

The Institute of ARCHAEOLOGY Siegfried H. Horn Museum



Table of Contents

	Page
<i>Schultz Lecture</i>	1
<i>SHHM Outreach</i>	3
<i>Random Survey</i>	4

INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY
HORN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
MUSEUM
NEWSLETTER

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Schultz Lecture

In the summer of 2014 Andrews University, in conjunction with the Annemarie Schimmel Kolleg of the University of Bonn (Universität Bonn), Missouri State University, and the German Jordanian University, conducted a short excavation season from May 25-June 11, at Tall Hisban in Jordan. During the excavation, 12 coins were found. Of these, only 5 were able to be firmly dated, all within the Islamic period. Nevertheless, from these 5 identifiable coins one has the opportunity to deduce various historical aspects concerning politics, expansionism, and dynastic rule within the Islamic period. To help illustrate coins and their use, Warren C. Schultz, of DePaul University, presented an illustrated lecture entitled "Numismatics and Tall Hisban: Mamluk Coins and the 2014 Season," on Nov. 30, 2014, as part of the Horn Lectureship Series, as well as a classroom presentation to undergraduate students.

In order to achieve a better understanding and appreciation for what numismatics (the study of currency) does for archaeology, one must begin with this question: what is money? In technical terms, it is a store of value, a medium of exchange, and a system of valuation. It could be anything; examples of valued items before the use of coins include cowrie shells, cattle, and metal ingots. The key is that the material was thought to have value. A follow up question is: what is a coin? Specifically, coins are metallic objects of various shapes used as money. Coins are struck—usually on two sides—with an image, inscription, or any combination of the two. A mint, on the other hand, can be quite small. All that is needed to operate a mint is a way to melt the metal, and a process to shape the metal into flans, an anvil, a hammer, the upper and lower dies with which to strike the blank flan, and workers to man the process. Furthermore, a mint could and

(cont'd on p. 2)



l-r: Yarleth Gomez, Amairis De Silva, Dr. Bates, Sydney Chilson, and Dr. Schultz.

did travel and produce coins in various places.

In terms of numismatic nomenclature, there exists an entire vocabulary to describe coin features and composition, the most important being the obverse: referring to the face of the coin struck with the anvil die, and the reverse: the face of the coin struck with the punch die. The coin type is designated either by the image on the coin or on imageless coins, its central device or motif.

What makes a coin valuable? The intrinsic value of the metal is what determines the value of the coin; i.e., how much of the precious metal the coin contains. Extrinsic value is the value added to the intrinsic value of material by the production process or the rate the issuing authority guarantees acceptance or exchange of the coinage. Coins today usually have no intrinsic value; the value is completely extrinsic as it is guaranteed by the state. By comparison, the value of most early coinages was intrinsic.

To put the study of numismatics into the context of Tall Hisban, it is necessary to explore the history of the Islamic world in that region. This short review focuses mostly around the expansion of Islam, from 632-750 AD. It was during this time that Islamic coinage originated, adapted from the monetary traditions of conquered lands. In 630 AD there were no coins minted locally in the Arabian Peninsula. Coinage came from elsewhere, mostly in the form of heavy copper pieces from Byzantine Rome and/or Sasanian Persian silver coins. During the Muslim conquest much of what had formerly been Byzantine territory was conquered. At that time Byzantine coins were modified, the image of the Emperor was replaced with that of the Caliph. Only seven coins of this type are known today. In 661-750 AD, the Muslim conquests expanded to North Africa and Spain. The Umayyad reforms of the late 7th-early 8th century AD led to the minting of Islamic coins, often bearing religious quotes. Over time and place, coin production, design and appearance varied tremendously. Differences are seen in the metals used, the

purity of alloy, weight standards, size, shape, design, local preferences, the relative values of metals, and supply and demand. As the Islamic world expanded, it began to copy coins of other regions.

