

GEORGE C. MILES

A PROVISIONAL RECONSTRUCTION  
OF THE GENEALOGY OF THE ARAB AMIRS OF CRETE

Greek hospitality, especially Cretan hospitality, is justly renowned. This Congress and the warm welcome all of us have received here is a case in point. I doubt that any guest present has greater reason to be recognizant of this hospitality than I. We are gathered here to celebrate the happy termination of an uncomfortable episode in the history of Crete and Byzantium, and yet the Organizing Committee has been so generous as to permit me to revive the memory of those invaders whom we have come here to bury. I can only hope that the ghost of Nikephoros Phokas, who is surely present here today, will be as tolerant, and that at the end of this session I will not be conducted to the port in chains and shipped north on the next boat as was 'Abd al-'Azīz just a thousand years ago. I am confident, however, that this will not be my fate, not only because of your hospitable habits but also because, as I have often been told by my Cretan friends, every episode in the long life of the island, even the most unpleasant, is an integral part of its history to be remembered and cherished. After each adversity the Phoenix of the Cretan spirit has risen again and has looked back with pride on dark days courageously survived and on difficulties successfully overcome.

But while I can rely on you to bear with me for these reasons, it is with real diffidence that I venture to speak to this learned gathering of Cretans and Cretologues on a subject about which I am sure many of you know a great deal more than I do. My only justification is perhaps that the source material on which I draw is in part, at least, unpublished, and while I anticipate criticism of the use to which I put this material, I feel that in making it available to scholars here and abroad I may have made a small contribution to the body of raw material out of which the history of Crete in this very obscure period is to be fashioned. We all know how sparse are the written and archaeological documents for the Arab occupation of the island, and I am confident therefore that all of us will welcome the addition of even the minutest scraps of

authentic information. Those of you who are aware of my preoccupation with numismatics will not be surprised to learn that my little contribution has to do with the coins of the Amirs of Crete. My intention here is to see what we can do with the evidence of the coins in filling out the fragmentary and rather hazy genealogy of the Amirs provided us by the testimony of the Arab and Byzantine chroniclers.

Until very recently our knowledge of the names of the Amirs and of their succession was based entirely on the Byzantine and Arab written sources. The Greek chronicles (chiefly the Continuator of Theophanes, Genesius, George the Monk, Symeon Magister, Leo Diaconus, Theodosius Diaconus) provide us with the names of Apochapsis, Saipis, Babel, Zerkounis, Kouroupas and Anemas. Fig. 1 represents an attempt to place these names in relation to each other. Apochaps was the conqueror of the island (I need not go into the details of the conquest and the chronological problems involved; they are well known and have been much discussed); his son Saipis ruled during the reign of Michael III (842–867) and, according to one indication, was still alive in 875; his son was Babel, contemporary with Leo VI the Wise (886–912); Babel's «brother» (σύγγονος) was Zerkounis, the «predecessor» (ὁ πρὸ τοῦ νῦν ἀρχηγοῦ τῆς Κρήτης καθηγησάμενος) of the ruler of Crete in Genesius' time; Kouroupas, who was an old man at the time of his capture by Nikephoros Phokas in 961; and Anemas, the son of Kouroupas, also taken prisoner by Nikephoros Phokas and later (in 972) killed by the Russians fighting for Byzantium. By the dotted lines I mean to indicate some doubt as to the relationship: was Zerkounis actually the «brother», and not a «cousin» of Babel? and who were the rulers between Zerkounis and Kouroupas?

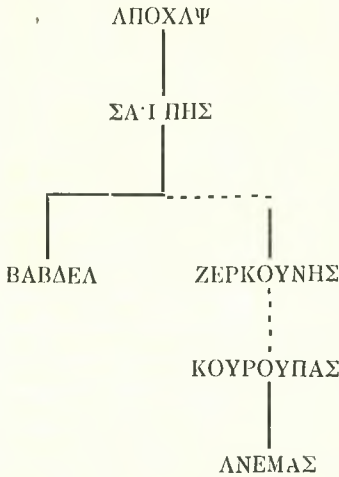


Fig. 1.

One other name is preserved in the Byzantine sources (in the Life of St. Theoctisti): Nisiris, commander of the Cretan fleet at the time of the raid on the island of Paros about 837. We have,

however, no reason to suppose that he was a member of the ruling family of Apochaps.

So much, in brief, for the Arab names in the Greek accounts.

The Arab sources give us a little more. The genealogy shown in Fig. 2 is a composite synthesis of the scattered information in Balādhuri, Tabari, Humaydi, Sam‘āni, Yāqūt, Nuwairi, Himyari, and later writers who drew upon them. This is not all as simple as it seems, because there are some contradictions among the Arab writers. The first two, Shu‘ayb and ‘Īsa, are Andalusians who do not figure in the history of Crete.

