A rare Umayyad Fals minted at Harran bearing the image of Caliph Abdel-Malik Ibn Marwan

Wael Abdel Rahim Abdellah Hemimy¹

¹Faculty of Archaeology, Luxor, Luxor University, Egypt

Abstract

This research aims to study and publish of a bronze rare Umayyad fals minted at Harran that is one of the most infamous minted houses. Harran lied in the Eurphrates Island during the reign of Caliph Abdel-Malik Ibn Marwan, however, it is a part of Urfa province in Turkey nowadays. The fals is bearing the image of Caliph Abdel - Malik Ibn Marwan, preserved in the collection of Mr. Mustafa Abu Ahmed in Lebanon, which has never been published or examined before and has no published equivalent. This paper provides an accurate scientific description of it in terms of the overall shape, form, and texts of its inscriptions. Moreover, they have been analysed, interpreted, and these texts were compared with another two Umayyad fulus; the first fals was published by Naif Al- Qusous (Nayef Goussous: Umayyad Coinage of Bilad al-Sham), although, the second fals was published by Stephen Album, but none of them examined the fals. However, both these fulus differ in general shape, form, and the depicted Latin Cross (Monogram) found on the reverse of the fals, from the fals in study, and any other fals that had been published before. In fact, this fals is considered as a new addition to Islamic Coins in general and Umayyad Coins in particular.

Keywords: Fals, Umyyad, Fals, Harran, Bronze, Rare.

1. Introduction

In Mr. Mustafa Abu Ahmad Collection, in Lebanon, there is a rare Umayyad fals minted at Harran bearing the image of Caliph Abdel -Malik Ibn Marwan (65 -86 A.H/ 685- 705 A.D) (pl.1; fig.1) whose obverse bears the image of the Umayyad Caliph Abdel Malik Ibn Marwan standing bareheaded with hair parted in the middle, and overhung on both sides of his head reaching his shoulders in addition to a long beard; wearing a cloak, carrying the sword with his right hand and holding it with his left hand (The sword, here, is a sign of the Muslim Imamate (Imamaha/ Leadership) (Fahmy, 1965, pp. 287-288; Mansour, 2004, p. 93). On the right at the place of Abdel -Malik, there is the name of mint: "Harran" حَرَّان, that is inscribed from top to bottom and, to the left, there is the word " Muhammad " مُحَمَّد also inscribed from top to bottom. All the inscriptions and motifs of the obverse are shown inside a circle of

tangential granules. On the Centre of the reverse, there appears three amphitheaters, topped by a pillar that ends at the top with an almost circle -shaped Cross. To the left of the pillar, there is the Greek Monogram and to its right, there is the word

"Muhammad" inscribed from top to bottom. The weight of this fals is (2.5) grams and a diameter by (20) mm.

Plate 1: A rare Umayyad Copper Fals Minted at Harran bearing the image of the Umayyad Caliph Abdel-Malik Ibn Marwan (65-86 A.H/ 685-705 A.D), undated; Weight: 2.5 g; Diameter: 20 mm;

Reverse

Obverse

Source: Preserved in a special collection of Mr. Mustafa Abu Ahmed in Lebanon

Figure 1: Illustrated of the inscriptions and decorations of the fals

Reverse

Obverse

Source: © The Author

Figure 2: Drawing of the Fals

Source: © The Author

2. Methodology

Depending on descriptive, analytical, and comparison study, between the fals and two other fulus, published before, the following might clarify its date to be from the same period of these two fulus, even if they differ in their shape, form, and the Latin Cross, they represent one model but in two different patterns.

