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## Upon the Appearance of the First Issue of *Israel Numismatic Research*

The Israel Numismatic Society (INS) is happy to announce the publication of its new peer-reviewed journal, *Israel Numismatic Research*.

Research of the ancient, medieval and modern coinage of this region has become increasingly relevant to multi-disciplinary studies in fields such as archaeology, history and iconography.

In inaugurating *Israel Numismatic Research* the INS national board wishes to stress the importance of having a high level numismatic journal which appears regularly, at the end of each calendar year. The ability to publish a true annual reflects the advances in the field of numismatics in Israel over the past decade. The title of the journal signals the Society's wish to encourage comprehensive and innovative research in the field.

The focus of *Israel Numismatic Research* will be on coinages circulating in the southern Levant, from antiquity through to the modern era. Articles on medals, tokens, metrology, sealings and minor arts related to numismatics will also be considered for inclusion, as will book reviews.

The Israel Numismatic Society is indebted to the Founders of *Israel Numismatic Research* without whose generosity the publication of the journal would not have been possible: David Hendin, Gil and Lisa Chaya, Stephen N. Gerson, Aba Neeman, Jonathan Rosen, Harlan J. Berk, Jay Galst, Gabriel Brener, Herbert L. Kreindler, Paul-Francis Jacquier and Ziv Zur.

It is our intention that *Israel Numismatic Research* will offer an academic forum for both Israeli and foreign numismatists. Contributions of original research should be sent to: *Israel Numismatic Research*, c/o Haim Gitler, The Israel Museum, P.O. Box 71117, Jerusalem 91710 ISRAEL, or to the Editor (dtariel@ins.org.il).

*Guidelines for Contributors* appear on page 177, followed by *Abbreviations* used in this volume.

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# From the Horse's Mouth: Re-Dating the Anonymous *Tvrris Davit* Issue

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## *Abstract*

The Crusader copper reading TVRRIS DAVIT was once considered an emergency issue struck during Saladin's siege of Jerusalem in 1187, and later was attributed to the short lordship of Raymond III of Tripoli over Beirut in 1184–1186. The recent excavation of a specimen at the Crusader stronghold of Mezad Ateret — destroyed in 1179 — points to a new mint location and date.

The anonymous TVRRIS DAVIT copper has had a long and checkered history of attributions. More than 125 years ago, Schlumberger tied this enigmatic coin to an emergency issue minted during Saladin's siege of Jerusalem in October 1187 noting the existence of a singular TVRRIS DAVIT coin overstruck on a *denier* of Beirut (Fig. 1; Schlumberger 1878:88–89). Exactly one hundred years later, in



Fig. 1.

1978, Sabine published a detailed article dedicated solely to this type (Sabine 1978:85–92). In it, he further dwelled on Schlumberger's "Beirut-overstrike," and noted the existence of two thirteenth-century Beirut deniers overstruck on the TVRRIS DAVIT copper. This and 11 other TVRRIS DAVIT coppers from the Beirut market convinced Sabine that these coins were minted in Beirut in the late twelfth century. In support of his claim Sabine presented stylistic, iconographic, and historical arguments linking the issue to the short lordship of Raymond III of Tripoli over Beirut in 1184–1186: (1) Stylistically, the coins were struck from many well prepared dies suggesting a long period of time rather than the four week emergency siege issue as Schlumberger had claimed. This idea was first put forward by Seltman (1966:63) and subsequently adopted by Sabine (1978:86); (2) the module of the coin resembled the star denier struck at the Tripoli mint; and (3) the iconography of the coins joined the Tower of David, the royal symbol of the Kingdom of Jerusalem and the eight-pointed star associated with the counts of

Toulouse and Tripoli. Following the sickness and death of the leper-king Baldwin IV, Raymond III of Tripoli was appointed to the regency of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. As a prize for his services he was given custody of the city of Beirut and its revenues (Sabine 1978:87; see Riley Smith 1973:107–108, especially n. 27).

#### TVRRIS DAVIT SPECIMENS FROM EXCAVATIONS

Sabine's theory was adopted by Edbury and Metcalf and others and has become the consensus in Crusader-period numismatics (Edbury 1980:61; Metcalf 1995:87–88). Now however, a recent find of a TVRRIS DAVIT specimen at excavations in Mezad Ateret, in northern Israel, directly challenges Sabine's view. The coin (IAA 107810) was found during the most recent excavation at this small Crusader castle, 20 km north of the Sea of Galilee, identified as the stronghold of Vadum Iacob, mentioned by the Frankish historian William of Tyre in his chronicle and in two charters he issued as head of the royal chancellery of Baldwin IV at the castle.<sup>1</sup> This was confirmed by the appearance during the excavations of four lead coins bearing the Latin inscription VADI IACOB (Kool 2001:329–333). Historical sources detail the castle's extremely short existence, only 11 months, from October 1178, when Baldwin IV gathered his entire army at Jacob's Ford and initiated the construction of the castle, until August 30, 1179 when the forces of Saladin successfully under-mined its unfinished walls, stormed the castle, and captured or killed the Templar garrison.<sup>2</sup>

The coin and a Chrismon and cross billon denier minted by the bishops of Le Puy were the only specimens of their type found at the site. No other billon or copper deniers except for 24 of the royal *Amalricus* types were found.<sup>3</sup> The copper denier was found lying directly on the jaw bone of an articulated horse skeleton. The horse presumably belonged to a Frankish warrior. Evidence for the battle may be seen in the dozens of arrow heads found laying nearby.

