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RARA & SINGULARIS COMMIXTIO LUCIS, & TENEBRARUM!
 AT THE BEGINNING OF THE STUDIES
 ON ARAB-BYZANTINE COINAGE*

Abstract

During the pioneering studies on Islamic coins, one of the most controversial and difficult to understand themes was to explain the simultaneous presence of Christian symbols alongside Islamic ones, such as the name of the prophet or the shahada (one of the Five Pillars of Islam). Over the centuries some issues were correctly attributed to the Urtukids, others remained unexplained, such as those now attributed to the Arab-Byzantine series. The orientalist of the late eighteenth century, including Simone Assemani, remained elaborated only erudite and uncertain explanations, far from a correct reading of what was legible on the coins. Gaetano Cattaneo, the curator of the numismatic collections in Milan, was the first who identified the exact classification of these coins, thanks to a follis/fals of the Tiberias mint, coming from a Venetian collection dispersed in the trade market in Milan.

Keywords

Assemani Simone; Arab-byzantine coins

* This paper is a continuation of Bruno Callegher, *Simone Assemani nella polemica Schiepati-Castiglioni (1818-1820)*, in Bruno Callegher & Arianna D'Ottone Rambach (eds.), *The 4th Simone Assemani Symposium on Islamic Coins*, Trieste, 26/27 September 2014, Trieste 2015. (*Polymnia: numismatica antica e medievale. Studi*, 9), pp. 37-104.

From the very earliest publications of Islamic numismatics scholars had to contend with an unexplainable abnormality¹: the minting of coins with epigraphs/legends in Kufic characters indicated without the shadow of a doubt that one of the most binding rules of Islamic religious culture, i.e. an absolute ban on the use of images, was not always respected. That bewilderment must be placed within the context of the knowledge *tout-court* of Islam in Europe between the 16th-18th centuries. Indeed, what the ambits and contents of the new and mysterious orientalism were among scholars of those centuries is still today a not easily researched subject². This is also true in the study of the monetary issues with legends in Kufic characters or Arabic script³. Concerning Islamic numismatics, or Kufic as it was at that time defined on an epigraphic basis, among the first to report issues with Arabic epigraphy and images was Johann Heinrich Hottinger (1620-1667)⁴. In his *Dissertatio tertia. De Nummis Orientalium, Judaeorum maxime & Muhammedanorum* he illustrated, for example, a fals of Qutb ad-Din el Ghazi-Urtukids of Mardin (AH 572-580, 1176-1189), on which appeared a Roman style bust⁵ and one with a two-headed eagle and Solomon's seal, minted by the caliph of the Urtukids of Hisn Keyfah and Amid

¹ Between the end of the 16th century and first decades of the 17th the subject was studied by Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc (1580-1637): cf. Peter N. Miller, *Peiresc's Orient: Antiquarianism as Cultural History in the Seventeenth Century*, III, Farnham: Ashgate Variorum, 2012, pp. 103-154, in part. pp. 108-113.

² An historical investigation on this subject is in Edward Wadie Said, *Orientalismo. L'immagine europea dell'Oriente*, Torino 1991 (translation by Stefano Galli of the New York edition 1978), in part. pp. 115-168; Aldo Gallotta & Ugo Marazzi (eds.), *La conoscenza dell'Asia e dell'Africa in Italia nei secoli XVIII e XIX*, III, Napoli 1989. Recently, with a francophone perspective, Michel Espagne, Nora Lafi & Pascale Rebault-Fuehrhahn take stock of orientalism in *Sylvestre de Sacy. Le projet européen d'une science orientaliste*, Paris 2016, certainly a valuable work in which, however, on pp. 325-326 a more updated bibliography would have been expected on Simone Assemani in line with this individual's role in both Italian and North-European orientalism. In the same line of studies, in particular for the contact with the Islamic world, an example is the anthology with reports of voyages in Attilio Brilli (ed.), *La Mecca rivelata. Avventure di esploratori europei nelle città sacre dell'Islam*, Palermo 2015 and one figure among the many: Richard Francis Burton (1821-1890): Jerrold Seigel, *Between Cultures: Europe and its Others in Five Exemplary Lives*. Philadelphia 2016.

³ The arising of interest in Islamic coinage among European scholars in the first decades of the 17th century is investigated in Peter N. Miller, *Peiresc and the Study of Islamic Coins in the Early Seventeenth Century*, in Alan Sthal (ed.), *The Rebirth of Antiquity: Numismatics, Archaeology, and Classical Studies in the Culture of the Renaissance*, Princeton. NJ 2009, pp. 102-155, a subject taken up again in Miller, *Peiresc's Orient: Antiquarianism cit.*

⁴ Jan Loop, *Johann Heinrich Hottinger. Arabic and Islamic Studies in the Seventeenth Century*, Oxford 2013, with ample biography and contextualization of this philologist/theologian within the ambits of studies on the Arabic language and culture, in particular of Islam and the Koran interconnected with Christian theology thanks to the methodological acquisitions of the reform movement.

⁵ Joh. Henricus Hottinger, *Cippi ebraici*, Heidelbergae 1667 (editio secunda), pp. 157-158, plate IV.5; cf. Michael Mitchiner, *The World of Islam*, London 1977, no. 1031.

(AH 597-619, 1201-1222)⁶. He explained the recourse to images on the “Turkish” coins as due to their being less iconoclastic and most of all for trading purposes⁷. A few years later Andreas Morell (1646-1703) described an Urtukid coin with two effigies, attributing them to Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn (1137-1193) and one of his sons, then extending the comment to the collections of “Arabicorum nummorum” in Northern Europe⁸. *Rectius*, from the illustration of Morell’s specimen, can be deduced to be a fals of Hosam ad-Din Yuluk Arslan-Urtukids of Mardin (AH 580-597, 1184-1201)⁹. In the numismatic collections of “oriental” coins, other cases began to be reported of nummi on which images accompanied by Latin script were associated to Arabic legends. This is the case of *Article XVII* of one of the first Dutch orientalists, Adriaan Reland (1676-1718), in which he discusses a bronze coin with a Victoria with crown of laurels on the obverse and the legend VICTORIA CONSTANTINI AVG together with the indication of the SIZ mint, in this case on the exergue of the obverse¹⁰. On the reverse was stamped a legend in four lines at the centre and another along the edge, but the author does not provide a full reading of this text but rather just some indications with little adherence to the epigraphy; nevertheless, for historical reasons, he assigned the coin to the Byzantine emperor Constantine IV (652-685). Obviously, the referral this emperor (also defined Pogonato in the text) derived from the necessity to put together, with some coherence, the iconography and epigraphy in a way that overcame the well-known Koranic ban rather than arriving at an identification on a textual basis. In reality the scholar had in his hands a bronze coin of the Urtukids of Hisn Kayfa and Amid, in particular of Fakhr al-Din Qara Arslan (AH 543-570 – 1144-1174)¹¹. No greater precision is found in the concluding pages of a booklet by Samuel Wilhelm Oetter [Vetter] (1720-1792)¹², where two coins are men-

⁶ Hottinger *Cippi ebraici* cit., pp. 159-160, plate IV.6; cf. Mitchiner *The World* cit., no. 1112.

⁷ Hottinger *Cippi ebraici* cit., p. 165: “Itaque cum Romanorum et Graecorum Imperatorum imagines in nummis et aspris [---] expressae conspicerentur, violari Prophetae legem clamabant, et abolendae monetae veteris autores erat. [---] Hodie non amplius animos arum illa religio tantopere tangit [---]. Imo nummos sive Ducatos Venetos, quibus vetitae Lege Mahumetis impressae sunt imagines, Sultaninis suis, qui nihil habent legi contrarium, Arabicis duntaxat insigniti literis, longe preaeferunt”.

⁸ Andrea Morellius, *Specimen universae Rei Nummariae antiquae*, Lipsiae 1695, pp. 230-232 and plate XXIII, 4. Morell’s attribution, however, does not convince me because in the copy consulted the acidity of the ink has made the print practically illegible.

⁹ Mitchiner *The World* cit., no. 1035.

¹⁰ Adriani Relandi, *Dissertatio de Marmoribus Arabicis Puteolanis & Nummo Arabico Contantini Pogonati*, “Memoires pour l’Histoire des Sciences & des Beaux Arts, 1706, pp. 227-232, illustration on p. 229.

¹¹ Stephen Album, *A Checklist of Islamic Coins*, 2nd, Santa Rosa Ca 1988, no. 1820.3.

