

Title	A note on Arab-Byzantine coins of the jāza hādhā type
Authors	Woods, David
Publication date	2019-12
Original Citation	Woods, David (2019) 'A note on Arab-Byzantine coins of the jāza hādhā type', Israel Numismatic Research, 14, pp. 153-159.
Type of publication	Article (peer-reviewed)
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Download date	2026-08-09 13:43:21
Item downloaded from	https://hdl.handle.net/10468/14076



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Israel Numismatic Research

14 | 2019

*Published by
The Israel Numismatic Society*

Israel Numismatic Research

Published by the Israel Numismatic Society

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Plate Layout: Yaniv Schauer

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Tel Aviv University Graphic Design Studio

Printed at Elinir, Tel Aviv

The publication of this issue was made possible by the generous contributions of
Thomas S. Kaplan, Jonathan Rosen and David and Jemima Jeselsohn.

ISSN 1565-8449

Correspondence, manuscripts for publication and books for review should be
addressed to: Israel Numismatic Research, c/o Haim Gitler, The Israel Museum,
P.O. Box 71117, Jerusalem 9171002 ISRAEL, or to dtariel@ins.org.il
Website: www.ins.org.il

For inquiries regarding subscription to the journal, please e-mail to info@ins.org.il

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Israel Numismatic Research

Published by the Israel Numismatic Society

Volume 14

2019

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ABBREVIATIONS

- AJC Y. Meshorer. *Ancient Jewish Coinage*. Dix Hills, NY 1982
- AJN *American Journal of Numismatics*
- BMC e.g., BMC Arab.: G.F. Hill. *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Arabia, Mesopotamia, and Persia*. London 1922
- BMCO e.g., BMCO 1: S. Lane-Poole. *The Coins of the Eastern Khaleefehs in the British Museum. Catalogue of the Oriental Coins in the British Museum* 1. London 1875
- CH *Coin Hoards*
- CHL Y. Meshorer, G. Bijovsky and W. Fischer-Bossert. *Coins of the Holy Land: The Abraham and Marian Sofaer Collection at the American Numismatic Society and the Israel Museum*. Ed. by D. Hendin and A. Meadows. New York 2013
- CIL *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*
- CNP e.g., L. Kadman. *The Coins of Akko Ptolemais* (Corpus Nummorum Palaestinensium IV). Jerusalem 1961
- CPE I C.C. Lorber. *Coins of the Ptolemaic Empire. Part I: Ptolemy I through Ptolemy IV, I, Precious Metal*, and II, *Bronze*. New York 2018
- CRE e.g., H. Mattingly. *The Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum I. Augustus to Vitellius*. London 1923
- DOC e.g., P. Grierson. *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* 3. *Leo III to Nicephorus III 717–1081*. Washington, D.C. 1973
- EH I T. Faucher, A. Meadows and C. Lorber eds. *Egyptian Hoards I: The Ptolemies* (Bibliothèque d'Étude 168). Cairo 2017.
- IEJ *Israel Exploration Journal*
- IG *Inscriptiones Graecae*
- IGCH M. Thompson, O. Mørkholm and C.M. Kraay. *An Inventory of Greek Coin Hoards*. New York 1973
- INJ *Israel Numismatic Journal*
- INR *Israel Numismatic Research*
- LA *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Liber Annuus*
- LRBC e.g., P.V. Hill and J.P.C. Kent. Part 1: *The Bronze Coinage of the House of Constantine, A.D. 324–46. In Late Roman Bronze Coinage (A.D. 324–498)*. London 1965. Pp. 4–40
- MIB e.g., W. Hahn. *Von Anastasius I. bis Justinianus I (491–565)*. *Moneta Imperii Byzantini* 1. Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften Philosophisch-Historische Klasse Denkschriften 109. Veröffentlichungen der Numismatischen Kommission 1. Vienna 1973
- MIBE W. Hahn. *Money of the Incipient Byzantine Empire (Anastasius I–Justinian I, 491–565)* (Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Numismatik und Geldgeschichte der Universität Wien 6). Vienna 2000
- MIBEC W. Hahn and M. Metlich. *Money of the Incipient Byzantine Empire Continued (Justin II—Revolt of the Heraclii, 565–610)*. (Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Numismatik und Geldgeschichte der Universität Wien 13). Vienna 2009
- MN *American Numismatic Society Museum Notes*
- NC *Numismatic Chronicle*
- NNM *Numismatic Notes and Monographs*
- RIC e.g., C.H.V. Sutherland. *The Roman Imperial Coinage* I. *From 31 BC to AD 69*. London 1984
- RN *Revue Numismatique*
- RPC e.g., A. Burnett, M. Amandry and I. Carradice. *From Vespasian to Domitian (AD 69–96). Roman Provincial Coinage* 2. London 1999
- RRC M.H. Crawford. *Roman Republican Coinage*. Cambridge 1974
- SC e.g., A. Houghton and C. Lorber. *Seleucid Coins. A Comprehensive Catalogue. Part I. Seleucus I through Antiochus III*. 2 vols. New York, Lancaster, Penn.-London 2002
- SICA e.g., S. Album and T. Goodwin. *Sylloge of Islamic Coins in the Ashmolean 1: The Pre-Reform Coinage of the Early Islamic Period*. Oxford 2002
- SNAT e.g., L. Ilisch. *Sylloge Numorum Arabicorum Tübingen–Palästina IVa Bilād aš-Šām I*. Tübingen 1993
- SNG *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum* (with suffix as necessary, e.g. SNG Cop.)
- SNR *Schweizerische Numismatische Rundschau*
- TINC *Transactions of the International Numismatic Congress*
- TJC Y. Meshorer. *A Treasury of Jewish Coins from the Persian Period to Bar Kochba*. Jerusalem-Nyack 2001

