

Tarì and *mancusi* in South Italy during the long tenth century

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Abstract

The classification of the earliest South Italian imitation gold tarì has depended overwhelmingly on the interpretation of the documentary record for South Italy, especially the comparatively rich sources for Campania, and on the more modest numismatic record for coin hoards and single finds. Scholars have devoted less attention to the vicissitudes of the model Fatimid rubaʿī or quarter-dīnar, both in South Italy and within the Fatimid caliphate, and their implications for the chronology of the earliest imitation tarì. This paper broaches the argument while also taking into consideration the circumstances that underlay, first, the evidently large-scale importation of Aghlabid and Fatimid quarter-dīnar in the ninth and tenth centuries, and second, the manufacture of the earliest continental imitations from the second half of the tenth century onwards. The wide variety in the style, module and metrology of the earliest imitations also offer abundant scope for further study.

Interest in ‘unsigned’ South Italian imitation gold *tarì* with pseudo-Kufic epigraphy has lately experienced a resurgence. In an article of 2019, Santoro re-examined the chronology of the earliest gold *tarì* of Amalfi¹. In May 2022, an international conference at Amalfi considered the origin and evolution of South Italian gold *tarì*, with several contributions focusing specifically on the earliest examples². Most recently, in April 2023, a conference at Hamburg sought to situate not only the circulation of Islamic gold coinage in South Italy, but also the appearance of the first South Italian imitation *tarì* within the context of human trafficking between Italy and Islamic North Africa during the eighth, ninth and tenth centuries³. Much of the research on the chronology and classification of the earliest imitation *tarì* has focused on documentary references to *tarì* and the evidence for hoards and single finds in South Italy, but the wide variety in style, module and even metrology of the South Italian imitations offer scope for further study.

This paper attempts to take a more holistic perspective on the coinage and monetary conditions in South Italy and the Central Mediterranean during the

1 SANTORO 2019.

2 TRAVAINI, SANTORO 2023.

3 *Trade and trade posts between North Africa and Southern Italy*, Universität Hamburg, 28 April 2023. The proceedings of the conference will appear in a dedicated issue of «Der Islam».

long tenth century. Above all, it seeks to achieve a better understanding of the chronology of the imitation *tari* through consideration of the circumstances that gave rise to gold inflows in South Italy during the Aghlabid and early Fatimid periods, the circulation and use of the Aghlabid and Fatimid gold coinages in the region, and the production of the imitations.

The term *tari* derived from an Arabic adjective meaning ‘fresh’ or ‘new’ that was used to describe the new gold quarter-*dinar*, or *rubāʿī*, of the Aghlabids in Sicily, which originally weighed up to about 1.05 g of fine gold (Fig. 1)⁴. The quarter-*dinar* evolved from the gold *tremissis* of Byzantine Syracuse after the Aghlabids seized the island from their Byzantine predecessors in the ninth century⁵. Once imported into continental South Italy, the Latin- and Greek-speaking populations of the region referred to the quarter-*dinar* by the adjective *tari*. The term first appeared in a South Italian document dated from Amalfi in 907, just as the Aghlabid caliphate in North Africa was giving way to the nascent Fatimid caliphate; it then appeared in other documents from Nocera in 908, Naples in 909 and Gaeta in 918 (see Maps 1-2)⁶. The actual appearance of Islamic quarter-*dinar* among the circulating currency in Campania almost certainly antedated these early documentary references, especially in view of the way in which the quarter-*dinar* fit so seamlessly within the existing system of account based on the Byzantine gold *solidus*. From 933, with increasing frequency, references to *tari* on the mainland sometimes indicated that the coins traded against the *solidus* at 4:1⁷. Because transactions involving quarter-*dinar* were straightforward, there was not necessarily any need to stipulate payment in the coins when prices were expressed in *solidi*. From the early tenth century, and probably somewhat earlier, the quarter-*dinar* or *tari* provided the basis for larger transactions throughout the region of modern Campania. References to *tari* from elsewhere in continental South Italy, for example in Apulia and Calabria, begin only after 1000, possibly in reflection of the more exiguous character of the early documentation outside of Campania.

4 GOITEIN 1967: 237; STERN 1970. Here and elsewhere in this article, generalisations about the fineness of gold coins that circulated in South Italy are based chiefly on the author's analyses of the specific gravity of Beneventan, Fatimid, Norman and other continental South Italian gold coins in the collection of the American Numismatic Society, New York City, carried out in 1993. Cf. GRIERSON, ODDY 1974; ODDY 1980.

5 BATES 2002.

6 For the reference from Amalfi in 907, see *Reg. Amalf.*, II, S. Maria: 49, doc. 2; from Nocera in 908, see *CDCaven.*, I: 158-159, doc. 124; from Naples in 909, see *RNAM*, I: 9-13, doc. 3; from Gaeta in 918, see *CDCajet.*, I: 43-44, doc. 24.

7 *CDCaven.*, I: 200, doc. 156 (Salerno, 933).



Fig. 1. Aghlabid Caliphate, Ibrahim II (AH 260-89/875-902 AD), no mint (but probably Sicily), AV quarter-*dinar*, dated AH 267 = 880 AD (1.01 g), with permission (Roma Numismatics e-sale 82, 15 Apr 2021, lot 1790).

From the later ninth century, references to prices, penalties and payments in South Italian documents were often expressed in «*solidi constantini*» or «*solidi bizanti*», clearly alluding to Byzantine *solidi* and/or a related unit of account⁸. Before about 882, references to *solidi* (and *tremisses*) were usually expressed in terms of the coins of Benevento, which weighed no more than 4.00 g (and rarely more than 1.30 g in the case of *tremisses*) and were no more than about seventy per cent fine during the time of Arechis II (758-87). The Beneventan gold coinage had undergone progressive debasement since then and was only about fifty per cent fine or less by the middle of the ninth century. From 906, South Italian documents from Amalfi sometimes referred to «*solidi mancusi*» or simply «*mancusi*», a term derived from the Arabic *manqūsh*, meaning ‘engraved’, and generally understood to denote Islamic gold *dinar* or their continental imitations⁹. In 939, a document from Amalfi indicated that the *mancus*, like the Byzantine *solidus*, exchanged against the *tarì* at 1:4¹⁰. This indicates that the *mancus*, whatever it was, exchanged at par with the *solidus*. References to *mancusi* continued to occur in documents from Amalfi until 984, but they became more

8 References to *solidi constantini* are attested in the evidence for Cava from at least as early as 882, for example in the *CDCaven.*, I: 111-113, doc. 87 (Salerno); apparent earlier references to *solidi constantini* in the same volume are dated inaccurately. A reference to «*solidi bizanti*» is attested in a document from Benevento already in 820, but they become more common only from 890. Respectively, see *RNAM*, I: 6-8, doc. 2; *CDCajet.*, I: 25-26, doc. 15 (Gaeta, 890).

9 CAHEN 1971. For the earliest reference to gold «*mancusi*» in South Italian documents, in a penalty clause, see *CDA*: 1-2, doc. 1 (Amalfi, 906). There is an extensive bibliography on the *mancus*, but see the discussions in McCORMICK 2001: 323-342; SACCOCCI 2018.

10 *CP*, I: 43-45, doc. 32 (Amalfi, 939).

infrequent after 970¹¹. From 960, the references often indicated that the *mancus* exchanged against the *tari* at 1:4¹². Significantly, the tenth-century references to *manкуси* in continental South Italy occurred exclusively in documents dated from Amalfi¹³.

