The background of the cover is a parchment map with various geographical labels and lines. At the top and bottom, there are several ancient coins, likely from the Roman or Byzantine periods, featuring various symbols and inscriptions. The title is written in a large, white, serif font with a slight shadow effect.

# A NUMISMATIC JOURNEY THROUGH THE BIBLE

Rev. Richard Plant  
Foreword by David Hendin  
ROTOGRAPHIC

# A Numismatic Journey Through the Bible

By Rev. Richard Plant.

Dedicated to my wife Ann, with grateful thanks for her love and patience.

1<sup>st</sup> Edition © MMVII

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## **FOREWORD**

### **BY DAVID HENDIN**

I have been a reader of Richard Plant's books about various types of ancient coins for quite some years. It is, therefore, with great pleasure that I offer a brief introduction for this project.

Plant's approach to Biblical coins is unique, eclectic, inclusive, and VERY collector-oriented. His discussions of various topics, from history to how to read different kinds of inscriptions, are wide-ranging, and will educate the beginner and enhance the knowledge of those who are more advanced.

In a series of logical numismatic "riffs" from the basic series of Judean coins, Plant explores not only the coins between the Old Testament and the Gospels, but coins from both earlier and later periods. Instead of a microscope, he uses a wide-angle lens and casts his net to include all kinds of ancient, medieval, and even occasionally modern coins, all of which are related to Biblical coins in one way or another.

Thus if you want to know about the coins of modern Israel, which are valued according to the ancient denomination "shekel", you can look here. You can also read about the medieval coins of Denmark with the Hebrew "Jehovah". Plant also offers many interesting and legitimate reference types that are often overlooked. For example, in his discussion of Noah's Ark, he not only reviews the rare coin of Apameia in Phrygia with the Noah motif, but also a related gold medal of Pope Innocent II (1691-1700).

Plant talks about the Tower of Babel, and shows some interesting parallels with both coins of Caesarea in Cappadocia and Corinth in Greece.

Plant covers the coins of the Ptolemys, Seleucids, Crusaders, and much, much more. A Numismatic Journey Through the Bible is like a meandering little brook. It wanders here and twists there. It will satisfy the thirst for knowledge about this field among many collectors for years to come.

David Hendin, December 2006

## **EXCHANGE RATE**

An exchange rate of GB£1.00 = US\$2.00 was used for the US\$ pricing in this book.

## PREFACE

What is a Biblical coin? For one thing, through most of the Old Testament period coins simply did not exist. We numismatists are unfortunately unable to go further back than c600 BC for the first real coins: and most of the Old Testament had finished happening by then! I've just read a book on the history of Israel which places the accession of King David at around 1016 BC, and that of Solomon c 976 BC. True, my book is doubtless completely obsolete as a theology textbook; but its dating cannot be as wrong as all that. So are there no coins until the latest Old Testament books, such as Ezra and Nehemiah?

Well, what about Genesis chapter 23, verse 15, where Ephron answered Abraham, "the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver"; this looks like money; but in the next verse Abraham, who has decided to buy the land, "weighed to Ephron the silver", in other words these are pre-coinage days when a "shekel" was a weight rather than a "coin" in the usual sense of the word.

In New Testament times, of course, coins did circulate; but only about half-a-dozen are actually mentioned in the Gospels. We have the "Widow's mite", the "Tribute penny", and the farthings with which to buy sparrows (Matthew chapter 10, verse 29. and Luke chapter 12, verse 6). Then there are Judas Iscariot's infamous "thirty pieces of silver" - very nice; but hardly enough material to build into a coin collection, let alone to write a book about.

However, when we take the view that if a city is mentioned anywhere in the Bible, then it becomes a "Biblical city"; and if we also accept the line of thought, "once a Biblical city, always a Biblical city", then the story is very different, and we now have enough material to satisfy the hungriest numismatic appetite! St. Paul's missionary journeys become rather like a numismatic railway line with a mass of coin-minting stops along the way - "all stations to Antioch, stopping at Perga, Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe".

Worse still, I am afraid I have been tempted to include all sorts of coins which have no connection at all with anywhere any Biblical character ever visited at all. My excuse? How could I miss out the Annunciation scene on the French Salut d'or, or the stoning of Stephen on the Halberstadt pfennig? Many of the connections are even more tenuous than these; but I had fun writing the book, and made many interesting discoveries. I hope you do when you come to read it. Had you realised that a Mediaeval Islamic Persian coin names Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, as well as Mohammed and his successors?

My aim has been partly to make the Ancient World of Biblical times more real to those who read this book: often showing a number of coins from a particular city to give the "feel" of a particular place. My hope is that as the Ancient World becomes more alive for you, then the stories of the Bible will become more meaningful too, and Jesus and Peter and St. Paul and the others will, to a certain extent, come alive. Perhaps this book does happen to be a catalogue as well - I hope it is, but in a way, that is incidental!

## Chapter One

# THE LANGUAGE BARRIER

Biblical coins are not normally inscribed in English. This book depicts coins written in a whole range of alphabets and languages: but the only ones we really ought to be able to read with regards to names and places are those in Latin, Greek and Hebrew.

HEBREW (with the exception of modern Hebrew letters used as numerals for dating purposes) I have placed in the section “between the Old Testament and the Gospels”; because we do not really need any more than that until we reach the central section of the book. However, it does help to have a minimum grasp of LATIN and GREEK right from the first chapter. When I say that we need a language, we can, of course, collect Biblical or other ancient coins without knowing anything other than English; but the person limiting himself in this way will obviously make himself (or herself) entirely reliant on books and catalogues, and, I suppose, on what the dealer tells him.

The easiest for us is LATIN: because the Romans used the same alphabet that we do; but note that in Latin I and J are the same letter, as are U and V. So “Julius Caesar” becomes IVLIVS Caesar. Note that “C” is pronounced as the C in “cake” - so “Caesar” is not “seesar” but “Kaisar”. AVG is an abbreviated form of “Augustus” or, if it is meant to be in the genitive case, of “Augusti” (“of Augustus”). More than one Augustus or Emperor, is expressed by doubling the last “G” of the abbreviated form - to AVGG: or trebling it for three AVGGG. Equally, CAES is one “Caesar”, whilst CAESS refers to two.

During the earliest days of the Roman Empire the one ruler would include both “Caesar” and “Augustus” in his titles; but soon “Augustus” became the title of the top man; and “Caesar” that used for the “second-in-command” or “prince”.

COS is an abbreviation for “consul”. TR POT or TRP means “Tribunician power”, and where Emperors had this power renewed annually TRP X or TRP XXII, or whatever, can give an accurate date to a coin.

Do not be frightened of speaking Latin words out loud in an English sort of way. There are no ancient Romans to tell you off, and nobody nowadays is certain how it ought to be pronounced anyway. Just one possible difficult one - “Gallienus” where the I and E are spoken as two vowels rather than one: so GALLI-ENUS.

Now we come to GREEK. Do not be put off by the Greek alphabet, because it is not difficult. About half of the 24 letters are the same shape as ours, and we “know” some of the others anyway - Π Pi = P: Δ Delta = D and Ω Omega = O. The only really “dangerous” ones are the four which look like English letters, but aren't! C is one of the shapes for S: P is Greek R: H is a long E vowel, and w is an alternative shape for Omega (long O).

Note that Greek Th, Ph, chapter and Ps each need two English letters to transliterate them. There are two Es and two Os in Greek (short E and long E: short O and long O). Our letter H is not normally written in at all in Greek (though it can be!).

|         | English | Greek  |         | English | Greek  |
|---------|---------|--------|---------|---------|--------|
| ALPHA   | A       | Α      | Nu      | N       | Ν      |
| BETA    | B       | Β      | Xi      | X       | Ξ      |
| GAMMA   | G       | Γ      | Omicron | O       | Ο      |
| DELTA   | D       | Δ      | Pi      | P       | Π      |
| EPSILON | E       | Ε      | Rho     | R       | Ρ      |
| ZETA    | Z       | Ζ      | SIGMA   | S       | Σ or Σ |
| ETA     | E       | Η      | TAU     | T       | Τ      |
| THETA   | Th      | Θ or Θ | UPSILON | U       | Υ      |
| IOTA    | I       | Ι      | PHI     | Ph      | Φ      |
| KAPPA   | K       | Κ      | CHI     | Ch      | Χ      |
| LAMBDA  | L       | Λ      | PSI     | Ps      | Ψ      |
| MU      | M       | Μ      | OMEGA   | O       | Ω or Ω |

These are the Greek CAPITAL letters - we do not need the “small” letters for coins!

Just knowing these letters can help so much - for instance, we can probably now read our Roman provincial bronze as a coin of, for instance ΓΟΡΔΙΑΝΟΣ, Gordian III, 238 - 244 AD.

Though Romans normally used the nominative case to name their emperors on the coinage, the Greeks preferred the genitive (of, belonging to). Thus a coin of Philip II King of Macedon 359 - 336 BC, reads ΦΙΛΙΠΠΟΥ (PHILIPPOU) “of Philip”, and a coin of his son Alexander the Great ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ of “Alexander”.

Coins of cities usually use the genitive plural of the people of that place - thus, not “of Athens”, but “of the Athenians”. We note that the genitive plural has the ending WN or ΩΝ (the letter before this ending varies considerably).

Here are four examples: ΑΣΠΕΝΔΙΩΝ - Aspendus (lit. “of the Aspendians”): ΦΙΛΑΔΕΛΦΕΩΝ - Philadelphia : ΣΥΡΑΚΟΣΙΩΝ - Syracuse: ΠΕΡΓΑΙΩΝ - Perga

Now have a go at these - note that ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ (Basileos, a genitive) means “of the King”. The answers are at the bottom of page 7.



### LATIN names on GREEK coins.

The rule is that Latin names transliterate into Greek, but titles translate. Transliteration is straightforward, except that Latin “V” usually becomes Greek “OU”. Latin “C” becomes Greek “K”, and Latin “I” may well emerge as Greek “EI”.

With regard to the titles, CAESAR remains ΚΑΙΣΑΡ; but IMPERATOR becomes ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑΤΩΡ. AUGUSTUS is ΚΕΒΑΚΤΟΚ and PIUS is ΕΥΣΕΒΗΣ

**Roman Emperors**

As we collect Biblical coins we will frequently be faced with the name of a Roman Emperor we should like to identify; but it may be written in Greek! Do not give up; it is usually not too difficult to read it, provided that we can see the lettering. Here are the names we are most likely to encounter.

| <b>Latin</b>                                 | <b>Greek</b>              | <b>Date</b>                              | <b>Important relation</b>                                                             |
|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Augustus                                     | ΚΑΙΣΑΡ ΣΕΒΑΣΤΟΣ           | 31 BC – 14 AD                            | Wife Livia, later called Julia                                                        |
| Tiberius                                     | ΤΙΒΕΡΙΟΣ                  | 14-37 AD                                 |                                                                                       |
| Caligula (C Caesar)                          | ΓΑΙΟΣ ΚΑΙΣΑΡ              | 37-41 AD                                 | Parents Germanicus & Agrippina I                                                      |
| Claudius                                     | ΚΛΑΥΔΙΟΣ                  | 41-54 AD                                 | 4 <sup>th</sup> wife Agrippina II                                                     |
| Nero                                         | ΝΕΡΩ                      | 54-68 AD                                 |                                                                                       |
| Galba-Otho-Vitellius                         |                           | 68-69 AD                                 |                                                                                       |
| Vespasian                                    | ΟΥΕΣΠΑΣΙΑΝΟΣ              | 69-79 AD                                 |                                                                                       |
| Titus                                        | ΤΙΤΟΣ                     | 79-81 AD                                 |                                                                                       |
| Domitian                                     | ΔΟΜΙΤΙΑΝΟΣ                | 81-96 AD                                 | Wife Domitia                                                                          |
| Nerva                                        | ΝΕΡΟΥΑ                    | 96-98 AD                                 |                                                                                       |
| Trajan                                       | ΤΡΑΙΑΝΟΣ                  | 98-117 AD                                |                                                                                       |
| Hadrian                                      | ΑΔΡΙΑΝΟΣ                  | 117-138 AD                               | Wife Sabina died c136 AD                                                              |
| Antoninus Pius                               | ΑΝΤΩΝΙΝΟΣ<br>ΕΥΣΕΒΗΣ      | 138-161 AD                               | Wife Faustina I, died 141 AD                                                          |
| Marcus Aurelius                              | ΜΑΥΡΗΑΙΟΣ<br>ΑΝΤΩΝΙΝΟΣ    | 161-180 AD                               | Wife Faustina II, died 175 AD                                                         |
| Lucius Verus                                 | ΟΥΗΡΟΣ                    | 161-169 AD                               | Wife Lucilla                                                                          |
| Commodus                                     | ΚΟΜΜΟΔΟΣ                  | 177-192 AD                               | Wife Crispina                                                                         |
| Pertinax-Didius Julianus                     |                           | 193 AD                                   |                                                                                       |
| Septimius Severus                            | ΑΣΕΠΙ ΣΕΟΥΗΡΟΣ            | 193-211 AD                               | Wife Julia Domna                                                                      |
| Caracalla                                    | ΜΑΥΡΗΛΑΝΤΩΝΙΝΟΣ           | 198-217 AD                               | Wife Plautilla                                                                        |
| Geta                                         | ΓΕΤΑ                      | Caesar 198-209 AD<br>Augustus 209-212 AD |                                                                                       |
| Macrinus                                     | ΜΟΨΕΜΑΚΡΕΙΝΟΣ             | 217-218 AD                               | Son (and Caesar) Diadumenian                                                          |
| Elagabalus                                   | ΜΑ ΑΥΡ<br>ΑΝΤΩΝΕΙΝΟΣ      | 218-222 AD                               | Grandmother Julia Maesa<br>Mother Julia Soaemias<br>Wives Julia Paula; Aquilia Severa |
| Severus Alexander                            | ΜΑΥΡ ΣΕΟΥΗΡ<br>ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΣ | 222-235 AD                               | Mother Julia Mamaea<br>Wife Orbiana                                                   |
| Maximinus I                                  | ΜΑΞΙΜΙΝΟΣ                 | 235-238 AD                               | Son (and Caesar) Maximus                                                              |
| Gordian I & Gordian II – Balbinus & Pupienus |                           | 238 AD                                   |                                                                                       |
| Gordian III                                  | ΓΟΡΔΙΑΝΟΣ                 | 238-244 AD                               | Wife Tranquillina                                                                     |
| Philip I                                     | ΦΙΛΙΠΠΟΣ                  | 244-249 AD                               | Wife Otacilia Severa                                                                  |
| Philip II (son of                            | ΦΙΛΙΠΠΟΣ                  | Caesar 244-                              |                                                                                       |



|                         |                 |                                  |                                                          |
|-------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| above)                  |                 | 247 AD<br>Augustus<br>247-249 AD |                                                          |
| Trajan Decius           | ΤΡΑΙΑΝΟΣ ΔΕΚΙΟΣ | 249-251 AD                       | Sons Herennius Etruscus & Hostilian (Caesars 250-251 AD) |
| Trebonianus Gallus      | ΤΡΕΒ ΓΑΛΛΟΣ     | 251-253 AD                       |                                                          |
| Volusian (son of above) | ΟΥΟΛΟΥΣΙΑΝΟΣ    | 251-253 AD                       |                                                          |
| Valerian I              | ΟΥΑΛΕΡΙΑΝΟΣ     | 253-260 AD                       |                                                          |
| Gallienus               | ΓΑΛΛΙΗΝΟΣ       | 253-268 AD                       | Wife Salonina                                            |
| Claudius II             | ΚΛΑΥΔΙΟΣ        | 268-270 AD                       | Brother Quintillus                                       |

Remember that the “S” letter may be written as “C” as well as “Σ”; that long “O” may be “W” as well as “Ω”. I have written the names in the NOMINATIVE case; but they are commonly in the GENITIVE (POSSESSIVE) CASE. To give examples; the genitive of ΚΑΙΣΑΡ ΣΕΒΑΣΤΟΣ is ΚΑΙΣΑΡΟΣ ΣΕΒΑΣΤΟΥ. ΝΕΡΩ becomes ΝΕΡΩΝΟΣ; ΔΟΜΙΤΙΑΝΟΣ becomes ΔΟΜΙΤΙΑΝΟΥ. JULIA DOMNA AUGUSTA in the GENITIVE would be ΙΟΥΛΙΑΣ ΔΟΜΝΑΣ ΣΕΒΑΣΤΗΣ. Note that “CARACALLA” and “ELAGABALUS” can be extremely difficult to distinguish. I have even seen BRITISH MUSEUM CATALOGUES describing coins as “CARACALLA or ELAGABALUS”. Neither of these Emperors uses the name we know them by, but have borrowed “Antoninus Pius” and “Marcus Aurelius” names; but fortunately, though they look very much like each other, they do not look at all like either Antoninus Pius or Marcus Aurelius

### Greek Dating

The Greek alphabet is also used to signify the numerals. As a numerical system it retained the otherwise obsolete letters Digamma, shaped as S or G for 6; and Koppa shaped as ς for 90

|   |   |    |        |    |   |     |        |     |   |
|---|---|----|--------|----|---|-----|--------|-----|---|
| 1 | A | 6  | S or G | 20 | K | 70  | O      | 300 | T |
| 2 | B | 7  | Z      | 30 | Λ | 80  | Π      | 400 | Υ |
| 3 | Γ | 8  | H      | 40 | M | 90  | ς      | 500 | Φ |
| 4 | Δ | 9  | Θ      | 50 | N | 100 | P      | 600 | X |
| 5 | E | 10 | I      | 60 | Ξ | 200 | C or Σ | 700 | Ψ |

Numbers are built up, usually, from the smallest to the largest, though occasionally they are the other way round. For example 234 would be written as 4+30+200 = ΔΛΣ

The Greeks used many dating eras; but the most noteworthy is the Seleucid Era commencing 1<sup>st</sup> October 312 BC. Two other common eras are the Caesarian commencing 9<sup>th</sup> August 48 BC, and the Actian Era beginning 31 BC (when Octavian beat Antony at the Battle of Actium). It is fortunate that all Greek and Roman Eras are solar rather than lunar as is the Islamic era, where complicated Mathematics are required to change dates from AH (Moslem years) to AD!

Answers:

A – SAMOS (Of the Samians)

B – SMYRNA

C – KING LYSIMACHUS (King of Thrace, 323 – 281 BC)

D – PERGAMUM

E – KING ANTIOCHUS I (Seleucid King) 280 – 281 BC

F – EPHEBUS (The city is named on the left hand side)

## Chapter Two

### THE OLD TESTAMENT

Well, at least we can start from the beginning, from the Creation as told in Genesis Chapter One. Modern Israeli coins are dated according to an era which commences at this point, reckoned by the Israelis to have been 7th October 3761 BC. On the two illustrated reverses **B1** and **B2** the date is on the bottom line. We note that Hebrew alphabetical letters can be used also to express numerals, as on the list below. Unfortunately the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet only allow them to reach as far as 400, so a number such as 700 has to be written as 400, 300.

#### The Hebrew Alphabet as Numerals

|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8   | 9   | 10  | 20  |
| א  | ב  | ג  | ד  | ה  | ו  | ז  | ח   | ט   | י   | כ   |
|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |
| 30 | 40 | 50 | 60 | 70 | 80 | 90 | 100 | 200 | 300 | 400 |
| ל  | מ  | נ  | ס  | ע  | פ  | צ  | ק   | ר   | ש   | ת   |

Hebrew reads from right to left, and this is how we must read the numerals too. On Coin **B1**, starting at the right, we read 5, 400, 300, 40, 4, with the initial 5 having the value 5000 - the whole making “5744”. From this we subtract 3760, bringing us to AD 1984. Coin **B2** reads as 400, 300, 20, 9 equalling only 729 - the 5000 having been omitted perhaps “to save space”! This equates with 1969 AD.



**B1: VF £2 / \$4**  
Cupro-Nickel.  
Israel 1984  
(reverse only) 10  
shekels Dated  
5744



**B2: VF £2 / \$4**  
Cupro-Nickel.  
Israel 1969  
(reverse only) 1  
lira Dated (5)729

It is strange that Coin **B1**, the most modern coin in this book, gives the value in “shekels”, the same denomination used in Genesis chapter 23 when describing the value of the field Abraham bought from Ephron.

The Russians up until 1700 also used an era commencing with the Creation, which for them supposedly happened in 5508 BC. Coin **B2A** is a silver “wire money” kopeck minted in 1697 AD, just before Russia changed to the Julian era with BC/AD dating.

The obverse has the very simple legend, “Tsar Petr Alexievich”, naming Peter the Great, 1696-1725 AD, with the date on the reverse just below the horseman. This consists of the two letter/numerals “C E”, the C having a cap on it to indicate hundreds. Here, as on many modern Israeli coins, the numeral representing the thousands has been omitted. The Russian letter/numerals are very like those of the Greeks, and these read as “205”, or, more fully, adding the omitted thousands, “7205”. We subtract 5508 from this, and arrive at 1697 AD, the date of the coin.



**B2a: VF £35 / \$70**

AR Kopeck “wire money” Russia, Peter the Great, Dated (7)205 = 1697 AD

“In the beginning God” (Genesis chapter 1, verse 1). But who is this God who created and sustains the Universe? In the older versions of the Bible He is called Jehovah, and this is the Name written in Hebrew lettering across the centre of the reverse of the Danish coin **B3**, with “The Just Judge” in Latin above and below the Hebrew. But modern scholars tell us that His Name was really “Yahweh”. It would appear that the Name of God was too holy for the Jews either to say or to write down, so the writers of Scripture used the four main consonants of Yahweh (note that in Hebrew Y is the same as J, and W and V are the same letter) – YHWH - and by using the vowel symbols of a different word also meaning “God”, changed Yahweh into Jehovah, and thus avoided committing sacrilege.



**B3: VF £300 / \$600**

AR 2 marks Denmark. Christian IV, 1588 - 1648. Rev. “Jehovah” in Hebrew: “The Just Judge” in Latin.

Genesis chapter 3 recounts the story of Adam's disobedience to God's command not to eat the fruit of the tree “which is in the midst of the garden”. God told them, “Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die”. Of course it wasn't Adam's fault - it was Eve's. It wasn't Eve's - it was the serpent's, because he had tempted her! Whoever's fault it was that Adam ate the “forbidden fruit”, it meant that sin had come into the world, and that Adam and Eve had to leave the lovely Garden of Eden to work for their livelihood. **B4** shows the scene; just at the moment Eve is actually taking the apple from the serpent. This design was actually the badge of the Fruiterers' Guild, of which Mathew Smith of Banbury was evidently a member. Around 1669 there was a great shortage of small change in England, and many tradesmen, such as Mathew Smith, minted their own token coinage for local use.



**B4: VF £30 / \$60**

AE England 1669 Tradesman's halfpenny token, Banbury, Oxfordshire. Rev. Adam and Eve being tempted by the serpent - Badge of the Fruiterer's Guild.

By Genesis chapters 7 and 8 we reach Noah and his Ark. We have a picture of this event, most unusually, on an Ancient coin. How is it that the bronze concerned comes from a city tucked away in the middle of Asia Minor? Could there have been a local legend that the Ark came to land on the mountain behind the city of Apameia, rather than on Mount Ararat in the Caucasus? The Ark is shaped more like a box than a boat; but it does give room for "Mr and Mrs" Noah to be shown twice, once sitting inside the Ark, which is shown afloat on the waves; and once safely out of the boat on dry land. We notice the dove with its olive branch overhead preparing to land.



**B5: Very Rare and Expensive**

AE Phrygia: Apameia, 244-249 AD Obv. Philip I. Rev. Noah's Ark

The Christian Church thought of Noah's Ark as symbolising the Church. If we enter the Ark (the church) we find salvation from the Flood (of sin and evil). So it is appropriate to see the Ark on the reverse of a Papal coin **B6**; but here the dove is the main actor as he brings his olive branch home, with the Latin legend reading "messenger of peace".



