COIN HOARDS 2016

ANCIENT

1. A 4th century AD hoard from Ayn al-Sebil, Dakhleh Oasis, Egypt

by

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DURING excavations in a house in the Roman period settlement known today as Ayn al-Sebil, archaeologists from the Supreme Council of Antiquities, Dakhleh-Farafra Inspectorate, found a hoard of coins sealed in a cupboard set within a mud-brick wall. The corroded lump weighed five kilograms. Officials from the inspectorate managed to separate some 1,200 coins from the hoard and cleaned around 200. I was asked to identify those that had been cleaned but as this request came in the final few days of my field-season in Egypt, I had limited time and was able to view and record only 39 coins. I was given access to a select few which were in excellent condition; they all had a silver wash. I was not shown the worn specimens, nor the corroded coins that had been separated nor those that remained within the lump. I was shown several photographs of other specimens from the hoard all of which represent the same types as those I was able to view. The coins fall within a narrow time frame, c.313–328, and represent a variety of mints from both the East and the West. Although this represents a fraction of the hoard, I take this opportunity to make available the coins that I have identified thus far, arranged by mint.

**Alexandria**

1. *Obv*: Bust l., laur., dr., cuir.; FL IVL CRISPVS NOB CAES. *Rev*: Camp gate, two turrets with star; PROVIDEN-TIAE CAESS; in exergue, SMALB. AE; 19mm; 2.6g; 12h. *RIC VII*, 35.

2. *Obv*: Bust l., laur., dr., cuir.; CONSTANTINVS IVN NOB C. *Rev*: Camp gate, two turrets with star; PROVIDEN-TIAE CAESS; in exergue, SMALE. AE; 19mm; 3.8g; 6h. *RIC VII*, 36.

3. As last. AE; 18mm; 3.2g; 6h. *RIC VII*, 36.

4. *Obv*: Bust r., diad.; CONSTAT-TINVS AVG. *Rev*: Camp gate, two turrets with star; PROVIDEN-TIAE AVG; in exergue, SMALE. AE; 19mm; 3.3g; 12h. *RIC VII*, 41.

5. *Obv*: Bust r., diad.; CONSTAT-TINVS AVG. *Rev*: Campgate, two turrets with star; PROVIDEN-TIAE AVGG; in exergue, SMALA. AE; 19mm; 3.2g; 6h. *RIC VII*, 41.

6. As last, but in rev. exergue, SMALE. AE; 19mm; 3.2g; 6h. *RIC VII*, 41.

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I am indebted to Kamel Bayumi of the Supreme Council of Antiquities Dakhleh-Farafra Inspectorate (Islamic Department) for the opportunity to study the coins and to Monash University which financed the research.
Antioch

7. *Obv:* Bust r., diad.; **CONSTAN-TINVΣ AVG. Rev:** Camp gate, two turrets with star; PROVIDEN-TIAE AVG; in exergue, SMANTE. AE; 19mm; 2.2g; 6h. *RIC VII,* 63.

8. As last, but in rev. exergue, SMANTA. AE; 18mm; 3.1g; 6h. *RIC VII,* 63.

9. *Obv:* Bust l., laur., dr., cuir.; **CONSTANTINVΣ IVN NOB C. Rev:** Camp gate, two turrets with star; PROVIDEN-TIAE CAES; in exergue, SMAN. AE; 17mm; 3.2g; 6h. *RIC VII,* 65.

10. *Obv:* Bust l., laur., dr., cuir.; **CONSTANTINVΣ IVN NOB C. Rev:** Camp gate, two turrets with star; PROVIDEN-TIAE CAESS; in exergue, SMANTI, AE; 19mm; 3.1g; 12h. *RIC VII,* 73.

11. As last. AE; 19mm; 3.2g; 6h. *RIC VII,* 73.

12. As last. AE; 18mm; 2.8g; 12h. *RIC VII,* 65.

13. *Obv:* Bust l., diad., dr., cuir.; **FL IVL CRISPVS NOB CAES. Rev:** Camp gate, two turrets with star; PROVIDEN-TIAE CAESS; in exergue, SMKA. AE; 19mm; 3.5g; 6 hr. *RIC VII,* 64.

