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Original Research Article

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The Persian translation of this article is published in the same issue with the following title تحليل و بررسی سکههای ايلخانی موجود در موزهٔ ملی «باغ فين» کاشان

# Analyzing and Examining the Ilkhanid Coins in the National Museum of «Fin Garden» in Kashan

#### Abstract

**Introduction:** Coins are one of the essential sources of identifying the history of humanity and critical historical documents by studying them from the technical (material, alloy) and content (patterns and themes of coins) perspectives, many aspects of the political, social, artistic, and religious developments of the governments are recovered. In the present study, which was conducted to identify the coins of the Ilkhanid period, an attempt was made to describe and analyze the designs and writings of the coins of the «Fin Garden» museum and their relationship with the religion and politics of this period. The following question is addressed: «What is the theme of the Ilkhanid coins of the «Fin Garden» museum and their common visual manifestations»?

**Research Method:** The current research is fundamental, and data collection was conducted using a library and field method (National Museum of Fin Garden in Kashan), as well as an analytical-historical approach.

**Results:** The findings show that among the Ilkhanid coins in the National Museum of Fin Garden in Kashan, the coins belong to three Ilkhanid rulers, including «Ghazan Mahmud» (694-703 A.H.), «Oljaitu» (716-703 A.H.), and «Abu Sa'id» (716-736 A.H.), most of which belong to Abu Sa'id and three pieces of coins belong to the princes of the Fatrat period (Muhammad Khan and Anoushirvan). In general, writings related to the Shiite religion (names of the Imams (PBUH)) and Sunnite (names of the Rashidun Caliphs), geometric decorative frames comprising circles, plant motifs, and celestial objects, and motifs using Tamgha are among the visual representations used in the Ilkhanid coins in the National Museum of Fin Garden in Kashan.

**Conclusion:** The writings on the Ilkhanid coins in the National Museum of Fin Garden are related to the Shiite religion (the names of the Imams (PBUH)) and Sunnite (names of the Rashidun Caliphs). Decorative geometric frames comprising circles, plant motifs, celestial objects, and motifs using Tamgha are among the visual representations used in these coins, which, like other historical periods of Iran, have represented the religion and politics of their era.

#### - Keywords

Ilkhanid, Coins, Kashan, National Museum of Fin Garden, Visual Elements, Religious Rituals

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#### Introduction

As the most lasting historical document, coins are a manifestation of different dimensions of society's life and reflect industry, type of clothing, economy, religious rituals, and other issues. Coins were exchanged between different strata in daily exchanges, which provided a suitable context for expressing the desired goals of the rulers. In the meantime, the coins of the Ilkhanid period include a lot of information regarding the variety of themes and patterns, which is of particular importance to researchers in such a way that with the establishment of Ilkhanid rule in Iran, they were forced to respect Islamic rituals and Iranian culture. These coins are artistically valuable. The existence of a large number of mints throughout the territory of Iran in this period was a sign of economic and political success and prosperity in all areas and villages, so there was a mintage of coins in small towns. At the same time, this was not common in previous periods. Examining the coins of the Ilkhanid period as a cultural-historical document to obtain visual evidence related to the religious beliefs in the society of that time is a missing link. Different religions, including Sunnite, influenced the religious beliefs governing the society of the Ilkhanid period, and the Shiites were a minority in the society. Unfortunately, a comprehensive scientific study and research have not been done on the Ilkhanid coins of the «Fin Garden» museum in terms of their form and content. In the present research, following the political and religious conditions related to this period, the patterns and content of the Ilkhanid coins of the museum have been investigated. Therefore, the purpose of the current research is to read and analyze the visual elements of the designs of Ilkhanid coins in the National Museum of Fin Garden in Kashan, and it has been tried to find the relationship of coins with religion and politics of this period by describing and analyzing the motifs and writings. Accordingly, the following questions will be answered during the research: «In terms of theme, what themes do the Ilkhanid coins of Fin Garden Museum include?» and «What are the common visual manifestations in the Ilkhanid coins of Fin Garden Museum?»

#### **Research Method**

Considering that the current research is related to the formal and content analysis of the Ilkhanid coins of the Fin Garden Museum, the nature of the present study is analyticalhistorical, and it is considered fundamental in terms of research objectives. In general, library sources and field findings (photography of coins) have been used to obtain form and content information. Sampling was done purposefully or qualitatively, and from the statistical and study community of the current research, among the hundreds of coins in Fin Garden in Kashan National Museum belonging to different periods, 143 cases definitely related to the Ilkhanid period were selected. Since many coins were generally produced from one Sarseke<sup>1</sup>, referring to the intended coins was representative of a large number of minted coins. Finally, the form and content of the Ilkhanid coins of the Kashan Museum were investigated.

#### **Research Background**

Regarding the coins of the Ilkhanid period, researchers have introduced the characteristics and the types of coins of the rulers of the Ilkhanid period by writing works in the form of books and articles. Among the most essential books and articles that have been published in this field, we can refer to the book entitled «Coins of the Mongols of Iran», by «Diler et al» (2006), which examines the coins of this government. «Sarafraz and Avarzamani» (2009) also discussed the general analysis of Iranian coins from the historical period to the Islamic period (Zand) in the book entitled «Coins of Iran from the beginning to the Zand

