

COINS FROM BISHOP GOBAT SCHOOL, MOUNT ZION, JERUSALEM

DONALD T. ARIEL

Fifty-five coins were found in the excavations in the Bishop Gobat School on Mount Zion, Jerusalem (see Re'em, this volume). Of these, 49 were identifiable and are presented here (Fig. 1; see Catalogue, below). Two of the coins (Nos. 48, 49) were identified by Ariel Berman.¹

The overwhelming majority of the coins date to the Second Temple period, in accordance with other finds uncovered in the excavation, most of which belonged to the remains of a monumental staircase from a late phase in that period (see Re'em, this volume). Sixteen coins of the Hellenistic–Second Temple periods that were found in surface accumulations are also included in the catalogue.

Three coins were retrieved from the bedding below the staircase (Stratum IV; Nos. 1, 15 and 31). The latest of these coins (No. 31) provides a *terminus post quem* for the



Fig. 1. The coins.

¹ The coins were cleaned in the laboratories of the IAA, by Lena Kupershmidt and Hila Rosenstein, and were photographed by Clara Amit of the IAA photography studio.

construction of the staircase, postdating 30/31 CE, i.e., in the last 30 years before the city's destruction in the Great Revolt. Further reinforcing evidence for this date is provided by two other coins from the same stratum (Nos. 3 and 34), also of the late Second Temple period, the latest of which is a coin of Agrippa I dated to 41/42 CE (No. 34). In addition, 18 coins, the latest of which (No. 39) dates to 54 CE, were found in debris accumulations overlying the monumental staircase (Stratum IVA; Nos. 6, 7, 12, 17, 19, 22, 24, 26–28, 30, 32, 33, 35–39; Fig. 1); another coin of this time span was found on the surface (No. 29).

Disregarding the stratigraphic context of the coins, for the most part they demonstrate a numismatic profile consistent with what is typical for a Second Temple-period site in Jerusalem. A few noteworthy observations in respect to this assemblage are mentioned below.

The number of Herodian coins found in the excavation (Nos. 17–21 and 23) is relatively high, and includes this king's largest and rarely uncovered denomination (No. 17), probably equivalent in value to all of the other Herodian coins from this excavation combined. The present specimen is only the seventh such coin found in Jerusalem (for a description of the other such coins, see Ariel and Fontanille 2012:139. n. 1; *The Coins of Herod: Jerusalem*). No explanation can be offered at this time for the disproportionate representation of Herod's currency in the present assemblage.

The absence of Second Temple period coins postdating the year 54 CE could be taken as an indication that the site was abandoned before the city's destruction in 70 CE. However, such a conclusion is precluded by the overall small quantity of coins from the excavation.

Ten coins, mostly specimens from surface accumulations, belong to later periods, between the fourth century CE and the Mamluk period. Five coins of the fourth century CE (Nos. 40–44) were found in the excavation, but are not related to any other archaeological material at the site noted by the excavator (see Re'em, this volume). Many coins of this period were, nonetheless, found in excavations nearby, in the Armenian Quarter (Fagerlie 1985:168–169, Nos. 257–275) to the north of the present excavation site, and in a number of sites located along the Byzantine-period city wall of Jerusalem to its south (e.g., Zelinger 2010).

A coin of Emperor Leo I (Stratum IVA; No. 45; Fig. 1) from the second half of the fifth century CE represents a common find of this period, encountered more frequently than coins of any other emperor of that time span (Bijovsky 2012:73). An unclear object is depicted to the right of the monogram on the reverse side of this coin; no other coins depicting such an object are known to the author.

The latest three coins from the excavation, an Arab-Byzantine-period *folles*, an Umayyad-period *fals* and a Mamluk-period *fals* (Nos. 47–49), are all apparently incidental losses.

