

Myths behind Calendars

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Abstract

The date of acceptance of a founding myth by the concerned community of believers might be traced with any artefact carrying a *kind of* colophon with date and site of release. The “birth certificate” of the myth of *Muhammed - Allah’s Messenger*, is a coin, minted in Persia in calendar year 67 AH (Anno Hegira). This era commemorates the Muslim tribe’s migration from Mecca to Medina. The late graft of the myth of *Prophet Muhammad bringing up the rear* of this migration has shaped the astonishing perennity of the Hegira Era. Regarding the myth of the *Incarnation of the Lord*, its “birth certificate” is a Diploma, issued in England in calendar year 736 AD (Anno Domini). This era commemorates the Incarnation of the Christian Divinity. The hypothesis about the origin of the AD Calendar as counter-attack to the rapid spreading of the AH Calendar is discussed.

If a founding myth *tells* the original event of a calendar era, in contrast, the artefact carrier of the date & site of release *remains*. This “birth certificate” attests the recognition, by the concerned community of believers, of the identity virtue of the myth and *historicizes* the event. Between its date and the one inscribed on the birth certificate takes place de facto a “chronological gap”, which the annalists will fill up by *retro-dating* the collective imaginary. Expressed in terms of a calendar era, the date, recorded for the visual account of an ancient solar eclipse (see: <http://www.archaeometry.org/ecliptique.pdf>), does anchor this era chronologically. Such anchor is unfortunately lacking to the Maya Era.

As a preamble, we will suppose that Marcus Terentius Varro, imagining Rome's foundation took place exactly 7 centuries before, decided to name the current calendar year 700 Ab Urbe Condita. As a matter of fact, no dated artefact has so far been found to confirm the date of this invention ! Though, it is sure that the Roman emperor Claudius organized a fastuous celebration of the 800th anniversary year AUC, a historical event reported by Dio Cassius in his History of Roma (Book 60 / Chapter 29) :

Ἐν δὲ τῷ ἐξῆς ἔτει ὃ τε Κλαύδιος **ὀκτακοσιοστοῦ** τῇ Πρώμῃ ἔτους ὄντος
(...in the **800th** anniversary year of Rome’s foundation)

Source: <http://remacle.org/bloodwolf/historiens/Dion/livre60.htm> :

There is an amazingly similar story to the one ending by Claudius' celebration. This story again took place in Rome. It is the celebration of the Re-birth of the Roman Empire....

The chosen date for the coronation of the emperor of the *Holy Roman Empire* has been the 800th anniversary year of the *Incarnation of the Lord* (a date which turns out to be late by 1 week over winter solstice). By eschatological precaution, calendar year 800 AD (Anno Domini) is not mentioned here. The celebration day is recorded by the Laursheim’s annalist as (new year’s day) 801, Dccci in latin, see Fig.1.

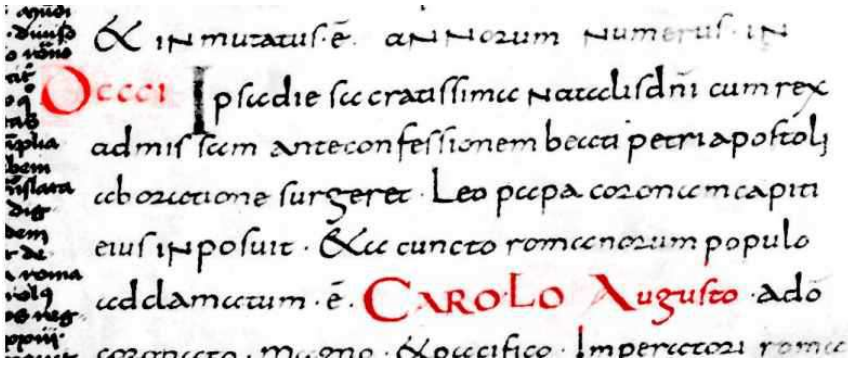


Fig. 1 Extract of Laursheim Annals for year DCCCI AD (+801 CE)
 Source: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9078401h/f89.image.r=laursheim>

Actually, before acceding to the highest rank, the ambitious Charlemagne and his accomplice Alcuin, patiently wove a plot: they first introduced School, then, in AD 789 in Aachen, let the Council confirm the royal order to schools to teach computus. This elaborate staging of the Re-birth of the Roman Empire had to include the teaching of the future subjects how to express dates in terms of the AD calendar drafted by the Venerable Bede !

