

UDC 737.1

<https://doi.org/10.59849/2710-0820.2023.2.139>

Mustafa Shabanov

*Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan,
National Commission of the Republic of Azerbaijan for UNESCO
mustafa.shabanov@gmail.com
Azərbaycan*

UNKNOWN M-TYPE SILVER COINS AND HEAVY DENOMINATIONS OF THE SHAKI KHANATE

Keywords: *Shaki Khanate, hoard, coin, 5 shahi, 6 shahi, 8 shahi (2 abbasi)*

According to the information we have obtained, from the end of November 2022 to July 2023, significant number of silver coins of the Shaki Khanate were found scattered in the area of an old residence (called Armudlu) near Aydinbulag village of Shaki, one of the ancient cities of Azerbaijan. We were able to obtain about 70 photos of these coins from various sources on the internet. On the other hand, since we saw only a part of the said coins, we believe that the number of coins found in the above-mentioned hoard was several hundred pieces in total. On the other hand, in 2023, some of these coins were reported to be sold to foreign countries. In February 2023, we noticed that a photo and data of one of these coins was posted on the Zeno.ru – Oriental Coins Database [6, #308127], but the well-known numismatist Stephen Album on the abovementioned portal had difficulty in expressing a clear opinion about this coin type, and in his note asked for help in identification. So this type of coin was not recorded in any catalogue before. Further research revealed that an example of this coin type was sold as recently as September 2021 at an auction led by Stephen Album [5, 41/634]. In the said auction, it was stated in the description of the coin that a part of the verse of Zand ("*shod aftar o mah zar o...*") was recorded on the coin, and for this reason, the coin was classified as a subtype of C-type. S.Album has recorded this coin type with the code "A-2048var." for his future edition of checklist. In general, the fact that one example of this coin type was sold at auction in the USA as recently as 2021 suggests that the coins in question were found in 2021 or earlier. Along with these coins, D-type coins of the Shaki Khanate, previously unknown to numismatics, with the denomination of 2 *abbasi* and some coins struck in other khanates were also found. One example of 2 *abbasi* denomination coins was known to us from the same source since 2020. The mentioned once

again confirms that the said coins were not found in November 2022, but a few years ago, in parts, most probably, from the same place. During the research, it became known to us that in 2009, a hoard of similar coins was found in another region of Azerbaijan and handed over to the National History Museum of Azerbaijan. Unfortunately, the hoard in question has not been involved in scientific research or published yet.

It should be noted that the coin photos presented in the article are not of the same visual quality, as we obtained them from various sources on the internet. Nevertheless, these coins are of great importance from the point of view of scientific research. Initially, we thought to include photos of all coins known to us from the mentioned hoard in the article, but later, due to the increasing number of coin samples every day, we decided to highlight in the article only photos of coin samples that show the main differences.

Coins included in the study can be divided into 2 groups according to their type: M-type and D-type coins.

M-type coins

On the obverse of the M-type coins studied for the first time, there is an inscription in Persian *نظم کار جهان سیم و زر است "nazmkar-e jahan sim wa zar ast"* (It is copper and silver that set the world in order) in two lines. The last letter of the particle *است "ast"* is extended as *kashidah*. On the reverse, the inscription *ضرب نخوي "duriba nukha"* (struck in Nukha/Nukhwi) is written in two lines. In the inscription, the last letter of the word *ضرب "duriba"* was extended as a *kashidah*.

The dates of the coins placed in the space at the bottom of the coin. The observed dates are 1210 and 1211 AH. Dates are sometimes marked inside a cartouche with various ornaments, and sometimes

without a cartouche. The sign indicating zero is sometimes engraved among the previous digits.

The examined M-type coins can be divided into 2 half-types: half-type I has the invocation يا عزيز "ya 'aziz" in the blank part of the reverse cartouche at 12 o'clock, while half-type II does not contain such an inscription. Some coins have the symbol "↑" on their reverse dies.

It should be noted that among the khanates that existed in the South Caucasus in the second half of the 18th century - the first quarter of the 19th century, the inscriptions mentioned on the obverse of the M-type coins were not found on the coins of any other khanate. However, although we found superficial information about the presence of the same inscription on one of the coin types of Agha Muhammad Shah Qajar during the mentioned period, unfortunately, we did not find any confirming coin examples either in the mentioned source or in other open internet resources. It is possible to assume that some example of M-type coin was confused with the coin of Agha Muhammad Shah Qajar. The reason for falling into such a mistake, in our opinion, could be the similarity of the spelling of the cities of Nukha نخوي and Khoy خوي. It is known that the evocation يا محمد "ya Muhammad" was used on the coins of Agha Muhammad Shah Qajar. However, on M-type coins, the evocation يا عزيز "ya 'aziz" was used. Thus, we think that there is still no serious evidence that the mentioned coin type is related to the coin types of Agha Muhammad Shah Qajar. However, it should be noted that in the mentioned period, Agha Muhammad Shah Qajar marched to Azerbaijan, and in the struggle for power in the Shaki Khanate; Muhammad Hasan Khan used the troops of Agha Muhammad Shah Qajar in a fierce battle against his brother Salim Khan near the village of Goynuk [1, p. 132].

