

Copper Coins from the mint of Agra

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Copper coins occupy a very eminent place in the coinage of Akbar. Abu Fazl in his seminal work 'Ain-i-Akbari' informs that imperial accounts were kept in the terms of dams (the unit of copper coin equaling approx 1/40 th part of rupee). Akbar minted a large volume of copper coins from various mints in his ever expanding empire. Akbar's copper coins are indeed very intriguing and sometimes puzzling. The combination of elegant calligraphy, numerous mints and type makes collecting Akbar copper coins very interesting! The types of the copper coins of Akbar for his numerous mints including Agra are not static for the most part of his reign makes it very attractive theme to collect. Furthermore denominational study of his copper coins makes it very exciting. I have compiled a typological list of copper coins of Akbar of Agra to give a peep into the beautiful and exciting world of the copper coins of Akbar, study of other mints is in the offing

Agra was in Akbar's control from the start of his reign with the earliest coin found dated 963 A.H. In 1558 (965 A.H), at the age of 16, Akbar shifted his government from Delhi to Agra. Agra was a place of great historical and political significance. It was Akbar's capital for a significant part of his reign so it is natural that he minted copper coins extensively from Agra mint like his father and grandfather. The copper coinage of Agra is unique as it has produced coins from start of the reign till the very last year of reign. Due to this prolonged period of minting, numerous types exist in copper coinage of Agra making it one of the most complex mints to study. Let us have a look at the major types classified according to legend and gross style—

1) Humayun second reign type

This coin pushed the earliest date of Akbar back by 2 years as was mentioned 'coinage of Akbar' by Andrew Liddle . The coin is seen only with a single date of 963 A.H. The coin is very similar to the ones produced during the second reign of Humayun differing only in the date. Fractions of dam like half dam and possibly quarter dams exists. It also has a special mintmark of a trident like figure.

Obverse- Zarb falus dar al khilafat Agra

Reverse- Nushad below a horizontle line and Sashtad wa seh above the line with mint mark



Fi Tarikh without falus type

The next type comes with 'Fi Tarikh' on reverse. Coins of this type dated 964 A.H is clearly seen. 965 A.H in this type is reported but I have not seen it personally nor any photo available so cannot confirm it's existence. Half dams are found.

Obverse- Zarb Dar-al-khilafat Agra

Reverse- Horizontle line separating Fi tarikh below and A.H date in words(e.g Nuhshad wa Sasht wa Chahar)



Double epithet type

A very interesting type exists for the date 965 only. The coin bears the epithet dar al zarb khilafat Agra. This coin is extremely scarce. No fractions has yet been reported.

Obverse- Falus Dar al zarb, dar al khilafat Agra

Reverse- Fi tarikh below a horizontle line and hijri date in words above the line.



- Photo taken from Rajgor Auctions # Auction 11.

Fi tarikh type with falus

The coins of this type starts from 965 A.H. The mint place and epithet are separated by the 'seen' of sikka. Half dams and quarter dams are known. This type was minted till 976 A.H.

Obverse- Sikka falus dar al khilafat above and zarb agra below a line formed by the 'seen' of sikka

Reverse- - Horizontle line separating Fi tarikh below and A.H date in words.



Falus type without fi tarikh

This type starts from 977 and lasts till 981 A.H. The coins do not have fi tarikh on the reverse. The mint name is present on the left top corner of the coin. Fractions of half dams are found and quarter dams are reported to exist.

Obverse- Zarb falus dar al khilafat Agra

Reverse- Sanah 'hijri year' in words above the line below sanah and in numerals below sanah



Single side dotted border type

This type appears to be a mule of the preceding and succeeding type. The obverse die is just like the preceding type and reverse has dotted border like the succeeding type. Only one date i.e 981 A.H is known. No fractions are known

Obverse. Zarb falus dar-al-khilafat Agra

Reverse- Sanah hijri year in letters and fi tarikh Nushad below the dotted line and hastad wa yak above the dotted line



Both side dotted border type

This is also a special issue with dotted borders on both side of the coin. Dates found on this type are 981 A.H, 982 A.H and 983 A.H. No fractions are reported. This issue seems to correspond to the similar issues from Ahmedabad, Anhirwala Pattan, Ahmednagar and Chainpur and Delhi mints.

