

JERUSALEM, MONBAZ STREET: THE COINS

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Seventy-two coins were found in the excavation along Monbaz Street in Jerusalem (see Sion and Rapuano 2018). Of these, 9 were modern and are not reported here. Of the rest, 42 were identifiable and are presented here (Fig. 1; see Catalogue, below). All the coins are bronze, except No. 38, which is billon.

The contexts of the coins provide only partial support for the chronological conclusions of the excavators, who based their conclusions primarily on the ceramic finds. This seems justified due to the heavily disturbed nature of the remains and the small size of many of the stratified coins, as the post-depositional location of such coins is more likely to shift.

Of the stratified coins found in Stratum II, which was dated by the excavators to the late Byzantine period (mid-sixth to the beginning of the seventh centuries CE), most relevant is a *follis* of Justin I (No. 32). It was unearthed in Room 4, within the ashy layer that covered Floor 571. This coin conforms reasonably well with the ascription of the floor to Stratum II.



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Fig. 1.

The suggested date of two cast coins (fifth–sixth centuries CE)—one found in the makeup of Floor 566 in Room 5 (No. 30), the other in a floor bedding in Room 2 (No. 31)—seems to fit the date ascribed to Stratum II. The latter is a rather rare coin: a small cast bronze struck in Egypt, which imitates an Axumite coin of Ezana or one of his successors. The most recent publication of such an imitation, from Ashqelon (Bijovsky 2004:113), noted that these coins have been found in several excavations and date from the mid-fifth to the mid-sixth centuries CE.

However, two other coins found in Stratum II (Nos. 23 and 25) are earlier in date: both were struck in the last quarter of the fourth century CE. The appearance of these coins in a mid–sixth century–seventh centuries CE context accords with Bijovsky’s claim that many fourth century CE coins remained current well after their emission date (Bijovsky 2000–2002:205–206).

Stratum I, like Stratum II, was ascribed by the excavators to the late Byzantine period, but it is slightly later in date (early seventh century CE). A half *folles* of Maurice (588/9 CE; No. 33) found in Fill 514 above Floor 544—a patch of cobblestones in Room 6—is likely to be associated with the occupation of the room. The same locus yielded a later coin, an Umayyad *fals* (No. 35), which is much smaller (1.06 g) and may have been intrusive, if the stratum’s early seventh century CE date is to be accepted. Two coins (Nos. 22, 24) found within the makeup of a Stratum I cobblestone surface (L547), probably a floor, date squarely within the fourth century CE: No. 22 dates between 351 and 361 CE, and No. 24 dates between 383 and 395 CE. These coins are small and may be residual finds, as their dates do not conform with the Stratum’s early seventh century CE date.

Other aspects of the coin assemblage are noteworthy. Half of the identified coins date from the late second or first century BCE and the first century CE, although one coin (No. 21) may date from the following century. Along with the pottery from this time period (see Rapuano 2018: Figs. 1:1, 2; 4:1–3; 5:1–4; 9:1, 2), these coins confirm the excavators’ conclusion that a Second Temple period occupation or other contemporaneous activity took place in the vicinity of the excavation area. Similarly, two Mamluk (Nos. 38, 39) and two Ottoman (Nos. 40, 41) coins, dating from the fifteenth through the early seventeenth centuries CE, are evidence of activity at the site during these periods.

Finally, the assemblage includes another noteworthy coin: a rare Umayyad *fals* minted in Ba‘labakk (No. 35). To my knowledge, only two similar coins have heretofore been published: from Tiberias (Berman 2004:232, No. 78) and from Bet She’an (Amitai-Preiss 2006:613, No. 35).

