INTRODUCTION

A new series of bronze coin issues began to appear in the cities of Syria and Palestine, possibly as early as the 640s CE. Known conventionally as the Arab-Byzantine coinage, these coins often bear the names of new urban mints – mints which, apart from Jerusalem, had not previously issued coins. These coins were a by-product of Umayyad administration of the Arab-Muslim junds, the military-administrative districts established in the wake of the Muslim conquest of Syria. I use the term ‘Umayyad’ in the sense of the extended family of Abū Sufyān, and in particular his sons Yaṣīd and Mu‘āwiya, who were successively governors of the jund of Dimashq, Urdunn and later Filastīn. Mu‘āwiya succeeded his brother in 640, and in due course saw his duties extended to cover the junds of Ḥimṣ, Qinnasrin and Jazīra (the latter by 646–47 CE/ 26 AH). (HUMPHRIES 1990: pp. 72-74, 255. HINDS 1996: p. 18) He administered these six junds until 660 when he became caliph, keeping his capital at Damascus, which lay in the centre of these junds. Mu‘āwiya made extensive use of family members and clan clientelae in the administration of the junds, as well as political dissidents from Kūf. (DE GOEJE 1866: p. 178. HUMPHRIES 1990: pp. 125, 128-129). There is practically nothing in the historical sources about his having shown an interest in minting bronze coins. (WALKER 1956: p. xxv) There has been some discussion about the issuing authority and chronology of the bronze coinage
of Mu‘awiya’s forty years as governor and caliph. The first bronze issues of urban mints have a *terminus ante quem* in the last years of his governorship, that is, in the 650s CE, to judge from an apparent hoard edited by Phillips and Goodman. (*Phillips-Goodman 1997*)

The earliest forms of this coinage have been called Type I, Pseudo-Byzantine or ‘imitative’ issues, which Tony Goodwin has divided into nine distinct series, Types A-I (*Goodwin 2005: pp. 16-17*) An important series of these, Type B, imitations – often crudely – the obverse of Herakeios’ coins of Cyprus bearing the triple imperial image of Herakleios, Herakleios Constantine and Martina (*Hahn 1981: 198a-b, Foss 2008, nos. 3-4. Album-Goodwin 2002: nos. 505-506. Goodwin 2005: no. 2*). A more extensive series, Goodwin’s Types I D-F, bears the obverse image of emperor Constans II copied from the standard bronze coinage of the mint of Constantinople in first eight years of his reign. (*Hahn 1981: nos. 162 a-d, 163a-b, 164, 165, 167b-d; Album-Goodwin 2002, nos. 508-516. Goodwin 2005: pp. 33-34, nos. 4-7*). A critical feature of the Arab-Byzantine imitations is at times the blundered repetition of the obverse inscription on the coins of Constans II: *EN TOYTO NIKA* (‘in this [sign] conquer’, a reference to the Chi-Rho or Christogram, and to Constantine’s victory in the battle of the Milvian bridge in 312), and the reverse with chaotic concatenations of Greek uncial letters, whose meaning – whether indications of mints, officinae, die cutters or other – cannot be determined with any certainty. The letters of the obverse Greek inscription and sometimes the entire reverse are in retrograde, suggesting poor mint discipline or unofficial issues by locally constituted mints, where no one took the trouble to cut the reverse dies in retrograde.

