

COINAGE AND HISTORY IN THE SEVENTH CENTURY NEAR EAST

Papers from the Seventh Century Syrian Numismatic Round Table 2007

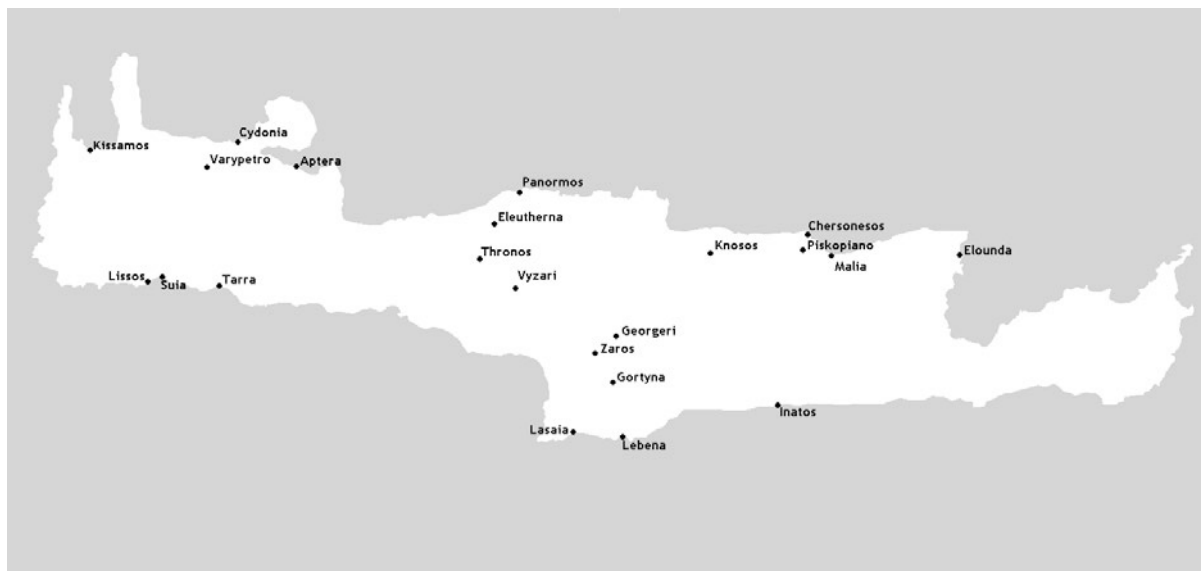
The Seventh Century Syrian Numismatic Round Table was formed by a small group of ONS members in 1993 following a successful ONS study day held at the British Museum. Its objective is to bring together numismatists, historians and archaeologists in a series of informal conferences which are held at intervals of between one and two years. The central interest of the group is the Byzantine and Arab-Byzantine coinages circulating in Syria/Palestine from the just before the Persian occupation of the early seventh century up to the comprehensive currency reforms of ‘Abd al-Malik at the end of the century. However, the boundaries are flexible both geographically and temporally, and are often extended to include Arab-Sasanian and related coinages. The 2007 conference was held on May 26th and 27th at the Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham, and we would like to thank Eurydice Georganteli and her colleagues for hosting the event, which was also supported by grants from the Royal Numismatic Society and the Arts and Humanities Research Council. This supplement constitutes a record of all the papers delivered at the conference, but in some cases, where full publication is planned for a later date, only an abbreviated version is given. Of the longer papers, two (Treadwell, and Ilisch) can be regarded as “completed” pieces of work, whilst the remainder (Phillips, Oddy and Goodwin) are very much reports on “work in progress”. A date has yet to be fixed for the 2008/09 conference, but anyone wishing to be put on the mailing list should e-mail Tony Goodwin at [REDACTED]

NUMISMATIC CONSIDERATIONS OF BYZANTIUM’S MARITIME BORDER WITH THE CALIPHATE

Eurydice Georganteli and Jonathan Shea

The present paper focuses on the economies of Crete and Cyprus from the late sixth until the mid- ninth century. It is part of a larger project on the economy of seventh-century Byzantium, which will accompany the catalogue of middle Byzantine coins from the Barber Institute of Fine Arts Collections.

The island of Crete, part of the Prefecture of Illyricum, was a wealthy, early Byzantine province. Fertile plains, deposits of metal ores, glass production and export of first class whetstone and timber ensured prosperity and continuing contacts of Crete with provinces across the empire. The coin finds from the island feature both the eastern mints of Constantinople, Thessalonike, Kyzikos, and Nikomedia as well as the western mints of Rome, Sirmium and Lugdunum.



6th-9th century Crete: location of coin finds

The almost idyllic position of Crete was disrupted by the Arab conquest of Syria and Egypt. From a province at the centre of trade networks, Crete became an island on the main routes of invaders and raiders. By 655/6 the Arabs had begun raiding Crete. In 671 they made a determined, if unsuccessful attack on Herakleion. Theophanes tells us that an Arab force wintered on Crete in 674, and Arab sources claim that this force actually occupied part of the island for a short time. Under Al-Walid I (705-715) there were renewed raids on Crete, taking place in 705/6, 713/14 and 714/15. After this, Crete experienced a period of relative peace until the 780s when raids began again, continuing up to the Arab conquest of the island. In spite of the raiding, Crete seems to have remained prosperous. Coin losses under Herakleios (610-41) are high, falling only slightly under Constans II (641-68), and still remaining higher than in any previous century. For the early

seventh century the mints of Constantinople, Thessalonike, Kyzikos and Antioch are present, with Constantinople forming the larger proportion as we progress further into the century. The coins are all single finds, and find-spots are mostly located in the central zone of the island, close to the capital of Gortyna. The ports of the southern coast seem to have declined at this time, while the ports on the northern coast and the settlements in the centre of the island continued to be inhabited. The raids of the Arabs must have had some impact on Crete, but this was obviously not severe enough to inspire a general move by the population to inland sites away from the coast. New defensive works were constructed, some designed to protect the coast, while others to defend individual sites or routes in the interior of the island. Various dates have been proposed for the construction of these fortifications, ranging from the seventh to ninth centuries. If the ninth century is accepted as a date, that would mean that it had taken the Byzantines over 150 years to respond to the first raids on Crete. However, a more likely date of the mid-seventh century would coincide with the fortification efforts of Constans II in mainland Greece, Asia Minor and Cyprus. Such centrally sponsored construction work may also explain the high rate of coin losses under this emperor. Crete seems to have become more ruralised as the eighth century progressed. There have been only three coin finds for the reign of Constantine IV (668-85), while after the death of Justinian II (685-95, 705-11) in 711 there are no coin finds for any reign until that of Leo IV (775-80), whose reign is documented by just a single coin find. To all intents and purposes Crete was without new coinage from the early eighth century.

Unlike Crete, Cyprus was originally part of the Prefecture of the East. In 536 it was transferred together with Caria, Scythia and Moesia Inferior and the Cycladic islands to a new unit under the authority of the Quaestor of the Army as part of wider administrative measures introduced by Justinian I. Since logistics played an important role behind this curious regrouping, one can only assume that Cyprus produced a considerable agricultural surplus, which contributed to the supply of the Byzantine armies along the Danubian border. By the second half of the sixth century, Cyprus's fortunes started declining. Earthquakes and outbreaks of the plague that spread across ports in the eastern Mediterranean must have had a serious effect on urban centres and the countryside of the island. This recession is well attested by archaeological and numismatic data. There is a visible decline in coin losses, especially for the period of the reigns of Justinian I (527-65) and Justin II (565-78). What also becomes apparent from the mint distribution of sixth-century coin finds from Salamis/Constantia, Saranta Kolones and Kourion are the continuing close ties of Cyprus with centres of production and consumption in Asia Minor and northern Africa. Coin finds represent the mints of Constantinople, Alexandria, Cyzicus, Nicomedia and Antioch. The mints of Rome and Ravenna are absent from the numismatic sample, and the same applies to the Thessalonican mint before Tiberios II (578-82). In short, Cyprus, the province which Ammianus Marcellinus described in the fourth century as so fertile and rich in products of every kind that "by its native resources alone it could build cargo ships from the very keel to the topmast sails, and could equip them completely," appears to have experienced, in the late sixth century, an island economy, which looked eastwards and functioned as a major stop-over between Constantinople, Alexandria and the Holy Land.



6th-9th century Cyprus: location of coin finds

Under Tiberios II there is a considerable increase in the number of coin losses, mostly folles and half-folles, and the presence for the first time of Thessalonican issues. While the Constantinopolitan mint is still very well represented in the numismatic body from Salamis, coins of the mint of Antioch/Theoupolis form the majority of coin finds. This strong influx of Antiochean coins is a sign of the economic revitalisation of Cyprus following the transfer to the island of Armenian prisoners of war by Tiberios II.

Throughout the first half of the seventh century Cyprus remained an important and integral part of the empire, though at times an isolated one due to the preoccupation of Constantinople with Avar raids in the Balkans and the war with the Persians. In 609/610 Herakleios visited Cyprus *en route* to Constantinople, and contributed to the repair and expansion of the aqueduct of Salamis/Constantia, a project particularly important for the growing population of the city. His coins together with coins of Constans II and Constantine IV found at Salamis/Constantia, when studied in their historical framework, help us elucidate questions related to the circulation of eastern mint issues in Cyprus, the mint of Constantia, and the connection of Cyprus with Syria in the course of the seventh century. The strong presence of Herakleios's copper coins in Cyprus reflect the position of Cyprus as a way-station between Syria and Constantinople, from where the Byzantines could supply Syria with fresh coin after the resumption of Byzantine rule in the area in 630.

Subsequent military efforts by the Byzantines to recover Egypt must account for the large number of Constantinopolitan coins of Constans II recorded at sites across the island. This monetary influx however must have dried out in the 660s following the two Arab raids and their obvious catastrophic consequences for the island, namely extensive destruction of secular and religious buildings, loss of human lives and 120,000 prisoners in 647 and 50,000 in 653. The Byzantine authorities of Cyprus addressed the acute lack of coin import from Constantinople by countermarking at Salamis earlier coins of Constans II, as Wolfgang Schulze has convincingly argued in two recent articles. As to the pseudo-Byzantine coins found at Salamis and Paphos, these can be linked to Mu'āwiyya I's installation in 653 of a garrison of 12,000 Arabs in Paphos. The incident recorded in Arabic sources certainly alludes to a significant military presence on the island, which apart from chasing the inhabitants of Paphos out from their homes until the removal of the garrison in 680-83 must have left traces in the local economy.

The influx of Constantinopolitan coins in Cyprus ends with the death of Constans II. The situation did not change after the withdrawal under Caliph Yazid I (680-83) of the Arab garrison from Paphos, the Arab-Byzantine peace treaty of 685, and the emergence of *condominium* as the new political reality for the island. There is only one regular coin of Constantine IV, which was found at the Salamis excavations. Twenty-one more examples from the reigns of Justinian II, Leontios (695-8) and Tiberios III (698-705), all half-folles and folles found at Salamis and Paphos, trace the end of Byzantium's numismatic presence on the island in the early eighth century. On the other hand, Umayyad Imperial Image coins from the mints of Damascus, Baalbeck, Emesa and Tabariyya, as well as post-reform Umayyad coins found on the island, cover the period up to 719.

The general picture that emerges from the above survey is that of gradual ruralisation in the islands of Crete and Cyprus throughout the seventh and eighth centuries. This phenomenon took longer in Crete, and seems to have been less influenced by Arab activity than in the case of Cyprus. This is demonstrated by the tenacious refusal of the local population to abandon many sites in Crete in contrast to the abandonment of certain urban centres in favour of new ones on Cyprus. As border zones of cultural and economic interchange between Byzantium and the caliphate, Crete and Cyprus are promising areas for studying the monetary and economic encounters between Byzantium and the early Islamic world.

TWO RECENT HERACLIAN COIN HOARDS

Marcus Phillips

Knowledge of the currency of seventh century Syria is heavily dependent on material from commercial sources. In the case of a parcel of coins purporting to be a 'hoard', one can only try and evaluate it as critically as possible. Hoards whose contents do not fit the conventional pattern, and which may therefore be more significant, pose a particular challenge.¹

This paper deals with two 'hoards' recently sold by the same Lebanese dealer. In order to help resolve the problems of authenticity and integrity, both groups of coins were made available for examination by the participants at the meeting.

The first, and by far the most interesting, hoard was said to have been found near a town in the Beqa valley not far from Baalbek. It is referred to as the 'S hoard'. The second appeared six months later but, unlike the first, it was not stated to be a hoard. The uniformity of colour of the coins in the second parcel and its overall composition both suggested that it was either a hoard or part of one. The S hoard has a number of puzzling gaps in its composition and the question arose as to whether it could be from the same deposit as the second parcel. Both had a similar green colour though no active corrosion. The second hoard had a high proportion of overstruck coins and was christened the 'Overstruck hoard'. The consensus of opinion at the meeting was that, although the colour of both groups was similar, there was sufficient variation to indicate they were from separate deposits. In particular, the patination of coins in the S hoard appeared to be thicker and harder than those in the Overstruck hoard.

¹ (Bibliographical note: the standard numismatic accounts are Grierson, P., *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection* vol. 2 (Washington, 1968) abbr. *DOC* and Hahn, W., *Moneta Imperii Byzantini* III (Vienna, 1981) abbr. *MIB*. Noeske, H.-C., *Münzfunde aus Ägypten. Die Münzfunde des ägyptischen Pilgerzentrums Abu Mina und die Vergleichsfunde aus den Dioecesen Aegyptus und Oriens vom 4.-8. Jh. n. Chr.* Studien zu Fundmünzen der Antike, Band 12 (Berlin, 2000), gives a comprehensive analysis of both site finds and hoards.)

The make up of the hoards was as follows:

S hoard (excluding eight coins not attributable to the regular mints)								
	CON	TES	NIC	CYZ	ANT	CYP	Total	Percent
Anastasius	1	0	0	0	0	-	1	0.4
Justin I	5	0	0	0	0	-	5	2.0
Justinian	4	0	0	0	3	-	7	3.0
Justin II	2	0	3	0	2	-	7	3.0
Tiberius II	1	0	2	0	2	-	5	2.0
Maurice	27	0	6	0	25	-	58	26.0
Focas	0	0	0	1	0	-	1	0.4
Heraclius	88	16	22	8	-	9	143	63.0
Total	128	16	33	9	32	9	227	
Percentage	56	7	15	4	14	4		

Overstruck hoard								
	CON	TES	NIC	CYZ	ANT	NEA	Unc.	Total
Anastasius	1	0	0	0	0	-	0	1
Justin I	0	0	0	0	0	-	0	0
Justinian	0	0	0	0	1	-	0	1
Justin II	0	0	0	0	0	-	0	0
Tiberius II	0	0	0	0	0	-	0	0
Maurice	8	0	0	1	9	-	0	18
Focas	4	0	0	0	0	-	0	4
Heraclius	54	0	4	1	-	1	5	65
Constans II	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
Total	77	0	4	2	10	1	5	99

The interest of both hoards lies in what they can tell us about the supply of base metal Byzantine coins to northern Syria after the Persian evacuation (AD 629/30) and the Arab invasion (636). The implications of this for our understanding of Byzantine policy towards Syria at this time have been sketched but never really analysed.²

At this point a very brief survey of the copper folles of Heraclius (610–41) may be useful. The coinage is divided into six groups.³

Class	Regnal Years	Weight grams	Obverse type
1	1-3	10.8	Facing bust.
2	3-6	10.9	2 standing figures. Both robed.
3	6-13	8.2	3 figures standing. Martina on left.
4	15-19	5.6	3 figures standing. Martina on left.
5a	20-21	9.8	2 figures standing. H. in military dress.
5b	22-30	5.4	2 figures standing. H. in military dress.
6	30-31	5.2	3 figures standing. Heraclonas on left.

Classes three and four are distinguished by their reverse design. Class three maintains the conventional type with ANNO to the left of the mark of value. Class four put the Heraclius monogram to the left and ANNO above the mark of value. Class five reverted to the traditional design. This change of the reverse design on class four only occurred at the three metropolitan mints: Constantinople, Nicomedia and Cyzicus. Thessalonica retained the traditional type. There were a number of emergency mints operating at various times but the only ones relevant here are Cyprus, which operated from years 17–19 and used the traditional class three reverse and NEA (Nablus in Palestine?) for years 25 and 26. In year twenty all the mints bar Constantinople were closed. Between years 26 and 30 very few coins were issued.

Many coins of Heraclius turn up in Syria but if they are dated before 630 there is no means of knowing whether they reached Syria during the Persian occupation or were brought in subsequently. Hoards are therefore important. Until now there have been four adequately recorded hoards, none of them from a controlled excavation.

² Phillips, M., 'Currency in seventh-century Syria as a historical source', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 28 (2004) pp. 13–31 esp. pp. 19–22.

³ This follows the arrangement in *DOC*. The average weights are those of the coins in the Dumbarton Oaks collection.

			Noeske ⁴
	Latest coin	Page	Occasion
ANS/Myers/Syria	627/8	516	Persian War
Tell Bisa	630/1	541	Arab Conquest
Coelesyria/Baalbek	630/1	564	Arab Conquest
Byblos	629/30	528	Arab Conquest

The first three hoards came from much the same region as the S hoard and were analysed by Bill Metcalf in 1975.⁵ Their make up was very homogeneous. In each case over 80% of the Heraclian coins were heavy folles of classes one and two. Not surprisingly Metcalf concluded that the copper currency of Syria was 'frozen' after 616. In other words very little new coin reached there at least until after 631. Byblos, on the other hand, consisted almost entirely of class three and four coins dated after 616. It was also unusual in containing a reasonable proportion of coins of the mint of Cyprus barely represented in the other hoards.⁶

The S hoard was in some ways a combination of the two. It had a good representation of heavy folles of Heraclius but also plenty of smaller folles of classes three and four as well as a good representation of Cyprus coins. On the other hand there were some extraordinary omissions:

Coins of Heraclius in the S hoard ⁷						
	Classes					
Mints	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
CON	5	0	27	53	3	0
NIC	11	0	5	6	0	0
CYZ	7	0	1	0	0	0
TES	0	0	15	0	0	1
CYP	0	0	9	0	0	0

The absence of class two coins is hard to explain. Even more extraordinary is the presence of the class six coin of Thessalonica dated 640/1 some ten years after what would otherwise be the latest coin. [Fig 1]



Fig. 1

At least it showed that all the rarities had not been removed!⁸ It seems as though someone, at some point, removed virtually all the Heraclius coins with two figures (as opposed to one or three) on the obverse. Looking at the Heraclius coins in the Overstruck hoard it becomes clear why the suspicion arose that the two hoards were part of the same deposit since the former seems to plug the mysterious gaps:

Overstruck Hoard						
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
CON	5	25	5	3	17	4
NIC	3	1	0	0	-	-
CYZ	1	-	0	0	-	-
NEA	-	-	-	-	1	-

Nonetheless, as stated above, the two appear to be from different deposits.

As already mentioned, in 630/1 the Byzantine government closed all the eastern mints except Constantinople. This makes the very existence of coins of Thessalonica dated 640/1 something of a mystery. Why re-activate the mint after ten

⁴ Noeske, H.-C., *Münzfunde aus Ägypten*. The page references are to vol. 1 the 'occasion' to Beilage 27 and 28 of vol. 3.

⁵ Metcalf, W., 'A Heraclian hoard from Syria', *Museum Notes* 20 (1975), pp. 109-37.

⁶ There are a number of Byblos hoard coins in the Barber collection. The hoard apparently provided Philip Whitting with a number of dates and mints which had eluded him.

⁷ Classifying Thessalonica and Cyprus in this way is misleading because they did not conform to the changes in design which demarcates the classes at the metropolitan mints. Chronologically speaking they belong to class four. A year by year breakdown will be given in the forthcoming full publication of the hoards.

⁸ There is only one other published specimen: *MIB* no. 223. This is a worn piece in the Barber Institute and seems to be from the same dies as the S hoard coin.

years to strike a handful of coins? Are they imitations? Again the consensus of opinion among those who examined the coin was that there was nothing irregular about it. The presence of rarities does not prove the integrity of a hoard. They can be added to make it more attractive. In that case the vendor would surely have drawn attention to it but he made no attempt to do so. The possibility remains that the coins are a selected group. On the whole, the S hoard has an attractive appearance with a good run of well-produced Heraclius class one folles. This is in contrast to the appearance of the Overstruck hoard which looked like it was made up from rejects from another parcel! On the other hand, the S hoard also contained large numbers of unprepossessing class four coins with illegible dates. There is no obvious reason why the finder, or a middle man, should have removed nearly all the Heraclius two-figure types.

Returning to the three hoards analysed by Metcalf, the evidence is that the supply of copper tailed off after 616. Nonetheless, a few later coins were available to their depositors. In the case of Tell Bisa and Baalbek at least these later coins may have been brought into Syria by the returning Byzantine armies. As already pointed out, this coincided with a (temporary) weight increase in the follis in 630. One would have thought that, when the Byzantines re-occupied Syria following the Persian withdrawal, the authorities in Constantinople would have wanted to introduce the new heavy coins. The area had, after all, been deprived of official coin. There was no point, therefore, in flooding it with low-weight coins whose issue was about to be discontinued. This presupposes that the changes had all been worked out in advance. There is also the contrasting composition of the Byblos hoard which consisted entirely of light-weight coins of classes three and four of Heraclius.

The most plausible explanation for the composition of the S hoard is that it was a savings rather than a circulation hoard. In other words, it represents coins taken out of circulation and stored over a period of time rather than a sample of the circulating medium at the time of the latest coin. In general the pattern of wear reflected this. There were a few older coins in remarkably fresh condition for example this coin of Justin II. [Fig. 2]



Fig. 2

Few of the Heraclius coins showed much sign of wear. The hoarder may therefore have added coins up to 613 then stopped. He started again with coins of classes three and four, but not two, brought in by the Byzantine army. Assuming the class six Thessalonica coin is not intrusive, or wrongly dated, he did not hoard many of the new class five coins. At the risk of being over-ingenious might one suggest that all the heavy two-figure coins available to him were taken out to be countermarked.? The vast majority of Heraclian countermarks are on class five coins but earlier types were occasionally countermarked and class two and class five coins are similar enough in appearance for the authorities not to bother to distinguish them. This may be stretching the facts but it seems more likely than the coins being removed in modern times.

As for the Overstruck hoard, there is nothing to compare it with as far as the published hoards are concerned. If it really is a hoard, it plugs a large gap: between the four aforementioned hoards, which all terminate around 631 and Hamah (dep. after 660).⁹ A hoard to be published in *Coin Hoards* dating to 658 or soon after is another welcome addition to the data.¹⁰ The latest coins in the Overstruck hoard are the *Inper Const* coins of year 3 which put it to 644/5.

The presence of a 'Neapolis' coin is not evidence that the hoard has not been picked as it would have been difficult to recognise. [Fig. 3]



Fig. 3

Another coin of interest is a class five Heraclius follis of year 20, Constantinople, from officina E. The fifth workshop seems hitherto not to have been recorded for this date which, considering the size of the issue, is very odd. Otherwise, the coin is unexceptional. [Fig. 4]



Fig. 4

⁹ Phillips, M. and Goodwin, T., 'A seventh-century Syrian hoard of Byzantine and imitative copper coins', *NC* 157 (1997).

¹⁰ Schulze, W., 'A hoard of seventh century Byzantine folles found near Aleppo', *Coin Hoards* no. 85, *NC* 2007, forthcoming.

The most notable feature of the Overstruck hoard is the absence of pseudo-Byzantine coins. I have always thought that the series may well have started quite early taking the form of Heraclius imitations (this view is shared by Schulze and Pottier - see the accompanying article) but, on the evidence of this parcel at least, they were not yet available. It is possible that the imitations were deliberately excluded by the depositor but this seems unlikely given the lack of any centralised fiscal control and the difficulty of recognising them. Until the series of imitations based on the early types of Constans II began the production of imitations seems to have been on a relatively small scale and it is possible that their circulation was circumscribed. This could account for their non-appearance in the hoard and the fact that there is only one pseudo-Byzantine coin in the above mentioned, 'near Aleppo' hoard dated to soon after 658.

Like Tell Bisa, S contained a number of imitations struck during the period of the Persian occupation. Fig. 5 seems to belong to the group recently published by Henri Pottier.¹¹



Fig. 5



Fig. 6

Another [Fig. 6] seems very close to a coin in the Tell Bisa hoard.¹²

Two coins dated years 11 and 13 [year 11 illustrated Fig. 7] appear to be ordinary Heraclius class three but are of unusually good style and noticeably lack crosses on the diadems of the obverse figures.



Fig. 7

The Byzantine re-occupation of Syria which followed negotiations between Heraclius and the Persian commander Shahbaraz has been the subject of some recent academic interest¹³.

There is a suggestion that Heraclius may have been prepared to leave Syria in Persian hands, at least for a while, but events obliged him to sponsor a coup by Shahbaraz in Ctesiphon. The numismatic evidence seems to reinforce the somewhat ad hoc nature both of the re-occupation and the coinage reforms which coincided with it. If the Byblos hoard is at all reliable it suggests that there may have been a military intervention, possibly from Cyprus, of which there is no hint in the written records. At all events, whoever put together the S hoard in the Beqa valley had access to large numbers of pre-630 coins, including those of Cyprus, that can only have come in with the Byzantine army. I plan to discuss these and other points when the hoards are published in detail.

	Ruler	Mint	Regnal Year	Officina	Weight (grams)	Die Axis	MIB ref.
Fig. 1	Heraclius	Thes-salonica	31	B	10.21	180°	223
Fig. 2	Justin II	Nico media	11	A	12.85	180°	46a
Fig. 3	Heraclius	Neapolis?	25	A	5.40	210°	X24
Fig. 4	Heraclius	Constantinople	20	E	11.30	190°	—
Fig. 5	Focas imitation	?	2	—	10.11	0°	—
Fig. 6	Maurice/Heraclius imitation	?	2	B	17.25	180°	—
Fig. 7	Heraclius imitation	?	11	Γ	8.31	20°	—

Key to Figures

¹¹ Pottier, H., *Le monnayage de la Syrie sous l'occupation perse (610–630)* (Paris, 2004).

¹² *Rivista Italiana di Numismatica* 1952/3, pl. 7, no. 13.

