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The word, shape, and image in early Islamic Numismatics within Cultural Heritage Context

الكلمة والهيئة والصورة المتناولة على العملات الإسلامية المبكرة من خلال السياق الثقافي

Dr. Dina Samir Mohamed El Ozery

Assistant Lecturer, Tourist Guidance Department, Higher Institute for Tourism, Hotels, and Restoration in Abu Qir, Alexandria - Egypt

د. دينا سمير محمد العزيري

مدرس مساعد بالمعهد العالي للسياحة والفنادق وترميم الأثار بأبى قير بالاسكندرية

E-mail: dinasamir345@gmail.com – dina.samir@ejust.edu.eg

Abstract:

Material objects¹ are one of the most important basic resources which must be analyzed and used in the historical, anthropological, and cultural heritage studies. Among the most important of these cultural material objects are numismatics and monetary system studies. To analyze the material context of these objects and assimilate its interpretations in history and heritage studies, a deep search for a set of axes must be extensively explored, such as refuting historical ties and relationships, unpacking evidence, analyzing documents, and examining study resources. The numismatic art has crystallized in the Islamic world and relied heavily on the aesthetic aspects of both the designed figures and the proportional distribution of text and symbols on the limited space available.

The current research is shedding light on three main parameters to analyze the coins that were used in the early Islamic decades as material cultural objects, which are Text, Image, and

¹ Material objects” include items with physical substance, They are primarily shaped or produced by human action, though objects created by nature can also play an important role in the history of human societies; **Waugh (Daniel)**, *Material culture/ objects, World history sources*, unpacking evidence, 2004, pp.1-17. <http://chnm.gmu.edu/worldhistorysources/unpacking/objectsmain.htm> 11/5/2019 5:28:27 AM

Shape, specifically during the first century of the Hijri calendar, and analyzing these three criteria to highlight the image and identity of society in this Historical period.

Keywords: Material objects, cultural heritage, Numismatics, Early Islamic coins.

الملخص:

تعد المفردات المادية الثقافية من أهم الموارد الأساسية التي يجب تحليلها والاستعانة بها في دراسات التراث التاريخي والأنثروبولوجي والثقافي، ومن هذه المفردات كمثال تطبيقي (دراسات المسكوكات الإسلامية والنظم النقدية)، ولكي يتم تحليل السياق المادي لتلك المفردات الثقافية واستيعاب تفسيراتها، فإنه يجب أن يتعمق البحث ضمن مجموعة من المحاور بشكل متسع مثل؛ تنفيذ الروابط والعلاقات التاريخية، وتفريغ الأدلة، وتحليل الوثائق، وفحص مصادر الدراسة. وقد تبلورت فنون المسكوكات في العالم الإسلامي واعتمدت بشكل كبير على الجوانب الجمالية للشخصية المصممة الى جانب التوزيع المتناسب للنص والرموز على المساحة المحدودة المتوفرة.

يسلط البحث الضوء على ثلاثة معايير رئيسية لتحليل المسكوكات التي تم تداولها في العقود الإسلامية المبكرة كمفردات مادية ثقافية؛ وهي النص والصورة والشكل كأطر أساسية ظهرت تحديداً خلال القرن الأول من التقويم الهجري، وتحليل تلك المعايير الثلاثة لإبراز صورة المجتمع وهويته في تلك الفترة التاريخية.

كلمات مفتاحية: عناصر ومفردات التراث ، التراث الثقافي ، النميات ، العملات الإسلامية المبكرة.

Research problem:

Research question: Is it possible to use the early Islamic Numismatic coinage system as a guide reference for social, cultural, and heritage interpretations of Islamic civilization identity?

This paper sets out to study early Islamic coins into heritage context as culture material objects and its discourse. It is argued that coins, as part of material culture, need to be examined within the theoretical framework of historical archaeology and material culture studies. Through several case studies, it could be demonstrated how coins, through their integration of text, image and existence as material objects, offer profound insights not only into matters of economy and the 'Big History' of issuers and state organization but also into 'Small Histories', cultural values and the agency of humans and objects. In the formative period of archaeology in the nineteenth

century, the study of coins played an important role in the development of new methods and concepts. Today, numismatics is viewed as a field apart. The mutual benefits of our approach to the fields of archaeology and numismatics highlight the need for a new and constructive dialogue between the disciplines.

There were old theories to study the coinage systems in ancient ages in both Historical and Archaeological contexts, but the New suggested interpretations are to use the theories and comparisons of both the Social context through economy, Religion State, Organization as well as the Cultural context through Rituals, Cultural values, Customs and traditions .from this sense the research is shading more light on early Islamic Numismatics as part of material culture through its contents of the word, shape, and Image in a trial to reveal more details about that very sensitive primary stage of Islamic coinage system development.

Research goals:

This research paper is focusing on examining coins not only in their archaeological contexts focusing on which coins are circulated together and for how long? , how quickly coins spread after their emission? Where and by whom coins were used? And in what way coins were deposited? But also rethinking coins as a tool reflecting all aspects of life. Also highlighting the value of Islamic coins for their artistic and stylistic qualities and as illustrations of not only historical events, but also as identity and heritage representations.



Accordingly, in Islam, money is an instrument of the transfer only, which carries no additional charge or price, associated with its usage¹.

2- The dies

Each surviving coin preserves an impression of the dies used to produce it, however, that impression has been modified by wear or damage over time. Thus it is, theoretically, possible to reconstruct all the matrices from which a given coinage was produced, to observe their deterioration, and to organize the whole body of coinage in the relative order of its striking based on die replacement.

3- Hoards

The evidence of hoards, like that of dies, was almost unexploited until this century, even though they have been coming out of the ground since antiquity. The utility of hoards as a dating tool is manifest, for they must have been put down later than the latest coin they include. They do have limitations, however, since they are almost invariably private stores of wealth whose manner of accumulation can barely be guessed at. The terms "savings hoard" and "currency hoard" are nonetheless bandied about as if hoards could be so classified, but they are useful only insofar as they illustrate possible means by which hoards might have been assembled. The savings hoard, in theory, represents an accumulation of money over time. The currency hoard represents a sum of money that reflects consolidation and burial of assets at a given moment, that is to say, it represents a cross-section, however small or unrepresentative, of one kind of money in circulation at the moment of its closure. It would

¹ Interest is the price of debt reflecting the supply and demand of loanable funds, and a debt, or a loan at interest, is always greater than cash received. This explains the necessity of increasing the stock of monetary products, which is backed by debt, being the asset of the banking system, such that the value of goods and services must accommodate this inflationary increase in the supply of money, the value of which increases at total aggregate interest. **Abdullah, A. (2014)**, "A new approach to monetary theory and policy: a monetary theory of value", World Applied Sciences Journal, Vol. 30 No. 8, pp. 1040-1063.

not, of course, consist of the coin today, but it would almost certainly favor more recent issues, as in fact our modern currency does¹.