There is practically no concrete evidence on the question of who produced these issues, but it has been suggested that Christian town counsellors (*bouleutai*), and particularly bishops – the same officials who negotiated the surrender of cities to the Muslim invaders in the late 630s and 640s – are likely candidates to have taken a hand in minting coins of this type not long after Constans II’s bronze coinage began to decline in module weight and frequency of issue during the late 650s. (*Phillips-Goodman 1997*)

A second type of coins emerged that have sometimes been called Type II or Umayyad Imperial Image coinage, featuring the effigy of an imperial figure singly, in dyads and triads, previously classified as ‘Type II (*Album-Goodwin 2002: nos. 531-595. Goodwin 2005: pp. 18-22, nos. 12-42*). These images were not per se or necessarily images of historical figures such as Constans II, Constantine IV or Mu‘awiya himself – the coins merely imitated the imperial iconography of Byzantine coins in a symbolic way. These series all have inscriptions with mint names, officina marks and other meaningful symbols; furthermore, certain types make ideological pronouncements, as for example

A third type, the Type III Standing Caliph coins of ‘Abd al-Malik’s first coinage reform, make a series of important departures from the previous issues, including long Islamic theme inscriptions in Kufic script, the distinctively Arab headgear or coiffure, brocaded coat and scabbard of the obverse caliphal figure. Apart from the mint name, the inscriptions are written round the margin of the obverse and reverse. (WALKER 1956: nos. 73-136. ALBUM–GOODWIN 2002: nos. 608-729. GOODWIN 2005: nos. 43-64. FOSS 2008: nos. 104-130. HEIDEMANN 2010) Most of these issues (except Jerusalem, Yubna and Diospolis) have the reverse image of a vertical pole standing on three or four steps and bearing a circular object, perhaps a victory trophy of some kind (GOODWIN 2005: pp. 24-25). These coins pose special problems – it is clear, for example, that quality control standards existed across all mints in terms of a focused epigraphic and iconographic prototype. My discussion will be confined mostly to unpublished coins of Types I and II which have unusual variations in their epigraphy and iconography that may aid the process of localising them chronologically and establishing their points of origin. My contextual remarks are for the most part based on the literature cited above. Figures containing more than one image are cited ‘a’ through ‘d’ from left to right and from top to bottom.

1. DERIVATIVES OF THE BAYSAN-SKYTHOPOLIS FALS.

Turning to specific examples, I note the Type II fals issues of Skythopolis-Baysān, a large coin usually struck on a thick flan (Figs. 1-2), sometimes with retrograde N’s in the imitative ANNO on the reverse. (Note the differences in the ‘A’ officina marks and thin flan of the second coin.) The presentational
framework of the reverse – the large M, the sometimes retrograde ANNO and the frozen date – was occasionally copied onto other coins whose mint origin is unknown. So for example a Type I coin with an obverse [E]N TOYTO, with [NIKA] off the flan, here compared for module size, with a large-headed Constans II (Fig. 3), has a reverse likely copied from the Skythopolis-Baysān fals (Fig. 4). (Note the distinctive officina mark.) There is room for scepticism that this Type I coin was a product of the Skythopolis-Baysān mint; it could be a Type I imitation with a stray reverse die. But a final judgement about this depends on whether other examples of this type emerge from the Skythopolis-Baysān excavations. Another reverse of this general type is found on the back of a badly worn Herakleios three imperial figure imitation (e.g. ALBUM-GOODWIN 2002, nos. 505-506); the reverse is badly blundered, with a large ‘M’, cross above, an apparent date of IIXI (=13) in the left field, officina B and an apparent NIK or NIKO in the exergue. (Fig. 7) Both these NIKO reverses are conscious attempts to recreate the recognisable and impressive reverse of the large Skythopolis-Baysān fals. (Figs. 1-2)