The references to *manкуси* and *solidi manкуси* have no further modifiers, but references to *tari* sometimes do, even attesting explicitly to the appearance of South Italian imitations of Fatimid quarter-*dinar* or *tari* in the eleventh century. It is also noteworthy that the Fatimid quarter-*dinar* or *tari* underwent stylistic and metrological change in the tenth and early eleventh centuries, sometimes leaving traces in the written evidence. In addition, scholars of Arabic or Islamic numismatics have identified imitations of Fatimid quarter-*dinar* with legible Kufic epigraphy that were evidently manufactured within the Islamic world. It will be useful to consider the chronological relationship between modified references to *tari*, stylistic and metrological changes in the Fatimid quarter-*dinar*, and the dating of imitations of Fatimid quarter-*dinar* with legible Kufic epigraphy.

The Aghlabids began to strike their quarter-*dinar* in Sicily no later than 878, and probably earlier¹⁴. Their quarter-*dinar* had a marginal ring of Kufic epigraphy around three or four lines of Kufic epigraphy in the area or field both obverse and reverse (Fig. 1)¹⁵. The Fatimids retained the same typology for their quarter-*dinar* until soon after the middle of the tenth century, when Caliph Abu-Tamin Ma'add al-Mu'izz (AH 341-65/953-75 AD) carried out a monetary reform¹⁶. This entailed no discernible change in coin metrology but saw the introduction of a new typology characterised on most *dinar* and quarter-*dinar* by two concentric rings of Kufic epigraphy around a central pellet or centring point (Fig. 3). Only in faraway Sijilmasa, an important trading entrepôt in modern

11 CDA: 17-18, doc. 11 (Amalfi, 984).

12 Reg. Amalf., I, *Minori*: 83-84, doc. 3 (Amalfi, 960).

13 In Naples, however, documents sometimes referred to both generic *solidi* and *solidi bizanti* as being *in cantum*, as opposed to *in fractum*. In 949, for example, a property conveyance stipulates a payment of nine «*solidi bizanti*», six «*in cantum*» and another three «*in fractum*». See Reg. Neap.: 58, doc. 68 (Naples, 949 June 30). Another conveyance of property in Naples two years earlier gives the price as ten generic *solidi*, five «*in cantum*» and five in *tari* at the rate of four *tari* to the *solidus*. See *ibid.*: 54, doc. 60 (Naples, 947 April 1).

14 Aghlabid quarter-*dinar* typically lack any indication of the mint, but some silver coins datable to the period from AH 214/829 AD to AH 250/864 AD reputedly bear the mint name *Siqilliyah* (Sicily, i.e., Palermo) or *Balarm* (Palermo). See 'AL-'USH 1982: 101-104.

15 E.g., 'AL-'USH 1982: 62-91 *passim*; D'OTTONE RAMBACH 2015: 41-47, nos. 3-9.

16 For the early horizontal-type quarter-*dinar* explicitly of Fatimid Sicily, see MILES 1951: 4, no. 12; NICOL 2006: 29-30, nos. 204-213; D'OTTONE RAMBACH 2015: 53, no. 15 and 55-56, nos. 17-18; NICOL 2018: 12, nos. 205, 205a, 205b, 209, 212. For the concentric-type quarter-*dinar* of al-Mu'izz, see MILES 1951: 6-9, nos. 17-24; NICOL 2006: 43-44, nos. 290a-293, 44-45, nos. 295-309, 46, nos. 311-318; D'OTTONE RAMBACH 2015: 58, no. 20, 60, no. 22; NICOL 2018: 14-15, nos. 296, 309, 312, 315.

Morocco at the northern terminus of the western trans-Saharan caravan routes, did the mint continue to produce coins with the horizontal typology.



Fig. 2. Fatimid Caliphate, Abu'l-Qāsim (AH 322-34/934-46 AD), no mint (but probably Sicily), AV quarter-*dinar* (*tari cassimini*), possibly AH 330 = 942 AD (1.03 g), with permission (Peus sale 407/408, 7 Nov 2012, lot 1464).



Fig. 3. Fatimid Caliphate, al-Mu'izz (AH 341-65/953-75 AD), Siqilliyah (Sicily), AV quarter-*dinar* (*tari buttimini*), AH 353 = 964 AD (1.00 g), with permission (Leu Numismatik web sale 12, 30 May 2020, lot 1828).

The changeover to the concentric typology occurred at a time when Fatimid monetary authorities in the capital al-Mansuriyah in modern Tunisia were experimenting with new, more aggressively Shi'ite inscriptions on the coins¹⁷. The message soon moderated, but the coins of al-Mu'izz and his successor Abu Mansur Nizar al-'Aziz (AH 365-86/975-96 AD) retained the concentric typology. One possibility is that the new concentric typology was intended to distinguish the coins of al-Mu'izz from earlier issues of the horizontal type, the credibility of which might have been undermined by the diffusion of unsigned imitations or forgeries. Scholars have indeed identified quarter-*dinar* imitations with horizontal typology evidently based on the coins of a predecessor of

¹⁷ D'OTTONE RAMBACH 2015: 22.

al-Mu'izz, Abu'l-Qasim Muhammad al-Qa'im (AH 322-34/934-46 AD), associating the imitations with the North African Maghreb or perhaps Iberia¹⁸. In mainland South Italy, however, the introduction of the coins with the concentric typology and/or the more overtly Shi'ite legends appear to have met with resistance and a preference for the earlier coins of al-Qa'im. Some contracts dated from 956-957 stipulated payment specifically in his quarter-*dinar*, describing them as «*tari cassimini*» (derived from Qasim) (Fig. 2)¹⁹. The references to *tari cassimini* were probably related to the introduction of the concentric-type quarter-*dinar* of al-Mu'izz and their appearance on the mainland, but they offer no explanation for the advent of the concentric typology itself.

Specific references to the quarter-*dinar* of al-Mu'izz, as «*tari buttimini*» (derived from Abu Tamin), occur in documents of mainland South Italy only towards the end of his rule when his coins with the concentric typology had already been in circulation for some twenty years²⁰. The stipulations for payment specifically in the coinage of al-Mu'izz might have been driven by a need to distinguish his quarter-*dinar* from other similar coins that had entered into circulation only after about 970. Under al-Aziz, Fatimid monetary authorities continued to use the concentric typology on their gold coins while reintroducing more openly Shi'ite messages in the inscriptions²¹. The quarter-*dinar* of al-'Aziz were comparable in metrological terms to those of al-Mu'izz, but scholars have identified unsigned concentric-type imitations specifically of the coins of al-'Aziz²². It is perhaps

18 MILES 1951: 48-49, no. 535; ANS 1917.215.1471 (<http://numismatics.org/collection/1917.215.1471>, accessed 6 June 2023); Stephen Album sale 37, 11 June 2020, lot 380, 1.00 g (https://www.sarc.auction/FATIMID-al-Qa-im-934-946-AV-1-4-dinar-1-00g-NM-NM-VF-EF_i36696857, accessed 6 January 2024), evidently modelled after NICOL 2006: 25, no. 192.

19 CDCaven. I: 246-247, doc. 191 (Nocera, 956 July), 251-252, doc. 195 (Salerno, 957 January); CP I: 42-43, doc. 31 (Amalfi, 957 January 20).

20 SAMBON 1919: 83, citing Perg., *Mon. S. Laurentii de Amalphi* (973); CP I: 108-109, doc. 74 (Amalfi, 974 May 5); Reg. Amalf., II, S. Maria: 58-59, doc. 14 (Amalfi, 975 October 18).

