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A Hoard by Any Other Name? Near-Synonyms and Word Choice in Archaeological Discourse

Gabriela Bijovsky and Rachel Kudish-Vashdi[1]

In archaeological discourse, mainly in the field of numismatics, many terms are used to describe groups of valuable artifacts found in a specific archaeological context. This study discusses the main synonymous nouns comprising the semantic field of the word *hoard*, with the aim of determining the differences between the lexical items and presenting a comprehensive rendering of their meaning. The results of this study stress the pragmatic, context-sensitive stance of synonymity, highlighting the importance of word-choice in the interpretation of archaeological finds.

Keywords: archaeological discourse, semantics, numismatics, hoard, synonyms, lexical co-occurrence, word choice

Introduction

The title of this paper echoes the phrase "a rose by any other name would smell as sweet"—a quotation from William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (Act 2, Scene 2), where Juliet Capulet argues that things are what they are, no matter what name you give them. In academic discourse, however, terminology is critical, as it formulates into conventions that allow researchers to convey their messages more explicitly. A fine example of the importance of properly defining a specific terminology are the terms used in archaeological discourse to describe intentionally deposited artifacts.

In the publication of the extraordinary group of cultic objects retrieved from a salvage excavation at Yavne, Kletter chose to describe it as "a repository pit of discarded votive objects," although he *does* say that "one may call it a *favissa* or a *geniza*" (Kletter 2010:204). In archaeological discourse, various synonymous nouns are used to describe groups of cultic or valuable objects found together in a designated context. While Kletter opted for the more neutral term, in this paper we attempt to define as accurately as possible the wide range of synonyms of the word *hoard*, highlighting the meanings that overlap and drawing

[1] Dr. Gabriela Bijovsky and Dr. Rachel Kudish-Vashdi, Israel Antiquities Authority.

Fig. 1. Front cover of the catalogue of the *Monedas de Ayer, Tesoros de Hoy* exhibition, Museu de Prehistòria de València, Spain 1997 (illustration: F. Chiner).

the line between meanings that distinguish one synonym from the other. By categorizing the various synonyms and mapping the relations between them, it is hoped that scholars pay more attention to the terms they use to define specific findings and make the most effective choice.

Reports on the discovery of a hoard in an excavation always raises excitement, imagination and curiosity among archaeologists and the public alike. This is due to the nature of their contents and the mystery underlying the circumstances of their deposition. For these reasons, hoards are a very popular subject for museum exhibitions and catalogues (see, e.g., Llorens Forcada, Ripollès Alegre and Doménech Belda 1997; Guri-Ramon 2013). The word hoard is commonly used to describe a group of valuable[2] objects intentionally hidden in a secret location known only to the owner with the intention of eventually being retrieved (Fig. 1;[3] see Kleeberg 2009:1). A shorter definition would be "a 'closed group' of associated artefacts" (Aitchison 1988:272). With hoard being the specific term for this kind of find, it is commonly used in archaeological discourse, especially among numismatists, who use

[2] We are aware of the fact that this term is subjective. In the eyes of the owner, the hoarded objects may have been valuable for a variety of reasons, be it ritual, social, monetary, etc.

[3] We are most grateful to Manuel Gozalbes and the staff of the Museu de Prèhistòria de Valencia, for allowing us to include this illustration.

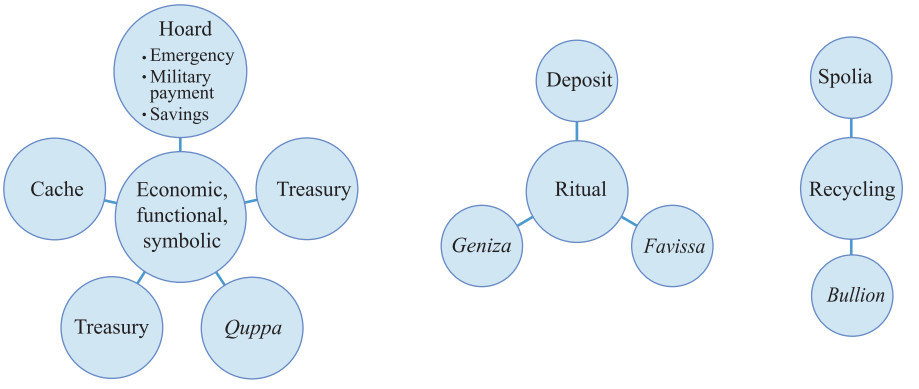

Fig. 2. Near-synonyms of the word *hoard* grouped according to hoarding intention.

it to indicate a group of two or more coins found together, particularly as an assemblage. However, other words belonging to the same semantic field are frequently used.

Included in the semantic field of the word *hoard* are synonyms that are regularly used in archaeological discourse. These words are presented in Fig. 2 according to conceivable value. The words *hoard*, *cache*, *treasure* and *trove* are notably used in the broadest sense, spanning the widest range of artifacts and pertaining to different values, while the words *deposit*, *favissa* and *geniza* are specifically used in ritual contexts. The words *spolia* and *bullion* are the most specific terms, primarily used to indicate an intention of recycling. Although the intention behind the deposition of a group of artifacts and the concept of being 'valuable' would call for a study of how people in ancient times thought ('cognitive archaeology'; Osborne 2004:3), this can be largely deduced from the type of artifact(s), location of deposition and when possible, historical circumstances.

Synonyms for *Hoard* in Archaeological Discourse

Synonyms are lexical representations of seemingly similar concepts; they are encoded by language and in turn, represent schematizations of experiences and background knowledge (Storjohann 2010:92). Although synonyms are different words with the same meaning, only in rare cases can these words be substituted without any change in connotation (Cruse 2000). In general, synonyms can be divided into three main types: (1) absolute/strict synonyms; (2) near/loose synonyms—words that share similarities in denotational meanings, yet not necessarily sharing collocates and semantic prosodies; and (3) sense synonyms—words that share one sense of meaning but are not interchangeable in the same context (Kearns 2006; Murphy 2010). Synonyms may be differentiated based on distribution patterns, collocations and semantic preferences.

Corpus linguistics can assist in the study of synonyms, reflecting an authentic use of language (Petcharat and Phoocharoensil 2017). In terms of quantitative analysis, corpus linguistics allows an investigation of the frequency of distribution patterns within a predetermined field of study, in this case, archaeology. One way to map the word usage in context is to map collocations, i.e., the natural co-occurrence of words (Sinclair 2004:22). The corpus used in this study comprises hundreds of articles in the field of archaeology that mention different nouns used to describe 'hoards,' which surfaced in advanced search results (full text) limited to English articles in journals, research papers and books in the field of archaeology (117 titles) retrieved from JSTOR. As we assume that the words chosen by various scholars are intentional rather than incidental, their usage enables tracing the various connotative meanings of these *hoard*-related nouns in archaeological discourse. The definitions of the various near-synonyms of the word *hoard* were checked in online dictionaries, primarily *The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (LDOCE)[4] and *Miriam Webster's Dictionary* (MWD).[5]

Based on the data retrieved, it is evident that archaeological discourse prefers the nouns *hoard* and *cache* to describe the largest range of artifacts, both nouns indicating the concealment of valuable artifacts with an intention to retrieve them later. But while *hoard* is mainly used to describe artifacts of monetary value, widely used in the field of numismatics, *cache* is the preferred word to describe artifacts of symbolic or functional value, especially in burial contexts (e.g., Gilmour and Kitchen 2012) and in prehistoric periods (e.g., Banning 2011; Westfall 2016). Finds concealed in a ritual act are frequently identified by the nouns *deposit*, *favissa* and *geniza*, each affiliated with specific kinds of finds (see below).

