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The Coins from Ḥorbat 'Ofrat

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This article constitutes a report on the numismatic finds from the 2008 Israel Antiquities Authority excavations at Ḥorbat 'Ofrat (see Alexandre, this volume). In addition, it presents a hitherto unpublished hoard found in the vicinity of the site in 1962, and touches upon a small hoard discovered in excavations at the same spot a decade later (1972).

Coins from the 2008 Excavations

Thirty-one bronze coins were discovered during the 2008 excavations, six of which were unidentifiable (Fig. 1; see Catalogue).[1] The bulk of the coins is dated to the fourth century CE (Stratum IV; Cat. Nos. 4–22); most types are conventional and do not require further discussion. However, several coins precede this period and likely reached the area during previous phases of site occupation (Strata V–VI): a 'year two' *pruṭa* of the Jewish War (Cat. No. 1), and two *antoniniani* of Gallienus and his wife Salonina (Cat. Nos. 2, 3). The sole coin that could be attributed to the fifth century CE is No. 22, of Honorius, which bears a depiction of a cross and is dated to 395–408 CE. Three Byzantine coins were identified: a small *follis* of Anastasius I (Cat. No. 23) and two coins of Maurice Tiberius (Cat. Nos. 24, 25). The latter, which were found in a Stratum II context, date to the end of the sixth century CE and constitute the latest coins found in the excavation.

Coin Hoard Discovered in 1962

In 1962, after heavy rainfall, a stray find hoard of 274 bronze *minimi* was fortuitously discovered by Ariel Berman while standing at the margins of the road next to the site (Fig. 2).[2] All in all, 119 of the coins were cleaned and eventually identified, their types and dates are detailed in Table 1. The hoard is dated to the mid-fourth century CE, which correlates

[1] The coins were cleaned at the IAA laboratories under the direction of Lena Kupershmidt and were photographed by Clara Amit of the IAA.

[2] My thanks to Yardenna Alexandre and Ariel Berman for providing this information. This event took place a few years before Berman became an IDAM staff member as archaeologist and numismatist.

Fig. 1. Coins from the 2008 excavation.

Fig. 2. Coins from the hoard discovered in 1962.

CATALOGUE[i]

No.	Locus No.	Basket No.	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date (CE)	Mint	References	IAA No.
Jewish Coins											
Jewish War–*Pruṭa*											
1	523	5116	2.68	17	↓	שתים [שנת] Amphora	ל[חר[ו]ת ציון Vine leaf	67/68	Jerusalem	*TJC*:241, No. 196	120896
Roman Imperial											
Salonina–*Antoninianus*											
2	539	5159	3.23	20	↑	SALONINA AVG Bust r., draped, on crescent	IVNO REGINA Juno stg. l., holding patera and scepter	258–259	Asia	*RIC* V/I:114, No. 64	120898
Gallienus (253–268)–*Antoninianus*											
3*	534	5133	3.32	20	↑	GALLIENVS AVG Bust r., radiate, cuirassed and draped	AETERNITAS AVG Saturn stg. r., holding scepter. In exergue: PXV	267	Asia	Cf. *RIC* V/I:184, No. 606	120897
Constantine I (307–337)											
4*	121	1073	2.93	20	↓	IMP CONSTANTINVS AVG Bust r., laureate, cuirassed and draped	SOLI INVIC–TO COMITI Sol stg. r., holding globe. To l., TF; to r., star; in exergue: PLG	315–316	Lugdunum	Cf. *RIC* VII:124, Nos. 31–34	120892
351–361											
5	111	1045	1.46	14	↓	[---] Bust r., bare headed, cuirassed and draped	[FEL TEMP REPARATIO] Virtus spearing fallen horseman. Mintmark illegible			Cf. *LRBC* 2:100, Nos. 2632–2633	120890
Julian II (360–363)											
6*	528	5143	8.55	27	↑	DN FL CL IVLI–ANVS PF AVG Bust r., pearl-diademed and bearded, cuirassed and draped	SECVRITAS REIPVB Bull stg. r., above two stars. In exergue: ANTB	361–363	Antioch	Cf. *LRBC* 2:100, Nos. 2640–2641	120895

[i] All coins are bronze unless otherwise stated; coins bearing an asterisk appear in Fig. 1.

CATALOGUE (cont.)