¹² Samuel Wilhelm Oetter, *Erläuterung einer überaus raren Münze von dem Erzbischöffen zu Köln*, Nürnberg 1748, pp. 45-48; cf. also Hubert Emmerig, Numismatische Publikationen im Umkreis der Churfürstlich – Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (1759-1806), in “Numismatische

tioned that display the obvious contradiction between what can be observed on them and what instead pertained to the Islamic world regarding images. They were two fals of the Urtukids of Mardin, both of Nejm ad-Din Alpi (AH 572-580, 1152-1176). The first showed such strong similarities with Byzantine issues of the Komnenos period, in particular for the *Theotokos* who crowns or protects the emperor, to be described following that coinage¹³; on the second two facing busts were stamped on the obverse and one on the reverse¹⁴. Nevertheless, after a display of scholarly erudition, he went no further than the by then almost inevitable reference to Turkish coinage, especially due to the absence of linguistic-philological tools to deal with this series of coins, often kept in collections precisely because of their unusual interpretative difficulty. Other works of the early 18th century were also purely descriptive, reporting the rare presence of Arabic nummi in collections¹⁵ or among finds of dirham in the Baltic area, mainly in Sweden¹⁶. During those same years, an article by Jean-Jacques Barthélemy (1716-1795)¹⁷ provided no progress. The author, after having expressed, in his opinion, some cornerstones and indicated structural difficulties in the study of Islamic coinage “*On peut donc poser pour un principe certain, que toutes les médailles Arabes qui sont venues jusqu’à nous, sont postérieures à Mahomet. J’ajoute qu’elles n’en sont pas mieux connues pour cela. Le petit nombre de celles qu’on a tenté d’expliquer, ont occasionné de nouvelles erreurs dans la Littérature, ou n’ont rien appris, parce qu’oultre le nom du Prince, elles ne conte-*

Zeitschrift“ 120-121 (2015), pp. 193-231, in part. pp. 207-209.

¹³ Album, *A Checklist* cit., no. 1827.3.

¹⁴ Mitchiner *The World* cit., no. 1029.

¹⁵ Rudolf Capell [1634-1684], *Nummotheca atque rariora Becceleriana: prout se obtulerunt et sub stylum venerunt*, Hamburgi 1684, but re-edition 1750; Franciscus Wise [1695-1767], *Nummi literis arabicis signati in Armario Bodleiano*, in *Nummorum Antiquorum Scriniis Bodleianis reconditorum Catalogus*, Oxford 1750. Other data in the reasoned bibliography of Marco Callegari, *Alle origini della bibliografia sulla numismatica islamica*, in Bruno Callegher & Arianna D’Ottone Rambach (eds.), *The 4th Simone Assemani Symposium on Islamic Coins, Trieste, 26/27 September 2014*, Trieste, 2015 (Polymnia: numismatica antica e medievale. Studi, 9), pp. 223-242: <http://hdl.handle.net/10077/12034>.

¹⁶ Carolus Abrahamus Clewberg [1712-1765], *Dissertatio Academica de Nummis Arabicis in Patria Repertis*, 1755: URI: <http://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi:bib:me:I00537064701>; *Nummi Arabici in Svecia effossi diversis temporibus*, in “Acta Literaria et Scientiarum Sveciae”, volumen tertium (1730-1733), Uspaliae 1738, D. 115. Carolus Aurivillius [1717-1786], *De nummis Arabicis in Sviogothia repertis disquisitio*, «Nova Acta Regiae Societatis Scientiarum Upsaliensis», II (1775), pp. 79-107. The finding and collecting especially of dirhem is illustrated in Jonas Hellenberg [1748-1834], *Collectio nummorum Cuficorum, quos aere expressos*, Stockholmiae 1800.

¹⁷ Jean-Jacques Barthélemy, *Dissertation sur les médailles arabes*, in «Mémoires de littérature, tirés des registres de l’Académie Royale des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres», XXVI (1759), pp. 557-576, 2 plates.; Thierry Sarmant, *De Gaston d’Orléans à l’Abbé Barthélemy : essai de sociologie des numismates français des XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles*, «Numismatische Zeitschrift», 120-121 (2015), pp. 403-414.

noient que des sentences de l'Alcoran qu'on sait déjà, ou qu'on ne se soucie pas de savoir; le grand nombre de celles qu'on a fait graver semblent avoir été abandonnées à des ouvriers qui vraisemblablement auroient fait des fautes grossières en copiant des inscriptions en leur propre langue. Mais il ne faut être surpris ni de cette négligence, ni de ces erreurs; la plupart des médailles Arabes sont très-difficiles à lire"¹⁸, limited himself to re-proposing previously published specimens, contributing no new perspectives on their identification and even less on those unpublished. His concentration on Omayyad or Abbasid dihrans, on Urtukid and more in general Turkish fulus, could have been due to their diffuse presence in the finds along the Baltic coasts or on the islands between Sweden and Denmark. In fact, it was there that these challenging coins were collected by enthusiasts of local antiques, collectors and public authorities, sufficient to steer the first attempts to put in order a numismatics at that time in its early dawn¹⁹. Among the first, if not the first, to draw attention to those until then unknown issues, certainly unpublished or ignored due to their interpretative complexity, was the cartographer-explorer Karsten Niebuhr (1733–1815). The direct examination of the coinage where it had been found, i.e. in the Palestinian regions he visited, allowed him to report new types of fulus that “*me paroissent remarquables par les signes que l'on ne trouve pas d'ordinaire sur les monnoies des Mahométans. D'un côté de la pièce 4 paroît une croix, pendant que l'inscription prouve, qu'elle a été frappée par des Mahométans*”²⁰. Plate X.4 (fig. 1) allows updating of the reference to the series today defined as the “Standing caliph”, in particular to the fulus minted at Jund Qinnasrīn, Qinnasrīn, Ḥalab or Manbij just before the reform of ‘Adb al-Malik (ca 690)²¹. It can be supposed that previously

¹⁸ Barthélemy, *Dissertation* cit., pp. 558-559.

¹⁹ Still in the first half of the 19th century the Urtukid coinage and more in general that of the Seljuq and Atabek is the most widely represented in collections of Islamic coins, as in that of Ignacy Pietraszewski, illustrated in Leopold Leon Sawaszkiewicz, *Le génie de l'Orient commenté par ses monuments monétaires*, Brussels 1846, pp. 199-220. The Islamic series of the Orientalisches Münzkabinett in Jena can be interpreted in the same way, with ample attestations of Golden Horde and Mongol coins: Tobias Mayer, *Sylloge der Münzen des Kaukasus und Osteuropas*, Wiesbaden 2005 (with contributions by Stefan Heidemann and Gert Rispling).

²⁰ Carsten Niebuhr, *Description de l'Arabie*, Amsterdam 1774, p. 87 and plate X.4.

²¹ Clive Foss, *Arab-Byzantine Coins. An Introduction with a Catalogue of the Dumbarton Oaks Collection*, Washington D.C. 2008; Tony Goodwin (ed.), *Arab-Byzantine Coins and History*, London 2012; Tony Goodwin & Rika Gyselen, *Arab-Byzantine Coins from Irbid Hoard. Including a new introduction to the series and study of the Pseudo-Damascus mint*, London 2015, pp. 24-28. Lastly, Cécile Morrisson & Vivien Prigent, *L'empereur et le calife (690-695). Réflexions à propos des monnayages de Justinien II et d'Abd al-Malik*, in *Hommages à Georges Tate*, Gérard Charpentier, Vincent Puech (eds.), (« Topoi », Suppl. 12), Lyon 2013, pp. 571-59, contributes notable critical relevance that seems to have been ignored by previous commentators on the « Standing caliph » series.

Tab. X.