2. DERIVATIVES OF HERAKLEIOS’ CYPRUS COINAGE

The Herakleios three figure imperial image coin of the KYĪP mint and its imitations are worth noting briefly (Goodman’s Type I B) (Figs. 5-6) On the official Byzantine coinage the imperial figures are usually, if no always, convincingly shaped, yet with a certain crudity, whereas the Type I B imitations are often struck on folles cut in half with carelessly composed reverses typified by various retrograde features. In the examples shown in Figs. 5-6 the official issue is at left for purposes of comparison; the imitation (at right) is struck on circular flan; on the latter the imperial figures’ torsos are drawn with vertical, diagonal and horizontal cuts and their faces are constructed of high-relief beads for the eyes and headgear; but the trefoil crosses, particularly those in the field between the emperors’ heads, are very carefully executed. As will be suggested for other Type I coins, the execution of the cross and its size might be taken as an indication of its provenance, that is, an ecclesiastical or semi-official secular mint. The reverse of the Herakleios three-figure imitation is almost completely in retrograde: the large M, the cross above, a retrograde date to left, retrograde ANNO to right and retrograde KYĪP in the exergue, but mutatis mutandis the gamma officina mark has come through in correct form. (Fig. 6b) The obverse and reverse dies of this imitation are thus not typical the Type I B series.
3. DERIVATIVES OF THE TYPE I PSEUDO-BYZANTINE COINAGE.

Let us now turn to the Type I D-F Constans II imitations. (Album-Goodwin 2002, nos. 508-516, as noted above) An example of the standard year 1-8 issues of Constans II with typical obverse with a clear inscription EN TOYTO NIKA (Fig. 8a, 9a) is shown here for comparison with an important Arab Byzantine Type I variant. (Fig. 8b, 9b) On the obverse, one should note the proportionately large size of the trefoil crosses on the processional cross (left) and globus cruciger (right). The imitation displayed at the right (22 mm.) is a near die match to a coin found by De Saulcy in Jerusalem in 1869. (Oral communication, Tony Goodwin, 17 September 2011) De Saulcy was inclined to attribute the coin to Khalid b. al-Walid, basing his argument on the inscription found on the reverse, a thesis that John Walker decisively refutes. (Walker 1956: pp. 47-48) De Saulcy read the obverse legend – indistinguishable on the coin shown here – as TIBERIA and on the basis of this attributed the coin to the mint of Tiberiada-Tabariyya, as shown in Fig. 10 (78 percent enlargement in Figs. 10 and 11). Whatever the merit of De Saulcy’s theory about the obverse, the reverse is more significant. (Fig. 11) It has a cursive M with a cross above and two pellets in the loops of the M. Reading down the right side of the coin, one finds XAΛEA (or XAΛEA) in the right field, ΒΟΝ in the exergue, and then a series of indistinguishable letters for which no satisfactory decipherment has been worked out. De Saulcy plausibly took XAΛEA ΒΟΝ for ‘Khalid ibn’, but it is not easy to find precise way of deriving Walid from the letters in the left field, which at first sight could be read as ΕΜΑΝ or ΕΛΑΛΛΑ, a doubtful anthroponym, or perhaps as ΕΜΑΔ or ΕΛΑΑΔ. If the latter, there might a provisional case for the identification, if one allows that the Arabic wāw / kasra of Walid was elided or pronounced as smooth breathing / epsilon in the local Greek linga franca or dialect, particularly as Arabic personal names and words were passing into Greek, Syriac and Palestinian Aramaic all the time. It would have involved the displacement of the weak consonant (in this case wāw) with a glottal stop similar to hamza, which does not work, because the reverse of the phenomenon of w/y > ‘ was invariably the case (Rabin 1951: pp. 201-202) As Walker indicates, the word in the left field may simply be blundered.

It is risky to try to draw this coin into the chronology of the immediate post-conquest period, which is a decade or two too early for the emergence of the Type I coin issues. There were in any case many Khalids and ibn Khalids at this time, for instance ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. Khalīd b. al-Walīd, a relative of the hero of the Muslim conquest who served as Mu‘āwiya’s governor (‘amīl) at Hims-Emesa. (Humphries 1990: pp. 119, 255). Localising early bronze coin issues is problematical outside the Umayyad-controlled areas of Damascus.
and Urdunn. The first khalīfa known to have signed his bronze coins in Syria remains caliph 'Abd al-Malik. (685-705 CE / AH 65-86) (Walker 1956: no. 122; Album-Goodwin 2002: p. 94).