Cyzicus

14. *Obv:* Bust r., laur.; **CONSTAN–TINVΣ AVG. Rev:** Camp gate, two turrets with star; PROVIDEN-TIAE AVG; in exergue, SMKA. AE; 19mm; 3.9g; 3h. *RIC VII,* 24.

15. As last. AE; 19mm; 3.1g; 6h. *RIC VII,* 24.

16. *Obv:* Bust l., laur., dr, cuir.; **FL IVL CRISPVS NOB CAES. Rev:** Camp gate, two turrets with star PROVIDEN-TIAE CAESS; in exergue, SMKA. AE; 19mm; 2.7g; 12h. *RIC VII,* 25.

Nicomedia

17. *Obv:* Bust r., diad.; **CONSTAN–TINVΣ AVG. Rev:** Camp gate, two turrets with star; PROVIDEN-TIAE AVGG; in exergue, SMNA. AE; 19mm; 3.4g; 6h. *RIC VII,* 90.

18. As last, but in rev. exergue, SMNB. AE; 19mm; 3.0g; 6h. *RIC VII,* 90.

19. As last, but in rev., exergue, MNB. AE; 18mm; 2.7g; 12h. *RIC VII,* 90.

20. *Obv:* Bust r., laur.; **CONSTAN–TINVΣ AVG. Rev:** Camp gate, two turrets with star; PROVIDEN-TIAE AVGG; in exergue, SMNA. AE; 19mm; 2.8g; 6h. *RIC VII,* 90.

21. *Obv:* Bust l., laur., dr, cuir.; **CONSTANTINVΣ IVN NOB C. Rev:** Camp gate, two turrets with star PROVIDEN-TIAE CAESS; in exergue, SMH. AE; 18mm; 2.5g; 6h. *RIC VII,* 93.

Heraclea

22. *Obv:* Bust r., laur.; **CONSTAN–TINVΣ AVG

Rev:** Laurel wreath enclosing VOT/XX/star; wreath encircled by D N CONSTANTINI MAX AVG; in exergue, SMHB. AE; 18mm; 2.9g; 12h. *RIC VII,* 60.

23. *Obv:* Bust l., laur., dr., cuir.; **CONSTANTINVΣ IVN NOB C. Rev:** Camp gate, two turrets with star PROVIDEN-TIAE CAESS; in exergue, SMHI. AE; 19mm; 2.8g; 12h. *RIC VII,* 107.

24. As last. AE; 19mm; 3.1g; 12h. *RIC VII,* 107.
**Thessalonica**

25. *Obv:* Bust r. laur.; CONSTAN-TINVS AVG. *Rev:* Laurel wreath enclosing VOT/XX; wreath encircled by D N CONSTANTINI MAX AVG; in ex., TSHVI. AE; 18mm; 3.5g; 12h. *RIC VII, 101.*

**Siscia**

26. *Obv:* Bust l., laur., dr, cui r.; CONSTANTINVS IVN NOB C. *Rev:* Camp gate, two turrets with star; PROVIDEN-TIAE CAESS; in exergue, ASIS. AE; 19mm; 3.3g; 6h. *RIC VII, 194.*

**Rome**

27. *Obv:* Bust r., laur., dr., cui r.; IMP CONSTANTINVS P F AVG. *Rev:* Sol rad., stg l., raising r. hand, globe in l., chlamys across r. shoulder; SOLI INV-I-CTO COMITI; in exergue, RP. AE; 19mm; 2.4g; 6h. *RIC VII, 1.*

28. *Obv:* Bust r., laur., dr., cui r.; IMP CON[STANTINVS P F AVG]. *Rev:* Sol rad., stg l., raising r. hand, globe in l., chlamys across r. shoulder; SOLI INV-I-CTO COMITI; in exergue, R[P]; this coin was damaged during cleaning with an abrasive tool. AE; 19mm; 2.6g; 6h. *RIC VII, 1.*

29. *Obv:* Bust r., laur.; CONSTANTINVS IVN NOB C. *Rev:* Laurel wreath enclosing VOT/XX; wreath encircled by D N CONSTANTINI MAX AVG; in exergue, RP. AE; 19mm; 3.9g; 6h. *RIC VII, 226.*

