

THE BETHSAIDA EXCAVATIONS PROJECT  
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# BETHSAIDA

## A CITY BY THE NORTH SHORE OF THE SEA OF GALILEE

Edited By  
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Fred Strickert

## The Coins of Philip

IN THE SUMMER OF 1992 a private Christian newspaper in Jerusalem ran a front page picture from our archaeological site with the caption "Head Of King Herold Found On Coin At Bethsaida." Coin discoveries can generate all kinds of excitement, but of course there was no King Herold (unless, perhaps, a Bethlehem angel). If the caption meant Herod the Great, as I assume, this was indeed exciting news because we have no visual representations of him, certainly not on coins. However, what was shown in the picture was a coin minted, not by Herod the Great, but by Philip, his son, who in 4 BCE inherited the tetrarchy northeast of the Sea of Galilee, including the town Bethsaida.

Since excavations began in 1987, some seventy-six coins have been discovered that cover a wide range of history, from a fifth-century-BCE. Tyrian Obol to nineteenth- and twentieth-century coins of the Ottoman empire. Among those seventy-six coins, two are of special interest because they originated in the mints of Philip himself. By concentrating on these two coins and the other coins of Philip that have been discovered over the years, I hope to share the excitement over discovery of the coins, and to show how coins can provide a wealth of information about the rule of Philip and even about the town of Bethsaida.

It is immediately apparent that the two coins in question are not well preserved, which is characteristic of all of Philip's coins. Ya'akov Meshorer writes: "Because of the poor alloy of bronze from which they [Philip's coins] were struck, those that have survived are mostly in a poor state of preservation."<sup>1</sup> This tells us something about the second-class nature of the region inherited by Philip. He was, after all, granted the

smallest allowance from the estate of Herod. Nevertheless, he began issuing coins twenty years prior to his brother Antipas in Galilee, and he offered twice as many issues.

#### HUMAN IMAGES

The two Bethsaida finds are characteristic of the most common coin type minted by Philip. The head of the emperor is found on the obverse; the facade of a tetrastyle temple is on the reverse. This type of coin was produced in each of the eight years that Philip minted coins (fig. 1). Philip

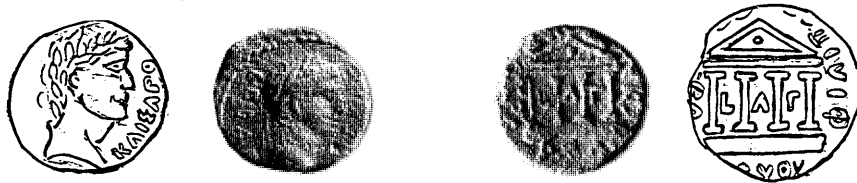


Fig. 1. Coin of Philip: Emperor Tiberius on obverse, facade of tetrastyle temple on reverse.

was the first ruler of the Jews to use human images on Jewish coins. While the most common type of coins used the image of the emperor (first Augustus and then Tiberius), Philip minted coins with images of himself, with Livia/Julia (wife of Augustus), and with an image of both Augustus and Livia.

Prior to this time, all Jewish coinage had been affected by the Commandment forbidding graven images.<sup>2</sup> Pilate's activities during his first years in office are well-known from the reports of Josephus and Philo, which include various incidents of Pilate's insensitivity to Jewish custom, including his bringing to Jerusalem the Roman standards with the image of the emperor Tiberius Caesar, his erecting commemorative shields at Herod's Jerusalem palace, and his taking money from the Temple treasury to build an aqueduct.<sup>3</sup> The Hasmoneans, Herod the Great, Archelaus, and the procurators all used common symbols on their coins instead of human images. One must note the influence of the Hasmoneans on Bethsaida, where no less than seven coins from that era were discovered. Even in Galilee, when Antipas first issued coins in 20 CE, he did not include human images even though his brother had been minting such coins for several decades. In subsequent mintings, he used other symbols; only in his final year, 39 CE, did he include the name of the emperor on his coins.<sup>4</sup>

Philip's freedom to use human images on coins was a result of both a low concentration of Jewish population in his region<sup>5</sup> and their less stringent attitude toward the Law. In fact, Philip was influenced by Lysanias and Zenodorus (r. 30–20 BCE) in his decision to use images for his initial coinage. In 27 BCE, Zenodorus issued a coin with his own portrait on the front and with a portrait of Octavian on the reverse.<sup>6</sup> The oldest coins of Philip include images both of himself and Augustus. This practice was then abandoned in favor of using only the emperor's image on the obverse and a tetrastyle temple on the reverse. Meshorer sees this as evidence of Philip's positive attitude toward Augustus and toward his own position as tetrarch. This stands in sharp contrast to both Archelaus and Antipas, who resented the distribution of their father's will.<sup>7</sup> Philip was the first ruler of the Jews to make use of this practice of using human images on the coins, especially the image of Augustus, and there is no sign that he met with disapproval. In fact, he was the most popular ruler of Herod's sons.

#### THE TEMPLE OF AUGUSTUS

More striking than the use of human images is Philip's depiction of a pagan temple on coins. While none of the coins specifically identifies this temple, there is no doubt that it represents the temple to Augustus in Paneas/Caesarea Philippi. Josephus reports that this temple was constructed by Philip's father, Herod the Great, when Augustus visited this territory and annexed it to the kingdom of Herod. After accompanying Augustus to the coast, Herod returned to carry out its construction in Augustus' honor.<sup>8</sup> The significance of this temple was not lost on Philip, who renamed the city Caesarea Philippi to parallel the coastal city of Caesarea, where Herod had built a second temple to Augustus.

The description in Josephus' *Antiquities* states only that the temple was constructed of beautiful white limestone. Philip's coins offer our only visual representation of the temple. The depiction is rather consistent throughout all mintings. It shows a tetrastyle temple with four Ionic columns supporting a pediment. On several coins the temple is presented on a high foundation, with a staircase.

While the use of human images and the depiction of a temple are striking, one must complete the picture by noting the absence of any Jewish symbols. The one exception is a lily which appears on the temple pediment in the first issue of this coin type. This may well have been a prominent decoration of the Paneas temple; however, on Jewish coins the

lily often represents the Jerusalem Temple. Meshorer notes the numerous descriptions of lily decorations during both the First Temple and the Second Temple eras.<sup>9</sup> Interestingly, despite the first issue of Philip's temple coin with a lily in the pediment, the lily is replaced in later coins with a simple dot. This could suggest that Philip was testing the waters with his first issue. If he received too much criticism, he could claim that the lily represented not the Augusteum, but the Jerusalem Temple. The omission of the lily from later coins might indicate an initially unfavorable reception of this coinage in his territory.