When checking the use of the near-synonymous nouns in collocations, the collocation *coin* + *hoard* is the most frequent (4909 out of 8362 occurrences of the word *hoard*), although other valuable artifacts are also classified as *hoard*, such as textiles, jewelry, metal, ivories and bullae. The word *hoard* is also used in the same sense as *treasure* + *trove* (the word *trove* appears in 979 articles, in 750 of which it appears as part of the collocation *treasure* + *trove*), i.e., in the general sense of "a valuable discovery, resource, or collection" (MWD) rather than in referring to a specific group of concealed finds. The collocation *royal* + *cache* is mainly used to describe burial kits of royal kings in ancient Egypt and Mayan culture (2576 occurrences out of a total of 10,036 mentions of the word *cache*), followed by the collocation *coins* + *cache*, which is mentioned 1197 times, and lithics + *cache*, 1076 times.

[4] https://www.ldoceonline.com

[5] https://www.merriam-webster.com

What Makes a *Hoard* a '*Hoard*'?

The word *hoard* is generally used to describe "a collection of things that someone hides somewhere, especially so they can use them later" (MWD). Before the development of commercial banking, the burial of coin *hoards* was a widespread practice. It is noteworthy, however, that *hoards* recovered today—by archaeologists, treasure hunters or looters—represent only a small fraction of those hidden, as most *hoards* were eventually retrieved by their owners and the coins could have then been recirculated or reburied. De Callataÿ (2017:314) suggests that the real question is whether one can assert why a particular *hoard* was concealed but never recovered.

Hoards can be classified into several classes and subdivisions, according to their nature, composition and purpose. For instance, Grierson (1975:130–136) classified hoards into four main groups based on the circumstances of their deposition: accidental losses; emergency hoards; savings hoards; and abandoned hoards. Kleeberg (2009:2) distinguished between three classes of finds when considering lost property, which also apply to hoards: lost (accidental), abandoned (intentional) and mislaid (negligent). De Callataÿ divided coin hoards into two: (1) intentionally buried and (2) accidentally lost. Regarding those hoards which were intentionally buried, he further distinguished between (a) hoards intended to be recovered and (b) those deliberately discarded (Callataÿ 2017:313–315). Recently, Howgego and Wilson defined hoards as "any group of coins which appear to have been deposited together" under several circumstances, like "buried in an emergency, ritually deposited or simply lost" (Howgego and Wilson 2021:4).

Coin hoards share several characteristics, such as: composition—either homogeneous (all coins are of the same material and date) or heterogeneous (different denominations, material and dates); chronology—all coins bear the same date, or show a sequence of dates spanning a given period; size—ranging from small (up to 50 coins) to large (as much as thousands of coins); and state of wear—older coins are usually more worn than newer ones (Llorens Forcada, Ripollès Alegre and Doménech Belda 1997:11–14).

The geographic distribution of concurrent hoards may indicate an association with a specific event as, for example, hoards hidden in the days of the Bar Kokhba Revolt (see *Emergency Hoards*, below). The mint provenance of coins in a hoard may suggest the place of origin of the assemblage, itineraries (if any) and trade relations that took place until its date of deposition. It is tempting for scholars to seek evidence of catastrophic events, such as wars, or natural disasters, e.g., epidemics, earthquakes and volcano eruptions, that led to a hoard's deposition. However, de Callataÿ is of the opinion that there are other, closer-to-home reasons for a hoard not to be recovered by its owner(s), such as a family dispute over an inheritance, or the sudden death of a hoard owner, who takes his secret with him to the grave. He also mentions robbery and piracy as probable reasons, for which there is usually no historical record or explanation (Callataÿ 2017:314). De Callataÿ (2017:327–328) further claims that "instability" can serve as a reason for not recovering a certain hoard, as was shown, for example, in a study by Turchin and Scheidel (2009), who point out

a correlation between the number of unrecovered hoards and the number of human losses during the Second Punic War.

Before delving into the different classes of hoards, a few comments are necessary to understand the interpretation of the deposition date of hoards. The latest/newest coin in a hoard provides the *terminus post quem*, i.e., the concealment must be concurrent or later than the latest coin's date of issue. This is relevant for instance, for the date of deposition of several second-century CE hoards of Trajan and the early reign of Hadrian attributed to the Bar Kokhba Revolt (132–136 CE), despite a lack of coins overstruck by the rebels (Goldman 2021:213). A well-dated coin hoard in a container, provides a *terminus ante quem* for the date of the container and all the objects in the same archaeological context (e.g., jewelry), meaning that they predate the time of the hoard's deposition. Another consideration is that the archaeological context of hoards is often not available. In many cases, it may make the difference in understanding the date of deposition and the reasons for non-recovery (Howgego and Wilson 2021:9).

That said, hoards may comply with one or more categories or sub-divisions. In the following pages, 'hoards' are classified and identified by the most accurate word in the same semantic field. Most of the examples presented below are from the field of ancient numismatics; however, 'hoards' of other artifacts are preferred when they are more descriptive than the coin finds.

Words Belonging to the Semantic Field of *Hoard* and Hoard Types

This section discusses each of the *hoard*-related synonyms, offering an explicit definition, which is further supported by examples of finds from excavations in Israel, mainly in the field of numismatics. We distinguish between three types of assemblages identified by the name *hoard*, based on the circumstances of their deposition: emergency hoards, military payment hoards and savings hoards. All other types of 'hoards' discussed in this study do not include the component *hoard* in their names (see below).

Hoard

Emergency Hoards

Such hoards were deliberately concealed by the owner upon the advent of imminent danger, with the intention of recovery after the threat had passed. Reasons for this may be wars or rebellions (see Klein et al., this volume; Kool, this volume), turbulent times, or fiscal or economic uncertainty concerning the future. Most emergency hoards were carefully hidden within a container, usually representing the currency in circulation during the time of their deposition, with the latest coin providing the *terminus post quem*. One of the principal characteristics of this category is that during turbulent times, there is usually an increase in the number of hoards, which, based on their date of deposition, can be connected to the same event. The most typical case is the sharp increase in the number of hoards during

the First Jewish Revolt (66–73 CE) and the Bar Kokhba Revolt (132–136 CE) (Goldman 2021:215–216).

That said, hoarding can also be linked to a general fear generated, e.g., by civil war, political instability and particularly, financial violence caused by monetary reforms (Callataÿ 2017:335). An illustrative example of the latter is the Byzantine gold hoard retrieved from the Bet She'an Youth Hostel, which yielded 751 *solidi* struck by Emperors Phocas (602–610 CE), Heraclius (610–641 CE), Constans II (641–668 CE) and Constantine IV (668–681 CE) hidden within a cooking pot (Fig. 3). It was most likely buried to avoid confiscation in the preceding unstable decade and 'Abd el-Malik's monetary reform in 696/697 CE (Aitchison 1988:272; Bijovsky 2002:161–227).[6]

Military Payment Hoards

Hoards of this type are generally homogeneous. Depending on the historical period, they can comprise gold, silver or bronze coins bearing military iconography or legionary countermarks; alternatively, they may comprise silver imperial or provincial issues, such

Fig. 3. Emergency hoard: Byzantine gold hoard retrieved from the Bet She'an Youth Hostel (photography: C. Amit).

[6] See Bijovsky 2002:180–185, especially p. 183, Fig. 11, presenting a table of Byzantine *hoards* from the Southern Levant classified according to date of deposition in relation to a specific event: e.g., the Persian invasion (608/610–615 CE) or the Arab conquest (c. 636 CE).

as *denars* and *tetradrachms*. Although initially intended as salary payment for soldiers, mercenaries and veterans, once handed over, these coins circulated in the local currency and were used by the general population. Hoards of this type may comprise thousands of coins kept in containers, such as the Mamshit hoard (Rosenthal-Heginbottom 2013:49–55), or wrapped in a piece of cloth, e.g., at Lod (see below).