¹³ Cf for example Kaegi, W., *Heraclius, Emperor of Byzantium* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 187-90

THE ‘STANDING EMPEROR’ COINAGE OF EMESA/HIMS

Andrew Oddy

Two main issues of coins with the mint name Emesa¹⁴ were struck in the proto-Umayyad period¹⁵. One has a bust on the obverse and an uncial m on the reverse surrounded by ΕΜΙ CHC¹⁶ and the other has a standing figure on the obverse and a capital M on the reverse surrounded by ΕΜΕ CIC (or variant).¹⁷ There are no die links or mules linking the two issues and no evidence for their relative chronology other than one example of a ‘bust’ issue overstruck on a ‘standing figure’ issue.¹⁸ The lack of any substantial evidence for one issue having followed the other suggests that the two were contemporary but struck at separate mints. One possibility is that one issue was military being struck for or by the garrison at Hims while the other issue was civil being struck by the local government in the city. A second possibility is that one issue was struck for the city of Hims and the other for the *jund* of the same name.¹⁹ This paper is concerned with the second of these two issues and is a preliminary report in advance of a fuller publication that will embrace all the coins attributed to Hims, together with their contemporary imitations.

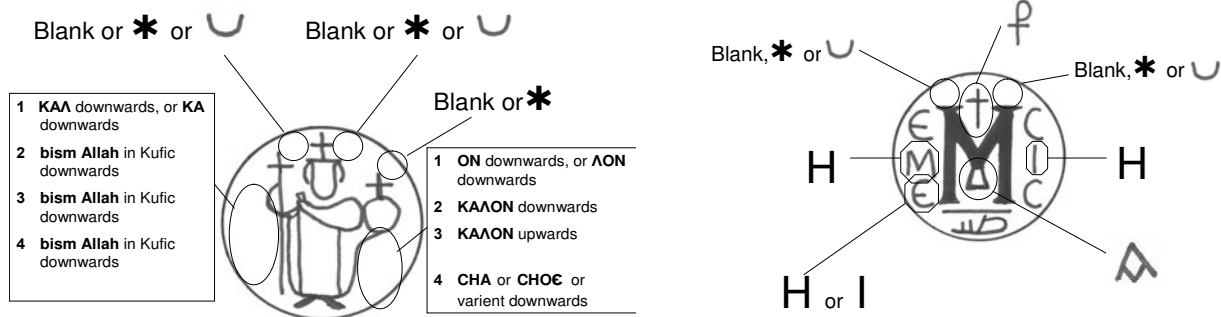
The standing figure issue of Emesa/Hims (sometimes called the ‘standing emperor’ issue) has a figure on the obverse derived from the image of Constans II on his early coinage struck in AD 641-3. The figure is dressed in a long robe reaching almost to the ground, with a cloak hanging down his back and fastened at the right shoulder with a brooch. He wears a simple crown surmounted by a cross and holds a long cross in the right hand and a *globus cruciger* in the left hand. His feet are usually visible below the robe.

This coinage may be divided into four classes as follows, based on variations in the obverse design:

1. The Greek word ΚΑΛΟΝ (‘good’) is written downwards in the field left and right of the figure;
2. The Arabic *bism Allah* (‘in the name of God’) is written in Kufic script downwards in the left field and the Greek ΚΑΛΟΝ is written downwards in the right field;
3. The Arabic *bism Allah* is written in Kufic script downwards in the left field and the Greek ΚΑΛΟΝ is written upwards in the right field;
4. The Arabic *bism Allah* is written in Kufic script downwards in the left field and the Greek letters CHA or CHOΕ or variant is written downwards in the right field.

There are sometimes stars or crescents to the left and/or right of the crown or above the *globus cruciger*.

The reverse has a capital M surmounted by a cross or a Christogram and the mint signature ΕΜΕ CIC, or variant,²⁰ reading downwards to the left and right of the M. In the exergue is the Arabic word *tayyib* (‘good’) written in Kufic script. Below the M is the ‘officina’ letter Δ or A, although this should not be taken to indicate officinae but rather a mere copying of a Byzantine model. To the left and right of the cross or christogram may be a star or crescent. The variations of obverse and reverse are summarised below:



Class 1

Class 1 can be divided into six types – labelled A to F below. The differences can be summarised thus:

¹⁴ Emesa (Latin), the modern Homs in Syria, was a pre-Roman foundation that was renamed Hims by the Arabs.

¹⁵ The term ‘proto-Umayyad’ is used to indicate the earliest phase of official coinage under the Umayyad dynasty that was established at Damascus in AD 661. The exact dating of these coins is uncertain, but there is general agreement that they cannot have been struck before 661 or after the coinage reform of ‘Abd al-Malik in the early 690s. The ‘proto-Umayyad’ term is equivalent to ‘Umayyad Imperial Image’ used elsewhere in this publication.

¹⁶ J Walker, *A Catalogue of the Arab-Byzantine and Post-Reform Coins*, British Museum, London, 1956 (henceforth BMC) nos. 57-72 and S Album and T Goodwin, *Sylloge of Islamic Coins in the Ashmolean: Volume I: The Pre-Reform Coinage of the Early Islamic Period*, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, 2002 (henceforth SICA) nos. 538-558.

¹⁷ BMC nos. 27-34 and SICA nos. 531-537

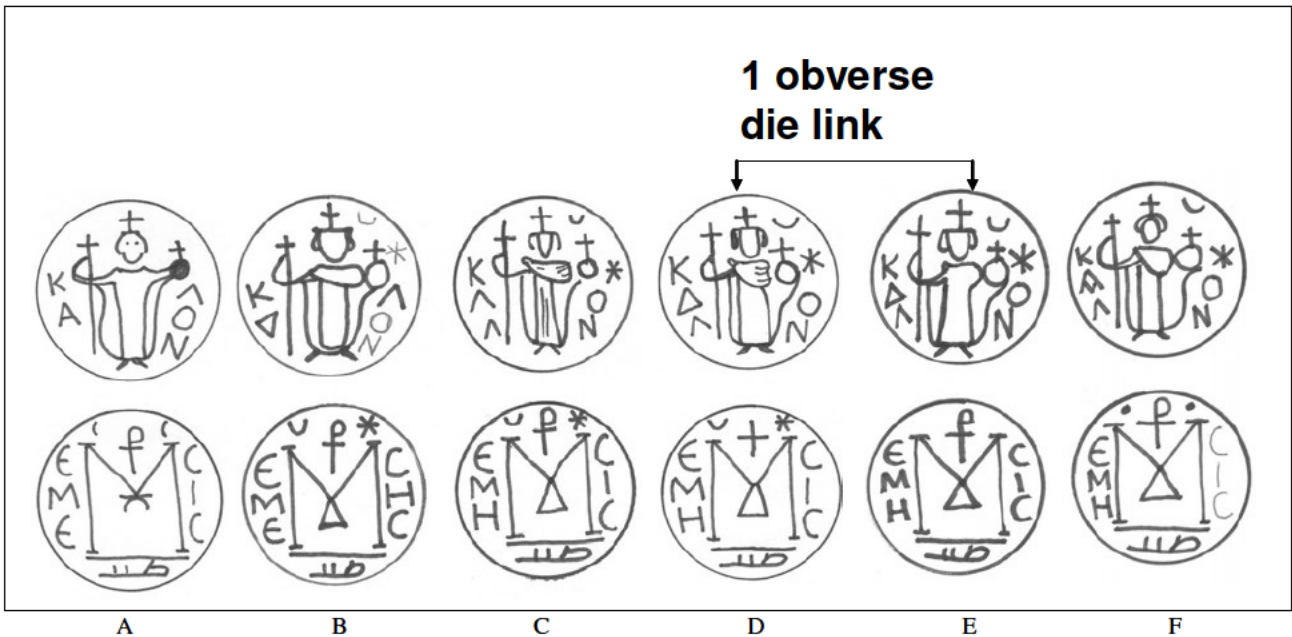
¹⁸ I am grateful to Tony Goodwin for this information.

¹⁹ I am grateful to Lutz Ilisch for this suggestion.

²⁰ The mint signature is written in the genitive singular, εΜΗCΗC or εΜεCΗC, of εΜΗCΑ (Greek). The Latin form is EMESA. I am grateful to Jonathan Shea for this information.

- Variation in arrangement of KAΛON
- Two spellings of the genitive form of EMHCA
- Simplified Christogram or cross above M

- Absence or presence of star and crescent on obverse
- Two 'officina' symbols – inverted crescent or Δ
- Various symbols on either side of Christogram/cross

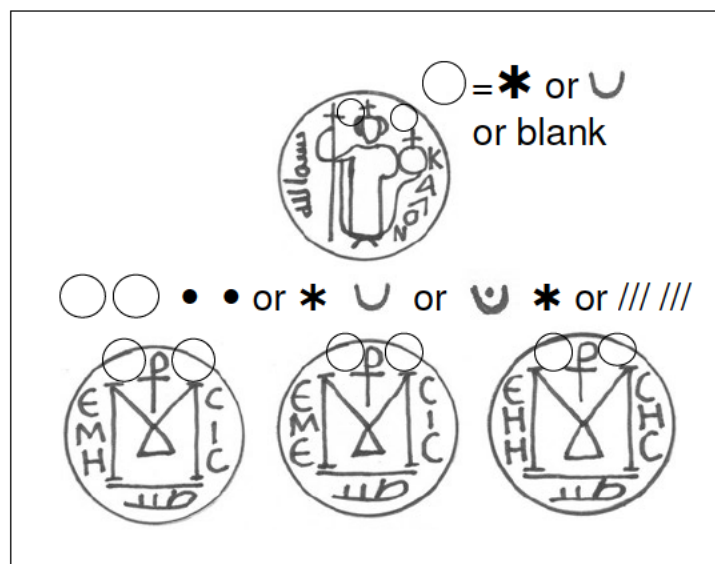


The division into six types is merely a means to describe the coins and has no implications for indicating different issues. As more specimens are examined it is likely that more die links will be found between the various types and it may then be possible to simplify this arrangement and to suggest a sequence.

Class 2

Class 2 can be divided into three types according to the spelling of EMHCHC (the genitive form of EMHCA). The main descriptors are:


- *bism Allah* downwards in field L on obverse
- KAΛON downwards in field R on obverse
- Presence or absence of symbols to L and R of head of figure on obverse
- Three different spellings of EMECHC on reverse
- Presence or absence of symbols to L and R of Christogram on reverse




Class 3

Class 3 is derived from Class 2 by writing KAΛON upwards to the R of the standing figure. It is the most common of the standing figure coins of EMESA/Hims. There are two main types, those with the 'officina' symbol Δ and those with A.

The coins of the first type – with 'officina' Δ – have numerous combinations of symbols to the L and R of the head of the standing figure and to the L and R of the Christogram. Those combinations listed so far are:



	3.A.i	3.A.ii	3.A.iii	3.A.iv	3.A.v	3.A.vi	3.A.vii	3.A.viii	3.A.ix	3.A.x	3.A.xi	3.A.xii
Obverse left						*	☾					
Obverse right		*		*	*		*	☾		*		*
Reverse left			*	*	*	*		*	☾	☾	*	☾
Reverse right			*		*	*			*	*	☾	☾

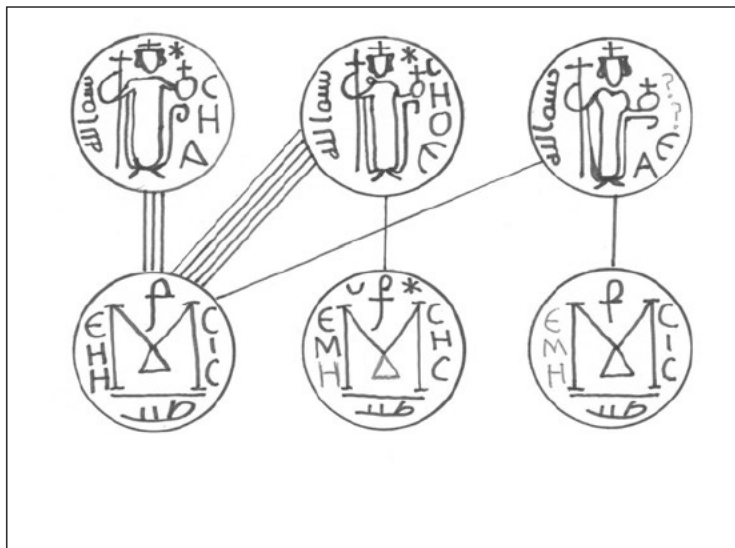
One unusual feature of Class 3 is the occasional occurrence of a symbol  in the obverse field to the L of *bism Allah*. Is it possible that this is a monogram ΔK? This symbol/monogram has only been found on a small number of coins but could, in reality, be more common but is off the edge of the flan in many cases.

The type with 'officina' A are less common, but are also characterised by the presence or absence of stars and crescents to the L and R of the head of the standing figure and to the L and R of the Christogram. Some of this type also have the ΔK symbol/monogram on the reverse.

Class 4

Class 4 is characterised by

- the replacement of KALON on the obverse with the letters CHA or CHOE or a variant
- The obverse may or may not have a star in the field R
- The spelling of EMHCIC varies
- The engraving of the dies is very neat and consistent
- Three obverse dies and three reverse dies are recorded. All are die linked.



Imitations and 'unique' coins

The coinage of Hims was widely copied. Contemporary forgeries are very common for the 'bust' issue and are very easy to distinguish from the official coins by the style of engraving, spelling and die axis. Unfortunately this is not the case for the 'standing figure' issue for which the engraving is more variable and for which there are some coins with retrograde legends that do appear to be 'official'. In some cases dies are so crudely engraved that the resulting coins can only be forgeries, but for many coins it will only be an extensive die study that will differentiate the 'official' coins from the 'forgeries'.

A few coins exist that do not fit into the classification scheme described here. These sometimes have pellets replacing the star and/or crescent and one coin is known with pellets to the L and R of the 'officina' symbol and also just above the M. There are also rare mint readings CMC CIC and CHI CIC. The status of these coins is, as yet, unclear.

Some examples of the 'standing figure coinage of Emesa/Hims are illustrated below.



Details of the illustrations:

- 1 Class 1A 4.00g 7.30
- 2 Class 1B 4.51g 6.00 The crescent and star on the obverse differs this type from 1A.
- 3 Class 1E? 4.30g 5.00 No symbols on the reverse
- 4 Class 2 4.23g 6.00 Although the reverse is retrograde this coin is of good style and considered to be 'official'.
- 5 Class 2 4.31g 1.00 Note the blundered obverse inscription, the presence of pellets on the reverse, and the unusual die axis. This may be a contemporary imitation.
- 6 Class 3 3.27g 6.00 Officina Δ
- 7 Class 3 3.56g 5.30 Officina Δ
- 8 Class 3 3.90g 7.00 Officina Δ The engraving of the dies is rather crude. This may be a contemporary imitation.
- 9 Class 3 3.02g 7.00 Officina A Although the reverse is retrograde this coin is of good style and considered to be 'official'.
- 10 Class 3 4.20g 6.00 Officina A
- 11 Class 4 4.02g 12.00 Obverse legend reads CHA It is not unusual for Class 4 to have 12.00 die axes.
- 12 Class 4 3.76g 12.00 Obverse legend reads CHO ϵ

THE PSEUDO-DAMASCUS MINT – PROGRESS REPORT ON A DIE STUDY

Tony Goodwin

Introduction

The second phase of the Syrian Arab-Byzantine coinage, known as the Umayyad Imperial Image, is characterised by the continuing use of Byzantine-style images and the introduction of short literate legends in Greek or Arabic, which usually include a mint name. A typical example, from the mint of Damascus, is shown in Fig. 1. The obverse of this coin, which is very loosely based on an image of Constans II, shows a standing emperor holding a long cross and globus cruciger, with a bird-on-T to the left and the legend $\Lambda E O$ to the right. The reverse has a capital M with a monogram above, a frozen Latin date, $ANO - XYII$, either side and the mint name, ΔAM , in the exergue.



Fig. 1: Copper fals, Damascus mint (SICA 560ff.),²¹ 2.53g. 5h. (approx. 1.5x actual size).²²

One group of Umayyad Imperial Image coins, of unusual style, stands out from the rest and has caused numismatists a certain amount of puzzlement. The coins usually (but not always) borrow certain features, including the mint name, from Damascus, but often include innovative and unusual images. Coins from this group have sometimes been interpreted as regular issues from the mint of Damascus and sometimes as transitional issues with some of the characteristics of the earlier Pseudo-Byzantine phase. However, it now seems likely that most of them are the products of a separate mint situated somewhere to the east of the Jordan river – the Pseudo-Damascus mint. This paper gives an overview of the coinage and describes a die study which is currently in progress.

The Pseudo-Damascus Coins

There are three main types of obverse, the most common being the standing emperor, two examples of which are shown in Fig.2



Fig. 2: Two Pseudo-Damascus standing emperor coins, the first with a capital “M” reverse and the second with a cursive “m” reverse, 4.02g. 2h. and 2.96g. 2h.

The first of these coins is recognisably based on the Damascus prototype in Fig. 1 although it is neither a close copy nor a crude approximate copy. The obverse figure still has the robes, long cross and globus of the prototype, but the figure is bearded and has long hair, rather reminiscent of the heads on some standing caliph coins. There are also three small strands hanging diagonally from the waist to the left, which are very similar to the so-called “girdle band” found on most standing caliph figures.²³ The bird-on-T has been omitted, but the opportunity has been taken to fill up any available spaces in the field with small symbols, in this case a star and crescent either side of the head. This is very characteristic of the mint. The reverse is quite close to the prototype, although the monogram has been transformed into a cross and the letter A of the mint name looks more like a θ ; again these features are very characteristic of the mint. The second coin is much farther from the Damascus prototype and the obverse die is really something of an artistic tour de force, with virtually every feature of the standing emperor modified to produce a really striking image and small symbols filling up every possible space in the field. The long cross has been transformed into a spear and the globus has become a strange symbol totally detached from the standing figure. Unlike any official Damascus coin the reverse has a cursive m , and this is rather more common for Pseudo-Damascus than the correct capital M . Sometimes the blundered Damascus mint name is retained on reverses with a cursive m , but often it is omitted, as in this case where it is replaced by a row of pellets. Pellets also appear between the uprights of the m , another very characteristic feature of this mint.

²¹ Stephen Album and Tony Goodwin, *Sylloge of Islamic Coins in the Ashmolean* vol. 1 2002

²² All coins are illustrated approximately 1.5x actual size. All coins are from private collections, unless otherwise indicated.

²³ The “girdle band” normally consists of 3 strands at mints in jund Dimashq, but in jund Qinnasrin it is usually a long loop. Despite considerable discussion there is no consensus on what the object really is, but it undoubtedly formed part of the caliph’s regalia.

The second main type of obverse is the enthroned emperor, also based on a regular issue of Damascus, which shows an enthroned imperial figure holding a cruciform sceptre and globus cruciger. Like the Damascus standing emperor type there is also a bird-on-T to the left and the word **ΛEO** to the right on the prototype, features which also sometimes appear at Pseudo-Damascus. The two examples shown in Fig. 3 are both struck from the same obverse die, another particularly fine example of die engraving.²⁴ Although it is fairly close to the Damascus prototype, the crown is unusual and there are a number of small symbols in the field. The reverse of the first coin is also quite close to the Damascus prototype, but the legends on either side of the **M** are transposed and the shapes of the letters have been subtly changed to make a pleasing design. In contrast the reverse of the second coin could hardly be further from the prototype, with a cursive **m** and no traces of the Damascus legends.



Fig. 3: Pseudo-Damascus enthroned emperor type; two coins sharing the same obverse die but with different reverse dies, Dies O15E/R7M 4.03g. 11h. and Dies O15E/R9mb, 3.89g. 12h.²⁵

The third main obverse type, the hunting figure (Fig. 4), has no known numismatic prototype and consists of a standing figure wearing a waisted tunic and holding a long cross, or sometimes a long staff. On his left arm is perched a bird and it seems very likely that this represents an image of falconry.²⁶



Fig. 4: Pseudo-Damascus hunting figure type, 3.21g. 10h.

The reverse consists of a cursive **m** with various symbols around, but in this case the spaces between the uprights of the **m** are filled by symbols that could be interpreted as stylised snakes.

In addition to these three main obverse types one die shows a standing figure with both hands raised, sometimes referred to as an “orans” figure, but probably best regarded as a variant of the standing emperor type. Another single die shows two enthroned emperors (Fig. 5).



Fig. 5: Pseudo-Damascus two enthroned emperor type, Dies O37EE/R94M, 4.0g. 10h. (Barber Institute collection AB 18).

Who issued the Pseudo-Damascus Coins?

The stylistic borrowings of the Pseudo-Damascus coins and the evidence of overstrikes both suggest that they are essentially contemporary with the rest of the Umayyad Imperial Image coinage. However, they differ from the coins of other mints in two main respects; firstly the lack of an apparently meaningful mint name and secondly the almost random way in which obverse and reverse types are paired with each other. Also some of the dies are engraved with more technical skill and artistic ability than at any other mint. It therefore seems very unlikely that this is some sort of unofficial imitative coinage, but it is clear that the issuing authority must have been essentially different from those controlling the other Umayyad Imperial Image

²⁴ These two coins were struck from the same obverse die as Walker 5 (J. Walker, *A Catalogue of the Muhammadan Coins in the British Museum* vol. 2 1956). With the very limited number of specimens available to him, Walker failed to recognise that this is not a regular Damascus coin. Walker 4 is an example of the regular Damascus prototype.

²⁵ Each die has been assigned a number as part of the study. See Fig. 6 for an explanation of the suffix letters. The dies from which these two coins are struck are included in the first die chain in Fig. 5.

²⁶ See W. A. Oddy, “Arab Imagery on the Early Umayyad Coins in Syria and Palestine: Evidence for Falconry, *Numismatic Chronicle* 1991 pp. 59-69.

mints. The coins seem to be most commonly found in modern Jordan, but are also sometimes found in Israel, so a mint location to the east of the Jordan river and to the south of Damascus seems probable. It was possibly within the *jund Dimashq*, which is believed to have extended well to the east of the Jordan, so it is even conceivable that the Damascus mint name was meaningful. Beyond this we are really reduced to speculation, but one possibility is that the coins were issued by a tribal chief on the desert fringe who was appointed as a local governor by the Umayyads. The mint may therefore not have been located at one particular town, but may have travelled with the governor. If this was the case, the relatively remote location and the illiteracy of the vast majority of coin users perhaps help to explain the unusual nature of the coins.

The Irbid Hoard

It would be almost impossible to write about Pseudo-Damascus coins without mentioning the so-called Irbid Hoard, which contains at least 200 Pseudo-Damascus coins. This parcel of coins was said to have been found somewhere in Jordan in the mid-1960s, although there seems to be no real evidence for an Irbid findspot. By the 1970s it was in the hands of a dealer in Jerusalem who split it into at least two parts. The first part, comprising 158 of the better coins from the hoard, was published by Milstein in 1991²⁷ and consisted mainly of Pseudo-Damascus coins and coins of the “*al-wafa lillah*” mint,²⁸ plus a few regular Damascus coins. This part was then dispersed in the trade, with some of the best coins appearing at various major auctions.²⁹ The second part, comprising 501 coins, was acquired by the Cabinet des Médailles in Paris. Like the first part this consists mainly of *al-wafa lillah* and Pseudo-Damascus coins, with some regular Damascus coins, but there are also a few Pseudo-Byzantine coins and a handful of coins from the mints of Emesa, Scythopolis and Tiberias. This second part of the hoard remains unpublished, but it is hoped that it will be published in full in 2009.³⁰ There were no Byzantine, Standing Caliph or Post-reform coins in the hoard.

There seems to be little doubt that this is an actual hoard, although given its history, it is quite possible that there were other parts of the hoard which were disposed of elsewhere, so it would be dangerous to draw too many conclusions from, for example, the absence of Standing Caliph coins. The coins also have the appearance of having been cleaned, so again it is just possible that there are a few “strays” present. Nevertheless, the two parts of the hoard represent an invaluable source for the study of the Pseudo-Damascus mint

The Die Study

So far I have examined over 500 coins which were in good enough condition for the dies to be identified. In most cases it has been possible to examine the coins themselves, although for about one third of the coins it was necessary to rely on images. 118 obverse and 197 reverse dies have so far been identified, and can be divided into the following categories:-

Obverse dies:	Standing emperor	77
	Enthroned emperor	25
	Two enthroned emperors	1
	Hunting figure	15
	Total	118
Reverse dies:	Cursive m	131
	Capital M	66
	Total	197

The final total is likely to be at least 20% higher, but this is already a surprisingly high total for an Arab-Byzantine mint. In contrast a die study on the mint of Baalbek gave a total of only 48 obverse and 69 reverse dies,³¹ but the Baalbek coinage probably survives in greater numbers today than that of Pseudo-Damascus, suggesting that it was originally more abundant. The reason for this apparent anomaly may be that the Pseudo-Damascus mint operated in a less organised way than Baalbek, possibly minting at different locations and sometimes using dies made of relatively soft alloy. In theory it would be possible to use standard statistical methods to estimate the total number of dies, but I think that this would be unwise at present mainly because of the suspected variability in the quality of die preparation but also because the present sample of coins may not be truly random, due to the high proportion of coins from the Irbid hoard.

For a group of coins which includes so many different obverse and reverse varieties, paired in an apparently random fashion, the key question for the die study is whether the group is really the product of a single mint. It now appears reasonably certain that this is in fact the case as numerous die links exist between all the obverse and all the reverse types and some quite long die chains have emerged. Fig. 6 shows two longer die chains, the first of which consists mainly of enthroned emperor dies, but also includes two standing emperor dies and every different variety of reverse die. The second die chain includes all obverse types.

²⁷ Rachel Milstein, “A Hoard of Early Arab Figurative Coins”, *Israel Numismatic Journal* 10 pp. 3-26 and Pl. 1-3, 1991.

²⁸ This mint, probably situated somewhere in modern Israel or Jordan did not use a conventional mint name, but all the coins bear the Arabic legend *al-wafa lillah* – “loyalty to God”, see SICA 1 pp.595-604.

²⁹ For example Sternberg Zurich 16,17/11/78 lots 1000ff. and Auctiones AG Basel 29/9/81 lots 748ff. Coins from this first part of the hoard also seem to have been acquired by London dealers Spink and Baldwins.

³⁰ I am currently working on the hoard with Rika Gyselen. We are hoping to publish the hoard along with the results of this die study.

