

## SIGNS OF SOVEREIGNTY: THE *SHAHĀDA*, QUR'ANIC VERSES, AND THE COINAGE OF 'ABD AL-MALIK

Numismatic evidence is an essential source for reconstructing the visual and textual history of the first eight decades of Islamic rule, particularly the reign of the Marwanid caliph 'Abd al-Malik (r. A.H. 65–86 [685–705]), when a large number of coin varieties, many with human representation, were struck.<sup>1</sup> Specifically, between the years A.H. 72 (692) and 78 (698), more than a half dozen different coin types were minted—in gold and silver by the caliph in Syria and in silver by his family and his governor, al-Hajjaj (d. A.H. 95 [714]), in Iraq.<sup>2</sup> Historians, art historians, and numismatists have traditionally referred to those coins minted before the all-epigraphic gold dinars of late A.H. 77 (early 697) and the silver dirhams of A.H. 78 as “experimental” or “transitional,” while the all-epigraphic issues are labeled “reformed.” All of these terms imply that the appearance of the all-epigraphic pieces was the logical conclusion of a series of steps culminating in proper “Islamic” coinage.

This study does not accept such labeling and begins with the premise that when a new coin type was struck, that is, a coin with a design that differed from earlier issues through the inclusion of more information than simply a new date or mint, the new elements were added as the result of unique historical factors. These new-style coins carried messages in the form of images and/or text that the ruler or his representative wished to transmit, that is, the new coinage served as a form of propaganda. The word “propaganda” is used in the sense of the dissemination of information aimed at reflecting the views of the issuing authorities and for the purpose of informing, if not influencing, the opinions of those who learned what was inscribed on the new coin type. This approach assumes that the new elements carried political and religious messages in a society where both concepts were inextricably intertwined.

For this study, the definition of a Muslim coin is one that includes words in Arabic. Examples will be cited below in which Muslim rulers before 'Abd al-Malik minted gold and silver coins that lacked an inscription in Arabic, that is, any visual sign that they were associated with Islam. It is doubtful that most contemporaries would have realized that such coins had been struck by Muslim rulers.

I will argue that there were specific historical reasons for the addition of new elements on each Muslim coin type issued by the Marwanids between A.H. 72 and 78, including the all-epigraphic coinage of A.H. 77 and 78. These issues were experimental in that there was no guarantee that the new messages would be understood, or that the new coin type would be accepted in the marketplace. In examining this gold and silver coinage for those years, the political, military, and religious settings in which each new coin type was struck will be identified. The increasing use of Arabic in the form of pious phrases and, eventually, Qur'anic verses (sing. *āya*), and of other data such as mint names and dates is one of the hallmarks of this coinage and will be traced through the all-epigraphic issues of A.H. 77 and 78. Finally, 'Abd al-Malik's authorization of the use of specific Qur'anic verses on his all-epigraphic dinars and dirhams was a deliberate act and the verses chosen carried messages that either the caliph himself or his agents considered important at that time and under those specific historical conditions. Therefore, those who assume that these dinars and dirhams “triumphed” over earlier Muslim coinage because they represented “true” Islam are projecting backwards onto earlier times the ultimate success of the new-style coinage rather than accounting for the reasons that it was issued and was successful in the market.<sup>3</sup>

Although this study focuses upon the context and meaning of the new messages and images on the Marwanid gold and silver issues, it is doubtful that most of these innovations were noted by the users of the coinage, which is true for most, if not all, historical periods. Few of the changes made in the language or imagery were recorded in historical texts. The primary role of the coins was to aid economic and monetary exchanges. If the coinage “looked” right, it was accepted in the market. As long as the degree of fineness of the gold and silver coinage remained constant—and there is no evidence to the contrary for the years covered—the purity of the coinage was not a factor. When coins were exchanged by weight, that is, were treated as stamped round pieces of gold or silver to be weighed on a scale against a known weight, the calculated theoretical weight for any individual piece was not important. Whether the individual coin was heavier or lighter than the theoretical ideal coin made no difference since the total weight was all that mattered. However, if coins were traded by number, as, I will argue, was the case for ‘Abd al-Malik’s all-epigraphic gold dinars, then the theoretical weight standard was critical in comparison with other coins that were traded by number. Trading light gold coins for heavy gold coins by number and not weight meant someone was losing money in every transaction.

I argue that the “triumph” of the all-epigraphic coinage was not due to any legislative act by ‘Abd al-Malik, a campaign by pious members of the Muslim community, or the reasons offered by the great Islamic scholar Ibn Khaldun writing at the end of the fourteenth century:

When ‘Abd al-Malik saw fit to use the mint to protect against fraud the two coins (the gold dinar and the silver dirham) that were current in Muslims transactions, he determined their values as what they had been in the time of the [Caliph] Umar. He used the iron stamp, but engraved words on it, rather than pictures, because eloquent words were obviously more congenial to the Arabs. Moreover, the religious law forbids pictures.<sup>4</sup>

Instead, my interpretation will be based solely on monetary factors and refers only to the gold dinars. More specifically, I will apply Gresham’s Law, according to which, under certain market conditions, “bad” money drives out “good,” to the gold coinage circulating in the late 70s A.H. (690s). In this case, the new all-epigraphic

dinars struck by ‘Abd al-Malik would be the “bad” currency. I will close with some observations on the short- and long-term impact of the shift from a Muslim coinage with images and text to one of text only.

Another theme in this study involves the emergence of a series of pious phrases found on contemporary coinage, milestones, and tombstones, and in the Dome of the Rock, which have been labeled in virtually all the modern literature as the *shahāda* (profession or affirmation of faith). In the twenty-first century, the *shahāda* is *lā ilāha illā Allāh Muḥammad rasūl Allāh* (There is no god except God, Muhammad is the Prophet of God) (لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله) and using the term *shahāda* for the late seventh century often evokes the modern formulation.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, I will use the phrase “affirmation of faith” to make clear that versions different from the one used today were employed at that time. Each time the phrase “affirmation of faith” appears below, a specific wording is given, accompanied by an adjective—“Jerusalem,” “Egyptian,” “Syrian,” “Eastern,” or “short.” “Jerusalem” refers to the fact that the earliest version of that specific wording appeared in the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem; “Egyptian” because the earliest version was found on a tombstone from Aswan; “Syrian” because it first appeared on coinage from A.H. 77 (697); “Eastern” because the earliest version was recorded on coinage from Iraq and Iran; and “short” because only the words *bism Allāh Muḥammad rasūl Allāh* appeared on certain coinage. Using these adjectives rather than the terms “Zubayrid” and “Marwanid” with the phrase “affirmation of faith” avoids creating the impression that these different versions of the *shahāda* were used only by one or another politico-religious movement.

## NUMISMATIC EVIDENCE

My approach to numismatic evidence is based upon a number of assumptions, some of which were set out above. First, when a new coin type was struck as a form of propaganda, its novel elements were meaningful to those who introduced them.<sup>6</sup> Second, the highest political authorities were ultimately responsible for what appeared on the coins. This meant that die cutters in the central provinces of Umayyad lands were not going to include images or inscriptions on their

gold and silver issues that were not approved by the caliph or his governors. Third, since coinage tends to be conservative, many elements of a new "coin type" such as images, inscriptions, script, and layout, are often carried forward in time, even when the reasons for the initial changes are no longer relevant, meaningful, or even remembered. In most cases, memory of the original meanings of the inscriptions, figures, and layout was quickly lost and never recorded in textual narratives.

A corollary to the conservative nature of coin types is that the size, weight, and shape of early Muslim gold and silver issues were determined by the characteristics of the coinage circulating in the Arabian Peninsula, Syria, Iraq, and Iran before their arrival. If the conquering Arab Muslim armies had carried with them a tradition of striking gold and silver coins, then the sizes and weights of this system would have been imposed upon the conquered populace. The reverse was true. At the time of the Prophet Muhammad, there is no record of coins being struck in the Hijaz. When Muslim rulers began to create their own coinage, that is, a coinage that had Arabic inscriptions signaling that it was issued by Muslims, its size, weight, and shape were based upon the coinage of the preceding Byzantine Empire for gold coins and of the Sasanian Empire for silver ones. This observation is important because the size of the coins would restrict how much could be inscribed on them and still be legible.

Returning to my assumptions about the world governed by Muslims, a distinction was made between numismatic issues struck in gold and silver versus copper coins, which were not necessarily subject to the same rules or level of caliphal control.<sup>7</sup> In the case of silver coinage, a wide variety of Muslim drachms were struck throughout former Sasanian lands, but these are not considered in any detail here because they were not the products of 'Abd al-Malik's policies in Syria and Iraq.<sup>8</sup> Numismatic scholarship on the period under study demonstrates that the wide range of copper issues, particularly the Arab-Byzantine pieces from Syria, reflected local control rather than a centralized policy set by the caliph.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, unlike most numismatic studies of 'Abd al-Malik's coinage, this one will not include data from the copper issues.<sup>10</sup>



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

### BACKGROUND TO 'ABD AL-MALIK'S COINAGE

The first Muslims had to rely upon the coinage circulating from the two dominant empires, the Byzantine and the Sasanian. Byzantine lands were famous for their gold issues (solidi), which included on the obverse an image of either the emperor alone or with his potential successors, while the reverse had a very clear Christian symbol in the form of a cross on a stepped platform (fig. 1).<sup>11</sup> With inscriptions in Greek, these gold coins were of very high quality and officially weighed 24 Greek carats (approximately 4.55 grams), allowing them to be traded by number.<sup>12</sup> The solidi circulating in Syria tended to weigh less, with a peak of around 4.38 grams.<sup>13</sup>

In the Sasanian world, which included most of modern Iraq, Iran, and parts of Central Asia, the dominant coinage was the silver drachm, which had on the obverse an image of the ruling emperor (*shāhanshāh*) with an elaborate crown, while the reverse included a fire altar with two attendants (fig. 2).<sup>14</sup> Each *shāhanshāh* was portrayed with a unique crown. Inscriptions on the obverse included the name of the *shāhanshāh* with the appropriate titles, while the reverse listed the mint name and a regnal date. These inscriptions were written in middle Persian, in Pahlavi script. The Sasanian drachm varied in weight from 3.6 to 4.3 grams, with a mean of around 4.17 grams in the latter years of the dynasty, and would have been traded by weight, not number. For most of the Sasanian era, the drachm had a high silver content.<sup>15</sup>



Fig. 2. Sasanian drachm of Khusraw II. With the permission of the American Numismatic Society, 2004.14.222. (Photo: courtesy of the American Numismatic Society)

The first new-style silver drachms with a visual Muslim marker, which are labeled “Arab-Sasanian” by numismatists, were minted during the reign of ‘Uthman (r. A.H. 23–35 [644–56]) and inscribed with the year 20 of the Sasanian Yazdgard calendar, that is, A.H. 31 (651).<sup>16</sup> These Muslim drachms were distinguished by the addition in Arabic of the phrase *bism Allāh* (In the name of God) inscribed on the obverse, the side of the coin with the image of the *shāhanshāh*, in the second quadrant, that is, between three and six o’clock (fig. 3).

Because the inscription began in the second quadrant, it had to be written in a clockwise direction, with the edge of the coin serving as the base line. If the inscription had been written counterclockwise beginning in the second quadrant, one would have had to turn the coin upside down to read it, and the *shāhanshāh*’s head would have appeared at the bottom. Until the end of A.H. 77, the marginal legends in Arabic on gold and silver issues were written in a clockwise direction irrespective of where they began, in emulation of the earliest Arab-Sasanian issues. Only when an entirely new coin design was introduced in A.H. 77 and 78—one not derived from earlier pre-Islamic models—was the direction of the inscription in the margin reconsidered. At that point, the rules for the direction of a marginal inscription based upon the direction of the script were applied.<sup>17</sup> If an inscription began at or close to twelve o’clock on a coin and was written in a script that went from right to left, as does Arabic, then the inscription would have been written in a counterclockwise direction.



Fig. 3. Arab-Sasanian drachm with *bism Allāh* in second quadrant of the obverse (left) margin. Bishapur, 25 Yazdgard era (A.H. 36). (After Stephen Album and Tony Goodwin, *The Pre-Reform Coinage of the Early Islamic Period*, vol. 1 of the *Sylloge of Islamic Coins in the Ashmolean Museum* [henceforth *SICA* 1] [Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, 2002], 110; reproduced with the permission of the Visitors of the Ashmolean Museum)

These first Muslim Arab-Sasanian drachms copied the coinage of Yazdgard III (r. 632–51), but very shortly thereafter Muslim governors shifted to using the better-known coinage of the Sasanian ruler Khusraw II (r. 591–628) as their model. The result was that most Arab-Sasanian drachms from the 20s A.H. (650s) until the 70s A.H. (690s) looked very much alike. They were not. Inscriptions included different dates, different mints, and the names of almost fifty Muslim governors, all written in Pahlavi, as well as a limited range of short phrases in Arabic that followed the model of the first Arab-Sasanian issues by beginning in the second quadrant (three o’clock) of the obverse. For those who had used the earlier Sasanian drachm for monetary transactions, the new Arab-Sasanian coinage looked so much like the earlier coinage in terms of size, weight range, and overall appearance, that there would have been no obvious problem in using the new coinage.<sup>18</sup>

It is very likely that for a brief period during the reign of the Sufyanid caliph Mu‘awiya (r. A.H. 41–60 [661–80]), a series of gold, silver, and copper coins were minted in Syria, reflecting bureaucratic developments taking place at that time.<sup>19</sup> Specifically, there is a series of Arab-Byzantine solidi attributed to the reign of Mu‘awiya (fig. 4). Both the obverse and reverse of these solidi imitate well-known Byzantine gold issues, except that all the Christian elements are missing. The crosses on the crowns on the obverse were turned into



Fig. 4. Arab-Byzantine solidi imitating the solidi of Heraclius, Heraclius Constantine, and Heraclonas. Attributed to the reign of Mu'awiya (r. A.H. 41–60 [661–80]). (After Album and Goodwin, *Pre-Reform Coinage of the Early Islamic Period*, SICA 1, 606; reproduced with the permission of the Visitors of the Ashmolean Museum)



Fig. 5. Arab-Sasanian drachm with *Muhammad rasul Allah* in the obverse (left) margin. Bishapur, A.H. 66. (After Album and Goodwin, *Pre-Reform Coinage of the Early Islamic Period*, SICA 1, 152; reproduced with the permission of the Visitors of the Ashmolean Museum)

sticks, while the cross on a platform with four steps on the reverse became a pole culminating in a “T-bar” on the same type of platform. The inscriptions were written in Greek or Greek-like letters. The crosses are gone, but there is nothing signaling that a Muslim ruler issued them, such as an inscription in Arabic.

It is theoretically possible that Arab-Sasanian style drachms were also minted in Mu'awiya's Syria. If they were, they would probably have looked like the Arab-Sasanian drachms circulating in former Sasanian lands because that would have been the only silver coinage those residing in Syria would have known, since the Byzantines struck very few silver issues. Crosses never appeared on Sasanian and Arab-Sasanian drachms, and there is no reason to believe that they would have been included on Syrian-struck drachms, if any were minted at this time.

