COINS FROM THE 1971 EXCAVATIONS AT HESHBON

ABRAHAM TERIAN
Basel, Switzerland

The present study abounds in contrasts when compared with the previous study of the coins from the 1968 excavations.¹ Most of the previous coins were identified through the inconvenience of photographs; the present identifications were made by handling the actual coins.² Whereas no two coins were alike in the 1968 finds, the present finds abound in duplicates and are more than four times as many in number. This is partly due to a hoard of 66 silver pieces found in Area C.

The present proportion of quantity to quality, however, is not better than that of 1968. Aside from the hoard, the 121 coins yielded only 49 specimens worth considering in this report. Though mostly obliterated, 54 of the remaining 72 are somehow recognizable by type and workmanship, but fall short of being attributed to specific rulers.³ The rest are worn beyond recognition and look like flans.


² Thanks are due to the Department of Antiquities of the H. K. of Jordan for lending its share of the coins for study and publication.

³ In the following list, the first numeral is the publication number while the excavator's registry number and findspot are presented in parentheses.

Some of the pre-Islamic coins are rather rare, e.g., a Nabataean leptos (No. 51) of the long-haired Rabbel II (A.D. 71-106), two procuratorial lepta of Judaea (Nos. 52, 53), an Aelia Capitolina sestertius (No. 54) from the joint principate of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus (A.D. 161-169), the reverse showing Astarte in her temple which stood at the site in Jerusalem later occupied by the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, and a sestertius (No. 56) of Herennius Etruscus (ca. A.D. 250). No. 55 is an odd specimen of Philip I (243-249). It bears no marks of circulation. Moreover, the wide and raised margin, coupled with unusual thickness, gives it the appearance of a medallion (if not an ancient imitation).

The Islamic coins are all of the conventional type fulūs—with the exception of two silver dirhamayn (Nos. 81, 82) and the hoard of 66 silver pieces found in Area C. Two pictorial-type Umayyad fīlsayn were found (Nos. 65, 66); one such fīls was found in 1968 (No. 21 in the previous report). Nonetheless, the overall condition of the Islamic coins is mediocre. Many are badly damaged and the ones in better condition are as problematic in most cases where part of a horizontal legend falls outside the flan. Marginal legends fall mostly outside the flan in many specimens that bear them. This suffices for the general description.

Maccabean

47. (1015—C.1:45, a hard-packed huwwar-layer, interpreted as an Early-Roman fill containing pottery that extended from the late Iron Age to the Early Roman period.) Alexander Janneus, 103-76 B.C.

D.6:33e) are certainly Mamlūk; No. 215 (1142, D.6:33h) is possibly early Ottoman (see below); and Nos. 216 (389, A.2 surface clean-up), 217 (413, A.5:1), 218 (548, B.1:17), 219 (661, C.5:3), 220 (938, D.5:5e), 221 (946, D.6:33c), 222 (1012, C.1 general clean-up), 223 (1013, C.1 general clean-up), 224 (1016, C.3 surface clean-up), 225 (1017, C.4 surface clean-up), 226 (1022, D.2 E. balk clean-up), 227 (1025, D.5:5f), 228 (1026, D.5:5f), 229 (1027, D.5:5f), 230 (1028, D.5:5f), 231 (1029, D.5:5f), 232 (1088, D.6:33c), and 233 (1092, D.6:33f) are worn beyond recognition.

Editor's note: Coin No. 215 identified as possibly early Ottoman by A. Terian, was examined also by George C. Miles, Curator of Islamic Coins of the American Numismatic Society, New York, N.Y. In a letter to Siegfried H. Horn of May 25, 1972, he says that the type seems to be unknown, but that it must be either late Seljuk of Rum or early Ottoman.
Obv. Obliterated.
Rev. Traces of a circle, anchor within.
48. (1090–D.6:33e, the 5th layer of a soil pile in a cistern.)
   Similar to the preceding, but of poorer condition.

_Nabataean_

   Similar to No. 2 in the previous report.
50. (1018–C.4, surface clean-up.)
   Similar to the preceding.
51. (1102–B.4:43, a thick, striated plaster layer.) Rabbel II, A.D. 71-106.
   Obv. Head of Rabbel r., laureate, with long hair.
   Rev. Similar to No. 3 in the previous report.