FIGURE 1 – Carsten Niebuhr, *Description de l'Arabie*, Amsterdam 1774, p. 87

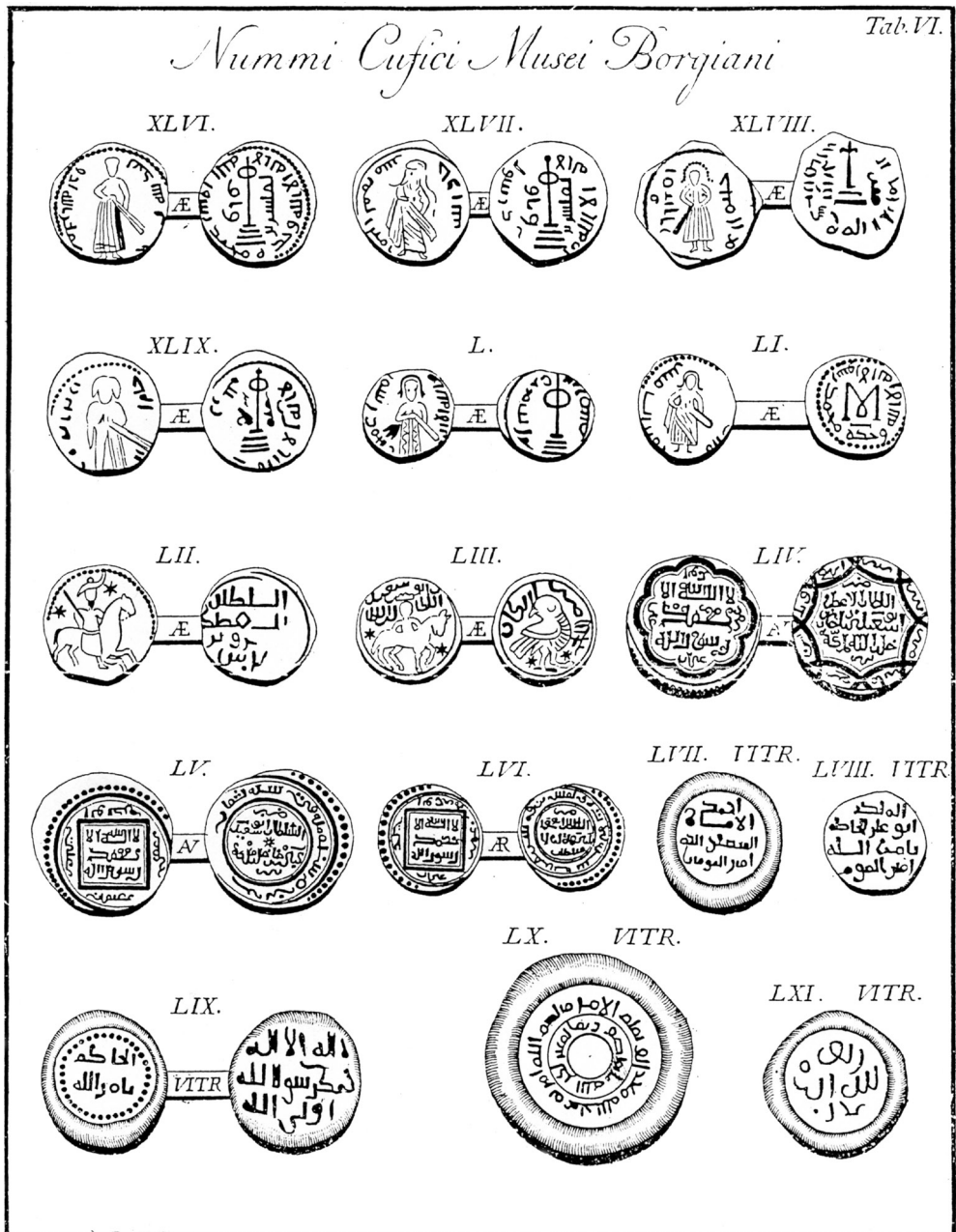


FIGURE 2 – Georg Christian Adler, *Museum Cuficum Borgianum Velitris, Romae* 1784, Tab. VI

these coins had not been considered in discussions on the co-presence of Kufic epigraphy and images because they were unknown or not among the finds in Northern Europe²² and consequently in the collections constituting the documentary basis from which a first ordering began of the Kufic coinage according to dynastic and/or chronological criteria. On the contrary, those types emerged in Italian collections, in particular at Rome and Venice where they were found for similar but opposing reasons: i.e. very probably as a consequence of merchants' or sailors' travels in the Syrian-Palestinian regions (Venice) or as gifts or legacies of missionaries (Rome)²³. In fact, these were examined by the first redactor of a catalogue of Kufic coins in a collection that was not Nordic or central-European, but that of Velletri²⁴ property of the cardinal Stefano Borgia (1731 –1804) of Propaganda Fide, a congregation in those years under his jurisdiction and particularly orientated to the spread of the Catholic faith in the Near East. In the first catalogue of 1782²⁵, citing the table of the *Description de l'Arabie*, for the Kufic nummi XLVI-LI, denominated “*Nummi aenei, cum figura Sérvatoris mundi*” Georg Christian Adler (1724 –1804) declared his inability to go any further than their description, even if insecure, despite “*Omnem diligentiam, cogitationem, mentem omnem in his nummis defixi, verum haud mihi contigit esse tam felici, ut eos ex omni parte intelligerem*”²⁶. The scholar stated that on the 6 nummi also illustrated in Plate VI (fig. 2), on the obverse “*Servatoris nostri effigies est*” – the image of Christ could be justified by the proximity to Byzantine coins. He recognised a nimbus, the volume and the imperial mantle [*paludamentum*]. On the reverse the cross on steps or a symbol similar to the cross “*typi nummorum Byzantinorum animadvertuntur, in plerisque crucis figura, vario modo formata, gradibusque innixa*” [assimilable to the Byzantine coins], enough to quote the “*Tiberii Absimari, Leonis Sapientis, Romani Lacapeni*” types. It is difficult to cite, as refer-

²² For a first confirmation, cf. Thomas Noonan, *When did dirham imports into tenth-century Sweden decline?*, in *Festskrift till Lars O. Lagerqvist* (Svenska Numismatiska Foreningen), Stockholm 1989, pp. 295-302; *Sigtuna papers: Proceedings of the Sigtuna Symposium on Viking-Age Coinage 1-4 June 1989*, Kenneth Jonsson & Brita Malmer, Stockholm 1990, *passim*; Thomas S. Noonan, *Coins, Trade and the Origins of the Ninth Century Rus' Towns*, in Bernhard Weisser (ed.), *XII. Internationaler Numismatischer Kongress. Berlin 1997. Akten-Proceedings-Actes*, II, Bernd Kluge &, Berlin 2000, pp. 934-942.

²³ As an example see Halim Noujaim & Libero Cruciani, *Giovanni Benedetti, Raggiunglio di Terra Santa, del Monte Libano e Provincia di Chesruan*, “*Studia Orientalia Christiana. Collectanea*”, 35-36 (2002-2003), pp. 257-364 and bibliography on the subject.

²⁴ Anna Germano & Marco Nocca (eds.), *La collezione Borgia. Curiosità e tesori da ogni parte del mondo*, Napoli 2001; *Le quattro voci del mondo: arte, cultura e saperi nella collezione di Stefano Borgia 1731-1804*, Marco Nocca (ed.), Napoli 2001.

²⁵ Georg Christian Adler, *Museum Cuficum Borgianum Velitris*, Romae 1784.

²⁶ Adler, *Museum Cuficum* cit., p. 71.

ences, a contemporary repertoire or collection of Byzantine coins known to Adler, but it can be supposed that he would have seen specimens of these emperors in the Borgian collection or he would have found them in Banduri (1675-1743)²⁷. In effect the cross on steps is also typical, but not just, of the solidi of Tiberius III (698-705) and the miliarenses of Leo VI (886-912), while for Roman I, co-emperor between 920-944 at the time of Constantine VII (914-959), the comparison appears more difficult because small steps at the base of the cross are present only on the miliarenses²⁸. The vagueness of the references thus confirms very limited knowledge of Byzantine and even more so of proto-Islamic numismatics. Among the six described by Adler, just one bears the value sign M with a Δ below. In this case, the author refers to the folles of Mauricius Tiberius (582-602)²⁹. In the legends, the scholar recognises the name of Allah, الله, but is uncertain in identifying any names of caliphs. On the obverse, he correctly cites the shahda, the proclamation of faith, whereas having deciphered the Kufic legend as *Kenesrini*, attributes it to a city in Mesopotamia and not to Jund Qinnasrīn, ummayyade district with Aleppo as city of reference. There are similar confusions in the chronology: Adler seems to be certain about the date 585 HE corresponding to 1189, a chronology that places those strange coins in an Urtukid or more in general Turkish ambit, thus concluding that “*In tanta horum nummorum ambiguitate nihil, nisi coniectura, mihi relinquitur*”. And the interpretative conjecture induces him to hypothesise that they were minted in territories in part subject to Arab authorities in part Christian (Byzantine?) in order to encourage trade with the Christian populations, supported by coins of a value guaranteed by the “*tituli Arabici Turcis*”³⁰. Almost ten years later the same Adler, from Copenhagen/Hafnia, examined another part of the Borgian collection, “*nummorum exempla sulphuri accurate impressa*”, in which other unusual nummi were conserved³¹. One or more emperors were observed on these, Christian symbols like the cross and others analogous to those described in his first Borgian catalogue. He dedi-

²⁷ Anselmo Banduri, *Numismata Imperatorum Romanorum a Trajano Decio ad Palaeologos Augustus. Accessit Bibliotheca Nummaria, sive Auctorum que de Re Nummaria Scripserunt*, II, Lutetiae Parisiorum 1718, pp. 697, 706-707, 730.

²⁸ For the reference iconography of the coins of these three emperors cf. Cécile Morrisson, *Catalogue des Monnaies Byzantine. Bibliothèque Nationale*, I-II, Paris 1970, *ad indicem*.

²⁹ Morrisson, *Catalogue cit.*, I, *ad indicem*.

³⁰ Adler, *Museum Cuficum cit.*, p. 73.

