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► **To cite this version:**

Yoav Farhi, Israel Finkelstein, Yana Kirilov, Thomas Römer. Kiriath-jearim from the Ptolemaic Period to the Bar Kokhba Revolt in Light of the Numismatic Finds. *Semitica*, 2021, 63, pp.203-222. hal-03819166

HAL Id: hal-03819166

<https://hal.science/hal-03819166>

Submitted on 24 Oct 2022

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Kiriath-jearim from the Ptolemaic Period to the Bar Kokhba Revolt in Light of the Numismatic Finds

Yoav Farhi, Israel Finkelstein, Yana Kirilov and Thomas Römer

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Collège de France

Abstract. *The following paper presents the history of Kiriath-jearim and its surroundings in the Hellenistic and early Roman periods, in light of the numismatic finds which were discovered at the site during the recent excavations by a joint Tel Aviv University – Collège de France team.*

Résumé. *Cet article présente l'histoire de Kiriath-jearim et de ses environs aux époques hellénistique et romaine à la lumière des trouvailles numismatiques issues des récentes fouilles archéologiques menées conjointement par l'université de Tel Aviv et le Collège de France.*

Introduction

The site of Deir el-'Azar (the mound of biblical Kiriath-jearim) is located on a dominating hill above the village of Abu Gosh, 13 km west-northwest of the Old City of Jerusalem (Fig. 1). The hill commands a sweeping view of large stretches of the coastal plain and the Mediterranean coast in the west, the western neighborhoods of modern Jerusalem in the east and the Judean Mountains in the southeast. The Convent and the church of the Ark of the Covenant, built in the early 20th century over the remains of a Byzantine church or monastery, are located on the summit of the hill. The terraced slopes below the convent are planted with olive trees. Judging from the spread of pottery on these terraces, the size of the mound can be estimated at 4–4.5 hectares – one of the largest in the central highlands.

The site was surveyed twice, in the 1980s and 2010s, and a salvage excavation was carried out on the summit in the mid-1990s.¹ Two seasons of excavations were undertaken at the site in 2017 and 2019 by a joint Tel Aviv University – Collège de France team.² The results of these projects are consistent regarding the settlement history of the site: It was occupied almost continuously from the Early Bronze to the early Islamic period, with strong phases of activity in the Iron IIB-C, the early Hellenistic and early Roman periods.

In this article we present the numismatic finds from the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman periods retrieved in the course of the Tel Aviv University – Collège de France excavations.³ When studied with other pieces of information related to the site – pottery assemblages, architecture, stamped handles, stone inscriptions and historical sources – the Kiriath-jearim coins open a window into the detailed history of a site located on the outskirts of Jerusalem, in several stormy centuries in the history of Judea.

¹ C. McKinny, O. Schwartz, G. Barkay, A. Fantalkin and B. Zissu, “Kiriath-Jearim (Deir el-‘Âzar): Archaeological Investigations of a Biblical Town in the Judean Hill Country”, Jerusalem, *Israel Exploration Journal* 68/1, 2018, p. 30–49.

² I. Finkelstein, T. Römer, C. Nicolle, Z.C. Dunseth, A. Kleiman, J. Mas and N. Porat, “Excavations at Kiriath-Jearim Near Jerusalem, 2017: Preliminary Report”, *Semitica* 60, 2018, p. 31–83; I. Finkelstein, T. Römer, C. Nicolle, Z.C. Dunseth, A. Kleiman, J. Mas, N. Porat and N. Walzer, “Excavations at Kiriath-jearim, 2019: Preliminary Report”, *Tel Aviv* 48, 2021.

³ The Shmunis Family Excavations at Kiriath-jearim is a joint project of Tel Aviv University and the Collège de France, funded by Sana and Vlad Shmunis (USA). Israel Finkelstein of Tel Aviv University and Thomas Römer and Christophe Nicolle of the Collège de France direct the project.

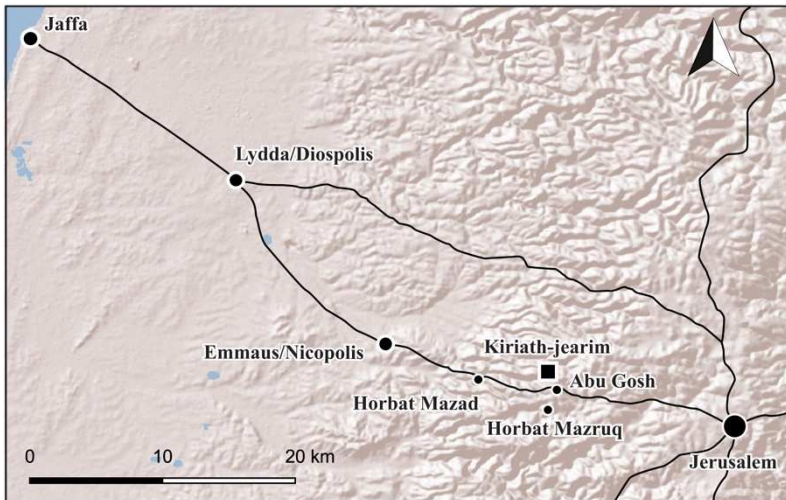


Fig. 1 - Sites mentioned in the article

The Numismatic Finds

Fifty coins were discovered during the excavations (the only ones published so far from this site⁴), 47 of which are ancient.⁵ The earliest coins date to the Persian period (4th century BCE) and the latest to the Mamlūk period (14th–15th centuries CE).⁶ Table 1 presents the 32 coins from the Late Persian, Hellenistic and Early Roman periods.⁷ The number of clean Hellenistic and Roman contexts

⁴J. Germer-Durand, “Découvertes Archéologiques à Aboughoch”, *Revue Biblique* 3/2, 1906, p. 286–287, mentions various coins which were found during the preparatory work for the construction of the monastery in the early 20th century. He notes coins from the following periods: Ptolemaic (with no further details), Hasmonean (John Hyrcanus, Judah Aristobulus and Mattathias Antigonus) to the destruction of Jerusalem (no further details), Roman (3 coins of Titus of the local *Judaea Capta* series), late Roman and Islamic (with no details). The location of these coins is unknown.

