

Spain (Al-Andalus)

The ANDALUSÍ Coin Collection

by Ana Serrano

Al-Andalus, the territory of the Iberian Peninsula governed by Islamic powers from the 8th to the 15th centuries, was one of the most influential cultural centers of the medieval western Mediterranean. Rather than a peripheral episode in European history, it functioned as a major point of contact between the classical Greco-Roman tradition preserved in the East, the scientific and philosophical developments of the Islamic world, and the intellectual traditions of Christian and Jewish Europe. Cities such as Córdoba, Toledo, and Granada emerged as major centers of learning where medicine, astronomy, mathematics, and philosophy were actively cultivated. The translation into Latin of classical works preserved and expanded upon in Arabic played a critical role in transmitting ancient knowledge to medieval Europe and ultimately helped shape the intellectual foundations of Western thought.

Al-Andalus also represents a distinctive historical example of a political and social environment in which three major religious traditions intersected: Christianity, in both its Latin and Mozarabic expressions, Islam, and Judaism. Within this framework, sustained interaction between these communities fostered cultural, legal, and economic exchanges that facilitated the circulation of ideas and knowledge across religious boundaries. From a broader historical perspective, the experience of Al-Andalus illustrates that the development of Western civilization emerged from processes of cultural contact, transmission, and adaptation, in which the Islamic West played a structural role in shaping the intellectual landscape of medieval Europe.

From the standpoint of monetary design as both an economic and typological model, the Andalusian dinar emerged as a widely recognized gold standard in the medieval western Mediterranean. Its consistently high fineness, stable weight standard, and broad acceptance in Mediterranean trade networks made it a reliable medium of exchange for long distance commerce. As a result, its monetary model was widely imitated by Christian polities seeking a competitive gold currency suitable for international trade. Such imitative issues include the Castilian morabetino of Alfonso VIII, the so called dinar of Offa of Mercia, the mancuses of Barcelona, and the gold bezants struck by the Crusader states. These coins frequently adopted the same weight standard, module, and even Arabic epigraphic formulas in order to ensure acceptance in established commercial markets. In this respect, Andalusian gold coinage did not merely participate in the western economy but effectively established a monetary benchmark whose technical authority extended beyond religious and political boundaries, becoming a reference standard for medieval European commerce.

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Note about NGC census information: Because NGC codes for these types are not broken down by date and/or mint, that information may be included on the labels when space is available, but is not reflected in the codes themselves, and therefore does not appear in census data. Because of this, some coins are the finest certified for their dates and/or mints but are not reflected as “top pop” in the census.



1305. SPAIN (Al-Andalus), Umayyads, Governors (dependent emirate of Damascus), AR dirham, post-reform type of Abd al Malik, AH110 (728 AD), mint of al Andalus س ل د ن أ ل, extremely rare, NGC AU 58, ex-Tonegawa, Frochoso Plate. Vives-25; Frochoso-1.2 (this coin). 2.91 grams. Lightly toned, with lustrous interiors and fully readable inscriptions.

The earliest Islamic coinage struck in Arabia closely followed the monetary models of the Byzantine and Sasanian empires. A major reform was introduced by the Umayyad caliph Abd al Malik in the late 7th century AD, transforming both the design and ideological function of Islamic coinage. The dirham emerged as a fully epigraphic type, eliminating figural imagery and establishing the characteristic Islamic monetary model. Its inscriptions consist primarily of religious formulas derived from the Qur'an, rendered in Kufic script, with the selected verses varying according to the intended message. Circular marginal inscriptions provide key administrative information, including mint and date of issue. Islamic coinage thus functioned not only as an instrument of economic exchange but also as a medium of ideological communication and state authority. Through their inscriptions, these coins disseminated core religious formulas of Islam while simultaneously proclaiming the legitimacy of the issuing authority, whether caliph, emir, or delegated governor.

In 711 Islam entered Hispania, initiating a rapid political and administrative transformation that included the adoption of the Islamic monetary system and the renaming of the territory as al Andalus. After a short period during which gold issues of Byzantine tradition circulated, the epigraphic dirham established under Abd al Malik was adopted as the principal silver denomination. Its typology remained remarkably stable, consistently preserving its purely epigraphic character. Islamic authority quickly consolidated in the peninsula under an emirate dependent on Damascus, with its capital at Córdoba, a phase commonly referred to in numismatics as the Period of the Governors.