³¹ Georg Christian Adler, J.G. Adler, *Museum cuficum Borgianum, Pars II; Collectio nova nummorum Cuficorum seu Arabicorum veterum: CXVI continens numos plerosque ineditos e Museis Borgiano et Adleriano*, Hafniae 1792, pp. 170-173. This was followed shortly after by, Id., *Museum cuficum Borgianum... Pars II; Collectio nova nummorum Cuficorum seu Arabicorum veterum: CXVI continens numos plerosque ineditos e Museis Borgiano et Adleriano, Editio secunda supplemento aucta*, Altonae 1795.

cated a separate section to these, at the end of the book, with reference to the chapter already explanatory of his hypotheses: *Numi Imperatorum Byzantinorum*. He therefore assigned nos. 105-108 to Leo IV (775-780) alone or with his son Constantine VI, citing Banduri³². The next coin, no. 109, that today we place in the “standing caliph” series, already known in the first Borgian catalogue, was again attributed to Leo IV, but clearly reading محمد/Muhammad on it he adds that “*Sed quid sibi velit illud Muhammed, ignor, nisi respiciat ad nomen pseudoprophetae, vel tritum illud Muhammedanorum symbolum: Muhammed est apostolus Dei, quod plene quoque legitur in aliis huius aevi numis arabicis, a Christianis excusis.*”³³ (fig. 3). In other words, being a reference to a pseudo-prophet, therefore a marginal personage, its incision would be of less importance than the figure of the Byzantine emperor. Analogous procedure for the last one, again assigned to Leo IV. At the end of his interpretative excursus, however, Adler felt the need to correct the conclusions in his first catalogue and even those of the Assemani catalogue³⁴, which had accepted them as a whole: “*Vindicandi sunt omnes, et Borgiani, et Naniani, cum illis, quo modo explicavimus, nisi eidem, quod verisimile est, Leoni Chazari, saltem alii Graecorum Imperatori, qui eos in Syria excudi, sua effige signari curavit, addito in quibusdam, indulgentiae causa, Mohammedanorum symbolo*”³⁵. The victory of the Byzantine army commanded by the *strategoi* Michele Lacanodracone, Artavasde, Tatzates, Baristerotzes and Gregorio di Muselakios against the Arabs in Syria in 778 must have left a profound mark on historiography if, in the 18th century, this was still used to identify a connection between Kufic epigraphy, the presence of images and the association of Christian elements with others undeniably Islamic³⁶. That series re-

³² Banduri, *Numismata Imperatorum Romanorum* cit, pp. 706-707.

³³ Adler, *Museum Cuficum*. Pars II, cit. p. 171.

³⁴ Simone Assemani, *Catalogo de'codici manoscritti orientali della Biblioteca Naniana* [...]. *Vi s'aggiunge l'illustrazione delle monete cufiche del Museo Naniano*, parte I, Padova, Stamperia del Seminario 1787, pp. xxxviii-xxxix and plate III, XLI-XLII; Id., *Museo cufico naniano*, parte II, Padova, Stamperia del Seminario 1788, p. cvij, plate VIII, C-CI.

³⁵ Adler, *Museum Cuficum*. Pars II, cit. p. 172.

³⁶ Paul Speck, *Kaiser Konstantin VI. Die Legitimation einer fremden und der Versuch einer eigenen Herrschaft*, I, München 1978, pp. 92-94; Michael McCormick, *Vittoria eterna. Sovranità trionfale nella tarda antichità, a Bisanzio e nell'Occidente altomedioevale*, Milan 1993, pp. 172-173. For the Byzantine sources cf. Teofane, *Chronographia*, A.M. 6270, De Boor, 451.11-24. Historical aspects relating to events on the Syrian border of the empire in Gustav Weil, *Geschichte der Chalifen*, 2, Mannheim 1848, p. 48, notes nos. 1-2. The Arab sources on the battle of Germanicia and consequent triumph are in Ibn Wadhīh and Al Tabari, authors translated by Ernest Walter Brooks *Byzantines and Arabs in the time of early Abbasids*, “The English Historical Review”, 15 (1900), pp. 728-747 and Ernest Walter Brooks, *Byzantines and Arabs in the Time of the Early Abbasids*, “The English Historical Review”, 16 (1901), pp. 84-92. Ralph-Johannes Lilie, *Die byzantinische Reaktion auf die Ausbreitung der Araber. Studien zur Strukturwandlung des byzantinischen Staates im 7. Und 8. Jhd.*, München 1976, pp. 167-181 is also useful.



FIGURE 3 – Georg Christian Adler, *Museum Cuficum Borgianum Velitris*, II, Romae 1784, Tab. VII

mained unexplained, also because an expert in the Arab language like Simone Assemani went no further than simply reiterating what had already been written by Adler, then confirmed in his review of that Borgian work in which, regarding the coins with the image of the “Saviour” [standing caliph series], he confirmed the *communis opinio*: they were issues of Leo IV (775-780), minted in Damascus or other Syrian cities during his campaign in Syria³⁷. It should also be remembered that at the meeting of the Accademia Patavina on 8 May 1800 the orientalist of Padova returned to these coins and their iconography with a critical dissertation³⁸. A few years later, in 1809, he published a summary of the subject, where he defined this coin group in contrast with the ban on images as a “monetary paradox, which tortured the brains of good Antiquarians”³⁹. In this he retraced the arguments put forward by scholars in the bibliography, such as Barthélemy, Adler and his correspondent Olof Gherhard Tychsen (1734-1815)⁴⁰, finally distinguishing, even if in a non-systematic way, two groups: that of the Atabek-Urtukids [coins with images] and that of Leo IV [standing caliph].

Regarding the former he rejected Tychsen’s thesis, i.e. the explanation that they were not real coins, but medals struck by Christian sovereigns offered to the Turkish

³⁷ [Reviews by Simone Assemani] *Museum Borgianum 21. Velitris. Pars II illustravit Jacobus Georgius Christianus Adler*, “Memorie per servire alla storia letteraria e civile”, 1793, no. XXIX, pp. 225-230 and no. XXX, pp. 233-237. These were later united in a treatise entitled *Articolo tratto dai numeri XXIX e XXX del foglio letterario impresso in Venezia nel MDCCXCIII col titolo Memorie per servire alla Storia Letteraria e Civile* [s.l. e s.d.], probably produced by the printers of the Seminario di Padova.

³⁸ Accademia Galileiana Padova [Archive], *Registro dei processi verbali di seduta dall’anno 1779 al dì 27 giugno 1811*, p. 412.

³⁹ Simone Assemani, *Sopra le monete arabe effigiate. Memoria dell’Abate Simone Assemani*, in “Memorie della Accademia di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti di Padova”, Padova 1809, pp. 417-436, in part p. 417. Anna Pontani, *Dall’archivio di Simone Assemani (1752-1821): documenti e carteggi*, “Quaderni per la storia dell’Università di Padova”, 40 (2007), pp. 3-66, p. 54 reports a “Memo above the illustration of a coin struck in Tiberias with Greek and Arabic inscription, read in the Institute [Accademia Patavina] on 19 January 1813 with a double account”. It can be hypothesised that he presented the content of the memo in concise form in print.

⁴⁰ The contribution of O.G. Tychsen to the history of the studies and collecting of Islamic coins is described in Niklot Klüssendorf, *Rostock als Standort der orientalischen Numismatik. Mit einem Anhang zu den älteren, Inventaren des Rostocker Münzkabinetts von K. Zimmermann*, in Stefan Heidemann (ed.), *Islamische Numismatik in Deutschland. Eine Bestandsaufnahme*, Wiesbaden 2000, pp. 27-59, in part. 27-30, and also in Stefan Heidemann, *Die Entwicklung der Methoden in der Islamischen Numismatik im 18. Jahrhundert – War Johann Jacob Reiske ihr Begründer?*, in Hans-Georg Ebert & Thoralf Hanstein (eds.), *Johann Jacob Reiske – Leben und Wirkung. Ein Leipziger Byzantinist und Begründer der Orientalistik im 18. Jahrhundert*, Leipzig 2005, pp. 148-202, in part. 170-176, 189-191. A rather severe judgement on his true skill in oriental languages, in particular Arabic, was expressed by Antoine-Isaac Silvestre de Sacy, s.v. *Tychsen (Olaus, ou plutôt Olauf Gerhard)*, in *Biographie universelle (Michaud) ancienne et moderne ou histoire par ordre alphabétique de la vie publique et privée de tous les hommes qui se sont fait remarquer etc.*, XVII, Paris 1827, pp. 120-126.

Princes of whom they were subjects, motivated by the greater tolerance of images in the Turkish compared to Arab populations. Assemani, on the contrary, declared forcefully that “[---] these Arab coins were indeed minted by Turkish Muslim Princes [---]” because they bore the name of the Turkish sovereign and that of the Caliph, the year of the hegira and that of the minting city, adding that in Persian culture the ban on images was never mandatory⁴¹.

