

A Possible Hoard of Judaeian and Nabataean Coins from Cyprus

PLATES 38–41

CRAIG A. HARVEY*

This article presents a group of 57 Judaeian and Nabataean bronze coins said to have been found on the Karpas Peninsula in Cyprus, donated to the ANS in 1978. Although the existence of this group has been mentioned by two prior publications, these coins are presented here for the first time fully and properly identified and analyzed. In addition to discussing the cohesion of this group as an ancient hoard, this article examines the context for these coins' arrival and use in Cyprus. Although Judaeian and Nabataean coins have previously been found in Cyprus, the coins presented here constitute a significant addition to this corpus.

An assemblage of 57 small bronze coins was donated to the American Numismatic Society (ANS) in 1978 by Anna Fleetwood Garner in honor of Pavlos Neuphytou. Sold together as a hoard, these coins were reportedly discovered on the Karpas Peninsula in Cyprus, in a small ceramic jar near the ruins of a presumed church.¹

* The University of Michigan (caharvey@umich.edu).

¹ Frustratingly little is known about the provenance of these coins. A brief memo accompanying the coins contains all the information about their discovery as conveyed by the donator. This memo is reproduced in full and verbatim here: "The Jewish coins which have been discovered at the Carpas Peninsula were found in a small earthen jar which unfortunately was broken, near the ruins of what they believe was a church but the name of the Saint was not mentioned. The name of the locality was 'Old Church' in Greek 'Palioklisia'. I believe, according to what the owner of the coins told me, that 10 to 15 were taken by another person who happened to be present at that time. I tried very hard to purchase those coins too, but I did not succeed."

Regrettably, 10–15 coins are reportedly missing from this assemblage, said to have been sold separately. The remaining 57 coins are all small bronze coins from Judaea and Nabataea. Four coins are Nabataean, 10 are Hasmonaean, 8 are of Agrippa I, 29 (the majority) are of the Roman procurators of Judaea, and six are of the second year of the Jewish War.²

CATALOGUE

Nabataean

Aretas IV (9 BC–AD 40)

1. Æ (AD 25–40); 11:00; 18 mm; 3.73 g
Obverse: Jugate busts of Aretas IV and Shuqailat, r.; no visible inscription or marks; crudely executed and worn.
Reverse: ח/הרע/הרע (Aretas/Shuqailat) between two crossed cornucopiae.
 ANS 1978.120.1
 Meshorer 1975: nos. 112–114

Rabbel II (AD 70–106)

2. Æ (AD 76–102); 12:00; 16 mm; 2.79 g
Obverse: Jugate busts of Rabbel II and Gamilat r.; no visible inscription or marks.
Reverse: ח/גמילת (Rabbel/Gamilat) between two crossed cornucopiae.
 ANS 1978.120.2
 Meshorer 1975: no. 163
3. Æ (AD 76–102); 12:00; 14–17mm; 2.10 g
Obverse: Jugate busts of Rabbel II and Gamilat r.; no visible inscription or marks; crudely executed and worn.
Reverse: ח/גמילת (Rabbel/Gamilat) between two crossed cornucopiae.
 ANS 1978.120.3
 Meshorer 1975: no. 163
4. Æ (AD 76–102); 2:00; 15 mm; 2.78 g
Obverse: Jugate busts of Rabbel II and Gamilat r.; no visible inscription or marks.
Reverse: ח/גמילת (Rabbel/Gamilat) between two crossed cornucopiae.
 ANS 1978.120.4
 Meshorer 1975: no. 163

² Upon donation to the ANS, these coins were provisionally identified (and in some cases misidentified), but otherwise left unstudied and unpublished. The existence of these coins and their provisionary identifications have been recorded briefly in two publications on the coinage of Cyprus (Parks 2004: 152, 277; Destrooper-Georgiades 2006: 45–6). This study represents a reassessment and re-identification of these coins and their full publication.

Hasmonaean

John Hyrcanus I (135–104 BC)

5. *Æ prutah* (135–104 BC); 2:00; 14 mm; 2.54 g
Obverse: יהוחנן הכהן הגדל וחכר היהודים (*Yehohanan the High Priest and the Council of the Jews*) within wreath.
Reverse: Two crossed cornucopiae adorned with ribbons, pomegranate in between.
 ANS 1978.120.5
 GBC 1133
6. *Æ prutah* (135–104 BC); 1:00; 13–15 mm; 1.88 g
Obverse: Incomplete paleo-Hebrew legend within wreath.
Reverse: Two crossed cornucopiae adorned with ribbons, pomegranate in between.
 ANS 1978.120.6
 GBC 1139
7. *Æ prutah* (135–104 BC); 1:00; 13 mm; 2.09 g
Obverse: Incomplete paleo-Hebrew legend within wreath.
Reverse: Two crossed cornucopiae adorned with ribbons, pomegranate in between.
 ANS 1978.120.8
 GBC 1139

Judah Aristobulus I (104 BC)

8. *Æ prutah* (104 BC); 12:00; 15 mm; 1.69 g
Obverse: יהוד הכהן גדול [ל]דג [ן]חכר [היהודים] (Yehudah the High Priest and the Council of the Jews) within wreath.
Reverse: Two crossed cornucopiae adorned with ribbons, pomegranate in between.
 ANS 1978.120.9
 GBC 1143

Alexander Jannaeus (104–76 BC)

9. *Æ prutah* (104–76 BC); ?; 14 mm; 2.32 g
Obverse: Paleo-Hebrew within wreath.
Reverse: Two crossed cornucopiae adorned with ribbons, pomegranate in between.
 ANS 1978.120.7
 GBC 1144–1146?

10. *Æ prutah* (104–76 BC); 1:00; 14 mm; 2.34 g
Obverse: [יהונתן הכהן הגדל וחכר היהודים] (*Yehonatan the High Priest and the Council of the Jews*) within wreath.
Reverse: Two crossed cornucopiae adorned with ribbons, pomegranate in between.
 ANS 1978.120.13
 GBC 1145
11. *Æ prutah* (104–76 BC); 1:00; 14 mm; 2.26 g
Obverse: Paleo-Hebrew [יהונתן הכהן הגדל חכר היהודים] (*Yehonatan the High Priest and the Council of the Jews*) within wreath.
Reverse: Two crossed cornucopiae adorned with ribbons, pomegranate in between.
 ANS 1978.120.14
 GBC 1144
12. *Æ prutah* (104–76 BC); ?; 15 mm; 1.51 g
Obverse: Paleo-Hebrew [יהונתן המלך] (*Yehonatan the King*) between rays of a star within a diadem.
Reverse: Β[ΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΛΕΞΑ]ΝΔΡΟΥ around inverted anchor.
 ANS 1978.120.10
 GBC 1150