21 D'OTTONE RAMBACH 2015: 22.

22 E.g., Stephen Album sale 46, 18 May 2023, lot 1764, 0.87g, despite the attached loop, with the mint name Misr (Cairo) (https://www.sarc.auction/FATIMID-al-Aziz-975-996-AV-dinar-0-87g-Misr-AH-303-VF_i48645229, accessed 8 January 2024). Grierson and Travaini also published a full-weight unsigned imitation *tari* of the concentric type that they described, provisionally, as South Italian, although hesitating to assign to either Salerno or Amalfi; the typology, with an empty or voided interior ring, is often attested on quarter-*dinar* in the name of al-Aziz. See MEC 14: 600-601, no. 36 (1.00 g). See also Heritage sale 3076, 5 September 2019, lot 31857, 4.04 g, (<https://coins.ha.com/itm/italy/italy-amalfi-or-salerno-anonymous-gold-4-tari-or-imitative-dinar-nd-c-11th-century-choice-xf-/a/3076-31857.s?ic5=CatalogHomeActionArea-JumpToLot-071515>, accessed 8 January 2024), described as an imitation *dinar* of Salerno or Amalfi and purportedly based on the concentric-type Sicilian *dinar* of al-'Aziz, which evidently survives in a unique example. Cfr. Numismatica Genevensis sale 8, 24 November 2014, lot 271 (<https://www.numisbids.com/n.php?p=lot&sid=915&lot=271>, accessed 8 January 2024), 3.85g, dated AH 385 (995), with the mint name Siqilliyah. The only Sicilian *dinar* recorded by Nicol are earlier examples in the name of al-Mu'izz (dated AH 345

also noteworthy that, during the rule of al-ʿAziz, there was an appreciable increase in stipulations for payment in ‘heavy’ *tarì*, extending from 981 to 1012²³. It was a standard trope in Medieval Western European commercial contracts that they sometimes stipulated payment in good, heavy and/or pure coins, and obligations for payment in good *tarì* were relatively common in documents of continental South Italy in the later tenth century. References to payments in heavy *tarì* were nevertheless more unusual, and their more frequent occurrence over a circumscribed period of some thirty years perhaps reflects a palpable change in the character of the circulating currency, though what exactly that change might have been is unclear.

The successor to al-ʿAziz, Abu Ali Mansur al-Hakim (AH 386-411/996-1021 AD), initially continued to oversee production of quarter-*dinar* with concentric typology, an average weight slightly greater than 1.00 g and an average standard of fineness greater than ninety-five per cent²⁴. Probably around AH 390/1000 AD, however, al-Hakim reintroduced the horizontal typology on his coins, possibly in response to the proliferation of concentric-type imitations. With the reversion to the horizontal typology, the average weight of al-Hakim’s quarter-*dinar* slipped below 1.00 g and the average standard of fineness often below ninety per cent; the changeover thus appears to have coincided with a decrease in fine weight of more than ten per cent²⁵. If the return of the horizontal typology and the reduction of the standard were intended to discourage quarter-*dinar* imitations, it evidently had little effect, at least to judge from the persistence of horizontal-type imitations of the quarter-*dinar* of al-Hakim²⁶.

and 361) and later ones in the name of al-Zahir (dated AH 415, 416 and 422). See NICOL 2006: 44, no. 294, 45, no. 310, 194, nos. 1408-1409, 196, no. 1422, respectively.

23 *CDCaven*. II: 156-157, doc. 331 ([Salerno], 981); 218-219, doc. 372 ([Salerno], 984); 309, doc. 432 ([Salerno], 990); 334-335, doc. 452 ([Salerno], 992); III: 56-57, doc. 496 ([Salerno], 996); IV: 117-118, doc. 603 (Nocera, 1008); 182-183, doc. 642 (Salerno, 1011); 196-197, doc. 651 ([Salerno], 1012). The only tenth-century reference to heavy *tarì* from before 981, as far as I am aware, dates from 932. See GALANTE 1980: 99, 164-166, doc. 4; cf. *CDCaven*. I: 195, doc. 152.

24 For an early concentric-type quarter-*dinar* of al-Hakim, see ANS 1972.162.9, from the North African mint at al-Mahdiyya, dated AH 387 (997/998 AD) (<http://numismatics.org/collection/1972.162.9>, accessed 7 June 2023). Another example from the North African mint at al-Mansuriya, dated AH 39[2] (1001/1002 AD), appeared at auction three times in 2017 and 2018. See Soler y Llach sale 1096, 4 May 2017, lot 267 (<https://www.acsearch.info/search.html?id=3766600>, accessed 7 June 2023); Soler y Llach sale 1099, 26 October 2017, lot 286 (<https://www.acsearch.info/search.html?id=4476583>, accessed 7 June 2023); Soler y Llach sale 1101, 22 February 2018, lot 168 (<https://www.acsearch.info/search.html?id=4755519>, accessed 7 June 2023). Nicol recorded only three concentric-type quarter-*dinar* of al-Hakim: NICOL 2006: 162, no. 1199 (al-Mansuriyah, date missing), 162, no. 1214 (al-Mahdiyyah, AH 388), 176, no. 1348 (mint and date missing).

25 Most of al-Hakim’s Sicilian quarter-*dinar* are either undated or without a fully legible date, but the standard of dated examples is consistent with that of the undatable ones.

26 E.g. Jean Elsen sale 152, 9 September 2022, lot 1379 (<https://www.numisbids.com/n.php?lot=1379&p=lot&sid=5940>, accessed 9 January 2024), 0.97 g, which is identified as a

The reappearance of the horizontal typology on Fatimid quarter-*dinar* provided scope for the addition of the kind of decorative floral motifs, tendrils and scrolls to the terminations of letters that increasingly characterised lapidary styles of Kufic epigraphy under the Fatimids at least from the time of their conquest of Egypt in AH 358/969 AD²⁷. On the coins, such decorative elements were especially conspicuous in descenders from the bottom lines of the inscriptions in the area or field, giving the Kufic a floriated quality. The use of this floriated Kufic became even more elaborate under al-Hakim's successor, Abu'l Hassan Ali al-Zahir (AH 411-27/1021-36), whose coins maintained roughly the same average weight and standard of fineness, that is except for a group of posthumous issues in the name of al-Zahir, dated AH 428-429 (1037-38 AD). Examples of AH 429, although comparable in weight with coins struck before al-Zahir's untimely death, are sometimes less than eighty per cent fine. Sicilian quarter-*dinar* of Abu Tamin Ma'add al-Mustansir (AH 427-87/1036-94 AD, in Sicily until AH 468/1075 AD), al-Zahir's successor, were nevertheless initially struck to a good standard of about eighty-five per cent fine, not quite as fine as al-Zahir's earlier coins but better than his posthumous issues.

Towards the middle of the fifth century AH, al-Mustansir oversaw production of quarter-*dinar* of the so-called 'stellate' type alongside those of the usual horizontal type. The stellate typology was essentially a variation on the concentric typology with the inner ring bisected by three pairs of intersecting parallel lines to give a six-pointed star around the centring point in the area or field and dividing the inner ring into twelve compartments. The typology was not new – it had already appeared on quarter-*dinar* in the name of al-Hakim – but it had never been employed on such a scale. Datable examples of Sicilian stellate-type quarter-*dinar* of al-Mustansir were typically struck during the period from AH 443-55/1051-63 AD, though the date is missing, illegible or only partly legible on many specimens. Imitations of these coins have also been identified²⁸. It was towards the end of this period that the standard of

possible local imitation – i.e. Sicilian – of a quarter-*dinar* of al-Hakim. Unsigned horizontal-type imitations of quarter-*dinar* based on the coins of al-Hakim's successors, al-Zahir and al-Mustansir, have also been identified. For an example based on the coins of al-Zahir, see Stephen Album Horizon sale 1, 2 October 2016, lot 393 (https://www.icollector.com/FATIMID-al-Zahir-1021-1036-AV-1-4-dinar-1-08g-NM-ND-EF_i25518397, accessed 9 January 2024), 1.08 g, the style of which is described as Spanish. For one based on the coins of al-Mustansir, see Stephen Album online sale 1, 20 January 2019, lot 5079 (https://www.sarc.auction/FATIMID-al-Mustansir-1036-1094-AV-1-4-dinar-0-74g-VF_i32010385, accessed 9 January 2024), 0.74 g, which is described as being of Italian or Spanish origin.

