



THE COINAGE OF AL-ANDALUS

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the evolution of Andalusī coins, from the first issues that appeared during the Islamic conquest of the Iberian Peninsula, continuing with the Umayyad issues of Al-Andalus (Emirate and Caliphate), the Ḥammūdīd ones and those of 11th century Ṭā'ifas' as well as the ones issued by Almoravid and Almohad dynasties, until the last ones, struck under the Naṣrīd dynasty of Granada.

A comprehensive view on the evolution of these coins is offered from a new perspective, including the latest contributions to the knowledge we have on this subject and raising new hypotheses. This paper is an update in which the main characteristics of the Andalusī coins of each period framed in its historical context are explored: coin legends, epigraphical characteristics, metrology, etc.; elements that turn the coins into a symbol of power of the different political authorities that ruled Al-Andalus.

KEYWORDS

Al-Andalus – Umayyad – Cordoba – Ḥammūdīd – Ṭā'ifa Kingdoms – Almoravids – Almohads – Naṣrīd – Coinage – Granada

المخلص

السكة الأندلسية
تتناول الورقة البحثية تطور القطع النقدية الأندلسية، بدءاً من أولى إصداراتها التي ظهرت خلال الفتح الإسلامي لشبه الجزيرة الإيبيرية، واستمرت في المسكوكات الأموية في الأندلس (عصري الإمارة والخلافة)، وبنو حمود، وتلك الخاصة بالطوائف في القرن الحادي عشر، فضلاً عن المسكوكات التي أصدرتها أسر المرابطين والموحدين، حتى آخر إصدار تم سكه تحت حكم الأسرة الناصرية في غرناطة.

وتناقش هذه الورقة من خلال نظرة شاملة تطور هذه القطع النقدية من منظور جديد، بما في ذلك أحدث المساهمات المعرفية المتعلقة بهذا الموضوع، وتقترح فرضيات جديدة. هذه الورقة هي تحديث لما هو معروف عن السمات الرئيسية للسكة الأندلسية بكافة حقباتها؛ وتعرض غيرها كل حقبة في سياقها التاريخي، وتفسر النقوش على السكة، الخصائص الكتابية، علم القياس، وما إلى ذلك؛ وتلك العناصر التي تجعل من القطع النقدية رمزاً للسلطة من بين السلطات السياسية المختلفة التي حكمت الأندلس.

الكلمات الدالة

الأندلس – أموي – قرطبة – بنو حمود – ملوك الطوائف – المرابطين – الموحدين – غرناطة – السكة

INTRODUCTION¹

From the very beginning of Islam, coins became an exceptional document. On the one hand, coins had an economic and fiscal function: in accordance with the quality standards (weight and fineness) marked by the State, they were fundamental for the tax collection,

¹ I would like to thank Dr. Atef Mansour M. Ramadan and Dr. Mohammad Younis for inviting me to the *Third International Course of Islamic Numismatic*. I was able to travel to Cairo thanks to the financial assistance of the Fayoum University and a New York University Global Faculty Fund (GFF).

market development, financial practices and even for the image and prestige of the ruler. But, on the other hand, coins were a key instrument for the transmission of the ideology of the state. Inscriptions on coins, both religious and political, which were never chosen randomly and would become the image of power, a main element of the ideological propaganda of the leaders and their political power, and the image of their vision and practice of Islam. Additionally, the fact that monetary inscriptions usually include the place and the date of coinage turns coins into essential documents for the dating of archaeological discoveries, and into impartial documents, not conditioned by the point of view or the interests of the historians, chroniclers, geographers or poets of the time. Consequently, they make possible the corroboration, correction and the expansion of the information provided by literary sources.

During an initial transitional stage, the symbolic program of the coins in the surrounding lands (Sasanian and Byzantine Empires) were adopted and modified for the new Islamic faith. However, since Islam avoids figural representation and forbids the creation of images for purposes of idol worship, coins became fundamentally epigraphic beginning with the reform of the caliph 'Abd al-Malik (77/699). It would be the word, and not the image, what would identify Islamic currency. And so, while it was not the only representation of power, numismatic inscriptions became the most important one.

Religious inscriptions affirmed the oneness of God and the prophetic mission of Muḥammad; and using various and carefully-chosen Quranic passages they also conveyed an ideological message linked to various events and different historical moments, showing the ideology of the different dynasties as well as their vision and practice of religion. Political inscriptions indicated the name of the caliph with his titles and honorific nicknames (*alqāb*, sing. *laqab*), all of them conscientiously chosen. Next to the name of the highest authority of the moment other names will often appear: first, high dignitaries of the administration, such as the chief of the mint, and after that, important political personalities, some of whom came to become semi-independent powers. The appearance of the caliph's name on the coin would make it an important legitimating element: minting coins in the name of a caliph, much like mentioning his name at the Friday prayer in the mosques, meant accepting his political and spiritual leadership and showing fidelity to his leadership. At the same time, we should not forget that this also meant that the caliph authorized, or even demanded, to have them coined in his name, which legitimized those who did it.

And finally, they are the best and most reliable testimony of political and religious dissensions within medieval Islam and the balance of power in the different territories, as we will see in the case of al-Andalus.

THE CONQUEST & THE GOVERNORS' PERIOD

During the caliphate of the sixth Umayyad caliph, Walīd I (50-96/705-715), al-Andalus was conquered. In 92/711, Ṭāriq, lieutenant of the Maghrebi emir (*wālī*) Mūsā b. Nuṣayr, crossed the Strait and landed at Gibraltar (*jabal Ṭāriq*) with about seven thousand soldiers, mostly Berbers, and they defeated Don Rodrigo, the last Visigothic king, in the Battle of Guadalete (*Wadī Lakka*).

The first coins were produced by Mūsā Ibn Nuṣayr from the beginning of the conquest. They are known as "transitional dinars"² and they, along with the recently studied lead

² The principal works about the transitional dinars are Navascués y de Palacio, "*Los sueldos hispano – árabes*" pp. 5-66; Balaguer, *Las emisiones transicionales árabe-musulmanas*; Balaguer, "*Descripción y comentarios de doce monedas*", pp. 32-51; Bates, "*The Coinage of Spain*", pp. 271-289, Bates, "*Roman and*

seals³, are the only material evidence of the Islamic conquest of the Iberian Peninsula. In accordance with the eastern practice, these first gold dinars, and smaller coins that represented fractional denominations, carried the Islamic profession of faith (*shahāda*) in Latin, the date written in Roman numerals according to the Byzantine and Islamic calendars, and the SPN's mint, which could refer to the Latin name Hispania (SPaNia) as well as the Byzantine SPaN⁴.

The basic typology of these solidi or dinars has the star in the area of its obverse and an abbreviation of the Latin translation of the first part of the *shahāda*, the message of the oneness of God, as the marginal legend: **IN NOMINE DEI NON DEUS NISI DEUS SOLUS NON SIMILIS**. This is equivalent to the abbreviated *basmala* (بِسْمِ اللَّهِ, *Bismi Allāh*, “In the name of god”) and the first part of the *shahāda*: لا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له (*Lā ilāha illā Allāhu waḥdahu lā šarīka lahu*, “There is no god but God, Alone, He has no partner”). On the reverse, we can find in the central area the byzantine chronological system of dating (indiction)⁵ and, as the marginal legend the abbreviations for the specimen, mint, and *hijri* year written in roman numerals: **SoLiDus FeRiTus IN SPaNia ANNo XCIII** (“Solidus (dinar) made in Spain the year 94”) (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Solidus / Dinar of al-Andalus (SPaNia) Indiction CXI.

There are thick gold coins with a diameter ranging from eleven to fifteen millimeters. Generally, the text is incomplete and/or incorrect, making it hard to read. Frequently, they have irregular quality and weight (between 3 and 4.7 grams), which was explained by the use of metal from the war trophies and the fast strike of the issues⁶.