Salome Alexandra as Regent for John Hyrcanus II or Aristobulus II (76–40 BC)³

13. *Æ prutah* (104–76 BC); 12:00; 15 mm; 2.11 g
Obverse: Paleo-Hebrew הכהן גדל וחכר יהודים [ינתן] (*Yonatan the High Priest and the Council of the Jews*) within wreath.
Reverse: Two crossed cornucopiae adorned with ribbons, pomegranate in between.
 ANS 1978.120.11
 GBC 1159
14. *Æ prutah* (104–76 BC); 1:00; 14 mm; 1.75 g
Obverse: Illegible paleo-Hebrew inscription within wreath.
Reverse: Two crossed cornucopiae adorned with ribbons, pomegranate in between.
 ANS 1978.120.12
 GBC 1161

³ Recent metallurgical research suggests that these coins should be attributed to the late reign of Alexander Jannaeus (D. Hendin, personal communication, March 2015).

Agrippa I (AD 37–44)

15. *Æ prutah* (year 6 = AD 41/2); 11:00; 17 mm; 2.17 g
Obverse: BA[CIΛEΩC AΓ]PIΠA; umbrella-like canopy.
Reverse: L in l. field; Σ in r. field; three corn-ears with leaves.
 ANS 1978.120.15
 RPC I 4981; *TJC* 120; *GBC* 1244
16. *Æ prutah* (year 6 = AD 41/2); 11:00; 18 mm; 3.34 g
Obverse: [BACIΛE]ΩC AΓPIΠ[A]; umbrella-like canopy.
Reverse: L in l. field; Σ in r. field.
 ANS 1978.120.16
 RPC I 4981; *TJC* 120, n. 11; *GBC* 1244
17. *Æ prutah* (year 6 = AD 41/2); 11:00; 17 mm; 2.85 g
Obverse: BACIΛEΩC A[ΓPIΠ]A; umbrella-like canopy.
Reverse: [L in l. field; ς in r. field]; three corn-ears with leaves.
 ANS 1978.120.17
 RPC I 4981; *TJC* 120; *GBC* 1244
18. *Æ prutah* (year 6 = AD 41/2); 11:00; 16 mm; 2.53 g
Obverse: [B]ACIΛEΩC AΓPIΠ[A]; umbrella-like canopy.
Reverse: [L in l. field; Σ in r. field]; three corn-ears with leaves.
 ANS 1978.120.18
 RPC I 4981; *TJC* 120; *GBC* 1244
19. *Æ prutah* (year 6 = AD 41/2); 11:00; 18 mm; 2.78 g
Obverse: BACIΛEΩ[C AΓPIΠA]; umbrella-like canopy.
Reverse: [L in l. field]; Σ in r. field; three corn-ears with leaves.
 ANS 1978.120.19
 RPC I 4981; *TJC* 120; *GBC* 1244
20. *Æ prutah* (year 6 = AD 41/2); 11:00; 17 mm; 2.53 g
Obverse: [BA]CIΛEΩ[C]AΓPI[ΠA]; umbrella-like canopy.
Reverse: [L in l. field; Σ in r. field]; three corn-ears with leaves.
 ANS 1978.120.20
 RPC I 4981; *TJC* 120; *GBC* 1244
21. *Æ prutah* (year 6 = AD 41/2); 11:00; 17 mm; 2.80 g
Obverse: [B]AC[IΛEΩC AΓPIΠA]; umbrella-like canopy.
Reverse: [L in l. field; Σ in r. field]; three corn-ears with leaves.
 ANS 1978.120.21
 RPC I 4981; *TJC* 120; *GBC* 1244
22. *Æ prutah* (year 6 = AD 41/2); 11:00; 17 mm; 2.69 g
Obverse: BACIΛEΩ[C AΓPIΠA]; umbrella-like canopy.

Reverse: [L in l. field]; Ç in r. field; three corn-ears with leaves.

ANS 1978.120.22

RPC I 4981; *TJC* 120; *GBC* 1244

Prefects/Procurators

Prefect under Augustus (Caponius or Marcus Ambibulus) (AD 6–9 or 9–12)

23. *Æ prutah* (year 36 = AD 5/6 or year 39 = AD 8/9); 12:00; 16 mm; 2.35 g

Obverse: KAICA/POC; ear of grain curving to right.

Reverse: LA? in lower fields; palm tree bearing two branches of dates.

ANS 1978.120.23

RPC I 4954–4955; *TJC* 311–313; *GBC* 1328–1329?

Prefect under Augustus (Marcus Ambibulus) (AD 9–12)

24. *Æ prutah* (year 39 = AD 8/9); 4:00; 16 mm; 2.16 g

Obverse: KAI[CA/POC]; ear of grain curving to right.

Reverse: LAΘ in lower fields; palm tree bearing two branches of dates.

ANS 1978.120.24

RPC I 4955; *TJC* 313; *GBC* 1329

Prefect under Tiberius (Valerius Gratus) (AD 15–26)

25. *Æ prutah* (year 5 = AD 18/19); 12:00; 14–16 mm; 2.03 g

Obverse: TIB/KAI/CAP within wreath.

Reverse: IOY/ΛIA; in fields below: L E; palm branch, curving to right.

ANS 1978.120.25

RPC I 4965; *TJC* 328; *GBC* 1339

26. *Æ prutah* (year?); 12:00; 15 mm; 2.19 g

Obverse: [TIB/KAI/CAP within wreath].

Reverse: [IOY]/ΛIA; [in fields below: L ?]; palm branch, curving to right.

ANS 1978.120.26

RPC I 4964–66; *TJC* 327–29; *GBC* 1338–1340?

27. *Æ prutah* (year ?); 1:00; 16 mm; 2.26 g

Obverse: [T]IB/[KAI/C]AP within wreath.

Reverse: IOY/ΛI[A]; in fields below: L [?]; palm branch, curving to right.

ANS 1978.120.27

RPC I 4964–66; *TJC* 327–29; *GBC* 1338–1340?

28. *Æ prutah* (year ?); 11:00; 16 mm; 2.43 g

Obverse: TIB/K[AI]/CAP within wreath.

Reverse: [IO]Y/ΛIA; [in fields below: L ?]; palm branch, curving to right.

ANS 1978.120.28

RPC I 4964–66; *TJC* 327–29; *GBC* 1338–1340?

