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The Ramat Raḥel Hoard of Tyrian Shekels*

YOAV FARHI, URI DAVIDOVICH, YUVAL GADOT, AND ODED LIPSCHITS

INTRODUCTION

THE Ramat Raḥel site is located on a projecting hill (818 m above sea level) half-way between Jerusalem and Bethlehem. Archaeological excavations by Y. Aharoni (1954, 1959–1962) and by O. Lipschits, M. Oeming and Y. Gadot (2005–2009) have revealed an exceptionally well-built edifice dating to the Late Iron Age, Persian period and Early Hellenistic period.¹ The character of the site shifted when the Hasmonean kings came to power. It lost its central political and economic status and instead became a small settlement inhabited by Jews.² Aharoni identified only meager material cultural remains related to this settlement (his stratum IVA),³ and dated them exclusively to the Herodian period. The main ethnic “marker” identified by Aharoni’s expedition was the use of stone ossuaries for secondary burial.⁴ Nevertheless, in later evaluation of the remains, Reich suggested that seven Jewish ritual baths (*miqvaʿot*) be identified among the remains unearthed by Aharoni.⁵ The renewed excavations at the site revealed at least two more ritual baths, and the extent of the settlement is generally based on the distribution of these facilities (Plan 1). The fate of this settlement, presently

* The publication of this hoard is one of the first outcomes of the renewed excavation project at Ramat Raḥel. The excavation project is directed by Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming, under the auspices of the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University, and the Theological Seminary (Wissenschaftlich-Theologisches Seminar) and Faculty for Jewish Studies (Hochschule für jüdische Studien) at Heidelberg University. The excavation staff includes Yuval Gadot (field director), Benjamin Arubas (architecture), and Liora Freud (registration). We thank B. Arubas for the general plan of the site (fig. 1) and Pavel Shrago for the photographs of the coins (fig. 4). The pictures in figs. 2–3 were taken by O. Lipschits. Uri Davidovich designed the illustrations.

¹ See Y. Aharoni: *Excavations at Ramat Raḥel: Seasons 1959 and 1960*, Rome, 1962; Y. Aharoni: *Excavations at Ramat Raḥel: Seasons 1961 and 1962*, Rome, 1964; O. Lipschits, M. Oeming, Y. Gadot, and B. Arubas: *Ramat Raḥel 2005*, *IEJ* 56 (2006), pp. 227–235; O. Lipschits, M. Oeming, Y. Gadot, and B. Arubas: *The 2006 and 2007 Excavation Seasons at Ramat Raḥel: Preliminary Report*, *IEJ* 59 (2009), pp. 1–20.

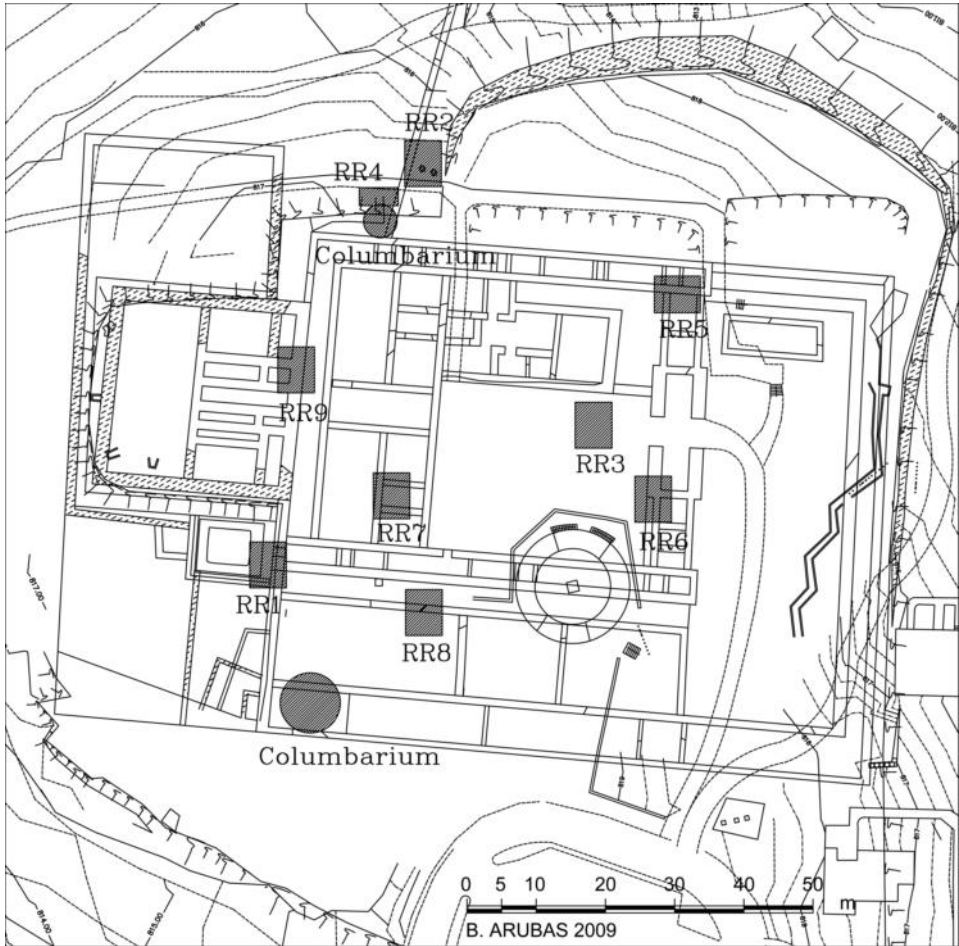
² O. Lipschits, Y. Gadot, B. Arubas and M. Oeming, *Ramat Raḥel and Its Secrets*, *Qadmoniot* 138 (2009), pp. 58–77.

³ Aharoni, *Seasons 1961 and 1962* (n. 1 above), pp. 120–121 and fig. 2.

