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The Coins from the al-Waṭa Quarter, Safed (Ẓefat)

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Thirty-one coins, two of silver and the remainder of bronze and copper, were recovered by the excavators of the Mamlūk–Ottoman-period al-Waṭa quarter, located in the southwestern sector of Safed (Ẓefat) (see Barbé, this volume). Nineteen of the coins were identified.[1]

The earliest are two intrusive coins from the Byzantine period (Cat. Nos. 1, 2) that date from the fourth to the second half of the sixth centuries CE. The remaining coins, with the exception of two (Nos. 18, 19), are low-value Mamlūk copper denominations belonging to one continuous period commencing with the reign of Baybars I (1260–1277 CE) and ending in the second reign of Barqūq (1390–1399 CE). Among these are two identical 'fesse' *fulus* of Lājīn (1296–1299 CE), showing the sultan's blazon bordered with a variant reading of his name and title—*husam al dunya wa-al-din Lajin* (the sword of the world and of the faith, Lajin). This coin seems to have been the dominant type circulating in the Syrian domains of the Mamlūk sultanate during the reign of Lājīn (Kool and Schultz 2009:135–144). There is in addition a single irregularly-shaped *dirham* fraction (No. 13). These small silver fractions, struck on small square flans with spike-like protrusions, were minted in large quantities during Baybars' reign at his Damascus mint (Balog 1964:95). They apparently circulated widely in medieval Syria as evidenced by their recurrent appearances in excavated strata dating to Baybars' offensive against the Crusader kingdom (1265–1271 CE) at other sites, among them Arsuf, 'Atlit, Bet She'an and Banias (Metcalf, Kool and Berman 1999:132).[2]

After a hiatus of almost a century and a half, the latest coin is a silver *para* dating to the reign of the Ottoman ruler Mehmed IV (1648–1687 CE).

Fig. 1.

CATALOGUE[i]

Cat. No.	Area/ Locus	Basket	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Obverse	Reverse	Date (CE)	Mint	Reference	Notes	IAA No.
Late Roman, 4th–5th c. CE											
1	1005	10017-3	2.23	15	Bust r.	SAL[VS REI-PVBLICAE] Victory to l., dragging captive In ex.: AN[A]	383–395	Antioch	Cf. *LRBC* 2:102, No. 2768		112082
Justin II (565–578 CE), *follis*											
2	1004	10007-1	11.90	30	DN IVSTI–NVS PP AV Justin and Sophia facing, enthroned	**M** Above, cross; to l.: A/N/N/O; to r.: μ; beneath: A In ex.: NIKO	570/571	Nicomedia	*DOC* 1:228, No. 96a.2	Perforated	112068
Mamlūks Al-Ẓāhir Rukn al-Dīn Baybars I (AH 658–676/1260–1277 CE), *fraction of dirham*											
3*	1010	10023-1	0.54	13	Illegible	In center: الظاهر ركن[الدنيا والدين]		Dimashq	Balog 1964:95, No.55		112085
Fals											
4	1003	1008-3	0.99	18	السلطان Lion …	Border circular line, in which linear square: لااله الا الله محمد رسول الله			Balog 1964:106, No.101		112072
Al-Manṣūr Sayf al-Dīn Qalā'ūn (AH 678–689/1279–1290 CE), *fals*											
5*	1005	10017-2	1.43	19	الملك المنصور Flexed cable قلاون [...]	[ضرب بدمس]ق Flexed cable ثمانين		Dimashq	Balog 1970:124, No. 141B		112081
Al-Manṣūr Husām al-Dīn Lājīn (AH 696–698/1296–1299 CE), *fals*											
6*	1004	1007-2	1.65	14	In center: الملك المنصور	Border of dots; counterclockwise legend: ….دني… Center: fesse		Same	Kool and Schultz 2009:138, No. 166B		112067
7	1008	10018-1	0.19	14	Illegible	Center: fesse		Same	Same		112083

[i] The coins are arranged chronologically, according to coin types. Coins bearing an asterisk are illustrated in Fig. 1.

CATALOGUE (cont.)

Cat. No.	Area/ Locus	Basket	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Obverse	Reverse	Date (CE)	Mint	Reference	Notes	IAA No.
Al-Nāṣir Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad I, 3rd reign (AH 709–741/1310–1341 CE), *fals*											
8	1010	10020-1	2.79	19	السلطاب الملك [الناصر] ناصر الدنيا و الدين [محمد بن] الملك المنصور قلاون	...ما النصر الا من... لاالة الااللة محمد		Same	Cf. Balog 1964:150, No. 222		112084
9	1005	10009-2	0.84	17	الملك الناصر	Eagle with spread wings			Cf. Balog 1964:163, No. 263 var.		112086
Al-Nāṣir Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad (AH 742–743/1342 CE), *fals*											
10	1002	10012-2	2.70	25	Hexagram with pellets in external angles ثلاث سنة واربعين	Hexagram with pellets in external angles	AH 743	Dimashq	Balog 1964:168, No. 272		112075
Al-Ẓāhir Sayf al-Dīn Barqūq, 2nd reign (AH 792–801/1390–1399 CE), *fals*											
11*	1004	10007-3	4.38	23	السلطان ... الظ اهر... [بر]قوق	fleur-de-lis chalice		Same	Balog 1964: 266, No. 590–591		112077
Mamlūk, 14th c., *fals*											
12	1003	10008-4	0.96	13	Illegible	Illegible					112073
13	1003	10008-1	0.49	15	Illegible	Illegible					112076
14	1004	1007-4	0.89	17	Illegible	Illegible					112078
15	1005	10009-1	0.45	15	Illegible	Illegible					112079
16	1003	10026-1	0.74	16	Illegible	Illegible					112069
17	1003	10015-1	2.92	19	Illegible	Illegible					112070
Mamlūk, 14/15th c., *fals*											
18	1003	10013-1	2.53	17	Illegible	Illegible					112071
Ottomans											
Mehmed IV (AH 1058–1099/1648–1687 CE), *para*											
19	1002	10012-1	0.62	18	[السلطان] محمد بن / ابرهيم حان	عز نصره ضرب مصر	AH 1058/1648/ 49 CE	Misr	Pere 1968:171, No. 458	Pierced	112074

NOTES

[1] The coins were cleaned by Lena Kuperschmidt of the IAA Metals Conservation Laboratory and photographed by Clara Amit of the IAA Photography Department.

[2] I would like to thank the following excavators for allowing me to refer to yet unpublished finds of these *dirham* fractions from their excavations: Gaby Mazor (Bet She'an), Jon Seligman (Bet She'an citadel) and Moshe Hartal (Tiberias, Gan Ha-'Ir) of the IAA and the late Professor Israel Roll (Arsuf) of Tel Aviv University.

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