The typological structure of these dirhams is essentially fixed. In Islamic numismatic terminology the obverse, designated First Area (IA), contains the Islamic profession of faith affirming the unity of God. The reverse, designated Second Area (IIA), records the prophetic mission of Muhammad.

Obverse (IA)

Central inscription:

إلا هلأ
مدحو هلأ
هل لكش ال

There is no god but God alone / He has no partner

Marginal inscription:

فئمو قرشع فنس سلدن أ ل اب مهردلأ اذه بررض هلأ مسب

In the name of God. This dirham was struck in al Andalus in the year one hundred and ten.

Reverse (IIA)

Central inscription:

هلأ دحا هلأ
و دلي مل دمصلأ
نكي مل و دلوي مل
دحا اوفنك هل

God is One, God is eternal. He neither begets nor is begotten, and there is none equal to Him.

Marginal inscription:

ملك نيدلأ يلع مرهظيل قحلأ نيد و يدهلأ ب هل سرا هلأ لوسر دمحم
نوكش ملأ مراك ولو

Muhammad is the messenger of God. He sent him with guidance and the true religion to make it prevail over all religions, even though the polytheists may dislike it.

NGC #8437663-001. Pedigreed to the Tonegawa Collection (stated on label), Auction III (Aureo & Calicó 453, June 2025, lot 7), and plated in El Dirham Andalusi en el Emirato de Córdoba (2009), by Rafael Frochoso Sánchez. Estimate: \$1,500-up.



1306. SPAIN (Al-Andalus), Umayyads, Governors (dependent emirate of Damascus), AR dirham, post-reform type of Abd al Malik, AH117 (735 AD), mint of al Andalus س ل د ن أ ل, very rare, NGC AU details / cleaned, ex-Tonegawa, Frochoso Plate. Vives-31; Frochoso-1.3 (this coin). 2.88 grams. Choice luster with faint hairlines in fields, full inscriptions, traces of toning, particularly rare in this state of preservation. NGC #8437663-002. Pedigreed to the Tonegawa Collection (stated on label), Auction III (*Aureo & Calicó* 453, June 2025, lot 10), and plated in *El Dirham Andalusi en el Emirato de Córdoba* (2009), by Rafael Frochoso Sánchez. **Estimate: \$1,250-up.**



1307. SPAIN (Al-Andalus), Umayyads, Emirate of Córdoba, AR dirham, Al Hakam I, 190 AH (806 AD), mint of al Andalus س ل د ن أ ل, NGC MS 62. Vives-88; Miles-81. Bright with brilliant luster, very bold strike with nearly all inscriptions clear.

With the arrival of the Umayyad prince Abd al Rahman I in al Andalus, Islamic authority was consolidated and the independent Emirate of Córdoba was proclaimed in 756 AD. After a brief period without coin production and a slow initial phase, minting resumed in 150 AH / 767 AD and continued thereafter on a regular basis, focused almost exclusively on silver dirhams. During these years gold dinars were not struck and copper fulus were produced only in very limited quantities.

In terms of design, the inscriptions follow the typological tradition established in the earlier period, maintaining the Umayyad use of Qur'anic sura 112, a formula already abandoned by the Abbasids. This conservative adherence to the Umayyad monetary model would remain characteristic throughout the history of the Emirate and later the Caliphate of Córdoba. Only minor variations appear in the form of small geometric or vegetal ornaments, or as in the present specimen, discreet triangular arrangements of dots incorporated into the field. NGC #8437667-002. **Estimate: \$600-\$900.**



1308. SPAIN (Al-Andalus), Umayyads, Caliphate of Córdoba, AV dinar, Abd al Rahman III al Nasir, 321 AH (933 AD) ةىمشل شو ن يرش عو ى دح!، mint of al Andalus سلدن أا، struck over a previous issue (Wilkes-668), NGC MS 63, ex-Kyle Ponterio. Album-348; Vives-376; Miles-200a; Wilkes-557. 4.14 grams. Rich gold color, boldly struck, with under-coin details partially visible, tied with one other for second finest for the type in NGC census behind a single MS 64.

