

**Coins From Mogadishu, C.1300 To C.
1700 By GSP Freeman-Grenville**

COINS FROM MOGADISHU, c. 1300 TO c. 1700

By G. S. P. FREEMAN-GRENVILLE

[SEE PLATE XVIII]

MOGADISHU, on the east coast of Africa, lat. 2. 1 N., long. 45. 24 E., is the capital of the newly independent country of Somalia which embraces the former Italian Somalia and the former British Somaliland. This article is concerned solely with the first named, whose southern frontier marches with Kenya.

In the past twenty years a private gentleman resident in Mogadishu, who desires to remain anonymous, has collected above 7,600 copper and some billon coins, principally in the town, but to some extent along the neighbouring coast to the north and south. While I must respect his wish to remain anonymous, I wish to record my gratitude to him for having made his collection available to me and for having engaged in a long and detailed correspondence. I must also thank him for a representative collection of these coins, which has now been deposited in the British Museum. I am also grateful to Dr. John Walker for having put me in touch with him and for having directed my attention to a small find of similar pieces presented to the British Museum in 1947 by Major A. C. A. Wright, and both to him and to Miss H. W. Mitchell, of the Ashmolean Museum, for kindly advice and assistance.

The majority of these coins appear to have been minted between c. 1300 and c. 1700. They include twenty-one rulers who are unknown to history, of whom eighteen are new to numismatics. In addition there are three issues which may provisionally be classed as commemorative, of which only one has hitherto been reported.

No great number of coins has so far been reported from Mogadishu or from Somalia in general, and it has never been suggested before that Mogadishu may have had a mint. In 1909 F. Stuhlmann reported a number of Chinese finds, mostly of the Sung dynasty.¹ In the frontier area, the former Jubaland, C. W. Hayward made an important find at Port Durnford, or Bir Gao, in 1911, which was reported by H. Mattingly in 1932.² It ranged through the Ptolemies

¹ F. Stuhlmann, *Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte von Ostafrika* (Berlin, 1909), 860, n. 2.

² *NC* 1932, 172.

to Imperial Rome and Byzantium, and then, with a long gap, to Egypt under the Turks. It contained no medieval Islamic coins. The first of these were reported by E. Cerulli in 1923, after a surface find at Warsheikh, up the coast from Mogadishu.¹ In 1934 the catalogue of the Museo della Garesa, Mogadishu, reported some similar coins and some others as 'monete arabe appartenenti al secolo secondo dell' Egira rinvenuto nelle necropoli di Mogadiscio, Brava, Merca, Uarscheikh, Meregh'.² For reasons which will appear, none of these is earlier than the fourteenth century. In 1947 Major A. C. A. Wright presented to the British Museum a small find made at Warsheikh, of which one billon piece was described by the writer in *NC* 1957.³ The remainder have not been published. This study, therefore, embraces the finds of Cerulli, the Garesa Museum, and Wright, together with the new Anonymous Collection, as follows:

	1 Cerulli, 1922	2 Garesa Museum, 1934	3 Wright, B.M., 1947	4 Anonymous Collection, 1958
<i>A. Dated</i>				
1. Abū Bakr ibn Muḥammad, 1322	1
idem, undated	1	7
<i>B. Without title</i>				
2. al-Raḥmān ibn al-Musā'id	6
3. Yūsuf ibn Sa'id	32	39	..	71
<i>C. Using the phrase عز نصره (i.e. post 1388)</i>				
4. Sultan Muḥammad	3	4	..	337
<i>D. Muẓaffarid Dynasty (? post 1500)</i>				
5. Sultan 'Umar	13
<i>E. Date uncertain, but with the title Sultan</i>				
6. Aḥmad ibn 'Alī	1
7. Sulaimān	2
8. Rasūl ibn 'Alī	8
9. Yūsuf ibn Abī Bakr	16
10. Malik ibn Sa'id	39
11. Zubayr ibn 'Umar	353
12. 'Alī ibn Yūsuf	93	64	8	5,800
<i>F. 'Commemorative': no ruler named</i>				
13. al-Sultānīa al-Mujāhidīa	148
14. 'al-Taūfīq sa'āda'	3

¹ E. Cerulli, *Somalia* i (Rome, 1957), 123 f.

² Regio Governo della Somalia, *Museo della Garesa: Catalogo* (Mogadiscio, 1934), 167-8. The large modern collection is ignored in this article.

³ 'Coinage in East Africa before Portuguese Times', 174, and illustrated on Pl. XIX.

	1 <i>Cerulli,</i> 1922	2 <i>Garesa</i> <i>Museum,</i> 1934	3 <i>Wright, B.M.,</i> 1947	4 <i>Anonymous</i> <i>Collection,</i> 1958
<i>G. Arabesque and related types</i>				
15. al-Bāhūq	4
16. Bahā-Lillāh	14
17. al-Ḍibr	112
18. Type 'A'	4
19. Type 'B'	5
20. Type 'C'	7
21. Type 'D'	13
22. Type 'E'	13
23. Type 'F'	25
24. Type 'G'	26
25. Type 'H'	58
<i>H. Foreign</i>				
26. Alexander Severus (222-35)	..	1
27. al-Mu'taṣim, Baghdad, 836	1
28. Shāh Firūz al-Bahmānī (1397-1422)	1
<i>Kilwa Sultans</i>				
29. Muḥammad ibn Sulaimān (1412-21)	31	10	1	473
30. 'Alī ibn al-Ḥasan (1478-9)	..	6	..	1
31. al-Ḥasan ibn Sulaimān (1479-85, 1486-90)	1
Chinese	39
Cingalese	4
Annamese	4
'Abd al-Ḍa'if, Harar	2
Obliterated (local Muslim)	36	29	..	23
Total	<u>195</u>	<u>153</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>7,635</u>