The fractional denominations, halves and thirds of a dinar, have two basic typologies. The first one has the star with the mint and year formula on the obverse and, on the reverse, the modification of the byzantine typology of the “cross-on-steps” with, once again, the legend of mint and year. The second one, has the word **SIMILIS** in the center of the area, which is the last word of the marginal legend, that is, the first part of the *shahāda* in latin: **IN NOMINE DEI NON DEUS NISI DEUS SOLUS NON SIMILIS**.

During the Sulaymān's caliphate, in 98/716-717, the new emir al-Ḥurr established Cordoba as the capital of the Andalusi emirate. The first bilingual dinars do not appear until the year

Early Muslim Coinage”, pp. 12-15; Roux, “*Le premier monnayage musulman*”, pp. 35-53; Pliego, “*El dinar*”, pp. 139-154; Jonson, *A Numismatic History*; Ariza Armada, “*Los dinares*”, pp. 137-158.

³ Ibrāhīm, “*Nuevos documentos sobre la Conquista Omeya*”, pp. 145-161. (Increased and corrected versión in: <https://www.academia.edu/2324901/>); Ibrāhīm, “*Los precintos de la conquista*”, pp. 7-37; Ibrāhīm, Gaspariño, “*Adiciones a los precintos de la Conquista*”, pp. 39-42.; Agüera Cachinero, “*Variante al Precinto de Plomo*”, pp. 43-46.

⁴ Ariza Armada, “*Los dinares*”, p 146.

⁵ An indiction refers to any of the years in a 15-year cycle. Cappelli, *Cronologia, Cronografia e Calendario perpetuo*.

⁶ Frochoso Sánchez, *El dirham*, 27-28.

when the governor al-Ḥurr arrived; and then, for the first time, the prophetic mission of Muḥammad is mentioned in an Andalusī currency along with the name of Al-Andalus. They were minted in Cordoba, which already was the capital of Al-Andalus. One year before, the first bilingual dinar was struck in the Maghreb (97/715-716, 98/716-717 and 99/717-718) by the governor Muḥammad b. Yazīd. Both, the Maghrebi and Andalusī ones are the result of the reform of the caliph Sulaymān b. ‘Abd al-Malik⁷ (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2. Bilingual dinar. Al-Andalus mint, year 98 H. National Archaeological Museum, Madrid

However, there are typological differences between the two. The Maghrebi bilingual dinars have the central legends in Arabic, the *shahāda*, and the marginal legends in latin: on the obverse, the mint and year and on the reverse, once again, the first part of the *shahāda* but now in latin. But on the obverse of the Andalusī-type dinars we find the star and the reference to the mint and year in latin while on the reverse all the legends are in Arabic. The central legend contains the second part of the *shahāda*, the affirmation of the prophetic mission of Muḥammad, and the margin contains the formula of the mint and year. Consequently, in the Maghrebi dinars the *tawḥīd*, is doubled while in the Andalusī ones it is the formula of the mint and date that is doubled; and the message of the Oneness of God disappeared and we can only find the prophetic mission of Muḥammad.

The most significant element that characterizes Andalusī coins, in this first moment, is the symbol of the star. Traditional historiography considers that it is the “canting arm” or “talking emblem” of al-Andalus, it makes reference to the “west star”, the Hesperus star, in allusion to the Greek name of the peninsula: Hesperia. Although it’s true that the star may be a “canting arm”, the fact that in the Andalusī bilingual dinars it takes the place of the *tawḥīd* as it disappears, and along with it the message of the oneness of God, leaving only reference to the prophetic mission of Muḥammad, has recently led to propose different hypotheses⁸.

The first hypothesis suggests that the star should not be viewed as a symbol of local tradition but rather of an oriental one since it is not present in the Byzantine coins of North Africa nor in the peninsular Visigothic ones, but rather only in the Eastern Umayyad coins. When Mūsā arrived in the peninsula, the star was already a symbol found on the Umayyad coins minted in the territories of Greater Syria and also in the Arab-Sasanian dirhams, in coins minted according to the Byzantine typologies of Ḥimṣ (Homs), in the “Standing Caliph” typology, also from the mint of Ḥimṣ, and in the *fāls* of Damascus and of ‘Ammān, struck by the *jund* of Damascus. It is important to remember that it was ‘Abd al-Malik who named Mūsā governor of the Maghreb. That would mean, this hypothesis suggests, that Mūsā and his troops brought the symbol of the star from the East.

⁷ Ariza Armada, “*Los dinares*”, p.143.

⁸ Ariza Armada, “*Los dinares*”, pp. 147-153.

The second theory holds that it is not only a geographical symbol but also a religious one. It could be related to sūrah 53 of the Quran, which emphasizes the affirmation that the Prophet was not wrong, and that he only transmitted what had been revealed to him, being therefore a possible symbolic reference to the Truth of the Revelation, bearing in mind that, according to some exegetes, the star in the Quranic text is a reference to the Quran itself. An alternate possibility is that it could be related to the sayings of the Prophet (*al-ʿaḥādīth*) that tell that the stars are related to the “Dwelling Garden”, to the Paradise, and are the guides in the faith. But in this case, it could also well acquire a pro-ʿAlī connotation, since according to a *ḥadīth* of the Prophet the stars are security (*amān*) for the “sons of Fāṭima”; and again the city of Ḥims, the main city in which this symbol was coined in the east, acquires significance because its residents chose the cause of ʿAlī against Muʿāwiyā and for some time it became an important center of shīʿī activity. Additionally, literary sources point out possible pro-ʿAlī tendencies of Mūsā. Thus, the protective character of the star symbol would be related to the Sassanid coins as the Palhavi texts attribute to Venus-Anāhīd (Hesperus) a beneficial and positive influence associated with power recognizable to Andalusī subjects. Both of these hypotheses suggest that the star symbol came to the Peninsula from the East, where it draws upon and Islamizes the Sassanian monetary tradition and acquires a beneficial and protective value, related to shīʿī beliefs or as a reference to Revelation or to Paradise.

It was not until the year 102/720-721, during the caliphate of Yazīd II, that totally epigraphic and Arabized dinars appeared in Al-Andalus (Fig. 3). As in North Africa, half dinars and third of dinars were also minted beginning in that year and they followed the same typological model as the dinar. Only the value of the piece itself will vary, using the term النصف (*al-niṣf*) to designate the half dinar and الثلث (*al-tulṭ*) for the third. The following year, 103/721-722, the first Andalusī dirhams, identical to the Oriental ones but with the mint name *Al-Andalus*, were coined. Both dinars and dirhams are characterized by stylistic uniformity, good minting and metrological regularity; the dinar has an average weight of 4.2 gr. and the dirham 2.90 grams. The *fāls* was also coined in al-Andalus, but more than 60% of those have only religious inscriptions and do not mention the mint or the year⁹; in cases in which the mint is named, it is al-Andalus.



Fig. 3. Dinar of the governors' period. Al-Andalus mint, year 105. Tonegawa collection.

THE INDEPENDENT EMIRATE OF CORDOBA

A few years later, in the East, a new caliphate would rise to power: the ʿAbbāsids. In 132/750, Mawān II, the last Umayyad caliph, was defeated in the Battle of the Zab and the

⁹ Frochoso Sánchez, “*Los feluses del período de los gobernadores omeyas*”, pp. 259-289; *Los feluses de al-Andalus*.

persecution of the Umayyads started. The prince ‘Abd al-Raḥmān escaped to the Maghreb and eventually al-Andalus, where he became the emir in 138/756. When the Umayyad Caliphate of Damascus disappeared and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān made al-Andalus independent from the new caliphate, the currency became a fundamental element of the image of the new power. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān I maintained the Umayyad monetary model, despite the extinction of the dynasty in the east, as a clear manifestation of his political and religious position against the ‘Abbāsids. The Andalusī coins followed the model of the Oriental Umayyad coins: they were identical and they just changed the name of the mint to *al-Andalus* (الاندلس).

The currency would become, therefore, a representation of Andalusī power facing off against the caliphate of Baghdad. And by maintaining the existing eastern Umayyad typology and legends the image of Umayyad power was preserved, not only in the face of the new caliphs of the east but also Christian powers. It is important to bear in mind that the Umayyads faced threats not only from the Byzantine presence in the Mediterranean but also from the Christian kingdoms from the north of the Peninsula and from the trans-Pyrenean lands.

