

## Chapter 12

*Arie Kindler*Bethsaida Numismatic Survey:  
Seasons of 1997 through 2000

## THE 1997 EXCAVATION SEASON

**D**URING THIS SEASON of the Bethsaida excavations, forty-eight bronze coins and one silver coin were discovered. These include one presumably of the Persian period (fourth century BCE); and four Ptolemaic coins, three of which were struck at Alexandria and one at Tyre by either Ptolemy I (323–284 BCE) or Ptolemy II (284–247 BCE).

The twelve Seleucid coins found cover mainly the second century BCE, a period during which Palestine was ruled by Seleucid kings, who are represented here by coins of Antiochus III (223–187 BCE), Antiochus IV (172–164 BCE), Demetrius I (162–150 BCE), Demetrius II (first reign: 146–139 BCE), Antiochus VII (138–129 BCE), and Demetrius II (second reign: 129–125 BCE). Quite a few of them were struck during the second half of the second century BCE at the mint of Tyre and are of the palm-tree type. The one surprising exception is a coin of Seleucus I struck at Seleucia on the Tigris (312–280 BCE).

These are followed by two Sidonian coins of the second century BCE and the first century BCE respectively, a Tyrian bronze coin of the first to second centuries CE, as well as a Tyrian shekel of the first century CE, which is obviously an ancient forgery. Four Hasmonaean coins were discovered, two of which are from John Hyrcanus I (135–

104 BCE), one from Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BCE), and one that is further unidentified. There is also a rather well preserved specimen of Agrippa II, dated to the time of Domitian (75/76 CE).

The group of city coins is of special interest. There is one rare specimen each of Diocaesarea (Julia Domna, 187–211 CE) and of Tyre (Caracalla, 211–217 CE). A seemingly unpublished coin-type of Tyre (Elagabal, 218–222 CE) also turned up. Other single city coins represent the cities of Bostra (Severus Alexander, 222–235 CE), Caesarea Maritima (Hadrian, 117–138 CE), and Gadara (Caracalla, 211–217 BCE). Thus all these coins belong to the first half of the third century CE. Coins of the cities of Bostra, Diocaesarea, and Tyre were also discovered in previous excavation seasons.

The period of about 150 years between Alexander Jannaeus and Agrippa II remains numismatically uncovered in this assembly and there is consequently no indication to the rule of Philippus, the son of Herod I. Late Roman coins are scarce, here and now represented by one badly preserved specimen. This is quantitatively similar to the results of previous excavation seasons. Only one Byzantine coin struck under Michael IV (1034–1041 CE) was found; it was from a time during which the region had already been under Arab rule for hundreds of years. Two Umayyad and one Mameluk coin follow and the list closes with a group of nine Ottoman coins covering the nineteenth century.

## THE 1998 EXCAVATION SEASON

During this season, only sixteen coins were discovered. The earliest are three Tyrian silver obols of the Persian period (fourth century BCE). All other coins found during this season are of bronze.

The above are followed by seven Hellenistic coins, five of which are Ptolemaic, most of which were struck at Alexandria in the third century BCE and only two are from the period of the Seleucid rule during the second century BCE, both struck at Tyre.

This season yielded only one Hasmonaean coin of the second to the first century BCE and two Tyrian city coins, which were struck under the reign of Trajan (98–117 CE).

From after the second century CE, there is a gap of at least 1100 years until the thirteenth to fourteenth century CE, which is represented by three Mameluk coins.

#### THE 1999 EXCAVATION SEASON

From this season, we have thirty-two coins of the periods covering similar stages to those of the 1998 season. There are one Tyrian silver shekel of the fourth century BCE, five Ptolemaic coins of the third century BCE (Ptolemy I and II), and four Seleucid specimens of the second century BCE.

From the later Hellenistic period, there are two Hasmonaean coins, one of which was issued by Aristobulus II (67–63 BCE), and one coin of Herod I (37–4 BCE).

During this season, six city coins of the second and third centuries were discovered. Unfortunately only two of them could definitely be identified. The rest of the coins discovered are of Ottoman origin from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries—altogether nine specimens—and also a Spanish silver coin of the eighteenth century.