⁴ E.g., M. Kochavi: *The Burial Caves of Ramat Raḥel, 1962 Season*, in Aharoni, *Seasons 1961 and 1962* (n. 1 above), pp. 70–73.

⁵ Five of these are discussed in R. Reich: *Miqvaʿot (Jewish Ritual Immersion Baths) in Eretz-Israel in the Second Temple and the Mishnah and Talmud Periods*, Ph.D. dissertation, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1990, pp. 279–281, 462–463 (Hebrew).

dated to the Hasmonean-Herodian era, is as yet unclear, though it may have ceased to exist following the Jewish War, as suggested by Aharoni.⁶



Plan 1: General plan of Ramat Raḥel site, showing the location of the ritual baths (*miqva'ot*; marked — RR 1–9) and the two columbarium caves dated to the Late Second Temple period (coordinates delineate 50×50 m squares; looking north).

The settlement at Ramat Raḥel in the Late Second Temple period also included two columbarium caves. The first, located in the northern portion of the site, was found and excavated by Aharoni (Plan 1).⁷ The second was found in 2006 during a survey of subterranean spaces in the southern portion of the site, conducted by R. Porat and U. Davidovich of the Cave Research Unit (CRU), a division of the

⁶ Aharoni, *Seasons 1961 and 1962* (n. 1 above), p. 121.

⁷ Kochavi (n. 4 above), pp. 65–69.

Hebrew University Department of Geography. This southern columbarium was excavated during three consecutive years (2007–2009) as part of the renewed excavations at Ramat Raḥel. The excavations exposed a system of interrelated columbarium chambers and several stratigraphic phases of construction and use of the whole complex. A detailed report of the excavation results will appear in a future publication of the Ramat Raḥel excavation project.

In 2008, a hoard of fifteen silver tetradrachms, minted in Tyre and popularly known as Tyrian shekels, was discovered in one of the niches in the columbarium, concealed inside a small cooking pot (Photo 1). Stratigraphically, the niche belongs to an advanced phase within the columbarium complex, following a major reshaping of the subterranean system, probably sometime in the Late Hasmonean period. The niche is located in the southwestern corner of the main hall of this “renovated” columbarium, approximately 0.5 m above the beaten

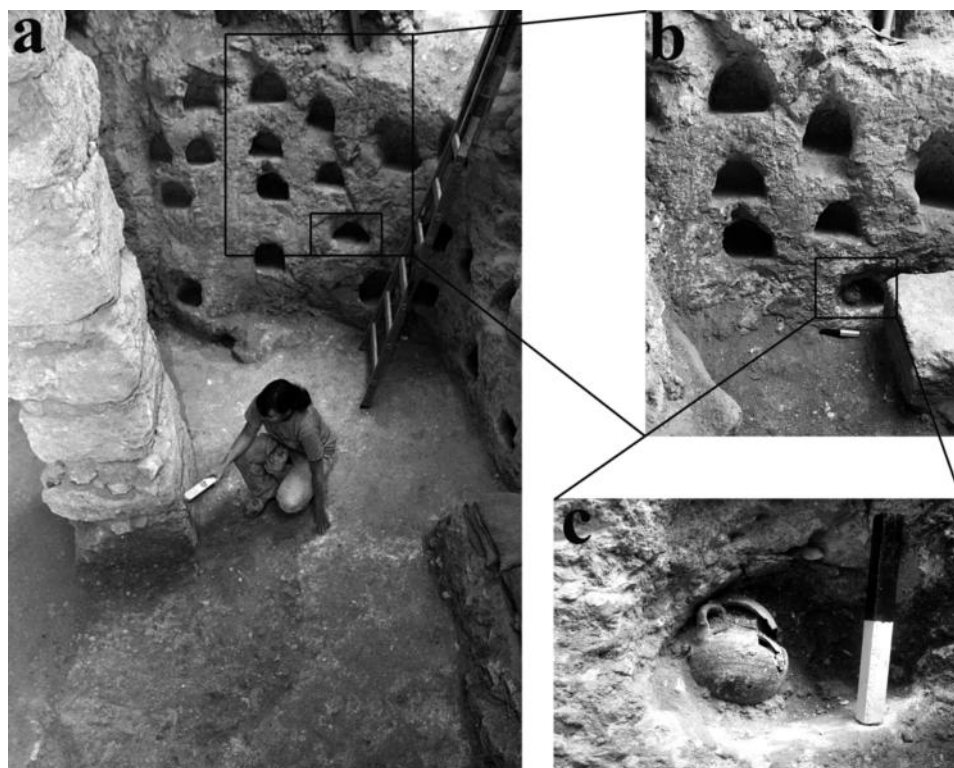


Photo 1: (a) The southwestern portion of the main hall of the “renovated” columbarium (see text) at the end of the 2009 season. (b) The same area in the 2008 season, when the cooking pot containing the hoard was found. The large stone to the right of the niche where the hoard was found is part of the material dumped into the columbarium after it went out of use. (c) The cooking pot as discovered. Note the thin layer of soil on which the pot was placed.

chalk floor and 3.5 m below the shaft leading into the hall (Photo 1a). This hall turned into a dump when the columbarium fell into disuse, and it was totally filled with debris consisting of dressed building stones, pottery fragments and finds from the Early Roman period onwards. The hoard was found after the removal of dumps about 3.5 m thick, filling the entire volume of the main hall.

The cooking pot in which the hoard was placed was found almost intact (Photo 1a–c). It was covered with the broken base of a jug (or juglet) that served in secondary use as a lid. The cooking pot was filled up to the rim with light-brown sediment, which covered the coins. It seems that the sediment had penetrated into the pot through the cracks by means of post-depositional processes. The pot was on top of a thin (3–4 cm) layer of sediment that covered the bottom of the niche (Photo 1c).