No.	Locus No.	Basket No.	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date (CE)	Mint	References	IAA No.
364–375											
7	110	1019	1.57	15×18	↑	DN[---] Bust r., pearl-diademed, cuirassed and draped	[GLORIA ROMANORVM] Emperor advancing r., dragging captive and holding standard. Mintmark illegible			Cf. *LRBC* 2:100, Nos. 2653–2655	120888
Theodosius I (379–395)											
8	614	6080	1.14	14	↓	DN THEODO–SIVS PF AVG Bust r., pearl-diademed, cuirassed and draped	Within wreath: VOT/X/MVLT/XX In exergue: SMKA	378–383	Cyzicus	*LRBC* 2:98, No. 2557	120909
9	620	6072	1.23	13	↑	Same	SALVS REIPVBLICAE Victory adv. l., dragging captive and holding trophy. In l. field ☧; mintmark illegible	383–395		Cf. *LRBC* 2:102, Nos. 2776–2777	120902
378–383											
10	614	6071	0.46	8 × 11	↑	[---] Bust r., pearl-diademed, cuirassed and draped	Unreadable *Vota* type within wreath. Mintmark illegible			Cf. *LRBC* 2:100, Nos. 2738–2743	120907
Valentinian II (375–392)											
11	614	6070	1.19	11	↑	[DN VALENTINIA]NVS PF AVG Bust r., pearl-diademed, cuirassed and draped	SALVS REI[PVBLICAE] Victory adv. l., dragging captive and holding trophy. In l. field ☧. Mintmark illegible	383–392		Cf. *LRBC* 2:102, No. 2768	120901
Arcadius (383–408)											
12	117	1075	1.13	14	↓	[DN A]RCA[DI]VS PF [AVG] Bust r., pearl-diademed, cuirassed and draped	SALVS REI[PVBLICAE] Victory adv. l., dragging captive and holding trophy. Mintmark illegible	383–395		Cf. *LRBC* 2:102, No. 2771	120891

CATALOGUE (cont.)

No.	Locus No.	Basket No.	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date (CE)	Mint	References	IAA No.
383–395											
13	615	6051	1.17	11	↓	[---] Bust r., pearl-diademed, cuirassed and draped	[SALVS REIPV]BLICAE Victory adv. l., dragging captive and holding trophy. Mintmark illegible			Cf. *LRBC* 2:102, Nos. 2768–2771	120910
14	615	6064	1.01	12	↓	Same	[SALVS REIPV]BLI[CAE] Same			Same	120911
15	602	6050	0.68	12	↓	Same	[SALVS REIPVBLI]CAE Same, but in l. field, cross			Cf. *LRBC* 2:102, Nos. 2763–2766	120900
Fourth century											
16	620	6093	1.23	11	↓	[---] Bust r., pearl-diademed, cuirassed and draped	[---] Figure stg. holding scepter				120904
17	620	6090	1.14	13		]IVS PF[---] Same	Obliterated				120903
18	104	1009	1.68	15		[---] Same	Same	Mid-4th c.			120887
19	614	6073	1.85	13		Same	Same				120908
20	621	6063	1.50	15		Same	Same				120905
21	110	1020	1.12	15		Same	Same				120889
Honorius (383–408)											
22	614	6069	0.85	10	↑	DN HONOR[IVS PF AVG] Bust r., pearl-diademed, cuirassed and draped.	CONCO]RD[IA AVGG] Cross. Mintmark illegible.	395–408		Cf. *LRBC* 2:102, No. 2807	120906

CATALOGUE (cont.)

No.	Locus No.	Basket No.	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date (CE)	Mint	References	IAA No.
Byzantine											
Anastasius I (491–518)–small *follis*											
23*	515	5054	7.68	24	↓	[DN ANASTA–SIVS PP AVG] Bust r., pearl-diademed, cuirassed and draped	**M** above cross. Mintmark illegible	498–507		Cf. *DOC* 1:12, No. 16	120894
Maurice Tiberius (582–602)–*follis*											
24*	539	5160	10.45	27	↓	dN mAVR[---] Same	**M** above cross; to l.: ANNO; to r.: ϛ; below, B	587/588	Nicomedia	*DOC* 1:324, No. 96	120899
half *follis*											
25*	514	5132	5.90	23	↓	dN TibE[---] Bust facing, crowned, cuirassed and draped, holding globe with cross	**K** above cross; to l.: ANNO; to r.: I; below B	582/583	Constantinople	*DOC* 1:311, No. 46a	120893

