

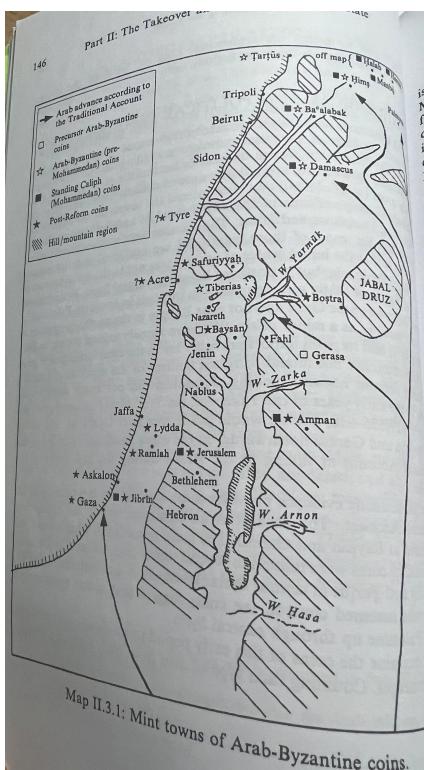
EVOLUTION OF MUHAMMAD. THE 2ND TORPEDO: ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

WHERE DO THE COINS COME FROM?

- 7th century coins have been recovered from many areas in the Middle East. They can be broadly classified into 2 groups:
 - A. Coins from Western Syria ie lands that were formerly part of the Byzantine empire
 - B. Coins from East Syria and Iraq/Iran ie lands that were formerly Persian

Western Syrian Coins

- The earlier coins in Syria name the mint town but have no dates and often do not name the ruler.
- The Syrian coins were usually copper and those in Persian areas were silver.
- Syrian coins were minted in Hims, Baalbek, Damascus, Tiberias and Tartus.
- The coins from Sassanian areas were dated and some have Muawiya's name on them. If he could mint coins in the East, he would have been able to mint coins in the west of Syria where he had more control.
- Therefore, the early copper coins were most likely minted during the rule of Muawiya (640-680)



- The earliest Arab-Byzantine coins were minted in Baysan and Gerasa. In later years they were minted at Tiberias in Galilee and Hims and Tartus in Syria.
- **The map to the left shows that these areas were all to the north of the Sea of Galilee and well to the North of Medina or Mecca.**

This is not consistent with a conquest originating in Medina with Caliphs ruling from there.
Nevo puts it this way '*Whatever it was that was happening as the Arabs assumed control, the coins suggest that it was happening in Northern Palestine up through central Syria*' [p145]

- We also see Arabic being used on the coins even though most of the population would not be literate in Arabic. Even those who were literate spoke Greek or Syro-Aramaic. In addition we see coins being 'overstruck' where new Arabic motifs are superimposed on older coins. This is most like a political statement that the Arabs were in control and that only coins issued by them were legal.
- We also see an evolution in the areas that minted coins:
 1. The coins from Muawiya's time come only from north of Baysan as far as Hims.

2. These coins continue to follow Byzantine prototypes and they do not have ruler's names.
3. We only see coins minted from central Palestine eg Amman, Jerusalem or from North of Hims eg Halab, Manbij, Harran, during the reign of Abd al-Malik
4. We also see coins minted in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Mosul and northern Mesopotamia under Abd al-Malik.
5. Only in the 8th century do we see coins from Gaza, Lydda, Askelon.

- The SIN tells us that all of Syria came under the control of the Muslims in 636 after the battle of Yarmuk. If this were true, then we should see coins appearing in all these areas from 636, especially in important towns like Jerusalem.
- But this is NOT what the coins tell us. The time distribution suggests that Muawiya only controlled the northern towns of Syria and that the assumption of control was GRADUAL. This is entirely consistent with what the literary sources tell us. [see 'Conquest or simple takeover']

Sassanian or Persian Coins

- These coins are particularly helpful as they have dates
- The earliest Arab-Sassanian coin is from mint of Darabjird dated 651 with no ruler's name. This is the year that the last Sassanian ruler Yezdigird III was killed at Merv. Even though it is unnamed, the fact that it has the Arabic religious formula 'Bism Allah' suggests that the area was under the control of the Arabs.
- From 661 coins have names of governors Ziyad bn Abu Sufyan, Samurrah bn Jundab and Abdallah bn Ziyad [p153]
- 664 coins have Muawiya's name on them. The fact that there are no names for rulers between 651 and 661 suggest a decade of instability among the Arabs that ended when Muawiya gained full control.
- Thus the coins tell us that it was Muawiya, when he was still governor of Syria who took control of the Sassanian realm. This is also consistent with what the literary sources tell us.
- In contrast, the SIN says that it was the caliph Uthman who did it. This is yet another example of how the SIN is just not consistent with the evidence.

'The epigraphy of the contemporary coins, then provides no evidence to corroborate the version of history in the Traditional Account, namely that Uthman conquered the Sassanian realm. Neither Uthman nor any of the earlier commanders or governors are mentioned. This silence regarding early commanders fits in much better with our suggestion that until Muawiya there was nobody to mention. Until AH41/661 the Arabs operated as foederati. After the battle of Siffin, Muawiya was recognised as the unified ruler of the whole area and his name then appears on the coins. In fact Muawiya, whose name is known from coins, inscriptions (one in Arabic and one in Greek), and written sources such as Sebeos, John of Phenek, and the Life of Maximus the Confessor, is the first historical Arab ruler to be archaeologically and epigraphically attested' [Nevo and Cohen, Crossroads to Islam p155]

Analysis of the Evidence

(Arab Sassanian coins are useful because they are dated.)

- The phrase Bism Allah appears on coins from 641-667
- The phrase Bism Allah Rabbi ('in the name of Allah my Lord') appears on coins dated 646- 683

- The phrase Bism Allah al-Malik ('in the name of Allah the king') appears on coins dated 662-677
- Official inscriptions by Muawiya from 661 and 678 do not mention Muhammad.
- Inscription on bridge in Fustat by Abd al-Aziz (688) does not mention Muhammad.
- The phrase 'Muhammad rasul Allah' is first seen publicly on Arab-Sassanian coin of Xilad bin Abdullah dated 690 (reign of Abd al-Malik)
- Even the coins minted by Ibn Zubayr and his supporters during the rebellion period (683-691) do not mention Muhammad Rasul Allah.
- 691-2 we see same phrase on Dome of the Rock inscriptions. Regarding Muhammad, Nevo notes that '*Before 71 AH (691) he is not mentioned; after 72 AH(692) he is an obligatory part of every official proclamation*' [p248]
- At some point after 692, Abd al-Aziz posts "Muhammad is the messenger of God" on the doors of churches in Egypt.
- In addition to Muhammad as messenger of God, Abd al-Malik also proclaimed the following doctrines: there was no god apart from Allah alone (called Tawhid) by Muslims ; Jesus is a messenger and servant of God; Allah does not beget nor was begotten.
- Despite this happening on official documents, we only see Muhammad mentioned in the 'lay level' desert inscriptions 40 years after the Dome of the Rock ie around 730.

[This is a big problem for the idea that the Arab empire was founded by an Arab prophet called Muhammad who also founded the religion and theology that drove this conquest and it all began in 622. This proposal is simply NOT consistent with the evidence]

*This is an 'argument from silence' of considerable weight. For the Negev inscriptions were simply personal declarations; but those on coins and royal inscriptions were a public declaration of official state views, and their wording was not casually decided. Both the political and religious content of such a coin or inscription had been vetted by the state and granted official approval. Issuing coins is an important symbolic function of any political entity, one which requires careful consideration of all its aspects-iconic and epigraphic, political and religious. This is especially the case when the political entity is new. If a religious formula appears on a coin, its wording has been carefully considered and its message intentional. The conclusion the evidence invites is that before 691 no Mohammedan religious message was intended, for there was no mention of Muhammad himself, nor any Mohammedan expressions. In other words, the **official** Arab religious confession included neither Muhammad nor Mohammedan formulae in its set phrases at this time. [Nevo, p273, emphasis in original]*

WHAT DO THE COINS ACTUALLY SHOW?

[What follows is an overview of Islamic what coins show us. It is taken from Volker Popp, "Early Islam". The number in the square bracket indicates the page where a picture of the coin can be found.]

Overview

The word MHMD can be found on coins, very early in the Arab empire, but it is usually NOT associated with anything remotely 'Islamic'. Indeed the coins show symbols that are important to the people of the land. For those minted in the West of the Arab empire, they show CHRISTIAN and JEWISH symbols. For those minted in the east, they show ZOROASTRIAN symbols. This is NOT consistent with Islam. Why is this so?

A brief overview of coins from lands under Arab control in the 7th century reveals things that are NOT CONSISTENT with these Arabs being ‘Muslims’.

Muhammad and Christian Symbols

- Coins from Western Syria that have been attributed to the time of Muawiya show a man with several crosses and the word MHMD.

Fig. 11: Obverse of a coin

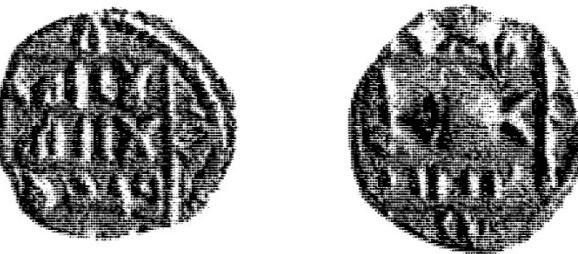


Cross above the letter M, in the exergue “MHMD” in Arabic letters.

with the ‘muhammad’-motto. ‘Ammān; to the left of an image of a ruler in frontal position; to the right of the figure long-cross, from the top down: bi-‘Ammān; on the reverse in the center capital “M”. M stands for 40 as a Roman number; 40 copper coins were equal to one silver drachm.

- This raises a very important question. **Why would an ‘Islamic ruler’ link a cross with the ‘prophet Muhammad’?** It should be obvious to anyone with a remote understanding of Islam that NO Muslim ruler would have minted a coin linking the ‘prophet Muhammad’ to a CROSS.
- Coin from Baisan (Galilee) has a FISH surrounded by the phrase ‘Muhammad rasul Allah’ [p79]. This makes no sense if the ruler was a Muslim.
- **Again the Question must be asked: Why would an ‘Islamic’ ruler link such an obviously CHRISTIAN symbol with the ‘Prophet Muhammad’?**

Fig. 17: Bronze coin from Baisan; obverse: religious inscription; reverse: depiction of a fish inside a square. Inscription around the square: the “muhammad” is the apostle of Allāh; Walker, Cat II. No. 686.



- After the end of Muawiya we see the cross disappear from Arab coins. It is replaced by symbol of a palm tree.
- There are also coins from the Umayyad period that have the head of John the Baptist on one side and the Palm on the other [p97].Christian tradition held that the head of John the Baptist was buried in the Basilica of St John in Damascus. This was converted into the “Umayyad Mosque” by al-Walid,

Fig. 25: On this coin from Damascus (?) John the Baptist is depicted as a preacher. His unusual clothes, as mentioned in the gospels, are conspicuous.



Fig. 1: Above the symbol for the face value, a capital letter M on the reverse, instead of a cross a palm tree is depicted. It is a symbol for Jesus. He was born under a palm-tree (sura 19:23). This



The

Question is again asked: Why would an 'Islamic' ruler put such obvious CHRISTIAN symbols on his coin? Surely there would have been 'Islamic symbols that would have more suitable to a true 'Muslim' ruler? And doesn't Islam forbid the use of icons or images? Isn't that why there are so few paintings of Muhammad?

Muhammad and the Jewish Symbols

Recently, Archaeologists have discovered coins dated to the **Umayyad Caliphate**. Circa AD 696/7-750 from the Iliya (Jerusalem) mint. It depicts Five-branched candelabra with horizontal bar on top; vertical stem with two leaves at mid-height; "There is no god but Allah alone" around / "Muhammad is Allah's messenger" in three lines; crescent below. A similar coin is found in Iberia (Spain).

Why would an 'Islamic' ruler link a JEWISH SYMBOL with the 'prophet Muhammad'?



A coin made during the Umayyad rule in Iberia. It is carrying Jewish menorah Quintet and writing in Arabic (Muhammad is the messenger of God) on the other side.

Muhammad and Pagan Fire Altars

- Around 651 we see coins in Persian lands with the title MHMD on them. There are silver coins from Sassanian regions from year 38 (660), 40(662) and 52 (674) with MHMT on them. Many have Zoroastrian symbols on them.
- We have coins from former Sassanian empire with Abd Allah from 661
- Sassanian coin with MHMT (equivalent to MHMD) begin 679. In some we see the MHMD and Zoroastrian fire alter. ***This is not consistent with the prophet of Islam.***

C. In particular, Sassanian Drachma has MHMD with a **Zoroastrian fire altar** on the other side. [p69,70].

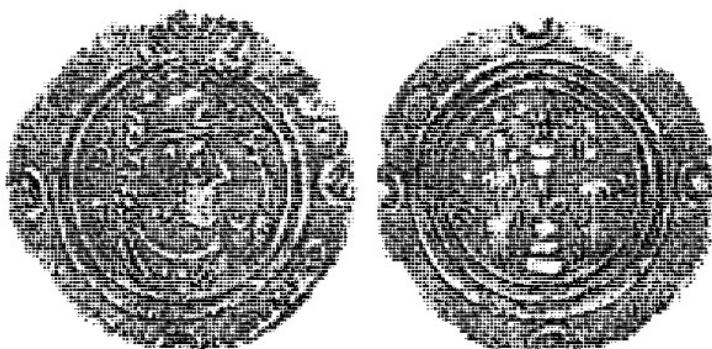


Fig. 10: Arab-Sassanian drachm mentioning MHMT in Pehlevi-script in the field to the right of the bust on the obverse; inscription on the rim in Arabic letters: muhammad; on the reverse image of fire-altar with two attendants.

D. Another has MHMD on one side and fire altar with 2 attendants on the other.

- This is a very significant finding. We can ask the same question that we asked of the coins with the Christian and Jewish symbols: **Why would a 'Muslim' ruler mint a coin with linking a pagan fire altar with the 'prophet Muhammad'?**
- Therefore the minter of this coin CANNOT have been a Muslim. It makes more sense to see that word MHMD as an honorific title for someone eg Jesus or even the ruler. [p69,70]

The answer to all these questions is obvious. The word MHMD was a title for the 'praised one' or the 'chosen one' ie Jesus and the 'prophet Muhammad as described by the SIN did NOT EXIST.

More Detailed Study

Muawiya



Fig. 8: Iranian Bronze coin with the motto "MHMD" to the right side of the bust on the obverse/ Image of MHMD as eschatological figure in the centre of flames, Ryka Gyselen, Arab-Sasanian Copper Coinage, p. 179.



Fig. 9: Arab-Sassanian drachm mentioning MHMD (muhammad) on the obverse, at the side of the bust; inscription on the rim: "wafin" (in Arabic); on the reverse Zoroastrian fire-altar.

We have seen from the above overview that in the time of Muawiya:

1. coins in western Syrian lands largely showed Christian symbols. We have Syrian coin minted in Amman with MHMD and rulers carrying a cross. It is dated to 2nd half of 7th century. Crosses appear on coins of Muawiya and the other Syrian emirs before Abd al-Malik
2. Coins in lands that were formerly Persian showed Zoroastrian symbols.

After Muawiya

- From 696-699 Abd al-Malik removed any Byzantine type images from the coins. Some say that this was motivated by his religion. The argument is that as a good Muslim, he would have been opposed to any iconography, and replaced it with religious formula.
- In contrast, the coins still show IMAGES eg birds, rabbits, and what look like Jewish temple vessels eg Menorrah. What they DO NOT show are any **Byzantine** images.
- This suggests that Abd al-Malik was making a *political statement* ie that the Byzantines were no longer in control

- Coins from Khuzistan to Khorasan have MHMD and 'Abdallah' on them. This route goes from East to West and would be consistent with a ruler from Merv (in east) eg possibly Abd al-Malik moving west.

First coin with 'Muhammad' as a NAME.

