The Coinage of Al-Andalus

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Abstract

This paper presents the evolution of Andalusi coins, from the first issues that appeared during the Islamic conquest of the Iberian Peninsula, continuing with the Umayyad issues of Al-Andalus (Emirate and Caliphate), the Hammūrid ones and those of 11th century Ṭāʾifas’ as well as the ones issued by Almoravid and Almohad dynasties, until the last ones, struck under the Naṣrid dynasty of Granada. A comprehensive view on the evolution of these coins is offered from a new perspective, including the latest contributions to the knowledge we have on this subject and raising new hypotheses. This paper is an update in which the main characteristics of the Andalusi coins of each period framed in its historical context are explored: coin legends, epigraphical characteristics, metrology, etc.; elements that turn the coins into a symbol of power of the different political authorities that ruled Al-Andalus.

Keywords

Al-Andalus – Umayyad – Cordoba – Ḥammūrid – Ṭāʾifas’ Kingdoms – Almoravids – Almohads – Naṣrid – Coinage – Granada

Introduction

From the very beginning of Islam, coins became an exceptional document. On the one hand, coins had an economic and fiscal function: in accordance with the quality standards (weight and fineness) marked by the State, they were fundamental for the tax collection, and on the other hand, they became exceptional documents that provided information on the political authorities that ruled Al-Andalus, as well as on the economic and fiscal conditions of the period. From the very beginning of Islam, coins became an exceptional document. On the one hand, coins had an economic and fiscal function: in accordance with the quality standards (weight and fineness) marked by the State, they were fundamental for the tax collection, and on the other hand, they became exceptional documents that provided information on the political authorities that ruled Al-Andalus, as well as on the economic and fiscal conditions of the period. From the very beginning of Islam, coins became an exceptional document. On the one hand, coins had an economic and fiscal function: in accordance with the quality standards (weight and fineness) marked by the State, they were fundamental for the tax collection, and on the other hand, they became exceptional documents that provided information on the political authorities that ruled Al-Andalus, as well as on the economic and fiscal conditions of the period. From the very beginning of Islam, coins became an exceptional document. On the one hand, coins had an economic and fiscal function: in accordance with the quality standards (weight and fineness) marked by the State, they were fundamental for the tax collection, and on the other hand, they became exceptional documents that provided information on the political authorities that ruled Al-Andalus, as well as on the economic and fiscal conditions of the period. From the very beginning of Islam, coins became an exceptional document. On the one hand, coins had an economic and fiscal function: in accordance with the quality standards (weight and fineness) marked by the State, they were fundamental for the tax collection, and on the other hand, they became exceptional documents that provided information on the political authorities that ruled Al-Andalus, as well as on the economic and fiscal conditions of the period.
market development, financial practices and even for the image and prestige of the ruler. But, on the other hand, coins were a key instrument for the transmission of the ideology of the state. Inscriptions on coins, both religious and political, which were never chosen randomly and would became the image of power, a main element of the ideological propaganda of the leaders and their political power, and the image of their vision and practice of Islam. Additionally, the fact that monetary inscriptions usually include the place and the date of coinage turns coins into essential documents for the dating of archaeological discoveries, and into impartial documents, not conditioned by the point of view or the interests of the historians, chroniclers, geographers or poets of the time. Consequently, they make possible the corroboration, correction and the expansion of the information provided by literary sources.

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

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

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

THE CONQUEST & THE GOVERNORS’ PERIOD

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

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

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2 The principal works about the transitional dinars are Navascués y de Palacio, “Los sueldos hispano – árabes” pp. 5-66; Balaguer, Las emisiones transicionales árabe-musulmanas; Balaguer, “Descripción y comentarios de doce monedas”, pp. 32-51; Bates, “The Coinage of Spain”, pp. 271-289, Bates, “Roman and...
seals\(^3\), are the only material evidence of the Islamic conquest of the Iberian Peninsula. In accordance with the eastern practice, these first gold dinars, and smaller coins that represented fractional denominations, carried the Islamic profession of faith (\textit{shahāda}) in Latin, the date written in Roman numerals according to the Byzantine and Islamic calendars, and the SPN’s mint, which could refer to the Latin name Hispania (SPaNia) as well as the Byzantine SPaN\(^4\).