⁵Three modern coins were found; one Ottoman (20 Para of Abdulmejid I, dated 1857), and two of the State of Israel (1 and 5 prutah, both dated 1949).

⁶Y. Farhi, “The Coins from Kiriath Jearim 2017, 2019 Excavations”, in I. Finkelstein, T. Römer and C. Nicolle (eds.), *The Shmunis Family Foundation Excavations at Kiriath-jearim (Deir el-'Azar)* (forthcoming).

⁷The coins were cleaned by Orna Cohen. The photos were taken by Sasha Flit and Anna Hayat. We wish to thank them all.

was limited, meaning that most of the coins originated from mixed loci.

The majority of the coins were found with the aid of a metal detector, operated by one of us (Y.F). The search for coins, alongside other metal objects, included a thorough check of all excavated squares and dumps, several times during the excavation. Thanks to this method, which is not standard in all archaeological excavations, we have the opportunity to present a solid numismatic biography of Kiriath-jearim.

Table 1: The Persian, early Hellenistic and Roman coins from Kiriath-jearim

No.	Reg. no. (season, area, locus, basket, artifact)	Wt. (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date of coin	Mint ⁸	References ⁹	Notes
PERSIAN PERIOD										
Yehud										
1	19/C/12 / PT2/ AR3	0.34	7	5	Head of Persian king l., wearing jagged crown	[---] Eagle with spread wings, head r.	c. 350–333 BCE	Jerusalem	Cf. TJC, p. 198, No. 16	Silver hemiobol (half gerah). Unrecorded subtype.

⁸ We use the conventional term ‘mint’ without implying any judgment as to the actual organization of coin production or to its exact location. It is possible, for example, that royal or provincial authorities made use of private contractors to produce occasional issues of coinage, rather than operating an official, permanent mint. It is also possible that coins (especially those that do not bear a mint name) that are usually attributed to a certain city, such as the Hasmonean coins attributed to Jerusalem, were actually not all struck in that city. However, since the Hasmonean coins, for example, were certainly struck by the authorities located in Jerusalem, they are assigned to the mint of Jerusalem.

⁹ Abbreviations for references, which appear in the table: TJC = Y. Meshorer, *A Treasury of Jewish Coins from the Persian Period to Bar Kochba*, Jerusalem-Nyack, 2001; Gitler and Tal 2006 = H. Gitler and O. Tal, *The Coinage of Philistia of the Fifth and Fourth Centuries BC: A Study of the Earliest Coins of Palestine* (Collezioni Numismatiche 6), Milano–New York, 2006; CPE 1/2 = C.C. Lorber, *Coins of the Ptolemaic Empire, Part I: Ptolemy I through Ptolemy IV, Volume 2: Bronze*. New York, 2018; CHL = Y. Meshorer, G. Bijovsky and W. Fischer-Bossert, *Coins of the Holy Land: The Abraham and Marian Sofaer Collection at the American Numismatic Society and the Israel Museum* (Ancient Coins in North American Collections 8), New York, 2013; GIC = C. Howgego, *Greek Imperial Countermarks: Studies in the Provincial Coinage of the Roman Empire* (Royal

No.	Reg. no. (season, area, lo- cus, bas- ket, arti- fact)	Wt. (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date of coin	Mint ⁸	Refer- ences ⁹	Notes
Athenian-style imitation										
2	19/A/49 / PT2/ AR1	0.60	8x8.5	6	Helmeted head of Athena r., with profile eye.	AΘE Owl r., head facing; in upper l. field, olive spray and crescent. In-cuse.	Before 332 BCE	Gaza?	Cf. Gitler and Tal 2006, p. 192-195	Unre- corded silver obol of type XIV.7T or XIV.8D.
PTOLEMAIC Ptolemy IV (222–204 BCE)										
3	19/B/5/ PT6/ AR9	5.87	19x20	12	Horned head of Zeus-Ammon r.; dotted border	[ΠΤΟΛΕ]ΜΑΙΟΥ – ΒΑΣΙΛ[ΕΩΣ] Eagle with closed wings standing l. on thunderbolt, cornucopiae bound with royal diadem on shoulder; dotted border	c. 210 BCE	Alexan- dria	Cf. <i>CPE</i> I/2, p. 128-129, Nos. B507 or B512	Hemi- obol. Central cavities
HASMONEAN Judah Aristobulus I (105/4–104/3 BCE)										
4	19/A/10 / PT2/ AR1	1.72	14x15	12	יהוד/הכהננ[ד]/ולו ח[בר]/הי[הוד/ימ] Paleo-Hebrew legend in wreath	Two conjoined cornucopias with pomegranate between horns.		Jerusa- lem	Cf. <i>TJC</i> , p. 217-218, Group U	
Alexander Jannaeus (104/3–76 BCE)										
5	19/B/5/ PT6/ AR7	1.86	13x14	6	יהו/נתנהב/הנהגול וחברה/יה Paleo-Hebrew legend in wreath	Two conjoined cornucopias with pomegranate between horns.	104/3– c. 85 BCE	Jerusa- lem	Cf. <i>TJC</i> , p. 212-213, Group P	
6	19/A/27 / PT2/ AR3	1.73	15	-	נתנ/הכהננה/גדולוח ב/ייהוד/---] Traces of legend of previous coin seen below	Traces of previous coin seen below (anchor surrounded by Greek legend)	Same	Jerusa- lem	Cf. <i>TJC</i> , p. 216-217, Group T	Over- struck on <i>TJC</i> Group N
7	19/A/70 / PT1/ AR6	1.52	14x15	-	יהונתן המלך Eight-pointed star in diadem: between rays, Paleo-Hebrew legend.	ΑΛΕ[ΧΑΝΔΡΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛ]ΕΩΣ Anchor sur- rounded by Greek legend.	c. 85–80 BCE	Jerusa- lem	Cf. <i>TJC</i> , p. 209-210, Group K	
8	19/A/70 / PT1/ AR5	1.57	14	-	יהונתן המלך Same	---] Same	Same	Jerusa- lem	Same	