In IA, Kalima in four lines, naming Muhammad in the final line, Qur'an IX:33 in the marginal legend; in IIA, "The victorious Imam, Abd al Rahman, Commander of the Faithful" in four lines, mint and date in circular legend.

In 929 AD Abd al Rahman III, until then emir of Córdoba, proclaimed himself caliph, concentrating in his person both civil and religious authority. With the establishment of the Caliphate of Córdoba Islamic power in the western Mediterranean reached its greatest expansion, controlling most of the Iberian Peninsula and extending its influence into parts of North Africa.

From a monetary perspective an important change appears in the epigraphy: the explicit naming of the issuing authority, the caliph. His name is placed in the reverse field (IIA) together with his official titlature or laqab. In this case the inscription reads: "The victorious Imam (al Nasir) through the religion of God (li din Allah), Abd al Rahman, Commander of the Faithful."

Note: The overstrike (Wilkes 557) over (Wilkes 664) indicates that this dinar was struck on a previously minted coin. This was a practical minting practice used to reuse existing gold flans of correct weight and fineness without melting them. It allowed the mint to quickly place new coin types into circulation while preserving the established gold standard. Overstrikes also appear during periods of political or typological change, when new inscriptions or titles needed to replace earlier issues. In this case it reflects normal mint economy and the continued reuse of earlier dinars within the caliphal monetary system. *NGC #8437667-003. Pedigreed to the Kyle Ponterio Collection, and to Jesús Vico Auction 149, November 2017, lot 581. Estimate: \$7,000-\$10,000.*

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1309. SPAIN (Al-Andalus), Umayyads, Caliphate of Córdoba, AR dirham, Abd al Rahman III al Nasir, 337 AH (949 AD) نوثال شو ةعبس قن س ار زلا قن يدب م ردلا اذ برض ل لا مس ب هئ امثال شو, Madinat al Zahra mint, obverse with Hebrew inscription, unique, NGC AU 53, Ariza Plate.
 Vives-417. 2.93 grams. 24 mm. Bold full inscriptions, lightly toned all over.

Obverse (IA)
 Central inscription:

ال لا ال
 مدحو ل لا
 مل لكرش ال
 دم حم

There is no God but
 God alone
 He has no partner
 Muhammad

Marginal inscription:

نوثال شو ةعبس قن س ار زلا قن يدب م ردلا اذ برض ل لا مس ب هئ امثال شو

In the name of God. This dirham was struck in Madinat al Zahra in the year three hundred and thirty seven.

Reverse (IIA)
 Central inscription:

نيدل رص ان لا مام لا
 نم حرلا دب ع ل لا
 نين مؤملا ريم

al Imam al Nasir li din
 Allah Abd al Rahman
 Commander of the Faithful

Marginal inscription:

نيدلا مل ع مر مظيفل قح ل ا نيد و يد مل اب مل س را ل لا لوسر دم حم
 نوكرش مل ا مر ك ولو ملك

Muhammad rasul Allāh arsula bil-hudá wa dīn al-haqq liyuẓhirahu `alá ad-dīn kullih wa law kariha al-mushrikūn
 Muhammad is the Messenger of God. He sent him with guidance and the religion of truth to make it prevail over all religion, even though the polytheists may oppose it.



This specimen, studied by Dr. Almudena Ariza, is a coin of exceptional historical and numismatic interest. On the obverse appears a small vertical inscription in the left field whose reading can only be interpreted as Hebrew. The similarity of the characters and of the formula itself to those found on certain transitional, Idrisid, and Kharijite issues, where a Hebrew legend also appears associated with the Islamic profession of faith, suggests that it may represent a shortened pious or validating expression intended to accompany the Islamic declaration of monotheism. Considering the recognizable characters, including an initial alef and a final yod, the inscription may correspond to the expression אמן יהוה יהוה (YHWH) or Yah, one of the names of the divinity. In this sense the phrase would function as an affirmation such as “So it is,” “Indeed it is,” or “Truly it is,” reinforcing the proclamation of belief in a single God.