The cooking pot belongs to a type of small, closed pots with a simple, outward-sloping rim, a flaring, convex neck, a squat, globular body, a convex, pointed bottom and one vertical handle extending from rim to shoulder. According to R. Bar-Nathan, this is an uncommon type found in both Hasmonean and Herodian contexts.⁸ No complete specimen was recovered in the Hasmonean and Herodian palaces at Jericho,⁹ but a similar pot from the first century BCE was found in Jason's Tomb in Jerusalem.¹⁰

THE NUMISMATIC MATERIAL¹¹

The hoard includes fifteen Tyrian shekels (silver tetradrachms), all in good condition, i.e. unworn from prolonged use. The coins were stuck together in the cooking pot and formed one chunk as a result of corrosion (Photo 2).

All the coins in the hoard (table 1 and Figs. 1–15) are of the same type, bearing the mint mark, name and date¹² of Tyre, and thus were probably minted at Tyre.¹³

⁸ R. Bar-Nathan: *Hasmonean and Herodian Palaces at Jericho: Final Report of the 1973–1987 Excavations*, vol. 3: *The Pottery*, Jerusalem, 2002, pp. 72–73, Type J-CP3A, nos. 151–152.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

¹⁰ L. Y. Rahmani: Jason's Tomb, *IEJ* 17 (1967), pp. 86–87, fig. 16:4, pl. 23a, bottom, second from right.

¹¹ The coins were cleaned by M. Lavy at the laboratory of the Institute of Archaeology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. We thank her for her careful work.

¹² The date on the coins is according to the local era of Tyre, which started in 125 BCE when the city was freed from Seleucid rule and became autonomous; see G. F. Hill, *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Phoenicia*, London, 1910, pp. cxxv, cxxiv, 233; D. Syon: The Bronze Coinage of Tyre: The First Years of Autonomy, *American Journal of Numismatics* (2nd series) 20 (2008), p. 296.

¹³ From the year 108 of the Tyrian era (19/18 BCE) until 65/66 CE, first a ligature ΚΡ [KAP(?)] and later the two Greek letters KP (kappa rho) were added on the reverse of



Photo 2: The hoard *in situ* during the removal of the sediment which filled the cooking pot. In the upper right: the hoard before cleaning. In the upper left: drawing of the cooking pot.

the coins. Meshorer argued that these types of Tyrian shekels and half-shekels were minted in Jerusalem and should be regarded as the silver coinage of Herod; see Y. Meshorer: One Hundred Ninety Years of Tyrian Shekels, in A. Houghton, S. Hurter, P. E. Mottahedeh, and J. A. Scott (eds.): *Studies in Honor of Leo Mildenberg: Numismatics, Art History, Archaeology*, Wetteren, Belgium, 1984, pp. 171–179. This hypothesis, however, is not accepted by others; see A. Burnett, M. Amandry, and P. P. Ripollès: *Roman Provincial Coinage*, vol. 1: *From the Death of Caesar to the Death of Vitellius (44 BC-AD 69)*, London and Paris, 1992, pp. 655–656 (hereinafter: *RPC I*); B. Levy: Tyrian Shekels and the First Jewish War, in T. Hackens and G. Moucharte (eds.): *Proceedings of the XIth International Numismatic Congress*, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium, 1993, pp. 267–274; B. Levy: Tyrian Shekels: The Myth of the Jerusalem Mint, *Journal of the Society for Ancient Numismatics* 19 (1995), pp. 33–35; W. Weiser and H. Cotton: Neues zum “Tyrischen Silbergeld” herodianischer und römischer Zeit, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 139 (2002), pp. 235–250; D. T. Ariel: *A Numismatic Approach to the Reign of Herod the Great*, Ph.D. dissertation, Tel Aviv University, 2006, p. 102. The meaning of these two letters and the reading of the ligature are not certain, and there are different opinions regarding the meanings of other ligatures as well. (The issue of the ligatures is beyond the scope of this paper; see Levy, Tyrian Shekels and the First Jewish War [above, this note], pp. 271–272; Weiser and Cotton [above, this note], pp. 239–240; Ariel [above, this note], pp. 101–102; Levy, The Myth of the Jerusalem Mint [above, this note], p. 889). Two explanations are pref-

The range of dates in the hoard is fairly limited. The earliest coin (no. 1) is probably from the year 38/37 BCE, whereas the rest were struck between 22 and 10 BCE. The date on one of the coins (no. 8) is obliterated, but based on its fabric and the monogram KP , it should be dated to 19–15 BCE.¹⁴ In contrast to later shekels, mainly those struck after Herod's reign, all the shekels in our hoard are concave and belong to the "good style", meaning that they were struck with dies smaller than the flans, thus permitting the entire design and inscription to be included.¹⁵ All the specimens were struck with an upright axis. The coins weigh between 13.30 and 13.93 gr., and the total weight of the hoard is 204.54 gr. (an average of 13.63 gr. per coin).¹⁶

CATALOGUE

Obv.: Bust of Melqarth-Heracles right, laureate, wearing lion skin knotted around neck; border of dots

Rev.: Eagle standing left above stylized ram; palm branch along front leg and behind its body;¹⁷ in field left, date above club; between eagle's legs, a Phoenician letter; in field right, monogram and/or letters; clockwise from right, Greek inscription: ΤΥΡΟΥ ΙΕΡΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΑΣΥΛΟΥ ("Of Tyre, the Holy City of Refuge"); beaded border

erable in our opinion: either the letters KP (and the monogram KAP — if this reading is correct) stand for KAICAP, meaning that these coins were minted with the consent of the Roman Emperor (Levy, *Tyrian Shekels and the First Jewish War* [above, this note], p. 272); or they stand for the Greek phrase K[AAON] AP[ITYPION], i.e. "good silver" (D. Herman: *Good Money: The Rise and Fall of the "Tyrian Shekel"*, *Et-Mol* 188 [2006], p. 7 [Hebrew]).