The sources of the history of Mogadishu and Somalia in general are extremely exiguous, and a full history of the Mogadishu sultanate is impossible. In addition to sparse references in Arabic literature there are local traditions, first collected by Guillaïn in 1846, and since amplified by Cerulli, and fortified by inscriptions.¹

In the early twelfth century Yāqūt says that the town was ruled by an assembly of the heads of leading families, and not by a sultan.² Ibn Baṭṭūṭa visited Mogadishu in 1331, and found a ruler with a constitutional council: his name was Abū Bakr ibn 'Umar. Ibn

¹ M. Guillaïn, *Documents sur l'histoire, la géographie et le commerce de l'Afrique orientale*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1856), i *passim*; Cerulli, *op. cit.* 1 ff.

² F. Wustenfeld, *Jacut's Geographisches Wörterbuch* (Leipzig, 1869), s.v. مَقْدَشُو, and cf. s.v. بحر الزنج.

Baṭṭūṭa addressed him as sultan, but was corrected by the Qādī, a man of Egyptian origins: he was told that local custom was to call him sheikh, not sultan. Nevertheless, in his subsequent account, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa persists in calling him sultan.¹

Following local traditions, Cerulli infers that this first dynasty was replaced, post 1500, by a dynasty known as al-Muẓaffar: the first collateral proof of the existence of this dynasty would seem to be furnished by the coins of one of the rulers about to be described, Sultan 'Umar al-Malik al-Muẓaffar.²

On 3 January 1499, on his return from his first voyage to India, Vasco da Gama bombarded the town. Thereafter, for two and a quarter centuries, Portugal claimed that Mogadishu was amongst its vassals. In fact this vassalage was never conceded. In 1567 the neighbouring petty sultanate of Oja, to the south, told the Portuguese that they were subjects of the Egyptian caliph. Similarly, when the long struggle between the Turks and the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean in the sixteenth century moved to the south, Mogadishu asserted its independence and warmly welcomed the Turkish sultan as caliph in the first of the raids of the Turk Amīr 'Alī Bey on the east African coast in 1587.³ While much is known of this struggle eastwards of Aden, little is known beyond the tale of the actual fighting on the east African coast. At Faza, however, a recently discovered manuscript history records the foundation there of a petty Turkish settlement by a family who called themselves al-Stambūlī and who made themselves rulers: they lost their position as recently as 1893. As to Mogadishu, when its independence was once asserted, although tribute was occasionally paid to quieten the Portuguese, the town enjoyed virtual self-government until c. 1700, when the Muẓaffarid dynasty was overthrown by an invasion of the Somali, since then its rulers and now the majority of its inhabitants.⁴

Ibn Baṭṭūṭa is the only writer who records the name of a ruler for

¹ *Les Voyages d'Ibn Batoutah*, ed. C. Defrémery and B. R. Sanguinetti, 4 vols. (Paris, 1863 f.), ii, 179 ff.

² Cerulli, op. cit. 40, 62–63.

³ G. S. P. Freeman-Grenville, 'The Coast, 1498–1840', in R. A. Oliver and A. G. Mathew, *History of East Africa* i, 1962; cf. R. Coupland, *East Africa and Its Invaders*, 1938, 58–60, where he is incorrectly termed Mirale Bey.

⁴ Cerulli, op. cit. 24; I am obliged to Sheikh Haidar Muḥammad al-Kindy, of Mombasa, for information of the contents of the History of Faza, a unique manuscript in the possession of Sheikh Muḥammad Sa'ad, late Mudir of Faza, and a member of this family: this has not been published nor have I been permitted to see it. The chronology of this section follows E. Cerulli, but a different one is preferred by A. Girace and M. Pirone, *Lineamenti di una storia della Somalia* (n.d., c. 1956), 30–31, 33, circulated privately from Mogadishu, which places the establishment of the Muẓaffarids c. 1400.

us, and no coins have yet been found in his name. It is thus only tentatively that one can arrange these finds of coins in any sort of order, and certainly not in the order of the accession of the rulers. Only one piece is dated, but there are also some other criteria which can be inferred from the general history of the area: these are best discussed piecemeal in connexion with the different issues. The only collections of wholly certain provenance are those of Cerulli and Wright, both from Warsheikh. The Garesa Museum collection is said to be from Mogadishu, Barawa, Merca, and Warsheikh: which pieces were found where is not recorded.

In regard to the Anonymous Collection, most of the pieces are stated to have come from Mogadishu itself, some of them having been purchased from goldsmiths and silversmiths. Finds were made at Mudugh, Migiurtina, Afgoi, Villabruzzi, Merca, and Barawa, and also at a number of small sites lying on the coast between 8 and 20 kilometres north and south of Mogadishu. The names of these latter places have not been recorded, nor were records kept of the different finds at any of the places named. I am told that it is probable that many more medieval coins might be recovered from stocks held by goldsmiths and silversmiths, but that these persons are most suspicious of numismatists.

Thus, as things are, the finds can only be general archaeological pointers: in themselves they are mostly without archaeological value. The absence of a list of find-sites and of the quantities found at each makes it impossible to describe their area of circulation with any precision. In the absence of mint-marks, it cannot be said where they were minted. Nevertheless the greater number of finds have been in Mogadishu itself, and the rest recorded to the north and south of it between Warsheikh and Barawa. Some strays, which will be enumerated in due course, have been found at Kisimani Mafia and Kilwa Kisiwani: these are too few to be of serious significance. With the exception of these, none of the pieces discussed here has been found outside the Mogadishu region; and it would seem a reasonable conclusion from the study of the individual pieces that the Anonymous Collection is broadly representative of the coinage of Mogadishu, circulated also in the surrounding territory, between the early fourteenth century and the end of the seventeenth century.