It is now time to go on the question of crosses. Are exaggerated crosses a possible indication of the provenance of particular coin issues? Some apparently unpublished examples are shown here. (Fig. 12 a-d, 13a-d). The obverse of the second coin (Fig. 12b) has well executed trefoil crosses somewhat larger than those typically seen on the early folles of Constans II, (Hahn 1981: nos. 162 a-d, 163a-b, 164, 165, 167b-d), but the obverse of the fourth coin at lower right (Fig. 12d) has a processional cross in the emperor’s right hand that is certainly of an exaggerated size; the heroic and perhaps militaristic figure of the emperor with the cheek pieces of his helmet gripping his face is impressive. The reverses of the two coins in Fig. 13a and 13c appear to be die matches with blundered or retrograde legends. Each has the large M of the follis, ANNO incorrectly placed in the right field with retrograde NN, a frozen and very late regal year of 25 in the left field and letters in the exergue that can be read as officina B, regnal year 2, as in the early official folles of Constans II, but in retrograde. The gigantic crosses are extraordinary for issues of this type.

Constans II’s aggressive military policies are poorly recorded in the chronicles, but he and his immediate successors seem not to have given up hope of an eventual re-conquest of the lost provinces in Syria, Mesopotamia and Egypt. Constans II was pursuing a policy of detente with the Monophysite Christians of the caliphate through the theological formulae of one will and one activity. (Stratos 1972: pp. 100-138) The question posed by the coins is twofold: first, can the cross be taken as a symbol not only of religious but also of political allegiance? And secondly, do crosses used on local coinage signify ecclesiastical control over the minting process in some towns? We know from al-Balahūrī and dated papyri that Greek continued to be used in the tax registers well into the 8th century (in Egypt at Apollōnios Anō papyri have been discovered dating as late as 713) (Remondon 1953: nos. 26-27), and numerous examples of late Byzantine and early Umayyad documents survive in the Nessana papyri in the 670s and 680s. One document mentions the petition of local Christian leaders to the governor in Gaza for tax relief in the late 7th century. (Kraemer 1958: no. 75) Powerful Christian families like the Mansūr of Damascus helped to staff the Umayyad bureaucracy with administrators; they continued to think and write in Greek and enjoyed continuing access to the caliphal court. (Kazhdan 1991: p. 1288) In the junds of Damascus and Ḥimṣ-Emesa, it is possible that these people, with the personal clientelae and bureaucratic skills derived from management of Umayyad estates, controlled not only the tax registers, but also the local mints in the second half of the 7th
c. The coins hint at such an identity of interest, but fall short of absolute proof. As to the display of crosses, conquest period evidence, if problematical in terms of transmission, seldom mentions the proscription of crosses, and some of it at least was tampered with by later Muslim legal scholars seeking to clear up inconsistencies. (Donner 1981: 246-247 and note 125) A primary, if not defining case, is seen in the capitulation agreement for Jerusalem, as reported by al-Ṭabarī. (Friedmann 1992: p. 191-192. Hill 1971: nos. 101, 202)

The terms of the treaty which 'Umar wrote for the people of Jerusalem were as follows: they had āmān for their lives, moveable property, churches and crosses. Their churches were not to be occupied or destroyed, nor were they or their estates to be diminished.

Khālid b. al-Walīd’s restriction on the display of crosses at the surrender of ʿĀnāt must be regarded as a breach or reversal of the caliphal suagna of ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, whereas the restrictions ʿĪyād b. Ghanm’s imposed at the capitulation of al-Raqqā are seen as possible anachronisms based on later legal practice. (Hill 1971: p. 96, no. 219)