A Note on Arab-Byzantine Coins of the *Jāza Hādhā* Type

DAVID WOODS

University College Cork

d.woods@ucc.ie

Abstract

Attention is drawn to the unnoticed occurrence of the Greek term ΚΑΛΟΝ on the reverse of some seventh-century Arab-Byzantine coins of the *jāza hādhā* type. The implications of the same for the dating and attribution of the two main subtypes within the larger *jāza hādhā* group are explored.

The Arab-Byzantine coinage struck in greater Syria during the seventh century is conventionally divided into three main phases (Goodwin and Gyselen 2015:12–28). It starts with the Pseudo-Byzantine coins struck from the 640s to the early 670s, so-called because they imitate Byzantine *folles*, often very crudely, but do not depict any meaningful new legends. Then come Umayyad Imperial Image coins struck from the 670s to the early 690s, which still imitate Byzantine models very closely, but also introduce meaningful new legends in Greek and Arabic, often a mint name or some statement of quality. The coinage concludes with Standing Caliph coins struck from the late 680s to the late 690s, clearly identifiable by their new Islamic imagery and legends. The purpose of this article is to draw attention to the presence of an overlooked Greek legend on the reverse of some members of a group of coins belonging to the Umayyad Imperial Image phase of coinage where this serves both to support the attribution of this group to the so-called Pseudo-Damascus mint and to assist the relative dating of the different types within this group.

While most coins of the Imperial Image phase depict meaningful mintmarks, and most mints struck consistent combinations of a limited range of obverse and reverse types, stylistic analysis and the examination of die links reveals the operation of mints that did not place meaningful mintmarks upon their coinage, but simply imitated the types of other mints, including their actual mintmarks, although they sometimes omitted mintmarks altogether. The largest of these anonymous mints has come to be known as Pseudo-Damascus because it mostly imitated the Imperial Image types struck in Damascus. Goodwin has suggested that this may have been a mobile mint operated by a tribal leader, possibly of the Kalb tribe, either in the northern part of modern Jordan or near the Sea of Galilee in modern Israel, but this is highly speculative (Goodwin and Gyselen 2015:156–157).



Fig 1.