One example of a hoard intended as a military salary payment is an assemblage of coins dated to the time of Alexander Jannaeus (104–76 BCE), found at Khirbat Mezin (Qaṣr el-Yahud) on the shore of the Dead Sea, south of ʻEin Feshkha. Thousands of coins, almost all of the same type, were scattered along a 50 m segment of the present-day shoreline, where a large structure, apparently a fortress, and a dock for boats once stood. The excavators considered the assemblage as originating in a sunken boat carrying salary payments for Jannaeus' army, including mercenaries (Hirschfeld and Ariel 2005:66–89).

Another type of military payment hoard was found at Shuʻafaṭ, north of Jerusalem (Fig. 4). It comprised 110 Roman Provincial bronze coins found near a jar's broken rim (possibly part of its receptacle) in Insula 9, Room E.[7] Although the coins are very worn, most of them,

Fig. 4. Military payment *hoards*: countermark's *hoard* from Shuʻafaṭ (photography: C. Amit).

[7] The excavations were conducted by Rachel Bar-Nathan (2006–2007) and Deborah Sklar (2003–2005) of the IAA. The coins were identified by Gabriela Bijovsky; the final report is in preparation. The site is dated by the excavators to the time between the two Jewish revolts. For a preliminary report, see Bar-Nathan and Sklar Parnes 2007:5–24.

totaling 56, were identified as the Judea Capta issue of 'Victory writing on shield leaning on palm tree' minted in Caesarea by Titus (*TJC*:265, No. 381), which celebrated the victory of the Romans over the Jews in 70 CE. Other mints appearing in the hoard include, inter alia, coins from Neapolis, Sebaste, Philadelphia-Rabbat Amon and Antioch. Fifty coins bear a rectangular countermark on the obverse with a head facing right, a type attributed to Legio X Fretensis (Howgego 1985:131, No. 135). The latest coin is dated to Trajan, but due to its bad condition, the details are illegible (Bijovsky 2007a:69– 71).

Howgego (1985:17, 20) suggested that legionary countermarked coins were basically intended for use by the Roman army. However, as noted above, in a later phase these coins were eventually used by the local population, becoming part of the currency in circulation during the period between the two Jewish revolts (70–132 CE).

Another hoard, containing 2755 bronze coins, was discovered in salvage excavations in Lod (Fig. 5) and serves to highlight the intrinsic relation between martial iconography and a group of military hoards dated to the mid fourth-century CE. This hoard was found under

a

b

c

Fig. 5. Military payment hoard: (a) the Lod hoard; (b) detail of coins with attached cloth; (c) FEL TEMP REPARATIO coin, Constantius Gallus, 352–354 CE (photography: D. Gazit).

a Roman-period floor;[8] the function of the space where it was found remains, however, uncertain. The coins were carefully wrapped in a piece of cloth, indicating that they were probably deposited intentionally.[9] Circa 43% of the coins were ultimately cleaned and identified. All were in excellent condition, dating to 348–355 CE. Four different emperors were documented in the hoard, with 12 mints identified and seven reverse coin types discerned.[10] The iconography is purely imperial military propaganda, emphasizing the victory of the Romans over the Persians. The predominant type in the hoard reads the reverse legend FEL TEMP REPARATIO ("restoration of happy times"; Fig. 5:c). The scene depicts the emperor striking down the king of the Persians with a spear, who falls from his horse in several postures (known as 'fallen horseman,' FH; 352–354 CE); the fallen horseman types were the only ones to be struck.[11] Similar hoards totaling thousands of coins have been found at Qaẓrin in the Golan and in the synagogue at Caesarea (Bijovsky 2007b:195–199).

Savings Hoards

Most hoards in this category were collected over a long period of time, their contents gathered by the owner based on the quality and value of the coins. Such hoards may include rare and exotic coins from distant places, sometimes interpreted as a "hoard of a collector in antiquity."[12] Howgego and Wilson (2021:14) claim that the "selectivity of coins for hoarding is of great interest for discerning the monetary behaviour of those doing the selecting."

Savings hoards are typologically heterogeneous and dating their contents is somewhat complicated; at best, a *terminus ante quem* can be established. Most savings hoards have been found within a container, more specifically, money boxes or 'piggy banks'.

An exceptional example is a group of 125 silver coins concealed in a ceramic 'piggy bank' found in the lower floor of a collapsed structure (Building B) within the medieval quarter of al-Waṭṭa in Safed (Ẓefat; Kool and Berman 2019; Fig. 6). The hoard, concealed after the 1340s, yielded coins of two different but concurrent currencies: 82 Mamlūk *dirhams* and 43 Venetian *grossi* spanning a period of some 110 years.[13] Considering the composition

[8] Salvage excavations were conducted in 1995–1996 by Eli Yannai and Raduan Badhi on behalf of the IAA.

[9] For additional data concerning the historical background and archaeological context of this group, see Bijovsky 2007b.

[10] The emperors are: Constantius II (337–361 CE), Constans I (337–350 CE), Constantius Gallus (351–354 CE) and Magnentius (350–353 CE). The mints are (from west to east): Lyon, Arles, Rome, Aquilea, Siscia, Thessalonica, Heraclea Thracia, Constantinople, Nicomedia, Cyzicus, Antioch and Alexandria.

[11] The other coin types show the emperor fighting in a number of scenes: standing on a galley, galloping, holding standards and dragging captives from a hut (see Bijovsky 2007b:188–189).

[12] See Aitchison 1988:273. A probable example for a collector's hoard is the hoard of 44 bronze coins discovered within a natural crevice at the threshold of the door connecting two rooms in Building III of excavations in Khirbat Badd ʿIssa, Qiryat Sefer (Bijovsky 2004:244–246).

[13] This extraordinary find was published by Kool and Berman (2019). The description of the coins is as follows: 46 *dirhams,* 34 fractions of *dirhams*, two Mamlūk overstrikes on Armenian silver pieces, struck by six consecutive Mamlūk sultans dating to 1260s–1341 CE and 43 Venetian *grossi* dating to 1230s–1330s CE. Most of the coins are dated to 1310–1341 CE.

Fig. 6. Savings *hoard*: a hoard of silver coins concealed in a ceramic 'piggy bank' from al-Waṭṭa, Safed (photography: C. Amit).

of the hoard, whose contents show the currency in circulation at the time of concealment, it seems that the Safed hoard should be better classified as an emergency hoard of the subtype 'fear from confiscation' (see above). This suggestion is also based on the circumstances of this hoard's deposition: the heavy fiscal measures taken by Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, which included confiscation of property and the imposition of new taxes (Kool and Berman 2019:174). If it were not for the container that shows a slot near the top to insert the coins, there would probably be no justification for identifying this find as a savings hoard.

A better example of a savings hoard is a small group of three Byzantine gold *solidi* found in the corner of a room in a monastery excavated at Har Ḥoma, south of Jerusalem. The coins were deliberately hidden in a hole carved into the wall's rock foundations (W520; Zelinger 2022: Fig. 5) and could be easily inserted and retrieved through a small opening. Due to their significant value and deliberate hiding in a secure place, it may be determined that the hole served as the monastery's safe (Bijovsky 2022a).

Quppa (Funds)

This category is specifically used to describe savings hoards within ancient synagogues. Two types of *quppa* can be distinguished based on their function: (1) a charity fund (צדקה), in which coins are collected for the purpose of donation; (2) a community fund, comprising money intended for the upkeeping of the synagogue and community affairs. An illustrative example of the first type of *quppa*, i.e., for charity, was discovered adjacent

Fig. 7. *Quppa*: Gush Ḥalav synagogue, coins intended for charity (photography: C. Amit).

to the northwestern entrance in the western corridor of the synagogue at Gush Ḥalav, in Upper Galilee (Fig. 7; Bijovsky 1998). A cooking pot served as the container; it was not intentionally hidden but uncovered on a washed-in layer of soil covering a plaster floor of Period IV (460–550 CE), the last phase of the synagogue that collapsed in the earthquake of 551 CE. The cooking pot yielded a total of 1953 tiny and worn coins, all *minimi*, which constituted the worthless base metal coins roughly dated from the fourth–sixth centuries CE. Based on the coin evidence, the accumulation of coins in the vessel started sometime in the mid-fourth century CE and continued without interruption until the last days of the synagogue in 551 CE. This was, presumably, the reason for the deposition of the coins.[14] As is often found in modern times, charity comprised modest change donations.

