THE NEW CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF ISLAM

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The New Cambridge History of Islam offers a comprehensive history of Islamic civilisation, tracing its development from its beginnings in seventh-century Arabia to its wide and varied presence in the globalised world of today. Under the leadership of the Prophet Muhammad, the Muslim community coalesced from a scattered, desert population and, following his death, emerged from Arabia to conquer an empire which, by the early eighth century, stretched from India in the east to Spain in the west. By the eighteenth century, despite political fragmentation, the Muslim world extended from West Africa to South-East Asia. Today, Muslims are also found in significant numbers in Europe and the Americas, and make up about one-fifth of the world’s population.

To reflect this geographical distribution and the cultural, social and religious diversity of the peoples of the Muslim world, The New Cambridge History of Islam is divided into six volumes. Four cover historical developments, and two are devoted to themes that cut across geographical and chronological divisions – themes ranging from social, political and economic relations to the arts, literature and learning. Each volume begins with a panoramic introduction setting the scene for the ensuing chapters and examining relationships with adjacent civilisations. Two of the volumes – one historical, the other thematic – are dedicated to the developments of the last two centuries, and show how Muslims, united for so many years in their allegiance to an overarching and distinct tradition, have sought to come to terms with the emergence of Western hegemony and the transition to modernity.

The time is right for this new synthesis reflecting developments in scholarship over the last generation. The New Cambridge History of Islam is an ambitious enterprise directed and written by a team combining established authorities and innovative younger scholars. It will be the standard reference for students, scholars and all those with enquiring minds for years to come.
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VOLUME 1
The Formation of the Islamic world
Sixth to Eleventh Centuries
EDITED BY CHASE ROBINSON

VOLUME 2
The Western Islamic World,
Eleventh to Eighteenth Centuries
EDITED BY MARIBEL FIERRO

VOLUME 3
The Eastern Islamic World,
Eleventh to Eighteenth Centuries
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THE NEW CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF ISLAM

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The Formation of the Islamic World, Sixth to Eleventh Centuries

Edited by
CHASE ROBINSON
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A note on transliteration and pronunciation

Since many of the languages used by Muslims are written in the Arabic or other non-Latin scripts, these languages appear in transliteration. The transliteration of Arabic and Persian is based upon the conventions used by *The encyclopaedia of Islam*, second edition, with the following modifications. For the fifth letter of the Arabic alphabet (jīm), j is used (not dj), as in jumla. For the twenty-first letter (qāf), q is used (not ḥ), as in qādī. Digraphs such as th, dh, gh, kh and sh are not underlined. For terms and names in other languages, the individual chapter contributors employ systems of transliteration that are standard for those languages. Where there are well-accepted Anglicised versions of proper nouns or terms (e.g. Baghdad, Mecca), these are used instead of strict transliterations.

As far as the pronunciation of Arabic is concerned, some letters can be represented by single English letters that are pronounced much as they are English (b, j, f, etc.); one exception is q, which is a ‘k’ sound produced at the very back of the throat, and another is the ‘r’, which is the ‘flap’ of the Spanish ‘r’. Others are represented by more than one letter. Some of these are straightforward (th, sh), but others are not (kh is pronounced like ‘j’ in Spanish, gh is similar to the uvular ‘r’ of most French speakers, and dh is ‘th’ of ‘the’, rather than of ‘thing’). There are also pairs of letters that are distinguished by a dot placed underneath one of them: thus t, s, d, z and their ‘emphatic’ counterparts ṭ, ṣ, ḍ, and ṭ, which give the surrounding vowels a thicker, duller sound (thus s ‘sad’, but ṣ ‘sun’); ṭ may also be pronounced as dh.

The ʿ is the hamza, the glottal stop, as in the Cockney ‘bu’er’ (‘butter’); the ‘ is the ‘ayn, a voiced pharyngeal fricative that can be left unpronounced, which is what many non-Arab speakers do when it occurs in Arabic loan-words; and the ḥ a voiceless pharyngeal fricative that can pronounced as an ‘h’ in all positions, just as non-Arabs do in Arabic loanwords. Doubled consonants are lengthened, as in the English ‘hot tub’.
A note on transliteration and pronunciation

The vowels are written as $a$, $i$, and $u$, with $\ddot{a}$, $\ddot{i}$ and $\ddot{u}$ signifying longer versions; thus $bit$ and $beat$. $W$ and $y$ can function as either consonants or, when preceded by a short vowel, as part of a diphthong.

Persian uses the same alphabet as Arabic, with four extra letters: $p$, $ch$, $zh$ (as in ‘pleasure’) and $g$ (always hard, as in ‘get’).
A note on dating

The Islamic calendar is lunar, and divided into twelve months of twenty-nine or thirty days each: Muḥarram, Ṣafar, Rabī’ I, Rabī’ II, Jumādā I, Jumādā II, Rajab, Sha’bān, Ramadān (the month of the fast), Shawwāl, Dhū al-Qa‘da, and Dhū al-Ḥijja (the month of the pilgrimage). Years are numbered from the hijra (‘emigration’) of the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Yathrib (Medina), conventionally dated to 16 July 622 of the Common (or Christian) Era; this dating is known as hijrī, and marked by ‘AH’. As the lunar year is normally eleven days shorter than the solar year, the Islamic months move in relation to the solar calendar, and hijrī years do not correspond consistently with Western ones; AH 1429, for example, will both start and finish within 2008 CE (so indicated as ‘1429/2008’), but this is exceptional, and most overlap with two Common Era years, and so ‘460/1067f.’.
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260  Shāpūr I’s victory at Edessa; capture of the Roman emperor Valerian