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period». «Alizadeh Moghadam» (2009) also introduced the coins of this Ilkhanate in the book entitled «Oljaitu Coins of the 8th Mongol Ilkhanate».«Aladdini» (2016) also conducted a study on the coins of this period in the book entitled «Iranian Coins of the Mongolian Ilkhanid Period». In addition to these cases, it is possible to refer to a doctoral dissertation by «Salehi» (2014) entitled «Elemental Analysis of Ilkhanid Coins to understand the economic and political situation of the studied time with the PIXE method» and the thesis by «Shahbazi» (2015) entitled «Investigating the coins of the Mongol Ilkhanates». The mentioned researchers concluded that the study of the Ilkhanid era coins showed that silver coins were more abundant than gold and copper ones, and they witnessed the change of script and the variety of patterns. On the other hand, mints have been concentrated in the Northern and Northwestern regions of Iran. Also, in the article by «Sharafi» (2016) entitled «Coinage system and exchange in the Ilkhanid era», the results of the research indicate that the Ilkhanid monetary system was influenced by previous periods and was based on metal coins, including gold, silver, and copper. The article by «Savagheb and Amraei» (2017) entitled «The process of transformation of religious rituals on the coins of the Ilkhanid period», investigates the influence of local beliefs, Chinese and Mongolian culture, religious missionaries, and neighboring governments. In the article entitled «Analysis of the legitimization process on Ilkhanid coins (657 -736 A.H.)» «Shamsi, Shateri, and Ahmadi» (2018) also believe that legitimization of Ilkhanates in the form of Mongolian, Iranian, and Islamic slogans has been through concepts based on legal-rational sources, tradition, and charisma. The results of the article by «Mahmoudi and Mahdavi» (2020) entitled «Iconographic reading of the visual elements governing the designs of coins of the Ilkhanid period», also indicate that the coins left from the beginning of the Ilkhanid period include writings in Uyghur script and Mongolian language. Finally, we can mention the article by «Nemati» (2021) entitled «Investigation and analysis of new coins from Zolf Abad of Farahan», the results of which have shown that the coins obtained from the Zolfabad area belong to the three rulers of the early Ilkhanid period, namely «Hulegu Khan, Abaga Khan, and Ahmed Tekuder». By examining the background of the subject, a comprehensive study of the visual research of the Ilkhanid coins in the Fin Garden in Kashan Museum has not been done so far; therefore, introducing and examining the variety of coins and themes engraved on the Ilkhanid coins of Fin Garden Museum is the turning point of the current research.

#### A Look Over the Coins of the Ilkhanid Period

During the Ilkhanid period, the most crucial element of the economic system was metal coins, which were minted from gold, silver, and copper. Gold coins were more popular and used in the foreign trade and transactions of the Ilkhanates and silver coins in terms of economic use, in commercial and official transactions within the territories of the Ilkhanids; in other words, it was the most common unit of coins during Ilkhanid period (Nemati, 2021). Of course, it should be mentioned that in the Ilkhanid era, coins did not have a fixed standard of weight and carat (Ibn al-Fuwati, 2002, 258). Researchers have divided the coins of the Ilkhanid period into three different periods:1. In the first period, the Ilkhanates, under the influence of the rich Islamic culture, used Islamic expressions to mint their coins, as in the previous periods. For example, «Hulegu Khan» minted a part of the blessed verse 26 of Surah Al-Imran<sup>2</sup> on his coins (Sarafraz & Avarzmani, 2009, 216). However, the history of the use of this verse in the Islamic era goes back to the coins of Muhammad bin Tahir II<sup>3</sup> (Aladdin, 2016, 63).

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2. In the second period, the effects of Mongolian culture on the coins increased. During this period, a number of Ilkhanates converted to Islam, including Abaqa Khan, Ahmed Tekuder, Arghun Khan, Gaykhatu, Baydu, and Ghazan Khan Mahmud (Nemati, 2021).

3. In the third period, which started from the time of Oljaitu, the names and titles of the Sultan were written in Persian letters. In this period, according to the religion of the Ilkhan, the Shahada<sup>4</sup> and the names of the twelve Imams (A.S.) or the Shahada and the names of the Rashidun<sup>5</sup> were minted on the coins. These Illkhantes include Oljaitu, Muhammad Khodabanda, Abu Sa'id, Arpagone, Musa, and Togha Temür. This era was the period of Iranian cultural victory. In this period, even Ilkhan himself, under the influence of Iranian-Islamic culture, separated himself from many of his Mongolian cultural symbols and indicators (Nemati, 2021).

«Juvayni», writes in the book entitled «Tarikh-i Jahangushay»: «During the Ilkhanids period, whoever sat on the throne of Khan, they added one name: «Khan or Qa'an», and that's it; they didn't write too much of it, and when they wrote charters and correspondence, they wrote the single name. They should not make a difference between the Sultan and the common people and should deny redundancies, titles, and wordings» (Juvayni, 2006, 129 & 130). Therefore, the title «Qur'an», meaning «Great Khan», was used for their successors. After Abaqa'an, the word «Sultan» is used before the name of the rulers of this dynasty, such as «Ahmed Tekuder», or they only engraved their names without any titles, such as Ahmad and Arghun; however, their titles were engraved in the Uyghur language and script on the coins (Torabi Tabatabaie, 1968, 32).

#### Kashan of the Mongol Era

The invasion of the Mongol army to Rey, Saveh, Qom, and Kashan in the report of the events of 621 A.H. by Ibn al-Athir had made this area a ruin (Spuler, 1989, 34). It is worth mentioning that during the Mongol era, reports related to Kashan were scattered, and we came across the name Kashan in the news. During the time of «Abaqa Khan» (663-680 A.H.), the ruler of Isfahan and Kashan was a person named «Khwaja Shamsuddin Juvayni», and then, during the «Arghun» period (683-690 A.H.), the ruler of Kashan was «Ali Ibn Bahā' al-Dīn Ibn Shamsuddin Juvayni». During the time of «Ghazan Khan» (694 - 703 A.H.), he built several Dar al-Siadeh in big cities such as Kashan (Rajabi, 2011, 126 & 127). Also, during the reign of Abu Sa'id (716-736 A.H.), the Khanqah and Rabat of Sayyed Rukn ad-Din Yazdi, the vizier of Abu Sa'id, were built outside the Kashan Gate (Naraghi, 1986, 91) (Fig 1).