27 GROHMANN 1957.

28 Balog supposed that examples of imitation stellate quarter-*dinar* from the Cassibile hoard in pale gold with illegible pseudo-Kufic epigraphy might have been struck in an early Norman mint at Troina, but the attribution has never been corroborated. See BALOG 1980-81: 140-141; BALOG *et alii* 1980-81: nos. 51-63. For a similar example from the royal collection in Rome, see D'OTTONE RAMBACH 2015: 113, no. 75. For other imitations, see *ibid.*: 112, no. 74,

fineness of al-Mustansir's Sicilian quarter-*dinar* began to decline. The weight standard remained stable but later examples were almost invariably less than eighty per cent fine, further declining to about seventy per cent fine by AH 464 (1072 AD), when al-Mustansir lost Palermo to Robert Guiscard (d. 1085), the Norman adventurer turned lord of Sicily²⁹. Al-Mustansir continued to oversee production of quarter-*dinar* elsewhere on the island – at Agrigento, Messina and Syracuse – until AH 468 (1075 AD), when the Normans effectively completed their conquest of Sicily, but these coins were likewise no more than about seventy per cent fine. Robert Guiscard maintained the same style, standard, Kufic epigraphy and even the Muslim profession of the faith on his first gold *tarì* of Sicily. Robert's Norman successors soon eliminated the profession of the faith, gradually introduced more overtly Christian iconography and epigraphy, and appear to have abandoned any semblance of a strict weight standard³⁰, but they continued to strike *tarì* in Sicily to roughly the same standard of fineness as the last Sicilian quarter-*dinar* of al-Mustansir³¹. The metallic standard of the Sicilian and Sicilian-style *tarì* persisted under the Norman kings and their successors, perhaps slipping somewhat after the death of Frederick II (1197-1250, emp.

114-115, nos. 76-77. On the Cassibile hoard, found near Syracuse in Sicily possibly around 1970 and closed *c.* 1075, see BALOG 1980-81: 137-145; TRAVAINI 1995: 364, no. R4; MEC 14: 416, no. 22.

- 29 It is unclear what drove the decrease in the standard of fineness of al-Mustansir's quarter-*dinar*, but the proliferation of stellate-type imitations might have been a factor. Debasements of coinage sometimes have the scope to augment revenue in the short term, deriving profit from the brief lag that typically occurred between any unpublicised debasement of coinage and its discovery by users. Another consideration, however, might have been the need to simplify production to permit the processing of ever greater quantities of gold. The streamlining of production in the interest of increasing output would also account for the subsequent abandonment under the Normans of an effective weight standard of the *tarì*. The subject is broached in FINETTI 1987: 32-33; DAY 2021: 322-323.
- 30 Despite significant variation in the weights of Norman *tarì* already under Roger I (1072-1101), scholars have argued that the Fatimid weight standard of about 1.05 g persisted at least until the reign of William I (1154-66), based on two predominately Norman parcels, one that closes with the coins of William I and another that closes with those of Henry VI (1194-97). In the former, the weights present an 'approximately normal distribution' around 1.00 g, while in the latter, the weights are more widely distributed around 1.24 g, with the dispersion greater from the time of William II (1166-89). See TRAVAINI 1995; MEC 14: 134. Suffice it to say that the average weights of coins from in the names of individual rulers in the two samples often exceed 1.00 g, sometimes significantly, even before 1166. Only the coins of Roger II (1105-54; as king, 1130-54) from after 1130 consistently weigh, on average, just below 1.00 g.
- 31 Documents of the early thirteenth century indicate that Hohenstaufen *tarì* of Brindisi and Messina were struck to a standard of 16⅓ carats of fine gold (68%) with the remainder of the alloy consisting in three parts silver (24%) and one part copper (8%). For example, see WINKELMANN 1880: 766, doc. 1004; MEC 14: 449.

1220); the *tari* remained in production at least until 1278, when Charles I of Anjou, as King of Sicily (1266-85), transferred all minting to Naples³².

The earliest South Italian imitation *tari* consisted in two rings of pseudo-Kufic epigraphy around a central pellet or centring point in the area or field, both obverse and reverse, and they lacked the kind of Western epigraphy and/or iconography that sometimes occurred on later issues. They were based on Fatimid quarter-*dinar* with the concentric typology, struck throughout the rule al-Mu'izz and al-'Aziz, and also during the very early years of al-Hakim's caliphate, from AH 341/953 AD to about AH 391/1000 AD. The earliest continental *tari* were reputedly recognisable as imitations specifically of the coins of al-Mu'izz³³. This would suggest that the imitations first appeared during his rule, perhaps eliciting the stipulations for payment in *tari buttimini* attested in documents of 973-75. It would also suggest that al-Hakim's reversion to the horizontal typology around 1000 was a reaction not so much to the initial appearance of the imitations but to their ongoing proliferation.

The early imitations show considerable variety in terms of fabric and style, but they may be divided into two distinct groups. Examples from one group (A; Fig. 4) are struck from higher quality gold, up to ninety per cent fine based on compositional analyses, often weigh more than 1.00 g and rarely less than 0.90 g, and show a more regular module with a well-defined marginal ring and border or edge³⁴. By contrast, examples from the other group (B; Fig. 5) have a dull or coppery hue, are no more than about fifty per cent fine, invariably weigh less than 1.00 g, are more irregular in terms of flan size and lack a well-defined border or edge, with the legend in the outer ring often dimly translated from die

32 Compositional analyses suggest that the *tari* of the Norman and early Hohenstaufen kings were almost invariably better than sixty per cent fine, and often near the ideal standard of sixty-eight per cent. By contrast, in *MEC* 14, the specific-gravity data accompanying the catalogue entries for the *tari* of Frederick's successors, though hardly a representative sample, mostly suggest a standard of less than sixty per cent fine. See *MEC* 14: 668-669, no. 576, 670-671, nos. 598-601, 674-675, no. 625. Mint ordinances for Messina and Brindisi in May 1278 provide for the continued issue of *tari*, and documents suggest that they remained in circulation over the next several years, but no *tari* of the 1278 coinage have ever been identified, which perhaps suggests that they were no longer struck after the transfer of the mint to Naples. See *MEC* 14: 206.

33 BALOG 1979: 628.

34 *MEC* 14: 592-593, no. 12, which is described as being about ninety-three per cent fine, based on specific gravity analysis, and weighing 1.02 g. The six pre-Norman examples without floriated pseudo-Kufic epigraphy in the collection of the ANS range from more than ninety per cent fine down to about sixty-five per cent fine, based on specific gravity analyses, and weigh 0.93-1.05 g. The higher standard of fineness is roughly equivalent to that of the quarter-*dinar* of Fatimid Sicily in the name of al-Hakim (AH 386-411/996-1021 AD) while the lower measures are roughly equivalent to those of the later quarter-*dinar* of Fatimid Sicily in the name of al-Mustansir (AH 427-87/1036-94 AD).

to coin³⁵. Crucially, coins of the latter group (B) are also distinguished by the presence of floriated pseudo-Kufic characters in the legends³⁶.