29. *Æ prutah* (year ?); 12:00; 16 mm; 2.36 g
Obverse: [TIB/KAI/CAP within wreath].
Reverse: IOY/[ΛIA]; in fields below: L [?]; palm branch, curving to right.
 ANS 1978.120.29
 RPC I 4964–66; *TJC* 327–29; *GBC* 1338–1340?
30. *Æ prutah* (year ?); 15 mm; 2.00 g
Obverse: [TIB/KAI/CAP within wreath].
Reverse: [I]OY/ΛI[A]; [in fields below: L ?]; palm branch, curving to right.
 ANS 1978.120.30
 RPC I 4964–4966; *TJC* 327–29; *GBC* 1338–1340?
- Prefect under Tiberius (Pontius Pilate) (AD 26–36)
31. *Æ prutah* (year 16 = AD 29/30); 12:00; 14 mm; 1.51 g
Obverse: [TI]BEPIOY KA[ICAPOC ΛIϚ]; *simpulum*.
Reverse: IOY[ΛIA KAICA]POC; three grain ears bound at stalk, middle one upright, other two drooping.
 ANS 1978.120.31
 RPC I 4967; *TJC* 331; *GBC* 1341
32. *Æ prutah* (year 16 = AD 29/30); 11:00; 14 mm; 1.56 g
Obverse: TIB[EPIOY] KAICAPOC ΛIϚ; *simpulum*.
Reverse: [IOY]ΛIA KAICA[POC]; three grain ears bound at stalk, middle one upright, other two drooping.
 ANS 1978.120.32
 RPC I 4967; *TJC* 331; *GBC* 1341
33. *Æ prutah* (year 17 = AD 30/1); 11:00; 15 mm; 2.06 g
Obverse: LIZ within wreath.
Reverse: TIB[EPIOY KAICAPOC]; *lituus*.
 ANS 1978.120.33
 RPC I 4968; *TJC* 333; *GBC* 1342
34. *Æ prutah* (year 17 = AD 30/1); 11:00; 16 mm; 2.24 g
Obverse: LIZ within wreath.
Reverse: TIB[EPIOY KAIC]APOC; *lituus*.
 ANS 1978.120.34
 RPC I 4968; *TJC* 333; *GBC* 1342
35. *Æ prutah* (year 18 = AD 31/2); 11:00; 15 mm; 2.31 g
Obverse: LIH within wreath.
Reverse: [TIBEPIOY KA]ICAP[OC]; *lituus*.
 ANS 1978.120.35
 RPC I 4969; *TJC* 334; *GBC* 1343

36. *Æ prutah* (year 18 = AD 31/2); 11:00; 16 mm; 2.02 g
Obverse: LIH within wreath.
Reverse: TIBEPI[OY KAICAPO]C; *lituus*.
 ANS 1978.120.36
 RPC I 4969; *TJC* 334; *GBC* 1343
37. *Æ prutah* (year 17 = AD 30/1 or year 18 = AD 31/2); 11:00; 15 mm; 2.03 g
Obverse: L [?] within wreath.
Reverse: [TIBEPIOY] KAICAP[OC]; *lituus*.
 ANS 1978.120.37
 RPC I 4968–9469; *TJC* 333–334; *GBC* 1342–1343?
38. *Æ prutah* (year 17 = AD 30/1 or year 18 = AD 31/2); ?; 15 mm; 1.65 g
Obverse: [L ?] within wreath.
Reverse: [TIBEPIOY] KAICAPO[C]; *lituus*.
 ANS 1978.120.38
 RPC I 4968–4969; *TJC* 333–334; *GBC* 1342–1343?
39. *Æ prutah* (year 17 = AD 30/1 or year 18 = AD 31/2); ?; 16 mm; 1.88 g
Obverse: [L ?] within wreath.
Reverse: [TIBEPIOY K]AICAPO[C]; *lituus*.
 ANS 1978.120.39
 RPC I 4968–4969; *TJC* 333–334; *GBC* 1342–2343?
- Procurator under Claudius (Antonius Felix) (AD 52–59/60)
40. *Æ prutah* (year 14 = AD 54); 11:00; 16 mm; 2.80 g
Obverse: [IOY/ΛΙΑΑΓ/ΡΙ]ΠΠΙ/NA within wreath tied at bottom with an X.
Reverse: [ΤΙ ΚΛΑΥΔΙΟΣ ΚΑ]ΙCΑΡ ΓΕΡM around two crossed palm branches,
 ΛΙΔ between and below.
 ANS 1978.120.40
 RPC I 4970; *TJC* 342; *GBC* 1347
41. *Æ prutah* (year 14 = AD 54); 11:00; 17 mm; 2.47 g
Obverse: [IOY/ΛΙΑΑΓ/ΡΙΠΠΙ/NA] within wreath tied at bottom with an X.
Reverse: [ΤΙ ΚΛΑΥΔΙΟΣ] ΚΑΙCΑΡ ΓΕΡM around two crossed palm branches,
 ΛΙΔ between and below.
 ANS 1978.120.41
 RPC I 4970; *TJC* 342; *GBC* 1347
- Procurator under Nero (Porcius Festus) (AD 59/60–62)
42. *Æ prutah* (year 5 = AD 58/9); 12:00; 16 mm; 2.12 g
Obverse: NEP/ΩNO/C within wreath.
Reverse: [LEKAIC]/APOC; palm branch.

ANS 1978.120.42

RPC I 4972; *TJC* 345; *GBC* 1351

43. *Æ prutah* (year 5 = AD 58/9); 6:00; 16 mm; 1.50 g

Obverse: NEP/ΩNO/C within wreath.

Reverse: [LEK]AIC/A[POC].

ANS 1978.120.43

RPC I 4972; *TJC* 345; *GBC* 1351

44. *Æ prutah* (year 5 = AD 58/9); 11:00; 16 mm; 2.22 g

Obverse: NEP/ΩNO/C within wreath.

Reverse: [L]EKAIC/A[POC]; palm branch.

ANS 1978.120.44

RPC I 4972; *TJC* 345; *GBC* 1351

45. *Æ prutah* (year 5 = AD 58/9); 12:00; 16 mm; 2.37 g

Obverse: NEP/ΩNO/C within wreath.

Reverse: [L]EKAI[C]/AP[OC]; palm branch.

ANS 1978.120.45

RPC I 4972; *TJC* 345; *GBC* 1351

46. *Æ prutah* (year 5 = AD 58/9); 12:00; 17 mm; 2.12 g

Obverse: [N]EP/[Ω]NO/C within wreath.

Reverse: [LEK]AIC/APOC; palm branch.

ANS 1978.120.46

RPC I 4972; *TJC* 345; *GBC* 1351

47. *Æ prutah* (year 5 = AD 58/9); 11:00; 16 mm; 2.12 g

Obverse: NEP/ΩNO/[C] within wreath.