30. *Obv:* Bust r., laur., dr., cui r.; CONSTANTINVS IVN NOB C. *Rev:* Laurel wreath enclosing VOT/V; wreath encircled by CAESARVM NOSTRORVM; in exergue, RS. AE; 18mm; 3.5g.; 12h. *RIC VII, 231.*

31. *Obv:* Bust r., laur.; CONSTANTINVS IVN NOB C. *Rev:* Laurel wreath enclosing VOT/V; wreath encircled by CAESARVM NOSTRORVM; in exergue, RS. AE; 19mm; 3.2g; 12h; *RIC VII, 236.*

32. As last. AE; 19mm; 3.2g; 12h. *RIC VII 236.*

33. *Obv:* Bust r., laur.; CONSTANTINVS IVN NOB C. *Rev:* Camp gate, two turrets with star; PROVIDEN-TIAE AVGG; in exergue, R- wreath- S. AE; 18mm; 2.8g; 12h. *RIC VII, 264.*

34. As last, but in rev. exergue, R-wreath-P. AE; 19mm; 2.8g; 12h. *RIC VII, 264.*

35. As last, but in exergue, RQ. AE; 19mm; 2.5g; 6h. *RIC VII, 264.*

36. *Obv:* Bust r., laur., dr, cui r.; CONSTANTINVS IVN NOB C. *Rev:* Camp gate, two turrets with star PROVIDEN-TIAE CAESS; in exergue, R-wreath-T. AE; 19mm; 2.5g; 12h. *RIC VII, 289.*

**Arles**

37. *Obv:* Bust r., laur.; CONSTANTINVS AVG. *Rev:* Laurel wreath enclosing VOT/XX; wreath encircled by D N CONSTANTI MAX AVG; in exergue, PA. AE; 18mm; 3.2g; 6h. *RIC VII, 223.*

38. As last. AE; 18mm; 3.2g; 6h ; *RIC VII, 223.*

39. *Obv:* Bust r., laur.; CONSTANTINVS AVG. *Rev:* Camp gate, two turrets with star; PROVIDEN-TIAE AVGG; in exergue, P-crescent-RL. AE; 19mm; 2.9g; 12h. *RIC VII, 286.*
## Discussion

Although it is impossible to determine whether the coins are representative of the hoard as a whole, this random sample is important for the wide range of mints included: seven Eastern and two Western. The distribution of specimens per mint dating before 321 and in the 321-327 period is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mint</th>
<th>Pre-321</th>
<th>321-327</th>
<th>Mint</th>
<th>Pre-321</th>
<th>321-327</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eastern</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Western</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexandria</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Antioch</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyzicus</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Nicomedia</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heraclea</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Thessalonica</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siscia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rome</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Arles</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to determine whether or not the range of mints represented is paralleled within the oasis, the sample can be compared with the excavation coins retrieved from the village of Kellis, about one kilometre north of its hamlet, Ayn al-Sebil, and the only site in Dakhleh where quantities of coins of the period have been discovered. For comparative purposes, only those coins that fall within the date range are considered:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mint</th>
<th>Pre-321</th>
<th>321-327</th>
<th>Mint</th>
<th>Pre-321</th>
<th>321-327</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eastern</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Western</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexandria</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Antioch</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicomedia</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Heraclea</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thessalonica</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Siscia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rome/Ostia</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Arles</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ticinum</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Lyons</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The range of mints represented for this period at the two sites is comparable. Although there are no coins from Cyzicus among these earlier issues from Kellis, the mint is well represented in other coins found at the site. In the Ayn al-Sebil sample, the Western mints of Rome and Arles account for a third of the coins, eight of which were struck before 321. The only Eastern mints represented in the pre-321 period are Thessalonica and Siscia (one coin each). Of the 28 coins from Kellis, 16 (57%), derive from Western mints; in the pre-321 period, Western mints account for 15 of the 17 coins, the other two coming from Alexandria and Siscia.

In their discussion of a parcel of 28 bronze coins from Egyptian Thebes in the National Museum of Scotland, all but one of the period 313–18, Holmes and O’Connell noted that 21 coins were struck by the mint of Rome and a further four at other Western mints: Lyons (dated 323–4), Trier, and two from Arles; the three remaining specimens were from Siscia, Heraclea and Antioch. They expressed some surprise at the composition, but the distribution of mints from the coins from Dakhleh Oasis is similar.

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