In historical sources, it is mentioned that Muhammad Hasan Khan was in power in Shaki in 1198-1210 AH, Salim Khan in 1210-1211 AH, and Muhammad Hasan Khan again in 1211-1219 AH [3, pp. 5-12]. Also, it is reported that Salim Khan came to power in *Jumada al-Awwal* 1210 AH (November-December 1795) and left power in *Dhu al-Qa'dah* 1211 AH (April-May 1797) [1, p. 270]. Thus, it is clear that the said coins were struck during the reigns of Muhammad Hasan Khan and Salim Khan.

We can conditionally divide the M-type coins studied into 2 groups according to their weight: those weighing 3 grams or more, and those weighing 2.78 grams or less. A smooth linear circle is dominated at the obverse cartouche of coins with

a weight of 3 g and more, and an eight-pointed star ornament is engraved at the obverse cartouche of coins with a weight of 2.78 g and less. Depending on the minting technology, the coins were minted on both circular and oval discs.

According to our observations, the average weight of M-type coins is 3.14 g for sub-type 1 (based on the measurement of 16 coins) and 2.76 g for sub-type 2 (based on the measurement of 5 coins).

It is possible to conclude that the mentioned sub-types were struck with different weight standards or in different denominations. As a result of our observations, it was known that since 1205 AH, coins with the denomination of *abbasi* were struck in the Shamakhi Khanate in the weight of 12 *nukhuds/nokhuds* (2.304 g). Since Shaki and Shamakhi khanates are located in the same economic and commercial zone, these values have been the same in Shaki Khanate since 1207 AH. In the years 1209-1211 AH, due to short-term economic fluctuations, the weight of the *abbasi* denomination coins decreased in the Shaki Khanate, and according to our observations, this value decreased to the weight of 10 *nukhuds* (1.92 g). During the study, the average weight of 17 such coins was 1.90 g. We believe that the weight reduction observed in the *abbasi* denomination coins struck in 1209-1211 AH of the Shaki Khanate and of the Shamakhi Khanate in 1207-1210 AH should not be considered an official change of the weight standard. This should be viewed as a short-term fluctuation in coin weights. In this regard, it will be more correct to take 2.30 g of the weight standard for 1 *abbasi*. In the Shaki Khanate in 1211 AH, not only 4 *shahis* (*abbasi*) denomination coins, but also 5, 6 and 8 *shahis* denomination coins were struck. The trend of decrease in coin weights up to 2 *nukhuds* weights was not observed in coins with denominations of 5, 6 and 8 *shahis*. This decrease was reflected only to coins with denominations of 4 *shahis* (*abbasi*). From this point of view, it is still not possible to fully clarify why the weight standard of *abbasi* denomination coins struck on the same dates differs from coins struck in other denominations. On the other hand, it could also be related to coin grading (purity) issues (i.e., there is a possibility that different grades were applied to different denominations). The weight standard of the studied coins could be 6 *shahis* for sub-type 1 coins and 5 *shahis* for sub-type 2 coins. So, in the mentioned period, 1 *abbasi* was considered equal to 4 *shahis* and if *abbasi* theoretically amounted to

2.304 grams, it is possible to assume that the theoretical weight of sub-type 1 of M-type coins was 3.456 grams, and sub-type 2 coins was 2.88 grams. Thus, the examined coins are distinguished among the khanates existing in the South Caucasus not only by the inscriptions on them, but also by their denominations.

D-type coins

D-type coins of the Shaki Khanate are well known to numismatics long ago. D-type coins were struck in Ganja, Shamakhi (Shirvan), Shaki⁴, Darband and Guba khanates. These coins were initially struck in the Shamakhi Khanate in the early 80s of the 12th century (in *hijri* calendar). On the obverse of these coins, the evocation "*ya saheb oz-zaman*"⁵ يا صاحب الزمان is placed. It is known that the coins with this evocation were struck in Isfahan and Shiraz during the reign of Azad Khan from the Hotaki Afghans (1163-1170 AH / 1750-1757 AD) [see: 4, pp. 284-285, A-2733.1; 6, #92116].