³¹ See Goodwin, *Arab-Byzantine Coinage*, 2005 Chapter 2 pp. 49-83.

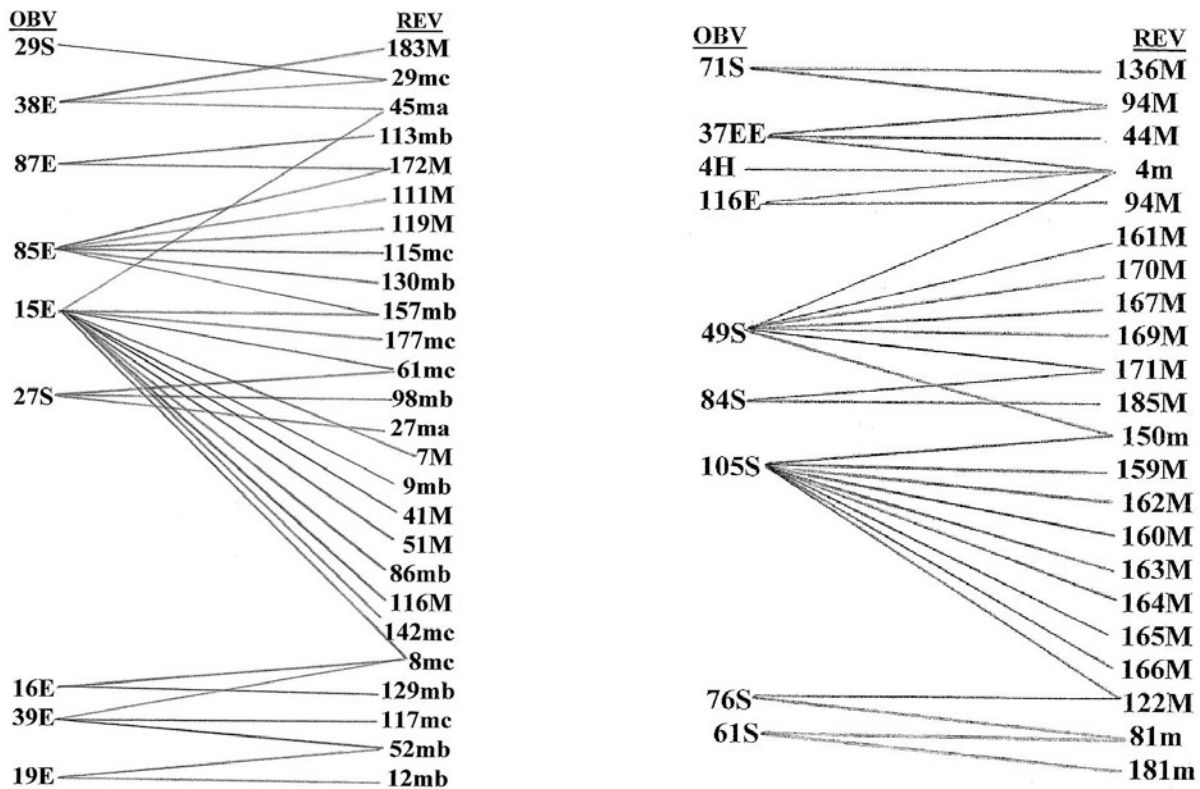


Fig. 6 Die Chains: Each die has a unique number followed by a letter or letters indicating the type of obverse or reverse.

Key – S = standing emperor obverse, E = enthroned emperor, EE = two enthroned emperors, H = hunting figure, M = capital “M” reverse and m = cursive “m” reverse. On the first die chain the “m” is followed by a letter indicating whether there are any symbols between the uprights of the “m”; a = no symbols, b = single pellets or stars, c = stylised snakes or multiple symbols.

There still remains the possibility that a small number of dies in the above totals are the product of a secondary mint, although as the study progresses and more die links are discovered this seems less likely. It is also certainly possible that a few coins are contemporary imitations and a few dies of rather poor style, which are not die linked to better dies, are likely candidates. However, there are a number of examples of very well-engraved dies being paired with rather crudely engraved ones, for example the second coin in Fig. 3 above, so not all coins of poor style can be dismissed as contemporary imitations.

An interesting feature of the first die chain is the large number of reverse dies paired with Die 15E. This is the finely engraved die illustrated in Fig. 3, and the question arises as to whether there was something special about this die. Perhaps it was prepared by a professional die maker who was not only a skilled engraver, but was also able to mix the correct bronze alloy and harden the die so that it lasted much longer than normal. The fact that this die is paired with both main types of reverse, some of which include the mint name and some of which do not, makes it unlikely that either the change from M to m or the loss of the mint name was a progressive trend over time. It looks much more likely that the type of reverse was chosen almost randomly.

Problem Areas

One problem which emerged when I was well into the die study was the discovery of some coins, which at first sight appeared to be regular Damascus coins, but could be proved by die links to be products of the Pseudo-Damascus mint. Fig. 7 shows a typical example, with two coins struck from the same obverse die. The obverse at first sight looks typical of Damascus, although the emperor’s head is rather large and the first letter of AEO has been replaced by a star and crescent. The reverse of the first coin is also typical of Damascus, but the second coin has a number of features characteristic of Pseudo-Damascus i.e. cross replacing monogram, small stars in the upper field and a blundered mint name with A transformed to “θ”. Further investigation showed that these coins were die linked to other Pseudo-Damascus coins including enthroned emperor and hunting figure types (see the second die chain in Fig. 6). It is clear therefore that the Pseudo-Damascus die engravers were perfectly capable of producing quite close copies of Damascus when they wished, so in pursuing the die study it will be necessary to look very carefully at any Damascus coins with even slightly unusual stylistic features.



Fig. 7: Two standing emperor coins struck from the same obverse die, the first with a reverse which appears to be a regular Damascus die (Dies O49S/R161M, 3.83g. 10h.) and the second with a typical Pseudo-Damascus reverse (Dies O49S/R122M, 3.35g. 6h.). Note that the obverse of the second coin is double struck.

Another example of the same phenomenon is shown in Fig. 8 with three coins all struck from the same obverse die, the first of which has a reasonable approximation to a Damascus reverse, whilst the third has a very obviously Pseudo-Damascus reverse. The second coin,

however, is particularly interesting in that it has an Arabic reverse, which is unusual for a Pseudo-Damascus coin. It is a blundered version of the Damascus legend *jaza hadha dimashq wafiya*.³² Coins with this legend form a rather anomalous group within the Damascus mint; they are of unusual and quite variable style and even the best examples have badly written legends.



Fig. 8: Three standing emperor coins all struck from the same obverse die, the first with a fairly close copy of a normal Damascus reverse (Dies O105S/R164M, 3.98g. 9h.), the second with a blundered copy of a Damascus Arabic reverse (Dies O105S/R160M, 3.76g. 4h.) and the third with a typical Pseudo-Damascus cursive “m” reverse (Dies O105S/R150mc, 4.56g. 12h.).

The discovery of this coin, which die links prove to be a product of the Pseudo-Damascus mint, raises questions about the status of the whole group of *jaza hadha...* coins. Fig. 8a shows one of the few known examples where the legends are not actually blundered and even on this the Arabic letters are very badly formed. Should all *jaza hadha...* coins be regarded as products of Pseudo-Damascus rather than Damascus?



Fig. 9a: Standing emperor coin of the Damascus mint with reverse legend (clockwise from 8h.) *jaza hadha dimashq wafiya*, 5.14g. 2h.
Fig. 9b: Similar coin overstruck by another (irregular?) Damascus standing emperor coin with the reverse legend *darb dimashq ja'iz*, 4.26g. 1h. (undertype 6h.).

This question is yet to be resolved, although my present feeling is that only a few dies will prove to be Pseudo-Damascus. The majority may be the product of a distinct workshop within the Damascus mint, but another possibility is that they were issued by a separate Damascus mint, operating under a different authority, which was suppressed by the main minting authority. The evidence for this is the fact that *jaza hadha...* coins are much more frequently found overstruck than any other Umayyad Imperial Image coin type.³³ The overstrikes (see Fig. 9b) are most often Damascus standing emperor coins with the normal Arabic legend (*darb dimashq ja'iz*), but also Umayyad Imperial Image coins from Baalbek, Emesa or Scythopolis (half unit). It therefore seems that the *jaza hadha...* coins were systematically withdrawn and overstruck, and the most likely explanation is the suppression of the coinage of a rival issuing authority, which had fallen from power. This may have occurred during or immediately following the second civil war or may merely have been the result of a localised dispute between two levels of administrative authority in Damascus.³⁴ It is also interesting to note that, unlike other Damascus coins, but like those of Pseudo-Damascus, the *jaza hadha...* coins seem to be more commonly found in modern Jordan rather than Syria or Lebanon. This may be partly due to the withdrawal of the coinage having been most effective around Damascus itself and less effective in the more remote parts of the jund, although of course any Pseudo-Damascus imitations are more likely to be found in Jordan.

A final small puzzle emerges when the dies of the overstrikes are examined carefully. Although, some are clearly regular coins, a number of the Damascus dies have a distinctly irregular appearance. For example in Fig. 9b the Greek legend to the right of the standing figure seems to be an abbreviated and blundered version of ΔΑΜΑΚΚΟC. It would, however, be very surprising to find an unofficial imitation overstruck on an apparently perfectly good coin, so is this yet another mint? For the moment this question also remains unresolved.

Future Work

The die study will need to continue until the rate of finding new dies and die links reduces considerably. It will also be necessary to carry out partial die studies on some groups of regular and irregular Damascus coins in order to check just where the boundaries of the Pseudo-Damascus mint lie. Most of the Irbid Hoard coins which are obviously Pseudo-Damascus have already been included in the die study, but hopefully a close examination of the Damascus coins, both regular and irregular, in the hoard will help to resolve the problems outlined in the last section. In the meantime I am very keen to hear from collectors who have Pseudo-Damascus coins in their collections.³⁵

³² All the dies from which these three coins were struck also appear on the second die chain in Fig. 6.

³³ See Goodwin, “Arab-Byzantine Coins – the Significance of Overstrikes”, *Numismatic Chronicle* Vol. 161, pp. 91-109. Out of 34 examples of Umayyad Imperial Image coins overstruck on other Umayyad Imperial Image coins, 15 of the undertypes and none of the overstrikes were of the *jaza hadha...* type

³⁴ We should bear in mind that mint name *Dimashq* could refer to either the town or the jund.

³⁵ Coins advertised on ebay and v.coins over the last 3 years are likely to have already been included.

THE MUHAMMAD-DRACHMS AND THEIR RELATION TO Umayyad Syria AND NORTHERN MESOPOTAMIA

Lutz Ilisch

This paper deals with a group of Sasanian-type drachms, which have an affinity to the Bilad ash-Sham, but which are not datable or locally assignable by their inscriptions. As long as they have not been known in sufficient number they have been included under “Sondertypen” by Gaube³⁶, or as FLC (funny looking coins) by Stephen Album³⁷ and were finally addressed and treated as a small group of their own by Stuart Sears, who located them to Azerbaijan mainly for metrological reasons although he also saw some relation to Northern Syrian reform-period coppers³⁸.

The attribution received an increasing interest in the light of new discoveries and debates about the silver coinage of Damascus. Here one important aspect lay in the recognition of the report in the Maronite Chronicle on Mu’âwiya’s attempted reform, characterised by the phrase “He also minted gold and silver, but it was not accepted, because it had no cross on it.”, which Clive Foss defended against Michael Bates’ reproaches as unhistoric³⁹. My impression is that Clive Foss’s view is shared by the majority of historians and present-day numismatists alike. Foss thought that the silver mentioned in the chronicle referred to the Iraqi silver coinage of Sasanian type. But with regard to the new discoveries of Damascus drachms from the mysterious Kirman hoard of 84 H. it seemed advisable to reconsider the year 72 H. as the initial year of the precious metal coinage in Syria.

The inception of silver coinage in Damascus in 72H., its typological sequence and relation to the mint of al-Kûfa



Fig. 1 Peus 3.11.04 lot 988



Fig. 2 Jazzar collection



Fig. 3 SICA 1, 278

During the last four years, parts of one of the largest hoards of early Umayyad post-reform dirhams from southwestern and central Iran up to the year 84 and Arab-Sasanian drachms with a particular representation of mints in Kirmân was dispersed in the European trade.⁴⁰ It contained at least three but possibly five or more early drachms from Damascus. What had been known before were drachms with the name of Khusraw II in Pahlavi in front of the bust and the legend *bismi llâh – muhammad rasûl allâh* in the obverse margin dated 72 H. (fig. 2). One variety of 72 H. (fig. 3) had an extra outer circle around the reverse, while the 73 and 74 H. drachms extended the *muhammad rasûl allâh* into a fuller version of the shahâda including interesting misspellings of the word *ilâha*. Now a remarkable novelty was a drachm of 72 which was characterised by placing the *muhammad rasûl allâh* in front of the bust, while the traditional *bismillâh* was in the second quadrant of the obverse margin (fig. 1). The reverse has again the outer marginal circle. Assuming a gradual typological evolution, these

³⁶ Heinz Gaube, *Arabosasanidische Numismatik*, Braunschweig 1973, p. 14f, no. 2.2.2.1.

³⁷ Stephen Album, mscr. *Catalogue of the Warden collection*, September 1992, p. 4. Album later followed Stuart Sears’ attribution to Armenia/Adharbaijan, however merging these coins with the heavier Hormizd IV type drachms with ZWZWN of Adharbaijan, which was clearly erroneous, cf. Stephen Album, *A Checklist of Islamic Coins 2nd ed.*, Santa Rosa 1998 p. 19 nos. E97 and F97, the same in Stephen Album and Tony Goodwin, *The Pre-Reform Coinage of the Early Islamic Period, SICA 1*, Oxford 2002, p. 38f

³⁸ Stuart D. Sears, *The Sasanian Style Coins of ‘Muhammad’ and Some Related Coins*, *Yarmouk Numismatics* 7, 1995, p. 7-20.

³⁹ Clive Foss, *A Syrian Coinage of Mu’awiya?*, *Revue Numismatique* 2002, p.353-365.

⁴⁰ The hoard itself was possibly not new because reports about such an accumulation of post-reform dirhams of the period of ‘Abd al-Malik were heard already around 1990. For a guess about the size see Stephen Album list 215, July 2006, p. 19, where he suggests “probably at least 4000”. The number of drachms and dirhams that reached the European auction market certainly remained in the hundreds and only the endless repetition of unsold lots in subsequent sales created the impression of a huge hoard. However it was obvious that only a selection of high-grade and interesting coins were offered, and for this reason Album’s estimate seems realistic.

coin types have to be placed in this sequence, by which drachms with outer reverse circles lead to coins with the name Khusraw and an increasing filling of the obverse margin. This sequence may well be incomplete because the small number of extant specimens does not give any confidence that we are seeing the whole historical development. But the important aspect that the type with the *muhammad rasûl allâh* takes first place in the sequence is probably not challenged by the relatively small number of coins. This opens the possibility to seek possible precursors.⁴¹



Fig. 4 Sotheby 1.10.92

One of the closer relatives of the Damascus 72 H. drachms is a mysterious light-weight drachm, which has the *bismillâh* transferred from the obverse margin to the reverse date-field, while the Pahlavi *afid* fills the space on the obverse (Fig. 4). The mint initials may make no sense at all, although the conventional reading AYL may be regarded as possible (with the alternative reading as HYL). However, the closest existing parallel to the new Damascus drachm of 72 H. can be seen in two anonymous drachms from the mint of AKULA, the Arabic al-Kûfa. These have already the full shahâda after *bismillâh* in the obverse margin and the *muhammad rasûl allâh* in front of the bust. An outer ring encloses the reverse margin as on the new Damascus drachm.



Fig. 5 Sotheby 18.3.83 lot 80



Fig. 6 Morton and Eden 14.12.05 lot 701

All typological features of these two drachms are the same and only the date differs. There is little reason to believe that it might be a consequence of corruption or insufficient craftsmanship. One variety (Fig. 5) has a long date which was read as 73 by Robert Doran when it first appeared in an auction catalogue⁴². The coins seems to have gone into the Warden collection, later Album/Warden collection, and Stephen Album rather read HYFTAD and interpreted this as either 70 or 73 H. It would be possible to regard the first two letters H and F as unconnected (i.e. F in its isolated form) as Walker renders it in his datelist for the year 77⁴³ and consequently the interpretation as 70 is more plausible than 73. The second variety (Fig. 6) turned up only recently in auction and it has a much shorter word where the date should be which looks like a Pahlavi HF at first sight.⁴⁴ My first impression that this could be an abbreviation of *haftâd* or 70 was not confirmed by any Pahlawi dictionary. But Akola/al-Kûfa was one of the few mints occasionally to use Pahlawi numerals. Among Pahlawi numerals the only similar-looking form is the numeral for 1000 together with the extra initial stroke for 1⁴⁵. The only era of such a duration which was practically in use around this period (but so far unattested on coins of the period) is the Seleucid era, which was reckoned in solar years. It was one of the preferred dating systems of the Christian population of Iraq and northern Mesopotamia. In this era, year 1000 began on 1 October 689 corresponding in Hijri years to mid-70 to mid-71, so, if this interpretation is correct, the dates of the two varieties confirm each other. I do not want to speculate as to why the millennium of the Seleucid era could have given a reason for use on the coinage under civil war circumstances. The coins must have been produced under Zubairid authority and we have a clear adoption of a Kufan type about a year later in Umayyad Damascus. On the other hand, the shahâda includes the phrase *wahdahu*, which can be found in Damascus only from 73 onwards. In my opinion, however, the evidence of the dates weighs more heavily than the postulated extension of the shahâda in a chronological sequence. The consequence of this redating for the historical interpretation is that both the

⁴¹ This sequence was already outlined by me in Peus Nachf. Auction 380, 3 November 2004, p. 122 comment to no. 988.

⁴² Sotheby's auction 18. March 1983 no. 80.

⁴³ John Walker, A Catalogue of the Arab-Sassanian Coins, A Catalogue of the Muhammadan Coins in the British Museum, vol. I, London 1941, p. clx.

⁴⁴ Morton & Eden auction December 2005 no. 701.

⁴⁵ D. N. MacKenzie, A concise Pahlawi Dictionary, London 1971, p. 145 only gives the general figure for any thousand, however Henrik Samuel Nyberg, A Manual of Pahlawi, vol. I, Wiesbaden 1964, p. 173 renders this sign for thousand preceded by an extra stroke for 1000, two strokes before it for 2000 etc. as the form in Persian inscriptional Pahlawi.

type and probably also the die cutters for the new silver coinage of Damascus in 72 H. must have been imported from al-Kûfa.

The Muhammad-drachms, their origin and their relation to the first Damascus 72 type

Let me now turn to the Muhammad drachms, which are, at first sight, very different from the drachms of Damascus, but when we look more closely turn out to be a rather complex type of coinage which may well originate from more than one mint and over a substantial period, whatever that may mean. The most striking feature lies in the fact that the majority of the coins does not follow the Khusraw II type III of drachms with a broad crown cap and attendants of the fire altar with crescents on their caps, but the type II struck from the second to tenth year of Khusraw II with a narrow bust, already with winged crown and characteristic pommels on the heads of the attendants on the reverse. The most common variety has the name Muhammad (MHMT) in Pahlavi in front of the bust and the word *wâfin* in the second outer quadrant (Fig. 7). Nothing can be made out of the mint signature unless we take it as another Pahlavi *alif* or *ha*. At present eleven specimens are known of this type with *wâfin* and their weights range from 2.54 to 3.26g.



Fig. 7 FINT

British Museum 1977 5-9-1: 3.26 g*
Private collection AD (according to Sears) 3.25 g*
State Hermitage, St. Petersburg 91546/477970: 3.22 g*
Phillips/Tyler-Smith coll. 3.21 g
Tübingen University collection 91-16-2 ex Kufa hd.: 3.19 g (chipped);
National Museum Qatar, SICA 1 494: 3.13g*
Berlin, Nützel, Katalog der Orientalischen Münzen I, Berlin 1892 no. 93: 3.09 g*
Islamic Coins Auction 8, 2004 no. 34 = Peus 372 no. 1472: 3.05 g;
Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge 7.1998: 2.90 g (probably clipped)
BN Paris 1968.699: 2.54 g*
Morton & Eden auction May 2003 weight not indicated.

Stuart Sears knew of six specimens (indicated by *) and recognised a weight cluster between 3.2 and 3.3 g. The additional new specimens include more specimens of slightly lower weight so that about 3.22 g seems more likely as a slight modification of the intended weight standard. The wide weight range is apparently not a result of clipping or wear but rather of a lack of tight weight control in the mint.

The prominent position of the word *wâfin* on these drachms would make it tempting to construct a connection to the term *dirham wâfi*, which is one of the terms frequently mentioned in the context of early Islamic currencies. There can, however, be no doubt that it was denoting one type of coin or a value of account in the early Islamic period and pre-Islamic period and that its meaning was no longer clear a couple of generations later so that it needed explanation. Like most of the other terms, its use disappears in a cloud of obscurity as soon as one tries to understand the contexts and the various contradictory explanations.⁴⁶ In one instance it is explained as a full-weight drachm, in another context as two thirds of a drachm, so that one may either conclude that the traditions are corrupt or alternatively, but less likely, that its meaning was so general as to denote a current drachm, whatever that was.

Closely related in style is a variety (Fig. 8) which replaces the Arabic *wâfin* in the second marginal quadrant in the obverse margin by an Arabic version of Muhammad, Sears' variety II.



Fig. 8 Timmerman

⁴⁶ Henri Sauvaire, Matériaux pour l'histoire de la numismatique et de la métrologie musulmanes, Journal Asiatique Mai-Juin 1880, p. 430f (on baghlî wâfi) and Janvier 1882, p. 66.

At present three specimens are known, of which the weight is available for only two:-
 National Museum Qatar, SICA 1 495: 3.41g*
 Timmermann ONSN 92-93, 1984 = Islamic Coins Auction 2001 no. 1: 2.86 g

Yet another type was regarded by Sears as a group of its own because it does not give the name Muhammad but its close relation to the Muhammad group is clear (Fig. 9). It bears the name *khusraw* in Pahlavi in front of the bust and Arabic *jâza hâdhâ* in the second quadrant of the obverse margin. Stuart Sears knew of two such coin in the British Museum and one with an enigmatic Arabic inscription in Copenhagen but it turns out that this is a third specimen of the same type, while a fourth was published by George Miles from the collection in Bern, a fact that escaped Sears' attention.



Fig. 9 Tyler-Smith

Bern, George C. Miles, Schweizerische Numismatische Rundschau 1966, p. 132, no. 2, 3.05 g
 British Museum OR 0236: 2.91 g*
 Phillips/Tyler-Smith coll. 2.88 g
 Copenhagen, Östrup, Catalogue des Monnaies Arabes et Turques, Copenhagen 1938, p. 7, no. 61 = Walker C.1: 2.75 g*
 British Museum 1961, 5-6-2: 2.71 g*

Sears assumed that these followed the famous weight of seven, which al-Hajjâj introduced for the post-reform dirhams. However, the heavier Bern drachm shows that this is not at all clear and with the new low-weight specimens of the *wâfin* drachms no clear distinction of the weights of the different varieties and groups can be made.



Fig. 10 Warden



Fig. 11 Iraqi Museum

Finally we have to include two further drachms, which do not follow the second, but the third type of Khusraw II coinage, again with Arabic *muhammad* in the second quadrant, but only in one case with a Pahlavi *Muhammad* (Fig. 10), while the other one shows a crude version of the name Khusraw (Fig. 10). The style of the two coins is so different from each other that it seems hard to allocate them to one mint. Moreover, the mint signatures looks different, with something like AYL or HYL on the ex-Warden coin (2.97 g)⁴⁷ and ShY on the Iraqi Museum coin (2.67 g)⁴⁸, although both were rendered as ShY by Sears. Sears listed the Warden coin as variety III of the Muhammad series and had information on the type of the Iraqi Museum drachm which he rendered as his variety IV, based on information from Gaube's Arabosasanidische Numismatik⁴⁹ on the one hand and an article by Mordtmann of 1865⁵⁰ on the other, but in neither case having images of these coins available. Now the Iraqi Museum coin does indeed correspond to Mordtmann's and only the dates differ between the two. Mordtmann read the date as 29 (NWWYST) while the coin in Baghdad shows something like "WYSTNB". Both the ex-Warden drachm and the Iraqi Museum drachm seem to be unique at present, which can be taken as an indication that the

⁴⁷ Sotheby's auction 21 November 1985 no. 255.

⁴⁸ Nâsir as-Sayyid Mahmûd an-Naqshbandî, ad-Dirham al-islâmî, al-juz' al-awwal, ad-dirham al-islâmî al-madrûb 'alâ t-tirâz as-sâsânî, Baghdad 1969/1389, p. 49, no. 4075, pl. 1 no. 15, for a better illustration vd. Widdâd 'Alî al-Qazzâz, ad-Dirham al-islâmî al-madrûb 'alâ t-tirâz as-sâsânî lil-Hajjâj ibn Yûsuf ath-Thaqafî, al-Maskûkât 2, 1969, p. 31 pl. 2 ill. 3

⁴⁹ Gaube p. 36 legend 2.2.3.12 without reference to provenance.

⁵⁰ A.D. Mordtmann, Erklärung der Münzen mit Pahlavi-Legenden, ZDMG 1865, p. 373-496, especially p. 464 no. 150 for a drachm from the Subhi Pasha collection, of which the present whereabouts are unknown although the Subhi Pasha collection was dispersed by Rollin et Feuardenet in Paris around 1880 and most of his important coins can be traced in the British Museum, Bibliothèque Nationale or Saint Laumer collections. John Walker, A Catalogue of Arab-Sassanian Coins, London 1941, p. 9 no. M.8 records the information given by Mordtmann but regarded it as unreliable while Stuart Sears took it as reliable evidence, which is now confirmed.

survival rate of such coins is low. Without doubt more related varieties will turn up in the future as well as the untraced specimens on which Mordtmann's and Gaube's information was based.