- In 67 (689) there is a coin from Harat which names the emir as 'Muhammad'. This is the first archaeologically verifiable use of the word Muhammad as a name [p70]

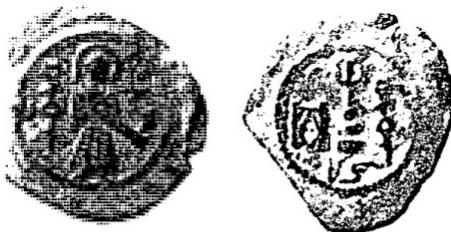
Coins with Jesus as 'Muhammad'

- In 685 Justinian II became Byzantine Emperor and we see a propaganda war develop between him and Abd Al-Malik. Justinian minted coins with inscription 'Servus Christi' (Servant of Christ). In reply, Abd al-Malik minted them with *Khalifat Allah* (Speaker of God).
- This is the earliest verifiable reference to the term 'Caliph'. Prior to this the Arab rulers called themselves 'Amir al Muminin' (Commander of the Faithful)
-
- Copper coin from Amman has standing figure with long CROSS on one side and the word MHMD on the other.[p70]

'The earliest depictions of Jesus as the muhammad on the copper coins show him in the form of a Christian ruler. The mint of the earliest mention of muhammad, Amman in east Jordan, is a hint that the notion of Jesus being the Muhammad was made public in the western domain by the Eastern Arabs' [Volker Popp p81]

- coin from Harran shows a standing figure of Jesus with flaming sword and mandorla as well as MHMD from Harran. It also shows the Jewish pillar Yegar Sahudata. Why would a 'Muslim' ruler have these symbols on coins more than 50 years after the death of his supposed 'prophet'?

Fig. 13: Obverse: Depiction of the eschatological Jesus with flame mandorla and flame sword; inscription on the left: 'muhammad', mint: Harran; reverse: in the center depiction of the 'stone' (גֶּתֶן Yegar Sâhâdûtâ); inscription on the right: 'muhammad', on the left cippus with rhomboid-shaped betyl within the naos.



- 688 silver coin from Bisapur has the inscription 'Bismallah muhammad rasul allah'. We also see written in Persian 'APDLMLIK-i-APDULAAANAN' (Abd al-Malik bin Abdallah). Given that the inscription on the coin very closely matches that on the Dome of the Rock (which refers to Isa bin Maryam), this suggests that the coin was minted by Abd al-Malik himself.
- In 688 we see coin from Bishapur in Persia with formula 'Bismillahi Muhammadun Rasul Allah' (in the name of God, the apostle of God is praised/chosen)
- In 692 we see the same formula on the Dome of the Rock the same formula is used (Muhammadun Rasul Allah) but it is closely followed by 'Rasulaka wa Abd aka Isa bn Maryam' (Your apostle and servant, Jesus, the son of Mary).
- The term 'Muhammad' is simply the participle form of Haman ie praised, chosen or desired. Thus it could be read as a title or a name. The context must guide us.

- We see in the Quran that a number of prophets and biblical figures are called 'rasul'. Why would the Dome of the Rock inscription specifically mention Jesus as messenger if the most important messenger was an Arab from Mecca? The inscription makes much more sense if we read the term Muhammad as a TITLE to describe the person that the inscription DOES NAME ie Jesus son of Mary.
- We also see a coin from 690 that calls MHMD as the representative of the law and the Logos (Word) of God. These are attributes given to Jesus, EVEN IN THE QURAN (Sura 3:39 and 4:171). This is further support to the use of MHMD as a TITLE for Jesus, rather than a name of a prophet from Mecca.

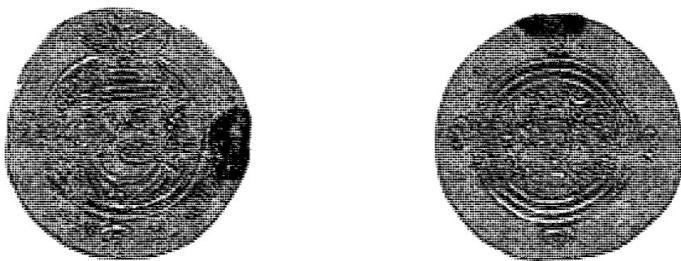


Fig. 34: Arab-Sassanian Drachma from Kirmān mentioning the 'MHMT' as representative of the memra/logos (wali al-amr).

Coin with Jesus as Muhammad AND Ali?

- 692 coin from Kirman with Persian inscription MHMT PGTAMI Y DAT or "the chosen one is the bearer of the word of God" as well as 'Bismallah wali Allah' or 'in the name of God he is the representative of God'. Thus the 'chosen one' and the 'representative of God' being on the same coin makes it more likely that it refers to the SAME PERSON. It also has a Zoroastrian fire altar.
- We note that the SIN describes 'Muhammad' as the prophet founder of Islam and 'Ali' as his son-in-law. The coin makes it more likely that these words were titles for the same person ie Jesus.

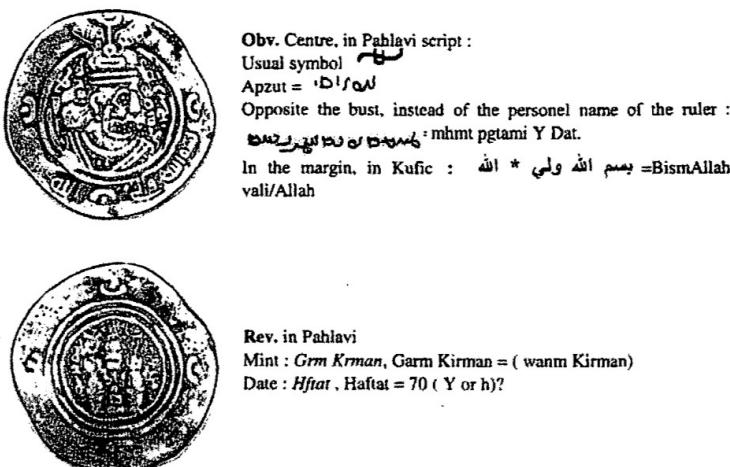


Fig. 33: Drachm from Kirman, discovered by Shams-Eshrag, Isfahan. In the inscription MHMT is called 'wali Allāh', the word PTGM (rasūl) is rendered as 'wali' here. In Islamic tradition this attribute is linked to 'Ali'.

- This conclusion is still reasonable even if one accepts the traditions that talk about Ali being killed by Muawiya at the battle of Siffin. How do we know that this Ali, if he existed was not named after the honorific title of Jesus?

Coin suggesting Jesus as 'Caliph'?

- 696 silver Dirham has a standing apocalyptic figure with a flame sword similar to coin from Harran. On his left is the title 'amir al-muminin' and to his right there is 'Halfat Allah'. The term 'halfat' is similar to the term 'halifa' or 'caliph'. Volker Popp argues that they are separate titles with the Amir referring to Abd al-Malik and the 'Halfat Allah' referring to Jesus as the MHMD.

Fig. 14: Dirham struck in the year 75 of the Arabs (696 CE). In the center of the reverse depiction of the eschatological Jesus with his flame-sword; on the left: title of the ruler: amīr al-mu'minīn; on the right: designation for the eschatological Jesus: halfat Allāh.



-
-
-
- Sassanian silver coins have been found as far away

as Gotland, Sweden. There are silver coins in style of Abd al-Malik but dated to 766 which declare 'Musa rasul Allah' ie 'Moses is the messenger of God'. This shows that being 'rasul Allah' was not confined to the 'Muhammad'

- Copper coins from Syria/Palestine have the Yagar Sahaduta ie the 'pillar on steps' which was the stone monument mentioned in Genesis 31 which symbolised the covenant between Jacob and Laban. Whatever the symbolism it had for Arabs, it is NOT CONSISTENT with Islam as we know it. Why would 'Islamic' coins have this on them? [comments from Volker Popp, Early Islam]

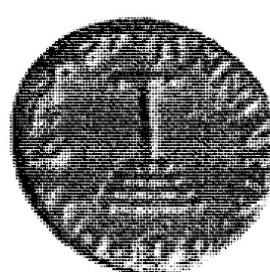
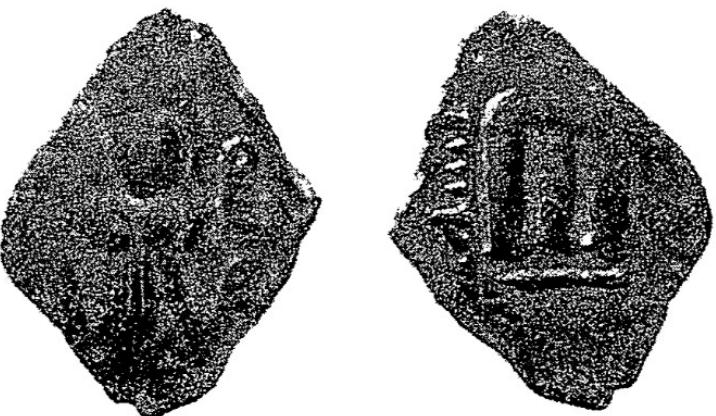


Fig. 20: Obverse and reverse of an Arabic coin from North Africa, apparently from the time of 'Abd al-Malik, as can be seen in the depiction of the Yāgar Sāhadūtā on the reverse. Such a symbol is extant on Tory Island off Western Ireland as well.

'Standing Caliph' or Jesus? The Propaganda war between Abd al-Malik and Justinian

- From 693-4 Abd Al-Malik minted gold coins and this inflamed things further. Prior to this the Arabs had minted only copper or silver coins. Only the Emperor issued gold ones. Despite this, there was no treasury revolution under Abd al-Malik. He adapted what he had inherited to suit him. As such silver coins continued to be minted in the former Persian areas and Syrian areas continued to use copper ones. [Heideman: the merger of two currency zones in early Islam (1998 95-112)]
- *"This pragmatic approach was necessary to ensure smooth activity at the governmental level in a region that was unified for the first time in a millennium (since Alexander the Great). It was a land mass from Egypt in the west to Central Asia, on the border of China, in the east."* [p67]
- Abd Al-Malik also minted coins with MHMd with the 'Yegar Sahadutha' or 'stone monument of testimony' from Genesis 31:45-47. These symbols became more common and the presence of crosses less and less common.
- When Justinian minted coin with himself standing on the reverse and HIS religious symbol, Christ as the Rex Regnantium ie King of Kings on the obverse. In response, Abd Al-Malik minted one with him standing on the reverse and HIS religious symbol on the obverse. What was HIS religious symbol? The Yegar Sahadutha, THE STONE.
- This shows a return to the pagan tradition of stone idols and may help explain the later significance of the 'Black Stone'
- Bronze coin from Edessa has picture of an imposing man standing with a sword. It was previously said to show a 'standing caliph' but the figure has no Arab headdress. In fact it has long hair much more like a traditional Jesus icon [p82]. The comments are from Volker Popp, Early Islam, p82

Fig. 19: Bronze coin from Yubna in Palestine, depicting the eschatological Jesus with a halo or flame mandorla. Hitherto erroneously interpreted as depiction of an Arab caliph with a kūfiya (Arabic headdress); reverse: value (M = 40 nummia).



the similarity to Byzantine depictions of Christ. This also applies to the portrait on the coin from Edessa. Here the person pictured has no headdress of Arab style, but long hair like a traditional Jesus-icon:¹⁴³



Fig. 18: Obverse of a bronze coin from Edessa (Syriac: ܥܪܗܝ Ӧրհய). Depiction of the eschatological Jesus with coins placed on his eyes, hitherto erroneously interpreted as depiction of a "caliph".

Whoever looks at this coin portrait through the eyes of a modern mainstream Arabist or Islamologist is more likely to come to the conclusion that this is the picture of a "standing caliph" wearing a *kūfiya* (Arab headdress) in the style of the Bedouins. If this picture, however, is interpreted from the perspective of the contemporary Syrian eschatology and the apocalyptic notions linked to it, then one is more likely to see a *halo* above the *Messiah*'s head.¹⁴⁴ In fact, the renowned numismatist John Walker, was convinced he saw a halo above the person depicted on a coin from *İliyā* (Jerusalem) in *Filastīn* (Palästina).¹⁴⁵

- We can see similar coins minted by Abd al-Malik from many areas that were considered 'sacred' in Syria and Palestine. This included: Jerusalem, Baalbek, Heliopolis, Bait Jibrin, Edessa, Harran, Aleppo, Hims, Damascus, Amman, Chalcis.
- Coins also tell us that the Islamic traditions of Ibn Zubayr barricading himself in the Ka'ba and being buried underneath it after it had been set on fire are not correct. He continues to mint coins from Kirman in Iran so he could not have died in the Hijaz.
- As noted above we see Abd Malik minting coins moving westward from his homeland in Merv to Palestine
- After 698 there are no more depictions of 'eschatological Jesus' with his flame sword.

Abd al-Malik coins without MHMD

- In addition to this, we have coins minted by Abd Al-Malik with a 7 branched lampstand ie the Menorrah. This is obviously a JEWISH SYMBOL.
- Later during the reign of Abd al-Malik we see coins with a 5 branched lampstand with the word MHMD. This is also not consistent with Islam as we know it today.
- In North Africa we see coins with the Yegar Sahadutha ie the STONE. They can be dated to the reign of Abd al-Malik and have statements like 'there is no God but one; there is no other associate like him'.
- In North Africa we also see coins with a bearded BAAL. This is obviously NOT a Muslim deity and reflects the flexibility that Abd al-Malik had with accepting traditional ideas of the region's inhabitants.
- Interestingly, there is no mention of MHMD in these coins, yet coins from the same period in the Eastern part of the empire often mention MHMD. This does not make sense if Abd al-Malik traced the origin of his religion to a prophet from Mecca. This prophet ie Muhammad should have been mentioned everywhere. If he was important

enough to mention in Syria, Iraq and Iran, he would have been important enough to mention in North Africa.

- If however, MHMD is just a title to be used to settle a Christological dispute, then it makes logical sense. You only use it where there ACTUALLY WERE such disputes.
- In North Africa there were various sects besides the Monophysite Copts eg Nestorians, Arians, Monarchians and others. Whatever disagreements they may have had with each other, they all had a common enemy: the Trinitarians of Constantinople. So disputes about Christology would have been far less common there than in Palestine.
- Therefore it makes logical sense that there was no need to impose the MHMD title here. Also, these Christians would not have opposed statements like 'bismallah' or 'there is only one God'. Similarly, they would not have objected to the Yegar Sahadutha either.
- This explanation also explains the absence of MHMD in a bridge inscription in Fustat commissioned by Abd al-Aziz, brother of Abd al-Malik dated 691. This is just before the Dome of the Rock is built. Why should this be the case if Abd al-Malik was focussed on promoting his idea of Jesus as the MHMD?
- The likely explanation is because as Monophysites, the Egyptians would have been opposed to BOTH the trinitarian Byzantines and the Nestorians in eastern Syria, Iraq and Persia. The area was stable and homogeneous theologically speaking, unlike Syria and Palestine. So there was no need to 'lay down the law' to warring factions. It would have been prudent then for Abd al-Malik and al-Aziz to avoid picking a useless fight.

Does MHMD have to refer to someone by name?

The word Muhammad can be either a participle/description or a name. Therefore it can refer to either a 'praised one' or to a man named Muhammad holding a CROSS! This is totally inconsistent with the Islamic version of 'Muhammad' and is NOT consistent with the Quranic treatment of Jesus. Therefore it is more likely describing the 'praised one' of Christianity, Jesus Christ. If it IS referring to a man named Muhammad, it is not Muhammad of the SIN.

An interesting Hypothesis to explain these coins

- Volker Popp has an interesting hypothesis that explains these coins:
- 3. Abd al-Malik saw himself as part of an eschatological program. The history of Israel that began with Jacob ie Israel was about to run its course with the coming of the Messiah ie the 'chosen one'.
- 4. For this reason he puts the Yagar Sahaduta on coins and the demand for 'Islam' ie 'concord' with God on the Dome of the Rock. These references would have been well-known to both Jews and Christian Arabs.
- 5. Abd al-Malik saw himself as the 'new Moses' who led the Arab people after 40 years in the wilderness. He was the liberator of his people from the 'pharaoh' Khosrow and led his people on an 'exodus' from Iran to the 'promised land'.
- 6. His appointment as 'Amir al muminun' was 40 YEARS after 622. This may explain the coins with 'Moses is messenger of God'
- 7. Abd al-Malik came up with the idea of 'the Hijra'.
- 8. He also saw himself like David and for this reason called his son 'Sulayman' ie Solomon.

[It should be emphasised that although it is consistent with the evidence, it is only a HYPOTHESIS. The reader is invited to come to his or her own conclusions regarding whether Popp's hypothesis has merit.]