As the Venerable Bede's original manuscript *De Temporum Ratione* got lost, the date of the invention of the AD Calendar looks as foggy as the date of the invention of the AUC Calendar by Varro. In addition, the Varro-Claudius dyad turns out to have its mirror image with the Bede-Charlemagne dyad. The sure thing is that, 4 years after the defeat of the Islamic invaders at the battle of Tour, the “year 736 of the Incarnation of the Lord” on the colophon of the Ismere’ Diploma, is the very first date expressed in terms of the Christian calendar (see Fig. 2).



Fig.2 Colophon of the Ismere Diploma dated +736 AD
 Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglo-Saxon_charters#/media/File:Aethelbald_charter_Cyneberht_736.jpg

In the *Codice Electronici Sangallenses*, the retro-dating of historical events, in terms of the AD calendar, fills up only one decade of the “chronological gap” generated by the Venerable Bede's invention (see Fig. 3).

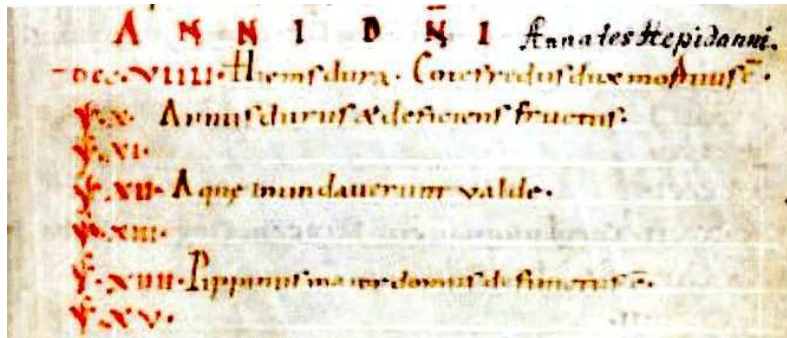


Fig. 3 First AD-dates in St-Gallen Annals (milesian numbering: $\psi=700$)
 Source: <http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/de/csg/0915/196/0/Sequence-714>

To complete this discussion on the genesis of AUC & AD Calendar Eras, we turn now to the AH Calendar Era. Hijri dates appeared on coins some years after the Muslim tribe’s migration from Mecca to Medina. The rear of this migration was claimed to have been brought up, on +622.07.16 CE, by the “Prophet Muhammad, Allah’s Messenger”. The 1st dated reference to this Messenger, its “birth certificate”, appears on the obverse side of a coin, minted by Governor Abd al-Malik ben Abdallah in Bishapur (Persia), in year 67 AH. In addition to the name of the Governor, this dirham carries the effigy of Shah Khosro II. The bilingual texts are in Pahlavi and Arabic, to be read from *right to left* (see Fig.4).