## A Look Over the Historical and Religious Developments of Ilkhanid Rulers in the Present Study

There are more than one hundred coins from the Ilkhanid period in the Kashan National Museum storage (Fig 2). Considering that most of the Ilkhanid coins of Fin Garden Museum belong to one ruler (Abu Sa'id). In the present study, a number of coins belonging to other Ilkhanid rulers available in the museum have been introduced and read. According to the reign period of the Ilkhanid rulers, the coins of the Kashan Museum seem to belong to three rulers of the Ilkhanid period (Ghazan Mahmud, Öljaitü, Abu Sa'id) and two of the rival Ilkhanates (Muhammad Khan and Anushirvan) (Diagram 1). In the following section, the historical and religious developments of mentioned coins are briefly described. «Sultan Mahmud Ghazan Khan» is the greatest Mongol Ilkhanate. He converted to Islam in 694 A.H. in the Firuzkuh area in the presence of «Sheikh Sadr al-Din Ibrahim Hamawi» and adopted the Islamic name of Mahmud (Boyle, 2006, 514). After him, «Sultan Muhammad

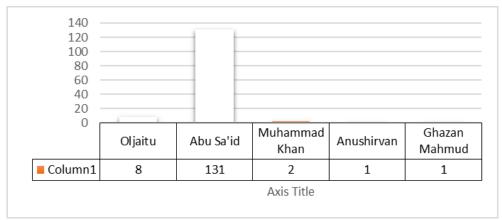


Fig 1. The development of Kashan City from the Mongol attack to the end of the Safavid era. Source: Archive of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism of Kashan.

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Khodabandeh» ruled Iran for thirteen years from 703 to 716 A.H. From the beginning of his ruling, he ordered to mint a coin with the names of the twelve Imams (A.S.), and after visiting Najaf in 709 A.H., he decided to accept Shiism. «Abu Sa'id» received the throne in 717 A.H. after the death of his father (Hafez Abru, 2001, 73). During the time of Abu Sa'id, Uyghur words were removed from the coins (it is worth noting that his name is in Uyghur on some coins), and Shiite tendencies are not observed in Abu Sa'id's coins. In the margin of most of the coins, the names of the caliphs are engraved (Torabi Tabatabaei, 1972). With the death of Abu Sa'id, the last Mongol Ilkhanate in 736 A.H., Ilkhanid rule was extinct, and some children and descendants of this family came to power; among these people whose coins are in Fin Garden collection are «Muhammad Khan» and «Anushirvan». «Sheikh Hasan Ilkani» (Sheikh Hasan Buzurg), one of the commanders of the western regions of Iran, appointed Muhammad Khan (a descendant of Hulegu) to the position of Ilkhanate in Dhu'l-Hijjah 736 A.H. Muhammad Khan was killed after two years in 738 A.H. by Sheikh Hassan Kuchak. After Muhammad Khan, several other Ilkhanid rulers came to power, but the last one left from this dynasty was a person named Anushirvan, who was appointed to the government by «Malek Ashraf Chupani» during the years 744 to 756 A.H. (Lotfabadi, Khal'tabari, & Hassani, 2018).



**Diagram 1.** Frequency of Ilkhanid coins in Fin Garden National Museum regarding each ruler. Source: Authors.

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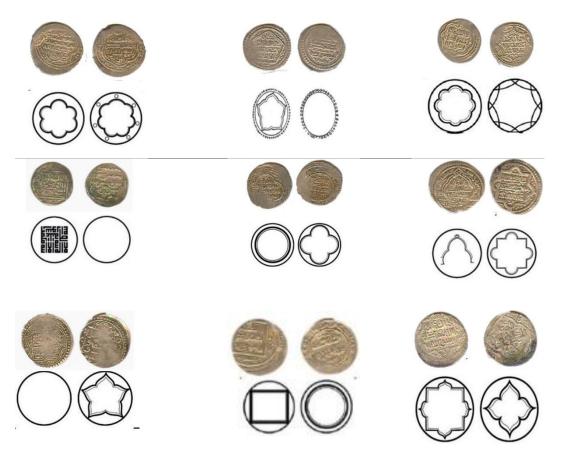
**Fig 2.** Samples of Ilkhanid coins (Ghazan, Oljaitu, Abu Sa'id, Muhammad, and Anushirvan) National Fin Garden Museum. Source: Authors.

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#### Ilkhanid Coins in Fin Garden Museum

**1. Investigating the form and shape of coins:** The Ilkhanid government, due to its location in Islamic lands, imitated Islamic coins. The coins of this period, like those of previous eras, consist of two nested circles, the second circle being the circumference of the coin. This method became common in Iran during the Sassanid period. It was customary to write the text inside the first circle during the period of the Rashidun and to write the text inside the outer circle during the time of the Umayyad caliphs. The critical difference of the Ilkhanid period is the emergence of the hexagonal shape on the coin, which is especially frequent in Shite coins and has replaced the inner circle (Nemati, 2021).