4. DAMASCUS

The Type II, Imperial Figure coinage of Damascus raises certain questions about how well Greek was known in the officinae of the mints. It is possible that the mints was staffed by Arabs right from the beginning, consisting of Muʿāwiya’s personal clientelae and freedmen, and at the same time by Christians whose first language was Arabic or Syriac. The Greek language survives in epigraphy of the Massif Calcaire to the east of Antioch until at least 666/7 CE (Trombley 2004: pp. 357-358), but less is known about the knowledge of Greek in the populace of Damascus at this time. To explore this hypothesis further, one must consider three bilingual Greek and Arabic coins of the Damascus mint. Some coins of the Type II Standing Imperial Figure series bear the obverse inscription ΔAMACKOC. (Figs. 14a-c, 15a-c) (Walker 1956: nos. 15, P. 2. Album-Goodwin 2002, nos. 566-567) The imperial figure bears the usual cross staff and globus cruciger, and there is at times a bird on a perch thought by Oddy to be a stylised falcon. (Oral communication, 11 September 2011) The imperial figures have disproportionately large heads in comparison with the Byzantine coinage of Constans II. In Fig. 14b the die cutter was having trouble distinguishing between alpha and delta in the legend, the alphas having a flat horizontal stroke at the bottom, a feature more characteristic of the letter delta in the way Greek uncial book-hands were developing. (Fig. 16) The peculiar affinity between the alpha and delta
can be seen in a considerably later uncial manuscript, the 9th c. parchment Gregory of Nazianzos, Paris Bibliotheque nationale MS grec 510, produced for the imperial family for emperor Basil I (inter 879-883). (Barbour 1981: no. 5) (Fig. 17) The coin is interesting because the reverse, executed by a different die cutter, makes use of the broken bar alpha in the exergual inscription ΔΛΜ abbreviating the name of the mint. Except for the Chi-Rho monogram above the large Μ, the reverse legends (ΑΝΟ ΔΛΜ) are all written in retrograde script. (Fig. 18) In the cruder dies, like Fig. 14c and 19, the head of the imperial figure has no outline as such; the work of framing the face is done by the headgear, beard, nose and eyes. The latter coin is illiterate epigraphically as well as in its iconography – it is a cartoon imperial image with a misspelt city name ΔΑΝΑΚΟ[C] where it has a retrograde ‘N’ in place of ‘Μ’. (Fig. 19) There is a rare published example of this obverse. (Goussous, 1996: no. 32) The reverse has the usual large ‘Μ’, a crude Chi-Rho above, and Dimašq in the right field. (Fig. 20) The officina mark on the reverse is a ‘star’ consisting of a large central pellet surrounded by eight smaller ones. The production of coins with such crude images suggests that the demand for bronze coinage outstripped the availability of qualified die cutters, even in Damascus.

5. SECONDARY IMITATIONS OF THE TYPE II IMPERIAL BUST AND STANDING IMPERIAL FIGURE COINAGE OF ḪIMṢ-EMESA

Turning to the Type II Imperial Image coins of Ḫimṣ-Emesa, one sees a finely composed bust portrait reminiscent of some portraits in the folles of Constans II (641–668) and Constantine IV (668–685). (Hahn 1981: Constans nos. 166, 169 series, Constantine IV nos. 86, 88-89) These Ḫimṣ-Emesa fulūs were issued in large quantities, appearing in flans of various sizes and having distinguishing marks of various types on the reverse (Figs 21-22). (Walker 1956: nos. 57-72. Goussous 1996: no: 7. Album-Goodwin 2002: nos. 530-558)

Our concern here is with Arab Byzantine secondary imitations of this basic type. It is worth noting in advance that the Type II Standing Imperial Figure coins of the city with the Bismallah inscribed in the left field downward of the obverse continued to incorporate the processional cross and globus cruciger despite the Islamic formula (Walker 1956: nos. 27-31).