The basic typology of these solidi or dinars has the star in the area of its obverse and an abbreviation of the Latin translation of the first part of the \textit{shahāda}, the message of the oneness of God, as the marginal legend: \textit{In Nomine Dei Non Deus Nisi Deus Solus Non Similis}. This is equivalent to the abbreviated \textit{basmala} (بِسْمِ اللَّهِ, \textit{Bismi Allāh}, “In the name of god”) and the first part of the \textit{shahāda}: لا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له (Lā ilāha illā Allāhu wahdahu lā šarīka lahu, “There is no god but God, Alone, He has no partner”). On the reverse, we can find in the central area the Byzantine chronological system of dating (indiction)\(^5\) and, as the marginal legend the abbreviations for the specimen, mint, and hijri year written in roman numerals: \textit{Solidus} \textit{FeRiTus IN SPaNia ANNo XCIHI} (“Solidus (dinar) made in Spain the year 94”) (Fig. 1).

There are thick gold coins with a diameter ranging from eleven to fifteen millimeters. Generally, the text is incomplete and/or incorrect, making it hard to read. Frequently, they have irregular quality and weight (between 3 and 4.7 grams), which was explained by the use of metal from the war trophies\(^6\).

The fractional denominations, halves and thirds of a dinar, have two basic typologies. The first one has the star with the mint and year formula on the obverse and, on the reverse, the modification of the Byzantine typology of the “cross-on-steps” with, once again, the legend of mint and year. The second one, has the word \textit{SIMILIS} in the center of the area, which is the last word of the marginal legend, that is, the first part of the \textit{shahāda} in latin: \textit{In Nomine Dei Nisi Deus Solus Non Similis}.

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

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\(^4\) Ariza Armada, “Los dinares”, p 146.

\(^5\) An indication refers to any of the years in a 15-year cycle. Cappelli, \textit{Cronologia, Cronografia e Calendario perpetuo}.

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

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

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

The most significant element that characterizes Andalusi coins, in this first moment, is the symbol of the star. Traditional historiography considers that it is the “canting arm” or “talking emblem” of al-Andalus, it makes reference to the “west star”, the Hesperus star, in allusion to the Greek name of the peninsula: Hesperia. Although it’s true that the star may be a “canting arm”, the fact that in the Andalusi bilingual dinars it takes the place of the tawḥīd as it disappears, and along with it the message of the oneness of God, leaving only reference to the prophetic mission of Muhammad, has recently led to propose different hypotheses.8

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

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

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

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

THE INDEPENDENT EMIRATE OF CORDOBA

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

⁹ Frochoso Sánchez, “Los feluses del período de los gobernadores omeyas”, pp. 259-289; Los feluses de al-Andalus.
persecution of the Umayyads started. The prince ‘Abd al-Raḥmān escaped to the Maghreb and eventually al-Andalus, where he became the emir in 138/756. When the Umayyad Caliphate of Damascus disappeared and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān made al-Andalus independent from the new caliphate, the currency became a fundamental element of the image of the new power. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān I maintained the Umayyad monetary model, despite the extinction of the dynasty in the east, as a clear manifestation of his political and religious position against the ‘Abbāsids. The Andalusi coins followed the model of the Oriental Umayyad coins: they were identical and they just changed the name of the mint to al-Andalus (الأندلس).

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

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

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

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

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

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

mint coins in fractional denominations. The majority of the fragments are the equivalent of ¼ and 1/5 of dirham. Form the point of view of the metrology, the average weight of the dirhams is 2,70. By contrast, the feluses, made of thin blank and with a medium weight of 1.48 gr., were coined along the emirate period.

THE UMAYYAD CALIPHATE

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

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

In respect to the epigraphy, the existence of innovations drawing upon Aghlabid influence has led to the consideration of the possible presence of Aghlabid artisans or technicians who fled from the Maghreb because of the Fāṭimid pressure\textsuperscript{14}. By contrast, numerous Andalusi variants of vegetal or floral decoration and rings, points, and star ornament, were inscribed above or below the central legends. These signs, that are either mere decorative elements or possible marks of workshops, would undergo a development that had not been seen before in the Andalusi currency, reaching its maximum plastic quality during the government of al-Ḥakam II\textsuperscript{15}.