The group of coins retrieved from the synagogue at Ḥorbat Merot in Upper Galilee is a descriptive example of a community *quppa* (Bijovsky 2022b). It is suggested that the

[14] The latest coins in the cooking pot are a *nummus* from Carthage, minted by Justinian I (538–542 CE; Bijovsky 1998:98, No. 367) and an Ostrogothic coin of King Baduila (549–552 CE; Bijovsky 1998:99, No. 370).

coins constitute the savings of the community, intended for synagogue maintenance and community expenses (Fig. 8). It was discovered in a concealed niche hewn in the rock within a vaulted storeroom adjacent to the exterior of the western wall of the synagogue. This secret space contained 482 coins of significant value: 244 gold coins (including all three Byzantine denominations); and 238 coins of the two largest copper denominations, *folles* and half *folles*. The importance of this find lies in its chronological and typological composition, which reflect the proportions of gold and large coppers in circulation during the sixth and the beginning of the seventh century CE in Byzantine Palestine. The earliest coins date to Anastasius I and the latest coin, which provides the time of concealment, belongs to a rare series of *solidi* struck during the Rebellion of the Heraclii in 610/611 CE (Bijovsky 2022b:140, 152–153). The *quppa* was seemingly abandoned shortly after, and eventually forgotten, although the synagogue continued in use until the earthquake of 749 CE.

Another example of a community *quppa* was discovered in the synagogue of Deir ʻAziz in the Golan. A ceramic juglet with its neck removed contained 14 Byzantine *solidi*, all struck by Justinian I. The hoard was found within the southern wall of the synagogue at the top of a fill comprising architectural fragments buried intentionally beneath the bema (see *Geniza*, below). Since the hoard was discovered in a public building, it was probably the savings or property of the community (Ahipaz 2007:157–165; Ma'oz 2013:71–75).

Fig. 8. *Quppa*: Synagogue at Ḥorbat Merot, savings of the community (photography: C. Amit).

Treasure

The word *treasure* is defined as "wealth (such as money, jewels, or precious metals) stored up or hoarded" (MWD). This near-synonym of *hoard* emphasizes the concept of wealth, being a collection of precious items, such as coins or jewelry. Treasures, whether belonging to an individual, group or community, are always stored and hidden intentionally. A treasure's existence is known only to its owners; if it is not recovered after a certain time, it becomes forgotten and lost. Moreover, a treasure does not entail any explanation for its deposition. Many treasures, however, may be sub-classified as emergency hoards when historically related to violent events, natural calamities, diseases or plagues (see Abadi-Reiss et al., this volume).

One of the most impressive finds in this category was discovered in 2013 in the 'Ofel excavations, south of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem (Fig. 9). The treasure was intentionally hidden in a small concavity sunken in the floor of one of the rooms within the 'House of the Pillars' and covered by a layer of earth; according to the excavator, it was the property of a Jewish community (Mazar 2013:74). The treasure included a large gold medallion depicting a seven-branched menorah, flanked by a shofar and a Torah scroll. The medallion was placed carefully over a group of gold and silver jewelry pieces which remained hidden.

Fig. 9. Treasure: gold jewelry and coins from the 'House of the Pillars' in Jerusalem's 'Ofel (photography: C. Amit).

In addition, 26 gold Byzantine *solidi* were found scattered on the floor nearby (Sandberg 2013:313–336). Although no container was found, the excavator suggested that the entire treasure may have been wrapped in two cloth purses (Mazar 2013:47). The latest coin belongs to Maurice Tiberius (582–602 CE) and therefore, the treasure could not have been concealed before his reign. The treasure was abandoned in haste and never recovered. Its circumstances of deposition are most probably connected to the Persian invasion, the siege and eventual conquest of Jerusalem in 614 CE (Bijovsky 2012b:423–427; Mazar 2013:85–88). In this context, the ‘Ofel treasure may also be considered an emergency hoard.

Treasury

Not to be confused with treasure, a treasury is “a place in which stores of wealth are kept” (MWD). This word, therefore, describes the place of deposition rather than the contents. That said, treasuries typically house assemblages of wealth, e.g., of dynastic character, such as the British royal family’s *Regalia* at the Tower of London (Fig. 10:a) or a nation’s treasury, like the gold ingots at the Federal Reserve Bank, New York (Fig. 10:b). Treasuries indicate prestige. The contents of treasuries are also gathered intentionally, displayed during ceremonial events and exhibitions, although not always visible to outsiders. In 2019, the location of the *sacellum* within the *principia* of the legionary base at Legio was unearthed (Tepper, Adams and Ernenwein 2023). Based on parallels from other Roman military bases throughout the Empire, this room frequently included a cellar (*aerarium*) for the storage of the legion’s treasury.

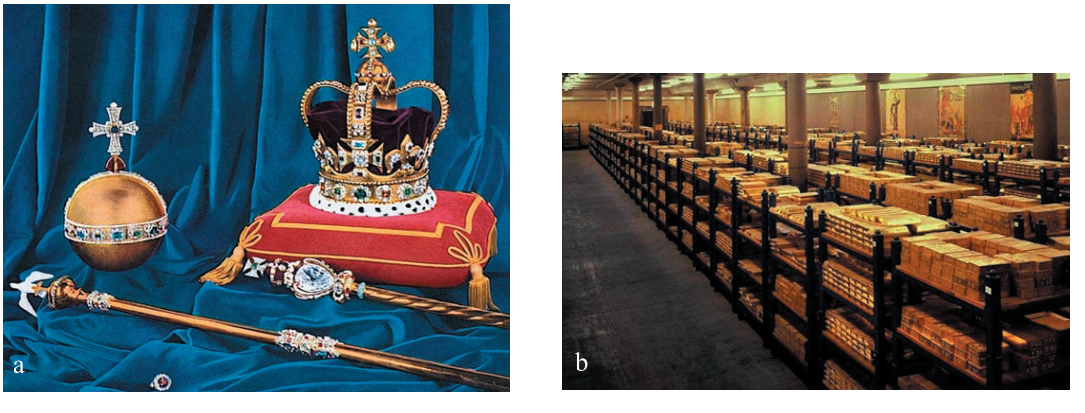

Fig. 10. Treasury: (a) *Regalia* of the British Empire at the Tower of London (published on December 19, 2019; author unknown, https://www.worldhistory.org/image/11653/british-crown-jewels/); (b) gold ingots in the Federal Reserve Bank, New York (https://www.identiv.com/resources/blog/the-worlds-most-secure-buildings-federal-reserve-bank-of-new-york).

Cache

The word cache, borrowed from the French, is a derivative of the verb cacher, "to hide, to conceal"; the noun describes both the hiding place and the items hidden, especially weapons (MWD; LDOCE).[15] In archaeological discourse, the word cache is widely used to describe a large range of artifacts, whose value was not necessarily economic, as is the case of *hoard*, but rather functional, ritual or symbolic (see also Barzilai and Goring-Morris 2007:280).

In archaeological discourse, the collocation *coin* + *cache* is much less used compared to *coin* + *hoard* (1197 versus 4909). Furthermore, it is noteworthy that *coin* + *cache* usually refers to a cache of finds that includes *inter alia* coins. The word cache, however, is widely applied when describing groups of finds other than coins, such as funerary equipment, e.g., the royal cache from Deir El-Baḥri (Niwiński 1984), and lithic artifacts in prehistoric contexts (e.g., Barzilai and Goring-Morris 2007; Khalaily, Milevski and Barzilai 2013).[16] *Cache*, like *hoard*, implies the hiding or concealment of items to be retrieved by their owner, but unlike *hoard*, which necessarily implies that the hidden items had an economic value, artifacts comprising a cache were stored for their functional—to be used in the future—or symbolic value, when connected with cult or burial practices. It is, however, possible for a cache of lithic artifacts, for example, to be of economic value if the main purpose of their production is to create use-values barter; 'spontaneous' forms of exchange occur in most prehistoric societies (see Milevski 2011:24–26).