To sum up, the Muhammad group is typologically incoherent, admitting some development over time and distribution over some loosely connected mints. The most important feature that they have in common, apart from the frequent occurrence of the name Muhammad, lies in their low weight and this was exactly where Stuart Sears' consideration on their origin started. He recognised correctly that the Muhammad-drachms were better understood as a regional coinage, rather than as "special types" in Gaube's classification, as they existed at this period mainly at the fringes of the caliphate. Using the information given by Balâdhurî and others on the various drachm standards in different provinces – which was an extremely problematic source material because it contains data for weight standards like Tabari and Yamani dirhams, which definitely did not exist in the 7th century – he nevertheless arrived at an interesting choice of regional attribution: "The standard of eight tenths of a mithqal is associated only with two locations, al-Hîra and Azerbâijân. Perhaps reflecting the cosmopolitan practice of a town next to the Eastern capital of al-Kûfa, al-Hîra is said to have used weights of five, six, eight and ten tenths in daily transactions. However the weight of eight tenths was, in this instance, secondary to the other standards. Taxes were either paid at weights of either five or six tenths. In Azerbâijân, the weight of eight tenths is mentioned as though it was the normal standard of the country. Taxes were paid at this weight. No other standard is ever mentioned to have been used."⁵¹

Stuart Sears' decided on an attribution to Azerbâijân. He took it for granted that this must have been a local type which developed independently as a *type immobilisé* in an area that assumed relative independence from the Sasanian central administration when this second type was still dominant in use and that had to be during the reign of Khusraw II. If that is right we should, however, expect intermediary varieties without Arabic inscriptions, which have not been identified so far⁵². As an alternative, it seems probable that, during 'Abd al-Malik's reform process and later on, earlier Sasanian drachm types were systematically revived to make drachms of differing fineness and weight standards recognisable. Other examples are the Khusraw II first bust type used as a model for the Mihrab/Anaza-type drachms of Damascus of about 3.7 g⁵³. Similarly the early Tabari dirhams of the Ispahbads, which were initiated in 93 H. used the reverse of Khusraw II type II rather than type III as a model until 109 H.⁵⁴

My main arguments against Azerbâijân are: missing hoard evidence, in spite of one century of hoard recording by Pakhomov and others,⁵⁵ and the existence of another Caucasian Sasanian type regional coinage following Hormizd IV drachms⁵⁶. However, Stuart Sears' rejected second alternative of al-Hîra is much more promising. Although located not at all on the fringes of the caliphate but rather close to its centre, its importance lay, like a harbour town, in the situation on the border of the desert and as a junction of important caravan routes. It was one of the traditional urban centres for the Northern Arabian tribal groups. The only recorded hoard provenance for a Muhammad drachm is the Tübingen specimen, which comes from the Kufa hoard with a t.p.q. of 808, which I was able to record in 1971.⁵⁷ Theoretically that could have been found by Sears, but in practice I understand why this was unlikely. The hoard belonged to a carpet dealer in Oberhausen, Germany, whose parents still lived in al-Kûfa and he had reliable knowledge of the provenance, which was thus about 25 km from al-Hîra. With more than a century between the striking of the coin and the burial of the hoard, not too much weight should be laid on the evidence. The Balâdhurî tradition on the weight standards used by the people of al-Hîra, going back to a money changer named Dâ'ûd, that the standards of 5, 6, 8 and 10 were used in olden times should be read with the

⁵¹ Sears p. 13

⁵² For the Hormizd IV type with ZWZWN instead of the mint and related imitative drachms (but not the Muhammad-drachms!) vd. the unfortunately still unpublished valuable article by A. Nikitin, Post-Sasanian Coins of the Transcaucasian Region, read at the Symposium: Coinage and Monetary Circulation during the Pre-Islamic/Islamic Transition Period, Tübingen 20-22 September 1993. That the gradual immobilisation continued throughout the 7th century to the final issue with the shahâda is shown by John Walker, A Catalogue of the Arab-Sassanian Coins, A Catalogue of the Muhammadan Coins in the British Museum, Vol. I, London 1941, p. 24 ANS.5, pl. XXX no. 1. Derivatives of these Hormizd IV type drachms are the drachms of Georgian kings of the 7th century, vd. E.A. Pakhomov, Monety Gruzii, Tbilisi 1970, pl. I-II, nos.8-22.

⁵³ Luke Treadwell, "Mihrab and 'Anaza" or "Sacrum and Spear"? A Reconsideration of an Early Marwanid Silver Drachm, MUQARNAS 22, 2005, pp. 11-13 on the obverse image and p. 23 table 2 with the data for the weight standard.

⁵⁴ Hodge Mehdi Malek, The Dabuyid Ispahbads and Early 'Abbasid Governors of Tabaristan: History and Numismatics, London 2004, p. 41 with typologically exact data without reference to the Sasanian prototypes, p. 68 for the metrology. I had pointed to the typological dependence of the early Ispahbad drachms and to their similarity to the only published Muhammad-drachm in my short article Münzgeschichte Tabaristans im 8. Jahrhundert, Münstersche Numismatische Zeitung Juni 1973, p. 1

⁵⁵ Coin finds from Armenia, Azerbâijân and Georgia are much better recorded as a result of the work of the Russian Imperial Archeological Commission and its successive structures compared to anywhere in the Near East. For finds from Azerbâijân see E.A. Pakhomov, Monety klady Azerbaidzhana Vols. I-IX, Baku 1926-1966, for Armenia Khatchatur Mousheghian, Anahit Mousheghian, Cécile Bresc, Georges Depuyrot, Francois Gurnet, History and Coin Finds in Armenia, Wetteren 2000-2003. It is, however, true that Khusraw II type II drachms are more common in late 7th century hoards from Armenia than his type III drachms, e.g. the Leninakan hoard. Included 15 type II and only 9 type III drachms, Pakhomov, Klady VIII, 1959, p.21., in Mingechaur 10 of type II and 11 of type III, Pakhomov, Klady VI; Baku 1954, p. 35, while a hoard from the Baku area presented a normal Iranian distribution with 7 type II and 34 type III drachms, Pakhomov, Klady II, Baku 1938, p. 19f.

⁵⁶ I discussed Stuart Sears' judgement in favour of an attribution to Azerbâijân in a paper read at the Bamberg ONS meeting in May 2006.

⁵⁷ Coin Hoards II, 1976, p. 97 no. 369 the description of the hoard was published in an abridged version, but still with the description "Arab governors, Muhammad, ZR or YZ, Walker I no. B 39". Also the two Muhammad drachms in the Shamma collection may have come from Riyadh, but I did not make notes on the provenance when I first saw them in November 1993 still in Samir Shamma's envelopes, some of which had acquisition notes.

knowledge that the standard of 7, which is not mentioned, was the normal standard⁵⁸. This standard of 7, to which many of the Muhammad drachms conform, may quite possibly not have been mentioned because the original objective of information in the tradition may well have been information about unusual standards in use in al-Hîra and not about usual standards. Or alternatively the intended information may have been that, apart from weight 7 dirhams, in al-Hîra drachms were struck at random weight, so that they had to be weighed. This would best fit to the results of weighing the Muhammad drachms.

Al-Hîra as a mint

There is good reason for the assumption that al-Hîra was a mint of a certain regional importance because, over the last few years, it has become apparent that the town had its own monetary history with local coinage before and after participating in the Muhammad-drachm coinage. Nikolaus Schindel recently rediscussed the most unusual hoard discovered in Humaima in Jordan, t.p.q. 399, which contained imitative solidi of Arcadius and a group of die-linked drachms of Yazdgerd I. He came to the conclusion that all of these coins originated from the mint of al-Hîra, which used the signature HYL⁵⁹. It should also be mentioned that a payment in a specific kind of dirham (*wâfi bihâ ka-darâhimi l-asjâdi*, translated by Freitag as drachmae figuris adorantium insignitae) is mentioned in the context of a payment at the Lakhmid court in pre-Islamic poetry.⁶⁰

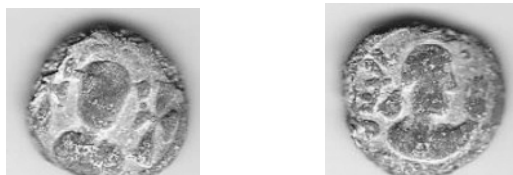


Fig. 12

In December 2006 Majed Shafi brought to my attention a small lead coin from Saudi Arabia (Fig. 12) and kindly allowed me to publish it. It showed something like a frontal bust between crosses on one side and a bust of a person with a hairball at the neck, and a hand or his hands raised to the right. An Arabic inscription around this bust clearly has to be read ending in *bi'l-hîra*. It is difficult to date the coin and it has to be borne in mind that al-Hîra is where the Arabic script was used already in pre-Islamic times. So the person depicted could be one of the Lakhmid princes of the 6th century. Such an early date, which would make this little coin the earliest presently known coin with an Arabic inscription, is supported by the similarity of the bust on the obverse, the type itself and the unusual use of lead as metal to an equally little-known Byzantine lead coin type (Fig. 13) of which I have seen a few specimens coming from Syria in the 1980s.⁶¹



Fig. 13

These small dekanummia show a frontal Imperial bust on one side and the value I between crosses on the other. They correspond best to copper coins of Justinian I, but could also be of the period of Maurice Tiberius. In the present context it is only important to note the probable existence of Christian coins either in the Arab principality or later in the bishopric of al-Hîra.⁶² Finally there are also the dirhams of al-Hîra dated 79 and 80 H., which are likely to provide an immediate chronological context to Muhammad drachms.⁶³

The Muhammad Drachms and the reform-period copper coinage of Syria and northern Mesopotamia

To get back to the starting point, coinage in the Bilâd ash-Shâm, we have noted that there was a close relation between the first drachm type of Damascus of 72 and the same coin type in al-Kûfa. Luke Treadwell has studied the late pre-reform silver coinage of the mint of al-Kûfa in great detail and shown that it operated with discontinuities and low productivity.⁶⁴ This

⁵⁸ Sauvaire, *Matériaux* 1879 p. 405

⁵⁹ Nikolaus Schindel, *Sylloge Nummorum Sasanidarum* vol 3, Vienna 2004 SNS 3/1 p. 502-506. The mint signatures on some of the Muhammad drachms can be read as AY or AYL. Bearing in mind that the differentiation between *alif* and *ha* in later Sasanian coin Pahlavi is often difficult, there is the possibility that those mint signatures intentionally name the proper mint HYL readable as HYR.

⁶⁰ Jarmila Stepkova, *Dinary a dirhamy v predislamske Arabii* (offprint without indication where this was published), p. 70; Georg Wilhelm Freitag, *Lexicon Arabico-Latinum, Tomus Secundum*, Halle 1833, p. 285. The possible bearing of earlier Hîran coin types with the praying ruler on the design of the Orans-drachms of al-Kûfa still has to be assessed.

⁶¹ private collection, Tübingen.

⁶² Especially with reference to the dirham asjâdi, mentioned above, it appears possible that yet another group of sub-Sasanian coins of the early 6th century may be associated with the lead coin from al-Hîra. This is a problematic group of bronze drachms which show a similar bust with raised hands, discussed, but left unlocalised by Schindel (cf. note 23) 3/2 p. 434f. Schindel left the inscriptions unread, but if the earlier proposed reading of the Iranian name Shahriwar is correct, that would exclude any connection with al-Hîra, where neither princes nor governors of that name have been reported.

⁶³ Michel Klat, *Catalogue of the post-Reform Dirhams, The Umayyad Dynasty*, London 2002, p. 116 nos. 282-283

⁶⁴ W.L. Treadwell, *The "Orans" Drachms of Bishr ibn Marwân and the Figural Coinage of the Early Marwânids*, in Jeremy Johns (ed.) *Bayt al-Maqdis: Jerusalem and Early Islam*, Oxford Studies in Islamic Art 9, 2, Oxford 1999, pp. 223-270.

sporadic issuing in contrast to the political importance as capital of one of the most important governorships in the East becomes explicable if the existence of a regional silver coinage in al-Hîra is accepted. The distance between al-Kûfa to al-Hîra is about 20 km. From al-Kûfa to Damascus the direct distance is more than 600 km and in practice the way from Damascus to Tadmur and the Euphrates via 'Âna, Hît, al-Anbâr is longer, probably one to two weeks travel. Still, al-Kûfa must have been the closest mint for Sasanian-type silver when Damascus needed die cutters and instruction.



Fig. 14 Private collection Tübingen

But Damascus was not the only Syrian mint in which silver coinage was struck in 72. The evidence for decentralised silver coinage at this stage is based on two observations. One is the existence of drachms from Hims dated 72 H. (Fig. 14) of which at present two specimens are known, both from the same pair of dies⁶⁵. They correspond to the second type of Damascus. The mintage of silver in Hims was probably very small. The other observation lies in the treatment of mintnames in Damascus. 72 to 74 H. The mintname is consistently indicated whereas under conditions of centralised minting the mintname became superfluous.



Fig. 15 Gorny

With the barely documented standing-caliph drachms of 75 H. (Fig. 15) the mint name is omitted and the first post-reform dirhams of 79 of Damascus were also struck without mintname, like the gold coinage. Nor does the Mihrab/Anaza drachm type, datable to 74/75 H. according to Treadwell or between 75 and 79 H. according to the traditional view indicate a mint. All this suggests that, from 74 or 75 onwards, 'Abd al-Malik intended to have the silver coinage centralised like the gold, thus following to the administrative precedent of the Byzantine Empire. But this failed for the silver and in 79 H. a compromise was found in which Damascus remained the central silver mint for the Bilâd ash-Shâm only. But whatever 'Abd al-Malik had planned in 72 H., he had not intended a centralised silver coinage in the Bilâd ash-Shâm at this initial stage. While there was minting of drachms in Hims, there may equally have been minting of silver in other jund capitals, whose coins either have not yet been found or which followed different types and did not indicate the mint names.

This basic assumption is guiding the search for similarities between some of the Muhammad drachms and the copper coinage of the Bilâd ash-Shâm and the Jazîra. Unlike the Muhammad drachms, the copper coinage generally indicates the mints or can be localised by find evidence. Consequently, similar features of copper coins and silver coins can help to localise mintless silver coins. There are three observations which I would like to present in this context:

1. The legend *jâza hâdhâ* appears on a rare type of reform-type fals, probably struck in the later 70s H (Fig.16).⁶⁶ The isolated position on the outer margin of the obverse corresponding to the second quadrant of the Sasanian-type coinage is a surprising parallel. On the reverse the same words are repeated in at the top of the outer margin. Unfortunately the coin is mintless. But by means of comparison to apparently related fulûs of reform type from Sarmîn and Ma'arrat Misrîn which bear only the word *jâza* and the mint name I tend to place the mintless fals into the environment of these two mints. Otherwise the *jâza hâdhâ* occurs of course also on imperial image type coins from Damascus⁶⁷. But the isolated words in identical position on the outer margin form a much more striking similarity, which makes best sense when seen in the chronological and regional context of the two coins.



Fig. 16 FINT

⁶⁵ SICA 1 pl. 21 no. 305 today in Qatar National Museum and the second in a private collection Tübingen.

⁶⁶ unpublished coin in the University coin collection Tübingen inv. no. 91-9-3. The dating of this and related copper types from Damascus, Sarmîn and Ma'arrat Misrîn, Nayef G. Goussous, Rare and Inedited Umayyad Copper Coins, Amman 2004, p. 379, nos. 438 and 440 is based on the assumption that these coins are the consequence of a short stage in the emission of the anonymous and normally mintless plain shahâda type fulûs, when it became necessary to add an indication of origin. The context is explained in detail in a paper read by me in May 2007 in Princeton to be published in due course.

⁶⁷ First read correctly by Tony Goodwin, Walker's "Full Weight Dirham"- New Light on an Enigmatic Arab-Byzantine Coin of Damascus, ONSNewsletter 157, Autumn 1998, p. 9.

2. Stuart Sears has already commented on the similarity of the *wâfin* on the most common type of Muhammad drachm and the standing caliph type fulus from Jund Qinnasrîn (although he only mentions Halab). Indeed this word was the mark of all the mints of Jund Qinnasrîn with the exception of Sarmîn and Ma'arrat Misrîn, which seem to have had an exceptional administrative position. The prominent position of the word on both the silver and copper is striking, but in this case I am much more uncertain. The letter *alif* in *wâfin* is always bent strongly backwards on the drachms but not on the standing caliph coppers, which casts some doubt on the possibility that the same die cutters produced silver and copper dies.



Fig. 17

3. On the drachm in the Iraqi Museum with the name *khusraw* (*HUSLUB*) before the bust and the Arabic *Muhammad* in the margin a paleographic feature is to be noted which I have never seen anywhere else than on some of the standing caliph fulûs from Harrân (Fig. 17). The connection of the letter *mîm* to the *hâ* is quite conventional in the later 70s and 80s on post-reform silver coins. But the final letter *dâl* is joined at half height to the *mîm*, which is so peculiar that it caused Casanova and others, who first published the Harrân type, to believe that this could not be Arabic but that it had to be a Himyarite monogram, which indeed look rather similar.⁶⁸ But the connection between Harrân and other types of Muhammad drachms is also given by the fact that the name Muhammad appears twice on the coins, being a parallel to the Pahlavi and Arabic version of the drachms with *wâfin*, perhaps referring in one case to the prophet, in the other to an official or governor. What finally convinces me that Harran was indeed one of the silver mints producing Muhammad drachms is the shape of the pedestal of the *phi*-shaped symbol on some of the fulûs of this mint, which was all too obviously not borrowed from the cross-on-steps but from the pedestal of the fire altars on drachms.⁶⁹ This makes best sense if the same die cutter also cut the drachm dies.

These three observations on similarities between drachms and copper coins have two features in common: they are firstly the similarities to coins of the reform period of 'Abd al-Malik and secondly that the coins come from the jund Qinnasrîn or administratively related areas. This finally leads to the question, when and where were the Muhammad drachms struck? Were they precursors of the drachms starting in 72 H., e.g. of the period of Mu'âwiya, or were they provincial contemporaries?

We have seen that the 72 drachms in Damascus start with the phrase *muhammad rasûl allâh*. On readily datable coins the phrase occurs for the first time in 66 and 67 in the drachm coinage of the little-known governor, 'Abd al-Malik ibn 'Abd-allâh, from Bîshâpûr. This 'Abd al-Malik can be identified as a son of 'Abd-allâh ibn 'Âmir ibn Kuraiz, the predecessor of Ziyâd ibn Abî Sufyân as governor of al-Basra in the mid-40s. As the year 66 H. is already during the Civil War we have to clarify on whose side he was. The main sources do not tell us the position of his governorate in Fârs but the fact that his brother was clearly on the Zubairid side leads us to expect that he was also acting as a governor for 'Abd-allâh ibn az-Zubair.⁷⁰ Now this brother was 'Abd al-'Azîz ibn 'Abd-allâh ibn 'Amir, the "author" of the Foroughi drachm from Sijistan 72 H., the first epigraphic Islamic coin, with its Pahlavi version of the shahada, which includes in the last line *muhammad payghambar-i yazd*, Muhammad is the messenger of Allah.⁷¹ It is, therefore, probably not far-fetched to assume that the inclusion of this phrase on coins was a consequence of the Zubairid claim to re-establish the caliphate with its centre in the Hijjâz, and to re-establish the Islamic caliphate of Muhammad. In 72 it was clear that the Umayyad side was victorious in the Civil War and the importance of this conjunction of the end of the Civil war and the monetary reform has rightfully been stressed repeatedly by Michael Bates. The relation between the Foroughi drachm and 'Abd al-Malik's reform is clear: 'Abd al-Malik was driven to prove that he could integrate the incentives of the Zubairid movement into his state. This could both be true regarding the inclusion of the *muhammad rasûl allâh* into the shahâda or into coin inscriptions as well as with regard to islamising the coinage by replacing the images with inscriptions.

If this view is correct then the Muhammad drachms are likely to follow the same impetus and the word refers to the prophet Muhammad, unless the double name would give a reason to assume references to the prophet and another contemporary Muhammad, as on the standing caliph coppers of Harrân. The earliest dating would be based on an attribution as Zubairid coins in al-Hîra around 66 H., but the above-mentioned similarities with copper coins would place at least any non-Hîran Muhammad coins, be it from Harran or Northern Syrian mints to a t.p.q. after 72.

When the Muhammad drachms are recognised as a regional coinage of al-Hîra then nearby al-Kûfa must also have been under the influence of this regional coinage. This would also explain the paucity of regular drachm production in al-Kûfa/Akola. When in 72 H. the mint of al-Kûfa had the task of developing silver coinage in Damascus and elsewhere, apparently the mint of al-Hîra seems equally involved. It exported its regional coinage into areas in the north, which, like al-Hîra, were dominated by Christian and recently converted Northern Arabian bedouins, certainly in Harrân and possibly in the Jund Qinnasrîn. Probability has it that the Muhammad drachms with *wâfin*, one of which was found in al-Kûfa, originate from al-Hîra. As for the related drachms with *jâza hâdhâ* and *muhammad* in the margin, an attribution either to al-Hîra or to the Jund Qinnasrîn seems possible.

⁶⁸ Paul Casanova, Notes de numismatique Himyarite, Revue Numismatique 1893, p. 186f

⁶⁹ E.g. SICA I no. 687 while the coin illustrated in Tony Goodwin, Arab-Byzantine coinage, London 2005, p. 42 no. 43 is different and rather derived from the cross on steps.

⁷⁰ Heinz Gaube Arabosasanidische Numismatik, Braunschweig 1973, p. 62. Stephen Album, Checklist p. 16, did not try to decide whose partisan he was. A.I. Koletnikov, Denezhnoe khozyaystvo v Irane v VII veke, Moscow 1998, p. 200 addressed him as Zubairid.

⁷¹ M.I. Mochiri, A Pahlavi Forerunner of the Umayyad Reformed Coinage, Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1981, no. 2, pp. 168-172 for the original publication, Stuart D. Sears, A hybrid imitation of early Muslim coinage struck in Sijistan by Abû Bardhâ'a, American Journal of Numismatics 1, 1989, pp. 137-169 for an attempt to redate the coin after 'Abd al-Malik's reform coinage, rejected by me in a review in Der Islam 69, 1992, p. 381, also Album in SICA 1 p. 27

THE MONETARY HISTORY OF THE BUKHARKUDA DIRHAM (“BLACK DIRHAM”) IN SAMANID TRANSOXANIA (204–395/819–1005)

Luke Treadwell

In the course of the 9–10th centuries AD the region lying between the Oxus and Jaxartes Rivers, known as Transoxania or *Mā warā’ al-nahr* (Arabic), was governed by the Samanid dynasty. Like several other regions located on the northeastern fringes of the Iranian world, early Islamic Transoxania had been remarkably slow to abandon the pre-Islamic figural coinage which had circulated locally before the Arab conquests. The provinces of Tabaristan, Khwarazm, Transoxania and Sistan form a belt which circles Iran, starting from its northern border on the Caspian Sea in the case of Tabaristan, and continuing down the eastern frontier which separates Iran from the steppe, from Khwarazm in the north, via Transoxania, to Sistan in the south. All four regions retained their local figural coinages well into the 8th century AD, long after the rest of Iran had adopted the aniconic gold and silver coinage introduced by the Marwanid caliph, ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwān, in the last years of the 7th century. The Abbasid governors who ruled these regions from the middle to the end of the 8th c. continued to issue figural coins, in some cases, like Sistan, alongside regular caliphal dirhams. By the end of the 8th century, virtually all local issues were discontinued and caliphal coinage became the rule. Although no longer struck, these local figural coins, much like the Sasanian and Arab-Sasanian issues of Iran in the 8th c., probably continued to circulate for many years before finally being replaced in the monetary stock by caliphal issues.

The one exception to this pattern of eastern Iranian monetary usage was Transoxania. Here the figural silver, the so-called Bukharkhuda dirhams, continued to circulate alongside the locally-struck caliphal dirhams for several centuries, throughout the Samanid period and well into the Qarakhanid period (11–13th centuries).⁷² The Bukharkhuda coinage was modelled on a Sasanian prototype, a late 5th–century drachm first struck in the city of Merv by the Shahanshah Varahran V (420–438 AD), which was later adopted by the rulers of Bukhara in Sogd. In the course of its long life, the Bukharkhuda drachm underwent significant changes in fabric and design. It first incorporated a Sogdian inscription next to the imperial bust; it later became progressively stylised in appearance; in the early Abbasid period, the names of caliphs and governors appeared alongside the bust (see Fig. 1); and at some time, probably beginning with the earliest Abbasid issues, the coinage began to suffer severe debasement, resulting in some hoard finds which appear to be composed mainly of base metal coins. A very extensive literature, much of it written by 19th and 20th century Russophone archaeologists and numismatists, has grown up around the Bukharkhuda series.⁷³ Up to the 1990s research was focused mainly on the question of the monetary function of the Bukharkhuda coinage of the 8th–13th centuries, though substantial progress has been made in the last two decades on the question of the pre-Islamic history of this coinage.⁷⁴

This paper is only concerned with the history of the Bukharkhuda coinage during the Samanid period, and in particular with its role as the coinage in which the various regions of Transoxania remitted taxes to the Samanid amirs in Samarqand and Bukhara. The current scholarly consensus holds that Bukharkhuda dirhams were used for the payment of taxes throughout the 9th–10th centuries. Yet as a student of Samanid history, it has often occurred to me that while it makes good sense to accept Ibn Khurrahādhibih’s evidence that taxes were paid in these coins in the early 3rd/9th century, when these coins constituted the local monetary stock and the Samanids had been in power for less than two decades, it is more difficult to explain why the Samanid amirs would have retained the system throughout the 4th/10th century, when their state had become one of the great powers of the Islamic world. From the late 9th century, they ruled a huge territory, comprising most of Eastern Iran, including Khurasan as well as Transoxania, which was administered by a centralised bureaucracy located in Bukhara, that had access to human and financial resources which were superior to those available to contemporary successor states in the post-Abbasid world. The Bukharkhuda coinage of the early 9th century was not a single coinage, but rather a complex series of three different coinages, each one known by a different name (*musayyabī*, *ghitirīfī*, *muḥammadī*). It is assumed that these three issues were visually distinct one from another, contained a high proportion of debased coins (hence their title of “black dirhams”) and may even have been valued at different rates. But what benefit would the administration of the most powerful state to rule Eastern Iran in the pre-Mongol period have perceived in retaining such a complex monetary system in Transoxania, while in Khurasan its agents collected taxes in caliphal dirhams? Finding myself unable to answer this question, I re-examined the slender textual evidence on which the current consensus rests. On the basis of my re-examination, I conclude that there is no reason to believe that the Samanids did retain this system in the 10th century.