**B6: Very Rare and Expensive**

AU Rome 1691-1700 Pope Innocent XII  
Rev. The dove returns to the Ark. "double scudo d'oro"

The Tower of Babel of Genesis chapter 11, verses 1-9, would appear to have been a ziggurat, an artificial hill surmounted by a shrine - as found in parts of Mesopotamia where there is a shortage of real mountains and hills. The ancient peoples of the Near East did like their religious sites to be in elevated positions, and often mountains were worshipped in their own right, as with this mountain on **B7**, which is actually placed on an altar! The catalogues call it an “agalma of Mount Argaeus” with “agalma” meaning something like “heavenly glow”, which makes Mount Argaeus look as if it is on fire



**B7: VF £25 / \$50**

AE Caesareaia in Cappadocia 222-235 AD. Severus Alexander.  
Rev. Mount Argaeus “in glory” placed on an altar

The ziggurat designated by the ancient Hebrews as the “Tower of Babel” must have been a very impressive structure. I have chosen to illustrate this by showing Coin **B8**, illustrating another “place of worship on a mountain”, a structure which must also have been very impressive, the Temple of Aphrodite on the top of Acrocorinth, the mountain overlooking the ancient city of Corinth



**B8: VF £60 / \$120**

AE Corinth 41-54 AD. Obv. Claudius Rev. Temple of Aphrodite  
on hill of Acrocorinth

We come to the story of Abraham. Terah had led his whole nomadic tribe northwards from Ur of the Chaldees to Haran in northern Mesopotamia. Genesis chapter 12, verses 1-5, relates that in Haran Terah's son Abraham heard for the first time the call of the Living God. God told him, “Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred and I will make of thee a great nation”. From this point on Abraham was to be a Yahweh worshipper. This was the real start of God's Chosen People, the Jews. To be a “full Jew” in later times, a person had to be a descendant of Abraham.

So it all started in Haran, which in Romano-Greek times was known as Carrhae, as illustrated by **B9**. The reverse, a common type for this city, shows the “Trinity” of Carrhae - the moon-god Sin, the sun-god Shamash, and the planet Venus, known locally as Ishtar. Doubtless these had been the main objects of worship at Haran/Carrhae for thousands of years, and very probably Abraham too had

worshipped them in Haran before God called him. But what a difference, from ritual dancing at the new moon and other weird ceremonies to the call to follow a Living God, Who told Abraham, aged 75, to leave home and set out for an unknown land, and Who gave him and his wife a baby (Isaac) when he was aged 100, and his wife Sarah aged 90.



**B9: VF £25 / \$50**

AE Mesopotamia – Carrhae 161-169 AD Obv. L.Verus. Rev.  
“the heavenly trinity”, the Sun and Moon and Venus.

Isaac succeeded Abraham as leader of the Children of Israel, and he was followed by Jacob. It ought to have been Esau after Isaac, as he was just slightly older than his twin brother Jacob; but Jacob had managed by two “dirty tricks” to win both the birthright and their father's blessing, the two necessary qualifications for the right to leadership of Israel ... but, after tricking his brother, Jacob was justly frightened of Esau's vengeance, and had to leave their Beersheba home in a hurry! He fled northwards towards Haran, and his ancestral roots. Then, unexpectedly, Genesis chapter 28, verses 10 - 22, tells us of the wonderful dream Jacob had during the first night's stop on his long journey, at the place later called Bethel. He dreamed of a ladder set up between heaven and earth with angels ascending and descending on it.

Numismatically, angels are extremely interesting. They start off, quite simply, as Greek or Roman female Winged Victories of the type depicted on a great number of coins. They commonly, as on **B10A**, appear holding a wreath and palm branch; but as we move forward in time we find that these same Victories undergo a sex change and become angels, as on **B10D**, where the Archangel Michael is shown crowning the Byzantine Emperor Isaac II. The actual point of changeover from Victory to angel occurs during the reign of the Byzantine Emperor Justin I, and two gold solidi of this emperor are illustrated. **B10B** shows a pagan Victory on the reverse; but **B10C**, a coin with exactly the same obverse, has now a Christian angel, though to the uninitiated it is almost impossible to spot the difference! The transition from one to the other appears to have been painlessly easy.



**B10A: VF £35 / \$70**

AR antoninianus Rome, 251-253 AD Trebonianus Gallus. Roman  
“Victory” holding wreath and palm branch

The Old Testament



**B10B: VF £225 / \$450**

AU Byzantium 516-527 AD. "Solidus" of Justin I.  
Rev. Victory holding a Cross



**B10C: VF £225 / \$450**

(Reverse only) Later "solidus" of Justin I.  
Rev. Male "angel" holds cross and orb.



**B10D: VF £200 / \$400**

Electrum. Byzantium 1185-1195 AD. scyphate (= saucer-shaped) "aspron trachy" of Isaac II. Obv. Virgin Mary seated  
Rev. Archangel Michael crowns Isaac

Moving on in the Bible to Joseph, we read that he suffered the horrible fate of being sold by his elder brothers to passing traders, thereby ending up as a slave in Egypt. After an unexpectedly good start there as he became top official in Potiphar's household, he was falsely accused of attempted rape by Potiphar's wife and was sent to prison. However, whilst in prison he heard about Pharaoh's dream - which, as was discovered, he happened to be the only person able to interpret successfully (Genesis chapter 41). Pharaoh had seen seven fat cattle being eaten by seven thin cattle, and Joseph told him that this meant that seven years of good crops would be followed by seven years of famine - so it was necessary to stock up now! As readers will know, crops in Egypt are dependent not so much on the weather as on the annual flooding of the River Nile. The reverse of **B11** shows a personification of the River Nile, who is reclining on a crocodile and holding a cornucopia. Above "Nilus" are two Greek numerals IS representing "16", which is there because 16 cubits was considered to be the ideal height of a Nile flood, ensuring the best possible crops. So at any rate we can learn from our coins how high the flood waters were likely to have risen during those good years!



**B11: VF £50 / \$100**

AE Alexandria 117-138 AD Obv. Hadrian Rev. "River Nile" reclining, with "16" written above. "Bronze drachm"

With our minds on Egypt, we note that just one coin, **B12**, minted by one of the later Egyptian Pharaohs, has a legend written in hieroglyphs. This consists of two pictographs - a windpipe that signifies "beneficent, good", and a gold collar with hanging pendants to be read as "gold", giving the reading *nefer nub* meaning "good gold".



**B12: Very Rare and Expensive**

AU Egypt 359-343 BC "stater" of Pharaoh Nektanebo II.  
Rev. Windpipe and gold collar (meaning "good gold").

We now move on to Moses, who is named on an Islamic coin, **B13**, from Iran. "Moses" is "Musa" in Arabic; and the name of the Mongol (Ilkhanid) ruler who minted this coin was Musa, so he is likely to have felt particular affinity with our Moses. On the obverse we have the "Kalima", the usual Moslem statement of faith, with the date, 736 AH (1336 AD) round the margin, together with the names of the first four Caliphs - Abu Bekr, 'Omar, 'Uthman and 'Ali. On the reverse, around the name and titles of Musa Khan (his name is written in the Mongol script), we read, at 3 o'clock Nuh (= Noah); at 1 o'clock Ibrahim (= Abraham), at 11 o'clock Musa (= Moses), and, most surprising of all, at 9 o'clock 'Isa (= Jesus).



**B13: Very Rare and Expensive**

AR Ilkhanids (= Mongols) of Iran 1336-7 AD. Musa Khan names Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus.



In Exodus chapter 3 God appears to Moses in the burning bush, telling him that his mission is to lead the Children of Israel out from slavery in Egypt towards the Promised Land of Canaan. God tells Moses that His Name is "I am" - other gods are lifeless; but Our God is the Living God. In Exodus chapter 20, God gives him the tablets on which are inscribed the Ten Commandments, which Moses then brings down from Mount Sinai to the people.

In Judges chapters 14 - 16 the Children of Israel were having trouble, as they often did, with the coast people known as the Philistines, when Samson came on the scene. One day he encountered a lion "and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him". He was able to kill this lion with his bare hands. The scene is depicted on **B14**, a French Samson d'or, where Samson, wearing Mediaeval armour, forces apart the jaws of the poor old lion, thus proving his great strength - in fact in this respect he is very like the Greco-Roman hero, Hercules, who is shown on a number of ancient coins doing the same sort of thing with the Nemeaeon lion. Later in the narrative, in Judges chapter 16, Samson visits a prostitute in Gaza, but the local Philistines discover he is there and plan to kill him next morning. Our hero, however, rises up at midnight and steals the Gaza city gates. Samson was later captured, and blinded by the Philistines, but in the final act of his life he was taken to the Temple of Dagon in Gaza to be made sport of by the people. Samson, however, had regained his strength, which he had temporarily lost through the wiles of Delilah, and was able to pull the temple down, killing himself and a great many Philistines. From much later times, coin **B15**, from Gaza, is included to represent Samson's activities in that city.



**B14: VF £1000 / \$2000**

AU France – Aquitaine 1468-74 AD. Charles of France (later King Charles VIII) "Samson d'or" Samson in full armour defeats the lion.



**B15: VF £80 / \$160**

AE Judaea – Gaza 117-138 AD Obv. Hadrian  
Rev. City-goddess and heifer

For our next coin with Old Testament connections, we move forward to David, in particular to I Samuel chapter 18, verses 10 and 11. King Saul had “discovered” David after the latter’s victory over the Philistine giant Goliath. He kept David near him and delighted to hear the young man playing his harp. However, before long Saul grew jealous of the military reputation gained by his favourite. One day, as David was playing, he hurled a javelin at him. Later David himself became King of Israel, and reputedly wrote many of the Psalms in the Bible. Coin **B16** shows him, bearded and wearing a crown, playing his harp, so presumably this is meant to represent him in later life composing a psalm, perhaps even Psalm 23, “The Lord is my Shepherd”.



**B16: VF £80 / \$160**

AE Ireland c1674. “St. Patrick’s farthing” Obv. St. Patrick drives out the serpents. Rev. King David plays his harp.

As we read the story of the Jewish conquest of Canaan in the Book of Joshua, it is easy to think that the Israelites overran the whole land very quickly; but things did not go quite as smoothly as that. Jerusalem itself was not taken until King David’s reign, when his men entered the city through a tunnel that brought in the water supply. He named Jerusalem “the city of David” and made it his capital. We read in II Samuel chapter 5, verse 5 that David “reigned over Judah from Hebron for seven years and six months: and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah”. Coin **B17** comes from the much later period of the Bar-Cochba revolt of 132-5 AD, when the Jews were on the point of losing their capital for many hundreds of years. On this coin, on the obverse, we read (from right to left) the name “Jerusalem” written in Old Hebrew lettering - (top row) J R U: (bottom) S L M. How moving must this word have been to Jews!



**B17: VF Very Rare and Expensive**

AE Judaea 132-135 AD. Bar Cochba Revolt.  
Obv. “Jerusalem” within wreath.

David died, and was succeeded by his son Solomon, whose major building project was to be the erection of the great Temple of God in Jerusalem, as recounted in I Kings chapters 5 and 6. Solomon needed large amounts of timber for this work; but fortunately the hills of Lebanon were covered with cedar trees, and these were under the control of a friendly power, that of Tyre, ruled by King Hiram. As Hiram, of course, was too early to mint coins himself, we represent this phase of Israel's history by a much later coin of Tyre, **B18**.



**B18: VF £25 / \$50**

AE Phoenicia – Tyre 93-196 AD (dated 219 = 93 AD). Obv. Head of City-goddess. Rev. War-galley

News of the great Temple Solomon had built for the Lord, and of Solomon's own great wisdom, reached out across the world and attracted the Queen of Sheba, who obviously felt that she wanted to see things for herself. She arrived with a large caravan of presents - she gave the King (I Kings chapter 10) “an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones”. Sheba was in the South-West of the Arabian peninsula, in a region where the Himyarites were later to mint their coins. In this area the “Head of Athena/Owl” tetradrachms of Athens became a very popular form of currency (just as the Maria Theresa dollars dated 1780 were to become a common medium of exchange more recently), and the designs of **B19** are obviously derived from the Athenian style.



**B19: VF £150 / \$300**

AR “drachm” Southern Arabia.- the Himyarites c100-24 BC.  
Designs based on coinage of Athens (see coin B379) derived from the Athenian “new style” type.

**B20** is a little saucer-shaped piece - in technical language “scyphate” - presumably showing on the reverse the head of 'Amdan Bayyin Yanaf, whose name is written around in the Sabaean (same word as Sheba) script. On the obverse it could be the same man or a deity - nobody knows!



**B20: VF £75 / \$150**

AR scyphate “quinarius”. The Himyarites mid 1st-mid 2nd centuries AD. 'Amdan Bayyin Yanaf.

The story continues with an Ethiopian tradition, which may well be true. The Queen of Sheba and King Solomon had a son named Menelik, who later fled from Jerusalem to Ethiopia taking with him the Ark of the Covenant, which is referred to many times up to this point in the Bible, but never afterwards. Modern Ethiopia begins with the coronation of the Emperor Theodore in 1855, who, claiming direct descent from this Menelik, took the title “the Lion of Judah”, reflecting his family’s supposedly ancient Jewish origins. Menelik “the Second” rather than the “First” succeeded Theodore as Emperor, because the Queen of Sheba’s son counted as the “First”. Menilek II issued the first modern Ethiopian coins, illustrated by a “One Bir” of 1902 (**B21**). It has one script, the Ethiopian, but two languages – the denomination is in modern Amharic (at the bottom of the reverse), but the rest is in the classical Ge’ez (pronounced “Gurz”) language. The reverse shows the “Lion of Judah” and reads – I transliterate the Ethiopian letters - *moa anbasā za imnagada Yihuda* “The Lion of the tribe of Judah has conquered”.



**B21: VF £50 / \$100**

AR Ethiopia 1889-1913 Emperor Menelik II. “1 bir” (or “talari”) 1902. Rev. The Lion of Judah.

For a really exciting Bible story, the “contest on Mount Carmel”, as related in I Kings chapter 18, takes a lot of beating. The Queen at the time was Jezebel, a very keen Baal-worshipper and persecutor of the prophets of Yahweh. Things certainly seemed to be going Baal's way. The obverse of coin **B22** shows what this god looked like - he holds corn-ears because it was he who was supposed to make the crops grow; and he holds an eagle because he was supposed to control the skies, including rain! Though most of the prophets of Yahweh had been disposed of, Elijah was still there, standing firm for Yahweh. On Elijah's word God stopped all rain falling in Israel for three years and six months (St. Luke chapter 4, verse 25), Baal being unable to do anything about it. Famine loomed, and Elijah, on God's behalf, challenged the 450 prophets of Baal, plus the 400 prophets of the groves “which eat at Jezebel's table” to a contest. They

were to meet on Mount Carmel in the presence of the people, whom Elijah told - "if the Lord be God follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him". Each side was to build an altar, place wood on it, then a bullock (which was killed and cut into pieces), but was not to use any fire-making material. They were to ask their god, Baal or Yahweh, to send the fire. Baal, as a fire-god, ought to have managed at least a flash of lightning, but, not being a real god, was completely unable to answer his followers; but God, the Living God, did send fire in abundance, and Yahweh was re-established as the national deity of Israel.



**B22: VF £250 / \$500**

AR stater. Tarsus 361-333 BC Obv. Baal seated. To right, in Aramaic script, *ba'al Tarz*, "The Baal of Tarsus"  
Rev. Lion and bull. Above, in Aramaic *mazdi* = Mazaeus, name of the satrap (governor) of Cilicia under Persian rule.

In II Kings chapter 5 we read that Naaman was an important Syrian general, but had been found to have leprosy. In one of the raids he had previously made into Israel, he had taken captive a young Jewish girl who now acted as servant to Naaman's wife. This girl mentioned the healing powers given by God to the prophet Elisha back home in Israel. Naaman picked up on this, and set off with numerous presents as payment for this wonderful healer; but when he arrived at Elisha's house the prophet did not even come to the door to greet his visitor. He just sent out a servant to tell him, "Go and wash in the River Jordan seven times and you shall be healed". Naaman was extremely annoyed at this apparent rudeness, and said, "Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?" However his attendants, who must have liked him, persuaded Naaman at least to give it a try. He did wash seven times in the Jordan, and was cured of his leprosy. To illustrate this episode we include coin **B23**, where the reverse shows the "Tyche", or special city-goddess, of Damascus in a shrine, whom Naaman must have often worshipped in one form or another.



**B23: VF £60 / \$120**

AE Damascus 193-217 AD Obv. Julia Domna.  
Rev. Bust of City-goddess within a shrine.

Naaman wanted to change his religion at this point and become a Yahweh-worshipper. But, thinking that a person could only worship Israel's God when standing on Israel's soil, he asked to be given two mules' burden of the local earth to enable him to worship Yahweh properly. He also asked to be excused if he continued to worship the Syrian god Rimmon, which he promised to do in a perfunctory manner, whilst really worshipping Yahweh in his heart. Rimmon was a thunder-god, to be identified with Hadad, who appears on the reverse of **B24**, from the Syrian city of Rhosus, where he is shown holding an ear of corn and a thunderbolt. The two bulls at his feet symbolise the noise of thunder.



**B24: VF £45 / \$90**

AE Syria - Rhosus. 1st century BC Obv. Head of City-goddess. Rev.  
Statue of god Hadad (= Rimmon) with bulls at his feet.

We come now to the story of Jonah, which has a whole “book” to itself in the Old Testament. In Jonah chapter 1 we read that God told Jonah to go to Nineveh and “cry against it”. Nineveh was the capital city of the usually hostile Assyrian Empire; and it must have seemed to Jonah much as it would to us if, during the Communist era, God had told us to go to Moscow and tell the Muscovites about their sins - very dangerous, and not very likely to achieve positive results. In any case, as we see in later chapters, Jonah did not want the people of Nineveh to repent at all: he would have preferred it if God had destroyed their city in its wickedness. As Nineveh lies to the East of the Holy Land, Jonah aimed to go westwards. Unfortunately America had not yet been discovered (even by the Vikings!), so Spain was the best he could do - named as “Tarshish” in the book of Jonah. We read in Jonah chapter 1, verse 3, “But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa; and he found there a ship going to Tarshish”. Joppa was a very ancient port, and it did mint coins. Coin **B25** is a tetradrachm minted in Joppa by the Egyptian King Ptolemy II, 284-247 BC, with the “ΙΟΠ” mintmark of the city to the left of the eagle on the reverse. Jonah did not get to Tarshish, learning the hard way that it is impossible to escape from God. A storm arose, and to save the ship the sailors had to throw Jonah overboard, where (Jonah chapter 1, verse 17) “the Lord had prepared a big fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights”. Eventually the fish, which may or may not have been a whale, vomited Jonah up on dry land.



**B25: VF £225 / \$400**

AR tetradrachm. Egypt - Ptolemy II, 284-247 BC. JOPPA mint  
 Obv. Head of Ptolemy I. Rev. "of Ptolemy the saviour". Eagle  
 standing on thunderbolt. "IOΠ " monogram at left of eagle

God told Jonah a second time to go to Nineveh, and this time he went. He was remarkably successful, and the people of Nineveh did repent, and, though Jonah did not want God to spare them from punishment, God did just that.

In 586 BC the armies of the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem, as related in II Kings chapter 25. They blinded Zedekiah, the last King of Judah, and led a great part of the population away to Babylon. To represent this "Babylonian captivity", a very important event in Jewish history, coin **B26** is shown, minted in Babylon soon after Alexander the Great's conquest of the East. But what wonderful poetry their misfortune inspired! For instance, Psalm 137, "By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion".



**B26: VF £300 / \$600**

AR Lion Tetradrachm, minted Babylon, 331-312 BC. Eastern  
 Empire of Alexander the Great. Obv. Baal seated, to right in  
 Aramaic script *ba'al Tarz*, "The Baal of Tarsus". Rev. Lion standing

The Babylonian Empire was itself conquered by the Persians, and coin **B27** was minted during the "Persian period", at a time when the Jews were minting tiny obols often inscribed in Old Hebrew lettering; though the writing on this drachm-sized coin is Aramaic. It is thought, therefore, that this larger coin was probably an issue minted by the Persian authorities for their province of Yehud (YHD on the reverse of the coin). It is surmised also that possibly the Persians were attempting to portray the local God of Judaea. If this is so, then we may be looking at the head of Yahweh on the obverse, with Yahweh seated on the reverse. If this is the way it is, then the idea of wings and wheels fits in well with Ezekiel's vision of the glory of God, which he describes in Ezekiel chapter 3, verse 13: "I heard also the noise of the wings of the living creatures that touched one another, and the noise of the wheels over against them, and a noise of a great rushing".



**B27: Very Rare and Expensive**

AR “drachm” Judaea under Persian rule, 375-333 BC. Designs may depict Yahweh on obverse and reverse.

In 539 BC the Persian King Cyrus conquered Babylon and its empire, and he gave the Jews permission to end their exile and return home to Jerusalem, as related in Ezra chapter 1. Their city had been totally destroyed, but with God's help and under the leadership of men such as Nehemiah, they succeeded in rebuilding the Temple and the walls of the city. But we have now reached the COIN PERIOD, a very important moment in Bible history. Cyrus the Persian had recently conquered the kingdom of Lydia in Asia Minor, where King Croesus was already minting coins such as **B28** - true, the design is only on one face of the coin, with the reverse having meaningless marks presumably made in the minting process. We call reverses like this “incuse”. Croesus minted coins of this design in both gold and silver, and also in electrum, which is a mixture of gold and silver. Cyrus took over this coin type, which is uninscribed, and continued to mint it for a number of years. The Persians then changed to a new design, shown as Coin **B29** with a running archer on the obverse. This may represent the King of Persia himself, or a god. This issue consisted of a gold coin called a “darcic”, and a silver coin of the same design known as a “siglos”. In the Old Testament the earliest mention of coined money comes in Ezra chapter 2, verse 69, where it is noted that contributions amounting to 61,000 darics were given towards the rebuilding of the Temple.



**B28: VF £200 / \$400**

AR siglos Lydia and Persian Empire 561- c515 BC - gold and electrum coins with similar design. Obv. Lion and bull confronted. Rev. “incuse” (=meaningless punch-marks)



**B29: VF £60 / \$120**

AR siglos Persian Empire, c515 - 330 BC Obv. Running archer. Rev. Incuse (the gold darcic uses the same designs)



## Chapter Three

# BETWEEN THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE GOSPELS

### The small silver coins of the LATE PERSIAN PERIOD from the Israel/Palestine area

These coins have only fairly recently become known to collectors. The larger ones, which we term “Drachms”, are drawn life-size; but the “obols” and “hemiobols” were just too small for me to do justice to (what any of these coins were actually called we just do not know) , so I have drawn them larger than life; but indicated their true diameter in millimetres. I give only a small selection of possible types.

### JUDAEA, c375-333 BC

There were larger “drachm” coins, such as **B27**. These are inscribed in Aramaic, and are probably an official Persian issue for their province of Yehud (Judaea). The following smaller coins of “obol” and “hemiobol” size have legends in the Old Hebrew script, and were most likely minted by the local Jewish authorities.



**B30: VF £350 / \$600**

AR 8 Obv. Falcon

YEHUD(Hebrew). Rev. Lily



**B31: VF £350 / \$700**

AR 6



**B32: VF £350 / \$700**

AR 6 Obv. The ear of God

Some of these coins have a personal name – probably that of a High Priest or Governor



**B34: VF £350 / \$700**

AR 8 Rev. Owl. Hebrew name  
“Hananiyah”(= “Ananias”)



**B33: VF £350 / \$700**

AR 6 Rev. Owl - above back “Hezekiah”,  
name of High Priest or Governor

### JUDAEA – PTOLEMAIC PERIOD 284-247 BC



**B35: VF £350 / \$700**

AR6 Obv. Head of Ptolemy I Rev. Eagle “Yehud” to left

### SAMARIA c400-333 BC



**B36: VF £350 / \$700**

AR drachm (actual size) AR 5-6.



**B37: VF £350 / \$700**

AR 5-6mms Rev. Hebrew letter “B”



**B38: VF £350 / \$700**

AR 9 AR 5-6



**B39: VF £350 / \$700**

AR 5-6 Rev. legend not understood



**B40: VF £350 / \$700**

AR 5-6 Rev. legend SMYRN (= Samaria)



**B41: VF £550 / \$1100**

AR 8 Rev. SN (probably = “Sanballat”, governor under Darius III, c350 BC)

### GAZA – Second half of 4<sup>TH</sup> century BC



**B43: VF £350 / \$700**

AR drachm (actual size)



**B44: VF £350 / \$700**

AR drachm (actual size)

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT and the GREEK PERIOD

**How the New Testament came to be written in Greek rather than Aramaic, the language actually spoken by the people of the Holy Land.**

In 334 BC Alexander with an army of about 35,000 men crossed the Hellespont from Europe into Asia, and attacked the vast Persian Empire. He defeated the Persians in battle at the Granicus and at Issus, conquering province after province; and by 332 BC he had taken Jerusalem.