The presence of such an inscription on a caliphal coin carries extraordinary historical significance. On the one hand, it supports earlier hypotheses advanced by scholars such as Miles, Bates, and Vives regarding other issues bearing Hebrew characters. On the other, it reflects the prominent role that certain members of the Jewish community achieved within the intellectual and administrative environment of Madinat al Zahra during the reign of Abd al Rahman III. Among the most notable figures was Hasday ibn Shaprut, whose influence at the Andalusí court was considerable. A physician, diplomat, and supervisor of customs revenues, he served as a trusted adviser within the Umayyad administration. His prominence illustrates the broader participation of Jewish elites in the political and economic structures of the medieval Mediterranean. Within such a context, the appearance of a Hebrew inscription on an official caliphal issue is not only plausible but understandable. Its precise function remains open to interpretation, whether ideological, administrative, political, or possibly decorative. Regardless, this dirham struck at the official mint of Madinat al Zahra represents an entirely exceptional piece within the numismatics of the medieval Islamic West.

Featured on back cover of printed catalog. NGC #8437667-001. Plate Coin in article by Dr. Almudena Ariza Armada in *Al Qanṭara magazine* (Vol XL/1, 2019), pp. 13-42. Estimate: \$6,000-up.



1310. SPAIN (Al-Andalus), Umayyads, Caliphate of Córdoba, AR dirham, Hisham II, 388 AH (998 AD), mint of al Andalus س ل د ن أ ل ، NGC AU 58 Star. Vives-538; Frochoso-47. 3.11 grams. Beautiful, deep, rich toning, very bold struck with fully readable inscriptions.

Obverse (IA)
Central inscription:
ا ل ا ه ل ا
م د ح و ه ل ل ا
ه ل ل ك ر ش ا ل
د م ح م

There is no God but
God alone
He has no partner
Muhammad

Marginal inscription:

ن ي ن ا م ث و ة ي ن ا م ث ق ن س س ل د ن ا ل ا ب م ه ر د ل ا ا ذ ه ب ي ر ض ه ل ل ا م س ب
ه ي ا م ث ا ل ث و

bism Allāh duriba hādā l-dirham bi-l-Andalus sana thamaniya wa
thamanun wa thalatha mia

In the name of God. This dirham was struck in al Andalus in the
year three hundred and eighty eight.

Reverse (IIA)
Central inscription:
م ا ش ه م ا م ا ل ا
ن ي ن م و م ل ا ر ي م ا
ه ل ل ا ب د ي و م ل ا
ر م ا ع

The Imam Hisham
Commander of the Faithful
al Mu'ayyad bi Allah
Amir

Marginal inscription:

م ل ك ن ي د ل ا ي ل ع م ر ه ظ ي ل ق ح ل ا ن ي د و ي د ه ل ا ب ه ل س ر ا ه ل ل ا ل و س ر د م ح م
ن و ك ر ش م ل ا م ر ك و ل و

Muhammad rasul Allāh arsula bil-hudá wa dīn al-haqq liyužhirahu
`alá ad-dīn kullih wa law kariha al-mushrikūn

Muhammad is the Messenger of God. He sent him with guidance
and the religion of truth to make it prevail over all religions, even
though the polytheists may oppose it.

NGC #8437663-015. Pedigreed to Aureo & Calicó auction 447, March 2025, lot 1051. Estimate: \$350-\$500.

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1311. SPAIN (Al-Andalus), Abbadids, Taifa of Seville, AV dinar, Muhammad ibn 'Abbad al Mu'tamid, 467 AH (1075 AD), Madinat Ishbiliya مَدِينَةُ إِسْبِلِيَا (Seville), NGC AU 58, ex-Tonegawa, Prieto Suplemento Plate. Vives-unl; Prieto Suplemento-155 (this coin). 3.76 grams. Beautiful example in light yellow color with spots of reddish encrustation, fully detailed strike, very rare in this condition, missing in Vives.

After the death of Almanzor, general and chief minister of the caliph Hisham II, the authority of the Umayyad Caliphate of Córdoba entered a profound crisis. The inability of the caliph and of Almanzor's successors to maintain political stability triggered the fitna, a prolonged period of internal conflict that culminated with the formal abolition of the caliphate in 1031 (422 AH). As a result, the territory of al Andalus fragmented into a series of independent states ruled by local dynasties, the so called muluk al tawa'if or taifa kingdoms.