¹⁴ According to *RPC I* (Burnett, Amandry, and Ripollès, n. 13 above, p. 656) and Levy (*Tyrian Shekels and the First Jewish War*, n. 13 above, p. 271), the monogram KP appears in the years 109–111 (18–15 BCE), but based on Meshorer (*Y. Meshorer: A Treasury of Jewish Coins from the Persian Period to Bar Kochba*, Jerusalem and Nyack, NY, 2001 [hereinafter: *TJC*], pp. 73, 75) and our coin (no. 5) it seems to appear as early as the year 108 (19/18 BCE).

¹⁵ On the style of the Tyrian shekels, see Meshorer (n. 13 above), p. 174; Levy, *The Myth of the Jerusalem Mint* (n. 13 above).

¹⁶ On the chemical composition of Tyrian shekels, see M. Notis, A. Shugar, D. Herman, and D. T. Ariel: *Chemical Composition of the Isfiya and Qumran Coin Hoards*, in M. D. Glascock, R. J. Speakman, and R. S. Popelka-Filcoff (eds.): *Archaeological Chemistry: Analytical Techniques and Archaeological Interpretation* (American Chemical Society Symposium Series, no. 968), Washington, DC, 2007, pp. 258–274.

¹⁷ It should be noted that in previous descriptions of Tyrian shekels (as well as Seleucid tetradrachms of the same type) the palm branch is described as being located over the eagle's shoulder (see, for example, Hill, n. 12 above, p. 233; K. Lönnqvist: *The Report of the Amman Lots of the Qumran Silver Coin Hoards: New Chronological Aspects of the Silver Coin Hoard Evidence from Khirbet Qumran at the Dead Sea*, Amman, 2007,

Table 1: Catalogue of the Ramat Raḥel hoard of Tyrian Sheqels¹

Reg. No.	Date on Coin	Date BCE	Let. / Mog.	Pho. let. ²	Wt. (gm.)	Diam. (mm.)	Thick. (mm.)	Parallels	Notes
3946/1 (Fig. 1)	ΠΘ (89)	38/37	ΔΙ	ϑ	13.54	27–28	1–3	<i>BMC Phoen.</i> : 246, No. 176; <i>RPC I</i> : 656, No. 4628.	
3946/2 (Fig. 2)	PE (105)	22/21	Ϡ	ϙ	13.48	26–28	2–3	Sharabani 1980: 281, No. 91 (same year but not the same letter; lower part of the monogram is retrograde); <i>BMC Phoen.</i> : 247, No. 182 (same year but not the same monogram and letter); <i>RPC I</i> : 656, No. 4638.	Unpublished monogram (?)
3946/3 (Fig. 3)	PZ (107)	20/19	Ϡ	ϙ	13.64	25.5–26.5	2–3.5	<i>BMC Phoen.</i> : 247, No. 183 (same year and letter [?] but not the same monogram); <i>RPC I</i> : 656, No. 4639.	Unpublished monogram for this year monogram (?)
3946/4 (Fig. 4)	PH (108)	19/18	Ϡ or Ϡ	ϙ	13.68	25–26	2–3	Weiser and Cotton 2002: 249 and pl. III, No. 3; <i>TJC</i> : 73 (picture).	Same rev. and probably same obv. die!
3946/5 (Fig. 5)	PH (108)	19/18	Ϡ	ϙ	13.43	25	3–3.5	Sharabani 1980: 282, No. 106 [<i>RPC Suppl. I</i> : 45, No. 4639A].	Same rev. and probably same obv. die!
3946/6 (Fig. 6)	PΘ (109)	18/17	Ϡ	ϑ	13.57	24.5–26	2.5–3.5	Sharabani 1980: 282, No. 108; <i>RPC I</i> : 656, No. 4640.	
3946/7 (Fig. 7)	PI (110)	17/16	Ϡ	ϑ	13.93	24.5–25	2.5–3.5	<i>BMC Phoen.</i> : 247, No. 187; <i>RPC I</i> : 656, No. 4641.	

pp. 36, 38, 41; C. Meir: Tyrian Sheqels and Half Sheqels with Unpublished Dates from the Ṣsfiya Hoard in the Kadman Numismatic Pavilion, *Israel Numismatic Research* 3 [2008], p. 121) or on the wing (Burnett, Amandry, and Ripollès, n. 13 above, p. 656). A careful look at the coins reveals that the palm branch is quite long: it runs alongside the eagle's front leg, continues behind its body, and appears again behind its neck. As Hill notes (n. 12 above, p. cxxxvii), the eagle is probably a legacy of Ptolemaic coinage. But whereas the Ptolemaic eagle is depicted standing on a thunderbolt (see, for example, D. Barag: Ptolemaic Silver Currency of Cyprus in Seleucid Phoenicia and Coele-Syria, *INJ* 16 [2008], pp. 38–48, nos. 1–34), the Seleucid eagle is usually standing on a palm branch (see, for example, *ibid.*, pp. 48–50, 53, nos. 35–41, 50). In some cities in which the Seleucid eagle is shown standing on a stylized ram (*ibid.*, pp. 50–52, nos. 43–46, 49) or even on a thunderbolt (*ibid.*, pp. 51–52, nos. 47–48), the palm branch is located alongside its front leg, continues behind its body, and appears again behind its neck. Thus it is clear that the long palm branch was added to the Seleucid eagle to distinguish it from the Ptolemaic one.