At Yiftaḥ'el, in Lower Galilee, several caches—groups of hidden artifacts—have been found within a pit that served as a cache, i.e., the hiding place (Khalaily, Milevski and Barzilai 2013).[17] An impressive building complex with plastered floors was uncovered (Area I), in which a cache of three plastered skulls was deposited in a pit (Fig. 11:a). Three caches containing bidirectional flint blades and tools (Fig. 11:b) and a cache of eight miniature votive green axes (made of malachite and serpentine) were discovered on the floor of Building 501. All these remains date to the mid–late Pre-Pottery Neolithic B period (c. 8000–7000 BCE). The excavators suggested that the deposition of flint tools was a communal activity (Khalaily, Milevski and Barzilai 2013:219) and proposed identifying the caching with three activities: (1) deposition of household accessories for functional reasons—flint blades and tools together with other items; (2) storing blades and projectile points with other items associated with tool manufacture within indoor workshops; and (3) caching of prestige items, such as the votive miniature axes, which were primary designated for ceremonial use (Khalaily, Milevski and Barzilai 2013:227–228).

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[15] In the years of military conflict prior to the establishment of the State of Israel, a special term, *sliq*, was used to describe a cache of weapons.

[16] We are most thankful to Dr. Ianir Milevski of the IAA for introducing us to this subject.

[17] The excavations, conducted by Hamoudi Khalaily, Ianir Milevski and Nimrod Getzov on behalf of the IAA, took place in 2007–2008. Four new areas were excavated: Areas F, H, G and I. For a detailed description of the finds, see Khalaily, Milevski and Barzilai 2013:223–226.

a

b

Fig. 11. Cache: (a) Yiftaḥ'el, three plastered skulls (photography: I. Milevski); (b) Yiftaḥ'el, bidirectional flint blades and tools (photography: H. Khalaily).

Votive Deposits

The word *deposit* is generally used to describe "something placed for safekeeping" (MWD). In archaeological discourse, however, this word is frequently used to describe the concealment of a group of finds—and hence its role as a near-synonym of the word *hoard*—albeit without any intention of being retrieved. In the field of numismatics, *deposits* comprise large numbers of very worn, small coins of similar size and weight—most not in circulation—which were buried at the time of construction or restoration of buildings, mainly synagogues, during the Byzantine period. Hundreds and thousands of *minimi* were scattered in the edifices: beneath floors, thresholds and benches, in niches or in corners. This

phenomenon is typically known as "foundation deposits"; recently, however, Ahipaz and Leibner (2023) challenged this term and introduced a more general one: "floor deposits."[18] As the purpose of the custom of burying coins was apparently to draw blessings for good luck, wealth, welfare and abundance, this phenomenon should be considered as a cultic or ritual practice, and therefore regarded as "votive deposits." Surprisingly, on several occasions single gold coins were buried in inaccessible deposits beneath a floor, attesting that votive deposits could have been very valuable (Reece 1988:263). Four examples of this phenomenon have been noted, all from synagogues: Dabbiye, Umm-el Qanaṭir and Deir 'Aziz in the Golan, and Ḥorbat Rimmon in the southern Judean Shephelah.[19]

The practice of burying large quantities of coins under the stone slabs of floors, benches and thresholds, near entrances or the Holy Ark, was very popular in fifth- and first half of sixth-century CE synagogues in the eastern Galilee and the central Golan.[20] The votive deposit of coins, or other valuable objects, such as figurines and amulets, was a pagan and secular practice widespread throughout the Roman Empire, eventually adopted in Byzantine Palestine, especially in synagogues.[21] The only examples of votive deposits in Byzantine churchs in our region were found at Khirbat Fa'ush, Makkabbim (Bijovsky 2012b:86), which yielded four coin deposits, and the Southern Church at Shivṭa, which yielded three coin deposits in niches (see Tepper and Farhi, this volume). It is possible that apart from the ritual aspect of this practice, it was also the easiest way to get rid of superfluous small change in currency that had lost its purchasing value.

A coin deposit of *minimi* was discovered in the renewed excavations in the ancient synagogue at Ḥorbat Kanaf in the Golan (Fig. 12).[22] It was found beneath a stone floor that was repaired with a thick layer of plaster. The excavators[23] date the construction of the synagogue to the fourth century CE and its destruction to 551 CE, when an earthquake had struck the Southern Levant (Zingboym 2021:105–115).[24]

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[18] Ahipaz and Leibner (2023) believe that the term "foundation deposits" is misleading since the examples they studied were all buried beneath renovated floors and not structure foundations.

[19] Dabbiye: a *solidus* of Gratian in deposit L124, 367–375 CE (Ariel 1991: No. 6); Umm el-Qanaṭir (Dray, Gonen and Ben David 2017:209–231); Deir 'Aziz: two *tremisses* of Justinian I, mixed in a deposit of 345 *nummia* (Ahipaz 2013:64); Ḥorbat Rimmon: a *semisses* of Justinian I and a *solidus* of Tiberius II related to stratum VI (Kloner 1989:46).

[20] For the most updated list of synagogues in Byzantine Palestine where this practice was applied, see Ahipaz and Leibner 2023:147-148.

[21] For an example in secular buildings, see the bathhouse of Insula W2S3, Caesarea, where a deposit of 106 *minimi* was discovered in a fill within a pit (Bijovsky 2012a:87–88).

[22] Excavations were conducted by Oren Zingboym on behalf of the IAA, together with Roi Assis and Jenny Peterson in 2018. Some 500 coins were discovered during the excavations, yet they still await numismatic analysis. The site was first uncovered in the 1980s by Zvi Ma'oz. For more information, see Zingboym 2021. We are most grateful to Oren Zingboym for the information and photographs.

[23] Haim Ben-David shares the same opinion.

[24] For the numismatic consequences of the 551 CE earthquake and the disappearance of *nummia* from circulation, see Bijovsky 2012a:256–260.

Fig. 12. Votive deposit: *minimi beneath the repaired floor of the* Ḥorbat Kanaf synagogue (photography: O. Zingboym).

Fig. 13. Votive deposit: coins from the wishing pool at the spring tunnel of ‘En Ẓur, Ramat Ha-Nadiv (photography: C. Amit).

Another variation of a votive deposit is the pagan tradition of throwing huge quantities of mainly worthless coins into wishing waters, such as wells, fountains and pools; often coins that were not in circulation as currency were used (Aitchison 1988:277). A good example of a votive deposit in Israel is the wishing pool at the spring tunnel of ‘En Ẓur, Ramat Ha-Nadiv, excavated by Yizhar Hirschfeld. Roughly 2100 coins were found in the corner of a small inner pool (Fig. 13). According to the Bordeaux Pilgrim, who visited the site in the fourth

century CE (Barkay 2000:377–419; after *Itinerarium Burdigalense*:1–26 [333]), the coins were thrown into the pool primarily by female bathers as an offering in recognition of the fertility properties of the water.

Such deposits accumulated over a long period, especially by pilgrims expecting to receive wealth, fertility and health in return. Blackburn (2005:10) described this phenomenon as a "cumulative deposit," and Aitchison offered a more general definition, "accumulation" (Aitchison 1988:274)—both suggestions emphasizing the dynamic process of a succession of deposition acts over a long period, while the term "votive deposit" alludes to the intention of the deposition. It is noteworthy that some scholars are of the opinion that votive deposits should not be considered hoards, as they were not assembled intentionally and not expected to be recovered (Llorens Forcada, Ripollès Alegre and Doménech Belda 1997:10); this, however, is not the common view. On the other hand, Callataÿ (2017:332, n. 63) stressed that there is a growing tendency toward the use of the adjective "ritual" when a deposit cannot be otherwise explained.