Numismatic Society Special Publication 17), London, 1985; *RIC* II = H. Mattingly and E.A. Sydenham, *The Roman Imperial Coinage Vol. II: Vespasian to Hadrian*, London, 1926; Butcher 2004 = K. Butcher, *Coinage in Roman Syria: Northern Syria, 64 BC-AD 253* (Royal Numismatic Society Special Publication 34), London, 2004.

No.	Reg. no. (season, area, lo- cus, bas- ket, arti- fact)	Wt. (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date of coin	Mint ⁸	Refer- ences ⁹	Notes
Alexander Jannaeus (104/3–76 BCE) or Later Successors										
9	19/A/22 / PT2/ AR2	1.10	11.5	-	[---] Eight-pointed star surrounded by circle of dots; around, illegible Aramaic legend.	[---] Anchor in plain circle; around, traces of illegible Greek legend.	80/79– 76 BCE or later	Jerusa- lem	Cf. <i>TJC</i> , p. 210, Sub- group L, No. 7	
10	19/B/38 / PT1/ AR3	0.58	10.5	-	[---] Six-pointed star surrounded by circle of dots; around, illegible Aramaic legend.	[---] Anchor in plain circle; around, traces of illegible Greek legend.	Same	Same	Cf. <i>TJC</i> , p. 210, Sub- group L, Nos. 8–9	
11	19/B/45 / PT1/ AR1	0.73	10x10 .5	-	[---] Six or eight- pointed star sur- rounded by cir- cle of dots; around, illegible Aramaic legend.	[---] Anchor in plain circle; around, traces of illegible Greek legend.	Same	Same	Cf. <i>TJC</i> , p. 210, Sub- group L, Nos. 7– 10	
12	19/C/19 / PT4/ AR4	0.81	14x15	-	[---] Traces of pointed star	Blank ?	Same	Same	Cf. <i>TJC</i> , p. . 210, Sub- group L, Nos. 8–	
ROMAN GOVERNORS IN JUDEA										
Under Augustus										
13	19/A/70 / PT1/ AR3	1.86	16	11	KAICA-POC Ear of grain	Palm tree; in fields, date: L-ΛϚ	Year 36 = 5/6 CE	Jerusa- lem	<i>TJC</i> , p. 256, No. 311	Copo- nius
14	19/B/5/ PT3/ AR1	2.34	16x17 .5	11	KAICA-POC Same	Same	Same	Jerusa- lem	Same.	Same
Under Tiberius										
15	19/A/27 / PT2/ AR4	2.09	15x17	11	TIB/KAI/CAP In wreath	Palm branch; in fields: IOY-ΑΙΑ / L-€	Year 5 = 18/9 CE	Jerusa- lem	Cf. <i>TJC</i> , p. 257, No. 328	Valerius Gratus
16	17/C/7/ AR2	1.99	15	12	TIBEPIOY KAI- CAPOC ΛΙϚ Simpulum	[IOY]ΑΙΑ KAICAPOC Three ears of grain tied to- gether.	Year 16 = 29/30 CE	Jerusa- lem	<i>TJC</i> , p. 258, No. 331	Pontius Pilatus
THE FIRST JEWISH REVOLT										
Year Three (68/9 CE)										
17	19/A/36 / PT1/ AR1	1.82	15x16	12	חרית- צנית Vine leaf with small branch and tendril; Paleo- Hebrew legend.	שנת- [ש]ליש Amphora with wide rim and lid. Fluted belly and two handles; Paleo-Hebrew legend.		Jerusa- lem	<i>TJC</i> , p. 242, No. 204	

No.	Reg. no. (season, area, lo- cus, bas- ket, arti- fact)	Wt. (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date of coin	Mint ⁸	Refer- ences ⁹	Notes
18	19/B/55 /PT3/ AR2	2.54	16	11	[חרות] - צי'ן Same	ש[נת] - ש[לוש] Same		Jerusa- lem	Same	
19	19/B61/ PT3/ AR4	2.05	13.5x 15	-	[---] Same	[---] Same		Jerusa- lem	Same?	Worn. Burnt?

