THE COINS FROM IQRIT

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INTRODUCTION

Twenty-six coins were discovered in the excavation of a burial cave at Iqrit, in the western Galilee (see Vitto, this volume). All the coins were identifiable and some of them are very well preserved. The coins are bronze, with the exception of two silver *denari* (Nos. 2 and 5), a billon *tetradrachm* (No. 20), and three billon *antoniniani* (Nos. 23–25). The coins were found in the *kokhim* (with the exception of *Kokh* 6, which included no numismatic material). No coins were discovered in the central chamber. The breakdown of the coins according to *kokhim* is presented in Table 1.

Two coin groups deserve special attention. The assemblage from *Kokh* 2 is most peculiar. Four coins were discovered; three of them relate to the only skeleton found: two antoniniani of the brothers Macrianus II and Quietus (Nos. 23 and 24), placed on either side of the head of the deceased, and a coin of Caracalla minted at Paphos (No. 6), placed over the chest. The first two coins date to the same year (260-261 CE) and are rarely found in excavations (see discussion below); therefore, it seems most likely that their placement together as a pair was intentional. The finely preserved coin of Caracalla is very unusual, not only for its provenance, but also because it was pierced. Considering its findspot, it was apparently hung around the neck of the deceased. In addition to the coins, other pieces of jewelry were discovered in Kokh 2, including many beads and a pair of gold earrings worn by the deceased when buried (see Vitto, this volume).

A total of 13 coins were found scattered within *Kokh* 7. The coins range from Ptolemy II

Table 1. The Coins from Igrit according to Kokhim

Cat. No. Description Date (CE) Kokh 1 (N = 1) Constantius I c. 295 Kokh 2 (N = 4) Constantius I c. 295 Kokh 2 (N = 4) Caracalla 211–217 20 Trajan Decius 249–251 23 Macrianus II 260–261 Kokh 3 (N = 2) Caracalla 211–217 13 Elagabalus 218–222 Kokh 4 (N = 2) Folian Severus 197–198 5 Septimius Severus 197–198 26 Maximinus 311 Kokh 5 (N = 1) Folian Severus 197–198 17 Julia Maesa c. 226 Kokh 7 (N = 13) Ptolemy II 285–246 BCE 2 Trajan 98–117 4 Autonomous 2nd c. 8 Macrinus 217–218 9 Diadumenian 217–218 10 Diadumenian 217–218 11 Elagabalus 218–222 12 Elagabalus 218–222	Table 1. The Co	mis from tqrit accord	mg to Nokmin
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7 Caracalla 211–217 13 Elagabalus 218–222 Kokh 4 (N = 2) Septimius Severus 197–198 26 Maximinus 311 Kokh 5 (N = 1)	24	Quietus	260–261
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15 Elagabalus 218–222 <i>Kokh</i> 10 (N = 1)	19	Severus Alexander	222–235
Kokh 10 (N = 1)	<i>Kokh</i> 9 (N = 1)		
` '	15	Elagabalus	218–222
3 Autonomous 2nd c.	Kokh 10 (N = 1)		
	3	Autonomous	2nd c.

(No. 1) to Valerian (No. 21). This last coin is dated to the same time as the latest coins from *Kokh* 2 (c. 260 CE). Coin Nos. 10 and 14 (Diadumenian and Elagabalus) were found stuck together; thus, they were most certainly deposited at the same time. Among the finds in *Kokh* 7 are glass vessels, a number of gold earrings and other pieces of jewelry. According to the excavator, the bones of at least two deceased individuals were found in this *kokh*.

The pagan custom to introduce coins into tombs as part of the deceased's possessions, is related to the belief in Charon's *obol*, very widespread throughout the Roman Empire (Rahmani 1993:149–150).

CURRENCY

With a few exceptions, the coins are quite homogeneous. Most of them are Roman Provincial issues, minted in Phoenician cities. Not a single Roman Provincial coin from a mint south of Iqrit was discovered, suggesting that Iqrit was strongly oriented to Phoenicia and Syria during the second and third centuries CE.

Table 2 reveals that the predominant currency is clearly Tyre. Tyre was the closest mint to Iqrit, and the main source of coinage for the whole region (see Barag 1982–1983:7–13). Tyrian coins are also most common in burial caves dated to the second and third centuries CE in the western and Upper Galilee (e.g., Hanita, Tomb XV: Barag 1978:46–54; Giv'at

Table 2. Breakdown of the Coins according to Mints

Mint	No. of coins
Tyre	12
Antioch	5
Sidon	2
Rome	2
Byblos	1
Paneas	1
Paphos	1

Yasaf: Bijovsky 1997:44–45; Ḥurfeish: Ariel 1997b:35–36; Asherat: Ariel 1997a:56–57; Tell er-Ras: Bijovsky 1999a:155–156; Gesher Ha-Ziv: Ariel 1994:94–96).