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298  ‘Peace of disgrace’ concluded between Romans and Sasanians

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378  Catastrophic Roman defeat by the Goths at Adrianople

387  Partition of Armenia

410  Rome is sacked by the Goths, led by Alaric

439  Vandals conquer Carthage

484  Shāh Fruž is defeated by the Hepthalites

527–65  Reign of Justinian; administrative reforms and military victories

528–9  al-Ḥārith ibn Jabala made supreme phylarch by Justinian

531–79  Reign of Shāh Khusrau I; social, economic and administrative reforms undertaken

540  ‘Eternal peace’ between Romans and Sasanians, agreed in 532, is broken by Khusrau

572  Sasanian advance into southern Arabia

c. 575  Birth of Muḥammad in Mecca

602  Assassination of the last Lakhmid ruler Nu‘mān III
Chronology

603–28  Last great war between Romans and Sasanians, the latter occupying Syria and Egypt

610–41  Reign of Emperor Heraclius

c. 610  Muḥammad delivers first revelations in Mecca

1/622  The ‘Emigration’ (ḥijra) of Muḥammad and his followers from Mecca to Medina

628  The Sasanian shah Khusrau is murdered; civil war in Ctesiphon ensues

630  Emperor Heraclius restores True Cross to Jerusalem

11/632  Death of Muḥammad in Medina

11–13/632–4  Reign of first caliph, Abū Bakr; the ‘wars of apostasy’ break out


23–35/644–56  Reign of third caliph, ‘Uthmān

31/651  Assassination of the last Sasanian king, Yazdegerd III, at Marw

35/656  First civil war (fitna) begins, triggered by the assassination of ‘Uthmān; the battle of the Camel

35–40/656–61  Reign of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, which ends with his assassination

41–60/661–80  Reign of the (Sufyānid) Umayyad Muʿawiya ibn Abī Sufyān

61/680  Killing of al-Ḥusayn, the Prophet’s grandson, at Karbalā’ by Umayyad forces

64–73/683–92  Second civil war: the Sufyānids fall, Ibn al-Zubayr rules the caliphate from Mecca and the Marwānid Umayyads come to power

73–86/692–705  Reign of ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān

79/698  Conquest of Carthage

86–96/705–15  Reign of al-Walīd, first of four sons of ʿAbd al-Malik to rule; Qutayba ibn Muslim leads conquests in Transoxania and Central Asia

92/711  Tārīq ibn Ziyād crosses the Strait of Gibraltar, and Iberia soon falls to Muslims

98–9/716–17  Failed siege of Constantinople

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### Chronology

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<td>101–2/720</td>
<td>Revolt of Yazid ibn al-Muhallab</td>
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<td>104/723</td>
<td>Muslim campaigns beyond the Indus</td>
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<td>106/724</td>
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<td>114/732</td>
<td>Muslim army defeated near Poitiers by Charles Martel</td>
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<td>122/740</td>
<td>Berber revolt; Umayyad authority dissolves in North Africa and Spain; revolt led by Zayd ibn ‘Alî, a grandson of al-Ḥusayn</td>
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<td>127–32/744–50</td>
<td>Reign of Marwān II, last Umayyad caliph</td>
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<td>129/747</td>
<td>Abū Muslim leads the Hāshimiyah in rebellion, conquering Marw in early 130/748</td>
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<td>132/749</td>
<td>The ‘Abbāsid Abū ‘Abbās acclaimed as caliph in Kūfa</td>
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<tr>
<td>132/750</td>
<td>Umayyad caliphate falls to ‘Abbāsid–Ḥāshimī armies; Marwān killed in Egypt.</td>
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<td>132–7/750–4</td>
<td>Umayyad counter-revolts in Syria and al-Jazīra</td>
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<td>136–58/756–75</td>
<td>Reign of al-Manṣūr; Abū Muslim is murdered, ‘Abbāsid power is firmly established and the ‘city of peace’ (Baghdad) is built (145/762–3)</td>
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<td>137/754</td>
<td>Revolt of ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Alî, ‘Abbāsid governor of Syria</td>
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<td>145/762</td>
<td>Rebellion of the ‘Alid Muḥammad, ‘the Pure Soul’; construction of Baghdad begins</td>
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<td>170–93/786–809</td>
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<td>‘Decade of the Barmakids’; vizieral family dominate ‘Abbāsid administration and culture</td>
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<td>180–92/796–808</td>
<td>Hārūn al-Rashîd makes al-Raqqa his capital</td>
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<td>193–8/809–13</td>
<td>Civil war between Hārūn’s two sons, al-Amīn and al-Ma’mūn; Baghdad besieged</td>
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<td>198–218/813–33</td>
<td>Reign of al-Ma’mūn; large numbers of Turkish slave-soldiers are introduced into the army from the 820s</td>
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<td>206/821</td>
<td>Appointment of Tāhir ibn al-Ḥusayn as governor of Khūrāsān; beginning of Tāhirid rule</td>
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<td>218–27/833–42</td>
<td>Reign of al-Mu’tasim; caliphal court is moved to Sāmarrā’, where it remains until 892</td>
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The *mihna*: the caliphs impose the doctrine of the ‘createdness’ of the Qur’an

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Al-Mutawakkil is murdered in Sāmarra’

Civil war in Iraq between al-Musta’īn and al-Mu’tazz

Ibn Ṭūlūn arrives in Egypt and begins to establish his rule there

Outbreak of Zanj revolt in southern Iraq

Ya’qūb the Coppersmith is defeated near Baghdad

Defeat of the Zanj in the swamps of southern Iraq

Accession of al-Muqtadir to the caliphate, followed by the revolt of Ibn al-Mu’tazz