#### THE 2000 EXCAVATION SEASON

The excavation season of the year 2000 yielded fifty-one coins, again in a similar composition, with an outstanding representation of the Hellenistic period with sixteen coins (about 16 percent), among them a tetradrachma of Alexander the Great struck at Sidon and a post-Alexander tetradrachma struck at Acco, four Ptolemaic coins from Ptolemies I–III, and ten Seleucid coins, among them two tetradrachmas of Demetrius II (129–125 BCE), all from the first and second centuries BCE. These are followed by one Hasmonaean and three Herodian coins: one of Herod I (37–4 BCE), one of Agrippa II (dated 24 of the era of his rule = 84 CE), and, to our surprise, also one single coin of Philippus (4 BCE–34 CE). This last single coin was a rather unusual feature, as one would expect to discover more coins of his since he was the founder of Julius-Bethsaida. Only two other coins of Philippus were discovered in Area B during the 1996 season.

The coin finds end practically with six city coins from the first and second centuries CE struck at Caesarea, Tiberias, Hippos, and Tyre. The Tyrian and Caesarea coins are somewhat conjectural in their identification. Also discovered were two Roman denarii, one from Trajan and the other from Hadrian, both struck at Rome.

Then follows a gap of about 1000 years for which this season's excavations yielded not a single coin whatsoever—no late Roman, Byzantine, or early Arab coins. The coin findings commenced again

with seemingly one Mameluk coin of the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries and closes after another gap of 400 years with twenty Ottoman coins covering mainly the nineteenth century.

#### SUMMARY

From the numismatic viewpoint, the picture created of the site gives evidence of the periods of the occupation of Bethsaida from the fourth century BCE (Tyre), proceeding into the Hellenistic period with Ptolemaic coins of the third century BCE and Seleucid coins of the second century BCE, with only a few Jewish coins of the second century BCE (Hasmonaean) and the first century CE (Herod I), and only three coins altogether of Philippus (4 BCE–34 CE). There is a group of city coins, including coins from Acco-Ptolemais, Tiberias, and Hippos, but also from the cities situated further south in Samaria.

The Late Roman and Byzantine coins are scarce and, compared with coin finds of these periods in other excavation sites, are next to nonexistent. The few Mameluk coins excavated may point to possible reoccupation of Bethsaida during the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries. Another gap of about 400 to 450 years follows, bringing us finally to the period of Ottoman rule in the nineteenth century, which is rather unimportant for this survey as it is mainly concerned with the earlier periods.

Comparing the coin finds of previous excavation seasons at Bethsaida with the present ones, if the numismatic evidence could serve as indicator, it shows that the site of Bethsaida was actively occupied during the Hellenistic period, as testified by rich finds of Ptolemaic, Seleucid, and Hasmonaean coins (also from the 1996 season), and on the other hand, occupied scarcely, if at all, between the second half of the third century CE and the Mameluk period of the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries.

The picture thus remains generally unchanged with the great gap of about a thousand years from the fourth century CE (late Roman) to the Mameluk period (thirteenth through fourteenth centuries) and the final gap of 400 to 450 years between that period and the Ottoman rule in the nineteenth century.

Table 12.1. Bethsaida numismatic survey: Coin catalog.