Abu-Hafs ‘Umar is generally conceded to be the conqueror of the island in 212 or 213 of the Hijrah (827-8 A. D.), although some say that it was Abu-‘Amr Shu‘ayb. Abu-Hafs was, according to Tabari, still the ruler of Crete in 238 H./852-3 A. D. Then the Arab historians are silent on the successors until ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, the last of the dynasty, who was defeated and captured by Nikephoros Phokas in 961. Yāqūt calls him ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Shu‘ayb, «a descendant of Abu-Hafs ‘Umar»; so also does Humaydi and Ibn-Khaldūn. But

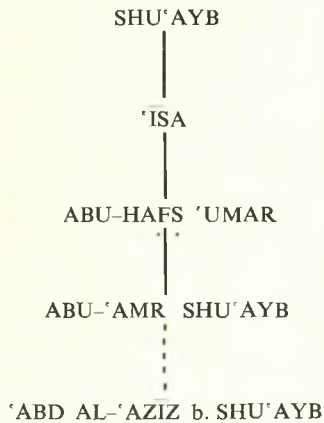
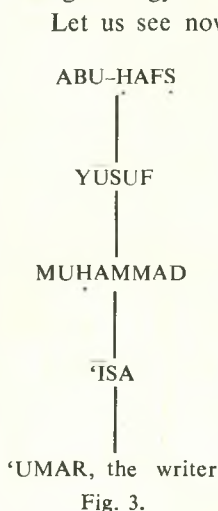


Fig. 2.

Nuwairi confuses things by calling him ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Habīb b. ‘Umar. I rather imagine that «Habīb» is a copyist’s error for «Shu‘ayb» (carelessly written the two names look fairly similar in the Arabic script), especially as we have numismatic evidence, which I will mention in a moment, supporting the name ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Shu‘ayb. You will notice, however, that I have connected ‘Abd al-‘Azīz with Shu‘ayb, the son of Abu-Hafs, by a dotted line, for I find it hard to believe that there was only one generation between the two. There are, it seems to me, two possibilities : either ‘Abd al-‘Azīz’s father’s name was indeed Shu‘ayb (but not Abu-Hafs’ son); or else «Shu‘ayb» was in this instance used as an eponym or family name, tracing back to the earliest known name of the family, Shu‘ayb the grandfather of Abu-Hafs.

There is one other name in al-Himyari’s description of Crete which has some relevance in this discussion. According to an unknown early source of this 14th century writer there was a learned

descendant of Abu-Hafs by the name of 'Umar who did not follow the piratical career of his ancestors, but who devoted his leisure time in prison in Constantinople (presumably after the Byzantine re-conquest of Crete in 961) to the composition of a work on «the meanings and the marvels of the Qur'ān»<sup>1</sup>. His genealogy, as given by al-Himyari, is represented in Fig. 3: 'Umar, son of 'Īsa, son of Muḥammad, son of Yūsuf, son of Abi-Hafs. I will revert later to this genealogy in connection with certain numismatic evidence.



We turn now to the evidence of the coins. Up until 1953 the coinage of the Amirs of Crete was entirely unknown. In that year John Walker of the British Museum<sup>2</sup> proposed to attribute to these amirs certain gold and copper coins which had hitherto been attributed to the 'Abbāsīd Caliphs and to unidentified Spanish Arabs. These coins were:

<sup>1</sup> See E. Lévi-Provençal in *Studi orientalistici in onore di Giorgio Levi Della Vida* (Rome, 1956), p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> John Walker, «The coins of the Amīrs of Crete», *Num. Chron.* 1953, pp. 125-130; cf. *idem*, *Actes, Congrès International de Numismatique, Paris, 1953* (Paris, 1957, pp. 487-490.



1) Four gold dinars, without mint name, bearing the name of Shu'ayb, and dated 271, 275 and 281 of the Hijrah (884/5, 888/9, and 894/5 A. D.), preserved in the British Museum, in the Khedivial (now the National) Library in Cairo, and in the Berlin Collection (πίν. Β', 1). Since Dr. Walker's publication, one more dinar, also of 281 H., has appeared in the collection of Dr. Paul Balog of Cairo.