Here are some coins from the period of his reign, 336 – 323 BC, minted during his lifetime – coins **B45-B50**



**B45: VF £1000 / \$2000**

AU stater minted during the lifetime of Alexander the Great (Alexander III of Macedon), 336 – 323 Amphipolis mint (many other mints similar). Obv. Head of Athena Rev. Winged Victory, “of King Alexander” (in Greek) at sides.



**B46: VF £175 / \$350**

AR tetradrachm minted during the lifetime of Alexander the Great, 336 – 323 BC (with similar coins being minted for many years after Alexander's death). Amphipolis mint (many other mints similar) Obv. Head of Heracles (Greek form of Roman “Hercules”), wearing over his head the skin of the Nemean lion. Rev. Zeus seated, “of King Alexander” around.



**B47: VF £60 / \$120**

AR minted during the lifetime of Alexander the Great, 336 – 323 BC drachm Types as **B46**



**B48: VF £30 / \$60**

AE minted during the lifetime of Alexander the Great, 336 – 323 BC Obv. Head of Heracles Rev. Club and bow in bow case



**B49: VF £25 / \$50**

AE minted during the lifetime of Alexander the Great 336 – 323 BC Obv. Head of Heracles. Rev. Club and bow with quiver



**B50: VF £30 / \$60**

AE minted during the lifetime of Alexander the Great, 336 – 323 BC Obv. Head of Apollo Rev. Horse

Alexander died at the young age of 32, after a comparatively short reign; and his Empire broke up following his death. But it was divided up and shared by Alexander's former military commanders, who were all Greeks; and this meant that Alexander's conquest of the East had a long-lasting effect, as we can see numismatically!

Firstly, coins bearing his types and his name continued to be minted long after his death. Here are just two examples.



**B51: VF £175 / \$350**

AR "Alexander" tetradrachm of Phaselis, Lycia, dated 207/6 BC. Countermark Seleucid anchor

**B51** AR tetradrachm, with the same basic type as **B46**, but minted more than a hundred years after Alexander's death by the city of Phaselis in S.E.Asia Minor, yet still inscribed "of Alexander" on the reverse. This coin is dated 207/6 BC, evidently at a

time when the city acknowledged no strong overlord. We see on the coin a countermark containing the Seleucid anchor badge, which is thought to mean that this coin was part of the vast hoard of coins taken by Demetrius I, who countermarked them as he sailed from the Lycian/Pamphylian coast to Tripolis in Syria, to claim the Seleucid throne in 162 BC. Note how these later “Alexander” tetradrachms are thinner and broader than the lifetime coins.



**B52: VF £175 / \$350**

AR “Alexander” tetradrachm from Odessus, Moesia c125-70 BC.  
Heracles has the features of Mithradates VI, King of Pontus

AR Tetradrachm from Odessus in Thrace, minted c125 – 70 BC (over 200 years after Alexander’s death!). This was the period when Mithradates VI, King of Pontus, had great power in the Black Sea region; and it would seem that the Head of Heracles on the obverse has taken the features of Mithradates. Perhaps the citizens of Odessus wanted to show their support for the King; but not too openly, in case the Romans didn’t like it.

The second reason for Alexander’s importance lies in the fact that Greek language and culture became predominant in the East for a considerable period of time. Except in the more remote lands, such as the desert kingdom of Nabataea, or in very strongly nationalistic (generally for religious reasons) areas such as Persis and Judaea, the local Aramaic language disappears from the coinage for several hundred years, to reappear later.

Thus the legends on the coins of Parthia (covering the Iran/Iraq area) are inscribed entirely in Greek, which starts as good, readable Greek, becoming nonsensical in later times – until suddenly around 140 AD, if we look carefully, we notice that something has happened, as on **B53**.



**B53: VF £50 / \$100**

AR drachm Parthia. Mithradates IV c140 BC. Obv. Diademed portrait of king. Rev. Seated archer with “nonsense Greek” around – but look at the top row of the reverse! This has suddenly become quite readable Aramaic, reading (from right to left), *Mithradata malka*, “Mithradates the King”.

So in Parthia the local language re-emerged after about 460 years of merely local unofficial use; but Greek was to last even longer in the far-away Afghanistan/North-West Frontier of India lands where the Kushans held sway, as we can see on this gold stater of Kanishka II, who has been dated by most recent scholarship to 229-247 AD. The obverse shows the King sacrificing at an altar – but the writing is a form of Greek, which we call “Bactrian” with an additional letter p equalling “Sh”.



**B54: VF £250 / \$500**

AU stater. The Kushans of Afghanistan/Pakistan. Kanishka II, c229-247 AD Obv. King sacrificing at an altar. Around, from 1 o'clock, *shaonano shao Kaneshko Koshano* “King of Kings Kanishka the Kushan”. Rev. *Ardochsho*, the Hindu Goddess Lakshmi, consort of Vishnu, enthroned with her feet on a lotus.

Alexander’s own reputation, numismatically speaking, was to last much longer than that! **B55**, a silver tanka of Sultan of Delhi, Mohammed I, 1295- 1315 AD, on the top line of the reverse calls the Sultan “a second Alexander”.



**B55: VF £25 / \$50**

AR tanka. Delhi 1295-1315 AD Sultan Mohammed I of Delhi. Rev. Top line. Reading from right to left, *Sikander es-sani*, “A second Alexander”.

When the New Testament was written, the Greek language was spoken and understood by the majority of educated people throughout the eastern part of the Roman Empire and beyond, as well as by a great number of people in the West. The New Testament was therefore written in Greek, and this fact aided the rapid spread of the Christian faith during the early days of the Church.

After the death of Alexander, when his original Empire split up, Ptolemy seized Egypt for his share of the spoils – soon after, he was to gain Palestine and Phoenicia. He established a dynasty of rulers in Egypt, who, unfortunately, are all called Ptolemy – and issue the same general coin types. True, they do have epithets – eg. Ptolemy III is Ptolemy Euergetes; but they do not normally use these epithets on the coinage, and therefore the whole long line of them is numismatically very confusing – and so many of the Queens are called Cleopatra!

However, **B56**, an AR Tetradrachm of 310-305 BC is different. This was minted by Ptolemy I, 323-284 BC, in the period before 305 BC (when he took the title of “King” ), whilst he was officially only “governor” of Egypt. The obverse head is that of Alexander himself, the first true likeness of him that we have on a coin. He wears an elephant’s skin head-dress reminding us of his conquests in India. The reverse shows the goddess Athena in a fighting attitude, and gives the name “of Alexander”, with no mention of Ptolemy himself



**B56: VF £350 / \$700**

AR tetradrachm Egypt c310-305 BC Ptolemy I. Obv. Alexander with elephant’s skin head-dress Rev. Athena

**B57** is an AR tetradrachm reading “of King Ptolemy” which shows the first ever portrait of a living person on a coin, that of Ptolemy himself. Most of the tetradrachms minted by all the later King Ptolemies continue to show this same portrait of Ptolemy I. On the reverse is an eagle standing on a thunderbolt. This particular coin, distinguished only by the monogram and the letter at the left of the eagle, is attributed to a series minted in Alexandria, Egypt, which began in Ptolemy I’s reign, continuing into that of Ptolemy II, 284 – 247 BC.



**B57: VF £125 / \$250**

AR tetradrachm Egypt 304-283 BC (Ptolemy I / Ptolemy II)  
Obv. Head of Ptolemy I. Rev. “of Ptolemy the King”.

**B58**, another AR tetradrachm, comes from the reign of Ptolemy II, and is dated to his 31st year (254 BC). The minor marks indicate that this was minted in Ake-Ptolemais in Phoenicia. We note that on this coin the legend reads “Ptolemy the Saviour” rather than “Ptolemy the King”, a variation of title used on many Ptolemaic tetradrachms minted for Phoenician cities, making *PTOLEMAIOU SOTEROS* coins well worth looking out for if you happen to be a collector of Biblical coins



**B58: VF £160 / \$320**

AR tetradrachm. Ptolemy II, 284-247 BC. Mint of Ptolemais-Ake. Obv. Head of Ptolemy I. Rev. legend “of Ptolemy the Saviour”

**B59** is an AE of Ptolemy III, 247 – 222 BC, minted at Alexandria – head of Zeus Ammon (with horn of Ammon on the side of his head), and eagle on thunderbolt – the normal Ptolemaic copper type! But look between the eagle’s legs – a very clear Chi-Rho “Christogram”! But I am afraid the date makes it impossible for this to be a Christian coin. It has to be pure coincidence, merely the monogram of some magistrate’s name.



**B59: VF £90 / \$180**

AE Ptolemy III, 247-222 BC. Alexandria mint. Obv. Head of Zeus Ammon. Rev. Note the “Chi-Rho” between the eagle’s legs

**B60**, an AE of Ptolemy III, has a club to the left of the eagle, indicating that it was minted in Tyre in Phoenicia. As the Jews did not mint their own coinage (except **B35**) at this period, it is likely that coins from the Phoenician mints, especially from Tyre, circulated in the Holy Land. The god of Tyre was Melkart, whom the Greeks equated with Heracles, whose usual weapon was a club – hence the “club” mintmark of Tyre.



**B60: VF £50 / \$100**

AE Ptolemy III, as last but note the club mintmark of Tyre to left of eagle on the reverse.



The Seleucid ruler (ie. descended from Seleucus, a distinguished soldier of Alexander the Great), Antiochus III, 223 – 187 BC, defeated Ptolemy IV in 198 BC, thus conquering Phoenicia and Palestine. The best indication of this regime change comes with **B61**, an AE from the Tyre mint. This shows Antiochus III's head on the obverse, with a ship's prow on the reverse plus the date PIE, or 115 in our numerals, meaning year 115 of the Seleucid Era, which commenced on October 1st 312 BC, equating with our 197 BC. The denomination of this coin is considered to be that known as a "Chalcous".



**B61: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Antiochus III, 223 –187 BC. Tyre mint, dated 197 BC. Obv.  
Head of Antiochus III. Rev. Prow of galley

Antiochus III was to have two other AE coin types minted at Tyre: **B62**, an undated small "dilepton" with the King's head on the obverse, and a date-palm on the reverse, and **B63**, a larger "chalcous" with the stern of a galley on the reverse. The illustrated coin shows the date 124AS = 188 BC. This became the normal Chalcous type for the later Seleucid rulers of Tyre



**B62: VF £35 / \$70**

AE Tyre under Antiochus III. Undated dilepton Obv, head of  
King. Rev. Date-palm



**B63: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Chalcous of Tyre dated 188 BC. Obv. Head of Antiochus III,  
Rev. Stern of galley

Two more Seleucid rulers were particularly important to the history of Judaea: Antiochus IV, 175 – 164 BC, and Antiochus VII, 138 – 129 BC. We propose to look at the coins of these two rulers, and then to pass on to the coinage of the Jewish Hasmonean dynasty.

One Saturday in February 1992 there was a Collectors' Market in Lichfield, and amongst other coins on offer was an ordinary looking Egyptian Ptolemy bronze, **B64**, selling at £3. As it looked a bit different, I bought it. When I got home, I saw there was a countermark on the eagle's back which I had not previously noticed – a “Seleucid anchor” within an oval. The underlying coin was of Eulaeus and Lenaeus, regents for Ptolemy VI, 181-146 BC, a coin minted in Alexandria between 174 and 171 BC; but the countermark made it really exciting. This had been added by Antiochus IV during his campaigns in Egypt 170-168 BC. He could possibly have conquered the whole country; but in 168 BC, as he besieged Alexandria, a delegation arrived from the Roman Senate to warn him off. Their leader, Populius Laena, drew a line in the sand around Antiochus, and told the king, “if you cross this line before you agree to our terms, you will be at war with Rome”. As he had been brought up as a hostage in Rome, Antiochus knew what a killing machine the Roman army was. He reluctantly withdrew, and marched his army home to Syria. On the way, feeling very frustrated and angry, Antiochus visited Jerusalem, where the Jews had had the insolence to drive out Menelaus, his own appointed High Priest – you cannot really blame them as Menelaus had had the “rightful” High Priest, Onias III, murdered. Antiochus in his anger determined to clear up the whole Palestinian situation once and for all – he would uproot the Jewish religion. He abolished the Jewish sacrifices, and placed an altar to Zeus inside the Temple. Anyone found with a copy of the Jewish Law was to be punished with death. Antiochus' religious intolerance was to lead to the Maccabean rebellion and eventually to Jewish independence from Seleucid rule.



**B64: VF £150 / \$300**

AE Ptolemy VI of Egypt under regents Eulaeus and Lenaeus  
174-171 BC. Seleucid “anchor” countermark on the reverse.

But back to Antiochus IV, and a few sample coins from his reign. **B65** is an AR Tetradrachm, minted 167-165/4 in Antioch. We notice that Antiochus shows Zeus seated, rather than the “Apollo seated” reverse commonly used by many other Seleucid Kings. The legend reads, “of King Antiochus, the god, Epiphanes (the illustrious one), Bringer of victory”. He claimed to be a god! This had to bring about a clash with God's chosen people, the Jews. He calls himself “Epiphanes”, but the Jews privately changed this to “Epimanes” - “the madman”.



**B65: VF £350 / \$700**

AR tetradrachm of Antiochus IV, 175-164 BC. Antioch mint 167-165/4 BC. Obv. Head of Antiochus. Rev. Zeus enthroned.



**B66: VF £30 / \$60**

AE Antiochus IV, Antioch mint, early in his reign. Obv. Veiled head of Demeter (Roman "Ceres"). Rev. Elephant's head with tripod behind. The edge of this type may be either serrated (ie saw-like) or plain (as this coin is).

Now to **B67** and **B68**. These two coins represent Antiochus' normal AE coinage from Antioch through most of his reign. The first, slightly larger, showing Zeus standing holding sceptre and thunderbolt; and the second showing Apollo drawing an arrow. On the obverse of both Antiochus wears the radiate crown of the sun-god.



**B67: VF £50 / \$100**

AE Antiochus IV, 175-164 BC, Antioch mint. Obv. Radiate head of Antiochus. Rev. Zeus standing holding sceptre and thunderbolt: eagle at feet.



**B68: VF £50 / \$100**

AE Antiochus IV, 175-184 BC, Antioch mint. Obv. Radiate head of Antiochus. Rev. Apollo with bow, reaching for an arrow from the quiver on his shoulder.

More interesting, also from Antioch minted around 168 BC, is **B69**, one a set of three bronze coins which we call Antiochus IV's "Egyptianising" issue. The smallest has the radiate head of Antiochus himself on the obverse: the middle one portrays the head of

Isis; and this largest coin has the head of Zeus Serapis. By placing his own head on one of these three, he seems to be making out that he is one of a special divine trinity – as Alexandria at this time had Serapis, Isis and Harpocrates (a child figure) as their own special trinity of deities, so Antiochus is trying to make out that he himself is the junior (the smallest of the three coins!) partner in a similar trinity. He has copied an Egyptian coin type, but not with any intention to deceive, as the eagle is the other way round from that on Ptolemaic bronzes.



**B69: VF £150 / \$300**

AE Antiochus IV “Egyptianising issue”. Antioch mint c168 BC  
Obv. Head of Zeus Serapis. Rev. Right-facing eagle (Ptolemaic eagles face left)

**B70**, an AE with a serrated edge, was minted in Antioch in 165/4 BC. Behind Apollo’s head on the obverse we see the monogram of Lysias, who was co-regent with Antiochus V during Antiochus IV’s absence conducting an expedition to the East. The reverse shows the common Seleucid design of Apollo seated on an omphalos (special stone reputed to be at the centre of the world surface).



**B70: VF £25 / \$50**

AE Antiochus IV. Minted Antioch 165/4 BC. Obv. Head of Apollo, monogram of Lysias behind. Rev. Apollo seated on omphalos



**B71: VF £50 / \$100**

AE Antiochus IV, 175-164 BC. Ptolemais-Ake mint. Obv. Radiate head of Antiochus. Rev. Victory is driving a biga (two-horsed chariot)

And now we come to one of Antiochus' hobbies, that of renaming cities – usually after himself. **B72** and **B73** are both AE's, and both are from Antioch (two different ones). **B72** reads “of the people of Antioch, the one near Daphne”; by which name he called the city everybody else calls either Antioch on the Orontes, or Antioch in Syria. **B73** reads “of the people of Antioch, the one on the (River) Callirrhoe” – this is the city we know as “Edessa” (in Mesopotamia), renamed by Antiochus for “personal” reasons.



**B72: VF £60 / \$120**

AE City coin of Antioch in Syria, 175-164 BC. Obv. Head of Antiochus IV. Rev. Zeus



**B73: VF £60 / \$120**

AE City coin of Edessa, 175-164 BC. Obv. Head of Antiochus IV. Rev. Zeus

And just a look at Antiochus' Phoenicia. **B74** is an AE chalcous from Tyre; just like **B63** of his father, Antiochus III; but below the ship's stern he adds the Phoenician legend “of Tyre, the mother of the Sidonians”.



**B74: VF £80 / \$160**

AE Tyre under Antiochus IV. Obv. Head of Antiochus. Rev. Stern of galley – “of Tyre, the mother of the Sidonians”

**B75** is a very similar AE, this time from Sidon, with the wording below the ship in Greek and Phoenician “of the Sidonians”



**B75: VF £50 / \$100**

AE Sidon under Antiochus IV Obv. Head of Antiochus Rev.  
Galley

**B76**, an AE from Berytus (Beirut) shows on the reverse Baal-Berit, equated with the Greek Poseidon, and at the left gives the city's "new" name of "Laodiceia", taken from "Laodice", the name of several Seleucid princesses. It reads in Phoenician lettering, "of Laodicea, the mother of Canaan".



**B76: VF £70 / \$140**

AE Beirut under Antiochus IV Rev. Poseidon standing.

Antiochus VII was a very different character from Antiochus IV. He did indeed send an army to attack Jerusalem, and besieged the city. The Feast of Tabernacles came round, so Antiochus proclaimed a truce, and himself sent offerings to the Temple. The Jews responded by accepting his suzerainty, and this Antiochus ruled Judaea and Jerusalem from 134 till his death in 129 BC.

He minted two distinct types of AR Tetradrachm. My specimen **B77** from Antioch, with a standing Athena on the reverse weighs 265 grains; whereas **B78** minted in Tyre, with the old Ptolemaic eagle on the reverse, weighs much less – the coin in my collection weighs 210 grains. Syria and Egypt used different weight standards; but the Seleucids attempted to ease trading relations with Egypt by producing coins on the Egyptian standard from the mint at Tyre, as well as on the Attic standard from Antioch, to be able to trade with most other places. We see that this king is named "Euergetes", the "Well-doer".



**B77: VF £175 / \$350**

AR Antiochus VII 138-129 BC. Tetradrachm of Antioch mint (based on the Attic weight standard). Obv. Head of Antiochus VII. Rev. Athena standing.



**B78: VF £150 / \$300**

AR Antiochus VII. 138-129 BC Tetradrachm of Tyre mint (based on Egyptian weight standard). Obv. Head of Antiochus. Rev. Club mintmark of Tyre to left of eagle's leg

I show two AE, both dated EOP, 175 AS, equalling 137/6 BC. Coin **B79**, the smaller piece, has a lion's head and a club. The slightly larger (coin **B80**) shows the head of Eros (Cupid) and the head-dress of Isis. There was also another bronze coin type minted in Antioch VII's name - at Jerusalem - and this shows an anchor and a lily; but as this may be described as "the prototype mite", I leave it till later.



**B79: VF £25 / \$50**

AE Antiochus VII. Antioch – dated 137/6 BC. Obv. Lion's head. Rev, Club



**B80: VF £30 / \$60**

AE Antiochus VII Antioch – dated 137/6 BC Obv. Head of Eros  
(wing at shoulder) Rev. Head-dress of Isis

### **The Seleucid Kings of Syria**

|                                          |                |
|------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Seleucus I                               | 312-280 BC     |
| Antiochus I                              | 280-261 BC     |
| Antiochus II                             | 261-246 BC     |
| Seleucus II                              | 246-227/6 BC   |
| (Antiochus Hierax in Western Asia Minor) | 241-228 BC     |
| Seleucus III                             | 225-223 BC     |
| Antiochus III the Great                  | 223-187 BC     |
| Seleucus IV                              | 187-175 BC     |
| Antiochus IV Epiphanes                   | 175-164 BC     |
| Antiochus V                              | 164-162 BC     |
| Demetrius I                              | 161-150 BC     |
| Alexander I Balas                        | 154-145 BC     |
| Demetrius II, first reign                | 145-138 BC     |
| Antiochus VI                             | 145-140 BC     |
| Tryphon                                  | 140-138 BC     |
| Antiochus VII Sidetes                    | 138-129 BC     |
| Alexander II Zabinas                     | 129-123 BC     |
| Demetrius II, second reign               | 130-125 BC     |
| Cleopatra Thea and Antiochus VIII        | 126-123 BC     |
| Seleucus V Philometor                    | 126-125 BC     |
| Antiochus VIII                           | 125-96 BC      |
| Antiochus IX Cyzicenus                   | 114-96 BC      |
| Seleucus VI                              | 96-95 BC       |
| Antiochus X                              | 95-92 BC       |
| Demetrius III                            | 95-87 BC       |
| Antiochus XI                             | 95-92 BC       |
| Philip I Philadelphus                    | 95-84 BC       |
| Antiochus XII Dionysus                   | 87-86 BC 84 BC |



## The Prutahs and reading old Hebrew

We come now to the series of “prutah” coins (official plural “prutot”, though I generally, wrongly, say “prutahs”) minted in Judaea. In the authorised version of the Bible these are translated as “mites”, and the Greek version of the word is “lepton” (plural “lepta”). The Seleucid Greek King Antiochus VII, who held rule over Judaea between 134 and 129 BC, minted the earliest of these, known sometimes as “the prototype mite”, in Jerusalem, but only between 132 and 130 BC. As we see on coin **B81**, legends are in Greek, and on the reverse there is an anchor, a badge of the Seleucid dynasty. However, the lily on the obverse is a Jewish design which appeared on some coins of the Persian period (eg **B30**) and it would seem likely that this earliest prutah was minted under the auspices of John Hyrcanus I and the Jewish authorities.



**B81: VF £40 / \$80**

AE prutah Jerusalem 132-130 BC naming Antiochus VII.  
Obv. Lily Rev. Anchor “The Prototype Mite”

At this point it would be helpful for us to have at least a minimal knowledge of Hebrew

### Hebrew Alphabet

| Modern Hebrew |            | Old Hebrew | Modern Hebrew |          | Old Hebrew |
|---------------|------------|------------|---------------|----------|------------|
| א             | A (ALEPH)  | 𐤀𐤁𐤂        | א             | L        | 𐤀𐤁𐤂        |
| ב             | B          | 𐤂          | ב, מ          | M        | 𐤂          |
| ג             | G          | 𐤂𐤁         | ג, נ          | N        | 𐤂𐤁𐤂𐤁       |
| ד             | D          | 𐤂𐤁         | ד             | S        |            |
| ה             | H          | 𐤂𐤁𐤂        | ה             | ' (AYIN) | 𐤂𐤁         |
| ו             | O, U, V, W | 𐤂𐤁𐤂𐤁𐤂      | ו, פ          | P, F     |            |
| ז             | Z          | 𐤂          | ז, צ          | Tz       | 𐤂          |
| ח             | H, Kh, Ch  | 𐤂𐤁         | ח             | Q        | 𐤂          |
| ט             | T          |            | ט             | R        | 𐤂𐤁         |
| י             | I, Y       | 𐤂𐤁         | י             | S, Sh    | 𐤂𐤁         |
| כ, ק          | K ()       | 𐤂𐤁         | כ             | T, Th    | 𐤂𐤁         |

**Hebrew Words**

|                         |                     |                                                                |
|-------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| HA                      | ה                   | The                                                            |
| KOHEN                   | כֹּהֵן              | Priest                                                         |
| GADOL                   | <ג>                 | Great                                                          |
| WA                      | ו                   | And                                                            |
| ROSH                    | רֹאשׁ               | Head                                                           |
| MELEK                   | מֶלֶךְ              | King                                                           |
| HAKKOHEN HAGGADOL       | <ג>ה כֹּהֵן גָּדוֹל | The High Priest                                                |
| CHEBER                  | קָהָל               | Community                                                      |
| YEHUDIM                 | יְהוּדִים           | Jews                                                           |
| WA CHEBER<br>HAYYEHUDIM | וְקָהָל יְהוּדִים   | And the community of the<br>Jews = (probably) the<br>SANHEDRIN |
| YEHOKHANAN              | יְהוֹכָנָן          | John Hyrcanus I                                                |
| YEHONATHAN              | יְחֹנָתָן           | Alexander Jannaeus                                             |
| YEHUDAH                 | יְהוּדָה            | Judas Aristobulus                                              |
| YONATAN                 | יוֹנָתָן            | John Hyrcanus II                                               |
| MATTATHIAH              | מַתְּתִיָּהוּ       | Antigonus Mattathias                                           |

Please note the following two rules

RULE ONE Hebrew reads from right to left.