On the second group, that with the so-called image of the “Saviour” accompanied by Greek and Kufic letters [standing caliph], he partly diverged from the Byzantine chronological placement of the emperor Leo IV. He proposed, instead, to consider them “[---] contraband coins struck by disreputable forgers, be they Greek, as seems more probable, or Muslims is of little importance”⁴² motivating his opinion with a list of seven pieces of evidence more or less of an epigraphic nature, all deduced from what could be read on the coins⁴³.

Between the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th century, despite an Arabist and various scholars being devoted to the study of oriental coins, if for the Urtukid & Zengid or more in general the Turkish/Ottoman series the classification was by then correctly framed within the ambits of Islamic issues, this was not so for the set which is today defined the “Arabic-Byzantine” series. This was still “*singularis commixtio lucis et tenebrarum*”.

However, interest in these strange coins was intensifying thanks to “orientalism”. Travellers like Domenico Sestini (1750-1832)⁴⁴, but also the inevitable relations with the Ottoman empire and Napoleonic military campaigns, promoted the flowering of erudite current affairs oscillating between the prose of memoirs and a more rigorous intent, almost philological, i.e. overcoming a highly imaginative reconstruction, to be founded rather on the reading of historical sources integrated by the collection of archaeological documents in order to pass from the vague to a real and rational knowledge. In this context, the “oriental” coinage, and Arab-Islamic coins were among these, assumed great value due to their ability to cover more than one century and vast territories. In these new studies numerous scholars distinguished themselves, as was recorded to have happened during the 18th century, in particular in Central-Northern Europe⁴⁵. However, something special happened in Lombardy-Veneto, where the Islamic coins were known in some

⁴¹ Assemani, *Sopra le monete arabe effigiate* cit., p. 426.

⁴² Assemani, *Sopra le monete arabe effigiate* cit., p. 435.

⁴³ Assemani, *Sopra le monete arabe effigiate* cit., p. 434.

⁴⁴ Luigi Tondo, *Domenico Sestini e il Medagliere Mediceo*, Firenze 1990.

⁴⁵ Stefan Heidemann (ed.), *Islamische Numismatik in Deutschland. Eine Bestandsaufnahme*, Wiesbaden 2000.

cases after finds⁴⁶, but mainly because they were brought by the travellers/sailors for centuries interested visitors to the ports of the Ottoman Near East⁴⁷. The turn of the 18th/19th century was then the period in which various “Kufic” collections⁴⁸ changed hands: that of Onorio Arrigoni (1668-1758)⁴⁹ and of Collalto of Susegana-

⁴⁶ There is, for example, the news of the finding of a hoard of dinars at Venice, after the demolition of the church of the convent of S. Lorenzo in 1592, reported in F. Corner, *Ecclesiae Venetae antiquis monumentis nunc etiam primum editis illustratae ac in decades distributae. Decadis undecimae, Venetiis* 1749, pp. 65-66. For the hoard and relative cataloguing, chronological and bibliographical information cf. Michele Asolati & Cristina Crisafulli, *Ritrovamenti monetali di età romana nel Veneto. Provincia di Venezia: Venezia/Altino* II, VI/2, Padova 1994, p. 226; lastly, Andrea Saccocci, *Ritrovamenti di monete islamiche in Italia continentale e in Sardegna (sec. VII-XV)*, in *Simposio Simone Assemani sulla Monetazione Islamica*, Padova 2005, pp.137-149.

⁴⁷ The presence of 6 Urtukid coins in the Venetian collection of Andrea Loredan between 1550 and 1560 is worth a mention. Illustrated in a manuscript, these are defined as “Chaldean” having come from that region to the east of Syria, today defined Mesopotamia, and perhaps also for the script, not Greek, not Hebrew and thus “Chaldean”. Cf. John Cunnally, *Muslim Coins of the Crusader Period in a Renaissance Collection: Premature Medievalism or Mistaken Identity?*, in Susan Solway (ed.), *Medieval Coins and Seals. Constructing Identity, Signifying Power*, Turnhout 2015, pp. 439-453.

⁴⁸ The Kufic collection of Jacopo Nani survived those dispersals and is still today kept at the Cà d’Oro Museum in Venice: Anna Pontani, «*Or vedete, amico carissimo...: appunti sulla «cassetta gialla» del medagliere naniano di Venezia*», in Chryssa Maltezou, Peter Schreiner, Margherita Losacco (eds.), *ΦΙΛΑΝΑΓΝΩΣΤΗΣ. Studi in onore di Marino Zorzi*, Venice 2008, pp. 309-337.

⁴⁹ Onorio Arrigoni, *Numismata quaedam cujuscumque formae et metalli Musei Honorii Arigoni Veneti, ad usum juventutis rei nummariae studiosae*, I-IV, Tarvisii 1741-1759. The author, in publishing a selection of the specimens he judged the most significant from his collection of 20 thousand coins, integrated the collection of Jean Foy-Vaillant, *Numismata imperatorum Romanorum praestantiora, a Julio Caesare ad Postumum et tyrannos*, Parisiis 1674, a work later republished many times with additions and corrections. Excluding brief introductions, the four volumes of Arrigoni contain only plates of drawings. Plates X-XVIII of volume III show many illustrations of “Arabic nummi”; however, all the drawings have an identical module, but mainly lack reliability because done by a person without any knowledge of the script and Arab language. The paper by Cristina Ravara Montebelli, *Le tavole del primo tomo dell’opera di Onorio Arrigoni emendate dall’autore*, “*Rivista Italiana di Numismatica*”, 112 (2001), pp. 327-338 edits the plates/drawings.

https://www.academia.edu/5054625/Le_tavole_del_primo_tomo_dellopera_di_Onorio_Arrigoni_emendate_dallautore.

The abovementioned abbot, a leading figure in Venetian numismatic collecting, published the cited collection of drawings with a didactic intent (he declared it to be “ad usum juventutis rei nummariae studiosae”). After the dispersal, there is later trace of some in Carlo Ottavio Castiglioni, *Monete Cufiche dell’I.R. Museo di Milano*, Milano 1819, p. XII. More recently, the Islamic coins of the Milanese museum were reconsidered in R. Leuthold, *Monete cufiche dell’ “I.R. Museo di Milano”*, “*Notizie dal Chiostro del Monastero Maggiore*”, 1968, fasc. I-II, pp. 59-62, however without any mention of the source being from this or other collections.

His collection was the fruit of purchases and exchanges with many Italian collectors, Venetians in primis, as can be read in some letters of Apostolo Zeno. In the letter that Zeno wrote in 1737 to Annibale degli Abati Olivieri at Pesaro regarding coins, he says that “the Abbot Onorio Arrigoni has an incredible collection in his study but none reach two librae and among these many are Etruscan and barbarian” (*Lettere di Apostolo Zeno cittadino veneziano storico e poeta cesareo nelle quali si*

Venice⁵⁰, the Stork and Anguissola collections in Milan⁵¹. In Milan, there was also the unceasing activity of Gaetano Cattaneo (1771-1841)⁵², who was able to unite in the Numismatic Cabinet of Brera, directly from Dresden, the substantial Kufic collection of Gottfried Johann Lipsius (1754-1820)⁵³, author of the famed *Bibliotheca numaria sive catalogus auctorum qui usque ad finem seculi XVIII. de re monetaria aut numis scripserunt* published at Leipzig in 1801, and the Kufic coins belonging to Abbot Tommaso Cavanna of Novi Ligure (?-1822)⁵⁴. To understand these “documents” Arabic was unavoidable or at least being able to read and transcribe Arabic. An infrequent ability in that period, not only among Italian scholars, but also among those in “northern Europe”, as is clearly shown, for example, from the letters between Amaduzzi and Assemani and his other correspondents, which refer to the orientalist “beyond the mountains”, including the previously mentioned Tychsen,

contengono molte notizie attenenti all'istoria letteraria de' suoi tempi. Venezia 1785. V, p. 283), and in other epistles addressed to Gian Francesco Baldini in 1731 and to Annibale degli Abati Olivieri, he mentions Arrigoni's exchanges and acquisitions of medals (*Lettere di Apostolo Zeno*, cit., p. 283). On the collection cf. also Gastone Moschini, *Della letteratura veneziana del secolo XVIII fino a' nostri giorni*, II, Venezia 1806, p. 86; Simona Savini Branca, *Il collezionismo veneziano nel '600*, Padova 1965, pp. 224-225; Marino Zorzi (ed.), *Collezioni di antichità a Venezia nei secoli della Repubblica: dai libri e documenti della Biblioteca Marciana: mostra 27 maggio – 31 luglio 1988*, Roma 1988, pp. 102-103; Irene Favaretto, *Arte antica e cultura antiquaria nelle collezioni venete al tempo della Serenissima*, Roma 1990, pp. 200-201; Krzysztof Pomian, *Collezionisti, amatori e curiosi: Parigi-Venezia 16.-18. secolo*, Milano 2007, p. 102.