Other forms of votive deposits may be the concealment of astragali near the fortifications of Middle Bronze Age Tel Nagila (see Sapir-Hen et al., this volume) and the concentrations of intact cooking pots deposited near the city walls of Second Temple period Jerusalem (see Lieberman, Monnickendam-Givon and Dan-Goor, this volume). Although these phenomena are not fully understood, they seem to be connected with rituals performed near city fortifications.

Favissa

This term is used specifically to describe a group of sacred objects that belonged to a temple, shrine or sanctuary, which due to their value and prestige could not be discarded or destroyed after going out of use. For this reason, these objects were buried or stored, with no intention of ever being retrieved. Although very similar to votive deposits, this group of finds is primarily determined by its cultic nature, elsewhere described as "cult deposits" or "ritual burials" (Strassburger 2015:200).[25]

The definition of the Latin word *favissa* is an "underground reservoir or cellar near the temples, for water or for sacred utensils no longer in use"; the word may have originated from the word *fovea*, meaning "small pit" (*The Latin Lexicon*).[26] Such subterranean spaces were used to store votive objects; however, as Kletter (2010:203) has stated in his publication of the votive finds from Yavne, "archaeologists have made great use of the term *favissa* for all kinds of cultic assemblages."

[25] It is noteworthy that if the abovementioned deposits of astragali and cooking pots will turn out to be understood as cultic artifacts related to a nearby temple or a shrine and buried for their sanctity, they should be redifined as a favissa rather than "votive deposits."

[26] https://latinlexicon.org/search_latin.php

Strassburger (2015), in the second volume of the publication of the finds from the Yavne repositing pit, further debated over the term *favissa* and offered in-depth criteria for defining such finds, including examples from many excavated sites in Israel, dating from the Late Bronze Age to the Persian period. According to Strassburger, the term *favissa* should be defined as a ritual burial or cultic deposit of votive objects, which were concealed in a secondary context in or near a temple. The 'container' of the deposit may vary: cave, room, cistern or vessel. The deposit may have occurred at one time, or reflect a repeated act. The main criterion for defining a *favissa* lies in the intention behind the concealment of the objects; this, however, as stated above, cannot always be deduced from the material finds (see Osborne 2004). Based on the data presented by Strassburger (2015), it may be concluded that for a ritual burial/cultic deposit to be considered a *favissa*, it must pertain to the following criteria:

Type of Objects: Special artifacts in terms of cultic nature (stands, incense burners, altars), size (miniature vessels) or investment (figurines, complex artifacts);
Condition: A sealed context, which is unreachable and no longer visible;
Location: In or near a temple/sanctuary/shrine, at a maximum distance of 10 m;
Patterns of Use: Traces of burning or breakage;
Findspot: Pit, cave, cistern or subterranean room;.
Disposal: Discarded at one time, or orderly placed in clearly distinguishable layers;
Accompanying Rituals: e.g., remains of cult meals;
Parallels: In contemporary temple paraphernalia;
Date: One period or collected over a long time span.

The extraordinary *favissa* unearthed at Yavne (Fig. 14; Kletter, Ziffer and Zwickel 2010; 2015) comprises special artifacts of cultic nature, e.g., stands, incense burners and altars, which have parallels in contemporary temple paraphernalia.[27] The artifacts were concealed in a sealed pit: some bear traces of burning, while others were broken. They were orderly

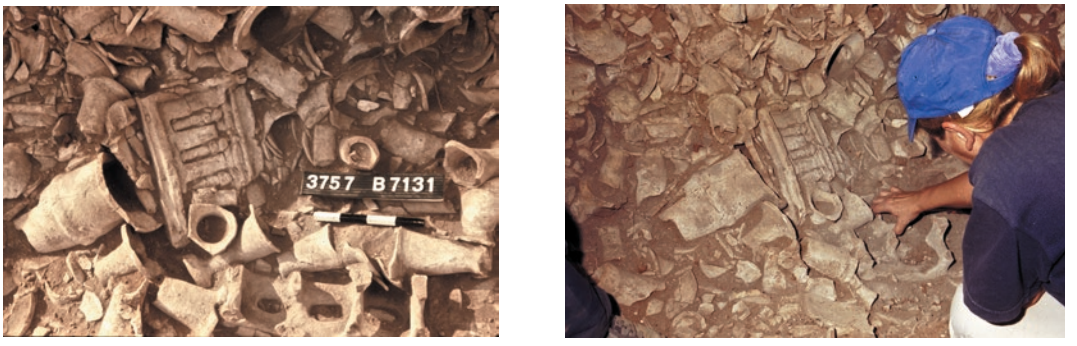

Fig. 14. *Favissa*: cultic vessels from the pit at Yavne (photography: T. Sagiv).

[27] The salvage excavation was conducted by Raz Kletter on behalf of the IAA in October–November 2002.

placed in clearly distinguishable layers, probably collected over a long time. As noted above, although the group of sacred items from Yavne answers to most of the above-mentioned criteria, the excavator preferred to describe it as a "repository pit" as no temple, sanctuary or shrine were unearthed nearby.

Geniza

The Hebrew word *geniza* derives from the Hebrew root *gnz*, which means "to hide, store." This word originated from the Persian word *ganj*, which, like the Arabic word *janāza*, means "burial" but also denotes a treasure (Goitein 1960:91a). *Geniza* is specifically used to define the storage area or storeroom in a Jewish synagogue designated for worn-out books and papers in Hebrew script—not necessarily in the Hebrew language—relating to religious topics, before their proper burial in a cemetery; such books could not simply be abandoned, destroyed or re-used, but had to be preserved in a concealed depository (Beit-Arié 1996). This type of assemblage is similar to the *favissa*; however, the word *geniza* is reserved for Jewish documents and books that are no longer in use but cannot be destroyed, such as the well-known Cairo Geniza. It is noteworthy that the Cairo Geniza in the Ben-Ezra synagogue at Fustat preserved also Egyptian chanceries written in Arabic, which have nothing to do with Jewish life: while some of these texts bear Hebrew or Aramaic writing on their verso, rendering them worthy of being consigned in the Geniza, others, which were not reused as writing material, may have found their way to the Geniza through Jewish clerks that had worked in the chancery (Stern 1964:530–532). Rustow (2010:21), however, noted that this explanation does not answer the question as to why these texts were needed by the Jewish community, and suggested that the discarded petitions from Cairo were sought by the Jewish community as models of writing, acting as a library of formularies. These petitions circled in the Jewish community for some time, until the caliph was replaced, and the old formulae were obsolete, when they were used as scrap or discarded in the Geniza.

Another form of a text repository is the archive, where documents that were no longer required were deposited.[28] From the dawn of history, archival practices have stood at the heart of empires, nations, religious orders and institutions, often used as a mechanism for consolidating and reinforcing power (Yale 2015:332). Private archives of nobles, families and other individuals are also known, comprising, e.g., letters, legal texts, tax receipts and purchase deeds. The texts were arranged on shelves or inside labelled containers. Only a small number of archives were found *in situ*, while most of what we have today are documents that survived in spite of their having been discarded (Paul 2018:347). Such

[28] The word *archive*, from the Latin *archivum*, derives from the Greek word *archeion*, literally meaning government house (in plural: official documents) (MWD). The Greek word entered the Hebrew and was used in this sense in Rabbinical literature, replacing the earlier term, *ganzakh*, which originated in the Persian language (see, e.g., 1 Chronicles 28:11; Book of Esther 3:9).

