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Coins from 'Ein ez-Zeituna

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A total of 25 bronze coins were discovered during the excavations at 'Ein ez-Zeituna in Naḥal 'Iron;[1] four of them were unidentifiable. The numismatic evidence is very homogeneous and dates to the first and second centuries CE. This data confirms the excavator's conclusions that the building is a one-period site (see Glick, this volume). All of the four fourth century coins (Nos. 15–18) and later Ayyubid- and Mamluk-period coins (Nos. 19–21) are surface finds, and will not be included in this discussion. With the exception of one example of the ubiquitous *pruṭot* of the Hasmonean king Alexander Jannaeus (No. 1), all the coins within stratigraphic contexts are Roman Provincial issues. The distribution of the mints present at the excavation reflects the common currency that circulated in the vicinity of 'Ein ez-Zeituna. The site is alongside a main road leading from Caesarea to Bet She'an, so it is not surprising to find coins from Caesarea (Nos. 2, 6*, 7, 12* and 14), Sepphoris–Diocaesarea (Nos. 4* and 10) and Tiberias (No. 5*). Coins from Caesarea are also predominant at other sites excavated within the territories of 'Emeq Ḥefer and Ḥof Ha-Carmel: Caesarea, Tel Ḥefer, Naḥal Ḥagit[2] and Ramat Ha-Nadiv (Barkay 2000a:88; Barkay 2000b:383–384, 386). Besides these mints, three coins from Antioch (Nos. 3*, 8 and 9*) give good testimony to the importance that coins of this city, together with those of Tyre, had in the coinage of Galilee and northern Judea. Also discovered at the site was a coin by Antoninus Pius minted in Gaza (No. 11*), which is rare in the region.[3]

The chronological sequence of the Roman Provincial coins continues from the second half of the first century CE to the second half of the second century CE with no perceived gaps. The coin of Alexander Jannaeus (No. 1) was probably part of the currency at the site during the first century CE, as Hasmonean *pruṭot* are known for their continued circulation long after their minting. The earliest coin in context is a local *Judaea Capta* issue, struck by Titus in Caesarea (No. 2); these coins are regularly found in the area, due to the close vicinity to the capital of the province.[4]

A regular *SC* issue from Antioch dated to Domitian was found on the floor of the southern portico in the southeastern corner of the peristyle (No. 3*). Two coins of Trajan were discovered, one minted in Tiberias and dated to 108/109 CE (No. 5*), and the other from Sepphoris (No. 4*). The latter belongs to the largest type in a series of four denominations minted by Trajan at the city of Sepphoris. The series bears Jewish symbols on the reverse and the inscription ΣΕΠΦΩΡΗΝΩΝ "of the people of Sepphoris". According to Meshorer, these coins were minted in consideration of the Jewish population that settled in Sepphoris, after the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE. In addition, he refers to the unusual obverse inscription, which includes the expression ΕΔΩΚΕΝ, meaning "gave" or "permitted," probably referring to a special right given by the emperor for the minting of the series at Sepphoris (Meshorer 1979:163–164).

Four coins of Hadrian were found at the excavation, two from the mint of Caesarea (Nos. 6*, 7) and two from Antioch (Nos. 8, 9*). Coin No. 7 was discovered on the floor of the western portico. Both Antiochean coins belong to the tiny size of the *SC* series that is exclusive to this emperor (Waage 1952:41, No. 438). The

obverse on this denomination is anepigraphic, and the attribution to Hadrian is based upon the emperor's portrait on a well-preserved specimen in the British Museum (*BMC Gal.*:185, Nos. 289–290). The profile bust on coin No. 9* is quite clear, and confirms this attribution.

The latest coins in stratigraphical context are two coins of Antoninus Pius, one minted in Gaza (No. 11*), as noted above, and the other in Sepphoris (No. 10). The latter represents a short period of time when the minting in the city was renewed (Meshorer 1979:165). However, the Jewish flavor of the coinage was no longer kept, the name of the mint was changed to Diocaesarea, and pagan motives were represented, as attested by coin No. 10.