ROMAN PROVINCIAL

Nero (64-68 CE)

20	19/A/70 / PT1/ AR2	10.7 6	22x23	12	[---]-ΚΑΙΣΑΡ Bust of Nero r., laureate	[---] Σ ΣΕΒΑ[---]]ΑΙΜΕ Tyche standing l. in military dress, holding bust in extended l. and scepter in r.; in l. field, date: ΛΙΔ	Year 14 = 68 CE	Caesa- rea	<i>CHL</i> , p. 25, No. 7	
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JUDAEA CAPTA SERIES

21	17/C/3/ PT1/ AR2	4.76	18-19	12	[---] Head of Titus r. In r. field, rec- tangular coun- termark with head r.	ΙΟΥΔΑΙΑC-[---] Nike standing r., resting l. foot on helmet and writ- ing on shield hanging from palm tree. In r., field, rec- tangular coun- termark depict- ing war galley.	71-73 CE	Caesa- rea	<i>TJC</i> , p. 265, No. 380a; <i>CHL</i> , p. 275, No. 8. For the <i>cmks.</i> See <i>GIC</i> , p. 131, No. 135 (head) and p. 183, No. 409 (gal- ley)	The <i>cmks.</i> are dated to 81-96 CE.
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ROMAN PROVINCIAL

Under Vespasian (69-79 CE)

22	17/C/2/ AR6	4.26	16	11	Head/bust of Ty- che r., wearing turreted crown and veil.	ΠΡ/ΑΣ War galley r.	180 = 76/7 CE	Ascalon	<i>CHL</i> , p. 99, No. 74	
23	19/B/3/ PT3/ AR1	3.69	15.5	11	Same	Same	Same	Same	Same	
24	19/B/38 /PT1/ AR5	3.21	15	12	Same	Same	Same	Same	Same	Partly broken

HERODIAN

Agrippa II (49/50-94/5 CE?)

25	19/B/38 /PT1/ AR1	5.68	20x22	12	ΔΟΜΙΤΙΑΝΟC - [K]ΑΙCΑΡ Bust of Domitian r., laureate	[---]ΚCΒΑ- ΑΓΡΙΠΠ[---] Victory standing r., resting l. foot on helmet and writing on shield which rests on her l. knee.	Year 26 =74/5 or 85/6 CE (?)	Caesa- rea Panae- s or Tibe- rias (?)	<i>TJC</i> , p. 238, No. 165; <i>CHL</i> , p. 267, Nos. 232-234	The date and mint are still un- der question by scholars.
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No.	Reg. no. (season, area, lo- cus, bas- ket, arti- fact)	Wt. (g)	Diam. (mm)	Axis	Obverse	Reverse	Date of coin	Mint ⁸	Refer- ences ⁹	Notes
26	17/B/26 /PT1/ AR1	4.39	17x18	12	ΔOMITIAN[---] Same	[---]KϸBA-[---] Same	Same	Same	Same	
27	19/B/3/ PT6/ AR2	5.95	19x20	11	ΔOMITIANOC - KAI[---] Same	[---]KϸBA-[---] Same	Same	Same	Same	

ROMAN IMPERIAL

Trajan (98–117 CE)

28	19/B/32 /PT4/ AR5	3.33	19	6	IMP TRAIANO AVG GER DAC PM TR P Bust of Trajan r., laureate; slight drapery on far shoulder	COS V P P S[P]QR OPTIMO PRINC Felicitas stand- ing l., holding ca- duceus and lean- ing on column	103–111 CE	Rome	RJC II, p. 252, No. 120	Silver denar- ius. The coin was found covered with ash.
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ROMAN PROVINCIAL

Hadrian (117–138 CE)

29	19/C/6/ PT2/ AR2	1.47	10	12	Bust r., laureate and undraped, no legend.	Within wreath, SC, below: Γ	Before 126/7 CE (?)	Antioch	Butcher 2004, p. 359, No. 242	
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BAR KOKHBA REVOLT (132–135 CE)

30	17/B/13 /PT1/ AR2	10.2 6	24–26	12	שמעון [לחר]ות ירושלם Palm tree with seven branches and two clusters of fruit.	Vine leaf	134–135 CE		TJC, p. 254, No. 292	
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ROMAN PROVINCIAL

Unidentified Ruler

31	17/A/23 / PT4/ AR2	12.6 9	26–28	12	[---] Bust r. (Domitian or Hadrian ?) Square counter- mark on head, with [L]·XII or XII (?)	SC, in wreath	1st– 2nd centu- ries CE	Antioch	G/C, p. 256, No. 737(?)	Worn. Burnt?
32	17/A/18 / PT1/ AR2	6.33	20–22	-	[---]MK (?) Bust r.?	[---] Worn, with un- clear round countermark	Same			Worn, burnt (?) and pierced.