**1.1. Framing of Ilkhanid coins of Fin Garden National Museum:** Imitation of nature does not have an essential place in Islamic culture and coins. Instead, other Islamic arts, such as calligraphy and geometric patterns, have been used. In early Islamic coins, they used geometric motifs limited to circles and concentric circles. These motifs gradually increased in a limited way and created shapes that fit the circular and small space of the coins. During the Ilkhanid period, with the overthrow of the Caliph, several fundamental reforms took place in the coins of the regions under their rule, which included the script, language, and images used in the coins (Salehi, 2014). Considering the number of frames in Kashan Museum's Ilkhanid coins, circular frames, circular chains with filled points, and multi-lobed flowers have been used (Fig 3).



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**Fig 3.** Samples of motifs used in the frame of Ilkhanid coins of Fin Garden National Museum. Source: Authors.

1.2. The motifs of the Ilkhanid coins of Fin Garden Museum: In general, the motifs include artistic, geometric, animal, and plant concepts and images that humans have used for various reasons throughout history. «Khazaei» believes: «Motifs are manifestations of the cultural and religious abilities of the society in which the artist has lived, and sometimes these patterns have been pushed towards geometric and temporal motifs in the form of plant and sometimes astronomical motifs» (Khazaei, 2002). In the early Islamic period, the motifs of the coins consisted of the image of rulers, symbols of dynasties, etc. Still, during the later eras, changes occurred in the motifs. The order was given to the sanctity of the images, and any depiction of the individual was banned. Therefore, geometric patterns, flowers, and leaves (Arabesque) and Islamic writings were engraved on the coins (Torabi Tabatabaei, 1968, 31 & 32). The motifs of Ilkhanid coins were derived from celestial bodies and Arabesque designs, and due to the frequency of silver coins in this era, most of the motifs were engraved on this category of coins (Shahbazi, 2015). The only motif on the studied Ilkhanid coins is the pattern of one of the heavenly bodies, the Star motif. According to Spuler, this motif is the Star of David, which the Ilkhanates sometimes used in their coins (Spuler, 1989, 294); however, «Sarafrazi» believes that this motif is not the Star of David and it is even on the coins of the Ghaznavid and Seljuk periods (Sarafrazi, 2010). This motif can be seen on the coins of the present research, in the form of six-pointed stars, and also on some coins, Arabesque or Cloud Ribbon motifs are observed (Fig 4).



**Fig 4.** Design of engraved motifs on Ilkhanid coins of Fin Garden National Museum. Source: Authors.

1.3. Script and language of Ilkhanid coins of Fin Garden Museum: The first step of «Genghis Khan» (1227-1162 A.D.) was to use script and write the Mongolian language. Among the captives of Genghis in the early wars, there was an Uyghur-speaking person named «Tatatonga», whose papers, documents, and seals the Mongol Khan showed interest in and asked him to teach the Mongol Emirs to write their language in Uyghur script. This script was adapted from the Sogdian script, which was used as an intermediate language until the fourth century A.H. Still, it continued to exist as a spoken language until the Mongol invasion of Central Asia (Shahbazi, 2015). The Uyghur script was usually written from top to bottom; however, because the Ilkhanates used the Arabic alphabet (Kufic) in coins in addition to the Mongolian script and language, along with Arabic letters, it was written and read horizontally and from right to left (Torabi Tabatabaei, 1972). The Kufic script, which was published at the end of the Umayyad period and the beginning of the Abbasid period, was common until the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries A.H. (Fazaeli, 1971, 142). Therefore, the script used on Kufic and Uyghur Ilkhanid coins showed the eclecticism of Iranian and Mongolian culture. Among the coins of the Kashan National Museum, there are writings in Uyghur script and language; however, most of the writings on the coins in the museum are in Kufic script and language, and in some cases, Banaei or Square Kufic script. It is worth mentioning that the inscription minted in the center of circular coins is more important than the writing on the edges of the coin, and it can be considered as the official slogan of the minter (Boyle, 2006, 347).

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**1.3.1. Square Kufic:** The relationship between architectural scripts and coins in the Ilkhanid period was more extensive than at any other time in Iran. During the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D. and, when calligraphy was at its peak in the Eastern lands of the Islamic world, a branch of Kufic script emerged, which became known as Square Kufic, and in Iran, it was called Ma'qeli or Banaei. The first use of Square Kufic on coins is related to the Ghaznavid era. The reason for using geometrical Kufic in coins despite the square frame is due to more attention to the use of common religious forms in other artistic media, especially religious decorations related to architecture (Salehi, Neyestani & Hejabri Noubari, 2015, 6-7). The use of Square or Geometric Kufic in the coins of Abu Sa'id's time has been minted in more than 90 mints (Diler, Ö., Diler, E. N., Kürkman, & Hinrichs, 2006, 471-475) and among the Ilkhanid coins of Kashan, this type of Banaei Kufic (Geometric) script is also observed (Fig 5).

1.4. The Tampha design of the Ilkhanid coins of the Fin Garden National Museum: In terms of semantics, Tamgha is a hot medal and a mark that is put on the buttocks of riding and burden-bearer quadrupeds such as horses, donkeys, and other quadruped animals. During the period of the Mongol Ilkhanates until Ghazan Khan, the Tamgha had a square shape with the heads of four warriors along with Mongolian words engraved on it (Mahmoudi & Mahdavi, 2020). This sign was derived from the tribal structure of the Mongol societies, which was derived from the public tribe Tamgha and given to independent khans by the Mongol Khan as a sign of attachment to the royal family (Shamsi, Shateri, & Ahmadi, 2018). In general, Tamghas have many uses in Mongolian society. From an official perspective, Tamgha had a dual function: First, it was used as the office seal, and second, it was applied for commercial taxes; then, it was used as the symbol of aristocratic property inherited by their sons in the same way. They gradually became the brand name of livestock and state seals and then appeared on coins as well (Mahmoudi & Mahdavi, 2020). Among the coins in Fin Garden Museum, two types of Tamgha (Swastika design) can be identified, a sample of which is presented in the table below on the coins of two Ilkhanid rulers in the museum (Table 1).



