

HISTORY OF THE COLLECTIONS

a. Hebrew University, Jerusalem

The coin collection of the Hebrew University was founded shortly after the inauguration of the university in 1925 by the archaeologist Eleazar L. Sukenik (1889–1953). Its bulk, however, was assembled between 1937 and 1947 as part of the Museum of Jewish Antiquities founded with the means bequeathed by Morris Kootcher (1885–1935) from South Africa. The subsequent history of the coin collection of the Hebrew University was to be quite adventurous. Being stored at the Mount Scopus Campus which was separated from Jewish Jerusalem after the War of Independence, it was stolen – together with the catalogue of the collection – after 1948. Coins which had formerly belonged to the Hebrew University collection first appeared on the coin market after the death of Sukenik and Dr. Stella Ben-Dor (1899–1951), the former curator. In the course of police investigations, it was possible to recover almost 90 percent of the coins. Unfortunately, the two Sasanian-type issues formerly among the holdings³ were among those pieces which were lost. In 1958/59 the new curator, Prof. Dan Barag, built up a concordance between the former holdings according to the card files, and the specimens which were recovered. In 1968, the acquisition of new coins started again. Presently, the collection contains some 6.600 coins. It is especially strong in Jewish coins and, due to the efforts of Ben Dor, in city coins of the Levant. However, the collection aims at providing a representative overview on the monetary history of present-day Israel. The single Sasanian coin now present in the Hebrew University collection included in the present catalogue is of special interest since it is a rare fourrée drachm of Khusro II, which in addition to this also is said to have been found in Israel, and thus ranks among the few finds of Sasanian coins from this country.

Dan Barag

b. Israel Antiquity Authority, Jerusalem

The Coin Department of the Israel Antiquity Authority houses more than 130,000 coins, forming an integral part of the archaeological treasures of the State of Israel (Israel State Collections). The coin collection is continually growing with finds from numerous excavations conducted in Israel every year. The collection spans a period of more than 2,300 years, from the invention of coinage in the 7th century BCE, through to the 17th century CE. Coins and artefacts after that date are presently not considered antiquities under Israel's Antiquities Law. The majority of coins preserved by the IAA Coin Department are single finds from excavations. In addition, the Department holds more than 150 hoards of gold, silver and bronze coins, beginning in the Persian period through to the Ottoman period. The collection's exceptional importance lies in the fact that the provenance of almost all the coins has been ascertained. Consequently it constitutes one of the largest scientific numismatic data-bases of its kind in the world, ideally suited for in-depth study of coin-types, distribution patterns, and intra/inter-site circulation. The nucleus of the collection is comprised of a group of 10,000 coins acquired by numismatists from purchases and excavations between 1925 and 1948. The staff of the Coin Department performs a wide range of tasks, both scientific and curatorial. Its members specialize in the identification, registration

³ Namely a posthumous drachm of Khusro II, ART, 27YE (HUJ 3843) and a Tabaristan hemidrachm of Hani, 137YE (HUJ 4006).

and scientific publication of coins found in excavations. Additional duties include lectures and scientific consultation for researchers and archaeologists; preparation of coin exhibits in Israel and abroad; preparation of educational material, and expert assistance to the Theft-Prevention Department.

Robert Kool

c. Israel Museum, Jerusalem

The Numismatic Department of the Israel Museum was established in 1969 under the curatorship of the late Prof. Ya'akov Meshorer (1935–2004). The purpose of the department was, and still is, to exhibit the important numismatic material of present-day Israel, with an emphasis on Jewish coinage, while building a comprehensive collection of coins with a focus on those that circulated or were struck in the country over the ages. The Museum collection could not be haphazard, based on accidental numismatic finds or archaeological material in bad condition, unsuited to museological needs. Prof. Meshorer therefore began by seeking out the existing collections of connoisseurs who had assembled choice pieces. The Numismatic Collection and Exhibit of the Israel Museum was created primarily through donations from various sources, and also through long-term loans from institutions such as the Museum of the Franciscan Biblical School in Jerusalem or the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's Institute of Archaeology. The holdings of the Numismatic Collection comprise today some 30,000 items altogether, among them about 6,000 Islamic coins. For the present study the most important collection is that of Islamic gold, silver, and bronze coins donated by Paul Balog. These coins are generally of a very high quality and include a large number of unpublished and rare coins from throughout the Islamic world, as well as four original dies. Save for two specimens, all but Sasanian and Arab-Sasanian coins in the IMJ collection which originate from it, among them several very rare and interesting pieces. Numismatic research at the Numismatic Department is focussed on one hand on the study and publication of coins in the collection itself, on the other hand on work on excavation coins from various archaeological sites in Israel and also in Jordan. Naturally, the main purpose of the Numismatic Department is to exhibit historically important coins in a way that conveys their significance. This has been done not only by changing the permanent exhibits from time to time but also by mounting small or major exhibitions on specific subjects. In addition, smaller coin exhibits are frequently integrated into other parts of the archaeological displays. In June 1994, the new Coin Gallery in the Israel Museum was inaugurated, which is based on a completely different conception of coin exhibition since the exhibit does not adhere to a chronological or thematic order, so that visitors may follow their own interests.

Haim Gitler

d. Kadman Numismatic Pavilion at the Eretz Israel Museum, Tel Aviv

The Kadman Numismatic Pavilion, a part of the Eretz-Israel Museum (formerly Ha'aretz Museum), was founded in 1962 on the initiative of Leo Kadman, and under the directorship of Dr. Arie Kindler. The collections of Leo Kadman, the first president of the Israel Numismatic Society, and that of Dr. Walter Moses, founder of the Ha'aretz Museum, were mostly Greek, Roman and Jewish coins, and they comprised the nucleus of what has become one of the largest and most important numismatic collections in Israel. The collection today includes about 90,000 objects and illustrates a broad and comprehensive spectrum of the means of payment from ancient times to the present – coins, paper-money, medals, weights, seals and other related items. Part of the collection comprises about 130 Sasanian coins, acquired through various donations since the foundation of the Museum until recently, especially from the Bezalel Collection purchased in 1969. The Sasanian coins range from Ardashir I to Ardashir III, with Arab-Sasanian and Tabaristan issues also being included. Totally unique in its kind world-wide is a hoard of more than 1800 Late Sasanian bronze coins (see *Appendix 1*).

Cecilia Meir