CATALOGUE¹

Cat. No.	Locus	Basket	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date (CE)	Mint	Reference	Notes	IAA No.
						Hasmoneans						
						Alexander Jannaeus (104–76 BCE)						
1	539	1078/1	2.31	16	[BAΣI]EΩΞ [AΛEΞANΔPOY] Inverted anchor; circle in lower right quadrant	[---] between rays of 8-rayed star within diadem	104–80/79 BCE	Jerusalem	TJC:209, Subgroup K19 Ariel and Hirschfeld 2005:85			125482
2	523	1047/1	2.55	14×16	[---] Inverted anchor	[---] Same.	Same	Same	TJC:209–210, Group K			125474
3	504	1059/1	0.93	12×14	BAΣI[EΩΞ AΛEΞA] NAI[POY] Same	[---] Same.	Same	Same	Same			125465
4	567	1155/1	1.06	11×13	[---] Anchor in circle	שנה אלכסנדרוס [שנה] [קד] Star within circle of dots.	80/79 BCE	Same	Cf. TJC:210, Subgroup L1–6	Barbaric letters		125497
5	509	1037	0.58	10	[---] Anchor?	Star	Same	Same	Cf. TJC:210, Subgroups L7–14			125469
6*	523	1047/2	1.79	15	[---]/[---] Anchor? within wreath	יחזקיהו Double cornucopiae; between them, pomegranate.	Same	Same	TJC:215, Group S.			125475
7	504	1059/2	1.23	10×15	-	-	80/79 BCE			Cf. TJC:210, Subgroups L7–14	Unstruck flan	125466
						Mattathias Antigonus (40–37 BCE)						
8*	505	1016	13.83	23	↑ Double cornucopiae; around and between paleo-Hebrew inscription: מתתיהו המלך הגדול חבר [היהודים]	Wreath of ivy leaves; around, Greek inscription: Β[ACI]A[EQ]C ANTIFONO(Y)	40–37 BCE	Same	TJC:218, No. 36			125467
						Unclear Hasmonean Ruler						
9	544	1011	1.44	13	↑ In wreath: [מתתיהו] [---]/[---] גדול [היהודים]	Double cornucopiae with pomegranate between horns		Same				125484

¹ Coins marked with an asterisk appear in Fig. 1.

CATALOGUE (cont.)

Cat. No.	Locus	Basket	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date (CE)	Mint	Reference	Notes	IAA No.
10	536	1071	1.81	14	↗	ה[---]/[---]/[---] ה[---]						
11	572	1199	1.11	12×14	↓	[---] Same	Same		Same			125498
12	514	1056/2	1.30	12×14		Illegible	Same		Same			125472
13	591	1198	1.27	14×16		Same	Double cornucopias	1st c. BCE –1st c. CE	Same	Cf. <i>TJC</i> :257, No. 320	Hasmonean or Herodian	125505
						Herod (37–4 BCE)						
14	580	1177	1.34	14	↑	[---] Anchor	Double cornucopia; between horns, caduceus		Same	<i>TJC</i> :222–223, No. 59		125501
15	505	1027	0.89	14		[---] Same	Same		Same	Cf. <i>TJC</i> :222–223, No. 59		125468
16	503	1040	0.78	12×14		[---]	Anchor? in circle with Y pattern		Same	<i>TJC</i> :223, No. 61		125464
						Agrippa I (37–44 CE)						
17	524	1089	2.36	17	↑	BACI/AEWC ΑΓΡΗΠΑ Canopy	Three ears of corn; in fields: [L]–ץ	Year 6 = 41/2	Same	<i>TJC</i> :231, No. 120		125477
18	588	1194/2	3.12	19	↑	[---] Same	Same; in fields: [L]–ץ	Same	Same	Same		125503
						First Jewish Revolt (66–70 CE)						
19	576	1175	1.71	15	↑	Amphora שנה–[שה]ם	Vine leaf [חרת] ציין	Year 2 = 67/68	Jerusalem	<i>TJC</i> :241, No. 196		125500
20	590	1192	3.16	17	↑	Amphora [שנה–שיל[ש]]	Vine leaf [חרת ציין]	Same	Same	<i>TJC</i> :242, No. 204		125504
						Roman Provincial (First–Second Centuries CE)						
21	588	1194/1	1.05	13		[---] Head or bust r.	Illegible				Bevelled	125502

CATALOGUE (cont.)