_Provincial Roman (Judea)_

52. (1118–B.3:28, a soil layer.) M. Ambibulus, A.D. 9-12.
   Obv. Ear of barley; traces of border.
   Rev. Palm tree with two bunches of fruit; traces of border.
53. (1100–D.5:5f, the 5th layer in the silt of a cistern.)
   Pontius Pilate, A.D. 29/30.
   Obv. Three ears of barley, around: [IOT][AIAKAI[CAPO[C].
   Rev. Obliterated.4
54. (636–F, Tomb 6, Locus 7, i.e., the 3d Loculus on the south side.)
   Aelia Capitolina; Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, A.D. 161-169.
   Obv. Busts of Aurelius (161-180) r. and Verus (161-169) l., both
   bearded and laureate; around: IMP CAES ANTONINO . . .
   Rev. Temple of Astarte showing four columns, pediment, central arch,
   and the goddess standing l. within, wearing turreted crown and
   chiton, resting l. hand on spear, r. hand holding uncertain object,
   and r. bare leg raised on something; COL AEL CAP in exergue.5

4 Editor's note: Sixteen coins came from Cistern D.6:33, in which the
   debris appeared to consist of nine layers, labeled a-i, with an apparent break
   between layers e and f. However, the coin evidence does not support the
   assumption that the layers had been accumulated in a chronological sequence.
   Mamlûk coins came from the 3d and 6th layers (c and f), Ayyûbid coins from
   the 2d and the 6th-9th layers (b and f-i), an Umayyad coin from the 3d
   layer (c), and a Roman and a Maccabean coin from the 5th layer (e).

5 Editor's note: The remarks made in connection with coins from Cistern
   D.6:33 (see note 3a) apply appropriately also to the coins found in Cistern
   D.5:5, where the silt consisted of five distinguishable layers (b-f). Only the
   last two of them produced identifiable coins: in layer e one Ayyûbid and
   eight Mamlûk coins were found, and in layer f one coin of the Procurator
   Pontius Pilate and two Mamlûk coins. Evidently the silt built up in Mamlûk
   times, although two earlier coins found their way into the cistern during
   that period.

Late Roman

55. (1224—F, Tomb 5, Locus 3, the modernly disturbed grave Trough 6 of the northern arcosolium of the Swinging Door Tomb.) Philip I, A.D. 243-249 (medallion?).
   Obv. Bust of Philippus Arabus r., bearded, laureate, and draped; around: IMP M IVL PHILIPPVS AVG.
   Rev. Lactitia standing l., holding wreath in l. and rudder in r. hand; around: LAET FVNDATA; SC in the field.

56. (429—D.6:15, a fill layer of mixed debris.) Herennius Etruscus, ca. A.D. 250.6
   Obv. Bust of Herennius Etruscus r., bareheaded and draped; around: EPENN ETPOV MEKV ΔΕΚΙΟC KECAP.
   Rev. Eagle perched on palm branch, head l.; around: ΔΗΜΑΡΧ ΕΕΟΒΙΑC; SC in exergue.

   Obv. Bust of Valerian I r., radiate and draped; around: IMP C P LIC VALERIANVS P F AVG.
   Rev. Helmeted Mars standing r. with spear, emperor standing l. with scepter; obliterated inscr. around.

58. (1091—D.6:33e, the 5th layer of a soil pile in a cistern.) Maximian, A.D. 296-305.
   Obv. Bust of Maximian r., radiate and draped; around: MAXIMIANVS NOB CAES.
   Rev. Similar to No. 9 in the previous report, but around: CONCORDIA M[I]L[TVM]; in the field: HA (Heraclea).

59. (1225—F, Tomb 5, Locus 3, the modernly disturbed grave Trough 6 of the northern arcosolium of the Swinging Door Tomb.) Constantine II, A.D. 337-340.
   Obv. Bust of Constantine II r., with pearl-diadem and cuirass; around: CONSTANTINVS IVN NOB C; pierced.
   Rev. Plan of Roman camp, Sol standing in the middle above; l.: VIRT; r.: EXERC; beneath: T.S.A. (Thessalonica); pierced.

   Obv. Head of Constans I r., around: CONSTA . . . .

