

WND EXCLUSIVE

REPORT: DUKE PROFESSOR CONFIRMS ARABIC ON OBAMA RING

'It is the first part of the Islamic Shahada'
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WND's report that Arabic-language and Islamic experts claim the gold band Obama has been wearing on his wedding-ring finger for more than 30 years is adorned with the first part of the Islamic declaration of faith naturally was met with skepticism in some circles, but Glenn



Beck's TheBlaze.com news service published a report citing a Duke professor who confirmed the WND experts' assessment.

Earlier today, before it published the report, four members of The Blaze editorial team, including Editor-in-Chief Scott Baker, cautiously discussed the Obama ring story in their "Blazecast Rewind" Internet broadcast, without mentioning WND.

Baker, noting he had been inundated with links to the WND article, said he approached the story as he does other "memes" that float around the Internet and need to be either debunked or verified.

TheBlaze.com reporter Billy Hollowell told Baker he spoke with a professor from Duke who read the article, examined the photos and affirmed the conclusion of the WND experts.

"Based on what he saw, he said that this is, essentially, Arabic script on the ring and that it is the first part of the Shahada," Hollowell said.

Hollowell pointed out the professor, who declined to be named, also cautioned that there is Islamic teaching that forbids wearing gold.

In WND's report, Egyptian-born Islamic scholar Mark A. Gabriel, Ph.D., explained that despite prohibitions in Islamic law, many Muslim men wear gold rings, even in strict Muslim countries, particularly if they contain a religious message.

The Duke professor told Hollowell that it is, indeed, common for gold jewelry of that sort to be worn in the Middle East but often for superstitious reasons.

“Outside of the religious realm, it’s more about warding off bad spirits or protecting people from snake bites,” Hollowell said, citing the professor.

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Later, [TheBlaze.com](#) posted a story by Hollowell reporting the WND article “has been making its way across social media and the blogosphere.”

In addition to citing the Duke professor who confirmed that the script appears to be Arabic and includes the first part of the Shahada, Hollowell reported he spoke with Harvard University’s Ali Asani

Asani, a professor of Indo-Muslim and Islamic Religion and Cultures, said that the images of Obama’s ring were not clear enough to make a determination.

“I’d actually have to see it much closer to see exactly what it says,” Asani told [TheBlaze.com](#)

Like the Duke professor, Asani believes that the first half of the Shahada is a statement that any monotheist, including a Christian, could accept, that there is only one God. Only the second part of the Shahada is exclusive, he said, declaring Muhammad is his prophet.

Meanwhile, [a posting at the blog Irregular Times](#) by JClifford compared photographs of Obama’s ring to examples of Shahada rings on the Web and concluded Obama’s ring “looks like it’s got some decorative swirls on it, and nothing more.”

However, Joel Gilbert, who was first to conclude that the ring bears the Shahada, has issued [a more detailed follow-up report](#) he prepared with the assistance of Yousef Shehadeh, a native Arabic speaker from Nazareth who studied Arabic for 13 years in the Holy Land and now works as a graphic artist in Los Angeles.

Gilbert, who has studied Arabic himself, told WND he sent close-up photographs of the ring to Shehadeh “cold,” without offering any opinion, and asked Shehadeh to evaluate them.

Shehadeh replied to him that the script on Obama’s ring is Arabic, and it is the first part of the Islamic declaration of faith.

<http://www.wnd.com/2012/10/report-duke-professor-confirms-arabic-on-obama-ring/>