The Fātimid ‘Abd Allāh the *mahdi* is declared caliph in North Africa

Execution of the mystic al-Ḥallāj

The Qarāmīta attack Mecca and seize the Black Stone

Death of al-Muqtadir

Death of Mardavij ibn Ziyār, warlord of northern Iran

Ibn Rā’īq becomes *amīr al-umarā* in Baghdad

Ahmad ibn Büya Mu‘izz al-Dawla enters Baghdad; end of the independent ‘Abbāsid caliphate

‘Alī ibn Mazyad al-Asadī establishes Mazyadid rule in Hilla and central Iraq

Sebūkṭegn seizes power in Ghazna

Rule of the Büyid ‘Aḍud al-Dawla in Iraq

al-Ḥasan ibn Marwān establishes Marwānid rule in Mayyafāriqīn and Amida

Reign of al-Qādir, resurgence of ‘Abbāsid authority

Ghaznavids secure power in Khurāsān

Issuing of the ‘Qādirī creed’ by the caliph al-Qādir; Maḥmūd of Ghazna takes Rayy and ends Būyid rule there

Death of Maḥmūd of Ghazna

End of Būyid rule in Baghdad

Death of Qirwāsh ibn Muqallad al-‘Uqaylī
Abbreviations

BAR  British Archaeological Reports
BASOR  Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
BGA  Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum
BSOAS  Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies
CII  Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum
CSCO  Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
EIr  Encyclopaedia Iranica, London and Boston, 1982–
IJMES  International Journal of Middle East Studies
JA  Journal Asiatique
JAOS  Journal of the American Oriental Society
JESHO  Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient
JNES  Journal of Near Eastern Studies
JRAS  Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society
JSAI  Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam
JSS  Journal of Semitic Studies
MW  Muslim World
OrOcc  Oriens et Occidens
REI  Revue des études islamiques
RSO  Rivista degli Studi Orientali
SI  Studia Islamica
ZDMG  Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft

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1. The physical geography of the Mediterranean and Near Eastern world
2. The political geography of the Mediterranean and Near Eastern world, c. 575
3. The expansion of Islam in the east
4. The expansion of Islam in the west
5. The 'Abbāsid empire in c. 800
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7. Arabia
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10. Egypt
11. Spain and North Africa
Numismatics

STEFAN HEIDEMANN

Islamic coins as a historical source

At least since Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886), the historical-critical approach to any study of history has demanded parallel independent proof in order to establish firmly a given historical fact. Historians of Islamic societies have almost no primary documents or archives for the period prior to the fifteenth century. In contrast to the scarce primary documents, the secondary sources – literary and historical accounts, especially from the ninth to the tenth centuries – are abundant.

This gross imbalance between the lack of primary documents, produced in the course of the events, and chronicles written much later has led scholars to depend greatly upon medieval but secondary authors. Since they typically wrote from the point of view of a city, a ruling house, a ruler or a religious community or school of law their accounts are necessarily biased. Without independent documents or material evidence the modern historian is often unable to corroborate or to refute these literary accounts; sometimes even important lacunae in our knowledge may remain unnoticed. After being widely neglected following the First World War the study and use of Islamic numismatic documents have again become a prospering academic subject, particularly in the 1990s.**

Islamic coins of the classical period can be characterised above all as bearers of texts of up to 150 words (fig. 16.35). The texts on coins struck during the first six-and-a-half centuries of Islam often mention up to five names, providing the entire hierarchy of power – from the local governor up to the caliph at the time and location of minting. They usually name the mint town, sometimes even the urban quarter, usually the year, and sometimes even the month and the day. Religious legends provide hints of the political orientation of the ruler.

** See the chapter bibliography below.
who commissioned the coin. The inclusion of the name onto the coin protocol (sikka) and in the Friday prayer (khuţba) served in their time as proof of who the actual ruler was. Both had a similar political value. The reference to the hierarchy of rulers in the Friday prayer was purely verbal and therefore transient, whereas on coins the protocol can be found permanently stored on a metal object that was frequently reproduced, like a ‘bulletin of state’. As what are normally precisely datable archaeological artefacts, they open a further dimension of information.¹⁴¹⁸

Coins as source of economic and legal history

Money as a means of coordinating human decisions and economic exchange is a complex social invention. It must always adjust to the prevailing economic, political and juridical conditions. Seen from another angle, its design and evolution reveal much about the societies creating it. In the pre-modern world the supply of coins – the physical instruments for the exchange of goods and services – were usually scarce. However, in order to function as an ‘absolute price’ (thaman muţlaq) or ‘equivalent’ (thaman) – that is, as money – at least one certain type of coin has to be available in sufficient quantities. Non-physical forms of money, bills of exchange (ţawāla) and cheques (sufţaja), were developed in the Middle East, but they were used only among small communities bound by ties of trust and kinship, such as, for example, in networks of long-distance merchants in major trade cities.

The value of coins was determined by market forces. It always exceeded the value of the same amount of metal as a mere commodity, although it was bound to the metal content, the difference being smaller for high-value coins than for petty coinage. If a coin-type was generally accepted and was in sufficient supply, it was maintained over a long period and remained stable in design and usually in metallic content.

Two separate currencies always existed side by side, serving distinct needs within different social classes: high-value money, usually gold or pure silver coins; and petty coinage, usually debased silver, billon or copper coins. Gold coins, and, to a certain extent, silver coins, constituted the principal currency for wholesale and long-distance merchants (ţujjār and jallābūn) as well as for

fiscal administration and state expenditure. It was also the money of high-ranking state officials and military, who needed it to store wealth, to transfer it conveniently over long distances and to make payments of large sums. High-value coins could be traded between regions, and stood in competition with other similar coins. Geographically well-defined borders of currency zones hardly existed. If they did exist, then it was for economic reasons and fiscal measures.