Therefore, the obverse sides of the coins maintain the central legend of the oriental Umayyad dirhams (لا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له) (*Lā ilāha illā Allāhu waḥdahū lā šarīka lahu*, “There is no god but God, Alone, He has no partner”) and the name of the mint and date as the marginal legend. On the reverse, the complete verse of sūrah 9, 33, is the legend on the margin, and the central legend comes from sūrah 112:

قل هو الله أحد، الله الصمد، لم يلد ولم يولد، ولم يكن له كفوا أحد (“[Say: “He is] God, [who is] One, God the Eternal Refuge. He neither begets nor is born. Nor is there to Him any equivalent”) (Fig. 4). However, the fact that he only struck silver coins (dirhames) and not golden ones shows that these were not the coins of a caliphal power.



Fig. 4. Dirham of the independent emirate of Cordoba. Al-Andalus mint, year 154 H.

After ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, eight emirs governed al-Andalus (‘Abd al-Raḥmān I, Hishām I, Al-Ḥakam I, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān II, Muḥammad I, Al-Munḍir, ‘Abd Allāh and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III). The number of coins produced during the period of the emirate bear a relationship to control of the territory. In the first years, the issues were almost inexistent. Since 145/762, the coins were limited; since 150/767 the coins began abundant and regular, but in the last years of the emirate, the issues were reduced because of the political instability¹⁰.

Another characteristic of coins from the Andalusī emirate is the enormous presence of fragmented coins due to the manipulation of those by the people because the state did not

¹⁰Canto García, Ibrāhīm, *Moneda Andalusí en la Alhambra*, pp. 27-28. The fundamental reference for the emirate period is Frochoso Sánchez, 2009.

mint coins in fractional denominations. The majority of the fragments are the equivalent of $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{5}$ of dirham. From the point of view of the metrology, the average weight of the dirhams is 2,70¹¹. By contrast, the feluses, made of thin blank and with a medium weight of 1.48 gr., were coined along the emirate period¹².

THE UMAYYAD CALIPHATE

At the beginning of the 4th/ 10th century the Islamic world was divided into three great caliphates: the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphate, the Fāṭimid Caliphate in North Africa, and the Umayyad Caliphate of al-Andalus. The currency was the main element of recognition of the sovereignty of each caliph, and its legitimacy, for the local dynasties of the various Islamic territories. In the year 316/929 the eighth emir of al-Andalus, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III, was proclaimed caliph in Cordoba. The Umayyad Caliphate of al-Andalus was born, which would compete with the ‘Abbāsīds Caliphate of Baghdad, both of which were Sunnī institutions, and with the Fāṭimids of North Africa, who were shī‘ites. Al-Andalus became the most important political-military, territorial, economic and cultural power in the Iberian Peninsula.

In the same year, the new caliph reopened the Cordoba mint, which coined gold coins (dinars) — a right reserved to caliphal powers — and silver ones (dirhams) indicating the mint name of al-Andalus after a thirty-six year period of inactivity due to political instability and lack of tax income¹³. Its monetary reform would establish the bases of coinage in the entire Andalusī caliphate. The first caliph of al-Andalus showed his caliphal power through three essential symbols. The first, the minaret of the mosque of Cordoba, which was the highest minaret in the west, symbolized the superiority of Sunni Islam. The second was the construction of his Palatine city, Madīnat al-Zahrā’, close to Cordoba, in 325/936. And third, the coins minted under his direction. The Umayyads of al-Andalus were descendants and successors of the Umayyads of Damascus. As a symbol of his dynastic vindication, the new caliph maintained some elements of continuity with respect to the previous period, as on the obverse of the coins, where the three lines of the central inscription included the first part of *shahāda* or profession of faith (“There is no god but / God, Only / He has no partner”), and the sūrah 9,33 of the Quran (محمد رسول الله ارسله بالهدى) (ودين الحق ليظهره على الدين كله ولو كره المشركون), “Muḥammad is the Messenger of God + [It is He who has sent His Messenger] with the guidance and with the religion of truth to manifest it over all religion, although they who associate others with God dislike it”) which had appeared on the reverse of the earlier coins. This sūrah is understood to defend Sunni Islam as the true religion “over all other religions”, including the shī‘ī Islam of the Fāṭimids in North Africa. And, on the reverse, the formula of specimen, mint and year is maintained. But the caliph also introduced some novelties to the reverse of the coins that defined his own image of power as caliph. These changes were not arbitrary but rather a conscious choice made to defy the Fāṭimid caliphs and portray ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III as equal to his ‘Abbāsīd counterparts through the adoption of the reverse of their coins as a model. Therefore, he introduced inscriptions that, in three or four lines, identified his political power: his name and cognomen (*laqab*) and the caliphal title of “emir of the believers” (أمير المؤمنين, *Amīr al-mu‘minīn*).

¹¹ Canto García, Ibrāhīm, *Moneda Andalusí en la Alhambra*, p. 30; Canto García, “*Emirato Omeya de al-Andalus*”, pp. 17-23.

¹² Frochoso Sánchez, *Los feluses de al-Andalus*. In relation to its metrology cf. Pellicer, “*El cambio metálico plata*”, pp. 19-36; Doménech Belda, *Dinares, dirhames y feluses*.

¹³ Canto García, “*Califato Omeya*”, p. 25.

In respect to the epigraphy, the existence of innovations drawing upon Aghlabid influence has led to the consideration of the possible presence of Aghlabid artisans or technicians who fled from the Maghreb because of the Fāṭimid pressure¹⁴. By contrast, numerous Andalusī variants of vegetal or floral decoration and rings, points, and star ornament, were inscribed above or below the central legends. These signs, that are either mere decorative elements or possible marks of workshops, would undergo a development that had not been seen before in the Andalusī currency, reaching its maximum plastic quality during the government of al-Ḥakam II¹⁵.

Another image of the Andalusī caliphal power in monetary form begins to come from a new mint: Madīnat al-Zahrā'. In 336/947, twenty years after his caliphal proclamation, the first caliph of al-Andalus moved the mint from the city of Cordoba to Madīnat al-Zahrā', replacing the name of the mint *al-Andalus* with the one of his new palatine city. This would become the mint of al-Andalus for the next thirty years, through the end of his caliphate and the beginning of the caliphate of his successor, al-Ḥakam II. The apparently simple change of the name of the mint is a clear expression of the use of coins as an ideological and propagandistic instrument: the enormous symbolic strength of the name of al-Zahrā' is one more proof of the symbolic confrontation between the Andalusī Umayyads and the Fāṭimids of North Africa, reflecting their political and religious confrontation¹⁶. Consequently, the coins of al-Andalus had the name of the mint Madīnat al-Zahrā' from the year 336/947 to 365/975 uninterrupted¹⁷.

The second caliph of al-Andalus, Al-Ḥakam II standardized the numismatic model that would become most emblematic of the Andalusī caliphate: the religious inscriptions in the reverse of the coins will disappear completely; the names of various figures, some identified as the officials of the mint and others as important political personalities of the court and administration, like the *ḥājib* (equivalent to a Prime Minister) appear over or below the central legends¹⁸. At this time, there was also a change of area of the marginal inscriptions so the ones that were before in the reverse of the coins, will now be in the obverse, and vice versa: the formula of specimen, mint and date ... (ضرب هذا الدينار/الدرهم بـ ... سنة ...) that was in the reverse will now be in the obverse, and the sūrah 9, 33 will now be, definitively, in the reverse (Fig. 5).



Fig. 5. Dinar of the Caliph al-Ḥakam II. Madīnat al-Zahrā' mint, year 357 H. Tonegawa Collection.

¹⁴ Delgado y Hernández, *Estudios de Numismática Árabe-Hispana*, p. 117.

¹⁵ Canto García, “*Las cecas: al-Andalus y Madīnat al-Zahrā'*”, p. 422.