Quantitatively, the second greatest number of coins found in the cave were minted in Antioch. Coins of Antioch predominate after the cessation of Roman Provincial minting around 260 CE. Four of the five Antiochean coins found at the site belong to this later period (Nos. 23-26). Coin Nos. 23 and 24 were minted by the sons of the usurper Macrianus I. After the capture of Valerian by the Persians in 259-260 CE, the power of Rome over the eastern empire weakend. The Roman generals in the east proposed the election of Titus Fulvius Macrianus as emperor: the latter accepted the throne on condition that both his sons Macrianus II and Quietus share it with him. Titus Fulvius Macrianus and his sons reconquered the city of Antioch from Persian hands, and both sons struck at this mint a full series of antoniniani (RIC 5/2:571-572). The coin of Macrianus II is extremely rare (No. 23). Besides the coin from Iqrit, only two other specimens from archaeological excavations are registered at the IAA coin database: one from the Oula hoard of antoniniani (IAA 89583; Kool, forthcoming), and the other from excavations at Khirbat Arbel (IAA 96328).2 Coins struck by Quietus are more common, although there are not many. Twenty-four coins are registered in the IAA coin database: eight belong to a hoard discovered at Sussita (Berman 2002:71); another eight coins, including the coin from Iqrit, come from controlled excavations.3

Rome is represented at the site by two silver *denari*, a very worn coin of Trajan (No. 2) and a coin of Septimius Severus (No. 5). Actually, billon⁴ *Syrian tetradrachms*, such as Coin No. 20 (of Trajan Decius; Prieur and Prieur 2000), exceeded Roman *denars* in coin finds in the Levant (Syria, Phoenicia and Palestine).

Roman coins from Cyprus, such as Coin No. 6, are rarely found in Israel. Most of the coin-finds from this island in the southern Levant date to the Ptolemaic and Crusader periods, when closer political and commercial relations were established between the two regions. Three other Roman coins from Cyprus are found in the IAA coin database: two tetradrachms of Caracalla (IAA 59192 from Kefar Bara, and IAA 68080 from Caesarea) and a bronze coin of Septimius Severus from Horbat Rimmon (IAA 74192). The last one is of the same type as No. 6.

DESCRIPTION OF TYPES ACCORDING TO MINT

Sidon

One of the two coins from Sidon (No. 17) is extraordinarily rare. It depicts Julia Maesa—grandmother of Elagabalus and Severus Alexander—on the obverse, and the car of Astarte—one of the known symbols of the city, surrounded by the zodiac wheel—on the reverse. Coins with similar representations of the zodiac were also minted in Akko-Ptolemais (Meshorer 1984–1985:13, No. 17) and Alexandria (*BMC Alex*:126–127, Nos. 1078–1079). In Sidon, this type is known both with Elagabalus and his first wife Julia Paula (Rouvier 1902:267, No. 1527; 276, No. 1571). Our coin, with Julia Maesa, seems to be yet unpublished.

Byblos

A single well-preserved coin, minted in Byblos under Diadumenian, was discovered in *Kokh* 7 (No. 10). The coin depicts the local Tyche, standing within an arch, suggesting that the statue, which served as a prototype for the coin, stood in a shell-niche. This detail is characteristic of Byblos coins.

Caesarea Paneas

Another coin that deserves particular attention was found in *Kokh* 7 (No. 16). It was minted by Elagabalus in Caesarea Paneas. Although the type is quite common—Tyche wearing a short chiton, holding a cornucopia and a long rudder—its date, 219 CE (CKB=222) does not appear in Meshorer's corpus of that mint (Meshorer 1984–1985:37–58).

Cyprus (Paphos)

This coin of Caracalla (No. 6) depicts on its reverse the sanctuary of Aphrodite in Paphos, believed to be the true birthplace of that goddess. The sanctuary consists of a tripartite facade with a semicircular courtyard surrounded by a fence with open gates. The central part of the facade is higher (a tower?), with windows in its upper story. It is flanked by porticos with doves perched on the roofs. Inside the central entrance is a baetyl (sacred stone); inside the porticos are altars or thymiateria (incense burners). The courtyard is paved with stone slabs; a long slab stands facing the central entrance (offering table?). To its right are three pellets. This description was very popular on Roman coins and gems from Cyprus (BMC Cyprus:cxxviicxxiv; Price and Trell 1977:147-149).