4- Archaeological evidence

Hoardings can provide us with the individual's (or, occasionally, the states) store of wealth, and generally, hoards can be placed in time with more or less certainty. Archaeological finds are another matter since they represent individual coins that were lost casually without the intent of recovery, and there is no sound way, except in sealed deposits dateable on other grounds, to determine the loss.

A corollary to this is that site-finds tend to reflect the petty currency of the day: since hoards represent money intended for recovery, they consist of high-value coins; archaeological finds represent, in the main, coins whose recovery was a matter of indifference. During the pre-Islamic era two weights, (Dinar) and (Dirham), were used to weigh gold and silver these names were also used for gold and silver coins. Early Muslims used both dinar, the Byzantine currency, and the dirham, the Persian currency², When Islam came, the Prophet did not change the weights that were current in Makah. He approved the use of Dirham and Dinar³.

¹ One of the most important sources for studying the history of trade routes in the medieval epoch is the evidence of coins. While being a symbol of political legitimization and state power, the coins may provide us today with information that is not reflected in the contemporary narrative resources. In this regard the numismatic material plays an outstanding role in clarifying the trade relationships between different countries located not only within a close geographical neighborhood but also on far away destinations. The aim of this talk is to reveal the connection of Islamic hoards with the main and trade routes that existed between the Orient and Northern and North-Eastern Europe in the period between the sixth and the tenth century AD. It is well known that in that period the intensification of the trade between the Near-Eastern and Middle-Asian Islamic countries with Vikings reached its apogee. Today, the number of hoards of Islamic silver coins revealed in Baltic Sea area, as well as in Eastern Europe exceeds several hundreds. However, before we turn to the question which way these coins reached the northern lands; **Vardanyan(Aram)**, *Islamic Coin Hoards and the Trade routes: How Dirham Reached the North*, Seminar at the Faculty of Archaeology, University of Fayum, Egypt, 9-10 Apr, 2012; https://www.academia.edu/1722281/Islamic_Coin_Hoards_and_the_Trade_Routes_How_Dirham_Reached_the_North accessed 17-5-2019 2:00AM.

² **Al Mawardi** (Alī ibn Mohammad.), *al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyya (Governmental Laws)*, Beirut: Daru Altabaa. 1938: 154; **Zarra-Nezhad (Mansour)**, *a Brief History of Money in Islam and Estimating the Value of Dirham and Dinar*, January 2004 © 2004, international association for Islamic economics Review of Islamic Economics, Vol. 8, No. 2, 2004, pp. 51–65; <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235761489>.

³ **Baladhuri, A.**, *Futooh Al-buldan (Conquest of Cities)*. Cairo: Al kutobu Alarabia, 1956, 452; **al-Maqrīzī**, *Al-Nuqood (Currencies)*. Cairo: Daru Ehia Aluloom. 1913, 6.



5- Documents

The most important documents for numismatists are those generated in the creation and the functioning of a mint. Since mints are extensions of governmental apparatus, they have their bureaucracies and their paperwork; but since they have a "license to print Currencies", that work must be carefully controlled. The coins themselves prove that coins are marked with magistrates and issue marks. Potentially the comparison of documents with coins can check to die survival, illustrate the internal organization of the mint from intake of bullion to dissemination of coin, and provide the economic historian with that most valuable piece of information, the amount of money generated. Unfortunately, virtually all the official documents from antiquity have been lost. For later periods, mint records often survive, and valuable information is also contained in law codes, governmental decrees, trial records, and records of private transactions.

Documents of private utterance papyri, merchants' exchange books, receipts, and the like can be of great value for showing what was being traded in a given time and place; they also fulfill their original purpose in stating the relative values of currencies. Thus even where this cannot be determined through finds and analyses, it can sometimes be reconstructed from the documents.

Another kind of documentary evidence is provided by inscriptions, military diplomas, and information about those individuals who performed some function in the mint. Since these people were generally no more than low-level bureaucrats (and in some cases the production personnel was slaves), history has not preserved a great deal of information about them; but an individual's career, often detailed in epitaphs, may often be placed in the context of the history of a mint¹.

6- Literature

The literary and historical tradition is of a value that has to be estimated on a case-by-case basis. For most of history, those who wrote it down did not understand more than the bare rudiments of economic and exchange theory. Mentions of coins are perhaps on firmer ground

¹ Zarra-Nezhad, *a Brief History of Money*, pp. 56–58.

when events such as the infamous had significant social or political implications, but in virtually every case such writings as surviving to us were produced after a considerable lapse of time.

Chroniclers also frequently display bias in reporting on past coinage changes, which are often characterized as attempts to steal from the populace, whatever their actual intent may have been. The literary sources can hardly ever be employed as a starting point of inquiry, except in the later medieval and modern periods. Metrology may be divided into two categories: weight and content. The weight of the individual coin may help determine its authenticity or its attribution. To make either determination, however, one must know the standard to which it is struck; put another way, the tabulation of large numbers of like coins can determine the standard to which they were struck.

7- Statistics

The use of statistics is certainly not exclusive to numismatists, but the science has had practical applications in our context only since the Second World War. Its major application has been in the area of calculating mint output. Work on statistical formulae has been in progress since the 1960s; Students have tried to recognize reality and escape the tedium of studying the dies of one series after another by comparing related issues, one of which has been treated in detail and the other not. Their relative frequency in hoards selected for representativeness can be compared, and a hypothetical number of dies calculated for the uncounted issue. In its combination of two methods that already have their built-in (and rather large) tolerances for error, this simply multiplies the error factor further, and the results achieved have been attacked; but it represents a creative stopgap measure until more series can be studied in full.

Previous studies and publications

Studying coins as a cultural material object was traced by some previous studies such as David F. Fanning (2012) Coinage from the Dawn of Islam, Middle Eastern Numismatics where early Islamic numismatics was introduced as a source of society elements different interpretations. Also in

the study of Daniel Waugh (2004), Material culture/objects, World history sources, unpacking evidence, which introducing a vision of how to read and analyze coins as a material object. Viewing coins as archaeological objects have been widely advocated. An early example is Petersson (1948), who used coins to reconstruct ritual habits in a southern Scandinavian church, though his work had little influence on wider archaeological or numismatic debates. An explicit agenda, demonstrating the importance of coin finds for archaeologists, was set by Casey and Reece (1974). Although one might think that the archaeology of coins is thus well-served and properly established, we feel it is not. On the contrary, coin finds publications are in most instances just that. The meticulous record of find contexts for each coin is used for site chronology and theories about economic prosperity, but the remaining potential of the information is untouched

Introduction

This research is a kind of Interdisciplinary study between numismatics and cultural heritage.

It describes some uses of numismatic evidence using the methodology while illustrating the directions in which current research is developing. Coins are both archaeological artifacts and historical documents. The designs on a coin should be regarded as complementing the inscriptions and from time to time as conveying a message. It is important to distinguish between the date of production of a coin, and the date of its loss. This paper aims to display the unique Islamic coins between (100 AH / 622-719 CE). These coins are unique in the sense of epigraphy as well as religious content. The research is focusing on linking the image, text, and symbols that appeared on the surface of the early Islamic coins with the cultural context in their communities. The social world surrounding the object-coin has to be addressed. Understanding interactions between different people, and between people and objects, helps in comprehending the functions of coinage in a society¹.