2.1. Caliph Abdel-Malik Ibn Marwan

Abdel- Malik Ibn Marwan is Abu al-Walid Abdel- Malik Ibn Marwan Ibn al-Hakam Ibn Abi al-Aas Ibn Umayyah Ibn Abd-Shams Ibn Abd Manaf and his mother is Aisha bint Muawiya Ibn al-Walid Ibn al-Mughayrah Ibn Abi al-Aas Ibn Umayyah. Of his children and wives, there are: Al- Walid, Suleiman and Marwan Al-Akbar Darj (Their mother " Aisha " is Walada Bint Al-Abbas Ibn Guzaa Ibn al-Harth Ibn Zuhair Ibn Khadija Al-absia); Yazid, Marwan, Muawiya Darj and Um- Kulthum (Their mother "Ateika" is the daughter of Yazid Ibn Muawiya Ibn Abi- Sufyan; Hisham and his mother is " Aisha " Umm- Hisham bint Ismail Ibn- Hisham Ibn Al- Walid Ibn al-Mughayriyah Al- Makhzoumia; Abu Bakr, the firstborn of his mother "Aisha " bint Mousa Ibn Talha Ibn Obeid- Allah; Al-Hakam Darj and his mother "Um- Ayoub bint Amr Ibn Othman Ibn- Affan; Fatima bint Abdel- Malik; Abdel- Malik; Muslima; Al-Munzir; Anbasa ; Mohammed ; Saeid AL-Khair and Al- Hagag (Ibn al-Atheer, 1965, p. 238).

Abdel Malik Ibn Marwan assumed the Umayyad Caliphate after the demise of his father "Marwan Ibn Al- Hakam" during Ramadan of 65 A.H. (Ibn al-Atheer, 1965, p. 13) His rule continued until he died in the middle of Shawwal month in 86 A.H.

He used to say: "I am afraid of dying in Ramadan as in this month I was born and weaned, collected the Holy Quran and people swore a duty of allegiance to me".

He was sixty years old when he died and some resources said that he was sixty-three years old (Ibn al-Atheer, 1965, p. 237). Abdel- Malik was a wise and firm man and knowledgeable writer. Abu Ziad said: The four scholars of the city are: Said Ibn Al- Musayyib, Erwa Ibn El-Zubair, Kubaisa Ibn zouib and Abdel- Malik Ibn Marwan (Ibn al-Atheer, 1965, p. 239).

2.2. Harran

To the right of the image of the Caliph Abdel- Malik, the mint name, which is Harran (using the damma for H and shadda / double consonant for R) ended by N letter after **أ** (Abu al-Fidaa, 1850, p. 276; Al-Hamawi, 1957, p. 243) is inscribed from top to bottom. Harran is a city located on the island of Euphrates¹. It is considered a part of Diyār Mudar on the way to Mosul al-Sham and Rumelia. It is famous with low amounts of water and trees and it has red soil and a mound with a chapel that is attributed to Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) (Abu al-Fidaa, 1850, p. 277).

Harran was opened during the reign of Caliph Omar Ibn al-Khattab (13 - 23 A.H) in 18 A.H by the commander "Ayyad Ibn Ghanam". At that time, it was inhabited by Christians and Sabians (worshippers of stars and planets) (Al- Baladhri, 1978, p. 178; Shami, 1993, p. 313). The Caliph Omar Ibn al- Aziz (99 - 101 A.H) moved the medical institutes from Alexandria to Antioch and Harran. In the Umayyad period, Harran enjoyed relative calm atmosphere and witnessed the business works and the practice of ancient Babylonian and Greek beliefs and rituals.

The Caliph Marwan Ibn Mohammed (127 - 132 A.H), the last successor of the Umayyad dynasty, made Harran as his rule headquarter after giving allegiance to him in 127 A.H / 744 A.D. He made it the capital of the caliphate instead of Damascus and moved to it all the state governmental offices to be close to his opponents (Wellhausen, 1968, p. 167). From Harran, Caliph Marwan came out leading a large army of twelve thousand fighters to fight in "Yellow Az-zab Battle" then he fled to Egypt to be killed by the Abbasids in the village of Abu Seer al-Malq in 132 A.H where he was buried (El-Rafeay & Ashour, 1992, pp. 52-53).