'Thus as Abd al-Malik had staged the history of the Arabs as a new version of the history of Israel, a century later the alleged early history of what was later to become the religion of Islam was located in the desert of the Arabian Peninsula. The story told contained fragments of Abd al-Malik's real past, biblical elements from an eschatological worldview and a considerable number of pieces taken from the civilisation of Iran' [p121]

***'The Islamological approach, which explains the events as a conquest of this cultural homeland of age-old civilisations by Bedouins, who come from from 'spiritual desert' under the leadership of a militant prophet from Mecca, is a mere legend based on literature written centuries after the alleged events and contradicting the material evidence and should be considered obsolete. The information from archaeological sources and inscriptions shows that in reality we are dealing with the establishment of rule of a (non-Trinitarian) Christian group in post-Sassanian Iran...The Arab conquest, which allegedly took place in the 7th century CE, cannot be proven archaeologically-neither buttons from Byzantine uniforms nor weaponry or coins from the war chest have been found by Palestinian merchants along the river Yarmuk or in the Yarmuk valley where the Byzantine army was allegedly annihilated by the Muslim conquerors in 636 CE. This however is not surprising as some of these 'conquered' countries, Syria and the southern parts of Iraq, were already ruled by Arabs in the 6th century.'* [p100]**

The Marwanids: Abd al-Malik's sons

- In part 1 of this document we saw how Abd al-Malik developed the idea of Jesus as the MHMD for his kingdom, a kind of 'patron saint' for an Arabian Church. The headquarters of this Arabian Church was the Dome of the Rock.
- In 708, his successor, Al-Walid partially tore down the Church of John the Baptist and converted it into a masjid ("place of prayer").
- This does not necessarily mean that he was a Muslim but that he saw himself as protector of a religious sanctuary.
- We see the same pattern when his brother Hisham expanded the shrine of Christian Syrian St Sergius at Sergiopolis (Rusafa)
- 716 The earliest coins with MHMD in North Africa appear during reign of al-Walid or Sulayman ie AFTER Abd al-Malik
- There is an Arabian silver coin dated 766 that has inscription "Musa Rasul Allah" or Moses is the Messenger of God. Note that in the Quran, Muhammad is only mentioned 4 times by name. In contrast, Moses is mentioned 136 times, Jesus(Isa) is mentioned 24 times and Mary (Maryam) 36 times.
- So by >230 years after the death of the 'Messenger of God' and the 'Seal of prophets' according to the SIN, we have a coin that says that MOSES is the messenger of God. When we combine this with the several references to Jesus being the 'Rasul Allah', the title 'Rasul Allah' was a more generic one. The idea that the term 'Muhammad' was ALSO a title, rather than a name is consistent with this.
- Historically we see that after the death of Abd al-Malik's sons, pilgrimages to Jerusalem and Rusafa stopped and Damascus was no longer the capital.
- 740 (year 128) coins minted in Merv by Kirmanians with inscription 'Al Kirmani bin Ali'. Although this is thought by SIN to refer to the Ali of the traditions, other scholars suggest that the word 'Ali', like 'Muhammad' is an honorific title meaning 'the elevated' that could also refer to Jesus. Note that previous coins from the same area have MHMT called the 'wali Allah'

- 753 we have a coin with 'Abu Muslim Amir al-Muhammad' ('the arch-Muslim, the empire of the family group of Muhammad). This is the first verifiable use of the term 'Muslim' on a coin.
- This is the end point of a process of **evolution** that began Jesus son of Mary as the 'chosen one' (*muhammad*) and 'servant of God' (*abdallah*) and ended with the Muhammad bin Abdallah (Muhammad son of Abdallah) of the SIN.

Coins from The Abbasids

- The Umayyad dynasty, of which Abd al-Malik was the most famous ruler, ended in 750 with the assassination of Marwan II. This was the beginning of the Abassid dynasty
- By 786 the 5th Abbasids caliph Harun al Rashid begins the pilgrimage to Mecca and his wife, Zubayda improves the road there and builds an aqueduct. Interestingly, Zubayda also appears to mint coins in her own right
- *807 is the first copper coin struck in Hijaz.* It is widely accepted by scholars of antiquity that only rulers had the right to mint coins. This is also common sense as coins were a means of 'propaganda' for ancient rulers. Volker Popp also notes that '*according to Islamic constitutional law the ruler is legitimised by mentioning his name in Fridays prayers and by his right to exercise the 'sikka' (minting right).. The right to strike and issue coinage makes it possible to determine the point in time at which land was seized and rule over it started to be exerted. Thus by looking at the dates provided by coins it can be ascertained that silver coins were struck at the time of Al-Mamun in San'a'*' [p160]
- aAl-Mamun (813-833) mints coins which declare him 'Khalifat Allah' ie Caliph of Allah. In 816 he declares himself 'Imam', setting himself up as the leader for both secular and sacred matters. The gold coin has the inscription of 'halifat al-Imam'.
- 824 silver coin mentions the 'Halifat' of 'Mamun'. Thus the offices of Caliph and Imam were likely developed during the reign of Al-Mamun'. If this office had existed earlier then, given its importance, it would have been referred to in inscriptions.
- In coins from 824-827 we see the following inscriptions:
 1. Muhammad rasul Allah (Muhammad is the messenger of God)
 2. Al-Mamun Halifat Allah (Al-Mamun is the representative of God)
 3. Wali ahd al-Muslimin (appointed representative of the covenant of the peaceful) Ali bin Musa/ Ali bin Ali Talib.
- It should be noted that these coins are from IRAN not from Syria ie Fars, Isfahan, Rayy, Samarkand.
- 822 and 823 we have first known coins from Mecca itself. These were during the reign of Al-Mamun (813-833). They actually mention the name Mecca as the mint and this means that at that time, Mecca was a culturally significant place. But this begs the following question as stated by Volker Popp:
'How then did it come that this location suddenly emerged from out of nowhere' [p167]

Mecca is Missing for nearly 200 years

- The first known coins from Mecca are not until 822 and 823. These were during the reign of Al-Mamun (813-833).

- They actually mention the name Mecca as the mint and this means that at that time, Mecca was a culturally significant place. But this begs the following question as stated by Volker Popp:

'How then did it come that this location suddenly emerged from out of nowhere' [p167]

If Mecca was a thriving trade centre where, according to the SIN, Muhammad was born in AD570, how is it that there we have NO COINS until 250 years later?

The most likely answer is that the Mecca of the SIN DID NOT EXIST in 570 AD.

The role of Abd al-Malik.

- When Abd al-Malik became Arab ruler he recognised that there were significant religious differences in his empire. In the western parts eg Egypt, Syria and Armenia there were Monophysites but in the former Persian areas, the majority were Nestorians.
- One way to unite these quarrelling factions was not to focus on Christology at all and simply declare Jesus as the 'Muhammad' or the Chosen One and as 'Abd Allah' or servant of God.
- We must remember that the term 'Muhammad' (MHMD) is simply the participle form of Hamad (HMD) ie praised, chosen or desired. This term is used in the Old Testament to describe something praised or valued and is also used in older Semitic languages eg Ugaritic and Phoenician. Therefore any reference to it could be read as a title or a name. We cannot just assume that it refers to the raider from Mecca as described by the SIN. We must look at all the evidence.
- *'Abd al-Malik had recognised that further victories against his confessional enemies could only occur if the military efforts were accompanied by an internal consolidation. Thus he put the emphasis of his own work on the development of ideological armament. His goal was to unify, under the banner of the Muhammad motto, the adherents of the old Syrian theology who had been driven into the east'* [Volker Popp, Hidden Origins of Islam p57]
- This is the best explanation for all the coins that have the formula MHMD yet have Christian symbols such as crosses or fish. Generally speaking, if a coin had the name of a ruler, then it would also have the name of the father as well. Thus we see coins minted by Muhammad bin Abd Allah who minted coins in the year 689 in Herat. This is the FIRST TIME the name Muhammad appears in any historical record.
- Coins were also a means of royal propaganda, as evidenced by the Sassanian rulers proclaiming their heritage from their gods.
- With Abd al-Malik however the Messiah becomes just a man, the 'chosen one' but not God. Thus we see the inscription in the Dome of the Rock 'Muhammadun abdu llahi wa-rasuluh. This makes a lot of sense if we translate it as 'the servant of God and his apostle may be praised'.
- 'It is a striking fact that such documentary evidence as survives from the Sufyanid period makes no mention of the messenger of God at all. The papyri do not refer to him..the Arab Byzantine bronze coins on which Muhammad appears as rasul Allah, previously dated to the Sufyani period, have now been placed in that of the Marwanids' [Patricia Crone and Martin Hinds, God's Caliph, 1986, 24-25]
- **If we IGNORE the SIN and focus on the evidence we see the following:**
 1. Abd al-Malik was focused on stabilising the Arab empire and he used religion as one way of doing this
 2. He was quite flexible in his acceptance of the religious beliefs of the masses, providing they did not adversely affect the stability of his empire. He adopted Jewish and pagan symbols on his coins.

3. One of his biggest problems was the continuing theological disputes in Syria, Iraq and Iran over Christology. He settled this by promoting the idea that Jesus was the 'chosen one' the MHMD.
4. This is good evidence that the word MHMD is a title for the chosen one-Jesus and NOT for a caravan raider from Mecca.

- Volker Popp summarises the strategy of Abd al-Malik as follows: "*One can see in the behaviour of Abd al-Malik a double role, or perhaps different policies for different places. He defended the mission of the muhammad in his homeland, the formerly Sassanian east, and in the region that was the source of the Syrian theology, in order to emphasise his Arabian understanding of Christianity. Outside of this region, he led the alliance of the Emperor's Christian opponents without influencing their theological ideas. This means that he limited the sphere of the Arabian church of the Arabian Empire, with its centre in Jerusalem, the regions of settlement for the Arabian tribes in Iran, Mesopotamia and Syria. In the areas surrounding this region of missionary work, he accepted the status quo*" [Hidden Origins of Islam p81]

The Abbasids

- By 750, the Marwanids and Umayyad dynasties had ended and the period of the Abbasids began. The first Abbasids ruler was Al-Saffah. His successor, Al-Mansur moved the capital to Baghdad in Iraq.
- By 135 AH (757) we have inscription on the Mosque of the Prophet in Medina which is first verifiable mention of the term sunna naawiya (Sunna of the Prophet). It also mentions the 'kitab Allah' (book of Allah) but it **does not call it the Quran**
- By 786 the 5th Abbasids caliph Harun al Rashid begins the pilgrimage to Mecca and his wife, Zubayda improves the road there and builds an aqueduct.
- Interestingly, Zubayda also appears to mint coins in her own right
- Al-Mamun (813-833) mints coins which declare him 'Khalifat Allah' ie Caliph of Allah. In 816 he declares himself 'Imam', setting himself up as the leader for both secular and sacred matters.
- At the time of Al-Mamun, there were a number of religious communities in Baghdad who wrote 'scriptures' and dispersed them. This included Jews, Zoroastrians, Christians and even Manichaeans.
- The Christians had long been using a harmonisation of the 4 Gospels into one document called the Diatessaron, produced by Tatian. In the 5th century an Aramaic a version of the 4 gospels called the 'Peshitta' was made available but was largely rejected. This is possibly the reason behind the later Muslim claim that 'the Gospel' had been 'corrupted'. "*The early existence of the New Testament in the form of a Gospel harmony-a comprehensive text in one volume-may have justified the later rejection of the translation of all four gospels into Aramaic in the form of the 5th century "Peshitta". From then on the complete translation of all four gospels was regarded by the Arabians as a falsification of the original one-volume book*" [Volker Popp p96]
- Thus we see that the Jews could refer to their scriptures and the Talmud, the Zoroastrians had the Avesta and the Denkart, and the Christians had the gospel, the Arabs had no 'scripture' of their own. All they had was religious tradition. There were most likely 'pre-Quranic' materials that existed as separate writings.
- Volker Popp advances the following hypothesis to explain the evidence. "*As Imam and Khalifat Allah, then al-Mamun's goal must have been the creation of an independent tradition of his own spiritual authority, a tradition not recognisably derived from the Christian tradition*" [p97]

740 (year 128) coins minted in Merv by Kirmanians with inscription 'Al Kirmani bin Ali'. Although this is thought by SIN to refer to the Ali of the traditions, other scholars suggest that the word 'Ali', like 'Muhammad' is an honorific title meaning 'the elevated' that could also refer to Jesus. Note that previous coins from the same area have MHMT called the 'wali Allah'

- 807 is the first copper coin struck in Hijaz. It is widely accepted by scholars of antiquity that only rulers had the right to mint coins. This is also common sense as coins were a means of 'propaganda' for ancient rulers. Volker Popp also notes that '*according to Islamic constitutional law the ruler is legitimised by mentioning his name in Fridays prayers and by his right to exercise the 'sikka' (minting right)..The right to strike and issue coinage makes it possible to determine the point in time at which land was seized and rule over it started to be exerted. Thus by looking at the dates provided by coins it can be ascertained that silver coins were struck at the time of Al-Mamun in San'a"* [p160]

- 818 a gold coin has the inscription of 'halifat al-Imam'. 824 silver coin mentions the 'Halifat' of 'Mamun'. Thus the offices of Caliph and Imam were likely developed during the reign of Al-Mamun'. If this office had existed earlier then, given its importance, it would have been referred to in inscriptions.
- In coins from 824-827 we see the following inscriptions:
 1. Muhammad rasul Allah (Muhammad is the messenger of God)
 2. Al-Mamun Halifat Allah (Al-Mamun is the representative of God)
 3. Wali ahd al-Muslimin (appointed representative of the covenant of the peaceful) Ali bin Musa/ Ali bin Ali Talib.

It should be noted that these coins are from IRAN not from Syria ie Fars, Isfahan, Rayy, Samarkand.

- 822 and 823 we have first known coins from Mecca itself. These were during the reign of Al-Mamun (813-833). They actually mention the name Mecca as the mint and this means that at that time, Mecca was a culturally significant place. But this begs the following question as stated by Volker Popp:

'How then did it come that this location suddenly emerged from out of nowhere" [p167]

Conclusions

- Coins from the 7th century found in areas controlled by the Arabs have the word MHMD associated with symbols that are CLEARLY Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian. It is therefore highly unlikely that they were minted by 'Muslim' rulers.
- The earliest Arab coins were minted in Baysan and Gerasa. In later years they were minted at Tiberias in Galilee and Hims and Tartus in Syria. these areas were all to the north of the Sea of Galilee and well to the North of Medina or Mecca.
- This is not consistent with a conquest originating in Medina with Caliphs ruling from there. Nevo puts it this way '**Whatever it was that was happening as the Arabs**

assumed control, the coins suggest that it was happening in Northern Palestine up through central Syria'

- We also see an evolution in the areas that minted coins:
- E. The coins from Muawiya's time come only from north of Galilee and they continue to follow the Byzantine pattern.
- F. We also see coins from Sassanian lands with Arabic religious formulae but not the ruler's name from 651-664. From 664 we see Muawiya's name on them. This suggests a period of instability that ended when Muawiya took control.
- G. Only during reign of Abd al-Malik do we see coins minted from central Palestine eg Jerusalem, Northern Syria, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Northern Mesopotamia
- H. Only in the 8th century do we see coins from Gaza, Lydda, Askelon.

- The SIN tells us that all of Syria came under the control of the Muslims in 636 after the battle of Yarmuk. It also tells us that it was Uthman who took control of the Sassanian lands. If this were true, then we should see coins appearing in all these areas from 636, especially in important towns like Jerusalem.
- But this is NOT what the coins tell us. The coins make it fairly clear that:
 - A. Muawiya only controlled the northern towns of Syria to begin with and that the assumption of control was more GRADUAL. This is entirely consistent with what the literary sources tell us.
 - B. It was not Uthman but Muawiya, when he was still governor of Syria who took control of the Sassanian realm. This is also consistent with what the literary sources tell us.

'The epigraphy of the contemporary coins, then provides no evidence to corroborate the version of history in the Traditional Account, namely that Uthman conquered the Sassanian realm. Neither Uthman nor any of the earlier commanders or governors are mentioned. This silence regarding early commanders fits in much better with our suggestion that until Muawiya there was nobody to mention. Until AH41/661 the Arabs operated as foederati. After the battle of Siffin, Muawiya was recognised as the unified ruler of the whole area and his name then appears on the coins. In fact Muawiya, whose name is known from coins, inscriptions (one in Arabic and one in Greek), and written sources such as Sebeos, John of Phenek, and the Life of Maximus the Confessor, is the first historical Arab ruler to be archaeologically and epigraphically attested' [Nevo and Cohen, Crossroads to Islam p155]

A study of Islamic Coins

[What follows is an overview of Islamic what coins show us. It is taken from Volker Popp, "Early Islam". The number in the square bracket indicates the page where a picture of the coin can be found.]

There are silver coins from Sassanian regions from year 38 (660), 40(662) and 52 (674) with MHMT on them.