⁵⁰ Moschini, *Della Letteratura* cit., p. 88, mentions a not otherwise known to me Giacomo Collalto of San Stin. “NH Giacomo Collalto of Santo Stin was also a dedicated collector of every type of old junk that he jealously guarded in his palace and did not have the opportunity to examine in order to talk specifically about them, and since split series of different medals already existed in the noble family de' Quirini at Santa Maria Formosa, to improve and enhance them he referred to NH Girolamo for their care.” The collecting of the Collato, both the San Stin branch and that of San Salvatore di Susegana are still an unexplored subject. For the specimens published by the Imperial Regio Museo of Milan: Castiglioni, *Monete Cufiche* cit., p. XII.

⁵¹ For the specimens in the Imperial Regio Museo of Milan: Castiglioni, *Monete Cufiche* cit., p. XIII.

⁵² Adriano Savio, Gisella Della Ferrera, *Il Poliedrico Gaetano Cattaneo Fondatore del Gabinetto Numismatico di Brera*, “Archivio Storico Lombardo”, 96 (1990), pp. 347-374.

⁵³ H. Schwanitz, *Lipsius, Johann Gottfried (Jean Godefroi)*, in *Sächsische Biografie, Institut für Sächsische Geschichte und Volkskunde e. V.*, M. Schattkowsky (ed.) Online-Ausgabe: <http://www.isgv.de/saebi> (01.04.2015); Rainer Grund, *Johann Gottfried Lipsius – Der Begründer der modernen numismatischen Bibliographie*, “Numismatische Zeitschrift” 120-121 (2015), pp. 265-284.

⁵⁴ Rodolfo Martini, *Le monete hispano-arabe delle Civiche raccolte numismatiche di Milano ed il Catalogo Castiglioni*, “Jarique de Numismática Hispano-Árabe”, III (1992), pp. 131-140, p. 134 where a letter to the abbot Tommaso Cavanna of 26 July 1817 is mentioned, seems to be based on a geographical misunderstanding because the cited T[ommaso] Cavanna worked between Genoa and Novi Ligure and not at Nove (VI). Cattaneo also began a long negotiation with this collector for the purchase of all his coins.

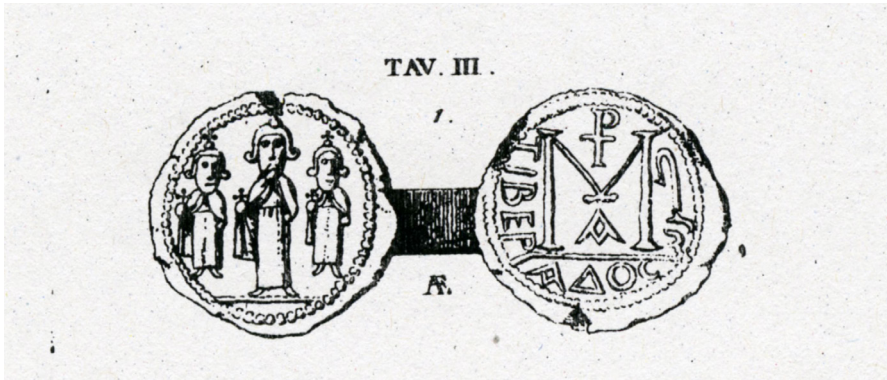


FIGURE 4 – Carlo Ottavio Castiglioni, *Monete cufiche dell'I.R. Museo di Milano*, Milano 1819, tav. III

or what emerged concerning the effective competence in the Arabic language of almost all the people involved in the contemporary controversy over the fakes of the Maltese abbot Giuseppe Vella (1750 ca.1815)⁵⁵. On this front, instead, Assemani was well recognized, being defined the “doyen of Kufic numismatics”, as the person to whom to apply for the deciphering of Kufic script. This role was also strengthened by the publication of the memoir *Sopra le monete arabe effigiate*. The treatise led to Milan and the Keeper of the Numismatic Cabinet, Gaetano Cattaneo. For the increase of that collection he had received a gift of a Kufic coin, up until then unknown to him. It came from a lucky find by Carlo Ottavio Castiglioni (1784-1849)⁵⁶, a philologist trained in the oriental languages in Vienna, who had unearthed it in the “tedious jumble of ancient and modern medals from the Collalto legacy of Venice”⁵⁷ (fig. 4), as Cattaneo recounted in his first publication aimed at making that unusual issue known to numismatists. It was completely new and in describing it in a letter to Domenico Sestini, he identified an undeniable correlation of his specimen with the folles of Heraclius with his two sons and on the reverse the numeral M [Cf. MIB III, 161-162]⁵⁸. In this case, the large M was surmounted by a Christogram surrounded

⁵⁵ See the bibliography in Callegher, *Simone Assemani nella polemica Schiepati-Castiglioni (1818-1820)* cit., in the notes nos. 19-21.

⁵⁶ Bernardino Biondelli [1804-1886], *Elogio del Conte Carlo Ottavio Castiglioni*, Tipografia Giuseppe Bernardoni di Gio., Milano 1856; Ida Calabi Limentani, Adriano Savio, *Bernardino Biondelli, archeologo e numismatico a Milano tra Restaurazione austriaca ed Unità*, “Archivio Storico Lombardo”, 120 (1994), pp. 351-400, in part. pp. 384-385.

⁵⁷ This was the dispersal of the Collalto collection in Milan: cf. supra note n. 50.

⁵⁸ Wolfgang Hahn, *Moneta Imperii Byzantini*, III (von Heraclius bis Leo III [610-720]), Wien 1981.

by a double epigraph in Greek and Arabic that gave the name of the city of Tiberias, to be placed in a “time after Heraclius”, but assigned not to Constantinople but rather to the “Syrian mints of those times”⁵⁹ [SICA, nos. 587-593]⁶⁰. Thus, Cattaneo was the first to identify the exact ambits for a correct interpretation. During his attempt to understand what was legible on the coin without being influenced by the past bibliography, he had examined the Assemani text, they wrote to one another, and also consulted the influential numismatist Enrico Sanclemente (1732-1815)⁶¹. Cattaneo’s first publication, decidedly innovative because it was faithful only to the incisions on the coin and devoid of erudite but prior interpretations, was sharply criticized by Antonio Marsand (olim Marchand) (1765-1842)⁶². A dispute arose, but in the end knowledge of the Kufic coins adorned with effigies was broadened. It derived that those attributable by type and legend to the period of Heraclius or immediately afterwards were distinct from those with the image of an individual for which the reference to Leo IV persisted⁶³. Progress was remarkable. Indeed, shortly after, Castiglioni, mindful of the Cattaneo lesson and with notable competence in Arab epigraphy⁶⁴, edited his catalogue of Islamic coins⁶⁵. That difficult ragbag, that “singularis commixtio”, found a first order in the division between “Coins of the Caliphs with images” and “Coins of Christian Kufic or bilingual Princes”. In the first group nine specimens were listed with on the obverse a “*Figura del principe in piedi, con gran barba e colla scimitarra al fianco, di faccia. In giro* [legend in arabic] *Nel nome di di Dio, Abdolmalec Principe dei credenti*”. On the reverse “*Φ sopra tre gradini. Nell’area, da una parte* [legend in English] *in Aleppo, dall’altra, in giro* [legend in Arabic] *Non vi è altro Dio che Dio, egli è solo, Maometto è il Legato di Dio*” [SICA, nos. 608-729]. He identified the issuing authority as ‘Abd al-Malik,

⁵⁹ Gaetano Cattaneo, *Lettera di G.C. al Signor Domenico Sestini sopra due medaglie greche del Reale Gabinetto di Milano. Seconda impressione cui s’aggiunge un articolo di confutazione del Signor T. Du Mersan e la difesa dell’autore*, Milan 1811.

⁶⁰ Cf. Stephen Album & Tony Goodwin, *Sylloge of Islamic Coins in the Ashmolean*, I, *The Pre-Reform Coinage of the Early Islamic Period*, Oxford 2002 [successively: SICA].

⁶¹ A bio-bibliographical update in Andrea Gariboldi, *Enrico Sanclemente e la “Medaglia di Cicerone” del Museo di Classe*, “*Rivista Italiana di Numismatica*”, 116 (2015), pp. 361-390.

⁶² Professor at the University of Padova, with numismatic and bibliographical interests in particular for the works and studies on Francesco Petrarca: cf. [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/antonio-marsand_\(Enciclopedia-Italiana\)](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/antonio-marsand_(Enciclopedia-Italiana)) (24 March 2015), who like many had a much less superficial knowledge of Arabic.

⁶³ On this matter, cf. Callegher, *Simone Assemani nella polemica Schiepati-Castiglioni (1818-1820)* cit., pp. 58-68.