¹ In the field of social anthropology this particular kind of context has been addressed by scholars like Parry and Bloch (1989) and Appadurai (1986), who demonstrated that the meaning and value of objects is culturally.

Historical Background:

Early Muslims produced coinage production aside with the Sasanian and Byzantine coins, these being the two dominant political powers in the regions where Islam took root. Both empires had long-established Coinages that were respected and accepted across many lands. Byzantine coins tended to circulate in Egypt and Syria (then part of the Byzantine Empire), while Sasanian coins circulated in the area of Iran and Iraq. While the Muslims' use of these coins was expedient, it was but a temporary solution. New coins eventually had to be produced. At first, these simply mimicked the ubiquitous Sasanian and Byzantine pieces; soon, however, the Muslims began striking these coins in modified form, creating what we now know as the “Arab-Sasanian” and “Arab-Byzantine” series.

Islamic coins of the classical period can be characterized above all as bearers of texts of up to 150 words (fig. 16.35). The texts on coins struck during the first six-and-a-half centuries of Islam often mention up to five names, providing the entire hierarchy of power – from the local governor up to the caliph at the time and location of minting. They usually name the mint town, sometimes even the urban quarter, usually the year, and sometimes even the month and the day. Religious legends provide hints of the political orientation of the ruler who commissioned the coin. The inclusion of the name onto the coin protocol (Sikka) and in the Friday prayer (khut.ba) served in their time as proof of who the actual ruler was. Both had a similar political value. The reference to the hierarchy of rulers in the Friday prayer was purely verbal and therefore transient, whereas on coins the protocol can be found permanently stored on a metal object that was frequently reproduced, like a ‘bulletin of state’. As what are normally precisely datable archaeological artifacts, they open a further dimension of information¹.

¹ **Heidemann(Stefan)**, *The New Cambridge history of Islam*, VI, The world, Formation of the Islamic world, Sixth to Eleventh centuries, chapter 16, Numismatics, ed. Chase Robinson, Cambridge university press, 2010, pp. 649; **Heidemann(Stefan)**, ‘Settlement patterns, economic development and archaeological coin finds in Bil ad aš-Š am: The case of the Diy ar Mud. ar’, in K. Bartl and A. Moaz (eds.), *Residences, castles, settlements: Transformation processes from Late Antiquity to early Islam in Bilad al-Sham*, Proceedings of the International Conference held at Damascus, 5–9 November 2006, *Orient-Archäologie* 24 (Rahden, 2009).

As stated earlier, the Islamic government did not have any control over coinage on the value of in-money circulation until the year 74 AH. There was no consistency and growing dishonesty, in the alloy, the content, and the weight of coins. Besides, when Abd al-Malik Ibn Marwan came to know that borders of curtains imported from Rome were woven with the proclamation of the Christian Trinity, he ordered this to be changed to a proclamation of the Islamic creed in the textile factories of Egypt. It is in retaliation for this that the Roman emperor threatened to engrave blasphemy against the Prophet on Roman coins. To solve this problem, the Islamic government sought to establish control of and improve the monetary system. Thereafter, the government established legal Islamic Dirham and steadily expelled the old coins in circulation out of its territory, and the new money replaced them¹.

The “Arab-Byzantine” coinage

The first Arab-Byzantine coins to be produced were copper Fulus (singular, Fals), which generally are undated, but are commonly accepted as having been produced from the A.H. 50s (A.D. 670s). These are fairly common and often include some indicator of mint. The first gold Dinars were struck around A.H.71-72 (A.D. 691-92). These very rare coins mimic the appearance of Byzantine solidi. Again, what makes both the copper and gold pieces Arab-Byzantine is the inclusion of Arabic words or legends. While most Arab-Byzantine and Arab-Sasanian coins closely resemble their pre-Islamic predecessors, Fig (1).

In some multidisciplinary studies which are focusing on studying the details of the image on early Islamic coins and trying to reveal more perspectives about this transitional period in the history of Islamic Numismatics and their interpretations such as in Figures 2,3,4,5,6.

Byzantine Coins and Their Arab Imitations

The Byzantine gold solidus from its creation in the 4th century, was constant, in the weight and purity and remained to guarantee its value for commercial transactions. With the rise

¹ - Zarra-Nezhad, a Brief History of Money, pp. 56.

of Islam in the 7th century, new Arab rulers wished to distinguish themselves from the Byzantines, whom they had conquered. Coins provided one way of doing so. Evidence from Caliph Abd al-Malik (685-705 AD.), offers an interesting insight into this issue. The obverse of one example from the rule of Abd al-Malik shows a ruler dressed in traditional Arab headdresses and robes, standing with a sword. The reverse has a stepped platform with a pole or pillar. The inscriptions, in Arabic, include the Muslim declaration of faith and the date in the Muslim calendar 76 AH. The second coin of Abd al-Malik in the following year is strikingly different, as images have been replaced by Arabic inscriptions and weigh less than the Byzantine standard.

Human images in early Arab coins are remarkable because Islam prohibits human representations. In this period, however, the restrictions were still being formed and these coins imitate contemporary Byzantine ones with a picture of the ruler. The platform and pillar are also revealing. Byzantine coins have a platform with a cross; in these coins, the crossbar has been removed, changing a religious Christian symbol into a pillar. This example shows how images on coins are important expressions of beliefs and symbols of power. Muslim caliphs wanted coinage with their distinctive symbols, distinct from the former Byzantine rulers. Arabic inscriptions asserted Islamic faith, further distinguishing the new rule. The coins offer striking evidence of important issues involved in the formation of a distinct Arab Muslim identity¹.

Byzantine Coins and Trade:

We considered the symbolic value of Byzantine coins. Yet we often think of coins as money with an economic function. Coins can also provide evidence about the role of money, trade routes, and change over time. However, the economic evidence of coins must be analyzed carefully. An isolated example of a coin may reflect a chance. Datable coins found in large numbers in well-defined regions are a different matter and may document patterns of distribution. Coins minted in one location and found in another may reveal patterns of production

¹ Waugh, *Material culture*, pp.1-17.

and trade. There is strong evidence about the distribution patterns of Byzantine coins in Eastern Europe from the 6th to the 13th centuries. For the 6th and 7th centuries, a few gold coins have been found in tombs of the nomads who roamed the steppes north of the Black Sea. Such coins seem to have served functions similar to those found in the Chinese tomb. Some are pierced and probably were used for ornaments. In the 8th and 9th centuries, coin discoveries extend a little farther north. However, beginning in the 10th century, gold Byzantine coins reached the middle Dnieper River, and by the 11th century, silver and copper coins, but not gold. Byzantine coins are found far north in the Baltic Sea region. The quantities are small compared with Arab and West European coins in this territory, but by the end of the 10th century, Arab coins begin to disappear. By the 12th century, Byzantine coins also decline. Coins provide a good starting point for learning about that trade. A broader understanding comes from looking at a wide range of material, including objects that formed part of the trade.