The only source which tells that the Samanids did collect taxes in all three denominations of Bukharkhuda dirham is a short passage in Muqaddasī’s *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm fī ma’rifat al-aqālīm*. Until now, this passage has been uncritically accepted as valid by every scholar who has studied it. Muqaddasī is lauded as the greatest of the Arab geographers of the 10th century, an acute observer of the customs and institutions of the lands he passed through, and a repository of reliable information. But although it has often been noted by literary scholars that the geographers of this time frequently incorporated excerpts from

⁷² The terminology adopted in this paper follows that of Naymark (1999). Pre-Islamic Bukharkhuda issues are referred to as Bukharkhuda drachms, while Bukharkhuda coins with Arabic inscriptions are called Bukharkhuda dirhams. This paper will only deal with the question of the circulation of these dirhams, not with the much debated matters of their silver content or their date of issue. Walker believed that Bukharkhuda dirhams were not struck later than the reign of the Abbasid caliph al-Ma’mūn, while others believe that some of the more common types continued to be struck in the Samanid period and later. The date of issue of Type 11 (see Table One, below) which bears the inscription *al-khāqān al-a’zam*, is particularly contentious.

⁷³ For a recent article in which much of the relevant literature is cited see Davidovich (1997).

⁷⁴ See Naymark (2001) and (2002).

the work of their predecessors in their own books, the question has never been asked of Muqaddasī's passage on the payment of taxes in Transoxania. Yet when we compare this passage with a passage in Ibn Khurradādhbih's earlier *Kitāb al-masālik wa al-mamālik*, which lists taxes raised in early 9th century Transoxania, it becomes obvious that Muqaddasī's text is not a direct observation of the status quo in the second half of the 10th century, but rather a copy of one version of his predecessor's list. Starting from this premise, we may re-examine the abundant testimony of other visitors to the 10th century Mashriq, including Ibn Faqlān and Ibn Ḥawqal, who had much to say about the Bukharkhuda dirhams which they observed in circulation. As I will argue below, once we have discarded the theory that the Bukharkhuda coinage was used in payment of taxation, it becomes apparent that the Bukharkhuda coinage was a low-value denomination of restricted circulation, whose monetary function resembled that of Samanid copper coinage more closely than it did the Samanid dirham.

I begin with a brief introduction to the Bukharkhuda coinage, including a description of types and hoards. I then turn to a comparison of the two texts in question, which I frame within an appraisal of the wider relationship between Muqaddasī and Ibn Khurradādhbih's geographies. This is followed by an analysis of Ibn Faqlān and Ibn Ḥawqal's evidence, then a commentary on the hoard evidence for Bukharkhuda and Samanid dirham coinage in the 9–10th centuries, that, to my mind, corroborates the conclusions I draw from the texts.

Arabic Bukharkhuda coinage: introduction

For those readers who are unfamiliar with the subject, a brief introduction to the typology of the Bukharkhuda coinage with Arabic inscriptions is provided in the form of an annotated table (Table 1). The Arabic inscriptions appear in the obverse margin surrounding the bust.

Table 1: Typology of the Bukharkhuda dirham series

Type	Inscription	Approx. Dating (AH) ⁷⁵
1	<i>khālid</i>	137 -140
2	<i>muḥammad</i>	143 -151
3	<i>al-mahdī</i> (see Figure 1)	151?-168
4	<i>al-mahdī al-faḍl lillāh</i>	166?-168?
5	<i>al-mahdī mūsā</i>	164 -168
6	<i>mahdiyyat al-khalīfa</i> <i>mūsā</i>	169 -170
7	<i>mahdiyyat al-khalīfa</i> <i>hārūn</i>	170 -193
8	<i>mahdiyyat al-khalīfa</i> <i>hārūn ja'far</i>	171 -173?
9	<i>al-khalīfa hārūn ja'far</i>	171 -173?
10	<i>bi-ism allāh muḥammad</i> <i>rasūl allāh muḥammadiyya</i> <i>mimmā amara bi-hi al-amīn</i> <i>'alī ('alā [yaday]?)</i> <i>sulaymān lillāh</i>	176?-193
11	<i>bi-ism allāh muḥammad</i> <i>rasūl allāh al-khāqān</i> <i>al-a'zam amīn (?) amīr</i> <i>al-mu'minīn</i>	Ma'mūn's reign? (198-218)

Type 1 (*khālid*), which was not known to Walker, is the earliest Bukharkhuda dirham. Smirnova was the first to publish a specimen found in a hoard from the excavations at Panjikent.⁷⁶ She argues that Type 1 is stylistically similar to Type 2 and thus attributes it to the earliest phase of the series. She identifies Khālid as the 'Abbasid governor of Khurasan, Abū Dā'ūd Khālid ibn Ibrāhīm (137-140 AH). Many new specimens of this type have been identified since Smirnova's publication.

Type 2 (*muḥammad*) bears the name Muḥammad. Walker was inclined to attribute the coin to the third 'Abbasid caliph Muḥammad al-Mahdī,⁷⁷ but was unsure whether it was struck during the first years of his reign or during that of his father, al-Manṣūr (136–158 AH), who appointed the future al-Mahdī as heir apparent no later than 142 AH, when coins of al-Manṣūr cite his son as heir. Smirnova has considered the dating in the light of the names and titles which appear on copper coins struck in Bukhara and Samarqand during al-Manṣūr's reign. She notes that al-Mahdī's name appears alone on only one specimen, a *fals* struck in Samarqand in 143/759-760.⁷⁸ In 144 and 148 AH his name and

⁷⁵ The dates given here have been established primarily on the evidence of the Arabic inscriptions on each type.

⁷⁶ Smirnova (1963), pp. 64–65, plate 1.1. ⁷⁷ Walker (1941), p. xci.

⁷⁸ However a *fals* of Bukhara dated 143 AH bears both al-Mahdi's name and title (Nützel [1898], no. 2076).

title appear together and thereafter, from 151 AH, only his title is used.⁷⁹ From this sequence she deduces that Type 2 of the Bukharkhuda series was struck between 143 and 151 AH.

Type 3 (*al-mahdī*) includes two sub-types, both bearing the title al-Mahdī, the first with three pellets on the bust (Figure 1) and the second, less common type, with the exclamation *bakh bakh* (bravo!) in place of the three pellets. Walker believed that they were struck from 163–166 AH, during the period when Musayyab ibn Zuhayr was governor of Khurasan.⁸⁰ However since the hoard evidence demonstrates that the first sub-type was by far the most common type of the Bukharkhuda series (see Table 3, below), it is reasonable to assume that it was struck over a much longer period than that proposed by Walker, probably throughout al-Mahdī's reign and perhaps from as early as 151 AH, the first year in which his title appears alone on the copper *fulus* of Transoxania.



Figure 1: Arabic Bukharkhuda dirham with “al-Mahdī” behind the obverse bust

Type 4 (*al-mahdī al-faḍl lillāh*) was first published by Tiesenhäusen.⁸¹ The word *al-faḍl* may refer to the governor of Khurasan, al-Faḍl ibn Sulaymān (166-171 AH): alternatively *al-faḍl lillāh* may be an exhortatory phrase. A variant of this type has recently appeared on the website zeno.ru (coin no. 18137) with the inscription *al-faḍl lillāh* upside down under the bust.

Type 5 (*al-mahdī mūsā*) was noted by Davidovich in one of the three major collections which she studied, but not fully published.⁸² It is reasonable to assume that it was struck after Mūsā had been appointed heir apparent to al-Mahdī in 160 AH⁸³ Since the earliest reference on the regular caliphal coinage to Mūsā's appointment appears on a dirham of Baṣra in 164 AH, we may assume that Type 5 was struck between 164-168 AH⁸⁴

Type 6 (*mahdiyyat al-khalīfa mūsā*) was published by Walker.⁸⁵ This coin bears the earliest reference to the term by which earlier types were no doubt also known (*mahdiyya*), but which is unknown in our textual sources. This coin must have been struck during the reign of al-Hādī, whose name appears on it, as it did on some issues of his regular dirham coinage.

Type 7 (*mahdiyyat al-khalīfa hārūn*) six specimens of this type were published by Walker and several specimens have become known since Walker's publication.

Types 8 and 9 (*mahdiyyat al-khalīfa hārūn ja'far* and *al-khalīfa hārūn ja'far*) were both noted by Davidovich but not fully published. The occurrence of the name *ja'far* on these coins is possibly a reference to either Ja'far ibn al-Ash'ath, governor of Khurasan (171-173 AH), or Ja'far ibn Yahyā al-Barmakī. The same name is described by Zambaur as being located "on the neck" of the bust of a Bukharkhuda coin in his private collection.⁸⁶

Type 10 (*bi-ism allāh muḥammad rasūl allāh muḥammadiyya mimma amara bi-hi al-amīn'alī* ('alā [yaday]?) *sulaymān lillāh*) was tentatively dated by Walker to the years 193-195 AH⁸⁷ However 193 AH was the year in which the principal mints of Transoxania, Samarqand and Bukhara, began to strike large quantities of regular caliphal dirhams bearing the name of Amīn's brother, al-Ma'mūn.⁸⁸ It is likely, as Walker noted, that the beginning of regular dirham production coincided with the end of the Bukharkhuda series. Therefore it seems reasonable to assume that Type 10 was struck during the reign of Amīn's father, Hārūn, possibly as early as 176 AH, when Amīn's title first appears on dirhams of al-Muḥammadiya.

⁷⁹ Smirnova (1963), table 2, p. 63.

⁸⁰ Walker (1941), pp. xci–xcii.

⁸¹ Cf. Walker (1941), xcii and p. 167.

⁸² Davidovich (1979), p. 112.

⁸³ For the date of appointment, see Ṭabarī (1879–1880) vol. 3, pp. 472–473.

⁸⁴ Baṣra dirhams of 164–166 and 168 AH bear the inscription *al-khalīfa al-mahdī/mimmā amara bihi/mūsā walī'ahd al-muslimīn*. (for 164 AH see Shamma collection, Ashmolean Museum; for other years, Lane-Poole (1875–1890), i, nos. 98-100).

⁸⁵ Walker (1941), L57 (=Istanbul Museum), p. 167. There is no reference to this coin in Artuk's (1970) catalogue, p. 6, where he publishes a Type 3 Bukharkhuda dirham.

⁸⁶ Davidovich (1979), p. 112; Zambaur (review of Allotte de la Fuḷe, *Numismatic Chronicle*, 1927), *Numismatische Zeitschrift*, 1928, p. 127.

⁸⁷ Walker (1941), pp. xciv–xcvi. Masson (1955) dates them to Tahirid period.

⁸⁸ The only Transoxanian mint to have struck silver dirhams before 193 AH was the mint of Shash which produced massive quantities in the years 189–190 AH

Type 11 (*bi-ism allāh muḥammad rasūl allāh al-khāqān al-a'zam amīn (?) amīr al-mu'minīn*) Walker, who referred to Fraehn's original publication of this type in 1819, knew of three specimens, of which he illustrated the one from the Nejelow collection.⁸⁹ Fedorov has since noted two further specimens which came to light as surface finds from the citadel of Bukhara. He attributes the type to the 12th century Qarakhanid ruler Arslān Khān Muḥammad b. Sulaymān (1102–1130 AD).⁹⁰ Kochnev notes that the title *al-khāqān al-a'zam* was used by Khusraw-Shāh, a Qarakhanid prince, in 574/1178.⁹¹ By contrast, Walker suggests that it was struck by one of the Central Asian princes who gave their allegiance to the caliph Ma'mūn. Stylistic similarities with Type 10 suggest that both were struck in the same period, but it is not possible to determine a precise provenance or dating for Type 11 at present. Given the rarity of the type, its absence from the hoard material, and the fact that it was not struck by a representative of the `Abbasid dynasty, we are justified in characterising it as an exceptional issue which must at present be excluded from the main series of Bukharkhuda coinage.

The eleven types presented above have been discussed by the many numismatists who have worked on this coinage over the past century and a half. The Bukharkhuda coinage is unique among all Islamic coins, in that there are several references to it in the textual sources. However the terms by which the texts refer to the coins bear little or no relation to the Arabic inscriptions which are the main criterion by which numismatists have created the taxonomy presented above. In fact, of the three terms known from the texts, *ghit̤rīfī*, *muḥammadī*, and *musayyabī*, two (*ghit̤rīfī* and *musayyabī*) refer to 8th c. `Abbasid governors of Khurasan, who introduced reforms to the coinage. The third term, *muḥammadī*, may refer to coins of Type 10, whose inscriptions bear the term *muḥammadiyya*.

The hoard evidence shows that Bukharkhuda coins circulated in Transoxania over a period of up to seven centuries, from the 6th–13th: the Bukharkhuda dirhams circulated from the 8th–13th centuries. The longevity of their circulation is confirmed by the textual sources. Kochnev supplies references for the Qarakhanid period, though he concedes that it is not possible to date these references accurately. The first occurs in the *Sharaf nāmā-yi shāhī*, a history of the Shaybanid `Abdallāh Khān (d. 1006/1597–8). From this text we learn that Abū Bakr Faḍl b. Ja'far al-Bukhārī, a shaykh who is said to have lived in the "pre-Mongol" period, obtained an inheritance of 400,000 Ghiḍrīfī dirhams.⁹² The second reference comes in the 12th century tract *Muḥīt al-burhān fi'l-fiqh al-nu'mān* of Maḥmūd b. Aḥmad b. `Abd al-`Azīz al-Bukhārī (d. 570/1174),⁹³ in which it is stated that in the 12th century AD commercial transactions were carried out, and prices were still set, in Ghiḍrīfī dirhams.

Much remains unknown about the Bukharkhuda series, particularly the earliest issues, which date to the second half of the 8th century. Metallurgical analyses are presently being carried out on a small sample of these early issues at Oxford University's Department of Materials which will hopefully shed light on the crucial question of their debasement. The textual evidence states that at certain times, Bukharkhuda dirhams were valued at a high rate against the silver dirham, in spite of the large proportion of debased coins in the series. Narshakhī's *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* gives us the following information: that some time after the reforms of Ghiḍrīf b. `Aṭā (appointed governor of Khurasan in 185 AH) the *ghit̤rīfī* was valued at 6:1 silver dirham; that in 221 AH 85 *ghit̤rīfīs* were worth 100 silver dirhams; and in 522 AH 70 *ghit̤rīfīs* were equal to 100 pure silver dirhams.⁹⁴ It has long been assumed that the *ghit̤rīfī* was valued at a similarly high rate against the dirham in the Samanid period: this paper will argue that this was not the case, and that, on the contrary, the *ghit̤rīfī* and other Bukharkhuda dirhams constituted a low-value coinage from the late 9th–end of the 10th centuries.

Ibn Khurradādhbih's list of Transoxanian taxes

Ibn Khurradādhbih's *Kitāb al-Masālik wa al-Mamālik* enjoyed a high reputation in the 10th century as the first comprehensive administrative geography in Arabic. Its author was an intimate of two caliphs, Mu'tamid and Mu'taḍid, and served as the head of the Abbasid courier and information service, one of the most senior offices in the caliphal administration, and a post which gave him access to much of the information which he used in his geography. The book had an exceptionally long and complex history during its author's lifetime. He wrote the first version in the reign of the caliph al-Wāthiq (227–32/842–47) but made many subsequent additions to it, finally completing a second edition in 272/885 or later.⁹⁵ It is therefore more than likely that several different autograph versions of the text, each one containing the author's own glosses, emendations and additions, were in circulation during his life. This is a point to which we will return below when we examine Muqaddasī's use of the book.

A valuable feature of the book is its use of documentary sources drawn from the Abbasid archives. One such document appears to have been a list of the tax revenues from the towns and cities of the Mashriq submitted to the Tahirid governor of

⁸⁹ Walker (1941), p. xcvi.

⁹⁰ Fedorov (1971), pp. 122–126 (the coins are not illustrated). Qubavī's Persian translation of Narshakhī's *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* states that the value of the Bukharkhuda dirham was 70:100 silver dirhams in 522/1128, that is during the reign of Arslān Khān.

⁹¹ Kochnev (2006), p. 144.

⁹² Bukhārī (1983), p. 108 (=fol. 46a). The sum involved is 400,000 *ghit̤rīfī* dirhams, not 4000 as stated by Kochnev.

⁹³ Chekhovich, O.D., "Cherty ekonomicheskoi zhizni Maverannakhra v sochineniyakh po fikku i shurutu", *Bližnii i srednii vostok, tovarno-denezhnie otnosheniya pri feodalizme/Bartoldovskie chteniya*, 1978, Moscow, 1980, p. 228 (reference from Kochnev, 1990, p. 57: article unavailable to me).

⁹⁴ Narshakhī (1351), p. 51; Narshakhī (1954), pp. 36–37.

⁹⁵ *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. viii, p. 38.

Khurasan, ‘Abdallāh b. Ṭāhir, probably in 221–222 AH⁹⁶ In this list are included the figures for Transoxania, the central and eastern regions of which were governed on behalf of the Tahirids by three brothers from the Samanid family, the senior amir Nūḥ b. Asad, who established his capital in Samarqand in 205 AH, and his brothers, Yaḥyā in Shash, and Aḥmad in Farghana. Western Transoxania, with its capital in Bukhara, remained under the control of governors appointed directly by the Tahirids during the first half of the 9th century and was only incorporated into the Samanid domains in 260 AH

Ibn Khurradādhbih’s list gives the following figures with the numbers written out in Arabic words, not numerals, according to de Goeje’s edition:⁹⁷

Bukhara	1,189,200 <i>ghitrīfiyya</i>
Al-Sogd and all the other districts governed by Nūḥ b. Asad (including) (from) Farghana (and from) the Turkish towns (as well as)	326,400 dirhams ⁹⁸ 280,000 <i>muḥammadiyya</i> 46,400 <i>khwārazmiyya</i> and <i>musayyabiyya</i> 1,187 thick <i>kundajī</i> cotton cloths, (<i>wa min al-murūr?</i>) ⁹⁹ and 1,300 pieces of metal sheeting cut in halves.
The total value (of the assessment for Sogd being)	2,172,500 <i>muḥammadiyya</i> . ¹⁰⁰
Of this al-Sogd including the mine of Buttam and the salt mine of Kish (“Kiss” in the printed edition), Nasaf and al-Buttam and other places in Sogd (contributes)	1,089,000 <i>muḥammadī</i> dirhams
Ushrusana	50,000 dirhams including 48,000 <i>muḥammadiyya</i> and 2,000 <i>musayyabiyya</i>
Al-Shash and the silver mine	607,100 <i>musayyabiyya</i>
Khujanda	100,000 <i>musayyabiyya</i> .

From this list we learn that the taxes of western Transoxania were levied separately to those of the rest of the region. Bukhara, the region under direct Tahirid control, remitted taxes totalling 1,189,200 *ghitrīfi* dirhams, whereas the other regions, including both those territories controlled by Nūḥ b. Asad, and others which were not under his control, submitted taxes in *muḥammadī*, *khwārazmī* and *musayyabī* dirhams, to a total of 2,172,500 *muḥammadī* dirhams. The fact that the figures for all regions other than Bukhara, when added together, give a total of 2,172,500 and that this total is given in one of the three denominations cited (*muḥammadī*), suggests that each of the three denominations were of equal value at the time that the budget was drawn up. One might ask indeed, why, in this case, the denominations retained their distinctive names. The answer probably lies in the well-known early Islamic custom of naming coinages after the governor or caliph during whose tenure they were first issued. But which of the ten or more types of Bukharkhuda dirham identified above belonged to each of these three denominations? The scholarly literature has provided more than one answer to this question, but the problem need not detain us here, since, as I will demonstrate below, Bukharkhuda dirhams were not used for the collection of taxes in the Samanid period.

Muqaddasī’s list of Transoxanian taxes

Muqaddasī wrote his work more than a century after the second version of Ibn Khurradādhbih’s book was completed, probably in 375 AH or shortly thereafter, at a time when Transoxania had changed out of all recognition from the frontier province which the Samanids had governed on behalf of the Tahirids.¹⁰¹ Bukhara and Samarqand expanded enormously as the state prospered and from the late 9th century, the Samanid amirs controlled the whole Mashriq, including Khurasan, from their Transoxanian capital. The prosperity of their kingdom resulted from their successful attempts to pacify the turbulent frontier with the steppe. This allowed trade with the steppe and the northern lands to grow rapidly and ensured relative harmony among the many Transoxanian client kingdoms which owed allegiance to the Samanids.

In the preface to his book, Muqaddasī notes that he had access to an abridgement of Ibn Khurradādhbih’s work. Given Ibn Khurradādhbih’s reputation, it is unlikely that Muqaddasī would have missed the opportunity to study the book carefully, although his note is slightly ambiguous in this regard.¹⁰² He certainly extracted some passages from it, with full

⁹⁶ This is the date given in Barbier de Maynard’s edition (1865), whereas de Goeje’s edition (1889) has 211–212 AH. The later date suits the history of the region better than the earlier. In 212 AH the Tahirids embarked on the reconquest of Shash and Farghana, which would therefore have been unlikely to have paid taxes in that year and furthermore, ‘Abdallāh b. Ṭāhir only became governor of Khurasan in 212 (see Nasafī [1999], p. 276, for the Tahirid reconquest).

⁹⁷ Ibn Khurradādhbih (1889), pp. 38–39.

⁹⁸ Von Kremer, 1875, p. 375, has *tatari* dirhams instead of “dirhams” but this can safely be assumed to have been the result of a scribal error.

⁹⁹ The meaning of this Arabic passage is unclear.

¹⁰⁰ Von Kremer (1875), p. 375 has 2,072,000 *muḥammadiyya*, which is the figure found in the Bodleian manuscript of Ibn Khurradādhbih (Ms Huntington 433).

¹⁰¹ For the date of composition, see Miquel’s article in *EI* (2nd ed.), “al-Muqaddasī”.

¹⁰² Muqaddasī (1906) p. 4, note 1. Manuscript C in de Goeje’s edition of Muqaddasī’s edition states that the author saw two abridged geographies in Nishapur, one by Jayhānī and the other by Ibn Khurradādhbih, both of which he was able to look at. But his statement does

acknowledgement of their provenance.¹⁰³ One such citation concerns the *kharāj* total for the city of Qinnasrīn, in northern Syria.¹⁰⁴ Curiously enough, even though Muqaddasī cites Ibn Khurradādhbih as giving a slightly higher figure for Qinnasrīn and its *awāṣim* (400,000 dinars) than the figure he gives (360,000 dinars), de Goeje's edition of Ibn Khurradādhbih reveals that the latter gave *two* different figures for the *kharāj* of Qinnasrīn in different parts of his book. On p. 75 he gives the figure of 400,000 dinars cited by Muqaddasī, while in later sections (pp. 246 and 251), he gives the same figure of 360,000 dinars which occurs (unacknowledged) in Muqaddasī's text. Muqaddasī's partial acknowledgement of his sources in this manner is a theme to which I will return below.

The question for our purposes, however, is the extent to which he quoted from his predecessor without acknowledgement in relation to the information he gives for Transoxania. The answer to the question is best sought in a detailed comparison of the two texts.

The first point to note is that Muqaddasī does refer indirectly to Ibn Khurradādhbih at the end of the passage. Having completed his list of Transoxanian tax figures, Muqaddasī makes a brief reference to Khurasan (meaning Transoxania and Eastern Iran together), citing all his numbers in words rather than numerals:

I found in a book that the original *kharāj* of Khurasan was 44,800,930 and 13 dirhams, 20 riding beasts, 2,000 sheep, 1,012 slaves and 1,300 pieces of woollen cloth and sheets of chain mail.¹⁰⁵

Muqaddasī's passage clearly parallels the summary of the tax figure for Khurasan which we find in Ibn Khurradādhbih (in numerals rather than words), albeit with minor differences in detail:

And the total *kharāj* of Khurasan and that which was included in the region due to Abū al-'Abbās 'Abd Allāh b. Tāhir from the districts and administrative regions was 44,846,000 dirhams. Of riding beasts, 13 head; of sheep, 2000; of Ghuzz prisoners, 2000 head to the value of 600,000 dirhams and of *kundajī* cloths 1,187 pieces and of *murūr* (?) and iron plates 1,300 pieces cut in half.¹⁰⁶

One can see at a glance that Muqaddasī's text is an abbreviated, if somewhat confused, copy of his predecessor's summary of Khurasani taxation. It is evident that the text to which Muqaddasī referred for the original *kharāj* of Khurasan was Ibn Khurradādhbih's list of Khurasani taxes.

What then does a comparison of the two Transoxanian tax lists tell us? Muqaddasī's passage on the taxes of Transoxania appears, at first sight, to be very different to Ibn Khurradādhbih's in formal terms. It is much shorter, lacking the itemised data on Khurasan which precedes it in the earlier text, at least in the manuscript which de Goeje selected as the *aṣl* (the main manuscript for his edition). However the Khurasani data is found in a second Muqaddasī manuscript (Ms C.), as de Goeje notes in a footnote, a point to which we will return below. Second, while Ibn Khurradādhbih begins with Khwarazm and ends his main text with the Turkish towns in the east, Muqaddasī organises his data beginning in the east, with Farghana, and running westwards to end with Khwarazm. That said, however, there are striking correspondences between the figures, which have escaped the attention of all who have dealt with these texts, beginning with von Kremer in 1875, right up to the most recent articles on the subject by Davidovich.¹⁰⁷ Muqaddasī's list runs as follows:

As for the *kharāj*, Farghana is liable for 280,000 *muḥammadīs*, Shash for 180,000 *musayyabīs*, Khujanda, *by way of tithes?* (*min muqāta'at al-a'shār*), for 100,000 *musayyabīs*, Sogd, Kish, Nasaf and Ushrusana for 1,039,031 *muḥammadīs*, whereas the *kharāj* of Isfiyab is 4 *dānaqs* and a broom, which is sent to the Sultan every year with presents. The *kharāj* of Bukhara is 1,166,897 *ghitṛīfīs*. They were three brothers, Muḥammad, Musayyab and Ghitṛīf, who struck these dirhams, which are black like *fulus* and are only spent in Haytal (Transoxania), where they are preferred to white (coins = silver coins). The *kharāj* of Saghaniyan is 48,529 dirhams. Wakhkhan is liable for 40,000 (dirhams), Khwarazm for 420,120 of their *khwārazmī* dirhams, each of the latter being worth four *dānaqs* and a half. I found in a certain book that the original *kharāj* (*aṣl kharāj*) of Khurasan was 44,800,930 dirhams and 13 dirhams, 20 riding beasts, 2,000 sheep, 1,012 slaves and 1,300 pieces of woollen cloth and sheets of chain mail.¹⁰⁸

To begin with, a simple comparison of the totals given by the two lists raises the suspicion that Muqaddasī had made use of a version of Ibn Khurradādhbih's data, or of a source of data of common origin:

Region	Ibn Khurradādhbih	Muqaddasī
Farghana	280,000	280,000
Shash	607,000 (with mine)	180,000
Khujanda	100,000	100,000
Ushrusana	50,000	Included in the total for Sogd

not allow us to determine how closely he studied them. The crucial phrase is *yattaḥḥiqū ma'ānīhimā*, in the sense that the *ma'ānī* of both books corresponded with one another. The meaning of *ma'ānī* is open to question: Miquel (1963), gives "leur leçons" (their texts), while Muqaddasī (1994) opts for "their substance" and Montgomery (1995) gives "the topics". Montgomery's reading is the most cautious, suggesting that Muqaddasī perused the section headings but little else. Yet elsewhere in his introduction, Muqaddasī gives a detailed and highly critical assessment of Jayhānī's book, even though he does not explicitly acknowledge that he had read it from cover to cover. We can be reasonably confident that he would have studied Ibn Khurradādhbih's text closely.

