

ROMAN AND BYZANTINE COINS FROM THE EXCAVATION ON THE EASTERN FRINGES OF TEL SHIQMONA

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A total of 194 coins were uncovered in Areas A–G on the eastern fringes of Tel Shiqmona (Torge and ‘Ad, this volume); 71 of them were identified (see Catalogue, below). Except for one Seleucid-period coin (Cat. No. 1) minted in Tyre during the second century

BCE, all the coins belong to one continuous period beginning in the early fourth century and ending with the reign of the Byzantine emperor Maurice (582–602 CE). Table 1 presents the coins according to their stratigraphic position.

Table 1. Distribution of Coins within Archaeological Context

Archaeological Context	Coin Type	Date	Catalogue No.
<i>Area A (N = 8)</i>			
Surface (L100)	Small bronzes	Late 4th–early 5th c.	4, 11, 18
Foundation fill above bedrock (L132, L147)	<i>pentanummium</i>	Justin I (518–527)	26
	<i>nummus</i>	5th–6th c.	53
Lower part of foundation trench (L110)	<i>pentanummium</i>	518–538	34
Lower part of foundation W3 (L106)	Vandalic <i>nummus</i>	Mid-6th c.	68
Fill of foundation trench (L153)	Seleucid bronze		1
<i>Area B (N = 2)</i>			
Fill north of W251 (L203/207)	<i>nummus</i>	5th–6th c.	58
Occupation level (L203/207)	<i>pentanummium</i>	Justin I (518–527)	29
<i>Area C (N = 32)</i>			
Between floor stones (L3007, L3040, L3048)		First half of 6th c.	30, 44, 46, 49
Between floor stones (L3035)	Small bronze	4th–5th c.	22
Between floor stones (L3037)	<i>nummus</i>	Justinian I (534–565)	
Fill below floor (L3043, L3048, L3051)	Small bronzes	4th–5th c.	6, 17
	<i>pentanummi</i>	518–538	28, 37
Removal of wall foundations (L3052)	Small bronze	4th–5th c.	15
	<i>pentanummium</i>	Justin I (518–527)	27
	<i>nummi</i> (2 Vandalic)	Mid-6th c.	55, 66, 69

Table 1 (cont.)

Archaeological Context	Coin Type	Date	Catalogue No.
Surface north of complex (L3028)	Vandalic <i>nummus</i>	Mid-6th c.	64
Concentration of stones removed by robbers (L3004, L3013)	Small bronze	425–450	10
L3010	<i>pentanummium</i>	518–538	39
	Small bronze	4th–5th c.	12
	Carthaginian <i>nummus</i>	Mid-6th c.	71
L3012	Small bronzes	4th–5th c.	16, 23
	<i>pentanummi</i>	518–538	33, 41
	Half <i>follis</i>	Maurice (586/7)	61
	Vandalic <i>nummus</i>	Mid-6th c.	65
L3022	Carthaginian <i>nummi</i>	Justinian I (534–565)	47, 50
Courtyard (L3025)	<i>pentanummi</i>	518–538	38, 43
Above bedrock (L3034)	<i>nummi</i>	6th c.	45, 51
<i>Area D/E (N = 18)</i>			
Surface (L1923)	Small bronze	335–341	2
Robbers' trench W452 (L417)	Vandalic <i>nummus</i>	Mid-6th c.	70
Above floors (L420, L421)	<i>pentanummi</i>	518–527	31
	<i>nummus</i>	6th c.	57
Above floor (L446)	Small bronze	4th–5th c.	20
Fill beneath floor (L430, L448, L449, L504, L522)	Small bronzes	4th–5th c.	7, 8, 14, 19, 21
	<i>pentanummium</i>	Justin I (518–527)	25
	<i>follis</i>	Justin II (574/5)	60
Cross-section (L510)	<i>nummus</i>	5th–6th c.	56
L444	<i>pentanummi</i>	518–538	35, 36
Fill above bedrock and between foundations (L401, L410, L451)	<i>nummi</i>	5th–6th c.	52, 59, 67
<i>Area F (N = 7)</i>			
Fill above floor (L714)	Small bronzes	4th–5th c.	5, 13
Occupation level above floor (L729)	Half <i>follis</i>	Maurice (591/2)	62
Fill reacing bedrock foundation (L732, L736, L739)	Small bronzes	4th–5th c.	3, 9
	<i>pentanummium</i>	Justin I (518–527)	32
Fill under wall (L744)	Small bronze	4th–5th c.	24
<i>Area G (N = 4)</i>			
Upper section of well (L801)	<i>nummus</i>	5th–6th c.	54
	Half <i>follis</i>	Maurice (593/4)	63
Lower section of well (L802, L803)	<i>pentanummi</i>	518–538	40, 42

Dating

The well-stratified coins described above allow us to suggest a *terminus post quem* for the construction of three buildings in Areas A, C and D. Interestingly, in all three cases, the latest datable coins are Vandalic *nummi* dated to the mid-sixth century.