¹⁶ Ariza Armada, “*La circulación de l’image du pouvoir*”. About the name’s symbology of Madīnat al-Zahrā' cf. Fierro, “*Espacio sunnī y espacio šī'ī*”, p. 175.

¹⁷ In the year 400/1009 Madīnat al-Zahrā' mint will start coining again as soon as Sulaymān al-Mustaīn came to the palatine city. In relation to the Madīnat al-Zahrā' mint coinage see: Frochoso Sánchez, *Las monedas califales*.

¹⁸ About the appearance and evolution of the proper names in the andalusī coins see: Ariza Armada, *De Barcelona a Orán*, pp. 80-83.

Toward the end of the caliphate, Sulaymān al-Musta‘in introduced, for the first time in the Andalusi currency, and following the initiative of the ‘Abbāsids caliphs of Baghdad, the name and title of the heir (*walī al ‘ahd*), which became a regular feature of the coins of the Ḥammūdids Caliphs.

The Umayyad Caliphate of al-Andalus was recognized in the Maghreb, and this is reflected in the coins. Eight Maghrebi mints struck dirhams in the name of the caliphs of Cordoba: Aghmat, al-Manşūrah/al-Manşūriyya, al-Başra, Fez, Nakūr, Şfax, Sijilmasa and Tasul¹⁹.

Regarding the metrology, the caliphal Umayyad coins were struck to the normal weight standars. The andalusi dinars have an average weight of 3.80 grames and the dirhams, between 2.70 and 3.10 grams²⁰. Another characteristic of this period is the desappearing of the copper coins, the *fāls*.

The good quality and prestige of caliphal coins led to their imitation by the Christian kingdoms of the North of the Iberian Peninsula. These imitations were known as “mancuses” and coins that are clearly imitations of Hishām II dinars have been identified, to this day²¹.

THE ḤAMMŪDID CALIPHATE

In 399/1009, a *coup d’état* started the civil war (*fitna*), which led to the division of al-Andalus into independent kingdoms: the Ṭā’ifa kingdoms or *mulūk at-ṭawā’if*. From that year until the disappearance of the last Ḥammūdīd caliph in 447/1055-1056, seven Umayyad and twelve Ḥammūdīd caliphs were proclaimed, and the several Ṭā’ifa kingdoms fought each other supporting one or another caliph.

The Ḥammūdīds are descendants of Idrīs II, the founder of the Idrīsīd dynasty, from the Banū ‘Umar branch²². The Ḥammūdīd Caliphate emerged in the year 407/1016 with the proclamation of ‘Alī b. Ḥammūd as caliph in Cordoba²³. Prior to assuming the caliphate he has been appointed governor of Ceuta by the Umayyad caliph Sulaymān al-Musta‘in. From that moment the Maghrebi city became an essential stronghold in Ḥammūdīd politics. Ceuta would not only become the “gateway to the Strait”, but also played a major role as the seat of the heirs who would inherit the rule of the Maghreb.

It was ‘Alī b. Ḥammūd, in his capacity as governor of Ceuta, who opened the first mint there in the year 403/1013. This one would remain active throughout the Ḥammūdīd era and become key to the dynasty’s monetary issues and policies. Although there are no textual references to explain this, one may find motivation to open the mint in Caliph

¹⁹ The principal bibliographic references about those maghrebi issues are: Sáenz-Diez, *Las acuñaciones del califato de Córdoba*; Benito de los Mozos, “*Aghmat: una nueva ceca*”; Canto García, “*Califato Omeya*”, pp. 32-34; Canto García, “*Nuevas evidencias de cecas africanas en época*”, pp. 95-101; Fontenla Ballesta, *Las primeras acuñaciones africanas*.

²⁰ Canto García, Ibrāhīm, *Moneda Andalusí en la Alhambra*, pp. 34.

²¹ Balaguer, *Del Mancús a la Dobra*, p. 138.

²² The Ḥammūdīds were Idrīsīds, as descendant of Idrīs I, Ḥasanīds, as direct descendants of al-Ḥasan Ibn ‘Alī, the Prophet grandson, ‘Alīds as descendants of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, and Hāshimīds as members of the Prophet tribe. For this reason, they had the legitimacy and nobility to be caliphs, and they weren’t “Berbers”, “arrivistes” and “usurpers” like the traditional historiographers say, but they were Fātimīds, Ṭālibīds, and Shī‘a as the literary sources stated: Ariza Armada, *Estudio sobre las monedas*, pp. 184-186.

²³ The classical work on Ḥammūdīd numismatic is Codera y Zaydín, “*Estudio crítico sobre la historia y monedas de los Hammudíes*”.

Sulaymān's need to pay the Maghrebi troops. With the movement of this army, the coinage struck in Ceuta would arrive in the Iberian Peninsula²⁴.

In the year 407/1016, 'Alī b. Ḥammūd became the first non-Marwānid caliph of al-Andalus and the first Hāshimid ruler to have the title of *imām*²⁵. With his rule, we can find a new image of power articulated through coins. 'Alī b. Ḥammūd implemented a clever fusion between the Umayyad Sunni and Shi'a traditions which favored his acceptance as caliph, both in Sunni al-Andalus and in the Maghreb, where the Shi'a could have been more influential. While maintaining the continuity in relation to Umayyad issues through the continuation of previous standards we can also find Shi'a tendencies — confirmed in the literary sources — in his coins, thanks to a legitimating iconographical program laden with Shi'i connotations and a clear propitiatory value of a magical-religious nature. His legitimizing graphic program was maintained in the coins of his son, Yaḥyā, and his grandson, Idrīs II. Through his monetary symbolism, numismatics clearly shows the differentiation of this family branch, which would confront the other branches of the dynasty in the struggle for power²⁶.

Consequently, 'Alī b. Ḥammūd introduced the fish symbol on his Ceuta currency as a symbolic reference to the prophet Moses and to 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, and perhaps even to al-Khaḍir, which legitimized him as a wise and just caliph, as his symbolic referents were²⁷. Moreover, especially on the Ceuta coins we find the second new iconographic element: the proliferation of stars. Although these were linked to the Umayyad tradition, they would now acquire a new connotation in connection with Shi'i Islam. The stars had a protective value (*amān*) over the members of the House of Prophet Muḥammad (*ahl al-bayt*), as he attributed to them. The Ḥammūdīd caliph, descendant of the "sons of Fāṭima", was thus legitimized²⁸.

His son, Yaḥyā, in addition to resorting to the stars, introduced the octogram symbol. This symbol, besides having the legitimizing and propitiatory value which is closely linked to the symbolism of the hexagram, can be identified with the *Rub' al-Hizb* (⊠). Thus, it made symbolic reference to the "Party of God", to which the Ḥammūdīds belonged as descendants of the prophet Muḥammad²⁹. Yaḥyā also made use of the symbolism of a series of isolated letters (*wāw* and *hā'*) which, once other possibilities have been ruled out, could very well represent numbers. Their numeral value, according to the Maghrebi *abjad*, would be six and eight respectively, which are obviously connected with the hexagram and the octogram, and thus, they would be symbols of propitiatory value³⁰.

After Yaḥyā, his son, Idrīs II, would also utilize the octogram thus making plain his intent to carry on with his father's graphic program. As for his own additions, Idrīs II added the hexagon, thus demarcating the legends in the area. This was a novelty on both coinages from al-Andalus as well as from the Maghreb that would not be used again in al-Andalus. Another element of great symbolic value that Idrīs II added to the caliphal currency was the hexagram or "Seal of Solomon", a monetary symbol whose origin, both in the East and in

²⁴ Ariza Armada, *De Barcelona a Orán*, pp. 69-70.

²⁵ The Idrīsīd protocol reserved the title to the 'Abbāsīd caliphs of Baghdad. Ariza Armada, "*Leyendas monetales*", p. 209.

²⁶ Ariza Armada, *Estudio sobre las monedas*, pp. 184-186; *De Barcelona a Orán*.

²⁷ Ariza Armada, "*Leyendas monetales*", pp. 203 – 231; Peña Martín, Vega Martín, "*The Qur'ānic symbol*", pp. 269 – 284; Ariza Armada, *De Barcelona a Orán*, pp. 107-110.