An eighth-century Christian document known as the *Maronite Chronicle* records that during his reign Mu'awiya “also minted gold and silver, but it was not accepted because it had no cross on it.”<sup>20</sup> The *Chronicle* preserves the memory of a coinage, for which we only have examples in gold, that lacked crosses and is attributed to the first Umayyad caliph. The problem was not just that this series of gold Arab-Byzantine solidi lacked crosses but that there was nothing visually obvious on them that would tie them to Mu'awiya, any other Muslim ruler, or even to Islam, since they lacked an inscription in Arabic. It is possible that to contemporaries they

looked like bad forgeries of Byzantine gold coins and would have been rejected in the market. Mu'awiya, or those in his court responsible for these pieces, apparently understood what images were inappropriate for a Muslim gold coin, but not which ones would be suitable.

Syria also lacked a pre-Islamic tradition of using silver coinage. If there was an increase in the number of Arab-Sasanian silver issues brought into Syria under Mu'awiya, there still might have been a reluctance to use them because silver coins were still relatively rare and they had nothing familiar inscribed on them such as a cross.

Our understanding of the circumstances under which Arab-Sasanian drachms were struck by specific governors with new inscriptions in Pahlavi and/or Arabic is still limited. For this study, the most important numismatic innovation took place in Bishapur during the governorship of 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Abd Allah (fig. 5).<sup>21</sup> The drachms are dated to A.H. 66 (685) and A.H. 67 (686) and include after *bism Allah* the phrase *Muhammad rasul Allah* (Muhammad is the Prophet of God). This was the first time that a reference to the Prophet had been made on coinage. The Arabic inscription, as in other contemporary numismatic examples, was written in a clockwise direction in the second and third quadrants of the obverse. The claim to the caliphate made at this time by Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr (r. A.H. 64–73 [683–92]) as *amir al-mu'minin* (commander of the



Fig. 6. Arab-Sasanian drachm with the first part of the Eastern “affirmation of faith” in the obverse (left) margin and *Muḥammad rasūl Allāh* in the obverse center (right of image). Sotheby Sales Catalog, 18.3.83, lot 80. (After Lutz Ilisch, “The Muhammad-Drachms and Their Relation to Umayyad Syria and Northern Iraq,” in *Supplement to the Journal of the Oriental Numismatic Society* 193: *Coinage and History in the Seventh Century Near East: Papers from the Seventh Century Syrian Numismatic Round Table 2007* [Autumn 2007], 18)

faithful) would also appear on a few Arab-Sasanian issues, but was inscribed in Pahlavi.<sup>22</sup>

In another development important for this study, Arab-Sasanian coins dating to mid-70–mid-71 A.H. (689–90) were inscribed on the obverse outer margin, in the second and third quadrants, with *bism Allāh* followed by *lā ilāha illā Allāh waḥdahu* (there is no god except God alone) (fig. 6). Continuing a practice dating to the first Arab-Sasanian issues, the inscription was written in a clockwise direction. In this case, the center of the obverse field included the phrase *Muḥammad rasūl Allāh* on the right side of the image of Khusraw.<sup>23</sup> Based upon this numismatic evidence, there is a version of the “affirmation of faith,” which I have labeled “Eastern,” that reads “In the name of God, there is no god except God alone, Muhammad is the Prophet of God” (*bism Allāh lā ilāha illā Allāh waḥdahu Muḥammad rasūl Allāh* [بِسْمِ اللَّهِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ]).<sup>24</sup>

Finally, this coinage is important for another reason: “...the die cutters for the new silver coinage of Damascus in 72 A.H. must have been imported from al-Kufa.”<sup>25</sup> This means that ‘Abd al-Malik had both professional coiners and models in silver when he began to issue his own coinage.

## THE DOME OF THE ROCK AND THE JERUSALEM “AFFIRMATION OF FAITH”

Before examining ‘Abd al-Malik’s coinage, it is possible to establish other versions of the “affirmation of faith” circulating in parts of Greater Syria and Egypt circa A.H. 72, which I label “Jerusalem” and “Egyptian,” respectively. Evidence for the first can be found in the Dome of the Rock.<sup>26</sup> This commemorative building was constructed in the form of an octagon, with a double ambulatory surrounding an outcropping of the rock on the Noble Sanctuary (*al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf*). Dominating the interior are magnificent mosaics of complex images created specifically for this building. These designs bore “meanings” that were presumably understood by ‘Abd al-Malik, who wanted these messages rendered as images to be included as part of the visual repertoire of the building. Unfortunately, neither ‘Abd al-Malik nor anyone else left a record of what “messages” or “associations” those images were meant to carry. In essence, this Marwanid building included a visual vocabulary whose symbolism appears to have been very short-lived. The images were not repeated in any significant way in other buildings or commented upon in later texts. The second most obvious visual element in the Dome of the Rock is a series of neutral designs, such as geometric patterns, which appear to be purely decorative. Finally, there are the inscriptions that were placed “just below a cornice that supports the ceiling on either side of the octagonal arcade.”<sup>27</sup>

The use of long inscriptions in Arabic on this building signaled a major shift for some Muslims as to what constituted an “Islamic” symbol, in addition to being a means of transmitting messages.<sup>28</sup> There was a long history in the eastern Mediterranean of religious communities using inscriptions written in an alphabet unique to their particular group: they were a way to “sign the community” and were “most frequently placed within the roofed enclosure, on walls, primarily within a position bordering mural representations which were significantly larger in scale.”<sup>29</sup> The placement of these inscriptions in the outer and inner arcade below the ceiling may not have been an innovation but an adoption of a tradition long practiced by Christian and Jewish communities in the region.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, the

appearance of an extensive text in Arabic marks a significant break from the first seven decades of Muslim rule, when public inscriptions in Arabic were relatively rare and brief, based upon the existing archaeological remains, material evidence including coinage, and textual references.

Additional observations are in order before analyzing the inscriptions as “affirmations of faith.” The extensive use of inscriptions in Arabic signals that a growing number of individuals recognized the script and associated it with Islam. Since the texts lack both the vowels and the dots needed to indicate certain consonants, they must have served as a mnemonic device for the growing number of Muslims who had memorized pious phrases and the Qur'an. The incorporation of specific Qur'anic verses also implies that there were enough individuals who knew them to make their inclusion comprehensible. Finally, the texts aided Muslims by reinforcing what they should believe and how that belief differed from Christianity.

The inscriptions in the outer arcade of the Dome of the Rock can be divided into six segments separated by rosettes, the wording in five of which closely parallels one another. They all begin with the full *basmala*: “In the name of God, the Magnificent, the Merciful” (*bism Allāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm*). The sixth segment is a dedicatory statement, which does not begin with the *basmala* and originally referred to 'Abd al-Malik as patron of the building; it is dated A.H. 72. A visitor who viewed the texts in the outer arcade could have read one segment, quickly recognized that the *basmala* was repeated in the next segment, which introduced a text similar to the one just read, and understood that he/she was supposed to move into the interior. In contrast, if the same visitor looked at the inscription in the inner arcade, he/she would discover that the *basmala* appears only once and introduces a continuous text, which can only be read by moving in a counterclockwise direction. In this sense, the text aids the visitor in determining in which direction the outcropping in the center of the building should be circumambulated.

Taken together, the parallel texts in the outer arcade create what I label the Jerusalem “affirmation of faith.” All five inscriptions begin with the full *basmala*, followed by the phrase *lā ilāha illā Allāh waḥdahu* (there

is no god except God, alone). Four of them continue with *lā sharīka lahu* (He has no partner). With its implied rejection of the concept of the Trinity, this brief phrase highlighted a fundamental difference between the ruling Muslim elite and the majority of Syria's population, which was Christian. In two segments, the phrase *lā sharīka lahu* is immediately followed by the words *Muḥammad rasūl Allāh*, while in the other three segments that began with the *basmala* the phrase *Muḥammad rasūl Allāh* is separated from *lā sharīka lahu* by additional pious phrases and/or Qur'anic verses. Therefore, I am defining the Jerusalem “affirmation of faith” as *bism Allāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm lā ilāha illā Allāh waḥdahu lā sharīka lahu Muḥammad rasūl Allāh* (In the name of God the Magnificent, the Merciful, there is no god except God, alone, He has no partner, Muhammad is the Prophet of God [بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ لا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له محمد رسول الله]).<sup>31</sup>

A second source for reconstructing the Jerusalem “affirmation of faith” is derived from an examination of the inscriptions on a series of road markers or milestones associated with the major road-building program of 'Abd al-Malik (fig. 7). The Marwanid caliph undertook to connect Jerusalem with his capital of Damascus as well as to create another road from the Palestinian coast to Jerusalem. The primary evidence for these building activities comes in the form of a series of inscribed slabs of basalt stone, which served as milestones that record some, if not all, of the following: the distance from Jerusalem, the type of work on the road, the name of the person in charge of the project, the caliph, and a date. So far, eight milestones of what must have been many more have been discovered, with dates ranging from Muharram 73 (May–June 692) to Sha'ban 85 (August–September 704).<sup>32</sup>

Almost every one of the milestones begins with the Jerusalem “affirmation of faith,” that is, exactly the same full formula found on the outer arcades of the Dome of the Rock. The repetitive data on the milestones indicate that a formula had been established and, although the date on each milestone would change, the basic inscriptions did not. The earliest date for the Jerusalem “affirmation of faith,” using the evidence from the milestones, is early A.H. 73, although the discovery of new milestones could push the date earlier. The dating

[بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم لا اله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له محمد رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم  
 أمر بعمارة (١) الطريق وصنعة [الأميال] (٢) عبد الله عبد الملك [ (٣) أمير المؤمنين رحمت  
 الله (٤) عليه من إيليا إلى [هذا الميل] (٥) سبعة [أميال].

Basmalah. There is no god but Allah alone. He has no companion. Muḥammad is the messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and give him peace. Has ordered the repair of the road and the construction of the milestones the servant of Allah, ‘Abd al-Malik, the Commander of the Faithful. May Allah’s mercy be on him. From Īliyā to this milestone (there are) seven miles.

Fig. 7. Inscription on a milestone built by ‘Abd al-Malik. (After Moshe Sharon, *Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum Palaestinae*, vol. 1 (A) [Leiden: Brill, 1997], 4, “Abu Ghush”)

of the Dome of the Rock is debated by scholars, but whether one argues that the building was begun or completed in A.H. 72, that is still the latest date in which the inscriptions could have been planned.<sup>33</sup>

One other piece of contemporary evidence, derived from an Egyptian tombstone dated to 14 Dhu ‘l-Qa‘da 71 (21 April 691) and dedicated to ‘Abbasa, the daughter of Jurayj,<sup>34</sup> indicates that another version of the “affirmation of faith” circulated in Egypt. The first inscribed line contains the full *basmala* but is separated from the rest of the “affirmation of faith” by nine lines of text, so it is not clear whether the *basmala* was considered part of the Egyptian “affirmation of faith.” The last three lines read: “There is no god except God alone, He has no partner, and Muhammad is His Servant and His Prophet (لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له وان محمد عبده ورسوله).<sup>35</sup>

Based upon the dating of the coinage, the inscriptions in the Dome of the Rock, the milestones, and the one tombstone, the Eastern, Jerusalem, and Egyptian versions of the “affirmation of faith” are almost contemporary with one another; however, they do differ in two ways, one big and one small. The minor difference is that the opening phrase has been reduced in the Eastern version to just *bism Allāh* (In the name of God). This may reflect a simple continuation of the same phrase found on earlier Arab-Sasanian drachms. The more important difference is that in contrast to the Jerusalem and Egyptian versions, the Eastern text does not include the phrase *lā sharīka lahu* (He has no partner).

To put it another way, while all the versions emphasize God’s unity and Muhammad’s mission, there is nothing specifically anti-Trinitarian about the Eastern text. This is not surprising, since Christians were only one of a number of religious populations in Iraq and Iran and there was no reason for anyone ruling the eastern lands where Arab-Sasanian coinage was struck to single them out.<sup>36</sup> With the all-epigraphic issues, a fourth version of the Muslim “affirmation of faith” will be documented.

#### ‘ABD AL-MALIK’S COINAGE, A.H. 72–77

Although ‘Abd al-Malik received the oath of allegiance in A.H. 64 (683) and virtually all future historians date his caliphate from that year, it was not until A.H. 72 that he was able to consolidate his military control over a significant portion of the central Islamic lands.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, we may say that for the years 64 to 73 (683 to 692), Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr was caliph, in that he was recognized in more lands and controlled the holy cities of Mecca and Medina.<sup>38</sup> There is also a lack of architectural and numismatic data supporting ‘Abd al-Malik’s claims to the caliphate before A.H. 72. Obviously, the earlier one dates the initial building of the Dome of the Rock, the earlier one can argue that ‘Abd al-Malik was using it and associated buildings as a sign of sovereignty.

In addition, Syria and Egypt had been part of a Byzantine monetary world in which imperial gold

circulated for centuries alongside locally manufactured copper. Both coinages carried Christian and imperial images and messages. As noted above, Mu'awiya probably experimented with striking a gold coinage based upon a Byzantine model, but why did 'Abd al-Malik not have gold or silver coins struck earlier than A.H. 72?

If 'Abd al-Malik could afford to build the Dome of the Rock, for which he used seven years' worth of Egypt's taxes, then acquiring gold for coinage could not have been a problem.<sup>39</sup> Lacking specialists who could cut dies and strike coins was also not insurmountable since, with enough money, die cutters and mint masters could always have been hired. My own guess is that only with the defeat of Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr's brother Mus'ab ibn al-Zubayr in Iraq at the end of A.H. 71 (691) was 'Abd al-Malik willing to use gold and silver coinage as a sign of his claims to the caliphate and the effective end to the first (Zubayrid) challenge to his caliphal authority. The transferring of Zubayrid die makers and mint employees only made the task that much easier.

In the years following the defeat of Zubayrid forces, the Marwanids would face a wide range of new challenges and 'Abd al-Malik would not be the only political leader who claimed the title of *amīr al-mu'minīn*. While opposition to the Marwanids took a variety of political and religious forms, the most important of the latter, particularly in Iraq and parts of western Iran, have been labeled Kharijite and it is the claims of the leaders of these movements that will be critical for understanding most of 'Abd al-Malik's coinage from A.H. 72 through 77 as a form of propaganda. Although the third challenge to Marwanid rule, the Byzantine Empire, was always a factor throughout 'Abd al-Malik's reign, it only became the highest priority after he and his governor al-Hajjaj neutralized Kharijite rebellions in Iraq in late 77. At that point the all-epigraphic issues of A.H. 77 and 78 reflect how 'Abd al-Malik's coinage became a form of propaganda directed against Byzantium.

Muslim solidi and drachms, that is, Arab-Byzantine gold and Arab-Sasanian silver, minted in Syria and Iraq during the caliphate of 'Abd al-Malik between A.H. 72 and 77, offer a rich range of new images and inscriptions. While the numerous and excellent scholarly contributions of others, particularly the introduction to

the *Sylloge* by Album and Goodwin and the articles by Treadwell,<sup>40</sup> have treated the coinage year by year or mint by mint, this article will focus on a different aspect, seeking to identify what was carried forward from earlier coinage and what was new. In particular, only the first appearance of a new element on the coinage will be analyzed, on the assumption that whatever the context was for the original innovation, it may not have been valid for subsequent years.