One cannot overemphasize the significance of the imagery on Philip's coins when discussing the environment of Christian origins. A case is often made from silence that Jesus avoided cultural centers like Tiberias. However, Jesus clearly frequented Bethsaida and also traveled to Caesarea Philippi. These were the two main centers of Philip's rule and the coins from those areas reflect a less conservative brand of Judaism and a prevalence of pagan ideas. It is interesting that the first question addressed to Jesus upon returning to Galilee concerns coinage and the payment of taxes,<sup>10</sup> and that the issue resurfaces once he reaches Jerusalem.<sup>11</sup>

#### DATING PHILIP'S COINS

With one exception, dates are included on all of Philip's coins. A Roman "L" standing for "Year" is followed by one or two Greek letters. This of course represents the year of Philip's rule, which began after Herod's death in 4 BCE, or possibly not until 3 BCE. On the majority of coins the date is located between the columns of the temple; on several coins it is found in the field next to the image.

Despite the poor condition of these coins, the dates are often legible. Of the two found at Bethsaida, one dates to year 33 of Philip, or 29 CE;<sup>12</sup> the date of the other is effaced. It would appear that Philip minted coins in eight of the thirty-seven years of his rule. There is some debate concerning those coins minted at the beginning of his rule. According to Meshorer, the earliest coins read "LE" or "year 5" (1 CE).<sup>13</sup> Jacob Maltiel-Gerstenfeld argues that the "E" is a Gamma, which would read "year 3" (2 BCE); for one other coin, he reads "year 6" (or 2 CE).<sup>14</sup> I prefer to follow Meshorer's readings. It is worthwhile to pay attention to the dates of mintings:

Table 1. Coin Mintings and Significant Events

Year	Coins of Philip	Event	Coins of Herod Antipas
4 BCE		Philip begins reign	
1 CE	1st issue	Caesarea celebrated	
6 CE		Coponius, procurator, issues coins	
8 CE	2d issue	(reaction to taxation)	
9 CE		Ambibulus, Procurator	
12 CE	3d issue	Annius Rufus, procurator	
15 CE	4th issue	Valerius Gratus, procurator	
20 CE		Tiberias founded	1st issue
26 CE	5th issue	Pontius Pilate, procurator	
29 CE	6th issue	1st Pilate coins	3d issue
30 CE	7th issue	2d Pilate coins	
31 CE		3d Pilate coins	
33 CE	8th issue		4th issue
34 CE		Death of Philip	

Why did Philip issue coins only in four of his first twenty-nine years as ruler and then four more times in the last eight years of his reign (26/27 to 33/34 CE; see table 1)? The answer to this question will tell us much about Philip. For New Testament scholars, the matter is significant because it concerns the time of Jesus' activity in and around Bethsaida.

#### PROCURATORS, PONTIUS PILATE, AND PHILIP'S PRODUCT

The timing of Philip's first four mintings are quite logical (see Table 1). Perhaps he did not mint coins during the first years of his rule until the city of Caesarea Philippi had become well established. (Antipas did not mint his first coins until 20 CE, after Tiberias was established.) It is not difficult to see that subsequent mintings were made not only to satisfy monetary needs, but also for political purposes. The second minting may have been a reaction to the introduction of the procurators in Judea. Upon his arrival in Judea in 6 CE, the first procurator, Coponius, issued his own

coinage. This was a time of great unrest, when Judas of Galilee, a Zealot leader and radical revolutionary, raised an insurrection against the taxation census (Acts 5:37).<sup>15</sup>

In 8 CE, Philip's decision to mint a new series of coins may well reflect his attempt to reassert the independence of his rule from the Roman procurators in Judea. Each of the next three mintings by Philip occurred in a year in which a new procurator arrived in Judea: 12 CE (Annius Rufus), 15 CE (Valerius Gratus), and 26 CE (Pontius Pilate).<sup>16</sup> It would seem that issuing coins served to publicize the legitimacy of one's own authority in the face of foreign domination. It is significant that while a coin of Archelaus was found at Bethsaida, no coin from the Roman procurators was found at this writing.

There was an eleven-year break between Philip's fourth and fifth mintings, which coincides with the longest tenure of the procurators by Valerius Gratus (15 to 26 CE). However, during the ten-year rule of Pilate (26 to 36 CE) Philip minted coins in four different years: 26, 29, 30, and 33 CE. In this situation, one might expect that the number of denominations of currency, up to this point two per minting, would have decreased. Instead, Philip continued to mint two denominations in 26 and 29 CE and even increased the number of denominations to three or four in both 30 and 33 CE. Philip died in 34 CE, two years before Pilate left office. It is obvious that the most productive minting period for Philip was during the time of Pontius Pilate's procuratorship.

A similar pattern occurs with respect to the coins of Herod Antipas. Even though he ruled longer than Philip, he issued coins during only five years of his reign: in 20 CE, after the founding of Tiberias; in 39 CE, shortly before his death; and in 29, 30, and 33 CE, during three years of Pilate's rule (the same three years that his brother Philip minted coins). Meshorer notes the nine-year gap between the first and second mintings of Antipas and explains this as the result of a saturation of the market with the bronze coins of the procurators.<sup>17</sup> He goes on to credit Pilate's antagonism towards the Jewish populace as the catalyst for the flurry of new mintings. There is no reason not to associate this phenomenon with Philip as well. Both Josephus and Philo report the dissatisfaction of the general public with Pilate. Philo even makes clear that the sons of Herod—Antipas and Philip—sided with the populace and led the opposition that forced Pilate to retreat.

Pilate issued relatively large quantities of coins in three consecutive years, 29, 30, and 31 CE, which may have been a deliberate attempt by

him to monopolize the market.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, both Philip and Antipas followed suit by minting coins in 29, 30, and 34 CE in order to "emphasize their legitimate rights as Jewish rulers."<sup>19</sup> The absence of coinage minted by the tetrarchs in 31 CE may reflect a lack of financial resources which prevented them from competing with Pilate. One must also note the report in the Gospel of Luke that cooperation in the crucifixion of Jesus served to mend fences between Antipas and Pilate.<sup>20</sup> The final incident reported by Josephus, Pilate's massacre of Samaritans at Mount Gerizim,<sup>21</sup> helped to unite Antipas and Philip against Pilate. This may help explain why they both began issuing coins again in 33 CE.

### THE PHILIP AND JULIA COINS

Recent discoveries have brought to light two new coin types minted by Philip which date to this period. Up until 29 CE, Philip's coins were relatively standard, depicting the image of the emperor and the Paneas temple.<sup>22</sup> However, in both 30 and 33 CE, Philip issued a coin with his own image and another with the image of Livia/Julia.<sup>23</sup> Careful analysis will illustrate that these particular coins were produced with Pilate's coinage in mind.