Inventory no.	Area	Locus	Square	Basket	Other indications	Material <sup>a</sup>	Date found (mm/dd/yyyy)	Mint	Identification
231e	—	—	—	—		AE	—	?	Persian period 4th century BCE
14	C	503	—	9162	level 167.59	AR	07/22/1998	Tyre	Tyre, 4th century BCE
13	C	503	321	9142		AR	07/16/1998	Tyre	Tyre, 4th century BCE
15	C	504	—	9141		AR	07/16/1998	Tyre	Tyre, 4th century BCE
19	A	3521	—	5205		AR	06/24/1999	Tyre	4th century BCE
3	—	560	560	2217	tetradrachma	AR	07/13/2000	Sidon(?)	Alexander the Great, 336–323 BCE
2	C	—	329	2126	tetradrachma	AR	06/19/2000	Alexandria	post–Alexander the Great
208	A	272	G54	7115		AE	07/10/1997	Alexandria	Ptolemy I, 323–284 BCE
200	—	252	—	7026		AE	06/23/1997	Seleucid, Tyre	Seleucus I, 312–280 BCE
178	—	216	—	3520		AE	01/21/1997	Alexandria	Ptolemy I or II, 3rd century BCE
17	A	352	155	5100		AE	06/01/1999	Alexandria	Ptolemy I, 306–287 BCE
1	A	352	—	5344		AE	07/12/1999	Alexandria	Ptolemy II, 287–245 BCE
2	A	352	—	5197		AE	06/23/1999	Alexandria	Ptolemy II, 287–245 BCE
4	A	350	J49/50	5174		AE	—	Alexandria	Ptolemy II, 287–245 BCE
213	A	238	K55	3882		AE	—	Alexandria	Ptolemy II, 284–247 BCE
186	—	—	I32	2033		AE	03/09/1996	Tyre	Ptolemy II, 284–247 BCE

Table 12.1. Bethsaida numismatic survey: Coin catalog, *continued*.

Inventory no.	Area	Locus	Square	Basket	Other indications	Material <sup>a</sup>	Date found (mm/dd/yyyy)	Mint	Identification
12a	A	280	K57	4146		AE	07/21/1998	?	Ptolemy II or III, 3rd century BCE
5	A	527	—	9230		AE	01/16/1999	Alexandria	Ptolemaic(?), 3rd century BCE
18	A	398	—	5595		AE	05/09/2000	?	Ptolemy II / III 3rd century BCE
24	—	550	C27	2049		AE	05/31/2000	Tyre	Ptolemy II, 3rd century BCE
32	—	402	C28	5645		AE	05/18/2000	Alexandria	3rd century BCE
9	C	550	C21	2029		AE	05/29/2000	Alexandria	3rd century BCE
28	C	560	B28	2222		AE	07/14/2000	?	Seleucid, 3rd to 2nd century BCE
12	A	—	—	3998	survey	AE	06/09/1998	Alexandria	Ptolemy III, 247–222 BCE
3	C	504	—	9136		AE	07/15/1998	Alexandria	Ptolemy III, 247–222 BCE
11	C	504	—	9136		AE	07/15/1998	Alexandria	Ptolemy III, 247–222 BCE
4	—	281	—	4186		?	—	?	probably Ptolemaic
1	—	—	—	—	survey	AE	06/25/1998	?	Seleucid, Ptolemaic
2	1E	343	H64/65	9077		AE	06/11/1998	Tyre	Seleucid, Ptolemaic
229	—	—	—	—	survey	AE	—	Antioch	Antiochus III, 223–187 BCE
205	West A	234	O53	3834/ 3839		AE	07/10/1997	?	Antiochus III, 223–187 BCE

Table 12.1. Bethsaida numismatic survey: Coin catalog, *continued*.

Inventory no.	Area	Locus	Square	Basket	Other indications	Material <sup>a</sup>	Date found (mm/dd/yyyy)	Mint	Identification
214a	A	—	—	—	survey	AE	—	Jerusalem	Hasmonaean, 2nd to 1st century BCE
7	—	273	—	473		AE	—	Jerusalem	Judea, Hasmonaean, 2nd to 1st century BCE
214b	A	—	—	—	survey	AE	—	Sidon(?)	Sidon, 1st century BCE
182	A	—	OO821	—	survey	AE	03/13/1997	Sidon(?)	Sidon, 1st century BCE
13	A	410	O56	5898		AE	06/26/2000	?	Herod I, Judea, 1st century BCE
30	A	425	—	5984		AE	07/07/2000	Tyre	Phoenician, 1st century BCE
10	A	373	—	5345		AE	07/12/1999	Jerusalem	Aristobulus II, 1st century BCE
18	A	356	—	5238		AE	06/25/1999	Jerusalem	Herod I, 37–4 BCE
225	A	228	—	3715		AE	06/17/1997	Tyre	Seleucid, Tyre
14	A	433	O56	6575		AE	07/27/2000	?	Philippus 4 BCE–34 CE
222	A	—	26–	3699		AR	06/05/1997	Tyre	Tyre, 1st century BCE, ancient forgery
31	A	—	N55	576–		AE	05/25/2000	Tyre	Phoenicia 1st century BCE to 1st century CE
211	A	270	—	3893		AE	07/18/1997	Tyre	Tyre, 1st to 2nd century CE
216	A	216	—	3584		AE	05/13/1997	?	Agrippa II, 75/6 CE
11	A	survey	—	5794		AE	06/13/2000	?	Agrippa II, 75/76 CE