Cat. No.	Locus	Basket	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date (CE)	Mint	Reference	Notes	IAA No.
						Constantius II (337–361 CE)						
22	547	1125/1	1.62	14×18	↑	[DN CONSTAN]–TIVS [P[F AVG] Pearl-diademed, draped bust r.	FEL TEMP– [REPARATIO] Virtus spearing fallen horsema	351–361		Cf. <i>LRBC</i> II:87, No. 2038		125485
						Arcadius (383–408 CE)						
23	566	1143	1.06	13	→	[D]N ARCA[D]IVS PF [AVG] Same	[SALVS REI– PVBLICAE Victory advancing l., dragging captive and holding standard; in l. field: ⋄; in ex.: [A]NT[.]	383–392	Antioch?	Cf. <i>LRBC</i> II:103, No. 2771		125494
24*	547	1108/2	1.09	11	↑	[–]–]PF AVG Same	SALVS REI[– PVBLICAE] Same; in l. field: ⋄	393–395	Alexandria	Cf. <i>LRBC</i> II:105, No. 2907	Emerpor unclear	125486
25	565	1138/3	1.03	11×13	↓	[–]–] Same	[–]–] Same; in l. field: ⋄(?)	383–395		Cf. <i>LRBC</i> II:89, No. 2183	Emerpor unclear	125496
						Fourth–Sixth Centuries CE						
26	555	1129/2	0.75	10		[–]–] Bust r.	Illegible	4th c.				125492
27	576	1167	0.17	8		[–]–] Same	Same	Same			Cast	125499
28	523	1076	0.65	7×13		[–]–] Bust r.?	Same	Same				125476
29	549	1157/2	0.70	13×15		[–]–] Same	Same	Same				125488
30	566	1167	0.26	9×12		[–]–] Same	Same	5th–6th c.			Cast?	125495
						Imitation of Coin of Ezana or One of His Successors, Axum (Fifth–Sixth Centuries CE)						
31	565	1138/1	0.48	10×12	↖	[–]–] Bust r.	[–]–] Maltese cross within circle		Egypt	Bijovsky 1998:98, Nos. 368–369	Cast	125483

CATALOGUE (cont.)

Cat. No.	Locus	Basket	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date (CE)	Mint	Reference	Notes	IAA No.
32*	549	1157/1	16.33	30	↓	Justin I (518-527 CE), <i>Follis</i> DN IV[STI-NVS] PP a/v Diademed, cuirassed bust r., with paludamentum	M Above, to l. and r., crosses; beneath: E; in ex.: CON	518-522	Constantinople	<i>MIBE</i> :96, No. 13		125487
33	514	1056/1	5.22	22	↙	Maurice (582-602 CE), <i>Half Follis</i> [---] Cuirassed and helmeted bust facing, holding globus cruciger and shield	K Above, cross; to l.: ANNO; beneath: A; to r.: 9	588/9	Same	<i>DOC</i> 1:313, No. 52a		125471
34	534	1200	2.37	14	↓	Sixth Century CE, <i>Dodecanumium</i> [---] Diademed bust r. Umayyad, <i>Fals</i>	HB In ex.: AΛΕΞ محمد رسول الله		Alexandria	Cf. <i>MIBE</i> :152, No. 165		125480
35	514	1075	1.06	13		لاله الا الله وحده لا شريك له Center: محمد رسول الله margin: [---]	لاله الا الله وحده لا شريك له Center: محمد رسول الله margin: [---]		Ba'labakk	Cf. Walker 1956:237, Nos. 766-772		125473
36	551	1139/1	2.35	16×18		لاله الا الله وحده لا شريك له Center: محمد رسول الله margin: [---]	لاله الا الله وحده لا شريك له Center: محمد رسول الله margin: [---]					125490
37	534	1066	1.03	15×17		Uncertain Abbasid Governor: 'Abd Allah <i>Fals</i> لاله الا الله وحده لا شريك له Center: محمد رسول الله Marginal legend: ضربت في عشره ومانتين	لاله الا الله وحده لا شريك له Center: محمد رسول الله Marginal legend: ضربت في عشره ومانتين	AH 213 = 828/9				125479

CATALOGUE (cont.)

Cat. No.	Locus	Basket	Weight (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date (CE)	Mint	Reference	Notes	IAA No.
38*	550	1111	1.23	18	✓	Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem Amaury (1163–1174 CE and Successors to 1235), <i>Silver Denier</i> + A[M]ALRICVS R[EX] + DE [I]ER[USA]LEM Cross pattée	+ DE [I]ER[USA]LEM Church of Resurrection	1163–1219	Jerusalem	Cf. Metcalf 1995: No. 169		125489
						Mamlūks, <i>Fals</i>						
39	555	1129/1	1.13	11 × 17		Illegible	Illegible	15th c.				125491
40	557	1201	0.61	13 × 15		Illegible	Illegible	End 15th c.				125493
						Ottomans, <i>Maḡhir</i>						
41	529	1054	1.13	13		Illegible	Illegible	16th c.				125478
42	510	1036/1	9.42	17		Illegible	Arabesque ornament	AH 982–1012 = 1574–1603	Miṣr al-Maḡrūsa	Cf. Kabaklarli 1998:444, No. 14-Miṣr-03		125470

NOTE

¹ Ariel Berman identified Coins 35–37 and 39–41. The coins were cleaned by Gali Beiner at the laboratories of the IAA and were photographed by Clara Amit of the IAA photography studio. The article was written in February 2012; it was edited by Dafnah Strauss.

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