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The Power of the Hammudid Dynasty as Represented in the Gold Coins of Ali Ibn Hammud al-Nasir Struck in Andalusia (407-408 A.H. / 1016-1017 A.D)

نفوذ بني حمود من خلال النقود الذهبية لعلي بن حمود ضرب الأندلس (٤٠٧ - ٤٠٨ هـ / ١٠١٦ - ١٠١٧ م)

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Abstract

This paper presenting one of the most important turning points in Andalusia's history; during the reign of Bani Hammud dynasty, as it triggered the beginning of the weakness of the Andalusī Umayyad power and reign in this significant region. Alī bin Hammud was the first ruler of the Hammudid dynasty. Thus, his coins have their own significance as they reflect the struggles of the Hammudidsto consolidate their reign in Andalusia. the present paper will investigate four gold dinars minted in al-Andalus in 407-408 A.H, with the name "Alī al-Nasir le Din Allah", which are unpublished and considered as among the very few pieces found bearing the name of this ruler.

Keywords: The Hammudid Dynasty, Alī bin Hammud, Gold Coins, Titles.

الملخص:

تستعرض هذه الورقة البحثية فترة من الفترات الفاصلة في تاريخ الأندلس، هي فترة حكم دولة بني حمود، والتي سجلت بداية النهاية لسيطرة الحكم الأموي في الأندلس. ويعتبر علي بن حمود هو أول حاكم لهذه الأسرة بالأندلس، وبالتالي تحظى نقوده بأهمية خاصة وانها تعكس قوة بني حمود من جهة، كما وتسجل بداية احكام سيطرتهم على الأندلس. هذه المرحلة التاريخية الفاصلة تنعكس من خلال أربع قطع ذهبية تمثل

موضوع البحث مضروبة في الأندلس في سنة 407-408 هـ، وتحمل اسم "علي الناصر لدين الله"، والتي تنشر لأول مرة وتعتبر من أندر النقود التي تحكل اسم هذا الحاكم، خاصة وان فترة حكمه لم تتجاوز العام وتسعة أشهر وبالتالي تحظى كل قطعة نقدية بأهميتها الخاصة.

الكلمات الدالة: دولة بني حمود، علي بن حمود، الدنانير الذهبية، ألقاب الحموديون، الأندلس.

## Introduction

The Ḥammūdid dynasty era is considered as a turning point in the history of Andalusia, as it triggered the beginning of the end of the Umayyad power and reign in this significant state. Thus, it marked the harbingers of total independency and a new era of reign known as Taifa in Andalusia.

The dynasty is named after their forefather “Ḥammūd bin Maymūn ibn ‘Alī al-Ḥassan bin ‘Omar bin Idrīs bin ‘‘Abdullāh bin al-Ḥassan bin Ali bin Abi-Ṭālib Thus, Ḥammūd was a descendent of “Idris bin Abdullah”; the establisher of Fes<sup>1</sup> city in Morocco<sup>2</sup>. Despite their Arab Muslim origins, they were considered more as Berberised Arabs, for even one of their most prominent characters “Ali bin Ḥammūd al-Nāṣir barely spoke Arabic, and when he attempted to speak it, he pronounced it with an accent<sup>3</sup>.

It was well known that the Berberiseds were the mainstay of the Idrisid reign in Morocco, then they played the same role with the Ḥammūdid dynasty; as with their assistance they established their country in Malaga<sup>4</sup> in 405 A.H./1014 A.D., then their caliphate in Cordoba<sup>5</sup> in 407 A.H./ 1016 A.D. As a matter of fact, despite their short

<sup>1</sup> Di Luthina, (Lewis S.), (1992): *Al-Hammudyoun Sadat Malka wal Jazira al-Khadr'aa*, translated by Adnan Mohamed, First Edition, Al-Sham press, Damascus, p.18.

<sup>2</sup> Fes: It is a northeastern Moroccan city, often referred to as the country's cultural capital. Al-Hamawī, (Yāqūt ibn-'Abdullah al-Rūmī), (2011): *Muj'am al-Buldan, Edited by Fared Abdel Aziz al-Gondi*, part 4, Second Edition, Dar Al-Kutub Al-Elmiya, Beirut, p.231.

<sup>3</sup> Anan, (Mohamed. A.), (2001): *Dawlat al-Islam fe al-Andalus, al-Khilafa al-Ummawiya wa al-Dawla al-America*, part 2, al-Haiya al-Masriya lil Kitab, Cairo, p.657.