Three other coins (Nos. 12*–14), found in stratigraphical context, can be related to the first–second centuries CE, even when in all of them the ruler is unidentifiable. Coins No. 12* and 13 are minimas from Caesarea. These minute coins, designated for small change, are commonly found in the dunes of Caesarea, and in the whole region (Hamburger 1955:116).

Finally, coin No. 14 was discovered on the floor of Room II. The coin is completely worn, but presents two rectangular countermarks on its obverse, one of them of the *XF* type, related to the Legion X Fretensis. Interestingly, Howgego attributes this countermarking to the repair of the road between Caesarea and Scythopolis, probably by units of the legion in 69 CE (Howgego 1985:251–252, Nos. 727–728). As stated above, the site of 'Ein ez-Zeituna lies on this main road, so that the presence of this coin at the site seems not coincidental.

CATALOGUE

The coins are arranged chronologically, according to type. Coins bearing an asterisk have photographs displayed here.

Fig. 1.

Cat. No.	Locus	Basket	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date (CE)	Mint	Reference	Notes	IAA No.
						Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BCE) ***Pruṭah***						
1	12	5198	0.53	10		Obliterated	Star	80/79–76 BCE	Jerusalem	*AJC* 1:122, Type Ce		47117
						Titus (79–81 CE)—*Judaea Capta* Series						
2	127	5462	7.37	20	↑	[ΑΥΤΟΚΡΤΙΤΟΣ ΚΑΙΣΑΡ] Bust r., laureate, cuirassed and draped	[ΙΟΥΔΑΙΑCE ΑΛΩΚΥΙΑC] Victory stg. r., writing on shield that hangs from a palm tree	71–73/74	Caesarea	*AJC* 2:288, No. 2		47125
						Domitian (81–96 CE)						
3*	138	5768	7.52	23	↑	[IMP] DOMITIANVS CAES [AVG] Head l., laureate	Within wreath: SC		Antioch	Cf. *BMC Gal.*:180, No. 245		47127
						Trajan (98–117 CE)						
4*	89	5545	15.53	26	↑	[ΤΡΑΙΑΝΟΣ ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑΤΩΡ ΕΔΩΚΕΝ] Head r., laureate	Within wreath: ΣΕΠΦΩ / ΡΗΝΩΝ		Sepphoris	*BMC Pal.*:1, No. 1		47129
5*	39	5464	?	14	↑	]E TPAI–ANO CE[Head r. laureate	TIBEP KΛAY Anchor. On both sides, date: L – Ч (year 90)	108/109	Tiberias	*BMC Pal.*:7, Nos. 18, 19		47122
						Hadrian (117–138 CE)						
6*	68	5358	13.53	22×24	↑	IMP TRA HADRIANO CAES AVG Head r., laureate	COL I FL AVG CAESARENS Head of Serapis r.		Caesarea	Kadman 1957:102, No. 28		47126
7	99	5685	5.85	15	↑	IMP [TRA HADRIANO CAE...] Bust r., laureate, cuirassed and draped	CIF AVG CAESAR Apolo stg. l. leaning on tripod, holding serpent		Same	Kadman 1957:102, No. 18		47132
8	39	5200	0.90	10	←	No inscription Head r., laureate	Within wreath: SC Beneath: A(?)		Antioch	*BMC Gal.*:185, Nos. 289, 290		47118
9*	48	5196	0.81	8	→	Same	Same, but beneath: C		Same	Same		47123