Another image of the Andalusi caliphal power in monetary form begins to come from a new mint: Madīnat al-Zahrā’. In 336/947, twenty years after his caliphal proclamation, the first caliph of al-Andalus moved the mint from the city of Cordoba to Madīnat al-Zahrā’, replacing the name of the mint al-Andalus with the one of his new palatine city. This would become the mint of al-Andalus for the next thirty years, through the end of his caliphate and the beginning of the caliphate of his successor, al-Hakam II. The apparently simple change of the name of the mint is a clear expression of the use of coins as an ideological and propagandistic instrument: the enormous symbolic strength of the name of al-Zahrā’ is one more proof of the symbolic confrontation between the Andalusi Umayyads and the Fāṭimids of North Africa, reflecting their political and religious confrontation\textsuperscript{16}. Consequently, the coins of al-Andalus had the name of the mint Madīnat al-Zahrā’ from the year 336/947 to 365/975 uninterruptedly\textsuperscript{17}.

The second caliph of al-Andalus, Al-Ḥakam II standardized the numismatic model that would become most emblematic of the Andalusi caliphate: the religious inscriptions in the reverse of the coins will disappear completely; the names of various figures, some identified as the officials of the mint and others as important political personalities of the court and administration, like the ḥājib (equivalent to a Prime Minister) appear over or below the central legends\textsuperscript{18}. At this time, there was also a change of area of the marginal inscriptions so the ones that were before in the reverse of the coins, will now be in the obverse, and vice versa: the formula of specimen, mint and date (ضرب هذا الدينار/الدرهم بـ ...) that was in the reverse will now be in the obverse, and the sūrah 9, 33 will now be, definitively, in the reverse (Fig. 5).

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{fig5.png}
\caption{Dinar of the Caliph al-Ḥakam II. Madīnat al-Zahrā’ mint, year 357 H. Tonegawa Collection.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{14} Delgado y Hernández, Estudios de Numismática Arábigo-Hispana, p. 117.
\textsuperscript{15} Canto García, “Las cecas: al-Andalus y Madīnat al-Zahrā’”, p. 422.
\textsuperscript{17} In the year 400/1009 Madīnat al-Zahrā’ mint will start coining again as soon as Sulaymān al-Mustaḥ came to the palatine city. In relation to the Madīnat al-Zahrā’ mint coinage see: Frochoso Sánchez, Las monedas califales.
\textsuperscript{18} About the appearance and evolution of the proper names in the andalusi coins see: Ariza Armada, De Barcelona a Orán, pp. 80-83.
Toward the end of the caliphate, Sulaymān al-Mustaʿin introduced, for the first time in the Andalusi currency, and following the initiative of the ‘Abbāsids caliphs of Baghdad, the name and title of the heir (walī al-‘ahd), which became a regular feature of the coins of the Ḥammūdīd Caliphs.

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

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

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

THE ḤAMMŪDĪD CALIPHATE

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

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

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

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19 The principal bibliographic references about those maghrebi issues are: Sáenz-Díez, Las acuñaciones del califato de Córdoba; Benito de los Mozos, “Agmat: una nueva ceca”; Canto García, “Califato Omeya”, pp. 32-34; Canto García, “Nuevas evidencias de cecas africanas en época”; pp. 95-101; Fontenla Ballesta, Las primeras acuñaciones africanas.
20 Canto García, Ibrāhīm, Moneda Andalusí en la Alhambra, pp. 34.
21 Balaguer, Del Mancús a la Dobla, p. 138.
22 The Ḥammūdīds were Idrīsids, as descendant of Idrīs I, Hasanids, as direct descendants of al-Ḥasan Ibn ‘Ali, the Prophet grandson, ‘Alīs as descendants of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, and an Ḥashimid as members of the Prophet tribe. For this reason, they had the legitimacy and nobility to be caliphs, and they weren’t “Berbers”, “arrivistes” and “usurpers” like the traditional historiographers say, but they were Fāṭimids, ʿṬalibids, and Shī’a as the literary sources stated: Ariza Armada, Estudio sobre las monedas, pp. 184-186.
23 The classical work on Ḥammūdīd numismatic is Codera y Zaydín, “Estudio crítico sobre la historia y monedas de los Hammudies”.

