'Atiqot 112, 2023

The Coins from Building 900 in the Southern Tyropoeon Valley

Donald T. Ariel and Gabriela Bijovsky[1]

Some 169 coins were retrieved from the excavation of Building 900 in the City of David, all of bronze or copper-alloy. Eight of the coins comprise a small hoard. The isolated coins range in date from the Hellenistic and Early Roman periods until the fourth century CE and probably represent residual finds. The hoard indicates that Building 900 was constructed in the Byzantine period, a date also supported by other finds at the site.

Keywords: City of David, Numismatics, hoard, Byzantine period, follis

Introduction

The excavation yielded 169 coins, all of bronze or copper-alloy. Many coins were from poorly stratified contexts and were not cleaned, resulting in 40 identified coins. Eight of the coins comprise a small hoard uncovered from L111, abutting W3 of Building 900 (see Szanton and Uziel, this volume).[2] An index of the coins, organized according to locus, is presented in Table 1.

The Isolated Coins

Although many of the isolated coins originated from the building's foundations, they appear to represent residual finds from earlier deposits at the site, and therefore, do not contribute to determining the construction date of Building 900 (see Catalogue A). For example, two of the four coins from L111 are of a Hellenistic and Early Roman date (Catalogue A: Nos. A6, A8), and the other two date to the fourth century CE, while the hoard, from the same locus, clearly indicates the Byzantine-period date of construction of Building 900.

---

1 Dr. Donald T. Ariel and Dr. Gabriela Bijovsky, Israel Antiquities Authority.

2 The coins were cleaned in the laboratories of the IAA, by L. Schtrochanov, and were photographed by Clara Amit of the IAA photography studio. D.T. Ariel identified the isolated coin finds and prepared the report on these finds, while G. Bijovsky identified the coins of Hoard 111 and prepared the report on the hoard.

Table 1. Index of Coin Identifications According to Loci[i]

Locus	N.	Date (CE)	Cat. No.	Total
111	1	80/79 BCE and later	A6	4
	1	Hasmonean	A8	
	1	383	A19	
	1	383–395	A23	
111 (hoard)	2	518–522	B1, B2	8
	6	532–537	B3–8	
113	1	383–395	A22	1
114	1	67/8	A10	6
	1	4th c.	A25	
	2	395–455	A29, B30	
	1	402–408	A28	
	1	538–610	A32*	
116	1	383	A20	2
	1	4th c.	A26	
121	1	24/5	A9*	8
	1	67/8	A11	
	1	138–161	A14*	
	1	161–169	A15*	
	1	177–192	A16*	
	1	337–341	A17	
	1	351–361	A18	
	1	491–498(?)	A31	
124	1	80/79 BCE and later	A3	1
126	2	80/79 BCE and later	A4, A5	3
	1	67/8	A13*	
127	1	162–150 BCE(?)	A2	3
	1	80/79 BCE and later(?)	A7	
	1	67/8	A12	
206	1	3rd c. BCE	A1	2
	1	383–395	A24*	
208	1	4th c.	A27	1
209	1	383–392	A21	1
Total				40

[i] Coins bearing an asterisk appear in Fig. 1.

Since much has been published regarding the numismatic finds of the classical periods in Jerusalem in general (e.g., Ariel 1982), and particularly those from the City of David (e.g., Ariel 2013), this report focuses on coins of special interest. These comprise three Roman provincial coins, two local issues of Aelia Capitolina (Nos. A14, A15; Fig. 1) and one struck

Fig. 1. Isolated coin finds.

in Canatha (No. A16). All three coins were retrieved from the same locus and basket (L121, B2357), and are relatively close in date, spanning only half a century at most between the earliest and the latest coin. Possibly, these coins constitute a small hoard, or they may originate from a hoard that had been scattered nearby Building 900. Only a few other small finds were retrieved from the context of these coins, the deep foundations of Building 900 underneath Floors 116A–C of Room A, and therefore, the context and time of their original deposition remains unclear.

The coin from Canatha, an issue of Emperor Commodus, is the latest of the three, and represents a rare appearance of this type. Two other, yet unpublished coins minted in Canatha were retrieved from excavations in Jerusalem,[3] both also struck by Commodus, although they are not of the same precise type discussed here, which portrays the bust of Athena.