The “Arab-Sasanian” coinage

The Arab-Sasanian pieces generally are silver drachms that record both a date and mintmark in Pahlavi script. Pahlavi isn't a language, but rather a system of inscription for various Middle-Iranian languages. The dating system used on the earliest of these coins is based on the regnal years of earlier Sasanian rulers, mainly those of Yazdegerd III, though some dates have evaded correlation with other dating systems. What makes these Arab-Sasanian coins the inclusion of Arabic legends in the outer margins of the obverse? The language is closely tied to Islam, and its appearance on these pieces is significant: it marked a major transition in the world's religious and political landscape. The most common marginal legend is) “Bism Allah بسم الله”, meaning “in the name of God.” Other examples of marginal Arabic legends on Arab-Sasanian coins include (Jadyyied جديد) (“good”), L-Allah: الله (“for God”), Bism Allah rabbi بسم الله ربي (“in the name of God, my Lord”) and) L-Allah al-Hamd الحمد لله (“God be praised”). Because of their Pahlavi inscriptions, Arab-Sasanian coins can be difficult to attribute, especially



for novices who might not have an adequate library on Islamic numismatics. That said, it is a fascinating series to collect¹. Many issues feature the names of Early Islamic governors and other officials, making them important historical documents in their own right. Several people who played key roles in early Islamic history are recognized on these coins, somewhat crude, yet intriguing iconography provides a numismatic transition from the pre- Islamic period to the later era of purely Islamic pieces. Figures 7, 8, 9.

Coins as a source of economic and legal history

Money's design and evolution reveal much about the societies creating it. In the pre-modern world the supply of coins, the physical instruments for the exchange of goods, and services were usually scarce. However, to function as an 'absolute price' ("Thaman Mutlaq (الثلمن المطلق)" or 'equivalent' (Thaman (ثلمن)) that is, as money at least one certain type of coin has to be available in sufficient quantities. In networks of long-distance merchants in major trade cities. The value of coins was determined by market forces. It always exceeded the value of the same amount of metal as a mere commodity, although it was bound to the metal content, the difference being smaller for high-value coins than for petty coinage. If a coin-type was generally accepted and was insufficient supply, it was maintained over a long period and remained stable in design and usually in metallic content. Two separate currencies always existed side by side, serving distinct needs within different social classes: high-value money, usually gold or pure silver coins; and petty coinage, usually debased silver, billon, or copper coins. Gold coins, and, to a certain extent, silver coins, constituted the principal currency for wholesale and long-distance merchants

¹⁻ **Fanning (David F.)**, *Coinage from the Dawn of Islam, Middle Eastern Numismatics*, October, 2012, p.49-54.

https://www.numislit.com/pdfs/1210_fanning-ART_dawn%20of%20islam.pdf accessed 18 May 2019 11:00 AM.

²⁻ A number of Muslim scholars have differentiated between a wider medium of exchange (wasilat al-tabadul وسيلة التبادل) and currency (an-naqd النقد). Currency has been defined as: "Nuqud (نقود) is the plural of naqd نقد and is composed of gold and silver", and referred to by the Fuqaha فقهاء as meaning that 1 dinar equals 10 dirhams by value (as the Islamic exchange rate in determining zakat). Due to a shortage of an-nuqud, 'Umar ibn al-Khattab (r.a.) contemplated using leather from camels as a medium of exchange. Majallah (2001), in Tyser, C.R., Demetriades, D.G. and Haqqi, I. (Eds), *The Mejelle: Being an English Translation of Majallah el-Ahkam-I-Adliya, And A Complete Code of Islamic Civil Law, Effendi in 1901, The Other Press, Petaling Jaya, enacted in Imperial Turkey between 1869 and 1876.*



(Tujjar and Jallabun التجار والجلابون) as well as for fiscal administration and state expenditure. High-value coins could be traded between regions and stood in competition with other similar coins. Geographically well-defined borders of currency zones hardly existed. If they did exist, then it was for economic reasons and fiscal measures¹.

The second currency type fulfilled the needs for daily purchases. It was the money of small dealers, artisans, workers in the urban market, and, of course, of the rest of the urban population. The urban population was dependent for their livelihood on income that usually came from their activities within the boundaries of a city or town, and thus on purchases within the urban markets. The majority of the people in pre-modern societies, the rural population, peasants, and nomads relied mainly on subsistence. Only certain extra requirements and excess produce were bought and sold in the market. Islamic law forbids two equal amounts of precious metal from being valued differently in one single transaction².

Early Islamic coins texts:

Islamic coins of the classical period can be characterized as bearers of texts of up to one hundred fifty words³. The texts on coins struck during the first six-and-a-half centuries of Islam often mention up to five names, providing the entire hierarchy of minting. They usually name the mint town, sometimes even the urban quarter, usually the year, and sometimes even the month and the day. Texts of those coins bear a lot of cultural context indications for example the religious legends provide hints of the political orientation of the ruler who commissioned the coin. The inclusion of the name onto the coin protocol (SIKKA (السكة) and in the Friday prayer (KHUTBA(الخطبة) served as proof of who the actual ruler was. Texts on coins were also sources of legal and economic history. Coins were always adjusted to the prevailing economic, political,

¹ Heidemann, *The New Cambridge history of Islam*, p. 650.

² Heidemann (Stefan), *Numismatics – Coins and Coin Circulation from the 7th to the 11th Centuries*, 2001, p.656.

³ Heidemann, *Numismatics* , p. 656



and juridical conditions. But concerning the reading difficulties for those coins texts, reading Kufic inscriptions is probably the most challenging difficulty¹.

When beginning to collect early Islamic coinage. Numismatists today are accustomed to coins that bear both a date and a mintmark or other indication of their place of manufacture. Yet the inclusion of this information was uncommon before the Islamic era. While ancient Greek and Roman coins sometimes bear mintmarks or other indications of where they were struck, they are inconsistent and only occasionally accompany a date. When these coins carry a year of issue, it is not stated according to a consistent and long-lasting dating system, but rather in terms of a regnal year or the year of a consul or other office².

The current dating system used throughout most of the Western world derives from a calendar devised by Dionysius Exiguus, based on the calculated birth of Christ³. Though Exiguus developed his calendar by 525 A.D, initially it was used only for liturgical purposes; the dates were not applied to other historical events. While the early historian Bede used the A.D.System in his 8th-century works, widespread adoption of the calendar did not come about for quite some time, and the earliest known A.D.-dated coin has been traced to 1234A.D.The Hijri calendar, based on the date of Prophet Muhammad's emigration to Medina, involves a lunar year usually lasting 354 days. It achieved widespread use in the Muslim world fairly quickly, by the end of the 7th century A.D. was generally accepted. Anno Hegiree (or A.H.) dating begins with Year 1, corresponding to 622 A.D. The early years of Islam following the death of the prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in 10 A.H. (632 A.D.) are considered the period of the (Rashidun caliphs (الخلفاء الراشدون). These were the first four caliphs of the Islamic community as successors to the prophet Muhammad (PBUH)⁴.