61. (655—B.4:6, surface soil.)
   Similar to the preceding.

   Similar to No. 12 in the previous report.

63. (570—C.1:33, a Byzantine soil fill.) Honorius, A.D. 395-423.
   Similar to No. 15 in the previous report.

Byzantine

64. (1188—C.4:2, a late-Islamic wall near the surface.) Nummus of Justinian I, A.D. 527-565.

Obv. Bust of Justinian I facing, with cuirass.
Rev. A (mark of value—1 nummus).

_Umayyad (661-750)_

65. (514—C.4:23, a late-Islamic soil layer.)
Obv. Jerboa facing l.; border.
Rev. _Muḥammad_; border.

66. (945—D.6:33c, the 3d layer of a soil pile in a cistern.)
Obv. Similar to the preceding, but traces of inscr. around.
Rev. Obliterated.

67. (606—D.6:26, an occupation surface.)
Similar to No. 23 in the previous report.
_Ayyūbid (1171-1342)^

68. (1148—D.6:33g, the 7th layer of a soil pile in a cistern.) _Aẓ-Ẓāhir Ghāzī_ (Ḫalab Branch), 1186-1216.
Obv. Within double octagram (the inner dotted): _Al-Imām / an-Nāṣir_; between octagram and outer dotted circle: . . . / ʾilāh../ ʾilā / ʾilāh / . . .
Rev. Similar, within: _Al-Malik / aẓ-Ẓāhir_; obliterated inscr. around.

69. (1150—D.6:33i, the 9th layer of a soil pile in a cistern.)
Obv. _Al-Imām aʾn-Nāṣir Amīr / al-Muʾminīn._
Rev. _Ghāzī / . . ._; arabesque beneath.

70. (1094—D.6:33g, the 7th layer of a soil pile in a cistern.) _Al-ʾAdil_, 1196-1218.
Similar to No. 28 in the previous report.

71. (1087—D.6:33f, the 6th layer of a soil pile in a cistern.) _Al-Manṣūr Muḥammad_ I or II (Ḫamāḥ Branch), 1191-1220 or 1244-1284.
Obv. Within triple hexagram (the middle dotted): _Al-Malik / aṣ-Ṣāliḥ._
Rev. Similar, within: _Al-Malik / al-Manṣūr._

72. (1095—D.6:33h, the 8th layer of a soil pile in a cistern.)
Similar to the preceding.

73. (942—D.5:5e, the 4th layer in the silt of a cistern.)
Similar to No. 29 in the previous report.

74. (1020—C.5:3, a late-Islamic fill.) _Al-ʾAzīz Muḥammad_ (Ḫalab Branch), 1216-1236.
Rev. Within double octagram (the inner dotted): . . . / al-ʾAzīz.

75. (1096—D.6:33h, the 8th layer of a soil pile in a cistern.) _Al-Kāmil Muḥammad_ (Egyptian Branch), 1218-1238.
Obv. Obliterated.
Rev. Within double square (the outer dotted): _Al-Malik al-Kāmil bi-Amr Allah._

76. (1086—D.6:33h, the 8th layer of a soil pile in a cistern.) _An-Nāṣir Šalāḥ ad-Dīn Yūsuf_ (Ḫalab Branch), 1236-1260.
Obv. Within triple hexagram (the middle dotted): _Al-Imām / al-Mustaʿsim_; traces of border.
Rev. Similar, within: _Al-Malik / an-Nāṣir._

^ End of the Ḥamāḥ Branch.
77. (1081–D.6:33b, the 2d layer of a soil pile in a cistern.) Aṣ-Ṣāliḥ Isma‘il (Damascus Branch), 1237–1245.
Obv. Al-Malik as-Ṣāliḥ / Isma‘il; illegible inscr. between two dotted circles around.
Rev. Ibn al-Malik / al-‘Adil Muḥammad; illegible inscr. between two dotted circles around.

78. (1077–D.6:33g, the 7th layer of a soil pile in a cistern.) Aṣ-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb (Egyptian Branch), 1240–1249.
Obv. . . ./al-Musta‘sim/[bi]-‘llah Ab[ū ‘l- . . . ].
Rev. . . ./[Nidj]m ad-Din Ayyūb; traces of dotted square.