In the year 29 CE, Pontius Pilate issued his first coin on which, as was the custom of the procurators, he made use of symbols rather than human images, surprising in light of his previous record. The obverse of the coin (fig. 2) shows a *simpulum*, which is a ladle used by Roman priests to pour wine over sacrificial animals. The reverse shows what appears to be a common neutral symbol: three ears of grain bound by stalks.<sup>24</sup> Although Meshorer notes that the Roman cultic *simpulum* is unique and carries what would seem to be an offensive message in Jerusalem, the presence of the three ears leads him to conclude that "the intentions of the procurator were not consistently negative or destructive, but rather may simply reflect his ignorance of local customs."<sup>25</sup> In other words, Pilate may have believed that the *simpulum* was used at the Jerusalem Temple and meant no harm.



Fig. 2. Coin of Pilate: *Simpulum* on obverse, ears of grain on reverse.

In spite of his many accurate insights, Meshorer here misses the point. The key to understanding this coin is the inscription on the reverse: ΙΟΥΛΙΑ ΚΑΙΣΑΡΟΣ. The year 29 CE marked the death of Julia, and this coin was produced to commemorate her death. A different coin type was produced in both 30 and 31 CE. Although ears of grain previously had been used on Jewish coinage,<sup>26</sup> they were not so prominent. It is also significant that the two outer ears are drooping. This may signify that Julia was dead. Gertrude Grether notes that Livia was frequently associated with Abundantia (ΕΥΘΕΝΙΑ), the goddess of agricultural plenty. In fact, coins of Augustus from 2 BCE to 14 CE depict Livia seated, holding ears of corn and a scepter.<sup>27</sup> Thus the symbolism of Pilate's coin is quite appropriate for Julia/Livia. A second artistic tendency with regard to Livia, according to Grether, was to depict her role as priestess of Augustus.<sup>28</sup> Thus, the obverse depiction of a Roman cultic theme is quite appropriate for this memorial for Livia. It would seem that Pilate was shrewd even when issuing coins. After failing in his efforts to bring to Jerusalem the Roman standards with the image of Tiberius and a dedicatory inscription on commemorative shields, he was able to commemorate the death of Julia on coin. Whether this symbolism was lost on the Jewish populace is unknown; neither Josephus nor Philo mentions any reaction. Philip seems to have been influenced by Pilate's coin. Philip's 30 CE coin (fig. 3) presents a draped image of Julia/Livia, perhaps depicting her priestly role. Her image is surrounded by the inscription: ΙΟΥΛΙΑ ΣΕΒΑΣΤΕ. On the reverse, Philip also used the three ears of grain. There are two differences between Philip's and Pilate's coins. First, in Philip's coin the hand of Julia is holding the ears—she is fulfilling her role as goddess of abundance. The inscription reads ΚΑΡΗΟΦΟΡΟΣ. Second, the grain is not drooping. Like the coin of Pilate, this coin depicts Julia in her dual role as priestess and goddess of agriculture. Ironically, Philip was able to do something that Pilate could not do: use the image of Julia.

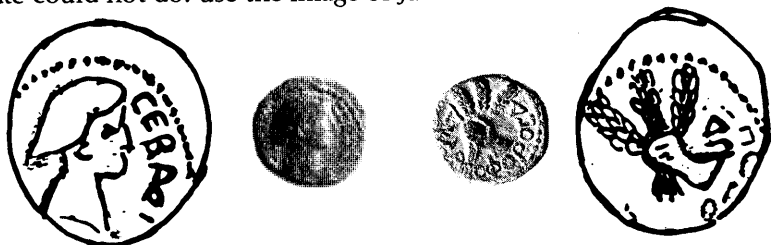


Fig. 3. Coin of Philip: Julia/Livia on obverse, holding ears of corn on reverse

In 30 and 31 CE, Pilate issued another coin type with a different symbol from the Roman cult, called a *lituus* (fig. 4). This augural staff represented the authority of the Roman state. The staff is surrounded by the inscription ΤΙΒΕΡΙΟΥ ΚΑΙΣΑΡΟΣ. On the reverse is only the date within a wreath, another symbol associated with the Caesars.<sup>29</sup>

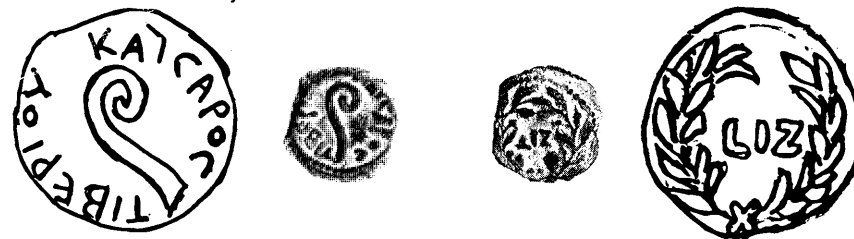


Fig. 4. Coin of Pontius Pilate: *Lituus* staff on obverse, wreath with date on reverse

For the first time since his initial mint, Philip issued in 30 CE and again in 33 CE a coin with his own image on the obverse and the date within a wreath on the reverse (fig. 5). It is not difficult to see the connection between this coin and the coin of Pilate. Philip simply substituted his own image for the *lituus*—both symbols of authority. The reverse with the date inside a wreath is virtually identical to Pilate's coin.

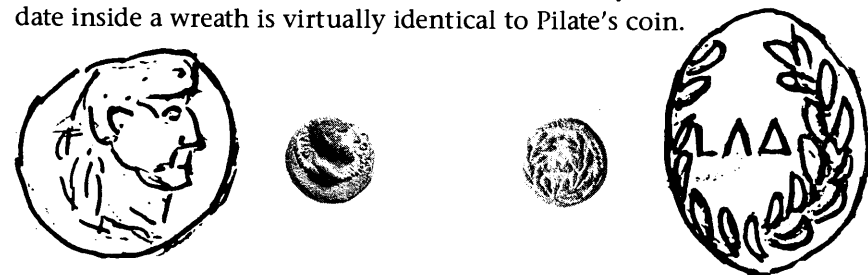


Fig. 5. Coin of Philip: image of Philip on obverse, wreath with date on reverse

One can conclude that Philip was influenced highly during these years by the minting patterns of Pontius Pilate, both with regard to the frequency of issue and the use of symbols. As mentioned earlier, Antipas also was influenced by Pilate's coins, but the coin type produced by Antipas during these years was totally independent—the symbol of a palm tree.

