ʿAtiqot 93, 2018

The Coins from Ḥorbat Basha

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The excavations at Ḥorbat Basha (see Peretz, this volume) yielded 53 coins, 24 of which were identified (see Catalogues 1, 2, below). All the coins are bronze, except for a silver fraction of a *dirham* (No. 19; identified by Ariel Berman).

A coin of Hadrian minted in Alexandria is the earliest coin discovered at the site (No. 1). The coin is very worn, and it was pierced for secondary use. Although no archaeological stratum from the Early Roman period was recognized at the site, a few finds from this period (for example, ceramics and glass) were discovered. Three additional coins can be related to the Roman period: a coin struck in Caesarea by Severus Alexander (No. 2) and two worn Roman Provincial coins roughly attributed to the second–third centuries CE (Nos. 3, 4).

The bulk of the numismatic evidence comprises Late Roman *minimi*, dating successively from the first quarter of the fourth century until the mid-fifth century CE (nine belong to the fourth century CE and four, to the fifth century CE). Most of the coins are worn and their places of minting are illegible. The types are conventional and deserve no further discussion.

Worthy of mention are five *minimi* (Nos. 20–24), discovered together at the bottom of Collecting Vat 420 in the winepress in Area B (Catalogue 2). These coins date from the end of the fourth century CE during the reign of Arcadius until Leo I (457–474 CE), thereby providing a *terminus post quem* for the end of the use of the vat.

The latest find is a silver fraction of a *dirham* attributed to an uncertain dynasty contemporary to the Abbasids in the ninth century CE (No. 19). The coin was discovered in Area C, but has no clear archaeological context.

What is striking about this numismatic group is not the types that are present but rather, those that are absent. According to the excavator, occupation at the site peaked during

Fig. 1.

the fifth–sixth centuries CE. The fifth century is well-represented: the latest coins are two *nummi* of Marcian (Nos. 16 and 23) and a *nummus* of Leo I dating to 457–474 CE (No. 24); however, not a single coin from the sixth century CE was discovered at the site. These sixth-century CE coins, struck in a number of denominations, *folles*, half-*folles*, etc., and particularly, 'chi-rho' *pentanummi*, are the most common currency at all the Byzantine sixth- and seventh-century sites that have been excavated in the area of Ashqelon, e.g., Ḥorbat Ḥaẓaẓ (Sokolov and Bijovsky 2007); Semadar Hotel (Bijovsky 2004); the painted tomb in Migdal (Bijovsky 1999a); Eli Cohen Street (Bijovsky 1999b); and 'Ard el-Mihjar (Sokolov 2002).

A similar picture was noted by Ariel in his report on the coins from the Third Mile Estate. The latest coins found in the excavations there are three 'chi-rho' *pentanummi*, roughly dated to the first decades of the sixth century CE. Ariel suggested, based on the lack of coins, that the site may have been ravaged by one of the cyclical waves of bubonic plague that struck the region starting from 542 CE (Ariel 2013). If this is the case, then at least some of the common coins of Anastasius I (491–518 CE), Justin I (518–527 CE) and the undated series of Justinian I (527–538 CE), which constitute the ordinary currency in circulation during the first half of the sixth century CE, should have been discovered at Ḥ. Basha. At this point, there is yet no convincing explanation for the absence of sixth-century CE coins at both Ḥ. Basha and the 'Third Mile Estate', in contrast to the presence at both sites of pottery and glass artifacts from this timespan.

CATALOGUE 1. ISOLATED COINS.[i]

Cat. No.	Locus	Basket	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date (CE)	Mint	Reference	Notes	IAA No.
						ROMAN PROVINCIAL **Hadrian (117–138 BCE)**						
1*	326	A-1074	4.04	18	↑	[AYT KAI TPAI AΔPIACEB] Head r. laureate	Double cornucopia		Alexandria	*Cf. BMC* Alex.:104, No. 894	Pierced	121512
						Severus Alexander (222–235 BCE)						
2	317	A-1038	6.72	20	↑	Head r. laureate	[---] Eagle stg. facing with wings open, holding wreath: SPQR		Caesarea	Kadman 1957: Nos. 99, 100		121509
						Uncertain						
3	332	A-1077	7.86	23	↑	[---] Bust r.	[---] Figure stg. l	2nd–3rd c.				121513
4	322	A-1058	11.05	23×27		Obliterated	Obliterated	3rd c.				121510
						ROMAN IMPERIAL **Uncertain**						
5	335	A-1089	2.90	17×19	↑	]N[Bust l.	PROVIDEN[TIAE] AVGG Camp gate. Mintmark illegible	318–320		*Cf. RIC* VII:546, Nos. 28, 29		121514
						Crispus (317–326 CE)						
6*	602	B-4009	2.25	18	↑	DN FL IVL CRISPVS NOB CAES Bust l., laureate, cuirassed and draped	PROVIDENTIAE CAESS Camp gate. In ex.: SMHΓ	324–326	Heraclea	*RIC* VI:670, No. 59b		121527

[i] The coins are arranged chronologically according to type. All coins are bronze unless otherwise mentioned. Coins marked with an asterisk appear in Fig. 1.