RULE TWO most vowels are omitted.

Unhelpful hint: Prepare for ambiguity. Many of the letters look very much alike. Can you see any difference between the K and N in the Hebrew KOHEN? I certainly can't.

Helpful hint ONE Watch out for the box-shaped letter Kh on the first or second line of the "Inscriptional type". This would indicate John Hyrcanus I.

Helpful hint TWO Watch out for the the three letters N Th N on the first or second line, which would indicate Alexander Jannaeus.

John Hyrcanus I and Alexander Jannaeus are by far the commonest rulers for this type.

The "inscriptional" type is the commonest used by the Jewish High Priests of the Hasmonean Dynasty, who issued their coins in their own name, plus that of the "Community of the Jews", who were probably a Council consisting mainly of Pharisees. Though the legend, apart from the name, usually remains constant, the style of lettering varies considerably, as does also how the writing is placed on the coin – Hyrcanus' Jewish name *YEHOKHANAN* may be written with *YEHO* on the top line, with

the remainder on the line below: or the top line may read *YEHOKH*, or may sometimes consist of the whole word. Note that the legend is often unfinished, perhaps with *YEH* instead of *YEHUDIM* at the end. This means that one would need a very large selection of illustrations to show every possibility – so it is important for the collector to be able to read at least the name of the High Priest for himself. Sorry!

Imagine that you were visiting a coin fair and noticed on one dealer’s stall a box marked “MIXED UNIDENTIFIED ANCIENTS £5 EACH” and you pick out coins A and B. Which ruler minted them? (answers at bottom of the page)



A



B

Coin **B82** is of the usual design naming John Hyrcanus I, 135-104 BC; but on this type we see the Greek letter A written above the Hebrew inscription. It would seem likely that this is acknowledging the suzerainty of the Seleucid king reigning at the time – probably either Alexander II, 128-123 BC, or Antiochus VIII, 121-96 BC. We note the “box-like” Kh, which identifies Hyrcanus for non-Hebrew experts, on the top row, third from left.



**B82: VF £25 / \$50**

AE prutah Judaea 132-104 BC John Hyrcanus I. “A” on top line of reverse probably refers to a Seleucid king

Coin **B83** is the smaller half-prutah. It has the same legend, but different designs, with the obverse legend either side of a palm-branch, and a lily on the reverse. Coin **B84**, also of Hyrcanus, appears at first sight to be of the usual inscriptional type, but it differs in one very important word – *ROSH*, which means “head”, which has its last letter (on the left) of the third line, and first two (on the right) of the fourth. The legend reads, “Yehokhanan, the High Priest, Head of the Community of the Jews”. The rare double-prutah, **B85**, with a helmet on the reverse, uses the same obverse legend including “Head of the Community of the Jews” for Hyrcanus. It would appear that at this stage of his reign, Hyrcanus was increasing his own power, perhaps in readiness to declare himself “King” (?), and pushing the “Community of the Jews” into the background.

Answers:

A = John Hyrcanus I (rotate to right)

B = Alexander Jannaeus (rotate to left)



**B83: VF £140 / \$280**

AE half-prutah John Hyrcanus I. Obv. Palm-branch Rev. Lily



**B84: VF £60 / \$120**

AE prutah John Hyrcanus I, naming Hyrcanus as “HEAD of the community of the Jews”



**B85: VF £2,750 / \$5,500**

AE double-prutah John Hyrcanus I. Obv. Double-cornucopiae  
Rev. Helmet

Coin **B86** reads *YEHUDAH* (the final H on the second line) for Judas Aristobulus II. His coins are harder to find, and identification is largely for negative reasons! He does not have the box-shaped KH in his name, nor the N Th N of Alexander Jannaeus. We note that he reverts to the old style of giving the Community of the Jews equality with himself.



**B86: VF £50 / \$100**

AE prutah Judaea 104-103 BC Judas Aristobulus I

Alexander Jannaeus was Judas’ younger brother; and his ambition was to extend the boundaries of his kingdom to what they had been in King David’s time. This meant that he was embroiled in constant wars; and neglected his duties as High Priest, which did not please the Pharisees. During his attendance at one Feast of Tabernacles the people did not like the perfunctory way Jannaeus carried out the preliminary water libation, and began to pelt him with the citrons they carried as part of the ceremony; and they shouted that, as a descendant of a captive, he was unfit to offer sacrifice as High Priest. His answer – he had six thousand Jews slaughtered to avenge this insult.

Coin **B87**, Jannaeus’ “inscriptional type”, used the old formula indicating partnership with the “Community”, but surely this must be earlier in his reign, before the citrons episode. By Coin **B88** he was calling himself “Yehonathan ham-melek” (Jannaeus the

King) round the star within wreath on the reverse, whilst the obverse has “of King Alexander” written in Greek round an anchor – why choose an anchor, which was a badge of the Seleucid Greek kings? Very many, often small and very crude, copies of B88 exist, as coins **B89** and **B170**, and these were probably produced during the troubled period at the end of, and following on from, Jannaeus’ reign.



**B87: VF £25 / \$50**

AE prutah Judaea 103-76 BC Alexander Jannaeus



**B88: VF £30 / \$60**

AE prutah Alexander Jannaeus Obv. Anchor Rev. Star within wreath. Around *Yehonathan ham-melek*

The last of Jannaeus’ types (coin **B90**) had the same legends as **B88**, but with a Jewish-looking lily on the obverse (perhaps aiming at reconciliation with the Pharisees), and the anchor on the reverse. These coins are hard to find as most of them were overstruck by Hyrcanus II, see coin **B93**.



**B89: VF £15 / \$30**

AE Judaea c76-63 BC Crude copy of **B88**



**B90: VF £60 / \$120**

AE prutah Alexander Jannaeus. Obv. Lily Rev. Anchor

Between 66 and 62 BC Pompey, the great Roman general, was campaigning in Asia. At the time there were two candidates for the high priesthood in Judaea, Judas Aristobulus II and John Hyrcanus II, who both sought the great man’s favour. So at this point we include a coin showing Pompey. Though he did mint coins before his murder in Egypt in 48 BC, those showing his portrait were minted later by his sons. Coin **B91** was actually minted by his younger son Sextus Pompey in Sicily between 42 and 40 BC; but it has a good portrait of Pompey the Great on the obverse.



**B91: VF £550 / \$1100**

AR denarius Sicily 42-40 BC. Obv. Showing head of Pompey  
(killed 48 BC)

In 63 BC, faced with the opportunity of choosing the next Jewish high priest, Pompey chose John Hyrcanus II rather than Aristobulus, probably feeling that he would be the more likely of the two to support Roman interests.

In c55 BC the Roman Republican moneyer Aulus Plautius minted a coin type, **B92**, that shows us a suppliant kneeling by a camel, with the two words “Bacchius Iudaeus”. It is thought likely that “Bacchius” is Aristobulus II, whose claim Pompey had rejected, and that we see him at the moment when he was submitting to Pompey.



**B92: VF £75 / \$150**

AR Roman Republican denarius c55 BC. Rev. Bacchius (probably  
= Aristobulus II) submits to Pompey

John Hyrcanus II minted a prutah under the name “Yonatan”. These are of the inscriptional type; but with the whole issue overstruck on Jannaeus’ Lily/anchor coins, as **B93**.



**B93: VF £40 / \$80**

AE prutah Judaea 63-40 BC John Hyrcanus II (Yonatan)  
overstruck on **B90**.

Mattathias Antigonus was younger son of the ousted Aristobulus II, and he went to the Parthians for help to gain for himself the Jewish high priesthood. The Parthians managed to capture Hyrcanus II, and presented him to Mattathias as payment for his hoped-for support against the Romans. Actually, I rather liked Mattathias until I read this in Paul Rynearson’s “The Numismatic legacy of the Jews”: “In order to ensure that Hyrcanus could never be High Priest again, Mattathias personally mutilated the

prisoner's ears with his own teeth, making him ritually unfit for that holy office”.

The Parthians established Mattathias as High Priest/King of Judaea in 40 BC, the same year that the Romans appointed Herod to be King of the same country! The Parthian army was defeated by the Romans in 38 BC, and Jerusalem itself fell to the Romans, but only after a siege lasting five months - so Herod's actual reign started in 37 BC, whilst poor old Mattathias was taken to Antioch and beheaded there!

Mattathias minted coins **B94** to **B97** using very much the same designs as those of his Hasmonean predecessors, with cornucopiae and wreaths, and with a Hebrew legend proclaiming “Mattathias the High Priest and the Community of the Jews”, but the whole look of the coins and of the writing is different - whilst the reverse of the two larger bronzes, the eight-prutot and the four-prutot, have the Greek legend, “of King Antigonos”. But Mattathias' most interesting coin is **B98**.



**B94: VF £140 / \$280**

AE 8-prutot. Judaea 40-37 BC. Mattathias Antigonos. Obv.  
Double cornucopiae Rev. Ivy-wreath



**B95: VF £110 / \$220**

AE 4-prutot. Judaea 40-37 BC Mattathias Antigonos Obv.  
Single cornucopia. Rev. legend in ivy-wreath.



**B96: VF £60 / \$120**

AE prutah Mattathias Antigonos



**B97: VF £75 / \$150**

AE prutah Mattathias Antigonos

One day in 1989, I was sorting through a bag of Ancients on offer at 50 pence each, when I noticed a small bronze that looked out of place - it was too flat and thin to be a

“Greek”; but it later turned out to be Coin **B98**. It is different from Mattathias’ other coins, with the Menorah, the seven-branched candlestick, on the obverse, and the shewbread table on the reverse - both very holy items from the Temple. This coin type may have been minted during the five months when the Romans were besieging Jerusalem, urging the Jews not to let such sacred things fall into the hands of strangers.



**B98: Very Rare and Expensive**

AE Jerusalem 37 BC Mat. Antigonos Obv. Menorah  
Rev. Shewbread table

Coins **B99** to **B102**, which were minted by Herod, all have the letters L gamma (Year 3) at the left of the obverse, and a TP monogram at the right. The TP (= our “TR”) has been taken to stand for “trito”, “third”, meaning “third year”- the same as the L gamma. If these do give a regnal date they would, if the start of his reign is counted as 40 BC, bring his “third” year to 37 BC, when he “really” began and a good point for his first coin issue! But scholars have recently pointed out that Mattathias’ Jerusalem did not fall until Herod’s fourth year - and so TP must mean something other than “3rd year”, probably “tetrarch”, which would refer back to 42 BC when Mark Antony appointed Herod to be tetrarch of Galilee. This would mean that the “L gamma” coins were minted in 40 BC, when he “officially” began reigning in Judaea. If this is so, Mattathias and Herod would have been minting coins for Judaea simultaneously!



**B99: VF £425 / \$850**

AE 8-prutot Judaea dated 40 BC or 37 BC, according to your view of what TP means. Herod the Great, (40 or) 37 BC – 4 BC. Obv. Tripod with bowl. Rev. Helmet (or possibly incense-burner)



**B100: VF £80 / \$160**

AE 4-prutot Judaea 40 or 37 BC. Herod the Great. Obv. Helmet  
Rev. Shield





**B101: VF £110 / \$220**

AE 2-prutot 40 or 37 BC Obv. Caduceus Rev. Pomegranate



**B102: VF £200 / \$400**

AE prutah 40 or 37 BC Obv. Aphlaston (ship decoration)  
Rev. Palm-branch

We note that Herod's coins have no Hebrew, but only Greek legends, naming him as king. He does not use the high priestly title because his family had not been Jews long enough for him to take that office. Some of his designs are definitely Greek rather than Hebrew. The "helmet" on the obverse of coin **B99** seems to be either "a helmet of the Dioscuri (Castor and Pollux)", or not a helmet at all, but rather a pagan incense-burner. The caduceus (wand of Mercury) on the obverse of **B101** is certainly Greek or Roman. On Coin **B109**, a prutah that is very like a type used by Alexander Jannaeus, he has spoilt it, from the Jewish point of view, by substituting between the horns of the cornucopiae another caduceus for the good Jewish pomegranate. Worst of all, Coin **B110** shows a living creature, an eagle, thereby breaking the Jewish law about not having graven images, as stated in Exodus chapter 20, verse 4, the second of the Ten Commandments.

It is very difficult trying to date the later coins of Herod. The eagle on **B110** seems to connect with the erection of the figure of an eagle over the main gate of the Temple (which angered the Jews very much), and coin **B111**, with the galley on the reverse, must link with the foundation of the harbour of Caesarea in 10 BC. But otherwise there is nothing really special to say about coins **B103** to **B108**. Coin **B109** is most like the coins of Herod's predecessors, and is by far the commonest Herod type.



**B103: VF £110 / \$220**

AE 37-4 BC Herod the Great. Obv. Tripod Rev. Cross within diadem.



**B104: VF £110 / \$220**  
AE 37-4 BC as last



**B105: VF £140 / \$280**

AE 37-4 BC Obv. "King Herod" Rev. Tripod



**B106: VF £275 / \$550**  
AE 37-4 BC similar to last



**B107: VF £140 / \$280**  
AE 37-4 BC similar to last



**B108: VF £80 / \$160**

AE 37-4 BC Obv. "King Herod". Rev. Anchor



**B109: VF £35 / \$70**

AE prutah. 37-4 BC Herod the Great. Obv. Anchor. Rev. Crossed cornucopiae.



**B110: VF £140 / \$280**

AE 37-4 BC. Herod the Great. Obv. Cornucopia. Rev. Eagle



**B111: VF £140 / \$280**

AE 37-4 BC Obv. Anchor Rev. Galley

Herod died in 4 BC at Jericho. He was succeeded by his three sons, with the territory of his kingdom divided between them. The Emperor Augustus appointed Herod Archelaus to be ruler of Judaea, Samaria, and Idumaea, with the title “Ethnarch”. Herod Antipas became Tetrarch of Galilee and Peraea. The youngest, Herod Philip, received the non-Jewish lands of the North, Gaulanitis, Batanea, Auranitis, and Trachonitis, also with the title “Tetrarch”.

On the coins Archelaus and Antipas are both called “Herod”; but they are easy to distinguish, because Archelaus is always “Ethnarch”, and Antipas is “Tetrarch”. Herod Philip is “Philip the Tetrarch”.

Archelaus’ coins are all, except for **B117**, very like his father’s – with the addition of Coin **B115**, a double-prutah. **B112** can easily be mistaken for **B109** if the letters of “ETHN” on the reverse are not too clear! There does seem to be a nautical flavour about coins **B112** to **B116**, and we must remember that Archelaus did hold Caesarea and the sea-coast. Coin **B117** is different, with a lovely “Jewish” bunch of grapes on the obverse; but a helmet that looks very Macedonian on the reverse. Archelaus treated his subjects so brutally that he was removed by the Romans in 6 AD, and replaced by Roman governors with the rank of “procurator”, which was lower than that held by the Governors of Syria!



**B112: VF £35 / \$70**

AE prutah Judaea. 4 BC –6 AD Herod “Ethnarch” Archelaus (not to be confused with **B109** of Herod the Great)



**B113: VF £60 / \$120**

AE prutah 4 BC – 6 AD Archelaus



**B114: VF £40 / \$80**

AE prutah Archelaus. Rev. Forepart of galley.



**B115: VF £225 / \$450**

AE double-prutah 4 BC-6 AD Archelaus Rev. War-galley



**B116: VF £110 / \$220**

AE prutah Archelaus – as last



**B117: VF £40 / \$80**

AE prutah 4 BC-6 AD Archelaus. Obv. Bunch of grapes  
Rev. Crested helmet

The earliest coin of Herod Antipas, 4 BC – 39 AD, was not minted until “Year 24”, which equals 19/20 AD (Coin **B118**). This comes in three sizes for three different denominations, and has a reed on the obverse, with “Tiberias” in a wreath on the reverse. It is thought that this was a special issue to mark the foundation of the city of Tiberias, a new city named in honour of the Roman Emperor Tiberius, and which Antipas made his capital.



**B118: VF £175 / \$350**

AE Herod Antipas, Tetrarch of Galilee and Peraea, 4 BC-39 AD.  
Dated “Year 24” = 19/20 AD. Obv. Reed Rev. “Tiberias” in wreath.

Other coins, similar to **B118**, were also minted at Tiberias, but with a palm-branch rather than a reed – these also come in different sizes - see Coins **B119** and **B120**. The latter is the smallest, having on the reverse just T C, the first and last letters of “Tiberias” in Greek.



**B119: VF £175 / \$350**

AE Herod Antipas, minted in Tiberias in “Year 34”= 29/30 AD.  
Obv. Palm-branch



**B120: VF £150 / \$300**

AE Herod Antipas “Year 34”, 29/30 AD. Rev. First and last  
letters of “Tiberias”

Antipas’ final issue, dated 38/39 AD, reads “Gaius Caesar Germanicus”, the name of the Emperor Caligula, on the reverse, with various parts of a date-palm on the obverse – the whole tree for the largest; a branch for the medium-sized; and a bunch of dates for the little one – Coins **B121** to **B123**.



**B121: VF £2,750 / \$5,500**

AE Herod Antipas, 4 BC-39 AD “Year 43” = 38/9 AD. Obv. Date-palm  
The reverse names Caligula (as “Caius Caesar Germanicus”)



**B122: VF £550 / \$1100**

AE Herod Antipas. Similar. Obv. Palm-branch. Rev. as last



**B123: VF £275 / \$550**

AE Herod Antipas similar Obv. Bunch of dates. Rev. “Caius Caesar” for Caligula

Herod Philip reigned from 4 BC to 34 AD. His coins are wholly non-Jewish in character, as were the territories over which he ruled. They show the head of the reigning Roman Emperor (or Emperor and his wife) on the obverse, and a pagan temple on the reverse, usually with letter or letters indicating Philip’s regnal year between the columns, coins **B124** and **B125**. On Philip’s death his tetrarchy became part of the Roman province of Syria



**B124: VF £1100 / \$2200**

AE Herod Philip as Tetrarch, 4 BC- 34 AD, ruling over territories to the North of Palestine. Obv. Heads of Augustus and Livia. Rev. Temple in which Greek “9”, (theta) for regnal year, 5/6 AD



**B125: VF £1100 / \$2200**

AE Tetrarch Philip. 4 BC – 34 AD. Obv. Augustus Rev. Temple in which “Year 12”= 8/9 AD

After Archelaus had been deposed, the Roman Procurators ruled over Judaea, Samaria and Idumaea. Their capital was Caesarea rather than Jerusalem. This meant that during Jesus’ ministry, the Romans governed Judaea: Herod Antipas (“that fox”) ruled in Galilee and Philip up in Caesarea Philippi.

The first of the Roman governors was “Caponius” 6-9 AD, whose prutahs show a date-palm and an ear of barley, Coin **B126**, must have been perfectly acceptable to the Jews. He was followed by Ambibulus, 9 – 12 AD, who used the same types, **B127**. These procuratorial coins are all dated by the regnal year of the reigning Emperor. Caponius minted in “Year 36” of Augustus; and Ambibulus in “Year 39”, “Year 40” and “Year 41”. The collector can distinguish Caponius “Year 36” from Ambibulus “Year 39” even when the last letter of the date is not clear, because a) the lowest branch of Caponius’ palm-tree does not turn downwards as Ambibulus’ trees do; and b) the two

letter/numerals of Coponius are written on the same level, whereas Ambibulus has his "9" on a higher level than the "30".



**B126: VF £40 / \$80**

AE prutah Judaea under Coponius, Procurator 6-9 AD.  
Obv. Ear of barley, "of Caesar" around.  
Rev. Date-palm. "Year 36" (of Augustus) = 6 AD



**B127: VF £30 / \$60**

AE prutah Judaea "Year 39" = 9 AD under Ambibulus, 9-12 AD

Next came Valerius Gratus, governor from 15 AD till the arrival of Pontius Pilate in 26 AD. Gratus' prutahs are dated in years of Tiberius, 14 – 37 AD. He minted a number of types, **B128** – **B134**; but his commonest, minted in "Year 4" (17 AD), "Year 5" (18 AD), and "Year 11" (24 AD), shown as **B134**, has on the obverse "TIB KAICAP" in a wreath; and on the reverse the name "Julia" on either side of a palm branch (see note on B186).



**B128: VF £110 / \$220**

AE prutah Judaea under Gratus, 15-26 AD. Dated "Year 2 of Tiberius Caesar" = 15 AD



**B129: VF £60 / \$120**

AE prutah of 15 AD Judaea under Gratus. Obv. Wreath within which "Julia" = Livia. See note on **B186**



**B130: VF £110 / \$220**

AE prutah of "Year 3" = 16 AD. Judaea under Gratus.



**B131: VF £70 / \$140**

AE prutah Judaea under Gratus, 16 AD. Rev. "Year 3" at side of three lilies.



**B132: VF £140 / \$280**

AE prutah of "Year 4" = 17 AD. Judaea under Gratus. Obv. Vine with grapes Rev. Amphora



**B133: VF £140 / \$280**

AE prutah – Judaea under Gratus 17 AD as last; but "Krater" (cup) on reverse



**B134: VF £40 / \$80**

AE prutah Judaea under Gratus, dated "Year 11" 24 AD



## Chapter Four

### THE GOSPEL STORY

St.Luke chapter 1, verse 26 tells us, “In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee named Nazareth.” This happening is known as the “Annunciation”, when the angel told Mary that she had been chosen to bear a Son, “and thou shalt call His name Jesus”. The scene is depicted on a beautiful gold coin from Provence **B135**, with a lily between the two figures representing the purity of Mary. The Latin words around are St.Luke chapter 1, verse 28, “Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee”.



**B135: VF £1000 / \$2000**

AU salut d'or Naples and Provence 1285-1309 Charles II  
Rev. “The Annunciation”.

The angel of the Lord also appeared to Joseph, as St. Matthew chapter 1, verse 23 relates. This quotes the prophecy in Isaiah chapter 7, verse 14 and reads, “They shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us”. “Emmanuel”, written in Greek, surrounds the figure of Christ on the obverse of this 11th century Byzantine “anonymous” coin, **B136**. The reverse shows the Cross, with the words, “Jesus Christ conquers”.



**B136: VF £20 / \$40**

AE anonymous follis. Byzantium c1034-1041 Obv. Christ standing. Legend “Emmanuel”. Rev. Cross. In the angles “Jesus Christ conquers”

Mary and Joseph were being prepared to receive God's Son Jesus, and so each year does the Christian church prepare for Jesus' birth at Bethlehem as it observes the season of Advent. "Advent" means "coming", and the Romans frequently prepared for the coming of their Emperor, with a coin such as **B137**. In 244 AD the Roman army of the East in Mesopotamia murdered Emperor Gordian III, and on the 25th February of that year they proclaimed Philip as the new Augustus, with his young son, also Philip, as Caesar (prince). The two Philips did not reach Rome until July 23rd, when there were great celebrations, including the issue of ADVENTUS AVGG coins to commemorate the "coming" of the new rulers.



**B137: VF £30 / \$60**

AR antoninianus. Rome 244-249 AD Obv. Philip I.  
Rev. legend "The Coming of the Rulers"

Judaea was in a strange position as part of the Roman Empire under the Emperor, and also to a certain extent controlled by the Governor of the Province of Syria – yet still ruled by its own King!

St. Luke chapter 2, verse 1 tells us, "There went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed". Augustus, 31 BC – 14 AD, minted many coins during his long reign, of which I show just two, **B138** and **B139**. Verse 2 continues, "This taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria". But was he? Cyrenius, or Quirinius, was indeed Governor of Syria from 6 to 9 AD, and did hold a census - in 6 AD; but this is too late for Jesus' birth, which has to come within Herod's reign - but Herod died in 4 BC. The Governor of Syria is actually named on some coins from cities within his province, particularly on certain coins of Antioch. Coin **B140** reads "Year 27" (of the Actian Era which commenced in 31 BC), making its date 5/4 BC; but it names the Governor as Varus, not Cyrenius – as do coins of Years 25 and 26 – ie the most likely period for Our Saviour's birth. Either Cyrenius was not actually "Governor", but a high-ranking outsider called in to conduct this census, and given temporary Governor's rank for this purpose; or St. Luke got mixed up with the names.