The second currency type fulfilled the needs for daily purchases. It was the money of small dealers, artisans, workers (ṣūqa and bā‘a) in the urban market (ṣūq) and, of course, of the rest of the urban population. The urban population was dependent for their livelihood on income that usually came from their activities within the boundaries of a city or town, and thus on purchases within the urban markets. The majority of the people in pre-modern societies – the rural population, peasants and nomads – relied mainly on subsistence. Only certain extra requirements and excess produce were bought and sold in the sūq.

The ratio in price between high-value and petty coinage was usually determined by supply and demand. The demand for small coins far exceeded their supply, as the central authorities usually neglected to provide a sufficient supply. This allowed a much higher profit for those who could provide these means of exchange – in other words, the local fiscal and political authorities or private money-changers. Petty coins could also be imported from other regions at a profit.

During the third/ninth century the legal prescriptions for money became fully developed, the most important among them being the theory of value and the prohibition of ribā (illegitimate profit according to the shari‘a). Islamic law forbids two equal amounts of precious metal from being valued differently in one single transaction. This is the core of the prohibition of ribā. Islamic legal theory determined the value of money to be identical with the intrinsic value of the bullion. Only silver and gold were the commodities that could be legally used for any transaction as ‘absolute price’. Muslim jurists of the fifth/eleventh century, however, were aware of the contradiction between observed empirical reality and normative imperative of the revealed law. They recognised that the fluctuating value of coins was based on the interest of the public in it – that is, on the market forces. In order to facilitate a monetary economy in the period of regional currencies with different finenesses and weights the jurists invented several legal arguments to ensure that market exchanges were in accord with Islamic law.
Numismatics

The majority of the jurists did not regard copper coins – the generic term is fals/falus – as money or ‘absolute price/equivalent’; if they regarded them at all, then they did so only as a substitute for money. Copper coins could serve in some, but not all, legal transactions, as did gold and silver.  

The development of the representation of a new universal religion and its empire: Zubayrid and Khārijite challenge and Umayyad reform

Coins and their imagery are our only contemporary continuous primary source for the genesis of the self-representation of the new religion and its empire in the seventh century. Our understanding on these early coins has grown quickly since the 1990s.

The Islamic armies swiftly conquered three major zones of monetary circulation, and took over much of their fiscal organisation: the former Byzantine territories in the centre; the Sasanian empire in the east; and Germanic North Africa and Spain. In the Byzantine territories the workhorse of the fiscal cycle, of taxation and state expenditure, was the gold solidus or nomisma of about 4.55 grams (fig. 16.1). The money used for the daily


purchases, the copper follis (pl. folles) (fig. 16.2), was sold by the treasury as well. In 629/30 Heraclius (r. 610–41) had concentrated all minting in the imperial capital, Constantinople. During the Sasanian occupation between 606–7 and 628 irregular mints were established in Syria, supplementing the circulating stock of copper coins. In the Sasanian empire the money of the fiscal cycle was the uniform silver drachm of about 4.2 grams, which was struck in the days of Khusrau II (r. 590/591–628) in about thirty-four mints (fig. 16.3). Almost nothing is known about late Sasanian copper coinage. Tiny coppers, which are now rare, probably circulated in the major urban centres. Their issues became especially rich in design under Arab rule, and constitute an excellent source for art history. In Spain and North Africa monetary economy had receded since the Roman empire, since the fifth century. The third of the solidus, the tremisses (c. 1.5 g), was the main and only coin struck in Spain and the rest of western Europe (cf. fig. 16.4). In North Africa Carthage was the only mint to continue striking petty coinage.

In the first decades after the battle of Yarmūk in 636 CE and the establishment of the Taurus border zone, Byzantine coppers remained in circulation, and were with few interruptions almost continuously supplemented by new imports from Byzantium. In contrast, the influx of nomisma dropped considerably. The obverse of the follis shows the emperor – here (fig. 16.2) the standing figure of Constans II (r. 641–68) wearing a crown with cross, holding a globus cruciger in one hand and a long cross in the other. On the reverse the M indicates the Greek numeral 40, the mark of value of the Byzantine standard copper coin. According to archaeological finds, an end to the importing of these coins can be discerned in the late 650s.

The importing obviously disregarded political boundaries. The selling of coppers was profitable for the Byzantine treasury. Early Islam, outside the Hijāz, was the elite religion of a tribally organised military. During the period of conquest the Islamic religion possessed only a rudimentary theology, which was probably even more basic among military units. Contemporary Byzantium might have perceived the conquest as a menacing rebellion and – if they had noticed the religious dimension at all – an Arab heresy of Judaeo-Christian origin. This perception would not necessarily have challenged the universal claim of the all-embracing Roman empire, since the idea of Rome

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was neutral to religion. In these early days the Umayyads in Damascus did not develop an imperial state ideology of their own. As leaders of the victorious Arab armies they were probably content with their de facto rule and modest fiscal exploitation. Numerous attempts to conquer Constantinople might be interpreted as the inheritance by the rising Islamic Arab power of the universal Roman claim.