Reverse: [L]EKAI[C]/APOC; palm branch.

ANS 1978.120.47

RPC I 4972; *TJC* 345; *GBC* 1351

48. *Æ prutah* (year 5 = AD 58/9); 10:00; 15 mm; 1.91 g

Obverse: NEP/[Ω]NO/C within wreath.

Reverse: [LEKAIC]/APO[C]; palm branch.

ANS 1978.120.48

RPC I 4972; *TJC* 345; *GBC* 1351

49. *Æ prutah* (year 5 = AD 58/9); 11:00; 16 mm; 2.00 g

Obverse: [NEP]/WN[O]/C within wreath.

Reverse: LEKAI[C]/APOC; palm branch.

ANS 1978.120.49

RPC I 4972; *TJC* 345; *GBC* 1351

50. *Æ prutah* (year 5 = AD 58/9); 5:00; 16 mm; 2.50 g
Obverse: N[EP/]WNO/]C within wreath.
Reverse: LEKAIC/AP[OC]; palm branch.
 ANS 1978.120.50
 RPC I 4972; TJC 345; GBC 1351
51. *Æ prutah* (year 5 = AD 58/9); ?; 16 mm; 1.70 g
Obverse: [NEP/WNO/C within wreath].
Reverse: [LEKAIC/A]P[OC]; palm branch.
 ANS 1978.120.51
 RPC I 4972; TJC 345; GBC 1351

Jewish War

52. *Æ prutah* (year 2 = AD 67/8); 5:00; 17 mm; 2.46 g
Obverse: אַל־כֶּסֶף (year two); amphora with broad rim and two handles.
Reverse: [יְהוָה חַיֵּנוּ] (the freedom of Zion); vine leaf on small branch with tendril.
 ANS 1978.120.52
 TJC 196; GBC 1360
53. *Æ prutah* (year 2 = AD 67/8); 5:00; 17 mm; 2.63 g
Obverse: אַל־כֶּסֶף (year two); amphora with broad rim and two handles.
Reverse: [יְהוָה חַיֵּנוּ] (the freedom of Zion); vine leaf on small branch with tendril.
 ANS 1978.120.53
 TJC 196; GBC 1360
54. *Æ prutah* (year 2 = AD 67/8); 12:00; 17 mm; 2.46 g
Obverse: אַל־כֶּסֶף (year two); amphora with broad rim and two handles.
Reverse: [יְהוָה חַיֵּנוּ] (the freedom of Zion); vine leaf on small branch with tendril.
 ANS 1978.120.54
 TJC 196; GBC 1360
55. *Æ prutah* (year 2 = AD 67/8); 5:00; 17 mm; 2.96 g
Obverse: [אַל־כֶּסֶף] (year two); amphora with broad rim and two handles.
Reverse: יְהוָה חַיֵּנוּ [יְהוָה חַיֵּנוּ] (the freedom of Zion); vine leaf on small branch with tendril.
 ANS 1978.120.55
 TJC 196; GBC 1360

56. *Æ prutah* (year 2 = AD 67/8); 6:00; 16 mm; 2.81 g
Obverse: [‡‡‡‡] ×‡‡ (year two); amphora with broad rim and two handles.
Reverse: [‡‡‡‡] ×[‡‡] (*the freedom of Zion*); vine leaf on small branch with tendril.
 ANS 1978.120.56
 TJC 196; GBC 1360
57. *Æ prutah* (year 2 = AD 67/8); 12:00; 16 mm; 1.64 g
Obverse: ‡‡‡‡ ×‡‡ (year two); amphora with broad rim and two handles.
Reverse: [‡‡‡‡] ×‡‡ (*the freedom of Zion*); vine leaf on small branch with tendril.
 ANS 1978.120.57
 TJC 196; GBC 1360

Despite the report that the coins were found in a clay vessel, David Hendin, after inspecting the coins, has expressed doubt as to whether they represent a true hoard deposited in antiquity, instead raising the possibility that they may have come from a foundation deposit or wishing well, or may have been accumulated by a modern dealer from separate finds. Hendin has raised several issues about the composition of the possible hoard, including the patina on the coins, the small size and denominations of the assemblage, and the wide chronological range of the coins. While each of these points raises the prospect that these coins represent a modern dealer accumulation, they do not rule out the possibility that the coins do indeed come from an ancient hoard. The following section will discuss each of these concerns in turn. For now, if one were to interpret these coins as belonging to a hoard, this hoard could not have been deposited before the late first century AD.⁴

For a supposed hoard uncovered together, these coins do exhibit clearly dissimilar surface deterioration. The patina and surface encrustation on the coins is inconsistent, and several of the coins even appear to have been cleaned prior to their donation to the ANS. Although the surfaces of these coins may suggest that they were assembled together in modern times from individual surface finds, it is also possible for similar objects deposited together to exhibit dissimilar corrosion and encrustation due to their depositional micro-environment. It is thus impossible on the basis of surface deterioration to rule out the identification of these coins as an ancient hoard.

⁴ This deposition date is based on the latest coins present in the group, which depict the Nabataean king Rabbel II and his wife Gamilat. These coins were struck from AD 76–102 (Meshorer 1975: 77–78). A major *caveat* is that this date is based solely on the extant coins in the group. As several coins were separated from the group, the date of deposition is open to some interpretation.

The small size of this assemblage is also striking, especially as it consists almost entirely of *prutot* (singular *prutah*), one of the smallest bronze coins in circulation at this time. During the first century AD, there were likely 64 *prutot* to the *denarius*.⁵ The purchasing power of these coins was thus very small, and it is curious why someone would hide this negligible wealth away. As suggested by Hendin, one possibility is that these coins came from a foundation deposit, the best example of which is perhaps the En-Gedi hoard. Discovered in Judaea in 1964, the En-Gedi hoard consisted of 139 bronze *prutot*. These coins were deposited in a Herodian lamp, which was then sealed in a wall of a house. The publication of this hoard states that this trifling amount of bronze coins was likely a votive hoard of a sacred amount of money (a half-shekel plus exchange fee) deposited to ward off the evil eye.⁶ Another votive hoard thought to have been deposited to ensure good luck comes from 'Ein Feshkha and consists of eight bronze coins dating between 40 and 37 BC.⁷

Excavation has also uncovered other small hoards of bronze coins in ancient Judaea, not all of which can be identified as foundation or votive deposits. A hoard of 11 bronze coins from Khirbat Wadi Hamam was likely an emergency hoard deposited during the Bar Kokhba Revolt.⁸ Purse hoards also commonly contain only small numbers of bronze coins.⁹ Thus, while the 57 bronze coins presented here could represent part of a foundation deposit, it is also possible that they come from another type of hoard, such as a purse hoard, although their supposed discovery in a ceramic jar does not support identification as a purse hoard.