- a. *Fals* with reverse legend *jāza hādhā dimashq wāfiyah* (3.93 g, 21 mm; CNG E-Auction 306, July 10, 2013, Lot 472); Goodwin, Pseudo-Damascus dies O133, R253DW;
 b. *Fals* with reverse legend *dimashq wāfiyah* and Greek sequence ΛON (3.43 g, 20 mm; Roma Numismatics, E-Sale 52, January 10, 2019, Lot 1161)

Goodwin has also argued that most of the coins bearing the distinctive reverse legend *jāza hādhā dimashq wāfiyah* ('this [*fals*] current [in] Damascus, full [weight]'), or the shorter form of this, were struck at the so-called Pseudo-Damascus mint, with the possible exception of a group that was not die-linked to any other Pseudo-Damascus coins (Goodwin and Gyselen 2015:151–153). The larger group of coins of this type firmly attributable to Pseudo-Damascus displays two main types of reverse, and the smaller group that cannot be die-linked to Pseudo-Damascus displays a similar division. One reverse type depicts a legend entirely in Arabic, which reads *jāza hādhā dimashq wāfiyah* and occupies the space on both sides of the denomination M and in the exergue below it (Fig. 1a). The other reverse type depicts a legend in Arabic in the exergue below and to the right of the denomination M, reading *dimashq wāfiyah* ('[in] Damascus, full [weight]'), but also depicts what appears to be a group of three Greek or Latin letters to the left of the denomination M (Fig. 1b). In the case of the smaller group of coins that cannot be linked to Pseudo-Damascus, Goodwin reads these letters as AOII (Goodwin and Gyselen 2015:152), but it is clear from his own illustrations and the specimen depicted here that one of the three dies depicts an N rather than II. It is not a well-formed N, since the diagonal hugs the left vertical for most of its length before finally swerving across to the right vertical, but it remains a recognizable letter N nonetheless.¹ Furthermore, as the specimen illustrated here reveals, the first letter is actually Λ rather than A.² Hence the letters should be read as ΛON rather than AOII.

1 As illustrated in Goodwin's Fig. 19, his die RI depicts N rather than II, but this element on his die RII remains unclear, while his die RIX does read II rather than N. The coin depicted as Fig. 1b here was struck with his dies OI, RI.

2 This element seems to read Λ on his dies RII and RIX, but is unclear on his die RI. One should note, however, that of the dies of the *jāza hādhā* type that he firmly attributes to the Pseudo-Damascus mint, R159, 160, and 215 display an Λ, while none display an A. See Goodwin and Gyselen 2015:82.



Fig. 2. *Fals* of Damascus (4.13 g, 18 mm; CNG E-Auction 298, March 13, 2013, Lot 430)

At first glance, this new reading may not seem important because neither ΛON nor AOII seems to make any sense by itself. Here one notes that one of the most common reverse types struck by both the Damascus and the Pseudo-Damascus mints depicts the letters ANO to the left of the denomination M and what is usually interpreted as a slightly corrupted reading of the Roman numeral XVII (17) to its right (Fig. 2). The sequence ANO clearly abbreviates the Latin legend ANNO ('in the year'), the traditional legend to the left of the denomination M on most Byzantine *folles*.

The key point here is that the legend under discussion, whether one reads it as ΛON or AOII , bears a striking resemblance to the sequence ANO . Hence it is tempting to dismiss this legend, whatever its precise reading, as a corrupt imitation of the sequence ANO as commonly depicted on so many coins from the Damascus and Pseudo-Damascus mints. Before doing so, however, one needs to pay due attention to two other noteworthy features of the reverse type bearing this legend.

The first of these other noteworthy features is that this reverse type depicts the letter or numeral A directly beneath the central dip of the denomination M where the workshop number had customarily appeared on Byzantine *folles*. This is noteworthy because so many varieties of Arab-Byzantine coins did not preserve a proper Greek letter or numeral there by this time. For example, most of the Arab-Byzantine reverses depicting the letters ANO to the left of the denomination M and the apparent Roman numeral XVII (17) to its right, as already mentioned, depict either a crescent or a crescent above a horizontal line where the workshop number should appear (Fig. 2). Furthermore, the other reverse type within the group of coins under discussion here, the one with the solely Arabic legend, depicts a star there instead (as Fig. 1a).

The second of these other noteworthy features is that the central dip of the denomination M does not conclude in a simple horizontal line as had traditionally been the case on normal Byzantine *folles*. Instead, it concludes in a short horizontal line from which two further short lines descend at an angle to one another, so that it looks like the letter K lying on its front (as in Fig. 1b). This is all the more noteworthy because most Arab-Byzantine reverses follow their ultimate Byzantine models in depicting the dip of the denomination M concluding in a simple horizontal line.