The minting of the first copper coins in the former Byzantine territories commenced after 636 CE. These imitations supplemented the circulating stock and followed even weight reductions in Byzantium. We do not know who the regulating authorities were, but it is possible that military authorities in the garrisons, local authorities in the cities, money changers or merchants were involved in their production. Beginning in the 660s with the Sufyānid reforms, some sort of coordination, if not central policy, can be assumed. In a study, Luke Treadwell focused his attention on the developments in the mints of the provincial capitals Damascus, Tiberias and Hims. Although these ‘imperial image’ coppers still depict Byzantine emperors with cross insignias, they now have carefully prepared flans and carefully engraved dies. The mints were named on the coins, in Greek, Arabic or both. Validating expressions were included, such as KAΛON or tayyib (both meaning ‘good’), or jā‘iz (‘current’) (figs. 16.5, 16.6). No attempt to represent the new state or religion was made; petty coinage first of all served as means of exchange. The Sufyānid government set up a ‘very loose tributary state’.

As a centralised state, the Sasanian empire fell while at its apogee – at least as far as its administration, its army, which was based on cash payments, and its monetary economy were concerned. Silver coins were the backbone of the fiscal cycle, and were available in enormous quantities. The typical late Sasanian drahm (fig. 16.3) of about 4.2 grams shows on the obverse the portrait of the shāhānshāh – either Khusrau II (r. 590–628) or Yazdegerd III (r. 632–51) – with an enormous winged crown as sign of their royalty. On the reverse, the fire altar served as the central symbol of the dualistic Iranian religion, Zoroastrianism. Priest attendants stand on either side, and beside them are abbreviations indicating the mint and the regnal year of the ruler. Dies were probably cut in a central workshop and then distributed to the provincial mints, a recurrent phenomenon in the later Islamic coinage. In his twentieth regnal year, 651, the last shāhānshāh Yazdegerd III was assassinated in Marw,

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the last eastern remnant of his empire. The coins in the conquered territories are almost indistinguishable from the coins under the authority of Yazdegerd III, except that mints lay outside his shrinking realm. For some time after 31/651 coins continued to be struck with the names and portraits of Khusrau II or Yazdegerd III and with the fire altar. Frequently – but not always – additional Arabic validating marks were set on the margin, such as bism Allāh (‘in the name of God’) or jayyid (‘good’), as on Syrian copper coins. The resulting picture for the early decades seems to correspond to a situation in which the Sasanian administration remained operational, but broken down to a provincial level and now responsible to Arab governors.1425 Starting in about 40/661, with Mu‘awiyah’s regime, the names of Khusrau II and Yazdegerd III were replaced, first occasionally and then regularly with the names of the provincial governors in Pahlavi, placed in front of the traditional portrait of the shāhānsahr. In many mints, but not in all, the dating shifted to the hijra year (fig. 16.7)

The Zubayrid and Kharījite challenges between 681 and 697 – the period of the second fiṭna – mark the watershed towards the initial inclusion of Islamic symbols in the coin imagery and finally to a clear iconographic expression of religion and state. ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr was a close, venerated and merited member of the family of the Prophet. He emphasised the religious–political character of his caliphate and demanded a state in accordance with the principles of Islam, whatever this meant at that time. After Mu‘awiyah’s death in 60/680 he strongly opposed the Sufyānid regime, and was supported in many parts of the empire. As early as 62/681f. his name was put on coins of Kirmān. The coins show in 64/684 that he assumed the caliphal title ‘amīr of the believers’ (fig. 16.8). In 67/687 his brother Mus‘ab secured Basra, Iraq and the territories to the east as far as Sīstān. The Umayyads seemed to have lost their cause.

Between 66/685 and 69/688f., in the city of Bishāpur, Muḥammad rasūl Allāh (Muhammad is the messenger of God) was placed for the first time on coinage, on that of the Zubayrid governor of the east. The coin image itself remained as before, the portrait of the shāhānsahr and the fire altar. The Zubayrids thus propagated the new Islamic imperial rule with reference to the Prophet and putative founder of the state. Probably in 70/689f. the Zubayrid authorities created a coin with the name of Muḥammad in front of the portrait of the shāhānsahr and in the margin a reference to Muḥammad, for the first time including the profession of faith and the unity of God, the shahāda, in

Arabic: lā ilāha illā Allāh wahdahu.\(^{1426}\) In 72/691f. the Zubayrid governor of the province of Sīstān, in south-eastern Iran, replaced the Zoroastrian fire altar with the profession of the new faith (shahāda). Iraj Mochiri read the Pahlavi script thus: ‘Seventy-two / One God but He / another God does not exist / Muḥammad [is] the messenger of God / SK [mint abbreviation for Sīstān]’ (fig. 16.9).\(^{1427}\) Clearly dated, the shahāda appears here on a contemporary document in Pahlavi script and in the Persian language. Together with the Prophetic mission of Muḥammad, it is the first symbol of the Islamic religion and its empire known. The Zubayrid governor had targeted the ideological-religious deficiencies of the Umayyad regime. In the same year the Marwānid re-conquered Iraq, and in 73/692 the caliphate of ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr was brutally suppressed in Mecca.

The Marwānid activities that followed can be seen as aimed at integrating the defeated moderate Zubayrid movement in ideological terms, and as well as a forceful reaction to the ongoing Khārijite menace. At this point in history at the latest, the idea was created of an Islamic universal empire in its own ideological right. In 72/691f. ‘Abd al-Malik built the present Dome of the Rock and the al-Aqṣā Mosque in Jerusalem as probably the first architectural manifestations of the new Islamic empire. The choice of Jerusalem placed the imperial religion in the tradition of Judaism and Christianity and in the centre of the medieval world.