The coin carries an eight-pointed star on one side, usually associated with the deniers from the county of Tripoli. On that side the preserved portion of the legend

1 William recorded that this was the name by which the site was known by contemporaries, [...] *in eo loco qui vulgo Vadum Iacob appellatur* alluding to the Christian tradition which identified the spot with Jacob's crossing of the Jordan to meet Esau (Gen. 32:10; *Willelmus Tyrensis*:997). The charters were dated November 17, 1178 and April 1, 1179; see Roehricht 1893, 1:149, n. 562; p. 154, n. 577.

2 The Frankish castle of Vadum Jacob was jointly erected by King Baldwin IV and the Knights Templar in October 1178 on a strategic site that overlooks virtually the only crossing of the Jordan between the kingdom's territory and the hinterland of Damascus, then ruled by Saladin. For a detailed survey of the historical sources see Ellenblum 2003:73–87.

3 For a comprehensive review of the coins found at the site see Kool 2002:73–88 and Kool 2001:329.

reads VIT. At first we associated legend with the common CIVITAS inscription appearing on the deniers minted by the counts of Tripoli. Further cleaning of the coin enabled a full reading: DAVIT. The context of the coin in Vadum Iacob makes it impossible to date the coin to 1184–1186.

Additional new data from excavations and stray-finds in recent years indicates that the TVRRIS DAVIT type did not solely circulate on the margins of the kingdom in the north as was previously thought (Sabine 1978:89, n. 17). These coppers are found in the kingdom's heartland towns and cities of Jerusalem, Jaffa and Caesarea.<sup>4</sup> This suggests that in addition to a correction of the TVRRIS DAVIT's date, there is reason to re-attribute its mint location to a locale further south from Beirut.

### DISCUSSION

How does one explain the presence of this anonymous coin type circulating in the Frankish kingdom in the twelfth century not later than 1179? If it were a coin of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, could it have been an anonymous royal issue minted either before or during the reigns of Baldwin III or Amaury I? This seems highly unlikely if we consider that the kings of Jerusalem struck their own denier issues on which their names clearly appear. And why would they issue a royal coin with a Tripolitan heraldic symbol? Could it have been a denier issued by the princely rulers of Tripoli? Here, too, the same logical argument applies: the counts of Tripoli had their own extensive coin issues both billon and copper which proclaimed their names and titles. Why should they mint an anonymous type which carried a royal symbol of the kings of Jerusalem?

Part of the answer lie in closely re-reading the political events of the time as witnessed by contemporary sources, in particular the chronicle of William of Tyre and the Old French continuations of William's chronicle (Morgan 1984:17–25). William related that upon the death of Amaury I on July 11, 1174, his son Baldwin IV was crowned king (*Willelmus Tyrensis*:21.2). However the boy-king was only thirteen years old and already stricken by leprosy. Miles de Plancy, a favorite of the late king, presumably usurped the regency, over the objections of a group of powerful nobles lead by Count Raymond III of Tripoli (Riley Smith 1973:101–102). With the assassination of Miles in Acre, the High Court of the kingdom granted Raymond III the regency which he held till 1177. It now appears that it was during Raymond's *first* regency, between 1174–1177 (and not the

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4 Specimens were recorded from the Citadel excavations in Jerusalem (1935), and excavations in Jaffa (1993–95). A stray-find is recorded from Caesarea. More recently five stray-finds of TVRRIS DAVIT coppers were reported from the region between Acre, Nazareth and Tiberias. My thanks to A. Berman for this information.

second one, 1184–1186, as Sabine had argued), that the TVRRIS DAVIT coins were minted.

No doubt Raymond III seems a good candidate for having issued these ‘regency’ coins. As ruler of Tripoli he minted his own coins, and as lord of Tiberias and the king’s most powerful vassal he no doubt had the political clout to do so in Jerusalem (Baldwin 1936; see also Mayer 1988:127). Sabine’s iconographic argument that the type combines a blend of royal and baronial iconography suits Raymond III’s first regency as much as his second. There may have been more practical reasons for the supply of these small coins. Under his regency, the kingdom waged a relative large number of military campaigns to counter the growing military power of Saladin (Richard 1999:192–193). It is possible that the frequent mobilization of the kingdom’s forces created a demand for currency that the supply of royal issues already in circulation could not satisfy.

Interestingly, no coins of another controversial anonymous issue, the *Moneta Regis* deniers were found at the site. But finds of these coins were made in the near vicinity (20 km. perimeter) of the castle.<sup>5</sup> Could these anonymous “royal” coins have also been related to Raymond’s regency and not minted in Acre before Baldwin III’s reform of 1140, as Metcalf proposed (1995:76–77)?

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5 Three hoards containing *Moneta Regis* deniers were found in the vicinity of Vadum Jacob. Seven deniers were discovered in a lump near the ruins of a fortified building at Qal’at-esh-Shûna (Naḥal ‘Amud; Rahmani 1980:72–76). Another five deniers and an obole were found in a lump at Capernaum (Spijkerman 1975:47–48). Four additional deniers in a corroded lump were excavated at the Frankish citadel of Beth-She’an (Berman 1996:47).

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