When considering coin Nos. A14–A16, it is noteworthy that the numbers of Roman provincial coins uncovered in excavations at the City of David, and in excavation areas somewhat further north, are not insignificant (Ariel 2013:241; Ariel, Baruch and Zilberbod 2014:158). Coin Nos. A14 and A15, in particular, should be seen in that context, as such

[3] IAA 44065 ('Southern Wall' excavations by Benjamin Mazar; License No. G-1/1971); IAA 136862 (Mamilla [Museum of Tolerance] excavations by David Amit; Permit No. A-5557/2009; identification uncertain).

Fig. 2. The hoard *in situ*.

coins are common in areas north of the City of David, to the south and west of the Temple Mount.

The Hoard

A small hoard of eight Byzantine *folles* was discovered on the interior, western side of W3 (Fig. 2, 3; see Catalogue B). The coins are issues of Emperors Justin I (518–527 CE; Catalogue B: Nos. B1, B2) and Justinian I (527–565 CE; Nos. B3–B8) from the mint of Constantinople, all lacking the year of issue.[4] Coin Nos. B1 and B2 are of the same type, generally dated to the early years of rule of Justin I, between 518 and 522 CE. The six coins of Justinian I are generally dated between 522 and 537 CE, and provide a *terminus post quem* for the deposition of the hoard, occurring at least by the time of the latter emperor's monetary reform in 538 CE (Bijovsky 2012:214–216, 220–224). It is known, however, that worn *folles* of the sixth century CE remained in circulation for a long period of time and are commonly found in hoards of *folles* dating to the sixth and seventh centuries CE (Bijovsky 2012:335–340). In its composition, the present hoard resembles two others, one from the synagogue of 'En Gedi (Bijovsky 2007:162–163) and another from Tel Ya'oz,[5] both including *folles* without noting a specific year, although generally understood to have been issued before 538 CE.

[4] In 538 CE, Justinian I introduced a monetary reform that involved the use of dates by regnal years and the frontal protrait of the emperor on copper coins (Bijovsky 2012:214).

[5] The Tel Ya'oz hoard (discovered outside of an archaeological excavation) is registered as Hoard No.18 in the Mandatory-period section of the IAA National Coin Database (see Bijovsky 2012:466, Appendix A: No. 37).

Fig. 3. Coins from the hoard.

CATALOGUE A: ISOLATED FINDS

Cat. No.	Locus	Basket	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date (CE)	Mint	Reference	Notes	IAA No.
Unclear Ptolemaic King												
A1	206	2515	6.19	17	↓	Head r.	[- - -] Eagle with spread wings stg. l. on thunderbolt	3rd c. BCE				144307
Demetrius I (162–150 BCE)?												
A2	127	2459	2.15	14	↖	Same; without radiate crown(?)	[- - -] Veiled and draped female figure, stg. facing, holding long scepter or torch		ʻAkko-Ptolemais	Cf. *SC* II: 181, No. 1679	Serrated	144304
Hasmoneans **Alexander Jannaeus (104–76 BCE)**												
A3–A5	124 (2439/1); 126 (2408, 2409)					Anchor in circle	Signs of star	80/79 BCE and later	Jerusalem	*TJC*:210, Subgroups L7–14		144300–144302
A6	111	2174	0.49	10		Illegible	Same	Same	Same	Same		144318
A7	127	2460	2.33	16	↓	[- - -]גדל[- - -] Within wreath; undertype: [border of dots]	Double cornucopias with pomegranate between horns; undertype, wreath		Same	*TJC*:216–217, Group T		144305
Unclear Hasmonean Ruler												
A8	111	2174	1.73	13×17	↑	[- - -]/[- - -]/[- - -] Within wreath	Double cornucopias with pomegranate between horns		Same			144321

Catalogue A (cont.)