Other Lines Of Evidence For The History Of Kiriath-jearim In The Persian, Hellenistic And Roman Periods

The following lines of evidence should be taken into consideration when reconstructing the history of Kiriath-jearim according to the numismatic finds:

The pottery assemblages: Persian period items are rare at Kiriath-jearim, restricted to a few sherds from mixed loci. The Hellenistic finds belong to two horizons: The first dated to the 3rd and early 2nd centuries BCE and the second to the first half of the 1st century BCE. Much of the 2nd century BCE seems to be missing from the assemblage.¹⁰ The Roman pottery dates to the 1st century CE, mainly to the years before and slightly after the First Jewish Revolt. Several types are characteristic of Roman military context, such as the legionary kilns in Binyanei Ha'uma.¹¹

Stamped and incised handles: Kiriath-jearim yielded 15 stamped handles, belonging to the early and late *LMLK*, concentric circles and rosette types. They well-represent the entire set of Judahite impressions of the Iron IIB-C.¹² On this background, it is noteworthy (and probably not accidental) that no *YEHUD* (all sub-types), or *YRSLM* impressions, typical of the Persian and Hellenistic periods until ca. middle of the 2nd century BCE were found at the site. It is also significant that stamped Greek amphorae, which are popular mainly in the 2nd century BCE, are missing at Kiriath-jearim; this is not a matter of location far from the coast, as they do appear in

¹⁰ D. Sandhaus, "Areas A and B: The Hellenistic Pottery", in I. Finkelstein, T. Römer and C. Nicolle (eds.), *The Shmunis Family Foundation Excavations at Kiriath-jearim (Deir el-'Azar)* (forthcoming).

¹¹ Y. Kirilov, "The Roman Pottery", in I. Finkelstein, T. Römer and C. Nicolle (eds.), *The Shmunis Family Foundation Excavations at Kiriath-jearim (Deir el-'Azar)*, (forthcoming).

¹² O. Lipschits and I. Koch, "Stamped and Incised Handles", in I. Finkelstein, T. Römer and C. Nicolle (eds.), *The Shmunis Family Foundation Excavations at Kiriath-jearim (Deir el-'Azar)* (forthcoming).

highlands sites, such as Bethel and Beth-Zur,¹³ but probably an indication of the lack of activity on the site.

Evidence for Roman army involvement at the site: Several inscriptions found on the hill (and kept in the church of the convent) and in nearby Abu Gosh¹⁴ provide strong evidence that the site served as a Roman military camp or fort in the 1st century CE, during the First Jewish Revolt and immediately thereafter. This is supported by the possibility that the rectangular Iron Age summit compound was extended in the early Roman period to the south in order to create a square camp/fort, 150 x 150 m in size.¹⁵ It is also noteworthy that Roman army boot nails were found in the excavations.

Discussion

The Late Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods (4th–3rd Centuries BCE)

Two small silver coins are the earliest in the assemblage. The first (No. 1) is a hemiobol YHD coin bearing the head of a Persian king on its obverse and an eagle with spread wings on its reverse. In this coin the head of the king is to the left and not to the right as usually appears on this type. The legend is missing and was probably struck outside the flan. This is common as it seems that the minters used dies which were larger than the flans. The second (No. 2) is an obol which imitates the Athenian common style, presenting the helmeted head of Athena on its obverse and an owl, with the letters

¹³ J.L. Kelso, *The Excavation of Bethel (1934-1960)* (AASOR 39), Cambridge, 1968, pl. 47b; O.R. Sellers, *The Citadel of Beth-Zur*, Philadelphia, 1933, p. 53–55; O.R. Sellers, R.W. Funk, J.L. McKenzie, N. Lapp and P. Lapp, *The 1957 Excavation at Beth-Zur* (AASOR 38), Cambridge, 1968, p. 81, pl. 40.

¹⁴ H.M. Cotton, L. Di Segni, E. Eck, B. Isaac, A. Kushnir-Stein, H. Misgav, J. Price and A. Yardeni (eds.), *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae, Vol. I*, Berlin, 2012, p. 11, 25–26, 38–39; M. Fischer, B. Isaac and I. Roll, *Roman Roads in Judaea II: The Jaffa—Jerusalem Roads* (BAR International Series 628), Oxford, 1996, p. 119.

¹⁵ Finkelstein *et al.*, 2018, *op. cit.* (above n. 2), p. 63, fig. 20.

AΘE on its reverse. This type was probably struck in Gaza, before the city was taken over by Alexander the Great.

Looking at the pottery and stamped handles evidence, activity in the Persian period was weak at best. This fits to the general picture of diminished occupation of the region during the time of the Achaemenids. On the other hand, the site features relatively strong presence in the early Hellenistic period. Hence, these two tiny silver coins could have originated from a modest Persian period settlement, or perhaps better, were circulated in the 3rd century BCE.

One Ptolemaic coin, struck under Ptolemy IV (222–204 BCE) was discovered (No. 3). This coin may belong to the early Hellenistic period settlement at the site; it strengthens the idea that the two 4th century BCE coins were circulated in the 3rd century BCE.¹⁶

The absence of Seleucid coins is especially noteworthy, as coins of Antiochus III and Antiochus IV are very common in Judean sites populated during the 2nd century BCE. Thus, the absence of Seleucid coins, *YHD* and *YRSLM* stamped handles, stamped amphorae handles and 2nd century BCE pottery suggests that after an activity phase in the early Hellenistic period the site was not inhabited until the Hasmonean period, possibly not before the days of Alexander Jannaeus (below). This may be related to economic and political changes after the Seleucids.¹⁷ The negative evidence listed above seems to weaken the possibility to identify the Emmaus mentioned among the Bacchides fortresses with Kiriath-jearim.¹⁸ All in all, it seems that the site was abandoned, or sparsely inhabited in the much of the 2nd century BCE.

¹⁶ Germer-Durand, 1906, *op. cit.* (above no. 4), p. 286, mentions Ptolemaic coins which were found on the site, unfortunately with no further details.