<sup>4</sup> Malaga: It is a port city on Southern Spain. Al-Hamawī, *Muj'am al-Buldan*, part 5, p. 43.

<sup>5</sup> Cordoba: It is a city in the southern Spanish region of Andalusia, and the capital of the province of Cordoba and was the major Islamic center in the middle ages; Al-Hamawī, *Muj'am al-Buldan*, part 4, p.324.

reign which lasted only for forty-four years, they were the prominent figure who played the biggest role in Islamic Spain's history as an Alaouite dynasty<sup>1</sup>.

Ali bin Ḥammūd was the sixth caliph of Cordoba, and the first ruler of the Ḥammūdīd dynasty. He was named governor of Ceuta<sup>2</sup> in 404 A.H. / 1013 A.D., by caliph Sulaymān bin al-Ḥakam (1009-1010A.D.)<sup>3</sup>, in appreciation of his help in returning Suleiman to the throne (404-407 A.H. / 1013- 1016 A.D.).

Taking advantage of this control, the Ḥammūdīds suddenly started to be a powerful force. Ali started to aim for the total power, especially with the weakness of the Umayyad reign at that time. Therefore, he claimed to be the rightful heir to Hishām the second, al-Musta'īn's predecessor<sup>4</sup>. In Muḥarram 407 A.H. / July 1016 A.D., Ali bin Ḥammūd attacked Cordoba by a large Berber army, where he imprisoned Suleiman then beheaded him with his father and brother<sup>5</sup>.

Ali was elected as a Caliph, adopting the title of "al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh",<sup>6</sup> Therefore, he was the first non-Umayyad to occupy the Andalusī caliphate. This was indeed a turning point in Andalusia's history, as the Umayyad caliphate power ended after total control for about two hundred and sixty eight years.

Shortly, after a year and nine months, in 28 Dhu al-Qidah Dhū al-Q'ida 408 A.H. / 22 March 1018 A.D., Ali was assassinated by three of his palace slaves in the water closet of his palace<sup>7</sup>. Thus, when his brother al-Qasim al-M'amūn knew the tragic incident, he came from Seville<sup>8</sup>, to Cordoba, where he prayed the funereal

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<sup>1</sup> Abdel Halim, (Rajab M.), (1976): *Dawlat Bani Hammud fe Malqa bel-Andalus*, M.A. thesis, Faculty of Arts, Cairo University, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Ceuta: It is a city on the north coast of Africa, separated by fourteen kilometers from Cadiz province by the Strait of Gibraltar. Al-Hamawī, *Muj'am al-Buldan*, part 3, p. 183.

<sup>3</sup> Anan, *Dawlat al-Islam*, p. 658.

<sup>4</sup> Anan, *Dawlat al-Islam*, p. 658.

<sup>5</sup> Di Luthina *Al-Hammudyoun*, p. 22.

<sup>6</sup> Ibn Idhari, (Abu al-Abbas Ahmed Mohamed), (1980): *Al-Bayan al-Mughrib fi Akhbar Muluk al-Andalus wa'l-Maghrib*, part 3, Dar al-Sakafa, Beirut, p. 119.

<sup>7</sup> Al-Sarafi, (Rizq Allah, M.), (1907): *Tarikh Duwal al-Islam*. Part two, al-Helal press, Cairo, p. 72.

<sup>8</sup> Seville, It is the capital of southern Spain's Andalusia region; Al-Hamawī, *Muj'am al-Buldan*, part1, p. 195

prayer for his brother, then he sent his corps to Ceuta to be buried<sup>1</sup>, after which he was elected as a caliph and took the title al-Ma'mun<sup>2</sup>.

## Coins Description

It is worth mentioning that from the middle of the eighth century until the caliphate era in Andalusia, only silver coins were struck; as the beginning of striking gold coins with large sum dates back to approximately 317 A.H. / 929 A.D.<sup>3</sup>. After the fall of the Umayyad caliphate in Andalusia; the region witnessed a new reigning era known as "Taifa" when the country was separated into several states. One of the most important states of "Taifa" was the Ḥammūdid dynasty . The rulers of this country struck coins with the same prototype of the Umayyad types during the caliphate era, with the names of the Ḥammūdid rulers added on them. In fact, the dinars were struck in a very small sum<sup>4</sup>.