D-type coins of the Shaki Khanate are struck with the mint name either Shaki or Nukha. Regarding whether the words Shaki شكي and Nukha نخوی written on the coins indicate the same or different mints, we believe that two different mints operated in the Shaki Khanate during the mentioned period. The fact that some of the coins struck on the same dates - in 1209 AH were struck with the word Nukha, and the other with the word Shaki - also strengthens our opinion. It is well known from history that in 1772 (1185-1186 AH), the city of Shaki was flooded as a result of the flooding of the Kish River, and the population moved to the nearby city of Nukha [2, p. 148]. Based on the coins studied, the mint at Shaki was active at least from 1207-1209 AH, where silver coins were struck. Although there is a wide variety of copper coins struck at the Shaki Mint, since the date is not marked on them, we cannot say exactly what years these coins were struck, but we assume that the mint in Shaki either ceased to operate when the mint in Nukha started operating, or its activity was more

limited (for example, only with the striking of copper coins) continued. It is interesting that the striking of silver coins at the Shaki mint continued in 1241-1242 AH with the name of Fath `Ali Shah Qajar, and these coins are considered to be the last coins of the Azerbaijani khanates in the South Caucasus. This suggests that the Shaki mint was not completely abolished during active operating period of the Nukha mint.

It is interesting that the striking of D-type coins in the Shaki Khanate began in 1207 AH. 1207 AH is also the date of the first known coins of the Shaki Khanate. Thus, in the Shaki Khanate, D-type coins were struck as a mint name of Shaki in 1207-1209 AH, and as a mint name of Nukha from 1209 AH. Coins of Shaki Khanate struck in 1209 AH are distinguished by a special floral design on the obverse. These coins were struck in 1209-1211 AH. It is interesting that on the reverse of these coins the word رایج "*raij*" is written instead of an evocation in a special cartouche at 12 o'clock. Although this word appeared before in the form of a countermark, it is included in these coins as one of the main inscriptions of the coin.

The next striking of D-type coins was carried out in 1220s AH. In 1210-1212 AH, M-type coins were also minted. It is also known that striking of C-type coins ("*shod aftar o mah zar o...*") began in Shaki Khanate in 1213 AH.

The reason why we include D-type coins in this article is mainly related to the denominations of these coins. Thus, some of the aforementioned coins found in Aydinbulag were struck in the denomination of 2 *abbasis*. It should be noted that in the Shaki Khanate, the striking of coins with denominations of 2 *abbasis* was not known to numismatics before. As mentioned in Table 2, the average weight of 2 *abbasis*-denominated coins studied is 4.46 grams (on the basis of measured 7 coins). Dates 1211 and 1212 AH written on the studied coins. The date of some coins is not legible. Thus, it is not excluded that these coins were struck in 1210 AH. If the theoretical weight of 1 *abbasi*-denominated coins was 2.304 g for the mentioned period, then the theoretical weight of 2 *abbasis*-denominated coins should be 4.608 g. At the same time, we are of the opinion that future scientific research can further clarify points related to coin denominations.

The discovery of a new type of coin struck in the Shaki Khanate is important from the point of view of studying the history of Azerbaijan, numismatics, especially the economic life of the

⁴ It is recorded in the coins with the mint name Nukha and Shaki.

⁵ This expression, which means the *O Master of Time*, refers to Hazrat Mahdi (as), the 12th Imam. According to the Shi'ite faith, Hazrat Mahdi (as) will be absent and will appear shortly before the Day of Judgment. Sufi sheikhs, on the other hand, say that anyone who wants to reach his soul to Allah before the death, and who wants to see the 12th Imam via the *dhikr* and *salatul-hajat* (desire) from Allah, could definitely see Him.

period of the Azerbaijani khanates. Also, the circulation of heavy coins in the Shaki Khanate in the mentioned period sheds light on the study of the economic life of the khanate period from a different perspective. Of course, as each new discovery enriches the numismatics, it also brings to light many unknown issues. We believe that an in-depth study of the economic life of the Shaki Khanate is possible only with a comprehensive approach to the coin system of the khanate period. In this regard, we hope that the coins studied in the article and our analysis of the coins will help to conduct future numismatic research.