Fig. 21b has a Standing Imperial Image on the obverse similar to those in this Ḫimṣ series of. (Fig. 21b) (Album-Goodwin 2002: nos. 531-53. Walker 1956: nos. 27-34) The coin shown has no discernible obverse legend, apart from an omicron of dubious function and meaning in the upper right obverse field. (It cannot be an isolated letter from the Greek word ΚΑΛΟΝ, ‘good’, that appears on the other Type II Imperial Image issues shown.) The obverse image is
impressive and not devoid of quality. The trefoil cross on the *globus cruciger* is quite large, but not exaggerated. The reverse shows clear signs of imitating the standard issues, but it has a retrograde curved uncial ‘M’. The wavy lines on each side of the cross at the top are similar to those found on the typical reverse of the Type II Imperial Bust coins. (Walker 1956: nos. 57-72. Goussous 1996: no. 7. Album-Goodwin 2002: nos. 530-558). A provisional attempt was made at spelling the city mint name as AM[,]HC – the first letter is clearly a broken-bar alpha. (Fig. 23c) This is faulty compared with the spelling of the standard legend *EMICH* (with lunate epsilon and sigmas). The large cross and clearly imitative style of the reverse both suggest a coin produced at an auxiliary mint at or near Himṣ-Emesa, one that was possibly controlled by the local ecclesiastical establishment.

Other imitations of the Himṣ-Emesa Type II Imperial Bust fals have been noted. These have a crudely bearded and coiffed imperial figure on the obverse. In the official issues, the Kufic šād, the last letter of Himṣ in the right field of the obverse, has the typical short tail; but the local imitations shown here have long, curved tails, a less common form of Kufic šād in the 7th c. It is first seen in the epigraphy on the Qubba al-Ṣakhra in Jerusalem (691 CE / 72 AH) (Fig. 24b-c) and in an Arabic papyrus of Nessana dated 674 CE / AH 65. (Grohmann 1971: Schrifttafel II. Gruendl 1993: pp. 70-71) These imitations thus have a plausible but not absolute terminus post quem ca. 674 CE, inasmuch as the long-tailed emphatic ‘š’ was quite possibly an early development, going back to the Nabataean script. (Grohmann 1971: Schrifttafel I: Zur Entwicklung der arabischen aus der nabatäischen Schrift) The reverses of these coins pose no particular problems apart from the crudeness of their execution. (Fig. 25b-c) (The coin shown at Fig. 24c and 25c may be a later forgery.)

6. SOME BYZANTINE CONNEXIONS

There anomalies in palaeography and image design of the 7th century Arab Byzantine issues need to be seen in light of wider tendencies that pre-dated the Muslim conquest of Syria. The types of irregularities seen in these late Byzantine issues were often a consequence of the administrative requirement to produce large numbers of bronze coins in a short time for military pay in time of military emergencies. One result of this was the hasty or careless cutting of dies, resulting in blundered legends with retrograde letters and the poor execution of imperial figures on the obverse. This is seen, for example, in the coinage of Justin II and Sophia from the Antioch mint. One bronze folles of his eighth regnal year (15 November 573-14 November 574) has been noted with a retrograde date (Hahn 1975: 56a) (Fig. 26-27) This was undoubtedly a
The same problems are seen in the coinage of the military mints of Seleucia and Isaura in regnal years six to eight of Herakleios (5 October 615-4 October 619). One example from the Seleucia mint, an overstrike, has retrograde N’s in the obverse legend DNN (domini nostres). The reverse is also blundered, with a retrograde officina letter B – a recurrent feature in these early bronze issues of Herakleios. (Hahn 1981: no. 192) (Fig. 28a-29a)