These coin finds suggest that the structures were erected in the first half of the sixth century, thus further narrowing the range of dating (early sixth to early seventh centuries) suggested from the study of the ceramics (see Torge and ‘Ad, this volume) and mosaics (see Barash, this volume). Furthermore, the coin finds from robbers’ trenches in Areas C and D/E do not extend beyond the sixth century.

The coin finds support the excavators’ conclusion (see Torge and ‘Ad, this volume) that Shiqmona was a single-phase Byzantine settlement that probably existed for less than one hundred years before its abandonment as a result of an earthquake in 631/2 CE (see Barzilay, this volume).

Comparison with numismatic material from two other excavations (Table 2; Hirschfeld 2006; Kletter 2010), conducted in close proximity to the excavation of Torge and ‘Ad,

shows close similarities both in dating and coin types.

All three excavations show a virtual absence of coins dated earlier than the fourth century and later than the reign of Maurice (582–602), c.1% and 5% respectively. In fact, all the coins belong to one continuous period beginning in the early fourth century and ending toward the close of Maurice’s reign (late 590s).

Circulation

The coin finds at Shiqmona, a large Byzantine village or harbor town with a mixed population of Jews and Christians (Torge and ‘Ad, this volume; Hirschfeld 1996; 2006), comprise a typical repertoire of small bronzes of the fourth to fifth centuries and post-reform Byzantine bronze currencies. The latter group, which contains the largest number of coins, consists of coins from the reign of Justin I (517–528 CE) onward, with a dominant presence of small denominations (*pentanummi* and *nummi*). Particularly noteworthy is the presence in relatively large numbers (14) of (Vandalic) *nummi* minted in Carthage, which circulated in large quantities throughout the Eastern Mediterranean area and were used as small change (Bijovsky 1998:84–85).

Table 2. Comparison of Numismatic Material from Three Excavations at Shiqmona

Period	Hirschfeld Excavation (Hirschfeld 2006)	Kletter Excavation (Kool 2010)	Torge and ‘Ad Excavation
Pre-4th–5th c.	1.03%	—	1.40%
4th–5th c.	46.39%	3.5%	32.29%
518–602	48.40%	73.0%	66.19%
7th c. and later	4.10%	3.5%	—
Total number of identifiable coins	97	15	71



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Fig.1.

CATALOGUE

Cat. No.	Locus	Basket	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date (CE)	Mint	Reference	Notes	IAA No.
						Seleucid, 2nd c. BCE						
1*	153	1193	1.77	14	↑	Diademed head r.	Palm tree; date P across field		Tyre	Cf. Houghton and Spaer 1998:186, Pl. 88:1342		76260
						335-341						
2	1923	12970/12	1.05	12	↑	[---] Laureate head r., with rosettes	[GL]OR-[IA] EXERC-[ITVS] Two soldiers stg. facing, between them one standard			Cf. <i>LRBC</i> 1: 31, No. 1363		76297
						Valentian II (375-392)						
3	739	70150	2.65	18	↓	DN [VALEN]TIA-NVS PF AVG Bust draped r.	CONCOR-DIA AVGGG Constantinopolis seated facing, head helmeted r., holding in r. hand sceptre, in l. hand globe, prow by foot In ex.: [SMA]NTT		Antioch	<i>LRBC</i> 2:101, No. 2706		76323
						383-395						
4	Surface	70193	1.73	13	↓	[---] Bust diademed r.	[SALVS REI-]PVBLI [CAE] Victory to l., trophy on shoulder, dragging captive. In l. field: +			Cf. <i>LRBC</i> 2: 102, No. 2761		76325
5	714	70031	1.19	12	↓	[---]PF Bust diademed r.	[SALVS REI-PVBLICAE] Same			Cf. <i>LRBC</i> 2: 102, No. 2768		76316
						Arcadius I (383-408)						
6*	3048	30340	2.02	15	↓	[ARC]ADIVS PF AVG Bust pearl—diademed r., with rosettes; l. behind head: star	[GLORI-A ROMA-NORVM] Emperors, three, facing; center figure is smaller and holds spear in r. hand; emperor on l. holds spear and rests l. hand on shield; emperor on r. rests r. hand on shield and holds spear in l.	400-402		Cf. <i>LRBC</i> 2: 102, No. 2801		76289

CATALOGUE (cont.)