The best parallel for a Cypriot hoard containing Judaeans and Nabataean bronze coins comes from Paphos. Here, excavation uncovered a hoard of 22 bronze coins heaped together in a room of a domestic structure.¹⁰ About half of these coins were Cypriot and the other half were foreign issues, including two Judaeans (of Herod Archelaus and of the procurator Valerius Gratus) and two Nabataean (of Aretas IV and of Rabbel II). Dating to the second half of the second century AD, the assemblage from Paphos shows that small numbers of bronze coins were hoarded in Cyprus during the Roman period.

A third concern in identifying these coins as an ancient hoard is their wide chronological range. The earliest coins are of John Hyrcanus I and thus must date before 103 BC. The latest coins date to the reign of the Nabataean King Rabbel II and his wife, Gamilat, and thus must date after AD 76. The coins therefore span a total of 179 years.

⁵ Hendin 2010: 46.

⁶ Meshorer 1976.

⁷ Bijovsky 2004.

⁸ Leibner and Bijovsky 2013: 117–119.

⁹ cf. Hoover 2000; Elkins 2011.

¹⁰ Michaelidou-Nicolaou 1993: 17–21; *CH* 9.595.

The excavators of the City of David in Jerusalem have suggested that the average maximal circulation life for a coin in early Roman Jerusalem was about 50 years.¹¹ They note, however, that some coins, including Hasmonaean coins, are found in much later contexts. While these estimates may be correct for the circulation of coins in Jerusalem, it is entirely possible that the duration of circulation differed in Cyprus. This discrepancy may have existed since coins in their home markets are more susceptible to demonetization and revaluation.

Evidence from coin hoards has suggested that at least some coins were still in circulation centuries after their issue. Several hoards uncovered through excavation in Judaea contain centuries-old Hasmonaean bronze coins. A hoard of *prutot* deposited during the Jewish War (AD 66–70) at Khirbet Zeita contained a coin from the time of Alexander Jannaeus, which was minted around 160 years before being deposited in this hoard.¹² Another hoard from the Te'omim Cave and dating to the Bar Kokhba Revolt (AD 132–135) contained a single bronze *prutah* of John Hyrcanus (135–104 BC). The excavators explained the presence of this antiquated coin by suggesting it was kept for nationalistic reasons.¹³ Small bronze coins of the Hasmonaeans and procurators even occasionally turn up in hoards deposited in the fifth to seventh centuries, when they were likely still used due to their similarity in size and fabric to contemporary issues.¹⁴

Compared to these much later hoards containing Hasmonaean coins, the 179-year chronological range of the Karpas hoard is unremarkable. As previously stated, even if it was uncommon for early Judaeian coins to circulate in Judaea during the first century AD, it is possible that this practice was common in foreign lands like Cyprus. Those unfamiliar with the value of bronze coins in their home market likely formed their own value system for the coins based on diameter.¹⁵ In this way, even those coins withdrawn from circulation in their home market could have continued to circulate freely in another place. Returning to the parallel hoard from Paphos (CH 9.595), it is evident that the practice of using antiquated bronze coins was known in Cyprus. The coins in this hoard range from the second quarter of the second century BC to AD 158/9, and include a coin of the Seleucid king Antiochus IV (175–164 BC) and a coin of the Seleucid usurper Alexander Balas dated to 150 BC.¹⁶ On the basis of this hoard, it seems that during the second century AD, Cypriots did indeed use centuries-old foreign bronze coins, and therefore could have used Hasmonaean coins alongside Judaeian and Nabataean coins of the first century AD.

11 Ariel 1990: 112.

12 Kindler 2006: 68.

13 Zissu et al. 2010: 119.

14 Bijovsky 2012: 99–101.

15 Stannard and Frey-Kupper 2008: 379.

16 Michaelidou-Nicolaou 1993: 19–20.

A fourth and final peculiarity of these coins is the wear on their surfaces. Strangely, the earliest coins in this assemblage are not significantly more worn than the latest ones. This pattern suggests that all the coins were not removed from circulation at a single point in time, but rather that the older coins were out of circulation for a while.

In summation, there are several features of this assemblage that seem peculiar, but have parallels in other hoards known from excavation. There is therefore no reason to assume that these coins were not deposited together in antiquity. Due to the lack of documentation concerning their discovery, however, it is not possible to conclude definitively how these coins came to be associated with each other. They could represent a hoard in the true sense, although they would be a rather small hoard. It is also possible that they represent a foundation hoard or deposits from a wishing well. Alternatively, these coins could be no more than a dealer accumulation of individual coin finds. The fact that extant coins are only of Judaeian and Nabataean provenance is suggestive in its own right. It will be useful to return to this point later.

Regardless of whether or not these coins represent a hoard buried together in antiquity, they almost certainly come from Cyprus. With this in mind, the remainder of this paper will focus on contextualizing these foreign coins in terms of their discovery and use in Cyprus. It is not at all surprising that these coins ended up outside their home markets. Judaeian and Nabataean small bronze coins were widely distributed and are found in many areas across the Mediterranean. Many of these coins have been found in Beirut, Antioch, Northern Syria, and Dura Europos, while significantly fewer have been found in Athens, Spain, and even Switzerland.¹⁷

Cyprus represents another region where Judaeian and Nabataean coins are regularly found. Excavations at Curium and Paphos have uncovered a significant number of Judaeian coins ranging in date from the Hasmonaean period to the Jewish War.¹⁸ In fact, Judaeian coinage was one of the most predominant foreign provincial currencies in circulation on Cyprus in the first century AD.¹⁹ A recent study has identified more than 191 Judaeian coins found on Cyprus, from excavation reports, museums, and private collections.²⁰ Interestingly, all identified coins are bronze, and the majority of the provenanced coins come from the more settled

17 These sites represent only a sample of find spots for Judaeian and Nabataean coins. For Judaeian coins: Beirut (Butcher 2001–2002: 161–162), Antioch (Waage 1952: 87), Northern Syria (Butcher 2004: 177), Dura Europos (Bellinger 1949: 11, 89), Athens (Kroll 1993: 282), Spain (Meshorer 2001: 176). For Nabataean coins: Beirut (Butcher 2001–2002: 162), Antioch (Waage 1952: 88), Northern Syria (Butcher 2004: 177), Dura Europos (Bellinger 1949: 10), Switzerland (Cahn 1970–1971).