Fig 5. The use of Geometric Kufic script among the Ilkhanid coins of Fin Garden National Museum. Source: Authors.

Ilkhanid Ruler	A sample of a coin with a Tamgha design		
Oljaitu (Sultan Muhammad Khodabandeh)		888	
Abu Sa'id		₩	

**Table 1.** A sample of the Tamgha used on the coins of the Ilkhanid rulers of Fin Garden National Museum. Source: Authors.

**1.5. Mints of Ilkhanid coins of Fin Garden National Museum:** Mints were established in every historical period based on prosperity and political, social, and cultural issues specific to a region; in other words, all important cities and centers had an official mint. Unfortunately, the lack of strict monitoring of the performance of the mints is one of the

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features of the monetary system in the Ilkhanid era, and the karat and weight of the coins in the states and countries under the Ilkhanid reign were different and variable. However, historians mention the organization of mints and the supervisory position of Dar al-Zarb (mint) in this period in their writings. In general, the weight of silver coins (Dirhams) fluctuates from two to three grams, and the most common is up to 12 grams at the time of Oljaitu (Sharfi, 2016). In Ilkhanid coins, words such as « فی، سنه، فی شهور سنه، فی ایام دوله،فی »

and no signs of numbers are seen in them (Salehi, 2014). The place of minting is displayed in the text or the margin on the coin and the back of the Shahada and the Rashidun coins. Also, during this period, more than 180 mints, most of which were located in the west and north of Iran, minted the coin (Shahbazi, 2015), and coins were minted in governmentsupervised mints that had their own organizations and hierarchies (Qabez, Sabak, Tabā', etc.) (Razavi, 2009). The name of the mint has been rubbed on some of the Kashan Ilkhanid coins, but among the mints mentioned on the Ilkhanid coins of the Fin Garden Museum, «Tabriz, Soltaniyeh, Baghdad, Kashan, Saveh, and Jajrum» can be mentioned; Tabriz and Kashan mints have the largest share among other mints that have been minted on coins. It is worth noting that the minting of coins in the Kashan mint started during the period of Abaqa Khan and continued until the last years of the rule of the Ilkhanates, and most coins minted in this mint are silver coins (Najafzadeh Torbati, 2019).

**2. Examination of Content Features:** In general, rituals mean signs and symbols that are used to announce the propagation of the school, religion, greatness, and appreciation of the divine religion (Amraei, 2011). Meanwhile, written texts are the most decorative means for Islamic coins. These writings with religious themes, prayers, and the name of God and the Prophet (PBUH) were actually the beliefs of the rulers or a political plan to attract the support of the people (Aghili, 1981). Therefore, due to the importance and position of coins in understanding the political, religious, and economic situation, the changes achieved on the coins of the Finn Museum will be explained in the following section.

2.1. Religious rituals on Ilkhanid coins of Fin Garden National Museum: Due to the non-Iranian nationality of Ilkhanid rulers, we witness a vast influence of Iranian coins in the fields of religion, script, language, and text on Ilkhani coins; however, their religious beliefs were not comparable to Islam, and many of their ceremonies were based on superstition and magic. Despite this, ruling over a society where there was no culture between the dominant and the defeated people seemed to be somewhat difficult, and this caused them to use Iranian bureaucrats and maintain the existing religious rituals at the beginning of their rule (Mahmoudi & Mahdavi, 2020). During the time of Abu Sa'id (716-736 A.H.). Iranians achieved more success in expanding the influence of Iranian Islamic culture. He was the only Ilkhanate who wrote Persian poetry and was proficient in Persian and Mongolian script writing. During his time, Uvghur words were removed from coins (Salehi, 2014). «Torabi Tabatabaei» narrates: «The period of the hundred-year rule of the Mongol Ilkhanates of Iran in terms of coins and its diversity from the perspective of language, script, calligraphy, images, rituals, symbols, Tamgha, etc. is exuberant and complex, especially the last twenty years (from 736 to 756 A.H.), after the death of Abu Sa'id Bahadur Khan, which is the period of disintegration of the government and possessions of the Ilkhanates and the beginning of severe tribal feudal and the empowerment of local rulers; because the local rulers each supported a Mongol prince (son of a khan) and reigned in his name» (Torabi Tabatabaei, 1974).

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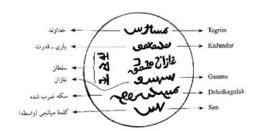
## Investigating the Shape and Content Features of the Coins of the Ilkhanid Rulers in Fin Garden Museum

**1. Ghazan Mahmud (694-703 A.H.):** As mentioned in the previous sections, Ghazan accepted Islam, and it became the official religion of the empire. Then, he chose the name Mahmud for himself, which is written on his mosques in Persian or Uyghur script. In some of Ghazan Khan's coins, the Sultan's name and titles were printed in Uyghur and Chinese script, and the words of the Shahada were engraved on the back of the coin (Fig 6).

Among the Ilkhanid coins of Fin Garden Museum is a coin named Ghazan Mahmud in Uyghur and Chinese script. Unfortunately, part of the back of the coin is worn. In the coins of Ghazan, especially the coin in the museum, on the coin, there is a trace of a phrase called «ناز» ولتگولوک سن» in the Phags-pa script on most of the coins of Ghazan, and it is unique to this Ilkhan and has not been used for other Ilkhanates (Fig 7). The two terms «کوجوندور» mean God and power, respectively (Sarafrazi, 2010). Ghazan coins generally have the phrase محوجوندور» written on them, which, unfortunately, on the coin in the museum, wear has prevented its accurate reading (Fig 7). On the coin is a five-lobed flower with religious rituals inside. Other writings or possible decorative elements are lost and unclear due to the passage of time. On the back of the coin, there is a Chinese cloud at the top, and in the center, the titles of Ghazan can be seen in Uyghur script (Phags-pa).