⁶⁴ Arianna D’Ottone, *Arabic Paleography*, in Alessandro Bausi et al. (eds.), *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies. An Introduction*, Hamburg 2015, pp. 271-276; Eadem, *Paleografia araba e altre paleografie*, “*Rivista di Studi Orientali*”, 87.1-4 (2014), pp. 213-222.

⁶⁵ Carlo Ottavio Castiglioni, *Monete Cufiche dell’I.R. Museo di Milano*, Milano 1819.

declaring that he had “classified these coins here, instead of in the place where others of the Caliphs should be so as not to interrupt the series because after all they are mostly of uncertain period”, assigning them to various mints: Aleppo, Homs, Bir Mir (*rectius* Sarmīr), el Quds (Jerusalem)⁶⁶. Castiglioni then placed among the coins of the caliphs also the follis with the “Figure of the Prince, but in rougher work” and “Mohamed is Legate of God” on the obverse, and the large value sign \mathfrak{M} accompanied by indication of the mint on the reverse⁶⁷ [SICA, nos. 730-731]. The series that only a few years before, influenced by the Byzantine issues and especially by an approximate Arabic had been described as “Nummi aenei, cum figura Sērvatoris mundi”, was finally placed in the exact context: it was Islamic coinage although with some chronological uncertainty [SICA, pp. 91-99].

The Milanese scholar also intervened on the second group of folles that had been the subject of controversy between Castiglioni and Marsand, placing them among the “Coins of Christian Kufic or bilingual princes”, primarily at the time of Heraclius. He thus identified the three figures on the obverse as Heraclius and his two sons, with a cruciform diadem and globus cruciger. On the reverse as well as the M surmounted by a Christogram (\mathfrak{X}) he read “Taberiah”-Tiberias mint, restricting their chronology to between 632 and 638. The new dating, even if incorrect, also in this case represented notable progress because it identified without any doubt a correlation with the issues of Heraclius of 632-635.

Equal thoroughness was not applied to the discussed type with “*Figura dell'imperatore in piedi, che tiene nella destra una croce oblunga, e nella sinistra un globo crucigero, a sinistra un'aquila sopra un'insegna militare. In giro ΔΑ (MACKOC)*”, on the reverse “*M majuscolo, superiormente il monogramma di Cristo X. In giro [legend in arabic] battuta in Damasco, Chaled*” [SICA, nos. 561-562]. Castiglioni knew the previous bibliography: Adler, Tanini, Marchant, Eckhel and Sestini, but refuted the reading both of Chazaro and Leo proposing instead to read Chaled or the “name of some other Christian Arab prince” of a Syrian dynasty prior to Islamization. Nevertheless, the four coins of this group were indicated as Leo IV Chazaro, with a correct reading of the mints at Damascus and Emesa⁶⁸.

⁶⁶ Castiglioni, *Monete Cufiche* cit., pp. 46-49. During studies on this “Arab-Sasanian” series specimens in copper were explained, with imitation of the “standing caliph” type and pseudo-cross on steps, with Pahlavi legend, Persian imitations of Arab-Byzantine types: Rika Gyselen, *Arab-Sasanian Copper Coinage*, Wien 2000, Type 39a-b & 40 of the Susa mint and pp. 146-147.

⁶⁷ Castiglioni, *Monete Cufiche* cit., pp. 50-51, with attribution to “Kennesrin” and “Ascalon”, *rectius* today assigned to mints included in the Jund Filastīn: cf. SICA, nos. 730-731; Tony Goodwin & Rika Gyselen, *Arab Byzantine Coins from the Irbid Hoard. Including a new introduction to the series and study of the Pseudo-Damascus mint*, London 2015, pp. 56-57, nos. 53-57.

⁶⁸ Castiglioni, *Monete Cufiche* cit., pp. 317-325. For the actual identification cf. SIC, nos. 531-537, 560-577; Goodwin & Gyselen, *Arab Byzantine Coins from the Irbid Hoard* cit., nos. 12-13, 17-21.

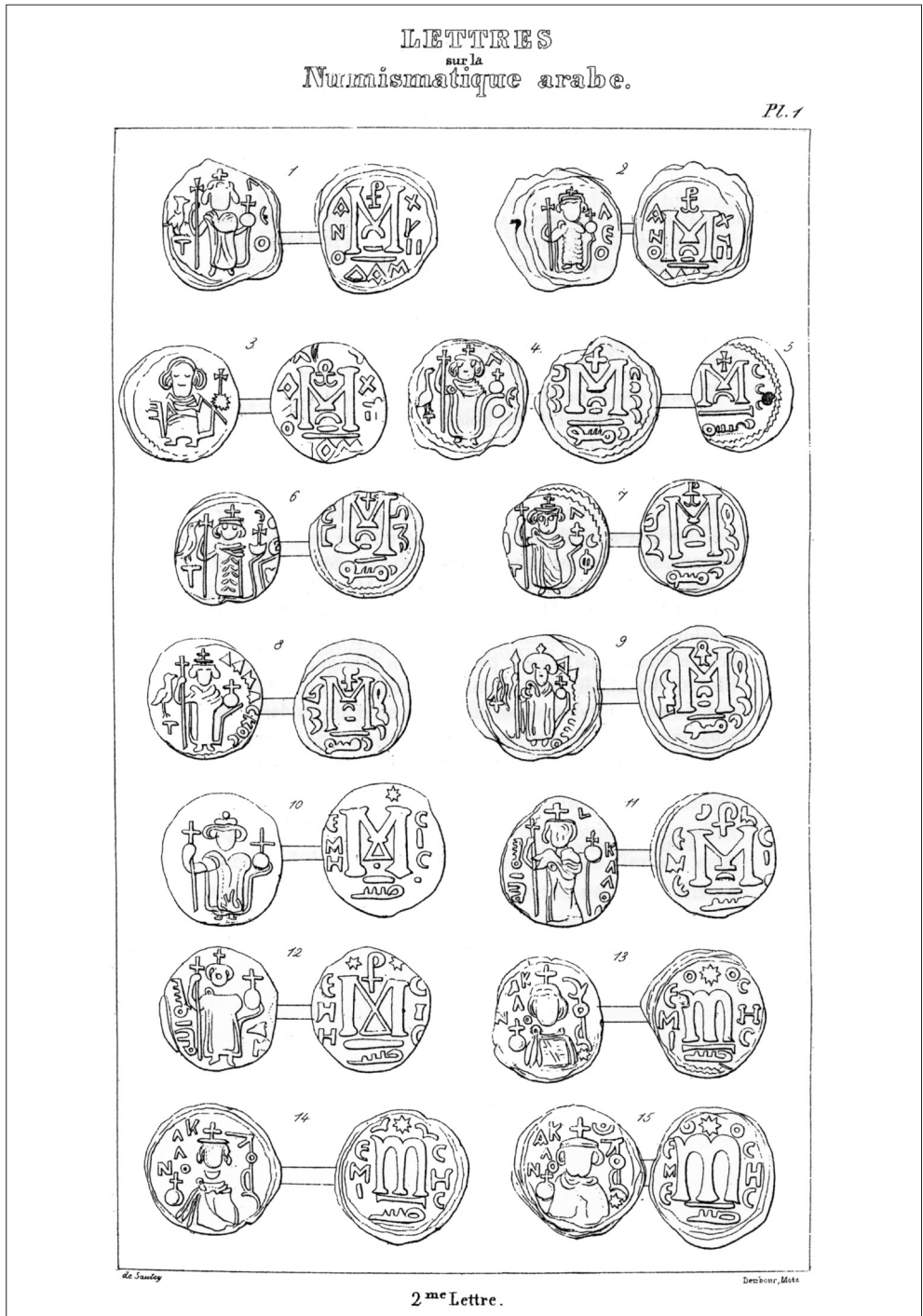
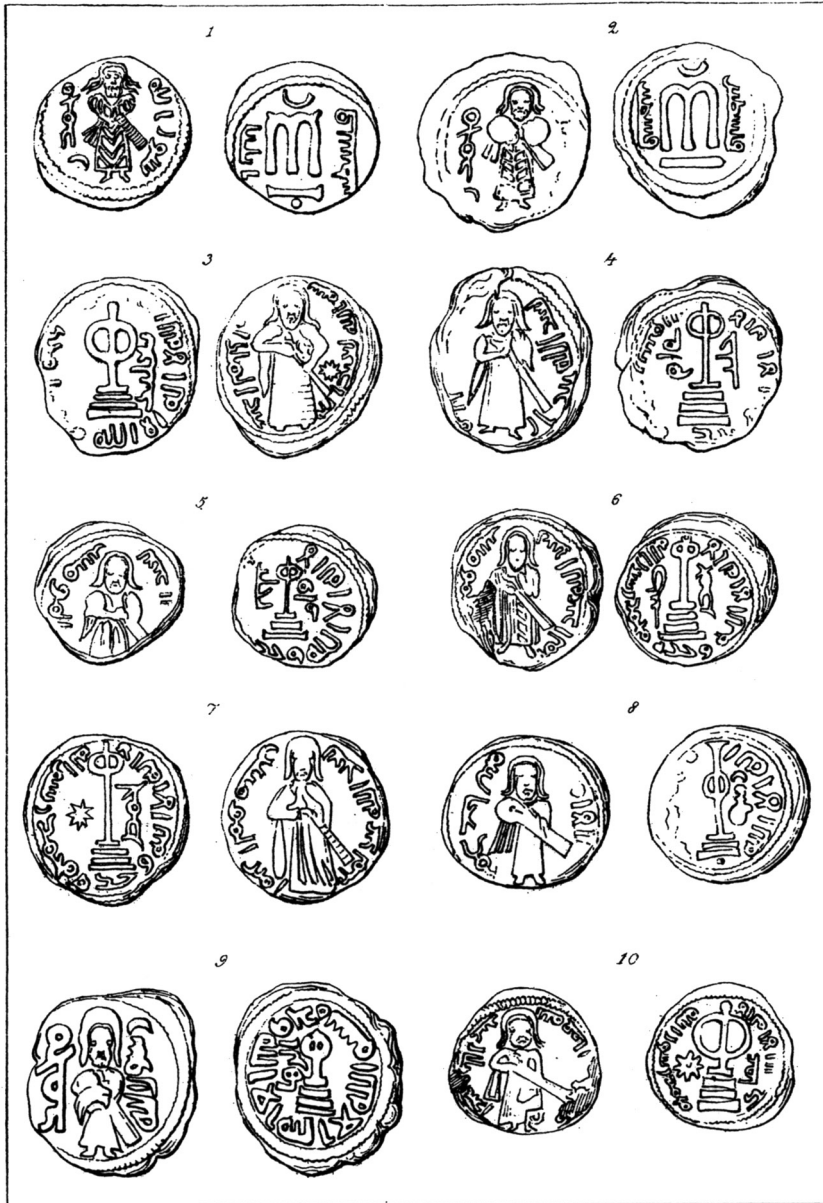