Table 12.1. Bethsaida numismatic survey: Coin catalog, *continued*.

Inventory no.	Area	Locus	Square	Basket	Other indications	Material <sup>a</sup>	Date found (mm/dd/yyyy)	Mint	Identification
7	A	410	O56	5914		AE	06/27/2000	Caesarea(?)	Nero(?), 1st century CE
5	—	248	—	—	tetradrachma	AR	06/09/1998	Tyre	Tyre, Phoenicia, Trajan
219	A	217	—	3512		AE	05/08/1997	?	Trajan, 98–117 CE
16	A	—	N56	5688		AE	05/29/2000	Tiberias	Trajan, early 2nd century CE
1	—	403	#56	5803		AR	06/14/2000	Rome	Trajan, 98–117 CE
227	B	365	—	3586		AE	05/13/1997	Caesarea	Hadrian, 117–138 CE
33	A	403	H56	5804		AR	06/14/2000	Rome	Hadrian, 117–138 CE
217	—	217	—	3585		AE	05/13/1997	?	187–211 CE(?)
8	A	405	I54	5789		AE	06/13/2000	Hippos	Lucius Verus, 2nd century CE
8	—	240	N55	3954		AE	05/05/1998	Tyre	Tyre, Phoenicia, 2nd century CE
9	A	352	—	5172		AE	06/18/1999	Hippos	Hippos, Lucius Verus, 2nd century CE
11	—	—	—	—		AE	—	?	2nd to 3rd century(?)
121	A	297	—	5049		AE	05/13/1999	?	Palestinian city coin, 2nd to 3rd century CE
206	A	238	—	3840		AE	—	?	Palestinian city coin, 2nd to 3rd century CE
13	A	297	—	5050		AE	05/13/1999	Tiberias	Tiberias(?), 3rd century CE

Table 12.1. Bethsaida numismatic survey: Coin catalog, *continued*.

Inventory no.	Area	Locus	Square	Basket	Other indications	Material <sup>a</sup>	Date found (mm/dd/yyyy)	Mint	Identification
25	E	455	—	6034		AR	06/03/1999	Constantinople	Ottoman, 18th century
30	A	538	—	9255		AR	02/18/1999	Constantinople	Ottoman, 18th century
31	A	—	K49/50	9212	surface	AR	—	Constantinople	Ottoman, 18th century
187	A	—	I59	—	surface	AE	07/04/1997	?	Ottoman, 18th to 19th century
207	—	236	454	—		AR	—	?	Ottoman, 18th to 19th century
49	A	403	—	5673		AE	03/25/2000	Constantinople	Mahmud II, Ottoman, 1808–1839
52	A	403	H56	5703		AR	05/31/2000	Constantinople	Mahmud II, Ottoman, 1808–1839
5–	A	403	H56	5703		AR	05/31/2000	Constantinople	Mahmud II, Ottoman, 1808–1839
50	A	403	H56	5779		AR	06/07/2000	Constantinople	Mahmud II, Ottoman, 1808–1839
37	—	398	I53	5624		AR	05/09/2000	?	Mahmud II, Ottoman, 1808–1839
45	A	420	H56	5954		AR	06/29/2000	Constantinople	Mahmud II, Ottoman, 1808–1839
39	A	403	H56	5833		AE	06/19/2000	Constantinople	Mahmud II, Ottoman, 1808–1839
46	A	405	I54	570?		AR	05/31/2000	?	Mahmud II, Ottoman, 1808–1839

Table 12.1. Bethsaida numismatic survey: Coin catalog, *continued*.