In addition to their economic value, coins are an important source for the political and dynastic history of the Islamic world. For example, after 750 AD, the right to mint coins was reserved only for rulers, by a principle known as *Sikka*. Likewise, was the right to have Friday sermons proclaimed in the name of the ruler alone, by a principle known as *Khutba*. These facts are reflected in the testimony of the coins. Schultz's own area of specialization is the Mamluk Sultanate, a medieval realm, spanning from Egypt, through the Levant, to western Arabia and Syria. It existed following the overthrow of the Ayyubid Dynasty, in 1250, until the Ottoman conquest of Egypt, in 1517. The Mamluks had mints in major cities and regions. In Egypt mints were located in Cairo and Alexandria, while in Syria coins were minted in Damascus, Aleppo, Hamah, and Tripoli, and occasionally in Malatya and Lattakiya. Since there were no mints between Cairo and Damascus, every Mamluk coin found in Israel, Palestine and Jordan, including Hisban, was brought there from elsewhere.

An example to illustrate this notion is the shrine of Aaron's Tomb at Petra, Jordan. The last Crusaders left the Petra area in 1187. Evidence of outsiders at the site since then include a visit by the Mamluk Sultan Baybars, in the 1260s, and a Mamluk-period inscription inside the Tomb, dating ca. 1310-1341. However, since this shrine became a pilgrimage site, people have regularly visited the site out of religious piety; and in 2012 a coin was found, that was struck in Egypt between 1357 and 1400. How the coin got there cannot be known with certainty, but someone (perhaps a pilgrim) brought it there from Egypt and either spent it, donated it, or dropped it, leaving it behind.

When one excavates in Jordan, Mamluk period coins are found; very few gold, some silver, and overwhelming numbers made of copper. While the gold

and silver coins display differences in terms of size and weight between the earlier (ca. 13th-14th centuries AD) and later (ca. 15th-16th cent. AD) halves of the Mamluk Sultanate, it is the copper coins that show the greatest variety in appearance and attributes. With this in mind, Schultz was able to provide analyses of the 5 identifiable copper coins that were discovered in the summer excavation of 2014 at Tall Hisban. The first was a Byzantine *folles* (a large bronze coin of Roman origin) from the reign of Emperor Justinian, in the 6th century AD, from a mint in Antioch, which at some point was pierced and subsequently used as a decoration. The second was an Umayyad *fals* (Arabic translation of *folles*) from an unknown mint. The remaining three coins are clearly identifiable 14th-century AD Mamluk copper coins; one minted in Damascus under al-Nasir Hasan, the second also (probably) in Damascus, but under al-Nasir Muhammad. The third coin was minted in Cairo also under al-Nasir Muhammad.

These finds fit the general picture that Bethany Walker, the archaeological director of the Tall Hisban site, described in her 2012 book *Jordan in the Late Middle Ages*: that Jordan was a region of Mamluk investment up to the mid-14th century AD, chiefly in terms of agriculture and defense. But in the late 1340s and following, the Black Death struck the region, resulting in a decline in population from the second half of the 14th century AD, with a major depopulation of the wider region by the 15th century AD. To put things in perspective, the coins that were found at Tall Hisban during the 2014 excavation season were from no later than the mid-14th century AD, indicating that there was no further occupation of the site during the Mamluk period.

The evidence that these Mamluk coins have provided in the validation of the history of the Islamic world demonstrates only one example of the use of numismatics to the study of archaeology. (Dorian Alexander)



SHHM Outreach

Museums often remind people of things old and dusty. A few people may consider lingering long enough to blow the dust off an object to peer into its distant past, but most will hurry by without even noticing the cultural or symbolic richness of the ancient artifact.

Not surprisingly, it is often the children who become the most enthusiastic about things that are crusty and old. Teachers in Berrien County, Michigan, have discovered the rich resources at the Siegfried H. Horn Archaeological Museum and have been encouraging their students' young inquisitive minds to explore beyond the confines of modern life.

When seventh graders at Buchanan Middle School were studying Mesopotamia and the early civilizations in the Fertile Crescent, in what is now modern Iraq and Syria, the staff at the Horn Museum was asked to bring the history alive for the students. Jacob Moody, the Assistant to the Curator as well as an archaeology Ph.D. student at Andrews University, brought a collection of replicas (tablets and cylinder seals) and genuine cuneiform tablets from the Horn



Jacob Moody and Students.

Museum to the school and gave three presentations to a total of 90 students. Using photos of sites, maps, excavations and artifacts, he gave an overview of Mesopotamian history, focusing on the Sumerians, Babylonians, Assyrians, and Neo-Babylonians.