Cat. No.	Locus	Basket	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date (CE)	Mint	Reference	Notes	IAA No.
7	448	40419	0.88	12	↑	DNAR[...] Bust draped r., cuirassed	Illegible					76309
							400–450					
8	522	50122	0.82	11	↙	[---] Bust r.	Cross			LRBC 2:102, No. 2806		76314
							408–421					
9	736	70130	1.52	14	↑	[---] Bust r., diademed	[GLOR]—A ROMA— NORVM Emperors, two, facing, heads turned r., and l., each holding shield and spear in r. and l. hand respectively			LRBC 2:105, No. 2929		76322
							425–450					
10	3013	30043	1.01	11	↑	[---] Bust r.	Cross within wreath.					76274
11	100	1000	0.69	12	↑	[---] Bust r.	Same					76254
							4th–5th c.					
12	3010	30120	1.27	10	↑	[---] Bust r.	[---] Figure stg.					76265
13	714	70062	0.79	11	↙	[---] Bust r.	[---] Figure stg. l.					76317
14	430	40312	0.51	12		Illegible	Figure stg. (?)				Broken	76304
15	3052	30261	1.22	12		[---] Bust r. diademed	Illegible					76296
16	3012	30076	0.90	14		[---] Bust r.	Illegible					76271
17	3051	30329	0.36	11		[---] Bust r.	Illegible					76290
18	100	1023	1.87	11		[---] Bust r.	Illegible					76255
19	430	40311	0.83	10		[---] Bust r.	Illegible					76303
20	446	40374	0.56	10		[---] Bust r.	Illegible					76307
21	449	40421	0.58	11		[---] Bust r.	Illegible					76310
22	3035	30220	0.97	20		Bust r. (?)	Illegible				Half coin	76281
23	3012	30073	0.77	10		Illegible	Illegible					76268
24	744	70192	2.22	12		Illegible	Illegible					76324

CATALOGUE (cont.)

Cat. No.	Locus	Basket	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date (CE)	Mint	Reference	Notes	IAA No.
						Justin I (518-527)—Pentannium						
25*	448	40417	2.18	13	↓	DN IVS[TI-NVS PP] AV/[C] Bust r., draped and diademed	Monogram To l.: B; to r.:		Constantinople	DOC 1:45, No. 21b.3		76308
26*	132	1110	1.32	13	↓	[DN IVS[TI-NVS PP AV] Bust r., draped and diademed	Monogram To l.: Δ; to r.:		Same	DOC 1:45, No. 21d.4		76258
27*	3052	30352	1.64	12	↓	[---] Bust r., draped and diademed	Same		Same	Same		76292
28*	3051	30350	1.96	12	↑	[---] Bust r., draped	Monogram To l.: Γ; to r.:		Same	DOC 1:46, No. 22b.1		76291
29*	207	20.059	1.49	12	↓	[---] Bust r., draped and diademed	Monogram To l.: N; to r.:		Nicomedia	DOC 1:50, No. 36.1		76262
30	3007	30051	1.98	13	↙	[---] Bust r.	Same		Same	Same		76263
31*	421	40189	1.98	14	↓	[---] Bust r.	Same		Same	Same		76302
32*	732	70139	1.76	12	↙	[---] Bust r., draped and diademed	Same		Same	DOC 1:51, No. 37.1		76321
						518-538						
33	3012	70074	1.45	12	↓	[---] Bust r., draped with cuirass and diademed	Monogram To l.: B; to r.:		Constantinople	Cf. DOC 1:82, No. 35b.1		76269
34	110	1020	1.64	11	↓	[---] Bust r.	Monogram To l.: [...]; to r.:			Cf. DOC 1:45, No. 21a		76257
35	444	40384	1.93	13	↓	[---] Bust r., draped with cuirass and diademed	Same			Cf. DOC 1:45, No. 21a		76305
36*	444	40415	1.65	12	↓	[---] Bust r., draped with cuirass	Monogram To l.: A; to r.:			Cf. DOC 1:45, No. 21a.4		76306
37*	3043	30292	2.23	12	↓	[---] Bust r.	Same			Cf. DOC 1:45, No. 35a		76287
38*	3025	30145	1.16	12	↑	[---] Bust r., draped with cuirass and diademed	Monogram To r.:					76277
39	3013	3004	0.54	11	↓	[---] Bust r.	Same					76273

CATALOGUE (cont.)