CATALOGUE¹

Cat. No.	Locus	Basket	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date	Mint	Reference	Notes	IAA No.
						Seleucids						
1	77	1079	1.38	11	0	Head r. Antiochus III (222–187 BCE)	[- - -] Apollo stg. 1	198–187 BCE	'Akko/ Ptolemais	SCI:416, No. 1096		136831
2	Surf.	Surf.	1.8	14		Head r.(?) Uncertain Seleucid King	Illegible	2nd c. BCE			Serrated	141067
3	66	1064	1.11	16 × 19		In wreath: /[- - -]/[י]הוה[ח]י '[- - -]/[- - -]	Double cornucopias with pomegranate between horns		Jerusalem	TJC:203, Group D		138042
4	Surf.	Surf.	0.81	12		Illegible Alexander Jannaeus (104–76 BCE)	גלגלכא אלכסנדרוס שנת כהן	80/79 BCE	Same	TJC:210, Subgroups L1–6		141062
5	Surf.	Surf.	1.21	13		[- - -]ΣΑΑ[- - -] Anchor in circle	[- - -] Eight-pointed star in dotted frame	Same	Same	Same		141060
6	59	1057	0.94	10 × 12		[- - -]ΓΞ[- - -] Anchor(?)	Same	80/79 BCE or later	Same	TJC:210, Subgroups L1–7		138041
7*	61	1054	0.34	9 × 11		Anchor in circle	Eight-pointed star in dotted frame	Same	Same	TJC:210, Subgroup L7		141050
8	Surf.	Surf.	0.91	12		Same	Same	Same	Same	Same		141066
9	Surf.	Surf.	0.75	12		[- - -]Α[- - -] Same	Same	Same	Same	Same		141072

¹All the coins are bronze, except for No. 15, which is lead. Coins bearing an asterisk appear in Fig. 1.

CATALOGUE (cont.)

Cat. No.	Locus	Basket	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date	Mint	Reference	Notes	IAA No.
10	Surf.	Surf.	0.84	13		Anchor in circle	Six-pointed star in dotted frame	Same	Same	<i>TJC</i> :210, Subgroup L9		141073
11	Surf.	Surf.	0.86	11		Same	Remnants of six-pointed star	Same	Same	<i>TJC</i> :210, Subgroup L12		141055
12	51	1024	0.25	8 × 10		Illegible	Same	Same	Same	<i>TJC</i> :210, Subgroup L13		138036
13	Surf.	Surf.	0.56	9 × 11		Anchor in circle	Illegible	Same	Same	<i>TJC</i> :210, Subgroup L15		141061
14	Surf.	Surf.	0.81	10 × 12		Anchor in circle(?)	Remnants of six-pointed star	Same	Same	Cf. <i>TJC</i> :210, Subgroups L1–7		141058
15	77	1080	2.70	14		Anchor in circle	Illegible	80/79–76 BCE	Same	<i>TJC</i> :211, Group M		136832
						Uncertain Hasmonean Ruler						
16	Surf.	Surf.	2.62	13		Inscription in wreath(?)	Double cornucopia with pomegranate between horns		Same			141070
						Herodians						
						Herod (37–4 BCE)						
17*	52	1027	5.43	21 × 23	0	Helmet	ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΗΡΩΔΟΥ Tripod; in fields: ΛΓ →	Year 3= 38/37	Same	<i>TJC</i> :221, No. 44; Ariel and Fontanille 2012:61, Type 1, p. 97		141045
18	Surf.	Surf.	1.33	13 × 15		Illegible	Table with three curved legs	c. 30	Same	Cf. <i>TJC</i> :222, Nos. 50–54; Ariel and Fontanille 2012:61, Type 6		141059

CATALOGUE (cont.)

Cat. No.	Locus	Basket	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date	Mint	Reference	Notes	IAA No.
19	52	1034	1.47	14	0	[ΒΑΣΙ]ΛΕ ΗΡΩ[ΔΟΥ] Anchor	Double cornucopia; between horns, caduceus	c. 24–12 BCE	Same	<i>TJC</i> :222–223, No. 59; Ariel and Fontanille 2012:63, Type 15		141047
20	Surf.	Surf.	1.42	14	0	[- -] Same	Same	Same	Same	Same	Two dots visible above caduceus	141068
21	Surf.	Surf.	1.3	15	5	[- -] Same	Same	Same	Same	Same	Three dots visible above caduceus	141071
22	52	1035	0.99	14	5	[- -] Same	Same	37 BCE–6 CE	Same	Cf. <i>TJC</i> :222– 223, No. 59	Identification of ruler uncertain	138038
23	Surf.	Surf.	0.75	12	6	[- -] Cornucopia	Eagle r.	c. 24–12 BCE	Same	<i>TJC</i> :224, No. 66; Ariel and Fontanille 2012:63, Type 16		141069
						Archelaus (4 BCE–6 CE)						
24	52	1044	1.12	14 × 16		[- -] Prow 1	[- -] Within wreath		Same	<i>TJC</i> :225, No. 72		141048
						Roman Prefects in Judea Augustus (27 BCE–14 CE)						
25	52	1028	2.32	17	0	KAICA–POC Ear of barley	Palm tree; in fields; L–ΛΘ	Year 39= 8/9 CE	Same	<i>TJC</i> :256, No. 313		141046
26	20	1011	1.97	17	0	KAICA–POC	Same; in fields; [- . .] Same	5/6–10/11 CE	Same	Cf. <i>TJC</i> :256, No. 311		141042