CATALOGUE 1. (cont.)

Cat. No.	Locus	Basket	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date (CE)	Mint	Reference	Notes	IAA No.
						Constantine I (306–337 CE)–posthumous issue						
7	601	B-4008	1.19	16	↘	DIV CONST[ANTI NVS PTAVGG] Head r. veiled	Emperor stg. on quadriga r. Mintmark illegible	337–341		*Cf. LRBC* 1:25, No. 1041		121526
						Constantius II (337–361 CE)						
8	316	A-1037	1.69	15	↑	[---] Bust r., pearl-diademed, cuirassed and draped	FEL TEMP [REPARA]TIO Virtus spearing fallen horseman. Mintmark illegible	351–361		*Cf. LRBC* 2:100, No. 2632		121508
9	408	B-2019	0.78	8×14	↖	[DN CONSTANTIVS] PF AVG Bust r., pearl-diademed, cuirassed and draped	Same	Same			Imitation; half coin	121515
						Uncertain						
10	429	B-2084	1.67	14	↑	[---] Bust r., pearl-diademed, cuirassed and draped	[GLORIA ROMANORVM] Emperor advancing r. dragging captive. Mintmark illegible	364–375		*Cf. LRBC* 2:100, Nos. 2653–2655		121522
						Theodosius I (379–395 CE)						
11	304	A-1025	1.07	14	↓	DN THEODOSIVS PF AVG Bust r., pearl-diademed, cuirassed and draped	[SALVS REI] PVBLICAE Victory advancing l., holding trophy and dragging captive. In l. field: ☨ In ex.: CONS	383–395	Constantinople	*Cf. LRBC* 2:89, No. 2178		121506

CATALOGUE 1. (cont.)

Cat. No.	Locus	Basket	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date (CE)	Mint	Reference	Notes	IAA No.
						Fourth Century CE–Uncertain						
12	460	B-2562	0.92	15		Bust r., pearl-diademed, cuirassed and draped	Obliterated					121525
13	315	A-1036	0.70	12		Same	Same					121507
14	609	B-4030	0.32	11		Same	Same				Half coin	121529
						Theodosius II (402–450 CE)						
15	439	B-2509	0.63	11	↖	DN THEO[DOSIVS PF AVG] Bust r., pearl-diademed, cuirassed and draped	[CONCORDIA AVGG] Cross. Mintmark illegible	402–408		*Cf. LRBC* 2:102, No. 2808		121523
						Marcian (450–457 CE)–*Nummus*						
16	410	B-2042	1.07	12	↑	[---] Bust r., pearl-diademed, cuirassed and draped	 Mintmark illegible			*Cf. RIC* X:90, No. 2248		121516
						End of Fourth–beginning of Fifth Centuries CE						
17	326	A-1065	0.59	12		[---] Bust r., pearl-diademed, cuirassed and draped	Obliterated					121511
18	450	B-2534	0.40	10		Same	Same				Half coin	121524
						ISLAMIC **Uncertain–Silver Fraction of *Dirham***						
19	603	B-4006	0.83	14		Margin: [---]ضرب عذا ال Center: له الا[	[---] ح بن نص [---]	9th c.			Identified by A. Berman	121528

CATALOGUE 2. COINS FROM THE WINEPRESS.[i]

Cat. No.	Locus	Basket	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date (CE)	Mint	Reference	Notes	IAA No.
						LATE ROMAN **Arcadius (383–408 CE)**						
20*	420	2081	1.05	14	↑	DN ARCADIVS PF AVG Bust r., laureate, cuirassed and draped	Inscription within wreath: VOT/V Mintmark illegible	378–383		*Cf. LRBC* 2:101, No. 2736		121520
						Uncertain						
21	420	2081	1.05	12×14	↓	Bust r.	[SALVS REI PVBLICAE] Victory advancing l., holding trophy and dragging captive. Mintmark illegible	383–395		*Cf. LRBC* 2:102, Nos. 2768–2771		121517
						Fourth Century CE–Uncertain						
22	420	2081	0.75	11×13		Bust r.	Obliterated					121519
						Marcian (450–457 CE)–*Nummus*						
23	420	2081	0.53	9×11		Bust r.	Monogram, details illegible			Cf. *LRBC* 2:90, Nos. 2247–2250		121518
						Leo I(?) (457–474 CE)–*Nummus*						
24	420	2081	0.79	10	↓	Bust r.	b/E Empress stg. facing, holding scepter diagonally. Mintmark illegible			Cf. *LRBC* 2:91, Nos. 2272–2275		121521

[i] The coins are arranged chronologically according to type. All coins are bronze unless otherwise mentioned. Coins marked with an asterisk appear in Fig. 1.

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