2) A number of copper coins, without mint or date, but with the following names : Shu'ayb alone (πίν. Β', 2), 'Umar and Shu'ayb

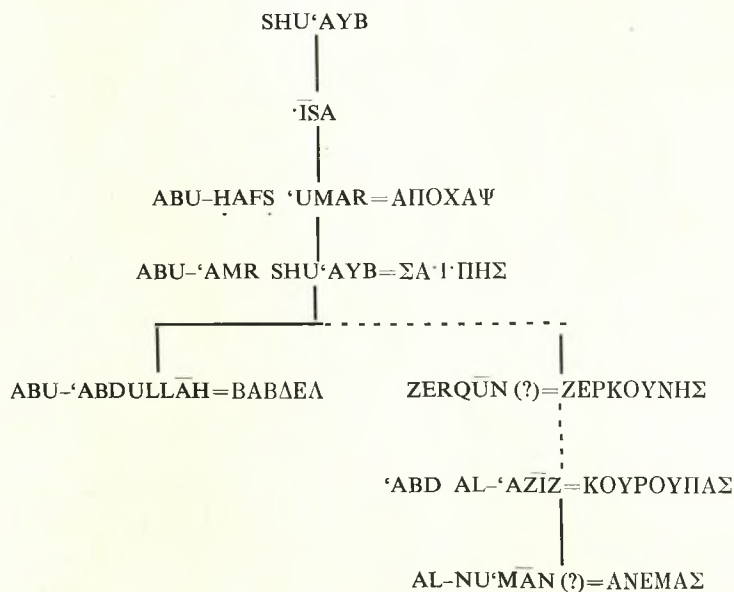


Fig. 4.

(πίν. Β', 3) on either side of the coin, and Muhammad b. Shu'ayb (a single specimen of the latter) (πίν. Β', 4). The specimens cited by Dr. Walker were in the British Museum, in private collections examined by Fraehn early in the 19th century, in the Cabinet des Médailles in Paris, in the Museo Naniano in Padua, in the Museo de Mainoni in Milan, in the National Collection in Istanbul, in the Soret Collection, and in the Gayangos Collection (now in the American Numismatic Society).

At the time of Dr. Walker's publication none of these coins was positively known to have come from Crete, although there was a strong presumption that the dinar in the British Museum came from the island because it had been acquired from Col. J. S. Cameron, whose collection had been formed almost entirely in Crete.

But strong confirmation of Walker's quite convincing attributions followed in the next few years through the finding of a number of copper coins of the same types on Cretan soil. The corpus of coins of Shu'ayb and of 'Umar and Shu'ayb has been enlarged by the following additions:

1) In Crete: 6 specimens found in digging the foundations for the Astir Hotel in Herakleion;<sup>3</sup> 17 specimens in the Archaeological Museum in Herakleion<sup>4</sup>, several of which are known to have been found in the city itself, as for example near the Church of San Pietro, and in the region of the port; 1 specimen in the possession of a resident of Herakleion; 1 specimen formerly in a private collection in Herakleion and presented by the owner to the Museum of the American Numismatic Society; 1 specimen from a vineyard near Phoinikia village, now in the Herakleion Historical Museum; 1 specimen from the Italian excavations at Gortyna; 1 specimen from Dr. Kalokyri's excavation of a basilica near Vizari; 1 specimen in the Gymnasium at Vianos above the south coast; 4 specimens in the Rethymno Museum; and 1 specimen found in the vicinity of the village of Giannoudi near Rethymno and in the possession of a resident of that village. In addition to these coins of known Cretan provenance, I have recorded the following specimens bearing these amirs' names.