Table 1, "Innovations on 'Abd al-Malik's Coinage," summarizes the images and inscriptions in Arabic that appeared on 'Abd al-Malik's coinage before the all-epigraphic issues. The metal is either gold (AV) or silver (AR). The words "Eastern" or "Jerusalem" under "affirmation of faith" refer to how the phrase was defined above, while the term "short" means that only the phrase *bism Allāh Muḥammad rasūl Allāh* (بِسْمِ اللَّهِ مُحَمَّدٍ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ) was inscribed. The words in bold indicate when an innovation was introduced. Again, although a number of innovations were carried forward on the coinage, only the first appearance is considered critical for this study.

Since Syria was a monetary zone in which gold was the primary precious metal used, it is most likely that the first coins that 'Abd al-Malik ordered struck were in gold. They were probably minted in Damascus in A.H. 72, although these pieces lack both the name of a mint and a date (fig. 8). These Arab-Byzantine solidi imitate the widely circulating Byzantine solidi, which were illustrated in figure 1 above and included the images of Heraclius (r. 610–14) and his two sons, Heraclius Constantine and Heraclonas, on the obverse. The reverse featured a cross on a four-stepped platform along with other Christian symbols, the mint name Constantinople, in an abbreviated form across the bottom to be read from right to left, and, in the rest of the margin, an imperial title, written in Greek in a clockwise fashion.

The obverse of 'Abd al-Malik's new gold coins imitates that of the Byzantine original but without any Christian symbols, while on the reverse the cross on a platform is transformed into a pole with a small globe at the top.<sup>41</sup> The most significant difference between these Marwanid Arab-Byzantine gold coins and those attributed to Mu'awiya discussed above (fig. 4) is that on 'Abd

Table 1. Innovations on ‘Abd al-Malik’s Coinage

Metal	Mint	Year	Obv. Field	Affirmation	Rev. Field & Rev. Margin
AV	Damascus?	72?	<b>Byz. Imitation Caliphal image standing</b>		<b>Deformed Cross:</b> Margin: Eastern <i>shahāda</i>
AV	Damascus?	74	Caliphal image standing	Eastern	Deformed Cross: Margin: Date formula
AV	Damascus?	75	Caliphal image standing	Eastern	Deformed Cross: Margin: Date formula
AV	Damascus?	76	Caliphal image standing	Eastern	Deformed Cross: Margin: Date formula
AV	Damascus?	77	Caliphal image standing	Eastern	Deformed Cross: Margin: Date formula
AR	Damascus	72	Khusraw II type	<b>Short</b>	Fire altar & mint/date in Arabic
AR	Damascus	73	Khusraw II type	Eastern	Fire altar & mint/date in Arabic
AR	Damascus	74	Khusraw II type	Eastern	Fire altar & mint/date in Arabic
AR	Damascus	75	Khusraw II type	Eastern	<b>Caliphal image &amp; Arabic inscription</b>
AR	Damascus	76	<b>Caliphal image bust</b>	Eastern	<b>Spear under sacrum &amp; Arabic inscription</b>
AR	Damascus	77	Caliphal image bust	Eastern	Spear under sacrum & Arabic inscription
AR	Hims	72	Khusraw II type	Short	Fire altar
AR	Kufa	73	Khusraw II type	Short	Fire altar
AR	Kufa	73	Khusraw II type	Eastern	<b>Orans:</b> Margin: <b>Bishr ibn Marwan</b>
AR	Kufa	74	Khusraw II type	Short	<i>Orans</i>
AR	Kufa	75	Khusraw II type	Short	<i>Orans</i>
AR	Basra	75	Khusraw II type	Short	Fire altar
AR	Basra	75	Khusraw II type	Short	<i>Orans</i>

al-Malik’s pieces there is an inscription in Arabic in the reverse margin, written in a clockwise direction, which did not appear on the earlier examples of these Arab-Byzantine solidi. It is the Eastern form of the “affirmation of faith.” Here, the inscription was placed on the reverse, while in Arab-Sasanian silver coins inscriptions in Arabic appeared on the obverse. The Arabic inscription on this gold issue is moved backwards so that it now begins at twelve o’clock rather than in the second quadrant, as in earlier Arab-Sasanian issues. This was done to accommodate the phrase *Muḥammad rasūl Allāh*, which is found in the margin at the end of the “affirmation of faith.” The earlier tradition, dating from the first Arab-Sasanian coins, of writing Arabic in the margin clockwise continued on these gold issues. The existence

of this new coin type also demonstrates that ‘Abd al-Malik was asserting his right to mint gold coins.

The first ‘Abd al-Malik drachms from Syria were minted in Damascus and Hims and are dated to A.H. 72 (fig. 9). They are clearly imitations of circulating Arab-Sasanian drachms, with their images of Khusraw on the obverse and of the fire altar with attendants on the reverse.

The mint and date appear in Arabic in the center of the reverse surrounding the attendants, although the significance of this innovation is not clear. Another difference is that only *bism Allāh Muḥammad rasūl Allāh*—that is, a shortened form of the “affirmation of faith” (بِسْمِ اللَّهِ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ)—is inscribed on the obverse margin. It is theoretically possible that the die makers



Fig. 8. Arab-Byzantine solidi of Heraclius, Heraclius Constantine, and Heraclonas. Attributed to Damascus, A.H. 72. (After Album and Goodwin, *Pre-Reform Coinage of the Early Islamic Period*, SICA 1, 607; reproduced with the permission of the Visitors of the Ashmolean Museum)



Fig. 9. Arab-Sasanian drachm. Damascus, A.H. 72. (After Album and Goodwin, *Pre-Reform Coinage of the Early Islamic Period*, SICA 1, 278; reproduced with the permission of the Visitors of the Ashmolean Museum)



Fig. 10. Arab-Sasanian Kharijite drachm. Bishapur, A.H. 75. (After Album and Goodwin, *Pre-Reform Coinage of the Early Islamic Period*, SICA 1, 194; reproduced with the permission of the Visitors of the Ashmolean Museum)



Fig. 11. Arab-Sasanian drachm. Damascus, A.H. 73. (After Album and Goodwin, *Pre-Reform Coinage of the Early Islamic Period*, SICA 1, 279; reproduced with the permission of the Visitors of the Ashmolean Museum)

who came from Iraq convinced the caliphal court that the inclusion of *lā ilāha illā Allāh* (There is no god except God [لا إله إلا الله]) was too close to the Kharijite formula *lā ḥukm illā li-llāh* (There is no judgment except God's [لا حكم إلا لله]), particularly given the latter phrase's association with the Kharijite leader Qatari b. al-Fuja'a (d. A.H. 78 [697]), who will be mentioned below (fig. 10). However, this is only speculation.

By A.H. 73, the Syrian drachms, which were only minted in Damascus from this date, contained the full Eastern form of the "affirmation of faith." It was inscribed in a clockwise direction on the obverse margin, as had been done the previous year on the reverse of the new-style gold coins (fig. 11).

Again, the inclusion of this particular wording and the direction in which it was inscribed may have carried no particular meaning other than that this was the way it had been done on earlier Arab-Sasanian coins.

Contemporary coins from Basra and the Kufan mint of Aqla are different in that they include on the reverse an *orans* figure, that is, an image of a person at prayer with arms outstretched (fig. 12). These were struck by order of 'Abd al-Malik's brother Bishr b. Marwan, who served as governor. Treadwell makes the critical observation that

[t]he literary record passes over the Orans *drachm*, as well as the other figural types of this experimental period, in complete silence. The interpretation of the meaning of the image therefore has to rely primarily on numismatic data, beginning with the image itself.<sup>42</sup>

Treadwell discusses this series in great detail, pointing out the possible symbolic meaning of the standing figure, which may have represented the governor himself, since he put his name under the image in the first series.<sup>43</sup> It is also possible that the creation of such a figure and of the



Fig. 12. *Orans*-style Arab-Sasanian drachm. Basra, A.H. 75. (After Album and Goodwin, *Pre-Reform Coinage of the Early Islamic Period*, SICA 1, 107; reproduced with the permission of the Visitors of the Ashmolean Museum)

specific obverse marginal legend to be discussed below were done to counter Kharijite claims to leadership of the Muslim community.

#### COINAGE AND THE KHARIJITE CHALLENGE

In addition to the struggle between Ibn al-Zubayr and ‘Abd al-Malik for the caliphate, supporters of both men had to face increasingly aggressive Muslim movements labeled Kharijite.<sup>44</sup> These religious/military groups controlled parts of the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq, and Iran, particularly around Kirman.<sup>45</sup> By the end of A.H. 69 (689), the leader of the Azraqi Kharijites, the more radical and militarily successful movement, was Qatari ibn al-Fuja’a, who claimed the title caliph.<sup>46</sup> With ‘Abd al-Malik’s defeat of the Zubayrids in Iraq in A.H. 72, responsibility for defending his lands against the military campaigns and propaganda of the Azraqis fell to his governors, including his brother Bishr ibn Marwan, who had the *orans*-type coins struck as propaganda to counter Qatari’s claims to leadership in the Muslim community. The *orans* image relates to the right to lead prayers and offer the khutba, which are public signs of legitimacy. In addition, Bishr ibn Marwan’s issues for Kufa (‘Aqula) in A.H. 74 and 75 (693–94) and for Basra in 73, 74, and 75 only include a “short” version of the “affirmation of faith.” For these specific issues, the obverse marginal legend contains only the phrase *bism Allāh Muḥammad rasūl Allāh*. As noted above, the missing words *lā ilāha illā Allāh* may have been too close to the Kharijite formula *lā ḥukm illā li-llāh* and



Fig. 13: Arab-Byzantine solidi with armed standing caliph. Damascus, no date. University Museum, University of Pennsylvania. With the permission of the American Numismatic Society, 1002.1.107. (Photo: courtesy of the American Numismatic Society)

easily confused in the small space allocated to it on the margin of the obverse. Following the death of Bishr ibn Marwan in A.H. 75, ‘Abd al-Malik appointed al-Hajjaj governor of Iraq. Al-Hajjaj made defeat of Qatari and the Azraqi forces a high priority and supported his generals with manpower and money. The Azraqi threat to Iraq ended in A.H. 76 (695), although Qatari himself was not killed until A.H. 78, and then by other Kharijites.

Returning to the coinage of the Marwanid capital, another new-style gold coin was first minted in A.H. 74 (fig. 13). While ‘Abd al-Malik’s first gold coins of A.H. 72, even with their full marginal reverse legends in Arabic, imitated Byzantine issues in circulation at that time, the new gold issues from A.H. 74 and carried into A.H. 77 included the image of the caliph himself.<sup>47</sup> He is dressed in Arab garb and carries a sword, with its implied message of military power, to enforce his political position. If this politico-military message was aimed at specific enemies, it is not clear from either the image or the limited text.<sup>48</sup>

In A.H. 75, we observe a change in the reverse of the Arab-Sasanian drachms of Damascus: the earlier Sasanian reverse image of the fire altar with attendants was replaced by that of the armed standing caliph, with inscriptions on either side (fig. 14). Before analyzing the new elements, it is appropriate to look at military and religious developments taking place in the east at this time. The Kharijites under Qatari, who claimed to be caliph, still represented a military and ideological challenge until their defeat in A.H. 76, but then another



Fig. 14. Arab-Sasanian drachm, with the image of the *shāhanshāh* on the obverse (left) and that of the armed standing caliph on the reverse (right). Damascus, A.H. 75. With the permission of the American Numismatic Society, 1917.314.35. (Photo: courtesy of the American Numismatic Society)



Fig. 15. Arab-Sasanian drachm, with a bust of the armed caliph and a spear under a sacrum. Damascus, A.H. 76. With the permission of the American Numismatic Society, 1944.100.612. (Photo: courtesy of the American Numismatic Society)

Kharijite movement arose, this time in northern Iraq, under the leadership of Salih ibn Musarrih (d. A.H. 76 [695]), who also claimed the title of caliph. Al-Hajjaj was able to gather enough forces to defeat this movement, called the Sufriyya, as well as kill its leader later in A.H. 76. At this point, it may have appeared to 'Abd al-Malik, and possibly al-Hajjaj, that serious threats to Marwanid control of Iraq had been eliminated. If this was the case, then new political and military priorities could be set and coin types struck to reflect these new directions. However, military priorities and an accompanying new coinage would have to wait, as another Kharijite threat to Marwanid rule in Iraq arose once more in A.H. 76 (696).

The remnants of the Sufriyya Kharijite forces gathered under the leadership of Shabib ibn Yazid al-Shaybani (d. A.H. 77 [697]), who also claimed the title of caliph. His campaigns were more of a guerilla operation involving a few hundred men, but they took advantage of every opportunity to cause chaos, particularly when al-Hajjaj was out of Iraq, and managed to occupy Kufa twice. Al-Hajjaj found it necessary to call upon additional troops from Syria to finally put an end to the revolt of Shabib, a mission that was significantly expedited by Shabib's death when he fell off a bridge and drowned near the end of A.H. 77.<sup>49</sup> At that point, a new coinage reflecting a new set of priorities was at last issued, but it is first necessary to return to the innovations on the silver coinage of Damascus struck in A.H. 75 and 76 and continued into 77.

The new Damascus silver coinage for the year A.H. 75 has a reverse very different from any that had appeared earlier (fig. 14): its dominant image is that of the armed caliph, which had earlier been found on the obverse of 'Abd al-Malik's solidi. Secondly, on either side of the reverse image there are inscriptions in Arabic: one reads *amīr al-mu'minīn* and the other *khalīfat Allāh* (God's caliph). The appearance of these two titles on the coinage was a direct result of the Kharijite challenge to Marwanid legitimacy rather than a sudden desire on the part of the Marwanids to assert titles they may have claimed before and after these coins were issued. "The fact it [the title *khalīfat Allāh*] disappeared from the coinage does not mean that 'Abd al-Malik repented of having called himself *khalīfat Allāh*, but that he changed his mind regarding the kind of propaganda he wished the coinage to make."<sup>50</sup>

On the other hand, the use of the armed standing caliph on the reverse of the A.H. 75 issue created an unusual situation in that both sides of the coins now had images and the caliphal one was smaller than that of the Sasanian monarch, which had appeared on the obverse of every new Arab-Sasanian drachm. Therefore, a new portrait of the caliph—now in a bust form rather than standing, but still armed—appeared on the silver coinage of Damascus beginning in A.H. 76, this time on the obverse, replacing the Sasanian monarch (fig. 15).<sup>51</sup>

The new reverse reflects an even more radical change in images. In a classic, highly influential study, Miles described the reverse images as depicting a mihrab

and *ʿanaza* (a staff or spear).<sup>52</sup> A half century later, Treadwell's careful scholarship offered a new and more convincing argument that the image is that of a spear under a sacrum,<sup>53</sup> which had developed out of the Christian sacrum (a protective covering that shelters a cross), with the spear now standing where the cross had in Christian iconography. The inscriptions are also critical in understanding why this coin type might have been issued. Once again, the claims of ʿAbd al-Malik to be *amīr al-muʿminīn* and *khalīfa Allāh* are inscribed on the reverse on either side of the sacrum, within which, on the left side of the spear, are the three Arabic letters *nūn*, *ṣād*, and *rāʾ* and, on the right, the word *Allāh*. Therefore, the inscription inside the sacrum can be read as *naṣr Allāh* (Victory of God) or *naṣara Allāh* (May God grant victory). These texts are not aimed at Byzantine or even Christian subjects of Marwanid rule but are meant to counter Kharijite claims. The spear and sacrum serve as visual symbols, reinforcing ʿAbd al-Malik's message of the superiority of his assertion of authority over the Muslim community.