Coins and Abd al-Malik

Coins from Khuzistan to Khorasan have MHMD and 'Abdallah' on them. This route goes from East to West and would be consistent with a ruler from Merv (in east) eg Abd al-Malik moving west.

In 67 (689) there is a coin from Harat which names the emir as 'Muhammad'. This is the **first archaeologically verifiable use of the word Muhammad as a name [p70]**

Sassanian Drachma has MHMD with a **Zoroastrian fire altar** on the other side. Another has MHMD on one side and fire altar with 2 attendants on the other. This is a very significant finding. Why would a 'Muslim' ruler mint a coin with the name of his revered prophet on one side and a pagan fire altar on the other? Therefore the minter of this coin CANNOT have been a Muslim. It makes more sense to see that word MHMD as an honorific title for someone eg Jesus or even the ruler. [p69,70]

Copper coin from Amman has standing figure with long CROSS on one side and the word MHMD on the other.[p70]

'The earliest depictions of Jesus as the muhammad on the copper coins show him in the form of a Christian ruler. The mint of the earliest mention of muhammad, Amman in east Jordan, is a hint that the notion of Jesus being the Muhammad was made public in the western domain by the Eastern Arabs' [Volker Popp p81]

coin from Harran shows a standing figure of Jesus with flaming sword and mandorla as well as MHMD from Harran. It also shows the Jewish pillar Yegar Sahudata. Why would a 'Muslim' ruler have these symbols on coins more than 50 years after the death of his supposed 'prophet'?

688 silver coin from Bisapur has the inscription 'Bismallah muhammad rasul allah'. We also see written in Persian 'APDLMLIK-i-APDULAanan' (Abd al-Malik bin Abdallah). Given that the inscription on the coin very closely matches that on the Dome of the Rock (which refers to Isa bin Maryam), this suggests that the coin was minted by Abd al-Malik himself.

692 coin from Kirman with Persian inscription MHMT PGTAMI Y DAT or "the chosen one is the bearer of the word of God" as well as 'Bismallah wali Allah' or 'in the name of God he is the representative of God'. Thus the 'chosen one' and the 'representative of God' being on the same coin makes it more likely that it refers to the SAME PERSON. It also has a Zoroastrian fire altar.

We note that the SIN describes 'Muhammad' as the prophet founder of Islam and 'Ali' as his son-in-law. The coin makes it more likely that these words were titles for the same person ie Jesus.

This conclusion is still reasonable even if one accepts the traditions that talk about Ali being killed by Muawiya at the battle of Siffin. How do we know that this Ali, if he existed was not named after the honorific title of Jesus?

696 silver Dirham has a standing apocalyptic figure with a flame sword similar to coin from Harran. On his left is the title 'amir al-muminin' and to his right there is 'Halfat Allah'. The term 'halfat' is similar to the term 'halifa' or 'caliph'. Volker Popp argues that they are separate titles with the Amir referring to Abd al-Malik and the 'Halfat Allah' referring to Jesus as the MHMD.

Sassanian silver coins have been found as far away as Gotland, Sweden. There are silver coins in style of Abd al-Malik but dated to 766 which declare 'Musa rasul Allah' ie 'Moses is the messenger of God'. This shows that being 'rasul Allah' was not confined to the 'Muhammad'

Coin from Galilee has a FISH surrounded by the phrase 'Muhammad rasul Allah' [p79]. This makes no sense if the ruler was a Muslim.

After the end of Muawiya we see the cross disappear from Arab coins. It is replaced by symbol of a palm tree.

There are also coins from the Umayyad period that have the head of John the Baptist on one side and the Palm on the other [p97].

Christian tradition held that the head of John the Baptist was buried in the Basilica of St John in Damascus. This was converted into the "Umayyad Mosque" by al-Walid

Copper coins from Syria/Palestine have the Yagar Sahaduta ie the 'pillar on steps' which was the stone monument mentioned in Genesis 31 which symbolised the covenant between Jacob and Laban. Whatever the symbolism it had for Arabs, it is NOT CONSISTENT with Islam as we know it. Why would 'Islamic' coins have this on them?

Bronze coin from Edessa has picture of an imposing man standing with a sword. It was previously said to show a 'standing caliph' but the figure has no Arab headdress. In fact it has long hair much more like a traditional Jesus icon [p82]

We can see similar coins minted by Abd al-Malik from many areas that were considered 'sacred' in Syria and Palestine. This included: Jerusalem, Baalbek, Heliopolis, Bait Jibrin, Edessa, Harran, Aleppo, Hims, Damascus, Amman, Chalcis,

Coin also tell us that the Islamic traditions of Ibn Zubayr barricading himself in the Ka'ba and being buried underneath it after it had been set on fire are not correct. He continues to mint coins from Kirman in Iran so he could not have died in the Hijaz

As noted above we see Abd Malik minting coins moving westward from his homeland in Merv to Palestine

After 698 there are no more depictions of 'eschatological Jesus' with his flame sword.

Volker Popp has an interesting hypothesis that explains these coins:

1. Abd al-Malik saw himself as part of an eschatological program. The history of Israel that began with Jacob ie Israel was about to run its course with the coming of the Messiah ie the 'chosen one'.
2. For this reason he puts the Yagar Sahaduta on coins and the demand for 'Islam' ie 'concord' with God on the Dome of the Rock. These references would have been well-known to both Jews and Christian Arabs.
3. Abd al-Malik saw himself as the 'new Moses' who led the Arab people after 40 years in the wilderness. He was the liberator of his people from the 'pharaoh' Khosrow and led his people on an 'exodus' from Iran to the 'promised land'.
4. His appointment as 'Amir al muminun' was 40 YEARS after 622. This may explain the coins with 'Moses is messenger of God'
5. Abd al-Malik came up with the idea of 'the Hijra'.
6. He also saw himself like David and for this reason called his son 'Sulayman' ie Solomon.

[It should be emphasised that although it is consistent with the evidence, it is only a HYPOTHESIS. The reader is invited to come to his or her own conclusions regarding whether Popp's hypothesis has merit.]

'Thus as Abd al-Malik had staged the history of the Arabs as a new version of the history of Israel, a century later the alleged early history of what was later to become the religion of Islam was located in the desert of the Arabian Peninsula. The story told contained fragments of Abd al-Malik's real past, biblical elements from an eschatological worldview and a considerable number of pieces taken from the civilisation of Iran' [p121]

***'The Islamological approach, which explains the events as a conquest of this cultural homeland of age-old civilisations by Bedouins, who come from from 'spiritual desert' under the leadership of a militant prophet from Mecca, is a mere legend based on literature written centuries after the alleged events and contradicting the material evidence and should be considered obsolete. The information from archaeological sources and inscriptions shows that in reality we are dealing with the establishment of rule of a (non-Trinitarian) Christian group in post-Sassanian Iran...The Arab conquest, which allegedly took place in the 7th century CE, cannot be proven archaeologically-neither buttons from Byzantine uniforms nor weaponry or coins from the war chest have been found by Palestinian merchants along the river Yarmuk or in the Yarmuk valley where the Byzantine army was allegedly annihilated by the Muslim conquerors in 636 CE. This however is not surprising as some of these 'conquered' countries, Syria and the southern parts of Iraq, were already ruled by Arabs in the 6th century.'* [p100]**

Coins after Abd al-Malik

740 (year 128) coins minted in Merv by Kirmanians with inscription 'Al Kirmani bin Ali'. Although this is thought by SIN to refer to the Ali of the traditions, other scholars suggest that the word 'Ali', like 'Muhammad' is an honorific title meaning 'the elevated' that could also refer to Jesus. Note that previous coins from the same area have MHMT called the 'wali Allah'

807 is the first copper coin struck in Hijaz. It is widely accepted by scholars of antiquity that only rulers had the right to mint coins. This is also common sense as coins were a means of 'propaganda' for ancient rulers. Volker Popp also notes that *'according to Islamic constitutional law the ruler is legitimised by mentioning his name in Fridays prayers and by his right to exercise the 'sikka' (minting right)..The right to strike and issue coinage makes it possible to determine the point in time at which land was seized and rule over it started to be exerted. Thus by looking at the dates provided by coins it can be ascertained that silver coins were struck at the time of Al-Mamun in San'a'* [p160]

818 a gold coin has the inscription of 'halifat al-Imam'. 824 silver coin mentions the 'Halifat' of 'Mamun'. Thus the offices of Caliph and Imam were likely developed during the reign of Al-Mamun'. If this office had existed earlier then, given its importance, it would have been referred to in inscriptions.

In coins from 824-827 we see the following inscriptions:

Muhammad rasul Allah (Muhammad is the messenger of God)

Al-Mamun Halifat Allah (Al-Mamun is the representative of God)

Wali ahd al-Muslimin (appointed representative of the covenant of the peaceful)

Ali bin Musa/ Ali bin Ali Talib

It should be noted that these coins are from IRAN not from Syria ie Fars, Isfahan, Rayy, Samarkand.

822 and 823 we have first known coins from Mecca itself. These were during the reign of Al-Mamun (813-833). They actually mention the name Mecca as the mint and this means that at that time, Mecca was a culturally significant place. But this begs the following question as stated by Volker Popp:

'How then did it come that this location suddenly emerged from out of nowhere' [p167]

Conclusion: What the Archaeology tells us

- Islam did not emerge suddenly as a result of a warrior prophet coming from Hijaz.
- The Arab empire did not come about via the conquest of hordes from Arabia. It came about via a power vacuum that resulted from defeat of Persian rulers and the abdication of these lands to Arab 'allies' by the Byzantines.
- The earliest Arab rulers were non-trinitarian Christians and monotheists.
- The words 'Muhammad' and 'Ali' were most likely honorific titles for Jesus.
- There were big differences in Syria/Palestine in west and Iraq/Iran in east over Christology and how 'divine right of rulers worked that continued to be a problem for decades after the empire began. There were also big differences in culture and ethnicity that created problems
- Beginning with Abd al-Malik (685-705), the rulers attempted to address this by 'unifying' their subjects in terms of race and religion. This they did by a kind of 'state religion' and 'Arab identity'
- This occurred via a process of 'evolution' beginning with Abd Malik and continuing with Al-Mamun (813-833) and the Abassid caliphs that follow him in the 9th century. It is no coincidence that the 'Sahih' Hadith collections also emerge in the second half of the 9th century
- The Islam we know today is the end result of this process of evolution.

The ‘evolution’ of Islam?

- Abd Malik becomes Caliph in 685 and he mints an Iranian coin that has Muhammad Rasul Allah (Muhammad is the messenger of God). (*This is more consistent with describing the ‘Praised one’ as the messenger of God ie Jesus.*)
- In 685 Abd Allah ibn az-Zubayr, rebels against Abd al Malik. Mints coin proclaiming ‘Muhammad’ as prophet of Allah
- 691 Dome of the Rock inscription declares that ‘Muhammad is the servant of God’ and that the ‘Messiah, Jesus son of Mary was a messenger’. (*The word Muhammad is more like to be used as a description not the name of a man from Mecca. The inscription refers to Jesus the Messiah and describes Him as both the ‘praised one’ and the ‘messenger of God. It is a Unitarian attack on the Trinity*)
- 692 Abd al Malik mints coin with figure of the Byzantine emperor Justinian II but NO CROSSES. On the other side is the inscription ‘in the name of God, there is no god but God alone, MHMT is his messenger’ (*Just like the Dome of the Rock inscription, this coin is most likely declaring that there is only one God and that Jesus is His messenger. It is an attack against the Trinity*)
- 692 Al-Zubayr commissions coins for eastern Iran and Afghanistan that the previous references to Zoroastrian fire altars with a version of the Shahada. (*If Islam arose as a complete new religion in the 630s with a scripture that was superior to Zoroastrianism, why did it take 70 years for the fire altar images to be removed? This is more consistent with a gradual development over decades rather than the SIN*)
- Abd al-Malik’s general Hajjaj Ibn Yusuf defeats Ibn al-Zubayr and then becomes governor of Iraq. Al-Hajjaj would go on to have a role in collection and distribution of Quran
- 696 First truly ‘Islamic’ coins appear. They do not feature an image of the ruler. They say ‘there is no god but God alone, He has no associates....Muhammad is the messenger of God whom he sent with guidance and the religion of truth that he might make it prevail over all religions even of the associators are averse’. The other side has ‘he did not beget and was not begotten. It is also possible that rather than representing the first “Islamic” Shada, this coin is more consistent with a Unitarian view of God that sees Jesus as Messiah but not divine. The ‘associators’ are those who say that someone else is divine like God. It should be obvious that this refers to Trinitarian Christians.
- Even if you accept the coin as ‘Islamic’, this is more than 60 years after the death of Muhammad and more than 70 years after the supposed founding of the **Muslim** Empire after the Hijra. If Islam was firmly established as the teachings of Muhammad in 632, then why did it take so long for supposed ‘Islamic’ rulers to put his teachings on their coins? Why were there crosses for so many years before this
- 690s The Word ‘Muhammad’ first appears on rock inscriptions
- 720 AD. The words ‘Muslim’ and Islam FIRST appear in rock inscriptions as a specific group different to Christianity. (*If Islam was a new religion begun by the prophet Muhammad in the 620s AD and conquered the Middle East by 640s, it simply does not make sense that there is NO MENTION in any rock inscriptions for a 100 YEARS. It is much more consistent with a gradual development where what became Islam began as a Unitarian Christian heresy.*)

BEST EXPLANATION BASED ON THE EVIDENCE?

- Islam was NOT founded in 622 as the teachings of a prophet called Muhammad from Mecca and Medina. Islam developed gradually over a period of decades.

- The first Arabs were Christians but they were non trinitarian Christians who did not regard Jesus as divine, but someone to be praised as the ‘messenger of God’.
- They referred to Jesus as ‘Muhammad’ or ‘the praised one’. They opposed trinitarians or anyone who called him divine as an ‘associator’

ARCHAEOLOGY PART 2: INSCRIPTIONS, PROTOCOLS, LETTERS.

- In addition to coins we have a number of other archaeological sources of evidence. They include the following:
- 7. Protocols. These are the identifying statement that preceded any official papyrus document produced on behalf of a ruler. They served a bureaucratic function that identified which ruler commissioned the document, who wrote it and when. Often they also contain a religious preamble. These preambles were often quite lengthy and had formulaic or creed-like statements of faith. From these we can gather at least some information on the religious beliefs of the time.
- 8. Public inscriptions that preceded any capital works or buildings.
- 9. Private inscriptions and iconography.

Protocols

The earliest papyrus protocols come from the reign of Abd al-Malik but they are not precisely dated. The earliest one that can be dated is from 88 AH (710) ie during the reign of Al-Walid. There are NO Arabic protocols from the Sufyani rulers ie Muawiya and his sons.

From the time of Abd al-Malik, we see the statement ‘Muhammad is the messenger of Allah’ and ‘there is no God but Allah alone’.

In 705 we see Walid saying the same thing but adding the formula of Muhammad having the ‘guidance of the religion of truth’.

In 716-17 a protocol of Umar II has all of the preceding components but then adds statements about Allah having ‘no associates’. It also says that ‘he did not beget and was not begotten’.

So here we again see clear evidence of EVOLUTION of a belief. Things get progressively added over time. Nevo and Cohen quote Abbot (1938 p21) who stated the 9th century Muslim historian Al-Baladuri “*noted that Abd al-Malik was the first Caliph to use Islamic ie Mohammedan phrases in it, and that previously, Christian formulae had been used*” [p284]

Pre 7th century

In northern Mesopotamia in the so-called Jazira (‘island’) between the Tigris and Euphrates, the city of Hatra was populated from Roman times ie 2nd Century AD. There is an inscription that describes the region of ‘Arab’. It comes from same Semitic root as the Hebrew ‘Ereb’ meaning ‘west’. When viewed from the Tigris, Hatra would have been WEST and the inhabitants of Hatra would be viewed as ‘Arabi’ ie inhabitants of the west. So we have a reference to ‘Arab’ and ‘Arabi’ from 2nd century AD.

In 1928 ruins dating to 13th century B.C discovered in Western Syria. Among the discoveries were texts written in a cuneiform consonantal script known as Ugaritic. The word MHMD which is the root for Muhammad is used to describe gold at its highest level of purity. The sense of the word is 'choicest or chosen'. They also use the term SMD, which is the root of the term Al-Samadu, used to describe Allah in surah 112.

Therefore we have a reference to the word MHMD dating to nearly 2000 years before the Prophet of Islam is supposed to have lived. This supports the idea that where the word MHMD is used in the Quran, it is used as an honorific title.