Concerning the coins minted in Ceuta with the name of Alī ibn Ḥammūd, before being a ruler, they bear the name of caliph Sulaymān bin al-Ḥakam along with his title, with a mention of Alī's name only without any titles representing him; which reflect the low power hierarchy during this time. For example, this can be noticed through a gold dinar minted in Ceuta in 403 A.H.<sup>5</sup>.

While in Andalusia both gold and silver coins had inscriptions on the obverse and the reverse with the legend of al-kalima "لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له", on the field of the obverse, and the date and mint of struck on the margin. On the field of the reverse in three lines and rarely sometimes in four lines; the name of the ruler with his titles, and sometimes some other names may appear in some types that might refer to important

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Idhari, *Al-Bayan*, p. 122

<sup>2</sup> Mohamed, (Jassim Y.), (2017): *Al-Siraa ala al-Sulta bayn Abnaa al-Bayt al-Ummawy fe al-Andalus, (138-422 A.H. / 755-1030 A.D.)*, Adab Zi Ker Journal, edition 21, Iraq, p. 291

<sup>3</sup> Levi-Provencal, (2002), *Tarikh Espania al-Islamiya min al-Fath ila Sokout al-Khilafa (711-1031 A.D.)*, Volume 2, part 1, translated by Ali Abdel Raaouf al-Bamby, al-Magles al-Alaa lel Sakafa, Cairo, p. 224

<sup>4</sup> Ramdan, (Atef M.), (2008): *Al-Nkoud Al-Islamiya wa Ahmyataha Fe Marefat Al-Tarikh wal Asar wal Hadarah al-Islamiya*, First Edition, Zaharaa El-Sharq Publishing, Cairo, p. 88

<sup>5</sup> Vives, (Antonio Y.), (1926): *Los Reyes de Taifas, Estudio Historico-Numismatico de Los Musulmanes Espanoles en el Siglo v de la Hegira (xi de J.C.)*, Madrid, num. 53.

people in the state or the head of the mint or *Walī al-‘ahd* ولي العهد (the crown prince) as it started to appear at the end of the caliphate era<sup>1</sup>.

The four gold dinars in the present study, minted in Andalusia in 407-408 A.H, with the name “Alī al-Nasīr le Din Allah”, are unpublished, bearing the name of this ruler and struck during his short term reign as a caliph, that lasted only for a year and nine months between the years 407-408 A.H. / 1016-1017 A.D . Thus, every single specimen has its own value and significance. The four specimens published in this paper from the same type in deferent dies. Two of them were minted in 407 A.H., and the other two were dated 408 A.H.

Both obverse and reverse centers are within a linear circle and a double circle surrounding the margins. Legends recorded in Kufic epigraphy<sup>2</sup> as follows:

**1- Gold dīnār, al-Andalus, 407 AH.** with the name of al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allah ‘Alī ibn Ḥammūd, and his successor Yaḥyyā, (Pl.1)<sup>3</sup>:

	Obv	Rev
field	لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له	ولي العهد الامام علي الناصر لدين الله امير المؤمنين يحيى
Margin	"بسم الله ضرب هذا الدينير بالاندلس سنة سبع واربعمائة"	"محمد رسول الله أرسله بالهدى ودين الحق ليظهره على الدين كله"
		
Pl.1: dinar struck in al-Andalus in 407 A.H., preserved in Qatar National Museum, Inv. 325, W.: 2.76 gr., D.: 22.5 mm.		

<sup>1</sup> Levi-Provencal, *Tarikh Espania*, pp. 226, 227

<sup>2</sup> Ramdan, *Al-Nkoud Al-Islamiya*, p. 407

<sup>3</sup> A dinar struck in al-Andalus in 407 A.H., preserved in Qatar National Museum, Inv. 325, W.: 2.76 gr., D.: 22.5 mm.

### Obv:

**Centre** legends recorded in three lines of Arabic inscriptions surrounded by a circle. The central legend holds the Kalima: “There is no God but Allah alone; He has no partner”.

**Margin:** the mint and date formula along with part of the basmala as follows:

In the name of Allah, this dinar was struck in al-Andalus in the year of four hundred and seven”.

### Rev:

**Centre:** five lines as follows: The field holds the name Ali with the title al-Imam along with the title which he gave to himself “al-Nasir le din Allah” (defender of the religion of God), with another popular title for caliphs: “Amir al- Mu’minin” (the commander of the faithful). Furthermore, he added his son’s name “Yahiya” with a title “waly al-ahed” (the crown prince).