²⁸ Ariza Armada, *De Barcelona a Orán*, pp. 117-118.

²⁹ Ariza Armada, *De Barcelona a Orán*, pp. 178-182.

³⁰ Ariza Armada, *De Barcelona a Orán*, pp. 184-194.

the Maghreb, had a strong pro-‘Alī connotation. The symbolic reference to the prophet Solomon conferred a magical and protective quality to them and legitimized Idrīs II as a wise and just caliph, as was the king-prophet himself³¹ (Fig. 6).



Fig. 6. Dirham of the Caliph Idrīs II. Al-Andalus mint, year 438 H. Tonegawa Collection.

The caliphate of ‘Alī b. Ḥammūd was widely recognized in the Maghreb. Not only do we have the testimony of literary sources, which indicate that it was recognized in Tangier, Ceuta and even Fez, but a dinar, only recently published, that was coined at the Oran mint (*Madīnat Wahrān*)³², in the year 407/1016-1017, both of which prove not only that the caliphial recognition of the Umayyads continued on to the Ḥammūdids, but also the Ḥammūdīd Caliphate enjoyed far greater recognition than we had previously believed. Numismatic evidence of the recognition of the caliphate also stretches far longer than we had believed, even beyond the first three Ḥammūdids in the Maghreb: Oued Laou (*Wādī Lāw*) would also strike coins in the name of Muḥammad al-Mahdī, and this was proof of the extent of its recognition also across time³³.

However, as proven by the monetary issues and problems receiving silver from the Maghreb experienced by the Ṭā’ifa kingdoms, only the legitimacy of the Ḥammūdīd Caliphate was recognized in the Maghreb; but never the supposed legitimacy of the different Ṭā’ifas or of the supposed caliph Hishām II, who had risen in Seville. As can be seen through the coins, the different Berber tribes were divided over the issue of recognition and recognized either one or the other of the successive Ḥammūdīd caliphs that rivaled each other in the fight for power.

Given the quality and prestige of the dinars issued in the name of the first three caliphs, they were imitated by the Counts of Barcelona. These “mancuses” were made by the counts themselves as well as by deputies, such as the Jewish minters Bonhom and Eneas. They ordered coins minted in the name of the Ḥammūdīd caliphs with their names to appear on some exemplars, just as local powers did in al-Andalus. In this way, they had at their disposal high-quality, prestigious coins that were accepted by the Christian populations, but that also circulated amongst Muslim populations and were an expression of recognition of, and even vassalage to, Ḥammūdīd sovereignty, at least as it was exercised by the first three caliphs of the dynasty³⁴. Thanks to the Treasure of Kiev, in which there was a “mancus”,

³¹ Ariza Armada, “*Iconografía y legitimación*”, pp. 61-83; Ariza Armada, “*Nueva tipología con hexagrama*”, pp. 207-210; *De Barcelona a Orán*, pp. 267-269.

³² Gaspariño, “*Nota sobre un nuevo dinar*”, pp. 71 – 76; Gaspariño, “*Una nueva ceca Ḥammūdī*”, pp. 142-156.

³³ Ariza Armada, *De Barcelona a Orán*, pp. 311-314.

³⁴ Ariza Armada, *De Barcelona a Orán*, pp. 339-349.

we know that the mancuses that imitated Yaḥyā's coinages — and perhaps those of others — traveled to places as far away the state of Old Russia (Rus), thus offering material evidence of the contact between the Sephardim and the Jewish community of the first Eastern Slavic state³⁵.

THE ṬĀ'IFA KINGDOMS (5TH /11TH CENTURY)

The civil war that devastated al-Andalus and caused it to fracture, politically and territorially into the aforementioned Ṭā'ifa kingdoms, was marked by the confrontation between the different Umayyad and Ḥammūdīes pretenders to the Andalusi caliphate. And coins would be, once again, a reflection of this struggle for power. The recognition of one or another caliph by the various kings of Ṭā'ifas, will determine the coinage during the first half of the 5th /11th century. Once the Ḥammūdīd dynasty disappeared, during the second half of the 5th /11th century, in the absence of a caliph in al-Andalus to recognize, the Ṭā'ifas would gradually resort, as a legitimating resource, to the mention of a generic 'Abd Allāh, theoretically in reference to the 'Abbāsīd caliph of Baghdad, or they would mint coin without any caliphal recognition.

The Ṭā'ifas' currency became the image of the absence of power and legitimacy, expressed, first, in the proliferation of mints: we find twenty-two mints³⁶ in the Ṭā'ifa period in opposition to the only one emirate-period mint, al-Andalus, the two (but not coetaneous) caliphal mints of al-Andalus and Madīnat al-Zahrā', and the four of the Ḥammūdīds: al-Andalus, Malaga, Granada and Zaragoza. The second sign of the absence of power and legitimacy is the metrological alterations seen during this period and the loss of the coin's quality; these new mints struck dinars of electrum (gold and silver or copper alloy) and dirhams of copper and billon (silver and copper alloy). The fact that the northern mines of present-day Morocco were held by the Maghrāwa, supporters of the Ḥammūdīd Idrīs II, explains why the so-called "silver crisis" was more evident in the case of Muḥammad al-Mahdī's currency than in that of Idrīs II. This crisis also affected the Ṭā'ifas since the passage through the Gibraltar Strait was controlled by pro-Ḥammūdīd tribes. After the disappearance of the Ḥammūdīds in the second half of the 5th/11th century, the mines in central and southern Maghreb fell under the control of the Almoravids. Neither the Berber tribes in the north nor the Almoravids recognized the legitimacy of the Ṭā'ifas, which explains their unwillingness to supply them silver³⁷.

Another characteristic of coins during the Ṭā'ifa period is the variety of typologies, which are differentiated by the distribution of legends, the appearance of honorary titles, the designation of heirs and the appearance of proper names of important political individuals; these all together represent a further manifestation of the diversity of interests and problems which will break the homogeneity and the political and monetary centralism of the caliphal period.

³⁵ Kuleshov, "*Mankus Barselonskogo grafstva*", pp. 211-217.

³⁶ Al-Andalus (الاندلس), Almería (المرية), Alpuente (البونت), Badajoz (بطليوس), Toledo (طليطلة + طليطلة), Cordoba (مدينة قرطبة), Cuenca (مدينة قونكة + قونكة), Valencia (بلنسية), Murcia (مدينة مرسية), Denia (دانية + دانية), Calatayud (مدينة قلاعة أيوب), Elota (الوطه), Granada (مدينة غرناطة), Huesca (وشقة), Lérida (لاردة), Malaga (مدينة مالقة), Mallorca (مدينة ميورقة + ميورقة), Segura (شكورة), Seville (مدينة اشبيلية), Tortosa (طرطوشة), Tudela (تطيلة) and Zaragoza (مدينة سرقسطة + سرقسطة).

³⁷ Ariza Armada, *De Barcelona a Orán*, pp. 319-322.

The last characteristic of the Ṭā'ifa-period coins is the poor quality of engraving, which make coins from this period the most difficult to read, in general³⁸.

THE ALMORAVIDS

In 478/ 1085, the kingdom of Castile conquered the Ṭā'ifa kingdom of Toledo; and the rest of the Ṭā'ifa kingdoms, led by Seville, sought help from the Almoravids, who founded the city of Marrakech in 454/1062 and from there conquered the Maghreb.

In 483/1090, the Almoravids conquered the Ṭā'ifa kingdoms and al-Andalus became a province of the Almoravid Empire. With the arrival of the Almoravids, the image of power articulated through coins changed radically: the monetary inscriptions will become a clear and unequivocal expression of the political and religious ideology of the Almoravid power.