Himyarite inscription 523 has MHMD with the Lord of the Jews. There are 2 obvious reasons that this cannot be a reference to the Muhammad of the SIN.
It is written nearly 50 years before he was even born (570 according to the SIN)
The Muhammad of the SIN would never associate with the Lord of the Jews.



[Agrandir +](#) [Télécharger l'image \(.jpg, 53.57 KB\) !\[\]\(efafcae43acae17c4bb9f41420411b00_img.jpg\)](#)

Fig. 9: Detail of Ja 1028, July 523 CE: The last line is to be read *rb-hd b-mḥmd*, 'Lord of the Jews with the Praised One'. Photograph by MAFSN.

Evidence of the Rock Inscriptions (7th century on)

- As noted above there were pagan inscriptions on rocks until the 6th centuries in Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Negev and the Northern Arabian Peninsula.
- From the 7th century we find inscriptions in the same general areas where the pagans wrote which are now NOT pagan but monotheistic. About 400 have been found in the Negev alone.
- These inscriptions can be divided into 3 groups:
 1. Basic inscriptions
 2. Muhammadan inscriptions
 3. Muslim Inscriptions.

Basic Inscriptions (660-730)

- These inscriptions are in the Kufic script and in Classical Arabic and most of them are private prayers written by ordinary people or by scribes on their behalf.
- It is clear that they are NOT Islamic. There is no mention of Muhammad, Tawhid, Islam and they do not engage in the kind of polemics typical of later 'Muslim' writings.
- There is no mention of an 'Arab prophet' or Muhammad. They talk about men being sinners that need God's protection and grace as well as about 'paradise'
- They also do not mention anything that could be deemed typically 'Christian'. There is no 'Father, Son and Holy Ghost. The only deity is 'Allah' which is merely the Arabic word for 'God'. Allah is the 'Lord of Moses and Jesus' which suggests that Jesus is a messenger and not divine

Muhammadan Inscriptions (beginning at 730 AD during reign of Hisham)

- These are the first references to Muhammad as a prophet in popular inscriptions.
- They portray him as a human capable of sinning like everyone else and request pardon for him.
- The terms 'sirat Mustaqim' (the right way), Huda (guidance) and jihad (struggle) also appear for the first time

Muslim Inscriptions

- They begin in 780s and go to 920s
- They include the idea that a Muslim should announce his faith and words similar to 'shahada' are used commonly.
- The Muslim idea of paradise, hell and resurrection are also common.

Therefore in the private inscriptions we don't see any mention of Muhammad until the reign of Hisham, 40 years after Abd al-Malik's declaration on the Dome of the Rock.

Public Inscriptions

- In 661 Muawiya commissioned a bathhouse in Gadara. It mentions Muawiya as 'Abd Allah and 'Amir al-Muminin' ('commander of the believers). The inscription begins with a Byzantine CROSS. In year 663 we have inscription naming Muawiya as the 'Abd Allah' ie 'servant of God' on a bathhouse in Gadara.' At the beginning of the inscription is a CROSS. We also see the inscription dated with the phrase 'the year of the Arabs' NOT 'the year of the Hijra'.

This suggests that Muawiya either was a Christian or was very sympathetic to Christians. Even if he was simply deferring to Christian sensitivities and was not a Christian himself, he cannot have been a Muslim as the Quran is completely against the crucifixion and the

cross. We also see that his name is written in the Aramaic form (MAAUIA), not the Arabic form (MAWIA).

'Even if Muawiya's use of Christian symbols and behaviour toward Christians, as an extremely Christian ruler may have made obligatory his understanding of the use of taquiyya, by naming his own method of dating as the 'era of the Arabians' rather than the 'era of Islam' or an 'era of the Hijra', he nonetheless betrays the fact that the prophet of the Arabians, as well as the 'era of the Hijra' are not yet known to him' [p40]

677 we see this title used in inscriptions and coins commissioned by other Umayyad rulers ie Abd al-Malik (682), al-Walid (705), Sulayman (715-720), Hisham (723-743), Marwan (745) [p31]

- 678 Muawiya inscription on dam near Ta'if : *this is the dam [belonging] to Abd Allah [servant of God] Muawiya Amir al-Muminin [Commander of the Faithful]. Abdallah bin Saxr built it with God's permission in the year 58. Allah! Forgive the servant of God Muawiya, Amir al-Muminin. Confirm him in his position and help him, and let the faithful rejoice in him. Amir b Janab wrote it* . Note that he is given the title 'Amir al-Muminin' or 'commander of the faithful'. He is NOT called 'Khalifa' or 'Caliph'.
- 688 we have inscription on bridge over the canal at Fustat, Egypt which was built by the order of Abd al-Aziz, brother of Abd al-Malik. *'This is the arch which Abd al-Aziz bin Marwan, the Amir ordered to be built. Allah! Bless him in all his deeds, confirm his authority as You please, and make him greatly satisfied in himself and his household, amen! Sa'd Abu Uthman built it and Abd al-Rahman wrote it in the month of Safar of the year 69'*
- It should be noted that this inscription predates the Dome of the Rock by only 2 years and there is NO MENTION of Muhammad or anything 'Islamic'. In fact it is very similar to the Muawiya inscription.
- In 692-693 inscription at Aqabah called the 'winding road' because it discussed improvements made to a mountain road. It reads *'in the name of Allah the compassionate, the Merciful; there is no God but Allah alone, he has no sarik [associator]. Muhammad is the messenger of Allah... Abd Allah [servant of God] Abd al-Malik, Amir al-Muminin [commander of the faithful] ordered the straightening of this mountain road. "*
- So we see that before 690 the state religion was NOT Mohammedan. If it were, then it would have been on the protocols and all public inscriptions. In fact it was similar to what it had been under Muawiya. After 690 however everything changed and it became 'Mohammedan'
- What changed between 688 and 692? Abd al-Malik became undisputed ruler.
- In 705, Walid became Caliph and one of his first acts was to pull down the inner walls of St John's Church in Damascus and turn it into a Masjid. There is an inscription that says words to the effect of '*there is no god but Allah and we shall worship him; Muhammad is the messenger of Allah; our din is Islam*'.
- This is significant because by replacing a church with a mosque and then inscribing on it that the 'din is Islam', Walid was making public declaration that the days of the Christians were over; the followers of Islam were now in charge.
- *'In political terms, Walid was making an overt break with Byzantium. This was expressed by his religious attitude toward the Christians ie the Rumi [Roman] faction. It was under Walid that the Rumi elite-such as John of Damascus among many others-found it increasingly difficult to retain their government positions. The point of Walid's ostentatious anti-Christian policy was to demonstrate publicly that the Arab state could*

now run itself. By the time of Umar II, this point had been well made...it was clear to everyone that the Christians no longer ran the state" [Nevo, p295]

The Disappearing Cross

- As we saw above, coins from Muawiya's time often had Christian symbols on them such as Crosses or Fish. We even see coins with the word MHMD as well as the cross.
- In addition, we see the Cross used at the beginning of his official bathhouse inscription.
- So in Muawiya's time either the rulers had no objection to the Cross.
- This is consistent with the other evidence that suggests that the earliest Arab rulers ie the Sufyanis were either some kind of Christian sect or some kind of Judeo-Christian monotheists. Whatever they were, they were NOT Muslims as per the SIN.
- From about the late 680s we see the attitude to the Cross change. Coins get issued with the arms of the Cross bent, or turned into a T shape.
- After 691, we see coins with the Muhammad Rasul Allah formula and they have no crosses.
- 720 AD. The words 'Muslim' and Islam FIRST appear in rock inscriptions as a specific group different to Christianity. (*If Islam was a new religion begun by the prophet Muhammad in the 620s AD and conquered the Middle East by 640s, it simply does not make sense that there is NO MENTION in any rock inscriptions for a 100 YEARS. It is much more consistent with a gradual development where what became Islam began as a Unitarian Christian heresy.*)
-

The conclusion is clear. The evidence from the protocols and inscriptions is consistent with what we see in the coins: that the earlier Arabs were some kind of Christian sect or Judeo-Christian monotheists. It is only after the Sufyani rulers ie from Abd al-Malik do we see anything resembling the Islam we know today and the Muhammad of the SIN.

BEST EXPLANATION BASED ON THE EVIDENCE?

- Islam was NOT founded in 622 as the teachings of a prophet called Muhammad from Mecca and Medina. Islam developed gradually over a period of decades.
- The first Arabs were Christians but they were non trinitarian Christians who did not regard Jesus as divine, but someone to be praised as the 'messenger of God'.
- They referred to Jesus as 'Muhammad' or 'the praised one'. They opposed trinitarians or anyone who called him divine as an 'associator'

INSCRIPTIONS

- In addition to coins we have a number of other archaeological sources of evidence. They include the following:
 4. Public inscriptions that preceded any capital works or buildings. They were usually done on behalf of the ruler
 5. Private inscriptions and iconography ie those that were written by or on behalf of a certain individual.
 6. Protocols. These are the identifying statement that preceded any official papyrus document produced on behalf of a ruler. They served a bureaucratic function that identified which ruler commissioned the document, who wrote it and when. Often they also contain a religious preamble. These preambles were often quite lengthy and had formulaic or creed-like statements of faith. From these we can gather at least some information on the religious beliefs of the time.

What do Public Inscriptions tell us?

- The earliest inscriptions have NO MENTION of Muhammad, 'Muslim' or anything 'Islamic'. Indeed they have crosses on them! This includes one by Muawiya who, according to the SIN was the 5th Caliph and a 'Muslim'.
- The photo below is from an inscription from a bathhouse in Gadara dated AD 663 ie year 42 'according to the Arabs' which names Muawiya and has a CROSS at the beginning.
- ***It is HIGHLY UNLIKELY that a 'Muslim' ruler would allow this***
-
- The first reference to 'Muhammad Rasul Allah' ie (Muhammad is the Messenger of God) is not until 690 with the Dome of the Rock. A very convincing case can be made for the term 'Muhammad' to mean a TITLE for Jesus rather than the name of the Prophet from Mecca.
- The first mention of 'Islam' on an inscription is not until AD 705 ie 75 years after Muhammad conquered Mecca.

What do Private inscriptions tell us

- There is NO MENTION of Muhammad, Islam or any doctrine of Islam in any inscription from 660 to 730AD.
- The first reference to Muhammad as a prophet appear during reign of Hisham around AD730. That is 100 YEARS after Muhammad supposedly conquered Mecca.
- The first references to 'Muslim' teachings don't appear until AD 780.

Evidence of the Rock Inscriptions

- As noted above there were pagan inscriptions on rocks until the 6th centuries in Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Negev and the Northern Arabian Peninsula.
- From the 7th century we find inscriptions in the same general areas where the pagans wrote which are now NOT pagan but monotheistic. About 400 have been found in the Negev alone.
- These inscriptions can be divided into 3 groups:
 1. Basic inscriptions
 2. Muhammadan inscriptions
 3. Muslim Inscriptions.

Basic Inscriptions (660-730)

- These inscriptions are in the Kufic script and in Classical Arabic and most of them are private prayers written by ordinary people or by scribes on their behalf.
- It is clear that they are NOT Islamic. There is no mention of Muhammad, Tawhid, Islam and they do not engage in the kind of polemics typical of later 'Muslim' writings.
- There is no mention of an 'Arab prophet' or Muhammad. They talk about men being sinners that need God's protection and grace as well as about 'paradise'
- They also do not mention anything that could be deemed typically 'Christian'. There is no 'Father, Son and Holy Ghost. The only deity is 'Allah' which is merely the Arabic word for 'God'. Allah is the 'Lord of Moses and Jesus' which suggests that Jesus is a messenger and not divine

Muhammadan Inscriptions (beginning at 730 AD during reign of Hisham)

- These are the first references to Muhammad as a prophet in popular inscriptions.
- They portray him as a human capable of sinning like everyone else and request pardon for him.
- The terms 'sirat Mustaqim' (the right way), Huda (guidance) and jihad (struggle) also appear for the first time

Muslim Inscriptions

- They begin in 780s and go to 920s
- They include the idea that a Muslim should announce his faith and words similar to 'shahada' are used commonly.
- The Muslim idea of paradise, hell and resurrection are also common.

Therefore in the private inscriptions we don't see any mention of Muhammad until the reign of Hisham, 40 years after Abd al-Malik's declaration on the Dome of the Rock.

Public Inscriptions

- In 661 Muawiya commissioned a bathhouse in Gadara. It mentions Muawiya as 'Abd Allah and 'Amir al-Muminin'. The inscription begins with a Byzantine CROSS.
- 678 Muawiya inscription on dam near Ta'if : *this is the dam [belonging] to Abd Allah [servant of God] Muawiya Amir al-Muminin [Commander of the Faithful]. Abdallah bin Saxr built it with God's permission in the year 58. Allah! Forgive the servant of God Muawiya, Amir al-Muminin. Confirm him in his position and help him, and let the faithful rejoice in him. Amir b Janab wrote it'*
- 688 we have inscription on bridge over the canal at Fustat, Egypt which was built by the order of Abd al-Aziz, brother of Abd al-Malik. *'This is the arch which Abd al-Aziz bin Marwan, the Amir ordered to be built. Allah! Bless him in all his deeds, confirm his authority as You please, and make him greatly satisfied in himself and his household, amen! Sa'd Abu Uthman built it and Abd al-Rahman wrote it in the month of Safar of the year 69'*
- It should be noted that this inscription predates the Dome of the Rock by only 2 years and there is NO MENTION of Muhammad or anything 'Islamic'. In fact it is very similar to the Muawiya inscription.
- In 692-693 inscription at Aqabah called the 'winding road' because it discussed improvements made to a mountain road. It reads *'in the name of Allah the compassionate, the Merciful; there is no God but Allah alone, he has no sarik [associator]. Muhammad is the messenger of Allah... Abd Allah [servant of God] Abd al-Malik, Amir al-Muminin [commander of the faithful] ordered the straightening of this mountain road. "*
- So we see that before 690 the state religion was NOT Mohammadan. If it were, then it would have been on the protocols and all public inscriptions. In fact it was similar to

what it had been under Muawiya. After 690 however everything changed and it became 'Mohammedan'

- What changed between 688 and 692? Abd al-Malik became undisputed ruler.
- In 705, Walid became Caliph and one of his first acts was to pull down the inner walls of St John's Church in Damascus and turn it into a Masjid. There is an inscription that says words to the effect of '*there is no god but Allah and we shall worship him; Muhammad is the messenger of Allah; our din is Islam*'.
- This is significant because by replacing a church with a mosque and then inscribing on it that the 'din is Islam', Walid was making public declaration that the days of the Christians were over; the followers of Islam were now in charge.
- '*In political terms, Walid was making an overt break with Byzantium. This was expressed by his religious attitude toward the Christians ie the Rumi [Roman] faction. It was under Walid that the Rumi elite-such as John of Damascus among many others-found it increasingly difficult to retain their government positions. The point of Walid's ostentatious anti-Christian policy was to demonstrate publicly that the Arab state could now run itself. By the time of Umar II, this point had been well made...it was clear to everyone that the Christians no longer ran the state*' [Nevo, p295]

Protocols

- The protocols are not as helpful because we have none from Muawiya's time. The earliest ones come from reign of Abd al-Malik but they cannot be precisely dated. The earliest one that can be dated is from 88 AH (710) ie during the reign of Al-Walid.
- Again it appears that Abd al-Malik was the first to use the Muhammadan formula and that prior to this CHRISTIAN formulae were used [Nevo and Cohen, p284]
- They also show evidence of a progression or EVOLUTION of beliefs where things get progressively added over time.
- Evidence of this is as follows:
 - C. From the time of Abd al-Malik, we see the statement 'Muhammad is the messenger of Allah' and 'there is no God but Allah alone'.
 - D. In 705 we see Walid saying the same thing but adding the formula of Muhammad having the 'guidance of the religion of truth'.
 - E. In 716-17 a protocol of Umar II has all of the preceding components but then adds statements about Allah having 'no associators'. It also says that 'he did not beget and was not begotten'.

Inscriptions and Muawiya

Royal Rock Inscriptions with crosses.

There is a bathhouse in Gadara in Palestine dedicated by Muawiya. It has an inscription that refers to Muawiya the 'servant of God'.

The inscription begins with a CROSS.

It also dates the inscription using the phrase 'year of the Arabs' rather than 'after the Hijra' as would be expected by SIN.

[Ohlig and Puin, the Hidden Origins of Islam]

Muawiya

Muawiya is the first historically verifiable ruler of the Arabs after Heraclius. We have the Inscription on a bathhouse in Gadara dated 663 we see in Greek 'Maavia al-momenin'. Again this names Muawiya as commander of the faithful and his name is again spelt using the Aramaic form. What is significant is that the inscription begins with a BYZANTINE CROSS.