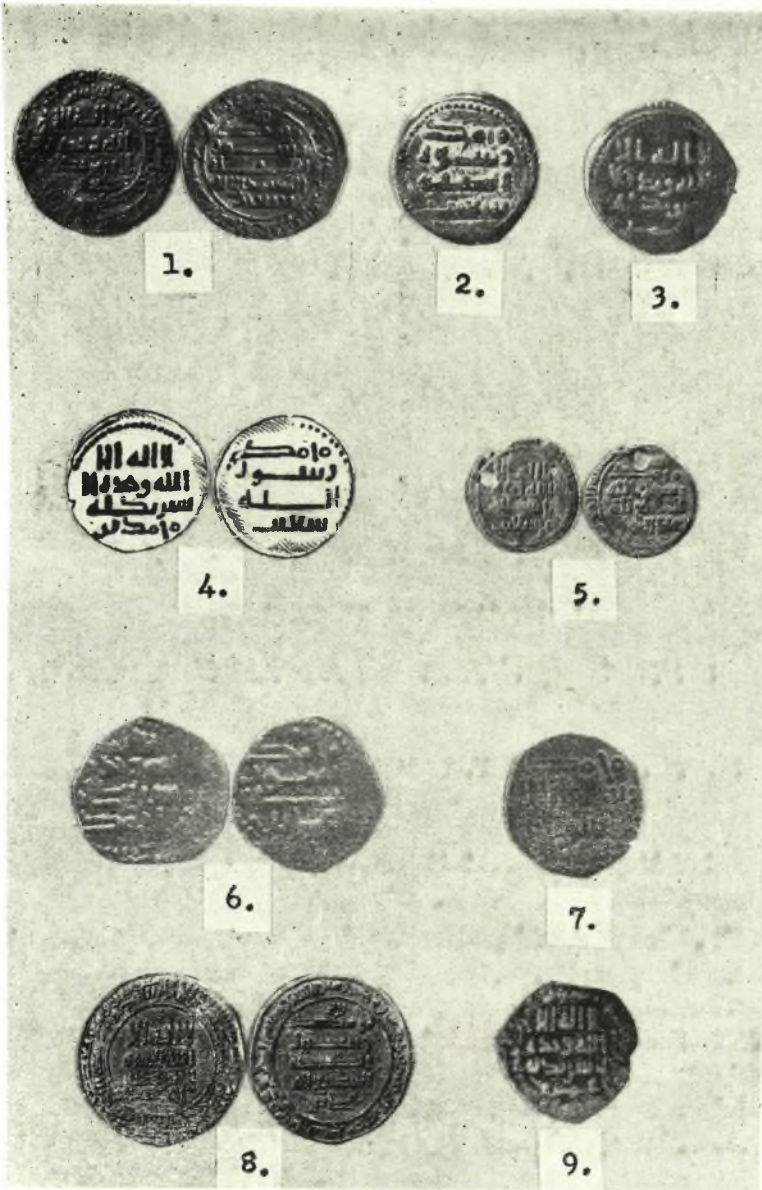
2) Elsewhere: 1 specimen found in the excavations of the Athenian Agora; 2 others in Athens (one of which is now in the American Numismatic Society); 6 specimens found in the Corinth excavations; 1 specimen in the Greek Gymnasium in Alexandria, Egypt; 2 specimens in the Hermitage Museum in Leningrad;<sup>5</sup> 3 specimens in the Royal Cabinet in Copenhagen;<sup>6</sup> 1 specimen in the Museo Arqueológico in Madrid; 4 specimens in the collection of the American Numismatic Society in New York; and 10 specimens belonging to a private collector in New Mexico. As you see, the Amirs of Crete were world travellers.

<sup>3</sup>) See George C. Miles in *Kritika Chronika* 1955, pp. 149-151.

<sup>4</sup>) Those present in the Museum at the time of my visit in 1956 are described in *Kritika Chronika* 1956, pp. 365-371.

<sup>5</sup>) See A. Bykov in *Soobshcheniya Gosudarstvennogo Ermitaja XIII* (Leningrad, 1958), pp. 65-67.

<sup>6</sup>) These are listed as nos. 685, 686 and 740 in J. Ostrup's catalogue (Copenhagen, 1938), but are not correctly attributed. I found them during the course of a visit to the Danish Royal Cabinet in 1960.



Locations of the Coins illustrated in the Plate: 1 British Museum, 2 American Numismatic Society, 3 Historical Museum, Herakleion, 4 American Numismatic Society, 5 National Historical Museum, Stockholm, 6 Corinth Excavations, South Stoa, 7 Archaeological Museum, Herakleion, 8 American Numismatic Society, 9 Istanbul Museum.

So much for the coins bearing names known to Dr. Walker. Then in 1955 (before my search had begun) an extraordinary find was made by the Swedish scholar, Mrs. Ulla Linder Welin, of a silver dirhem bearing the name of 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Shu'ayb and struck in 350 H./961 A.D.<sup>7</sup>, that is, in the very year of Nikephoros Phokas' re-conquest of the island. This unique coin (πλν. Β', 5) was found in a Swedish Viking hoard, very probably in Gotland. Arab coins in Scandinavian Viking hoards are of course plentiful, but how remarkable that the only recorded silver coin that can positively be assigned to the Amirs of Crete, and the only coin of the last amir, should turn up in the Baltic! At any rate, from this unexpected quarter, we have numismatic confirmation of the name of 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Shu'ayb.

In the following year, 1956, I spent some time here in Crete looking for traces of the Arab occupation, and among the many rewards of that sojourn was the discovery not only of most of the coins which I have inventoried above but also of some hitherto unrecorded names on the copper coinage. Since then a few other specimens bearing some of these names have come to my attention. Here are the new names :

1) «Ahmad» on the obverse, and «Shu'ayb» on the reverse : 2 specimens, one in the Historical Museum in Herakleion (found in Herakleion)<sup>8</sup>, and one found in 1939 in the excavations of the Agora in Athens.

2) «'Ali b. Ahmad» (the name being distributed «'Ali b.» on the reverse and «Ahmad» on the obverse) : 5 specimens, one in the Rethymno Museum, one in Dr. Kalokyri's excavations at Vizari, one in the Herakleion Museum brought in from the district of Avdhou, west of the Lasithi Valley near Mokhos, one found in 1956 in the Agora excavations in Athens, and one that turned up in the area of the South Stoa at Corinth (πλν. Β', 6).