¹ **Heidemann**, *Numismatics*, pp. 656-658.

² **Fanning**, *Coinage from the Dawn of Islam*, p.49-54

³ **Jonson (Trent)**, *A Numismatic History of the Early Islamic Precious Metal Coinage of North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula*, VOL. 2, PhD, Oxford university, 2014, pp.274-276.

⁴ **Heidemann (Stefan)**, *Calligraphy on Islamic Coins*. In: *Jurgen Wasim Frembgen (ed.): The Aura of Alif. The Art of Writing in Islam Munich et al.: Prestel, 2010, pp. 161-171.*



Umayyad gold dinars are fascinating and include some notable rarities. Last year. The legends usually are clearly engraved and very formulaic; only the date and mint name tend to vary from coin to coin. They also are relatively common as a group, though numerous rarities exist. For these reasons, they are reasonably popular and a good place to start¹.

The silver Dirhams began to be struck after ‘Abd Al-Malik’s coinage reform. There were No images depicted, only writing and occasional decorative devices, such as annulets, in the outer margins. The text is in Arabic, with the script being an early form of Arabic orthography called Kufic inscriptions. Angular and less flowing than modern written Arabic, it was developed for use in inscriptions and was easier to engrave in dies than a more rounded script. Most significant, it does not include the diacritical marks (dots and other accents).

That indicates many of the subtleties of the Arabic language, including most vowel sounds. Without the diacritical marks, letters like “ب b,” “ن n,” “ت t” and “ث th” can look the same. Learning to read Kufic is probably the most formidable challenge when beginning to collect early Islamic coinage, but good resources are available. (Umayyad Kufic is far easier to read than some later versions of Kufic or other Arabic scripts²).

The Umayyad silver Dirhams were struck from (79- 132 A.H) (A.D. 698 to 749), when the dynasty was overthrown by the Abbasids. These coins are known to bear nearly 100 different mint names. While some of these refer to the same place, it is clear the pieces were struck at an astonishing number of mints over a very wide geographical area, much like the Sasanian and Arab-Sasanian drachms that preceded them. Stylistic differences are evident, and some of the pieces made by remote provincial mints feature charmingly crude orthography when compared to the more skillful products of the larger mints³.

¹- **Heidemann (Stefan)**, *The Evolving Representation of the Early Islamic Empire and Its Religion on Coin*, ed. Angelika Neuwirth, Nicola Sinai, Michael Marx, BRILL, Yale University, vol6, 2010, pp, 149-197.

²- **Heidemann**, *the Evolving Representation*, P.154.

³- **Heidemann**, *Calligraphy on Islamic Coins*, PP. 164-166.

Text in early Islamic numismatics Heritage values:

From the political point of view: where the coins indicate the rulers of the States and their sultans and royal crown princes, they took them when they took the government to engrave their names on them, and they were striking a picture of the city, and this helped the archaeological experts to know the extension of the state and territories under them.

Religious and doctrinal: It had inscriptions to indicate the Islamic faith and Arabization by the Caliph Abdul Malik bin Marwan in 777 AH, where he wrote the Basmalah and the word of Tawheed, in addition to the verses of the Sincerity.

Economically: Coins or gold coins were the currency of most countries of the Islamic world. They also indicate the economic recovery of the country, whether high or low. Its weight and purity determine the economic situation of the country.

From a social point of view: this coin was a witness to the life aspects of the time, such as marriage, divorce, reconciliation, illness, and death, to serve as a small memorial to commemorate the anniversary. It was used as a valuable gift for princes, leaders, and kings.

The relationship with painting and art: coins were decorated with the drawings of plants and Islamic ornaments and some geometric inscriptions, and some humans and animals, which were mostly represented images of kings and princes.

Arabic calligraphy: inscriptions were written in fine Arabic fonts, where they were written in Kufic script and copies, and were a distinctive combination to illustrate different stages of the development of Arabic calligraphy.

The word within the text: The coins are also one of the first materials that carried the Arabic calligraphy, so it was necessary to take care of the line and engrave it with the best methods and to the fullest extent ... It is engraved to mention but not limited to Basmalah, martyrdom, Quranic verses, names of successors, kings, rulers, princes, governors, and decision-makers. The registration of cities beating on this money shows the extension of each ruler.

Text as a tool to figure out the type

For our purposes, "type" refers to the central device or motif (Doty uses the term "dominant design") of either face of the coin. On one face of the United States cent, for example, the type is the bust of the caliph r.; on the other, the Caliph Memorial.

The word as a tool to show the field

The field is the area on the face of the coin around the type, or which provides its background. The field is often subdivided into left and right. When "to l." and "to r." (Or "in field l.", "in field r.") Are written, they refer to left and right as the viewer sees them, although when we are describing the left or right arms or hands, they are the left or right arms or hands of the figure portrayed. Some catalogs eliminate the verbiage by using a graphic device, e.g. A|*, where A appears in l. field, * in r. field, and nothing beneath. One part of the field has its name. This is the exergue, a term which originates in Greek ex and ergon, literally "outwork" or an accessory to the main work. This refers to the portion of the type beneath the ground line, which is often explicitly rendered and always implicit. In ancient coinage it is often left blank, though on the titulary-laden reverses of Roman coins the type is sometimes spelled out here; later it is used for mint or issue marks and, especially in modern times, for dates.

Early Islamic coins Images

The image reveals a lot of details and explains the royal regalia. Also, reflect power symbols and social status, On the very first examples of Islamic coins, there was a trial which we can call it imitation to the Byzantine coins such as Byzantine solidus, the common currency of the Christian Byzantine empire during the seventh century where emperor Heraclius stands between his sons, on their heads, the imperial family wear crowns; in their right hands, they carry orbs, symbols of their earthly power. On the reverse, the same mint mark, for Constantinople, and a Byzantine cross mounted on steps. On the next evolution step, the coin has had all of its Christian imagery removed from the crowns, from the orbs and from the cross

itself. The coins speak of more than a change in currency and leadership¹. Christian iconography commonly found on Byzantine coins was gradually modified on Arab-Byzantine issues to reflect the change in religion.

Some of the imagery on these coins conveys coherent messages which can yield important information: thus the widespread presence of crosses is sometimes taken to indicate Christian agency behind the production of coinage. Similarly, it has been suggested that some types of figures, particularly those that diverged most sharply from the Byzantine numismatic canon, such as the 'Falconer' type, must have been intended to reflect an aspect of the identity of the issuer.

