pronounce his name in their ḫutba on the minbar and ordered that the coins should be minted with the words (Ṭuġril Beg venerable Prince) inscribed on them.

Rare Saljuki Dinar[16]

Weight : 3.74 gr.
Diameter : 23 mm.

Obverse

Centre
Victory
There is no God but
Allāh hath no associate

First circle
In the name of Allāh.
This Dinar struck in
Nisabur in 431 A.H .

Second Circle
Allāh's authority is supreme be it earlier or later.
Then, do the faithful rejoice in Allāh's victory.
(Coran XXX, 4,5)





[14] Al-Bayhaqī, *op. cit.*, p. 680, 688, 689.
[15] Ibn Al-Aṯīr, *op. cit.*, part. 8, p. 178. Al-Rawandī, *op. cit.*, p. 102.
[16] Islamic Art Museum in Cairo, 1848.

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Reverse

Centre
For Allāh
Muḥammad is the
Messenger of Allāh,
Al-Qā'im bi-Amr Allāh
The venerable prince
Ṭuġril Beg

Margin
He who hath sent His Apostle with Guidance
and the religion of truth to proclaim it over all religion
even though the pagans may detest (it).
(Coran IX, 30)





It is worth noting that the numismatic scholars referred in their writing to the fact that the oldest coins of the Saljuks, as Miles put it, were minted in 433 A.H. in the city of Rayy in Ṭuġril Beg name.[17] Lane-Poole, too, had the same view as regards the year of coinage but he referred to Nisabur as the city where the dinar was minted.[18] However, the Islamic Art Museum in Cairo had a specie, a (rare dinar) struck in Nisabur on the victory of the saljuks over the Ghaznavids in the battle of Dāndānqān in 431 A.H/1040 A.D. The importance of this dinar lies in the fact that it provides an emendation of the data given in the catalogues and published reference books on the coins of the Islamic East, for the date of coinage inscribed on the dinar precedes the dates of coinage referred to in these reference books.

In addition, the dinar is considered a specie of the kind minted on memorable occasions and important historical events. The dinar referred to in this article was, for instance, struck by the Saljuks to record their victory over the Ġaznavīd in Dāndānqān in 431 A.H./1040 A.D. For the word *Naṣr* (Victory) is inscribed in the centre of its first side and hence the coin was a kind of document and a testimony to the actuality of the events referred to in the historical sources. The victory of the Saljuks as well as the date of coinage correspond with what Ibn al-Aṯīr mentioned : "Ṭuġril Beg, after winning victory in the battle of Dāndānqān, went to Nisabur towards the end of 431 A.H."[19]

Moreover, the inscription on this dinar provided on emendation of the view adopted by some researchers concerning the title of Ṭuġril Beg that many researchers referred to Ṭuġril Beg as the Sultan, or the great Sultan,[20] after his victory in the battle of Dāndānqān, Ṭuġril Beg merely called himself

[17] G. Miles, *The Numismatic History of Rayy*. New York, 1938, p. 199.

[18] S. Lane-Poole, *Catalogue of the Oriental Coins in the British Museum* III, London, 1889, no. 53, p. 27-28.

[19] Ibn Al-Aṯīr, *op. cit.*, part. 8, p. 22.

[20] W. Barthold, *Histoire des Turcs d'Asie Centrale*, Paris, 1945, p. 104-105. Cf. Muḥamad Idrīs, *Tārīḫ al 'Irāq wa-l- Šarq al Islāmī*, éd. Nahdat–al-Šarq, 1985, p. 84 ; 'Iṣām Abd-l–Rā'ūf, *Al-Duwal al-Mustaqilla fi al-šarq al-Islāmī*, éd. Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, 1999, 142.

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the venerable prince (*al-amīr al-aǧall*), a fact that is testified when one reads the fourth line below the title of the Abassid caliph on reverse of the coin, for Ṭuġril Beg wanted to win the favour and get the support of the Abassids to authorize the rule of the state he was establishing and wanted to give the rule of the Saljuks a legal aspect and capacity, two aims which he achieved in 435 A.H/1044 A.D. when the Abassid Caliph sent Abū-l-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Muḥammad Al-Mawārdī to Ṭuġril Beg with a robe of honour from the Sultan, and a commission to rule the lands under their power.

As for the title, the Sultan, it was used by the Saljuks only after the Abassid Caliph al-Qā'im gave Ṭuġril Beg a permission to enter Baġdād towards the beginning of 447 A.H./ 1055 A.D. At that time, he commanded the preachers to pronounce Ṭuġril's name in their *ḫutba* on the *minbar* (pulpit) of Baġdād and to call him "Abū-Ṭālib Ṭuġril Beg Muḥammad b. Mīḫā'īl, al-*Sultan al-Muʿaẓẓam*, (The great Sultan), *Rukn al-Dīn*, (The Saviour of Religion), *Yamīn Amīr al-Mū'minīn* (The Right Hand of the Commander of the Faithful), whose name is to be inscribed[21] on the coins", thereby, Ṭuġril Beg, the leader of the Saljuks was given that honourable title quoted above.[22]

In the light of the preceding study, we conclude the following facts :

1. The importance of that rare dinar belongs to the kind of memorable occasions coins.

2. Ṭuġril Beg had titled himself *al-Amīr al-Aǧall* (venerable prince) on early coins after the Seljuk's victory in Dāndānqān against Ghaznavids, 421 A.H./1040 A.D.

3. Later Ṭuġril Beg title changed to *al-Sultān al muʿaẓẓam, Rukn al-Dīn*, *Yamīn amīr al-Mū'minīn*, which appeared on the reverse inscription.

[21] Al-Bindārī, *op. cit.*, p. 8-9. Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *al-Muntaẓim fi Tāriḫ al-Mulūk wa-l-umam* VIII, Ḥaydar Abād al-Dakkan, 1359, p. 116.

[22] Ibn Al-Ǧawzī, *op. cit.*, part. 8, p. 164. Cf. Ibn Ḫaldūn, *Ibid.*, part. 3, p. 409 ; Ḥasan al-Bāšā, *al Alqāb al-Islāmiyya*, Dār al-Nahda al-ʿArabiyya, 1978, p. 325.

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