In summary, for most of the years between A.H. 72 and 77, ʿAbd al-Malik's caliphate focused on a series of Kharijite revolts threatening Iraq and challenging Marwanid legitimacy. This challenge had to be met on an ideological as well as a military level. Qatari, Salih, and Shabib all claimed to be caliph and leader of the community (*amīr al-muʿminīn*). When we review the pre-epigraphic coinage of ʿAbd al-Malik from Syria and Iraq for these same years, in which the main focus of military and ideological attention was the Kharijites, eliminating those images and inscriptions that were carried forward from an earlier coinage, a different interpretation of the new images and inscriptions emerges from that found in other modern studies. The unifying theme is that the new images and texts were aimed to counter Kharijite claims to the caliphate. The caliph with sword and even the spear under the sacrum represent the successful and rightful military leader of the community, while the caliph or his representative giving the Friday sermon as the *khaṭīb* (preacher) in the *orans*-style issues proclaims his legitimate right to lead the community in prayer. The references to him as God's caliph (*khalīfat Allāh*) and commander of the faithful (*amīr al-muʿminīn*) are a specific response to Kharijite claims to the caliphate. Finally, the phrase *naṣr Allāh*

(meaning either "victory with God" or "May God grant victory") challenges the Kharijites' claims that they were favored by God. It is also possible that those numismatic issues, which only have in their obverse margin the phrase "In the name of God, Muhammad is the Prophet of God" (*bism Allāh Muḥammad rasūl Allāh*) and lack the words "There is no god except God, alone" (*lā ilāha illā Allāh waḥdahū*), dropped this part of the Eastern "affirmation of faith" because it was too easy to mistake it, in the small space allocated, for the Kharijite call "There is no judgment except God's" (*lā ḥukm illā li-llāh*).

Very little has been written on the monetary role of ʿAbd al-Malik's solidi and drachms because there are relatively so few coins and the historical accounts offer no specific data on economic developments in these years. The surviving solidi weigh about 4.37 grams and fall into the same range as those Byzantine solidi circulating in Syria, while the size of the flans was that of the earlier gold currency. Therefore, if one traded solidi by number or by weight there was no advantage or disadvantage in using ʿAbd al-Malik's Arab-Byzantine gold issues instead of the Byzantine ones. While there were visual clues indicating that ʿAbd al-Malik's solidi were "different" from Byzantine gold coins, there was no obvious monetary or economic reason to prefer one over the other. The silver issues from Syria and Iraq associated with ʿAbd al-Malik's reign from A.H. 72 to 77 fall into the same category. Their size was the same as thousands of Arab-Sasanian and Sasanian silver coins minted earlier and their range of weights was as wide as the earlier silver ones, meaning that they had to be exchanged by weight rather than by number. Therefore, there were no market-related reasons to switch to ʿAbd al-Malik's drachms or solidi versus using earlier circulating pieces.

In most societies where coinage was common, new coin types continued to carry their "new" images, even when those elements were no longer meaningful to those who used them, because the monetary function of currency has a much longer lifespan than the propaganda purposes of the images. In addition, going back to the earliest days of the Rashidun, the size, weight, and degree of fineness of the gold and silver issues were set by market expectations based upon pre-Islamic models. Finally, during this era, there is no written

record of any opposition to the inclusion of human images on the coinage issued. Arguing from the absence of evidence is never safe, but for seven decades Muslims used gold and silver coins with images and there is every reason to assume that this is what Muslims and non-Muslims living under Muslim rule assumed coins should look like.

One important numismatic development that took place from A.H. 72 into 77 was the increasing use of Arabic inscriptions. From their first appearance during the caliphate of 'Uthman as a tiny marker in one quadrant of the obverse of Sasanian-style issues, inscriptions in Arabic became a major marker of Muslim coinage during the reign of 'Abd al-Malik. Long inscriptions in Arabic appeared on both the obverse and reverse of gold coins and the reverse of Marwanid silver ones minted in Syria and Iraq. However, none of these inscriptions was Qur'anic.

#### MUSLIM-BYZANTINE RELATIONS

Late in A.H. 77, a new style of all-epigraphic coinage first appeared. Only gold coins are known for that year. Beginning in A.H. 78, new-style silver pieces were produced in only a few mints but by A.H. 79 almost fifty mints were striking the new-style silver coinage, although a few Arab-Sasanian drachms continued to be minted in eastern parts of the empire. Upon examining the new-style gold and silver coins of A.H. 77 and 78, it immediately becomes apparent that both types included the same basic information, although the full texts could not be inscribed on gold coins because their flans were too small. Therefore, the new gold and silver coins of A.H. 77 and 78 will be treated below as reflecting a unified approach.

Before offering a detailed analysis of the new-style coins, which are labeled dinars (gold) and dirhams (silver) in contrast to the earlier solidi and drachms, a brief overview of Muslim-Byzantine relations is necessary.<sup>54</sup> The caliph Mu'awiya, facing serious internal problems, agreed to a peace with the Byzantine emperor Constantine IV (r. 668–85) according to which the Muslim ruler was obligated to pay a large tribute to Constantinople. During the early years of the reign of 'Abd al-Malik, Emperor Justinian II (r. 685–95), supported by his

general Leontios, undertook military operations against the Marwanids, taking advantage of 'Abd al-Malik's own struggles against the Zubayrids. 'Abd al-Malik had to sue for peace and agreed to renew the earlier agreement with a slightly increased tribute. According to most accounts, the Muslims were now expected to pay a weekly tribute of 1,000 gold coins, one horse, and one slave.

Sometime around A.H. 72 (692), Justinian II instigated a war against 'Abd al-Malik, whom he felt to be in a weak position. Later in 692 or in 693, Muslim troops responded by attacking Byzantium on two fronts, North Africa and Anatolia. The Marwanid armies were successful at the Battle of Sebastopolis in 693, effectively ending the payment of the Marwanid tribute to the Byzantines. Justinian II blamed Leontios for the Byzantine defeat and had him arrested and imprisoned.

Marwanid armies continued to push against Byzantine positions, particularly in North Africa. Justinian II, fearful of losing Carthage in Tunisia, released Leontios from prison in 695 and called upon him to lead a new army, this time in North Africa, against the Marwanid forces. Leontios promptly seized power in Constantinople, arrested Justinian, had his nose cut off as a sign that he was no longer qualified to be emperor, and sent him into exile in the Crimea. Leontios (r. 695–98) did not undertake military campaigns against the Muslims and Carthage fell. Parties in Constantinople wanting a more aggressive foreign policy reacted by overthrowing Leontios and making Tiberius II (r. 698–705) emperor. However, he, too, was not interested in carrying out military operations against the Marwanids.

'Abd al-Malik may have hoped to attack the Byzantines early in his caliphate but his military struggles against the Zubayrids, the Kharijites, and other groups prevented him from committing his best Syrian forces to the Anatolian and North African fronts. It may even be possible that in A.H. 76 (696), following the defeat of the Kharijites Qatari and Salih, 'Abd al-Malik was in a position to make the Byzantine front his highest priority; indeed, this was a policy that had been inaugurated by the first Umayyad caliph, Mu'awiya. Consequently, the decision to strike a new-style coinage containing anti-Byzantium propaganda may have been planned in A.H. 76. The failure of al-Hajjaj to crush the revolt of the Kharijite Shabib ibn Yazid that year may then have



Fig. 16. The earliest dinar, A.H. 77. With the permission of the American Numismatic Society, 1002.1.406. (Photo: courtesy of the American Numismatic Society)

delayed the actual striking of the new coinage until the end of A.H. 77.

This last observation is important because there is a medieval Muslim textual tradition that dates the introduction of the all-epigraphic coinage to the year A.H. 76.<sup>55</sup> Modern historians, particularly those who include numismatic data in their studies, have ignored the date in the medieval texts because they give greater weight to the date on the earliest coins, that is, A.H. 77. The simplest explanation is that both sources are correct and that a military problem that went on longer than either the caliph or his governor al-Hajjaj anticipated resulted in the new-style issues appearing later than originally planned, in A.H. 77. It is also probable, but again without supporting textual data, that the actual striking of dinars began so late in A.H. 77 (fig. 16) that there was no time to strike silver pieces and so the new-style silver coins did not appear until A.H. 78.

#### ‘ABD AL-MALIK’S ALL-EPIGRAPHIC COINAGE, A.H. 77–78

Virtually everything about the all-epigraphic coins was new, except for the use of the Kufic script and one marginal inscription. Neither the dinars nor dirhams included any of the images associated with the previous coinage struck by ‘Abd al-Malik. Other than a series of small circles called annulets placed on the outer circles of each face of the dirham, there were no geometric or design elements that carried meaning.<sup>56</sup> The lack of any images and the use of low-relief inscriptions preclude a

definite determination of the obverse and reverse sides of this new coinage. For the purposes of this study, the side with references to God’s oneness will be defined as the obverse (see table 2).

Most scholars writing on this new all-epigraphic coinage refer to the appearance of the Muslim *shahāda*, but as I shall detail below, while major portions of what constituted the Eastern and Jerusalem forms of the “affirmation of faith” were engraved on the coinage, their arrangement on the dinars and dirhams differed in significant ways from any of the previous “affirmations of faith,” resulting in the creation of a “Syrian” version.

On neither the dirham nor the dinar does the center inscription, where the most important messages were placed, begin with *bism Allāh*, as found in the Eastern “affirmation of faith,” or the full *basmala*, as in the longer Jerusalem version. On the obverse center, the first two lines are: *lā ilāha illā Allāh waḥdahu* (there is no god except God, alone), as was found in the margins on almost all the earlier ‘Abd al-Malik gold and silver issues, where it followed, on the pre-77 coinage, the *bism Allāh*. But the third line is not *Muḥammad rasūl Allāh*, as had appeared for six years on Marwanid gold and silver coins. Instead, what was inscribed was the phrase *lā sharika lahu*. These words, which were associated with an anti-Trinitarian sentiment last recorded by ‘Abd al-Malik on the Dome of the Rock and on milestones from A.H. 72 (692), as well as on an Egyptian tombstone from the same period, were part of the Jerusalem “affirmation of faith.”

It would have been possible to include in the center field the phrase *Muḥammad rasūl Allāh*, either by squeezing four lines into the center of the obverse or by writing the previous phrases in two lines and making the last line *Muḥammad rasūl Allāh*. However, none of this was done. The central and most important message on the obverse was therefore that which emphasized God’s unity and rejected the concept of the Trinity through the inclusion of the phrase *lā sharika lahu*. But unlike the Dome of the Rock, or even milestones and tombstones, whose potential readership was limited to those who actually visited those sites where that phrase appeared, the messages on gold and silver coins were available to anyone who handled them and therefore, reached a wider audience. In my view, the religious message had an implicitly political aspect; that is, it was as

Table 2. All-Epigraphic Coinage

Photo with the permission of Dr. Saber Arab, Director, Egyptian National Library & Archives, reg. no. 79. (Photo: courtesy of the Egyptian National Library & Archives)

Obverse margin: date and, on dirham, the mint, except on the dirham below



Obverse center: There is no god except God, alone, He has no partner

Reverse margin: Muhammad is the Prophet of God (Sura 9 [al-Tawba]:33), Who sent him [Muhammad] with guidance and the religion of truth so that he may proclaim it above all religions even though the *mushrikūn* may detest it.



Reverse center: Sura 112 (*al-Ikhlāṣ*): God, One, the Everlasting, Who does not beget nor has begotten, He is without equal

anti-Byzantine as it was anti-Trinitarian. The need to emphasize 'Abd al-Malik's legitimacy against Zubayrid and Kharijite claims, which had both religious and political dimensions and had been the common theme on the earlier Marwanid gold and silver coinage, was no longer necessary.

The reverse center inscription hammers home the same anti-Trinitarian, anti-Byzantine message, but in an even more powerful manner. 'Abd al-Malik's major innovation was to include Qur'anic verses on coinage for the first time. The inscription in the reverse center is from Sura 112, *al-Ikhlāṣ* (Oneness), which had also been used in the outer arcade of the Dome of the Rock. The sura speaks of God's unity and specifically rejects the concept of the Trinity. The fuller version of the sura is found on the all-epigraphic dirhams. The dinar was not big enough to include all of it; however, anyone who knew the Qur'an could complete that part of the text not found on the dinar. This was neither the only *āya* that rejects the Christian concept of the Trinity nor the only one that 'Abd al-Malik could have used, since he employed other Qur'anic verses in the arcades of the Dome of the Rock.<sup>57</sup> The advantage of using Sura *al-Ikhlāṣ* is that it is short, clear, and easily memorized.

In fact, Sura *al-Ikhlāṣ* is one of the first Qur'anic chapters that Muslims memorize, so even those with a limited knowledge of the Qur'an would have been familiar with this verse and could have completed it upon hearing or reading the first part.

In the arcades of the Dome of the Rock, 'Abd al-Malik used verses from eleven different suras. This means that by A.H. 72 at the latest the caliph assumed that a growing number of Muslims would know the Qur'an well enough that the appearance of specific verses or partial segments thereof would resonate with these viewers. For many, catching a few key words or a phrase in the inscription would be enough to fill in the rest of the text. 'Abd al-Malik's inscriptions in the Dome of the Rock were aimed at an elite Muslim audience who had memorized the Qur'an and were confident in their knowledge of it. While the inscriptions in the outer and inner arcades stress slightly different elements of Islam's understanding of Christianity, particularly the inner arcade's continuous text, in which Jesus is recognized as a prophet, there are no conciliatory messages on the all-epigraphic coinage. The Qur'anic message in the center of the reverse of the coinage was reinforced by another Qur'anic *āya* that speaks of the Muslims' triumph over

the *mushrikūn*, a term that will be discussed further below. Therefore, the use of Sura *al-Ikhlāṣ* in A.H. 77 was more anti-Byzantine than when it was used in the Dome of the Rock in A.H. 72, due to different political and military conditions.

Turning to either side of the all-epigraphic coin, the holder of the coin might experience another shock reading the legend in the margin: the inscription was not written in a clockwise direction, as had been the case for virtually all marginal legends in Arabic since A.H. 20 (644), but had to be read counterclockwise. As noted above, this is the logical way in which a script that is read from right to left and begins at the top of a coin should be written, although it had not appeared in this fashion on any gold or silver Muslim coin up to that time. With the direction of the marginal inscription reversed, a potential reader could no longer assume that he knew what was inscribed based upon the conventions of earlier Muslim coinage. The viewer was forced to read it or have it explained to him if he wished to know what was inscribed.<sup>58</sup>

The obverse margin on the dinar (fig. 16) and the reverse margin on the dirham (table 2) begin with the phrase *Muḥammad rasūl Allāh* but then include a part of the Qur'an hitherto unknown in inscriptions. It is traditionally assigned to Sura 9:33 but is found two other times in the Qur'an (48:28 and 61:9). It was therefore highly probable that one who knew the Qur'an would be familiar with the verse.<sup>59</sup> After the reference to Muhammad's prophethood on both the gold and silver coins, it continues: *Arsalahu bi-l-hudā wa-dīn al-ḥaqq li-yuḥzirahu 'alā 'l-dīn kullihī* (Who sent him [Muhammad] with guidance and the religion of truth so that he may proclaim it above all religions).