Mamlūk (1250–1517)*

79. (943–D.5:5e, the 4th layer in the silt of a cistern.) Az-Ẓāhir Bibars, 1260–1277.
Obv. Obliterated.
Rev. Lion facing l.; above: Al-Malik; beneath: Bibars.

Similar to No. 39 in the previous report.

81. (950–D.6:33c, the 3d layer of a soil pile in a cistern.) Dirham (2.12 gm.) of aṣ-Ṣāliḥ Isma‘il, 1342–1345.

82. (952–D.6:33c, the 3d layer of a soil pile in a cistern.) Similar to the preceding (2.59 gm.).

83. (366–C.4:24, a late-Islamic soil layer.) Al-Aṣraf Sha‘bān, 1363–1377.
Obv. [As-Sultān al-Malik / [al-Aṣraf] Sha‘bān / . . . ; double border (the outer dotted).
Rev. Within hexagram of two triangles: Ṭarāblūs.

84. (436–B.4:5, surface soil.)
Rev. Within arabesque: Ḥuriba / bi-Dimashḵ / . . . ; double border (the outer dotted).

85. (912–D.5:5f, the 5th layer in the silt of a cistern.) Similar to the preceding. 86. (953–D.6:33c, the 3d layer of a soil pile in a cistern.) Similar to the preceding.

Similar to No. 42 in the previous report.

90. (1093–D.6:33f, the 6th layer of a soil pile in a cistern.) Similar to the preceding.

91–99. (935, 936, 941–D.5:5e, the 4th layer in the silt of a cistern.) Az-Ẓāhir

* Baḥrī Mamlūk (1250–1382), Burdji Mamlūk (1382–1517).
Barkūk, 1382-1399.

Obv. . . . / as-Sultan al-Malik / Barkūk; two straight lines across the field.

Rev.  Within hexagram of two triangles: Šuriba / bi-Dimashk.

94. (581—C.5:1, surface soil. The coin lay in a Byzantine lamp.)
   Similar to the preceding.

95. (937—D.5:5e, the 4th layer in the silt of a cistern.)
   Similar to No. 44 in the previous report.

The Hoard

It could be said that a number of coins accumulated in a locus may be treated as a hoard. In this case, Nos. 53, 73, 79, 80, 85, 87-89, 91-93, and 95 above, all found in D.5:5 and Nos. 58, 66, 68-72, 75-78, 81, and 82, found in D.6:33, could be counted as additional hoards. But such a consideration has its limitations. Accumulated hoards cover a wide chronological range and are of little value for interpretation of stratigraphy. Such hoards are built up haphazardly, i.e., coins dropped in cisterns or carried off by drains, sunk through soft soil from higher strata on account of their own weight, etc.

The hoard under consideration is a savings hoard found in a sealed locus (C.4:37, a late-Islamic layer). It is reminiscent of the remarks made by the satirical playwright Aristophanes in ca. 400 B.C.:

The public has often given us the appearance of treating our wisest and best citizens in the same way as it treats old and new coins. We do not use the latter . . . though they are of purer metal . . . we prefer to use bad copper pieces, struck and embossed in the very worst way.¹

These remarks are true heri et hodie et in saecula—and so they were in the 1270s when an occupant of the “north building” of Square 4 in Area C died, leaving behind his savings. The coins, consisting of bronze cores with silver coatings, were kept in an earthen lamp and hid in a little niche under the west end of a column drum used as a horizontal bench along the south wall. Apparently, no other member of the household knew about the scant savings which consisted of 66 pieces—32 dirhams and 34 half-dirhams identified as follows:

42 ABRAHAM TERIAN

Ayyūbid

96. (460) Dirham (2.79 gm.) of aş-Sālih Ayyūb (Egyptian Branch), 1240-1249.
Obv. Within double square (the outer dotted): Al-Imām / al-Musta'ṣim / bi-'l-lah Abū Aḥmad 'Abd Allah Amīr al-Mu'minin; in segments between square and double border (the outer dotted): Al-Ḵāhira / sanat ārba'a wa / . . . ([64]4 A.H).

Mamlūk


98. (447) Half-dirham (1.47 gm.);
Similar to No. 36 in the previous report.