Table 1. Breakdown of the Coins from the 1962 Hoard according to Types and Mints

Type/Date	Aquilea	Rome	Constantinople	Heraclea	Nicomedia	Cyzicus	Antioch	Alexandria	Uncertain	Total
GLORIA EXERCITVS/one standard/335–337									1	*1*
Constantine I deified/ Quadriga/337–341									1	*1*
Constantine I deified/VN MR/341–346					1	2		1	1	*5*
Constantine I deified/IVST VEN MEM/341–346							1			*1*
Constantine II/GLORIA EXERCITVS/ one standard/337–341							1			*1*
Constans I/GLORIA EXERCITVS/one standard/337–341		1	1							*2*
Constans I/VOT XX MVLT XXX/341–346									1	*1*
Constans I/Æ2/Hut/*/346–350									1	*1*
Constantius I/GLORIA EXERCITVS/ one standard/337–341							1			*1*
Constantius II/VOT XX MVLT XXX/341–346							1		1	*2*
Constantius II/Æ2/Emperor and two captives/346–350 (Fig. 3; IAA 5354)			1							*1*
Constantius II/FH3/351–354			3	2			1			*6*
Constantius II/FH3/A/351–354									1	*1*
Constantius II/FH4/351–354			1							*1*
Constantius II/FH3/M/351–361					1	2	4		1	*8*
Constantius II/FH4/M/351–361							1		2	*3*
Constantius II/FH3/351–361					1	1	5		23	*30*
Constantius II/FH3/355–360		3								*3*

Table 1. (cont.)

Type/Date	Aquilea	Rome	Constantinople	Heraclea	Nicomedia	Cyzicus	Antioch	Alexandria	Uncertain	Total
Constantius II/FH3/II/355–360	1									*1*
Constantius II/FH3/M/355–361				1			2	3		*6*
Constantius II/FH4/M/355–361							2			*2*
Constantius II/FH3/S/355–361						1				*1*
Constantius II/SPES REIPVBLICE/355–361					1	2	2	2	6	*13*
Constantius Gallus/Æ2/ FH3/•S•/351–354								1		*1*
Constantius Gallus/FH3/•/351–354			1							*1*
Constantius Gallus/FH3/351–354					1		1		3	*5*
Julian II/FH3/M/355–361				1	1					*2*
Julian II/FH3/355–361		1					4		3	*8*
Julian II/FH4/•M•/355–361			1							*1*
Julian II/SPES REIPVBLICE/355–361				1					2	*3*
FH3/351–361								1	4	*5*
Uncertain type/first half fourth century									1	*1*
Total	*1*	*5*	*8*	*5*	*6*	*8*	*26*	*8*	*52*	*119*

to Stratum IV, one of the principle phases of occupation at the site (Peleg 1990). Only the coins of numismatic interest will be discussed below.

The earliest coin in the 1962 hoard is one standard issue GLORIA EXERCITVS, dated to 335–337 CE. The majority of the coins from this hoard are bronze issues of the popular FEL TEMP REPARATIO fallen horseman type and its many varieties, struck by Constantius II, Constantius Gallus and Julian II. The latest coins in the hoard are dated to 355–361 CE, which includes issues of Julian II such as fallen horseman and SPES REIPVBLICE types. Some fallen horseman coins from the hoard are struck on very small light flans, probably indicating they are imitations (for instance, see IAA No. 5334 minted in Rome; Fig. 2:1).

Western mints are represented in very small amounts—there are five coins from Rome, and a coin which belongs to a rare type in Israel depicting the field mark II from Aquilea (IAA No. 5308; Fig. 2:2). Coins from eastern mints predominate the assemblage, including 26 coins from Antioch and 8 coins each from Constantinople, Cyzicus and Alexandria. Most peculiar is a posthumous coin of Constantine I minted in Antioch, depicting on its reverse the figure of Aequitas holding a balance and scrolls with the inscription IVST VEN MEM (*Justa [soluta] venerandae memoriae*; No. 1394, IAA No. 5336; Fig. 2:3; *LRBC* I:31). This extremely rare type was minted only in eastern mints. To the extent of the author's knowledge, this is the first example known from a site in Israel.

COINS FROM THE 1972 EXCAVATION

After the 1962 hoard was found, salvage excavations were carried out in 1972, and a small hoard of eleven Late Roman coins was discovered by Urman (1993–1994). The latest coins in this group were no later than 346 CE, which led the excavator to suggest the site was damaged during the Gallus Revolt (Urman 1993–1994:43).[3] However, the stray hoard found in 1962 postdates the revolt, and the isolated coins found at the present excavation show no gaps during the second half of the fourth century. Moreover, a study has shown that in most cases, coins are irrelevant in verifying the Gallus Revolt from archaeological sites and hoards (Bijovsky 2007).

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[3] The coins in the hoard discovered during Urman's excavations were identified by Ariel Berman and are not registered at the IAA coin department.

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