Cat. No.	Locus	Basket	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date (CE)	Mint	Reference	Notes	IAA No.
Roman Procurators in Judea under Tiberius (14–37 CE)												
A9*	121	2357	1.78	15	↓	TIB/KAI/CAP Within wreath	Palm branch; in fields: IOY–ΛIA L–IA	Year 11 = 24/5	Same	*TJC*:257, No. 329		144295
First Jewish Revolt (66–70 CE)												
A10, A11	114 (2220); 121 (2366)					[- - -] Amphora	[- - -] Vine leaf	Year 2 = 67/8	Jerusalem	*TJC*:241, No. 196		144288, 144299
A12	127	2461	2.09	1 × 17		Same	Illegible	Same	Same	Same		144306
A13*	126	2410	6.16	20 × 22	↑	לגאלת ציון Cup	שנת ארבע Lulav between two ethrogs	Year 4 = 69	Same	*TJC*:243, No. 214		144303
Antoninus Pius (138–161 CE)												
A14*	121	2357	12.45	23	↑	IMP AN[TO–NINV]S AVG PPP Laureate, draped bust r.	Tetrastyle temple with central arch; within, Tyche standing l., resting foot on unidentified object, holding small bust and scepter; in ex.: CAC		Aelia Capitolina	*CHL*:82, No. 21; Meshorer 1989:72, No. 20		144293
Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus (161–169 CE)												
A15*	121	2357	7.43	21 × 23	↑	IMP CA[ES ANTONINO ET V] ERO AVG Laureate, draped busts, confronted	[COL A]EL–CAP Bust of Serapis, r.		Same	*CHL*:83, No. 55; Meshorer 1989:80, No. 56		144294

CATALOGUE A (cont.)

Cat. No.	Locus	Basket	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date (CE)	Mint	Reference	Notes	IAA No.
Commodus (177–192 CE)												
A16*	121	2357	1.42	14	↑	[- - -]KAIC MA (retrograde)–KAM ITI Laureate bust r.	Γ[AB•] KAN[AΘ] Helmeted bust of Athena r.		Canatha	*CHL*:154, No. 6; Spijkerman 1978:92–93, No. 9		144296
Roman Imperial												
A17	121	2361/2	1.24	15	↓	[- - -] AVG Pearl-diademed, cuirassed bust r.	[- - -] Securitas stg. facing, head r., holding scepter in r. hand; l. elbow on column	337–341	Rome	Cf. *LRBC* I:15, No. 585	Julian II	144297
A18	121	2361/1	0.94	13	↑	[- - -] Pearl-diademed, draped bust r.	[- - -] Virtus spearing fallen horseman	351–361		Cf. *LRBC* II:87, No. 2039		144298
A19	111	2174	1.00	13	↑	[- - -] Same	VOT/V Within wreath	383		Cf. *LRBC* II:89, No. 2160	Valentinian II	144319
A20	116	2275	0.95	13×15	↑	[- - -] Same	VOT/V Same; in ex.: SMHS	Same	Heraclea(?)	Cf. *LRBC* II:84, No. 1963		144291
A21	209	2543	1.15	11	↓	[- - -]IVS PF AV[G] Same	[- - -] Victory advancing l., dragging captive and holding trophy; in l. field: +	383–392		Cf. *LRBC* II:102, No. 2761		144310
A22	113	2278/1	0.94	11	↗	[- - -] Same	[- - -] Same; in l. field: /	383–395		Cf. *LRBC* II:87, No. 2183		144292

Catalogue A (cont.)

Cat. No.	Locus	Basket	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date (CE)	Mint	Reference	Notes	IAA No.
A23	111	2174	1.05	13	↑	[- - -] Same	[- - -] Same	Same		Same		144320
A24*	206	2516	1.26	12	↓	[- - -] Same	[SALVS REI]– PVBLICAE Same	Same		Same	Imitation(?)	144308
A25	114	2218	1.07	13	↑	[- - -] Bust r.	[- - -] Stg. or seated figure(?)	4th c.				144284
A26, A27	116 (2274); 208 (2537)					[- - -] Same	Illegible	Same				144290, 144309
A28	114	2218	0.58	11	↘	DN THEODOSIVS PF [AVG] Pearl-diademed, draped bust r.	CONCORDIA AVG Cross; in ex.: ALEA	402–408	Alexandria	Cf. *LRBC* II:105, No. 2922	Theodosius II	144287
A29	114	2231	1.05	11	↗	[- - -] Same	Cross	395–455				144289
A30	114	2218	0.47	10		Illegible	Same	Same				144286
Byzantine												
A31	121	3188	0.75	8		Head(?)	Monogram based upon N	491–498(?)			Anastasius I(?)	144322
A32*	114	2218	1.58	15		Illegible	I+B In ex.: AΛЄΞ	538–610	Caesarea	Bijovsky 2012:297–307	Dodecanummium	144285