The Coinage of Al-Andalus
Sulaymān’s need to pay the Maghrebi troops. With the movement of this army, the coinage struck in Ceuta would arrive in the Iberian Peninsula.

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

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

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

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

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24 Ariza Armada, De Barcelona a Orán, pp. 69-70.
26 Ariza Armada, Estudio sobre las monedas, pp. 184-186; De Barcelona a Orán.
28 Ariza Armada, De Barcelona a Orán, pp. 117-118.
29 Ariza Armada, De Barcelona a Orán, pp. 178-182.
the Maghreb, had a strong pro-ʿAlī connotation. The symbolic reference to the prophet Solomon conferred a magical and protective quality to them and legitimized Idrīs II as a wise and just caliph, as was the king-prophet himself.

![Fig. 6. Dirham of the Caliph Idrīs II. Al-Andalus mint, year 438 H. Tonegawa Collection.](image)

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

The caliphate of ʿAlī b. ʿAbbād was widely recognized in the Maghreb. Not only do we have the testimony of literary sources, which indicate that it was recognized in Tangier, Ceuta and even Fez, but a dinar, only recently published, that was coined at the Oran mint (*Madīnat Wahrān*)

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

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

Thanks to the Treasure of Kiev, in which there was a “mancus”,

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

34 Ariza Armada, De Barcelona a Orán, pp. 339-349.
we know that the mancuses that imitated Yahyā’s coinages — and perhaps those of others — traveled to places as far away the state of Old Russia (Rus), thus offering material evidence of the contact between the Sephardim and the Jewish community of the first Eastern Slavic state.

**THE ṬĀ’IFA KINGDOMS (5TH /11TH CENTURY)**

The civil war that devastated al-Andalus and caused it to fracture, politically and territorially into the aforementioned Ṭā’ifa kingdoms, was marked by the confrontation between the different Umayyads and Ḥammūdīs pretenders to the Andalusi caliphate. And coins would be, once again, a reflection of this struggle for power. The recognition of one or another caliph by the various kings of Ṭā’ifas, will determine the coinage during the first half of the 5th/11th century. Once the Ḥammūdīd dynasty disappeared, during the second half of the 5th/11th century, in the absence of a caliph in al-Andalus to recognize, the Ṭā’ifas would gradually resort, as a legitimating resource, to the mention of a generic ‘Abbāsid caliph of Baghdad, or they would mint coin without any caliphal recognition. The Ṭā’ifas’ currency became the image of the absence of power and legitimacy, expressed, first, in the proliferation of mints: we find twenty-two mints in the Ṭā’ifa period in opposition to the only one emirate-period mint, al-Andalus, the two (but not coetaneous) caliphal mints of al-Andalus and Madinat al-Zahirā, and the four of the Ḥammūdīds: al-Andalus, Malaga, Granada and Zaragoza. The second sign of the absence of power and legitimacy is the metrological alterations seen during this period and the loss of the coin’s quality; these new mints struck dinars of electrum (gold and silver or cooper alloy) and dirhames of copper and billon (silver and copper alloy). The fact that the northern mines of present-day Morocco were held by the Maghrāwā, supporters of the Ḥammūdīd Idrīs II, explains why the so-called “silver crisis” was more evident in the case of Muḥammad al-Mahdi’s currency than in that of Idrīs II. This crisis also affected the Ṭā’ifas since the passage through the Gibraltar Strait was controlled by pro-Ḥammūdīs tribes. After the disappearance of the Ḥammūdīds in the second half of the 5th/11th century, the mines in central and southern Maghreb fell under the control of the Almoravids. Neither the Berber tribes in the north nor the Almoravids recognized the legitimacy of the Ṭā’ifas, which explains their unwillingness to supply them silver.