Between 72/691f. and 77/696f. the Marwānid government experimented with new symbols as representations of religion and imperial power, not all of which are well understood today. Most famous is the image of the standing caliph on gold, silver and copper coins in Syria and northern Mesopotamia (figs. 16.10, 16.11). On the Syrian silver drhms and on some copper coins ‘Abd al-Malik asserted his claim to being khalīfāt Allāh (the deputy of God), to enhance his politico-religious leadership (fig. 16.11).\(^{1428}\) However, the recurrent theme of


all experiments in coin design was the inclusion of the name of the founder of the religion and the putative founder of the empire, Muḥammad rasūl Allāh, sometimes together with the shahāda. This was the symbol of Islam comparable to cross, fire altar and menorah. The Zubayrid idea was firmly adopted.

Between 77/696 and 79/699, just after the final defeat of the Khārijite caliph Qatārī ibn al-Fujā’a, the definitive symbolic representation of Islam and the Islamic empire on coinage were launched. In 77/696 new dīnārs were produced (fig. 16.12) – probably in Damascus – bearing the new religious symbols of the Islamic empire: the shahāda, encircled by the risāla, the Prophetic mission of Muhammad (Q 9:33), and on the opposite side the word of God, the sūrat ikhlās (Q 112) and the date of minting. Late in 78/697 f. al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf, the governor of the east, ordered the reform of the dirhams in his realm, similar to the new dīnārs, but stating the mint name also, as on Sasanian drahms. The reform started in Kūfa, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Jayy and Shaqq al-Taymara in al-Jibāl, as far as we can currently tell. The following year saw the application of the new design in more than forty mints (fig. 16.13).\footnote{1429}

Precious-metal coins remained anonymous until the time of the ‘Abbāsid al-Manṣūr (r. 136–58/754–75). The image and the name of the ruler were taken out of any representation of the empire. This constituted a historically unprecedented breach with a tradition of Hellenistic coin imagery going back about a millennium. The epigraphic image of the profession of faith and the words of God can be read as ‘the sovereignty belongs to God’, almost a concession to Khārijite thinking. Anonymity did not mean modesty, because the new Islamic universal emperor claimed nothing less than being khalīfat Allāh: the deputy of God.

Umayyad and early ‘Abbāsid coinage

The new currency system of the empire consisted of an almost pure gold dīnār regulated to the mithqāl weight (4.2 g), an almost pure silver dirham regulated to a dirham weight (2.8–2.9 g) and unregulated copper coins which had a token character. This became the standard model for currency in the emerging Islamic law. Although the Umayyad empire was far from a centralised state, the coinage does show a high degree of organisation and centralisation, owing

\footnote{1429 M. Klat, Catalogue of the post-reform dirhams: The Umayyad dynasty (London, 2002); L. Ilisch in Dr. Bussos Pes Nachf. Münzhandlung Frankfurt, Katalog 369 (31 October 2001), no. 1467, pp. 80–1.}
to its Sasanian heritage.\textsuperscript{1430} It can be supposed that the gold coinage, which mentions no mint, would have been struck almost exclusively at the caliph’s court, first in Damascus and later in Baghdad. Mints for \textit{thulths (tremisses) and some \textit{dirham except for Damascus; all others were closed down.}

\textbf{The organisation of silver coinage serving the fiscal authorities in the former Sasanian east was different. The new design soon spread to all mints in the east and the capital Damascus; in 97/719f. it was adopted in Ifrīqiya, and finally, in 100/718f., in al-Andalus. It was struck in about a hundred mints. After the foundation of Wāsit in Iraq and the move of al-Ḥajjāj to his new capital in 83/703f., Wāsit became the paramount silver mint of the empire until the ‘Abbāsid \textit{coup d’état. For a brief time between 84/703f. and 89/707f. Wāsit was the only dirham mint except for Damascus; all others were closed down.}\textsuperscript{1431}

Between 132/749f. and 147/765f. Baṣra and Kūfa became the principal silver mints of the empire. This paramount role then shifted in 146–7/765–7 to Madīnat al-Ṣalām and to Rayy/al-Muḥammadīyya, the first after the foundation of the palace city in Baghdad – the mint was opened in 146/765f. – and the latter after the establishment of the heir apparent in Rayy in 145/762f.\textsuperscript{1432} The ‘Abbāsid takeover had little impact at first on the coin design; except that the \textit{sūrat al-ikhāṣ, which was associated with the Umayyads, was replaced by \textit{Muḥammad rasūl Allāh, stressing the connection of the ‘Abbāsids to the family of the Prophet (fig. 16.15).}

In Rayy in 145/762f., the year of the menacing ‘Alid revolt and its repression, the heir apparent, Muḥammad (r. 158–69/775–86), began to insert the newly adopted honorific title (\textit{laqab}) al-Mahdī and his name into the \textit{dirham coin protocol, abandoning the anonymity of precious metal coinage (fig. 16.16). Later he continued this as caliph.}\textsuperscript{1433} From now on, until the coinage reform of


al-Maʾmūn (r. 194–218/810–33), various names appear on the coinage – the caliph, the heir apparent, viziers, governors, officials – sometimes as many as four names, giving a kaleidoscope of the administrative structure of the empire, which is not yet fully understood (figs. 16.17, 16.22).\(^{1434}\)

The circulation of silver coins was far from uniform, unlike the new gold dīnārs. Umayyad and Sasanian dirhams still circulated until the early fourth/tenth century. Some regions maintained, along with the imperial coinage, a local one, usually debased silver of Sasanian appearance, notably in Ṭabaristān (an exception as they are of pure silver) (fig. 16.18), Sīstān and the oasis of Bukhārā (fig. 16.19).\(^{1435}\)