**B138: VF £120 / \$240**

AR denarius Rome 31 BC- 14 AD. Obv. Head of Caesar Augustus. Rev. Caius and Lucius Caesar.



**B139: Fine £45 / \$90**

AE “as” of Rome, 31 BC – 14 AD. Obv. Head of Augustus



**B140: VF £50 / \$100**

AE Antioch in Syria, dated 5/4 BC, naming Varus as Governor. Obv. Head of Zeus. Rev. City goddess, “River Orontes” swimming at feet

In St. Matthew chapter 2 we have the story of the Wise Men. King Herod, represented by coin **B141**, must have had a very nasty surprise when the Wise Men arrived at his palace asking, “Where is He that is born King of the Jews?”, and he obviously suspects that they are referring to the Messiah. Herod’s religious advisers tell him that the Christ will be born in Bethlehem, so this is where he directs the men, telling them to come back and report to him, so that he can worship the Babe too! Coin **B142** shows the Wise Men on their way, following the star. St. Matthew chapter 2, verse 11 tells how they arrive, and present “unto Him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh”, as depicted on coin **B143**.



**B141: VF £110 / \$220**

AE Judaea 37 – 4 BC, naming “King Herod”



**B142: Very Rare and Expensive**

AU Two and a half ducats Rome. Pope Leo X, 1513-21.  
Rev. The Magi follow the star.



**B143: VF £50 / \$100**

AE reckoning counter. Spanish Netherlands 1562.  
Obv. Philip II of Spain. Rev. The Magi present their gifts

Who were these Wise Men, commonly known as “the Magi”? During the Middle Ages they were thought of as three kings, and somehow their bones (very valuable things were bones in Mediaeval times!) ended up in Germany, in Cologne Cathedral. On the coat-of-arms of Cologne, on the shield on the breast of the double-headed eagle (representing the Holy Roman Empire), as can be seen on coin **B144**, are three crowns representing the Magi above eleven “drops of blood” standing for St. Ursula and the 11,000 virgins who were travelling with her. One day they were journeying peacefully down the River Rhine when, near Cologne, they were set upon and killed by Huns.



**B144: VF £20 / \$40**

AE 4 hellers Cologne 1768. Rev. The city arms, showing the crowns of the “Three Kings”.

The Magi were actually an Iranian priestly caste involved in the fire-worship of the Zoroastrian religion. Marco Polo passed through Iran on his way to China some time between 1271 and 1275. In his “Travels” he relates that there was a city called Saveh, from which “the Three Magi set out when they came to worship Jesus Christ”, and he tells us that they were also buried in large and imposing tombs in Saveh, which lies around 80 miles South-West of Teheran. We learn elsewhere that there was a very important astronomical observatory in Saveh - until Genghiz Khan swept through the area and destroyed it. This really does sound very much like the sort of place from which our “Wise Men” would have come. As Iran was at the period of Jesus’ birth ruled by the Parthians, whose King at the appropriate time was Phraates IV, 38-2 BC, I show a selection of this ruler’s coins, **B145**, **B146A**, **B146B** and **B147**. The difficulty with Parthian coins is that they always name Arsaces, who founded the Dynasty c250 BC, rather than the current ruler, so we can only attribute coins by style, or (much easier!) by looking them up in a catalogue.

The Gospel Story



**B145: VF £110 / \$220**

AR tetradrachm Parthia, 38 BC – 2 BC.  
Obv. Head of Phraates IV



**B146A: VF £40 / \$80**

AR drachm of Phraates IV, 38 – 2 BC



**B146B: VF £40 / \$80**

AR as last but different obverse



**B147: VF £20 / \$40**

AE Parthia. Obv. Phraates IV Rev. Bunch of grapes and two corn-ears.

The Holy Family was warned by God to escape from the threat posed by King Herod. They travelled down to Egypt, where they remained for a number of years. Egyptian coins **B148**, **B149** and **B150** each name the Emperor Augustus, and thus represent the time of their residence there.



**B148: VF £100 / \$200**

AE Alexandria, Egypt 31 BC-14 AD Obv. Head of Augustus



**B149: VF £120 / \$240**

AE Alexandria 31 BC – 14 AD Obv. as last



**B150: VF £100 / \$200**

AE Alexandria 31 BC – 14 AD Obv. as last

Although actually God Himself, Jesus was at this time just a helpless little Baby, and, from the human point of view, if King Herod's men had got hold of Him, He would have stood no chance, especially if He was, as it says in St.Luke ch2, verse 12, “wrapped in swaddling clothes” of the type shown on the reverse of coin **B151** from southern Italy. Coin **B152** from the Byzantine Empire shows Mary holding a very different sort of Baby Jesus - a “grown-up” Baby, with the Cross depicted inside His halo. (Religious pictures in Byzantine art are not meant to be realistic; but to direct our thoughts upwards and outwards to the subject represented. When we look at the obverse of **B152** we are not supposed to see Christ as a little baby; but are meant to meditate on the “human aspect” of Our Lord, including His ministry and His Crucifixion). Note that on either side of the Virgin's head on B152 are two Greek letters, above each of which is a contraction mark (a sort of raised-up hyphen). These represent the Greek form of the Latin title MATER DEI (“Mother of God”), which was first used by St. Ambrose of Milan, c340-397 AD. The reverse translates as, “Mother of God, full of glory, he who puts his trust in Thee will never fail in his undertakings”. Even less realistic is the image of the Virgin Mary, crowned and enthroned in Heaven, as the “Patroness of the Kingdom of Hungary” on coin **B153**, but at least on this one the Baby Jesus looks like an “ordinary” sort of Child, with His hand raised in blessing.



**B151: VF £100 / \$200**

AE Norman County of Calabria and Sicily Roger I, 1072-1101. Rev. “Mary, the Mother of the Lord”



**B152: VF £275 / \$550**

AR miliaresion Byzantium 976-1025 AD. Basil II.  
Obv. Virgin Mary holds Jesus.



**B153: VF £200 / \$400**

AU ducat. Hungary 1739. Emperor Charles VI, 1711-1740

In St. Luke chapter 2, verses 41 - 51 we read how, when Jesus was twelve years old, the Holy Family went up to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival, travelling with a large number of friends. As they returned home, none of them noticed that Jesus was missing from the party until the end of the first day's journey. His parents anxiously went back to look for Him, and found Jesus having a learned discussion with the doctors of the law in the Temple. When rebuked by His mother, Jesus replied, "Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" To illustrate this episode we show coin **B154**, minted long after the Destruction of the Temple in 70 AD, but nevertheless showing the façade of the Temple in Jerusalem as Jesus must have seen it. During the Greco-Roman period the cult image, usually enlarged, was commonly depicted between the central arches of a temple. It is thought that the object between the central arches here is the Ark of the Covenant, shown as a portable shrine with dots marking the frontal view of the carry-bars.



**B154: VF £1500 / \$3000**

AR tetradrachm. Judaea 132-135 AD Bar Cochba Revolt.  
Obv. Façade of the Temple in Jerusalem. Rev. Lulav

As we move forward in time towards the actual ministry of Jesus, we come to the reign of the Roman Emperor Tiberius, 14 - 37 AD, who is represented here by **B155**, a bronze "as" - Tiberius' commonest silver denarius comes later, where it is shown as

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B175, the “tribute penny”. Jesus' own ministry was preceded by that of His cousin John the Baptist, whose baptising ministry began, according to St. Luke chapter 3, verse 1, “in the 15th year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar”. Coin **B156** is a gold florin from Florence, first minted in 1252, which was soon to become a widely copied gold coin type. The reverse of this shows John, as described in St. Matthew chapter 3, verses 4, wearing his “raiment of camel's hair”. He points skywards as he prepares the way for the Lord. Malta was for many years the home of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, whose patron was John the Baptist, and the Knights produced some very beautiful John the Baptist coins, such as **B157** which shows the Baptist pointing down at a lamb. St. John chapter 1, verse 29, says that John pointed to Jesus saying, “Behold the Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world”. But the Baptist coin we would all surely most like to obtain is **B158**, the Aethelred II penny which was probably issued to commemorate the 1000 AD Millenium (though actually produced c1009), which shows the “Lamb of God” on the obverse; but adds a very important part to the story by placing a dove on the reverse, reminding us that when (St. Matthew chapter 3, verse 16) John baptised Jesus in the River Jordan he saw the Holy Spirit descending on Our Lord in the shape of a dove.



**B155: Fine £55 / \$110**

AE “as” of Tiberius. Rome, 14-37 AD Rev. Rudder and globe



**B156: VF £250 / \$500**

AU florin. Italy – Florence, from 1252 on. Obv. Lily  
Rev. John the Baptist





**B157: VF £90 / \$180**

AR 15 tari 1762. Knights of St. John of Malta.  
Rev. John the Baptist points to small lamb at feet



**B158: Very Rare and Expensive**

AR penny 1009 AD England (Southampton mint) Aethelred II,  
978-1016. Obv. "The Lamb of God"  
Rev. The Dove of the Holy Spirit.

Not so nice is **B159**, the Maltese copper showing the head of John the Baptist on a meat dish, ready to be presented to Salome as a reward for her dancing, as St. Mark relates in chapter 6, verses 21 - 28. Most of us probably hope that Salome came to a sticky end! But no chance. Unfortunately we meet her again (numismatically) in Chalcis in Lebanon, where she appears as the queen on the reverse of **B160**, with her husband King Aristobulos, on the obverse, who ruled somewhere around 72 - 92 AD.



**B159: VF £25 / \$50**

AE 20 grani of 1742. Malta under the Knights. Obv. Head of  
John the Baptist on a charger (meat-dish).



**B160: Very Rare and Expensive**

AE Chalcis in Lebanon c72-92 AD Obv. Head of King  
Aristobulus. Rev. Head of Queen Salome

At the commencement of His ministry, both St. Matthew chapter 4 and St.Luke chapter 4 tell us that Jesus went into the wilderness for 40 days, and, at the end of that time, was tempted by the devil. The Christian Church took over the physical shape of the Greek shepherd-god Pan, with the little horns on his head, the tail, and the goat's feet, to represent the devil - so this justifies me in including **B161** from Macedonia, because the obverse depicts Pan's head in the centre of a Macedonian shield. When tempted, Jesus was at the end of a long period of fasting, and obviously physically at a low ebb. The devil did not so much tempt Jesus to do bad things as NOT to do the will of God, which was to go through with dying on the Cross, bearing upon Himself the sins of the world.



**B161: VF £500 / \$1000**

AR tetradrachm Macedonia c271-265 BC. King Antigonus Gonatas. Obv. Head of Pan within Macedonian shield

We read in St. John chapter 2, verses 1-11 that Jesus' first ever miracle was when He changed the water into wine at a wedding feast in Cana. Though our coins cannot show us this particular event, we can represent it by illustrating a Byzantine wedding between the Emperor Anastasius and Ariadne, where the Christian nature of the ceremony, as seen on **B162**, is emphasised by Jesus Himself standing between bride and groom with an arm round each, drawing them closer together. Jesus' injunction about marriage in St.Mark chapter 10, verse 9, "what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder", is quoted (in Latin) on the reverse of **B163**, showing the close bonding of Mary Queen of Scots with her French bridegroom, the Dauphin (later, King Francis II). How unfortunate for Mary that he died such a short time later!



**B162: Very Rare and Expensive**

AU solidus. Byzantium, 491-518 AD. Obv. Anastasius.  
Rev. Christ standing between bride and groom



**B163: VF £20 / \$40**

Billon “nonsunt” (12 pence Scots) 1558 celebrating marriage of Queen Mary and French Dauphin Francis

Jesus' first disciples were the four fishermen, Peter and Andrew, James and John. St. Luke chapter 5, verses 1-11 tells how the four had been out all night, but caught nothing. They were sitting down despondently preparing their nets for the next night, when Jesus came by, and asked if He could use Peter's boat as a sort of pulpit from which to preach to the people. After this He told Peter, “Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch”. Peter was reluctant to do this, as it would mean washing and refolding the nets all over again; but nevertheless he did do as Jesus asked, and almost immediately the nets filled to overflowing with a massive catch, which required the assistance of James and John to draw to land. Jesus told the four men to follow Him, and that from now on they would “catch” men rather than fish. Coin **B164** shows Peter fishing; but until, through knowing Jesus and by the power of the Holy Spirit, he became a changed man I cannot think that a very ordinary rough working fisherman would have been allowed to wear a halo!



**B164: VF £350 / \$700**

AU “fiorino di camera”. Rome 1471-84 Pope Sixtus IV.  
Rev. St.Peter fishing

St.Mark chapter 1, verses 40 - 45 tells how Jesus healed a leper, and for this I show coin **B165**, which comes from Edessa, the capital of a small kingdom called Osroene. The Roman Emperor Commodus occupies the obverse, with the local king appearing on the reverse. This was Abgar VIII. A tradition (unfortunately almost certainly false) states that one of this Abgar's forebears, Abgar V, aware of the miracles Jesus was performing, and the dangers He was in, wrote Jesus a letter offering Him asylum in Osroene, and asking for help with regard to an affliction from which he himself suffered - which may well have been leprosy! Jesus healed him, and told Abgar that He would send a disciple to Edessa after His Resurrection.

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**B165: VF £25 / \$50**

AE Mesopotamia – Edessa. Obv. Roman Emperor Commodus. Rev. King Abgar VIII, 179-214 AD

Coin **B166** comes from Gadara, ie from “the country of the Gadarenes” referred to in St. Mark chapter 5, with reference to the man who was called “Legion” because of the many demons by which he was possessed. Jesus cast these out, but allowed them to enter into a herd of swine nearby. The swine immediately rushed off over a cliff and into the sea and drowned. The man, however, was healed of his madness.



**B166: VF £50 / \$100**

AE Decapolis (Jordan) - Gadara, dated 73/4 AD. Obv. Head of Titus Rev. Crossed cornucopiae

The Pharisees were very much opposed to Jesus - but not quite all of them. One was called Nicodemus, and St. John chapter 3, verses 1-13 tell how this man came to see Jesus by night (presumably so that his fellow Pharisees would not know), and Jesus told him he must be “born again”. We believe that Nicodemus did have a spiritual rebirth, because we read in St. John chapter 19, verse 39, that Nicodemus was there with Joseph of Arimathea, helping to take the Body of Our Lord down from the Cross. **B167**, from Lucca in Tuscany, shows the crowned Head of Christ on the obverse. This was part of a Byzantine crucifix taken to Lucca in the 8th century (now in Lucca Cathedral). Legend tells us that this crucifix was carved by Nicodemus at the command of an angel, but when he had finished all except the head he fell asleep. On awaking, he discovered that the angel had completed the figure for him.



**B167: VF £20 / \$40**

AE quattrino. Italy – Lucca 1553. Obv. The “Holy Face” of Christ

Coin **B168** shows a view of Mount Gerizim in Samaria, which was especially holy to the Samaritans. This mountain features in the story of another interview that Jesus had, this time with a Samaritan woman, as told in St. John chapter 4. In verse 20, the woman says, “Our fathers worshipped in this mountain (Gerizim), but you Jews say that Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship”. Jesus replies that “God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth”. In other words, the particular place (or denomination) does not really matter.



**B168: VF £100 / \$200**

AE Samaria – Neapolis, 218-222 AD. Obv. Elagabalus.  
Rev. Mount Gerizim

One Sabbath day, as St. Luke chapter 4 tells us, Jesus was in His home town of Nazareth attending the synagogue, when He stood up and told the Jews a few unpalatable home truths. The Jews took Him out and led Him to the brow of a hill, from which they intended to throw Him down. Then comes verse 30, a verse which was to influence English coinage for many years - “But He passing through the midst of them went His way”. This text, in Latin of course, was inscribed on Edward III's gold Double-Leopard of 1344, illustrated as **B169**. Thence it passed to its numismatic successor, the gold noble. Why did King Edward III choose this verse? It is thought that it may refer to the naval battle of Sluys of 1340, when Edward's ship sailed safely right through the centre of the French fleet.



**B169: Very Rare and Expensive**

AU double leopard (or florin). England 1344. Edward III,  
1327-77, with St.Luke chapter 4, verse 30 inscribed round the  
margin of the reverse

On one occasion (St. Mark chapter 12, verses 41-44) Jesus and His disciples were in the Temple courtyard in Jerusalem near one of the Temple offertory boxes. The richer worshippers put in far greater gifts than “a certain poor widow, who threw in two mites which make a farthing”. However, Jesus points out that this widow had given more than any of the others, because hers was sacrificial giving. But what did she actually give? The word “mite” translates the Greek “lepton”, for which the Hebrew original is “prutah”, so her coins were certainly from the long series of prutahs minted in Judaea. Certain very small and barbarous prutahs, as **B170**, minted in the reign of Alexander Jannaeus, have been nicknamed “widow's mites”, but this is probably only because they are very small. More likely the widow put in coins from the “procuratorial” period, perhaps **B171**, which would have been common currency in Judaea at the time.

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**B170: VF £10 / \$20**

AE Judaea c80-63 BC. Crude copy of Jewish prutah, nicknamed "Widow's mite"



**B171: VF £40 / \$80**

AE prutah Judaea dated 11 AD. Procurator Ambibulus, 9-12  
– possibly this was the type the widow really used

It is interesting that if you fancied sparrow for dinner in Bible times, according to St. Matthew chapter 10, verse 29 you could purchase two birds for one farthing; but, if you were expecting guests, you could do better than that! St. Luke chapter 11, verse 6 says, "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings?". The word "farthing" translates the Greek "assarion", a diminutive of "as", and probably means any small-sized provincial bronze coin, such as **B172** from Antioch. In the England of the period around 1611, when the Authorised Bible was produced, there was only one base metal coin circulating, the poor little thin farthing illustrated as **B173**.



**B172: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Antioch in Syria, dated 4 BC. Obv. Augustus. The sort of coin called a "farthing" in our translations of the New Testament



**B173: VF £20 / \$40**

AE "Lennox" farthing. England, 1614-25. James I

The Pharisees joined with the Herodians on one occasion in an attempt to trap Jesus (St. Mark chapter 12, verses 13 - 17). They asked Him, "Is it lawful for us to give tribute to Caesar or not?" If Jesus suggested that it was right to pay this very unpopular tax, He would immediately lose favour with the people. If Jesus said, "No, you need not pay it", He could have been reported to the nearest Roman soldier! However, Jesus' answer was extremely clever. Though on Roman coins the Emperor's

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name is usually in the nominative case, this is not so with Greek - on Greek and other coins from the East the ruler's name is commonly written in the genitive, or "possessive" case, reflecting that in the East they did in fact consider that a coin "belonged" to the ruler whose name and portrait was on it, or to his legitimate successor. Jesus told them to show Him a denarius - a word which the Authorised Bible translates as "penny" (the "penny" of 1611 was a silver coin, as **B174**). The denarius shown to Jesus would most likely have been **B175**, the so-called "Tribute Penny", the common type of the reigning Emperor Tiberius. Jesus' Jewish hearers would have had to agree that if Tiberius Caesar's "image and superscription" were on the coin then it did rightly belong to Caesar. Jesus adds a punchline that surely still has meaning for us today - "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's".



**B174: VF £40 / \$80**

AR penny England, 1604-19. James I



**B175: VF £165 / \$330**

AR denarius. Rome, 14-37 AD Obv. Tiberius.  
Rev. his mother Livia seated. "The Tribute Penny"

In St. Luke chapter 11, verses 1-4, the disciples ask Jesus to teach them how to pray. This is the occasion when He taught them the Lord's Prayer. We can see on our coins not what they prayed, but how they prayed in Bible times. The reverse of coin **B176** is actually a little misleading because it reads PIETAS PUBLICA, when Roman "piety" means "devotion to duty" rather than our sort of purely religious piety. Nevertheless, "Pietas" is evidently standing there praying with both arms raised, and the palms of her hands turned upwards. Coin **B177** portrays the Virgin Mary on the reverse, with both hands raised in the same attitude of prayer, a type known as the "Virgin orans" ("the praying Virgin").



**B176: VF £30 / \$60**

AR denarius. Rome, 193-217 AD Obv. Julia Domna.  
Rev. "Pietas" praying

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**B177: VF £25 / \$50**

AE anonymous follis Byzantium c1068-71. Obv. Christ.  
Rev. Mary praying.

We come now to the point in the Gospel story when Jesus and His disciples reach Caesarea Philippi, also known as Paneas, which lies in a non-Jewish area to the North of Palestine. The people here had particular regard for the shepherd-god Pan, as the local coins indicate. On one, **B178**, Pan stands playing his pipes: on the other, **B179**, we see just the pipes.



**B178: VF £100 / \$200**

AE Paneas (= Caesarea Philippi), dated 169/170 AD.  
Obv. Marcus Aurelius Rev. Pan playing pipes



**B179: VF £80 / \$160**

AE Paneas 169/170 AD Obv. Head of Pan Rev. Pan's  
pipes.

It was here at Caesarea Philippi that, according to St. Matthew chapter 16, verses 13-20, and St. Mark chapter 8, verses 27 - 31, Peter scored top marks with his answer to Jesus' question, "But Whom say ye that I am?". Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God". St. Matthew adds in verse 18 that Jesus then told Peter, "Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build My Church. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven". Coin **B180** is just one out of very many that show St. Peter connected with the two keys that have become his special symbol. Most times the keys are crossed, but not on this particular early Papal coin.





**B180: VF £300 / \$600**

AR “grosso paparino”. Rome, 1268-71 AD Papal interregnum. Obv. Head of St.Peter Rev. Two keys

This is a good point to pause and look at Jesus - what do we think He looked like? Do we believe He was and is the Son of God, the Saviour of the world? Look at **B181** and **B182**. Both coins were minted by the same Byzantine Emperor, Justinian II. On the obverse of both we see Jesus with a Cross behind His head; but on the earlier coin He is shown long-haired and long-bearded: on the second He is much younger-looking and with only a very short beard (like this He is known as the “Syrian Christ”). Which is nearest to the way you think of Him?



**B181: VF £600 / \$1200**

AU solidus Byzantium, 685-695 Justinian II, 1st reign.  
Obv. Bearded head of Christ



**B182: VF £800 / \$1600**

AU solidus Byzantium, 705-711. Justinian II, 2nd reign.  
Obv. Head of the “Syrian” Christ

In St.Luke chapter 21, verse 21, Jesus tells His disciples, “When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains”. An historian tells us that in 66 AD, as the Roman armies approached Jerusalem, the members of the Christian church in the city remembered Jesus’ warning and escaped from the city, going to Pella in the Decapolis, where they must have seen many times the temple on the hill-top which appears on the coin of Pella the reverse of which is illustrated as **B183**. The date in the exergue, 246, equates with 183/4 AD. By giving them this prior warning of events to come, Jesus must have saved the lives of very many members of the Early Church.



**B183: Very Rare and Expensive**

AE (reverse only) Decapolis – Pella. Dated 183/4 AD. Obv.  
Head of Commodus.

There is an interesting account in St. Matthew chapter 17, verses 24 – 27, concerning the occasion when the Temple-tax collectors came to Jesus. The tax of half a Tyrian silver shekel per year was demanded from every adult male Jew – though Rabbis were supposed to be exempt. As Tyrian half-shekels were not as common as all that, two adult male Jews would often pay one full shekel between them. The tax collectors approached Peter, “Doth not your Master pay tribute?” Jesus told Peter to go down to the Sea of Galilee, “And cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for Me and thee”. The coin Peter found in the mouth of the fish was evidently a full Tyrian shekel! Jews had to pay in money of Tyre, not because it was less pagan than other “foreign” coinages, but because it was better quality silver. Coin **B184** is a Tyrian tetradrachm or “shekel” – and whose head does it show on the obverse? That of Melqart, the “Baal” of Tyre. Elijah would not have liked this one little bit! At the left of the eagle on the reverse is the club of Heracles, with whom Melqart had been equated by the Greeks. Above the club are the letter/numerals gamma and N, giving the date as “53” (of the Era of Tyre), equalling 73 BC. Some scholars think that the later coins of this Shekel series were actually minted in Jerusalem, but this is still an open question. Coin **B184A** is one such later coin, which I have just acquired for my own collection! The coins have become much chunkier; in fact they tend to have too narrow a flan to take the whole design. At the left of the eagle is the date, reading “P” for 100 (which has not managed to get itself included) then 61. Era of Tyre 161 equates with 35 AD, not so long after the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Our Lord. The Melqart/Eagle tetradrachms and didrachms (Shekels and half Shekels) commence in Year One of the Tyrian era of freedom, 126/5 BC. The earlier coins, such as Coin **B184**, are thinner and broader and have various letters or monograms to the right of the eagle; but from 19/18 BC they do seem to change, and the letters KAP, soon shortened to KP, appear at the right of the eagle on practically all these later pieces. They may have been minted somewhere other than in Tyre – we just do not know. It would probably have helped if we knew what KP meant; but we don’t; and can only patiently await new discoveries. The series of Tetradrachms ends in 54/55 AD; and the Didrachms in 69/70 AD.