18 Cox 1959: 25–26; Nicolaou 1990: 80–84.

19 Nicolaou 1990: 119–120; Parks 2004: 156.

20 Destrooper-Georgiades 2006.

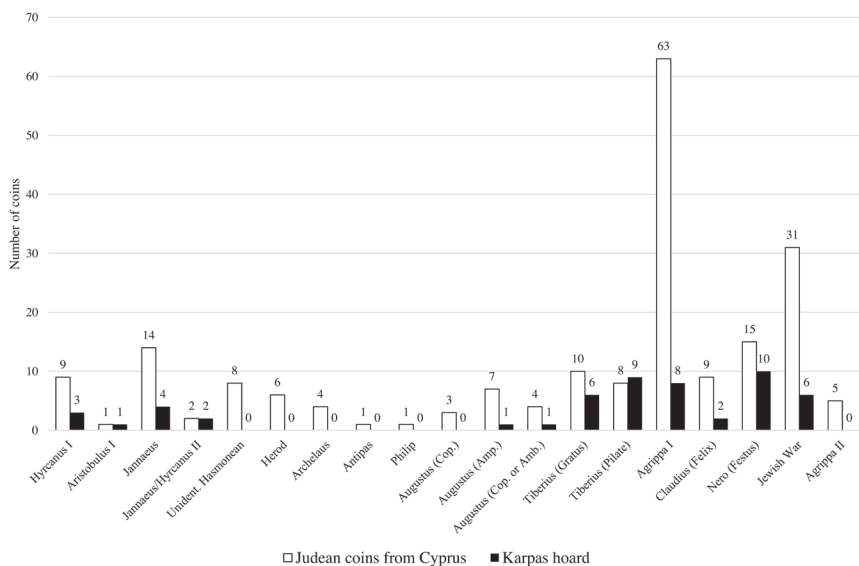


Figure 1. Comparison of Judaeen coins from Karpas hoard to Judaeen coins known from Cyprus (Destrooper-Georgiades 2006).

region on the southwestern coast of Cyprus, on the corner of the island opposite the Karpas Peninsula. A comparison of the Judaeen coin frequencies documented by Destrooper-Georgiades and those present in the Karpas hoard reveals a strong correlation (Fig. 1). The scarcity of Herodian coins found in Cyprus is mirrored in the Karpas hoard. Similarly, the relative abundance of coins of Agrippa I (Cat. Nos. 15–22), Porcius Festus under Nero (Cat. Nos. 42–51), and the second year of the Jewish War (Cat. Nos. 52–57) in the Karpas hoard is in keeping with these coins' occurrence throughout Cyprus. The Karpas hoard represents a major addition to the number of documented Judaeen coins from Cyprus—an increase of more than 27%. In the case of the coins of Pontius Pilate, the Karpas hoard has more than doubled the recorded coins of that type from Cyprus. While the Karpas hoard has not revealed any hitherto unknown information regarding the types of Judaeen coins that circulated in Cyprus, the correlation between the Karpas hoard and the Judaeen coins catalogued by Destrooper-Georgiades supports her findings regarding Judaeen coins in Cyprus. It also helps confirm Cyprus as the source of the Karpas hoard.

Nabataean coins are not as common on Cyprus as Judaeen coins, but excavations have nevertheless uncovered a few examples. Three coins of the Nabataean king Aretas IV came to light during excavations at Curium,²¹ while

21 Cox 1959: 26.

the excavation of a room in Paphos uncovered a single coin of Rabbel II.²² Two additional Nabataean coins, one of Aretas IV and the other of Rabbel II, are present in the bronze hoard from Paphos mentioned earlier.²³ It is possible that more undocumented Nabataean coins exist in private or museum collections.

These six Nabataean coins uncovered from excavation all have the common Nabataean design of jugate busts on the obverse and crossed cornucopiae with a Nabataean inscription on the reverse. As such, these coins are nearly exact parallels for the four Nabataean coins present in the Karpas hoard (Cat. Nos. 1–4), which bear the same design and are issues of the same kings. Thus, while the Karpas hoard has not revealed any new examples of Nabataean coins on Cyprus, it has nevertheless added significantly to the corpus of documented Nabataean coins found there.

The importation of Judaeian coins to Cyprus probably took place through traders and travelers from the Levant.²⁴ Cyprus is strategically located to take advantage of the trade between Europe and the Levant, and it also constituted a significant trading center in its own right. There is also a long literary attestation of Jews in Cyprus that stretches from the second century BC to the centuries after their expulsion from the island during the time of Trajan.²⁵ It is possible that these Jewish communities continued to circulate the currency of their homeland and served as a market for the importation of these coins. In Northern Syria the presence of Jewish communities has likewise been suggested as the reason for the significant quantity of Judaeian coins discovered in the region.²⁶

As for the Nabataean coins, their presence in the archaeological record of Cyprus and in the Karpas hoard may represent either direct or indirect contact between Nabataea and Cyprus. While there is no definitive proof of Nabataeans trading with or visiting Cyprus, numerous inscriptions around the Aegean in Nabataean script or mentioning Nabataeans reveal that they were active in the wider Eastern Mediterranean trading network.²⁷ Since Cyprus was strategically located between the Levant and the Aegean, it is probable that Nabataean traders and travelers did visit this island, but the extent to which Nabataean coins entered circulation in Cyprus through direct contact with Nabataeans is unclear. It seems more plausible that the majority of Nabataean coins found in Cyprus arrived indirectly via Judaea.

Excavations throughout the territory of Judaea have uncovered many Nabataean coins, revealing that they circulated widely in the region throughout the first century AD. While excavations at smaller sites often uncover sporadic

22 Nicolaou 1990: 86.

23 Michaelidou-Nicolaou 1993: 19.

24 Parks 2004: 166–167; Destrooper-Georgiades 2006: 48.

25 Destrooper-Georgiades 2006: 44–45.

26 Butcher 2004: 177.

27 Schmid 2004: 420.

Nabataean coins,²⁸ larger settlements such as Jerusalem have unsurprisingly produced more.²⁹ At Masada alone, 55 Nabataean coins have been found.³⁰ Coin finds from Jerusalem indicate that the circulation of Nabataean coins was particularly commonplace between the Jewish War and the Bar Kokhba Revolt, when a severe lack of local currency encouraged the use of non-local issues.³¹ During this period at least, Nabataean coins circulated alongside local Judaeen coins. With Nabataean coins regularly being circulated in Judaea, they easily could have been brought to Cyprus in the purses of Jewish traders or visitors. The acceptance of Nabataean coins in Judaea probably also meant their acceptance by the Jewish community of Cyprus.