**Fig 6.** Front and back of Ghazan Mahmud Ilkhanid coin sample in Fin Garden National Museum of Kashan. Source: Authors.



**Fig 7.** Uyghur and Chinese words on coins of Ghazan Khan. Source: Aladdin, 2016, 120.

2. Oljaitu; Sultan Muhammad Khodabandeh (703-716 A.H.): Legitimization of Oljaitu reign has often been done by using Islamic traditions in the form of Islamic titles, Quranic verses, and the names of religious grandees to show the tendency and association of Ilkhan with religious groups and legal discourse dominant in the society (Shamsi et al., 2018). In general, the features of Oljaitu minted coins among the Ilkhanid coins of Fin Garden National Museum of Kashan are: The writing of the coins has a Shiite style as «لمرب في دوله الله ملكه فرب في دوله الله ملكه مالك رقاب الامم غياث الدنيا و الدين اولجايتو سلطان محمد خلد الله ملكه فرب في دولة (Shamsi et al., 2018). It seems that the reign of the Great Sultan, the leader of the nations, the great king of the world and the religion, Oljaitu Sultan Muhammad, may God make his kingdom eternal» (Fig 8). It seems that the rhyme on this coin has moved away from the Iranian perspective and is closer to the Islamic aspect. However, it is worth mentioning that the use of the religious motto «خلد الله ملكه mentioned at the end of the above rhyme appears for the first time on the coins of Ghazan Mahmud (694-703 A.H.) (Savagheb & Amraei, 2017). The use of the words acient and religion», used on Oljaitu with general scient and religion», used on Oljaitu

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coins, his sufficiency to dominate the Islamic world through the life of the nations has been emphasized (Shamsi et al., 2018). In the margin on the coins of Sultan Muhammad Khodabandeh in the museum, writings such as دلاالله الله محمد رسول الله على ولى الله» and the names of the Imams (PBUH) have been engraved in detail on a number of coins of Muhammad Khodabandeh; unfortunately, most of them have been worn. Also, the geometrical shape of the coins has been changed to four-edged scallop designs (Fig 9).



**Fig 8.** Front and back of Oljaitu coins along with its linear design in Fin Garden National Museum. Source: Authors.

**Fig 9.** Sample of the complete front and back designs of the Oljaitu Ilkhanid ruler. Source: Khosravi, 2008.

It is worth mentioning that, for the first time, the religious rituals of «على ولى الله» also appear on the coins of Abaqa Khan (681-683 A.H.), and finally, the last Ilkhanate who used this phrase, was Oljaitu (703-716 A.H.). He used this Shiite message in all the coins minted after his conversion to the Shia religion in 709 A.H. (Salehi, 2014) (Fig 8). During Oljaitu's reign, for the first time, he used the common and long eastern titles that can be seen on the coins in different ways (Spuler, 1989, 273). In general, Oljaitu coins include a central circle in which the main rituals are placed, and the prayers of the 12 Imams can be seen on the outer edge and the back of the coin, there is a four-lobed flower on which the title of the king and other prayers can be seen (Fig 9).

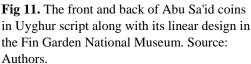
3. Abu Sa'id Bahadur Khan (716-736 A.H.): Abu Sa'id was twelve years old when he sat on the throne (Ahmadi, Shateri, & Shamsi, 2015). During his time, the reign faced many internal and external disputes. In this period, the position of Shiism decreased (Spuler, 1989, 196), and this attitude is visible on the coins of this Ilkhanate (use of the names of Sunnite caliphs such as Abu Bakr, Umar, and Uthman); Even so far, no coin with Shiite rituals related to the period of Ilkhanid Abu Sa'id has been observed. However, it is worth mentioning that Shiite rituals were used in the religious architecture of the time of Abu Sa'id (a religious Shiite ritual was written in the western inscription of the Varamin Jameh Mosque by order of Abu Sa'id in 722 A.H.); it is possible that Shiite or Arab and non-Arab terms were not used on the coins due to religious and ethnic differences (Savagheb & Amraei, 2017). In general, the characteristics of Abu Sa'id's coins among the Ilkhanid coins of Fin Garden National Museum in Kashan include the most widely used design of the altar shape in Abu Sa'id's coins. The extensive use of the altar motif in the coins of Abu Sa'id Bahadur Khan is designed as an altar in the form of a Quranic phrase. A significant number of Kashan Ilkhanid coins have this design. In this motif, a part of verse 137 of Surah Al-Baqarah means «God will be sufficient for you, for He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing» has been used and the word «فَسَيكفيكَهُم» is placed in a frame in the form of an altar in the center and the other part of the verse is engraved in the margin of the coin (Fig 10).

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**Fig 10.** The front and back of Abu Sa'id coins with an altar motif along with its linear design in the Fin Garden National Museum. Source: Authors.