As noted above, the coin was placed on the chest of the skeleton in *Kokh* 2. It seems likely that this well-preserved coin, intentionally pierced for suspension as a medallion, belonged to the deceased and was considered a precious object.

Tyre

As mentioned above, the bulk of Roman Provincial coins discovered in Igrit derive from Tyre. Some of them are standard coin-types, such as the two autonomous issues representing the head of Melgart and the temple of Koinon (Nos. 3, 4), and the three specimens dated to Elagabalus, of the 'Tyche standing between trophy and Victory on column' (Nos. 11-13). The stories behind Coin Nos. 7, 11-13 are somehow connected. Coin No. 7 belongs to Caracalla, and it depicts a bull and the standard of the Legio III Gallica. The bull was the symbol of this legion, which was quartered at Tyre. In 219 CE, the Syrian legate Verus tried to usurp the throne in Rome. As a result, Elagabalus dispersed this legion and revoked Tyre's rights as a colony and metropolis, as seen in the changed inscription TVRIORVM on Coin Nos. 11-13. The city was reinstated as a colony early in the reign of Severus Alexander (BMC Phoen.:cxxv-cxxvi).

Also noteworthy is a Tyrian coin of Diadumenian, depicting Harpocrates standing beside an altar (No. 9). This is a yet unpublished variant of a type known only under Caracalla and Elagabalus. In addition, there are two coins of a relatively rare type, dated to Severus Alexander, that represent Marsyas standing before a palm tree (Nos. 18, 19; Babelon 1893: No. 2234; Rouvier 1904: Nos. 2417, 2418). One was discovered in *Kokh* 7 and the other in *Kokh* 8. Because of their rarity, they may both have been deposited at the same time.

Finally, there is a Tyrian coin probably struck under Valerian (253–260 CE; No. 21) that seems to be an unpublished variant. The coin shows Melqart standing facing, holding a patera over a flaming altar. In its upper left field is a murex shell. This type was heretofore known with small Ambrosial Rocks (and sometimes

water flowing from them) appearing where the murex shell is located (cf. Rouvier 1904:98, No. 2495), or below at the left field, between Melqart and the altar.⁵ Our coin might very well belong to a deficient die of this type.

DATING

According to the numismatic evidence, the cave was in use from perhaps sometime in the late second century CE to the beginning of the fourth century CE. The latest coin, dated to Maximinus in 311 CE, was discovered in *Kokh* 4. The bulk of the coins is dated to the first half of the third century CE. Most of them were minted in Phoenicia, primarily Tyre. As this is a very homogeneous group, it seems that the major burial activity in the cave was during this period.