#### DENOMINATIONS

The Pilate coins also affected another aspect of Philip's coinage: their size. Prior to the year 30 CE, Philip produced two denominations per year, with the smallest coin weighing 3.8 grams, with a diameter of 16 mm. In both

the years 30 CE and 33 CE Philip produced three or four denominations of coins, and introduced smaller coins for the first time. The four coins with an image of Philip or with an image of Julia weigh 1.61, 1.75, 2.51, and 3.5 grams and have diameters of 10.5, 11.7, 14.0, and 15.2 mm respectively.<sup>30</sup> The radical change in minting patterns appears to be a response to Pilate's flooding the market with small coins that weighed from 1.2 to 2.3 grams and had diameters from 14 to 16 mm.<sup>31</sup>

A brief word must be inserted here about denominational standards for ancient mints. The Roman system of this time was made up of five denominations:

Denomination	Weight
1. <i>Sestertius</i>	27.0 grams
2. <i>Dupondius</i>	14.0 grams
3. <i>As</i>	7.0 grams
4. <i>Semis</i>	3.5 grams
5. <i>Quadrans</i>	1.8 grams

Table 2. Roman Denominational Standards during Reign of Philip

The precision of these measurements was due to the use of a yellow alloy of copper and zinc called orichalcum.<sup>32</sup> Since this alloy was unavailable in Palestine, such precision there was impossible, but an effort was made to follow the Roman standard to some degree. Both Herod the Great<sup>33</sup> and Antipas (see table 3)<sup>34</sup> consistently minted four denominations:

Denomination	Weight
1. <i>As</i>	12.58-17.75 g
2. <i>Semis</i>	5.78- 8.25 g
3. <i>Quadrans</i>	3.05- 3.95 g
4. <i>Half Quadrans</i>	1.39- 1.95 g

Table 3. Mintings by Antipas

It is not so easy to be conclusive about the denominations of Philip owing to the poor quality of specimens available for study.<sup>35</sup> However,

careful analysis reveals a clear pattern. In six mintings through 29 C.E., Philip issued coins in two denominations: the *As* and the *Semis*. The evidence from the first two issues (1 C.E and 8 C.E)<sup>36</sup> is clearest because Philip issued two different coin types in each year, as demonstrated by the Maltiel-Gerstenfeld Catalog and the Meshorer Catalog:

Year	Denomination	Obverse	Reverse	Weight	Diameter
1 BCE	<i>As</i>	Philip	Augustus	9.39 grams	23.4 mm
	<i>Semis</i>	Philip	Temple	3.82 grams	18.0 mm
8 CE	<i>As</i>	Augustus Head, <i>r.</i>	Temple	9.61 grams	22.0 mm
	<i>As</i>	Augustus Head, <i>r.</i>	Temple	8.90 grams	21.0 mm
	<i>Semis</i>	Augustus Head, <i>l.</i>	Temple	5.96 grams	18.0 mm

Table 4. Coins of Philip according to Maltiel-Gerstenfeld Catalog<sup>37</sup>

Year	Denomination	Obverse	Reverse	Weight
1 BCE	<i>As</i>	Philip	Augustus	7.50 g
	<i>As</i>	Philip	Augustus	7.12 g
	<i>Semis</i>	Philip	Temple	3.82 g
8 CE	<i>As</i>	Augustus Head, <i>r.</i>	Temple	9.61 g
	<i>As</i>	Augustus Head, <i>r.</i>	Temple	8.93 g
	<i>As</i>	Augustus Head, <i>r.</i>	Temple	8.63 g
	<i>Semis</i>	Augustus Head, <i>l.</i>	Temple	6.39 g
	<i>Semis</i>	Augustus Head, <i>l.</i>	Temple	5.31 g

Table 5. Coins of Philip according to Meshorer Catalog<sup>38</sup>

On the basis of this comparison, we get a picture of the general standard used by Philip:

Denomination	Weight	Diameter
<i>As</i>	7.12-9.61 g	21-23.4 mm
<i>Semis</i>	3.82-6.50 g	16-18 mm

Table 6. Standards for Philip's Coins

For the years 12, 15, 26, and 29 CE, analysis of denominations is complicated by the fact that only one coin type is used, with the head of the emperor on one side and the temple on the reverse. For the years 26 and 29 CE, however, there is one slight difference in coins: some display a laurel branch to the lower right of Tiberius' image, others omit the branch. In all cases the laurel branch coin weighs less.<sup>39</sup> Note the following comparison of these coins using Meshorer's weights:<sup>40</sup>

With Laurel	26 ce	29 ce
No	7.41 g	6.70 g
No	6.80 g	—
Yes	3.80 g	5.59 g

Table 7. Tiberius Coin of Philip

The only examples cited by Maltiel-Gerstenfeld for these two years do not show a laurel branch and weigh 6.5, 6.85, and 7.71 grams.<sup>41</sup> The two Philip coins found at Bethsaida are important to note here. Although both are effaced, I observed slight traces of the laurel branch on the coin dated 29 CE. It weighs 4.67 grams and has a diameter of 17.5 to 18 mm. The other coin, too badly damaged to note either date or laurel branch, weighs 3.9 grams and has a diameter of 17.5 to 19 mm.<sup>42</sup>

On the basis of this evidence one can conclude that the laurel branch designates the *Semis*, and the coins without the branch are in the *As* denomination. When we place them alongside the earlier coins, we begin to get a better picture of the range of weights in these denominations.

Denomination	1 CE–8 CE	26 CE–29 CE
<i>As</i>	7.12–9.61 g	6.50–7.71 g
<i>Semis</i>	3.82–6.50 g	3.80–5.59 g

Table 8. Weight Ranges of Four Mintings by Philip

It would appear as though Philip slightly lowered the standard of weights between these two periods.