From a monetary perspective this fragmentation led to the multiplication of mints and the decentralization of gold dinar production, previously tightly controlled by the caliphal administration. The earliest taifa issues maintained a strong continuity with the Umayyad tradition in both typology and epigraphy, reflecting the prestige and legitimacy associated with caliphal coinage. As the new dynasties consolidated their authority, however, gradual modifications appeared in the inscriptions and sometimes in the metallic standard, adapting the dinar to the evolving political landscape.

Different dynasties developed distinct numismatic strategies to legitimize their rule. The Hammudids, who sought to restore the caliphate under their own dynasty, incorporated caliphal titles in their coinage. Other rulers resorted to the political fiction that Hisham II was still alive and continued striking dinars in his name, as seen with the Amirids of Valencia, the Banu Hud of Zaragoza, and the Abbadids of Seville, attempting to counter the caliphal claims of the Hammudids. In other cases certain taifas issued coinage in the name of the imam Abd Allah, establishing a symbolic reference to the Abbasid caliphate and reinforcing their religious legitimacy.

This complex political landscape is reflected in the remarkable typological and epigraphic diversity of the dinars struck in al Andalus during the 11th century, forming one of the richest and most varied chapters of Andalusí numismatics.

NGC #8437663-006. Pedigreed to the Tonegawa Collection (stated on label), Auction II (Aureo & Calicó 439, November 2024, lot 330), and plated as coin 155 in the 2003 supplement to Antonio Prieto's Los Reyes de Taifas. Estimate: \$10,000-up.



1312. SPAIN (Al-Andalus), Almoravids, Madinat Qurtuba (Córdoba) ةبطرف ةنيدم, AV dinar, Yusuf ibn Tashfin, 491 AH (1098 AD), extremely rare, NGC MS 64, ex-Tonegawa. Vives-unl; Hazard-unl. 4.10 grams. Very sharp full details and choice luster, tied with next lot for second finest in NGC census for the type behind a single MS 65, this date not recorded in Vives or Hazard for this mint.

By the late 11th century, faced with the military advance of the Crown of Castile, the taifa rulers sought assistance from the Almoravids led by Yusuf ibn Tashfin. Although the North African intervention initially succeeded in halting Christian expansion, the political balance soon shifted. Following their military victories, the Almoravids gradually imposed their own authority over the taifa kingdoms, incorporating al Andalus into their expanding dominion.

The establishment of Almoravid rule brought a significant reorganization of the monetary system. Under their authority the Almoravid dinar became firmly established, a gold coin noted for its remarkable consistency and high metallic purity that soon developed into one of the principal reference currencies of medieval Mediterranean commerce. Its prestige was such that its typology was imitated in several parts of the Christian world, as seen in the mancuses of Barcelona, the bezants of the Crusader states, the so called dinar of Offa in England, and the Castilian morabetinos.

From an ideological perspective these issues also reflect a clearly defined doctrinal orientation. The coin inscriptions incorporate Qur'anic verse 3:85, which proclaims Islam as the only religion accepted by God, replacing earlier formulations centered primarily on the prophetic mission. This reference, associated with the doctrinal tradition linked to the Abbasid caliphate and the symbolic authority of the imam Abd Allah, reinforces the religious and legitimizing function of the Almoravid dinar within the political discourse of the new regime.

From a technical standpoint these coins are distinguished by the high quality of their manufacture. The precision of the engraving and the refined execution of the calligraphy give these dinars a distinctive aesthetic appeal, qualities that can be fully appreciated in the six remarkable specimens presented here.

Obverse (IA)
Central inscription:
للا الال ال
للل لوسر دمحم
يلع نبملمملا ريمأ
فسوي نبا

La ilah illa Allah / Muhammad rasul Allah / amir almuslimin 'Ali / Ibn Yusuf

There is no god but Allah / Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah / the Commander of the Faithful 'Ali / ibn Yusuf

Note: The first two lines on all Almoravid dinars contain the religious formula known as the Kalima or Shahada.