116, 119, 122, 123 (pierced), 126, 127. Similar to the preceding, but the beginning Amīr al-Mu'minin is at the end.
106, 124. Similar to the preceding, but add to l. and r. margin: Ḍuriba bi-'l-Kāhira; double border (the outer dotted.)11
121. Duriba bi-Di máiṣh / al-Imām al-Ḥākim / bi-Amr Allah Abū 'l-Abbās / Aḥmad Amīr al-Mu'minin; similar border.
99, 103, 114, 118. Al-Imām al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allah / Abū 'l-'Abbās Aḥmad / Amīr al-Mu'minin; similar border.
100-102, 104, 105, 107, 109-113, 115, 117, 120, 125, 128. Lā ilah illā 'llah / Muḥammad Rasūl Allah / ārsalahu bi-'l-hudā; the mint and date as a marginal inscr. surround the obv. legend in four lines as follows:

10 In the following list (also in that given in note 16) the first numeral presents the publication number, while the excavator's registry number and the weight in grams for each of the 30 dirhams are given in parentheses.
99 (446, 3.39 gm.), 100 (448, 2.71), 101 (449, 2.42), 102 (451, 2.58), 103 (452, 2.93), 104 (454, 2.76), 105 (456, 2.98), 106 (457, 2.84), 107 (458, 3.07), 108 (462, 2.95), 109 (463, 3.38), 110 (464, 2.10), 111 (465, 2.68), 112 (446, 2.92), 113 (467, 2.74), 114 (468, 2.84), 115 (470, 2.72), 116 (471, 2.91), 117 (472, 2.79), 118 (474, 2.90), 119 (476, 3.11), 120 (479, 2.83), 121 (480, 2.90), 122 (481, 2.52), 123 (483, 2.72), 124 (486, 2.75), 125 (488, 2.82), 126 (489, 2.81), 127 (492, 2.73), 128 (496, 2.95).

11 The undated coins, according to S. L. Poole, are "conterminous with the short duration of El-Mustansir's Khalifate, or 659-661 [1260-1262]" (Catalogue of Oriental Coins in the British Museum [London, 1879], IV, 142, n.). It should be noted that coins bearing these dates have been found; see infra. nn. 12 and 13.
Beginning from 1.: ḏuriba bi-ʾl- Khá/hira sanat sittīn / . . . ([6]60 A.H.).  


Beginning from 1.: ḏuriba bi-ʾl- Khá/hira sanat āḥad wa sittīn / wa sit-miʿāa / wa dīn al-hak (661 A.H.).

Beginning from 1.: ḏuriba bi-ʾl- Khá/hira sanat sittīn / wa sit-miʿāa / wa sittīn / . . . ([6]66 A.H.).

Rev. ʿAs-Sāliḥī / as-Sultān al-Malik / ʿaz-Ẓahir Rukn ad-Dunya waʾd-Dīn / Bibliars ʿAsīn Amir al-Muʿminīn; beneath, lion facing 1.; similar border (the rev. of the dirhams is identical; however, the heads of some lions are larger and the tails of others are raised higher).


Obv. 133, 144, 152. Lā ʾilah illā /ʾIlah Muḥammad / Rasūl Allah; around: . . . ḏuriba . . . .


Rev. Type A: Al-Malik / ʿaz-Ẓahir; beneath, lion facing 1.


Rev. Type B: As-Sultān / al-Malik ʿaz-Ẓahir; beneath, lion facing 1.


134, 135, 139, 142, 146. Lā ʾilah illā /ʾIlah Muḥammad Rasūl Allah / ārsalahu biʾl-hudā; around: . . . ḏuriba . . .

Rev. Type C: As-Sultān al-Malik / ʿaz-Ẓahir Rukn ad-Dunya waʾd-Dīn / Bibliars ʿAsīn Amir al-Muʾminīn; beneath, lion facing 1.

Like S. L. Poole, “I have endeavored in vain to discover any system in the weights of the Memlook coins.” 17 The dirhams of

Note 11 for explanation of numbers.