THE COINS

- [*Note:* (i) The weight given refers to the average of all specimens seen.
(ii) An asterisk (*) indicates that the inscription has been reconstructed from several specimens.]

1. *Abū Bakr ibn Muḥammad*

I. *Æ* (billon). Weight 3.47 gm.

Obv. Within a circle, a circle of dots and a further circle containing a square:

within the square:

يثق	trusts
بالأحد الصمد	in the One Eternal (God)
أبو بكر بن محمد	Abū Bakr ibn Muḥammad

in the four segments between the square and the circle:

- | | | |
|------|---------|-----------------|
| i. | ضرب | struck |
| ii. | سنة ٧٢٢ | in the year 722 |
| iii. | /// | (erased) |
| iv. | /// | (erased) |

Rev. Within a circle, a square containing the kalima, with the names of the four Orthodox caliphs in the outer segments, from the top clockwise.

There are no difficulties in the reading of the reverse. It is disappointing that the edges of the flan of the obverse are partly erased. Presumably one of these recorded the name of the mint.

A.H. 722 corresponds to A.D. 1322-3, and the piece thus antedates Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's visit, when the ruler was Abū Bakr ibn Sheikh 'Umar. It throws no light on their relationship, if any.

In addition to this single dated specimen, there are seven further billon specimens (of lower weight, 1.90 gm.) of this ruler in this collection which are similar to the single specimen among Major Wright's finds described in *NC* 1957.¹ There I suggested that this ruler was one or other of the two sixteenth-century rulers of Pate of the same name. Both the large and the smaller pieces are identical in their legends, in script and in metal, so that the date on the large piece must effectively dispose of this suggestion. The only differences are in size, weight, and the lack of legend outside the square in the smaller issue.

No copper or gold issues of this ruler have yet been found: so far only nine billon specimens are known. In view of their rarity, it is to

¹ Freeman-Grenville, 'Coinage in East Africa before Portuguese Times', cited above.

be hoped that there may be further finds, and perhaps also of copper issues. If any of these are similar to I, the place of the mint should be settled.

The majority of the copper coins in the Anonymous Collection bear the title sultan. It has already been noted that Ibn Baṭṭūṭa mentions that the people of Mogadishu did not use this title at the time of his visit. It is not known when Mogadishu began to employ this title. Whatever title Abū ibn Muḥammad used, he did not show it on his coinage; and it would seem possible that the coins of the two rulers now to be described belong to the same earlier period before this title was introduced.

2. *al-Raḥmān ibn al-Musā'id*

II.* Æ. Weight 1.90 gm.

[Pl. XVIII. 1]

Obv. Within an octagon, the ن crossing | in the first line:

[sic]	الرحمان	al-Raḥmān
	بن	ibn
	المساعد	al-Musā'id (i.e. the Assister)

<i>Rev.</i>	في الدولة	fi'l-daula (who) in the kingdom
	المجاهد	al-mujāhid makes Holy War

References to the Holy War occur on other coins in this collection, and are discussed below under no. 13.

3. *Yūsuf ibn Sa'id*

III. Æ. Weight 0.70 gm.

[Pl. XVIII. 2]

Obv. Within a circle, with points as shown:

يوسف	Yūsuf
بن سعيد	ibn Sa'id—
عز	He is glorious!

Rev. Within traces of a circle, two heavy dots at the bottom of the flan, with points:

المعتمد	who relies
على الله	upon God

IV. Æ. Weight 0.32 gm.

Obv. As before, but يوسف pointed in full and عز is omitted.

Rev. As before.

The following ruler has at least a *terminus ante quem non* for his dating in that his legends include the phrase عز نصره—May his victory

be prosperous! The earliest known dated appearance of this phrase is on a piece of the Egyptian Mamlūk al-Mansūr, A.H. 778 = A.D. 1376. It becomes a regular feature of Turkish coinage after A.H. 790 = A.D. 1388.¹ Presumably in this case the influence came from Egypt, with which, according to Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, Mogadishu had important commercial connexions.

4. *Sultan Muḥammad*

V. Æ. Weight 0.41 gm.

[Pl. XVIII. 3]

Obv. Within traces of a curved figure, ن placed like a crescent at the top:

ن	
السلطان	The Sultan
محمد	Muhammad
عز نصره	May his victory be prosperous!

Rev. Within traces of a curved figure:

المجاهد	Who wages war
فاق ذكره	May his memory be supreme!

VI. As V, but obverse and reverse within a badly drawn circle.

VII. Æ. Weight 0.32 gm. As VI, but without the surrounding circles.

VIII. Æ. Weight: 0.65 gm.

[Pl. XVIII. 4]

Obv. Within a circle, with points:

محمد	Muḥammad
عز نصره	may his victory be prosperous!

Rev. Within a circle:

فاق	May his memory be supreme!
ذكره	

IX. Æ. Weight 0.18 gm. As VIII, but obverse without decoration.

Likewise, if Cerulli is correct, and if the reference to the Muzaffarid dynasty is not mistaken, the following ruler would have a *terminus ante quem non* in the rise of the dynasty c. 1500.

5. *Sultān 'Umar*

X.* Æ. Weight 0.75 gm.