Fig. 4. Salerno, AV imitation quarter-*dinar* (*tarì salernitano*), c. 1000 (1.02 g), with permission (Bertolami sale 5, 14 May 2012, lot 1083).



Fig. 5. Amalfi, AV imitation quarter-*dinar* (*tarì amalfitano*), 11th century (0.97 g), with permission (Bertolami sale 5, 14 May 2012, lot 1084).

The earliest use of floriated Kufic on the Fatimid quarter-*dinar*, as noted above, occurred on the horizontal-type coins of al-Hakim and continued, more ornately, under al-Zahir and his successor al-Mustansir. This effectively dates the imitations with the floriated pseudo-Kufic to sometime after about 1000, supposing that al-Hakim's coins provided the model, or later if the coins of al-Zahir or al-Mustansir provided the model³⁷.

35 *MEC* 14: 600-601, nos. 37-38, which are described as being less than forty per cent fine, based on specific gravity analyses, and weighing 0.96 g and 0.92 g, respectively. The four pre-Norman examples with floriated Kufic in the collection of the ANS are less than fifty per cent fine, based on specific gravity analyses, and weigh 0.93-0.97 g.

36 Grierson already recognised the floriated characters in the pseudo-Kufic legends, which he described as «resembling a tree with overhanging branches», as peculiar to the coins of Amalfi; he also regarded a certain V-like character as a distinctive mark of *tarì amalfitani*. See GRIERSON 1977: 235-236; *MEC* 14: 68.

37 For example, see MILES 1951: 16-17, nos. 125-126 and plates 1-2, which describe and illustrate two quarter-*dinar* of al-Hakim with floriated Kufic, dated AH 401 and 407/9, respectively; and 22-25, nos. 193, 201, 208 and plate 2, which describe and illustrate three quarter-*dinar*

South Italian imitation *tari* from the Ordona hoard, although varying considerably in terms of style, fabric and diameter, appear to be exclusively from the former group (A), without the floriated pseudo-Kufic script in the legends. The Ordona hoard, discovered during archaeological excavations in 1965/1966 at the Herdona site near Foggia, is probably the most important find of the early imitations. It consists in 147 South Italian *tari* of the concentric type modelled after the Fatimid quarter-*dinar* of al-Mu'izz, al-'Aziz and early issues of al-Hakim, plus a single Byzantine gold *histamenon* of Constantinople in the names of Emperors Basil II and Constantine VIII (976-1025). Significantly, apart from a few outliers, the *tari* show an average standard of fineness of about ninety per cent³⁸. The hoard is generally dated to the second quarter of the eleventh century³⁹. In other words, the Ordona hoard establishes the *terminus ante quem* of the finer imitations of group A without the floriated pseudo-Kufic characters in the legends at around 1025/30 and suggests the *terminus post quem* of the baser imitations of group B with the floriated pseudo-Kufic epigraphy at about the same time.

Documentary evidence for the South Italian imitations is exiguous before the middle of the eleventh century. References to imitation *tari* of Amalfi ostensibly from 960 and 1019 may be discounted. They occur in later Italian registrations of the lost original documents but they are absent from contemporary Latin registrations of the same documents in the Vatican Archives⁴⁰. Another reference to gold *solidi* of Amalfi from 990 is perhaps more compelling but likewise survives in a registration that contrasts with another registration of the same document⁴¹. The earliest secure contemporary reference to *tari* of continental South Italian manufacture dates from 1012 and concerns not the coins of Amalfi but the 'heavy' *tari* of nearby Salerno: «*septem auri tari boni pensanti et medium tari moneta salernitanas*»⁴². A document of Amalfi from 1005 that stipulated payment in 'new' *tari* might have been in reference to *tari* of Salerno, though it equally might have referred to the new horizontal-type quarter-*dinar* of al-Hakim introduced in Fatimid Sicily some five years earlier⁴³. Explicit references to *tari* of Amalfi begin only in 1057, after which they become common and

of al-Zahir with floriated Kufic, dated from AH 417 (?), 422 and 428, respectively. The introduction of the coins with the floriated Kufic evidently coincided with the reappearance of the horizontal typology under al-Hakim around AH 390 (1000 AD).

38 BUCCOLIERI, SARCINELLI, ZAPPATORE 2023.

39 GURNET 1967; TRAVAINI 1995, *MEC* 14: 419, no. 60; SARCINELLI 2023.

40 *Reg. Amalf.*, I, Minori: 83-84, doc. 3a-b (960), 88, doc. 10a-b (1019); SANTORO 2019: 134-135.

41 In this case, the reference occurs in the Vatican registration but not in other evidence from the archiepiscopate of Amalfi. See *Reg. Amalf.*, I, Amalfi: 69, doc. 1a-b (990); TRAVAINI 1995: 21, no. 37; TRAVAINI 2016: 3; SANTORO 2019: 135.

42 *CDCaven.* IV: 196-197, doc. 651.

43 *CPI*: 106-107, doc. 71 (Amalfi, 1005). It has not been possible to corroborate another reputed reference to 'new' *tari* from 997, but see CAMERA 1876-81, I: 177.

greatly outnumber references to *tarì salernitani*⁴⁴. Two documents of Salerno dated from 1056 nevertheless refer explicitly to locally struck *tarì*, as if to distinguish them from *tarì* produced elsewhere⁴⁵. Already in 1027, a document of Naples stipulated a price of thirty-two *tarì* for immovable property in Piscinola, of which sixteen were payable in ‘the good [*tarì*] from our coinage’ (*«boni de illis monetis vestris»*), implying that the balance of the price was payable in another perhaps inferior variety of *tarì*, though it is unclear what exactly the good *tarì* were and what the other ones were⁴⁶. Another Neapolitan document of 1048 stipulated an annual rent of twenty gold *solidi* at the rate of four *tarì* per *solidus* payable in the coinage that was then in circulation (*«de moneta que tunc andaverit in ipsa civitate»*), perhaps suggesting an uncertain or changeable monetary environment⁴⁷. In 1063, six years after the first explicit reference to *tarì amalfitani*, yet another Neapolitan contract stipulated an annual rent of twenty-five *solidi* of Amalfi at the rate of four *tarì* per *solidus*, though if another unnamed but superior currency were available, it allowed for payment of twenty *solidi* in the better money⁴⁸. The differing rates for the two currencies suggest that the coinage of Amalfi was worth twenty per cent less than the alternative coinage. Because the only documentary reference specifically to *tarì* of either Salerno or Amalfi from before 1025 mentions only the coins of Salerno, it is reasonable to suppose that the coins of group A belong to Salerno while those of group B belong to Amalfi.

The concentric-type imitation *tarì* of Amalfi were based not directly on the Fatimid quarter-*dinar*, which by 1057 had long been exclusively of the horizontal type, but on the concentric-type imitation *tarì* of nearby Salerno. The coins of Amalfi are nevertheless distinguishable from those of Salerno by the floriated pseudo-Kufic characters in their inscriptions, borrowed from the epigraphy on contemporary Fatimid coins of the horizontal type, as noted above. The floriated pseudo-Kufic characters were absent from the legends of not only the coins in the earlier Ortona hoard but also from contemporary *tarì* of Salerno with a form of the Latin legend GISVLFFVS PRINCEPS in one or both of the outer rings⁴⁹. These coins are identifiable with Gisulfo II, Prince of Salerno (1052-77), which effectively establishes their place of manufacture and chronological parameters⁵⁰. Compositional analyses of two examples of the

44 *CDCaven.* VIII: 8-10, doc. 1241 (Salerno, 1057), 15-17, doc. 1245 (Salerno, 1057).

