

**Additions to Walker's B.M.C. of
Arab Byzantine Coins**

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Coins are a mine of information, they are part of our material culture for over 2500 years, documenting the life cycle of different cultures and civilizations. They supply us with official information because they were issued by various authorities rather than privately made by individuals, a fact which makes them an important source of information.

Coins are tough survivors usually found in large numbers. Their designs and inscriptions usually show cultural affinity and prevailing ideas regarding art, commerce, war, politics, religion and society.

Coins, can also tell us about economics in case we have little or no evidence, and as they were mass-produced and have survived in large numbers they are a useful aid in studying the economic history of some societies in a quantitative way.²


Since the publication of the splendid work of John Walker in 1956, a great deal of research has been done, and much material has been collected; some published in different journals. Many new coins have also been published in auction journals; these, The authors we believe, are inaccessible to most readers and numismatists. Many newly discovered coin types and varieties have appeared and numerous of other coins lie unstudied in private collections. No serious attempt has been made to collect and study this new material in a new corpus in which the deficiencies of the old system followed by early pioneers avoided.

(1) John Walker. A Catalogue of the Muhammadan Coins in the British Museum. Vol. 11 : A Catalogue of the Arab - Byzantine and Post-Reform Umayyad coins, London : The British Museum. 1956.

(2) Andrew-Burnett. Coins, London : British Museum, 1991. p. 7.

The aims of this paper is to describe inedited and rare early Islamic coins in a private collection not published in Walker's monumental work, published in 1956. Since that time much material has been revealed and there have been many additions to our knowledge. Hopefully that this article will contribute to numismatics in general and Islamic numismatics in particular.

The photographs of these coins are arranged according to chronological order, each coin is fully described, photographed, and enlarged seven times to serve the purpose of clarifying illegible inscriptions and coin identifications. The weight, axis and metal size are also recorded.

No.	Weight (g)	Size (cm)	Ax.	Obverse	Reverse
Pl. 1	5.1	1.65	↑	Imperial figure standing facing and wearing long robe, with his r. hand, upraised, he is leaning on a long cruciform sceptre; his left hand holds globus surmounted by cross; in field r. quadruped facing l. [ram ?]; in field l. six-pointed star traces of beaded circle.	 decorated with two pellets between its limbs, double outer, beaded circle.

Although the reverse of the coin is double struck, it shows clear details. "Walker" published a drawing of a variety of this coin. (1956 : 50).³

Pl. 1

(3) Walker, 1956 : 50.

No.	Weight (g)	Size (cm)	Ax.	Obverse	Reverse
Pl. 2	3.8	1.6	↓	Imperial figure, standing facing and wearing long robe, with his r. hand raised, he is leaning on a long cruciform sceptre top; above sceptre six-pointed star; his l. hand holds globus surmounted by cross; the outline of the robe is continued to the r. by conventional line almost touching the bottom of globus; outer circle.	M above, across; officia mark \square , in the field r. downward X-1; l. downward AN; below exergual line MΔX (i.e. ΔAM reversed) outer beaded circle.

It is an interesting fact that some beginner die-cutters in ancient times apparently had a difficult time understanding the proper principle of engraving and instead of engraving the mirror image of the desired inscription, they inscribed the true images on the die, thus when the coins were struck they carry the inscription reversed i.e. mirror image.

No.	Weight (g)	Size (cm)	Ax.	Obverse	Reverse
Pl. 3	4.8	1.95	→	<p>Imperial figure, standing facing and wearing long robe, and diadem; cross. off flan; with his r. hand raised, he is leaning on a long crusiform sceptre; his l. hand holds globus surmounted by cross; in the field r., bird facing left, the outline of the robe is continued to the r. by conventional line almost touching the bottom of globus. l. of the field; downward Arabic legend :</p> <p style="text-align: center;">الوفا لله</p> <p>i.e. 'honesty (belongs) to Allah'; outer beaded circle.</p>	<p>Cursive m, above cross; l. ANA; r. (...) (...) below exergual line</p> <p style="text-align: center;">{الوفا لله} ;</p> <p>outer beaded circle.</p>

For the first time we find the Arabic inscription « **الوفا لله** » on both the obverse and reverse This inscription usually appears only on the reverse of this series.

No.	Weight (g)	Size (cm)	Ax.	Obverse	Reverse
Pl. 4	2.6	1.75	↓	Bearded figure of the Caliph standing, facing, and wearing long robe & native head dress, the folds of the latter falling on either side of his shoulders; his r. hand is placed on his sword in the attitude prescribed for the Imam at the recitation of the public sermon (khutba); the bands of his girdle hang down on the l.; marginal legend partly effaced running clockwise, only the word رسول is discernible, in the field l. I; outer circle.	l. six pointed star; marginal legend running clockwise; on r. the legend off flan on l. in crude Kufic script محمد رسول r. downward دمشق Traces of outer circle.

It is for the first time we meet the letter “I” on the copper coins of the Standing Caliph type which always bear Arabic inscription only.

No.	Weight (g)	Size (cm)	Ax.	Obverse	Reverse
Pl. 5	3.4	1.6	↑	Three Imperial figures (said to be Heraclius bearded in centre flanked by his sons Heraclius Constantine and Heraclonas) standing facing, and wearing long robes and cross-surmounted crowns; each holds in his r. hand a small globe with cross; below, outer circle.	M Above cross; officina mark star; to r. in vertical column; الله الملك to l. in vertical column legend obliterated; below exergual line Kufic legend الصمد traces of outer circle.