Marginal legend:

انيرساجلاء انيم يتاريجعلا يف اوه و نم ولابكوي مال اف مانيد ميلسللا ارياغ يغاتباي نام و
wa-man yabtagui gayra al-islām dinam fa-lam yuqbalu minhu wa-huwa fi al ajirati mina al-jasirina.

Whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted from him, and in the Hereafter he will be among the losers (Qur'an 3:85).

Reverse (IIA):

Central legend:

ناميال
للل دب ع

نينمؤملا ريمأ

Al Iman / Abd-Allah /
Amir Almuminin

The Imam / 'Abd Allah /
Commander of the
Faithful

The central inscription acknowledges the spiritual sovereignty of the Abbasid caliphate.

1313. SPAIN (Al-Andalus), Almoravids, Qurtuba (Córdoba) قبطرق, AV dinar, Yusuf ibn Tashfin, 495 AH (1102 AD), date with units in feminine form, very rare, NGC MS 64, ex-Tonegawa. Vives-unl; Hazard-unl. 4.08 grams. Rich color with choice luster, bold and sharp full details, this date not recorded in Vives or Hazard for this mint, tied with previous lot for second finest for the type in the NGC census behind a single MS 65. *NGC #8437663-007. Pedigreed to the Tonegawa Collection (stated on label), Auction II (Aureo & Calicó 439, November 2024, lot 354). Estimate: \$7,000-up.*



1314. SPAIN (Al-Andalus), Almoravids, Qurtuba (Córdoba) قبطرق, AV dinar, Yusuf ibn Tashfin, 496 AH (1103 AD), NGC MS 63, ex-Tonegawa. Vives-1489; Hazard-114. 4.04 grams. Full inscriptions, traces of luster, a great coin for the type without the uniqueness of the previous two lots within the same type at NGC. *NGC #8437663-008. Pedigreed to the Tonegawa Collection (stated on label), Auction II (Aureo & Calicó 439, November 2024, lot 355). Estimate: \$5,000-\$7,500.*



1315. SPAIN (Al-Andalus), Almoravids, Balansiya (Valencia) ةيسنلب, AV dinar, 'Ali ibn Yusuf, 503 AH (1110 AD), very rare, NGC MS 63, ex-Tonegawa. Vives-unl; Hazard-unl; Cru.C.G.-1638A; Gaceta Numismática 93, no. 16. 4.00 grams. Beautiful example of the type with bold full inscriptions and traces of luster, this date not recorded in Vives and Hazard for this mint. Featured on back cover of printed catalog. *NGC #8437663-009. Pedigreed to the Tonegawa Collection (stated on label), Auction II (Aureo & Calicó 439, November 2024, lot 359). Estimate: \$7,000-\$10,000.*



1316. SPAIN (Al-Andalus), Almoravids, Ishbiliya (Seville) ةيليشبشا, AV dinar, 'Ali ibn Yusuf, 517 AH (1123 AD), date with units in feminine form, NGC MS 64. Vives-1659; Hazard-215. 4.00 grams. Bold strike with full inscriptions, good luster per the grade. *NGC #8437667-004. Estimate: \$3,000-\$4,500.*



1317. SPAIN (Al-Andalus), Almoravids, Al Mariya (Almería) دينار، AV dinar, ‘Ali ibn Yusuf, 519 AH (1125 AD), date with units in feminine form, very rare, NGC MS 61, ex-Tonegawa. Vives-1650; Hazard-287; Eustache-457. 4.09 grams. Bold strike, rich gold color, slightly undulating flan. NGC #8437663-004. Pedigreed to the Tonegawa Collection (stated on label), Auction III (Aureo & Calicó 453, June 2025, lot 406). Estimate: \$7,000-\$10,000.



1318. SPAIN (Al-Andalus), Almoravids, Al Mariya (Almería) دينار، AV dinar, ‘Ali ibn Yusuf, 533 AH (1139 AD), NGC MS 61. Vives-1753; Hazard-361. 4.20 grams. Broad flan, full inscriptions but softer in places, traces of luster. NGC #8437663-011. Estimate: \$2,500-\$3,750.



1319. SPAIN (Al-Andalus), Almoravids, AR qirate, Ishaq ibn ‘Ali, 540-541 AH, rare, NGC AU 55, “top pop,” ex-Tonegawa. Vives-1896; Hazard-1041; FBM-E2; Eustache-576. 0.92 gram. Bold strike with choice toning, tied with one other for finest in the NGC census.