Abū al-Maḥāsīn Yūsuf Ibn Taghrībirdī 2 mentions in the first part of his book "The Glorious Stars النجوم الزاهرة فى ملوك مصر والقاهرة" and Ali Ibn al-Athir ابن على الأثير in his book "The Complete in History الكامل فى التاريخ" that "Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah" and the word "blessing", were the first to use as calligraphy adds in Islamic coins. In the succession of Uthman, الخليفة عثمان, the third caliph of Al Rashedon struck a dirham engraved by the sentence "Allah Akbar" and hit Muawiya Dnair fighter. Abdullah bin al-Zubayr struck a round dirham in Mecca, the first to hit the round dirhams, and the inscription on the first face of the dirham "Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah" and the other "God ordered loyalty and justice" and hit his brother Musab bin Zubayr Dharam in Iraq, and after the killing of Abdullah and Musab, Abdul Malik Ibn Marwan examined the Mithqals.

Al-Dumeiri الديميري said in his book "Animal Life حياة الحيوان" that there is money struck by princes and governors during the era of the Caliphs, the oldest of which dates back to the year 28 AH in Tabaristan طبرستان, and in its circle in the Kufic line "Bismillah Rabbi بسم الله ربي" The same phrase, and the last year on his circle, "Abdullah ibn al-Zubair Amir the year 30 AH, he

¹ Heidemann, *the Evolving Representation*, P.164.

² Ibn Taghrībirdī (Abū al-Maḥāsīn Yūsuf), *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah fī Mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah* (النجوم الزاهرة فى ملوك مصر والقاهرة), Chronicle of period from, Edited by William Popper. 12. vols. Cairo, Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyah, 1929, p. 56.



established a role in Damascus, Jerusalem, Tiberias, طيبيرس and Baalbek بعلبك, a copper coin, which bore the image of the Roman emperor (Heraclius). In the eastern parts of the Islamic state (Persia and Iraq), the Persian silver coin bearing the image of the second and the last Persian king continued to circulate. The word (بسم الله Bismillah) and replaced (the name of Kisra كسرى) in the name of (the governor). Hajaj ibn Yusuf al-Thaqafi had issued a distinctive silver coin bearing his name in Kufic script.

The coins of this stage were decorated with Images of the Byzantine emperors carrying the sticks and their crosses. Some of them had pictures of a Byzantine emperor surrounded by Arabic writings such as the word "Bismillah بسم الله", "good" جيد. Numerous figures and drawings were available on coins at this stage¹.

Analyzing the following features improve the cultural context findings of the coins: Facial features, Cloth style, and fabrics, Dimensions between figures and images, Royal insignia and regalia, Direction and spaces between words, style of hair.

Arab Photo Stage:

In the reign of Caliph 'Abd al-Malik Ibn Marwan, who was the crown prince of the caliphate from 65 to 89 AH, there was a sharp dispute between him and the Roman emperor (Justinian II). This led to the modification of the inscription of the coin and the issuing of the first golden Dinar, He wears the Arab dress, and his hand grabs the sword, while the second face of the Dinar was written by Surah Al-Ikhlās سورة الاخلاص. And Abdul Malik threatens to kill those who deal without this track of dirhams and dinars and ordered the abolition of dealing with the Roman and Persian coins. But the majority of Muslims saw the appearance of the image of the Caliph on the inscription as a violation of the Sunnah, خرق للسنة النبوية, so he amended the dinar and wiped out the image of the Caliph, and instead engraved the Kufic script: "There is no God but Allah alone لا اله الا الله". After this, copper coins appeared on both sides of what was available

¹ Jonson, *A Numismatic History*, pp. 274-276.

in the local environment such as human figures, plant-based ornamental figures, geometrical designs. This stage where the images replaced the Arab Islamic and decorative linear images of Byzantine and Sasanian embodiment of the Arab Islamic character of different types.

In this stage, the Kufic line was used in various types, including the simple one, which was visible on the copper coins in the first century AH, as well as on the dinars and the Umayyad dirhams. This line is characterized by simplicity except for its complexity in its uppermost parts of its letters. (Or end-to-end-الحروف) and the line of copying at this stage was used alongside the Kufic line¹. With the beginning of the Abbasid caliphate, Coins remained in terms of the general form, as it is with a slight difference in terms of the appearance of beating years and the names of senior figures of the state figures such as sultans and officials of the role of beatings, ministers some names of renowned women. All this appeared either by explicit name or reference by the first letters of the name. Figures 10, 11.

Early Islamic coins Shape:

Some designs were adopted to send a political message to the new religion's neighbors. The Standing Caliph type of Arab-Byzantine (Fals) pictures an aggressive caliph with hand on sword, along with Islamic legends clearly distinguishing the coin from its Byzantine prototypes. Besides, Christian Iconography commonly found on Byzantine issues (the crucifix, for example) was gradually modified on Arab-Byzantine coins to reflect the change in religion². The most significant event in early Islamic numismatic history was the coinage reform effected by 'Abd al-Malik Ibn Marwan, who was the Umayyad caliph from A.H. 65 to 86 (A.D.685-705). The repercussions from those changes, which took place around A.H. 77-78 (A.D. 696-97), continue to affect Islamic coinage today. First, precious-metal coins would be purely epigraphic in design, with no figural representations. It was very rare to find other shapes in this early Islamic period

¹ **Heidemann (Stefan)**, *Coinage and history on the seventh century near east*, 2, ed. Andrew Oddy, Proceedings of the 12th seventh century Syrian Numismatic round tableheld at Gonvilleand Caius college, Cambridge on 4th and 5th April, 2009, pp. 45-49.

² **Fanning**, *Coinage from the Dawn of Islam*, p.49-54.



than the circular shape coins, later on, many different shapes were issued around the Islamic world, each shape different and special in its uniqueness and characteristic features.

Analysis

Coins are invariably among the most numerous artifacts found in excavation contexts, and almost always the most precisely dateable ones. While this draws the archaeologist's attention, an archaeologist is unlikely to be much further interested in the numismatic significance of the object, and the record of sites from which the coins have been published in usable detail is disgraceful. In archaeological finds, what is lost in terms of chronological control is regained in spatial control. For the numismatist, an exact locus is seldom the objective, and association by locus is often pressed too hard, by both numismatists and archaeologists, given the disturbance of rigid stratification in modern times. For the numismatist, the larger picture is important: what circulated at a site, and in what quantities? Excavations themselves confirm that their bulk consists of local issues; this can be important in dealing with coins whose mintage is unknown, and on occasion, the exceptions can be taken to demonstrate lines of commercial contact. Another general principle is that in any system of multiple mints, the mints will be represented in direct relationship to their distance from the site. But to be able to reach the best results numismatics and archaeology must be working together.