3) «Ahmad» on the obverse, «'Ali» on the reverse : 3 specimens, all found in Crete, two in the Herakleion Museum<sup>9</sup>, and one in the Rethymno Museum.

4) «'Ali b. Yūsuf» on the reverse : 3 specimens, two in the

<sup>7</sup>) Ulla S. Linder Welin in Num. Chron. 1955, pp. 211-214.

<sup>8</sup>) Kritika Chronika 1956, no. 21.

<sup>9</sup>) Ibid., nos. 19 and 20.



Herakleion Museum<sup>10</sup>, and one in the Corinth excavations (πίν. Β', 7).

5) «'Umar» on the obverse, «Yūsuf» on the reverse: 6 specimens, two in the Herakleion Museum<sup>11</sup>, one in the possession of a resident of Herakleion, one in the Rethymno Museum, one belonging to the Pro-Hegoumenos of Arkadi Monastery Dionysios Psaroudhakis, found in the area of Apostoloi, Pantannasa, Voliones south-west of Arkadi, and one the property of a Turkish collector.

Finally, there are two other coins which I believe are to be assigned to the Amirs of Crete. One is a curious gold dinar which was acquired by the American Numismatic Society some years ago from a gentleman whose father-in-law came from Xanthi in Macedonia. The coin bears no mint name, and the date is very obscurely written, but it looks like 337 H./948-9 A. D. In any case the name of the 'Abbāsīd Caliph al-Mutī' is present, and the coin therefore certainly dates between 334 and 363 H./945-974 A. D. Beneath the name of the Caliph on the reverse is inscribed «'Alī b.» and beneath the obverse field «Ahmad» (πίν. Β', 8). Before I came across the copper coins of 'Alī b. Ahmad in Crete and on the Greek mainland I had no idea where in the Moslem world to ascribe this coin, but I now believe, especially in view of the distribution of the name exactly as on the fulūs, that this dinar is to be attributed to one of the Amirs of Crete. If this is correct (and I have very little doubt about it) we have here an important bit of chronological evidence, which we are badly in need of, as none of the coppers is dated.

The other coin, and the last one that I shall mention, is a dirhem in the Istanbul Museum, published by Ismail Ghalib over 65 years ago<sup>12</sup>. It is without mint-name (a most exceptionable circumstance for an Arab dirhem), is clearly dated 326 H./937-8 A.D., and bears, in addition to the name of the 'Abbāsīd Caliph, al-Rādi, that of 'Umar on the obverse and Ahmad on the reverse (πίν. Β', 9). A number of considerations incline me to believe that this too is a coin of the Amirs of Crete: the location of the specimen, that is in Constantinople (bearing in mind the fact that in 1894 Crete still was nominally a part of the Ottoman Empire); the fact that no

<sup>10</sup>) Ibid., nos. 17 and 18.

<sup>11</sup>) Ibid., nos. 15 and 16.

<sup>12</sup>) *İsmā'īl Ghālib, Meskūkāt-i Qadīme-i Islāmiyye*, I (Constantinople, 1312), no. 677.

mint name is present, just as the mint-name is lacking on the dinars of Crete at a time when dinars issued at other mints in Arab lands always name the mint (I might remark parenthetically that although Mrs. Welin believed that she could read the traces of the letters b i' l - K h a n d a q, «in Khandaq», in the obverse marginal legend of the dirhem of 'Abd al-'Azīz in Stockholm, I myself, having examined the coin with great care, am not convinced that these letters are there); and finally, the fact that the combination of names, «'Umar» and «'Ahmad», not otherwise met with in Arab coinage of

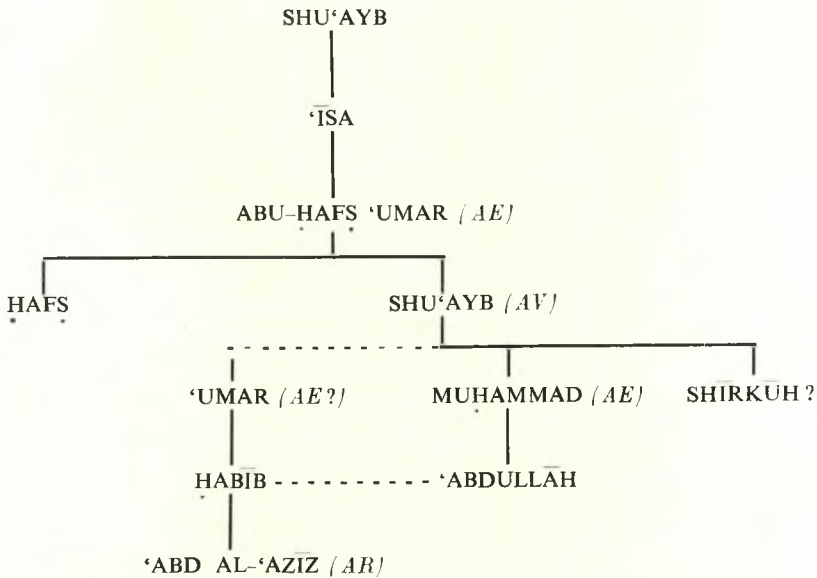


Fig. 5.

the period, is suggestive of some connection with the same names on copper coins of indisputable Cretan origin.