While Judaeen and Nabataean coins may have arrived and initially circulated in the Jewish settlements on Cyprus, their circulation was not confined to these communities. Judaeen coins have been found all over Cyprus, including areas where the presence of Jews in antiquity is not attested in written sources.³² Furthermore, it is known from archaeological excavations that official, foreign provincial, and local coins all circulated simultaneously in Cyprus during the late Republic and early Empire, although the exact relationship between these coinages remains uncertain.³³

Cyprus, like other regions of the Roman Empire, imported silver coins produced in Rome and also struck its own locally-circulating bronze coins. After the Julio-Claudian period, the coinage of Cyprus underwent a change in character and began to adhere more closely to imperial weight standards.³⁴ As part of this reformation, locally produced Cypriot coins became larger in size and denomination.³⁵ The resulting lack of small change almost certainly had an effect on the local economy. In order to fill this gap in the coinage, the locals seemed to have turned to foreign provincial coins. This use of foreign coins for small change is best exhibited in the Paphos hoard (*CH* 9.595) of 22 bronze coins. In this hoard, all identifiable coins 26 mm or greater in diameter were either local issues or imperial provincial issues, while all identifiable coins 20 mm or smaller in diameter were foreign.³⁶

The absence of small change in Cyprus probably encouraged the adoption and circulation of Judaeen coins.³⁷ The small size and abundance of the Judaeen *prutot* made them the perfect choice to fill this gap. Nabataean coins, thanks to

28 Bijovsky 2000: 158; Fisher and Gur 2008: 101–102.

29 Ariel 1982: 323.

30 Meshorer 1989: 76, 120–121.

31 Ariel 1982: 291.

32 Destrooper-Georgiades 2006: 46–47.

33 Parks 2004: 166.

34 Parks 2004: 75.

35 Parks 2004: 112.

36 Michaelidou-Nicolaou 1993: 18–20.

37 Destrooper-Georgiades 2006: 48.

their small size and interchangeability with Judaeian coins, were also embraced, although to a much lesser degree due to their relative scarcity in Judaea. Such adoption of Judaeian and Nabataean coins is not limited to Cyprus, rather it is thought that these common small bronze coins filled a similar monetary gap in Northern Syria.³⁸

It is unlikely that Cypriots would have refused to use Judaeian and Nabataean coins. In antiquity, foreign bronze coins were most likely valued primarily on the basis of their diameter.³⁹ Due to their comparable size, the small Judaeian and Nabataean coins in the Karpas hoard probably had values equal to that of the Roman *quadrans*, several of which were struck during the Julio-Claudian period in Cyprus.⁴⁰ The last of these *quadrantes* was minted in AD 22/23, after which point the depletion of small change due to coin loss and other factors required the importation of small bronze coins such as the Judaeian and Nabataean coins found in the Karpas hoard.

The introduction, adoption, and circulation of Judaeian and Nabataean bronze coins in Cyprus can thus be summarized in the following way: Judaeian coins arrived in Cyprus via travelers and traders from Judaea. The Nabataean coins likewise arrived from Judaea, where they circulated widely. These coins probably entered into circulation on Cyprus through the numerous Jewish communities where cultural familiarity ensured that such coins were initially accepted and circulated locally. As a result of the currency reforms and the subsequent lack of small change, these coins were readily welcomed into wider circulation and were used throughout the island alongside official and local coins.

Returning to the Karpas hoard itself, it is striking that the hoard is entirely made up of Judaeian and Nabataean coins. Even if every one of the 10–15 coins that are said to have been removed were locally struck Cypriot issues, the Karpas hoard would still be predominately composed of Judaeian and Nabataean coins. This homogeneity is even more striking compared to the only other hoard from Cyprus that contains Judaeian and Nabataean coins. In the hoard from Paphos, Judaeian and Nabataean coins make up only four of the 22 bronze coins.⁴¹ What then does the homogeneity of the Karpas hoard say about its formation, and does the absence of any local issues rule out the possibility that these coins were deposited together in antiquity?

As mentioned above, there is not enough evidence to rule out the possibility that these coins represent a dealer's accumulation of individually found coins. The fact that all the coins are either Judaeian or Nabataean suggests, if they are a modern accumulation, that the dealer sorted them according to ethnicity. While

38 Butcher 2004: 177.

39 Stannard and Frey-Kupper 2008: 379.

40 Parks 2004: 51, 66, 183, 190–191.

41 Michaelidou-Nicolaou 1993: 20.

this possibility cannot be disproven, there are other explanations for the high percentage of Judaeen and Nabataean coins in the Karpas hoard.

These coins may have been deposited soon after coming from Judaea and thus did not have a chance to circulate on Cyprus. This explanation requires that the Hasmonaean coins present in the Karpas hoard were still circulating in Judaea by the end of the first century AD, when the last of the coins in the hoard were struck. As discussed above, Hasmonaean coins did continue to circulate in Judaea at this time; however, their prolonged circulation in Judaea would be more surprising than their circulation on Cyprus, since in their home market they would be more subject to any demonetization or revaluation.

This assemblage of coins may also represent the removal of certain coins from circulation, although the reason for doing so remains unclear. It is unlikely that the coins were selected to be removed from circulation based on their place of origin, as this action would require someone who was familiar with coins well enough to identify the ethnicity of coins hundreds of years old.

Alternatively, these coins may simply represent a collection of the smallest denomination coins in circulation in Cyprus at the end of the first/beginning of the second century AD. This theory, however, is not supported by the hoard from Paphos, which shows that small bronze coins from sources other than Judaea and Nabataean circulated on Cyprus.⁴² If the Karpas hoard was a collection of circulating coins, one would expect to see small bronze coins from a number of mints, not just those from Judaea and Nabataea. On the other hand, Judaeen coins are by far the most common foreign coins found in Cyprus.⁴³ Since the smallest coins on Cyprus were typically from foreign mints, any hoard with exclusively small bronze coins would contain very few locally struck coins, and these foreign coins would more likely than not be from Judaea. It is also possible that the ten to fifteen coins that were removed from this hoard contained coins that were not Judaeen and Nabataean.

The exact context of the Karpas hoard's deposition remains uncertain. Although the evidence supports the theory that it was deposited in antiquity, the absence of any proper documentation means that it will never be possible to confirm or refute this assemblage's identification as an ancient hoard. What is more certain, however, is that these coins do come from Cyprus and represent the typical Judaeen and Nabataean coins circulating on the island in the first to second centuries AD.