¹⁰³ Montgomery (2005), p. 196.

¹⁰⁴ Muqaddasī (1906), p. 189.

¹⁰⁵ Muqaddasī (1906), p. 340.

¹⁰⁶ Ibn Khurradādhbih (1889), p. 39.

¹⁰⁷ Von Kremer (1875), p. 376, note 1, where Muqaddasī's figures are juxtaposed to the text of the Tahirid budget; Davidovich (1966) and elsewhere.

¹⁰⁸ Muqaddasī (1906), pp. 339–340.

Sogd etc	1,089,000	1,039,031
Isfiyab	(Non-Muslim in 222?)	Token payment + gifts
Bukhara	1,189,200	1,166,897
Saghaniyan	48,500	48,529
Wakhkhan	(?) 20,000	40,000
Khwarazm	489,000 (+ Gurganj?)	420,120

First we should note that in spite of the century and a half which separate the lists, and with a few exceptions, the tax districts are the same and every district pays its tax in the same denomination of Bukharkhuda dirham. Second, the totals themselves are close; in three cases (Farghana, Khujanda and Saghaniyan) they are the same (with a negligible difference of 0.06% in the latter case), while in Samanid capital, Bukhara, the difference is less than 2%. In other cases, the data is not as easy to compare because the two lists use slightly differing groups of regions. Nevertheless, the case of Sogd is striking. In Ibn Khurradādhbih's list Sogd is cited twice, the second time comprising lands outside the control of Nūh b. Asad and including the mine of Buttam, the salt mine of Kish, Nasaf, (the district of?) Buttam and other dependencies of Sogd. Muqaddasī has a slightly garbled version of Ibn Khurradādhbih's entry which lists Sogd, Kish, Nasaf and Ushrusana, but gives a figure, 1,039,031, which differs from his predecessor's by less than 5%. In some cases where the figures are further apart, such as Wakhkhan (100% difference) and Khwarazm (14%), there are doubts about Ibn Khurradādhbih's references.¹⁰⁹ In the case of Sogd, the difference may result from Ibn Khurradādhbih's inclusion in his figure of revenues from the prolific local silver mines.

One puzzling feature of Muqaddasī's list in de Goeje's edition is that it deals only with Transoxania, and not with Khurasan, though the Samanid state encompassed both regions. But as de Goeje notes in a lengthy footnote,¹¹⁰ in one Muqaddasī manuscript (Manuscript C) there is a long list of Khurasani towns with their tax totals, all written in numerals rather than words, following the list of Transoxanian tax assessments. Among these, one notes that some, including Sistan (947,000), Kabulistan (1,500,000), Khulm (12,000), and Balkh (193,300) have the same tax figures as in Ibn Khurradādhbih, though the remaining towns (ten in number) have different totals.¹¹¹

In sum, it seems reasonable to conclude from the statistical proximity of tax totals in these two texts which were written more than a century apart, that the younger text drew on a version of the older. As mentioned earlier, there were most likely several autograph copies of Ibn Khurradādhbih in existence during his lifetime. Given that much of the material that interests us consists of figures and given that these figures were probably recorded in numerals (which are more liable to miscopying than words) in some manuscripts (as is the case in Muqaddasī's Ms. C), it is reasonable to assume that differing versions of these lists of numbers proliferated fairly quickly after they were first written down. As Montgomery points out, it is a mistake to think that the process of textual diffusion always followed a well regulated pattern in the medieval Islamic world, beginning with a single "complete" authorial text, which was then adapted, epitomised, and abbreviated by other hands than the author's.¹¹² In fact, a more realistic model, which is particularly applicable in Ibn Khurradādhbih's case, would be to see the author himself as responsible for creating several variant texts during his lifetime, as he constantly updated, glossed, and corrected his original text. In these circumstances, one can easily imagine that lists of figures would be vulnerable to change, not only by virtue of scribal laxity and ineptitude, but because the author himself often chose to emend his own text. It is quite reasonable to assume that some of the cases in which Muqaddasī's totals do not match those of Ibn Khurradādhbih's arose from Muqaddasī's use of a version of his predecessor's text which is no longer extant.

Having established in principle that Muqaddasī did draw on Ibn Khurradādhbih, it is only fair to turn to those parts of Muqaddasī's list which do *not* find a close match in any extant version of Ibn Khurradādhbih's text and ask whether they might be reflections of current practice in the late 4th/10th century which Muqaddasī recorded and interpolated into the framework which he borrowed from Ibn Khurradādhbih. The two cases we will examine are those of Bukhara and Isfiyab.

As for Bukhara, we have already noted that the totals in the two books are fairly close (no more than 2% difference between them), but there are further points of interest. First, Muqaddasī's figure is more "precise" (1,166,897) than Ibn Khurradādhbih's, which is a "round number" (1,189,200). Second, a third text, the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* of Narshakhī (fl. 332 AH), gives an even more precise figure of 1,168,566 dirhams and five and one-half *dāngs* (= *dānaqs*), adding that this was the tax figure for Bukhara and its surrounding lands (*navāḥī*), specifically including Karmīna among these.¹¹³ The observation that both Muqaddasī and Narshakhī give more precise figures than Ibn Khurradādhbih may at first glance suggest that both later authors derived their data from contemporary sources of information, either documentary or oral, which would account for their precision. However, if we return to the comparison of Ibn Khurradādhbih and Muqaddasī's lists (above), one sees that in all those cases where the later author's figures differ from the earlier (Bukhara, Sogd, Saghaniyan, Khwarazm), each of these figures includes decimals and units, whereas Ibn Khurradādhbih's figures are all

¹⁰⁹ Wakhkhan is read as W-j-n in one manuscript. The sum for Khwarazm includes the town (?) of Kardar (?) (= Gurganj?), which may account for why it is given a higher total than Khwarazm (mentioned on its own) in Muqaddasī's text.

¹¹⁰ Muqaddasī (1906), p. 340, note d.

¹¹¹ Also of note in this passage from Manuscript C is a reference to "Qudāma" (b. Ja'far's *Kitāb al-kharāj*), whose tax figure for Sistan (3,811,000 dirhams) Muqaddasī mentions. While there are no direct correspondences between Muqaddasī's text and Qudāma b. Ja'far's (d. between 320–337 AH) text, the latter survives only in part. It may be that Muqaddasī incorporated data from the lost parts of Qudāma's book in his own work.

¹¹² Montgomery (2005), pp. 200–201.

¹¹³ Narshakhī (1351), p. 46; Narshakhī (1954), p. 33.

“rounded up”. In other words, precision (in the sense of detailed figures) is not a characteristic of Bukhara alone, but of nearly half of all the figures in Muqaddasī’s list. Furthermore, given that even the “precise” figures cited by Muqaddasī are statistically close to the more “rounded” equivalents in the printed text of Ibn Khurradādhbih, it seems more likely that Muqaddasī derived them, not from contemporary sources, but from a variant of Ibn Khurradādhbih’s list in which the original figures had been made more “precise”. Even in the printed edition of Ibn Khurradādhbih, we find evidence of some very “precise” figures (including decimals and units), as for example in the case of Marv al-Shāhijān.¹¹⁴

Narshakhī’s figure for Bukhara demands an explanation. We do not know of any instances where Narshakhī cites Ibn Khurradādhbih, although he did make use of early Islamic sources, like Madā’inī and Ibn al-A‘tham al-Kūfī. Narshakhī presented a copy of the Arabic text of his history of Bukhara to the Samanid ruler, Nūḥ b. Nasr in 332, the year after Nūḥ had come to the throne. From this information, we may assume that Narshakhī was to some extent familiar with the Samanid court environment. It was in that very court, during the reign of Nasr (d. 331 AH) that the wazīr Jayhānī (and possibly his son) compiled the great lost geography of the *Masālik* genre for which Jayhānī is principally known as an author.¹¹⁵ Jayhānī’s geography bore the same title as Ibn Khurradādhbih’s and is sometimes cited in conjunction with it, apparently because the form and content of both books were similar.¹¹⁶ Jayhānī is known to have cited extensively from Ibn Khurradādhbih’s book. Given the local renown of Jayhānī’s book, it is quite possible that Narshakhī would have drawn the data for Bukhara’s tax assessment from it. It may strike the reader as improbable that a Samanid wazīr would have ignored the information on Bukharan taxes held in the archives administered by his own scribes, in favour of data cited by an Iraqi Abbasid official, like Ibn Khurradādhbih. But this would be to ignore both the fact that in 222 AH the records for the tax assessment of Bukhara were kept in Tahirid Merv, not in Bukhara, and the fact that the Samanids only took over Bukhara in 260 AH. We should also bear in mind that the printed edition of the history of Bukhara is not the original Arabic text, but a later abridgement of a translation into Persian, written by Aḥmad Qubāwī in the 12th c. In these circumstances, it cannot be ruled out that the Bukharan tax figure was added after Narshakhī had compiled the original Arabic text. Finally, it should be noted that there is no reference to the dating of the information on the tax figure for Bukhara in Narshakhī’s text: the context is given as “in the time of the Samanid family and the Samanid amirs”, which could refer to any time from the beginning of the 3rd/9th century. The fact that the author notes that the tax of Bukhara was reduced in subsequent years suggests that the figure should be dated to the beginning of the dynasty’s reign.

As for Isfiyab, Muqaddasī notes that the ruler of the province sent no *kharāj* but a broom and four *dānaqs*, obviously a token payment. Historians have long assumed that the ruler of Isfiyab, who was in charge of a vital link in the ring of frontier provinces which protected Samanid Transoxania from the steppe, was granted remission of taxes in return for supplying troops to guard the frontier. Another passage in Muqaddasī’s book tells us that tax remission was granted to other client kings of the Samanids, some of whom, like the king of Khwarazm, also played an important role in securing the frontier with the steppe.¹¹⁷ The information concerning the tax of Isfiyab must relate to the late 10th century, rather than the early 9th century, because according to Sam’ānī the Samanids did not conquer the province until 225 AH: the province would not therefore have been in a position to remit any tribute, token or otherwise, in the years 221–222 AH.¹¹⁸ If one accepts the argument made above that most of Muqaddasī’s data was lifted unacknowledged from Ibn Khurradādhbih, the reference to Isfiyab stands out as the one piece of data which is definitely datable to Muqaddasī’s own time.

If this were true, modern readers might feel inclined to accuse Muqaddasī of aggravated plagiarism, and to charge him with inserting an observation drawn from his own experience in a passage consisting mainly of outdated material, perhaps with the intention of trying to fool his reader into believing that the whole passage consisted of information which dated to his own time. But this would infer too acute a preoccupation with chronology on Muqaddasī’s part and an exaggerated concern with his readers’ sensitivities that fits better with the sensibility of a reader of the 21st, rather than the 10th, century. Once again, at this point where the text itself poses problems that are impossible to solve on the basis of textual comparison alone, it makes sense to seek guidance from the broader setting of Muqaddasī’s book within the wider context of 10th c. geographical writing. Here we should take note of an important comment made by André Miquel, who pioneered the study of early Islamic geographical writing. In his *La géographie humaine* Miquel suggests that while all geographical writing shared certain features that set it apart from other literary activities, such as poetry and history, it was nevertheless like them a branch of *adab*, which one might define as the literature patronised by all Muslims who claimed a place among the cultural elite of their day. More recent commentators, including Montgomery, have begun to widen the scope of *adab* to include many genres of writing that had previously been regarded as lying outside the canon. The point is that individual geographical works can no longer easily be fitted into the narrow categories (e.g. administrative, climatic, social geography) which were established for them in the middle of the 20th century. To take Ibn Khurradādhbih himself as an example, Montgomery has recently argued that close study of the prefaces of the two printed editions of the text, suggests that different versions of the work prepared by the author served entirely different purposes, *and* that both versions of the work included passages which should be classified not as administrative geography, but as entertainment on the one hand, and pro-caliph legitimatory propaganda on the other.

¹¹⁴ Ibn Khurradādhbih (1889), p. 36. The figure quoted here is 66,144 dirhams and 3 *dānaqs* for the *akhlāf* of Marv.

¹¹⁵ See Pellat’s article in *EI* (2nd ed.) Supplement, “Djayhānī” for the theory that the geography was a family compilation, started by the wazīr and completed by his sons.

¹¹⁶ See above note 31, above, in which Muqaddasī states that he saw a full version of the work of one of these authors’ books (he was not certain which of the two composed it) as well as abridgements of both their books.

¹¹⁷ Muqaddasī (1906), p. 337.

¹¹⁸ Sam’ānī (1992), p. 26.

Similarly, one might suggest that nowadays it is no longer adequate to read Muqaddasī (even if one is only mining his work for information on monetary history) *just* as an eloquent observer of his own time, who took pains to distinguish between what he experienced (through his own senses) and what he read in books. In fact, Muqaddasī was liable to be attracted by the unknown, the inexplicable and the plain odd, just like his contemporaries, although it is true that he restricts to a bare minimum references to ‘*ajā’ib*’ (marvels) in his own work. Insofar as the taxation of Samanid Transoxania was concerned, I would suggest that Muqaddasī was probably not particularly interested in the tax figures for individual towns and cities in the Samanid state. As his introduction shows and the bulk of his text confirms, Muqaddasī was primarily interested in relaying his observations on the linguistic usages and social and political institutions of those parts of the Islamic world through which he travelled (i.e. eastwards from Egypt). I would imagine that having come across Ibn Khurradādhbih’s Tahirid tax register, he was intrigued by the curious coinage mentioned there and decided to include it in his book, because he was unaware that this coinage no longer played the same role that it had in the Tahirid period. Muqaddasī clearly knew nothing about Bukharkhuda dirhams or about their history. He makes no reference to seeing them himself, but does note, in a faint echo of Ibn Ḥawqal and Istakhri, that they were preferred to silver coinage in Transoxania.¹¹⁹ He also states that the three denominations were struck by three eponymous brothers, a sure indication that he was unaware of the complex history of the coinage. In other words, the “black dirhams” were for Muqaddasī a marvel (‘*ajība*’) which he read about. Having decided to put them in his book, he also added a few details of his own to the passage, like the reference to the Isfiyabi arrangements, and perhaps other details such as the observation that the tax derived from Khujanda was raised *min muqāta’at al-a’shār*.

Ibn Faḍlān and Ibn Ḥawqal on the Bukharkhuda dirham

The case for seeing Muqaddasī’s information on Transoxanian tax figures as an unacknowledged borrowing from Ibn Khurradādhbih has been made above. The argument is persuasive but not conclusive. At this point we turn to the eye-witness testimony of Ibn Faḍlān and Ibn Ḥawqal relating to the monetary functions of the Bukharkhuda dirham in Bukhara. Among other deductions to be made from their evidence, the most important is that this coinage formed a currency of low value and restricted circulation. As such it could not have played the role of a currency in which provincial taxation was remitted to the Samanid capital.

Ibn Faḍlān, a member of the caliph Muqtadir’s embassy to the king of the Volga Bulgars, spent some days in Bukhara in the year 310 AH, where he had an audience with the young Samanid amir, Nasr b. Ahmad, before setting off northwards on his journey to the Volga Bulgar king via Khwarazm. His is the only eye-witness evidence of Bukharan monetary history which can be precisely dated and is therefore of prime importance. The most significant element of his account is his statement that the *ghitrīfī* dirham was exchanged in Bukhara at the rate of 100: 1 silver dirham. Davidovich suggested that this figure was the result of a scribal mistake in the Mashhad manuscript in which it appears and amended it to 100: 100, placing the value of the *ghitrīfī* on a par with the silver dirham. For the present, we will proceed on the assumption that the figure in the Mashhad manuscript is correct.

Ibn Faḍlān also tells us that the *ghitrīfī* dirham was thoroughly debased, composed as it was of an alloy of several base metals, and that it was exchanged by the piece, not by weight, just as we would expect to be the case with a coin of little intrinsic value. He adds that the *ghitrīfī* had a particularly important role to play in specific forms of exchange, including the writing of bridal contracts in which the amount of the dowry was expressed in so many thousand *ghitrīfīs*, and the purchase of property and slaves. The reference to bridal contracts is significant on two counts. First, because it shows that the *ghitrīfī* was used as a money of account as well as a physical medium of exchange, suggesting that this was a coinage that was well entrenched in Bukharan society and may have played a symbolic as well as a financial role.¹²⁰ Second, because the expression “so many thousand *ghitrīfīs*” adds weight to the idea that this was a coin of low value, whose value in a bridal contract had to be expressed in multiples of a thousand.¹²¹ Were one to agree with Davidovich’s theory that the *ghitrīfī* was exchanged on a par with the silver drachm, one would have to accept that all Bukharan families which gave away dowries were exceptionally wealthy! The fact that the same currency was cited in documents certifying the purchase of the two most expensive commodities which most Bukharans would ever own, property and slaves, confirms the evidence that the *ghitrīfī* was well established in the Bukharan monetary system.¹²² It is not known whether in the case of property and slaves, the *ghitrīfī* served both as a medium of exchange *and* as a money of account. Ibn Faḍlān’s description of the metal content of the coin and its value against the silver dirham proves beyond doubt that he saw these coins in circulation in Bukhara.

Ibn Faḍlān also gives information on other types of debased coinage which he found circulating in Bukhara, but these are not easy to attribute. He describes two other types of “copper dirhams”, the first of which was exchanged at a rate of 40

¹¹⁹ Muqaddasī (1906), p. 400; Ibn Ḥawqal (1939), p. 490.

¹²⁰ Ibn Faḍlān makes no further comment on the link between the *ghitrīfī* and the marriage contract, but it is legitimate to speculate that at some time during the marriage ceremony, *ghitrīfī* coins would have been exchanged as the dowry was handed over to the bride or her family.

¹²¹ The Arabic is *tazawwaja fulān b. fulān fulāna bint fulān ‘alā kadhā wa kadhā alf dirham ghitrīfīyya*. Togan translates this correctly (p. 9) as “...für so and so viel tausend Gītrīfī-Dirhems”, but Kovalevskii (p. 122) omits the multiple: “za stol’ko-to i stol’ko-to dirkhemov gitriifii”.

¹²² Ibn Faḍlān (1939), p. 6 (Arabic text): *wa kadhālika ayḍan shirā’ ‘aqārihim wa shirā’ ‘abādihim lā yadhkirūna ghayrahā min al-darāhim*. The use of the verb *dhakira* is to be understood in the sense that purchase values for these commodities were expressed in this currency in documentation relating to the sale.

per *dānaq* (1/6 of a dirham),¹²³ thus 240: 1 silver dirham, the second, which he says was called the “Samarqandī”, at a rate of 6 per *dānaq*, thus 36: 1 silver dirham. He calls these coins *darāhim ākhar safar* (“other copper dirhams) implying a resemblance to the preceding *ghitrīfī*. One might therefore be tempted to identify both as Bukharkhuda “black dirhams”, *muḥammadī* and *musayyabī* respectively. But the rate for the first type is so much lower than the *ghitrīfī* that one wonders whether Ibn Faḍlān was in fact describing a copper *fals*, perhaps one of the prolific *fals* issues of Bukhara datable to the years 302–308 AH. The “Samarqandī” type would, if one follows the same argument, be identifiable as a *fals* of Samarqand, which was struck in quantities from the late 3rd/9th century. The theory that Ibn Faḍlān is here discussing *fulūs* rather than Bukharkhuda dirhams is particularly attractive in the light of evidence for the existence of a sexagesimal fractional system for copper coinage which appears to have operated in the late Sasanian period and was taken over into the early Islamic copper coinage of Eastern Iran, several types of which express their value against the dirham sexagesimally.¹²⁴ Although no Samanid *fulūs* bear inscriptions denoting their value against the dirham, they may have continued the sexagesimal value system of the earlier copper coins of the region. Against this identification lies the fact that Ibn Faḍlān’s text uses the term “dirham” for these types, rather than *fals*. On the other hand, Ibn Faḍlān also writes of a *musayyabī* dinar in another context, a term which is almost certainly mistaken, since there were no local gold coins struck at the time that the governor Musayyab b. Zuhayr (160s AH) was governor of Khurasan.¹²⁵ The question remains open: was Ibn Faḍlān, or a later scribe, lax in the use of monetary terminology, or were all three denominations of Bukharkhuda dirhams in circulation at different rates of exchange in Bukhara at the beginning of the 4th/10th century?¹²⁶

Ibn Ḥawqal’s evidence on Bukharan money, though not as precisely datable, does at least confirm that more than one denomination of Bukharkhuda dirham was in circulation in the city in the 10th century. He gives us the crucial evidence that these coins were indeed of figural type and that they were struck by the predecessors of the Āl Sāmān, in other words, by the Abbasid governors of Transoxania. He does not state the rate of exchange, but does say that all three denominations of Bukharkhuda dirham were known. He puts the *ghitrīfī* at the beginning of his account, bearing out Ibn Faḍlān’s account that it was the most common of the three, but also makes reference to the circulation of the *muḥammadī*. He supplies invaluable evidence about the Samanids’ attitude towards the use of this coinage, stating that Abū Ibrāhīm (Ismā‘īl b. Aḥmad) the Samanid (d. 295 AH) “believed that the use of silver (dirhams of caliphal standard) was more appropriate than (the use of) these dirhams and was the first to strike them (Samanid dirhams) in Mā warā’ al-nahr”.¹²⁷ From this we learn that Ismā‘īl intended to replace the highly-valued Bukharkhuda “black dirhams” at the end of the 3rd/9th century, with a high quality silver coinage of his own issue. The numismatic evidence confirms that from the late 270s Ismā‘īl did begin striking silver coinage in his own name, in the mints of Shash and Samarqand. The hoard evidence shows that in the 4th/10th century, the Samanid silver dirham dominated the regional monetary stock.¹²⁸

The evidence of Ibn Faḍlān and Ibn Ḥawqal demonstrates however that, at least in Bukhara, the Bukharkhuda dirham continued to circulate, albeit at a much lower rate against the dirham than it had in the 3rd/9th century. Ibn Ḥawqal was probably reporting directly from his personal observations in the early part of the second half of the 10th c. (although there is no guarantee that his account is not datable to an earlier period). The fact that *ghitrīfī* and *muḥammadī* dirhams were still in circulation at that period shows that Ismā‘īl’s dirham issue had made little impact on the monetary stock of Bukhara. The reason for this is not hard to find: although several other mints in Transoxania and Khurasan (principally Samarqand, Shash, Balkh and Andaraba) produced Samanid dirhams in quantities, Bukhara itself produced no silver coinage until the mid-330s. Furthermore, Bukhara produced little copper coinage before the beginning of the 4th/10th century. Thus, there was a real need for local coinage in Bukhara and it was this gap that was filled by the *ghitrīfī* dirham. One can only assume that the Bukharkhuda dirham remained so profoundly entrenched in the Bukharan economy by the 330s, that even the copious silver issues of Bukhara which began in this decade failed to dislodge the old-style coinage.

As one might expect from the late date at which the Bukharan mint was opened, the configuration of the monetary system in Bukhara appears to have been unique to that city. Elsewhere, Samanid silver played an important role from the time it was introduced. Ibn Ḥawqal’s brief notice on the money of Samarqand proves that monetary circulation in that city followed a different pattern. There the “Ismā‘īlī” dirham formed the backbone of the currency, being exchanged both as whole coins and in fragments. There, too, Bukharkhuda dirhams played a role, albeit a minor one. Ibn Ḥawqal tells us that the *muḥammadī* dirham which circulated in Samarqand was “*min nuqūd bukhārā*” (“of the coinage of Bukhara”), a clear reference to the fact that this coinage originated in Bukhara and not in Samarqand.¹²⁹ Its use in Samarqand can be explained by the close commercial links between the two cities, particularly in relation to trade with the steppe lands to the north and east, in which slaves played a key role.

To sum up, the testimony of these two authors, both eye-witnesses to life in Samanid Transoxania, reveals two important conclusions about Bukharkhuda dirhams in the 4th/10th century. First, that their use was mainly restricted to the city of Bukhara. Second, that they were a low denomination currency, and that they fulfilled the function of a money of account in

¹²³ For the meaning of *dānaq* in this context, see Ibn Faḍlān (1939), p. 112.

¹²⁴ See for example the *fals* of Balkh with the inscription *sittīn wa thalāthmi’a bi al-dirham* (at least five specimens in the collection of the Forschungsstelle für islamische Numismatik, Tübingen, including coin nos. 93–17–1 to 93–17–4).

¹²⁵ Ibn Faḍlān (1939), p. 29 (German translation) and p. 16 (Arabic text).

¹²⁶ Togan (1939), p. 112, opts for the identification of these three types as “black dirhams”.

¹²⁷ Ibn Ḥawqal (1939), p. 490/line 11–12.

¹²⁸ See Tables Two and Three below.