Among the coins of this Ilkhanate are also coins with the name Abu Sa'id engraved on the back of the coin in Uyghur form. n the coin, the phrase «ملي الله عليه» are engraved on the names «Abu Bakr (ابوبكر), Umar (على), Uthman (عثمان), and Ali (عثران)» are engraved on the margin of the coin (Fig 11). On the back of the coin, the title of the Sultan can be seen as «ملكه» are enter and the names of the coint, the title of the Sultan can be seen as معالي الله معرب الوسعيد سلطان العالم ضرب ابوسعيد سلطان بهادرخان خلد ملكه». In general, the religious rituals of this Ilkhanate appear in the center, and the names of the Rashidun caliphs are written at the bottom of the coin. According to the degree of importance that the names had for the designer, these names have been placed on the coin. On the back of the coins, the designer has created a frame from the combination of a four-lobed flower and a square, in the center of which the king's titles can be seen (Fig 12). Abu Sa'id used this motif on the back of his coins during the years after 717 A.H., especially in the years 719 and 720 A.H. According to Omer Diler's book, nearly 90 mints minted coins with this design in these two years (Salehi et al., 2015, 5). A sample of this altar-shaped inscription in the form of a painting on stucco can also be seen in the transitional squinches of domes of the Tomb of Sayyed Rukn ad-Din in Yazd (Salehi et al., 2015, 5) (Fig 13).



Fig 12. The name of Abu Sa'id on the back of the coin in the center and the names of the caliphs on the coin. Source: Khosravi, 2008.



**Fig 13.** The altar motif in the stucco of Tomb of Sayyed Rukn ad-Din in Yazd and its similarity with the coins of Abu Sa'id. Source: Salehi et al, 2015, 6.

Words such as «السلطان العالم العادل، بهادرخان» are also found on the coins of Abu Sa'id in the Kashan Museum. Among the other expressions engraved on the back of the coins, «سرب فی », is of other phraseological features of Ilkhanid Abu Sa'id, which he used on his coins and repeated in many coins. This case can also be seen on the back of the Ilkhanid coins of the Fin Garden Museum (Fig 14).



**Fig 14.** The written phrase «مورب في الدوله» on the back of Abu Sa'id coins, Fin Garden National Museum. Source: Authors.

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4. Muhammad Khan (738-736 A.H.): With the death of Abu Sa'id Bahadur, the reign of the successors of Hulegu ended, and the remaining princes sought the position of Ilkanate. «Roemer» writes: «In this day and age, there were people who believed that the Mongol rule would continue because, in the meantime, this scene was not empty of Mongol leaders and politicians or princes who were dependent on the immediate successors of Genghis Khan» (Roemer et al., 2008, 13). One of these people was Muhammad Khan. In general, the inscriptions and rituals of the coins of the princes of the Ilkhanid period are in the style of the Ilkhanid coins, which are engraved in the Sunnite style, and the names of Rashidun «لا الله محمد رسول الله»». Caliphs. On the coins of Muhammad Khan, which is shown below, and the name of the Rashidun Caliphs, including «Abu Bakr» are engraved on its margin. On the back of the coin also, the title «السلطان العالم محمدخان خلدالله ملكه» can be seen (Fig 15). 5. Anushirvan (745-756 A.H.): Another Ilkhanate known so far is Anushirvan (Ja'fari Mazhab, 2011). As mentioned above, the type of writing and the style of the coins of the Ilkhanates of the Fatrat period are similar to the main rulers of this dynasty. Among the Ilkhanid coins of Kashan, a coin named Anushirvan can be seen. On the back of the coin, and on the coin, the phrase «السلطان انوشيروان خلد الله ملكه», and in the «السلطان انوشيروان خلد الله ملكه» margin of the coin the names of the Rashidun Caliphs «Abu Bakr (ابوبكر), Umar (عمر), Uthman (عثمان), and Ali (على)» are engraved (Fig 16).



Fig 15. Top: The front and back of the Muhammad Khan coin of Fin Garden National Museum. Down: The linear design of the coin. Source: Authors.



Fig 16. Top: Front and back of the Anoushirvan coin of Fin Garden National Museum. Down: The linear design of the coin. Source: Authors.

#### Discussion

In addition to economic use, coins sometimes have social, cultural, and political functions. By examining the themes engraved on the coins of the Ilkhanids in the Fin Garden Museum, it was found that a large part of them are related to Islamic concepts. During Ghazan Khan's period and after his conversion to Islam, religious themes were included on the coins, such that an inscription in Uyghur script, «تنگریین کوجوندور غازانو دلدکگولوک سن» means that Ghazan minted this coin with the help of God (Fig 7). The phrase mentioned above shows that he has the kingdom by God's will (Bayani, 2014, 16-21), so this slogan shows the emergence of Mongolian and Uyghur concepts with an Islamic theme. On the Ghazani coin in the Fin Museum, in addition to the Mongolian writing, there is also Chinese writing under the title «Sultan», which is probably a definition of his identity as a ruler of Mongol descent and his ethnic and tribal attachments (Shamsi et al., 2018). According to the historical sources mentioned in the previous sections, Oljaitu was baptized as a child and converted to Islam with the encouragement of his wife. Over some time, he converted to Shiism (Kashani, صلوات بر », «على ولى الله» (on the coins of Oljaitu, expressions of the Shiites such as «على ولى الله») و2005, 95 can be seen, which shows that this «نجات دهندهٔ دنیا و دین» or a phrase entitled «دوازده امام معصوم ruler has used Islamic traditions to show his religious orientation. On the coins of Abu Sa'id, Sunnite expressions such as the names of the Rashidun Caliphs «Abu Bakr, Umar, and

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Uthman», a part of the verse of Surah Al-Baqarah «فَسَيَكْفِيكَهُم» and words such as «الاعظم، السلطان العادل are observed, which seem appeared in a charismatic aspect (Mongolian form: God or Tengri (تانگری), The Islamic form: God's will and God's shadow (ضل اللهی). As stated in various sources, with the death of Abu Sa'id, the Ilkhanid reign went into decline, and after him, nine people came to the kingdom as rulers. Among the movable artworks (coins), there are some coins of the kings of the period after Abu Sa'id, Muhammad Khan, and Anushirvan; in terms of visual and content aspects, the coins of these two rulers only have the name of the owner of the coin, the phrases «عثمان », and the names of the Rashidun Caliphs; this was common on coins from the time of Oljaitu until the end of the Ilkhanid period. Another finding of this research is the use of Kufic script. Various methods of Kufic script in multiple works, such as coins, pottery, inscriptions, etc., are fundamental from the research perspective. Some of the letters and words used in the Ilkhanid coins of the Kashan Museum are simple, and some are written in decorative Kufic script (Table 2).