**The marginal** legend states: “Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, he was sent with guidance and the religion of truth to make it prevail over every other religion”.

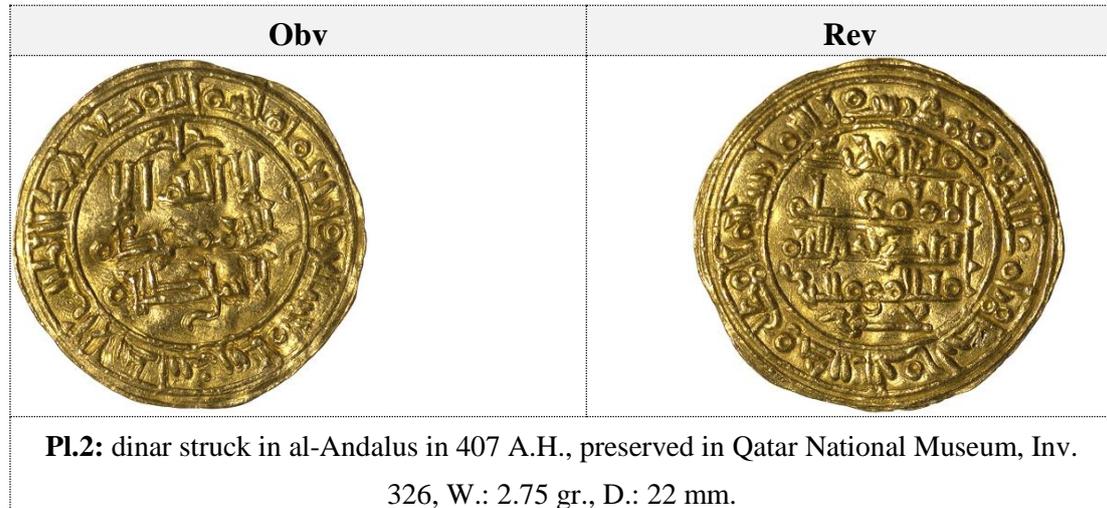
As it was previously mentioned, all four dinars bear the same inscriptions, while each piece was distinguished by some specific features; as the previous piece has an ornament (**fig. 1**) over the obverse inscriptions, and the letter (س) in the mint “al-Andalus” is obliterated, while its reverse has annulets surrounding the field inscriptions, also, a part of the marginal legend (دين الحق) effaced.

**2- Gold dīnār, al-Andalus, 407 AH.** with the name of al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allah ‘Alī ibn Ḥammūd, and his successor Yaḥyā [Pic. 3,4]<sup>1</sup> (**Pl. 2**) As no. 1, but with only a remaining part of one ornament, (**fig. 2**) over the obverse field inscriptions, and

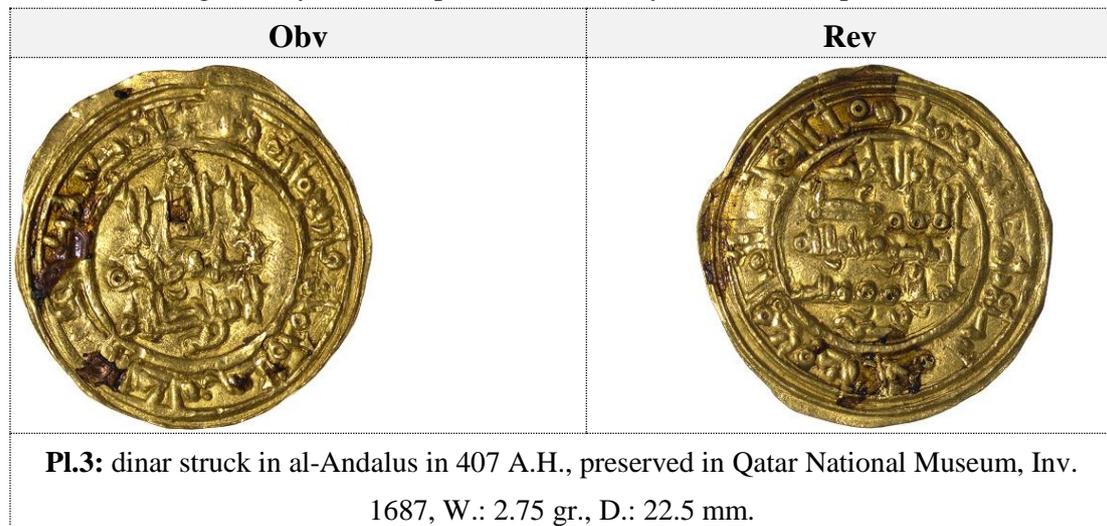
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<sup>1</sup>- A dinar struck in al-Andalus in 407 A.H., preserved in Qatar National Museum, Inv. 326, W.: 2.75 gr., D.: 22 mm