¹²⁹ Ibn Ḥawqal (1873), pp. 373–374; Ibn Ḥawqal (1939), p. 500.

written contracts. Other local coinages of pre-Islamic style also continued to play a role in parts of Samanid Transoxania, as they had in the Umayyad and early Abbasid empires. Ibn Faḍlān tell us that he encountered Khwarazmian dirhams in Khwarazm, though he does not tell us what their value was.¹³⁰ He adds the intriguing remark that the moneychangers of Khwarazm sold dice and spinning tops as well as dirhams. We should not deduce from this that Khwarazmian moneychangers, imaginative entrepreneurs though they were, developed a sideline in the sale of childrens' toys, but rather that these items probably played a role as monetary tokens. This underlines an ever-present, but often neglected, fact of commercial life in the medieval world, which was the constant scarcity of specie, particularly in regions like Khwarazm, where vigorous commercial contacts greatly stimulated demand for money in whatever form it could be provided. This chronic lack of coin sustained a constant demand for non-standard forms of local coinage.

It must be said that the conclusions reached in this paper thus far do go against the consensus of opinion regarding the function of Bukharkhuda dirhams, as expressed by Russophone numismatists over the past century. While I would prefer to let my arguments be considered on their merits by readers of this article and do not wish to engage at this stage in a point by point refutation of views contrary to those expressed in this paper, I must however confront with one further problem that arises as soon as my reconstruction is considered in the light of the published numismatic record of Samanid Transoxania.

The consensus view holds that there were two types of silver coinage under the Samanids: high-quality Samanid dirhams which served as an export coinage that was exchanged for valuable goods like slaves and furs on the northern trade routes and debased Bukharkhuda dirhams which served as an internally circulating silver currency. The northwards drain of good silver coin, so it is said, was of such magnitude that it created a shortage of silver coinage in Transoxania, a fact that is apparently borne out by the paucity of hoard finds containing Samanid dirhams in Central Asia. The lack of high-quality silver coinage created a demand for debased Bukharkhuda dirhams which were employed throughout Transoxania, both as a medium of commercial exchange and for the payment of regional taxes to the Samanid government.

The key point in this argument is the statement that there are very few hoards of Samanid silver in Central Asia. But in fact there are substantial numbers of Samanid Central Asian dirham hoards, including some published in journals which have remained inaccessible to the majority of non-Russian numismatists, as well as several as yet unpublished hoards. On the basis of this evidence, I conclude that Samanid dirhams did indeed circulate in Samanid Transoxania. I will also draw attention to the fact, already noted in the literature but not sufficiently emphasised, that the Samanid era is the only period between the 6th–13th centuries in which there is a glaring absence of datable hoards of Bukharkhuda coinage. These two observations, when considered together, support the conclusions that I have derived from the textual evidence regarding the monetary role of the Bukharkhuda dirhams.

Dr Anvar Atakhodjaev, my colleague in the Samarkand Archaeological Institute, has very generously supplied me with the information in Table 2 about hoards of Samanid dirhams found in Central Asia.¹³¹ The theory that the Samanid silver dirham coinage was intended primarily as an export coinage to serve the trade to the northern lands cannot be sustained in the light of this new data, which includes a substantial number of large Central Asian dirham hoards, some of which contain quantities of previously unrecorded fragments. Thomas Noonan, a major exponent of the theory that Samanid dirhams constituted an export coinage, bases his conclusions on a direct comparison of the total number of dirhams found in the northern hoards versus the much smaller total number in Central Asian hoards.¹³² Such direct numerical comparison fails to take account either of the different hoarding practices in medieval Russia and Central Asia, or of the general rates of recovery of coin hoards in the two regions. In Central Asia a sophisticated monetary system constrained the numbers of hoards, whereas in some regions of 10th century Russia, hoarding was the principal means of securing stores of wealth.¹³³

¹³⁰ Ibn Faḍlān (1939), p. 12 (German translation) and p. 7 (Arabic text), states that the debased Khwarazmian drachms weighed 4 ½ *dānaqs* but does not give their rate against the dirham.

¹³¹ Dr Atakhodjaev is currently preparing a publication of the unpublished hoards listed in Table Two. I am extremely grateful to him for making this preliminary list available to me in advance of his publication.

¹³² Noonan (1988), p. 433–435 lists 9 Samanid dirham hoards from Central Asia and states "...the number of dirhams involved (i.e. recorded in Central Asian hoards) is unquestionably small. The vast majority of Sāmānid dirhams were exported abroad, primarily to European Russia." For a recent endorsement of Noonan's views, see Kovalev (2001), pp. 250 and 268.

¹³³ In a more recent article, Noonan (2000) did begin to explore the patterns of dirham hoarding in different Russian regions. He came to the conclusion (see pp. 386–7) that the relative lack of hoards of 10th c. dirhams in the Upper Volga region was, paradoxically, probably the result of the intensive trade which developed in that region as a consequence of the influx of Samanid dirhams to Volga Bulgar. Thus he equated intensification of trade with a relative absence of dirham hoarding on the grounds that increased trade led to an increase in business investment and a consequent decrease in hoarding. One needs to apply this model to every region in which Samanid dirhams circulated (in Central Asia as well as the northern lands) in order to come to a balanced view of the numerically disparate evidence presented by the hoards of both regions.

Table 2: Samanid dirham hoards in Central Asia

<i>Location and date of discovery</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Total contents (Samanid unless otherwise identified) (whole dirhams and fragments)</i>
Samarkand, 1926 ¹³⁴	–357 (<i>tpq</i>)	29
Samarkand, 1928 ¹³⁵	295?–365?	300 + 2.5kg of fragments (of which only 154 have been examined)
Tashkent, 1928 ¹³⁶	273–317	6
Tashkent, 1938 ¹³⁷	?	2 (whole) + 142 fragments (Abbasid, Saffarid, Samanid)
Samarkand, 1940 ¹³⁸	371–378	15 (counterfeit Samanid dirhams)
Chinaz (Tashkent distr.), 1960 ¹³⁹	?	More than 1800 (mainly Samanid, also Buyid and Ziyarid)
Samarkand 1968 ¹⁴⁰	365-77	15 + 184 Samanid fulus
Altyntepe (Kashkadarya distr.), 1975 ¹⁴¹	Samanid component (294–314)	976 (4 whole, rest fragments) Arab-Sasanian, Umayyad, Abbasid, Saffarid, Samanid
Abyrlyg (Tashkent), 1976 ¹⁴²	Samanid component (309–370)	144 (over half are fragments) Abbasid (1), Samanid (77) (309–370), Qarakhanid (1)
Tashkent distr. 1976 ¹⁴³	Samanid component (357–364)	Approx. 150 (of which 18 dirhams examined)
Kashkadarya distr., 1994(?) ¹⁴⁴	Samanid component (314–370)	45 Samanid, Buyid, Ziyarid, of which 40 Samanid
Samarkand distr. 1997 ¹⁴⁵	317–348	48
Kashkadarya distr.(?), 1997 ¹⁴⁶	Samanid component (325–379)	50–60, of which 12 Samanid dirhams examined
Duniatepe (Kashkadarya distr.), 1999 ¹⁴⁷	292–305	Approx. 20 (including whole dirhams and fragments)
Turkmenistan, near Marw(?), 1999 ¹⁴⁸	Examined component 318–374	Approx. 100 of which 30 examined
Kashkadarya distr., near Shahrisabz, 2001 ¹⁴⁹	253?- 284	336 + approx 7500 fragments, including Arab-Sasanian, Umayyad, Abbasid, Saffarid, Banijurid, Samanid (which comprise 10% of the total of whole coins and 30–40% of the fragments)

Turning now to Bukharkhuda dirham hoards, one notes the complete absence of such hoards which can be dated to the Samanid period. Table 3 lists the main publications of these hoards from the period dating from the mid–8th century AD to the 13th century.¹⁵⁰

¹³⁴ Ernazarova and Kochnev (1977), p.134.

¹³⁵ Ernazarova and Kochnev (1977), p.134.

¹³⁶ Kochnev (1996), p. 36.

¹³⁷ Atakhodjaev (1993), p. 11.

¹³⁸ Ernazarova and Kochnev (1977), p.138.

¹³⁹ Unpublished.

¹⁴⁰ Unpublished.

¹⁴¹ Atakhodjaev (1993), pp.12-13.

¹⁴² Kochnev (1996), pp. 37-38.

¹⁴³ Kochnev (1996), p. 38.

¹⁴⁴ Kochnev (1996), p. 38.

¹⁴⁵ Atakhodjaev (2000).

¹⁴⁶ Atakhodjaev (2000).

¹⁴⁷ Kochnev (1996), p. 38.

¹⁴⁸ Atakhodjaev (2000).

¹⁴⁹ Unpublished.

Table 3: Hoards containing Bukharkhuda dirhams¹⁵¹

<i>Findspot</i>	<i>TPQ (AH) series</i>	<i>Contents</i>
1 Panjikent ¹⁵²	160? ¹⁵³	BK drachm 1
2 Panjikent ¹⁵⁴	160?	BK dirham 9 (Type 1 [1], Type 2 [1], Type 3 [7]) BK drachm 5 (no listing of BK dirham contents).
3 Vashan ¹⁵⁵ (Zarafshan valley)	160?s	BK drachm 63 BK dirham 62 (Type 1 [3], Type 2 [31], type 3 [28]) UM 58 (latest date-126 AH) AB 1 (133 AH)
4 Leninabad ¹⁵⁶ (Khojend)	396	BK dirham 2 QR 6
5 Ferghana ¹⁵⁷	399	BK dirham 13 SM 1 (AE) (954 AD) QR 397 (latest coins dated 398 AH)
6 Munchaktepe ¹⁵⁸ (Kashka darya province)	415	BK dirhams 10 (Type 3) QR (Unknown quantity)
7 Beshiktepe ¹⁵⁹ (Samarqand prov.)	433	BK dirhams 4000 (Type 3 [3500] Type 10 [500]) QR (unknown quantity).
8 Miankale ¹⁶⁰ (Samarqand prov.)	Mid 5th c. AH?	BK dirham 498 (Type 3 [365], Type 10 [133])
9 Samarqand ¹⁶¹	483	BK dirham 141 (Type 10 [3] + ?) QR (Unknown quantity).
10 Kolkhodz Varganzi ¹⁶² (Kashka Darya prov.)	483	BK dirham 1182 (Type 10 [16] + ?) QR (Unknown quantity)
11 Afrasiyab ¹⁶³ (Samarqand)	late 6th- early 7th c.	BK dirham 168 (Type 10 [15] + ?)
12 Afrasiyab ¹⁶⁴ (Samarqand)	late 6th- early 7th c.	BK dirham 150 (Type 10 [27] + ?)
13 Khojend ¹⁶⁵ (Leninabad)	Unknown	BK dirham 2000 (Type 3 [4]).
14 Khojend ¹⁶⁶		BK dirham ? (Type 3 "several unknown specimens")
15 Karamazarski Mts ¹⁶⁷ (Leninabad prov.)	Unknown	BK dirham 9 (All type 3)

Table 3 calls for comment. Although the hoard evidence demonstrates that the Bukharkhuda coinage did not circulate outside Transoxania, it does not give us an accurate picture of the overall circulation patterns of the series within Transoxania. The reason for this is that many of the hoards have come to light during the excavation of ancient sites, notably

¹⁵⁰ This table was compiled for an unpublished conference paper I gave on Bukharkhuda dirhams in Tübingen University some 15 years ago. Since I have been unable to update the data in the course of writing the present paper, there may well be hoards which have been discovered in the last decade and a half which should be added to the table.

¹⁵¹ **BK**= Bukharkhuda drachms and dirhams; **UM**=Umayyad; **AB**=Abbasid; **SM**=Samanid; **QR**=Qarakhanid.

¹⁵² Davidovich (1979), hoard no. 21, pp. 85-88. Previously published in Smirnova (1963), pp. 57-72.

¹⁵³ According to Smirnova, the *tpq* of this hoard is established by the date of the destruction of the city of Panjikent which occurred at the end of the third quarter of the 8th century AD

¹⁵⁴ Davidovich (1979), hoard no. 24, p. 118.

¹⁵⁵ Davidovich (1979), hoard no. 23, pp. 92-117. The hoard originally numbered some 400 coins of which Davidovich was able to study fewer than 200.

¹⁵⁶ Davidovich (1966), p. 123.

¹⁵⁷ Davidovich (1966), p. 123 refers to an archival record of this hoard written by Tiesenhansen in 1894.

¹⁵⁸ Kochnev (1990), p. 55.

¹⁵⁹ Kochnev (1990), p. 55.

¹⁶⁰ Kochnev (1990).

¹⁶¹ Kochnev (1990), p. 55.

¹⁶² Kochnev (1990), p. 56

¹⁶³ Kochnev (1990), p. 56. This hoard was mistakenly identified by T.S. Noonan as a hoard of regular caliphal dirhams in "When and how dirhams first reached Russia: a numismatic critique of the Pirenne theory", *Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique*, vol. xxi, July-Dec 1980, appendix iv, hoard 4, p. 464.

¹⁶⁴ Kochnev (1990), p. 56-57.

¹⁶⁵ Davidovich (1979), hoard no. 25, p. 118, referring to an archival reference to this hoard which was discovered in 1867.

¹⁶⁶ Davidovich (1979), hoard no. 26, p. 118. The coins were found in 1929 and considered to comprise a hoard by M.E. Masson.

¹⁶⁷ Davidovich (1979), hoard no. 27, p. 118.

Panjikent and Afrasiyab. On the other hand, there are sufficient numbers of random finds of hoards to indicate that the coinage did circulate outside the urban areas of the region. The concentration of finds in Samarqand and the Kashka Darya region, to the south of Samarqand, is noticeable. The absence of finds in the region of Bukhara may appear to be remarkable, but it is generally true that there have been few finds of Islamic coins from the area, a fact which is partly explained by the lack of archaeological excavations, but nevertheless remains a curiosity.

The first ten of these fifteen hoards are securely dated by their authors to two periods, the latter half of the 8th century and the 11th century AD. The two hoards from Afrasiyab are tentatively dated to the late 12th-early 13th century: the evidence for this dating is not given by Kochnev, but presumably relies on the archaeological context in which the hoards were discovered.¹⁶⁸

It is remarkable that there are no hoards which are securely datable to the 9th and 10th centuries, although it is possible (though not provable) that some of the hoards without a *tpq* (nos. 13-15) were deposited during this period. Such a marked absence of hoard material from the Samanid period contrasts strikingly with the evidence for the later Qarakhanid period and suggests that the Bukharkhuda dirham could not have been a widely circulating currency under the Samanids, let alone the sole monetary medium in which the state collected its taxes.

Conclusions

This paper has restricted itself to the circulation, value and monetary function of the Bukharkhuda dirham in the Samanid period. However, there is one other major issue which needs to be considered before this enigmatic coinage can be properly understood. That is the question of the composition of the alloy from which the coins were made and the course of the process of the debasement which these dirhams suffered. Several authors, including Narshakhī (and/or the redactor of Narshakhī's history, Qubavi), Ibn Ḥawqal, Bīrūnī, Gardīzī and Sam'ānī mention that this alloy was composed of many different metals.¹⁶⁹ Metallurgical analysis will have to be conducted on an adequate sample of this coinage before a judgement can be made on the information found in these texts. Further study will also be required to understand the process of debasement of these dirhams which probably only began in earnest during the early Abbasid period.¹⁷⁰

My conclusion is that the textual and numismatic evidence combine to overturn the current consensus that the Bukharkhuda dirhams formed the most important element in the monetary stock of Samanid Transoxania and that the Samanids collected taxes in this coinage. In fact, as Ibn Ḥawqal himself notes, Samanid taxes were raised and spent in (Ismā'īl) dirhams.¹⁷¹

On the contrary, Bukharkhuda coinage was limited in its purchasing power and its circulation. While it may well have continued to play an important state-wide role throughout much of the 3rd/9th century, as soon as Ismā'īl the Samanid began producing Samanid silver dirhams, the old coinage began to lose ground. Only in Bukhara, whose mint only came into full operation half a century after the first Samanid dirhams were struck by Ismā'īl, did the use of Bukharkhuda coinage persist. In Bukhara, the Bukharkhuda dirhams remained embedded in the local monetary stock in the half century up to the 330s AH and probably continued in use even after the Bukhara mint began producing Samanid dirhams. If Ibn Ḥawqal's data on Bukhara is contemporary with his visit to Transoxania (mid-10th century), as we may assume it to be, it appears that the Bukharkhuda coinage continued to dominate the currency of the city for many years after the opening of the mint, no doubt because the population had become so accustomed to its use that they were unwilling to give it up and the Samanid amirs did not judge it to be in their own interests to insist that they did so.

As already noted, I decided to re-examine this question because I found it hard to believe that the Samanid state, which produced a high-quality silver coinage, would have allowed complex local systems of coinage to dominate its monetary system, let alone provide the main medium through which it collected provincial revenues. It must be admitted however, that no medieval monetary system was monolithic in character: in every state local practices competed with the state's coinage to some degree. In Samanid Transoxania we see evidence for this in Khwarazm as well as Bukhara. As is well known, Samanid silver dirham production also varied enormously through time and space. Khurasani dirhams were different in many ways to those of Transoxania; and the precious metal content of Samanid dirhams, as well as their appearance, began to change for the worse in the first decades of the 4th/10th century so that by the end of the century, several mints were producing severely debased coins. Nevertheless, it seems that it was only in the Qarakhanid period, and possibly only as late as the 6th century, that the Bukharkhuda dirham was called back into service as a major component of the Transoxanian monetary system. Qubavi tells us that in 522 AH, the *ghitrīfī* dirham was valued at 70:100 silver dirhams. The onset of the silver "crisis",

¹⁶⁸ Kochnev (1990), p. 56 refers to Shishkina, G.V., *Gorodskoi kvartal vii-xi vv. na severo-zapade Afrasiaba/Afrasiab*, vol. ii, Tashkent, 1973, p. 121 (unavailable to me).

¹⁶⁹ Sam'ānī (1979), pp. 57–58; Narshakhī (1954), pp. 35–36; Bīrūnī (1936): Gardīzī (1347), p. 128. See Davidovich (1997) for the most recent summary of the problems surrounding the metallic composition of these coins.

¹⁷⁰ An indication of the complexity of the textual problems can be gauged by comparing two passages in Narshakhī. On the one hand, Narshakhī tells us that Ghitrīf b. 'Aṭā' introduced debased Bukharkhuda dirhams to the region of Bukhara (Narshakhī [1351], pp. 49–52 and [1954], pp. 35–37). On the other hand, we are told that in 260 AH, when Ismā'īl the Samanid occupied Bukhara, his opponent, Ḥusayn b. Ṭāhir, "seized the entire tax of Bukhara, all in Ghidrīfī dirhams. He had them piled in the court and wanted to convert (melt) them all to silver but did not have time." (Narshakhī [1351], p. 107 and [1954], p. 78). The second account implies that the *ghitrīfī* dirhams in the possession of Ḥusayn b. Ṭāhir had a substantial silver content, whereas in the first passage Narshakhī states that Ghitrīf had debased the coinage to the extent that it turned black and was rejected by the Bukharans.

¹⁷¹ Ibn Ḥawqal (1939), p. 469 (the amount was 40 million dirhams annually).

which only took hold in Transoxania in the course of the 11th c. AD,¹⁷² appears to have forced a return to the status quo of the early 9th century, when a severe lack of silver coin necessitated the creation of a token coinage, based on a design that had originated in 5th century Marv, to fill the gap left by the absence of high-quality silver coin.

The final word should go to Mas'ūdī, one of the most acute commentators on geographical writing in the 10th c. and himself a towering figure in the genre. The present paper has highlighted once again the well-known fact that numerals in ancient texts are notoriously fluid. Mas'ūdī was keenly aware of the folly of quoting tax figures in geographical works, given the rapidity with which tax assessments changed through time. In his *Murūj al-dhahab*, he berates Ibn Khurrādādhbih himself for including these figures in his description of Iraq, in the following terms:¹⁷³

Now there is no useful benefit in knowing distances and route, since that is what couriers and letter- and map-bearers¹⁷⁴ do. He (Ibn Khurrādādhbih) also mentions that the tax (*kharāj*) of the cantons of al-Iraq amount to such and such a sum of money, *though this is something which can increase or decrease, can grow or diminish, according to conditions and with the passage of time.* (my italics)

Mas'ūdī, like many of his fellow writers, sometimes criticised the work of his predecessors harshly, no doubt the better to illustrate the scale of his own contribution to the genre. But modern historians ignore his warning at their peril.

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¹⁷² See Noonan (1987) for the beginning of the silver crisis in the Islamic lands.

¹⁷³ I take the citation and translation from Montgomery (2005), p. 189.

¹⁷⁴ "Bearers of mail-bags" is a more accurate translation of *aṣḥāb al-kharā'iq* than "map-bearers." I thank Adam Silverstein for this correction.

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ANOTHER VISIT TO MESHORER'S ENIGMATIC COIN

Charlie Karukstis

This "series", of which the coin shown in Fig. 1 is an example, was first visited by the author almost eight years ago at the 1999 ANS Arab-Byzantine Forum in Washington. Several new examples had been acquired in the years preceding, and, with the duly increased census, the coins were examined in the light of earlier analyses by de Saulcy, Walker, Qedar and particularly by Yaacov Meshorer in an important article in 1966 entitled "An Enigmatic Arab-Byzantine Coin".¹⁷⁵ The conclusions from that earlier foray were minimal: the coins were likely related in terms of source, meaning Tiberias, and the use of the Greek **KAON** was a conscious attempt by an "authority" to ensure standards. The bigger questions of the usefulness of epigraphic interpretation and the role of any central authority in striking these coins were avoided, in anticipation of more examples appearing.



Fig. 1: Umayyad Imperial Image Coin, probably minted at Tiberias. Obv: standing emperor holding long cross and globus cruciger, to l. downwards TIBEPHAC. Rev: Cursive m with cross above, blundered legend approximating to KAAN – XAAEA either side, BON (retrograde) in exergue, 4.45g. 2h. (approx. twice actual size).

The objectives of this update are to review the candidacy of possible new examples, as well as assess whether sufficient new information exists to examine earlier conclusions.

Mysteries and Near Misses

In review, the original census of coins is nine: the two examples in Jena (Walker J.4 and J.5), the coin in the Bibliothèque Nationale, the coins published by Meshorer and Qedar, and the four examples included in the original 1999 paper. There are

¹⁷⁵F. de Saulcy, *Lettre a Baron de Slane*, Journal Asiatique Aug. – Sept. 1871 pp.199-211.

J. Walker, *A Catalogue of the Muhammadan Coins in the British Museum Vol. 2*, 1956, pp.46 – 48.

Y. Meshorer, "An Enigmatic Arab-Byzantine Coin", *Israel Numismatic Journal* 3, 1966, pp. 32-36.

S. Qedar, "Copper Coinage in Syria in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries AD", *Israel Numismatic Journal* 10, 1991, pp. 27-39.

no die links, and the connection between the coins has been maintained based on epigraphy, style and flan fabric. Since then six other coins, probably from the same series, have been published, all of which have rather blundered legends.¹⁷⁶

Another coin, unknown to the author at the time of the first survey but with some stylistic similarities to the series, appeared at auction in 1983 (Fig. 2), and interestingly bears a Kufic mint name on the obverse *tabariya*¹⁷⁷. Seven other coins, which are possible candidates for inclusion in the series were considered at the conference.



Fig. 2: Similar coin to Fig. 1, but with *tabariya* in Arabic upwards to the left of the obverse standing figure, 4.52g. (Bank Leu).

The seven new candidates offer no die linkages, and rely mainly on some strong stylistic similarities to justify consideration:

- The dies of one example are the same as the Bank Leu example mentioned above with the Kufic legend *tabariya* written upwards to the left of the standing figure. Although no exact matches for the Greek legends exist, and the flan is seemingly prepared in a manner similar to the known examples, but the weight (at 5.76 g rather much higher than other examples) and the elongated globus cruciger on the obverse raise questions. With no die linkages or contextual information allowing any direct association, the coin may be the product of another mint until proven otherwise.
- Another coin is included as an example of why stylistic association can be only one tool in the construction of mint sequences. Taken on its own, the reverse die shows a number of elements stylistically sympathetic with the nine known examples, but the obverse style is not compatible at all, and as such suggests no association.
- Two more coins present a similar quandary for different reasons. The obverse of the first is extremely similar to that of Meshorer's enigmatic coin: except for the border of the drapery and the headgear, the die uses similar depiction for other components, and the coin remains persuasive for reasons of style and flan preparation. The relationship becomes much less clear, though, when examining the reverse of this coin and of a closely related example. The style of these dies shares many more connections to another series, those coins bearing the legend *al-wafa lillah*, and it is difficult to surmise that one series is related to the other except through a possible common prototype.
- Two other additional coins are included as well to illuminate the pitfalls of epigraphic interpretation. While coins bearing a literal legend **BON** are scarce, there are no criteria which would suggest a connection to the current series.
- Finally, one last coin discussed is of potential interest due to the possible legend on the reverse, but the overall style, especially that of the obverse, preclude any real potential viability.

The bottom line is that, with the possible exception of one coin, no new coins stand out as additions to the present "series".

Is This Really a "Series"?

The century-and-a-half of analysis from De Saulcy to Meshorer and others has placed a high priority on mint attribution, and those numismatists certainly cannot be faulted in their desire to address a basic numismatic question. However, given a census of approximately seventeen examples, with no die linkages, where the style of the coin is largely derived and legends are usually heavily blundered, it is perhaps too optimistic to read anything literal into the legends on these coins.

Obverse mint names occur on a number of Umayyad Imperial Image coins (for example Scythopolis and Damascus), and, therefore, the literal interpretation of **TIBEPHIAOC** may not be so risky. Until better continuity of epigraphy can be demonstrated, however, interpretation of other legends, such as the use of **KALON** on Meshorer's example, must be regarded as very uncertain.

What are the Plausible Questions?

Given the paucity of examples, with the resulting lack of die linkages and statistically valid samples, it is probably at best conjectural to ask what information can be drawn from these coins. Given those vulnerabilities, there are a number of avenues that could and should be pursued in an effort to better understand the context of this "series".

- **Are the flans significant?** The planchets for these coins seem to be very well-prepared, if not consistent in metrology. No overstriking has been observed on any of these coins as well, even on most of the possible additions to the corpus

¹⁷⁶ T. Goodwin, *Arab-Byzantine Coinage*, 2005, p.38 Cat. 28.

N. Goussous, *Rare and unedited Umayyad copper coins*, 2004, pp. 397-398 Cats. 476-480.

¹⁷⁷ Bank Leu Auction 34, 11.10.83, lot 105.