The years 12 CE and 15 CE pose more of a problem because none of the examples includes the laurel branch or any other markings that

distinguish between denominations. One might conclude that Philip issued only one denomination during these years, but different denominations of the same coin type might have been distinguished only by size (as was the case with the coins of Antipas).<sup>43</sup> The following charts attempt to analyze the data presented by Meshorer and Maltiel-Gerstenfeld:

By Meshorer <sup>44</sup>		Suggested Denomination based on Wgt	By Maltiel-Gerstenfeld <sup>45</sup>	
12 ce	15 CE		12 CE	15 CE
—	—	<i>As</i>	—	8.12 g
—	—	<i>As</i>	6.42 g	—
—	6.30 g	<i>As</i>	—	—
6.15 g	6.15 g	<i>As</i>	—	—
—	6.12 g	<i>As</i>	—	—
—	6.05 g	<i>As</i>	—	—
—	—	<i>Semis</i>	—	5.48 g
5.37 g	—	<i>Semis</i>	—	—
—	4.29 g	<i>Semis</i>	—	—
—	—	<i>Semis</i>	—	4.19 g

Table 9. Analysis of Two Mintings by Philip

There is no doubt that two denominations are also represented here. The large coin, 8.12 grams with a diameter of 22.8 mm, is clearly an *As*.<sup>46</sup> The smaller coins are certainly *Semis*. The only question is where to draw the line. I would suggest that all coins above 6.0 grams fit into the *As* denomination while the *Semis* range from 4 to 6 grams. We can therefore suggest the following distribution:

Denomination	1 CE/8 CE	12 CE / 15 CE	26 CE / 29 CE
<i>As</i>	7.12–9.61 g	6.05–8.12 g	6.50–7.71 g
<i>Semis</i>	3.82–6.50 g	4.19–5.48 g	3.80–5.59 g

Table 10. Distribution of Six Mintings by Philip



We can conclude that Philip consistently issued two denominations in each of the six years that coins were minted from 1 CE to 29 CE. For each of these years we have examples of both the *As* and the *Semis*.

As we stated at the beginning of this section, Philip changed his minting pattern in 30 CE. In both 30 and 33 CE, he issued two additional denominations, the *Quadrans* and the *Half Quadrans*, while continuing to issue a *Semis*.

Denomination	Obverse	Weight	Diameter
<i>As</i>	?	?	?
<i>Semis</i>	Tiberius	5.16 g	18.5–19.0 mm
<i>Quadrans</i>	Julia	3.50 g	15.0–15.2 mm
<i>Half Quadrans</i>	Philip	1.61 g	11.7 mm

Table 11. Coins of Philip Minted in 30 CE

Denomination	Obverse	Weight	Diameter
<i>As</i>	?	?	?
<i>Semis</i>	Tiberius	7.05 g	19 mm
<i>Quadrans</i>	Julia	2.51 g	13–15 mm
<i>Half Quadrans</i>	Philip	1.75 g	10.5 mm <sup>47</sup>

Table 12. Coins of Philip Minted in 33 CE

The Tiberius coin (*Semis*) is a continuation of the most common coin type with the temple on the reverse. The example from 30 CE weighing 5.16 grams fits the standard for the *Semis*, although the 33 CE coin weighing 7.05 grams reaches the upper limit. Note, however, that both of these coins include the laurel branch, which as we argued above, designated the *Semis* in 26 and 29 CE.

In both 30 and 33 CE, therefore, Philip issued at least three denominations. Only the *As* appears to be missing, which would complete four full denominations—the minting pattern of both Herod and Antipas. Following a suggestion by Maltiel-Gerstenfeld, I would argue that we also have the *As* for 30 CE.

### COINS WITH NO DATE

There is a final type of coin by Philip which does not include a date (fig. 6). This coin has the tetrastyle temple on the reverse, but a double image of Augustus and Livia on the front. It is coin type 6 in Meshorer's catalog,<sup>48</sup> and no. 118 in Maltiel-Gerstenfeld's list.<sup>49</sup> According to Maltiel-Gerstenfeld, this coin should be classified as an *As*.<sup>50</sup> The examples he lists weigh from 7 to 8 grams with a diameter ranging from 19 to 24 mm. The two examples cataloged by Meshorer at 5.63 and 5.37 grams may raise questions, but in the text he cites another example weighing 13.71 grams.<sup>51</sup> Unfortunately, Meshorer does not include the diameter measurements, but close examination of plate 7 in Meshorer shows that this was one of the largest coins minted by Philip. Clearly, it should be classified as an *As*. The most logical date for this coin is 30 CE. As we saw above, all six issues of coins from 1 to 29 CE already include both an *As* and a *Semis*, while only in 30 and 33 CE is an *As* missing. One must not exclude the possibility that this coin was issued in a different year from the eight mintings studied. On the basis of the present corpus of coins, that is unlikely; however, the coin must be examined carefully.

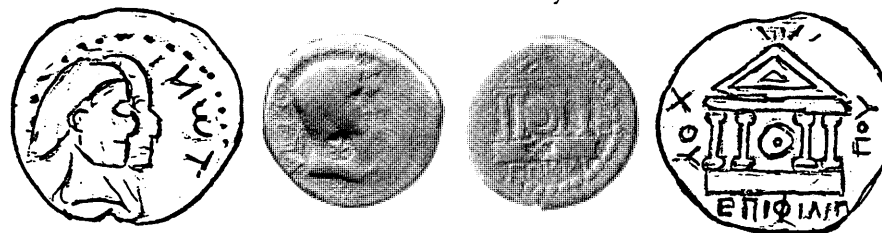


Fig. 6. Coin of Philip: Augustus and Livia on obverse, tetrastyle temple on reverse

The inscription ΣΕΒΑΣΤΩΝ rules out an early date since Livia was not adopted into the Julian gens and granted the title of *sebaste* until after Augustus' death in 14 CE.<sup>52</sup> Thus one can discard easily Hendin's date of 5 CE (based on his assumption that the round object in the center of the temple must be the Greek letter theta [Θ]).<sup>53</sup> Meshorer dates this coin to shortly after Augustus' death, partly on the basis of a countermark.<sup>54</sup> Since countermarks were added after the coin was in circulation, this evidence should not override evidence from the original minting. The reverse inscription reads ΕΠΙ ΦΙΛΙΠΠΟΥ ΤΕΤΡΑΡΕΟΥ, which does not occur on any other coins through 15 CE. Rather, ΦΙΛΙΠΠΟΥ ΤΕΤΡΑΡΕΟΥ is the usual inscription. Beginning with coins of 26 CE, however, the longer inscription was used consistently. There is no reason to date this

coin earlier than 30 CE.<sup>55</sup> Therefore, the year 30 CE, unlike the previous six years that coins were minted, includes four different denominations:

Denomination	Obverse	Weight	Diameter
As	Augustus/Julia	7.0 g	19.0-24.0 mm
Semis	Tiberius	5.16 g	18.5-19.0 mm
Quadrans	Julia	3.5 g	15-15.2 mm
Half Quadrans	Philip	1.61 g	11.7 mm

Table 13. Coins of Philip Minted in 30 CE

Why then was the date omitted on this particular coin? Not only does it differ from other coins in previous years, but it also differs from the three other coins minted in 30 CE, which did include dates. One must assume that the omission was not accidental. Like most coins of Philip, this coin portrays the Paneas temple on the reverse. Yet instead of including the date between the four columns, the inner columns have been moved adjacent to the outer columns, leaving no space in between for the date. This alteration was deliberate in order to depict a round object in the center of the temple—an object which is not depicted on any of the dated coins. Meshorer's conclusion reflects a general feeling of puzzlement: It is "an enigmatic round shape, which perhaps represents a decoration on the entrance door."<sup>56</sup> Maltiel-Gerstenfeld, however, is more specific in referring to it as a "shield."<sup>57</sup>