Fig. 15. *Geniza*: architectural elements buried beneath the bema of the Deir ‘Aziz synagogue (photography: H. Ben-David).

archives are first-hand evidence of various aspects of daily life. The recovery of such texts and their deciphering shed light on heretofore unknown social, religious and economic issues, e.g., in the medieval Islamic world (see Haim, this volume).

A wider interpretation of *geniza* was offered by Ma’oz (2013:71), who considered that the term can also be applied to a group of architectural elements that originated in a synagogue and went out of use; however, due to their sacred context, they could not be discarded, so they were buried beneath the bema of the synagogue. Two examples for this practice are noted in the Nabratein[29] and Deir ‘Aziz synagogues. At Deir ‘Aziz, four fragments of an aedicule were buried at the base of the Holy Ark (bema; Fig. 15). Ma’oz assumed that these fragments were unquestionably buried due to the prestige, and perhaps even sanctity that the refurbished synagogue would inherit (Ma’oz 2013:74). Although the term *geniza* is usually related to textual records, it may also be applied to architectural elements of a synagogue that went out of use, as the function of both is the same, only the media is different. The religious character of the *geniza* marks the difference between it and *spolia* (see below).

[29] In the Nabratein synagogue, the *geniza* contained the buried fragments of an aedicule featuring two rampant lions, which belonged to an earlier phase of the synagogue (see Younger 2009:84–87).

SPOLIA

The term *spolia* is used in archaeological discourse to describe an intentional reuse of architectural elements from ancient shrines and temples in the creation of new structures. *Spolia* is a secular version of hoarding, comprising items intended for secondary use or recycling, as noted in the facade of the Bar‘am synagogue in Upper Galilee (Aviam 2019:296–297, n. 21). Examples of *spolia* are largely found in synagogue architecture, but are also known to exist in other media, such as the marble *spolia* from ‘Akko (Stern 2013:89*–95*) and the Giv‘ati Parking Lot excavations (Fig. 16).[30] It is distinguished from

a

b

Fig. 16. *Spolia*: Giv‘ati Parking Lot: (a) marble fragment with a Latin inscription reused in an ‘Abbasid wall; (b) huge quantities of marble chunks intended as raw material for the production of limestone (photographs: courtesy of Yana Tchekhanovets).

[30] Salvage excavations at the Giv‘ati Parking Lot, Jerusalem, have been conducted since 2008, and from 2013 to 2017, by Doron Ben Ami and Yana Tchekhanovets on behalf of the IAA; and between 2017–2018, by Yuval Gadot and Yifhah Shalev, on behalf of Tel Aviv University and the IAA.

geniza by its secular nature—the architectural elements are not considered sacred—and by the fact the architectural elements were recycled, as opposed to buried or concealed.

Unlike other categories of hoards discussed above, which were hidden in a certain place, the *spolia* from the Giv'ati Parking Lot excavations comprises a large marble assemblage of over 2400 fragments discovered throughout the site in secondary use, mainly dating from the Byzantine to the Abbasid period (Tchekhanovets 2016). As there were no marble quarries in Israel, almost all marble items found in the country were imported. Most of the crafted fragments produced in the Byzantine period were reused in the Early Islamic period, and a large concentration of marble chunks and limestone intended as raw construction material were recycled in a large limekiln at the beginning of the Umayyad period (Fig. 16:b). In the Abbasid period, the area became a large open market with many refuse pits. As noted above, most fragments were "spoliated" in Byzantine liturgical furniture and Abbasid buildings, while many other pieces were discarded into a large Late Roman water cistern. The Giv'ati *spolia* is evidence that the builders considered marble a raw material fit for producing high quality plaster for construction, regardless of its beauty and luxury. *Spolia* is thus connected primarily to functionality.

Bullion

Bullion means "metal in the mass" (MWD), i.e., the value of the metal is determined by its weight. In archaeological discourse, this term refers to assemblages of metal artifacts and coins intended for recycling or for the issuing of new coins. In ancient times, metal resources were limited, and therefore, the mass of metal originated from the recycling of metal artifacts that went out of use (e.g., broken vessels or statues), or coins withdrawn from circulation, which retained their intrinsic metal value (Bijovsky 2012b:40).

An illustrative example is the *bullion* retrieved from the 'House of the Bronzes' in Tiberias, where a metal workshop dated to the Fatimid period (the second half of the eleventh century CE) was uncovered.[31] Three huge pithoi were discovered (Fig. 17:a), each containing a large variety of bronze utensils, copper-alloyed coins (Late Byzantine Anonymous *folles*; Fig. 17:c) and metal scraps (Fig. 17:b). The pithoi were carefully buried, anticipating a dangerous event. As the Byzantine *folles* were not part of the currency circulating in the region, and thus had no monetary value, they were deposited as raw metal to be melted down as bullion for repairs at the workshop (Bijovsky and Berman 2008:82, n. 28; Bijovsky 2012b:40). The bullion was found intact, indicating that its owner never returned. In this sense, the House of the Bronzes is also an emergency hoard, possibly related to the Seljuk occupation of the region at the end of the eleventh century CE (Bijovsky and Berman 2008:81–82).

[31] Salvage excavations were conducted by Yizhar Hirschfeld and Oren Gutfeld, on behalf of the Institute of Archaeology of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in the summer of 2004.

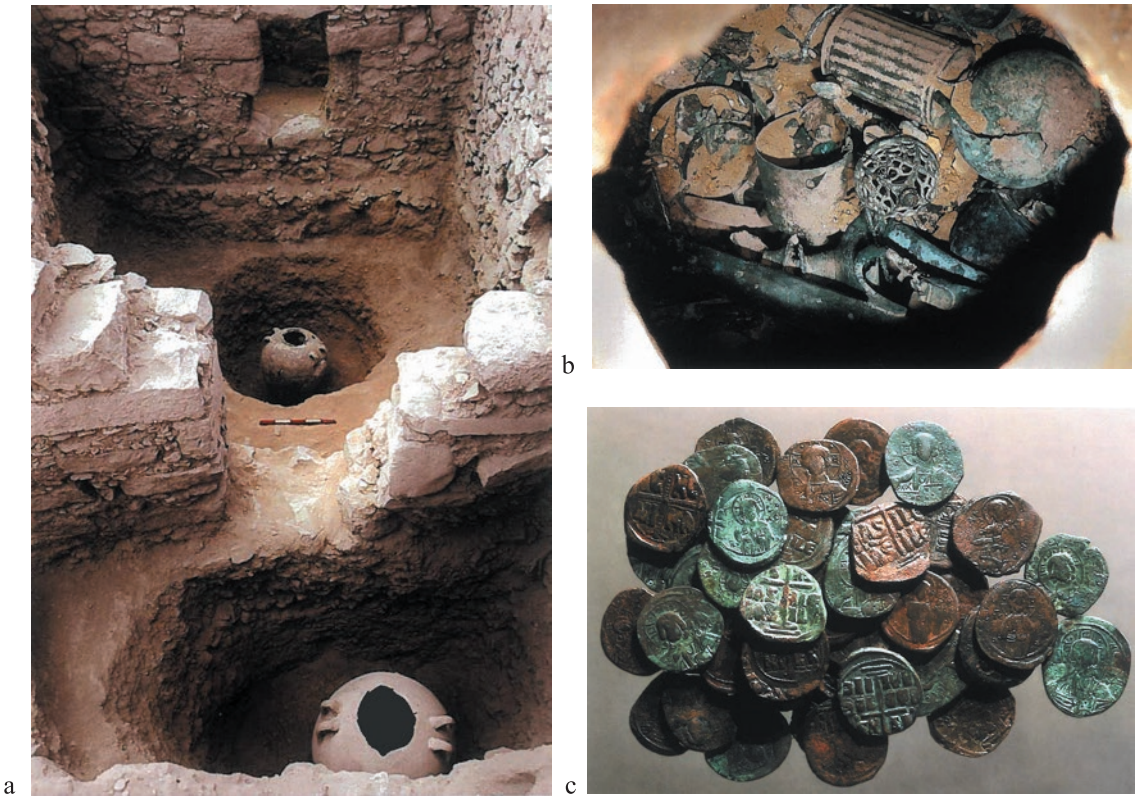

Fig. 17. Bullion: The House of the Bronzes, Tiberias: (a) *in situ* pithoi; (b) hidden copper-alloy artifacts; (c) anonymous *folles* for recycling (photography: Gabi Laron; reproduced from Hirschfeld and Gutfeld 2008: Pls. IIC, IIIA, IVA, with the permission of the Institute of Archaeology, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem).