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

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36. Al-Andalus (الأندلس), Almería (أمالرية), Alpuente (أبلونتي), Badajoz (بادافس), Cordoba (قرطبة), Cuenca (كانتخا), Valencia (فاليانسيا), Murcia (موصية), Denia (دانيا), Salamanca (سامانش), Valladolid (والقديد), Toledo (تودعو), Seville (سيفليه), Córdoba (قرطبة), Granada (غرنادا), Huesca (وعشقة), Lérida (ليريدا), Malaga (ملايكة), Mallorca (ملباورقة), Segura (سقورة), Seville (سيفليه), Tortosa (تورتوسية), Tudela (توديلة), and Zaragoza (زاراغواة).
37. Ariza Armada, De Barcelona a Orán, pp. 319-322. 

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The last characteristic of the Ṭā‘īfā-period coins is the poor quality of engraving, which makes coins from this period the most difficult to read, in general.

**THE ALMORAVIDS**

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

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

The Sunni Almoravids, lacking the ambition to proclaim themselves caliphs, recognized the sovereignty of the ‘Abbāsid caliph of Baghdad, using the generic reference ‘Abd Allāh, emir of the believers (الامام عبد الله أمير المؤمنين, al-Imān ‘Abd Allāh amīr al-mu’minīn) on their coins. They adopted for themselves minor titles like “emir” (al-amīr) and “emir of the Muslims” (amīr al-muslimīn). As a marginal legend, they chose the sūrah 3,84 from the Quran, considered a symbol of the Almoravids: وَمَن يَبْتَغِ ﻏَインターノ اﻹِْﺳْﻼَمِ مِ ﺑَنَأ يُﻘْﺒَﻞَ ﻣِﻨْﮭُ وَھُوَ ﻓِﻲ اﻵْﺧِﺮَةِ ﻣِﻦَ اﻟْﺨَﺎﺳِرِﯾﻦَ (“And whoever desires other than Islam as religion - never will it be accepted from him, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers”). This is an explicit allusion by the dynasty to the superiority of Sunni Islam, especially against the heterodoxy of the Bargawāta and the Fāṭimid “apostasies”, and against the Christians of the northern kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula (Fig. 7).

![Figure 7: Almoravid dinar. Seville mint, year 539 H. Tonegawa Collection.](image)

In al-Andalus, Almoravid coins were struck in 15 mints: Cordoba (مدينة قرطبة), Játiva (شاطبية), Sanlúcar (سلئكة), Seville (إشبيلية), Almeria (مدينة الامامية), Granada (مدينة المهمية), Malaga (مدينة مالقة regularly Malaga), Valencia (بندية), Denia (دانية), Murcia (مدينة مرسية), Algeciras (الجزائر), Jaén (جيان), Zaragoza (سيرسطة), Cuenca (قونكة), Badajoz (مدينة بطليوفس). Malaga was the first among them to mint Almoravid coins.

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

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recognized. They also introduced pious expressions related to the Prophet, as ُصلاة عليه وسلم (sallā Allāh ‘alayhi wasalama taslīmā, “May the peace and blessing of God be upon him”) or requests for help such as اللهم ارحم (Allāhūmmā arḥām, “Be Propitious”) or (‘awnūka ya Allāh, “Your help, Oh God”), especially in times of great tension (as other dynasties did in other territories of Islam in similar situations). Regarding the silver coins, the Almoravids issued large quantities of one-gram coins called “quirats”, that bear a huge variety of monetary legends and demonstrate tremendous stylistic breadth 40.