References

1. Tahirzadə Ədalət, Şəkinin Tarixi Qaynaqlarda, Azərbaycan Milli Elmlər Akademiyası. Şəki Regional Elm Mərkəzi, Bakı, 2005;
2. Ağaoğlu Rəşat Ahmet, Şirvân ve Arrân bölgeleri muhaddisleri, İstanbul, 2020;
3. Абдул-Латиф-Эфенди, Материалы по Истории Азербайджана. История Шекинских Ханов, текст и перевод: А. Дадашев, Баку, 1926;
4. Album Stephen, Checklist of Islamic Coins, Third edition, Santa Rosa, 2011;
5. Stevealbum.com – S.A.R.C. Auction;
6. Zeno.ru – Oriental Coins Database.

Xülasə

Mustafa Şabanov

Şəki Xanlığının bilinməyən M tipli gümüş sikkələri və ağırçəkili nominalları

Məqalədə Şəki Xanlığına məxsus, bu günədək elmə məlum olmayan sikkə tipindən (M tipi) və ağır çəkili nominallardan bəhs olunur. Tədqiq olunan M tipli sikkələrin əksər hissəsinin Şəki şəhərinin Aydınbulaq kəndi ərazisindən tapıldığı bildirilir. Bu sikkələr üzərində “*nəzmkar-i cahan sim və zər əst*” (Dünyanı nizamlayan mis və gümüşdür) yazısı yer alıb. Sözügedən dəfində həmçinin, Şəki Xanlığının 2 abbasi nominallı sikkələri və D tipli sikkələrin bəzi variantları da ilk dəfə aşkar olunub və məqalədə tədqiq edilib. Məqalədə bu sikkələrin zərb yeri, tarixi, nəzəri çəkili, eləcə də M və D tipli sikkələrin digər xüsusiyyətləri təhlil olunub. Tədqiq olunan sikkələrin əsas fərqlilikləri əks etdirən nümunələrinin fotoları məqaləyə daxil edilib.

Açar sözlər: Şəki Xanlığı, dəfina, sikkə, 5 şahı, 6 şahı, 8 şahı (2 abbasi)

Резюме

Мустафа Шабанов

Неизвестные серебряные монеты типа М и крупные номиналы Шекинского ханства

В статье речь идет о неизвестном до сегодняшнего дня типе монет (тип М) и крупных номиналах Шекинского ханства. Сообщается, что большая часть изученных монет типа М была найдена в селе Айдынбулаг города Шеки. На этих монетах есть надпись «*назмкар-е джахан сим ва зар аст*» (Медь и серебро приводят мир в порядок). Монеты номиналом 2 аббаси и некоторые варианты монет типа D Шекинского ханства также были обнаружены в том же кладе впервые и исследованы в статье. В статье анализируются место чеканки, дата, теоретический вес этих монет, а также другие особенности монет типа М и D. Фотографии исследуемых монет показывают основные отличия также включены в статью.

Ключевые слова: Шекинское ханство, клад, монета, 5 шахи, 6 шахи, 8 шахи (2 аббаси)

Table 1

New M-type silver coins of the Shaki Khanate and their characteristics								
Coin No.	Source	Obverse		Sub-type and denomination	Reverse		Date	Weight (g)
		Cartouche	Inscriptions		Cartouche	Inscriptions		
1	Aydinbulag hoard	Around the inscriptions there is a smooth linear circle, a space and a smooth liner circle.	نظم کار جهان سیم و زر است "nazmkar-e jahan sim wa zar ast" It is copper and silver that set the world in order.	1 shahi	Around the inscriptions there is a smooth linear circle, a space, a smooth linear circle and a dotted circle.	The date ۱۲۱۰, "1210" is marked within a special ornament in the part of the cartouche with a space in the direction of 6 o'clock and the evocation "ya 'aziz" is marked in the direction of 12 o'clock.	1210	3.20
2								3.37
3								3.16
4								3.10
5	Zeno #308127 (Aydinbulag hoard)	The cartouche around the inscriptions consists of an eight-pointed star.		2 shahi		The date ۱۲۱۱ "1211" is marked on the empty part of the cartouche at 6 o'clock and the evocation "ya 'aziz" is marked in the direction of 12 o'clock.	1211	3.20
6								2.75