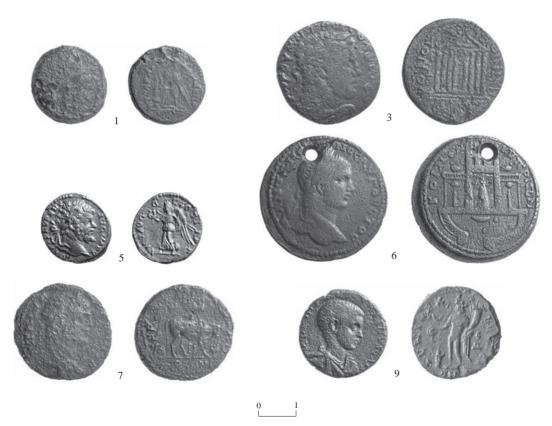


Fig. 1



Fig. 2

CATALOGUE

IAA No.		29659		29660		29665	29655		29647		29641	29646
References and IA		SNG Ptol.: Pl. 17: 2 Nos. 496, 497		2		BMC Phoen.: 268, 2 No. 361	Same 2		CRE 5:62, No. 2		BMC Cyprus:87, 2. No. 60. Pierced	BMC Phoen.: 271, 2 No. 376
Mint		Tyre		Rome		Tyre	Same		Rome		Cyprus (Paphos)	Tyre
Date (CE)						2nd c.	Same		197–198			
Reverse	PTOLEMIES Ptolemy II (285–246 BCE)	[ΒΑΣΙ]ΛΕ[ΩΣ ΠΤΟ]ΛΕ[ΜΑΙΟΥ] Eagle stg. l., in l. field, club	ROMAN IMPERIAL Irajan(?) (98–117 CE) – silver denarius	[] Female seated I., holding cornucopia and branch	ROMAN PROVINCIAL Autonomous issue	KOINOY ΦΟΙΝΙΚΗΟ Temple of the Koinon. In exergue: AKT	Same	ROMAN IMPERIAL Septimius Severus (193–211 CE) – silver denarius	[VICT AVG G COS II PP] Victory advancing 1., holding wreath and palm branch	ROMAN PROVINCIAL Caracalla (211–217 CE)	KOINON KYTIPION Temple of Aphrodite at Paphos	SEPT[VRVS MET]RO Bull walking r., in background, standard: LEG/III/GAL; in r. field, murex shell; in exergue: COLONI
Obverse	Ptol	Bust Zeus r.	\mathbf{R} Trajan(?) ([] Head r. laureate	RO	TYPOY MHTPONONEWC Head of Melgart r., laureate, lion-skin knotted round neck	Same	R Septimius Sevei	[L SEPT SEV PERT A VG IMP X] Bust r. laureate	RO Ca	M•ANTQNEI–NOC AYFOYCTOC Bust r. laureate	[I]MP M[AVR ANTONINVS] Bust r. laureate
Axis		\rightarrow		\rightarrow		←	←		←		←	←
Diam. (mm)		19		17		25	24		17		33	25
Weight (g)		4.01		1.96		9.48	29.6		2.39		23.86	11.34
Kokh		7		7		10	7		4		2	ε
Bask. No.		83		84		44	79		27		58	23
Cat. No.		*		2		**	4		\$\$		*9	7*

¹ All of the coins are bronze unless otherwise stated. The coins are arranged chronologically, according to coin-types. Coins bearing an asterisk are illustrated in Figs. 1, 2.

CATALOGUE (cont.)

Cat.	Bask. No.	Kokh	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date (CE)	Mint	References and Notes	IAA No.
						W	Macrinus (217–218 CE)				
∞	82	7	6.47	20	←	[IMP CAES MACRINVS AVG] Bust r. laureate, cuirassed and draped	SEP [TVRO METRO] Galley; above, murex shell. In exergue: COLON		Tyre	BMC Phoen.: 272, No. 384	29658
						Diad	Diadumenian (217–218 CE)				
*6	80	7	11.17	23	←	[IM OP DIADVMENIA] NVS CAES Bust r. bare- headed, cuirassed and draped	[SEPTVRVS METROJP COLONI Harpocrates stg. 1., holding cornucopia and himation, and r. hand to his lips. In I. field, lighted altar; in r. field, murex shell		Tyre	Unpublished variant. Cf. BMC Phoen.:270, No. 374 (Caracalla)	29656
10*	85	7	10.15	24	\rightarrow	[MOII A]IADOMENIA] NO CKAI Same	IEPAC BYB-AOY Distyle temple; in center, Tyche crowned by Victory on column		Byblos	BMC Phoen.: 103, No. 40	29661
						Ela	Elagabalus (218–222 CE)				
*11	76	7	18.25	29	←	IMP CA[ES] MAV ANTONINVS AVG Bust r., laureate, cuirassed and draped, seen from back	TV[RIO]RVM Tyche stg. facing, laying hand on trophy from 1.; crowned by Victory on column from r. In inner I. field, palm tree; in inner r. field, murex shell		Tyre	BMC Phoen.: 275, No. 396	29652
12	77	7	12.98	29	←	Same	Same		Same	Same	29653
13	89	3	12.44	27	←	Same	Same		Same	Same	29645
14*	98	7	8.09	26	←	IMP CAES MAV ANTONINVS AVG Bust r., laureate, cuirassed and draped, seen from back	TV[RIO]RVM Victory stg. facing, leaning with I. arm on column and holding palm branch; murex shell on extended hand; in I. field, palm tree		Tyre	BMC Phoen.: 276, No. 407	29662
15	106	6	7.34	27	←	IMP CAES MAV [ANTON]INVS AVG Bust r., laureate, cuirassed and draped, seen from back	COL AVR PIA METRO Car of Astarte; within inverted crescent above sphere. In exergue: SID		Sidon	BMC Phoen.:186, No. 250	29663

CATALOGUE (cont.)