The Sunni Almoravids, lacking the ambition to proclaim themselves caliphs, recognized the sovereignty of the 'Abbāsīd caliph of Baghdad, using the generic reference 'Abd Allāh, emir of the believers (الامام عبد الله امير المؤمنين), *al-Imān 'Abd Allāh amīr al-mu'minīn*) on their coins. They adopted for themselves minor titles like "emir" (*al-amīr*) and "emir of the Muslims" (*amīr al-muslimīn*). As a marginal legend, they chose the sūrah 3,84 from the Quran, considered a symbol of the Almoravids: *وَمَنْ يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ* ("And whoever desires other than Islam as religion - never will it be accepted from him, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers"). This is an explicit allusion by the dynasty to the superiority of Sunni Islam, especially against the heterodoxy of the Bargawāta and the Fāṭimid "apostasies", and against the Christians of the northern kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula (Fig. 7).



Fig. 7. Almoravid dinar. Seville mint, year 539 H. Tonegawa Collection.

In al-Andalus, Almoravid coins were struck in 15 mints: Cordoba (مدينة قرطبة+قرطبة), Játiva (شاطبة), Sanlúcar (سنلوكة), Seville (اشبيلية), Almería (مدينة المرية+المرية), Granada (غرناطة), Malaga (مدينة مالقة+مالقة), Valencia (بلنسية), Denia (دانية), Murcia (مدينة مرسية+مرسية), Algeciras (الجزيرة), Jaén (جيان), Zaragoza (سرقسطة), Cuenca (قونكة), Badajoz (مدينة بطليوس). Malaga was the first among them to mint Almoravid coins³⁹.

When the Almohad doctrine that preached the imāmate of the mahdī started to spread it represented a threat to Almoravid sovereignty; because of this the Almoravids added the title of *al-'Abbāsī* to the name of the generic caliph of Baghdad to the formula found on the dinars coined from 533/1138-1139 in order to avoid any doubt about the caliph they

³⁸ The classical reference book on Ṭā'ifas period is Prieto y Vives, 1926. The most recent global work about Ṭā'ifas' coins is: Ariza Armada, "*De la legitimidad hammūdī*", pp. 115 – 132.

³⁹ Ariza Armada, "*Monedas andalusíes de Málaga*", pp. 115-116.

recognized. They also introduced pious expressions related to the Prophet, as *سَلَامًا* (*šallā Allāh 'alayhi wasalama taslīmā*, “May the peace and blessing of God be upon him”) or requests for help such as *اللهم ارحم* (*Allāhūmmā arḥām*, “Be Propitious”) or (*'awnūka ya Allāh*, “Your help, Oh God”), especially in times of great tension (as other dynasties did in other territories of Islam in similar situations). Regarding the silver coins, the Almoravids issued large quantities of one-gram coins called “quirats”, that bear a huge variety of monetary legends and demonstrate tremendous stylistic breadth⁴⁰.

The great quality of four-gram Andalusī Almoravid dinars is probably the main reason for their imitations by the Christians kingdoms. Alphonse VIII of Castile struck his “morabetinos” or “maravedis” in Toledo (مدينة طليطلة *Madīnat Ṭulayṭula*)⁴¹, maintaining the Almoravid typology and the legends in Arabic, adapting them for the Christian faith. This way, the king of Castile eliminated the *shahāda* from the obverse of the coins and swapped the reference to the *amīr al-mu'minīn* (“emir of the believers”) for his own name with the title of emir of the Catholics *أمير القتلوقين الفنش بن سنجة* (*amīr al-qatūliqīn, Alfunshu Ibn Sanju*) and a petition for help to God: *ايده الله ونصره* (*ayyada-hu Allāh wa naṣara-hu*, “May God support him and assist him”). On the reverse, he changed the mention to the caliph (*al-Imām / 'Abd Allāh/ amīr al-mu'minīn/ al-'Abbāsi*) for the mention to the Pope, “The Imām of the Church of the Messiah, the Pope” (*Al-Imām al-bī'atu al-masīḥiātu bābā*), and inserted a cross and the first three letters (monogram) of his name in gothic alphabet: ALF⁴². Where sūrah 3,84 is found on the obverse (“And whoever desires other than Islam as religion never will it be accepted from him, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers”) it is answered in the reverse with a legend drawn from the Gospel of Mark 16,16: “In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the one God, whoever believes and was baptized will be saved”

(بسم الأب والابن والروح القدس، الاله الواحد، من آمن واعتمد يكن سالما)

With the fall of the Almoravid power in al-Andalus due to pressure from Christian kingdoms to the north and the Almohads to the south, various local leaders took power in their respective cities. Some minted coins that kept the Almoravid typology, while others used the monetary legends of the Umayyad currency but retained mention of the ‘Abbāsīd caliph.

THE ALMOHADS

In 566/1171 Abū Ya‘qūb Yūsuf I conquered al-Andalus and made Seville the capital of the new province of the Almohad Empire.

The Almohads, as the image of the new Caliphal power they represented, took off the recognition of the ‘Abbāsīd caliphs from coins, that would disappear from the Maghreb coins during eighty years. The first Almohad caliph, al-Mu‘min, effected a major reform in the monetary system that would affect not only typological and metrological matters but also the shape of the coins. The new coins were square or were round with an inscribed square, and they became an emblematic representation of power that the Almohads would

⁴⁰ Benito de los Mozos, *La plata almorávide y postalmorávide: el quirate*.

⁴¹ The difficulties of the attribution of those issues was already mentioned by Vives (Cf. Vives y Escudero, *Monedas de las dinastías arábigo-españolas*, LXXIX-LXXX).

⁴² Vives 2022-2042. The other known typology (Vives 2019-2021) doesn't include the monogram. The most recent work about those issues is Mozo Monroy, *Estudio y catalogación de los morabetinos arábigos*, pp. 165-186.

use as an element of differentiation and expression, as well religious affirmation and divulgation⁴³.

The Almohad reform did not only affect the shape of the coins and the inscriptions, but also the epigraphy, which would now use naskh calligraphy (cursive script). Inscriptions, that were in accordance with the ideology of the new dynasty — the doctrine of the mahdī Ibn Tūmart that declares divine oneness to be its fundamental principle — left their mark on the currency through formulas like: الحمد لله وحده (*al-ḥamdu li-llāh waḥdahu*, “Praise be to God Alone”), “Praise be to God Lord of the Universe” (*al-ḥamdu li-llāh rabb al-‘alamin*), والهمك واله واحد (*Wa l-hukum ilaha waḥid*, “And your God is One”) or لا إله الا هو الرحمن الرحيم (*La Ilah illā huwa al-Raḥman al-Raḥīm*, “There is no God but He who is the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful”) employed in dinars, or expressions such as لا إله الا الله لا قوة الا بالله (*La Ilah illā Allāh / al-amr kullu-hu li-llāh / la quwwa illā bi-llāh*, “There is no god but God / all power is of God / there is no force but in God”) recorded in the dirhams. Along with this essential characteristic of the Almohad coins, there is another basic element: the fact that in all of them there is a mention of the mahdī, with phrases such as المهدي امام الامة (*al-Mahdī imām al-umma*, “al-Mahdī is the Imām of the community”) or المهدي امامنا (*al-Mahdī imāmu-na* “al-Mahdī is our Imām”) (Fig. 8).



Fig. 8. Almohad dinar of Abū Yūsuf Ya‘qūb, No mint nor date. Tonegawa Collection.

On the one hand, the reverse of gold coins (the double and its fractions) there is always a mention of the Almohad caliph who issued of the coin, with his antecessors, giving the coins true genealogical inscriptions. However, the square dirhams are anonymous. No other name than the one of the caliph appears on the coins of the Almohads. On the other hand, the date of coinage does not appear in either in the gold or the silver, so they do not provide an exact chronology that would allow for exhaustive knowledge of their production. This is an even bigger problem in the case of the dirhams, as they are anonymous. Mints’ inscriptions are rarely included in Almohad coins, and when they are it is secondary: the mint name is engraving in tiny epigraphic characters and placed in a lower angle or on the bottom of the area.