Fig. 3.

a. *Fals* of Emesa with KAAON split to either side of imperial figure on obverse (4.19 g, 21 mm; CNG, E-Auction 333, August 20, 2014, Lot 421);

b. *Fals* of Emesa with KAAON to upper l. of obverse bust (5.04 g, 22 mm; Roma Numismatics, E-Live Auction 4, November 29, 2018, Lot 1057)

The importance of these last two features is that they suggest the presence of the letters K and A on this reverse type in addition to the letters AON, and this is significant because together these letters spell the Greek adjective KAAON ('fine'). It is not surprising in itself to find this adjective used in this way because the same adjective occurs on the coins of the Arab-Byzantine mints at Emesa and Antarakus, although those mints always depicted it on the obverse of their coins.³ There seem to have been two mints at Emesa striking very different types. One mint struck a type depicting a standing emperor on the obverse and a capital M on the reverse (Fig. 3a), while the other struck a type with an imperial bust on the obverse and a cursive M on the reverse (Fig. 3b), but both included the exact same form of the adjective as under discussion here — KAAON — on the obverse.⁴ The mint at Antarakus struck three variants of the same basic type pairing an imperial bust on the obverse with a reverse depicting a denomination M as the central element of a monogram spelling its name, and while two of these variants do use the same form of the adjective in association with the bust as do the mints at Emesa, the third uses a slightly different form, spelling it KAAΩN instead.⁵

All the types depicting the adjective KAAON or KAAΩN struck by the mints at Emesa and Antarakus are bilingual, that is, they include legends in both Greek and Arabic, and it is worth considering the relationship between the Greek and Arabic legends on these coins to see how the type under discussion fits within this wider

3 Goodwin (*SICA* 1:88) refers to a puzzling standing emperor type from Tiberias with reverse depicting a cursive M "with a blundered legend, which seems to incorporate the word KAAON". See Walker 1956:46–47. While the legend remains difficult to read, there is no good reason to believe that it was intended to include this term.

4 On the standing emperor type from Emesa, see Oddy 2007. On the attribution of the two different types to two different mints operating successively at Emesa, see *SICA* 1:85.

5 See Schulze 2013. No significance ought to be attached to the spelling of this term as KAAΩN rather than KAAON. It seems simply to be a mistake based on the similarity of sound between Ω and O.

pattern of usage. All of the coins struck at Emesa with **KΛΛON** on the obverse also include the Arabic term *ṭayyib* ('fine') in the exergue on the reverse, and it is clear that one term was intended in translation of the other. This is also true of the three variants of the type struck at Antaradus, which always depict both **KΛΛON** and *ṭayyib*. One variant even displays the term *ṭayyib* twice, once on the obverse with **KΛΛON** and once in the exergue on the reverse, while the other two variants display it once only in the exergue on the reverse. The importance attached to the marking of coins as 'fine', whatever the language employed, is further indicated by the fact that fully half of the Imperial Image coins struck at Gerasa were also countermarked with the Arabic *ṭayyib*, 45 out of 89 recorded specimens (Oddy 2017:71–72). The relevance of all this is that none of the coins in the small group under discussion display the term *ṭayyib*, so **KΛΛON** does not serve simply to translate this term in this case. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the other type displaying a purely Arabic legend does not include the term *ṭayyib* either. Hence the behavior of those responsible for striking the group of coins under discussion was very different to that of their equivalents at the mints of Emesa and Antaradus as far as their use of the legend **KΛΛON** was concerned.



Fig. 4. *Fals* of Pseudo-Damascus with **ΠΛΕΟΝ** on obverse (3.73 g, 20 mm; Wilkes and Curtis, Auction 2, September 15, 2014, Lot 47). Goodwin dies O83H, R132DW

While one cannot dismiss the legend **ΛΟΝ** as a simple corruption of the sequence **ΑΝΟ** as commonly depicted on so many coins from the Damascus and Pseudo-Damascus mints for the reasons just noted, this does not mean that the **ΑΝΟ** reverse type did not play a role in the development of the new reverse type. On the contrary, the rather clumsy division of the adjective **KΛΛΟΝ** between the space to the left of the denomination **Μ** and the space beneath the dip of the **Μ** suggests that the originator of the new type wished to retain the basic composition of the **ΑΝΟ** reverse type even while amending these letters to form part of the adjective **KΛΛΟΝ** instead.