Obverse IA:

لا اله الا

الله

محمد رسول الله

lā ilāha illā / Allāh / Muḥammad rasūl Allāh

There is no god but God. Muhammad is the Messenger of God.

Reverse IIA:

نبي المسلمين

يما

نيدلار صران

يلع نب قاحسا

al-muslimīn / amīr / Nāṣir al-Dīn / Iṣḥāq ibn ‘Alī

Commander of the Muslims / Defender of the Faith / Ishaq ibn ‘Alī

The Almoravid empire controlled from its origins the trans-Saharan gold routes, largely channeled through the commercial center of Sijilmasa, which enabled the abundant striking of gold dinars.

The situation with silver was very different. Silver issues appear in the form of qirates of roughly one gram and in even smaller fractions, sometimes reaching divisions as small as 1/16 with weights below 0.06 grams. This extremely small module was not arbitrary but rather the result of the scarcity of silver during the Almoravid period. Despite these material constraints, engravers succeeded in adapting the epigraphic design to an exceptionally reduced surface, producing compositions of remarkable precision and elegance.

The qirate presented here is an excellent example of these emissions and stands out particularly for the quality of its strike and the refinement of its calligraphy, revealing the hand of a highly skilled engraver capable of resolving the epigraphic composition with balance and clarity within such a minute field. NGC #8437663-005. Pedigreed to the Tonegawa Collection (stated on label), Auction III (Aureo & Calicó 453, June 2025, lot 449). Estimate: \$1,000-\$1,500.



1320. SPAIN (Al-Andalus), Almohads, AV dinar, Abu Yusuf Ya'qub ibn Yusuf ibn 'Abd al Mu'min al Mansur فسوي وبأ روصنملا نمؤملا دبع نب فسوي نب بوق عي 580-595 AH (1184-1199 AD), rare, NGC MS 65. Vives-2066; Hazard-501. 4.60 grams. Square in circle type with central epigraphic inscriptions naming the ruler and his Almohad lineage, typical Almohad design without mint or date. Struck during the reign of Abu Yusuf Ya'qub who adopted the title al Mansur Billah ("Victorious through God") after defeating the army of the Castilian king Alfonso VIII at the Battle of Alarcos on July 18, 1195. Choice grade with bold full inscriptions and nice luster.

With the rise of Almohad power, a new ideological framework was reflected in a corresponding transformation of the coinage. The formal change is immediately visible. The traditional circular design of the dinar was replaced by a distinctive square frame, eliminating the marginal circular legends in favor of inscriptions arranged within the central square. Dates were no longer included and mint names appear only rarely. The absence of these chronological and geographic indicators was partly offset by the emphasis placed on the issuing authority, whose genealogy was often fully recorded within the inscriptions. The ideological message also shifted, incorporating the reference to the Mahdi, the "rightly guided one," a central element of Almohad doctrine. The most significant reform, however, concerned the weight standard. The Almohad dinar doubled in weight to approximately 4.6 grams. For this reason it became known in the Christian kingdoms as the "dobla," and it served as an important metrological standard throughout much of the later Middle Ages. Another characteristic feature of Almohad coinage was the inclusion in the inscriptions of the predecessors of each ruler, reinforcing dynastic legitimacy. The resulting design, both structured and elegant, proved highly influential and would later be echoed in the coinage of the Nasrid kingdom of Granada.

Featured on back cover of printed catalog. NGC #8437663-014. Pedigreed to *Aureo & Calicó Auction 448, March 2025, lot 48. Estimate: \$3,500-\$5,000.*



1321. SPAIN (Al-Andalus), Almohads, AV dinar, Abu Hafs 'Umar al Murtada, 646-665 AH (1249-1267 AD), no mint indicated, NGC MS 64, finest known in NGC census. Vives-2079; Hazard-532. 4.64 grams. Rich gold color, strong strike with traces of luster, currently the single finest of nine in the NGC census. NGC #8437663-013. Pedigreed to the *Tauler & Fan auction of February 2025 (lot 86).* Estimate: \$2,500-\$3,750.