- **Can die origins be traced from the drapery?** One of the better indicators of similar sources of non-die-linked coins could potentially be in the portraiture details on the obverses. Tendencies for celators to engrave drapery using similar markings may be helpful in isolating related coins, and these criteria could certainly be extended to other attributes usually lumped into the technique of “style”
- **Is metallurgical analysis useful?** While the coins under consideration do not display overstriking, so little is known of mint practices during this period that there is no base of knowledge against which to compare analytical information. Still, some association of material may be gleaned from a better understanding of the flans used.

Another Attempt at Conclusions

It has been a disappointment that, in the intervening years since the author’s 1999 paper, so few new examples of these coins have appeared. No new contextual information has been published, and as such perhaps it remains to be definitively proven that the earlier conclusions for these coins – their origin from Tiberias, their use of the word, etc. – remain valid. It is the opinion of the author that, at the present time, the best that can be gleaned from these few coins is that:

- The original nine coins and the six subsequently published examples are all related, but owe that association more to their flans and style than any epigraphic similarities
- The attribution to Tiberias remains contingent upon the larger question of whether Greek mint names on any Arab-Byzantine coins can be defended
- Until better knowledge of mint administration is understood, the use of any epigraphy – Greek, Kufic or otherwise – must be considered as non-definitive

It is unfortunate that, over an appreciable length of time, so little new knowledge about these coins has been gleaned. That deficiency, however, serves to strengthen the position that much of our knowledge will be gained from overall analysis of large quantities of these coins, and perhaps somewhat less from study of individual series. For now, at least, Meshorer’s coin does indeed remain enigmatic.

Addendum: At the Study Day, four additional examples of this type were provided for examination by other attendees. These new examples are still being studied, but they underscore the importance of these gatherings as a vehicle for new discovery.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE SOURCES FOR THE COINAGE OF JUSTIN II AND ITS IMITATIONS

Tasha Vorderstrasse

The coinage of Justin II (565 – 578) is interesting not only because it presents several innovations in both the gold and copper issues, but also because the coinage was discussed in both the historical and papyrological records. Further, the coinage was also imitated in the 7th century in Palestine, and there is considerable archaeological evidence for the circulation of Justin II’s coins and their imitations. These imitations can be divided into three categories: military mints, coins minted under the Persian occupation of Syria, and Arab-Byzantine coinage. Each of these issues will be discussed and where relevant, archaeological and hoard evidence will be brought in to understand better the coin circulation in these periods.

Justin II’s gold and copper coinage represents a departure from that of his predecessors. His gold coins depicted the geographical personification of Constantinople on the reverse,¹⁷⁸ while the copper coins showed him on the obverse with his wife Sophia.¹⁷⁹ Descriptions of these coins exist in two sources from the period: Dioscorus of Aphrodito and John of Ephesus. Dioscorus of Aphrodito is not well regarded now by historians,¹⁸⁰ but he had a prodigious literary output. This included a poem (P. Cairo Masp. I 67097 verso F) written when he lived in Antioch in Egypt praising an emperor. Unfortunately the name of the emperor and the date of the poem are missing, but the evidence argues that the papyrus was produced for the *adventus* of an image of Justin II at the city.¹⁸¹ The phrase,

¹⁷⁸ *DOC*: 1-11 (Constantinople mint), 138-142 (Antioch mint); J. M. C. Toynbee. “*Roma and Constantinopolis in Late-Antique Art from 365 to Justin II.*” In *Studies Presented to David Robinson on his Seventieth Birthday. Volume II*, ed. G. E. Mylonas and D. Raymond. St. Louis: Washington University (1953): 261, 269, 277, no. 124; C. C. Vermeule. *The Goddess Roma in the Art of the Roman Empire*. Cambridge, MA: Spink and Son Ltd. (1959): 47-48; S. MacCormack. “Roma, Constantinopolis, the Emperor, and his Genius.” *CQ* (1975): 147.

¹⁷⁹ *DOC*: 22-58 (copper from Constantinople), 64-85 (copper from Thessalonica), 92-115 (copper from Nicomedia), 117-135 (copper from Cyzicus), 150-160, 162-173, 175-184 (from Antioch), 197-201 (Carthage, busts only), 202-203 (full effigies from Carthage).

¹⁸⁰ J. Maspero. “Un dernier poète grec d’Égypte: Dioscore fils d’Apollôs.” *Revue des études grecques* 24 (1911): 472; H. I. Bell and W. E. Crum. “A Greek-Coptic Glossary.” *Aegyptus* 6 (1925): 177; H. I. Bell. “An Egyptian Village in the Age of Justinian.” *JHS* 64 (1944): 27-28; T. Viljamaa. *Studies in Greek Encomiastic Poetry of the Early Byzantine Period*. Helsinki: Helsingfors (1968): 32; A. Cameron. “*Pap. Ant.* III. 115 and the Iambic Prologue in Late Greek Poetry.” *CQ* 20 (1970): 121-122; A. Cameron. “Wandering Poets: A Literary Movement in Byzantine Egypt.” *Historia* 14 (1965): 509; B. Baldwin. “Dioscorus of Aphrodito and the Circus Factions.” *ZPE* 42 (1981): 285; B. Baldwin. “Dioscorus of Aphrodito: The Worst Poet of Antiquity.” In *Atti del XVII Congresso Internazionale di Papirologia*. Napoli: Central Internazionale per lo Studio del Papiri Ercolanesi (1984): 327, 331.

¹⁸¹ The issue of the dating of the text is very complicated and will be discussed in detail in the expanded version of this article, which will appear in *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*.

Χαιρε, ὀλοκοττινοπερίπατε ἀγγελόποσωπε,¹⁸² (Hail you whose angelic face circulates on the gold coin) which appears in the poem, would seem to refer to a gold coin of Justin II,¹⁸³ although whether or not Dioscorus had actually seen a gold coin of Justin II is another question. The purpose of the text, much like Corippus' panegyric of Justin II,¹⁸⁴ is to praise him. The other person who described the gold coinage of Justin II was John of Ephesus who is likely to have definitely seen them and who was certainly not interested in praising the emperor. He adopts a highly critical view of the coinage and states that people thought that the geographical personification of Constantinople on the reverse was Venus (*Ecclesiastical History*. Part III, Chapter 14, 140).¹⁸⁵ John of Ephesus' motives for describing the coinage in this way were probably influenced by his great dislike of Justin II. The fact is, however, that this reverse was never used again after Justin II died, which indicates that it might have truly been unpopular.



Fig. 1: Imitations of Nikomedea folles of Justin II. a: Syrian mint. Obv: Justin (l.) holding a globus cruciger and Sophia (r.) holding a cruciform scepter, seated on a double throne, around $\Delta\text{NIVSTI-NVS PP} \dots$. Rev: "M" with ANNO –Y either side and NIKO in exergue, 11.51g. 10h. This is a very close copy of an official Byzantine follis, but minted in Syria during the Persian occupation of the early seventh century. b: Scythopolis. Obv: as last, but legends replaced with the mint name $\text{CKY}\theta\text{O-}\Pi\text{O}\Lambda\text{HC}$. Rev: as last but year YII, 12.11g., 6h. An Umayyad Imperial Image coin minted at Scythopolis (modern Beth Shean in Israel) several decades after the Arab conquest, probably c. 680.

The imitation coinage of Justin II can essentially be divided into three categories: contemporary imitations, Persian imitations, and Arab-Byzantine imitations minted in Palestine. The contemporary coins need to be studied in more detail,¹⁸⁶ but the Persian imitations have received considerable attention from Pottier,¹⁸⁷ and the Arab-Byzantine imitations have been studied in detail. The Arab-Byzantine coins were struck in the jund of al-Urdunn at the mints of Scythopolis, Gerasa, and possibly Abila.¹⁸⁸ They usually imitated the type of Justin II coin struck at Nicomedia. It is clear when one looks at the excavation evidence from Jerash, Pella, and the smaller sites of Tell Jezreel and Capernaum (in addition to the Amman hoard as well as the Arab-Byzantine hoard published by Bates and Kovacs), that the percentage of coins of Justin II are unusually high in this region when compared with other Byzantine issues. In general, the mint of Nicomedia also dominates.¹⁸⁹ Given this large number of Byzantine issues of Justin II, it is not surprising that there were Arab-Byzantine issues imitating Justin II types. The main mint is Scythopolis/Beth Shean, which dominates, even at Jerash (which had its own mint).¹⁹⁰ The evidence from Beth Shan itself is problematic and very few coins in general have been preserved, none of them Arab-Byzantine imitations of this type.¹⁹¹

¹⁸² The text is reproduced here from J.-L. Fournet. *Hellénisme dans l'Égypte du VI^e siècle. La bibliothèque et l'oeuvre de Discore d'Aphrodite*. MIFAO 115. Cairo: IFAO (1999): No. 40. The *editio princeps* is P. Cairo Masp. I 67097.

¹⁸³ B. Baldwin. "Dioscorus of Aphrodito and the Circus Factions." *ZPE* 42 (1981): 285; L. McCoull. "Imperial Chairetismos of Dioscorus of Aphrodito." *JARCE* 1981: 43-46; J.-L. Fournet. *Hellénisme dans l'Égypte du VI^e siècle. La bibliothèque et l'oeuvre de Discore d'Aphrodite*. MIFAO 115. Cairo: IFAO (1999): 649. For dissenting views see J. Maspero. "Un dernier poète grec d'Égypte: Dioscore fils d'Apollôn." *Revue des études grecques* 24 (1911): 472; A. Kuehn. *Channels of Imperishable Fire: The Beginnings of Christian Mystical Poetry and Dioscorus of Aphrodito*. Lang Classical Studies Volume 7. New York: Peter Lang (1995): 77-79.

¹⁸⁴ Corippus. *In laudem Iustini Augusti minori*, ed. A. Cameron. London: Athlone Press (1976).

¹⁸⁵ C. Morrisson. *CMB*: 124; A. Cameron. "The Artistic Patronage of Justin II." *Byzantion* 50 (1980): 83; Hahn. *MIB* 2: 37, no. 1; P. Grierson. *Byzantine Coins*. London: Methuen (1982): 35, 52.

¹⁸⁶ *DOC*: Note on 204-205; A. Bellinger. "A Mint at Constantine in Numidia." *ANSMN* 12 (1966): 99-106; C. Morrisson. *CMB*: 156, no. 1; G. E. Bates. *Byzantine Coins*. Archaeological Exploration of Sardis Monograph 1. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (1971): 10; W. Hahn. *MIB* 2: 46, 49-50; H. Pottier. *Le monnayage de la Syrie sous l'occupation perse (610-630)*. Cahiers Ernest-Babelon 9. Paris: CNRS (2004): 81.

¹⁸⁷ H. Pottier. *Le monnayage de la Syrie sous l'occupation perse (610-630)*. Cahiers Ernest-Babelon 9. Paris: CNRS (2004): 69-80.

¹⁸⁸ J. Walker. *A Catalogue of the Arab-Byzantine and Post-Reform Umayyad Coins*. London (1956): xviii-xx, 1; A. Naghawi. "Umayyad filses minted at Jerash." *Syria* 66 (1989): 219-222; A. Oddy. "The early Umayyad coinage of Baisān and Jerash." *Aram* 6 (1994): 408, 410-414; S. Album and T. Goodwin. *Syloge of Islamic Coins in the Ashmolean Museum Volume I: The Pre-Reform Coinage of the Early Islamic Period*. Oxford: Ashmolean Museum (2002): 82, 89; A. Oddy. "Whither Arab-Byzantine Numismatics? A Review of Fifty Years' Research." *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 28 (2004): 136-137; H. Pottier. *Le monnayage de la Syrie sous l'occupation perse (610-630)*. Cahiers Ernest-Babelon 9. Paris: CNRS (2004): 82-83.

¹⁸⁹ G. M. Fitzgerald. *Beth-Shan excavations, 1921-1923 : the Arab and Byzantine levels*. Publications of the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania Volume 3. Philadelphia (1931): 58-60; A. R. Bellinger. *Coins from Jerash: 1928-1934*. Numismatic Notes and Monographs 81. American Numismatic Society: New York (1938); A. Spijkerman. *Cafarnao*. Pubblicazioni dello Studium Biblicum Franciscanum No. 19. Jerusalem (1975): 69; M. Bates and F. L. Kovacs. "A Hoard of Large Byzantine and Arab-Byzantine Coppers." *Numismatic Chronicle* 156 (1996): 165-174; A. Walsmsley. "Coin Frequencies in Sixth and Seventh Century Palestine and Arabia: Social and Economic Implications." *JESHO* (1999): 330, 335, 343; T. S. N. Moorhead. "The Late Roman, Byzantine and Umayyad periods at Tell Jezreel." *Tel Aviv* 24 (1997): 158; H.-C. Noeske. *Münzfunde aus Ägypten. Die Münzfunde des ägyptischen Pilgerzentrums Abu Mina und die Vergleichsfunde aus Diocesan Aegyptus und Oriens vom 4.-8. Jh. n. Chr.* Studien zu Fundmünzen der Antike 14. Berlin (2000): 682-688.

¹⁹⁰ A. R. Bellinger. *Coins from Jerash: 1928-1934*. Numismatic Notes and Monographs 81. American Numismatic Society: New York (1938); A. Walsmsley. "The Social and Economic Regime at Fihl (Pella) between the 7th and 9th Centuries." In *La Syrie de Byzance à l'Islam VII-VIII^e siècles: Actes du Colloque international, Lyon*, ed. P. Canivet and J.-P. Rey-Coquais. Damas: Institut français de Damas (1992): 258-259; M. Bates and F. L. Kovacs. "A Hoard of Large Byzantine and Arab-Byzantine Coppers." *Numismatic Chronicle* 156 (1996): 165-174; T. S. N. Moorhead. "The Late Roman, Byzantine and Umayyad periods at Tell Jezreel." *Tel Aviv* 24 129-166.

¹⁹¹ G. M. Fitzgerald. *Beth-Shan excavations, 1921-1923 : the Arab and Byzantine levels*. Publications of the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania Volume 3. Philadelphia (1931): 51; G. M. Fitzgerald. *A Sixth-Century Monastery at Beth-Shan (Scythopolis)*.

PSEUDO-BYZANTINE COINAGE IN SYRIA UNDER ARAB RULE (638 – c.670)
CLASSIFICATION AND DATING

Preliminary report – Summary

Henri Pottier, Ingrid Schulze and Wolfgang Schulze

The aim of our study is to establish a well-founded chronological order and a possible dating of the various types, classes and series of Pseudo-Byzantine coinage. The term Pseudo-Byzantine covers all the imitations of Byzantine folles minted in Syria after the Arab conquest and before the first reform of the Arab authorities introduced coins with mint names. These imitations, using as model the contemporary coins of the Byzantine imperial mints, are characterised by generally blundered inscriptions, pseudo-mintmarks, officinae and dates probably without meaning.

After having shown that most of the coins' parameters, (e. g. shape or borders, stylistic characteristics of obverses and reverses) are useful for describing but not helpful in establishing a chronological order, it appears that the only valid parameters for defining a chronology are the metrological data. Indeed, in contrast to a first impression that the production of Pseudo-Byzantine coins could be anarchic, like the variation of style suggests, a detailed metrological analysis of more than 1400 specimens shows that the production follows weight standards which are close to those of Byzantium. We then developed a new typology on the basis of data given by metrology, possible overstrikes, die links or similarities with other Pseudo-Byzantine series.

As a *preliminary* result we can propose the following classification and dating of the Pseudo-Byzantine coinage:

Classes		dates
Class I	Obverse with three figures	638-43
I.1	Imitations of Cyprus folles	638-43
I.1a	with pseudo-mintmark KYIIP	
I.1b	with pseudo-mintmark CON	
I.1c	with pseudo-mintmark THEUP	
I.1d	combined forms between a, b, c and others	
I.2	Imitations of folles year 30-31, Heraclius in military dress	640-43
Class II	Obverse with two figures	642-46 (47)
II.1	Heraclius and Heraclius-Constantine in chlamys	
	Small module imitation of folles, regnal years 3 to 6	
II.2	Heraclius in military dress, Heraclius-Const. in chlamys	
	Small module imitations of folles, regnal years 20 to 30	
II.2a	Rev. M	
II.2b	Rev. m	
II.3	Phocas and Leontia	
Class III	Obverse with bust	
III.1	Imitations of Constans II bust, folles regnal year 3	645-47
III.1a	with obverse inscription 'inper-const'	
III.1b	without inscription	
III.1c	bust between crescent and star	
III.2	dated year XX	658-60
Class IV	Obverse with standing emperor	647-c.670
IV series 1 (heavy module)		647-58
IV series 2 (light module)		658-64

The table above shows that there was a continuous striking of Pseudo-Byzantine coins during the first decades of Arab rule in Syria.

Publications of the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania Vol. 4. Philadelphia (1939): 11; N. Amitai-Preis. "The Coins." In *Excavations at Tell Beth-Shean 1989-1996. Volume I. From the Late Bronze Age IIB to the Medieval Period*. Jerusalem: The Israel Exploration Society (2006): 607-615.

Some examples



In a further step we looked at the historical background. Among a lot of other questions we had to discuss the phenomenon that, in seventh century Syria, both regular Byzantine and Pseudo-Byzantine coins circulated together. At some times the influx of Byzantine coins was strong, at others meagre. Furthermore the circulation of petty money might reflect the turbulent political events during the period in discussion. In the end, our working theory that the weight standards of the Pseudo-Byzantine coins followed the changing standards of Byzantium seems to be confirmed by the historical facts.

The results of the complete study, which is for the time being (July 2007) a work in progress, are planned to be published in the *Revue Numismatique Belge* 2008.

PRECIOUS METAL COINAGE OF THE MINT OF DAMASCUS AH 72 -79

(abstract – full version to be published in *Past Presented*, ed. C. Goodson, proceedings of a conference in Birkbeck College, London, March 2007.)

Luke Treadwell

This paper is an account of the activities of the caliphal mint of Damascus during the early years of ‘Abd al-Malik’s reforms which seeks to build on the earlier work of Bates (1986 and 1989) in the following ways. It proposes changes of terminology; it attempts to assess the size of the various issues which make up the transitional coinage and to map their geographical extent; it offers a provisional scheme for understanding the successive phases of the reforms and assesses the relationship between the transitional period (72–79 AH) and the post-reform period (77–79 AH onwards). The paper suggests that the development of Islamic coinage can only properly be understood by drawing together all aspects of its study. To date, art historians have studied numismatic iconography without paying attention to monetary context, while numismatists and monetary historians have concentrated on taxonomy (sequence of issues and chronology) and have generally avoided the questions thrown up by the emergence of figural numismatic art prior to 77 AH. As a consequence unrelated and, at points contradictory, stories have been told about the early coinage. One side, pioneered by Oleg Grabar, sees the brief flourishing of numismatic imagery and its abrupt termination as illustrative of Islam’s short-lived engagement with the figural tradition of Late Antique, especially of Byzantine, art, and interprets the retreat into writing as a sign of Islam’s inability to compete with Late Antique tradition. This view in turn has fed into a wider perception of the reasons for the absence of figural imagery in the early Islamic context. The numismatic approach, by contrast, has elaborated the coinage sequence and has created a map of monetary circulation on which the coinage issues can be plotted, but has offered no critique of the first approach. Neither draws substantially on the conclusions of the other, with the result that each offers only limited scope for integrated analysis of the issues they address.








This paper aims to demonstrate that a more inclusive treatment of the topic provides new scope for understanding the causes of the “abandonment” of numismatic imagery and the introduction of epigraphic coinage which signalled the beginning of the post-reform period. Its main premise is that the reforms pursued by ‘Abd al-Malik in the mint of Damascus from 72–79 AH should be considered in isolation from concurrent numismatic experiments in the Mashriq (the Orans drachm and Hajjaj’s “radial drachm”) which were undertaken by local governors, not by the caliph. Once the Damascus mint is viewed separately, the main phases of reform, which are here renamed the “Shahada” phase and the “Caliphal Image” phase respectively, can be seen to have followed a logical sequence. This sequence consisted of a series of progressive trials involving new weight standards, coinage designs and changes in mint organisation, which were carried out with the aim of producing a standard universal type that could be struck throughout the state. But the universal type proved to be elusive, so

long as the mint continued to produce adaptations of Byzantine and Sasanian coinage. The only solution to the problem lay in the adoption of the imageless coinage, as ‘Abd al-Malik eventually acknowledged, when he introduced epigraphic coinage in the last years of the 8th century.

SOME NEW(?) STANDING CALIPH COINS

Ingrid Schulze

In 2006 two small lots of previously unknown standing caliph coins¹⁹² appeared on the market; Group A (4 coins) was acquired by Nayef Goussous¹⁹³ for the Numismatic Museum of the Ahlibank (former Jordan National Bank) in Amman and Group B (3 coins) by the author. Both lots were said to have been found in Southern Syria. The data relating to the coins are as follows:

no.	Group A (Goussous)	weight	diam.	axis	die no.
1		2.8g	18mm	12h	Obv. 1 Rev. 1
2		2.2g	17mm	12h	Obv. 1 Rev. 2
3		2.2g	17mm	6h	Obv. 1 Rev. 2
4		3.8g	17mm	6h	Obv. 1 Rev. 3
	Group B (Schulze)				
5		6.27g	20mm	1h	Obv. 2 Rev. 4
6		2.75g	19mm	3h	Obv. 2 Rev. 5
7	 overstruck on a Roman coin	2.67g	18mm	7h	Obv. 2 Rev. 5

Although the two groups are not die-linked, they correspond in some unusual features, and mint names of three or two different Junds respectively are connected by the same obverse die. We know of die links between different mints¹⁹⁴, but only within the same Jund. Even more strange is the fact that the mint names *Iliya* and *Filastin* occur in combination with the transformed cross-on-steps instead of the cursive m. Minor, confusing details like a strange “girdle band”¹⁹⁵ horizontally

¹⁹² The standing caliph coins were minted in Syria during the reign of the Umayyad caliph ‘Abd al-Malik (65-86/685-705).

¹⁹³ I’m grateful to Mr Goussous for the permission to publish these coins and to my husband, Wolfgang, who took the pictures.

¹⁹⁴ Album, Stephen – Goodwin, Tony, *Sylloge of Islamic coins in the Ashmolean*, Vol. 1, The Pre-Reform Coinage of the early Islamic Period, Oxford 2002, p. 96 fn. 71

¹⁹⁵ For a detailed discussion of the “girdle band” see Miles, George C., *The Earliest Arab Gold Coinage*, ANSMN 13 (1967) and Album-Goodwin op. cit. p. 92 f

crossing the caliph's waist to the left on both obverse types lead us to assume that both groups have the same possibly irregular origin.

The obverses



obverse 1
(Group A, 4 specimens)



obverse 2
(Group B, 3 specimens)

Obverse 1 has a blundered legend, while obverse 2 shows the standard legend written clockwise from 1h: *li'abd allah 'abd al-malik amir al-mu'minin*. The already mentioned unusual "girdle band" is rather faint but visible on obverse 1, and very prominent on obverse 2.

The reverses

The three reverse dies of Group A obverse 1:



reverse 1



reverse 2



reverse 3

The reverse legend is the *shahada* and the transformed cross has three steps.

Reverse 1 looks quite regular: *bi-hims* to the right of the transformed cross and a blank field to the left¹⁹⁶; the only flaw might be the *mim*, which appears (as on reverse 2) as a filled-up circle. On reverse 2 the prefix *bi* is a little bit disturbing: we know it from some mints, but never in combination with *dimashq*, where even the initial *dal* is often missing. The additional word *darb* on the left of reverses 2 and 3 is an unpublished variant too: up to now we only know it from the standing caliph coins of Hims. The most suspicious is reverse 3 with the mint name *Iliya* beside the transformed cross on steps: the mints in Jund Filastin (Iliya, Yubna and Ludd) never used this symbol, but always the cursive *m*.

The reverses of Group B obverse 2:



reverse 4



reverse 5

Again the legend is the *shahada* and the transformed cross has three steps and again we have the prefix *bi* in connection with *dimashq* while the *darb* is replaced by a star – the star is quite rare but occurs on regular standing caliph coins of Damascus. The most enigmatic reverse is no. 5. There are two possible readings: either we are dealing with a blundered version of *qinnasrin* and a blundered *wafin* or with *bi-filastin* and *ja'iz*. The second reading is more plausible because in the mint name a *ta* can be made out relatively clearly. Until now Filastin as the name of the Jund is only known in combination with the name of the town where the coin was minted and the word *ja'iz* is only known from the Umayyad Imperial Image coins but never occurs on standing –caliph coins. Like reverse 3, reverse 5 represents a new type.

¹⁹⁶ Walker, John, *A Catalogue of the Arab-Byzantine and Post-Reform Umayyad coins*, London 1956 (A Catalogue of the Muhammadan Coins in the British Museum, Volume II), no. 118 and Album-Goodwin op. cit. no. 696

Are we dealing here with forgeries? There is no convincing argument in favour or against. Of course: the fact that seven unknown dies appeared on the market during the same period makes them highly suspicious. The coins with reverses 1 and 4 would have been accepted as genuine if offered alone, but in combination with the other new types, we must be very cautious in doing so. On the other hand many more dies were used that have not yet been published. Furthermore the different patinas all appear quite convincing. After cleaning coins 5 to 7 physically and chemically there was no trace of artificial patina and the behaviour of the coins during cleaning was identical to that of genuine coins.

In this connection another coin should be mentioned:



4.02 g

This coin too was offered in trade in 2006, but it had also been offered on the London market some 3 or 4 years previously.¹⁹⁷ The obverse legend is not clear due to the patination; the reverse legend seems to be the *shahada*, possibly not complete. But there is no doubt that the mint name is *bi-Iliya* on the right of the transformed cross-on-steps (left field unclear) and the strange “girdle band” is again prominent on the obverse. With these features this coin fits well within the two groups.

In summary therefore, the coins listed above are highly suspected of being forgeries, but there is no definite proof for that. It would be helpful to know of more specimens, their provenance and the time when they were found or appeared in trade.

Acknowledgement: I am greatly indebted to my friends and colleagues in the Seventh Century Syria Round Table for devoting their time to discuss these enigmatic coins with me.

¹⁹⁷ Many thanks to Tony Goodwin for this information.

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