One must assume that the object in question was identifiable by the populace in Philip's day and that it was related to a particular event near the time of minting since the image was never repeated on any of the other issues of this coin. With these assumptions, I believe Maltiel-Gerstenfeld is on the right track. One event that is well known from this particular period is the famous "shields episode," when Pilate attempted to set up commemorative shields in Jerusalem. Philo relates these events as follows:

One of his lieutenants was Pilate, who was appointed to govern Judaea. He, not so much to honour Tiberius as to annoy the multitude, dedicated in Herod's palace in the holy city some shields coated with gold. They had no image work traced on them nor anything else forbidden by the law apart from the barest inscrip-

inscription stating two facts, the name of the person who made the dedication and of him in whose honour it was made.<sup>58</sup>

There are two less familiar, yet important, details reported by Philo. First, Philip and the other sons of Herod were instrumental in persuading Pilate to back down:

But when the multitude understood the matter which had by now become a subject of common talk, having put at their head the king's four sons, who in dignity and good fortune were not inferior to a king, and his other descendants and the persons of authority in their own body, they appealed to Pilate to redress the infringement of their traditions caused by the shields and not to disturb the customs which throughout all the preceding ages had been safeguarded without disturbance by kings and by emperors.<sup>59</sup>

Thus, the story was probably well known among the inhabitants of Philip's region. In light of our previous discussion, it is apparent that there was a rivalry between Philip and Pilate, and that Philip saw his own coins as important propaganda devices. It is also worth noting what happened to those shields taken to Jerusalem. Philo concludes his account by stating that they were returned to Caesarea, where they were hung in the Temple of Augustus:

For at once without even postponing it to the morrow he [Tiberius] wrote to Pilate with a host of reproaches and rebukes for his audacious violation of precedent and bade him at once take down the shields and have them transferred from the capital to Caesarea on the coast surnamed Augustus after your great-grandfather, to be set up in the temple of Augustus, and so they were.<sup>60</sup>

We should not confuse two distinct temples, but the fact remains that Philip's father, Herod, built two temples in honor of Augustus, both in cities named Caesarea. Would not a symbolic depiction of a shield in a Temple of Augustus on Philip's coin serve to remind people of Pilate's fiasco and Philip's triumph? Since this event probably took place around 29 or 30 CE, there would have been great interest when the coins of Philip were issued in 30 CE.

#### THE KTISTES COIN

Another coin in the 30 CE series is of special interest. The *Semis*, which depicts the image of Tiberius and the tetrastyle temple, includes a unique

inscription. There are basically three types of inscriptions which mention the name of Philip on this common coin type:

ΦΙΛΙΠΠΟΥ ΤΕΤΡΑΡΕΟΥ	Years 1, 8, 12, 15 CE
ΕΠΙ ΦΙΛΙΠΠΟΥ ΤΕΤΡΑΡΕΟΥ	Years 26, 29, 30, 33 CE
ΕΠΙ ΦΙΛΙΠΠΟΥ ΤΕΤΡΑΡΕΟΥ ΚΤΙΣ	Years 30 CE

This last inscription is of special interest since the additional ΚΤΙΣ is an abbreviation for κτίστης, or “founder.” This coin calls attention to the role of Philip as the founder of cities. In fact, this is the very word used by Josephus in his description of the founding of Caesarea and Julias: “Philip founded [κτίηει] the city Caesarea at the sources of the Jordan in Paneas and Julias in lower Gaulantis.”<sup>61</sup> In a parallel passage, Josephus gives much more detail:

Philip for his part made improvements at Paneas, which is situated at the headwaters of the Jordan, and called it Caesarea; he further granted to the village Bethsaida on the Sea of Galilee both by means of a large number of settlers, and through expansion of strength, the rank of a city and named it after Julia, the daughter of Caesar.<sup>62</sup>

While he does not use the term κτίηει in this passage, Josephus refers to the founding process not so much as the creation of new cities but rather as a change in status. This involves “improvements” and “expansion” and the name changes—from Paneas to Caesarea and from Bethsaida to Julias. With regard to Julias he is explicit in referring to a change from the status of village (κώμη) to city (πολις).

The literature on coins has generally noted the ΚΤΙΣΤΗΣ inscription as a reference to the founding of Caesarea Philippi.<sup>63</sup> This, however, seems to ignore the fact that ΚΤΙΣΤΗΣ occurs only on a single issue of coin in 30 CE.<sup>64</sup> Caesarea was founded in the early years of Philip’s rule.<sup>65</sup> Why was ΚΤΙΣΤΗΣ not used on earlier coins? There is no reason to continue interpreting the inscription as a reference to Caesarea.

It is more logical to conclude that the occurrence of ΚΤΙΣΤΗΣ on a single coin refers to the founding of a city in the very year that the coin was issued, 30 CE. This is supported by the presence of the ΚΤΙΣΤΗΣ coin as part of a series of four coins in the only year that Philip issued four denominations. The series not only includes coins with the image of the emperor and Philip himself—something that had been done previously—but also includes two new coin types: one with Julia alone and the other with Julia alongside Augustus. The attention given to Julia in this series is a

strong argument in support of the view that this issue of coins was made to commemorate the founding of Bethsaida/Julias. Every indication indicates that the founding of this city was designed as a grand celebration.

My colleagues, Rami Arav and Heinz-Wolfgang Kuhn, have already demonstrated that Josephus was mistaken in connecting the name Bethsaida/Julias with Julia, daughter of Augustus. Since she was banished in 2 BCE, it is quite clear that the city was not named for her, but rather for Livia/Julia, wife of Augustus.<sup>66</sup>

Livia, of course, had been a widely popular figure, who was honored along with her husband, Augustus, in the imperial cult. Upon his death in 14 CE, she was adopted into the Julian clan according to the directive of the will of Augustus. She thus received the title Augusta/Sebaste and the name Julia, which, while guaranteeing succession to her son Tiberius, also raised her to the level of equality with the next emperor.<sup>67</sup> As a close friend of the Herod family it is no accident that her honors extended to their territory. Antipas had already rebuilt the town Betharamatha in Perea and named it Livia, later to be changed to Julia.<sup>68</sup> Salome bequeathed territories on the southern coast to Julia.<sup>69</sup> Even the procurators honored Julia with inscriptions on six different coins minted between the years 15 and 24 CE.<sup>70</sup> It was only fitting for Philip to honor her as well.