45 *CDCaven.* VII: 300-301, doc. 1232 (Salerno, 1056), 302-304, doc. 1234 (Salerno, 1056); SANTORO 2019: 136-137.

46 *Reg. Neap.*, II.1: 258-259, doc. 412. Piscinola is situated six or seven kilometres north of Medieval Naples, just west of the airport at Capodichino.

47 *Reg. Neap.*, II.2: 294-295, doc. 483.

48 *Reg. Neap.*, II.2: 298, doc. 493.

49 TRAVAINI 1995: tbl. 4, nos. 37-39.

50 GRIERSON 1956: 38; TRAVAINI 1995: 23, 160; *MEC* 14: 61. Although modern forgeries of these coins are known, there are also genuine specimens, for example in *CNI* XVIII: 317, nos.

GISVLVFS PRINCEPS *tari* by gamma-ray transmission give gold contents of seventy and fifty-six per cent⁵¹. Analyses of other *tari* of similar style but lacking the Latin inscriptions in the outer rings have gold contents ranging from sixty to forty-four per cent, though tending towards the upper margin⁵². The disparity between the results from the two coins with the Latin inscriptions suggests that Gisulfo debased his *tari salernitani* by some twenty per cent during his principate, which more or less accords with the account of Amato, a Benedictine monk of Monte Cassino, who complained about Gisulfo's underweight coinage⁵³. The scale of the debasement implied by the analyses matches the difference in the 1063 rent contract from Naples described above between the superior but unnamed coinage and the *tari* of Amalfi.

The *tari* with the inscription GISVLVFS PRINCEPS were not the only imitations that bore Latin legends. There were also others with a form of the legend S ANDREAS SALRN, generally only partly legible, though mint attribution is not as straightforward⁵⁴. The first part of the legend evidently refers to Sant'Andrea, patron of Amalfi to whom the city's Cathedral Church was dedicated from at least 1103 and possibly from before 1060, while the second part appears to refer to Salerno⁵⁵. The explanation for the seeming ambiguity of the inscription perhaps lies in the possibility that the coins were struck in Amalfi during Robert Guiscard's besiegement of Salerno, with the second part intended as a herald of the city's impending fall. Stylistically, the coins belong to the group associated with Amalfi in that they are distinguished by the floriated pseudo-Kufic epigraphy that was absent from the coins of the Ortona hoard. Compositional analysis of one example of these *tari* by gamma-ray transmission suggest a gold content of only forty-six per cent, the same result obtained by touchstone assay in the nineteenth century⁵⁶. Compositional analyses of other *tari* that lack the S ANDREAS SALRN inscription but share a similar style and also have the floriated pseudo-Kufic characters in the legends suggest a gold content of less than forty per cent.

The debasement of continental *tari* around the middle of the eleventh century fits into a broader pattern of debasement of gold coinage in the Mediterranean basin around that time. Not only are the debased *tari* of Amalfi first attested

1-2, with photographic illustrations in pl. xix.10-11. For other apparently genuine examples appearing recently on the antiquities market, see Bertolami e-auction 52, 4 Feb. 2018, lot 593; Bertolami auction 109, 4 May 2022, lot 737. The latter example subsequently appeared in Soler y Llach subasta 1129, 26 Oct. 2022, lot 655.

51 BALOG *et alii* 1980-81: 168; TRAVAINI 1995: 23, 160.

52 BALOG *et alii* 1980-81: 169; TRAVAINI 1995: 23, 161.

53 AMATO 1935: 211-212 (iv.39).

54 TRAVAINI 1995: 163-167. For line-drawings of *tari* with a form of the legend S ANDREAS SALERN, see TRAVAINI 1995: tbl. 5, nos. 50-51.

55 GRIERSON 1977: 227.

56 BALOG *et alii* 1980-81: 169; TRAVAINI 1995: 23, 155, 161, 165.

during the principate of Gisulfo II, whose *tarì* likewise underwent debasement, but there were also debasements of contemporary Fatimid and Byzantine gold coinages. Probably towards AH 450/1058 AD, as already noted above, Fatimid Caliph al-Mustansir began to debase his gold quarter-*dinar* of Sicily, initially to about eighty per cent or less and ultimately to about seventy per cent or less. The standard of the Byzantine gold *histamenon* began to slip from more than ninety per cent fine already in the 1040s under Emperor Constantine IX (1042-1055), levelling off at about seventy-five per cent after 1050, and then fell again under Michael VII (1071-78)⁵⁷.

The earliest South Italian imitations of the Fatimid quarter-*dinar* had entered into circulation certainly by 1012, probably already by about 1005 or even 1000, and possibly from as early as about 970. In 1012, the *tarì* of Salerno are first attested in South Italy in the documentary records of Salerno; the hoard of concentric-type quarter-*dinar* imitations discovered at Foggia, closed after about 1025/30, very likely consisted largely if not wholly in the *tarì salernitani*. In 1005, a document of Amalfi stipulated payment in «*tarì nuovi*», perhaps in reference to the imitations of Salerno or the new quarter-*dinar* in the name of Fatimid Caliph al-Hakim, who oversaw the changeover from the concentric-type quarter-*dinar* of al-Mu'izz and al-'Aziz back to the traditional horizontal type around 1000. The changeover was evidently accompanied by debasement; taking into consideration both weight and fineness, al-Hakim's reversion to the horizontal typology appears to have coincided with the dilution of the quarter-*dinar's* value by a little more than ten per cent in terms of gold. The change might have been in reaction to an initial issue of the concentric-type imitations on the mainland or more likely to their steady proliferation after entering into circulation some three decades earlier. The references to *tarì buttimini* in the records of both Salerno and Amalfi in 973-75, towards the end of the rule of al-Mu'izz, already suggest the presence of competing coins and a preference for the ones of al-Mu'izz over them, perhaps signalling the advent of the imitations among the circulating currency.

Hanging over all of this are the overriding questions of what precipitated the inflows of gold from the Islamic Sicily and North Africa into continental South Italy in the first place and what gave rise to the mainland imitations. Rigorous assessments of these matters are beyond the scope of this study, but their broad contours may be sketched. By the later seventh century, gold had begun to leach from Europe towards the Middle East. Only in Italy and Umayyad Spain did the production of gold coinage continue, but even in Italy, the standard of weight and fineness came under pressure in the eighth century due to Europe's negative balance of trade with the East. In the later eighth century, however, the trans-Mediterranean flow of gold reversed as Europe's balance of

⁵⁷ MORRISSON 1976; MORRISSON 2017.

trade with the East improved. The driver of this change was the expansion of the Carolingian Empire, particularly towards the East, which yielded a surfeit of marketable resources in the form of human captives who could be sold into slavery to Byzantines and especially Muslims. Slaves were perhaps the only European exports that were sufficiently valuable to generate significant gold inflows, reverse the balance of trans-Mediterranean trade and even bring about an ephemeral 'return to gold' in Europe in the later eighth and ninth centuries⁵⁸.