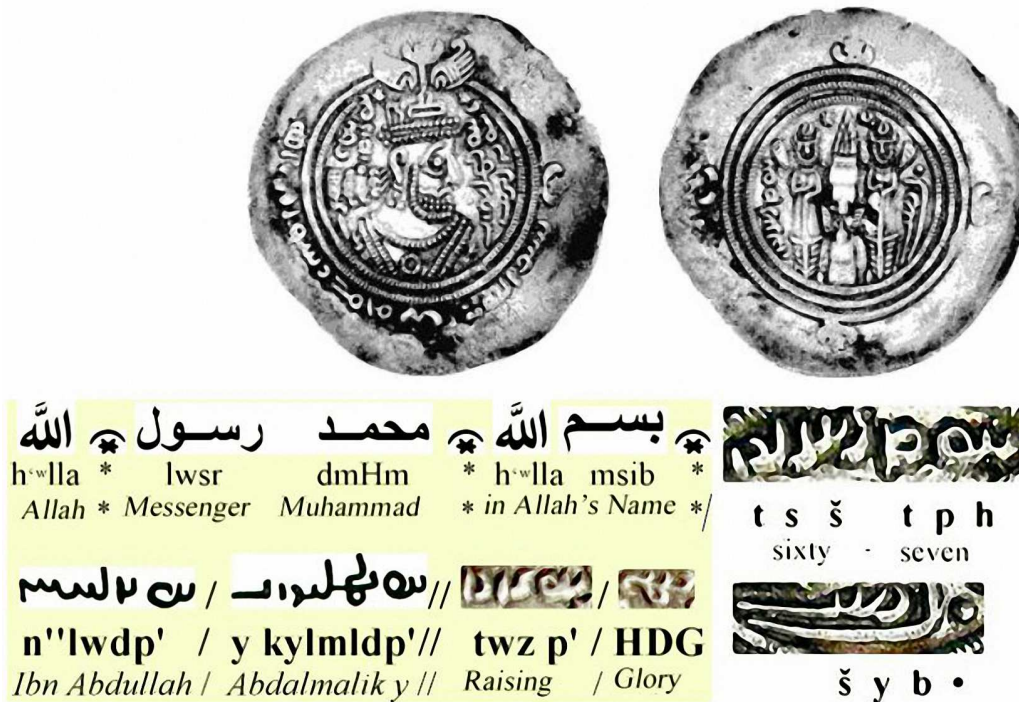


Fig.4 Arabic-Sassanian dirham dated 67 AH
 Source: <https://www.3quarksdaily.com/3quarksdaily/2016/06/viewing-the-early-islamic-state-through-its-coinage.html>
 Clavier virtuel: <https://www.lexilogos.com/keyboard/arabic.htm>

On the reverse side sits the Zoroastrian fire altar flanked by its two attendants. In Pahlavi are given the mint date 67 AH (written, from right to left, as “seven sixty”), and the workshop sign •BYŠ for Bishapur.

By the way, this bilingual coin exhibits an amazingly high degree of religious tolerance. In contrast, by calendar year 93 AH, texts on dirhams appeared without any effigy, highly proselytizing and in Arabic only.

In 98 AH, bilingual texts in Arabic and Latin showed up on coins minted in Andalusia. In Spain, in those days, dates were expressed in terms of the EG calendar (Era Gótica o Era de César, then even Tarij as-Safar). EG's chronoecliptic anchorage is the solar eclipse of 1079.07.01 EC, i.e. *Era mcxvii kls julii*. Though Caesar & Sosigenes introduced the Julian calendar on -44.1.1 EC, this eclipse does set year 1 EG to -37.01.01 EC. The use of the EG calendar has been confirmed by the Tarragona provincial Council of +516.11.06 EC, to be finally abolished in +1351 EC.

98 AH corresponds to calendar year EG DCCLV, i.e. +717 EC. The latin text on the obverse side of a dinar minted that year, in order presumably to avoid confusion among the Visigothic subjects, the year is not specified (see Fig.5).



Fig. 5 Arabic-Andalus dinar with star dated 98 AH

Source: <https://www.islamic-awareness.org/history/islam/coins/latin7.html>

On the reverse side of this dinar, (from right to left) the margin gives the Islamic date:

ضرب هذا الدينر بالاندلس سنة ثمان و تسين

nyst w nmt h'ns sldna-la b rnyd la ad'h b rD

In the name of Allah this dinar was minted in Al-Andalus year 98

This time, “*Muhammad, Allah’s Messenger*” is sitting enthroned, no longer in the margin, but right in the centre of the coin. Calligraphy casts a hijab on the face of the Sassanid effigy. Are we flipping coins? Does Myth substitutes History?

Conclusion

The devastatingly fast introduction of the Islamic Calendar in southwestern Europe might well have been the spark triggering Venerable Bede’s invention of the Christian Calendar.