An entire unit on Mesopotamia is part of the sixth grade curriculum at the Lakeshore Middle School in Stevensville. The teaching instruction includes history of the region, teaching the students how to write in cuneiform, and running virtual Mesopotamian archaeological digs. In anticipation of Jacob Moody's presentation, the students wrote down questions to ask him at the beginning of his talk. For this group of students, Jacob set up an on-site exhibit of life-size replicas (made possible by our donors), including a brick stamped with Nebuchadnezzar II's name, a cast bronze bust of Sargon of Agade/Naram-Sin found in the Ishtar Temple of Nineveh, the Taylor Prism, which tells the story of Sennacherib's siege of Jerusalem in which Hezekiah was held "like a bird in a cage," and the massive "India House Inscription," written by Nebuchadnezzar II, and found in the ruins of Babylon. A few genuine cuneiform tablets were also shown, but not passed around for the students to handle. The faces of the students tell the enthusiasm with which they enjoyed this hands-on experience.

The Jordanian goat-hair Bedouin tent has long been a highlight for many who visit the Horn Museum. This is especially true for school groups. Ruth Murdoch Elementary School teachers of the third and fourth grade classes brought 56 students to sit in the tent and talk about life during the period of the Patriarchs. The threshing sledge and winnowing fold, sheep skin yogurt churn, and ceramic vessels help the children to visualize life as it might have been. Spending time in the Museum is one of the best ways to catch a glimpse into the biblical world.

Children are not the only ones to ask for repeat visits to the Museum. Dr. Craig Bowman, Professor of Old Testament and Archaeology at Rochester College in Rochester Hills, MI, regularly brings a group of undergraduate students to tour the Museum as part of his Introduction to Biblical Archaeology class. These are among some of the most enthusiastic visitors, partially because they are always well prepared after a full semester of delving into the ancient past as it relates to the Bible.

Being a part of the Horn Museum is rewarding, especially when we see others grasp the relevance of biblical and ancient Near Eastern history and how understanding the past informs the present and enlightens the future. (Constance E. Gane)



Sargon I/Naram Sin Replica.

RANDOM SURVEY

Archaeology and DNA:

The remains of four people from contexts dating between 2,500 BC and 500 AD, found on Tells Ashara and Masaikh, in the middle Euphrates Valley, have recently undergone DNA testing, with the result that they have links to the Indian subcontinent. While Syrians no longer have the genetic markers M4b1, M49 and/or M61 haplogroups, these genetic markers are still present in places such as Tibet, India, and Pakistan. The study suggests that the tested people were either migrants or merchants from India.

Baby Rattle Found at Kaniš-Karum:

The site of Kaniš-Karum, an Assyrian trading colony in ancient Anatolia, dating to the 18th century BC, has been excavated since 1948. Recently a ceramic baby rattle with pebbles inside was found for the first time on the site. It is the oldest example of this type of toy ever found.

To discover more about archaeology, the Institute, and the Museum, contact us at:

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Mycenaean Tomb Found:

Archaeologists have recently found the grave of an Mycenaean-period warrior near Pylos, at the site of the palace of Nestor, on the Peloponnese peninsula, in Greece. The 3,500 year-old tomb is ca. 2.4 m long and 1.5 m wide. The skeleton, found in a wooded coffin, was arrayed with over 1,400 artifacts including, gold jewellery, a string of pearls, signet rings, a bronze sword, with a gold and ivory handle, silver vessels and ivory combs, all in Minoan style, some with figures of deities, and animal and floral motifs.

Earliest Copy of the Gospel of Mark Found:

While Egyptian Pharaohs were buried with gold masks, those used by commoners were often made of papyrus, paint and glue. Since papyrus was expensive, sheets with writing on them were reused, a single death mask often consisting of over a dozen texts. Recently, a fragment of the Gospel of Mark was found as part of one of these masks, and appears to be the earliest known copy of book, dated to ca. 80 AD, within 20 years of its proposed composition.

Coin Cache Found:

A cache of 114 bronze coins, dating to the 4th year (AD 69-70) of the first Jewish revolt (AD 66-73/74), has recently been located inside a jug in the corner of a room, during a recent salvage excavation in the village of Khirbet Marzouk, just outside of Jerusalem.

NEWSLETTER



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