The texts on coins show how much numismatic vocabulary has to do with to coin manufacture and the resulting product, and it reaches back to the beginnings of numismatic study. At the beginning that study was purely descriptive, and consisted of little more than catalogs of private collections, intended as much to celebrate the acumen of their owners as to broaden the base of numismatic knowledge. The turn of the nineteenth century, however, represents a watershed, and the beginning of the development of the modern numismatic method. Normally in describing coins in prose the English terms are used, but standard catalogs almost universally employ abbreviations taken directly from the Latin rather than from the periodic

table: thus AV (aurum) = gold, AR (Argentum) = silver, AE (aes) = copper or one of its alloys. This last abbreviation is used generically to describe any coin consisting principally of copper; when it appears in prose, aes is frequently translated as bronze.³ Occasionally the abbreviations El (= electrum) and Bi (= billon, an alloy of silver in which the silver comprises less than 50%) are encountered, and Cu is becoming more common to describe copper. This unscientific terminology and abbreviation describe the principal element only; when standard chemical abbreviations are used, it is almost always in the context of a formal analysis of a coin's content. Only in recent times has it been possible to determine with any degree of precision the metals of which a coin was comprised, so the older abbreviations have been used in describing the major component of a coin while disclaiming the precision of scientific analysis.

Conclusion

The brief survey of calligraphy on coins explores a field of Islamic art which is hardly known although often admired, and commentary is sometimes given on the calligraphy of single issues. The art of writing on coins established itself at the moment when the Qur'an message became an iconic symbol of Islam and its empire. The small form set certain limits; coins as documents required certain formulae, and their products as an absolute medium of exchange, meaning money, required techniques of mass production. As miniature official inscriptions of the Islamic Empire and its successor states, calligraphy on coins is always orientated towards the current forms of representation of these states, be it the art of Qur'anic calligraphy, the style of monumental architecture, or the fine art of courtly poetry rendered in calligraphy or finally the sultan's name in calligraphy.

As a function of Coins, the measure or the unit of value was a role that also included an "accounting unit of value" or "money of account", which although was not externalized, and thus lacked the physical form of a coin, it was nonetheless real, for they were closely linked to units of weight (Mithqal) associated with circulating gold and silver coins. The theoretical weight of

the dinar and the dirham for the payment of zakat was itself a unit of account at the time of the Prophet, that whilst Byzantine and Sasanian coins were used, their exact weight and fineness were only formally externalized with the minting of the first Islamic coins under Umayyad caliph Abd al-Malik Ibn Marwan in 77H/697A.D. Subsequently¹.

To analyze material evidence is to write an object's biography. Each object has a story to tell, a story shaped by human use. When historians analyze material objects, they begin by recording basic “facts,” starting with a verbal description and, if possible, photographs. The description might include measurements, material, and distinguishing features, such as ornamentation. This kind of information provides material for generalization about technology, economy, or social relations within a given society and how they changed over time. The material of the object (e.g., coin). May make it possible to specify where it was produced, especially if we have other evidence about centers of production².

When studying an object, we have to start by with these basic descriptions:

- Observe the coin, paying close attention to detail.
- Take notes on material, size, shape, and distinguishing characteristics.
- Turn the coin over if possible, examining from multiple angles and perspectives.
- Note what the descriptive label (from a book, website, or museum) tells about the coin.

These details are the first step to determining what the coin is as a cultural material object.

The biography of the coin includes information on owners of the object over an extended period and may reveal how the coin was used or perceived in different settings, perhaps in ways unintended by its creator. A coin produced for a practical function in daily life may acquire symbolic value at a later time. Or its original function may become irrelevant because society no longer has a use for it or because people no longer know how the coin was originally used for.

¹⁻ This behaviour has been confirmed in the Geniza documents (Goitein, 2000, 1, pp. 229-266) Goitein, S.D. (2000), A Mediterranean Society, The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza, Volume 1: Economic Conditions, Vol. 6, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA.

²⁻ **Waugh**, *Material culture*, pp.1-17.

Most coins have passed through several historical stages and the location of discovery is rarely the site of production. How did the coin reach its location of discovery?

What does the context tell us about the coin's environment and associations? Does the context provide date information? Such evidence may reveal patterns of exchange and interaction. To use objects for research, we have to start by asking how and where they were found. Where are they now? How are they presented? This information can be rich and layered. For example, a gold coin with an image of the Byzantine emperor Justinian may have been found in a 6th-century tomb. Each object has a story.

Many objects used to understand the past were uncovered by archaeologists. Only in the late 19th century, however, did archaeologists begin to record exact object locations-not a town or a site but the exact place within the site and about other objects. The relative positions of objects often allow for the most meaningful interpretation. Archaeologists try to understand what objects are grouped and what appears in the same chronological layer. An updatable object may be dated by its proximity to other objects whose dates are known. The layers in an archaeological site begin with the earliest at the bottom and the most recent near the surface. Yet when archaeologists remove objects, they destroy the sites, leaving only their record and the objects.

About the coin function and how far it was unique or not?

Objects may have multiple functions, some more obvious than others. The primary function of an object is that for which it was originally made and used. Additional uses, however, may have been invented. A chair made for sitting could be used to reach a high object.

The function of a coin may seem obvious that it is used in financial transactions. Coins, however, also have a symbolic value connected with national identity. Coins have images of presidents or rulers, national monuments, and inscriptions such as "In God We Trust." Historically, some coins were more important as symbols than for their monetary value, especially if the latter was so high that few circulated or were used for commerce. Cultures that

do not use coins in the trade may value them as symbols of social status-for example, as jewelry. Sometimes clues about such usage are found in the coins themselves, for example, a hole at the top of a coin worn as a necklace. Close observation of an object and its context can help establish function. Studying wear patterns, for example, may show if a knife was used or decorative, how it was held, and whether the user was left-handed or right-handed. Observing the context in which the object is found is also important.

Coin's shape, design, texts, and evolution reveal much about the societies creating it.

The minting and circulation of gold and silver coins during this early period have not attracted the attention of numismatists and historians from the concept of identity elements revealing theories. Few studies have even been focused on social interpretations of this monetary system.

Figures:

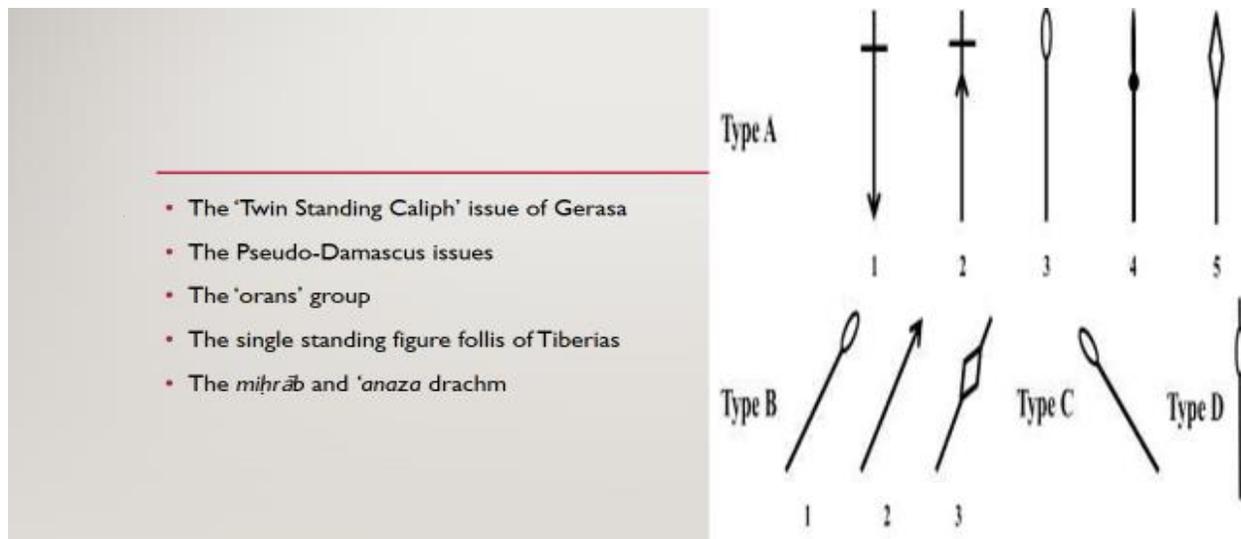
Fig (1) Byzantine solidi with Heraclius, Heraclius Constantine, and Heraclonas. With the permission of the American Numismatic Society, 1925.172.34. (Photo: courtesy of the American Numismatic Society).



