ʿAtiqot 115, 2024

The Coins from Ḥorbat Sahar

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The coin finds retrieved from the excavation areas at Ḥorbat Sahar range in date from the Roman to the Mamluk periods, partially aligning with the settlement periods identified at the site. A bronze coin of Elagabalus, struck in Abila, depicts on its reverse a sanctuary with a hexastyle facade flanked by two towers with a large altar in the center. This is an important addition to our limited knowledge of this coin-type's circulation in sites west of the Jordan River.

Keywords: Galilee, numismatics, Elagabalus, Abila

Introduction

Twenty-one bronze coins were retrieved from the excavation at Ḥorbat Sahar (see Alexandre, this volume; see Catalogue):[2] twenty from Area A and one (No. 6) from Area B; fifteen coins were identifiable. The coin finds align partially with the settlement periods identified at the site based on the ceramic record. One bronze coin of Elagabalus, struck in Abila, is noteworthy and further elaborated on below.

The Coins

In Area A, the earliest coin (No. 1) dated to the reign of the Roman emperor Elagabalus (218–222 CE), ten coins (Nos. 2–11) dated to the Late Roman (fourth–fifth centuries CE) and Byzantine (sixth century CE) periods, three coins (Nos. 12–14), to the Umayyad period (seventh–eighth centuries CE), and the latest coin (No. 15), to the second reign of Mamluk Sultan Barquq (1390–1399 CE). Two of the three Umayyad coins may consolidate the dating of the Area A building remains: an Umayyad-period *fals* (No. 12), found together with Byzantine–Early Islamic sherds on Floor 148 in the southern square, and an Umayyad post-

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[2] The coins were cleaned in the IAA laboratories by Ilya Raznisky and photographed by Dafna Gazit of the IAA.

reform *fals* (No. 13), dating to 697–750 CE, found together with Early Islamic sherds on Floor 106 in the northern square. The other coins in Area A came from accumulation layers on bedrock (L128, L147, L153) that yielded Roman to Early Islamic pottery, including a Roman coin from the early second century (No. 1), seven small bronze *minima* from the fourth–fifth centuries CE (Nos. 3–5, 7–10), a large post-Anastasian-Reform *follis* of Justin I (518–527 CE; No. 11), and a Mamluk-period *fals* (No. 15).

The single coin (No. 6) retrieved from Area B dates to the fourth–fifth centuries CE, and it was found on Pathway 140, together with Byzantine and Early Islamic potsherds.

Discussion and Summary

The coin finds align partially with the settlement periods identified at the site, with two Umayyad-period *fals* (Nos. 12, 13) supporting the dating of the Area A building remains (see Alexander, this volume). Numismatically noteworthy is the bronze coin of Elagabalus (No. 1). This coin, unfortunately poorly preserved, was struck in Abila (modern Qwailibah in Jordan), part of the Roman Decapolis League founded after 63 BCE (*CHL* 2013:141). Abila minted coins as 'Seleucia Abila' starting from Marcus Aurelius' reign in 161 CE and ceased to mint by the beginning of Elagabalus's reign (c. 219 CE). The reverse of this coin depicts a sanctuary with a hexastyle facade flanked by two towers with a large altar in the center. This type is attested on civic coins of Abila for the entire 58-year period that it minted coins. Although the site of Abila has been excavated for many years, the sanctuary's location depicted on the coin has not been found (Lichtenberger 2015:157). The Israel Antiquities Authority coin database contains only 17 bronze coins minted in Abila, indicating their limited circulation in sites located west of the Jordan River.

Catalogue

Cat. No.	Locus	Basket	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date (CE)	Mint	Reference	IAA No.
ROMAN PROVINCIAL											
Elagabalus (218–222 CE)											
1	153	1281	11.59	23×30	↑	[- - -] Bust r.	[- - -] Tetrastyle temple seen from rear with central arch and podium with stairs, flanked by two towers with doors and windows.		Abila	Cf. *CHL*:143, No. 26	173310
ROMAN IMPERIAL											
Constantine I (306–337 CE)											
2	100	1077	2.00	18×20	↓	IMP CONSTANTINVS PF AVG Pearl-diademed, draped bust r.	SOLI INVIC–TO COMITI Sol rad. Stg. l., raising r. hand, globe in l., chlamys across l. shoulder; in l. field: ∗; in ex.: S	316	Rome	Cf. *RIC* VII:301, No. 45	173320
330–335 CE											
3	153	1303	1.31	14	↓	[VRBS] ROMA Helmeted, cuirassed bust of Roma l.	Wolf and Twins l., above, two stars. In ex.: CONS[A]		Constantin	*LRBC* I:24, No. 1008	173307
Uncertain Ruler											
4	153	1304	0.73	10×13	↙	[- - -] Bust r.	[FELTEMP REPARATIO] Virtus to l., holding shield and spearing fallen horseman raising arm.	346–354		Cf. *LRBC* II:100, No. 2625	173308
5	153	1306/2	1.99	13×15	↙	[- - -] Pearl-diademed, draped bust r.	FELTEMP [REPARATIO] Same, in l. field: M	355–361		Cf. *LRBC* II:103, No. 2848	173308
6	140	1282	1.78	16×18	↖	[- - -] Same	[SECVRITAS]–REI[PVBLICAE] Victory adv. l., holding wreath and palm.	364–375		Cf. *LRBC* II:100, No. 2656	173317

CATALOGUE (cont.).

Cat. No.	Locus	Basket	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date (CE)	Mint	Reference	IAA No.
Arcadius (383—408 CE)											
7	147	1274	1.22	14	↑	DN ARCA [DIVS PF AVG] Same	[SALVS REI—PVBLICAE] Victory adv. l., holding trophy and dragging captive.	383–392		Cf. *LRBC* II:94, No. 2405	173309
Uncertain Ruler											
8	147	1262	1.00	11	↑	[- - -] Same	[SALVS REI—PVBLICAE] ? Figure stg. l.	383–395			173319
Fourth–Fifth centuries CE **Uncertain Ruler**											
9	147	1264	0.29	8×10	↓	[- - -] Same	[- - -] Figure stg. l.				173318
10	147	1276	0.88	7×9		[- - -] Same	Worn				173316
BYZANTINE **Justin I (518—527 CE), *Follis***											
11	128	1149	16.56	30×33	↓	[DN IVSTI]—NVS PP AVC Same	**M** above, cross; to l.: star, to r.: cross; in ex.: CON; beneath: A		Constantin	*DOC* I:40, No. 9a2	173314
UMAYYAD (697–750 CE), *Fals*											
12	148	1245	2.77	17×18		لاالله \ الله الله \ وحده	محمد \ رسول \ الله				173315
13	106	1043	2.52	19	↓	Same	Same				173312
14	128	1150	4.43	20×21	←	Same	Same, palm tree in r. field	711\13–750 CE	Al-Ramla	Cf. *SNAT* 1993: No. 50	173311
MAMLUK (1250-1517 CE) **Al-Zahir Sayf Al-Din Barquq 2nd reign (H. 792—801=1390–1399 CE), *Fals***											
15	153	1306	4.79	20×25	→	[السلطان الملك] الظاهر أبو [سعيد برقوق خلد ملكه]	Fleur-de-lis chalice: ضرب بدمشق سنه [سع تسعين] وسبعمائة	H. 799 = 1396 CE	Damascus	Balog 1964:266, No. 591	173313

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