Reg. No.	Date on Coin	Date BCE	Let. / Mog.	Pho. let. ²	Wt. (gm.)	Diam. (mm.)	Thick. (mm.)	Parallels	Notes
3946/8 (Fig. 8)	Obliterated	19–15 (?)	𐤀𐤍	𐤍	13.85	24.5–26	2.5–3		
3946/9 (Fig. 9)	𐤀𐤍 (113)	14/13	𐤀𐤍	𐤍	13.81	24–27.5	2.5–3	<i>RPC I</i> : 656, No. 4643; Meshorer 1998: 175, No. 646 (same year and letter but not the same monogram).	
3946/10 (Fig. 10)	𐤀𐤍 (114)	13/12	𐤀𐤍	𐤍	13.61	24.5–25.5	2–3.5	<i>BMC Phoen.</i> : 247, No. 190; <i>RPC I</i> : 656, No. 4644.	
3946/11 (Fig. 11)	𐤀𐤍 (115)	12/11	𐤀𐤍	𐤍	13.83	24–25	2–3.5	<i>BMC Phoen.</i> : 248, No. 193 (same year and monogram but not the same letter); <i>RPC I</i> : 656, No. 4645.	
3946/12 (Fig. 12)	𐤀𐤍 (115)	12/11	𐤀𐤍	𐤍	13.53	26–27	2–3	Same	
3946/13 (Fig. 13)	𐤀𐤍 (115)	12/11	𐤀𐤍	𐤍	13.53	26–27	2–2.5	Same	
3946/14 (Fig. 14)	𐤀𐤍 (115)	12/11	𐤀𐤍	𐤍	13.30	26–27	2.5–3	Same	
3946/15 (Fig. 15)	𐤀𐤍 (116)	11/10	𐤀𐤍 𐤍 (?)	𐤍 (?)	13.81	27.5–29	1.5–3.5	<i>BMC Phoen.</i> : 248, No. 194; Sharabani 1980: 284, Nos. 146–150.	Double-struck rev.

- 1 With regard to these letters states Hill: “These Phoenician letters are often most carelessly formed. 𐤍 and 𐤍 are certain, and in spite of the great variation in the forms it would seem that these are the only two letters intended” (*BMC Phoen.*: cxxxv). Meshorer has offered that these two letters may represent two parts of each year (Meshorer 1984:171, note 2).
2. The abbreviations used in the catalogue are as follows: Reg. No. = Registration (basket) number ; Let. / Mog. = Letters or/and Monogram (in the right field); Pho. let. = Phoenician letter (between legs of eagle); Wt. = Weight; Diam. = Diameter; Thick. = Thickness (of the flan edges). We are indebted to Danny Syon for creating the fonts for the monograms. We wish to thank him as well as Danny Herman and Hanan Eshel for their useful comments regarding Tyrian sheqels.

Two coins (nos. 4–5), both from the year 108 of the Tyrian era (19/18 BCE), are interesting in that they were minted with the same reverse dies, and probably with the same obverse dies as well, as several coins known from other sources.¹⁸ Coin no. 4 used the same die(s?) as one coin from a hoard of unknown provenance published by Weiser and Cotton,¹⁹ and as another coin, probably originating in the

¹⁸ No comprehensive research regarding die-links of Tyrian sheqels has been done so far. For some information and examples, see Weiser and Cotton (n. 13 above), pp. 235–243; Lönnqvist (n. 17 above), pp. 12–17.

¹⁹ Weiser and Cotton (n. 13 above). According to Mr. Ritter, a coin dealer in Düsseldorf (personal communication), all the Tyrian sheqels in this paper were bought from dealers in London at the same time and they may derive from a single source (a hoard?). The size, composition and origin of the group are unknown. The last coins in this

ᶒIsfiya hoard, which was published by Meshorer.²⁰ Coin no. 5 shares its die(s?) with a coin from Qumran published by Sharabani.²¹ No Tyrian shekels from this year are recorded in *BMC Phoenicia* or *RPC I*, and it may be argued that there is a connection between the paucity of shekels known from this year and the fact that most of the known specimens share dies.

DISCUSSION

Several hoards containing Tyrian shekels are known from Israel and Jordan; some of them have been sufficiently published to facilitate a comparative discussion in relation to the Ramat Raḥel hoard (table 2).²² The hiding date of most of the hoards, using the date of the latest coin as a *terminus post quem*, is somewhere in the third quarter of the first century CE, clearly in connection with the Jewish War (with the possible exception of the ᶒIsfiya hoard). Other than the Ramat Raḥel hoard, only two hoards are dated to the late first century BCE: the Mount Scopus

group of which Mr. Ritter is aware are dated to 11/12 CE (these coins are not included in the paper published by Weiser and Cotton). We thank Mr. Ritter for this information.

²⁰ A picture of this coin appears in *TJC* (Meshorer; n. 14 above, p. 73), though without its provenance. This coin is from the ᶒIsfiya hoard (IAA no. 8814). We thank D. Herman for this information.

²¹ No photograph of the coin was published by Sharabani. We thank D. Herman for showing us a photograph of it.

²² For several other hoards that include Tyrian shekels, see S. P. Noe: *A Bibliography of Greek Coin Hoards*, 2nd ed. (Numismatic Notes and Monographs, no. 78), New York, 1937, p. 208, no. 788; L. Kadman: The Monetary Development of Palestine in the Light of Coin Hoards, in A. Kindler (ed.): *Proceedings of the International Numismatic Convention (Jerusalem 27–31 December 1963): The Pattern of Monetary Development in Phoenicia and Palestine in Antiquity*, Jerusalem, 1967, p. 323, no. 14; M. Thompson, O. Mørkholm, and C. M. Kraay (eds.): *An Inventory of Greek Coin Hoards*, New York, 1973, pp. 221–224, nos. 1601, 1616, 1617, 1629–1631; U. Wartenberg, M. J. Price, and K. A. McGregor: *Coin Hoards*, vol. 8: *Greek Hoards*, London, 1994, p. 65, nos. 551, 553; R. D. Leonard: Numismatic Evidence for the Authenticity of the Copper Scroll, in B. Weisser and B. Kluge (eds.): *Proceedings of the 12th International Numismatic Congress* (Berlin 1997), Berlin, 2000, pp. 685–686, table 1; K. Butcher: *Coinage in Roman Syria: Northern Syria, 64 BC–AD 253*, London, 2004, pp. 270–272, nos. 7, 11, 18a, 20, 22a. As far as we know, all these hoards are from uncontrolled excavations and were never published in detail. The reason for not including here the hoard from Casemate 1039 at Masada (Y. Meshorer: The Coins of Masada, in *Masada: The Yigael Yadin Excavations 1963–1965, Final Reports*, vol. 1, Jerusalem, 1989, p. 74, no. 3) is that the Tyrian shekel and half-shekel included in this hoard were deliberately defaced, and according to Meshorer, “They were no longer regarded as Tyrian shekels or even as coins in general, but apparently used as ingots (as they are of pure silver)” (p. 76). For isolated finds of Tyrian shekels, see Ariel (n. 13 above), pp. 83–85.

