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A Coin Wrapped in Cloth from Elqosh

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In the previous volume of *'Atiqot*, a coin wrapped in cloth, found in a burial cave at Elqosh, was published (Vitto 2008:122; Bijovsky and Sokolov 2008: No. 2); however, the coin's photograph was not published. This unfortunate oversight is hereby corrected with the publication of the photograph (Fig. 1), accompanied by a short discussion based on Vitto 2008:122.

The coin, dated 324–330 CE, was found wrapped in cloth in Trough 2 of the Elqosh burial cave. The textile preserved on the coin is made of linen, S-spun, in plain weave technique (Orit Shamir, pers. comm.). The discovery of coins with remains of cloth on them is attested at a number of sites, e.g., at Ashqelon (a hoard of 31 fourth-century BCE obols wrapped in a linen bag; Gitler 1996), and in Roman tombs at Gesher Ha-Ziv (Shimony and Shamir 1994) and at 'Ein Feshkha (Bélis 2003:242–243).[1] In Roman times, people either carried their money in a small, usually leather pouch (*marsupium*, βαλάντιον or βαλαντίδιον), which was held in the hand or hung from a belt, or hidden in the folds of garments (Lafaye 1904; Hug 1930; Croom 2002:25). Unfortunately, the Elqosh coin was not found *in situ,* so it is not known if the deceased was buried with a purse containing payment for Charon, or if the coin had been left, unintentionally, in a fold of his garments.

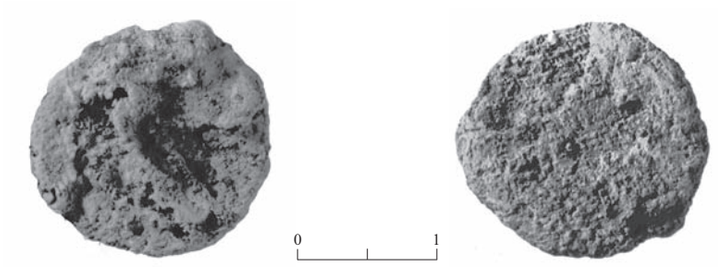

Fig. 1. A coin wrapped in cloth.

Note

[1] My thanks to Orit Shamir for identifying the technique used in weaving the cloth, and to Samuel Wolff, for drawing my attention to the Ashqelon example.

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