This innovative transformation of a corrupt sequence of letters into a meaningful new Greek term while still retaining the same basic composition seems to occur on one other occasion only. A unique variant of the obverse type with 'hunting figure', so called because the emperor holds a bird on his arm in the manner of a falconer, depicts the Greek legend **ΠΛΕΟΝ** ('full') surrounding the figure (Fig. 4), and seems to represent an adaptation of a very common obverse type of the Damascus and Pseudo-Damascus mints depicting a standing emperor accompanied

by the meaningless legend ΛΕΟ (Woods 2017:109–112). Alternatively, one could perhaps read this legend as ΛΕΟΤ if the object below the bird to the left of the figure is really a letter rather than a stand (as in Figs. 1b, 2). Whatever the case, this last was the obverse type normally paired with the ΑΝΟ reverse type just noted. This imaginative transformation of the meaningless ΛΕΟΤ into the meaningful ΠΛΕΟΝ so closely parallels the transformation of the meaningless ΑΝΟ into the meaningful ΚΑΛΟΝ, both Greek adjectives in the same case and number used to declare the quality of the coinage, that it seems highly likely that the same mind or policy was responsible for both transformations. Indeed, this idea is reinforced by the fact that the single die with the ΠΛΕΟΝ obverse occurs with only two reverse dies, both depicting the legend *jāza hādhā dimashq wāfiyah* around a capital Μ, so confirming that the obverse type was struck contemporaneously with the coins marked *jāza hādhā dimashq wāfiyah*.

Finally, one may now return to the question of whether or not the Pseudo-Damascus mint struck the group of coins marked *jāza hādhā dimashq wāfiyah* that Goodwin was reluctant to attribute to that mint because they were not die-linked to any other coins that were clearly attributable to it. The fact that the sole reverse die recorded by Goodwin that properly preserves the final Ν of ΚΑΛΟΝ belongs to this problematic group suggests that the person, or persons, who initially transformed the meaningless ΑΝΟ into the meaningful ΚΑΛΟΝ worked at the mint responsible for the group. However, if, as seems probable, the same person, or policy, was also responsible for the ‘hunting figure’ obverse with the legend ΠΛΕΟΝ, and this obverse type is attributable to Pseudo-Damascus, then the reverse type must also be attributable to there, and the aforementioned persons worked not at some other anonymous mint, but at the so-called Pseudo-Damascus mint.

As for the relative dating of what one should properly distinguish as the bilingual coins with the reverse legends ΚΑΛΟΝ and *dimashq wāfiyah* and the monolingual coins with the reverse legend *jāza hādhā dimashq wāfiyah*, the former ought to be dated earlier than the latter for two reasons. First, there is the general principle observable elsewhere that Arab-Byzantine mints struck bilingual coins in Greek and Arabic before they struck coins in Arabic alone.⁶ Second, many of the reverse dies with the legend *jāza hādhā dimashq wāfiyah* depict the Greek letter Κ hidden in the denomination Μ (see Figs. 1a, 4). This is quite meaningless by itself, and must be understood as a fossilized element carried forward without realization of its significance, when all the other traces of non-Arabic script were removed from the original model. Hence the reverse type with the full legend ΚΑΛΟΝ upon which

⁶ This can sometimes also be confirmed by declining weight standard, the general assumption being that standards normally declined over time between one reform or phase of coinage and the next. For example, the final Imperial Image phase coins of Scythopolis with legends in Arabic alone weighed much less than their bilingual predecessors. In general, see Oddy 2015.

the hidden K still served a purpose must have been struck first before these coins. Furthermore, those reverse dies with the legend *jāza hādhā dimashq wāfiyah* that do not depict a hidden K represent a further stage in the evolution of this type away from its original model, and so probably date last of all.

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