[Pl. XVIII. 5]

Obv. Within a single circle, the ن crossing ل in السلطان:

السلطان	The Sultan
عمر الملك	'Umar the King
المظفر	who conquers (al-Muzaffar)

¹ J. Walker, 'History and Coinage of the Sultāns of Kilwa', *NC* 1936, 74.

Rev. Within a circle: المعتمد who relies
 بالله العزيز upon God the Mighty
 الأكبر the Greatest

Various explanations can be given of al-Muẓaffar on this piece. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa reports that al-Ḥasan ibn Sulaiman III of Kilwa (1310–33) was known as Abū al-Muẓaffar, although this is not noted in either the Arabic or Portuguese versions of the Kilwa History.¹ Thus it may not be more than a proper name. Equally it may be taken as a reference to the Holy War, a subject mentioned on the coins of several rulers in this collection and discussed under no. 13. Both these explanations, however, ignore the word الملك—the king, to which al-Muẓaffar is adjectivally related. It may be that the rulers of Mogadishu used both titles. In this case it would be justifiable to translate the obverse: The Sultan 'Umar, the King of the Muẓaffar(id dynasty).

The next seven rulers can be distinguished only by the use of the title sultan and by the word السلطانية—the sultanate—in another series of pieces. Their appearance and style is consonant with their having been minted at any time between the fourteenth and the sixteenth centuries: they all lack dates, mint-marks and, like the rest, denomination.

6. *Aḥmad ibn 'Alī*

XI. ₤. Weight 1.20 gm. One specimen only.

Obv. No decoration: السلطان (The) Sultan
 [sic] أحمد ابن Ahmad son of
 علي 'Alī
 (بن يوسف؟) (? son of Yusuf)

Rev. Obliterated.

7. *Sultan Sulaimān*

XII. ₤. Weight 0.42 gm. Two specimens only.

Obv. No decoration: السلطان (The) Sultan
 سليمان Sulaimān

¹ Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, op. cit.; S. A. Strong, 'The History of Kilwa', *JRAS* 1895, 415–16; J. de Barros, *da Asia* (Lisbon, 1552), ed. A. Baiao (Coimbra, 1931), 310.

Rev. No decoration:

يثق	trusts
بمولي	in the Master
المنن	of Bounties—
عز	He is Glorious!

In addition to the copper pieces described here, a billon piece has been reported but not yet examined. This, with the single example of Aḥmad ibn 'Alī, suggests that there may yet be found some silver or billon issues for other of the rulers represented in this collection. The fact that the billon pieces are much rarer is perhaps accounted for by their popularity as material for silversmiths, whereas there is scarcely any demand for copper for the making of ornaments.

The reverse legend of Sultān Sulaimān is identical in wording with the copper coins of Sulaimān ibn al-Ḥasan of Kilwa (1294–1308), certain variants of 'Alī ibn al-Ḥasan of Kilwa (1478–9) and of Dāūd ibn al-Ḥasan, possibly of the same place.¹ Here, however, the patronymic is omitted on the obverse, unlike the Kilwa series. Since the phrase occurs on the coins of two datable rulers whose reigns are separated by nearly two centuries, it can only be regarded as a cliché, and without significance for the dating of the piece.

8. *Rasūl ibn 'Alī*

XIII. Æ. Weight approximately 0.40 gm. (specimens incomplete).

Obv. Without decoration, the ن crossing ل in السلطان:

السلطان	The Sultan
رسول	Rasūl
بن علي	ibn 'Alī

Rev. Without decoration:

(?)	يثق	(?) trusts
	////	(erased)
	////	(erased)

9.* *Yūsuf ibn Abī Bakr*

XIV. Æ. Weight 0.94 gm.

[Pl. XVIII. 6]

Obv. Within a circle, and with ن crossing ل in السلطان:

السلطان	The Sultan
يوسف	Yūsuf
بن ابي بكر	son of Abī Bakr

¹ Walker, *op. cit.* 65, 70, 72.

Rev. Within a circle: المتوكل who trusts
 بالله in God
 الأكبر the Greatest

The reading of the last line of the reverse is doubtful, and appears in all known specimens to have been blundered.

A personage of similar name, al-Ḥājj Yūsuf ibn Abī Bakr ibn al-Ḥājj Dāūd, is commemorated in the epitaph of a tomb in the Hamar-wen quarter of Mogadishu dated 4 Dhū 'l-Ḥijja 766 = 22 August A.D. 1365.¹ Less than two dozen epitaphs of medieval date have been recorded in Somalia,² and clearly al-Ḥājj Yūsuf was a person of considerable consequence. It is just possible that he is the same person as that mentioned on the coins, but, if so, one would have expected the title sultan to have appeared in the epitaph; there would be nothing surprising in the omission of al-Ḥājj from his coins.

XV. As XIV, but without the surrounding circles.

10. *Malik ibn Sa'id*

XVI. Æ. Weight 0.34 gm.

Obv. Within traces of two circles, in a very square script:

السلطان The Sultan
 ملك Malik
 بن سعيد son of Sa'id

Rev. Without decoration: المعتمد who relies
 باللة (. .) upon God (. .)
 الصمد the Eternal

It may be noted that الصمد—al-Ṣamad—the Eternal, the sixty-seventh of the ninety-nine Beautiful Names of God recited on the *tasbīḥ*, or Muslim Rosary, also occurs in the legend of no. 1, Abū Bakr ibn Muḥammad, and likewise in the legend of al-Ḥusain ibn Aḥmad, who was probably a fifteenth-century ruler of Zanzibar.³ Presumably it was chosen to establish a rhyme between the obverse and reverse, but here surely it is a stretch of licence to make al-Ṣamad rhyme with Sa'id.