In al-Andalus they minted coins in the name of the Almohads caliphs in thirteen mints: Seville (مدينة اشبيلية+اشبيلية), Valencia (بلنسية), Jaén (جيان), Cordoba (قرطبة), Mallorca (ميورقة), Menorca (مانرقة), Malaga (مالقة), Murcia (مرسية), Granada (غرناطة), Jerez (شريش) and Denia (دانية), and the recently identified as Cartagena (قرطجنه) and Priego (باغه)⁴⁴.

⁴³ A summary of the theories about the reason of the Almohad coins being square or having an inscribed square can be found in Vega Martín, Peña Martín, Feria García, *El mensaje de las monedas almohades*, pp. 251-259.

⁴⁴ Vega Martín, “*Qarṭayanna y Bāguh, cecas almohades*”, pp. 63-75.

As happened with the Umayyad, Ḥammūdīd and Almoravid coins, Almohad coins were also copied by the peninsular Christian kingdoms. The Almohad dinars, with an average weight of 4.5 grams, inspired the Castilian “dobla” coined beginning in the reign of Ferdinand III (the Saint); this would become the common currency of Castile throughout the late Middle Ages. And the silver coins, with an average weight of 1.5 grams, were also imitated by princes, counts, principal citizens and even by some bishops in Catalonia, the south of France and Italy. These imitations are called “millares”⁴⁵.

When Almohad power in al-Andalus ultimately declines, peninsula enters a period referred to as the “third Ṭā’ifas”. During this period the minting of Ibn Hūd of Murcia stood out: he would become independent from Almohad power and would be recognized as emir of al-Andalus by the caliph of Baghdad, in whose name he would mint coins. In spite of the importance of Murcia, the only Ṭā’ifa that survived the Christian conquest, as a vassal state of Castile, was the Naṣrīd one, which would become the last Islamic state in the Iberian Peninsula.

THE NAṢRĪD KINGDOM

The traditional explanation of early Naṣrīd coinage is that it was influenced by the political relationship between the Naṣrīds and the Ḥafṣīds of Tunis. When the Almohad caliph ‘Abd al-Wāhid II died (640/1242), the first Naṣrīd emir, Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr, signed an alliance with his Tunisian counterpart. He received a great sum of money for fighting against the Christian kingdoms of the north of the Iberian Peninsula, which had conquered a great part of al-Andalus and had reduced its extent in just a few years to what remained of the Naṣrīd Kingdom. Then, the first coins appeared that we can identify as symbolizing Andalusī dependence upon Ḥafṣīd power. Therefore, the first Naṣrīd coins, minted in Granada, followed the Almohad model, like the Ḥafṣīd coinage did, and the Ḥafṣīd style, and recognized Abū Zakarīyā’ Yaḥyā as emir. Later, they would recognize the sovereignty of the Almohad caliph and, as in the case of the Almohads coins, would include a reference of *al-Mahdī* or *al-Mahdī imām al-umma*; he was also called *amīr al-muslimīn*, with his *laqab* (الغالب بالله, *al-Gālib bi-Llāh*), and the pious expression *أيده الله* (*ayyada-hu Allāh*, “May God support him”), and the name of the mint in tiny letters⁴⁶. This chronological sequence that has been recently refuted, being considered that the firsts issues of Muḥammad I are the ones with an Almohad typology⁴⁷. Nevertheless, since the beginning, Muḥammad I introduced, in his dinars and dirhams, the principal image of Naṣrīd power: his dynastical motto “the *gāliba*” (ولا غالب الا الله *Wa lā Gālib illā Allāh*, “And there is no victor but God”).

Silver coins followed the Almohad pattern with square dirhams and their divisors. The first dirhams bore the *gāliba* on the obverse, under the profession of faith and, on the reverse, the name of the Naṣrīd emir with the title of *amīr al-muslimīn* and the generic recognition of *khalīfa al-‘Abbāsī*, leaving the name of the mint, Granada, relegated to a small space and very small characters, as was characteristic of the Almohad coins.

However, the first sultan of Granada soon reformed the coins. He kept the basic typology and metrology of Almohad issues⁴⁸ but he made a coinage with specific characteristics

⁴⁵ Ariza Armada, “*El millarés. Revisión historiográfica*”, pp. 98-114.

⁴⁶ As example Prieto y Vives, “*Numismática granadina*”, pp. 305-311; Rodríguez Lorente, *Numismática nasrī*, p. 31 (n° 1), lam. 1, pp. 101-102; Medina Gómez, *Monedas hispano-musulmanas*, pp. 479, 498.

⁴⁷ Fontenla Ballesta, “*Notas sobre el sistema monetario nazari*”, p. 140.

⁴⁸ The two most recent works about Naṣrī metrology are Jiménez Puertas, “*La evolución del sistema monetario nazari*”, pp. 31-49 and Fontenla Ballesta, “*Notas sobre el sistema monetario nazari*”, pp. 139-148 who refutes the first one.

that would define Naşrid coins throughout the dynasty's rule. On the one hand, they represent the limits of his power and isolation by failing to recognize any caliph; and furthermore, from the beginning of the 15th century and the rise of Yūsuf III, the title of *amīr* disappeared. On the other hand, the coins came to reflect the critical nature of his situation vis-a-vis pressure from the Christian kingdoms. Consequently, the coins include petitions for help to God and the dinars also have two typical legends at the center of the obverse side: sūrah 3,26, except the last sentence (*قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ مَالِكُ الْمُلْكِ / تُؤْتِي الْمُلْكَ مَنْ تَشَاءُ / وَتَنْزِعُ / عَنْهُ الْمُلْكَ مَنْ تَشَاءُ / وَتُعْزِزُ مَنْ تَشَاءُ / وَتُذَلِّقُ / مَنْ تَشَاءُ / بِرَبِّكَ الْخَيْرُ* , “Say, “O God, Owner of Sovereignty, You give sovereignty to whom You will and You take sovereignty away from whom You will. You honor whom You will and You humble whom You will. In Your hand is [all] good. Indeed, You are over all things competent”) and sūrah 3,200 (*يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اصْبِرُوا / وَصَابِرُوا / وَرَابِطُوا / وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ / لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ* , “O you who have believed, persevere and endure and remain stationed and fear Allah that you may be successful”). And in the segments, we can find the formula of date and place of minting (*طبع / مدينة / غرناطة* , *Ṭubi‘a / Madīnat / Garnāta*) and the request that God protect Granada (*حرسها الله* , *ḥarasahā Allāh*, “May God keep her”). It is interesting to say that since Muḥammad V, the word “*ḍuriba*” was changed for “*ṭubi‘a*”, and it was also with this emir when the sūrah 3,200 it was introduced (Fig. 9).



Fig. 9. Naşrid dinar of Muḥammad XII (Boabdil). Granada mint. Tonegawa Collection.

Two of the most common characteristics of Naşrid coins can be found on the reverse sides: the repetition of the *gāliba* in all the four segments (this happens from the government of Muḥammad III) and the genealogy of the king without the title of *amīr* (from Yūsuf III) and without any reference to the *imām* but with the petition of help to God: *أيداه الله و نصره* (*ayyada-hu Allāh wa naşara-hu*, “May God support him and assist him” (Fig. 9). The *gāliba* was mainly spread thanks to the coins rather than its so many times repeated inscriptions on the walls of the Alhambra. The Naşrid coined up to thirty-five diverse types of gold coins “*doblas*”. Following the Almohad model, the Naşrids didn't engrave the dates on their dinars.

As for the dirhams, they were also reformed and evolved in a manner that is an expression of the Granada's kingdom political situation. So, the profession of faith (*shahāda*) would become the only text on the obverse, while on the reverse, the face typically used for articulating political power, the title of *amīr al-muslimīn* disappeared and was substituted with the name, but not the title, of the sultan. The name of Granada itself gained prominence, occupying all the third line of the inscription in characters of similar size to the rest of the text. Something similar happened with the dynastic motto, especially in the divisors of dirhams, which moved from the third line of the inscription on the obverse to become the main text of the reverse, next to the name of Granada.