FIGURE 5 – Félicien de Saulcy, *Lettres sur quelques points de la numismatique arabe à M. Reinaud*, “Journal Asiatique”, Mai 1839



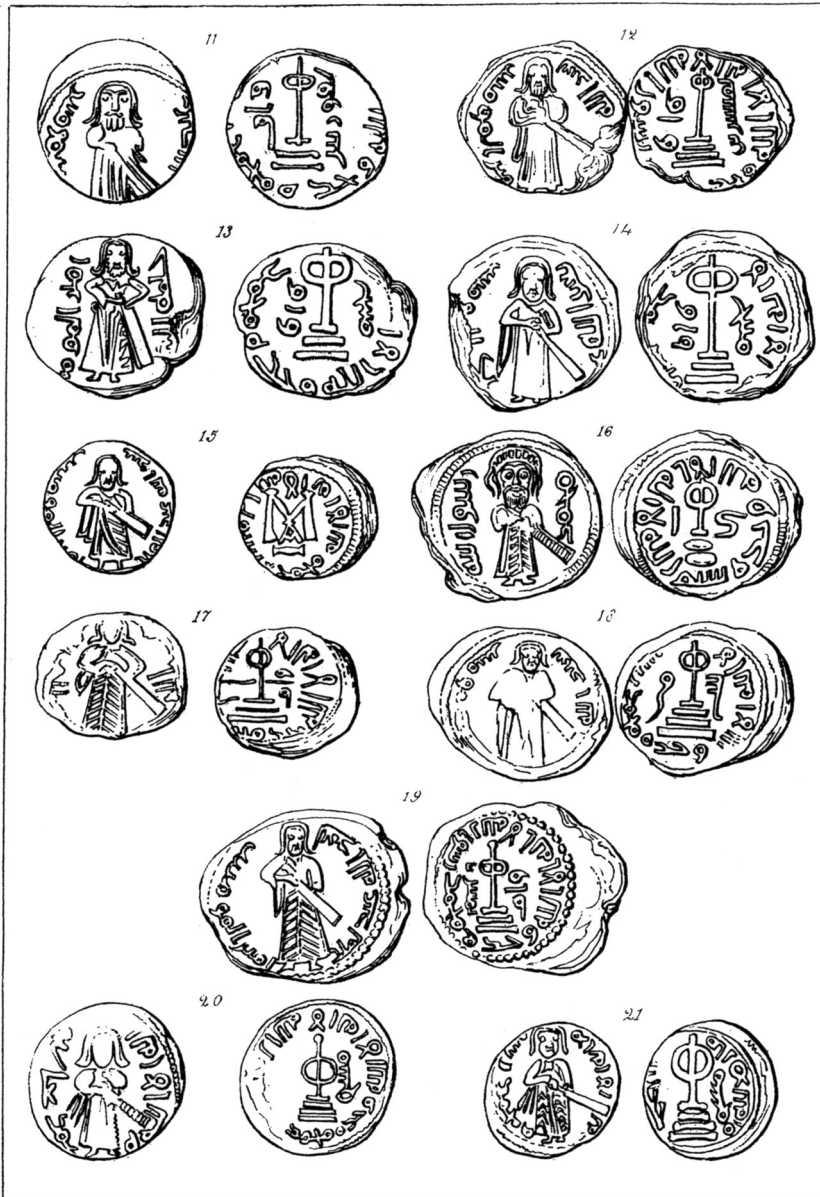
F de Sauley.

Autog. de Dombour & Metz.

LETTRES SUR LA NUMISMATIQUE ARABE.

(IV)

FIGURE 6 – Félicien de Sauley, *Lettres sur quelques points de la numismatique arabe* à M. Reinaud, "Journal Asiatique", Décembre 1839



F de Sauley.

Autog de Dembour à Metz

LETTRÉS SUR LA NUMISMATIQUE ARABE.

(IV)

FIGURE 7 – Félicien de Sauley, *Lettrés sur quelques points de la numismatique arabe* à M. Reinaud, "Journal Asiatique", Décembre 1839

Reference to the folles of Constans II as reference prototype [MIB III, 162-165; 170-172] was avoided, but the issuing area coincided with that of the preceding coins. A few years after Castiglioni's lesson, fundamental for any further examination of these difficult coins with images and Arabic epigraphy, would be developed in a substantially conclusive fashion by Félicien de Saulcy (1807-1880)⁶⁹: In his first contribution, regarding this last group, he concluded that "*La présence des monnaies bilingues arabo-grecques qui [...] doivent être regardées comme des espèces frappées par les chrétiens, pour avoir cours tout à la fois parmi le peuple musulman et le peuple chrétien. Leur fabrication commença donc vraisemblablement peu temps après la conquête, et fini ver l'an 76 de l'hégire, lorsque Abdou 'l-Malik décida que les monnaies de son peuple seraient désormais arabes et musulmanes pures*"⁷⁰ (fig. 5). For the group with the image of a caliph, because the name "Abdou'l-Malek" was legible on almost all of them, the classification was indubitable, as were the period and minting cities, identified as among the most important in the region between Jerusalem and Emesa⁷¹ (figs. 6-7).

Collecting and a more competent interest in orientalism, numismatics included, had led to significant and convincing clarifications. A better periodization in relation to the Byzantine coinage but especially to the Islamic presence in Syrian-Palestinian regions is a task for future scholars, who will no longer find themselves faced with erudite but unfounded arguments: the "*commixtio lucis et tenebrarum*" has found a first solution, thanks to the autopsy method of analysis of the coins and historical-philological research applied also to numismatics⁷².

⁶⁹ Christian Charlet, *Un grand numismate, grand franc-masson méconnu : Félicien de Saulcy*, « Cahiers Numismatiques », 211 (March 2017), pp. 51-58.

⁷⁰ Félicien de Saulcy, *Lettres sur quelques points de la numismatique arabe à M. Reinaud*, « Journal Asiatique », Mai 1839, pp. 404-443. Anastatic reprint in *Numismatic of the Islamic World*, 3, Fankfurt am Main 2003.

⁷¹ Félicien de Saulcy, *Lettres sur quelques points de la numismatique arabe à M. Reinaud*. « Journal Asiatique », Décembre 1839, pp. 472-495. Anastatic reprint in *Numismatic of the Islamic World*, 3, Fankfurt am Main 2003.

⁷² John Walker, *A catalogue of the Arab-Byzantine and post-reform Umayyad coins*, London 1956; SICA; Morriison & Prigent, *L'empereur et le calife* cit., mainly the series *Coinage and History in the Seventh Century Near East*, London 2007-. A bibliographical update in Arianna d'Ottone Rambach, *Bibliografia per la numismatica islamica*, "Comunicazione", 71 (2018), pp. 39-50.