We must now see what we can do in harmonizing the information provided by the Byzantine and Arabic written sources with the evidence of the coins. I should first mention that both Dr. Walker and Mrs. Welin proposed tentative genealogies based on the information available to them. Dr. Walker's family tree is represented in Fig. 5.

This requires a few words of explanation. Abu-Hafs 'Umar is the conqueror and the issuer of the bronze coins (represented by the symbol AE) with the names «'Umar» and «Shu'ayb». But here Dr. Walker admits an alternative possibility: that the copper coins

may have been minted by a son of Shu'ayb's named 'Umar, who would have been the grandfather of 'Abd al-'Azīz. Hafs (on the

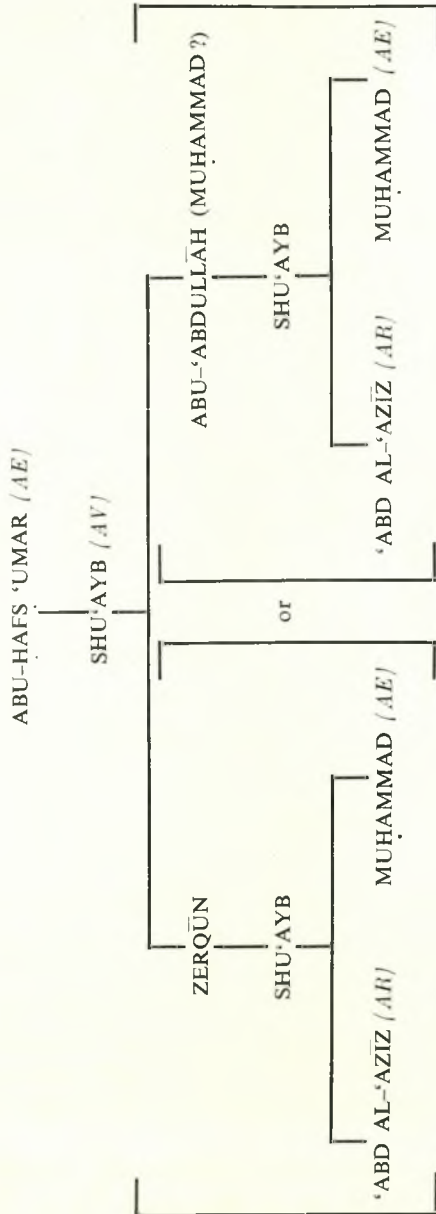


Fig. 6.

left) is a putative son, reconstructed from 'Umar's kunya, «Abu-Hafs», «father of Hafs». Shu'ayb is the minter of the gold coins

and of the copper coins with Shu'ayb's name alone. 'Umar, on the left, is Shu'ayb's son, if Dr. Walker's alternative be accepted; his son Habīb is Nuwairi's father of 'Abd al-'Azīz. Muḥammad, son of Shu'ayb, is the individual named on the unique copper coin. As Walker remarks, either 'Umar or Muḥammad might have been the Abu-'Abdullāh (Babdel) of the Byzantine sources. The mysterious Shīrkūh is presumed to be a son of Shu'ayb.

Mrs. Welin proposed two alternatives, represented in Fig. 6 :

Her alternatives branch off from Shu'ayb, the son of the conqueror. The first alternative assumes Zerqūn (Zerkounis) to be the grandfather of the last ruler; the second would make Abu-'Abdullāh the grandfather. In both cases another Shu'ayb is proposed as the father of 'Abd al-'Azīz (as in Yāqūt's and in Nuwairi's corrected genealogy), and Dr. Walker's second 'Umar is eliminated, the argument being that when Nuwairi wrote «'Abd al-'Azīz b. Habīb [read Shu'ayb] b. 'Umar», he skipped, as was sometimes done in rendering an individual's ancestry, all generations between the father of 'Abd al-'Azīz and the founder of the dynasty, 'Umar. Mrs. Welin also suggests that the Muḥammad b. Shu'ayb who struck the copper coin might have been a brother of 'Abd al-'Azīz and perhaps the next to the last ruler. She bases this hypothesis on the fact that, as she says, the copper coin is «related in type» to the dirhem of 'Abd al-'Azīz. I must say that I do not follow this, as I see no particular resemblance in type between the fals of Muḥammad and the dirhem; in fact the fals is similar in style to the coppers of Shu'ayb and of Shu'ayb and 'Umar, and has in common with most of them the characteristic of a peculiar arrangement of the obverse field, with the lā of the phrase lā-sharīka lā-hū on the second line rather than in its usual and logical position on the third.