The copper coinage was of almost no concern to the central government; it was left for the regional or local Umayyad and ʿAbbāsid authorities to supply, and for some supplemental coinage even private commercial enterprises can be assumed. According to Islamic law copper coins did not constitute money that was legally valid in all transactions. Thus a huge variety of copper coins with many names of local amīrs and officials existed. Images were occasionally applied too. Thus the copper coins are an excellent source for local administration, history and art history (fig. 16.20).\(^{1436}\) This decentralised production resulted in temporary and regional shortages in petty coinage, frequently bridged by cast imitations (fig. 16.21) and importation from other regions. In the period of Ḥārūn ar-Rashīd the growing demand in northern Mesopotamia exceeded by far the regular production of copper coinage. Coins were thus cast until their model was unrecognisable, and plain copper sheets were cut into mainly octagonal pieces.\(^{1437}\)


Numismatics

The reforms of al-Ma’mūn and al-Mu’taṣīm billāh

The devastating war of succession between al-Amīn (r. 193–8/809–13) and al-Ma’mūn marked a turning-point. The latter initiated a reform in the design of the coinage, which went along with a reorganisation of coin production as a whole. The reform started with the first changes in design 201/816f. (fig. 16.22) and found its definitive appearance in 206/821f. (fig. 16.23). The new style was consecutively adopted during the following years in almost all mints.¹⁴³⁸

First of all, gold and silver coins were given a standardised design based on the dirham without altering the weight standards. The most obvious change in the design was a second marginal obverse legend praising the victory of God (Q 30:4–5). This design continued with few alterations until the fifth/eleventh century. Whereas the old style preferred an angular Kūfic script, the new style exhibited a neat curvilinear calligraphy. The new style coinage of al-Ma’mūn once again became anonymous. The number of mints was reduced to the major capitals of the empire. The production of silver and gold coinage dropped considerably, and even more under his successors.

Al-Mu’taṣīm billāh (r. 218–27/833–42) dismissed anonymity again, and added his name to the new design on the reverse in 219/834 (fig. 16.24). This became the rule. From 236/850 under al-Mutawakkil ʿalā Allāh (r. 231–47/847–61) the name of the heir apparent was also included. The production and distribution of dies was almost centralised. The extent of the new capital city of Sāmarrā’, built and provisioned entirely by tax money, is impressive proof of the high degree of the empire’s centralisation at its peak.¹⁴³⁹

In the wake of the second devastating war of succession in 251–2/865–6 al-Mu’tazz billāh (r. 252–5/866–9) resumed the production of precious-metal coins on a large scale. Many mints were set up in the provinces. Weakened, the empire gradually lost its grip on its peripheral provinces. In Panjhir/Transoxania in 259/872f. Ya’qūb ibn al-Layth (r. 247–65/861–79)

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was probably the first provincial ruler to add his name to the caliph’s protocol on silver coins as proof of his autonomy (fig. 16.25). At least from 879/266 on, with the rule of Ahmad ibn Tülin in Egypt, the inclusion as an autonomous amīr into the coin protocol became a regular feature (fig. 16.26). His model was followed by the Sāmānid rulers in Transoxania and many other ruling houses. Sikka and khutba in the name of the regional ruler became a sign of autonomy within the frame of the ‘Abbāsid empire until its end in 656/1258.

In the ‘Abbāsid core provinces the inclusion of the vizier’s honorific title (laqab) in 903/291 and in 932/320 set precedents for the imperial government. In 936/324 the first amīr al-umara’, Ibn Rā’iq, had abolished the distinction between civil and military administration. The amīr al-umara’ Bajkam was the first to be included in the coin protocol in 940/329 (fig. 16.27). In 945/334 the caliph delegated his power to the Būyids (fig. 16.28) and following them to the Saljuqs (figs. 16.31, 16.32), and these always – with few exceptions – appear on the coinage with flourishing honorific titles (figs. 16.28, 16.32) until the sixth/twelfth century when the caliph freed himself from Saljuq political domination.1440 Autonomous rulers who depended on the Būyids, such as the ‘Uqaylids in northern Mesopotamia (fig. 16.29), and the Ḥasanwayhids1441 in Kurdistān, among others, acknowledged the Būyids as overlords and added their names to the hierarchy of power listed in the coin protocol. Others at the periphery, such as the Ikshīdīs1442 in Egypt or the Sallārids1443 in Azerbaijan (fig. 16.30) acknowledged only the caliph. Sometimes further mint marks, names of die-engravers and dynastic emblems (tamghās) were added (figs. 16.34, 16.35). For the historian the sikka became an unrivalled tool for defining length of reigns, the extent of territories, especially for local dynasties, and shifting political–religious allegiance (cf. fig. 16.39), which are not in the focus of the main chronicles.

During the middle decades of the third/ninth century copper coinage vanished almost completely from the urban markets from Spain to Iran (fig. 16.20), remaining only in certain limited regions such as Sāmānid Transoxania (fig. 16.32). Fragmentation of the circulating precious-metal coins served the needs of small change in the rest of the Islamic empire.