Cat. No.	Locus	Basket	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date (CE)	Mint	Reference	Notes	IAA No.
40	802	80009	1.49	13	↑	[---] Bust r.	Same					76327
41	3012	30037	2.38	14		[---] Bust	Monogram 					76266
42	803	80018	1.15	11		[---] Bust r.	Same					76282
43	3025	30227	1.95	12		[---] Bust r.	Same					76284
						Justinian I (527-565)—Dodecanumium						
44*	3040	30221	1.91	13	↑	[---] Bust r., diademed, wearing cuirass and paludamentum	I+B In ex.: AAEΞ		Alexandria	DOC 1:157, No. 274.1		76283
						Nummus						
45	3034	30244	0.41	9	↑	[---] Head r.	A	534-539	Carthage	DOC 1:170, No. 309		76279
46*	3040	30228	0.65	8	↓	Illegible	†	534-565	Same	Metcalf 1987:71, No. 212		76286
47*	3022	30130	0.79	11		Illegible	Same	534-565	Same	Same		76275
48*	3037	30231	0.37	8		Illegible		534-565	Same	Buttrey 1976:193, note to Nos. 219-220; Bijovsky 1998:103		76285
49*	3048	30338	0.49	10	↗	[---] Bust r., diademed, wearing cuirass and paludamentum	VO[TT]XIII Within wreath and circle	540/1	Same	DOC 1:170, No. 309		76288
50	3022	30161	0.29	7	↓	[---] Bust facing		548-565	Same	DOC 1:170, No. 311 Bijovsky 1998:103		76276
						5th-6th c						
51	3034	30263	0.47	9		[---]C [---] Bust r., diad., wearing cuirass and paludamentum	Illegible					76280

CATALOGUE (cont.)

Cat. No.	Locus	Basket	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date (CE)	Mint	Reference	Notes	IAA No.
52	451	40433	0.78	9		[---]S P[---] Bust r.	Illegible					76311
53	147	1175	0.22	8		Illegible	+					76259
54	801	80013	0.32	10		Bust r. (?)					Cast	76326
55*	3052	30358	0.19	7		Illegible	Part of cross(?)				Cast	76294
56	510	50029	0.59	9		[---] Bust r.	Illegible					76313
57	420	40297	0.71	10		[---] Bust r.	Illegible					76301
58	203	20157	0.10	10		Illegible	Illegible				Cast	76261
						6th c.						
59	410	40051	1.09	12		[---] Bust	Є Within wreath			DOC 1:102, No. 96a		76299
						Justin II (565–578)–Follis						
60*	504	50132	9.80	30	↓	DN IVSTI–NVS PPAV Bust	M Above, cross; to l.: A/N/O; to r.: X; beneath: A In ex.: KYZ	574/5		DOC 1:236, No. 122d		76312
						Maurice (582–602), Half Follis						
61*	3012	30106	5.36	20	↓	ON MAV[---] Bust, facing, in cuirass and crown with cross. In r. hand, globe crucis	K Above, cross; to l.: [A]/N/O; to r.: U	586/7(?)	Constantinople.	DOC 1:312, No. 50.a.1		76272
62	729	7051	5.20	22	↗	[---] Bust, facing, in cuirass and crown with cross. In r. hand, globe crucis	K Above, cross; to l.: [A]/N/O; to r.: X Below: B	591/2	Same	DOC 1:314, No. 55	Variant not published in <i>DOC</i>	76320
63	801	80010	5.62	20	↓	δN MAVI[---] Bust, facing, in consular robes and crown with trefoil prnament. In r. hand, mappa	K Above, cross; to l.: [A]/N/O; to r.: IIX Below: P	593/4	Same	DOC 1:348, No. 187.I		76328

CATALOGUE (cont.)

Cat. No.	Locus	Basket	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date (CE)	Mint	Reference	Notes	IAA No.
							Vandals, mid-6th c.					
64*	3028	30187	0.64	9	↓	[---] Bust r., draped with cuirass and diademed			Carthage	<i>BM/CV</i> : 26, No. 68		76278
65*	3012	30071	0.74	7	↑	[---] Bust r.(?)	Same		Same	Same		76267
66*	3052	30259	0.38	9	↑	[---] Bust r. diademed	Same		Same	Same		76295
67	401	40053	0.16	8		Illegible	Same		Same	Same		76298
68	106	1007	0.54	8		Illegible	Same		Same	Same		76256
69*	3052	30353	0.37	8	↓	[---] Bust r.			Same	Metcalf 1987:71, Nos. 213– 215		76293
70	417	40108	0.39	8		[---] Bust r.(?)	Same		Same	Same		76300
71	3010	30046	0.46	8		Illegible	Same		Same	Same		76264

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