I now submit my own proposed genealogical tree, taking into consideration all the names that have come to our attention (Fig. 7):

Now this calls for several comments. In the first place, a warning. I would be the first to admit that in my effort to include all the names appearing on the coinage I may have created more Amirs of Crete than ever existed. Before these recent numismatic discoveries we had at the most the names of five amirs; now we have eleven. I have had to do a lot of guess-work. A search among the Arabic historians and chroniclers for the new names—that is, the new names on the coins—has been uniformly unsuccessful. Among



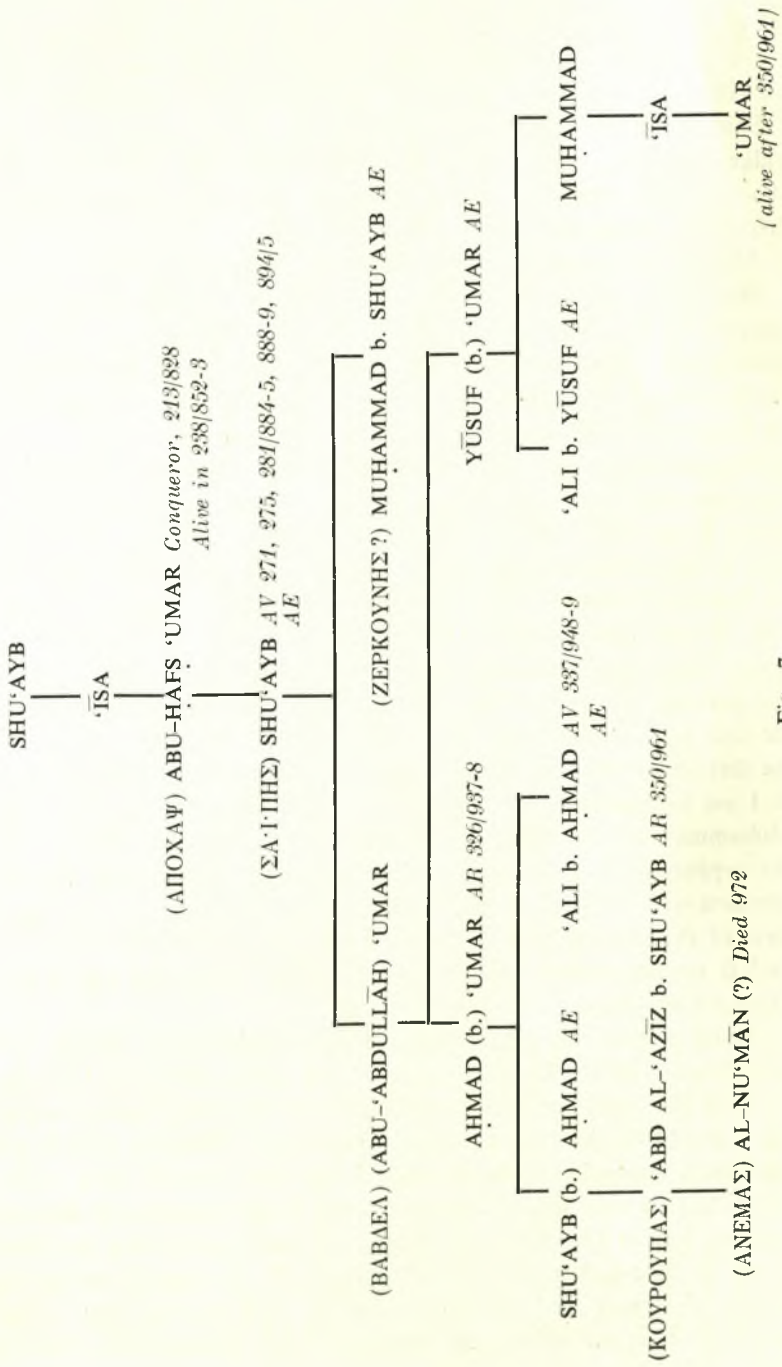


Fig. 7.

several possibilities of error in this genealogy are: the uncertainty that exists, where the word *bin* («son of») is lacking on the coin, as to which man is the father and which the son; whether in fact one is the son of the other (he might be unrelated, and simply a lieutenant); whether all are actually descendants of Abu-Hafs; whether an individual named perhaps as heir apparent on the coinage ever succeeded to the rule; and whether (a disturbing thought) there may have been rival amirs on the island, minting coins independently and contemporaneously. Or, even more upsetting, might some of these individuals have come from beyond Crete, from Sicily, for example?