4. Inscription on a bathhouse in Ta'if dated to 680 is written in Arabic and also names Muawiya as 'Amir al-muminin'

Here Mu'awiya's name is written in the tradition of Aramaic names.
This is also the case for the next inscription:

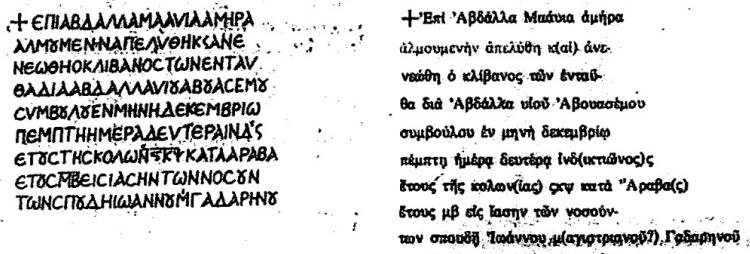


Fig. 4: The inscription of Mu'awiya in the baths of Gadara from the year 42 "kata Arabas – according to the Arabs". Israel Exploration Journal, vol. 32 (1982), p. 94.

Inscription on Dam near Ta'if 677

Muawiya dedicates this dam with an inscription that describes Muawiya as servant of God and commander of the faithful. There is no mention of Muhammad or Islam

Inscriptions Abd al-Malik

What do Private inscriptions tell us

- There is NO MENTION of Muhammad, Islam or any doctrine of Islam in any inscription from 660 to 730AD.
- The first reference to Muhammad as a prophet appear during reign of Hisham around AD730. That is 100 YEARS after Muhammad supposedly conquered Mecca.
- The first references to 'Muslim' teachings don't appear until AD 780.

Basic Inscriptions (660-730)

- These inscriptions are in the Kufic script and in Classical Arabic and most of them are private prayers written by ordinary people or by scribes on their behalf.
- It is clear that they are NOT Islamic. There is no mention of Muhammad, Tawhid, Islam and they do not engage in the kind of polemics typical of later 'Muslim' writings.
- There is no mention of an 'Arab prophet' or Muhammad. They talk about men being sinners that need God's protection and grace as well as about 'paradise'
- They also do not mention anything that could be deemed typically 'Christian'. There is no 'Father, Son and Holy Ghost. The only deity is 'Allah' which is merely the Arabic word for 'God'. Allah is the 'Lord of Moses and Jesus' which suggests that Jesus is a messenger and not divine

Muhammadan Inscriptions (beginning at 730 AD during reign of Hisham)

- These are the first references to Muhammad as a prophet in popular inscriptions.
- They portray him as a human capable of sinning like everyone else and request pardon for him.
- The terms 'sirat Mustaqim' (the right way), Huda (guidance) and jihad (struggle) also appear for the first time

Muslim Inscriptions

- They begin in 780s and go to 920s

- They include the idea that a Muslim should announce his faith and words similar to 'shahada' are used commonly.
- The Muslim idea of paradise, hell and resurrection are also common.

Therefore in the private inscriptions we don't see any mention of Muhammad until the reign of Hisham, 40 years after Abd al-Malik's declaration on the Dome of the Rock.

•

Public inscriptions

Public Inscriptions

- 688 we have inscription on bridge over the canal at Fustat, Egypt which was built by the order of Abd al-Aziz, brother of Abd al-Malik. *'This is the arch which Abd al-Aziz bin Marwan, the Amir ordered to be built. Allah! Bless him in all his deeds, confirm his authority as You please, and make him greatly satisfied in himself and his household, amen! Sa'd Abu Uthman built it and Abd al-Rahman wrote it in the month of Safar of the year 69'*
- It should be noted that this inscription predates the Dome of the Rock by only 2 years and there is NO MENTION of Muhammad or anything 'Islamic'. In fact it is very similar to the Muawiya inscription.
- 691 Dome of the Rock
- lead seal from Joppa dating to his reign. It has the inscription *'la illah illa llah wahdahu la sarik (a) la-hu, muhammad (un) rasul Allah'*. This can be translated as 'there is no deity other than God alone, he has no companion, the messenger of God is the Chosen One'.
- Abd al-Malik also improved the road from Damascus to Jerusalem and provided milestones along the way.
- In 692-693 inscription at Aqabah called the 'winding road' because it discussed improvements made to a mountain road. It reads *'in the name of Allah the compassionate, the Merciful; there is no God but Allah alone, he has no sarik [associator]. Muhammad is the messenger of Allah... Abd Allah [servant of God] Abd al-Malik, Amir al-Muminin [commander of the faithful] ordered the straightening of this mountain road.'*
- So we see that before 690 the state religion was NOT Mohammedan. If it were, then it would have been on the protocols and all public inscriptions. In fact it was similar to what it had been under Muawiya. After 690 however everything changed and it became 'Mohammedan'
- What changed between 688 and 692? Abd al-Malik became undisputed ruler.
- In 705, Walid became Caliph and one of his first acts was to pull down the inner walls of St John's Church in Damascus and turn it into a Masjid. There is an inscription that says words to the effect of *'there is no god but Allah and we shall worship him; Muhammad is the messenger of Allah; our din is Islam'*.
- This is significant because by replacing a church with a mosque and then inscribing on it that the 'din is Islam', Walid was making public declaration that the days of the Christians were over; the followers of Islam were now in charge.
- *'In political terms, Walid was making an overt break with Byzantium. This was expressed by his religious attitude toward the Christians ie the Rumi [Roman] faction. It was under Walid that the Rumi elite-such as John of Damascus among many others-found it increasingly difficult to retain their government positions. The point of Walid's ostentatious anti-Christian policy was to demonstrate publicly that the Arab state could now run itself. By the time of Umar II, this point had been well made...it was clear to everyone that the Christians no longer ran the state'* [Nevo, p295]

Protocols

- The protocols are not as helpful because we have none from Muawiya's time. The earliest ones come from reign of Abd al-Malik but they cannot be precisely dated. The earliest one that can be dated is from 88 AH (710) ie during the reign of Al-Walid.
- Again it appears that Abd al-Malik was the first to use the Muhammadan formula and that prior to this CHRISTIAN formulae were used [Nevo and Cohen, p284]
- They also show evidence of a progression or EVOLUTION of beliefs where things get progressively added over time.
- Evidence of this is as follows:
 - F. From the time of Abd al-Malik, we see the statement 'Muhammad is the messenger of Allah' and 'there is no God but Allah alone'.
 - G. In 705 we see Walid saying the same thing but adding the formula of Muhammad having the 'guidance of the religion of truth'.
 - H. In 716-17 a protocol of Umar II has all of the preceding components but then adds statements about Allah having 'no associates'. It also says that 'he did not beget and was not begotten'.

Inscriptions Abd al-Malik

What do Private inscriptions tell us

- There is NO MENTION of Muhammad, Islam or any doctrine of Islam in any inscription from 660 to 730AD.
- The first reference to Muhammad as a prophet appear during reign of Hisham around AD730. That is 100 YEARS after Muhammad supposedly conquered Mecca.
- The first references to 'Muslim' teachings don't appear until AD 780.

Basic Inscriptions (660-730)

- These inscriptions are in the Kufic script and in Classical Arabic and most of them are private prayers written by ordinary people or by scribes on their behalf.
- It is clear that they are NOT Islamic. There is no mention of Muhammad, Tawhid, Islam and they do not engage in the kind of polemics typical of later 'Muslim' writings.
- There is no mention of an 'Arab prophet' or Muhammad. They talk about men being sinners that need God's protection and grace as well as about 'paradise'
- They also do not mention anything that could be deemed typically 'Christian'. There is no 'Father, Son and Holy Ghost. The only deity is 'Allah' which is merely the Arabic word for 'God'. Allah is the 'Lord of Moses and Jesus' which suggests that Jesus is a messenger and not divine

Muhammadan Inscriptions (beginning at 730 AD during reign of Hisham)

- These are the first references to Muhammad as a prophet in popular inscriptions.
- They portray him as a human capable of sinning like everyone else and request pardon for him.
- The terms 'sirat Mustaqim' (the right way), Huda (guidance) and jihad (struggle) also appear for the first time

Muslim Inscriptions

- They begin in 780s and go to 920s
- They include the idea that a Muslim should announce his faith and words similar to 'shahada' are used commonly.
- The Muslim idea of paradise, hell and resurrection are also common.

Therefore in the private inscriptions we don't see any mention of Muhammad until the reign of Hisham, 40 years after Abd al-Malik's declaration on the Dome of the Rock.

•

Public inscriptions

Public Inscriptions

- 688 we have inscription on bridge over the canal at Fustat, Egypt which was built by the order of Abd al-Aziz, brother of Abd al-Malik. *'This is the arch which Abd al-Aziz bin Marwan, the Amir ordered to be built. Allah! Bless him in all his deeds, confirm his authority as You please, and make him greatly satisfied in himself and his household, amen! Sa'd Abu Uthman built it and Abd al-Rahman wrote it in the month of Safar of the year 69'*
- It should be noted that this inscription predates the Dome of the Rock by only 2 years and there is NO MENTION of Muhammad or anything 'Islamic'. In fact it is very similar to the Muawiya inscription.
- 691 Dome of the Rock
- lead seal from Joppa dating to his reign. It has the inscription *'la illah illa llah wahdahu la sarik (a) la-hu, muhammad (un) rasul Allah'*. This can be translated as 'there is no deity other than God alone, he has no companion, the messenger of God is the Chosen One'.
- Abd al-Malik also improved the road from Damascus to Jerusalem and provided milestones along the way.
- In 692-693 inscription at Aqabah called the 'winding road' because it discussed improvements made to a mountain road. It reads *'in the name of Allah the compassionate, the Merciful; there is no God but Allah alone, he has no sarik [associator]. Muhammad is the messenger of Allah... Abd Allah [servant of God] Abd al-Malik, Amir al-Muminin [commander of the faithful] ordered the straightening of this mountain road.'*
- So we see that before 690 the state religion was NOT Mohammedan. If it were, then it would have been on the protocols and all public inscriptions. In fact it was similar to what it had been under Muawiya. After 690 however everything changed and it became 'Mohammedan'
- What changed between 688 and 692? Abd al-Malik became undisputed ruler.
- In 705, Walid became Caliph and one of his first acts was to pull down the inner walls of St John's Church in Damascus and turn it into a Masjid. There is an inscription that says words to the effect of *'there is no god but Allah and we shall worship him; Muhammad is the messenger of Allah; our din is Islam'*.
- This is significant because by replacing a church with a mosque and then inscribing on it that the 'din is Islam', Walid was making public declaration that the days of the Christians were over; the followers of Islam were now in charge.
- *'In political terms, Walid was making an overt break with Byzantium. This was expressed by his religious attitude toward the Christians ie the Rumi [Roman] faction. It was under Walid that the Rumi elite-such as John of Damascus among many others-found it increasingly difficult to retain their government positions. The point of Walid's ostentatious anti-Christian policy was to demonstrate publicly that the Arab state could now run itself. By the time of Umar II, this point had been well made...it was clear to everyone that the Christians no longer ran the state'* [Nevo, p295]

Protocols

- The protocols are not as helpful because we have none from Muawiya's time. The earliest ones come from reign of Abd al-Malik but they cannot be precisely dated. The earliest one that can be dated is from 88 AH (710) ie during the reign of Al-Walid.

- Again it appears that Abd al-Malik was the first to use the Muhammadi formula and that prior to this CHRISTIAN formulae were used [Nevo and Cohen, p284]
- They also show evidence of a progression or EVOLUTION of beliefs where things get progressively added over time.
- Evidence of this is as follows:
 - I. From the time of Abd al-Malik, we see the statement ‘Muhammad is the messenger of Allah’ and ‘there is no God but Allah alone’.
 - J. In 705 we see Walid saying the same thing but adding the formula of Muhammad having the ‘guidance of the religion of truth’.
 - K. In 716-17 a protocol of Umar II has all of the preceding components but then adds statements about Allah having ‘no associates’. It also says that ‘he did not beget and was not begotten’.

After Abd al-Malik

- Al-Walid is mentioned on copper coin from year 708. He is also mentioned on the inscription on the Umayyad Mosque from same year.
- Sulayman does not appear on any coins but he is mentioned in a lead sealing
- Hisham (724-743) is mentioned on an inscription on the Qasr al-Hayr dated 732.
- Walid II is mentioned indirectly in an inscription naming ‘Uthman bin Al-Walid’. This is dated 749
- Yazid bin Umar is mentioned on a coin from 751
- A ruler thought by some to be “Marwan II” is mentioned in lead sealings from year 749. Other scholars interpret the reference to Marwan to mean ‘the one from Merv’. They read it as follows: *‘During the representation (khilafa) of the servant of God (Abd’allah) of the man from Marwa/Merv (‘Marwan’), head of the protectors (amir al-muminun)’* This is similar to how Abd al-Malik was referred to as the ‘son of Marwan’ when it could just as easily mean ‘the one from Merv’.
- Sulayman tried to invade Constantinople around 718. Emperor Leo repelled the attack, again using ‘Greek fire’. The Bulgars also joined the war on the side of the Byzantines and blockade of the city was lifted.
- Fighting continued on land with battles in Cappadocia and Nicaea. It finally ended in 740 when the Khazars of Central Asia helped the Byzantines
- As noted above, Abd al-Malik ruled over an empire with fundamentally different religious ideas and had to find a way to balance them. He was relatively successful at this but it appears that his successors were not as successful. This probably explains why none of the Umayyad rulers after Abd al-Malik had anywhere near his power and longevity. Whereas Abd al-Malik himself reigned for 20 years from 685-705, the reign of his son and successor Al-Walid was only half as long. From 715 to 750 we see 8 different rulers. The longest of these was Abd al-Malik’s son Hisham who reigned for 19 years. There is a period of unrest after the death of Hisham which Islamic traditions interpret as indicating a kind of ‘civil war’

The Dome of the Rock Inscription

[VOLKER POPP: HIDDEN ORIGINS OF ISLAM]

The Dome of the Rock.

- It is arranged like a Syrian Christian church that follows the plan of the temple of Solomon. Accordingly it has an innermost part supported by 4 posts and 12 columns (12 disciples of Jesus). There are inscriptions on the walls that make theological statements.
- This follows the pattern established by Heraclius who published his 'ekthesis' on Monotheletism on the walls of the Hagia Sophia cathedral in Constantinople. Heraclius did this to have a theological impact on quarrelling Christians. He was trying to settle the Monophysite/Nestorian/ Chalcedonian disagreements over Christology. In the same way, Abd Al-Malik was making a theological statement to settle these continuing disputes that were dividing his empire.
- The oldest inscription is around the inner octagon. The following translation is taken from the website 'Islamic Awareness'. [The letters S, SE, E, etc refer to South, South East, East etc.]

S In the name of God, the Merciful the Compassionate. There is no god but God. He is One. He has no associate. Unto Him belongeth sovereignty and unto Him belongeth praise. He quickeneth and He giveth death; and He has Power over all things. Muhammad is the servant of God and His Messenger.

SE Lo! God and His angels shower blessings on the Prophet. O ye who believe! Ask blessings on him and salute him with a worthy salutation. The blessing of God be on him and peace be on him, and may God have mercy. O People of the Book! Do not exaggerate in your religion

E nor utter aught concerning God save the truth. The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only a Messenger of God, and His Word which He conveyed unto Mary, and a spirit from Him. So believe in God and His messengers, and say not 'Three' - Cease! (it is)

NE better for you! - God is only One God. Far be it removed from His transcendent majesty that He should have a son. His is all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. And God is sufficient as Defender. The Messiah will never scorn to be a

N servant unto God, nor will the favoured angels. Whoso scorneth His service and is proud, all such will He assemble unto Him. Oh God, bless Your Messenger and Your servant Jesus

NW son of Mary. Peace be on him the day he was born, and the day he dies, and the day he shall be raised alive! Such was Jesus, son of Mary, (this is) a statement of the truth concerning which they doubt. It befitteth not (the Majesty of) God that He should take unto Himself a son. Glory be to Him!

W When He decreeth a thing, He saith unto it only: Be! and it is. Lo! God is my Lord and your Lord. So serve Him. That is the right path. God (Himself) is witness that there is no God save Him. And the angels and the men of learning (too are witness). Maintaining His creation in justice, there is no God save Him,

SW the Almighty, the Wise. Lo! religion with God (is) Islam. Those who (formerly) received the Book differed only after knowledge came unto them, through transgression among themselves. Whoso disbelieveth the revelations of God (will find that) lo! God is swift at reckoning!"