¹⁷ B. Eckhardt, "The Seleucid Administration of Judea, the High Priesthood and the Rise of the Hasmoneans", *Journal of Ancient History* 4/1, 2016, p. 57-87.

¹⁸ I. Finkelstein and T. Römer, "Kiriath-jearim and the List of Bacchides Forts in 1 Maccabees 9: 50-52", *New Studies in the Archaeology of Jerusalem and its Vicinity* 13, 2019, p. 7*-17.

The Hasmonean Period (Late 2nd–1st Centuries BCE)

The Hasmonean period is represented by eight coins (Nos. 4–12) all from well-known types. The earliest is a coin of Judah Aristobulus I (No. 4), which could have arrived to the site in his days (104–103 BCE), or possibly later, with the coins struck under Alexander Jannaeus (Nos. 5–8).¹⁹ Nos. 9–12 are commonly assigned to Alexander Jannaeus as well, but based on the find of large amounts of these coins in contexts postdating the Hasmonean period, a common phenomenon at many Jewish sites, it has been suggested that they circulated over a long period of time and were used until the end of the Second Temple period. It is thus possible that they were struck by Alexander Jannaeus' successors as well.²⁰

The pottery data as well as the numismatic evidence indicate strong activity at the site in the first half of the 1st century BCE. There was perhaps a Hasmonean attempt to repopulate this site, after it had been abandoned under the Seleucids.

From the Roman Governors to the First Jewish Revolt (5/6–70 CE)

The 1st century CE, prior to the destruction of Jerusalem, is represented by eight coins (Nos. 13–20). Four were struck under the Roman governors of Judea, two during the reign of Augustus (Nos. 13–14) and two under Tiberius (Nos. 15–16).

¹⁹ Germer-Durand, 1906, *op. cit.* (above no. 4), p. 286, also mentions Hasmonean coins of John Hyrcanus and Judah Aristobulus, as well as one coin of Mattathias Antigonus, all seems to be of the regular prutah types.

²⁰ Y. Meshorer, "The Coins from Qumran", *Israel Numismatic Journal* 15, 2006, p. 19 (19–23); D. Syon, 2014. "The Coins", in D. Syon, S. Amorai-Stark and Y. Arbel (eds.), *Gamla III: The Shmarya Gutmann Excavations 1976–1989: Finds and Studies I (Israel Antiquities Authority Reports 56)*, Jerusalem, 2014, p. 144–146 (109–231); Y. Farhi, "The Numismatic Finds from Khirbet el-Maqatir", in S. Stripling and M.A. Hassler (eds.), *The Excavations at Khirbet el-Maqatir, Israel: 1995–2001 and 2009–2016. Vol. 2, The Late Hellenistic, Early Roman, and Byzantine Periods*, Oxford, (Forthcoming).

The absence of later coins of the Roman governors,²¹ as well as the absence of the most common canopy/ears of barley year 6 *pruta* of Agrippa I (dated 41/2 CE) should be noted. The former are quite common, and the latter (coin of Agrippa I) is the most common Jewish coin during the 1st century CE. Their absence here may be accidental or possibly suggesting that the site was not inhabited, for some reason, between ca. 30 CE and the years before the First Jewish revolt.

Three *prutot* from the First Jewish Revolt were found (Nos. 17–19), two are dated to the third year of the revolt (68/9 CE), while the third is illegible, worn and possibly burnt. These *prutot* suggest that the site was inhabited by Jews and was taken by the Roman army during the third year of the revolt.

The military importance of Kiriath-jearim can easily be explained. The site is located on a commanding hill, immediately above the east-west road leading from Diospolis (Lod, Lydda) to Jerusalem (Fig.1), and with sweeping views to the coastal plain, the hill country of Jerusalem and the highlands of Judea. According to Josephus, the Fifth Legion, around 6000 men, camped at Emmaus (probably Emmaus/Nicopolis, near Latrun) from the spring of 68 CE, and later moved to Jerusalem (*BJ* IV: 444, 449; V: 42).²² According to Fischer this road could have been the route of the nighttime march of the Fifth Legion from Emmaus to Mount Scopus (*BJ* V: 67–68).²³ Nighttime march was unusual in the Roman army.²⁴ One reason for the march may be that Jewish forces were still located in the region during 69–70 CE, before the final assault on Jerusalem. This suggestion may be supported by the excavations of the nearby Jewish village of Ḥorbat Mazruq (on the outskirts of Abu Gosh), where a hoard of 114 coins from the fourth year of the revolt (69/70

²¹ Such as Meshorer, 2001, op. cit. (above no. 9), nos. 333–345, dated between 30/31 CE and 58/9 CE.

²² J. Salvador, 1847. *Histoire de la domination romaine en Judée et de la ruine de Jérusalem. Tome deuxième*, Paris, 1847, p. 293.

²³ M. Fischer, *Horvat Mesad: A Way-Station on the Jaffa-Jerusalem Road* (Tel Aviv University, Institute of Archaeology, Monograph Series 30), Tel Aviv, 2012, p. 282.

²⁴ See the editor's comment in Yosef Ben Matityaho, [Titus] *Flavius Josephus, History of the Jewish War against the Romans*, with a Hebrew transl. by L. Ulman, and scientific edit and notes by I. Shatzman, Jerusalem, 2009, p. 446, note 67.