Lutz Ilisch in his splendid catalogue published a variety of this coin in which the word "al-Malik" was replaced by the word "Ahad".⁴

Pl. 5

(4) Lutz Ilisch, *Sylloge Numorum, Arabicorum* Tubingen. Palastiana IV a Bilad as-Sam I Tubingen : 1993, Coin no 285.

No.	Weight (g)	Size (cm)	Ax.	Obverse	Reverse
Pl. 6	3.5	1.7	→	Two rulers enthroned; de-christianized type; no date; outer circle.	K , with crescent above; 1. downward in Kufic script بيسن in exergue traces of letter (letters), outer circle.

In addition to the denomination mark “**M**” for “forty” Baysan also issued smaller coins with the denomination mark (**K**) for twenty, that is with half the value of the large “**M**” coins. This denomination was not known to Walker.

No.	Weight (g)	Size (cm)	Ax.	Obverse	Reverse
Pl. 7	2.9	1.75	↓	Very roughly drawn figure of the Caliph in which the head-dress has assumed the appearance of a halo, standing facing and wearing long robe, his right hand is placed on his sword; in the field 1. downward, محمد ر , r., upwards, سول الله ; outer circle.	C u r s i v e (reversed) above six pointed star below a short horizontal line; to r. and 1. vertical columns: بينى فلسطين outer circle.

Walker published five specimens with illegible inscriptions on the reverse, and traces of a mint name which he could not read.⁵

Pl. 7

(5) Walker, 1956 : 24-5.

No.	Weight (g)	Size (cm)	Ax.	Obverse	Reverse
Pl. 8	3.7	17	↓	<p>In the field :</p> <p>لا إله إلا الله وحده</p> <p>Counterstruck on the coin of Licinius with bust 1.; underlying legend in field 1. [IOVI] CONSER [VATORI]; outer beaded circle.</p>	<p>In the field :</p> <p>{م} حمد رسول الله</p> <p>underlying legend; [LICI] NVS AVG</p> <p>outer beaded circle.</p>

The underlying coins is Licinius I A.D. 308-324.

Walker draws our attention to a Roman coin of Maximianus Herculeus A.D. 286-305 of the mint of Antioch, which had been used by the Arabs as a flan for an early fals of the Post-Reform currency⁶. after an interval of 400 years (reported in Rev. Num. Belge, 1864, pp. 327-8). Nitzan Amitai published an anonymous Umayyad coin overstruck on a Late Roman coin of Constantius II, Constantinople, A.D. 351-354, and said : "This seems to be the first example of an Umayyad coin overstruck on a late Roman coin".⁷

Pl. 8

(6) Walker, 1956 : IXX.

(7) Nitzan Amitai - Preiss, Some Arab Byzantine and Umayyad coins from the Hebrew University collection, Israel Numismatic Journal 11, 1990-1991, p. 94-99.

No.	Weight (g)	Size (cm)	Ax.	Obverse	Reverse
Pl. 9	4.2	2.6	→	<p>In the field :</p> <p>لا إله إلا الله وحده</p> <p>Counterstruck on Arab - Byzantine coin [Emperor and two sons; mint Tiberias, Greek and Arabic legend], showing traces of a head of an imperial figure surmounted by a cross; traces of outer two circles.</p>	<p>In the field :</p> <p>محمد رسول الله</p> <p>Counterstruck showing traces of the underlying legend; in field 1. THBE and the upper part of the left limb of the letter M is seen; above traces of two circles.</p>

No.	Weight (g)	Size (cm)	Ax.	Obverse	Reverse
Pl. 10	2.5	1.4	↓	Within beaded circle : محمد رسول الله	Within beaded circle : bird (pigeon ?) flying l.; around, legend (top, l. and bottom): {محمد ر} سول الله

The obverse of the coin normally should bear the Kalima Qur'an⁸ (لا إله إلا الله وحده) most probably the striker was confused and used a reverse die bearing, محمد رسول الله .

Pl. 10

(8) The holy Qur'an, Translation of the Meaning of the Holy Qur'an, By Abdulla Yusuf Ali, Beirut : Printing Production, 1965, XLVII, 21.

No.	Weight (g)	Size (cm)	Ax.	Obverse	Reverse
Pl. 11	3.3	1.6	↓	In the field : (sic) لا الله (sic) إلا * لله وحده outer double beaded circle.	Within a dotted circle : محمد رسول وحده outside, marginal legend : بسم الله ضرب هذا الفلس حلب واف outer circle.

The die engraver was confused and engraved the word (وحده) on the reverse instead of the word الله .

The word وحده is part of the faithful formula, or Kalima which is morally found on the obverse of reform Umayyad copper coins.⁹

Pl. 11

(9) Qur'an, XLVII, 21.

الخلاصة :

تعتبر المسكوكات من أجمل روائع العالم رغم صغر حجمها ، ولها قدرة فائقة على استمرارية البقاء حيث عرفت منذ أكثر من ٢٥٠٠ عام . وهى جزء من تراثنا الحضارى يوثق لنا الماضى كما يبين لنا السائد من الأفكار الدينية والسياسية والتجارية والاجتماعية .

الهدف من هذا البحث دراسة لـ إحدى عشرة مسكوكة لم تنشر لغاية الآن إذ لم يجر التعرف عليها فى المصنف الجامع للمسكوكات الأموية لصاحبه العالم الكبير « جون ووكر » والذي أشرف على إصداره مجلس أمناء المتحف البريطانى .

Abstract :

Many Coins are among the worlds most beautiful and interesting artifacts, they are tough survivors they were invented 2500 years ago.

Coins are part of our material culture documenting past and prevailing ideas involving religion commerce war, art and society.

The aim of this study is to describe unpublished and rare early Islamic coins in a private collection not published in Walker's monumental work.