The Israeli scholar Ya’akov Meshorer hypothesised that, because there was extensive rioting in Tyre in 20 BC, which we read about in Dio Cassius’ histories (he was a Roman historian who lived from c165 AD till after 229 AD), the Romans may have

taken away from Tyre the right to mint silver coins. However, as Meshorer continues, King Herod intervened, telling the Emperor Augustus how very important the Tyrian tetradrachms were to the Jews for paying their Temple-tax; and that the Emperor allowed their minting to be continued, but in Jerusalem rather than Tyre. A nice story, and good for Herod's reputation – he needs it – but with no supporting evidence.



**B184: VF £250 / \$500**

AR tetradrachm (or Shekel) Tyre 126/5 BC – 65/66 AD  
Obv. Head of Melqart. The “Judas Piece”



**B184A: VF £250 / \$500**

AR Coin 184A Later version of 184, dated Era of Tyre 161,  
equalling 35 AD.

Jesus sometimes visited the home of Mary and Martha and their brother Lazarus in their house at Bethany just outside Jerusalem – in fact in St.John chapter 11 we read how Our Lord raised Lazarus from the dead. In St.John chapter 12, as He passed that way for the last time, on His way to Jerusalem and the Crucifixion, Jesus and the disciples “drop in for supper” there; and on this occasion (verse 3) “Then took Mary a pound of costly ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus”. The Mary who did this may or may not have been Mary Magdalene; but in Mediaeval times they felt sure that this Mary was the one we read about in St.John chapter 20, verse 1, “The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early”. She sees the empty tomb, and then, verse 14, she sees the Risen Lord; but thinks that He is a gardener. When she does recognise Him she evidently wants to hug Him, but Jesus tells her, “Touch Me not”. Coin **B184B** is a gold florin from Provence under its last independent ruler, Charles III, 1480-1, showing on the obverse Mary Magdalene holding the priceless alabaster box of ointment of spikenard – this coin type was also known as the “Magdelon d’or”.



**B184B: VF £600 / \$1200**

Gold Magdelon d'or of Provence and Naples under Charles III, 1480-1481

We move on to Jesus' "Last Supper", which He had with His disciples on the evening before the Crucifixion. At the end of the meal, as we read in St. John chapter 13, verse 27, Jesus tells Judas, "That thou doest, do quickly". "He went immediately out: and it was night". Judas Iscariot had offered to betray his Master for "thirty pieces of silver" – ie for coins of the type that were probably piled up high in the Temple treasury, Tyrian shekels. So, for us modern-day collectors these coins **B184** and **B184A** are no longer just an ordinary Greek tetradrachm, but are "Judas pieces"!

At the "Last Supper" Jesus instituted the Holy Communion, and spoke at length with the disciples. In St. John chapter 14, verse 27 He tells them, "My peace I give unto you", which, written in Latin, is on the reverse of coin **B185**, where the disciples are kneeling prayerfully as they listen to Jesus speaking.



**B185: Very Rare and Expensive**

AR quarter ducat. Rome, 1513-21. Pope Leo X. Rev. Jesus blessing His disciples.

Jesus was arrested, taken, tried, and condemned to death. Pontius Pilate, the Roman procurator of Judaea, had not wanted this verdict; but washed his hands of the whole affair. Pilate was responsible for the minting of two coin types in the "prutah" series, which I illustrate here as **B186** of Year 16 of Tiberius Caesar, equalling 29 AD; which on the reverse has a "simpulum" (a ladle with a long handle used in sacrifices), and the commoner type, minted in two successive years, coin **B187** of year 17 (30 AD), and **B188** of year 18 (31 AD), which has a "lituus" (the badge of office of a Roman augur) on the obverse. We are not sure of the date of the Crucifixion, except that it fell within the procuratorship of Pilate, 26 – 36 AD; but perhaps the most likely year is 30 AD. Unlike the more important Governor of Syria, Pilate was, unfortunately, not entitled to place his own name on the coinage, only that of the Emperor Tiberius.



**B186: VF £70 / \$140**

AE prutah. Judaea 29 AD under Pontius Pilate. Obv. Three ears of barley bound together, “Julia Caesar” around Rev. simpulum, “Tiberius Caesar, year 16” around.

Peter Lewis tells me that the “Julia Caesar” on this coin is not Tiberius' second wife Julia whom he divorced in 2 BC, but is Tiberius' mother, Livia, widow of the Emperor Augustus, who assumed the name “Julia Augusta” in 14 AD after her husband's death. Pontius Pilate presumably intended to please Tiberius by including his mother's name on the coinage - did he realise that Tiberius was estranged from his mother and did not even attend her funeral when she died in that very year, 29 AD?



**B187: VF £60 / \$120**

AE prutah dated 30 AD under Pontius Pilate. Obv. Lituus: “of Tiberius Caesar” Rev. “Year 17” in wreath



**B188: VF £100 / \$200**

AE prutah. As last but dated “Year 18” = 31 AD

Every man condemned to crucifixion normally had to carry his own cross to the place of execution; but, as it was evident that Jesus was not strong enough for this task, the Romans recruited (St. Mark chapter 15, verse 21) “one Simon of Cyrene, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear His cross”. The fact that Simon is named makes it likely that he afterwards became a Christian and joined the early Church, where members reading the Gospels would have known, if not Simon, at least his sons. As he came from Cyrene on the Libyan coast, I show a selection of coins from this city, **B189** to **B192**



**B189: VF £45 / \$90**

AE Cyrene 4th century BC

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**B190: VF £45 / \$90**

AE Cyrene c300-277 BC Obv. Head of Zeus Ammon.  
Rev. Date-palm



**B191: VF £45 / \$90**

AE Cyrene c250 BC Obv. Zeus Ammon. Rev. Silphium  
plant

The silphium plant, a member of the fennel family, was a herbal contraceptive that only grew in the region of Cyrene. It was much in demand, and brought great riches to Cyrene. Unfortunately, it was overharvested and became extinct in ancient times.



**B192: VF £100 / \$200**

AE Roman Province of Cyrenaica and Crete, c39 BC. Obv. Head  
of Artemis/Diana. Rev. Stag, with name of governor, L. Lollius,  
around.

Jesus' cross was erected between two others. St.Luke chapter 23, verse 33, reads, "When they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left". Coin **B193** shows on the reverse a "Cross on steps", a type otherwise known as a "Cross Calvary", with the steps representing the fact that in later times Calvary was thought, rightly or wrongly, to be a hill.



**B193: VF £200 / \$400**

AU solidus Byzantium, 610-641 AD. Obv. Heracles and family. Rev. Cross on steps (known as “Cross Calvary”)

St. John chapter 19, verses 19 – 22, tells us that Pilate wrote, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews” above the Cross in the three languages, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. After 135 AD, the end of the Bar Cochba Revolt, the next occasion there would be three official languages of equal status in the Holy Land was the period of the British post-WWI Mandate, with English, Hebrew, and Arabic - as on **B194**.



**B194: VF £10 / \$20**

AR Palestine – British Mandate, dated 1942

Whilst Jesus was hanging from the Cross, as we read in St. John chapter 19 verses 26 – 27, He thought to provide for His mother. Jesus handed her into the care of St. John, and evidently John did provide for Mary. He later moved to Ephesus, where a visitor can still see the remains of “Mary’s house”, not far from where John himself lived and worked. Coin **B195** from Ottoman Turkish times was minted at Ayasaluq (the mint name is written along the top line of the reverse – from right to left, of course). The Turkish “Ayasaluq” is very close to ancient Ephesus, the name being a corruption of “Agios Theologos”, “the holy Theologian”, ie St. John, the “Beloved disciple of Our Lord”.



**B195: VF £15 / \$30**

AE Ottoman Empire, 1421-51. Murad II. mint of Ayasaluq  
(= Ephesus)

As Good Friday drew to a close, and Jesus, now lifeless, was still stretched on the Cross, St. John chapter 19, verses 38 – 42, relate that Joseph of Arimathea, supported by Nicodemus, received permission from Pilate to remove the Body of Jesus. They did so, and, as St. Matthew chapter 27, verse 60 tells us, laid Him in the new tomb Joseph had prepared for himself. At this point we look at a very rare Crusader coin, **B196**,

which C.J. Sabine thinks was probably a siege piece minted by the Crusaders in Jerusalem soon after the disastrous Battle of Hattin. Saladin's army encamped before Jerusalem on 20th September 1187, and the city was forced to capitulate on 2nd October. Sabine thinks that **B196** was minted in the twelve days between. On the obverse we see the "Tower of David"; but the reverse is the really interesting side, with the legend apparently reading "Sepulchrum Domini", the "Tomb of Our Lord". The semi-circle in the lower half of the design may, as Chris Sabine thinks, represent the tomb, within which is an empty sarcophagus, with, just possibly, an angel flying above.



**B196: VF Very Rare and Expensive**

Billon Crusaders in Jerusalem 1187. Obv. Tower of David.  
Rev. "The tomb of our Lord".

But what happened to the Cross after the Crucifixion? – There were to be fragments of the True Cross all over the world in Mediaeval times! It was Constantine the Great's mother, Helena, who is portrayed on Coins **B197** and **B198**, who travelled to the Holy Land to search for it. Legend tells us that she excavated three crosses; but which was the right one? Easy! She took a piece of wood from each, and carrying them one at a time to a certain sick woman watched for results. The first two had no effect, but the piece from the third cross gave her full healing.



**B197: VF £25 / \$50**

AE Roman Empire, 324-330 AD. Obv. Helena, mother of  
Constantine



**B198: VF £20 / \$40**

AE Roman Empire. Helena (died 328 AD) memorial coinage,  
337-340 AD

Over Jesus' tomb was built the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and we see the dome of this building, as it was in Crusader times, on the reverse of the billon deniers of King Amaury (Almaric) – see coin **B199**, though we are not sure whether this is Amaury I (162 – 74) or Amaury II (1197 – 1205).





**B199: VF £50 / \$100**

Billon Crusading Kingdom of Jerusalem, Amaury I or II,  
1162-1205. Rev. Dome of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre

Coins **B200** from Venice, and **B201** from Germany both show the Resurrection; but what a difference there is between them. On the reverse of the Italian coin, Jesus seems to have just stepped out of His tomb, and is holding up one hand in blessing. On the reverse of the German “Truth Thaler”, minted by Henry Julius of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, we see Christ Triumphant, with His arms outstretched as though He has just stepped off the Cross. The legend behind Him reads, “Truth conquers everything”, whilst calumny and falsehood are shown lying dead at His feet.



**B200: VF £40 / \$80**

AR soldino Venice, 1486-1501. Doge Agostino Barbarigo  
Rev. The Resurrection.



**B201: VF £150 / \$300**

AR “Truth Thaler” 1597 Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel. Duke  
Henry Julius, 1589-1613 Rev. The Resurrected Jesus

St. Luke chapter 24, verses 13 – 35 tells the story of how the Risen Christ walked with two of His disciples along the road to Emmaus. They did not recognise Him until after they had invited Him into their home, where they were about to have a meal. At table Jesus broke the bread – and as He did this, they suddenly realised who He was, at which point the Lord disappeared from their sight. The two disciples immediately rushed back to Jerusalem to tell the others that they had seen the Risen Lord. There are coins of Emmaus, of which I show an example, **B202**; but unfortunately this must be another town of the same name, as this one was too far from Jerusalem for them to have walked it. The coins in fact come from a small town known as Nicopolis-Emmaus; but as it is such a wonderful story in the Gospel, I felt that one coin must be included because of the name Emmaus.

The Gospel Story



**B202: VF £50 / \$100**

AE Nicopolis-Emmaus (not St.Luke's Emmaus) after 141 AD.

Faustina I memorial coinage

From St.Matthew chapter 28, verse 19 we learn that just before Jesus ascended into heaven, He told His disciples "to go and teach all nations". For this I include just two disciples, Thomas and Andrew. Coin **B203** was minted by the Indo-Parthian king Gondophernes, who ruled in the North-West Frontier/Afghanistan area. This was certainly the King Gundaphar who features in the "Acta Thomae", relating the story of St.Thomas who travelled to India after the Ascension of Jesus – he was eventually martyred in South India. King Gundaphar was considered to be a purely fictional character as there was no historical reference apart from the Acta to any king of this name, until in comparatively recent times numismatists started discovering his name on coins.



**B203: VF £60 / \$120**

Billon tetradrachm The Indo-Parthians. 20-46 AD (possible date) Gondophernes (= Gundaphar of Thomas story) Obv. Legend in Greek, "Of Gundopherros. The great King of Kings". Rev. Legend in Kharoshti (each "letter" is vowel + consonant. These read from right to left). The five "letters" at the bottom = *Gudapharasa*. Around from the small "crescent" at 4 o'clock "Maharajah Rajah of Rajahs, saviour, protected by the gods"

Coin **B204** is a Scottish coin depicting St.Andrew. He did not actually go to Scotland – but his bones did!



**B204: VF £400 / \$800**

AU gold lion. Scotland 1390-1406. Robert III.

Rev. St.Andrew on his cross

## The Gospel Story

St.Andrew supposedly went to Greece, where he did good work. He was then condemned to death, and bound to a cross. The story goes that whilst hanging on the Cross he preached to 20,000 men before finally dying two days later. His body was later taken on Constantine the Great's orders to Constantinople; but later St.Rule, who had been placed in charge of the relics, was told by an angel who appeared to him in a dream to take them to a place to which the angel would guide him. This guidance eventually brought St.Andrew's bones northwards to Scotland.

## Chapter Five

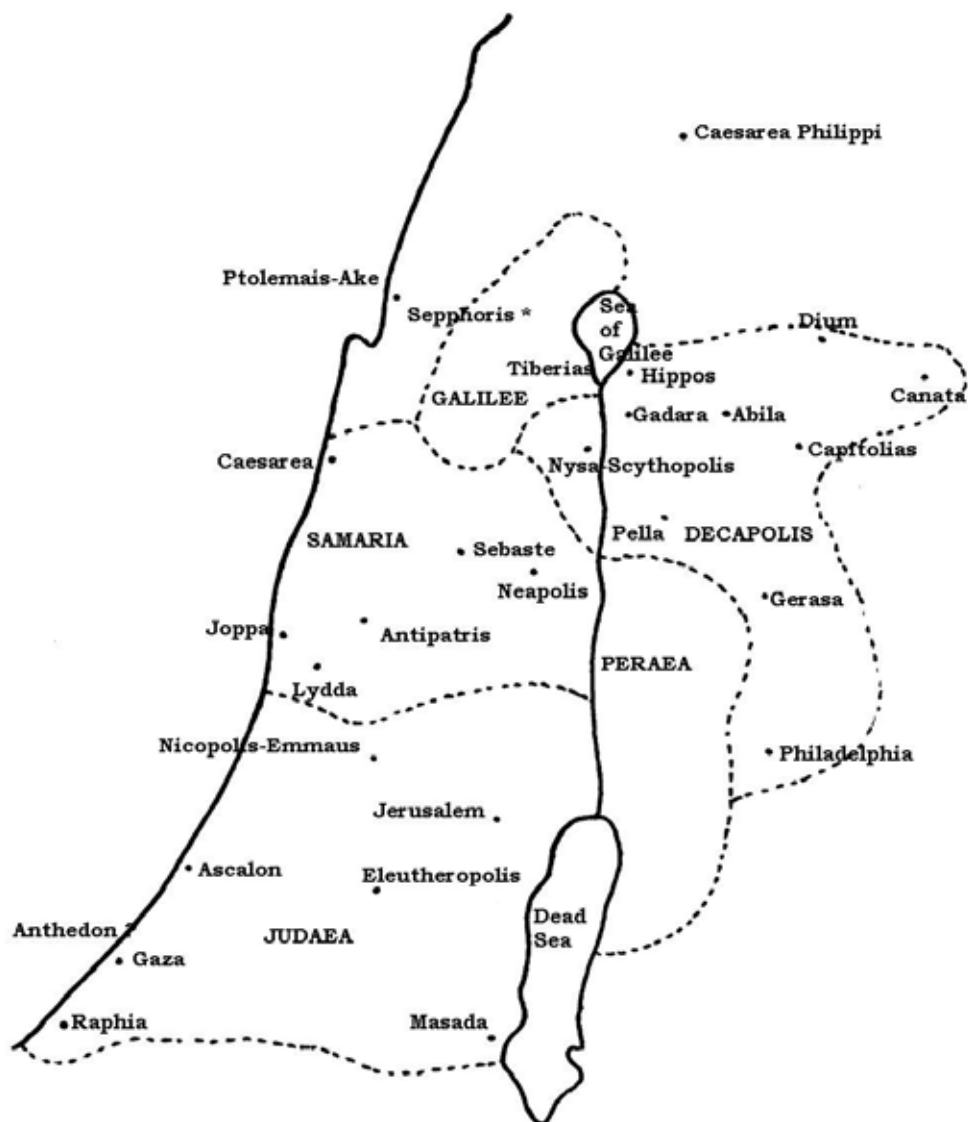
# THE LAND

The purpose of this chapter is to take a brief numismatic look at Galilee, Samaria, Judaea, and the Decapolis during ancient times. Though I would have liked to say “during Biblical times”, this would have been too limiting. Unfortunately, as so many of the cities referred to will already have been mentioned and illustrated in other chapters: I am afraid that the coinage of many mint cities is “split”. Thus Antipatris has two coins shown in this book. One is included in this chapter, illustrating Antipatris as a mint city of Samaria; whilst the second is shown in reference to St. Paul, who was taken there, as related in Acts chapter 23. To find both the reader will, I am afraid, have to use the index – sorry!

## Galilee

We start our survey with the city of Sepphoris, also known as Safed or as Zippori, in Galilee, built on a hill about three miles North of Nazareth, and visible for miles. In fact it may have been Sepphoris that Jesus was referring to in St. Matthew chapter 5, verse 14, when He said, “A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid”. Sepphoris revolted against Roman rule after Herod the Great’s death, and, as punishment, in about 3 BC the Roman governor of Syria, Varus, completely destroyed the town. However, it was soon after rebuilt in grand style by Herod Antipas, who made it his capital (though it was relegated to second place when Tiberias was built c19/20 AD). With the outbreak of the First Jewish Revolt of 66 – 70 AD, the people of Sepphoris took the Roman side against their fellow-Jews. They went to meet the newly arrived Roman commander-in-chief when he landed at Ptolemais-Ake in 66 AD, and requested help in protecting themselves against their Jewish neighbours. This new general was the future Emperor Vespasian (69 – 79 AD), and his name appears, together with the Emperor Nero’s, on Coin **B204**, the earliest minted by Sepphoris. The obverse legend begins at the top with “Epi”, a word which means “in the time of” in reference to a magistrate or governor, and reads, “In the time of Vespasian Eireno(polis) Neronias Sepphor(is)”, showing that the city had augmented its name by adding “Eirenopolis”, i.e. “the city of Peace”, and also “Neronias”, in honour of the Emperor Nero. Within the wreath on the reverse we read, “Year 14 of Nero Claudius Caesar”, showing that the coin was minted in 67/68 AD.

The Land  
"THE LAND"





**B204: VF £150 / \$300**

AE Sepphoris 67/68 AD. Nero as Emperor: Vespasian as Governor

We now jump to the reign of Trajan, 98 – 117 AD, when a little series of four bronze denominations, Coins **B205-B208**, was produced. All four have the same obverse showing the Emperor's head, and reading "Traianos autokrator edoken". "Edoken" means, "he gave"; so the Emperor Trajan must have given them something; possibly a grant to pay for this issue of coins. The reverses, from largest to smallest are legend in wreath, date-palm, caduceus, and two corn-ears, and read simply "of the people of Sepphoris", dropping the two extra names added previously.



**B205: VF £80 / \$160**

AE Sepphoris 98-117 AD Obv. Trajan Rev. "of the people of Sepphoris" within wreath.



**B206: VF £70 / \$140**

AE Sepphoris. as last Rev. Date-palm



**B207: VF £70 / \$140**

AE Sepphoris as last Rev. Caduceus



**B208: VF £60 / \$120**

AE Sepphoris as last Rev. two ears of corn

We now get a real name-change. At some point before or during the reign of Antoninus Pius, the city was renamed “Diocaesarea”, the “Dio” part meaning “Jupiter” (the Greek Zeus), and the “Caesarea”, the Roman Emperor. On Coin **B209**, of Caracalla, we see both – the Emperor on the obverse, and Zeus in the temple on the reverse, with “Dioca” in the exergue of the reverse. Be careful, though. “Diocaesarea” is also the name of a city in Cilicia!



**B209: VF £150 / \$300**

AE Sepphoris-Diocaesarea, 198-217 AD Obv. Caracalla  
Rev. Temple in which Zeus seated

We come now to Tiberias, which was built by Herod Antipas, probably in 19/20 AD, and so named in honour of the Emperor Tiberius. Coin **B210** shows a reed on the obverse, a design only issued in the one year, regnal year 24 of Antipas (who started his reign in 4 BC) which equates with 19/20 AD. The Israeli scholar Meshorer thought that the reed motif was specially used to mark the foundation of this new city built by the shores of the Sea of Galilee, where reeds abounded. On later coins of this type the obverse shows a palm branch. Tiberias replaced Sepphoris as capital of Antipas’ Tetrarchy. It is strange that, though Jesus did so much of His work near Tiberias, there is no evidence the He ever actually went there – the only time the city is mentioned in the Bible is in St. John chapter 6, verse 23, “there came other boats from Tiberias”.



**B210: VF £1000 / \$2000**

AE Tiberias under Herod Antipas Foundation year 19/20 AD  
Obv. Reed Rev. “Tiberias” in wreath.

John Goddard has told me about an article that he and his son Andrew published in the October 1992 issue of Spinks Numismatic Circular. In St. Luke chapter 7, verses 24-26 (with very similar verses in St. Matthew chapter 11) Jesus, referring to John the Baptist, asks the people, “What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed

shaken in the wind? Or a man dressed in soft raiment? “When Jesus asked these questions Herod Antipas had recently minted coins **B118** and **B210**, the first locally minted coin type circulating in Galilee. Round the reed are the name and title of Herod Antipas; with a reed where one might expect the portrait of the ruler to be. Coin finds seem to indicate that these early Tiberias coins had a limited area of circulation, as none have been found outside the boundaries of the old Tetrarchy. Antipas WAS a ruler who changed his mind! He changed his capital from Sepphoris to Galilee and he changed his wife. His first wife was a daughter of Aretas IV of Nabataea; but then, whilst in Rome, he visited the house of his brother Herod Philip, whose wife was Herodias – and, guess what – Herodias and Antipas fell in love and arranged things so that they could get married. So Antipas, in these and other ways, was like a reed shaking in the wind; so Galileans doubtless used to joke that he HAD put his portrait on the coinage, though the allusion would have meant nothing to non-Galileans. Lovely to be able to share a private joke with Jesus and his Galilean audience. Antipas was soon (**B119**) to change the reed to a palm, and I can’t say that I blame him.

The Emperor Claudius, 41-54 AD, must have been a benefactor, because his name was added to the city name to make it “Tiberias Claudiopolis”, as we see on Coins **B211-B215**. We note that dates are of an era commencing 19/20 AD, the presumed year of the city’s foundation. Coins **B212** of Trajan, and **B215** of Hadrian have a nautical flavour about them, presumably because of the position of Tiberias on the Sea of Galilee.



**B211: VF £80 / \$160**

AE Tiberias as Tiberias-Claudiopolis, “Year 81” = 99/100 AD  
Obv. Trajan. Rev. Palm between crossed cornucopiae.



**B212: VF £60 / \$120**

AE Tiberias “Year 90”= 108/9 AD Obv. Trajan Rev.Anchor



**B213: VF £120 / \$240**

AE Tiberias “Year 101”= 119/20 AD Obv. Hadrian.  
Rev. Zeus within temple.