¹ Cerulli, *op. cit.* 6.

² Cerulli, *op. cit.*, cites thirteen; the Garesa Museum Catalogue contains a number of others of varying date, but the readings may not be satisfactory: for a discussion of no. 259, p. 30, dated there A.H. 138—A.D. 758, see G. S. P. Freeman-Grenville, *Journal of the East African Swahili Committee*, Jan. 1959, which argues that A.H. 1138 is intended, that is A.D. 1725.

³ Freeman-Grenville, *NC* 1957, 170.

11.* *Zubayr ibn 'Umar*

XVII. Æ. Weight 0.79 gm.

[Pl. XVIII. 7]

Obv. Without decoration, but with ن crossing ل in السلطان:

السلطان	The Sultan
زبير بن	Zubayr son of
عمر	'Umar

Rev. Without decoration: المستقى who follows
 بالله God
 الأكبر the Greatest

12. *'Alī ibn Yūsuf*

XVIII. Æ. Weight 0.77 gm. Flan clipped to form a rough octagon.

[Pl. XVIII. 8]

Obv. Without decoration: السلطان The Sultan
 على بن 'Alī son of
 يوسف Yūsuf

Rev. With a trace of a surrounding square, two circular decorations on the left of the flan, a point in the centre and two points at the bottom of the field:

المقتدر	the Powerful
بالله	in God
الأكبر	the Greatest

XIX. Æ. Weight 0.54 gm. (reconstruction from various specimens).

Obv. Without decoration, with ن crossing ل in السلطان, and four small dots above, legend as XVIII.*Rev.* As XVIII.

XX. As XIX, but without the four small dots on the obverse.

A single specimen of this ruler was reported by the writer from Kisimani Mafia in *NC* 1957.¹ Since then, H. N. Chittick has found four further specimens on the beach at the same place, which he has been kind enough to show me. Apart from a single specimen of no. 17, reported also from there by Dr. John Walker in 1936,² these are the only coins which appear to be local to Mogadishu and the neighbouring country to have been found outside that area. In the case of 'Alī ibn Yūsuf, a total of 5,965 pieces (including 5,800 from the Anonymous Collection) from the Mogadishu area would seem to establish him as a ruler of Mogadishu beyond reasonable doubt. In

¹ Freeman-Grenville, *NC* 1957, 156.² Walker, *op. cit.* 76, no. 4, illustrated, Pl. IX, no. 21.

addition, the characteristic of ن crossing ل in السلطان, which numbers XIX and XX share with X, XIV, and XVII, together with a similar device in II and perhaps V, is an important indication that all these rulers may be ascribed to Mogadishu.

There follows an issue in which the title and name of the ruler are not given, but which, on grounds of similarity of script, weight, type and appearance, would appear to be connected with one or other of these rulers who employed the title sultan just described.

13. *al-Sultānīa al-Mujāhidīa*

XXI. Æ. Weight 0.55 gm.

[Pl. XVIII. 9]

Obv. Within traces of a curved hexagon in two lines:

السلطان
نية The Sultanate

Rev. Without decoration, in two lines:

الحج
هدية which wages the Holy War

XXII. Æ. Weight 0.29 gm.

Obverse and reverse with traces of a surrounding figure, perhaps hexagonal, and with legends as XXI.

XXIII. Æ. Weight 0.16 gm.

Obverse and reverse without decoration, the legends as XXI.

It is certainly hard to understand the purpose of minting coins of such extreme lightness, which makes them very difficult to handle. They must have been very easily lost. Although few of the coins of the rulers described here weigh as much as a gramme, and light coins seem to have been fashionable in the area for a long time, a copper coin as light as 0.16 gm. would seem almost valueless in itself. It is unfortunate that there is no text to throw light on their comparative purchasing power. It is plain, however, even if these coins are very light, that there was a deliberate intention to produce different weights which is also apparent in the issues of 'Alī ibn Yūsuf. His have two different weights, whereas here there are three.

Another possibility is that these are the smaller denominations of the coinage of one of the sultans already named, for the obverse implies that the sultanate existed at this time. Two other issues might be linked to these since they both refer to the Holy War. No. 4, Sultan Muhammad's pieces average 0.41 gm., so that they seem hardly to

fit logically into sequence with this series. Those of no. 2, al-Raḥman ibn Musā'id weigh 1.90 gm., but he does not describe himself as a sultan, and, in addition, refers to his state as *daula*. Again the script of his pieces is individual and quite unlike al-Sultānīa al-Mujāhidīa.

To what Holy War do these refer? The references are presumably to trouble with the pagan tribes of the interior, similar to that which cost al-Ḥusain ibn Sulaimān of Kilwa (1356-62) his life.¹ Here the coins mention wars of which literature has no trace.

It is convenient to describe here one other anonymous issue in this collection. Only three specimens survive, and its text suggests perhaps that it is a commemorative medal rather than a coin.

14. '*al-Taufiq sa'āda*'

XXIV. Æ. Weight 1.45 gm.

Obv. With ق alone pointed and without decoration:

التوفيق	Success (is)
سعادة	Happiness

Rev. With ش alone pointed and without decoration:

والشكر	And thanks (is)
زيادة	An increase (of it)

This, perhaps, may be a memory of some long-forgotten battle.