000	Bask. Kokh No.	ch Weight (g)	Diam.	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date (CE)	Mint	References and Notes	IAA No.
37 7		13.81	52	←	AVTKM ANTWNINOC Bust r., laureate, cuirassed and draped, seen from back	KAIC ITAN CEB ACYA Tyche stg. facing, holding cornucopia and long rudder; leaning foot on prow of galley. In r. field, date: C/K/B	Year 222 = 219	Caesarea Paneas	Date unpublished; Cf. Meshorer 1984–1985:54, No. 34 (but date 218 CE)	29650
		-			Juli	Julia Maesa (d. c. 226 BCE)				
66	w	14.30	29	→	IVL MAESA AVG Bust r., draped	COL AĮVR PIA METR SIDON] Zodiac-wheel; in center, car of Astarte		Sidon	Unpublished variant; Cf. BMC Phoen: 187, No. 260 (Elagabalus)	29649
		-			Severu	Severus Alexander (222–235 CE)				
81	7	8.47	22	←	M AV ALEXANDER CAES SEBJ Bust r., laureate, cuirassed and draped	[SEP TVRO COLO] Marsyas stg. r., facing palm tree, Between them, murex shell		Tyre	Rouvier 1904:84, Nos. 2417, 2418	29657
42	∞	6.88	25	←	Same	Same		Same	Same	29664
					Trajan Decius	Trajan Decius (249–251 CE) – Billon tetradrachm				
59	2	8.87	24	←	AYT K F ME KY [TPAIANJOC AEKIOC CEB] Head r., radiate, cuirassed and draped	ΔΗΜΑΡΧ ΕΞΟΓΥCΙΑC] Eagle stg. I. on palm branch, holding wreath in its peak. In exergue: SC	250–251	Antioch	Prieur and Prieur 2000:73, No. 551	29642
					Val	Valerian(?) (253-260 CE)				
78	7	9.80	27	←	JIANVS AVG Head r., laureate, cuirassed and draped	COL TIVR METRO] Melgart stg facing, holding club and lion-skin and patera over lighted altar. In 1. field, murex shell		Туге	Unpublished variant; Cf. Rouvier 1904:98, No. 2495 (with Ambrosial Rocks in upper l. field)	29654
						Uncertain				
38	7	8.69	23		[] Head r	Obliterated	2nd-3rd c.			29651

CATALOGUE (cont.)

IAA No.		29644		29643		29640		29648
References and Notes		RIC 5/2:581, No. 11		RIC 5/2:583, No. 9. Pierced		RIC 5/2:302, No. 674		<i>RIC</i> 6:642, No. 161
Mint		Antioch		Antioch		Antioch		Antioch
Date (CE)	10				S	c. 295		311
Reverse	ROMAN IMPERIAL Macrianus II (260–261 CE) silver-plated – <i>antoninianus</i>	ROMAE AETERNAE Rome seated I. on round shield, holding spear and Victory. In I. field, star; in exergue, two pellets	Quietus (260-261 CE) silver-plated - antoninianus	ROMAE AETERNAE Rome seated I. on round shield, holding spear and Victory. In I. field, star; in exergue, two pellets	Constantius I (295-306 CE) silver plated - antoninianus	IOVI ET HERCULI CONS CAES Jupiter receiving Victory on globe from Hercules. Below: S; in exergue: XXI	Maximinus (309–313 CE) – folles	GENIO AVGVST[I] Genius stg. I., holding cornucopia and himation, and patera over lighted altar. In I. field: ~, in r. field: €/Å; in exergue: ANITI
Obverse	R Macrianus II (260-	IMP C FVL MACRIANVS PF AVG Head r. radiate, cuirassed and draped	Quietus (260–26	IMP C FVL QVIETVS PF AVG Head r. radiate, cuirassed and draped	Constantius I (295-	FL VAL CONST[ANTI] VS NOB CAES Head r. radiate, cuirassed and draped	Maxim	GAL VAL MAXIMINVS PF AVG Head r. laureate
Axis		→		→		→		→
Diam. (mm)		20		22		23		22
Cat. Bask. Kokh Weight (g) Diam. No. No. (mm)		3.05		2.82		3.26		2.82
Kokh		2		2		1		4
Bask. No.		61		09		51		26
Cat. No.		23*		24*		25*		26*

NOTES

- ¹ The coins were cleaned at the IAA laboratories under the direction of Ella Altmark and were photographed by Clara Amit and Sandu Mandrea.
- ² Another eight coins from unknown provenance are registered (IAA 31684, 56422–56428).
- ³ Two coins from Ḥanita (IAA 36530, 36536); one from Naḥal Ḥagit (IAA 47109); one from Kabri (IAA 82704); one from Kefar Bar'am (IAA 84584);
- one from the Qula hoard (IAA 89582) and one from Tell Oasile (IAA 97552).
- ⁴ Alloy that contains less than 50% silver.
- ⁵ This variant is unpublished. Some other examples are IAA 77663 (Aquilea Severa; from excavations in Qastra) and IAA 9849 (Valerian; of unknown provenance); see Bijovsky 1999b: Appendix A.

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