Obverse- Zarb Falus 81(82or 83) below dotted horizontal parallel line dividing the flan into two semicircle and dar al khilafat Agra above dotted horizontal parallel line

Reverse- - Sanah hijri year in letters and fi tarikh Nushad below the dotted line and hastad wa yak(do or sheh) above the dotted line



Dar Al Zarb type

Another special issue from Agra and extremely scarce is the this one bearing Dar-al-zarb as mint epithet. No fractions are reported. Dates found on this type are 983 A.H, 984 A.H and 985 A.H.

Obverse- Falus dar al zarb Agra

Reverse- Hijri date in numerals and words



Khilafat Agra type

The coins of the next variety had previously been misread as Jalalnagar by Whitehead but subsequent coins have shown the mint name as Khilafat Agra (note: There is no dar-al). Coins bear the dates 984 and 985. Fractions are found as half and quarter dams

Obverse- Zarb falus khilafat Agra

Reverse- Fi tarikh hijri date in numbers and words



Allah Agra type

There was another very interesting change that we get subsequently. This type is known as Allah Agra type. The word Allah features very prominently in the centre of the coin with rest of the legend surrounding it. This change coincides with the introduction of tehrik e ilahi (a order or religion started by Akbar) and the coin seems to be commemorating the event. This type is found in 986 and 987 A.H. Fractions are known in half dam.

Obverse- Zarb Falus dar al khilafat Allah Agra

Reverse- Hijri date in numeral and words



Agra on top type

In this variety the mint name Agra is placed on the top. Sometimes Agra is off flan with only a little part of Agra visible on flan. Found in 988 A.H only. Fractions are seen in half dam

Obverse- Zarb Falus dar al khilafat Agra

Reverse- Date in Hijri in numeral and words



Thick legend type

This type is characterized by thick characters and oversized legends so that Agra features prominently in the centre while the mint epithet is mostly off flan. Found with dates 987 A.H, 988 A.H and 989 A.H. Fractions are known.

Obverse- Zarb falus dar al khilafat Agra

Reverse- Hijri date in number and words



No copper coin from Agra after 989 till Ilahi 43 is reported..

Ilahi type

The ilahi series of Agra are in general scarcer than the hijri issues

Tanka Akbarshahi type

The tanka akbarshahi type is characterized by introduction of the new denomination of Tanka weighing approx 40 gms in weight. Thus the dam becomes 'neem tanka' with approx 20 gms in weight. Further fractions like chaharam hissa (10gms) are known. Other fractions may exist but not found yet. The 40 gms tanka of Agra are rare and few have seen them in hand. Even 'neem tanka' is scarce and chaharam hissa is also very scarce. They are found for ilahi 44 and ilahi 45.

The 'neem tanka' is also extensively found overstruck on earlier Suri dams

For tanka and neem tanka

Obverse- Zarb Agra (neem) below a horizontal line and tanka akbarshahi above the line

Reverse- Persian month below a horizontal line and ilahi year above

For chaharam hissa

Obverse- Ilahi year and zarb Agra below a horizontal line and ilahi month above

Reverse- Chaharam hissa below a horizontal line and tanka Akbarshahi above

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Tanki type

From Ilahi 46 onwards the Tanki denomination was introduced with ek tanki approx 4 gms. Do tanki approx 8 gms and chou tanki approx 16 gms. They are found till ilahi 50

Obverse- Ilahi year and Zarb Agra below a horizontal line and Persian month on the obverse

Reverse- Chou or do or yek Tanki below a horizontal line and Akbarshahi is above the line





- 'Akbar copper coins' is a very dynamic subject with new dates and types constantly coming up. I have tried to put together this work based on evidence from photographs with clear dates and physically examining whenever possible (most coins are my own collection).
- Further research work on other mints are underway. If you have Akbar coppers then please feel free to share your coin pics with me. Your coins may open up new dimensions in copper coins of Akbar. Also please feel free to send pics of copper coins of Akbar waiting for attribution

My email address is- dr.abhi20@gmail.com

Special thanks to Mr. Jan Lingen for allowing me to share pics from www.zeno.ru

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