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**Qara Qorum-City (Mongolia) I**

Preliminary report of the excavations 2000 - 2001

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**Varia:**

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**Institute of Pre- and Early Historical Archaeology  
Bonn University**

Associate Member of the Center for Asian Studies Bonn  
CASB

## COIN PENDANT FROM CENTRAL ASIA

Stefan Heidemann

About 260 coins were discovered during two excavation seasons in 2000 and 2001 in Qara Qorum under the direction of H.R. Roth, University of Bonn, and U. Erdenebat, Academy of Science in Ulaan-Bataar. Except one, all coins belong to the Chinese types of the Northern Song, Jin and the Mongol Yuan-Dynasty. Qara Qorum was firmly integrated into this currency zone. These coins are currently studied by Eva Nagel. The only coin from regions under Mongol sway where Islamic currencies prevailed as well as the only precious metal coin at all is a dirham struck in the oasis of Utrar, nowadays located in the south of Kazakhstan. The type is attested for the years 683 to 694 h. or 1285 to 1293 AD. This fits well into the time-frame of the duration of Qara Qorum. It was not used as coin any more when it was lost. The heavy worn coin was mounted in order to serve as jewellery.

From the numismatic point of view Mongolia and the currency circulation there is mostly unknown. The excavation will add much to our knowledge about the economic history of the region and many preconceptions will be dismissed. Precious metal coins usually appear in excavations within hoards, rarely as single finds. So the lack of them within the excavation is not surprising. For example what might have been expected are other base metal coins (broad copper-Dirhams) from Islamic eastern central Asia. Monetary contacts between Qara Qorum and the Islamic central Asia are only reflected in a mounted coin so far.



Fig. 1: Coin pendant. Front (left) and back (right).

### Catalogue:

Mongol tribe, indicated by S-shaped Tamgha, caliph al-Nasir li-Din Allah (575-622/1180-1225), posthumous.

Dirham, (Utrar), year off, type known for the period 683-684 h. MAYER, T. (1998): *Sylloge Numorum Arabicorum* Tübingen, Nord- und Ostzentrasien, XV b Mittelasien II. Tübingen, Berlin, no. 10 to 14. DAVIDOVICH, E. A.: *Klady drevnikh i srednevekovykh monet Tadzhikistana*, Moskva 1979, p. 248.

1. „KAR 2“-486, 1,87g, much worn, mounted as jewellery.

Filling (SFN 486, trench LH 17/13, layer 3, -80 cm) within the housing- and workshop area at the N-S street axis in the centre of the medieval city.

Commentary:

On the obverse, surrounding a S-shaped Tamgha, only traces of the inscription are visible: *al-imam (al-d<sup>o</sup> zam) al-Nasir (li-Din Allah)*. On the reverse in the centre is read: *al-mulk lillah / al-hamd lillah*. The mint- and date formula in the margin is unfortunately not legible. This type is only known for Utrar. The posthumous naming of the deceased caliph al-Nasir li-Din Allah, who reigned during the conquests of Chinggis Qan, is a typical feature of Mongol coins from Central Asia. It does neither indicate any political attachment to the extinct Islamic caliphate in Iraq nor to the newly created one in Egypt. Probably his name served on coins as a symbol of Islamic belief, which had to be shown on the coin in order to be accepted legal tender.