The eleven issues that follow are wholly different in type, weight, epigraphy and decoration. Eight of them bear arabesque monograms on both the obverse and the reverse: one of them, al-Ḍibr, is transitional between this and the earlier use of orthodox script in that one of his issues employs both. The sudden appearance of arabesque coins in a remote and unimportant sultanate on the east African coast is at first sight strange. Although crude in form, these arabesques resemble the *tughra*, which is characteristic of Turkish coinage and which lends it a special grace and elegance. The Turks took Cairo in 1517, and had conquered most of the Yemen by the 1540's. The earliest reported Turkish raids along the east African coast were c. 1562; but so violent a change in the manner of the coinage may perhaps be connected with the events of 1587, when Amīr 'Alī Bey appeared at Mogadishu. The people declared themselves free of the Portuguese and acknowledged the Turkish sultan. Clearly it was a moment for an overt gesture of defiance against the Portuguese.

¹ Strong, *op. cit.* 417.

When Portuguese vassalage was after a fashion renewed six years later, the new coinage, with its obscure monogrammatic arabesques, could cause no obvious offence but remained as a sign of belief in independence. If this is no more than a speculation, it does not seem unreasonable.

15. *al-Bāhūq*

XXV. *Æ*. Weight 0.27 gm.

[Pl. XVIII. 10]

Obv. Within a circle, in two lines:

البا
هوق al-Bāhūq

Rev. Without decoration, in two lines:

الله
المالك The Kingdom is God's

Only four of these silver coins have so far been found, and no corresponding copper issues. The phrase on the reverse links them with no. 17, al-Ḍibr, and with the reverse of arabesque types 'C' and 'H'. The name cannot at present be paralleled, but it is important to note that it is arranged in two lines, as is the following:

16. *al-Bahā-Lillāh.*

XXVI. *Æ*. Weight 0.85 gm.

[Pl. XVIII. 11]

Obv. Within a collar and with six decorations, viz. \wedge :

الله
البتها The Splendour is God's

Rev. Within a collar: (illegible)
الله God
..... (illegible)

It is to be noted that the script here is closely related in style to those of al-Ḍibr, which follow.

17. *al-Ḍibr*

The only coin of this ruler so far reported was among a hoard of Kilwa coins described by Walker in *NC* 1936. There the name was read *al-Ṣabr*. Dr. Walker tells me that he now thinks al-Ḍibr (The Lion) a more likely reading, and this is supported by the obverse of XXXIII, which depicts a lion.

XXVII. Æ. Weight 2.68 gm.

[Pl. XVIII. 12]

Obv. Within a dodecagon surrounded by a collar, with pellets in the segments thus formed:

الضبر	al-Dibr
.....	(illegible)
.....	(illegible)

Rev. Within a similar figure:

الله	The Kingdom is God's
المالك	

XXVIII. Æ. Weight 1.38 gm.

Obv. Within a circle and a circle of dots, surviving legend as XXVII.

Rev. Decoration as obverse, legend as XXVII.

XXIX. Æ. Weight 1.12 gm. (flan clipped after minting?).

Obv. Without decoration, as before.

Rev. Within a six-pointed star, legend as XXVII.

XXX. Æ. Weight 1.44 gm.

Obv. Within a circle:

الضبر	al-Dibr—
عز	He is glorious!

Rev. As XXVIII.

The obverse legend of this specimen makes it clear that we are intended to take al-Dibr as the name of a person.

XXXI. Æ. Weight 0.76 gm.

Obv. Within two circles separated by a circle of dots, legend as XXX.

Rev. Decoration as obverse, legend as XXVII.

This piece is thus similar in description to the single specimen reported by Walker, but much smaller: his specimen weighed 2.28 gm., a weight which is not represented here.

XXXII. Æ. Weight 0.44 gm.

Obv. Within a single circle, legend as XXX.

Rev. Within a circle and a circle of dots, legend as XXVII.

XXXIII. Æ. Weight 1.55 gm.

Obv. On a square flan, surrounded by a circle of dots and a plain square, the lower half of the field having a lion with the right fore-paw raised and the tail brought forward above the body, legend in the upper part of the field as XXX.



Rev. Within a square of dots and a plain square, legend as XXVII.

Except for two of the reverses and one obverse, it has not proved possible to read any of the following eight types which bear arabesque monograms:

18. XXXIV. Type 'A'. Æ. Weight 2.30 gm. Arabesque monograms on the obverse and reverse.
19. XXXV. Type 'B'. Æ. Weight 1.70 gm. Arabesque monograms on the obverse differing from the preceding. [Pl. XVIII. 13]
20. XXXVI. Type 'C'. Æ. Weight 0.83 gm. Arabesque monograms on the obverse and reverse differing from the preceding set within six-pointed stars: the obverse may be read **الله الملك**—God's is the kingdom.
21. XXXVII. Type 'D'. Æ. Weight 3.57 gm.
Obv. Within a circle, a circle of dots and an inner circle, a six-pointed star with the segments containing dots, and an illegible arabesque monogram.
Rev. As obverse, but lacking the outer circle and with a differing monogram.
22. XXXVIII. Type 'E'. Æ. Weight 3.57 gm. (as XXXVII). [Pl. XVIII. 14]
Obv. Within a circle, a six-pointed star with the segments containing dots, and an illegible arabesque monogram differing from the preceding.
Rev. Similar decoration, and an arabesque monogram differing from the preceding.
23. XXXIX. Type 'F'. Æ. Weight 3.50 gm.
Obv. Within a circle, another arabesque monogram.
Rev. Similar.
24. XL. Type 'G'. Æ. Weight 1.57 gm.
Obv. Within an irregular polygon, an arabesque monogram.
Rev. Within traces of a six-pointed star, a differing arabesque monogram.
25. XLI. Type 'H'. Æ. Weight 1.15 gm.
Obv. Within a six-pointed star, an arabesque monogram, possibly representing **عبد العزيز**—'Abd al-'Azīz.
Rev. Within a circle enclosing a six-pointed star with dots in the lower segments **الله الملك**—The Kingdom is God's.