42 Michaelidou-Nicolaou 1993: 18–20.

43 Nicolaou 1990: 119–120, Parks 2004: 156.

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KEY TO PLATES

Plate 38

1. Bronze Nabataean coin of Aretas IV, ANS 1978.120.1.
2. Bronze Nabataean coin of Rabbel II, ANS 1978.120.2.
3. Bronze Nabataean coin of Rabbel II, ANS 1978.120.3.
4. Bronze Nabataean coin of Rabbel II, ANS 1978.120.4.
5. Bronze *prutah* of John Hyrcanus I, ANS 1978.120.5.
6. Bronze *prutah* of John Hyrcanus I, ANS 1978.120.6.
7. Bronze *prutah* of John Hyrcanus I, ANS 1978.120.8.
8. Bronze *prutah* of Judah Aristobulus I, ANS 1978.120.9.
9. Bronze *prutah* of Alexander Jannaeus, ANS 1978.120.7.
10. Bronze *prutah* of Alexander Jannaeus, ANS 1978.120.13.
11. Bronze *prutah* of Alexander Jannaeus, ANS 1978.120.14.
12. Bronze *prutah* of Alexander Jannaeus, ANS 1978.120.10.
13. Bronze *prutah* of Salome Alexandra as Regent for John Hyrcanus II or Aristobulus II, ANS 1978.120.11.
14. Bronze *prutah* of Salome Alexandra as Regent for John Hyrcanus II or Aristobulus II, ANS 1978.120.12.

Plate 39

15. Bronze *prutah* of Agrippa I, ANS 1978.120.15.
16. Bronze *prutah* of Agrippa I, ANS 1978.120.16.
17. Bronze *prutah* of Agrippa I, ANS 1978.120.17.
18. Bronze *prutah* of Agrippa I, ANS 1978.120.18.
19. Bronze *prutah* of Agrippa I, ANS 1978.120.19.
20. Bronze *prutah* of Agrippa I, ANS 1978.120.20.
21. Bronze *prutah* of Agrippa I, ANS 1978.120.21.
22. Bronze *prutah* of Agrippa I, ANS 1978.120.22.
23. Bronze *prutah* of uncertain prefect under Augustus (Cophonius or Marcus Ambibulus), ANS 1978.120.23.

24. Bronze *prutah* of prefect under Augustus (Marcus Ambibulus), ANS 1978.120.24.
25. Bronze *prutah* of prefect under Tiberius (Valerius Gratus), ANS 1978.120.25.
26. Bronze *prutah* of prefect under Tiberius (Valerius Gratus), ANS 1978.120.26.
27. Bronze *prutah* of prefect under Tiberius (Valerius Gratus), ANS 1978.120.27.

Plate 40

28. Bronze *prutah* of prefect under Tiberius (Valerius Gratus), ANS 1978.120.28.
29. Bronze *prutah* of prefect under Tiberius (Valerius Gratus), ANS 1978.120.29.
30. Bronze *prutah* of prefect under Tiberius (Valerius Gratus), ANS 1978.120.30.
31. Bronze *prutah* of prefect under Tiberius (Pontius Pilate), ANS 1978.120.31.
32. Bronze *prutah* of prefect under Tiberius (Pontius Pilate), ANS 1978.120.32.
33. Bronze *prutah* of prefect under Tiberius (Pontius Pilate), ANS 1978.120.33.
34. Bronze *prutah* of prefect under Tiberius (Pontius Pilate), ANS 1978.120.34.
35. Bronze *prutah* of prefect under Tiberius (Pontius Pilate), ANS 1978.120.35.
36. Bronze *prutah* of prefect under Tiberius (Pontius Pilate), ANS 1978.120.36.
37. Bronze *prutah* of prefect under Tiberius (Pontius Pilate), ANS 1978.120.37.
38. Bronze *prutah* of prefect under Tiberius (Pontius Pilate), ANS 1978.120.38.
39. Bronze *prutah* of prefect under Tiberius (Pontius Pilate), ANS 1978.120.39.
40. Bronze *prutah* of procurator under Claudius (Antonius Felix), ANS 1978.120.40.
41. Bronze *prutah* of procurator under Claudius (Antonius Felix), ANS 1978.120.41.
42. Bronze *prutah* of procurator under Nero (Porcius Festus), ANS 1978.120.42.

Plate 41

43. Bronze *prutah* of procurator under Nero (Porcius Festus), ANS 1978.120.43.
44. Bronze *prutah* of procurator under Nero (Porcius Festus), ANS 1978.120.44.
45. Bronze *prutah* of procurator under Nero (Porcius Festus), ANS 1978.120.45.
46. Bronze *prutah* of procurator under Nero (Porcius Festus), ANS 1978.120.46.
47. Bronze *prutah* of procurator under Nero (Porcius Festus), ANS 1978.120.47.
48. Bronze *prutah* of procurator under Nero (Porcius Festus), ANS 1978.120.48.
49. Bronze *prutah* of procurator under Nero (Porcius Festus), ANS 1978.120.49.
50. Bronze *prutah* of procurator under Nero (Porcius Festus), ANS 1978.120.50.
51. Bronze *prutah* of procurator under Nero (Porcius Festus), ANS 1978.120.51.
52. Bronze *prutah* of Jewish War (Year 2), ANS 1978.120.52.
53. Bronze *prutah* of Jewish War (Year 2), ANS 1978.120.53.
54. Bronze *prutah* of Jewish War (Year 2), ANS 1978.120.54.
55. Bronze *prutah* of Jewish War (Year 2), ANS 1978.120.55.
56. Bronze *prutah* of Jewish War (Year 2), ANS 1978.120.56.
57. Bronze *prutah* of Jewish War (Year 2), ANS 1978.120.57.

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Plate 38



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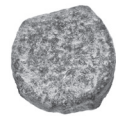
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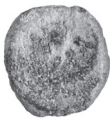
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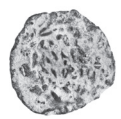
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Possible Hoard of Judaeian and Nabataean Coins from Cyprus



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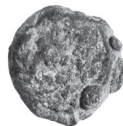
23



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Possible Hoard of Judaean and Nabataean Coins from Cyprus

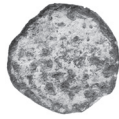
Plate 40



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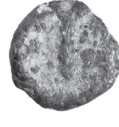
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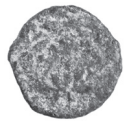
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Possible Hoard of Judaean and Nabataean Coins from Cyprus



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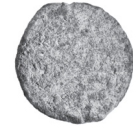
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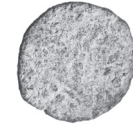
49



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Possible Hoard of Judaeian and Nabataean Coins from Cyprus