The Qur'anic verse is not complete on the gold issue because there was not enough room on the margin. Those who knew the Qur'an would be aware that the rest of the verse is *wa-law kariha al-mushrikūn* (even though the *mushrikūn* may detest it). Therefore, the fuller version of the Qur'anic *āya*, along with the reference to Muhammad's Prophethood, is on the all-epigraphic dirham, which has a larger diameter and thus a circumference greater than that of the dinar, and reads: *Muḥammad rasūl Allāh arsalahu bi-l-hudā wa-dīn al-ḥaqq li-yuḥzirahu 'alā 'l-dīn kullihī wa-law kariha al-mushrikūn* (Muhammad is the Prophet of God, Who

sent him [Muhammad] with guidance and the religion of truth so that he may proclaim it above all religions, even though the *mushrikūn* may detest it.

محمد رسول الله أرسله بالهدى ودين الحق ليظهره على الدين كله ولو كره [المشركون]). Virtually every modern English version of the Qur'an translates the Arabic term *mushrikūn* as "pagans" or "polytheists," but in the context of this coin and the earlier use on the coinage of the root *sh-r-k* in the phrase *lā sharīka lahu*, *mushrikūn* can only refer to Christians, whether they were living in Muslim or Byzantine lands.<sup>60</sup> Therefore, 'Abd al-Malik's use of Sura 9:33 (or 48:28 or 61:9, which have the same wording) was not a whim but a deliberate choice meant to re-enforce the messages in the center inscription.

The counterclockwise marginal inscription on the reverse of the dinar begins with *bism Allāh* and gives the hijra year in which the coin was struck, while the version on the dirham, with its additional space, includes in most cases the name of the mint as well as the date. This inscription was not new, as it had already appeared on the reverse margin of 'Abd al-Malik's pre-epigraphic coinage, but it was now written in a counterclockwise direction.

The dinars and dirhams treated above are regarded as reflecting a single policy pursued by 'Abd al-Malik, his governor al-Hajjaj, and possibly others, with the earliest all-epigraphic dirhams dated to A.H. 78.<sup>61</sup> A careful study of the dirhams for that year demonstrates that there were two major variations, whose differences depended on which side the marginal legends described above were placed.<sup>62</sup> Beginning with the dirhams struck in A.H. 79 and in all later Umayyad dirhams, the marginal legends are laid out in the reverse position to that found on the dinars.

There is another implication of having the location of the marginal legends on the dirham the reverse of those on the dinar, namely, that one can not assume that the center and marginal texts are to be read as a single message. Both the earlier Jerusalem "affirmation of faith" as found in the Dome of the Rock and the Eastern version, which was used on coinage from A.H. 72 on, were changed. There is no *bism Allāh* in the beginning and the phrase *Muḥammad rasūl Allāh* is not connected to the rest of the words as a single text. If these separate phrases constituted a single "affirmation of faith," it would be read as *lā ilāha illā Allāh waḥdahū*

*lā sharīka lahu Muḥammad rasūl Allāh* (There is no god except God, Alone, He has no partner, Muhammad is the Prophet of God [لااله الاالله وحده لا شريك له محمد رسول الله]). While most scholars refer to this combination of separate phrases as constituting the Muslim *shahāda*, they have been labeled for this essay the Syrian “affirmation of faith.” Therefore, it is not clear from the existing numismatic and architectural data which phrases constituted the *shahāda* in the 70s.

'Abd al-Malik changed the nature of the messages on the new Marwanid coinage in many ways. No longer was the caliph the focus in script or figure. He disappeared in both title and image. Neither his power as ruler nor his role as God's agent appeared on the new coinage. In addition, the inscriptions in which Jesus is recognized as a prophet, as in the interior arcade of the Dome of the Rock, were gone. Even the role of Muhammad as Prophet was marginalized; it would not be inscribed in the center of Muslim coinage until the Abbasids came to power, when it was part of their ideological position to identify themselves as descendants of the family of the Prophet, the *ahl al-bayt*. For 'Abd al-Malik, the Kharijite rivals were also no longer the focus of these numismatic messages.

I have argued that new developments on the coinage occurred within specific religious, political, and military contexts, moving from competition with the Kharijites to competition with Byzantium, and were not part of a search for a universal Islamic identity. The all-epigraphic coins asserted in words the superiority of Islam over Christianity, which in political terms meant Byzantium. But in making this point, there was nothing obvious that happened in A.H. 77 or possibly 78 that would hint at the subsequent transformation of this new-style coinage into the iconic coinage it would become. In theory, the new all-epigraphic coinage could have gone the way of previous coin types from the Rashidun to the Marwanid eras that, issued under specific political conditions, continued to be minted even after their original meanings had been forgotten—because that is the conservative nature of currency. They would then be replaced by new coin types intended to meet new political, military, or religious conditions. In the case of the new coinage of A.H. 77 and 78, this did not happen and the reason why can be found in a study of the metrology of the gold coinage.<sup>63</sup>

#### GRESHAM'S LAW AND THE TRIUMPH OF THE DINAR

The triumph of the all-epigraphic coinage is an epic turning point in monetary history, as this new style would have a direct impact on the coins issued by Muslim rulers for over 1,300 years, during which time the use of Arabic script and the absence of human and most other images would become characteristic of numismatic material from Spain and Morocco to Indonesia. The appearance of the script would be identified with a religion and designated as Islamic, while virtually all other coinages are known by geographic labels such as Chinese, English, and so forth. The analysis that follows offers a monetary reason for the immediate success of the all-epigraphic dinars and then postulates a theory as to how the coinage became “Islamic,” whereas the previous coinage issued by Muslims was not. The existing narrative sources do not answer these questions.

“Bad money drives out good money” is a popular saying among monetary historians. This is known as Gresham's Law, although there is no evidence that Sir Thomas Gresham (d. 1579) had anything to do with it.<sup>64</sup> However, the actual “law” is more complex. It states that “bad” money drives out “good” money only if two conditions are met: first, the “bad” money must be overvalued in relation to the “good” money and, second, there must be enough “bad” money in circulation to make a significant difference in the market.<sup>65</sup>

By applying Gresham's Law to the case of 'Abd al-Malik's new all-epigraphic dinars, we see that this gold coinage was both overvalued in relation to the earlier gold coinages and appears to have been struck in large enough quantities so that it acted like “bad currency,” effectively driving the “good” Byzantine and Arab-Byzantine solidi from the market. Gresham's Law did not apply in the case of the new silver coinage because the all-epigraphic dirhams were not overvalued in relation to the earlier Sasanian and Arab-Sasanian drachms. My interpretation is based solely on numismatic evidence, specifically coin hoards.<sup>66</sup>

In using this sort of evidence, the key is in determining which coins were saved together, because it implies that the coins in the hoard were interchangeable as far as their use in the market was concerned. In the case of silver issues, Sasanian drachms,

Arab-Sasanian drachms, and all-epigraphic dirhams are found together. Differentiating Sasanian drachms from Arab-Sasanian drachms can be difficult because one has to look carefully for the Arabic in the obverse margin. However, separating drachms from dirhams is easy, since they are visually so distinct. This means that if all three types of silver coins were saved together, then they were exchanged as though they were of equal value.

A study of the weights of Sasanian and Arab-Sasanian drachms demonstrates that they were never minted according to a strict weight standard and always had to be traded by weight rather than by number. Existing specimens range from slightly under 3 grams to slightly over 4 grams. Muslim historians write that 'Abd al-Malik's new dirhams were to weigh seven-tenths of the new dinar weight standard, that is, seven-tenths of the Syrian mithqal (a unit of mass) standard of 4.25 grams. In theory, this meant that the new dirham was to weigh 2.975 grams. Most did not, which suggests that it made no difference in the market if one used Sasanian drachms, Arab-Sasanian drachms, or all-epigraphic dirhams when paying in silver, since they were all treated as stamped silver bullion with the same degree of fineness. Evidence for this comes from hoards of silver coins dated to after A.H. 78, including an Abbasid hoard of silver coins dated to A.H. 200 (815), that is, over 120 years after the introduction of the new-style silver issues, which still included a significant number of Sasanian and Arab-Sasanian coins.<sup>67</sup>

We should also consider that the monetary zone in which the silver coins circulated was enormous, covering Syria, Iraq, Iran, and parts of Central Asia.<sup>68</sup> To have expected the markets in all these lands, where the power of the ruling elite was limited and the bureaucracy supporting it small, to suddenly and immediately change to using only the new all-epigraphic style coins would have been unrealistic, although beginning in A.H. 79 almost fifty Muslim mints in the east began striking the new-style dirhams. More importantly, there was no monetary advantage in having the old-style drachms melted and restruck as new-style dirhams, which would have also involved a small fee. Neither the old Sasanian/Arab-Sasanian drachms nor the all-epigraphic dirhams were better or worse ("good" versus "bad") than the other in terms of exchange rates. Therefore,

Gresham's Law does not apply to the history of the new dirham.

A study of hoards of early Muslim gold coins reflects a different pattern. Both the new-style and older circulating gold coins appear to have been of the same high degree of fineness, but Byzantine and Arab-Byzantine gold solidi were not mixed in hoards with the new-style dinars. If the gold coins were exchanged by weight, then it would have made no difference which style coin was thrown on the scale. But since the solidi and dinars were saved separately and not mixed, this meant that they were not treated as struck gold bullion but were traded by number.<sup>69</sup> Under these conditions, if a lighter gold coin was treated as equal in value to a heavier one, then the lighter one was overvalued, or "bad," in relation to the heavier one. This is precisely what happened in the case of the all-epigraphic dinars.

When 'Abd al-Malik ordered the minting of his all-epigraphic dinars in A.H. 77, he made one other fundamental change, which was first analyzed a half century ago by Grierson.<sup>70</sup> The new dinars were based on a weight standard of 4.25 grams. Grierson noted that 4.25 grams was the equivalent of 20 carats of a Syrian weight standard, making it an easily divisible number. In contrast, circulating Byzantine solidi and Arab-Byzantine solidi weighed around 4.37 or 4.38 grams, based upon an earlier Greek mithqal weight standard of 4.55 grams. The surviving textual tradition does not tell us why 'Abd al-Malik authorized this change in the weight standard for gold coins. One reason could be that it fit into the existing weight standards of the *Bilād al-Shām*, the heart of his empire, but it is also possible that his goal had more to do with making his gold resources go further. We normally call this act of deliberately lowering the weight standard debasing the coinage. It allows the ruler to produce more coins from the same amount of metal as previously, while claiming that the value of the new, lighter coin is equal to that of the earlier, heavier issue.

By paying by number, rather than weight, with his new coinage, 'Abd al-Malik made a profit of between three and seven per cent, if calculated against the weight of Arab-Byzantine and Byzantine gold coins found in Syria (4.38 grams) or the theoretical weight of a full Byzantine solidi based on a Byzantine standard

(4.55 grams). Once merchants, administrators, and military leaders were paid by number in the new, “lighter” money, they would want the lighter coins to pay their bills, assuming again that they paid by number and not by weight. To do so, they had to either use the gold dinars circulated by 'Abd al-Malik or go to the mint, have their old gold coins weighed as if they were bullion, and receive in return new-style coins.<sup>71</sup> This way, they would get more new dinars than the number of older solidi they handed in to be weighed.

The demand by the caliph and then everyone else for the new light-weight dinars would have resulted in the market being flooded with the all-epigraphic coins. This is what I speculate happened, although the only evidence for the number of coins in circulation is that the number of different dies used to strike the new all-epigraphic dinars increased in comparison with the number used to mint the older Arab-Byzantine pieces.<sup>72</sup> The number of dies does not prove that the actual number of coins in circulation increased, but in relative terms it is highly probable. Therefore, both conditions for Gresham's Law to be operative were in place—one coin was overvalued in relation to the other and relatively large numbers of the former were circulating. The result was the triumph of the new all-epigraphic dinar.

Again, when 'Abd al-Malik and his court began paying with the new dinars, anyone who held gold—the merchant, the religious leader, the military commander, and others—would immediately want to use the new-style dinars because every time they used the old gold solidi and paid by number, they lost money in the exchange. Within Muslim lands where gold was used, which must have meant Syria and possibly Egypt, the new dinars quickly dominated the market as they drove out the older solidi. It is also likely that in Byzantine lands, rulers and merchants demanded that payment in gold coins be either by weight or in their own style of currency and not by number, since the new Muslim dinars weighed less, in addition to looking different. While gold coins had circulated freely in the Eastern Mediterranean for centuries, now the Islamic and Byzantine worlds had separate monetary zones, the gold issues of which had totally different iconographies and were based upon two distinct weight standards.<sup>73</sup>

We will never know if 'Abd al-Malik and his advisers had any idea of what the impact of issuing dinars at

a lower weight standard would be, but the rapid success of the new all-epigraphic issues quickly transformed the gold coinage from being another piece of monetary propaganda into a currency that everyone who used gold coins wanted. No edict had to be issued, no caliphal statement had to be made, and no religious ruling about human or non-human representation on coins had to be promulgated. The market alone transformed the symbolic role of the coinage. Once market forces were at work, the all-epigraphic dinars were successful, but how, in the world of 'Abd al-Malik, could one explain the immediate dominance of a light-weight gold coin over a heavier, different-style issue that had been circulating in the region for decades, if not centuries?

The new all-epigraphic gold coinage was both overvalued and produced in adequate quantities so that it acted as “bad” money and effectively drove the “good” Byzantine and Arab-Byzantine solidi from the market. 'Abd al-Malik and those with whom he consulted must have believed that the success of the coinage could only be understood in religious terms. What made the dinars different was that they carried God's word in the form of Qur'anic verses. There was nothing visual that linked them to any older coinage. Therefore, in their view, the dinar was successful because this was the type of coin Muslims should mint. The old-style coins may have served their particular purpose, but they never triumphed over all their competitors because they were not “Islamic” enough, although they, too, included inscriptions in Arabic and even pious phrases. Therefore, the success of the all-epigraphic dinars created the expectation that all future issues would be like them; that is, the coinage of the Islamic world would lack the type of imagery found on issues from Byzantine and Sasanian lands.

Gresham's Law did not apply to the case of the new silver coinage, but the sudden and successful triumph of the all-epigraphic gold coins in A.H. 77 and 78 created a demand that all subsequent coinage should look like the new-style gold coinage. Orders went out with the proper dies to mint all Marwanid silver coins as all-epigraphic dirhams.<sup>74</sup> Within a year or two at most, all-epigraphic coinage became the symbol of Islam because only the inclusion of God's words on the new coins could explain why they had succeeded where earlier drachms

and solidi had not. As a result of the success of the new coinage, Muslim rulers, with rare exception, would not, or felt they could not, return to the older models. Since the exchanges with silver took place by weight and not by number, old-style Sasanian and Arab-Sasanian drachms had a monetary value equal to their weight and could still be used in the market.<sup>75</sup>

### SHORT-TERM RESPONSES

One of the themes of this essay has been the absence of negative responses by identifiable individuals to numismatic developments, including the appearance of human images, up to A.H. 77. While there may have been opposition to some of these developments, there were no objections serious enough to be recorded by later historians.<sup>76</sup> ‘Abd al-Malik’s introduction of the all-epigraphic coinage did break the earlier pattern and, for once, we have specific evidence of some learned members of the ulama commenting on this, though we cannot determine exactly how soon they acted after the introduction of the new dinars and dirhams during ‘Abd al-Malik’s caliphate. In light of the dominant medieval and modern tradition that Muslims welcomed the new all-epigraphic coinage because it lacked human figures and therefore reflected “real” Muslim values, it comes as a surprise to learn that the earliest commentators were opposed to it.