CE) was discovered, along with other remains hinting that this settlement was inhabited until the late stages of the revolt.²⁵ Thus, coins Nos. 17–19 from Kiriath-jearim, together with the finds from nearby Ḥorbat Mazruq, and with two coins from the third year of the First Jewish Revolt discovered in Horbat Mazad,²⁶ suggest that these sites were inhabited by Jews during the revolt, probably until 69 CE. In this case, the Jewish forces were still in the region, at least for some time after the Fifth Legion was camped at Emmaus (spring of 68 CE).

Coin No. 20, which was struck in Caesarea and dated to 68 CE, is of a type strongly connected with Roman military presence.²⁷ Thus, it could have been brought to the site by a Roman soldier, since we know from Josephus that Vespasian arrived to Judea from Caesarea (BJ IV, 550). This soldier could have belonged to the Roman force which seems to have occupied the site during the third year of the revolt.

The numismatic finds listed above fit what we know about the site from other lines of evidence: the pottery, which dates to the 1st century CE and especially the years before and after the First Jewish Revolt, and the evidence from inscriptions, small finds and the layout of the site, testifying to the presence of the Roman army here during the assault on Jerusalem and the years immediately thereafter.

²⁵ D.T. Ariel, E. Marco and P. Betzer, “A Hoard of First Jewish Revolt Coins Found near Ḥorbat Mazruq (Abu Ghosh)”, *Strata: Bulletin of the Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society* 36, 2018, p. 11–35.

²⁶ M. Fischer and Z. Gur, “The Coins from Horbat Mazad” *Israel Numismatic Research* 3, 2008, p. 105, 115, nos. 84–85 (95–116).

²⁷ D.T. Ariel, Y. Baruch, I. Zilberbord, “‘Out of the North the Evil Shall Break Forth’: Numismatic Evidence for the Besiegers in Jerusalem during the First Jewish Revolt?” *Israel Numismatic Research* 9, 2014, p. 156–159 (149–161); Y. Farhi and D. Ben Shlomo, “The Settlement of Tel Hebron in the Hellenistic to Byzantine Periods: New Numismatic Evidence”, *Tel Aviv* 43, 2016, p. 251, 260, no.19 (243–265).

From the First Jewish Revolt to the Bar Kokhba Revolt (70–135 CE)

The period between the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE and the end of the Bar Kokhba Revolt in 135/6 CE is represented by twelve coins (Nos. 21–32). The earliest in this group is of the *Judaea Capta* local series, struck at Caesarea c. 71–73 CE (No. 21).²⁸ This specific specimen bears two rectangular countermarks, one on the obverse with head, and one on the reverse depicting a war galley. These types of countermarks are related to the *Legio Decima Fretensis*; they were assigned by Barag to his group II,²⁹ which he dated to the period immediately after the accession of Domitian. Three coins (Nos. 22–24) are from the mint of Ascalon (Ashqelon) under Vespasian, all are of the same type and date (76/7 CE). This type of coin was popular in Provincia Iudaea, and probably related to Roman military presence as well, both due to its find spots but also since many exemplars are struck with countermarks of the Tenth Legion;³⁰ one such coin was found in nearby Horbat Mazad.³¹

Three coins, similar to each other, bear the name and bust of Domitian on their obverse and the name of Herod Agrippa II on their reverse (Nos. 25–27). These coins were assigned by Meshorer

²⁸ Germer-Durand, 1906, *op. cit.* (above no. 4) mentions three coins of this type.

²⁹ D. Barag, “The Countermarks of the Legio Decima Fretensis (Preliminary Report)”, in A. Kindler (ed.), *The Patterns of Monetary Development in Phoenicia and Palestine in Antiquity*. Proceedings of the International Numismatic Convention, Jerusalem, 27–31 December 1963, Tel-Aviv, Jerusalem, 1967, p. 120 (117–125).

³⁰ Y. Farhi, “The Coins”, in O. Lipschits, Y. Gadot and L. Freud (eds.), *Ramat Rachel III*, Vol. 2 –*Final Publication of Yohanan Aharoni’s Excavations (1954, 1959–1962)*, Tel Aviv University Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology Monograph Series 35, Winona Lake, p. 595, 616, no.49 (588–623); U. Davidovich, R. Porat, R. Bar-Nathan, R.E. Jackson-Tal, Y. Farhi, N. Marom and G.D. Stiebel, “The Road from the Judean Highlands to Masada and the Excavations of Badar and Zfira Fortlets”, in J. Patrich, O. Peleg-Barkat and E. Ben-Yosef (eds.), *Arise, walk through the land. Studies in the Archaeology and History of the Land of Israel in Memory of Yizhar Hirschfeld on the Tenth Anniversary of his Decease*. Jerusalem, 2016, p. 116–117, no.3 (103–128) (in Hebrew).

³¹ Fisher and Gur, 2008, *op. cit.* (above no. 26), p. 101, 115, no.86.

to the mint of Tiberias and were dated to 85/6 CE.³² However, Kushnir-Stein assigned them to Caesarea Paneas and dated them to 74/5 CE.³³ They are similar in their size and reverse design to the *Judaea Capta* local series, which was struck in Caesarea Maritima (No. 21). Coins in the name of Agrippa II are not a common find in Judea. So far only one coin of this ruler is known from Jerusalem.³⁴ The finding of these three coins in Judea can suggest that they were possibly struck in Caesarea Maritima rather than in Caesarea Paneas. They seem to be related to the Roman army, and were probably brought to the site by Roman soldiers.