- If one reads this inscription WITHOUT the influence or bias of the SIN, one cannot help but notice that the person it is most concerned about is JESUS.
- L. It mentions him by name 3 TIMES and then a further time as 'Messiah'.
- M. In addition it is a clear polemic against the trinity and the divinity of Christ. It also mentions the 'sonship', 'associate', 'say not 3' which are again clearly about the Christian belief that Jesus is divine.

- N. It talks about the day Jesus was born, the day he dies and the day he is raised alive.
- O. There is only ONE mention of 'Muhammad' and one mention of 'prophet'. Jesus was regarded as a prophet by many Christians. In addition the root of the word 'muhammad' ie HMD is also used where it is rendered 'to him belongs praise'
- P. the word Muhammad can just as easily mean the 'chosen one, desired one' rather than being a proper name.
- If one puts aside the SIN, it is clear that the inscription is an anti trinitarian polemic clearly stating that Jesus, while being THE Muhammad ie the 'chosen one' is just a messenger of God and not God Himself. If the SIN were true and the raider from Mecca were the 'seal of the prophets' then surely this inscription should have been all about HIM rather than Jesus, son of Mary.

[CHRISTOPHE LUXEMBERG: HIDDEN ORIGINS OF ISLAM

Dome of the Rock inscription around the inner side of the octagon is over 240 meters long and is written in Kufic monumental script. It has no diacritical marks for the most part. Those that exist are thought to have been added later by Al-Mamun in 838 AD.

It should be noted that we are under no strict obligation to translate MHMD as a proper name. It is, grammatically speaking a gerundival participle of the root HMD. In this sense it would mean 'being praised' or 'being chosen' or even 'praised be' ..

Given that we already see the root HMD used before it, the word MHMD can be seen as a **gerundival participle** of the root HMD rather than a proper noun.

In addition, if the word MHMD were to be a name ie a noun, there would need to be some form of the verb 'to be' ie 'is' to have the sentence make sense. For example, we would not say 'John disciple of Jesus' and expect people to read that as a sentence. We would say 'John IS the disciple of Jesus' or 'John WAS the disciple of Jesus for it make sense as a sentence.

In semitic languages however, if one uses a gerundival participle of a verb, one does not need the coupling verb 'is' because the participle form is already a verb itself.

Therefore the sentence makes more sense to be read 'Praised be the servant of God and his messenger'

We see similar uses of the gerundival participle form for Psalm 118:26 and Matthew 21:9 ie 'Blessed be the one who comes in the name of the Lord'. The Arabic word for 'bless' is barak and the participle form is 'mubarak'. Indeed that is what we see: 'Mubarakun (blessed be) alati (the one who comes) bismi (in the name of) Rabb (the Lord)"

In addition we see that later on in the inscription we see the supplication of 'O God *bless your messenger and servant, Jesus, Son of Mary*'. We saw in the opening supplication it says ""muhammad" is the servant of God and his messenger". This is just the same supplication as the opening one with the titles reversed.

It makes very little sense for the inscription (which would have been authorised by Abd al-Malik himself) to spend so much time blessing the servant and messenger of God Jesus, if he really intended it to describe someone else entirely.

There is a long Syrian Christian tradition referring to Jesus as 'Abd Allah' or servant of God. Indeed we see in the 'Martyrdom of Polycarp (2nd century AD) the phrase 'praised

servant' Jesus Christ which would read 'muhammad(un) abd illahi. We also see in Quran 19:30 where the infant Jesus speaks from his cradle and declares that '*I am the servant of God; he gave me the scripture and made me a prophet*'

There is also a substantial Christian tradition (the Cave of Treasures, the Book of Enoch) that spoke of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem as the centre of the earth and that the Messiah was supposedly crucified there. This would have given Abd Al-Malik good reason to build a Syrian Christian building on this site.

Luxemberg then reexamines Sura 72:18-20 using the hypothesis that the Quran was originally derived from a Syro-Aramaic 'pre text'. He notes that the standard translation has Muhammad in brackets, ie it is not in the Arabic. 72 : 18 And that the mosques are meant for (the worship of) Allâh, so call on no one (therein) beside Allâh.

72 : 19 And when (- Muhammad) Allâh's servant stands up calling to Him, these (- disbelievers) crowd upon him, well nigh suffocating him (to stifle and smother his voice).
72 : 20 Say, 'I invoke only my Lord and I associate no one with Him (as His partner).'

When he applies the rules of Aramaic grammar Luxemberg re translates it this way:
'*And that worship belongs to God, so you should call upon no other but God*
And that when the servant of God was resurrected, all the while calling him (that is continuing to worship God), they (the people) would almost have worshipped him (as God) (Upon which defending himself), he said (not 'say'): 'I call indeed upon my Lord, and I associate no other with him''

He notes that Western scholars of Arabic and Islamic studies have put their trust in the Arabic philology rather than use historical critical methods. The rules of Arabic grammar were not standardised until the end of the 8th century, nearly 150 years after the Quran was supposed to have been canonised by Uthman according to the SIN

Summary

- There was substantial tradition that associated the Temple Mount as a sacred site in Syrian Christianity and this would have given Abd al-Malik good reason to build a shrine there.
- The inscription on the Dome of the Rock contains Christological material and was directed exclusively to Christians who embraced trinitarian views of Jesus after the Council of Nicea (325AD)
- The inscription is directed to the 'people of the Scripture' ie Jews and Christians and Abd al-Malik is defending a kind of Syrian-Arab Christianity that believed in one God and saw Jesus as the 'servant of God' but not God himself.
- The gerundival participle muhammad ie MHMD was not originally a personal name but a title/commendation/descriptor for the servant of God, Jesus, son of Mary. The later writers of the Sira misunderstood this and assigned it to the 'prophet of Islam' who supposedly lived 570-632.
- We can therefore talk of 'Muhammad I'(Jesus) and 'Muhammad II (the prophet of the SIN),
- When the inscription refers to 'Islam' it does not refer to a new religion but being in conformity with 'the Scripture'. Because the inscription is all about Christology, then 'the scripture' must be referring to The Gospel, NOT the Islam of the SIN.
- Therefore we can talk about 'Islam I' (conformity with Christian Scripture) and 'Islam II' (the Islam of the SIN)
- As we have seen with popular inscriptions, The Islam of the SIN only began around the middle of the 8th century. Luxemberg notes that such a big religious change would not

have happened without political change. We see that around this time, the Umayyads dynasty is deposed and the Abbasids consolidated their power around this time. They would not have wanted to follow the religion of the Umayyads so they adopted a new- 'Islam II'. What the SIN describes as Islam is really an Abbasid creation.

Luxemberg's conclusion

'Islam I' was a pre-Niceness, Oriental Christian, Syrian-Arabian form of Christianity. This form of Christianity most likely survived in the region of Mesopotamia until the end of the Umayyad dynasty (c750), and perhaps even longer. This explains why Jerusalem was the destination for pilgrimage before Mecca enjoyed the same honor. This also explains the spacious precinct that lies around the Dome of the Rock and served to receive these pilgrims. With the Christological doctrine presented in the description on the Dome of the Rock, 'Islam I' desired to bear witness to its own orthodoxy with regard to Christian theology, against the opinions of the Nicea that were defended in the nearby Constantinian Church of the Holy Sepulchre....Islam II refers to the turn from the (Christian) Islam I and, consequently from the 'scripture'. Other changes that resulted included the turn from Jerusalem to Mecca and the replacement of the 'Scripture' (ie Bible) with the (Arabic) Quran....

..These changes can only be explained in political terms. When the Abbasids took power, they wanted nothing more to do with their Umayyad opponents or with their religion. From this perspective, and from this point in time (c750), 'Islam II' slowly appeared. It is only because the Abbasids made 'Islam II' their national ideology that one can explain historically why Christianised Arabian tribes were suddenly forced to submit to Islam II"
[p145]

Were the Arab Rulers Muslims

Archaeological Evidence and Muawiya: Coins and Inscriptions

Coins with crosses and 'Muhammad'

There is a coin dated 17 ie 639 from Sistan in south east Iran with MHMT written in Aramaic on it. This is the equivalent of MHMD and the coin also has the monogram of the Byzantine emperor Heraclius. He was still emperor in 639. So why would 'muslim' rulers mint coins with MHMT/MHMD, while also having the name of the Byzantine emperor on them? This makes NO SENSE if MHMD was a 'warrior prophet' from the Hijaz who founded a new religion.

Arabic Around 651 we see coins in Persian lands with the title MHMD on them.

- From the early years of Muawiya's reign we see coins depicting a ruler carrying a CROSS and bearing the inscription 'Muhammad' appear. [Clive Foss, Arab-Byzantine coins; An introduction with a catalogue of the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, 2008]
- Surah 4:157 of Quran admonishes Christians that Jesus was neither killed nor crucified. Islam views the cross as an object of derision and certainly not something to be revered. Therefore by definition, such coins CANNOT BE 'ISLAMIC'.
- In 679 Muawiya mints count with a man holding a Cross with the word MHMD (Muhammad) on the other side. There is a cross on this side as well. [Volker Popp "Hidden Origins of Islam" 2010 P56-65]

EXPLANATION

The word Muhammad can be either a participle/description or a name. Therefore it can refer to either a 'praised one' or to a man named Muhammad holding a CROSS! This is totally inconsistent with the Islamic version of 'Muhammad' and is NOT consistent with the Quranic treatment of Jesus. Therefore it is more likely describing the 'praised one' of Christianity, Jesus Christ. If it IS referring to a man named Muhammad, it is not Muhammad of the SIN.

- Coin from Galilee has a FISH surrounded by the phrase 'Muhammad rasul Allah' [p79]. This makes no sense if the ruler was a Muslim.
- After the end of Muawiya we see the cross disappear from Arab coins. It is replaced by symbol of a palm tree.
- There are also coins from the Umayyad period that have the head of John the Baptist on one side and the Palm on the other [p97]. Christian tradition held that the head of John the Baptist was buried in the Basilica of St John in Damascus. This was converted into the "Umayyad Mosque" by al-Walid

Muawiyas coins vary depending on the region

- Coin from majority Christian areas show Muawiya holding a cross and with a cross above his head
- In 660s Coins from areas formerly Persian had Zoroastrian fire altars on them
- 660s Coins have 'cresent and stars' on them. These were used by Persian kings since the 1st Century BC
- 667 Muawiya has a coin with 'Bismallah al-Malik' (in the name of God, the king'. This is just Arabic for in the name of God, the king and could refer to ANY God, even the God of the Bible

EXPLANATION

Muawiya was either

- some kind of Christian or a ruler that paid homage to Christianity
- Some kind of Persian/Zoroastrian or a ruler that paid homage to this religion

Whatever Muawiya was he CANNOT have been a Muslim as described by the SIN

What can we conclude about Muawiya based on these?

- He saw himself as the guardian of religious group.
- He originally wrote his official messages in Aramaic or Greek, NOT Arabic.
- The fact that he had a Byzantine Cross at the BEGINNING of his dedication suggests that He was either a Christian or very deferential to Christians.

4. He was NOT a Muslim as described by the SIN.

What we CANNOT conclude about Muawiya:

1. His ancestry ie who his father was. Despite what the SIN says, we cannot determine from these inscriptions whether or not he was Sufyani.
2. What language he spoke. He could have been an Arabic speaking Arab or an Aramaic speaking Arab. The fact that he wrote the inscriptions using the Aramaic form suggests an Aramaic background.

Other “Islamic” rulers mint coins with crosses

- Yazid became Caliph in 680 and he mints coins that depict Yazid and a cross
- Coins from time of either Muawiya or Abd al-Malik have the formula ‘there is no God but Allah alone’ with a 7 branched lampstand ie the Menorrah. This is obviously a JEWISH SYMBOL and contradicts the idea that this Caliph was a Muslim [Volker Popp, Hidden Origins of Islam, p73]

EVOLUTION OF ISLAM

Was Islam fully formed by 632 or did it evolve over time? What does the archaeological evidence tell us?

Archaeological Evidence for the Evolution of Islam.

(Volker Popp, ‘From Ugarit to Samarra: An archaeological journey on the trail of Ernst Herzfeld’, Early Islam p14-175)

In this publication, Volker Popp lays aside the SIN as told by the Traditional Islamic literature and examines only the Archaeological evidence available. He then reconstructs an alternative history based on this evidence.

In 1928 ruins dating to 13th century B.C discovered in Western Syria. Among the discoveries were texts written in a cuneiform consonantal script known as Ugaritic. The word MHMD which is the root for Muhammad is used to describe gold at its highest level of purity. The sense of the word is ‘choicest or chosen’. They also use the term SMD, which is the root of the term Al-Samadu, used to describe Allah in surah 112.

Therefore we have a reference to the word MHMD dating to nearly 2000 years before the Prophet of Islam is supposed to have lived. This supports the idea that where the word MHMD is used in the Quran, it is used as an honorific title.

In northern Mesopotamia in the so-called Jazira (“island”) between the Tigris and Euphrates, the city of Hatra was populated from Roman times ie 2nd Century AD. There is an inscription that describes the region of ‘Arab’. It comes from same Semitic root as the Hebrew ‘Ereb’ meaning ‘west’. When viewed from the Tigris, Hatra would have been WEST and the inhabitants of Hatra would be viewed as ‘Arabi’ ie inhabitants of the west.

So we have a reference to 'Arab' and 'Arabi' from 2nd century AD.

As per most of the near east in Roman times, there were likely many Christians in Hatra. They would have used the only scripture available in their language at the time: Tatian's Diatessaron, a harmony of the 4 Gospels.

In middle of 3rd century, Persian king Shapur I conquered Hatra and deported a number of people back to Persia. This probably included many Christians who would have taken the Diatessaron with them. Shapur I also conquered Antioch around the same time and the bishop of Antioch and many priests were taken to Persia.

The Lakhmids and Ghassanids

As noted above, the region of Northern Mesopotamia and Eastern Turkey was dominated by city states of Palmyra, Edessa and Hatra during Roman times. In 3rd century AD, the Byzantines and Persians destroyed them and the tribe of Lakhm moved in. The city of Hira west of the lower Euphrates then became the leading urban centre.

Their kingdom was between the Byzantine and Sassanian empires and there were a number of minority religions that existed alongside the Sassanian state religion Zoroastrianism.

Lakhmid rulers appoint themselves as 'Kalpha' (Aramaic for 'representative' for minority religions for political purposes. The legendary first king of the Lakhmids is said to have been the Kalpha for the Manichaeans and his son Imru al-Qays was Kalpha for the Christians of his land.

Due to increasing conflict with Sassanians, Imru al-Qays fled into Byzantine territory in Syria. One condition of his entry would have been conversion to Christianity and this would have applied to his subjects as well. He became a vassal of the Byzantines and died in 328. The inscription on his grave calls him '*King of all Arab*'

The Lakhmid kingdom continued into the 5th century, ruling from Hira. This city was at the centre of a trade route and was a competitor for Bosra which was controlled by the Ghassanids. They then burnt down Hira sometime in the 5th century. Another dynasty, then took power and ruled Hira. They were also likely to have been Christian Arabs, most likely Nestorians/Diaphysites

In 602, Khosrow II had several Monophysites as part of his court and they along with Khosrow did not want a rival Christian client kingdom getting powerful. The Lakhmid ruler of Hira then had himself Christened at the Byzantine court in order to make him the natural leader of Christianity in Persian lands.

This took things too far and Khosrow ended their rule and dissolved the Lakhmid client state. He also left the office of Patriarch for Seleucia-Ctesiphon vacant.

The Ghassanids

These tribes were nomadic people who settled in Western Syria and Jordan. Their base was the old Nabatean town of Bosra. The Romans allowed them to stay there after they converted to Christianity and agreed to pay tribute. By 502 they were counted as 'foederati' or allies and paid annual subsidies called 'annonae foederatica'. The Ghassanid rulers were also given the title of 'phylarch' and were allowed to wear the crowns of vassal kings

Archaeological investigations confirmed that the Romans evacuated the border towns of Fityan, Yasir, Bsir in the 4th and 5th centuries. Lajun was relinquished after the earthquake of 551. By 565 the remaining legions were deserted and the southern border with Arabia was not fortified. The Byzantines allowed the Ghassanids to rule these areas as client kings.

An inscription dated 559 on monastery of Qasr-al-Hayr al Garbi does not mention the Byzantine emperor and names the builder as the Ghassanid ruler al-Harit bin Gabala. and the archaeology shows that they, rather than the Romans were engaged in construction.