In Islamic times, Harran was known as a city of the Sabians and its people were speaking Syriac language. During the Abbasid era, it is known that Harran had a large number of great philosophers and scholars, notably Thabit Ibn Qura and Harrani and his sons and grandchildren, as well as Al- Batani and others. Harran was the most important center of translation and thought in the Abbasid era. In his book " Best partitions in knowing regions " in the late fourth century of Hegira / tenth century A.D, Al- Maqdisi described Harran as a beautiful city protected by a castle of carved

¹ It is the country between the Tigris and the Euphrates. For more information, cf. Al-Astakhri, 1968, p. 53.

stone. However, its importance declined when the traveler Ibn Jubair visited it in the sixth century of Hegira / twelfth century A.D¹.

It was seized by Seif al-Din Ghazi after the death of Sultan Nor al- Din Mahmoud Ibn Zanki (Ibn al-Adeem, 1996, p. 401; Ghanem, 1983, p. 81) and occupied by Sultan Salah al- Din al-Ayyubi in 578 A.H / 1182 A.D (al-Hanbali, 1979, p. 299; Al-Zarkali, 1979, p. 220). When King "Al- Kamel" took control of the city of Damascus in 626 A.H / 1228 A.D, he made King Al-Ashraf as his deputy in its rule and instead of it he seized Harran, Edessa and Ar Raqqa (al-Hanbali, 1979, p. 172).

Nowadays, Harran is part of turkey and its current name is "Sanliurfa ". It is named Harran in Arabic and Turkish (Rice, 1952, pp. 36-83; Segal & Brice, 1951, pp. 77-111; Pingree, 2002, pp. 8-9). It is located in the south part of Turkey, that is close to the Turkish - Syrian border, where it is about seventeen kilometers from the Syrian border and about 640 kilometers from Ankara. To its north, there is the Syrian Ar Raqqa; to the east is Ankara and to the west is Aleppo. Its ancient walls, main gates, castle and large mosque remain to this day (Shami, 1993, p. 313).

2.3. Describing the "Fals"

In the fals in question, the name "Mohammed" is repeated twice, one time on the obverse and the other on the reverse. This name may refer to the first name of Harran's ruler appointed by the Caliph Abdel- Malik Ibn Marwan, its Islamic tax official, the chief policeman, headmaster of the mint or one of the important figures because minting was allowed for those figures only.

To the left of the amphitheaters and the pillar, there is the Greek Monogram, that is, a rectangular shape with a triangular or almond-shaped model inside it which ends at the bottom with a small pillar. Below the amphitheaters, there is a Greek | S - shaped decoration. There is no doubt that this decoration and the Greek Monogram are Byzantine influences that continue to affect Islamic Coins since its inception. But these influences disappeared only after the full Arabization of Coins in 77 A.H by the Caliph Abdel- Malik Ibn Marwan (Al-Huseini, 1969, pp. 22-25). (PL. 2)

Plate 2: Umayyad Copper Fals Minted at Harran

Source: Published in Goussous, 1996, p. 73, pl. 55

¹ Harran was a very important city in the islamic times as a center of thought in many peiods, cf. Al-Tabari, 1960, p. 312; Ibn Jubayr, 1986, pp. 197 - 199; Jasim, 2006, pp. 1 - 50; Ahmad & Al-Faisal, 2008, pp. 1- 22.