The great quality of four-gram Andalusi Almoravid dinars is probably the main reason for their imitations by the Christians kingdoms. Alphonse VIII of Castile struck his “morabetinos” or “maravedis” in Toledo مدينة طليطلة (Madīnat Ṭūlayṭūla) 41, maintaining the Almoravid typology and the legends in Arabic, adapting them for the Christian faith. This way, the king of Castile eliminated the shahāda from the obverse of the coins and swapped the reference to the amīr al-mu‘minīn (“emir of the believers”) for his own name with the title of emir of the Catholics أمير القولين الفتني بن سنجة (amīr al-qatūliqīn, Alfunshu Ibn Sanju) and a petition for help to God: أيةدت الله ونصره (āyyada-hu Allāh wa naṣara-hu, “May God support him and assist him”). On the reverse, he changed the mention to the caliph (al-Imām ‘Abd Allāh/ amīr al-mu‘minīn/ al-‘Abbāsi) for the mention to the Pope, “The Imám of the Church of the Messiah, the Pope” (Al-Imām al-bī’atu al-masīḥiatu bābā), and inserted a cross and the first three letters (monogram) of his name in gothic alphabet: ALF 42. Where sūrah 3,84 is found on the obverse (“And whoever desires other than Islam as religion never will it be accepted from him, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers”) it is answered in the reverse with a legend drawn from the Gospel of Mark 16,16: “In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the one God, whoever believes and was baptized will be saved” ِبسم الآب والابن والروح القدس، الآله الواحد، من أمن واعتمد يكل سالما (Bismi al-‘ab wa al-‘abn wa al-rūḥ al-qudūs, al-‘ālama wadā adhāmin min ‘amīn wa ‘a‘thāmin yak in salīmā).

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

**THE ALMOHADS**

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

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

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

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

42 Vives 2022-2042. The other known typology (Vives 2019-2021) doesn’t includes the monogram. The most recent work about those issues is Mozo Monroy, *Estudio y catalogación de los morabetinos árabigos*, pp. 165-186.
use as an element of differentiation and expression, as well religious affirmation and divulgation.

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

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

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

In al-Andalus they minted coins in the name of the Almohads caliphs in thirteen mints: Seville (مدينة الشبيلية), Valencia (Balearic), Jaén (حيان), Cordoba (قرطبة), Mallorca (موريقة), Menorca (مئورقة), Malaga (مالة), Granada (أرنطة), Jeréz (شريش) and Denia (باجيه) and the recently identified as Cartagena (قرطجة) and Priego (باجيه)44.

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

44 Vega Martín, “Qartṭūnna y Bāguḥ, cecas almohades”, pp. 63-75.
As happened with the Umayyad, Ḥammūdīd and Almoravid coins, Almohad coins were also copied by the peninsular Christian kingdoms. The Almohad dinars, with an average weight of 4.5 grams, inspired the Castilian “dobla” coined beginning in the reign of Ferdinand III (the Saint); this would become the common currency of Castile throughout the late Middle Ages. And the silver coins, with an average weight of 1.5 grams, were also imitated by princes, counts, principal citizens and even by some bishops in Catalonia, the south of France and Italy. These imitations are called “millares”.

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

THE NAṢRID KINGDOM

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

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

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

46 As example Prieto y Vives, “Numismática granadina”, pp. 305-311; Rodríguez Lorente, Numismática nasri, p. 31 (n° 1), lam. 1, pp. 101-102; Medina Gómez, Monedas hispano-musulmanas, pp. 479, 498.
47 Fontenla Ballesta, “Notas sobre el sistema monetario nazarí”, p. 140.
48 The two most recent works about Naṣri metrology are Jiménez Puertas, “La evolución del sistema monetario nazarí”, pp. 31-49 and Fontenla Ballesta, “Notas sobre el sistema monetario nazarí”, pp. 139-148 who refutes the first one.
that would define Nasrid coins throughout the dynasty’s rule. On the one hand, they represent the limits of his power and isolation by failing to recognize any caliph; and furthermore, from the beginning of the 15th century and the rise of Yusuf III, the title of amīr disappeared. On the other hand, the coins came to reflect the critical nature of his situation vis-a-vis pressure from the Christian kingdoms. Consequently, the coins include petitions for help to God and the dinars also have two typical legends at the center of the obverse side: sūrah 3,26, except the last sentence (قُلْ اللَّهُ ﻣَلِكُ ﺍﻟْءِدَادِ، ﺳُؤُرِي ﺍﻟْءِدَادَ ﻣَن ﺗَشَاءُ، ﻭَتَنزَعُ ﺍﻟْءِدَادَ ﻣَن ﺗَشَاءُ، ﻭَشَاءُ ﻣِن ﺗَشَاءُ ﻭَشَاءُ ﻣِن ﺗَشَاءُ، ﻧِئْدَكُ ﺧَيْرَ). “Say, “O God, Owner of Sovereignty, You give sovereignty to whom You will and You take sovereignty away from whom You will. You honor whom You will and You humble whom You will. In Your hand is [all] good. Indeed, You are over all things competent” and sūrah 3,200 (يَا ﻣَا أَذْهَبْنَ ﻗُلْ أَصْبِرُوا وَصَﺎبِرُوا ﻟَعَﻠَّـكَ ﻗُلْ أَصْبِرُوا وَصَﺎبِرُوا). It is interesting to say that since Muhammad V, the word “duriba” was changed for “ṭubi’a", and it was also with this emir when the sūrah 3,200 it was introduced (Fig. 9).