The above-described items also support the notion that Roman military activity at the site continued for a while after the subjugation of Jerusalem, definitely until the days of Domitian in the 80s of the 1st century, if not later (see below). Roman military presence could have continued here in parallel to the establishment of a Roman legionary camp in Jerusalem³⁵ (*BJ* VII:1–2,5,17).

At least three coins in this group (Nos. 28–30) are most probably related to the period of the Bar Kokhba Revolt (the Second Jewish Revolt). The first (No. 28) is a silver denarius of Trajan found in topsoil context. Coin No. 29 was struck in Antioch under Hadrian. Coin No. 30 belongs to the undated series struck by the Bar Kokhba authorities, probably in 134–135 CE. If the site continued to be used as a Roman camp after the First Jewish Revolt, the first two coins could have been used by Roman soldiers who were located there. The Bar Kokhba coin could either get there by Jewish rebels who possibly attacked the site or by a Roman soldier who took it as a booty/souvenir from a Jewish rebel.³⁶ This is the first Bar Kokhba

³² Meshorer, 2001, *op. cit.* (above no. 9), p. 238, no. 165.

³³ A. Kushnir-Stein, “The Coinage of Agrippa II”, *Scripta Classica Israelica* 21, 2002, p. 123–131.

³⁴ The coin (IAA 11933) from year 83/4 CE is noted in Ariel *et al.*, 2014, *op. cit.* (above no. 27), p. 155, No. 4.

³⁵ S. Wexler-Bdolah, *Aelia Capitolina – Jerusalem in the Roman Period in Light of Archaeological Research*, Brill, 2019, p. 19–50.

³⁶ Find of Bar Kokhba coins from Europe, most in Roman military contexts, suggests that they were taken as souvenirs by Roman soldiers who served in the East (H. Eshel, B. Zissu and G. Barkay, “Sixteen Bar Kokhba Coins from Roman Sites in Europe”, *Israel Numismatic Journal* 17, 2010, p. 91–97). The find of coins from the First Jewish Revolt at Carnuntum (Austria), suggests a similar practice in the 1st

coin to be found in archaeological excavation along the road between Khirbet el-'Aqd (near Emmaus) and Jerusalem.³⁷

Coins Nos. 31–32 are both worn, and possibly burnt. One (No. 31) is from Antioch and has a square countermark on the obverse, probably presenting L·XII or XII. If this reading is correct, the coin is related to the Legio XII Fulminata, and should be dated no later than the early years of Hadrian.³⁸ The other coin is pierced and was probably in secondary use. Both coins seem to be related to the Roman army during c. 66–135 CE.

The assumption that right before the attack on Jerusalem, a Roman camp was built at the site³⁹ is now supported by the numismatic evidence. On the question how long Roman military activity here lasted after the subjugation of Jerusalem, the pottery and numismatic data collide: The former seems to point to only a short period of time,⁴⁰ while the latter may indicate a longer period, until the Second Jewish Revolt.

Summary

The numismatic finds from Kiriath-jearim – together with evidence from the pottery, stamped handles, architecture (layout of the site), inscriptions and historical sources – contribute to better understanding of the detailed history of Kiriath-jearim and its surroundings in the Hellenistic and early Roman periods:

- The site was probably abandoned around the time of the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem. Since no sign of devastation

century CE (R. Reich, “A Note on Coins from the First Jewish Revolt against Rome Discovered at Carnuntum, Austria”, *Israel Numismatic Journal* 17, 2010, p. 88–90).

³⁷ For the most updated discussion and maps regarding Bar Kokhba coins from known findspots see G. Bijovsky, “The Coins from Khirbet Badd 'Isa-Qiryat Sefer”, in Y. Magen, D.T. Ariel, G. Bijovsky, Y. Zionit and O. Sirkis (eds.), *The Land of Benjamin*, Jerusalem, 2004, p. 250 (243–300); H. Eshel and B. Zissu, *The Bar Kokhba Revolt - The Archaeological Evidence*, Jerusalem, 2020, p. 135–138.

³⁸ Howgego, 1985, *op. cit.* (above no. 9), p. 256.

³⁹ Finkelstein *et al.*, 2018, *op. cit.* (above n. 2), p. 63–65.

⁴⁰ Kirilov, forthcoming, *op. cit.* (above n. 11).

was traced in the excavations, one may assume that the population fled to Jerusalem before the arrival of the Babylonians. Sparse activity could have taken place here in the 4th century BCE.

- Relatively strong activity in the early Hellenistic (Ptolemaic) period is documented by both the pottery and the coins, possibly dating to the late 3rd century BCE.
- The site was probably abandoned in much of the 2nd century BCE.
- Activity was significant again in the first half of the 1st century BCE and possibly declined for a while thereafter, in the later part of the century.
- Strong activity – associated with the Roman army (the site was possibly a military camp) – is recorded in the second half of the 1st century CE, especially in the years during and after the First Jewish Revolt. Activity could have continued until the Second Jewish Revolt, or disrupted after the First Revolt and resumed during the Second Revolt.
- Following the Second Jewish Revolt the site was deserted for two centuries. A Roman imperial coin from the mid-4th century CE is the earliest coin from the post Bar Kokhba period activity at the site, which continued (as a monastery or church) throughout the Byzantine period.

This record of Kiriath-jearim well-represents the stormy history of the area of Jerusalem and its vicinity in the Hellenistic and Roman periods.