‘Abd al-Malik not only struck a coinage without images but for the first time inscribed Qur’anic verses on it. The caliph was using the Muslim sacred text to legitimize his message of the triumph of Islam but in a far more public way than he had done in the Dome of the Rock. Anyone who held the new all-epigraphic coinage and wished to know what was inscribed would learn that they were holding God’s word as revealed in Arabic to the Prophet Muhammad. For some pious-minded Muslims, particularly in Medina, the issue of ritual purity in handling the Qur’an and, by extension, verses from the Qur’an, was an important one.<sup>77</sup> Now these same sacred texts were inscribed on pieces of metal that could and would be held by anyone and carried anywhere, including unclean venues such as lavatories.<sup>78</sup>

There are variant accounts of the opposition to the all-epigraphic coinage in the Arab sources, but the following passage by al-Maqrizi (d. A.H. 845 [1441])

captures the tone of the arguments, while also revealing some of the individuals involved:

Al-Hajjaj struck white dirhams and engraved on them “Say: he is God the One.” To this the Qur’an readers said, “May God fight him! What evil has he afflicted the people with? [This coin] is now handled by impure [persons] and menstruating women!” Before then, the legend on the dirhams was engraved in Old Persian. Some of the Qur’an readers abhorred touching the [new] dirhams whenever they were in a state of impurity. Accordingly, these [dirhams] came to be known as *al-makrūhah* [the reprobate ones], an expression that came to stigmatize and identify them.

Malik [ibn Anas] (d. 179/795) was asked about changing the legend on the dinars and the dirhams, because it contained excerpts from the Qur’an...He answered “Though it has reached me that Ibn Sirin (d. 110/730) [who was a contemporary of Malik ibn Anas and knew him, ed.] abhorred using these (coins) in buying and selling, people continued to use them and I have not seen anyone who has prohibited them here [i.e., Medina].”

‘Abd al-Malik was told: “These white dirhams contain excerpts from the Qur’an and are handled by Jews, Christians, impure [persons], and menstruating women. It will be advisable for you to erase [the inscription].” He answered: “Do you wish [other] nations to allege against us that we have erased our [belief in the unity] of God and the name of our Prophet?”<sup>79</sup>

The Marwanids recognized that the protests from some members of the ulama were more than a complaint about the inclusion of Qur’anic verses on the coinage—they were a direct challenge to caliphal authority. Giving in on this issue would have laid the ground for the ulama to challenge all legislative acts by any caliph. The call by Ibn Sirin and others to remove the Qur’anic verses was thus rejected for more fundamental reasons than that recorded by al-Maqrizi. Memory of that early opposition can also be found in the work of al-Mawardi (d. A.H. 450 [1058]), who, in his section on tribute and land tax, included the following comment on the new all-epigraphic coinage:

Those *dirhams* were nicknamed “the hateful,” but there is disagreement on the reason for calling them so. Some say that the jurists hated them for bearing words from the Qur’an while they could be carried by the ritually impure. Others claim that foreigners hated their reduced weight.<sup>80</sup>

Ironically, al-Mawardi's explanation is valid on both accounts, as some members of the ulama rejected the new coinage because it included God's word, while merchants who had relied on gold coins based upon a Byzantine standard would have been angry because they were being paid by number in the lighter-weight dinars, thereby losing significant sums of income. Memory of the rejection of the all-epigraphic coinage also appears in the work of Imam al-Nawawi (d. A.H. 671 [1272]): in a section of his *Etiquette with the Qur'ān (al-Tibyān fī ādāb ḥamalāt al-Qur'ān)* entitled "Touching Books Containing the Qur'an," he writes:

The sound opinion is that it is permissible for someone in the state of minor or major ritual impurity or menstruation to touch or carry the following since they are not considered to be a *muṣḥaf*: (1) a book of *fiqh* or some other field of knowledge that contains verses from the Quran; (2) a garment embroidered with Quran; (3) a gold or silver coin; (4) luggage whose contents include a *muṣḥaf*; and (5) a wall, pastry or bread engraved with it. There is also an opinion that this is unlawful.<sup>81</sup>

As indicated above, no narratives attributed to the period before A.H. 77 (697) mention any opposition to gold and silver Muslim coinage that included human representation. On the other hand, there is evidence that the Marwanids saw the appearance of the Qur'anic verses on the all-epigraphic dinars and dirhams as a marker of their identity as Muslim rulers and as testaments to their belief. At a date unknown but probably during the reign of either 'Abd al-Malik or his son al-Walid (r. A.H. 86–96 [705–15]), large copper plates with inscriptions in Kufic were installed above the doors of the Dome of the Rock. The ones on the northern and eastern doors were still *in situ* when van Berchem recorded their texts at the beginning of the twentieth century. From examining the inscriptions, it is apparent that the bottom sections of both plaques were cut where the date and name of the patron would have been found and replaced by a new inscription in a later Abbasid script. The inscription on the northern door is important for this study because it contains all the pious phrases and Qur'anic verses (Sura 9:33 and Sura 112) found on the all-epigraphic coinage from A.H. 77. By placing the plaque on the northern door, the Marwanid caliph wanted to ensure that all who entered

the Dome of the Rock saw this inscription, in contrast to the almost invisible, earlier inscriptions in the outer and inner arcades of the interior of the Dome of the Rock.

Evidence for how the inscriptional data associated with the all-epigraphic issues was used can be found in the earliest, fully bilingual protocol on Arabic papyri, which dates from the reign of al-Walid. It, too, contains Sura 9:33 and Sura 112, as well as the same pious phrases.<sup>82</sup> In both of these cases, the totality of the inscriptions demonstrates how what was originally a piece of propaganda related to a specific historical situation became a marker for the Marwanid caliphs and then a general symbol of Islam. The success of the all-epigraphic coinage in Syria quickly transformed the messages inscribed, which were the product of a particular historical setting, into generalized statements of caliphal and Muslim belief and authority.<sup>83</sup>

#### LONG-TERM IMPACT

Coinages successful in the market tend to be conservative in terms of avoiding radical changes, and the triumph of the dinar meant that future coins struck by Muslim rulers would draw upon 'Abd al-Malik's model.<sup>84</sup> The Syrian mithqal, the weight standard first used by 'Abd al-Malik for the dinar, became canonical for all Muslims and the use of Arabic script on coinage struck by Muslim rulers became the norm. Many of the phrases found on the coins of A.H. 77 and 78 were also carried forward, even though, for those who used those coins, the Qur'anic verses had become formulaic. For example, the Abbasids continued to inscribe on their coins everything found on 'Abd al-Malik's coinage, with the exception of Sura *al-Ikhlāṣ*, which was replaced by the phrase *Muḥammad rasūl Allāh* in order to emphasize their biological tie to the Prophet.

In another example of the conservative nature of most coinage and the impact of 'Abd al-Malik's use of specific Qur'anic verses, we see that references to Sura 9:33 continued to appear on dinars and dirhams for centuries. The Bahri and early Circassian Mamluks placed the full *āya* on the reverse of their large-flan dinars. Later, when Mamluk dinars were struck on a smaller flan, reference to the same verse persisted but was now limited to the word *arsalahu* (He sent him),



Fig. 17. Dinar of Qansuh al-Ghawri, Cairo, no date, with [ar]salahu on top of obverse (left). With the permission of Dr. Saber Arab, Director, Egyptian National Library & Archives, reg. no. 2466. (Photo: courtesy of the Egyptian National Library & Archives)

which appeared on the top of the obverse (see the dinar in fig. 17). During the reign of the last effective Mamluk sultan, al-Qansuh al-Ghawri (r. A.H. 906–22 [1501–17]), someone examining his currency had to know in advance that the wavy line at the top was *salahu*, from *arsalahu*, and should be read after *Muḥammad rasūl Allāh* in the third line. Here are Muslim dinars minted over eight hundred years after ‘Abd al-Malik’s reign that are directly linked to his all-epigraphic coinage.<sup>85</sup>

### CONCLUSIONS

Coinage is one among many important sources available to scholars for reconstructing the past. For the first century of Islamic history, the information that can be derived from numismatics is particularly valuable, since coins are one of the only sources that can be identified by time and place. Still, the conservative nature of coins must always be kept in mind. We must recognize the necessity of identifying when a new coin type was first issued, as images and inscriptions were often carried forward even when they no longer retained the meaning they had when they were first incorporated into the coinage. In studying the variant forms of what has been labeled by scholars as the *shahāda*, there is evidence for one version that circulated in Egypt and Syria in the early 70s A.H., which I have labeled the Jerusalem “affirmation of faith.” A second variant, based upon numismatic developments in the East, was placed upon the Syrian coins minted for six years of ‘Abd al-Malik’s

caliphate, that is, from A.H. 72 into 77, which I label the Eastern “affirmation of faith.” With the all-epigraphic coinage of A.H. 77 and 78, it is even possible to reconstruct a third version, which lacks the opening *bism Allāh* and is labeled the Syrian “affirmation of faith.” All of these titles were created to demonstrate that different “affirmations of faith” circulated in Muslim lands in the late first/seventh century. Ultimately, other sources, such as monumental inscriptions, historical and religious texts, and other coinage, including copper pieces, will be needed to reconstruct when the version of the *shahāda* familiar to us today came to be widely accepted.

Context is key to interpreting each of the new coin types issued during ‘Abd al-Malik’s caliphate. It is important to understand why certain images or texts first appeared with each new coin type. These new elements were incorporated in order to transmit specific messages. The first issues of A.H. 72, in gold and silver from Syria, demonstrate ‘Abd al-Malik’s right as caliph to strike coins, while their images and inscriptions owe almost everything to previously circulating Arab-Sasanian drachms and Byzantine solidi. The succeeding innovations on the solidi and drachms reflect responses to Kharijite challenges. The images on the coins illustrate the caliph, or possibly his brother, as the legitimate leader of the Muslim community, with the ability to exert military force. The ever-increasing use of Arabic text was again a response to specific historical challenges, and the new phrases emphasized the role of ‘Abd al-Malik as the religious and political leader whom God favored. Finally, in facing the challenge of Byzantium, ‘Abd al-Malik turned to Qur’anic verses to emphasize the eventual triumph of Islam and the Muslim rejection of the Christian concept of the Trinity. In the confrontation with Byzantium, text rather than imagery was the most effective way of distinguishing the two cultures and religious communities.

One of ‘Abd al-Malik’s greatest innovations was his use of Qur’anic verses, first in the Dome of the Rock and later on his coinage. The creative use of specific verses, sometimes slightly different from those found in the modern Egyptian Qur’an edition, reflected the key decision makers’ thorough knowledge of the Holy Book, particularly those sections that would be appropriate for these very specific contexts. In addition, the

appearance of these verses on the coinage implies that there were Muslims who knew the Qur'an well enough both to recognize and understand the significance of using God's word in this new context. Far more than inscribing political titles or pious phrases on coinage, the incorporation of Qur'anic verses reflected the growing centrality of the Qur'an as a source of authority and for a Muslim's sense of identity. The appearance of Qur'anic verses on the all-epigraphic coinage was opposed by some members of the ulama, particularly one Muhammad ibn Sirin and his supporters in Medina, because "unclean" people were handling God's word. Their opposition may have focused on this specific issue, but underlying it was their resistance to the power of the caliph to determine Islamic practice, which they saw as a form of Marwanid absolutism. Therefore, contrary to the story created later, the only datable and attributable opposition to early Islamic coinage was not against those issues that included human images, but against the all-epigraphic gold and silver coinage, because these dinars and dirhams were inscribed with Qur'anic verses.

Finally, the creation of the all-epigraphic coinage, which was probably planned in A.H. 76, and then executed in gold in A.H. 77 and in silver in A.H. 78, reflected 'Abd al-Malik's imperial goal of confronting Rome, that is, the Byzantine Empire. Had the Marwanid dinars been based on the same weight standard as that of the earlier currencies, they may have eventually won wide acceptance or, possibly, the more conservative ulama could have forced the removal of the Qur'anic verses, even if the coinage continued to be epigraphic. But 'Abd al-Malik debased his new gold coinage by issuing it on a new, lighter-weight standard and, in relative terms, flooded the market with dinars by paying by number and not by weight. This self-serving act had an unexpected result. The market immediately demanded that all transactions with gold coins be done with the new, lighter, all-epigraphic dinars, as anyone using the circulating Byzantine and Arab-Byzantine gold coins lost money. But how could one explain the immediate and total domination of the market by a coinage that included no images, as had every Muslim coin for the previous eight decades, and, for the first time, included verses from the Holy Book itself? The easiest answer

was that this was proper Muslim coinage and all future Muslim coinage should look like it.

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## NOTES

*Author's note:* Valuable comments were made upon earlier drafts of this paper by Sherif Anwar, Michael Bates, Irene Bierman-McKinney, Chase Robinson, Stuart Sears, and an anonymous reviewer. My own work on this topic was significantly advanced in 2007, when I held a Robinson Fellowship in the Department of Coins and Medals of the British Museum, and I wish to thank Joe Cribb, Vesta Curtis, and the other department members for their support and encouragement. As I was completing this article, Luke Treadwell and Stefan Heidemann each graciously shared with me their articles, which were then in press: see Luke Treadwell, "Abd al-Malik's Coinage Reforms: The Role of the Damascus Mint," *Revue Numismatique* 165 (2009): 357–82, and Stefan Heidemann, "The Development of the Representation of the Early Islamic Empire and Its Religion on Coin Imagery," in *The Qur'an in Context: Historical and Literary Investigations into the Qur'anic Milieu*, ed. Angelika Neuwirth, Nicolai Sinai, and Michael Marx, Texts and Studies on the Qur'an 6 (Leiden, 2010), 149–95. Both of these works are important contributions and have valuable bibliographies in addition to their extensive footnotes.