CATALOGUE (cont.)

Cat. No.	Locus	Basket	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date	Mint	Reference	Notes	IAA No.
						Prefect under Tiberius (14-37 CE)						
27	20	1007	2.25	16		Wreath(?)	Palm branch; in fields: [IOV-ΛΙΑ] L-ΙΑ	Year 11= 24/25 CE	Same	<i>TJC</i> :258, No. 329		141041
28	51	1025	1.37	16		Illegible	Same; in fields: [IOV]-ΛΙΑ [-]	17/18- 24/25 CE	Same	Cf. <i>TJC</i> :257, No. 327		138037
29	Surf.	Surf.	2.18	16		[- - -] Simpulum	[- - -] Three ears of grain	Year 16= 29/30 CE	Same	<i>TJC</i> :258, No. 331		141056
30*	51	1023	1.32	15		TIBEPI[OY- KAICAPOC] Lituus	LIZ Within wreath	Year 17= 30/31 CE	Same	<i>TJC</i> :258, No. 333		138035
31	77	1078	1.56	16	0	[- - -] Same	LIZ Same	Same	Same	Same		136830
32	20	1008	1.32	13		[TIBEPIOY-KAI] CAPO[C] Same	[- - -] Same	30/31- 31/32 CE	Same	Cf. <i>TJC</i> :258, No. 333		138033
33	52	1043	1.55	15		[TIBEPIOY-K] AICA[POC] Same	Illegible	Same	Same	Same		138040
						Herodians						
						Agrippa I (37-44 CE)						
34	66	1065	2.09	17	0	BAC[IEWC AΓPIA] Canopy	Three ears of corn; in fields: L-[-]	Year 6= 41/2 CE	Same	<i>TJC</i> :231, No. 120		141051
35	75	1014	3.12	17	0	BA[CIEWC] AΓPIA Same	Same; in fields: [L]-S	Same	Same	Same		141052

CATALOGUE (cont.)

Cat. No.	Locus	Basket	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date	Mint	Reference	Notes	IAA No.
36	51	1022	2.53	18	0	B[ACI]EWC AΓP[ΠA] Same	Same; in fields: [- -]	Same	Same	Same		138034
37	20	1013	2.73	18	0	B[ACI]EWC AΓP[ΠA] Same	Same; in fields: [- -]	Same	Same	Same		141043
38	57	1058	2.06	17	0	BACI[EWC AΓP[ΠA] Same	Same; in fields: [- -]	Same	Same	Same		141049
39	52	1026	2.55	17 × 19	0	[NEPW KAA]Y KA [CAP] Two oblong shields and two crossed spears	Procurator under Claudius (41–54 CE) Palm tree; above: BP [IT]; below: └-[Δ]/[K]-A]	Year 14 = 54 CE	Same	TJC:259, No. 340		141044
Fourth Century CE												
40	Surf.	Surf.	1.27	11	6	[- - -] Pearl-diademed, draped bust r.	VOT[X/MVLT/XX Within wreath	383 CE		Cf. LRBC II:101, No. 2732		141064
41	Surf.	Surf.	1.18	12		[- - -] Bust r.	[- - -]/[- - -]/[- - -]/ [- - -] Within wreath	383(?) CE				141074
42	Surf.	Surf.	1.22	12 × 14	6	[- - -] Bust r.	[- - -] Victory advancing l., dragging captive and holding standard	383–395 CE		Cf. LRBC II:89, No. 2183		141057

CATALOGUE (cont.)