Fig 2: Analytical view of the imitation and image elements interpretations on the Arab-Byzantine coins, case study applied on spears and scepters uppermost parts shapes and directions of the Rulers and what kind of symbolism they reflect¹.



¹ Proceedings of the 14th Seventh Century Syrian, Numismatic Round Table held at The Hive, Worcester, on 28th and 29th September 2013.



- The 'Twin Standing Caliph' issue of Gerasa
- The Pseudo-Damascus issues
- The 'orans' group
- The single standing figure follis of Tiberias
- The *mihrāb* and 'anaza drachm

Fig 3: Different positions and shape of the scepters top parts and their classifications into 5 groups according to the study¹.



Fig 4: Different positions and shape of the scepters top parts and their classifications into 5 groups according to the study².

¹ Proceedings of the 14th Seventh Century Syrian ,Numismatic Round Table held at The Hive, Worcester, on 28th and 29th September 2013.

² Proceedings of the 14th Seventh Century Syrian ,Numismatic Round Table held at The Hive, Worcester, on 28th and 29th September 2013.

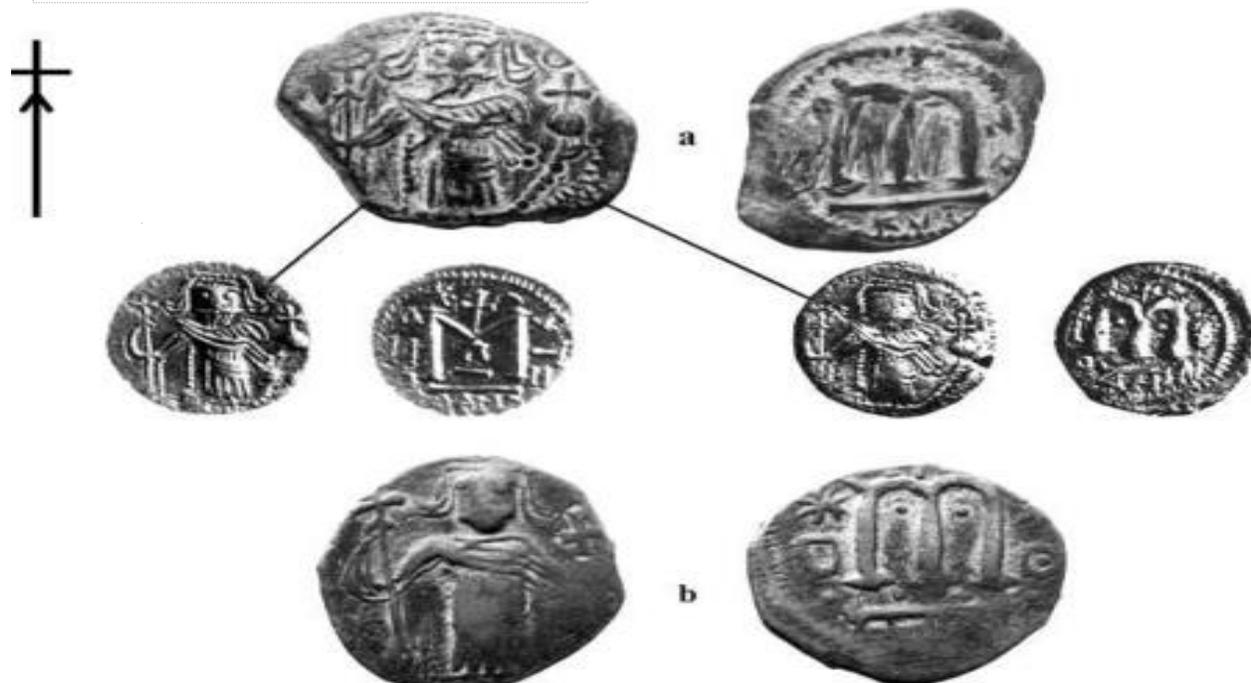


Fig 5: Different positions and shape of the scepters top parts and their classifications into 5 groups according to the study¹.



Fig 6: Different positions and shape of the scepters top parts and their classifications into 5 groups according to the study².

¹ Proceedings of the 14th Seventh Century Syrian ,Numismatic Round Table held at The Hive, Worcester, on 28th and 29th September 2013.

² Proceedings of the 14th Seventh Century Syrian ,Numismatic Round Table held at The Hive, Worcester, on 28th and 29th September 2013.

Fig (7) Arab-Sasanian Drachm, with bismallāh in the second quadrant of the obverse (left) margin. Bishapur, 25 Yazdgard eras (a.h. 36). (After Stephen album and tony goodwin, the pre-reform coinage of the early Islamic period, vol. 1 of the sylloge of Islamic Coins in the Ashmolean Museum [oxford: Ashmolean museum, 2002], (reproduced with the permission of the visitors of the Ashmolean Museum)



Fig (8): Arab-Sasanian drachm, with the image of the shāhanshāh on the obverse (left) and that of the armed standing caliph on the reverse (right). Damascus, a.h. 75. With the permission of the American Numismatic Society, 1917.314.35. (Photo: courtesy of the American Numismatic Society).



Fig (9): Arab-Sasanian drachm, with a bust of the armed caliph and a spear under a sacrum. Damascus, A.H. 76. With the permission of the American Numismatic Society, 1944.100.612. (Photo: courtesy of the American Numismatic Society).



Fig (10): Arab-Byzantine solidi with the armed standing caliph. Damascus, no date. University Museum, University of Pennsylvania. With the permission of the American Numismatic Society, 1002.1.107. (Photo: courtesy of the American Numismatic Society).



Fig (11): Umayyad Caliph 'Abd al-Malik: 'Caliphal Image solidus' or Standing Caliph solidus struck from 74-77 AH. Based on Byzantine numismatic traditions. Note that, contrary to popular belief, there are official representations of the human figure in the Islamic context.



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