The timing of this celebration is significant. One might expect the naming of the town Julias to have occurred in 29 CE, the actual year of Julia/Livia’s death. Why did it take place a year later? One must understand that her death was not without controversy. While she personally sought deification as had been the case with Augustus, this was not granted by her son Tiberius.<sup>71</sup> In fact, because he was away from Rome at the time of her death, only a simple funeral was carried out without him. In contrast to Tiberius’s command that mourning be forbidden following the death of Augustus (implying subsequent deification),<sup>72</sup> Tiberius ordered that the populace mourn Julia’s death—a recognition of her mere humanity.<sup>73</sup> The coin with her name issued by Pilate in 29 CE (see fig. 2, p. 171 above) shows that this mourning was taken seriously throughout the empire. Even the ears of grain are drooping on that coin. Pilate was responding favorably to his political appointment by Tiberius.

The actions of Philip, however, suggest that he did not mourn Livia/Julia as a mere human. Rather, like many others, he favored her deification—a process which would eventually occur during the rule of Claudius in 41 CE.<sup>74</sup> Thus the absence of a Julia coin in 29 CE is not surprising. Philip would not produce a coin which focused on themes of mourning.

At the same time, he could not offend Tiberius by publicly disregarding the period of mourning.

A year later, however, such honors for Livia/Julia could be considered appropriate. The coin of Julia not only honors her following her death, but also emphasizes her divinity with the representation of the hand holding ears of grain—the goddess Abundantia *continuing* to provide blessings. The depiction of her hand is itself rather interesting and may represent a copy of a statue of Livia/Julia, perhaps erected in a prominent location in Bethsaida.<sup>75</sup> Likewise a second coin which juxtaposes Julia and Augustus and the inscription ΣΕΒΑΣΤΩΝ connotes equality in status. This coin is also an important reminder that Philip had initially received his rule not from Tiberius, as was the case with Pilate, but from Augustus, who favored honors for Julia. It is ironic that the ΚΤΙΣΤΗΣ inscription occurs on the coin in that series which displays the image of Tiberius. The ultimate honor bestowed by Philip on Livia/Julia was not the issuing of coins, but rather the founding of a city in her honor.

Grether reports that, in spite of the wishes of Tiberius, among the honors which continued in the years following her death was the public celebration of Livia/Julia's birthday.<sup>76</sup> One would assume that this took place, as during her lifetime, not on the anniversary of her birth, but on September 21, when she was honored together with Augustus.<sup>77</sup> This would also explain the occurrence of the Livia/Augustus coin in 30 CE. Therefore, the most likely time for the founding of Bethsaida/Julia is on September 21, 30 CE. This dating of the refounding of Julias may explain the absence of the name "Julias" in the Gospels. The Gospels record events ending with the crucifixion of Jesus on April 7, 30 CE. If the name Julia had appeared appended to the name Bethsaida in the Gospels, readers would have recognized it as anachronistic. The issue concerning the terminology and the timing of the refounding of the city has additional implications. While Mark correctly refers to Bethsaida as a village at that time, Luke and John use the later designation πόλις.<sup>78</sup>

It was probably no accident then that the Julia coin was reissued in 33 CE, the ninetieth anniversary of Livia's birth and the seventieth anniversary of her marriage to Augustus. It is possible that the undated coin was reissued that year as well, which might explain the variations of sizes for that coin. What is clear is that the final two mintings of coins by Philip gave special attention to Livia/Julia and thus must be related closely to the founding of the city Bethsaida/ Julias.

### MINT

Unlike Antipas, Philip did not name his mint on coins. It is generally assumed that Philip minted his coins at Caesarea Philippi.<sup>79</sup> There are several reasons for this assumption:

- There are later references to a mint at Caesarea Philippi.
- The city of Caesarea Philippi was founded at an early date.
- There is no clear evidence for a mint at another location.

I would like to suggest that Philip had two mints. During the first four issues (1 CE to 15 CE) coins were minted at Caesarea Philippi. In 26 CE, however, the mint was moved to Bethsaida. It is necessary to note that the founding of the city in 30 CE does not preclude this. As was often the case, the actual founding of cities took place after years of building and improvements.<sup>80</sup> Thus, the expansion of Bethsaida may have been partially completed years before its official founding. It does appear that Philip showed more favor toward Bethsaida/Julias in his later years and as a result he chose this site for his tomb.<sup>81</sup> To support this theory, I offer several bits of evidence:

- There is greater precision in the minting of coins from 26 CE on.
- There is a shift in inscriptions in 26 CE from ΦΙΛΙΠΠΙΟΥ ΤΕΤΡΑΡΕΩΥ prior to this date to ΕΠΙ ΦΙΛΙΠΠΙΟΥ ΤΕΤΡΑΡΕΩΥ following this date.
- The major mintings in the years 30 and 33 CE would make more sense if the minting was done in the city of Julias itself.
- During the years 26, 29, 30, and 33 CE, many coins of Tiberius show what we described earlier as a laurel branch. It does not occur on any of the earlier coins. Is it possible that this represents not a laurel, but a reed, which is used to symbolize a body of water? Antipas, in fact, made use of the reed on his coins which were minted at the lakeside city of Tiberias.<sup>82</sup> The symbol may denote the change of minting site to the seaside city of Bethsaida/Julias.

We must pay close attention to future coin finds in order to see if there are any distribution patterns which may offer further clues concerning the mint. At present, Philip coins have been discovered in excavations at Bethsaida, Gamla, Ginnosar, and Tel Anafa. None has been discovered at Caesarea Philippi, where the mint of Philip was supposedly located. The discovery of Philip coins at Bethsaida enhances our understanding of this ancient city.