1. The reader should be aware that, given the importance of mint years in this article, dates will be provided according to the hijra calendar followed, at first mention, by the common era equivalent in parentheses. The starting point for any research on early Islamic coinage is now Stephen Album and Tony Goodwin, *The Pre-Reform Coinage of the Early Islamic Period*, vol. 1 of the *Sylloge of Islamic Coins in the Ashmolean Museum* (Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, 2002). A fuller bibliography related to Greater Syria, particularly copper issues, can be found in Clive Foss, *Arab-Byzantine Coins: An Introduction, with a Catalogue of the Dumbarton Oaks Collection*, Dumbarton Oaks Byzantine Collection Publications 12 (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2008). References to the extensive scholarship published between 2002 and 2007 can be found in Lutz Ilisch, "Islamic Numismatics (North Africa to Central Asia)," in *A Survey of Numismatic Research 2002–2007*, ed. Michel Amandry and Donal Bateson, International Association of Professional Numismatists Special Publication 15 (Glasgow: International Numismatic Commission, 2009), 480–82, 493–94. For background to many of the current debates, the pioneering work of Walker and Bates should not be neglected: John Walker, *A Catalogue of the Arab-Byzantine and Post-Reform Umayyad Coins* (London: British Museum, 1956); John Walker, *A Catalogue of*

- the Arab-Sassanian Coins* (London: British Museum, 1941); Michael L. Bates, "History, Geography and Numismatics in the First Century of Islamic Coinage," *Revue Suisse de Numismatique* 65 (1986): 231–62. Many scholars have offered interpretations of 'Abd al-Malik's coinage, including the reasons behind the all-epigraphic issues. Examples are Stephan Lloyd, "An Introduction to Early Islamic Coinage," in *Islamic Gold, Umayyad Dinars, from the Collection of H. E. Sheikh Ghassan I. Shaker*, ed. Tom Eden (London: Morton & Eden. Ltd., 2004), 5–13; Treadwell, "'Abd al-Malik's Coinage Reforms"; and Heidemann, "Representation of the Early Islamic Empire and Its Religion on Coin Imagery" (the last two articles are cited above in the author's note).
2. The coinage of Muhammad ibn Marwan struck in the Umayyad north, that is, northern Jazira, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, is not included in this study: Stuart D. Sears, "Before Caliphal Coins: Transitional Drahms of the Umayyad North," *American Journal of Numismatics*, 2nd ser., 15 (2003): 77–110.
  3. Those who claimed to be caliph strongly believed that the holder of the title acted as God's agent and had, in relative terms at least, universal authority: Patricia Crone and Martin Hinds, *God's Caliph: Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Chase F. Robinson, "The Ideological Uses of Early Islam," *Past and Present* 203, 1 (May 2009): 205–28. This study accepts the basic premises of Crone and Hinds, and Robinson, but argues that any new wording and/or image on the coinage reflected specific historical circumstances, not a general principle.
  4. Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, trans. Franz Rosenthal, ed. N. J. Dawood, 3 vols. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1969), 2:56–57.
  5. Very valuable observations on the different versions of the "affirmation of faith" can be found in Sears, "Before Caliphal Coins," 80–83.
  6. Robert G. Hoyland, "New Documentary Texts on the Early Islamic State," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 69 (2006): 397.
  7. Stuart Sears, *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān* (Leiden: Brill, 2001–6), s.v. "Money." Muhammad Aslam Haneef and Emad Rafiq Barakat, "Must Money Be Limited to Only Gold and Silver?: A Survey of *Fiqhi* Opinions and Some Implications," *Journal of King Abdul Aziz University: Islamic Economics* 19, 1 (2006): 21–34. This distinction between central control over gold and silver issues versus local control over copper coins is a fundamental assumption in a recent work on coins from Egypt and Greater Syria for the years that the present study covers: Foss, *Arab-Byzantine Coins: An Introduction*.
  8. In addition to Album and Goodwin, *Pre-Reform Coinage of the Early Islamic Period*, see Stuart D. Sears, "A Monetary History of Iraq and Iran, ca. CE 500 to 750" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1997). The terms *drahm* and *drachm* both appear in the literature. This essay will use the latter.
  9. An example of the use of copper coinage for reconstructing history is Harry Bone, "The Administration of Umayyad Syria: The Evidence of the Copper Coins" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2000). For an illuminating study of copper in former Sasanian lands in this period, see Luke Treadwell, "The Copper Coinage of Umayyad Iran," *Numismatic Chronicle* 168 (2008): 331–81, as well as the earlier Rika Gyselen, *Arab-Sasanian Copper Coinage* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000).
  10. This is also true of Heidemann, "Representation of the Early Islamic Empire and Its Religion on Coin Imagery," and Treadwell, "'Abd al-Malik's Coinage Reforms."
  11. A standard reference for Byzantine issues for this period is Philip Grierson, *Heraclius Constantine to Theodosius III (641–717)*, vol. 2, pt. 2 of *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, ed. Alfred R. Bellinger and Philip Grierson, 5 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1966–99).
  12. Philip Grierson, "The Monetary Reforms of 'Abd al-Malik," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 3 (1960): 247.
  13. Data on Arab-Byzantine solidi are from George C. Miles, "The Earliest Arab Gold Coinage," *American Numismatic Society, Museum Notes* 13 (1967): 205–29.
  14. Descriptions of these issues can be found in Album and Goodwin, *Pre-Reform Coinage of the Early Islamic Period*, 1–4, as well as a number of works specializing in Sasanian numismatics. See also Nikolaus Schindel, *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, s.v. "Sasanian Coinage"; accessed December 17, 2009, at [http://www.iranica.com/newsite/articles/unicodet/ot\\_grp9/ot\\_sascoin\\_20050831.html](http://www.iranica.com/newsite/articles/unicodet/ot_grp9/ot_sascoin_20050831.html).
  15. Jere L. Bacharach and Adon A. Gordus, "The Purity of Sasanian Silver Coins: An Introduction," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 92, 2 (April–June 1972): 280–83; Album and Goodwin, *Pre-Reform Coinage of the Early Islamic Period*, 38.
  16. During the reigns of the first Muslim caliphs, the circulating silver coinage was that of Yazdgard III (r. 632–51). The first Muslim issues continued this style of coinage and even the dating system of Yazdgard III. The inscriptions were written in middle Persian in Pahlavi script. Some modern numismatists have argued, based upon errors in the inscriptions, that earlier, during the reign of the caliph 'Umar (r. 634–44), Muslim governors minted Yazdgard III-style coins without any Arabic. Therefore, there is nothing inscribed on them that signals that they were struck by order of a Muslim ruler rather than a Sasanian one. If holders of the coins did note the errors in the Pahlavi script, they more likely feared that they were bad forgeries rather than that they were products of the mint of the new Muslim governors. Aleksandr Nikitin and Gunter Roth, "The Earliest Arab-Sasanian Coins," *Numismatic Chronicle* 155 (1995): 131–37. Michael Bates writes: "The chronological marker is precisely 651, the year of the death of Yazdagird. Before that time, there was no

- indication of Arab rule, even if the coin's date indicates that it was minted after the Arab conquest of the place. After that time, all official coins have Arabic. Private minters (who 'must have been' Persians, not Arabs) might well have made imitations of Sasanian coins without any Arabic." Personal communication, 17 April 2009. An overview of the early Arab-Sasanian issues can be found in Album and Goodwin, *Pre-Reform Coinage of the Early Islamic Period*, 5–6; the labeling of the coins struck before A.H. 77 is discussed by Album on p. 1.
17. This observation was first made to me by Bernard O'Kane. Personal communication, 1 April 2009.
  18. Michael Bates writes: "I think it needs to be emphasized that 'Arab-Sasanian coinage' is a modern terminology for a phenomenon that was not named by contemporaries in the seventh century and didn't need a name. There is no indication in the texts that the coins with Arabic inscriptions were regarded as a 'new coinage' separate from the earlier coinage." Personal communication, 17 April 2009.
  19. Clive Foss, "A Syrian Coinage of Mu'awiya," *Revue Numismatique* 158 (2002): 353–65.
  20. Andrew Palmer, Sebastian P. Brock, and Robert G. Hoyland, *The Seventh Century in the West-Syrian Chronicles* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1993), 31.
  21. Album mentions the first appearance, in A.H. 66, of the phrase *Muhammad rasul Allah* on drachms from Bishapur: Album and Goodwin, *Pre-Reform Coinage of the Early Islamic Period*, 22. An overview of the various interpretations can be found in Heidemann, "Representation of the Early Islamic Empire and Its Religion on Coin Imagery."
  22. Album and Goodwin, *Pre-Reform Coinage of the Early Islamic Period*, 15.
  23. Lutz Ilisch, "The Muhammad-Drachms and Their Relation to Umayyad Syria and Northern Iraq," in *Supplement to the Journal of the Oriental Numismatic Society* 193: *Coinage and History in the Seventh Century Near East: Papers from the Seventh Century Syrian Numismatic Round Table 2007* (Autumn 2007), 17–19. References to the debate on this issue can be found in Ilisch, "Islamic Numismatics," 481.
  24. "The placing of the *shahāda* on coinage...was a Zubayrid, not a Marwanid innovation." Luke Treadwell, "The 'Orans' Drachms of Bishr ibn Marwān and the Figural Coinage of the Early Marwanid Period," in *Bayt al-Maqdis, Part One: 'Abd al-Malik's Jerusalem*, ed. Julian Raby and Jeremy Johns, Oxford Studies in Islamic Art 9, 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 243. Heidemann appears to accept the association of the phrase with the Zubayrids: Heidemann, "Representation of the Early Islamic Empire and Its Religion on Coin Imagery." Michael Bates questions whether the appearance of the phrase represents a Zubayrid position, since the phrase does not appear on contemporary coinage issued by known Zubayrid governors. Personal communication, 17 April 2009.
  25. Ilisch, "Muhammad-Drachms," 19.
  26. For recent scholarship on the Dome of the Rock and an extensive bibliography, see Gülru Necipoğlu, "The Dome of the Rock as Palimpsest: 'Abd al-Malik's Grand Narrative and Sultan Süleyman's Glosses," *Muqarnas* 25 (2008): 19–105. Islamic art historians have written more about the Dome of the Rock than about any other single building; similarly, more has been written on Muslim coinage struck before the all-epigraphic issues of A.H. 77 and 78 than on any other Islamic numismatic topic. The lack of contemporary historical narratives, as well as the importance of both topics for the subsequent history of Muslim-sponsored material culture, may be the primary reason for this intensive scholarly interest.
  27. Oleg Grabar, Mohammad al-Asad, Abeer Audeh, and Saïd Nuseibeh, *The Shape of the Holy: Early Islamic Jerusalem* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), 56.
  28. Estelle Whelan, "Forgotten Witness: Evidence for the Early Codification of the Qur'an," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 118 (1998): 1–13.
  29. Irene A. Bierman, *Writing Signs: The Fatimid Public Text* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 28, 41.
  30. *Ibid.*, 28.
  31. The inscription in the inner arcade begins with the Jerusalem "affirmation of faith" through *lā sharika lahu*. The specific phrase *Muhammad rasul Allah* does not appear in the extended text, although references to his Prophethood and mission do. Most of the interior text relates to Muslim beliefs about the role of Jesus as a prophet.
  32. Moshe Sharon, *Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum Palaestinae* (Leiden: Brill, 1997–), vol. 1 (A), 4–5, 102–6; vol. 2 (B–C), 1–7; vol. 3 (D–F), 94–100; vol. 4 (G), no examples. See also Katia Cytryn-Silverman, "The Fifth *Mil* from Jerusalem: Another Umayyad Milestone from Southern *Bilād al-Shām*," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 70 (2007): 603–10.
  33. Sheila Blair, "What Is the Date of the Dome of the Rock?" in Raby and Johns, *Bayt al-Maqdis, Part One*, 59–85.
  34. Hassan Mohammed el-Hawary, "The Second Oldest Islamic Monument Known, Dated A.H. 71 (A.D. 691): From the Time of the Omayyad Calif 'Abd-el-Malik ibn Marwān," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (April 1932): 289–93. A fuller discussion of the tombstone as a marker of social and religious change can be found in Leor Halevi, *Muhammad's Grave: Death Rites and the Making of Islamic Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 20–25.
  35. A more detailed analysis of the wording on this tombstone will be found in Jere L. Bacharach and Sherif Sayed Anwar, "An Aswan Tombstone of 71 A.H. and the *Shahāda*," Papers of the 2010 Aswan Conference on Islamic Tombstones (Cairo: German Archaeological Institute, forthcoming).
  36. Malek Iradj Mochiri, "A Pahlavi Forerunner of the Umayyad Reformed Coinage," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1981): 168–72.
  37. Fred M. Donner, "From Believers to Muslims: Confessional Self-Identity in the Early Islamic Community," *Al-Abhāth* 50–51 (2002–3): 9–53, puts 'Abd al-Malik's policies in the