what is remarkable on this piece is that its inscriptions are very well engraved; thus very clear and readable.



**3- Gold dīnār, al-Andalus, 408 AH.** with the name of al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allah ‘Alī ibn Ḥammūd, and his successor Yaḥyyā<sup>1</sup> (Pl. 3) As no.1, but dated 408 A.H. and had the same ornament (fig. 1) like the first dinar, while several parts of the piece were obliterated and generally the inscriptions are not very clear like the previous dinar.

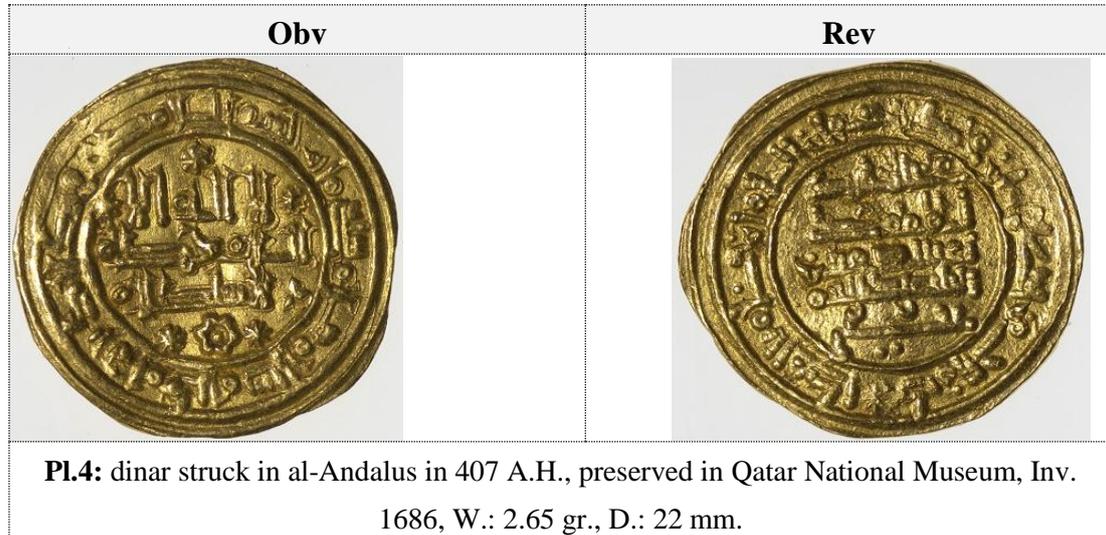


**4- Gold dīnār, al-Andalus, 408 AH.** with the name of al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allah ‘Alī ibn Ḥammūd, and his successor Yaḥyyā<sup>2</sup>(Pl. 4) This dinar is distinguished by many ornaments on its obverse; over the field formula there is one (fig. 3), and under

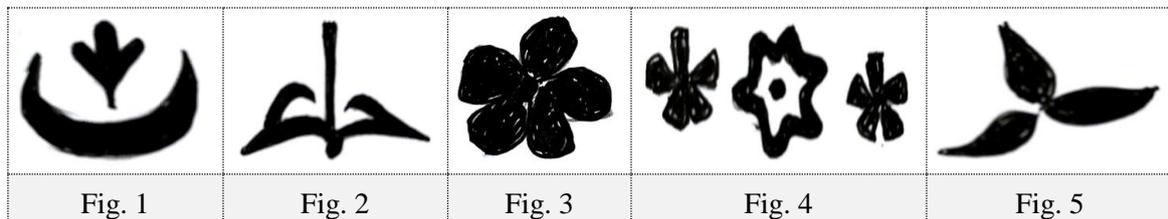
<sup>1-</sup> A dinar struck in al-Andalus in 408 A.H., preserved in Qatar National Museum, Inv. 1687, W.: 2.75 gr., D.: 22.5 mm.