3. Analytical Comparative study of the fals and other fulus

It should be noted that there are two fulus of the type in question, the first fals was published by Naif Al- Qusous (Pl. 2) (Goussous, 1996, p. 73, pl. 55) and the second fals was published by Stephen Album (Album, Stephen: Sale 19, Lot 279), but they did not examine them. They are perfectly identical and of the same pattern but their pattern differ from the pattern of the fals in question which was published, examined and dated for the first time. Despite their similarity, the fals, in question, differs from the two other models in the form, size and position of the Monogram (Latin Cross) and the Greek decoration found on the reverse of the fals, especially the lower part of the monogram and its position as for the amphitheaters. In the fals in question, we find that the monogram is smaller in size, and its shape and position differs from that of the two fulus mentioned. Inscriptions and decorations of this fals are more pronounced than the other two models mentioned. Thus, it is clear to us that the two aforementioned fulus published only without study are exactly identical in their inscriptions and decorations, and represent one pattern that is different from the type of fals in question, which is considered the third fals published from the mint of Harran and displays the image of Caliph Abdel- Malik and is the first fals of its kind and pattern to be published and studied and that is why it is considered an important and rare one.

Comparing the fals , in question, to the Umayyad Coins that bear the image of Caliph Abdel- Malik minted in other minting houses, such as Ma'arrat Masrin (Al-Khuraiji, 1434, p. 17, pl. 28), and Qinnasrin (Al-Khuraiji, 1434, p. 17, pl. 29) Oman (Al-Khuraiji, 1434, p. 18, pl. 31), and Sarmin (Al-Khuraiji, 1434, p. 18, pl. 32-33), and Homs (Al-Khuraiji, 1434, p. 19, pl. 36) and Aleppo (Al-Khuraiji, 1434, p. 20, pl. 37) in the collection of Professor Abdel- Majid al-Khuraiji, we find that the obverse includes the image of the Caliph Abdel- Malik standing surrounded by an inscription saying: "For Abdullah Abdel- Malik Amir al-Mu'minin (Leader of the Faithful). The reverse includes four amphitheaters topped with a pillar ended with ball- shaped Cross surrounded by the mint name. Around all of these parts, there is an inscription with simple Kufic calligraphy that includes the short form of the Islamic declaration of faith " shahada " and Muhammadan message as follows: "No god to be worshiped but Allah and Mohammad is Messenger of Allah ".

The Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo also includes two fulus of the same type, the first minted in Aleppo (Fahmy, 1965, p. 404, pl. 848) and the other minted in Damascus (Fahmy, 1965, p. 405, pl. 849).

The British Museum in London preserves another fals minted in Damascus that is similar to the fals found in the Islamic Museum (Walker, 1956, p. 37, No. 171). It is clear that the inscriptions appeared on the three fulus around the image of the Caliph Abdel- Malik are as follows: "Calih of Allah, Amir al-Mu'minin (Leader of the Faithful)" instead of mentioning the name and titles of the caliph Abdel- Malik inscribed on the aforementioned Coins which are included in the collection of Al-Khuraiji.

The position of the mint's name on the aforementioned fulus differs, sometimes, the name is inscribed to the right of the pillar above the amphitheaters on the reverse

as shown on the fulus and coins minted at Oman and Homs, and to the left of the amphitheaters as shown on the fulus and coins minted at Qinnasrin and Aleppo. In other cases, the mint's name is divided between both sides of the amphitheaters and the pillar as shown on the fulus and coins minted at Sarmin and Ma'arrat Masrin in the collection of Al- Khuraiji.

The fals, in question, doesn't contain the name and titles of the Caliph Abdel-Malik on the obverse and the short form of the Islamic declaration of faith " shahada " and Muhammadan message on the reverse, as it only includes an Arabic inscription composed of two words: "Muhammad" on the obverse and reverse, and "Harran " on the obverse. Moreover, the fals under study differs from the previously mentioned fulus and coins minted at other mints by the Greek Monogram and the Greek | S-shaped decoration on the reverse.