- larger context of the changing nature of the Muslim community.
38. Chase F. Robinson, *ʿAbd al-Malik* (Oxford: Oneworld Publishers, 2005), 31–39.
  39. Andreas Kaplony, *The Ḥaram of Jerusalem, 324–1099: Temple, Friday Mosque, Area of Spiritual Power* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2002), 319, 367.
  40. Album and Goodwin, *Pre-Reform Coinage of the Early Islamic Period*; Treadwell, “Orans’ Drachms”; Luke Treadwell, “Mihrab and ‘Anaza’ or ‘Sacrum and Spear’? A Reconsideration of an Early Marwanid Silver Drachm,” *Muqarnas* 22 (2005): 1–28; Treadwell “ʿAbd al-Malik’s Coinage Reforms.”
  41. Miles, “Earliest Arab Gold Coinage,” 227.
  42. Treadwell, “Orans’ Drachms,” 245.
  43. *Ibid.*, 247–49.
  44. Chase F. Robinson, *Empire and Elites after the Muslim Conquest: The Transformation of Northern Mesopotamia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 109–26. An overview of Kharijite views can be found in Patricia Crone, *Medieval Islamic Political Thought* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 54–65.
  45. Textual and numismatic data can be found in Clive Foss, “The Kharijites and Their Coinage: A Reply,” *Oriental Numismatic Society Newsletter* 171 (Spring 2002): 24–34. See also Stuart D. Sears, “The Legitimation of al-Ḥakam b. al-ʿĀṣ: Umayyad Government in Seventh-Century Kirman,” *Iranian Studies* 36, 1 (March 2003): 5–25, esp. 9–10. For an overview of the use of numismatic evidence for the study of Kharijites, see Adam R. Gaiser, “What Do We Learn about the Early Kharijites and Ibaḍiyya from Their Coins?” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (forthcoming).
  46. G. Levi Della Vida, *Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition* (henceforth *EI2*) (Leiden: Brill, 1960–2004), s.v. “Ḳaṭarī b. al-Fudjā’a.”
  47. Once again Treadwell’s careful scholarship is an important guide for our understanding of this issue: Treadwell, “Mihrab and ‘Anaza’ or ‘Sacrum and Spear’?” 1–28. See also Miles, “Earliest Arab Gold Coinage,” 205–29.
  48. According to Treadwell, it is not clear whether the specific figure, traditionally labeled in modern literature as the standing caliph, copied a Byzantine model associated with the coinage of Justinian II or was just an example of the caliph wishing to represent himself as Byzantine coinage had represented the emperor. Following Treadwell, I do not use the term “standing caliph” in reference to a specific coin type but only consider it one sub-group of images of an armed caliph. Treadwell, “ʿAbd al-Malik’s Coinage Reforms.”
  49. al-Ṭabarī, *The Marwānid Restoration*, trans. Everett K. Rowson, SUNY Series in Near Eastern Studies (*The History of al-Ṭabarī = Ta’rikh al-Rusūl wa’l-mulūk*, Bibliotheca Persica 22) (Albany: SUNY Press, 1989), 122–26.
  50. Crone and Hinds, *God’s Caliph*, 11 n. 11.
  51. Treadwell, “Mihrab and ‘Anaza’ or ‘Sacrum and Spear’?” 1–3.
  52. George C. Miles, “Mihrab and ‘Anazah: A Study in Early Islamic Iconography,” in *Archaeologia Orientalia in Memoriam Ernst Herzfeld*, ed. George C. Miles (Locust Valley, N.Y.: J. J. Augustin, 1952), 156–71.
  53. Treadwell, “Mihrab and ‘Anaza’ or ‘Sacrum and Spear’?” 21.
  54. Numerous books and articles cover the events summarized here: James D. Breckenridge, *The Numismatic Iconography of Justinian II (685–695, 705–711 A.D.)* (New York: American Numismatic Society, 1959); Romilly Jenkins, *Byzantium: The Imperial Centuries, A.D. 610–1071* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966); Constance Head, *Justinian II of Byzantium* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1972); Leslie Brubaker and John Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era (ca. 680–850): The Sources. An Annotated Survey*, Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Monographs 7 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 116–28; and ‘Abdulwāhid Dhanūn Ṭāhā, *The Muslim Conquest and Settlement of North Africa and Spain* (London: Routledge, 1989).
  55. al-Ṭabarī, *Marwānid Restoration*, 90–92; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fi’l-tārikh*, 14 vols. (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1385–87 [1965–67], repr. of Ibn el-Athiri, *Chronicon quod perfectissimum inscribitur*, ed. Carl J. Tornberg [Leiden, 1853–67]), 4:416–17. References to the year a.h. 76 appear in later Muslim medieval works as well, including a note in the work by the Persian historian Rashid al-Din (d. a.h. 718 [1317]), as preserved in the 1417 edition of his history. Rachel Milstein, “A New Source for the Monetary Reform of ‘Abd al-Malik,” *Israel Numismatic Journal* 16 (2007–8): 172–75.
  56. A. S. DeShazo and M. L. Bates, “The Umayyad Governors of al-ʿIrāq and the Changing Annulet Patterns on their Dirhams,” *Numismatic Chronicle* 14 (1974): 110–18.
  57. Sura 4 (*al-Nisā’* [The Women]):171–72, and Sura 19 (*Maryam* [Mary]):33–37. See also Blair, “What is the Date of the Dome of the Rock?” 86–87.
  58. Blair made the additional observation that “having the marginal inscribed in a counterclockwise direction highlights the message in the coin’s center because your eye is drawn to the center which is another way in which the political and religious nature of the center inscriptions is re-enforced.” Sheila Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy* (Cairo: American University of Cairo Press, 2006), 88.
  59. The text can be found in Sura 9 (*al-Tawba* [The Repentance] or *al-Barā’a* [The Immunity]):33, which is usually cited, since it is the first one in terms of the organization of the Qur’an. The other two references are Sura 48 (*al-Fath* [The Victory]):28, and Sura 61 (*al-Ṣaff* [The Row]):9.
  60. See Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, for Sura 9:33: accessed December 17, 2009, at <http://quran.al-islam.com>.
  61. The basic reference for Umayyad dirhams is now Michel G. Klat, *Catalogue of the Post-Reform Dirhams: The Umayyad Dynasty* (London: Spink & Son, Ltd., 2002).
  62. The dirhams of a.h. 78 issued at Adharbayjan (Azerbaijan) and Irmīniya (Armenia), then under the control of the caliph ‘Abd al-Malik’s brother Muhammad, as well as dirhams minted in al-Kufa, governed by al-Hajjaj, and one dirham without a mint name, which may have been struck in Damascus, all have the same basic layout as the dinar of a.h. 77 except that the obverse margin completes Sura 9:33

and the reverse center completes Sura 112. In both cases, the additional space on the dirham, as compared with the size of the dinar, is the simplest explanation for these changes.

On the dirhams from A.H. 78 struck elsewhere, including those from the mints of al-Rayy and Shaqq al-Tamara, the marginal inscriptions are reversed, that is, Sura 9:33 was now inscribed on the reverse margin and the mint-date formula on the obverse margin. I suspect that this change was done to prevent counterfeiters from taking new-style dirhams, giving them a gold plating, and passing them off as dinars, since the layout of the inscriptions would have been exactly the same. However, this is only speculation as there is no record in the texts of why the marginal legends were reversed between the two coinages. There is a dirham for A.H. 79 without a mint name, which, on the basis of a detailed analysis of style and calligraphy, has been identified as having been struck in Damascus.

63. Treadwell, "Abd al-Malik's Coinage Reforms," offers an excellent summary of the earlier arguments of Blair, Bates, and Grabar, as well as his own interpretation, in which he stresses that the all-epigraphic issues were the final and successful solution to creating a coinage comprehensible and acceptable to the new Islamic world built upon its Byzantine and Sasanian heritage.
64. Gresham's Law was proposed by Henry D. MacLeod, a nineteenth-century economist. Raymond de Roover, *Gresham on Foreign Exchange* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1949), 91.
65. Stefan Heidemann, "The Merger of Two Currency Zones in Early Islam: The Byzantine and Sasanian Impact on the Circulation in Former Byzantine Syria and Northern Mesopotamia," *Iran* 36 (1998): 95–97, is the first work that I know of to raise the issue of the application of Gresham's Law to this situation.

A modern example may make it clearer how Gresham's Law works. During the 1990s, United States currency was worth more than Canadian currency, and if a Canadian came into the U.S. and tried to spend Canadian dollar bills, he/she often received only a percentage of the U.S. dollar, for example, 80 U.S. cents per Canadian dollar. Therefore, it made no economic difference if one used Canadian or U.S. dollars in a shop in the United States, because neither currency was overvalued in relation to the other. The same was not true for coins since the two nations' coins are harder to distinguish than are their respective paper monies. If a Canadian quarter was worth 20 U.S. cents and could be passed off as an American quarter, the owner of the Canadian quarter could make a profit on each transaction; that is, the Canadian quarter was "bad" in relation to the American "good" coin. However, for a Canadian or anyone else to make a significant profit, large quantities of Canadian quarters had to be transferred across the border. When U.S. merchants along the Canadian border began to find themselves flooded with the overvalued ("bad") Canadian money, they stopped accepting any Canadian currency and checked the coins carefully to make certain they were not Canadian. Therefore, in this case, the second condition of Gresham's

Law, requiring large quantities of overvalued coins, was not met, and "bad" Canadian money did not drive out "good" American coinage.

66. Here is a theoretical example of how evidence derived from hoards can be interpreted. If a person in Europe is using two-euro coins to buy goods, the euros are all traded as equal, irrespective of which country in the European Union minted the pieces. In saving these two-euro coins, that is, creating a hoard, one does not care about their country of origin and the result is a mixed hoard in terms of the countries that struck them. If the European goes to Egypt, that person quickly discovers a one-pound Egyptian coin in circulation. The Egyptian coin resembles the two-euro coin in its silver rim and copper-colored center, but is valued at approximately one-fifteenth the value of a two-euro coin. Therefore, each time a European mistakenly pays a bill in Egypt using a two-euro piece where an Egyptian one-pound coin would do, the European loses money.
 

Now the same European saving his/her money in Egypt, that is, creating a hoard, would probably quickly separate the Egyptian pound coins from the two-euro ones in order to prevent them from being spent in the wrong monetary zone. If, hundreds of years from now, archaeologists found hoards in which large numbers of both two-euro and one-pound Egyptian pieces were mixed, they might assume that the two sets of coins were worth the same in the market. If the coins were found in separate hoards of European versus Egyptian issues, the same scholars would conclude that the two sets of coins were traded at different rates, but, without additional data, they would not know which was considered the better coin at the time of their circulation.
67. Album and Goodwin, *Pre-Reform Coinage of the Early Islamic Period*, 39.
68. Heidemann, "Merger of Two Currency Zones," is the first serious study of the incorporation of gold and silver into a single Muslim monetary zone. Since Sasanian and Arab-Sasanian drachms were not struck in Syria until the years 72 to 77 A.H., and then in relatively small quantities, it is not surprising to find only dirham hoards from Syria for the Umayyad period. On the estimated number of dies struck for the Syrian drachm, see Treadwell, "Abd al-Malik's Coinage Reforms."
69. Treadwell, "Abd al-Malik's Coinage Reforms," also argues that they were traded by number (tale).
70. Grierson, "Monetary Reforms of 'Abd al-Malik," 241–64.
71. Gathering circulating coins, weighing the resulting pure metal, and then striking new coins was one method by which rulers made a profit. There is a reference to al-Hajjaj following such a policy: Aḥmad ibn Jābir al-Balādhurī, *The Origins of the Islamic State, Being a Translation from the Arabic of the Kitāb Futūḥ al-buldān*, trans. Francis Clark Murgotten (New York: Columbia University Press, 1924), 266.
72. Giulio Bernardi, "Il dinar di 'Abd al-Malik coniato nell'anno 77 H.: Un esame comparativo dei conii di martello e d'incudine," *Revue Suisse de Numismatique* 80 (2001): 131–37. An expanded discussion of the production of dinars is found in Treadwell, "Abd al-Malik's Coinage Reforms."

73. For the creation of a new Muslim monetary zone composed of both dinars and dirhams, see Heidemann, "Merger of Two Currency Zones," 95–112. Sears and Ariel use evidence gathered from hoards to argue that it took time for silver to be introduced in the former Byzantine lands of Syria and that a truly integrated monetary zone should be dated to the Abbasid period: Stuart D. Sears and Donald T. Ariel, "Finds of Late Sasanian and Early Muslim Dirhams in Historical Palestine," *Atiqot* 40 (2000): 139–50. Additional data to support their position can be found in Luke Treadwell and Eugene Rogan, "An Ottoman Report of an Umayyad Coin Hoard: Jarash, 1898," *Yarmouk Numismatics* 6 (1994): 20–29. Foss makes the case that the introduction of silver coinage into Syria began during the Persian (Sasanian) occupation of the early seventh century but in small quantities: Clive Foss, "The Coinage of Syria in the Seventh Century: The Evidence of Excavations," *Israel Numismatic Journal* 13 (1994–99): 131.
74. It is recorded that 'Abd al-Malik had dies for the new-style issues sent to al-Hajjaj, who in turn sent them to the provinces: Adel Allouche, *Mamluk Economics: A Study and Translation of al-Maqrīzī's Ighāthah* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994), 60; al-Maqrīzī, *al-Ighāthah al-umma bi-kashf al-ghumma* (al-Haram [Giza]: 'Ayn li-l-Dirāsāt wa-l-Buḥūth al-Insāniyya wa-l-Ijtimā'iyya, 2007), 130–31. A variant version is found in al-Maqrīzī, *Shudhūr al-'uqūd fī dhikr al-nuqūd* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1990), 120–21.
75. A discussion of this shift, over time, to Abbasid hoards composed only of dirhams and no drachms is found in Stuart D. Sears, "An 'Abbāsīd Revolution Hoard from the Western Jazīra (al-Raqqā?)," *American Journal of Numismatics* 12 (2000): 171–93.
76. In one of the accounts of the origins of the all-epigraphic coinage, it is recorded that "'Abd al-Malik was advised to mint his own style coins on which we would write 'On one side the names of God and the Prophet, and on one side your own name.' The Muslims, objecting to it, used to say that it was bad, improper and impossible to carry out, and the religious authorities always forbade it." Milstein's statement that the opposition refers to the Muslim coinage with images is not necessarily true, as the medieval account makes no reference to any images on the coins but only to text. As argued in this paper, the all-epigraphic coinage was opposed because it included God's word as revealed to the Prophet Muhammad and collected as the Qur'an. Milstein, "New Source," 173–74.
77. T. Fahd, *EI2*, s.v. "Ibn Sīrīn, Abū Bakr Muḥammad." According to al-Ṭabarī, "[t]he best expert in matters of trade and money was Ibn Sīrīn": al-Ṭabarī, *The History of al-Ṭabarī: Biographies of the Prophet's Companions and Their Successors*, trans. Ella Landau-Tassarou (Albany: SUNY Press, 1998), 39:223. I am grateful to Stuart Sears for bringing to my attention the opposition of Ibn Sīrīn and others to the all-epigraphic coinage. Sears's comments are part of his larger study of Ibn Sīrīn's opposition to the authoritarian policies of the Umayyads. Personal communication, 24 December 2001. The authoritarian role of the Umayyads, particularly the last members of the family, is analyzed in Steven Judd, "Reinterpreting al-Walīd b. Yazīd," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 128, 3 (July–Sept. 2008): 439–58.
78. Ironically, a fourth-century A.H. (tenth-century) presentation piece struck in the name of the Ikhshidid ruler Abu 'l-Qasim Unujur (d. A.H. 349 [960]) with the Qur'anic verse 65:3 inscribed on it was found in the excavations in Fustat, "embedded in the lip of a latrine in the proletarian house." Michael Bates, "Numismatics," in *Fuṣṭāṭ Expedition Final Report*, vol. 2, *Fuṣṭāṭ – C*, ed. Wladyslaw Kubiak and George T. Scanlon, American Research Center in Egypt Report 11 (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1989), 63.
79. Allouche, *Mamluk Economics*, 62.
80. al-Māwardī, *The Ordinances of Government: A Translation of al-Aḥkām al-sulṭāniyya wa'l-wilāyāt al-dīniyya*, trans. Wafaa H. Wahba (London: Garnet Publishers, 1996), 171.
81. Imām Abū Zakariyyā Yahyā al-Nawawī, *Etiquette with the Quran: Tibyān fī ādāb ḥamalāt al-Qur'ān*, trans. Musa Furber (Baltimore: Starlatch Press, 2003): 114–15; al-Nawawī, *al-Tibyān fī ādāb ḥamalāt al-Qur'ān* (Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Tawfiqiyya, 1397 [1977]), 130. I thank Jonathan Brown for bringing this material to my attention.
82. Adolf Grohmann, *Arabic Papyri in the Egyptian Library*, vol. 1, *Protocols and Legal Texts* (Cairo: Egyptian Library Press, 1934), 21–24, 47–48.
83. Additional evidence for the use of Sura 9:33 after the appearance of the new dinars and dirhams can be found in a study of Muslim tombstones from Aswan. Out of 150 steles analyzed by 'Abd al-Tawwab covering the years A.H. 102 (721) to 257 (870), this sura was inscribed on forty of them, more than any other Qur'anic verse. Only with the publication of the planned database of inscriptions will it be possible to identify when this verse was first used on a tombstone, but it is clear that up to the Fatimid era it was more popular than any other Qur'anic verse. 'Abd ar-Rahman M. 'Abd al-Tawwab, *Stèles islamiques de la nécropole d'Assouan* (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1977–), vol 1.
84. The long-term impact of the all-epigraphic coinage is discussed in David J. Wasserstein, "Coins as Agents of Cultural Definition in Islam," *Poetics Today* 14, 2 (Summer 1993): 303–22.
85. We also have western examples of how phrases might continue to appear on coinage long after they had lost their original meaning and most users of the money had forgotten why they were there. In 1521, Pope Leo X awarded King Henry VIII (d. 1547) of England the title *Fidei defensor* (Defender of the Faith) for the text published in his name defending Catholicism against Protestantism. Henry VIII responded by adding *Fid defto* to his coinage. Although Henry VIII left the Catholic Church, the phrase continued to be used on British coinage, sometimes only in the form of the letters FD, as it does today on the coinage of Queen Elizabeth II, almost five centuries after Henry first had it inscribed on his coinage.