'Atiqot 61, 2009

The Coins from Tel 'Afar

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A total of 55 coins was found during the excavations at Tel 'Afar (see Peilstöcker, this volume). Most of the coins (41) are unidentifiable; therefore, only 14 coins are discussed below.[1]

The majority of the coins are from Area C, where remains of several architectural structures were discovered. The coin assemblage is quite homogeneous, covering the period between the end of the fourth and the end of the sixth centuries CE (Nos. 1–13). As with the pottery, no Early Islamic coins were found. In this respect, the chronological range parallels the pottery typology, which suggests a single-period Byzantine site. The material from Porath's excavations (Porath 1988) confirms the general chronology provided here (Table 1), as of the 17 coins discovered by Porath, the bulk belongs to the fifth–sixth centuries CE.

Table 1. Summary of the Numismatic Material

Period \ Excavation	Porath 1988	Peilstöcker, this volume
Hasmonean	1	–
Late Roman (4th c.)	1	1
Theodosius II (425–450)	2	–
Late Roman (5th c.)	2	1
Anastasius I (498–518)	1	1
Justin I (518–527)	2	4
Vandalic	–	3
Byzantine dodecanummi	1	–
Justinian I (534–565)	–	2
Tiberius II (579–582)	–	1
Crusader, Amaury	2	1
Crusader, Lyon (12th c.)	1	–
Unidentifiable	2	41
Total	*15*	*55*

Fig. 1.

CATALOGUE[i]

Cat. No.	Bask. No.	Loc. No.	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date (CE)	Mint	References	IAA No.
						LATE ROMAN					
						Uncertain – Fourth century CE					
1	1432	420	0.65	12		Head l(?)	Inscription within wreath(?)				63487
						Uncertain – Fifth century CE – *Minima*					
2	1439	424	0.55	8		Obliterated	Unclear monogram	Second half 5th c.			63490
						BYZANTINE					
						Anastasius I (491–518 CE) – *Follis*					
3	III	Surface	17.35	32	↓	DN ANASTA–SIVS PP AVC Bust r., diademed, cuirassed and draped	M above, cross; on both sides, stars; below: Γ. In exergue: CON	512–518	Constan-tinople	*DOC* 1:19, No. 23a	63493
						Justin I (518–527 CE) – *Follis*					
4	1375	385	15.73	29	↓	DN IVSTI–NVS PP [AVG] Bust r., diademed, cuirassed and draped	M above, cross; on l. side, star; on r. side, cross; below: Γ. In exergue: CON	522–527	Constan-tinople	*DOC* 1:40, No. 9	63485
5	1023	215	15.84	28	↓	Same	M above, cross; on both sides crosses; below: Є. In exergue: CON	518–522	Constan-tinople	*DOC* 1:41, No. 11	63480
6	II	Surface	14.34	26	↓	Same	M above, cross; flanking motifs illegible; below: Δ. In exergue: CON	518–527	Constan-tinople	*DOC* 1:40–41, No. 8– 11	63492
7	1230	309	16.10	30		Same	M above, cross; on both sides crosses; below: B. In exergue: NIKM	518–522	Nicomedia	*DOC* 1:49, No. 33	63483

[i] All of the coins in the following catalogue are bronze unless otherwise stated. The coins are arranged chronologically, according to coin-types. Coins bearing an asterisk are illustrated in Fig. 1.

CATALOGUE (cont.)

Cat. No.	Bask. No.	Loc. No.	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date (CE)	Mint	References and Notes	IAA No.
						Vandalic Anonymous – *Nummi*					
8*	1206	309	0.46	8		Obliterated	Palm tree	Mid-6th c.	Carthage	*BMCV*:26, No. 68	63482
9	1206	309	0.23	6		Same	Same	Same	Same	Same	63481
10*	1385	389	0.51	9		Same	Eight-pointed star within wreath(?)	Same	Same	*BMCV*:38, Nos. 165–172	63486
						Justinian I (527–565 CE) – *Follis*					
11*	1182	–	19.23	33	↓	DN IVSTINI–ANVS PP AVG Bust facing, helmeted with pendants, cuirassed; in r. hand holding globe	M above, cross; on l. side, ANNO; on r. side, date: XX and crescent; below: A. In exergue: hЧП	546/547	Antioch	*DOC* 1:143, No. 217	63489
						Nummus					
12	1438	422	0.52	7		Obliterated	Cross	534–565	Carthage	*DOC* 1:49, No. 33	63488
						Tiberius II (578–582 CE) – *Half Follis*					
13	I	Surface	5.38	22	↓	[dmTIbCONS TANT PP AVI] Bust facing, helmeted with pendants, cuirassed; in r. hand holding globe	XX above, cross. Date illegible. In exergue: NIKO(?)		Nicom-edia	*DOC* 1:40, No. 9	63491
						LATIN KINGDOM OF JERUSALEM **Amaury (1163–1174 CE) – *Denier***					
14*	1324	361	0.49	18		[AMAL]RICVS [REX] Cross pattée within circle of pellets	[+DE IERVSALEM] Church of the Resurrection within circle of pellets		ʻAkko	Metcalf 1983: Pl. 6, No. 96	63484

A single Crusader coin (No. 14) was also found in the excavations. The discovery of this coin is related to three silver coins of the same period discovered during the previous excavations at the site (Porath 1988:28). As no Crusader layer was revealed at Tel ʻAfar, these coins are probably connected with the massive antiquities robbing that took place at the site after the settlement came to its end.

The most interesting coins from the recent excavations are the four North African *minimi*, all of them from Area C. Their presence at the site is not surprising, as large quantities of such *minimi* were found in the Caesarea area (Bijovsky 1998:100–104). Since they are found in high concentrations in the Caesarea dunes, Hamburger (1955:117–118) assigned them to local fabric from the fourth–sixth centuries. However, most of these tiny, crudely manufactured coins were struck in Carthage (Bijovsky 1998:82–83). These *minimi* were used as small change currency and circulated side by side with the larger bronze denominations until the mid-sixth century CE.

NOTE

[1] The coins were cleaned in the IAA laboratories by Ella Altmark and were photographed by Sandu Mandrea.

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