Another possible bullion was uncovered in an underwater excavation near the northern breakwater reef of the Herodian harbor at Caesarea Maritima (Sharvit and Buxton 2022; Fig. 18:a–c). After a winter storm in 2016, the remains of a Roman shipwreck were exposed, comprising a large assemblage of scrap metal items, indicating "that the vessel was engaged in collecting used and broken artifacts to be sold for recycling" (Sharvit and Buxton 2022:3).

The assemblage comprised two groups according to function: navigation objects used by the crew (anchors, weights, a lead brazier, water containers, fishing tools, and hundreds of ballast stones) and a cargo comprising about 500 kg of metal scrap, including broken bronze statues and other bronze objects, such as oil lamps, hundreds of kilograms of raw glass, lumps of cast lead and roughly 6400 bronze coins. Some of the coins were found in two homogeneous conglomerations, which, according to their shape, may have been kept in two amphoras whose fragments were not discovered. More than 1000 coins were identified

Fig. 18. Bullion(?): Caesarea shipwreck cargo of scrap metal:
(a) divers recovering one of the lumps (photography: J. Sharvit);
(b) fragments of bronze sculptures (photography: J Sharvit);
(c) the two coin conglomerations (photography: D. Gazit).

by Helena Sokolov, who dated them to the first quarter of the fourth century CE. Both lumps contain mostly two types of *folles* dating from Diocletian to Crispus.[32]

In addition to the coin lumps, dozens of other coins were found scattered on the seabed. Among these was a homogeneous group of 34 FEL TEMP REPARATIO 'fallen horseman' coins, dating to 351–361 CE. With some reservations, Sokolov attributed this group to the same shipwreck, even though there is no proof that both coin finds are related. The interpretation of the function of the coins in the ship, both the two lumps and the scattered coins, dated to the second half of the fourth century CE, is complicated. One may assume

[32] Helena Sokolov of the IAA is in charge of the publication of this 'hoard.' Our thanks to her for providing us with this yet unpublished data.

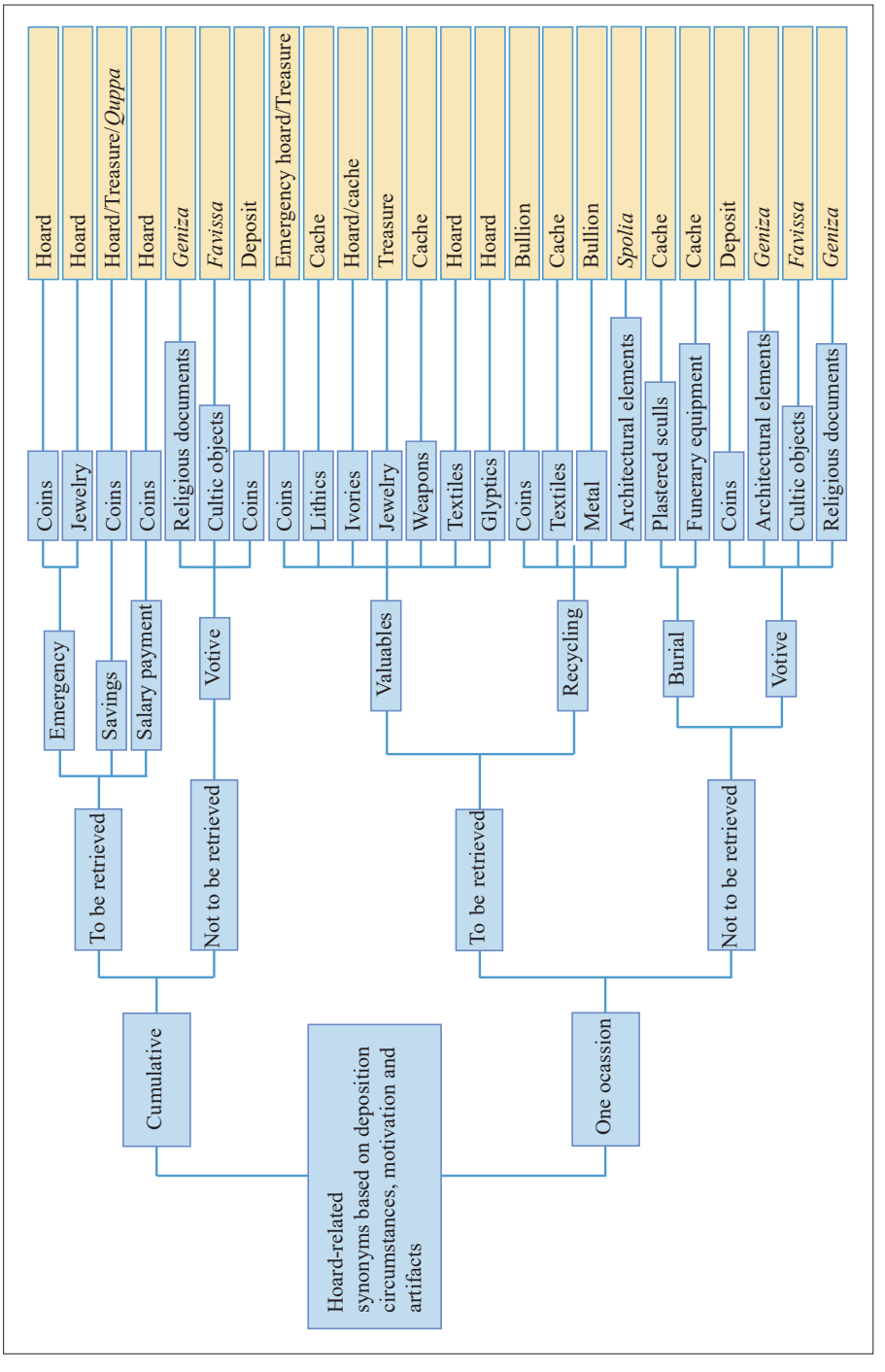

Fig. 19. 'Road map' of *hoard*-related synonyms based on deposition circumstances, motivation and artifacts.

that the lumps included currency still in circulation, as should be expected to be found on a merchant ship. On the other hand, if one accepts that the FEL TEMP REPARATIO coins belong to the same vessel, then they provide the *terminus post quem* for the shipwreck, not before the mid-fourth century CE. That said, the two lumps can be defined as coins withdrawn from circulation but kept for their metal value and therefore, they were an integral part of the bullion for sale.

Conclusions

This study discussed the most frequently used terms in archaeological discourse, mainly in the field of numismatics, to define a group of valuable finds concealed in a certain place. From the outset, it was clear that the word *hoard* was the first lexical choice—a hypothesis supported by the results of the full-text search of archaeological publications stored in JSTOR database (see *Introduction*, above). The word *hoard* accentuates the economic value of the finds and their mysterious circumstances of deposition, and hence, its significant pragmatic effect. Based on the co-occurrence approach,[33] alternative lexical choices that convey the concept of *hoard* were discussed. These are displayed in Fig. 19 considering the deposition circumstances (one act or a recurring one), the purpose of concealment (to be or not to be retrieved), the type of artifact or artifacts and the intention behind the action. It is noteworthy that the choice of the 'best' word, i.e., the one most typical or expected in a given context, has an influence on the interpretation of the finds under consideration.

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