**Table 2.** All kinds of inscriptions on Ilkhanid coins of Fin Garden Museum of Kashan. Source:

 Authors.

No.	لا اله الله Type of لا اله الله	محمد رسول الله Type of	على Type of	لا Type of
1	티웨미워	مرودي	على	y
2	ي الله	شرو الله	म	Ņ
3	ที่เสียาไได้	全国の法		8

During this period, according to historical sources, it was determined that every Ilkanate who sat on the throne chose a title for himself; therefore, their titles in Uyghur or Persian language were engraved on the coins, and by examining the coins of the Ilkhanids in the museum, we are faced with some of the titles of the Ilkhanates. For example, on the coins of Abu Sa'id, his name is written in Persian, and on some coins, his name is written in Uyghur (Table 3).

Ruler	Titles
Ghazan Mahmud	تنگریین کوجوندور غازان محمود
Oljaitu	السلطان الاعظم مالك الرقاب الامم اولجايتو سلطان غياث الدنيا و الدين
Abu Sa'id	السلطان الاعظم ابوسعيد بهادرخان، السلطان العادل
Muhammed Khan	السلطان الاعظم محمدخان
Anushirvan	السلطان العادل انوشيروان

Table 3. The titles of Ilkhanid rulers in Fin Garden Museum. Source: Authors.

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Among the other findings of the research are the frames or margins of the Ilkhanid coins of the museum. The type of frame of the coins included geometric and flower patterns (based on the number of lobes). The most common way of using geometry and its application in museum coins is the main shapes of circles and squares, which can be seen on both sides of the coins. Another form is the use of circular chains with filled points (solid circles) that can be seen on the margins of most of the coins in the present study. The flower motifs used on the coins include four-, five-, and eight-lobed and overlapping eight-lobed flowers. Among the other used frames is the altar frame, which can only be seen on the coins of Abu Sa'id. In general, most of the frames in the Ilkhanid coins of the museum are circular frames, circular chains with filled points (solid circles), and four- and eight-lobed flowers.

#### Conclusion

Nowadays, by studying and examining Islamic coins, it is possible to identify the religious beliefs and tendencies of the kings to some extent. In other words, coins are a representation of culture, language, and script, as well as the political, social, economic, and religious status of each region. The Ilkhanid period is one of the most critical periods in the history of Islamic Iran in terms of coin mint developments. Next to motifs, coin inscriptions are the most decorative means for coins. Having different religious beliefs (Shamanism, Buddhism, Christianity) and religious tolerance, and considering that they were aware of Iran's beliefs, the Ilkhanates emphasized religious and religious tolerance and applied this issue on their coins. As it is known, in the beginning, signs of Christian influence can be seen in the coins, but with the conversion of Ilkhanates to Islam, non-Islamic rituals were removed little by little so that the most detailed Shiite writings can be found on the coins of Oljaitu (Sultan Muhammed Khodabandeh). By examining the Ilkhanid coins of Fin Garden National Museum in Kashan, it was concluded that the studied coins of Fin Museum belong to Muslim Ilkhanid rulers «Ghazan Mahmud, Oljaitu, Abu Sa'id, Muhammed and Anushirvan». Based on the researchers' opinion about the Ilkhanid coins, it can be considered that the coins in the Fin Garden Museum belong to the third period that started from the time of Oljaitu. These coins, like most coins of the Ilkhanid period, were of the Dirham type and made of silver. Another feature of the Ilkhanid coins of the museum is the motifs of the coins, which are derived from plant motifs and celestial bodies (stars). The motifs and writings on the front and back of the Ilkhanid coins of the museum have religious themes. They are essential in terms of visual and artistic features. On the coins, there are religious rituals, and on the back of the coins, words that convey the legitimacy of the ruler, such as قاب الامم و, الاعظم, السلطان, etc. Generally, writings related to the Shiite religion (names of the Holy Imams (A.S.)) and Sunnite (names of the Rashidun Caliphs), geometric decorative frames consisting of circles, plant motifs, and celestial bodies and Tamgha motifs are among the visual representations used in the Ilkhanid coins of Fin Garden Museum.

#### **Author Contributions**

The first author of the article selected the research images, took photographs, and started the research project. The second author also analyzed the cultural data of the research. This manuscript was written with the contribution of all authors. All authors discussed the results and reviewed and approved the final draft of the manuscript.

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The author (s) declare that there are no potential conflicts of interest related to this research, in writing, and publication of this article

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#### Appendix

1. A metal stamp to engrave on a coin by pressing it.

2. «Say, O Lord, the kingdom is yours, you give to whomever you will, you take from whomever you wish, and you cherish whomever you wish» (Yar Ahmadi, 2010, 40).

3. Muhammad bin Tahir, nicknamed Muhammad Khorasani, is the fifth ruler of the Tahirid dynasty in Great Khorasan.

4. Islamic formula whereby an individual announces his acceptance of Islam.

5. The first four caliphs who led the Muslim community following the death of Muhammad (PBUH).

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