**B214: VF £80 / \$160**

AE Tiberias as last. Rev. City goddess foot on prow, holding head

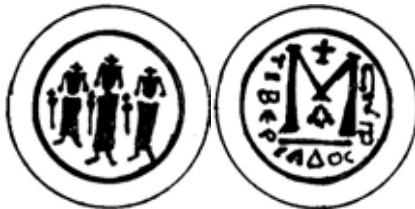


**B215: VF £60 / \$120**

AE Tiberias as last. Rev. Galley

The city lost its political importance when Herod Agrippa II degraded it and restored Sepphoris to its former position as capital of Galilee. However, after the prohibition of Jews going anywhere near Jerusalem following the failure of the Bar Cochba revolt in 135 AD, Tiberias became the chief centre of Jewish religious learning in Palestine – containing, at one point, no fewer than thirteen synagogues.

Tiberias fell to the Arabs c535 AD, becoming the “Tabariyeh” of Arab-Byzantine coins such as Coin **B216**.



**B216: VF £50 / \$100**

AE Tiberias c635-695 AD “Arab-Byzantine”, based on a Follis type of the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius, 610-641 AD. Obv. Heraclius and members of his family. Rev. Tabariyah in Arabic written downwards at the right side of the “M”.

## Samaria

Antipatris was founded by Herod the Great, and named after his father Antipater. It lay on the road between Jerusalem and Caesarea, and issued coins during the reign of Elagabalus, 218-222 AD. Coin **B217** has on the reverse a bearded male head, which may be meant to represent Zeus, or, it has been suggested, a personification of the River Yarkon.

**B217: VF £110 / \$220**

AE Antipatris, 218-222 AD. Obv. Elagabalus Rev. Bust of male deity (Zeus or River Yarkon?)

Herod the Great also founded Caesarea (often known as Caesarea Maritima to distinguish it from other Caesareas). This was in 10/9 BC, with the new city passing to Archelaus after his father's death in 4 BC. On Archelaus' deposition in 6 AD, it came directly under the rule of the Roman procurators, who much preferred a "mixed" city of Jews and Greeks, such as Caesarea had become, to the very Jewish Jerusalem, and they made Caesarea their place of residence and the capital of the province. The coins have been included in the chapter on St. Paul, except coin **B218** from the reign of Hadrian, which shows the head of the Egyptian god Serapis on the reverse. Vespasian was acclaimed Emperor in Caesarea in 69 AD, and, as a reward for the speed with which the citizens did this, he gave them Colonial status, naming the city Colonia Prima Flavia (meaning that it was the first so honoured by Emperor Flavius Vespasian) Augusta Caesarea (or Caesarensis). Under Septimius Severus the city added to its titles the letters F.C., which probably mean something like "Faithful and Constant". Later, under Severus Alexander, it became "Metropolis", with Trajan Decius adding "P", to make it "Metropolis of Palestine", and it continued to mint coins down to the reign of Gallienus, 253-268 AD.

**B218: VF £60 / \$120**

AE Caesarea Maritima, 117-138 AD. Obv. Hadrian  
Rev. Serapis

Around 200 AD, the Emperor Septimius Severus made Lydda (or Lud) into a Roman Colonia, renaming it Colonia Lucia Septimia Severa Diospolis, and Septimius Severus, Julia Domna, and Caracalla all minted coins here. Coin **B219** of Caracalla shows a very interesting Temple (or inner shrine of a temple) inside which the city-goddess is standing. The date in the reverse exergue is "Year 9", which, with the city's era commencing in 200 AD, equals 208 AD. On Coin **B220** of Julia Domna, the reverse shows the veiled bust of Demeter, the corn-goddess, holding a torch, with "E" for "year" and "I" for 10, dating it to 209 AD.



**B219: VF £200 / \$400**

AE Lydda-Diospolis, 208 AD. Obv. Caracalla.  
Rev. City-goddess within temple.



**B220: VF £70 / \$140**

AE Lydda-Diospolis, 209/210 AD. Obv. Julia Domna.  
Rev. Veiled bust of Demeter holding torch.

Joppa, or Jaffa, which is now part of the modern city of Tel Aviv, was an important seaport from ancient times. According to local legend, Noah's son Japheth built it soon after the Flood – and named it after himself! The Egyptian ruler Ptolemy II, 284-247 BC, minted the earliest coins here; but its own city coins date from between the reigns of Caracalla and Severus Alexander, when it was known as Flavia Ioppes, as is seen on Coin **B221** of Elagabalus, 218-222 AD. The reverse shows Athena (Roman Minerva) standing in very military pose.



**B221: VF £150 / \$300**

AE Joppa, 218-222 AD. Obv. Elagabalus.  
Rev. Athena standing

Vespasian founded Neapolis, the modern Nablus, in 72 AD under the name Flavia Neapolis. It lies between Mounts Ebal and Gerizim, the latter mountain being especially holy to the Samaritans. Philip I, 244-249 AD, gave it colonial status as Colonia Julia Neapolis; but sometimes it is named as “Sergia Neapolis”, though “Sergia” and “Julia” never appear on the same coin. The language on the colonial coinage is Latin. Later coins of Trebonianus Gallus and Volusian, who were the last Emperors to issue coins in Neapolis (251-253 AD), revert to “Flavia Neapolis” in Greek as on Coin **B229** – the city had evidently been deprived of its colonial status. Coins **B222** and **B223** come from the reign of Domitian, and are both dated “Year 11” of an era commencing with the city's foundation in 72 AD, equalling 82/3 AD. The larger

one shows the city name and the date within a wreath; and the smaller, a date-palm. A number of very fine and unusual types were produced in the mid 2nd century AD, and I illustrate three: Coins **B224**, **B225** and **B226**, minted in the name of Faustina II, wife of Marcus Aurelius. All three give a date across the field beginning with “ET” for “etos”, “Year”, either “Year 89” or “Year 88”. We cannot identify the goddess of Coin **B224** with the two birds beside her; but the lady on the reverse of **B225** is fairly obviously Tyche; and the goddess of **B226**, with the stags at her side, is certainly closely related to Artemis of Ephesus. Some coins, such as **B227** of Commodus, are very “ordinary”; but on others we have that very interesting mountain, Gerizim, appearing in different situations. Coin **B228** shows Philip I and his son Philip II jugate on the obverse, whilst on the reverse we find the mountain balanced on an upside-down spear which stands between two uncertain characters apparently engaged in earnest conversation. On Coin **B229** Gerizim is held up by the wing tips of an eagle.



**B222: VF £75 / \$150**

AE Neapolis, 82/3 AD. Obv. Domitian. Rev. Name of city and date within wreath.



**B223: VF £70 / \$140**

Neapolis, 82/3 AD. Obv. Domitian. Rev. Date-palm



**B224: VF £90 / \$180**

Neapolis, 160/1 AD. Obv. Faustina II. Rev. Goddess holding two wreaths or saucers. Two birds below



**B225: VF £90 / \$180**

AE Neapolis, 159/160 AD. Faustina II. Rev. Tyche (= Fortuna) holding rudder and cornucopia.



**B226: VF £85 / \$170**

AE Neapolis as last Rev. Cultus statue similar to Ephesian Artemis, stag each side.



**B227: VF £50 / \$100**

AE Neapolis, 177-192 AD. Obv. Commodus.  
Rev. Ares (= Mars)



**B228: VF £75 / \$150**

AE Neapolis, 244-249 AD. Obv. Jugate heads of Philip I and Philip II. Rev. Two uncertain figures confronted. Mount Gerizim above at top of inverted spear.

**B229: VF £100 / \$200**

AE Neapolis, 251-3 AD. Obv. Volusian. Rev. Mount Gerizim  
above eagle

The dating era of Sebaste commences in (probably) 25 BC, which is likely to be the year Herod the Great changed the name of the city from Samaria (a very ancient city) to Sebaste in honour of the Emperor Augustus (the Greek form of “Augustus” is “Sebastos”); though it is still called Samaria in Acts chapter 8, verse 5, when “Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them”. The Jews destroyed the city during their First Revolt of 66 – 70 AD, and though Vespasian recaptured it for the Romans in 69 AD, the city was not properly restored until the end of the 2nd century AD. Coin **B230** from Commodus’ reign, 177 – 192 AD reads “of the people of Sebaste” in Greek on the reverse around Ares, the war-god, and the date “216”, equalling 191/2 AD, at the sides of the god. We note, however, that the obverse legend is Latin rather than the Greek we should expect. We have the same combination of Latin and Greek ten years later on **B231** of Julia Domna, which shows the corn-goddess Demeter on the reverse. Septimius Severus gave Sebaste Colonial status, with the name Colonia Lucia Septimia Sebaste, as on coins **B232** and **B233**, which are now fully inscribed in Latin. Coin **B232** was minted in the name of Aquilia Severa, Elagabalus’ second wife, who before her marriage had been a Vestal Virgin, but Elagabalus soon tired of her and divorced the girl, though he did go back to her later. The sphinx on the reverse is an interesting type, with a radiate head above, though we do not know what this refers to. However, we do know the story behind the reverse of **B233**, the Rape of Persephone. Persephone, the daughter of the corn-goddess Demeter (Roman, Ceres), was out one day peacefully picking flowers (traditionally the narcissus, the flower of death). Hades, the god of the Underworld, was passing by in his chariot, and as he saw this beautiful maiden, he fell in love with her, and carried her off. It is this point in the story which Coin **B233** illustrates. We see Hades driving his chariot to the right, with one arm round a very doll-like Persephone, whose flower-vase lies on its side beneath the horses. Eros (Roman, Cupid) flies above, symbolising that Hades is in love. Demeter, Persephone’s mother, had great difficulty finding her whereabouts; but did eventually discover the truth; and an agreement was made whereby the girl was to spend some of her life above ground with her mother, and the rest of the year below ground with her husband. The Ancients used this story to explain why we have summer and winter.



**B230: VF £70 / \$140**

AE Sebaste, "Year 216" = 181/2 AD Obv. Commodus.  
Rev, Ares walking



**B231: VF £70 / \$140**

AE Sebaste, 201/2 AD. Obv. Julia Domna. Rev. Demeter  
holding long torch and ears of corn



**B232: VF £110 / \$220**

AE Sebaste, 220-221 AD Obv. Aquilia Severa. Rev. Sphinx,  
radiate head above.



**B233: VF £150 / \$300**

AE Sebaste, 218-222 AD Obv. Julia Soemias.  
Rev. "The Rape of Persephone"

## Judaea

After the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, the city remained a ruin, with the 10th Legion encamped within the western part. In 130 AD Hadrian visited Palestine and drew up plans for the construction of a new city to be known as Aelia Capitolina, which came into being in 131/2 AD. It was almost certainly the foundation of this new Roman Colony in such a holy location that brought about the Jewish Revolt under Bar Cochba, 132-135 AD. The name "Aelia" was part of the Emperor Hadrian's own name, and "Capitolina" dedicated the city to the Roman god Jupiter Capitolinus, to whom a temple was dedicated right on top of the Temple mount. It is probable that the Christians who had fled to Pella to escape the Jewish war of 66-70 AD now returned to Jerusalem, and were able to build up a strong church in the city, though no one of the Jewish faith was allowed anywhere near Aelia.

The name of the Colony is almost always abbreviated. Here are some coins of Antoninus Pius, 138-161 AD. On Coin **B234**, round the Head of Serapis on the reverse, we read COL AE CAPIT. Coins **B235**, with a "Head of Tyche, the City-goddess" reverse; and **B236** with the heavenly twins Castor and Pollux (the "Dioscuri") standing either side of an eagle, both read CO AE CA. Coin **B237**, with the Temple of Tyche, showing the goddess holding a small human head, has the very short form C A C. We are getting to an area where the numismatist who is not clever enough to recognise this immediately as an abbreviated version of "Colonia Aelia Capitolina", and is racking his brains to think of somewhere beginning with "Cac", is definitely going to need a catalogue. Coin **B238** is even worse; with the letters K A C. "Capitolina" can begin with the letter "K", as on Coin **B239** of Marcus Aurelius, which reads COL AEL KAP – one suspects that the coin designer of **B238** really meant to put "C A K". The boar on this coin is the emblem of the Roman legion stationed in Palestine, Legio X Fretensis.



**B234: VF £110 / \$220**

AE Aelia Capitolina (Jerusalem), 138-161 AD. Obv.  
Antoninus Pius. Rev. Bust of Serapis.



**B235: VF £110 / \$220**

AE Aelia Capitolina. As last.  
Rev. Head of Tyche (City-goddess).





**B236: VF £110 / \$220**

AE Aelia Capitolina as last Rev. The Dioscuri (Castor and Pollux), eagle between.



**B237: VF £150 / \$300**

AE Aelia Capitolina as last Rev. City goddess within temple.



**B238: VF £70 / \$150**

AE Aelia Capitolina as last Rev. Boar (badge of 10th Legion)



**B239: VF £90 / \$180**

AE Aelia Capitolina, 161-180 AD. Obv. Marcus Aurelius.  
Rev. City goddess

Anthedon lay on the coast very close to Gaza, and minted coins during the reigns of Elagabalus and Severus Alexander. Coin **B240**, of Elagabalus, shows the City goddess seated, holding a sail in front of her.



**B240: VF £150 / \$300**

AE Anthedon, 218-222 AD. Obv. Elagabalus Rev. City goddess holding ship's sail.

We now move northwards up the coast, and halfway to Jaffa, to reach Ascalon, which was not a port, but an important stronghold on the route South to Egypt. In Old Testament times, Ascalon had been one of the five main cities of the Philistines. Later, between 200 BC and 104/3 BC, it was under the Seleucid kings of Syria, and was the mint-town for a few Seleucid coins, including the illustrated coin **B241**, a tetradrachm of Antiochus VIII, 121-96 BC, which is dated Seleucid Era 207, equalling 106/105 BC. Coin **B242** is a little silver Seleucid period diobol, with the head of Aphrodite/Astarte on the obverse, and a dove, associated with her worship, on the reverse.



**B241: VF £600 / \$1200**

AR tetradrachm Ascalon mint. Seleucid King Antiochus VIII, 121-96 BC



**B242: VF £50 / \$100**

AR diobol Ascalon 2nd cent. BC. Obv. Head of Aphrodite/Astarte. Rev. Dove

The “Head of city-goddess/war-galley” type is a common Ascalon design, which is usually dated according to an “era of freedom”, ie from the Seleucids, commencing in 104 BC. Coin **B243** is dated above the ship “209” equalling 105/6 AD. Coin **B244** reads “180” above “AS” (for “Ascalon”), and this equals 76/7 AD.



**B243: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Ascalon 105/6 AD. Obv. Head of City goddess. Rev. Galley



**B244: VF £40 / \$80**

AE (reverse only) Obv. as last, Rev. dated 76/7 AD

I illustrate three Roman Provincial bronzes from Ascalon. Coin **B245** has on the obverse an Emperor who is not named, though we can identify him as Domitian by the date, 85 AD. This has a reverse showing the city-goddess/Astarte standing on a galley, holding an aplanstion (a branch-like ornament decorating the stern of a galley which may also be called an "aplustre"). Coin **B246**, of Trajan (also unnamed), portrays the war-god Phanebal on the reverse. He holds a shield and a harpa, with a palm-branch behind – this is dated 107/8 AD. Coin **B247** was minted in the reign of Antoninus Pius and is dated 150/1 AD. It shows four doorways set one behind the other; but we do not know where or what this represents.



**B245: VF £60 / \$120**

AE Ascalon, 85 AD Obv. Head of Domitian. Rev. City goddess/Astarte on galley. Dove to right.



**B246: VF £50 / \$100**

AE Ascalon, 107/8 AD Obv. Trajan Rev. Phanebal



**B247: VF £80 / \$160**

AE Ascalon, 150/1 AD. Obv. Antoninus Pius. Rev. Four doorways, one behind the other

We move now to Eleutheropolis, about 20 miles South-West of Jerusalem on the road to Gaza, a city much favoured by the Emperor Septimius Severus. The Romans minted coins here between the reigns of Septimius Severus and Elagabalus. I offer two illustrations. The first, coin **B248** comes from the short reign of Macrinus, 217-218 AD, with a reverse which shows the Emperor grasping hands with his nine or ten-year-old son Diadumenian. Coin **B249** is from Elagabalus' reign and has the city name as "L.Sep.Seve.Eleuther" written round in Greek. The seated figure is either Athena or Roma. The date underneath the throne reads, "E (for year) 19" of an era commencing in 199/200 AD, equalling 218 AD.



**B248: VF £200 / \$400**

AE Eleutheropolis, 217-8 AD Obv. Macrinus Rev. Macrinus greeting son, Diadumenian



**B249: VF £180 / \$360**

AE Eleutheropolis, 218-222 AD Obv. Elagabalus. Rev. Athena enthroned, shield below seat

We come to the ancient Philistine city of Gaza. Gaza did mint coins during the earliest period, as we saw in the chapter "Between the Old Testament and the Gospels"; but in this chapter we move on to the Ptolemaic period to illustrate a Tetradrachm (coin **B250**) minted at Gaza by Ptolemy II, King of Egypt, 284-247 BC. As with the other Ptolemy II silver coins of Phoenicia and Palestine, the legend on the reverse reads "of Ptolemy the Saviour" rather than the usual Ptolemaic formula "of Ptolemy the King". The gamma-A monogram of "Gaza" is by the eagle's wing to the left of the bird, and at the right (to the left of the Omega of "Soterios", we see the date letters "Lambda Z", naming the 37th regnal year of Ptolemy II.



**B250: VF £250 / \$500**

AR tetradrachm of Ptolemy II, 284-247 BC, dated regnal year 37. Gaza mint. Obv. Head of Ptolemy I. Rev. "of Ptolemy the Saviour". Gamma-A monogram to left of eagle's wingtip.

There are two special things to note with Gaza coins: Firstly, most of the city coins have on them a "swastika" sort of thing. This is probably the Phoenician letter "M", the initial of the local male god called Marnas. Secondly, many of the coins have a date; this according to the Era of Gaza commencing in 61/60 BC. So on coin **B251** of Antoninus Pius we see Heracles standing in his usual pose holding a club and a lion's skin. If "Gaza" on the left of the reverse had been illegible, the "swastika" at bottom right would have given a certain identification to this coin which could otherwise have come from anywhere in the Greek world. The HC at top right read as "208", equalling 147/8 AD. Coin **B252**, also of Antoninus Pius, has a Head of City-goddess ("Tyche") on the reverse, which would make me think of Cilicia or Syria/Palestine anyway; but the "swastika" again makes Gaza certain. The date is given as "220", which comes to 159/60 AD.



**B251: VF £50 / \$100**

Gaza, 147/8 AD Obv. Antoninus Pius. Rev. Heracles



**B252: VF £80 / \$160**

AE Gaza, 159/160 AD Obv. as last Rev. City goddess. "swastika" of Marnas in front.

Coin **B253** of Julia Domna, dated "266", equalling 205/6 AD, shows "Gaza", at the right, shaking hands with Io. Io was one of Zeus' many girlfriends. When he intended to seduce her he first covered the world with a thick blanket of clouds, so that his wife, Hera (Roman, Juno) would not notice. A silly thing to do, as it made Hera realise that her husband was up to mischief somewhere. As the clouds dispersed she found Zeus standing next to a beautiful white heifer (he had managed to metamorphose her in the

nick of time). He claimed that the heifer had just that moment happened to come that way; but she, being up to his trickery, begged him to let her have the animal, and to avoid Hera's suspicions he had to give it. Hera then set hundred-eyed Argos to guard the heifer for her; but, on Zeus' behalf, Hermes managed to lull Argos to sleep and kill him, thus releasing Io (who was still a heifer). Hera sent a gadfly to torment her and she was driven madly about the world still chased by the gadfly, until eventually she found rest and regained her human form by the banks of the River Nile. We do not know her connection with Gaza; but there must have been one. On Coin **B254**, of Verus, dated 160/1 AD, we see an animal that is probably a heifer standing to the left of the City-goddess.



**B253: VF £70 / \$140**

Gaza, 205/6 AD Obv. Julia Domna Rev. Io and City goddess clasp hands.



**B254: VF £70 / \$140**

AE Gaza 160/1 AD Obv. Verus Rev. City goddess with heifer

We move on to Nicopolis-Emmaus, which lies halfway between Jerusalem and Joppa, making it too far from Jerusalem to be the Emmaus of St. Luke chapter 24. It uses a dating era from 71 AD, which makes it apparent that it became "Nicopolis", which means "City of Victory", in commemoration of the Roman victory over the Jews in 70 AD. The Jews themselves had won a victory here in 166 BC, when the army of Judas Maccabaeus had defeated one of the generals of the Greek Seleucid King Antiochus IV Epiphanes – but the Romans would not have commemorated that. City coins were minted here during the second half of the Second Century AD, and the first part of the Third. Nicopolis (the Romans did not use the "Emmaus" part of the name) is illustrated by a coin of Elagabalus, 218-222 AD, shown as **B255**. This Emperor started his own era for Nicopolis from 219/20 AD, and this explains the "EB" between the eagle's legs on the reverse – they mean "Etos" (year "2"), equalling 221/222 AD. In a wreath above the eagle is the city name.

**B255: VF £80 / \$160**

AE Nicopolis-Emmaus, 218-222 AD Obv. Elagabalus  
Rev. Eagle supporting wreath in which name of city

Twenty four miles South of Gaza on the frontier with Egypt lies the city of Raphia – there was a battle here too, when in 217 BC Ptolemy IV of Egypt defeated the Seleucid King of Syria, Antiochus III “the Great” (though he wasn’t great that day!). Greek legend took the name “Raphia” to be connected with the Greek word for “sew”, and said that the city received its name on account of a mythological “sewing up”. The god Zeus had fallen in love with a mortal called Semele; but Zeus’ wife Hera found out about it, and set about thwarting their plans by destroying the girl, who was now pregnant. Hera appeared to Semele in disguise and persuaded her to insist that her “boyfriend” (she didn’t realise he was a god) must appear to her in the same glory and majesty in which he was accustomed to approach his own wife. Zeus tried to warn her off, but she started nagging about it, and, as men usually do, he gave in. He appeared to her in thunder and lightning, and she was so frightened that she gave premature birth to her child, and then disappeared in flames. Zeus saved the baby and sewed him up in his own thigh until he was ready to be born properly, but his mother was beyond even his help! The baby was Dionysus, the god of wine, and the people of Raphia always felt a special bond between themselves and this particular god.

Raphia minted coins between the reigns of Marcus Aurelius and that of Philip II. **B256** is from the reign of Philip I, 244-249 AD, and the reverse shows the city goddess holding a cornucopia and, on her right hand, Dionysus as a little baby holding a bunch of grapes. To the right is the date “Delta T” = 304 of the Raphia era commencing in 58 BC, equalling 244/5 AD.

**B256: VF £60 / \$120**

AE Raphia, 244/5 AD Obv. Philip I Rev. City goddess  
holding infant Dionysus

## The Decapolis

The “Decapolis” is a confederation of ten cities lying to the East and South of the Sea of Galilee. I include it here because it is specifically mentioned on three occasions in the Gospels – in St.Matthew chapter 4, verse 25: in St.Mark chapter 5, verse 20; and in St.Mark chapter 7, verse 31. The difficulty is that of knowing which particular ten cities were actually in this confederation, as the ancient lists differ, and one authority actually names 18 cities. My wife always tells me off for not being definite enough (particularly when choosing from the dessert menu in a restaurant); but, rightly or wrongly, I am going to be decisive here – and just choose ten! As these are not particularly Biblical, except for Gadara with its “Gadarene swine”, I am only listing one, or at most two, coins for each.

We start with Nysa-Scythopolis, which was the chief city of the Decapolis, and was the only one to the West of the River Jordan and is actually geographically in Samaria. Legend stated that it was founded by the wine-god Dionysus during his travels round the world. He was accompanied by a chosen guard of Scythians (from South Russia), and some of these settled here giving the site the “Scytho-” part of its name. Dionysus had a wet-nurse called Nysa, and when she died he thought that Scythopolis would be a nice place for her tomb, which gave the city the other part of its name. Not surprisingly, Dionysus was the favourite god in this city, and appears on many of the coins, which were minted between the reigns of Nero and Gordian III. Coin **B257** of Antoninus Pius has a reverse showing Dionysus holding a wine-cup from which he seems to be pouring a drink for the small panther at his feet. In his right hand he holds his “thyrsus” (special rod topped by a pine-cone). Coin **B258** of Gordian III, dated “T delta”, equalling 240/1 AD, shows the god wielding his thyrsus – the legend here reads “Nys(a) Scyth(opolis) hier (as kai) asu(lou)” - “Nysa-Scythopolis, holy and inviolate”.