CATALOGUE B: THE HOARD (L111, B2173)

Cat. No.	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date (CE)	Mint	Reference	IAA No.
BYZANTINE									
Justin I (518–527 CE), *follis*									
B1	17.21	32	↙	dN IVSTI–NVS PP ÄVC Diademed, cuirassed bust r., with paludamentum	**M** Above, cross; to l. and r., stars; beneath: A; in ex.: CON	518–522	Constantinople	*MIBE* I:96, No. 11	146513
Justin I (527–565 CE), *follis*									
B2	16.17	31	↓	Same	Same, but officina beneath uncertain	Same	Same	Same	146512
B3	16.35	33	↑	DN IVSTINI–ANVS PP AVC Diademed, cuirassed bust r., with paludamentum	**M** Above, cross; to l. and r., stars; beneath: B; in ex.: CON	532–537	Constantinople	*MIBE* I:126, No. 83	146514
B4	15.44	32	↙	Same	Same	Same	Same	Same	146515
B5	16.56	28×32	↑	Same	**M** Above, cross; to l. star; to r. cross; beneath: A; in ex.: CON	Same	Same	*MIBE* I:126, No. 84	146518
B6	17.95	32	↑	Same, a star on shoulder	Same, but officina beneath B	Same	Same	Same	146516
B7	17.37	29	↓	Same	Same, but officina beneath Γ	Same	Same	Same	146519
B8	15.75	34	↓	Same	Same, but officina beneath uncertain	Same	Same	Same	146517

References

Ariel D.T. 1982. A Survey of Coin Finds in Jerusalem (until the End of Byzantine Period). *LA* 32:273–326.

Ariel D.T. 2013. The Coins. In D. Ben-Ami. *Excavations in the Tyropoeon Valley (Giv'ati Parking Lot)* I (IAA Reports 52). Jerusalem. Pp. 237–264.

Bijovsky G. 2007. The Coins. In Y. Hirschfeld. *En-Gedi Excavations* II: *Final Report (1996–2002).* Jerusalem. Pp. 157–233.

Bijovsky G. 2012. *Gold Coin and Small Change: Monetary Circulation in Fifth–Seventh Century Byzantine Palestine* (Polymnia Numismatica antica e medievale. Studi 2). Trieste.

CHL: Y. Meshorer, G. Bijovsky and W. Fischer-Bossert. *Coins of the Holy Land: The Abraham and Marian Sofaer Collection at the American Numismatic Society and the Israel Museum* (Ancient Coins in North American Collections 8). D. Hendin and A. Meadows eds. New York 2013.

LRBC I: P.V. Hill and J.P.C. Kent. The Bronze Coinage of the House of Constantine, A.D. 324–346. In *Late Roman Bronze Coinage A.D. 324–498*. London 1965. Pp. 4–40.

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.

Meshorer Y. 1989. *The Coinage of Aelia Capitolina* (Israel Museum Catalogue 301). Jerusalem.

MIBE I: W. Hahn. *Money of the Incipient Byzantine Empire (Anastasius I–Justinian I, 491–565)* (Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Numismatik und Geldgeschichte der Universität Wien 6). Vienna 2000.

SC II/I: A. Houghton, C. Lorber and O. Hoover. *Seleucid Coins. A Comprehensive Catalogue; Seleucus IV through Antiochus XIII* II, I: *Introduction, Maps and Catalogue.* New York–Lancaster, Pa.–London 2008.

Spijkerman A. 1978. *The Coins of the Decapolis and Provincia Arabia* (SBF Collectio Maior 25). Jerusalem.

Szanton N. and Uziel J. This volume. A Byzantine and Early Islamic Building along the Southern Tyropoeon Valley.

TJC: Y. Meshorer. *A Treasury of Jewish Coins from the Persian Period to Bar Kokhba.* Jerusalem–Nyack, N.Y. 2001.