36 See note 11 for explanation of numbers.

12 Only the datable Nos. are given: 115, 128 (1261/2).

12 No. 109 (1262/3).

24 Nos. 100, 125 (1266/7).

15 Nos. 110, 117 (1268/9).

17 “The first impression one derives from a study of the Memlook coins is that no two examples are alike in weight . . . but the worn condition of most of the coins may account in part for this irregularity. Still, with every allow-
Bibars range from 2.10-3.39 gm. (av. 2.73 gm.) and the half-dirhams from 0.84-2.37 gm. (av. 1.54 gm.). But when the three reverse types (A-C) of the half-dirhams are considered separately, the range is not so broad. Type A ranges from 0.84-1.55 gm. (av. 1.20 gm.); type B from 0.99-1.69 gm. av. (1.42 gm.); and type C from 1.05-2.37 gm. (av. 1.60 gm.). Figs. 1 and 2 illustrate this; the symmetry in Fig. 2 is noteworthy.

The dirhams of Bibars present a variety of obverses and only one type of reverse. The obverse types are of little help to ascertain their chronology since all the datable ones have the same obverse. The rest are represented by a few specimens that do not warrant a comparative study. The half-dirhams also present a variety of obverses, but three types of reverses emerge (A-C). These are appropriately divided into 12, 10, and 11 coins. This satisfactory distribution enables a study of their weight system to determine which of the three types is the oldest (assuming the simple principle that coins longer in circulation lost more of

ance for friction, it is impossible to discover any standard weight for either the deenars [gold] or the dirhems [silver] . . . there are all varieties of weights . . . for dirhems between 7 and 88 grains. From such vague data . . . it is difficult to see how any system of standard, in one metal or two, can be discovered” (Poole, Catalogue of Oriental Coins, pp xxi-xxii).
their weight than those with a shorter period of circulation). In the absence of dates on the *half-dirhams*, an application of this metrological theory is appropriate to ascertain the chronology of the three types. It shows that at the time when the coins were hoarded, type A had lost about 25% of its weight and type B about 12% of its weight in comparison with type C. The comparison suggests that A is chronologically the earliest type. Aside from the metrological evidence, the clustering of *tituli* from *al-Malik az-Ẓāhir*, in A, to *as-Sultān*¹⁸ *al-Malik az-Ẓāhir* in B, and to *as-Sultān* al-Malik az-Ẓāhir Rukn ad-Dunyā wa’d-Dīn Bibars Ḫāsim Amīr al-Mu’mīnīn in C (though the latter appears on the earliest *dirhams*) is noteworthy.

Like the rest of the Ayyūbid and Mamlūk coins from the various strata, the hoard makes it evident that the Ayyūbid coins were almost driven out by the Mamlūk coins soon after the rise of the latter dynasty in the middle of the 13th cent. (notice the ratio of 1 to 65). The Ayyūbid coin (No. 96) dates from 1246/7 and the latest datable Mamlūk coins (Nos. 110, 117) are from 1268/9, suggesting that the hoard was last hidden sometime in the early 1270s.

A disappointment persists: none of the coins hitherto found bears any of the ancient mint names of Transjordan. The obliterated margins of most Islamic coins have no legible traces of mint names. Of the Ayyūbid coins, No. 96 was struck at Cairo,

¹⁸ Bibars was the first Mamlūk ruler to use this title on coins.
as were the *Mamlûk dirhams*—with the exception of No. 121 which was struck at Damascus. As for the *Mamlûk fulûs*, No. 83 was struck at Tripoli (Lebanon), and Nos. 84-86 and 91-94 at Damascus.

If the coins from the 1971 excavations were to be tabulated as were those from the 1968 excavations, a considerable increase in the number of coins would be seen; however, the pattern of distribution would remain the same as that of Table 1 (p. 157) in the previous report. There are no coins from before the 1st cent. B.C. and none from after the 15th cent. A.D. Likewise, there are no coins from the intervening 9th-12th cents. which comprise the *Abbasid* period. Consequently, the conclusions drawn in the previous report remain unchanged.

19 A possible exception is the somewhat doubtful Ottoman coin 215 (see n. 3).

Postscript. Please correct the following errors in my article "Coins from the 1968 Excavations at Heshbon," *AUSS*, 9 (1971), 147-160: page 148, line 1 read (No. 7) instead of (No. 8); page 148, line 5 read (No. 8) instead of (No. 9); page 150, line 23 read (year 18 ...) instead of (year 17 ...).