Table 2

D-type silver coins of the Shaki Khanate and their characteristics						
Coin No.	Source	Obverse		Reverse		Weight (g)
		Cartouche	Inscriptions	Cartouche	Inscriptions	
7	Zeno #260257	Around the inscriptions there are smooth linear and dotted circles.		Around the inscriptions there is a smooth linear circle and a space. Date is marked in central circle.	ضرب ۱۲۰۷ "duriba shaki 1207" Struck in Shaki, 1207.	2.09
8	Oghuz hoard (2017)	Around the inscriptions there is a smooth linear, dotted and smooth linear circles.		Around the inscriptions there is a smooth linear circle, a space and again a smooth linear circle. Date is marked in the blank area of the direction of 6 o'clock.	ضرب ۱۲۰۸ "duriba shaki 1208" Struck in Shaki, 1208.	2.00
9	Aydinbulag hoard	Around the inscriptions there is a dotted circle connected to each other with the smooth lines.	يا صاحب الزمان	Around the inscriptions there is a circle consists of the small circles. Date is marked inside of central circle.	ضرب ۱۲۰۹ "duriba shaki 1209" Struck in Shaki, 1209.	1.92
10	SARC Auction 38/707		'ya saheb oz-zaman"	Around the inscriptions there are a smooth linear circle, a space and a smooth linear and dotted circles. There is an invocation راج "raj" in the blank area of the direction of 12 o'clock and a date at the direction of 6 o'clock.	ضرب نخوي ۱۲۰۹ "duriba Nukha 1209" Struck in Nukha, 1209.	1.88
11		Around the inscriptions there is a smooth linear circle and a circle with floral patterns.	O Master of Time!		ضرب نخوي ۱۲۱۰ "duriba Nukha 1210" Struck in Nukha, 1210.	1.95
12						-
13	Aydinbulag hoard				ضرب نخوي ۱۲۱۱ "duriba Nukha 1211" Struck in Nukha, 1211.	191
14						1.87
15	Zeno #41347	Around the inscriptions there are a six petals cartouche, a smooth linear circle and "+" symbol in the folds of the petals.		Around the inscriptions there are a six petals cartouche, a smooth linear circle, a circle consisting of "✻" symbol and a flower bud symbol in the folds of the petals.	ضرب نخوي ۱۲۲۰ "duriba Nukha 1220" Struck in Nukha, 1220.	2.31

16	Zeno #72958	Around the inscriptions there are a six petals cartouche, a smooth linear circle and "∗" symbol in the folds of the petals, as well as there is a flower bud symbol at the directions of 3 and 9 o'clock.	Around the inscriptions there are a six petals cartouche, a smooth linear circle and "∗" symbol in the folds of the petals, as well as there is a "∗" symbol at the directions of 3 and 9 o'clock.	Around the inscriptions there are a six petals cartouche and a smooth linear circle.	۱۲۲۱ ضرب نخوي "duriba Nukha 1221" Struck in Nukha, 1221.	1221	2.33
17	SARC Internet Auction 21/976	Around the inscriptions there are a six petals cartouche, a smooth linear and dotted circles and "∗" symbol in the folds of the petals, as well as there is a "∗" symbol at the directions of 3 and 9 o'clock.	Around the inscriptions there are a six petals cartouche, a smooth linear circle and a flower bud symbol in the folds of the petals.	Around the inscriptions there are a six petals cartouche, a smooth linear circle and a flower bud symbol in the folds of the petals.	ياعزيز ۱۲۲۱ ضرب نخوي "ya'aziz, duriba Nukha 1221" Ya 'Aziz, struck in Nukha, 1221.	1221	2.28
18		Around the inscriptions there are a smooth linear circle, a space and "❖" symbol at the direction of 3 o'clock.	Around the inscriptions there are a smooth linear circle, a space, a smooth linear and dotted circles. Date is marked at the space (blank) part of the cartouche at the direction of 6 o'clock.	Around the inscriptions there are a smooth linear circle, a space, a smooth linear and dotted circles. Date is marked at the space (blank) part of the cartouche at the direction of 6 o'clock.	۱۲۱۱ ضرب نخوي "duriba Nukha 1211" Struck in Nukha, 1211.	1211	3.98
19	Aydinbulag hoard	Around the inscriptions there are a smooth linear circle, a space, a smooth linear and dotted circles.	Around the inscriptions there are a smooth linear circle, a space, a smooth linear and dotted circles.	Around the inscriptions there are a smooth linear circle, a space, a smooth linear and dotted circles.	۱۲۱۲ ضرب نخوي "duriba Nukha 1212" Struck in Nukha, 1212.	1212	4.59
20		Around the inscriptions there are a smooth linear circle, a space, a smooth linear and dotted circles, as well as there is a "→" symbol at the direction of 9 o'clock.	There is an invocation ياعزيز "ya 'aziz" at the blank part of the cartouche at the direction of 12 o'clock.	There is an invocation ياعزيز "ya 'aziz" at the blank part of the cartouche at the direction of 12 o'clock.	... ضرب نخوي "duriba Nukha ..." Struck in Nukha,	-	4.26

PHOTOS OF THE COINS



1



6



2



7



3



8



4



9



5



10



11



16



12



17



13



18



14



19



15



20