hoard, deposited in or after 30/29 BCE;²³ and the hoard from Qumran (essentially comprising three different vessels), deposited in or after 9/8 BCE.²⁴ These two hoards, like the Ramat Raḥel hoard, are devoid of Jewish shekels from the Jewish War and clearly predate the war by several decades.²⁵

Sukenik associated the hiding of the Mount Scopus hoard with the unrest following the defeat of Marcus Antonius, Herod's benefactor, in Actium.²⁶ Ariel suggested that the reason for this hoarding was more localized, perhaps related to the instability that followed the execution of Herod's wife Miriam in late 30/29 BCE.²⁷ Regarding the Qumran hoard, Magness has suggested, with caution, that the destruction of the site (phase Ib), as well as the hoarding, be associated with the turmoil in Judea upon the death of Herod the Great in 4 BCE.²⁸

²³ E. L. Sukenik: A Find of Tyrian Shekels at the Hebrew University Campus, in Y. Baer, Y. Guttman, and M. Shwabe (eds.): *Sefer Dinaburg*, Jerusalem, 1949, pp. 102–103 (Hebrew); Thompson, Mørkholm, and Kraay (n. 22 above), p. 224, no. 1628.

²⁴ R. de Vaux: *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, London, 1973, pp. 34–35; M. Sharabani: Monnaies de Qumran au Musée Rockefeller de Jérusalem, *Revue Biblique* 87 (1980), pp. 274–284, pls. III–IV; J. Magness: *The Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Grand Rapids, MI, and Cambridge, 2002, pp. 188–193; Lönnqvist (n. 17 above).

²⁵ A recent publication about the Amman lots of silver coins from Qumran (Lönnqvist, n. 17 above) suggests that this hoard (or parts of it) was hidden much later, sometime around 210 CE (pp. 32–34). This claim is based on the inclusion of several Roman Imperial denarii from the reigns of Nerva, Trajan, Septimius Severus and Caracalla in the Qumran lots in Amman (pp. 51–53, nos. 347–354). These denarii, however, are not mentioned in any earlier publications about the Qumran coins (e.g. de Vaux 1996:127; Humbert and Chambon 1994:329–330; *idem* 2003:52). On this issue see also the discussions by Magness (1998:40–42; 2002:58, 188–193).

According to the earlier publications, the latest coin in the hoard is a tetradrachm of Tyre from the year 9/8 BCE (e.g., de Vaux, n. 24 above, pp. 34–35). Furthermore, the hoard has gone through many hands since its discovery, and as Lönnqvist notes, “by 1973 altogether 58 of the original silver coins had either been scattered or lost” (Lönnqvist, n. 17 above, p. 3). Moreover, Lönnqvist and Lönnqvist claim that “modern contamination of the Qumran hoards is also possible”, and they admit that the inclusion of Trajanic *denarii* in the Qumran coin assemblage is not certain (K. Lönnqvist and M. Lönnqvist: The Numismatic Chronology of Qumran: Fact and Fiction, *Numismatic Chronicle* 166 [2006], pp. 138, 139, n. 104). For all these reasons, we find it hard to believe that these coins are an original and integral part of the Qumran hoard; rather, they should be regarded as later intrusions. See also R. Donceel and P. Donceel-Voûte: The Archaeology of Khirbet Qumran, in M. O. Wise, N. Golb, J. J. Collins, and D. G. Pardee (eds.): *Methods of Investigation of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Khirbet Qumran Site*, New York, 1994, p. 4, n. 12.

²⁶ Sukenik (n. 23 above), p. 103.

²⁷ Ariel (n. 13 above), p. 83.

²⁸ Magness (n. 24 above), pp. 67–68. See Josephus: *Antiquities* 17.149–223, 250–298; Josephus: *Jewish War* 1.33, 2.1–5.

Table 2: Published hoards from the Herodian period onward which include Tyrian sheqels and half-sheqels

No.	Site	Year of Discovery	Total No. of Coins	No. of Tyrian Sheqels/ Half-Sheqels	Other Coins	Date of Earliest Coin	Date of Latest Coin	Reference
1	Mount Scopus (Jerusalem)	1944	11	9	2 Seleucid Tetrachms	130/129 BCE	30/29 BCE	Sukenik 1949; <i>IGCH</i> 224, no. 1628
2	Ramat Raḥel	2008	15	15	–	38/37 BCE	11/10 BCE	
3	Qumran	1955	561	406 sheqels and half-sheqels (at least)	93 Seleucid Tetrachms and didrachms (at least); 6 Roman Republican denarii	142/141 or 138/137 BCE	9/8 BCE	De Vaux 1973: 34–35; Sharabani 1980; Magness 2002: 188–193; Lönnqvist 2007
4	‘Isfiya/ ‘Usfiyeh	1960	c. 4560	c. 3400+ 1000	c. 160 Roman denarii	40/39 BCE	53/4 CE	Kadman 1962; Meshorer 1998: 173–188; Levy 2006: 886–887; Meir 2008
5	Gamala	1987	27	20	7 tetrachms of Nero	8/9 CE	63 CE	Syon 1992–93: 44; 2004: 66–68
6	Irbid	1955	55	40+15	–	35/34 BCE	64/65 CE	Seyrig 1973: 120; <i>CHI</i> : 32, no. 119
7	R. Hecht hoard (Bethlehem area?)	Late 1960s	30 (?)	1+1	12 Jewish sheqels and 1 tetrachm of Nero	17 CE	67/68 CE	Meshorer 1985; 1998: 190–192
8	Shiloah (Jerusalem)	1940	12 (?)	9 (or more)	3 Jewish sheqels (at least)	13/12 BCE (?)	67/68 CE	Reifenberg 1945; 1947: 30–31; Kadman 1967: 323, No. 29
9	St. Stephen Gate (Jerusalem)	1935	160 (?)	23 (at least)	2 Ptolemaic tetrachms and 64 Jewish sheqels	258 BCE	68/69 CE	Noe 1937: 141, No. 516; Hill 1938