Two of the most common characteristics of Nasrid coins can be found on the reverse sides: the repetition of the gāliba in all the four segments (this happens from the government of Muhammad III) and the genealogy of the king without the title of amīr (from Yusuf III) and without any reference to the imām but with the petition of help to God: “أَيْدِهُمُ ﻋَلَى ﻣَن ﻋَلَى، ﺃُصِبِّرواُ، ﺎَصِبِّرواُ، ﻋَلَّـكُمْ ﻛُفَاَنَوْنَ. "May God support him and assist him” (Fig. 9). The gāliba was mainly spread thanks to the coins rather than its so many times repeated inscriptions on the walls of the Alhambra. The Nasrid coined up to thirty-five diverse types of gold coins “doblas”. Following the Almohad model, the Nasrids didn't engrave the dates on their dinars.

As for the dirhams, they were also reformed and evolved in a manner that is an expression of the Granada’s kingdom political situation. So, the profession of faith (shahāda) would become the only text on the obverse, while on the reverse, the face typically used for articulating political power, the title of amīr al-muslimīn disappeared and was substituted with the name, but not the title, of the sultan. The name of Granada itself gained prominence, occupying all the third line of the inscription in characters of similar size to the rest of the text. Something similar happened with the dynastic motto, especially in the divisors of dirhams, which moved from the third line of the inscription on the obverse to become the main text of the reverse, next to the name of Granada.
Also, in the silver coins it is very common to find a symbol that has been read by the Spanish numismatic historiography as ﺗﻊ (ta‘ālā) “Be Exalted”. Nevertheless, I find that it seems to be more likely to be a final hā’ as an abbreviation of the word ﻣَتَنَهَيّ ‘intahā (‘finished’). This abbreviation started to appear on some dirhams of ‘Alī b. Sa’d at the end of the name of the mint of Granada (Vives 2185), and its use became more frequent on the anonymous dirhams, on which it normally appears at the end of the profession of faith (Vives 2193) and, moreover, at the end of the gāliba, as it happens on the cursive inscriptions of the gāliba that can be found at the Alhambra (Fig. 10).

![Image](image_url)

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

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

The mints that coined Naṣrid coins were: Alhambra of Granada (Granada), Almería (Almería), Guadix (Jaén), Malaga (Malaga), Murcia (Murcia), Ceuta (Ceuta) and the recently identified Ronda (Ronda).

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

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


52 Rodríguez Lorente, Numismática nazarí, pp. 81-82.

53 Rodríguez Lorente, Numismática nazarí, pp. 79-81.


CONCLUSION

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

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

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

Al-Andalus was reunified with the Almoravid’s arrival and with it, a radical change occurred: fifteen Andalusi mints will strike high quality coins with an Almoravid typology, with epigraphy and legends that expressed the reformist ideology of the new emirs. When the Almoravid power will be replaced by the Almohad one, thirteen Andalusi mints will strike Almohad coins following its metrology and typology that, once again, will be a clear element of religious affirmation and divulgation. The last Andalusi state, the Naṣrid
Kingdom of Granada had a complex and difficult origin that could be seen on the various typologies that the first Naṣrid emir struck, as well as through the pious formulas that he introduced in his legends. Nevertheless, from the first issues, the main image of the Naṣrid power was introduced: the dynastical motto, “the gāliba”. The Naṣrid coinage is the testimony of the political evolution of the kingdom and of the pressure that it underwent from the Christian kingdoms. It represents the limits of its power and its need for help expressed on the coins through Quranic legends and pious formulas.

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

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