

COINS FROM EXCAVATIONS ON ŞALLAḤ ED-DIN STREET, JERUSALEM

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During the excavations in the Late Roman cemetery on Şallaḥ ed-Din Street (see Avni and Adawi, this volume) three bronze coins were discovered.¹ A *prutah* of Agrippa I, struck in Jerusalem (No. 1), is related to the first phase at the site, the Second Temple-period quarry that probably provided stone blocks for the construction of the 'Third Wall'. Coin Nos. 2 and 3 belong to the second phase at the site, the northern cemetery of Aelia Capitolina.

Coin No. 2, dated to the second century CE, was discovered within the skull of the deceased in T5000, suggesting that the coin had been placed in his mouth or covered one of his eyes. The placement of the coin represents a pagan custom, probably related to Charon's obol (Stevens 1991; Rahmani 1993). Coin No. 3 was retrieved from T3500, which the excavators describe as unusual in shape for this region. This coin is also a curious find. It is of western origin, struck in Trier in 352 CE during the reign of Decentius, and is quite worn and perforated. Four small link fragments of a bronze chain were discovered with it, suggesting that the coin was in secondary use as a pendant and buried with its owner. Therefore, it seems likely that the coin reached the tomb much later than its minting date. The geographical origin of the coin, together with the unusual shape of the tomb, may indicate that the deceased were foreigners living in Jerusalem.

CATALOGUE

1. Reg. No. 11074, L6000, IAA 95528.

Agrippa I, 41/42 CE, Jerusalem.

Obv.: [BACIAEWC AΓΡΙΠA] Canopy.

Rev.: [L – Ϛ] Three ears of corn.

Æ *prutah*, ↑, 2.28 g, 17 mm.

TJC:231, No. 120.

2. Reg. No. 11076, T5000, IAA 95529.

Autonomous, end of 1st–end of 2nd centuries CE, Tyre.

Obv.: Head of Tyche r., turreted and veiled.

Rev.: [---] ¥ IEPA[C] ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΕWC Galley.

Æ, ↑, 2.19 g, 18 mm. Found inside skull.

BMC Phoen.: 262, No. 313.

3. Reg. No. 11082, T3500, IAA 92345.

Decentius, 352 CE, Trier.

Obv.: DN DECENTIVS [FORT] CAES Bust r., laureate, cuirassed and draped.

Rev.: [SALVS AVG NOSTRI] Chi-Rho, to l.: A; to r.: W. In exergue: [TRP]

Æ, ↑, 2.21 g, 20 mm, perforated. Found together with four small fragments of a bronze chain.

RIC VIII:165, No. 332.



NOTE

¹ Coin Nos. 1 and 2 were identified by Donald T. Ariel. The coins were cleaned at the IAA laboratories

under the direction of Ella Altmark. Coin No. 3 was photographed by Clara Amit of the IAA.

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