Muslim marauders were making regular incursions in Sicily and Sardinia to plunder and take prisoners for sending into slavery already in the early eighth century. By the middle of the century, Venetian and Byzantine merchants were insinuating themselves into the slave trade in Rome and elsewhere in Tyrrhenian Central Italy as intermediaries, purchasing slaves for resale and export to Africa⁵⁹. Within a few years of that, the Saracen raids evidently abated somewhat⁶⁰, as if human trafficking had shed some of its predatory aspect and assumed a more commercial character, though Pope Hadrian I (772-95) still complained to Charlemagne (768-814, emp. 800) in 776 that the Greeks of Campania were engaging in the commerce of Lombard slaves⁶¹. The incursions in Sicily resumed in the early ninth century and steadily quickened, building to a veritable full-scale invasion of the island by about 830. On the mainland, too, the impact of the Muslims was appreciable. In the *Pactum Sicardi* of 836, the rulers of Naples, also on behalf of the subject cities of Sorrento and Amalfi, promised the prince of Benevento to desist from enslaving Beneventan Lombards for sale *super mares*, which suggests that the merchants of these cities had been active in the slave trade beforehand⁶². If the merchants had indeed honoured the pledge after 836, the outbreak of civil war between Benevento and Salerno in 839 created new opportunities for both slave traders and Muslim raiders⁶³. In 846, a large band of Saracen raiders even sacked Rome⁶⁴. By that time, the Aghlabid and/or Berber outposts that had been sprouting up in Apulia since about 830 had coalesced into the short-lived emirate of Bari, with the eponymous Adriatic port

58 SPUFFORD 1989: 49-52. In the ninth century, according to GOITEIN 1967: 211, Jewish merchants played an important role as intermediaries in the trafficking of slaves from Europe to Islamic North Africa and the Middle East, but he further noted that the trade left virtually no trace in the rich trove of documents from the Cairo Geniza.

59 E.g., DUCHESNE 1955-57, I: 433.

60 MCCORMICK 2001: 512-514, 768.

61 *MGH Epist.* III (*Karolini Aevi* I): 584-585. VERLINDEN 1977: 114 supposed that the Greeks of Campania were probably from Amalfi, though they might have been from Naples, to which Amalfi was still subject, or perhaps from both.

62 *MGH LL* IV: 217, 218 §3. One of the clauses in the *Pactum* – §44: *De Amalfinis qualiter peragantur* – also dealt specifically with travellers from Amalfi, though only the heading survives. See also VERLINDEN 1977: 114-115.

63 During the decade-long civil war, moreover, both Radelchis of Benevento (839-849) and Siconulfo of Salerno (839-849) employed Muslim mercenaries. See KREUTZ 1991: 26.

64 KREUTZ 1991: 26-27; METCALFE 2009: 18.

city and above all the Ionian port of Taranto serving as its chief centres for the transshipment of Christian captives to North Africa and the Middle East⁶⁵. Bari fell to Emperor Louis II (844-75, sole emp. 855) in 871, but it long remained an important slave entrepôt⁶⁶. The Franks also besieged Taranto, though unsuccessfully, and the city remained a Muslim enclave in Apulia until 880, when the troops of Byzantine Emperor Basil I the Macedonian (867-886) occupied the city; Bari had already passed to the Byzantines in 876. The disintegration of the emirate of Bari did not, however, dispel the Saracen threat on the mainland; it merely shifted the focus of the menace to the cities of the Tyrrhenian coast.

Salerno came under siege in 871/72 but survived the ordeal thanks to timely support from Amalfi and, ultimately, the threat of the imminent arrival of a large Frankish relief force⁶⁷. After abandoning the siege, the Saracen contingent dispersed, but some elements remained in the area, settling mostly in the territories of Salerno and Naples, while others established bases farther north, within striking distance of Rome⁶⁸. The threat to Rome greatly alarmed the new pope, John VIII (872-82), whose correspondence starkly elicits the gravity of the situation⁶⁹. He wasted little time in writing to authorities in Amalfi to solicit succour against Saracen encampments at Monte Circeo near Terracina⁷⁰. By about 875, however, Amalfi and other coastal cities – Gaeta, Naples and Salerno – were evidently in league with the Saracens and, it seems, were allowing them to ravage Roman territory virtually unchallenged, presumably in exchange for inducements⁷¹. Starting in 877, the pope campaigned vigorously to encourage these cities to break their treaties with the Muslims and participate in a coalition to defend Rome against them⁷². In 878, he offered authorities in Amalfi 10,000 *manusi* to despatch their boats to patrol the Tyrrhenian coast from Minturno, near the mouth of the river Garigliano, to Civitavecchia northwest of Rome, but Amalfi refused to cooperate on the grounds that the pope had originally agreed to pay 12,000 *manusi*⁷³. In the absence of support from

65 According to the Frankish monk BERNARDUS 1879: 310-311, whose account presumably comprises a measure of hyperbole, six vessels carrying an astonishing 9000 Beneventan captives sailed from Taranto probably around 865 bound for trans-Mediterranean destinations. Bernardus and two fellow pilgrims to the Holy Land travelled on one of the boats, alighting at Alexandria in Egypt. See also MUSCA 2023: 94-97.

66 In the early eleventh century, for example, the monks of San Benedetto di Conversano in Apulia obtained an exemption from charges on slaves purchased in Bari on behalf of the monastery. See VERLINDEN 1977: 102.

67 AMARI 1854-58, I: 584-587; KREUTZ 1991: 56.

68 KREUTZ 1991: 60-62.

69 ENGREN 1945; KREUTZ 1991: 57-60; DBI 55, 2001: 000-000.

70 MGH *Epist.* VII (*Karolini Aevi* V): 276, doc. 5.

71 MGH *SS RL*: 249 chap. 39: ... *«pacem habentes cum Saracenis»*.

72 MGH *Epist.* VII (*Karolini Aevi* V): 48-49, docs. 51-53.

73 *Ibid.*: 75, doc. 79 and 81, doc. 86. Interestingly, the references to *manusi* in John's letters only occur in connection with his efforts to defend Rome against the Saracen threat and mostly

Amalfi, John had no remedy to the ‘persecution of the pagans’ but to agree to paying the tormentors an annual tribute of 25,000 silver *mancusi*⁷⁴. The gloom must have deepened at the end of May 878, when Byzantine Syracuse, one of the few remaining Christian bastions in Sicily, fell to the Aghlabids⁷⁵. The pope subsequently demanded that Amalfi return his initial 10,000-*mancusi* payment, but Amalfi’s intransigence was merely a symptom of a greater problem; other cities in the region likewise continued to maintain alliances with the Saracens in the interest of profit⁷⁶. In October 879, John excommunicated the bishop, the prefect and the entire population of Amalfi because of the city’s reluctance to break its treaty with the Saracens⁷⁷. He soon offered Amalfi yet another opportunity to step away from its partnership with the Muslims, this time proposing an annual tribute of 10,000 silver *mancusi* to the city plus an initial bonus of 1000 *mancusi*; if Amalfi continued to collaborate with the enemy, however, he threatened to make it impossible for the city’s merchants to do business anywhere⁷⁸. The threat was nevertheless an empty one, and there is nothing to suggest that Amalfi ever heeded it. In 881, the pope even excommunicated the bishop of Naples, despite having contributed 1400 *mancusi* to him in support of his campaign to become the city’s lone authority in 877; the reason, he explained, was that the bishop persisted in alliance with the Saracens and, according to the pope, was in receipt of a share of their plunder⁷⁹. The Muslim raids reached their apogee in the early 880s, penetrating as far north as Spoleto in Umbria and including assaults on the hallowed monasteries at San Vincenzo al Volturno in 881 and Monte Cassino in 883⁸⁰. After the Volturno raid, John offered to rescind his order of excommunication against Naples if the city would break its pact with the Saracens, but evidently to little avail⁸¹.

The pope died in December 882, probably the victim of assassination from within the papal court, possibly at the hands of a relative. John had failed in his crusade against the Saracens, emptied the papal coffers in pursuit of unsuccessful policies, alienated his natural allies in Europe and depended too heavily on the Byzantines for their inadequate support. After his death, and in the absence of his efforts to mount a resistance against the incursions, the Saracen presence in Campania became too pervasive for comfort even among the cities that had enthusiastically collaborated with the raiders over the previous decade. Within

in his correspondence with authorities in Amalfi and Naples. The references were usually generic, like these, and never explicitly to ‘gold’ *mancusi* but sometimes to ‘silver’ *mancusi*.