<sup>2-</sup> A dinar struck in al-Andalus in 408 A.H., preserved in Qatar National Museum, Inv.1686, W: 2.65 gr, D: 22 mm

it the same ornament on both sides of a flower (fig. 4), again the same ornament (fig. 3) appears on both sides of the first line (لا اله الا الله), and finally there is an ornament of floral design of three petals (fig. 5).



It is worth noting that the majority of the collections of most of the catalogues<sup>1</sup> concerned in Ali bin Hammūd's coins are silver coins struck in Ceuta, and only very few gold coins struck in Andalusia were published, which indeed reflects the rarity of these coins.



## Coins Analysis and Significance

The analytical study of the inscriptions mentioned on coins has in fact reflected and confirmed many important historical events. This can be noticed through the coins under study, as through the analysis of their inscriptions and their

<sup>1</sup> For further information about Ali bin Hammud coins. Vives; (Antonio Y.), (1893): *Monedas de las Dinastías Ababigo-Espanolas, Establecimiento Tipografico de Fortanet*, Madrid, num. 719-734. Vives, (Antonio Y.), (1926): *Los Reyes de Taifas, Estudio Historico-Numismatico de Los Musulmanes Espanoles en el Siglo v de la Hegira (xi de J.C.)*, Madrid, num. 53-63. Miles, (George C.), (1954): *Coins of the Spanish Muluk al-Tawaif*, published in co-operation with the Hispanie Society of America, The American Numismatic Society, New York, num. 9-37.

comparison to the historical facts of the same era, several major proceedings can be generalized, as it is going to be revealed through the following study.

It is noted that the field of the obverse holds the testimony of Islam as it represents the first and basic corner of the Islamic doctrine<sup>1</sup>, and it is considered to be the general slogan for all the Islamic sects in every place and time, whether for the Sunni or the Shiites.

These gold coins appear to be worthy of examining, because as it was mentioned before, they are extremely rare, for to date, research shows that only few gold pieces were found holding this mint and all were struck in 407 A.H, 408 A.H, especially that as previously stated the main struck was for silver coins.

Concerning the field of the reverse, it bears many titles that carry highly profound meanings, as follows:

### Waly al-Ahd

This title (crown prince) was given to the person who is to be the successor of the ruler<sup>2</sup>. Here, it was seen on Ali's coins to his son Yahiya; as he struck his name in the fifth line.

### Al-Imam:

It is a title that was known for the Prophet's kinfolk then was taken by the Fatimid Caliphs in Egypt and the Zaydi Imamette in Yemen. This title was given to those who were appointed as leaders of the Muslims issues since the Prophet's age "peace be upon him". It was also a common term to entitle those who are known for their righteousness, asceticism, and knowledge<sup>3</sup>.

Accordingly, it is worth mentioning that despite the fact that it was predicted that the Ḥammūdids were going to fight the Umayyads by spreading a contradictive

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<sup>1</sup> Ramdan, *Al-Nkoud Al-Islamiya*, p. 62.

<sup>2</sup> El-Basha, H., (1978): *Al-Alkab al-Islamiya fe al-Tarikh wal Was'aik wal Asar*, Dar al-Nahda al-Arabia, Cairo, p. 543.

<sup>3</sup> El-Basha, *Al-Alkab*, pp. 166-179.

doctrine, they actually kept the Maliki sect as it was in Andalusia. Simultaneously, some people took the Shiite doctrine to show their support for the Ḥammūdids who were of Alaouite origin<sup>1</sup>. In this regard, it is logical to surmise that Ali took advantage of his name with this title to make a combination together which may have a hidden hint to his Alaouite origin.

### Al-Nasir le din Allah

This was the title adopted by Ali bin Ḥammūd in 407 A.H., as he was very keen on taking it right after he was elected as a Caliph, which means the defender of the religion of Allah. This might reflect his intention to show every one that he defends Allah's religion, no matter what Islamic sect it is.

### Amir al-Mu'minin:

Commander (Amir) in language refers to the one who has power and dominance, and it is one of the occupational titles that were used as an honorary one. Since the era of caliph 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, the title "amir al-mu'minin" (the commander of the faithful) was the official name of who was in charge of the general role of the Muslims. Mostly, it was used as a functional title, rather than an honorary one, as was reflected in its attachment to names in the inscriptions on coins and other materials with inscriptions<sup>2</sup>. Thus, adopting this title and inscribing it on the fourth line was to declare that Ali now is the prince of believers so he is the main sign of power and reign.