1322. SPAIN (Al-Andalus), Nasrids, Granada, AV dinar, Yusuf I, 734-755 AH, NGC MS 62, finest known in NGC census, ex-Tonegawa. Vives 2167 var; Medina 243 var; R. Lorente 8 var; al Nasr YU1:1.3 (online catalog); Numismática Nazarí-8 var; IV Jarique, p. 49, no. 26. 4.69 grams. Beautiful example with choice strike and strong luster for the assigned grade (single finest at NGC). Note that Vives incorrectly describes the last two lines of the reverse.

Obverse (IA):

كَلِمَاتُ كَلِمَاتِ مَهْلِكِ لِق
 اَشْتِ نَم كَلِمَاتِ يَتَوْت
 اَشْتِ نَم كَلِمَاتِ عَزَنْتُو
 لَذْتُو اَشْتِ نَم زَعْتُو
 رِي خَلَا كَدِيْبِ اَشْتِ نَم

Say: O God, Sovereign of the Kingdom. You give power to whom You will and take it away from whom You will. You exalt whom You will and humble whom You will. In Your hand is all good.

IM: Marginal legend distributed across the four segments:

مَلِكُ مَهْلِكِ اَوْ / دَمَحَمِ اَنْدِيْسِ يَلْعُ لَلِ اِلِصْ / مِي حَرَلَا نَم حَرَلَا لَلِ اِمَسَب
 مِي حَرَلَا نَم حَرَلَا وَه اَل لَلِ اِل / دَحَاو

In the name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate / May God bless our lord Muhammad / And your God is One God / There is no deity except Him, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate.

Reverse (IIA):

فَسْ لَلِ اِدْبَعِ اَلِ ا
 رِيْمِ وَي
 يَبْ اَنْ يَمْلَسْ مَلَا رِيْمْ اَنْب
 لِي عَامِسْ اِدِيْلَوْلَا
 دَايْ اَرْصَنْ نَبْ جَرْفِ نَبَا
 دَعَسْ اَوْ لَلِ ا

The servant of God, Yusuf / Amir Yusuf / son of the emir of the Muslims Abu / al Walid Isma'il / son of Faraj, son of Nasr Ayad. / May God grant him happiness.

IIM: Repeated in the four segments.

لَلِ اِلِ بِلَاغِ اَلِو

There is no victor except God.

Following the Almohad defeat at the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212, al Andalus entered a new phase of political fragmentation with the emergence of several local powers. In this context the figure of al Mutawakkil ibn Hud gained prominence, leading from Murcia a movement of resistance against Almohad authority. Shortly afterward, amid conflicts with the Banu Hud, the Kingdom of Granada emerged, founded by Muhammad ibn Yusuf ibn Nasr, known as al Ahmar, who proclaimed himself emir of al Andalus. After a period marked by alliances and vassalage agreements with the kingdoms of Castile and with the Hafsid emirate of Tunis, the Nasrid state consolidated its territory as the final Islamic polity in the Iberian Peninsula.

Nasrid gold and silver coinage largely preserved the metrological and formal framework inherited from Almohad issues, though it developed a distinctive epigraphic style of its own. Among its most characteristic features is the dynastic motto “wa la ghalib illa Allah” (“There is no victor except God”), placed within the outer segments of the square frame. As in Almohad coinage, Nasrid dinars rarely include a date, although the mention of the reigning sovereign and his predecessors usually allows a relatively precise chronological attribution.

During the Nasrid period Andalusí coinage experienced its final major phase. Despite the gradual reduction of territory, difficulties in the supply of precious metals, and the constant pressure of the Christian kingdoms, the rulers of Granada maintained their right of coinage until the very end. The progressive reduction in metallic fineness, the production of small gold denominations and copper fulus, and the repeated presence of the dynastic motto reveal a clear propagandistic and symbolic function. With the fall of the Kingdom of Granada in 1492 the history of Andalusí numismatics came definitively to an end, closing a long historical cycle marked by a remarkably rich artistic and epigraphic monetary production.

NGC #8437663-010. Pedigreed to the Tonegawa Collection (stated on label), Auction II (Aureo & Calicó 439, November 2024, lot 479). Estimate: \$10,000-\$15,000.