Inventory no.	Area	Locus	Square	Basket	Other indications	Material <sup>a</sup>	Date found (mm/dd/yyyy)	Mint	Identification
47	A	405	I54	570–		AR	05/31/2000	Constantinople	Mahmud II, Ottoman, 1808–1839
210	—	238	K55	3866		AR	07/15/1997	Egypt	Mahmud II, Ottoman, 1808–1839
220	—	217	—	35–4		AR	—	?	Mahmud II, Ottoman, 1808–1839
180	A	218	L53	3512		silver wash	01/20/1997	Constantinople	Mahmud II, Ottoman, 1808–1839
181	—	—	—	—		silver wash	07/30/1996	?	Mahmud II, Ottoman, 1808–1839
38	A	403	—	5826		AR	06/19/2000	Constantinople	Abdul Medjid, Ottoman, 1839–1861
43	A	406	H57	594		AR	06/27/2000	Constantinople	Abdul Medjid, Ottoman, 1839–1861
21	A	527	J49/50	9231		AR	01/16/1999	Constantinople	Mahmud II, Ottoman, 1808–1839
29	A	512	—	926–		AR	02/28/1999	?	Mahmud II, Ottoman, 1808–1839
32	A	371	—	5327		AR	—	Constantinople	Mahmud II, Ottoman, 1808–1839
24a	A	350	—	5150		AR	06/17/1999	Constantinople	Mahmud II, Ottoman, 1808–1839
22	A	T206	—	5213		AR	—	Constantinople	Abdul Medjid, Ottoman, 19th century

Table 12.1. Bethsaida numismatic survey: Coin catalog, *continued*.

Inventory no.	Area	Locus	Square	Basket	Other indications	Material <sup>a</sup>	Date found (mm/dd/yyyy)	Mint	Identification
42	A	403	H56	5735		nickel(?)	06/02/2000	?	Ottoman, 1918–1922(?)
53	A	403	H56	5703		nickel(?)	05/31/2000	?	Ottoman, 1918–1922(?)
20	A	405	—	5708		AE	05/31//2000	?	Ottoman, 1918–1922(?)
24	A	350	—	5150(?)		AR	06/17/1999	Constantinople	Muhammed Reshat V, Ottoman, 20th century
27	A	350	—	—	tomb 202	AR	06/10/1999	Constantinople	Muhammed Reshat V, Ottoman, 20th century

not recorded  
 unknown  
 perhaps  
 digit illegible  
 AE = copper (cuprum); AR = silver (argentum)

## Chapter 13

*Donald T. Ariel*

### Stamped Amphora Handles from Bethsaida

**F**OURTEEN STAMPED AMPHORA HANDLES were excavated at Bethsaida through the 2001 season. Their value as chronological indicators complements the many coins found at the site dating from the third and second centuries BCE. Together with the coins and other ceramics, they contribute to our understanding of Bethsaida in the Hellenistic period.

In addition, an almost complete Rhodian amphora (Reg. No. 571; IAA 2001–2231; fig. 1) was found in Area B in the 1996 season (Forner 2008, color plate VII:1). Restoration of the vessel was accomplished from Loci 221, 222, and 223, all contiguous loci. Areas B and C are primarily domestic in nature; a few houses separated by streets were discovered. Loci 221, 222, and 223 constitute the remains of a floor of one of these houses, just north of a better-preserved house with a large courtyard, denoted by the excavators “The House of the Fishermen.” While some of the pottery readings from these loci yielded undisturbed Hellenistic remains, others did not. So the amphora’s context may be said to be Hellenistic, but with significant disturbances because of its proximity to the surface.

My thanks to Carl Savage for his help in understanding the stratification of the amphora material, and to Gérald Finkelsztein for the data on quantities of dated eponyms from Rhodes (Lindos and Camiros), which may be said to approximate the production his-