1442 J. L. Bacharach, Islamic history through coins: An analysis and catalogue of tenth-century Ikshīdī coinage (Cairo, 2006).
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Coins were circulating more and more by weight expressed in standard *dirhams* and *dīnārs* instead of by tale or count.¹⁴⁴⁴

Starting slowly, probably in the time of al-Muqtadir billah (r. 295–320 / 908–32), the fineness of the silver coinage dropped, varying from region to region, and the strict weight regulation was abandoned. After the political, economic and military collapse of the central lands of the ‘Abbāsid empire during the fourth/tenth century the silver *dirham* declined to a debased copperish coin with no regulated fineness or weight.¹⁴⁴⁵ Now different kinds of *dirhams* were used, each current only within a limited region. Amounts of money were expressed in terms of monies of account.¹⁴⁴⁶ Actual payments of coins were transacted by weighing the coins. In the fourth/tenth and fifth/eleventh centuries the number of coins being struck diminished dramatically in the central lands of the empire. In the narrative sources these coins are referred to as ‘black *dirhams*’ (*dirham aswad*), because of their dark appearance (fig. 16.39). In Egypt they were then called *dirham wariq*,¹⁴⁴⁷ the ‘silver[ish] *dirham*’. Legal texts addressed them more appropriately as *dārihim maghshīsha*, ‘debased *dirhams*’. The monetary sector of the urban economy in the core lands of the Islamic empire – northern Syria, northern Mesopotamia, Iraq and western Iran – shrunk to a low that may not have been experienced since Hellenistic Antiquity.

This monetary situation caused frequent complaints by jurists and theologians. It was open to unintended violations of the *riba* prohibition, the unequal market value of the same amount of precious metal: *dirham aswads* from different circulation zones might contain a different amount of silver alloy; the intrinsic amount of silver in foreign *dirhams* might be unknown (*majhūl*), or the coins might be valued differently in the market with no regard to the real content of precious metal. In order to avoid *riba* and to facilitate commerce, jurists allowed transactions with *dirham aswads* only as long as they involved current *dirhams* circulating within a single zone (*rāʾij fi l-balad*).¹⁴⁴⁸

In order to distinguish one issue of black *dirhams* from the other the issuing authorities gradually diverged from the classical coin design. To remedy this

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¹⁴⁴⁶ ‘Monies of account’ are denominations not actually struck, or no longer struck, but used to determine legally amounts of money in transactions, contracts or debts.
unsatisfactory monetary situation, sporadic attempts at coinage reform were made in some regions, but were of no avail in the long run (fig. 16.28).

The eleventh century: the currency system at the brink of the reform

In the periphery, however, in Central Asia and in Egypt, a high level of monetary economy and an army based on cash payment remained. The Sāmānids had the advantage of rich silver mines in present-day Afghanistan, and the resulting huge volume of coinage fostered a trade with these coins which, via the Volga river, reached the countries around the Baltic Sea in the fourth/tenth century (fig. 16.31). Although by contrast the dirhams of the Ghaznavids (384–582/994–1186) with a high silver content in the late fourth/tenth and first half of the fifth/eleventh centuries were a regional coinage, they were nevertheless struck in abundant quantities. As early as the Sāmānid period the dīnār of Nishāpūr gained fame for its purity and stability (fig. 16.34). It became one of the preferred trade coins circulating between Iraq, eastern northern Mesopotamia and Central Asia. It maintained its leading position into the Saljuq period while the dīnārs of the other eastern Iranian and Transoxanian mints, Ghazna, Herat, Marw, Balkh, Bukhārā and others debased, sometimes to such an extent that they consisted almost of pure silver and served only as regional standard currency (fig. 16.35). Sporadic attempts at coinage reforms were made in some regions.

The situation was different in Egypt. The Ismāʿīlī Shīʿite Fāṭimids challenged the ‘Abbāsid claim of universal rulership both ideologically and militarily, and thus their coinage named only the Fāṭimid caliph. After their conquest of Egypt their coins presented a visual distinction to the classical late ‘Abbāsid coinage, moving towards a design consisting mainly of rings of concentric inscriptions (figs. 16.36, 16.37). The Fāṭimids profited from the North African gold trade as well as from trade with the northern Italian mercantile republics. The Fāṭimid dīnār (fig. 16.36) of a regulated weight and an undisputed pure gold content became the preferred trade coinage for the Islamic Mediterranean, the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf and Iraq. On the level of the petty coinage the North African–Egyptian dirham suffered the same decline as it did in the entire Islamic world (fig. 16.37). Copper coinage was also abandoned. A debate between Paul Balog and Michael Bates centring around the question whether the abundant glass tokens of the Egyptian

1449 N. D. Nicol, A corpus of Fāṭimid coins (Trieste, 2006).
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Fatimid and Ayyubid period served the purposes of daily purchases has not yet been settled (fig. 16.38).\textsuperscript{1450}

Outlook: the reform

Islamic coinage of the middle Islamic period was quite different from the degenerated state of the classical coinage system. The renewal commenced slowly from the end of the fifth/eleventh century and ended at about the middle of the seventh/thirteenth. The ‘black dirham’ (fig. 16.39) disappeared mostly in the course of the sixth/twelfth century. In Syria Nur al-Din Mahmud (r. 541–69/1150–74) issued it for the last time in 546/1151f. in Aleppo, although it continued to be struck in Mosul into the 650s/1250s and in Egypt into the Mamluk period. In the last decades of the fifth/eleventh century copper coinage resumed in northern Syria, northern Mesopotamia and the Caucasus through the appearance of imported Byzantine folles, called in Arabic sources qirtas or qartis (pl. qaratis). In the middle decades of the sixth/twelfth century a successful indigenous copper-coin production commenced, mainly in the Zangid and Artuqid realm (fig. 16.40). Regional copper coinages spread to the other western Saljuq successor states. In 571/1175f. – after almost 250 years – the Zangids in Aleppo and the Ayyubids in Damascus reintroduced a dirham of almost pure silver with a regulated weight of about 2.8 grams (fig. 16.41). The success of the reform was achieved through the northern Italian trade of European silver. The reform spread from the Levant to the entire Middle East. Once again a currency system was established that conformed to the requirements of Islamic law.\textsuperscript{1451}


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