No.	Site	Year of Discovery	Total No. of Coins	No. of Tyrian Sheqels/ Half-Sheqels	Other Coins	Date of Earliest Coin	Date of Latest Coin	Reference
10	Bir-Zeit	1940	54	47+2	5 Jewish sheqels	11/12 CE	68/69 CE	Sukenik 1942:15–19; Kadman 1967: 323, No. 28
11	Dominus Flevit (Jerusalem)	1961	16	1	14 Jewish sheqels and half-sheqels and 1 tetradrachm of Nero	52 CE	70 CE	Spijkerman 1961

The hoard from Ramat Raḥel was deposited in or after 11/10 BCE. It may have been deposited either shortly after the date of the latest coin or several years later (as Magness suggested in the case of the Qumran hoard; see above). The reason for the hoarding may have been of a local, or even personal, nature. Nevertheless, as Judea suffered from increasing instability during the latter part of Herod's reign, culminating in the upheaval following his death, particularly in Jerusalem and its vicinity, it is also possible that the hoarding was done during an emergency associated with this turbulent period.²⁹

The most remarkable feature of the Ramat Raḥel hoard is its homogeneity. It consists exclusively of Tyrian shekels, a phenomenon almost unparalleled in other

²⁹ Regarding both the Ramat Raḥel and Qumran hoards, one can argue that the time lapse between the dates of the latest coins (11/10 and 9/8 BCE) and the unrest following Herod's death (4 BCE) is too long for this historical association to be relevant. From a numismatic perspective, however, this gap can be explained by the relative rarity of Tyrian shekels and half-shekels dated between 10/9 and 4/3 BCE. This assertion is based mainly on the published material in *RPC I* (Burnett, Amandry, and Ripollès, n. 13 above, pp. 656–657) and the first supplement to it (A. Burnett, M. Amandry and P. P. Ripollès: *Roman Provincial Coinage*, Supplement 1, London and Paris, 1998, pp. 45–46) and on an unpublished database created by D. Herman, who documented approximately two thousand Tyrian shekels. We are grateful to him for sharing his research with us. In this respect, the published coins from the Qumran hoard show a clear decline in the number of Tyrian shekels between the years 12/11 and 9/8: thirty-two shekels and half-shekels from 12/11 BCE (Sharabani, n. 24 above, pp. 283–284, nos. 130–143; Lönnqvist, n. 17 above, pp. 47–48, nos. 291–308); sixteen shekels from 11/10 BCE (Sharabani, n. 24 above, p. 284, nos. 144–150; Lönnqvist, n. 17 above, p. 48, nos. 309–317); five shekels from 10/9 BCE (Sharabani, n. 24 above, p. 284, nos. 151–152; Lönnqvist, n. 17 above, pp. 48–49, nos. 318–320); and only one shekel from 9/8 BCE (Sharabani, n. 24 above, p. 284, no. 153).

hoards from the Herodian period (with the exception of the Irbid hoard, which contains only Tyrian shekels and half-shekels; see table 2). On the one hand, Tyrian shekels were the main means of financial transactions in the area during this period, and it can be argued that the Ramat Raḥel hoard represents the “regular” cumulative wealth of a family/individual, or a “saving hoard” according to Grierson’s typology.³⁰ Saving hoards tend to be more selective than other types of hoards in the sense that they include mainly high-value coins, and mostly “better specimens of such coins, unworn ones if possible, rather than inferior ones”.³¹

On the other hand, the exclusivity of Tyrian shekels in the Ramat Raḥel hoard is not typical of a saving hoard, as the latter is assumed to contain other large denominations that were in circulation as well. In this respect, it is tempting to link the exclusive preference for Tyrian shekels in the Ramat Raḥel hoard to the “half-shekel tribute” brought to the Temple as an annual tax.³² Tyrian shekels, due to their high purity, became the official coinage used in the Herodian Temple for payment of this tax, at least until 66 CE when the first Jewish shekels of the Jewish War were minted.³³ If such a linkage is accepted, the Ramat Raḥel hoard may represent a tribute intended to be paid by thirty adult men for the Temple.

Numerous possible reconstructions may be suggested for the chain of events that led to the hiding of the hoard in the southern columbarium of Ramat Raḥel, and to the fact that it was never retrieved, but they will all be equally speculative. Archaeologically, the hoard could have been placed there, A. when the columbarium was still in use, B. when the function of the subterranean complex was changed, C. after it had been completely deserted. The second and third options seem preferable for the following reasons:

1. It stands to reason that the placement of the hoard was the last act carried out in the main hall of the columbarium before it was filled with thick dump layers (see above) that concealed the hoard from sight.
2. The last clear stratigraphic phase observed within the underground complex prior to the aforementioned deliberate filling involved the obliteration of columbarium niches and the carving of two small spaces (at a lower level) in the northwestern chamber of the columbarium. These changes were detected

³⁰ P. Grierson: *Numismatics*, Oxford, 1975, pp. 130–136.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

³² E.g., J. Liver: The Half-Shekel Offering in Biblical and Post-Biblical Literature, *Harvard Theological Review* 56 (1963), pp. 173–198.