## CHAPTER NOTES

1. Meshorer 1982, 2:49.
2. Exod. 20:4; Meshorer 1982, 2:42.
3. Josephus, *Ant* 18.55-62, *JW*, 2.167-177. Philo, *Embassy to Gaius*, 38.299-305.
4. Meshorer 1982, 2:40.
5. Josephus, *Ant* 17.188. Josephus refers to a "mixed population of Jews and Syrians" in this region (*JW* 3.58) and he describes how Herod settled both Babylonian Jews (*Ant* 17.2.1-5) and Idumaeans (*Ant* 16.9.2) in this area. See also Meshorer 1982, 2:45.
6. Kindler 1971, 162.
7. Meshorer 1982, 2:45, lists this coin only for the first minting. It is also included for a second minting according to Maltiel-Gerstenfeld 1982, 145.
8. Josephus, *Ant* 15, 363; *JW* 1.404.
9. In the First Temple, the pillars of Jachin and Boaz were decorated with the lily. The brim of the molten sea is compared to a lily (1 Kgs. 7:26); it is suggested that the menorah was adorned with the lily (Exod. 25:33) and this theme is carried over in synagogue depictions. During the Second Temple period, Ptolemy Philadelphus made a gift of a lily-decorated table to the Jerusalem Temple (*Letter of Aristeas*); see Meshorer 1982, 1:29-30.
10. Matt. 17:24-27.
11. Mark 12:13-17.
12. The catalogs give a two-year range for Philip's coins. For the sake of simplicity I list only the earliest year:
  - 1 CE to 1/2 CE
  - 8 CE to 8/9 CE
  - 12 CE to 12/13 CE
  - 15 CE to 15/16 CE
  - 26 CE to 26/27 CE
  - 29 CE to 29/30 CE
  - 30 CE to 30/31 CE
  - 33 CE to 33/34 CE
13. Meshorer 1982, 2:48.
14. Maltiel-Gerstenfeld 1982, 89.
15. Judas, the leader of the revolt in Judea, was from Gamla (Josephus, *Ant* 18. 3). He is credited by Josephus with founding the Zealot movement, the "Fourth Philosophy" (*Ant* 18. 1). Note that the large number of Idumaeans in this area would have their sympathies with those under the procurators' rule. See also J. T. Greene's chapter in this volume.
16. The year 15 CE is also significant since Augustus died in 14 CE. New coins of Philip would demonstrate his allegiance to the new Emperor Tiberius.
17. Meshorer 1982, 2:38.
18. Meshorer 1982, 2:180.
19. Meshorer 1982, 2: 38.
20. Luke 23:12.
21. Josephus, *Ant* 18.85-89.
22. The first year is the only exception.
23. Unless specifically noted, reference to Julia in this chapter will always mean Livia, wife of Augustus and mother of Tiberius. Livia received the name Julia upon adoption into the Julian gens after the death of Augustus in 14 CE. See Tacitus, *Annals*, 1.8.14; Dio 56.32.1; 56.46.1; 57.12.2; Suetonius *Augustus*, 101.2. See also Giacosa 1983.
24. Meshorer 1982, 2:180, 283.
25. *Ibid.*, 2:180.

26. *Ibid.*, 1:63, 89.
27. Grether 1946, 226, 232.
28. *Ibid.*, 245.
29. Meshorer 1982, 2:180, 283.
30. *Ibid.*, 1:245-246; Maltiel-Gerstenfeld 1982, 278.
31. *Ibid.*, 2:282.
32. *Ibid.*, 2:37.
33. *Ibid.*, 2:15.
34. *Ibid.*, 2:242. Meshorer uses the terminology "whole, half, quarter, eighth" for these denominations.
35. E.g., coin no. 108 in Maltiel-Gerstenfeld 1982 weighs 3.82 grams and has a diameter of 18 mm. The following coins are listed at 18 mm but are much heavier: no. 112 (5.96 g), no. 113 (6.42 g), no. 117 (6.85-7.71 g). On the other hand, the weight of no. 120 (3.184-3.43 g) is similar to no. 108, but it has a smaller diameter (15.2 mm). Unfortunately, Meshorer does not list the diameters for comparison.
36. The dating of Meshorer 1982 is followed here. Maltiel-Gerstenfeld 1982, 89, argues that Philip first issued coins in 2 BCE. This will not affect our argument.
37. Maltiel-Gerstenfeld 1982, 144-146.
38. Meshorer 1982, 2:244-245.
39. *Ibid.*, 2:45.
40. *Ibid.*, 2:245.
41. Maltiel-Gerstenfeld 1982, 147. Note that he identifies these as *Semis*.
42. Similar to Meshorer 1982, no. 9, 26 CE.
43. Meshorer 1982, 2:242-243.
44. *Ibid.*, 2:244-245.
45. Maltiel-Gerstenfeld 1982: 146-147.
46. Maltiel-Gerstenfeld 1982, 146, no. 114.
47. Meshorer 1982, 2:246; Maltiel-Gerstenfeld 1982, 148-149.
48. Meshorer 1982, 2:245.
49. Maltiel-Gerstenfeld 1982, 148.
50. *Ibid.*, 143, 148.
51. Meshorer 1982, 2: 49.
52. Grether 1946, 233.
53. Hendin 1987, 70. Note that there is no symbol "L" for "Year," nor does the figure look like a theta.
54. Meshorer 1982, 2:48.
55. Maltiel-Gerstenfeld 1982, 143.
56. Meshorer 1982, 2:46.
57. Maltiel-Gerstenfeld 1982, 143.
58. Philo, *Embassy to Gaius*, 38.299.
59. *Ibid.*, 38.300.
60. *Ibid.*, 38.305.
61. Josephus, *JW* 2.168.
62. Josephus, *Ant* 18.28.
63. Meshorer 1982, 2:42; Hill 1965/1914, xcvi; Maltiel-Gerstenfeld 1982, 143.
64. Meshorer 1982, 2:49, suggests that this commemorates the thirtieth anniversary of the founding of Caesarea.
65. Schuerer 1973, 2:170.
66. Kuhn and Arav 1992, 77-106. I am indebted for their suggestion that the ΚΤΙΕΘΕ coin points to the founding of Bethsaida. This suggestion was originally made by Professor

- Arie Kindler in a lecture given in a congress "On the House of Herod" at the Haifa University on April 9-10, 1986, based on his reading of the numismatic evidence of Philip coins available then. See also Kindler 1989.
67. Grether 1946, 233.
  68. Josephus, *JW* 2.168.
  69. *Ibid.*, 2.167.
  70. Meshorer 1982, 2:173.
  71. Dio, 58.2; Suetonius, *Tiberius*, 51; Tacitus, *Annals*, 5.1-2.
  72. Dio, 56.41.
  73. *Ibid.*, 58.2.
  74. Suetonius, *Claudius*, 11; Dio, 60.
  75. I am indebted to Dr. Robert Wenning of Münster, Germany, for this suggestion.
  76. Grether 1946, 247.
  77. Tacitus, *Annals*, 4.37; Dio, 51.20.
  78. There are, of course, other solutions to these questions and the dating of the crucifixion is by no means a closed question, but this solution is highly suggestive because of Mark's terminology as well. The use of the terms *κομη* and *πόλις* are not altogether standard in this period.
  79. Meshorer 1982, 2:42-43.
  80. As with Caesarea Maritima and Tiberias. See Avi-Yonah 1950-1951, 168-169.
  81. Josephus, *Ant.*, 18.106-108.
  82. Meshorer 1982, 2:36-37.

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