The similarity of this reverse to those of al-Dībr has already been remarked.

Of the foreign coins, the single Roman specimen is of Alexander Severus.¹ In view of those described by Mattingly from Port Durnford, or Bir Gao, it is surprising that more have not been found. The single *fihs* of al-Mu'taṣim, minted in 836, the year before his move to Sāmarrā, serves to emphasize the rarity of coins of the caliphate in east Africa. The only others so far reported have come from Pemba.² The single piece of Shāh Fīrūz al-Bahmānī is the first Bahmānid coin to be reported anywhere in East Africa.

It is not surprising to find coins of 'Alī ibn al-Ḥasan and of al-Ḥasan ibn Sulaimān of Kilwa, both of types already described in the *Numismatic Chronicle*. Trade between Mogadishu and Kilwa is well attested. Some comment seems necessary on the Garesa Museum Catalogue entry for 'Alī ibn al-Ḥasan, items 278-83, which reads: *Sei monete: Recto: 'Sultano Ali' (1254 d.C.) Verso: 'Maometto e apostolo di Dio'*. In 1956, through the kindness of Dr. Walker, the writer was able to examine some of the coins from the Garesa Museum which, through his intervention, were sent to the British Museum for examination. No coins of this description, however, were sent. It has now been possible for the writer to arrange for the coins shown with this entry to be re-examined in the Garesa Museum. It appears that they are normal specimens of 'Alī ibn al-Ḥasan which had been mis-read when the catalogue was made. A specimen of this coinage recently found at Kisimani Mafia, and now in the King George V Memorial Museum, Dar-es-Salaam, Tanganyika, provides a clue to the mis-reading. The lower part of the obverse was so erased that the word —sa'ida—appeared as , which could easily be taken as ٦٥١—651/A.D. 1254.³

What is most extraordinary is that the Anonymous Collection includes no less than 473 pieces of Muḥammad ibn Sulaimān of Kilwa, particularly because reports of specimens of his coins have been so far sparse. So far published are: Kilwa Kisiwani, 6; Kisimani Mafia, 1; Kua, Juani Island, Mafia, 1; Zanzibar, 1; Lamu, 1; Garesa Museum, Mogadishu (including 6 not mentioned in the catalogue), 10; Cerulli, Warsheikh, 31; total, 51.⁴ It will be noted that of these only 20 come from the Kilwa and Zanzibar areas. In addition, Major

¹ Catalogo, 167.

² Mattingly, loc. cit.; Freeman-Grenville, op. cit. 171.

³ I am grateful to Miss J. R. Harding, late Curator, for having sent me this piece for examination.

⁴ J. Walker, 'Some New Coins from Kilwa', *NC* 1939, 223-6; Freeman-Grenville, op. cit., Table of Finds, 176-9; Cerulli, op. cit. 124, 126; *Catalogo*, loc. cit.

Wright's find shows one more from Warsheikh, while H. N. Chittick has recently found three more on the beach at Kisimani Mafia.

The immense preponderance of finds of this ruler in the Mogadishu area thus raises the question whether Walker's original identification of them with Muḥammad ibn Sulaimān of Kilwa can be correct. This was made in 1939,¹ when the only finds known were from the Kilwa and Zanzibar areas. Like the Kilwa coins they have a rhyming obverse and reverse, while العادل—al-ʿĀdil is the title or throne-name given him in the Kilwa History.² In addition appearance, weight (two specimens, 0.71 gm. and 1.16 gm.) and composition were consonant with the other Kilwa issues. All these arguments seemed to the present writer unexceptionable, and it must be admitted that it never occurred to him to question them.

Certain arguments, however, can be presented against this identification. All the other Kilwa issues give both the name of the sultan and his patronymic. Here only the name, Muḥammad, is given. None of the other Kilwa issues bears a title or a throne-name: here the ruler is named as sultan and a throne-name al-ʿĀdil is included. Although some of the Kilwa and Zanzibar coins have a square flan,³ none of them has the legend within a square: amongst the Mogadishu coins XXXIII has both features. Again, a noticeable feature in the Anonymous Collection is the lightness of the pieces as compared with the heavier Kilwa issues; and, in spite of the two different weights reported by Walker, the five new variants described below are much lighter. They weigh 0.68 gm., 0.68 gm., 0.45 gm., 0.34 gm., and 0.17 gm. respectively. The heavier weights described by Walker are not present at all. In this there is a great similarity with the Mogadishu finds. As to script, there is great variation between the various Kilwa sultans, even between variants of the same sultan: it is perhaps relevant that the issues of Muḥammad ibn Sulaimān strongly resemble those of Sultan Muḥammad already described, V, VI, and VII, specimens of which have never been found in the Kilwa area.

These arguments may seem powerful in sum, but, in addition to the arguments used by Walker in 1939, there are others which support his view. In all the Mogadishu issues described, if the word sultan occurs, it is in the first line of the obverse: in those of Muḥammad ibn Sulaimān it is in the third line of the obverse. The argument from

¹ Loc. cit.

² Strong, *op. cit.* 406, 417.

³ Freeman-Grenville, *op. cit.*, Table III. 5, contains a number of examples.

weight is a weak one: all these rulers show great variation in the weights they employed, and it is not possible to perceive any consistent significance in them. Again, the Kilwa rulers all used rhymes between the obverse and the reverse, and Muḥammad ibn Sulaimān is no exception: such rhymes are rare in the Mogadishu coins, and occur only in I (obverse only), (?) II, X, XII, XIV, (?) XVI, XVII, and XXI.