Cat. No.	Locus	Basket	Weight (gm)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date (CE)	Mint	Reference	Notes	IAA No.
						Antoninus Pius (138–161 CE)						
10	50	5246	6.90	22	↑	[...] Bust r., laureate, cuirassed and draped	[ΔΙΟΚΑΙ ΙΕΡΑ ΑCYAYTO] Tetrastyle temple, within, city-goddess stg. l.		Sepphoris	*BMC Pal.*:34, No. 21		47124
11*	98	5581	1.38	12×14	↓	[ΑΝΤѠΝΕΙΝΟC] CEBA[C] Bust r., laureate	ΓΑZ[A] Heracles stg. r., holding club and lion skin		Gaza	Cf. Rosenberger 1972:59, Nos. 78–80		47131
						Roman Provincial—Uncertain						
12*	43	5579	1.01	10		Obliterated	Wild boar(?), wolf(?) r.	1st–2nd c.	Caesarea	Cf. Hamburger 1955:128, Nos. 39–48	Minima	47120
13	12	5197	1.03	11×13		Obliterated	Palm tree(?)	Same	Same	Cf. Hamburger 1955:126, No. 24	Same	47137
14	96	5578	8.64	22		Obliterated Two rectangular countermarks: XF Illegible	Obliterated	Same		Howgego 1983:251–253, Nos. 727–729 (for countermarks)		47130
						330–341 CE						
15	80	5544	0.91	14	↓	VRBS ROMA Bust of Rome l., helmeted	She-wolf stg. r., nursing Romulus and Remo. In ex.: [S]MALA		Alexandria	Cf. *LRBC* 1:32, No. 1431		47128
						Constantius II (337–361 CE)						
16	Surface	5284	1.24	15	↑	DN CO[NSTAN]TIVS PF AVG Head r., pearl-diademed	Within wreath: VOT/XX/MVLT/XXX In ex.: SMANA(?)	341–346	Antioch(?)	Cf. *LRBC* 1:31, No. 1398		47135
						Valentinian I (364–375 CE)						
17	44	5203	2.26	16	↑	[DN VALENTINIANVS PF AVG] Bust r., pearl-diademed, cuirassed and draped	SECVRITAS REI–PVBLICAE Victory advancing l., holding palm branch and wreath In ex.: ALEA		Alexandria	*LRBC* 2:104, No. 2862		47121

Cat. No.	Locus	Basket	Weight (gm)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date (CE)	Mint	Reference	Notes	IAA No.
						364–375 CE						
18	40	5283	2.42	16	↓	DN[- - -]AVG Same	[SECV]RITAS REIPVBLICAE Same			Cf. *LRBC* 2:100, Nos. 2656, 2657		47119
						Ayyubids						
19	Surface	5286	1.39	17		Obliterated	Obliterated					47136
						Mamluks **Al-Zāhir Sayf Al-Dīn Barqūq (1382–1389 CE)** ***Fals***						
20	110	5639	3.06	16×18		Within wavy border: السلطان الملك الظاهر سيف الدنياو علدين ابو سعيد برقوق عز نصره	Within circle: ضرب بالقاهرة النى اسعين سنة سبعماية	792 H = 1389	Cairo	Cf. Balog 1964:263, No. 578 (var.)		47133
21	Surface	5204	4.19	20		Same	Same	Same	Same	Same		47134

NOTES

[1] The coins were cleaned at the IAA laboratories under the direction of Ella Altmark, and were photographed by Clara Amit. Coins bearing an asterisk have photographs displayed here.

[2] The coins from all these excavations were identified by the author. My thanks to Yosef Porath, Eli Yannai and Jon Seligman for permission to note these finds here.

[3] Other Roman Provincial coins from the mint of Gaza have also been found in the region: Caesarea (Commodus, IAA 66513; cited with permission of Yosef Porath), Bet She'an (Commodus, IAA 63662 and Septimius Severus, IAA 63661), Bet She'arim's synagogue (Julia Maesa, IAA 75260) and even at Banias (unidentifiable ruler, IAA 75266).

[4] Registered at the IAA are six such coins from excavations in Caesarea: IAA 62574, 63194, 64365, 65969, 66426, 68380 (cited with permission of Yosef Porath); a coin from Ḥorbat 'Eleq, Ramat Ha-Nadiv: IAA 83578; three coins from Bet She'an: IAA 75230, and two coins which were not yet registered (from Gaby Mazor and Rachel Bar-Nathan's excavations); a coin from Migdal: IAA 48254 (cited with permission of Hanaa Abu 'Uqsa); and a coin from Kh. Burnat: IAA 87410 (with permission of Hagit Torge).

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