Also, in the silver coins it is very common to find a symbol that has been read by the Spanish numismatic historiography as *تع*, considered the abbreviation of the pious formula *تعالى* (*ta'ālā*) “Be Exalted”⁴⁹. Nevertheless, I find that it seems to be more likely to be a final *hā'* as an abbreviation of the word *انتهى* *intahā* (“finished”). This abbreviation started to appear on some dirhams of 'Alī b. Sa'd at the end of the name of the mint of Granada (Vives 2185), and its use became more frequent on the anonymous dirhams, on which it normally appears at the end of the profession of faith (Vives 2193) and, moreover, at the end of the *gālība*, as it happens on the cursive inscriptions of the *gālība* that can be found at the Alhambra⁵⁰ (Fig. 10).



Fig. 10. ½ Naṣrid dirham, anonymous, Granada mint. Tonegawa Collection.

Currency was thus a clear picture of the evolution of Naṣrid power. The diminishing power of Granada was also reflected in the quality of the currency: against the good quality of dinars which had characterized the Naṣrid currency, Muḥammad XII, Boabdil, would coin in “electrum” (gold-silver) during the critical time of the civil war that devastated the kingdom in its last years. They even came to coin dated copper *fāls*, whose polygonal cut-outs included only the mint in one of its areas and the date in the other; these were made during the period from 879/1474 to 894 / 1488, during the reign of the three last emirs, Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī (known as Muley Hacén to the Christians), Muḥammad XII (Boabdil) and Muḥammad XIII (El Zagal)⁵¹. At the same moment, there's a Naṣrid innovation regarding to the Almohade model: those known as “dinarines”, small square and anonymous gold coins bearing, in general, the Naṣrid motto on the obverse and the name of the mint (Granada, Almería and Malaga) in the reverse⁵². Together with this numismatic Naṣrid innovation we can find the so called “square dinars”⁵³ and those considered as “double dirhams” or “amulets”, which following the last historiographical proposal could be items with a funeral feature⁵⁴.

The mints that coined Naṣrid coins were: Alhambra of Granada (حمرنا غرناطة), Granada (مدينة غرناطة+غرناطة), Almería (مدينة المرية+المرية), Guadix (وادي اش), Jaén (جيان), Malaga (مدينة مالقة+مالقة), Murcia (مرسية), Ceuta (سبتة) and the recently identified Ronda (رندة)⁵⁵.

⁴⁹ For example: Vives y Escudero, *Monedas de las dinastías arábigo-españolas*; Medina Gómez, *Monedas hispano-musulmanas*; Canto García, Ibrāhīm, Martín Escudero, *Monedas Andalúsies*; Delgado y Hernández, *Estudios de Numismática Arábigo-Hispana*; Canto García, Ibrāhīm, *Moneda Andalusí*. I kindly thank Naiera Rafik for her comments about this question during the course.

⁵⁰ Martínez Enamorado, “*Lema de príncipes*”, pp. 534, 549 thinks that it is the abbreviation of the word *تع*, while Puerta Vilchez says it's an ending *hā'* (Puerta Vilchez, *Leer la Alhambra*, p. 19).

⁵¹ Fontenla Ballesta “*El cobre nazari*”, pp. 163-173.

⁵² Rodríguez Lorente, *Numismática nasrí*, pp. 81-82.

⁵³ Rodríguez Lorente, *Numismática nasrí*, pp. 79-81.

⁵⁴ Pérez Sanchez, “*Los dobles dirhames*”, pp. 41-53.

⁵⁵ Gaspariño, Benito de los Mozos, “*Nota sobre una nueva ceca para las monedas nazariés*”, pp. 63-69.

CONCLUSION

As the rest of the coin issues of the different Islamic powers, Andalusī coin is an essential document on which we can find the expression of the different ideologies and religious doctrines as well as the political interests and historical conjunctures of the various powers that ruled al-Andalus. And all of it seen through various elements such as coin metrology and fineness, but especially through the coin legends. These ones were either of a religious character (different expressions of the profession of faith, Quranic legends and pious formulas) or a political one (names and titles of sovereigns and other political personalities) and were always consciously selected and distributed on the coin's die with the objective of conveying a specific message.

The Andalusī coinage was born under the parameters set from the East by the Umayyads of Damascus but with specific identity features (such as the star symbol, for example). After a transition period, as a territory under the authority of the caliph of Damascus, al-Andalus issued dinars, dirhams and *fāls* following the eastern Umayyad's model. This pattern was kept when it became an independent emirate, as an expression of dynastical vindication, clearly exhibiting its position against the caliphal power of Bagdad. But the Independent Emirate of Cordoba only struck silver coins (dirhams) and the volume of its issues would be conditioned by the political instability that marked his history. This instability disappeared when 'Abd al-Raḥmān III was proclaimed caliph. The Caliphate of Cordoba will lead al-Andalus to its maximum splendor and its currency became the main element of recognition of the sovereignty of the new caliphate, which was recognized in the Peninsula as well as in the Maghreb, where eight mints struck coins in the name of the caliphs of Cordoba. As a symbol of their dynastic claim, the Umayyad caliphs of al-Andalus maintained on their coins the same religious legends as their predecessors, but they introduced novelties that defined their own image of power as caliphs defy the Fātimid and the 'Abbāsīd caliphates: a new mint, Madīnat al-Zahrā', and the introduction of the name and titles of the Andalusī caliphs on the coins and the names of important political personalities, following the 'Abbāsīd model.

After the Umayyads, the Ḥammūdīd caliphs had greater recognition than we had previously believed, striking coins in their name in the Maghrebi mints of Ceuta, Fez, Wādī Lāw and Oran. Their dynastic conflicts appeared on the coinage, that even if it kept following the caliphal pattern, a branch of the dynasty introduced a "graphical program" with Shī'a connotations and with a clear propitiatory value. The last issues had to bear the consequences of the generalized 'silver crisis' that happened mainly due to the civil war that had divided al-Andalus into several independent Ṭā'ifa Kingdoms. The absence of power and legitimacy was expressed on the Ṭā'ifa coins through the proliferation of mints, the metrological alterations and the loss of coin quality because they lacked access to the Maghrebi mines, controlled by powers (pro-Ḥammūdīd tribes and Almoravids) that did not recognize the legitimacy of the Ṭā'ifas. Furthermore, the variety of the coin typologies represents the diversity of interests and problems of a period that contrasts with the homogeneity and centralism of the Umayyad Caliphate.

Al-Andalus was reunified with the Almoravid's arrival and with it, a radical change occurred: fifteen Andalusī mints will strike high quality coins with an Almoravid typology, with epigraphy and legends that expressed the reformist ideology of the new emirs. When the Almoravid power will be replaced by the Almohad one, thirteen Andalusī mints will strike Almohad coins following its metrology and typology that, once again, will be a clear element of religious affirmation and divulgation. The last Andalusī state, the Naṣrīd

Kingdom of Granada had a complex and difficult origin that could be seen on the various typologies that the first Naṣrid emir struck, as well as through the pious formulas that he introduced in his legends. Nevertheless, from the first issues, the main image of the Naṣrid power was introduced: the dynastical motto, “the gālība”. The Naṣrid coinage is the testimony of the political evolution of the kingdom and of the pressure that it underwent from the Christian kingdoms. It represents the limits of its power and its need for help expressed on the coins through Quranic legends and pious formulas.

To conclude, it is important to point out that the high quality and prestige of the Andalusī coinage led to its imitation by the northern peninsular Christian kingdoms. The gold coins of the Umayyad Caliphate and the three first Ḥammūdid caliphs were imitated by the Catalanian counties (“mancusos”); later, king Alphonse VIII of Castile imitated Almoravid dinars maintaining its typology and the Arabic language, but introducing legends that defied the Islamic creed, adapting them to the Christian faith (“morabetinos” or “maravedís”); and the Almohad gold inspired the Castilian “dobla”, the most common currency of Castile in the late Middle Ages. The Almohad silver coins were also imitated in present-day Catalonia (“millares”).

The evolution of Andalusī coins was conditioned by the conjunctures that al-Andalus had to face during its almost eight centuries of history. They always maintained identity and singularity elements that identified them, notwithstanding being immersed in the ideological, political and economic context of the rest of *Dār al-Islām*.

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