With these uncertainties in mind, let us briefly examine the proposed relationships. Apochaps or Abu-Hafs 'Umar was the conqueror of the island. I propose here to depart from Dr. Walker's and Mrs. Welin's view that he issued the coppers bearing the names 'Umar and Shu'ayb and to suggest the possibility that both the coins with «Shu'ayb» alone and those with «Shu'ayb» and «'Umar» belong to Shu'ayb, in the latter case naming Shu'ayb's son 'Umar as successor. In support of this view I would argue the probability that the founder of the dynasty was unlikely to have had the necessary technicians and equipment to have established a mint<sup>13</sup>.

Then to Abu-Hafs' son and successor Shu'ayb (Saipis) I would assign certainly the dated gold coins, almost certainly the copper coins with the name «Shu'ayb» alone, and probably a second issue in which he names his son 'Umar as heir designate. Now you will recall that according to the Byzantine tradition Shu'ayb had a son Babel (a contemporary of Leo VI), and that Babel was succeeded by his brother (?) Zerkounis. I am suggesting that Babel's (Abu-'Abdullah's) given name was 'Umar (named on Shu'ayb's coins), and that Zerkounis was Muhammad b. Shu'ayb, for whom we have one copper coin. I admit there is no phonological resemblance between the names Zerkūn and Muḥammad, but it may be that the Spanish diminutive of Azraq (in general a word with a «color» significance) was a nick-name.

I then propose two sons for 'Umar II: Ahmad (son of?) 'Umar of the curious dirhem dated 326 H., and Yūsuf (son of?) 'Umar, for whom we have six copper coins. This Yūsuf could have been

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<sup>13</sup>) A. Bykov (loc. cit. in footnote 5, above) has also suggested this probability.

the father of 'Ali b. Yūsuf, for whom also there are copper coins; and this Yūsuf also would be the great-grandfather of the literary gentleman who whiled away the hours in prison in Constantinople by writing a book on the marvels of the Koran. This identification of course assumes that al-Himyari's source either skipped the generations between Yūsuf and Abu-Hafs, or else that he believed Yūsuf's father 'Umar to have been Abu-Hafs 'Umar.

Returning to the left side of the genealogical tree, I assign two sons to Ahmad b. 'Umar: Shu'ayb II (son of ?) Ahmad, for whom

	A. D.
ABU-HAFṢ 'UMAR I	828—ca. 855
SHU'ĀYB I b. 'UMAR	ca. 855—880
(ABU-'ABDULLĀH) 'UMAR II b. SHU'ĀYB	ca. 880—895
MUHAMMAD b. SHU'ĀYB	ca. 895—910
YŪSUF b. 'UMAR II	ca. 910—915
'ALI b. YŪSUF	ca. 915—925
AHMAD b. UMAR II	ca. 925—940
SHU'ĀYB II b. AHMAD	ca. 940—943
'ALI b. AHMAD	ca. 943—949
'ABD AL-'AZĪZ b. SHU'ĀYB II	ca. 949—961
AL-NU'MĀN (?) b. 'ABD AL-'AZĪZ	died 972

Fig. 8.

we have two fulūs, and 'Ali b. Ahmad, who minted copper coins and also the strange gold dinar of about 948. Then Shu'ayb II would have been the father of the last amir, 'Abd al-'Azīz or Kouroupas, grandfather of Anemas who died fighting the Russians.

All this is, as I say, extremely controversial, and I am prepared to have it torn to bits. So also the very tentative listing of the dynastic succession (Fig. 8) with approximate dates of rule, these dates being mostly guesses, propped up here and there by a few firm dates (828, 884 to 895, 961 and 972), and a couple of problematical ones (937 and 948). I thank you for your patience and now prepare to beat a hasty retreat before Greek fire hurled by the descendants of Nikephoros Phokas<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>14</sup>) My travels in Crete in 1956, 1958 and 1961, and in other parts of Greece in 1958 and 1960 were facilitated by grants from the American Philosophical Society, the American Council of Learned Societies and the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation.

## ΣΥΖΗΤΗΣΙΣ

- N. Παναγιωτάκης: *I should like to ask you if you ever were called further to the possibility of another interpretation about the existence of two dynasties of Arab Emirs in Crete. I should like to point out that there is such a case in the report of Theodosios Diaconos. Except Abdull Aziz there is Abdull Karamouzis who was called Emir in the report. Well, this point to the possibility of the existence perhaps of some independent states here in Crete.*
- G. Miles: *That is a most interesting observation. Because you may recall that I mentioned among the reservations that I have in setting up this genealogy the disturbing thought, as I said, of the possibility that there were two widely rival or parallel or contemporary lines which would completely throw my genealogy all to bits and so would it some others.*