Finally, it cannot perhaps be sufficiently emphasized that all these coins, from Kilwa, Mafia, Zanzibar, and Mogadishu, are surface finds: while recent excavations have yielded a small number of coins, so far no hoard has been reported. It is thus wholly possible that the present situation, in which the doubt about Walker's identification rests in the last analysis solely upon numbers, might be reversed by the chances of excavation tomorrow. For all these reasons the writer is convinced that the arguments put forward by Walker in 1939 have not been rebutted: the contrary arguments are so weak that the original identification must be allowed to stand.

Variants of Muḥammad ibn Sulaimān in the Anonymous Collection are:

29. *Muḥammad ibn Sulaimān*

XLII. Æ. Weight 0.68 gm. On a round flan.

Obv. Within a square, legend as Walker, *NC* 1939, but with traces of decoration or lettering between the square and the edge of the flan.

Rev. Ditto.

XLIII. Æ. Weight 0.68 gm. On a round flan.

Obv. Without decoration, legend as in Walker, *op. cit.*

Rev. Without decoration, but the legend arranged in three lines:

الظا	The Con-
فر بتأييد	queror by the help
الرحمن	of the Merciful

XLIV. Æ. Weight 0.45 gm. Round flan. As Freeman-Grenville, *NC* 1957, II.

XLV. Æ. Weight 0.34 gm. Round flan.

Obv. As XLIV.

Rev. Within a circle, the legend arranged as in XLIII.

XLVI. Æ. Weight 0.17 gm. Round flan.

[Pl. XVIII. 15]

Obv. Within a trace of a surrounding circle:

محمد	Muḥammad
السلطان	the Sultan

Rev. Within a circle, in two lines:

الظافر
فر The Conqueror

The only other foreign coin of interest in this collection comes from Harar, in Ethiopia.

Amīr 'Abdallāh 'Abd al-Shākir

XLVII. Æ. Weight 1.30 gm.

Obv. Within a circle of dots:

العبد
الضعيف The Weak Slave (of God)
١٣٠٣ 1303

Rev. Without decoration: ضرب في
مدينة (the) town (of)
حرر Harar

The year A.H. 1303 is A.D. 1885. Colonel A. T. Curle, late H.B.M. Consul in Addis Ababa, has been kind enough to make inquiries about this person for me. He was set on the throne of Harar by the Egyptian, Radwan Pasha, and the English Lieutenant Peyton, who supervised the Egyptian withdrawal from Harar in 1884. He was an especially devout Muslim, and declined to have any title on his coinage but 'The Weak Slave (of God)'. He was ejected when the Shoans conquered Harar in January 1887. His copper coinage, which was known as Ashrafi, was minted out of used Remington cartridge cases which the Egyptians left behind when they withdrew. These he compulsorily exchanged with Egyptian silver coinage, to his own financial benefit, but to the destruction of the economic life of the town.

The Far Eastern coins in the Anonymous Collection are of interest in a number of ways. They contain one of the rare T'ang dynasty coins to be found on the east African coast, as well as the first specimens of the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties. It is curious that so far all finds have been of the Sung dynasty.¹ They also include the first pieces from medieval Ceylon, as also from nineteenth-century Annam. Those from Ceylon remind one that it was from slightly further north that Cosmas Indicopleustes set off thither in A.D. 523: this is the first suggestion of a two-way traffic between these areas

¹ For others, see Freeman-Grenville, *op. cit.* 164-5.

for six and a half centuries.¹ In regard to the six Ming pieces, it is to be noted that Mogadishu was one of the places visited by Cheng Ho during his fifth voyage in the Indian Ocean, 1417–19, and again on his sixth voyage, 1421–2. A copper-red decorated bottle excavated at Gedi in Kenya is thought by Kirkman to have been possibly a diplomatic present brought on one of these voyages, of which the intention seems to have been to extend imperial trade.² It cannot, of course, be asserted that these coins were brought on one or other of these voyages, but the possibility cannot be excluded.

The Far Eastern coins have been identified as follows:

Southern T'ang: ruler not identified, 1; *Northern Sung*: Chen-Tsung (T'ien-Hsi) (1017–21), 1; Shen-Tsung (Hsi-Ning) (1038–77), 1; (Yuan Feng) (1078–85), 3; Che Tsung (Yuan Yu) (1086–94), 3; (Hsuan Ho) (1119–25), 2; *Southern Sung*: Kao Tsung (Shao Hsing) (1131–62), 1; Ti Tsung (Ch'un Yu) (1241–52), 2; (Pao Yu) (1253–9), 2; *Ming*: Ch'eng Tsung (Yung Ho) (1403–24), 6; *Ch'ing*: Shih Tsung (1644–62), 1; Wen Tsung (Hsun-Feng) (1851–82), 1; obliterated Chinese, 8.

Ceylon: Queen Lilavati (1197–1200), 1; Parakrama Bahu II (1236–71), 2; Buhuvanaika Bahu (1273–84), 1.

Annam: Ming-Ming (1820–40), 1; Shao-Chih (1841–7), 1; Tse-Te (1848–82), 1; Wei Hsin (1907–16), 1.

¹ *Christiana Topographia*, ed. J. W. McCrindle, Hakluyt Society, 1897.

² J. J. L. Duyvendak, *China's Discovery of Africa*, 1949, 26 f.; T. Filesi, *Le relazioni della Cina con l'Africa nel medio-evo*, Milan, 1962, 75 ff.; J. S. Kirkman, *The Arab City of Gedi*, 1954, 13, 129.



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