The marginal legend of the reverse reflects Muhammads message which is the second corner of the Islamic doctrine<sup>3</sup>. In light of this analytical study, it is quite obvious that all the above inscriptions struck on Ali's coins have very profound meanings, but to have a deeper view, let us briefly display how the coins of Ali were before being a caliph.

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<sup>1</sup> Abdel Halim, *Dawlat Bani Hammud*, p. 224.

<sup>2</sup> El-Basha, *Al-Alkab al-Islamiya*, p. 543.

<sup>3</sup> Ramdan, *Al-Nkoud Al-Islamiya*, p. 62.

In the time when Ali was a governor of Ceuta, he struck the coins under the name of Caliph Suleiman al-Mosta'in, along with his name but only as a governor in the years 402, 403, 404 A.H<sup>1</sup>. These coins appeared with name of Suleiman along with his titles but what is worth noting is that Ali struck his name over the name of Suleiman on the field of the reverse<sup>2</sup>, then on some other prototypes he even added his family's name "Ibn Ḥammūd", along with his name as well<sup>3</sup>.

In addition, on his pieces struck under the name of "Hisham al-Mo'ayad be Allah", he added the title "waly al-ahd" on the reverse field inscriptions along with his name, but this time under the name of Hisham and not over it as he did with Suleiman<sup>4</sup>.

Therefore, Ali's name being written over Suleiman's name may show that he wanted to give an indirect message of his superiority over him, that he even dared to add his family name on the coins not only his name, which may reflect his hidden intentions for independency. On the other hand, when Ali struck coins with the name of Hisham, he wrote his name under him, with the "crown prince", so he was keen on showing his loyalty to him but at the same time, he claimed to be the rightful heir to Hisham.

## Conclusion:

In conclusion to this analytical study, it is obvious that examining coins from an analytical perspective assisted in shedding more light on their role, and accordingly in clarifying some political facts concerning the power of the Ḥammūdīd dynasty and its birth through the coins of Ali bin Ḥammūd, especially the dinars struck with "al-Andalus" as a mint to show the dominance over all this huge land.

As it was previously mentioned, this ruler reigned for a very brief period; for only about a year and nine months, thus every single piece of his coins has its own value and significance. Also, generally this era was known more of striking the silver

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<sup>1</sup> Abdel Halim, *Dawlat Bani Hammud*, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Vives, *Monedas de las Dinars*, num. 719; Miles, *Coins of the Spanish*, num. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Vives, *Monedas de las Dinars*, num. 720, 721.

<sup>4</sup> Vives, *Monedas de las Dinars*, num. 720-725; Miles, *Coins of the Spanish*, num. 10-14.

coins, while the ones under study are gold. The rarity of these dinars comes from having few pieces with this mint, besides, all their releases date back to the year 407A .H and 408 A.H only, which coincides with the reign of Ali bin Ḥammūd.

Definitely, this date records a turning point in Andalusia history, representing the date Ali bin Ḥammūd came to the throne, thus marking the end of the Umayyad power and reign in this important country and the beginning of a new era of reign, known as Taifa in Andalusia.

In addition, after the comparison made between the four pieces under study, it is obvious that each one of them was struck with a different mold, not only as a result of the different ornaments appearing on each, but also according to the differences in the inscriptions letters shape and size of the four pieces. Besides, concerning the other pieces published in the catalogues studying the coins of this dynasty, it is found that the content of the inscriptions is one; differences only came in the ornaments and the letters shape and size.

The second published dinar in this research is remarkably clear and obvious, and at the same time, it is struck with only one simple floral ornament, which might come as a result of using most of the coin's surface for inscriptions.

In addition, the analytical study of these coins, not only shed light on the historical events of that time, but also highlighted a highly remarkable notice, for by having an in-depth observation into the coins struck while Ali was a governor of Ceuta and by comparing them to the pieces under study dating back to the time when he was a caliph, the harbingers of the independency intentions of Ali, and his aims to be a caliph and to establish his dominance over the Umayyad caliphate can be noticed. Therefore, it is highly recommended to conduct more analytical studies on coins inscriptions, connecting them to all the contemporary historical aspects for the rest of the Ḥammūdids coins in particular, and the coins of other eras in general.

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