Cat. No.	Locus	Basket	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date	Mint	Reference	Notes	IAA No.
43	Surf.	Surf.	0.77	12	6	[- - -] Bust r.	[- - -] Figure stg.					141075
44	Surf.	Surf.	1.14	13		[- - -] Bust r.(?)	Illegible				Possibly fallen horseman type	141076
							Fifth Century CE Leo I (457-474 CE)					
45*	52	1042	1.59	11	6	DN [LEO P]F AVGO Pearl-diademed, draped bust r.	Within wreath; NE to r. unclear object			Cf. <i>LRBC</i> II:91, No. 2264; cf. <i>R/C</i> X:294, No. 693		138039
							Sixth-Seven Centuries CE(?), Pentanummium(?)					
46	Surf.	Surf.	0.49	8 × 11	6	Illegible	Illegible		Antioch(?)	Cf. Bijovsky 2012:304	Uncertain identification; a reading of E is possible; struck on cut quarter coin	141065
							Arab-Byzantine (647-670 CE), <i>Follis</i>					
47	Surf.	Surf.	2.66	18 × 27	5	Imperial figure stg. facing, holding long cross and <i>globus</i> <i>cruciger</i>	m Above, cross; to r.: A/E; in ex.: QNOC			<i>SICA</i> 1: Pl. 36, Type E		141054
							Umayyad, <i>fals</i>					
48	Surf.	Surf.	1.18	9 × 13		Center: [الاله] [الله وحده]	Center: [محمد رسول] [الله]	697-750				141054
							Mamlūk, <i>Fals</i>					
49	Surf.	Surf.	1.13	11 × 17		[- - -] [النبا] [- - -]	[- - -] [سيف] [- - -]	14th c. CE				141063

REFERENCES

- Ariel D.T. and Fontanille J.-P. 2012. *The Coins of Herod: A Modern Analysis and Die Classification* (Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity 79). Leiden–Boston.
- Bijovsky G.I. 2012. *Gold Coin and Small Change: Monetary Circulation in Fifth–Seventh Century Byzantine Palestine* (Polymnia: Numismatica antica mediavale. Studi 2). Trieste.
- The Coins of Herod, Appendix, Tables of Coin Finds According to Site.* https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0Ahuqy-fB_vKrdFh1aXNNYzZKdUxhcU51d213U0hWdEE&hl=en_US.
- Fagerlie J.M. 1985. The Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Arab, Crusader, and Modern Coins. In G.C. Miles ed. *The Coins from the Armenian Garden.* In A.D. Tushingham. *Excavations in Jerusalem 1961–1967* 1. Toronto. Pp. 168–171.
- LRBC II: R.A.G. Carson and J.P.C. Kent. Bronze Roman Imperial Coinage of the Later Empire, A.D. 346–498. In *Late Roman Bronze Coinage A.D. 324–498.* London 1965. Pp. 41–114.
- Re'em A. This volume. A Herodian-Period Staircase on Mount Zion, Jerusalem, and a Revaluation of the Remains from Bishop Gobat School.
- RIC X: J.P.C. Kent. *The Roman Imperial Coinage X: The Divided Empire and the Fall of the Western Parts, AD 395–491.* London 1994.
- SC I: A. Houghton and C. Lorber. *Seleucid Coins. A Comprehensive Catalogue I: Seleucus I through Antiochus III* (2 vols.). New York–Lancaster, Pa.–London 2002.
- SICA 1: S. Album and T. Goodwin. *Sylloge of Islamic Coins in the Ashmolean 1: The Pre-reform Coinage of the Early Islamic Period.* Oxford 2002.
- TJC: Y. Meshorer. *A Treasury of Jewish Coins from the Persian Period to Bar Kokhba.* Jerusalem–Nyack, N.Y. 2001.
- Zelinger Y. 2010. Jerusalem, the Slopes of Mount Zion. *HA–ESI* 122 (November 3). http://www.hadashot-esi.org.il/report_detail_eng.aspx?id=1530&mag_id=117 (accessed October 26, 2015).