As for the minting date of the fals in question, it does not have a specific date for its minting but displays the image of the Caliph Abdel- Malik Ibn Marwan while standing and two words "Muhammad and Harran" only. Nonetheless, this fals can be attributed to the period beginning at the year 73 A.H (the first year in which the Caliph Abdel Malik began Arabization of the minting die¹ after denouncing the treaty between him and the Byzantine Emperor Justinian II during the sixth year since its signature (67 A.H / 686 A.D)) until the year (77 A.H / 708 A.D) (El Adawy, 1951, p. 59), the year in which the coins were fully Arabized. In 77 A.H, a new two type of dinars, one, the oldest type, which had the image of Caliph Abdel Malik appeared, and the other type had pure Arabic inscriptions (Fahmy, 1965, pp. 48-49). This can be emphasized by a dinar preserved in the collection of Nayef Goussous (Goussous, 1996, p. 48, pl. 22) bearing the image of the Caliph Abdel Malik minted in 75 A.H (PL. 3), and another dinar preserved at the National Library of Paris (Fahmy, 1965, pp. 287-288; Lavoix, 1887, p. 485, No. 1677) also bearing the image of the Caliph Abdel Malik on the obverse surrounded by the following inscriptions: "la alh 'ilaa allah (No god to be worshiped but Allah), Muḥammad rasūl Allāh (Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah)". On the reverse around amphitheaters, the date of minting is inscribed, that is 76 A.H as follows: " In the name of Allah, this dinar was struck in the year seventy-seven".

Plate 3: Umayyad Dinar gold

Source: Published in Goussous, 1996, p. 48, pl. 22

¹ The stage where a dispute occurred between Abdel- Malik Ibn Marwan and Justinian II over setting his image on the dinars as like what happened with Maaweya whose image was set on the dinars. For more on treaties cf. Mansour, 2004, p. 64; Al-Falahi, 2015, p. 1187-1188; Uthman 1989, p. 39.

The fact that Caliph Abdel Malik struck in 77 A.H two models of dinars can be emphasized by the oldest model that bears his image, (at the National Library in Paris (Fahmy, 1965, p. 288, pl. 1; Lavoix, 1887, p. 17, No. 56), dated 77 A.H) where the obverse of the dinar shows the image of Caliph Abdel Malik standing surrounded by the following Kufic inscriptions: "In the name of Allah, No god to be worshiped but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah". The pillar and amphitheaters found on the reverse, there is a simple Kufic inscription and reads as follows: "In the name of Allah, this dinar was struck in the year seventy-seven".

The other model minted in 77 A.H, is the latest model which is fully Arabized in 77 A.H and holds the purest Arabic Islamic inscriptions as follows:

	<u>Obverse</u>		<u>Reverse</u>
Centre	la alh 'iilaa allah wahdah la sharik lah (No god to be worshiped but Allah)	Centre	He is Allah, Who is the One Allah The Eternal Refuge (Allâh-us-Samad) He neither begets nor is born,
Margin	Muḥammad rasūl Allāh (Mohammad Messenger of Allah). It is He who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to manifest it over all religion	Margin	In the name of Allah this dinar was struck in the year seventy- seven

4. Conclusion

Thus, in light of the above, it is clear to us that the fals in question differs from the aforementioned coins (Fahmy, 1956, p 291; Record number in the Islamic Museum, 1946 A.D; al-'Ush, 1984, p. 125, pl. 200; Walker, 1956, p.84, No.186; Miles, 1967, p. 214, pl. XIV, 17; Nicol & El- Nabarawy & Bacharach, 1982, p. 2, No. 44-45) that are minted in mints other than Harran, and that its pattern is different from the pattern of Goussous and album's fulus which were published only without being examined or dated. Both fulus are also struck at Harran and bear the image of Caliph Abdel-Malik. The current fals is also characterized by being studied and published for the first time in this research and is different from other fulus in terms of the shape and position of the Greek Monogram and Greek decoration, although they bear the name of one mint, namely Harran, and bear the image of Abdel- Malik and represent one model but in two different patterns. In fact, the inscriptions and decorations of the fals in question, especially the monogram, is clearer than the other two fulus, as both represent one pattern. Our fals is considered the third fals published of its type, but it is the first fals minted at Harran and has the image of the Caliph of its type that is

published and studied and hence it is an important and rare one and is considered as a new addition to the Umayyad Coins.

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