74 *Ibid.*: 85-86, doc. 89.

75 METCALFE 2009: 27-28.

76 *MGH Epist.* VII (*Karolini Aevi* V): 192, doc. 214; 194, doc. 217; 204-205, doc. 230.

77 *Ibid.*: 214-215, doc. 246.

78 *Ibid.*: 218-219, doc. 250.

79 *Ibid.*: 72-74, docs. 76-77; 246-247, doc. 279.

80 *MGH SS RL*, 251-254 chap. 44; *Chron. Vult.* I, 362-365; CITARELLA, WILLARD 1983.

81 *MGH Epist.* VII (*Karolini Aevi* V): 264-265, doc. 305.

a few years, two of the most affected cities, Naples and Salerno, united to drive the marauders from their territories, with some of the uprooted bands resettling farther north near the mouth of the river Garigliano on the border between Campania and Lazio. As the South Italians were beginning to appreciate that the threat posed by the Aghlabids on the mainland outweighed the economic benefits of doing business with them, the Byzantine commander Nikephoros Phokas arrived in South Italy to launch a formidable anti-Muslim campaign, taking advantage of the mounting disorder among the Aghlabid leadership in both Sicily and North Africa⁸². Within a generation, the Aghlabid caliphate gave way to the Ismaili Shi'ite Fatimids.

With the advent of Fatimid rule in North Africa and Sicily in the early tenth century, relations between the Muslims and the cities of Campania and southern Lazio assumed a more amicable complexion. Muslim incursions in the region effectively ceased and the remaining Muslim outposts either disbanded or, like the one near the mouth of the river Garigliano, were forcibly removed. The ensuing period, with a few exceptions, was one of relative stability, though raids continued in Byzantine Apulia and Calabria, even intensifying towards the middle of the century⁸³. The countervailing flows of Christian slaves and African gold therefore continued, if perhaps on a diminished scale, but they must have fallen away after the Byzantines reached a settlement with the Fatimids in 967 that effectively ended the incursions. Two years later, the Fatimids expanded towards the East in North Africa, conquering Egypt and establishing a new capital at Cairo. The caliphate's centre of gravity inevitably drifted eastwards. By that time, the maritime city-states of Italy's southern Tyrrhenian coast had come to depend upon the gold inflows for their supply of high-value currency; prices for transactions in immovable property, for example, were typically quoted, as noted above, in gold *tarì* or gold *solidi* (or «*solidi mançusi*») at four *tarì* to the *solidus*. The decline of the slave trade and the consequent reduction of the gold inflows in South Italy disrupted the balance of supply and demand, probably providing the impetus for the local imitations as well as the eventual debasements of continental *tarì*.

The most likely scenario therefore is that the references to *tarì buttimini* in documents of Salerno and Amalfi in 973-75 are indeed indicative of the presence in the region of another kind of *tarì*, very likely of local manufacture, that imitated the Fatimid quarter-*dinar* of al-Mu'izz. Although it is uncertain where the earliest imitations were produced, it is reasonable to suppose that they were struck largely if not wholly in the mint at Salerno, which had a tradition of coin production stretching back more than a century and was the city with which the imitations were first identified in the documentary record some forty

82 METCALFE 2009: 28-31.

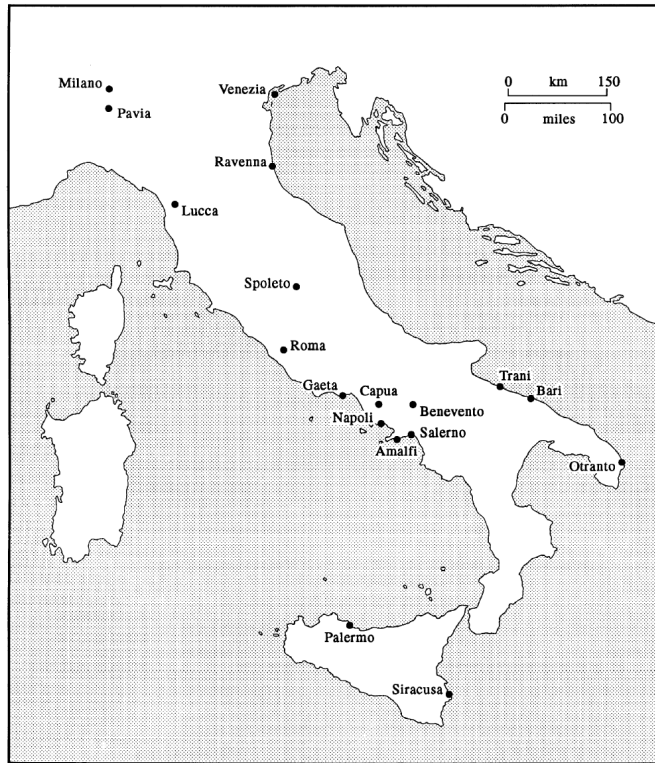
83 KREUTZ 1991: 98, 101.

years later. Around the same time, references to *mancusi* began to occur more infrequently in South Italian documents; there are only a few dated from after 970, the last two from 979 and 984. This probably signalled a contraction in the supply of gold due to declining inflows from the slave trade. The references to *tari buttimini* also coincide with the brief rule in Salerno of the usurper Landulfo (973-74), to whom a silver *denaro* with the reverse legend LAN | SALRN has been attributed⁸⁴. The early imitation *tari* were those without the floriated pseudo-Kufic characters in the legends, as noted above; examples of this variety evidently were still the only ones in circulation when the Ortona hoard was closed probably sometime after about 1025/30. By the middle of the eleventh century, in the face of diminishing gold inflows, the production of the imitations depended increasingly upon recycling. This helps to explain not only the debasements of the *tari salernitani* of Gisulfo II but also the issues of base *tari amalfitani* with the floriated pseudo-Kufic epigraphy. Amalfi introduced its *tari* no later than 1057 and possibly some years earlier but probably not before 1052, when Gisulfo inherited the principate of Salerno.

By about 1100, the fineness of continental *tari* might have slipped even further⁸⁵, though Sicilian and Sicilian-style *tari*, as noted above, maintained the same standard of fineness from the collapse of Fatimid rule until the death of Frederick II in 1250. From the time of Roger II, moreover, output from Sicily was robust. The inflows of African gold in Sicily never disappeared but remained steady and even grew enough in the early thirteenth century to support, from 1231, the production of Frederick's more Western-style gold *angustales* and half-*angustales* not only at Messina but also on the mainland at Brindisi, and to expand production of his Sicilian-style *tari* to Brindisi. By that time, however, outflows of European silver rather than slaves were providing the basis for the gold inflows, but that is another story.

84 MEC 14: 592-593, no. 11.

85 The high proportion of alloy in base gold renders specific gravity analysis less reliable than on fine gold. Specific gravity analyses on later eleventh- and twelfth-century continental *tari* associated with Amalfi, for example, suggest that they are in the range of about 20-40 per cent fine while tests on those associated with Salerno suggest that they are only about ten per cent fine. A document of 1146 nevertheless indicates that *tari amalfitani* were ideally struck to a standard of a little more than forty per cent fine and that *tari salernitani* were one-third fine. See MEC 14, p. 451.



Map 1. Italy, *c.* 800, with permission (drawn by Ian Agnew, Dept of Geography, University of Cambridge, for Day 1997: 26).



Map 2. Southern Italy, c. 800, with permission (drawn by Ian Agnew, Dept of Geography, University of Cambridge, for Day 1997: 28).

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