There were other irregular issues during this period, among them the bronze coin issues of Antioch under Sasanid occupation. (Pottier 2004) These were minted by the local authorities to compensate for the closure of the Antioch mint after Herakleios’ overthrow of Phokas (5 October 610). (Grumel 1958: p. 356) There were still other irregular issues produced by local mints in Syria around this time which have not been included in Pottier’s catalogue. They imitate the standard obverse two-figure Standing Emperor folles of Herakleios’ early reign produced at the mints of Constantinople, Thessalonke, Nikomedeia, Kyzikos and Seleukia (regnal years 3-8, CE 612-618). (Hahn 1981: nos. 159-160 series, 175 series, 185, 193, 218 series, 219-220) In the imitations the obverse imperial figures are crudely composed, having dangling feet, with both the taller figure of senior emperor Herakleios and the processional cross in the left field tilting to the right in order to squeeze everything onto a reduced size die measuring approximately 28 mm., instead of the more or less normative 30 mm. of the official issues. The imitative coins have a scattering of letters, some retrograde, filling in the right (NK) and bottom (Λ) fields of the obverse. This may have been motivated by the horror vacui or perhaps intended somehow to imitate the DNN of the regular issues. (Fig. 30) Two reverses are here noted, one with a rectilinear M for the currency amount and various letters in the left and right fields, all of them lying on their sides. The left field bears retrograde NN (possibly [Λ or Δ]NN) in imitation of the ANNO on official issues, the right field INA or INΔ and the lower field with K visible. The second coin came from the same obverse die as the first, but the reverse dies are entirely different. The crude M is rounded with flaring legs and no serifs. The left field has retrograde NN, the right a crescent and X and other forms that cannot be perfectly distinguished because of the poor state of the coin (apparently ΙΔ or ΙΜ, but possibly an attempt to imitate or represent the regnal year. The exergue was crushed flat, thereby obliterating any legend. (Fig. 31) The flan sizes are typical of Herakleios’ two-figure coins issued by the Constantinople mint on reduced dies during regnal years 6-7. Both coins have inordinately large crosses in the reverse upper field, suggest-
ing manufacture by a local Christian secular or ecclesiastical governing body. No minting site can be suggested with confidence, although I would be inclined to suggest a provenance on the fringes of the Syrian desert, in the vicinity of Ḥalab-Aleppo or Damascus; this question could easily be clarified by the discovery of these coin types in the hoards of particular localities. In one way or another, all these minting phenomena are a consequence of bronze currency shortages. They are likely to have been a consequence of regionally ‘globalised’ conditions prevailing both before and after the Muslim conquest.

7. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion I would suggest that the present discussion has made only marginal headway towards resolving questions about the provenance and chronology of Arab-Byzantine bronze coinage. The principal difficulty is that few, if any of these coin types can be assigned to a chronological order with respect to each other. Some coin types are clearly dependent on others for their iconography. The examplar can often be dated but it is usually impossible to determine the actual date minting. A close examination of the historical record might discover further points of reference, not only in the expression of ideology, but also in the social and cultural life of Umayyad junds of Damascus, Ḥims-Emesa, Filastīn, Ḫurdūn, Qinnāsrīn and Jazīra.

I may been added that a detailed review of the use of the bronze currency in the papyri dating from the decades before and after ‘Abd al-Malik’s coinage reform also might make some headway towards an understanding of the economic conditions under which the Arab Byzantine currency arose by analysing any such transactions that involved bronze coinage. To judge from the Nessana papyri, local commerce invariably gave rise to transactions requiring small subunits of the solidus. However, not one of the Nessana papyri that mention follis belongs to the Islamic period. (KRAEMER 1958: nos. 89, 95, 162, 177). Similarly, only one of the Aphroditio papyri in Greek, an account of requisitions dating from 715–716 CE, mentions follis. (BELL 1910: no. 1435, lines 14, 33, 38, 83a, 102, 111). Conversely, the word turns up frequently in the Coptic papyri in the same edited collection. These documents may mostly belong to the early 8th century CE and refer to workmen’s wages, which are calculated in fractions of solidi/dinars. (BELL 1910: nos. 1508, 1514, 1526, 1544) One must remember that a ‘follis’ in Egyptian bronze currency at this time would have been composed not only of any number of the 12, 6 and 3 nummi coins of Herakleios (HAHN 1981: nos. 199-215) and Constans II (HAHN 1981: nos. 188-190), but also of a wide variety of post-Byzantine imitations of similar
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