Just like that of the Lakhmids and Sassanians, the relationship between the Ghassanids and the Byzantines was a difficult one in which the vassals or client kings were increasingly seen as religious competitors for their overlords. The fact that the Ghassanids were Monophysites and remained so even after the council of Chalcedon in 451 only made things even more complicated and difficult.

The Fall of the Sassanian Empire and the Rise of the Arabs.

Around 540 AD, Khosrau I deported the whole population of Antioch.

590 period of instability after the death of Hormuz IV sees Khosrau II go to Constantinople for assistance. He is supported by emperor Maurice, and Khosrau marries Maurice's daughter.

In contrast to previous Persian rulers who tended to be more favourable to Dyaphysite and Nestorian Christians ie those opposed to Constantinople, Khosrau has several Miaphysites as part of his 'inner circle'.

In 602, the Byzantine army rebelled against Maurice and he was killed and Phakos became emperor. Khosrau II took the opportunity to attack Constantinople, ostensibly to defend the honor of his father in law. He advanced to Chalcedon, but was unable to take Constantinople due to his lack of a navy.

602 Khosrau II he killed the Lakhmid king and his family in Hira. This meant that the Arabs of Mesopotamia would no longer look favourably on the Persians.

610, there is a coup against Phakos and Heraclius became emperor.

614 Khosrau occupied Jerusalem, destroyed the church of the Sepulchre and took the 'True Cross'

618, Heraclius decides to give up the Middle East and even Constantinople itself. He wishes to shift the capital to Sicily and focus on Europe. Mass protests in Constantinople forced him to reconsider. [PJ Alexander, Religious and Political History and Thought in the Byzantine Empire, 1978 p6-5]

The church leaders were understandably concerned and agreed to use their treasures to fund Heraclius army. He then advanced into Armenia, surprising the Persians and dealing them a comprehensive defeat in 622. Heraclius was assisted by Arab mercenaries or foederati (allies) who were given control over the areas of Syria and Mesopotamia to rule under Heraclius. This is when the Arabs first begin their dominance of the area and is probably the main reason why 622 is viewed as the 'Year of the Arabs'.

Sources from this time refer to them as 'Tayyaye', and 'Mahgraye' ie descendants of Hagar.

627 Persians defeated at Nineveh and Khosrau II killed. A year later, 628 Persian ruler Sahvaraz made a peace treaty agreeing to return the True Cross and withdraw Persian troops from Byzantine lands.

630 Heraclius recovered Jerusalem and works to build bridges with the Syrian Christians in Iran. He does this by avoiding difficult Christological issues and instead helping them focus on the common enemy, the Sassanian emperor. He does this by adopting the 'Syrian Legend of Alexander the Great' and he presents himself as the 'new Alexander'. This is the likely explanation for how the story of 'Dhul Qarnayn' (the 2 horned one) came to be in the Quran. This elaborate story talks about how the 'Alexander' figure went to where the sun sets in a muddy spring, built a bridge of iron between 2 mountains among other things. Madelung cites a Hadith that suggests that Dhul Qarnayn referred to Heraclius dating to the 9th century which has the prophet asked about seizing Syria. Someone supposedly responded with *'How can we have anything to do with Syria, Oh messenger of God, as there are the Romans, who bear horns'*

Writings of the time talk of 'Arab' tribes fighting on the side of Heraclius as well as an Arab general who defected to the Persians. These Arab tribes were from Mesopotamia and Syria and were the descendants of the Ghassanid and Lakhmid client kingdoms of the 6th century. They were referred to as 'foederati' (allies) of the Byzantines. According to Christophe Luxemberg, foederati is the Latin equivalent of Q-R-S from which the word Quraysh can be derived. [The Syro-Aramaic reading of the Quran, 2007]

The Arabs Rule in their Own right

In 641 Heraclius died and we see coins minted in Syria, Iraq that are imitations of Byzantine coins. The fact that they mint coins shows that they now regard themselves as the rulers of the land as only the king minted coins. On the coins from former Byzantine lands we see crosses and on the coins from former Persian lands there are Zoroastrian symbols, including crescent moons. They also have the formula 'Bismallah al Rahman al Rahim' (in the name of the gracious and merciful God).

There is a papyrus dated 642-3 that talks of the 'amir' of the 'magaritais'. It is written in Greek and the term 'magaritais' most likely refers to the Aramaic term 'mhaggraye' or 'Hagarenes' ie descendent of Hagar. Notice that there is no reference to Islam or a warrior prophet named Muhammad.

There is a coin dated 17 ie 639 from Sistan in south east Iran with MHMT written in Aramaic on it. This is the equivalent of MHMD and the coin also has the monogram of the

Byzantine emperor Heraclius. He was still emperor in 639. So why would 'muslim' rulers mint coins with MHMT/MHMD, while also having the name of the Byzantine emperor on them? This makes NO SENSE if MHMD was a 'warrior prophet' from the Hijaz who founded a new religion.

Arabic Around 651 we see coins in Persian lands with the title MHMD on them.

Muawiya

Muawiya is the first historically verifiable ruler of the Arabs after Heraclius. We have the following inscriptions to give us clues as to who he was:

1. Coins were minted in 663 in Darabjird in Persia portraying a Sassanian ruler and an inscription that reads 'Maawia amir-i wurroyishnigan' which is Persian for 'Amir al Muminin' ie 'commander of the faithful'. Notice that his name is written in the Aramaic form of MAAWIA.
2. Inscription on a bathhouse in Gadara dated 663 we see in Greek 'Maavia al-momenin'. Again this names Muawiya as commander of the faithful and his name is again spelt using the Aramaic form. What is significant is that the inscription begins with a BYZANTINE CROSS.
3. Inscription on a bathhouse in Ta'if dated to 680 is written in Arabic and also names Muawiya as 'Amir al-muminin'

What can we conclude about Muawiya based on these?

1. He saw himself as the guardian of religious group.
2. He originally wrote his official messages in Aramaic or Greek, NOT Arabic.
3. The fact that he had a Byzantine Cross at the BEGINNING of his dedication suggests that He was either a Christian or very deferential to Christians.
4. He was NOT a Muslim as described by the SIN.

What we CANNOT conclude about Muawiya:

1. His ancestry ie who his father was. Despite what the SIN says, we cannot determine from these inscriptions whether or not he was Sufyani.
2. What language he spoke. He could have been an Arabic speaking Arab or an Aramaic speaking Arab. The fact that he wrote the inscriptions using the Aramaic form suggests an Aramaic background.

Given the conflicts over Christology, Heraclius attempted a compromise with the doctrines of 'monotheletism' and 'monoenergism', which taught that Christ could have two natures but one will or energy. He had this published on the Hagia Sophia. Unfortunately, the compromise failed and prominent theologian Maximus the Confessor attacked both of these as heresy.

In 648 Byzantine emperor Constans II removed these references and issued a decree forbidding any discussion about how many wills or energies Christ possessed. Despite this, the damage was done and the Christological conflict never really went away, but simmered below the surface.

649 Pope Martin denounced Constans' decree and in 653 he was charged with high treason and exiled to Crimea where he died in 656. Maximus the Confessor was exiled to West Georgia and died in 662.

It is in this context that Muawiya is first mentioned in Cappadocia in 647. In 659 Muawiya agrees to a treaty with Byzantium and agrees to pay tribute

In 662 he was appointed Amir al-muminun. We first see coins from Darabjird mentioning Muawiya.

The Maronite Chronicle, said to have been written around 664 says that Muawiya was 'crowned' in Jerusalem and one of the first things he did was go to Golgotha to pray and then to Gethsemane. It records that he refused to rule from the 'throne of MHMD' ie Jerusalem and instead ruled from Damascus. This makes no sense if Muawiya was a 'Muslim'. It makes perfect sense if he was some kind of Christian and the reference to 'MHMD's throne' was a reference to Jesus' throne ie Golgotha and by extension, Jerusalem.

662 Constans gave up the capital city of Constantinople and returned to Europe, settling in Syracuse, Sicily in 663. This led to a relative calm in hostilities and gave Muawiya the opportunity to build alliances with the Syrian and Egyptian monophysites on the one hand and the Iranian Nestorian Christians on the other.

By gaining authority over Syria and Egypt, he gained access to their fleets. This was the missing piece to capturing Constantinople. The Sassanians had gotten all the way to Chalcedon but couldn't take Constantinople as they had no navy. Muawiya would not make the same mistake and he began taking, island by island. Eventually he capture Cyprus and Rhodes. By 672 he captured Smyrna and was in a position to take the city.

Unfortunately for Muawiya, the emperor Constans was murdered in Syracuse and his son Constantine IV became emperor in 668. He was more disposed to defend Constantinople.

From 674 Muawiya laid siege to Constantinople and his fleet was burned by 'Greek Fire' ie gunpowder. Muawiya was forced to pay an annual tribute in gold, horses and slaves.

Muawiya's failure leads to a rebellion among the Eastern Arabs. In 674 we see coins minted from Darabjirdn (central Iran) referring to Abdulla ibn al Zubayr as the 'Amir-i-wurroyisnigan' (commander of the faithful) but in Pahlavi script, NOT ARABIC.

The dam inscription of 669 is the last we hear of Muawiya. We don't know how he died. *'For a long time, the Byzantines probably saw him [Muawiya] as a magister militum [master of soldiers], a praetorian much like Theodoric (the Great) in Italy, who-like Muawiya- was a Christian (an adherent of Arianism), but of a different denomination...As a Quraysi -according to the coin inscriptions already mentioned, not the member of the fictitious clan of the Quraysh but a foederatus (ally) he was officially an ally of the Byzantines up until his betrayal of Byzantium'* [Volker Popp 84]

[Volker Popp sees Darabjird as the ancestral seat of the Sassanians and he believes that it was the location for choosing the Amir-i-wurroyisnigan for the Eastern Arab tribes.]

After 681, coins minted by Ibn al-Zubayr do not have the title of Amir-i-wurroyisnigan. His name is found on coins from Kirman (683-690) and from the Sassanian province of Pars (686-688). This suggests that he lost power over the whole Sassanian region but continued to rule over some of the central Sassanian provinces for nearly 10 years. He would not have been able to mint coins otherwise.

It is noteworthy that there are NO epigraphic references to the title 'Caliph' from the time of the Umayyads.

Abd al-Malik

Volker Popp theorises that after the defeat of Muawiya, there was a change in the balance of power between the Arabs in Syria and those in Iran. the rule of Damascus was no longer accepted in the east. In 682, Abd al-Malik from Merv becomes ruler of Arabs in Persis and Ibn Zubayr retreated to Kirman. Abd al-Malik then made his way to Damascus and took power there. His lieutenant Al Hajjaj ibn Yusuf ultimately defeats Ibn Zubayr and Abd al-Malik is undisputed ruler from 685.

He is referred to as the son of Marwan, which more likely refers to his home town of MRW ie Merv which is located in modern day Turkmenistan. This was a major urban hub on the Silk Road dating back to 3rd millennium BC. It was formerly called Alexandria and had been ruled by Persians, Macedonians, Seleucids, Sassanians until the Arabs controlled it. There are Sassanians coins minted in Merv marked with MRV and the metropolitan bishop of Merv is said to have arranged for the burial of the last Sassanians ruler Yazdegerd III

696 coin from MRV has inscription 'ABD'LMLK-i-MRWanan' (Abd al-Malik from Marwan). It is significant that it does NOT have the title Amir-i-wurroyisnigan and this is probably due to the fact that the coin is from his hometown where he was well known. Coins from outside this area where he would have been less well-known would more likely have the official title. In time, the Iranian form of Marwanan became 'Marwan'.

Another reason to suggest that Abd al-Malik was from Merv is the fact that coins in this region persist dating to 758 still show the style of Abd al-Malik. This is well after his death and is indeed during the reign of the Abassids. This shows that an element loyal to him remained in Merv for the obvious reason that he was 'one of their own'.

Besides the Dome of the Rock (described elsewhere) we also have a lead seal from Joppa dating to his reign. It has the inscription '*la illah illa illah wahdahu la sarik (a) la-hu, muhammad (un) rasul Allah*'. This can be translated as 'there is no deity other than God alone, he has no companion, the messenger of God is the Chosen One'.

Abd al-Malik also improved the road from Damascus to Jerusalem and provided milestones along the way.

695 Qatari bin al-Fuga appointed Amir-al-Muminun. He minted a silver coin to confirm this. According to Islamic sources this revolt was put down by Al-Hajjaj Ibn Yusuf but this is difficult to determine from archaeological sources. All we know is that by 698 it was over and Abd al-Malik is undisputed Arab ruler.

Abd al-Malik then presides over an area that is fundamentally dichotomous, as it was made of former Byzantine lands and former Sassanian lands. Each of these areas had fundamentally different modes of rule. For the Byzantines, the ruler had to be a 'servant of

God' but for the Iranians the ruler had to be divinely ordained. They were fundamentally at odds with each other and unless the ruler could reconcile them, the dynasty would not survive.

Volker Popp summarises this as follows:

'A choice had to be made between a mode of rule that would satisfy the former Byzantine Orient, and one that would meet the Iranian requirement, that unless it was directly from God, no reign would last...Hence a ruler could reign in the former Byzantine Orient as a servant of Christ. According to the Iranian model of rule, the 'divine grace (fortuna)' had to directly shine on the ruler, with no deviation via a representative of God' [p124]

After Abd al-Malik

Al-Walid is mentioned on copper coin from year 708. He is also mentioned on the inscription on the Umayyad Mosque from same year.

Sulayman does not appear on any coins but he is mentioned in a lead sealing

Hisham (724-743) is mentioned on an inscription on the Qasr al-Hayr dated 732.

Walid II is mentioned indirectly in an inscription naming 'Uthman bin Al-Walid'. This is dated 749

Yazid bin Umar is mentioned on a coin from 751

A ruler thought by some to be "Marwan II" is mentioned in lead sealings from year 749. Other scholars interpret the reference to Marwan to mean 'the one from Merv'. They read it as follows: *'During the representation (khilafa) of the servant of God (Abd'allah) of the man from Marwa/Merv ('Marwan'), head of the protectors (amir al-muminun)'* This is similar to how Abd al-Malik was referred to as the 'son of Marwan' when it could just as easily mean 'the one from Merv'.

Sulayman tried to invade Constantinople around 718. Emperor Leo repelled the attack, again using 'Greek fire'. The Bulgars also joined the war on the side of the Byzantines and blockade of the city was lifted.

Fighting continued on land with battles in Cappadocia and Nicaea. It finally ended in 740 when the Khazars of Central Asia helped the Byzantines

As noted above, Abd al-Malik ruled over an empire with fundamentally different religious ideas and had to find a way to balance them. He was relatively successful at this but it appears that his successors were not as successful. This probably explains why none of the Umayyad rulers after Abd al-Malik had anywhere near his power and longevity. Whereas Abd al-Malik himself reigned for 20 years from 685-705, the reign of his son and successor Al-Walid was only half as long. From 715 to 750 we see 8 different rulers. The longest of these was Abd al-Malik's son Hisham who reigned for 19 years. There is a period of unrest after the death of Hisham which Islamic traditions interpret as indicating a kind of 'civil war'.

Conclusion: What the Archaeology tells us

- Islam did not emerge suddenly as a result of a warrior prophet coming from Hijaz.
- The Arab empire did not come about via the conquest of hordes from Arabia. It came about via a power vacuum that resulted from defeat of Persian rulers and the abdication of these lands to Arab 'allies' by the Byzantines.
- The earliest Arab rulers were non-trinitarian Christians and monotheists.
- The words 'Muhammad' and 'Ali' were most likely honorific titles for Jesus.
- There were big differences in Syria/Palestine in west and Iraq/Iran in east over Christology and how 'divine right of rulers worked that continued to be a problem for decades after the empire began. There were also big differences in culture and ethnicity that created problems
- Beginning with Abd al-Malik (685-705), the rulers attempted to address this by 'unifying' their subjects in terms of race and religion. This they did by a kind of 'state religion' and 'Arab identity'
- This occurred via a process of 'evolution' beginning with Abd Malik and continuing with Al-Mamun (813-833) and the Abassid caliphs that follow him in the 9th century. It is no coincidence that the 'Sahih' Hadith collections also emerge in the second half of the 9th century
- The Islam we know today is the end result of this process of evolution.

Conclusion

Analysis of archaeological evidence of coins, inscriptions and royal protocols all tell us the SAME THING:

- A. Islam as we know it today DID NOT begin in the 7th century as the SIN claims.**
- B. Islam as we know it today is the end product of a process of EVOLUTION that first began under Abd al-Malik.**