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The Coins from Ramla

Robert Kool

The excavation in Azrieli Mall, Ramla, yielded 39 coins, 19 of which could be identified.[1] The coins were retrieved from all three excavation areas (A–C) and from the various stratigraphic contexts uncovered in the excavation (see Toueg and Torgë, this volume). The earliest datable coin is a Roman Imperial bronze dated to the second half of the third century CE (No. 1). The only other pre-Islamic coin found in the excavation was dated to the Byzantine period (No. 2). More than half of the coins (12; Nos. 3–14) were dated to the Umayyad and Abbasid periods. Two silver fractions minted during the Fatimid period are particularly noteworthy, as the use and circulation of silver and billon coinage during this period have been little studied: a cut *dirham* fraction of the Fatimid caliph al-Ḥākim (996–1021 CE; No. 15); and a silver half *dirham* minted during the long reign of Abū Tamīm Ma'add al-Mustanṣir Billāh (1036–1094 CE; No. 16). Some 170 fractional *dirham* coins from this period have been reported so far from more than 40 urban and rural ancient settlements excavated in Israel (Kool, Baidoun and Sharvit 2018:129–130). These finds show that the circulation of fractional silver and billon, possibly used in small daily payments during this period, was far more widespread than previously thought.

The remainder of the finds comprises Mamluk-period copper coins: two fourteenth-century CE coins (Nos. 18, 19) and a coin dated to the reign of Sultan al-Ashraf Barsbāy, which is the latest coin in this assemblage (AH 825–841/1422–1438 CE; No. 17).

The majority of the coins discovered *in situ*, came from Area A, from strata dated to the late Abbasid–Fatimid and the Mamluk periods (Strata III–I). Four of these coins were retrieved from the earliest stratum (Stratum III): two Umayyad-period *fulus* (Nos. 7, 11) found in a plaster floor (L174) below a cesspit; an Umayyad-period copper found in the fill of a robber trench (L181; No. 10); and an Abbasid-period *fals* found in association with a cooking facility (L245; No. 13). Two other coins were retrieved from contexts of the Abbasid–Fatimid periods: an early Umayyad-period *follis* (645–670 CE; No. 3) from Area C; and an Umayyad-period *fals* found in a plaster floor (L200; No. 5) of Area A Stratum II.

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[1] The coins were cleaned in the IAA laboratory under the direction of Lena Kuperschmidt and photographed by Clara Amit of the IAA.

CATALOGUE

1. B3102, L317, IAA 147072.
Second half of the third century CE.
Obv.: Bust r.
Æ, 1.68 g, 19 mm.

2. B1519, L193, IAA 147066.
Byzantine, fourth–fifth centuries CE.
Obv.: Bust r.
Rev.: wreath(?)
Æ, 0.67 g, 14 mm.

3. B4132, L503, IAA 147069.
Umayyad pre-reform, 645–670 CE.
Obv.: Figure standing facing, wearing crown.
Rev.: m
Æ, ↖, 2.99 g, 20 mm.

4. B1750, L247, IAA 147415.
Umayyad pre-reform, 645–670 CE.
Obv.: Figure standing facing.
Rev.: m
Æ, ↖, 2.13 g, 23 mm. Quarter piece.

5. B1557, L200 IAA 147067.
Umayyad post-reform, Ramla, 90s AH/708–713 CE.
Obv.: radial circle; inscription in center: لاالة / الااللة / وحده
Rev.: In center: palm branch and inscription: محمد / رسول / اللة
in margins: بسم الله ضرب هذا الفلس [بالرملة]
Æ, 3.05 g, 26 mm.
Cf. *SNAT* 1993:12, No. 48.

6. B.4153, L503, IAA 147073.
Umayyad post-reform, 90s AH/713–717 CE.
Obv.: Inscription in center: لاالة / الااللة / وحده
in margins: … لفلس …
Rev.: Inscription in center: محمد / رسول / اللة
Æ, 3.05 g, 26 mm.
Cf. *SNAT* 1993:12, No. 59.

7. B1395, L174, IAA 147064.
Umayyad post-reform, 725–750 CE.
Obv.: Bird to l., below: محمد / رسول / الله
Rev.: Inscription within double circle: محمد / رسول / الله
Æ, 1.50 g, 16 mm.
Cf. *SNAT* 1993:44, No. 532.

8. B3103, L316, IAA 147070.
Umayyad post-reform, 696–750 CE.
Obv.: Inscription in center: لاالة / الاالله / وحده
Æ, 4.31 g, 14 mm.

9. B4084, L523, IAA 147074.
Umayyad post-reform, 696–750 CE.
Obv.: Inscription in center: لاالة / الاالله / [وحده]
Rev.: Inscription in center: محمد / رسول / [الله]
Æ, 1.98 g, 14 mm.

10. B1406, L181, IAA 147065.
Umayyad post-reform, 696–750 CE.
Obv.: Inscription in center: محمد / رسول / [الله]
Rev.: Blank flan.
Æ, 1.05 g, 19 mm.

11. B1375, L174, IAA 147063.
Umayyad post-reform(?), 696–750 CE.
Æ, 0.98 g, 15 mm.

12. B3100, L317, IAA 147071.
Abbasid, beginning of ninth century CE.
Rev.: Above in two circles: بخ
In center: محمد / رسول / الله / الفضل
Æ, 2.44 g, 18 mm.
Cf. Savage 1999:90, No. 15.

13. B1822, L245, IAA 147068.
Abbasid, early ninth century CE.
Æ, 2.02 g, 18 mm.

14. B4123, L529, IAA 147075.
Abbasid, early ninth century CE.
Æ, 2.54 g, 18 mm.

15. B1741, L222, IAA 147394.
Al-Manṣūr al Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh, 996–1021 CE.
Obv.: Five lines, four surviving in center:
عبد اللة ومية / الامام الحاكم بامر الله امين /
المؤمنين وعبد الرحيم / [ولي] عهد [المسلمين]
margin: off-flan
Rev.: four lines, three surviving:
علي / لا اله الا الله وحدة /
لا شريك له محمد رسول الله / ولي الله
Æ, 1.56 g, 14 mm.
Cf. Nicol 2006:122, Type N1b.

16. B3107, L323, IAA 147059.
Abū Tamīm Ma‘add al-Mustanṣir Billāh, 1036–1094 CE.
Obv.: Three lines, two surviving, pellet in center:
middle: دعا الام معد لتوحيد الاله الصمد
inner: المستنصر بالله امير المؤمنين
الامام معد ابو تميم المستنصر بالله امير المؤمنين
Rev.: Three lines, two surviving, pellet in center:
middle: ولي افضل الوصيين و وزير خير المرسلين
inner: لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله

ÆR, 1.31 g, 17 mm.
Cf. Nicol 2006:306, No. 2177.

17. B4151, L514, IAA 147060. Plate 000.
Al-Ashraf Sayf-al-din Barsāy, Damascus 825–841 AH/1422–1438 CE.
Obv.: In area divided by horizontal chain: [الناصر] المالك
Rev.: Six-pointed star with six-leaf rosette in center
ÆR, 0.59 g, 16 mm.
Cf. Balog 1970:169, No. 861.

18. B3101, L317, IAA 147061.
Mamluk, end of fourteenth century CE.
Æ, 3.55 g, 17 mm, cut.

19. B3101, L320, IAA 147062.
Mamluk, end of fourteenth century CE.
Æ, 3.75 g, 16 mm, cut.

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