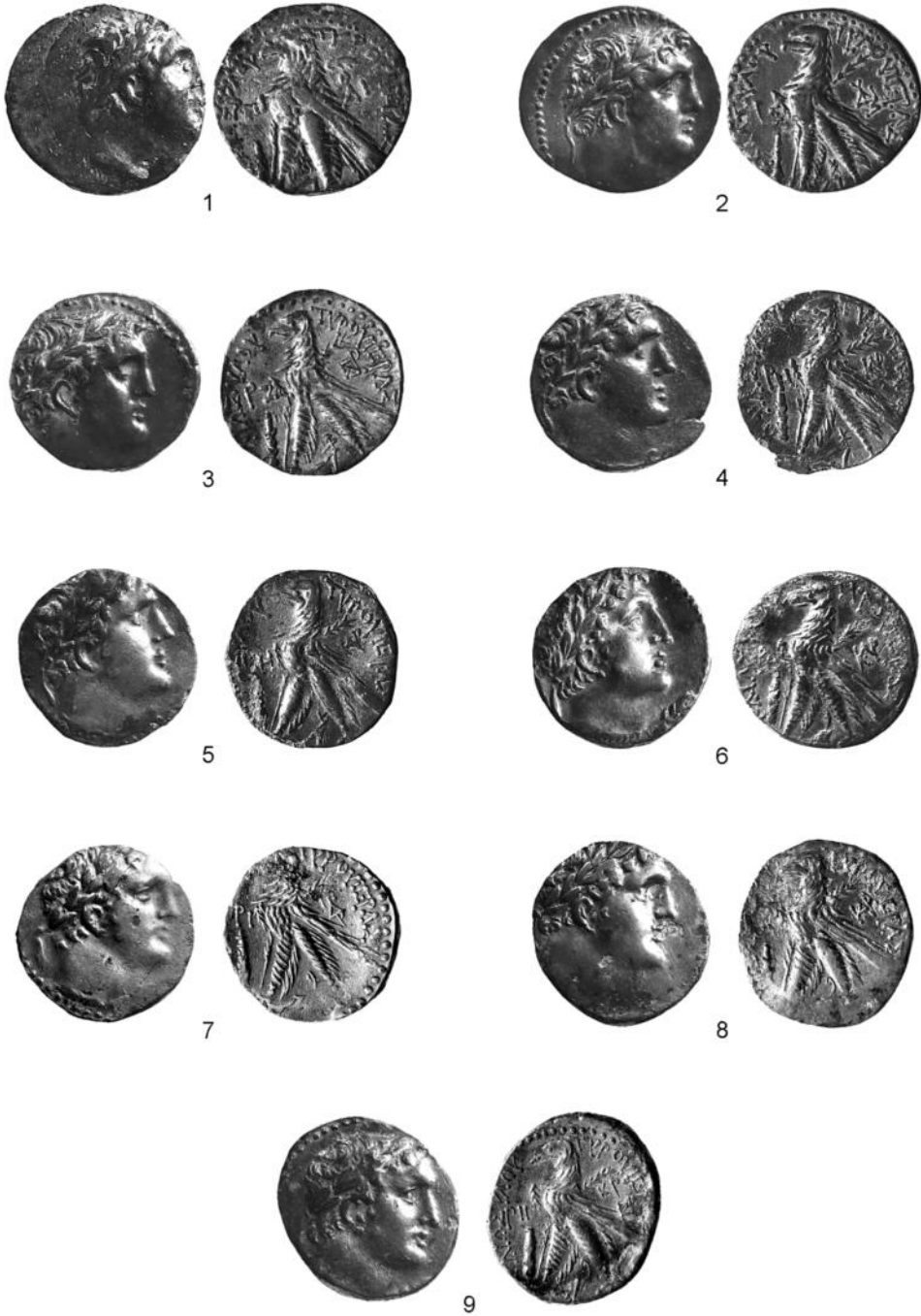
³³ A. Ben-David: *Jerusalem und Tyros: Ein Beitrag zur palästinensischen Münz- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte (126 a.C.-57 p.C.)*, Tübingen, 1969; Meshorer (n. 13 above), pp. 176–177; D. Syon: *Tyre and Gamla: A Study in the Monetary Influence of Southern Phoenicia on Galilee and the Golan in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods*, Ph.D. dissertation, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2004, pp. 164–165; *TJC*, pp. 73–75; Ariel (n. 13 above), pp. 99–101.

only in the last excavation season (July-August 2009), and are therefore in a very preliminary stage of research. Nevertheless, they indicate that before the subterranean complex was put totally out of use, it served (probably for a short while only) for purposes other than the raising of doves.

3. As already mentioned, the cooking pot in which the hoard was placed was found resting on top of a thin layer of light grey-brown sediment. This sediment (of aeolian origin?) must have been deposited before the hoard was placed there, possibly indicating that some time had elapsed between the end of the raising of doves in the niches and the hoarding.

It can also be argued that the hoarding was probably done with little effort and somewhat carelessly. This is evidenced mainly by the fact that the hoard was placed in an open underground space, and was not hidden in a more discreet location. In addition, the use of a vessel much larger than the hoard itself and the broken base of a jug as a lid seems to indicate quick improvisation rather than thoughtful treatment. Nevertheless, it is unclear whether this was because it was a time of emergency, or merely because the placing of the hoard was done offhandedly, without the thought that retrieval might become impossible.

The owner of the hoard hid the cooking pot containing fifteen shekels and was subsequently unable to retrieve it. Unfortunately, we will never know who the owner was and why the hoard was hidden, but its discovery after two thousand years raises many questions and paves the way for further research regarding the history of the site at the very end of the first century BCE.



Figs. 1–15: The coins of the Ramat Raḥel hoard after cleaning.



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Figs. 1-15: The coins of the Ramat Raḥel hoard after cleaning.

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