**B257: VF £125 / \$250**

AE Nysa-Scythopolis, 138-161 AD Obv. Antoninus Pius.  
Rev. Dionysus with small panther



**B258: VF £150 / \$300**

AE Nysa-Scythopolis, 240/1 AD Obv. Gordian III  
Rev. Dionysus wielding thyrsus

We take the rest of the Decapolis cities in alphabetical order.



Abila minted coins between the reign of Marcus Aurelius and the early 3rd century AD, using an era from 64 AD when the Romans under Pompey arrived. These made the Decapolis part of their Roman Province of Syria. The Greeks of the Decapolis much preferred the Romans to their previous Jewish overlords! Coin **B259** of Faustina II has a reverse showing Athena holding a spear and an olive branch. The city is named as Seleucia Abila and this coin is dated “BKC” (222), equalling 158/9 AD. Coin **B260** of Verus, is dated in the exergue “230” for 166/7 AD. It shows Heracles seated left on a rock, holding his club with his right hand.



**B259: VF £125 / \$250**

AE Abila, 258/9 AD Obv. Faustina II Rev. Athena



**B260: VF £125 / \$250**

AE Abila, 166/7 AD Obv. Verus Rev. Heracles seated

Antioch ad Hippum was built on a flat-topped foothill of the Golan Heights, and, viewed from above, this foothill was shaped more or less like the head and neck of a horse. The Greek word for horse is “hippos” – like “hippopotamus”, which means “river horse”. So the city came to be called “Hippos” or “Hippum”, and eventually, with the help, no doubt, of a Seleucid king, “Antioch ad Hippum”. Coin **B261**, of Marcus Aurelius, has the only reverse type I have actually seen, with the city goddess standing in front of a horse. The date in the exergue is “229” of an era commencing in 64 BC, equalling 165 AD. The legend reads “Antioch at the (“ad” in Latin: “pros” in Greek) Hippos, holy and inviolate”. In 80 BC Alexander Jannaeus conquered Hippum, forcing the whole population, which was entirely Gentile, to become Jews – and this meant that all the males had to be circumcised! No wonder that they celebrated their freedom in 64 BC when the Romans arrived - in fact most of the cities of the Decapolis use the 64 BC era.



**B261: VF £75 / \$150**

AE Antiocheia ad Hippum (Hippus) 165 AD. Obv. Marcus Aurelius Rev. City goddess with horse

Coin **B262** comes from Canata, with the Emperor Domitian on the obverse, and the city goddess on the reverse. The date is “157”, equal to 93 AD.



**B262: VF £70 / \$140**

AE Canata, 93 AD Obv. Domitian Rev. City goddess

Coin **B263** from Capitolias, shows a wonderful temple of Zeus, and Price and Trel in “Coins and their cities” say a surprising thing about it. I quote, “The towers that are found on the temples of Capitolias and Abila had their origin in the ancient East, and their mediaeval descendants in the towers that decorate Notre Dame and Canterbury cathedrals - so our coins are a big help in understanding architecture! Capitolias’ titles on the reverse state that the city is “Holy, Inviolable and Autonomous (the “AYT” at the bottom left)”.



**B263: VF £550 / \$1100**

AE Capitolias, 166/7 AD Obv. Marcus Aurelius  
Rev. Gateway to the sanctuary of Zeus.

We do not yet know exactly where Dium is; but it minted coins between 205 and 220 AD. I illustrate a coin of Geta Caesar, **B264**, which though from a boring sort of place has a very interesting reverse showing the god Hadad, between two bulls. He has an eagle on his sceptre, and is being crowned by a small Victory - the usual sort of things to show how tough the locals thought their Baal was (Elijah would certainly have disagreed with them!).



**B264: VF £120 / \$240**

AE Dium, 198-209 AD Obv. Geta Caesar. Rev. Hadad standing between two bulls

Next we come to Gadara, which we have already referred to in the gospel section in reference to Legion and the Gadarene swine. Coins were minted here between the reigns of Augustus and Gordian III. The exergue of coin **B265**, of the reign of Elagabalus, shows that in Gadara they not only took their dating era from Pompey's conquest in 64 BC, but that they added his name to that of their city – we read “Po(mpeiteon) Gadaro(n)” - in gratitude for his restoration of their liberty. The date in the pediment of the Temple of Zeus reads as “281”, equalling 217/8 AD. Coin **B266**, from the reign of Gordian III, shows a galley rowing right – but the object called in catalogues either “aplustre” or “aphlaston” and used to decorate the stern of a galley looks really fragile. As the territory of Gadara reached down to the Sea of Galilee, one presumes that this galley, sailing on an inland lake, was used more for ceremonial purposes than for actual warfare.



**B265: VF £100 / \$200**

AE Gadara, 217/8 AD. Obv. Elagabalus Rev. Zeus seated within temple



**B266: VF £100 / \$200**

AE Gadara, 239/240 AD Obv. Gordian III Rev. Galley

Gerasa is the modern Jordanian Jerash, with its very impressive ancient ruins making it the best-preserved Roman provincial town we have. Coins were minted here between the reigns of Hadrian and Severus Alexander. **B267** is of Hadrian, and the reverse shows a bust of Artemis resting on a crescent (she was the moon goddess as well as goddess of the hunt), with the legend that Artemis was the Tyche, or city goddess, of the people of Gerasa.



**B267: VF £120 / \$240**

AE Gerasa, 117-138 AD Obv. Hadrian Rev. Bust of Artemis  
above crescent

Pella was the place where the Christians found refuge during the years of the Jewish Revolt. It was an ancient city renamed “Pella”, probably to honour Alexander the Great’s birthplace of that name in Macedonia. When out “coin hunting”, remember that coins naming “Pella” are MUCH more likely to be from Macedonia than from the Decapolis, as coins from this Pella are not common. I show two that do come from the Pella we want: Coin **B268** of Domitian, with the date-palm on the reverse dated 145 equalling 81 AD; and coin **B269** of Commodus, with a temple housing an uncertain male god, dated “246” (182 AD).



**B268: VF £80 / \$160**

AE Pella, 81 AD Obv. Domitian Rev. Date-palm



**B269: VF £150 / \$300**

AE Pella, 182 AD Obv. Commodus Rev. Uncertain figure  
within temple

Lastly Philadelphia, the modern Amman, capital of Jordan. In Old Testament times this was Rabbah, capital of the Ammonites. Thus in II Samuel chapter 11, verse 1 we read, “David sent Joab and they destroyed the children of Ammon and besieged Rabbah”. Ptolemy II, known as “Philadelphus”, changed the name to Philadelphia after his own name; but the old-time Ammonites had the last laugh as the name changed back to Amman after its ancient inhabitants in early Arab times. **B270**, dated 227 for 163 AD, shows a corn goddess, with serpents and corn-ears emerging from a basket on the reverse. **B271**, of Marcus Aurelius, has a city goddess on the reverse. On both coins the words KOI CYP for “Federation of Syria” are added, so there is unlikely to be a mistaken attribution to the Philadelphia in Lydia.

The Land



**B270: VF £60 / \$120**

AE Philadelphia, 163 AD Obv. Corn goddess.  
Rev. Basket containing corn-ears and serpents.



**B271: VF £60 / \$120**

AE Philadelphia, 161-180 AD Obv. Marcus Aurelius  
Rev. City goddess

## Chapter Six

### ACTS AND SAINT PAUL

The world was ready for Christianity! This is shown by an Egyptian coin **B272** of Antoninus Pius, where Zeus on the reverse has the attributes of a whole range of Greek and Egyptian male gods. Firstly, the horn of Ammon and, on his head, the modius (sort of bucket) of Serapis. Underneath the modius is the hem-hem crown of Harpocrates, while round his head are the rays of Apollo as Helios, the sun-god. He is holding the trident of Poseidon, which is encircled by the serpent of Asclepius. The people were ready for One God rather than the multiplicity of paganism, but knowing only the gods of paganism, these Egyptians had to do the best they could with the gods they knew in their attempt to find the One True God.

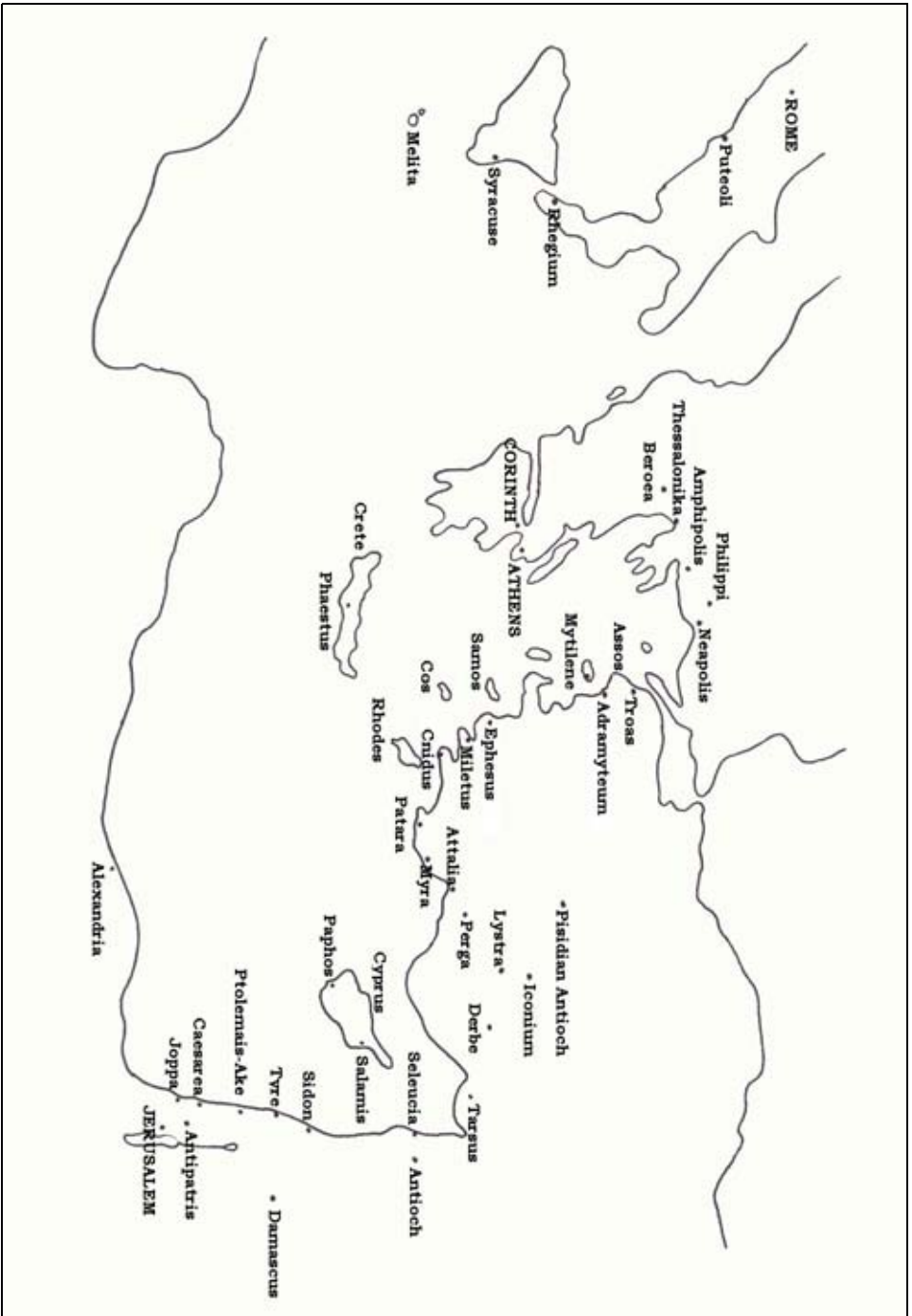


**B272: VF £200 / \$400**

AE drachm Egypt - Alexandria, 138-161 AD Obv. Antoninus Pius. Rev. "Pantheistic" Zeus

However, God was preparing the men and women who were to spread the Gospel message for which the people thirsted. Here on Papal coin **B273** we see two of His main human agents for this work. These are not true portraits, of course – they were as the 16th Century Church saw them - St.Paul on the left; and St.Peter on the right.

THE WORLD OF ST. PAUL





**B273: VF £150 / \$300**

AR double giulio. Rome, 1523-34 Pope Clement VII.  
Obv. Medici arms. Rev. St.Paul and St.Peter

We have already encountered Peter in the chapter on the Gospels - so now we come to St. Paul! Before his Christian conversion he was Saul of Tarsus, and it was at Tarsus that he received his early education before going on to complete his studies in Jerusalem. In Tarsus he would have had the advantage of living in an intellectually flourishing city, as well as being part of a strong Jewish community. Here is a small selection of the coins of Tarsus to give us the flavour of the place. The earliest, **B274**, comes from the Persian period just before Alexander's conquest. Then follows **B275**, a coin of Antiochus IV, who was up to his favourite game of giving his own name to as many cities as possible – so Tarsus for a few years became “Antioch on the (River) Cydnus”. The obverse shows the Head of the City goddess (or “Tyche”), which is common on coins of Cilicia and Syria. The reverse portrays the peculiar hunter god of Tarsus known as Sandan, who appears to be an archer standing on a horned lion. Perhaps the Tarsus coin we are most likely to encounter is **B276**, minted during the 2nd and 1st centuries BC, where Sandan and his horned lion are raised up on some sort of monument (called a “pyre” in the British Museum catalogue) – and the city is back to its own name. The next, **B277**, a slightly later coin, is of similar style; but we note that by **B278** Tarsus has become a “metropolis”, and the temple on the reverse is named as the “Koinon” (or “federation”) of Cilicia, indicating that Tarsus is now considered to be the capital of the province of Cilicia. This is a city that is growing in importance!



**B274: VF £50 / \$100**

AR obol Tarsus 4th cent. BC. Obv. Forepart of wolf  
Rev. Baal seated



**B275: VF £70 / \$140**

AE Tarsus, 175-164 BC - as “Antioch on the (River) Cydnus”.  
Rev. Sandan standing on a horned “lion”.





**B276: VF £60 / \$120**

AE Tarsus, c164 BC - Early Imperial times.  
Obv. City goddess. Rev. Monument of Sandan



**B277: VF £50 / \$100**

AE Tarsus. Rev. Zeus seated



**B278: VF £60 / \$120**

AE Tarsus. Rev. Zeus seated

During the later “Roman provincial” period, Tarsus minted many large bronzes, of which I show just two. **B279** of Elagabalus has two crowns on the reverse – one over an altar, and the other, described as “archieratic” (Belonging to the High Priest), with human heads attached! By now the city has picked up extra letters, AMK and B gamma, all of which must be complimentary, meaning something like “the first, the greatest and the fairest”.



**B279: VF £200 / \$400**

AE Tarsus, 218-222 AD. Obv. Elagabalus. Rev. Altar surmounted by crown. At right High Priest's crown

These letters are seen also on **B280** of Gordian III, where the reverse shows Dionysus, the god of wine, standing with a small panther looking up at him.



**B280: VF £100 / \$200**

AE Tarsus, 238-244 AD. Obv. Gordian III.  
Rev. Dionysus, panther at feet

In the Bible, Saul of Tarsus makes his first appearance in Acts chapter 6 and 7, when Stephen is being stoned for his Christian faith. We can actually see this stoning happening on **B281**, a lovely 12th century German “bracteate” (a thin coin with the design on one side only). He is described on this piece as “Protomartyr”, ie. the first Christian martyr.



**B281: VF £400 / \$800**

AR bracteate (uniface) pfennig. Halberstadt (Germany) 12th century – Bishop Ulrich. “The stoning of Stephen”.

During the Middle Ages “relics” (usually bones) of saints were very highly valued, and one of Stephen’s arms ended up in the cathedral of Besançon in eastern France. His hand, raised in blessing, is proudly shown **B282**, on the reverse of the city’s archiepiscopal coinage. Those who stoned Stephen “laid down their clothes at a young man’s feet whose name was Saul”, and one suspects that the calm and joyful way the martyr accepted his death – Acts 7 verse 56, “Behold, I see the heavens opened and Jesus standing on the right hand of God” – must have affected Saul of Tarsus very deeply.



**B282: VF £60 / \$120**

AR denier, Besançon (France), 11th cent.  
Rev. The hand of St.Stephen.

But Peter and Paul were not the only people to preach the Gospel. In Acts chapter 8 we read of a remarkable encounter made by Philip the Evangelist. He was conducting a successful “campaign” up in Samaria when suddenly God called him to travel many miles southwards - to the desert road from Jerusalem to Gaza, which hardly anyone used. On this road he met up with an important Ethiopian official who happened to be travelling along in his chariot reading Isaiah chapter 53. Philip told him about Jesus, Whose death as “the Suffering Servant” is referred to in that chapter, and the Ethiopian there and then accepted the Christian faith. The only difficulty about this story is that Ethiopia did not become a Christian country until the reign of Ezanas, King of Aksum, 330-355 AD. **B283** shows Ezanas as a pagan - note the crescent and dot markings - whilst **B284** shows him after his conversion to Christianity – we note the four crosses in both the obverse and reverse legends. Why is there a similar head on both sides? One may represent Ezanas as King of the Aksumite Empire, and the other Ezanas as King of Aksum itself; but this is just guesswork. *Bici* on the reverse is thought to be the Greek transliteration of the Ge’ez word meaning “man of”, making the legends read, “Ezanas, a man of Alene, King of the people of Aksum”. Vincent West, an Ethiopian specialist, says that in Bible times the name “Ethiopia” was applied to the whole area south of Egypt, and that Philip’s Ethiopian official probably came from the important trading kingdom of Meroe rather than from Ethiopia itself.



**B283: VF £200 / \$400**

AR Aksum, Ethiopia, 330-355 AD. King Ezanas, before his conversion to Christianity.



**B284: VF £350 / \$700**

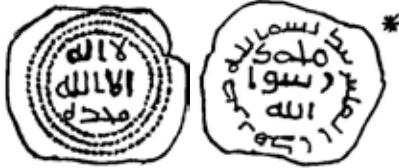
AU King Ezanas after becoming a Christian

In Acts chapter 9, verse 32 we find Peter joining “the saints which dwelt at Lydda” (where legend states that St. George was born). Here Peter healed a man called Aeneas; and from here he was asked to go to nearby Joppa, where he prayed over a godly woman named Tabitha or Dorcas, who had performed many good works; but who had now died. Acts 9, verse 40 tells us, “Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down and prayed. He said ‘Tabitha, arise’. And she opened her eyes and sat up”. To represent Lydda we show **B285**, a coin of Caracalla, 198-217 AD, at a period when Lydda was temporarily known as “Diospolis”, and also **B286**, an early Arab coin of a type common in Palestine, on which I have starred the part of the reverse marginal legend which reads *BiLuD*, “in Lydda”. From Joppa I include a bronze from the reign of Elagabalus **B287**, and also a billon denier, **B288**, from the Crusading “Counts of Jaffa (an alternative name for Joppa) and Ascalon”.



**B285: VF £100 / \$200**

AE Diopolis-Lydda, dated “E (for “year”) 10” = 209/210 AD.  
Obv. Caracalla Rev. City goddess.



**B286: VF £30 / \$60**

AE Arabs in Palestine, c695-750 AD. Lydda mint. “Bi-LuD”  
marked by star.



**B287: VF £60 / \$120**

AE Joppa, 218-222 AD. Obv. Elagabalus. Rev. Bull



**B288: Very Rare and Expensive**

Billon denier 13th century. Crusading Counts of Jaffa  
(Joppa) and Ascalon.

We return now to Acts chapter 9 and the conversion of Saul of Tarsus as he neared Damascus whilst on a mission to destroy the Christian church in that city. I accept Dr. Peter Lewis’ date for this event as being 36 AD.

## Damascus

**B289** is the case of another Seleucid king, this time Demetrius III, having fun with renaming cities! Damascus has (for a very short period) become “Demetrias”. The Damascenes evidently were addicted to showing Tyche, the special city goddess, as on this coin where her head appears on the obverse; and her standing figure on the reverse.



**B289: VF £70 / \$140**

AE Damascus as “Demetrias” c95-85/4 BC Obv. Head of City goddess (Tyche). Rev. Tyche standing



**B290: VF £50 / \$100**

AE Damascus, dated 307 of the Seleucid Era, which commenced in 312 BC = 5 BC. Types as last



**B291: VF £60 / \$120**

AE Damascus, 138-161 AD. Obv. Antoninus Pius.  
Rev. Bust of Tyche – it is still “Tyche”, though Damascus has now been promoted to the status of “Metropolis”.



**B292: VF £30 / \$60**

AE Damascus 193-217 AD Obv. Julia Domna.  
Rev. Winged Victory. Because this is a much smaller coin it has the much shorter legend, just “of Damascus”.

Philip I, 244-249 AD, was to make Damascus a “Roman Colony” – the greatest honour Rome could give a provincial city. Coins **B293** and **B294** are from the colony. The changeover of language from Greek to Latin is not quite complete. Greek Delta instead of the Latin “D” still begins the word “Damascus”, and the “Sebasmia” games on **B294** remain in Greek!



**B293: VF £150 / \$300**

AE Damascus (now a Roman Colony), 251-253 AD.  
Obv. Trebonianus Gallus Rev. Doe (= dama) suckling child



**B294: VF £150 / \$300**

AE Damascus, 251-253 AD Obv. Volusian  
Rev. “Sebasmia” (the local games) within a wreath.

Damascus was to be an extremely important Arab city and, until 750 AD, when it was replaced by Baghdad, the capital of the Arab Empire. **B295** and **B296** illustrate this period.



**B295: VF £30 / \$60**

AE Damascus, 635-695 AD under Arab rule. “Arab-Byzantine” type. *Dimishq* (= “Damascus”) in exergue of reverse.



**B296: VF £20 / \$40**

AE Damascus, c695-750 AD, under the Umayyid Caliphs.  
*Bi-Dimishq* on bottom line of reverse.

Saul of Tarsus heard the voice of Jesus on the Damascus Road, and (Acts chapter 9, verse 6) submitted to Jesus with the words, “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” He had become blind, and had to be led into Damascus by his followers. A very brave Christian called Ananias went to the house in the Street called Straight where Saul was staying, laid his hands on him so that his sight was restored, and introduced Saul into the company of the Damascus Christians – who welcomed him. Soon Saul was publicly preaching the Christian message. Naturally, the Jews did not like it when their “champion”, who was supposed to be helping to stamp out Christianity, now stood up for Christ. Acts 9, verses 23-25 recounts how they planned to kill him; but Saul managed to escape from Damascus by being lowered over the city walls in a basket. We learn more about this event in II Corinthians chapter 11, verse 32, where we are told that at this time Damascus was under King Aretas of Nabataea (whose capital was at Petra). This was Aretas IV, 9 BC – 40 AD, represented by **B297** and **B298**. The Christians sent Paul home to Tarsus to recuperate and to think things out.



**B297: VF £25 / \$50**

AE Kings of Nabataea, Aretas IV, 9 BC-40 AD.  
Rev. Queen Huldu (his first wife) standing.



**B298: VF £20 / \$40**

AE Kings of Nabataea, 9 BC - 40 AD. Obv. Aretas IV with his second wife Shuqailat. Rev. Nabataean script reading *Harithath Shaqilath* from right to left. Nabataean is particularly important as being the script which the Arabs were to develop into Kufi, the earliest form of their own writing.

It was probably in 46 AD (Dr. Peter Lewis’ dating), and in 47 that he began his first missionary journey; but in the meantime the church at home in Jerusalem had been going through a bad patch!

We come to Herod Agrippa I, grandson of Herod I, who was a personal friend of both the Roman Emperor Caligula, 37-41 AD; and of his successor Claudius, 41-54 AD, which friendships naturally considerably enhanced his prospects. Starting with a small kingdom with its capital at Paneas, imperial grants were to build Agrippa’s kingdom up into the whole of the region formerly ruled by his grandfather, Herod the Great. By far the commonest of his coins is **B299**, with the umbrella, symbolising royal power, on the obverse, and LS, for Regnal Year 6 at the sides of the three barley ears on the reverse. Of his other coins, his earliest, **B300** – of Regnal Year 2 – is the first

time a Jewish ruler portrayed his own portrait on a coin! Acts chapter 12 tells how Herod Agrippa I had the Apostle James, the brother of John, “killed with the sword”, and then went on to have Peter put in prison – but Peter was released by an angel (Acts chapter 12, verses 7 – 10) and was able to rejoin the other Christians. Fortunately, Herod Agrippa did not last long after that. From his royal throne he spoke to the people, who gave a shout, “It is the voice of a god, and not of a man” (Acts chapter 12 v 23), which presumably Herod Agrippa accepted as a nice little compliment; “and immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost”, indicating, I imagine, a very painful death! Other coins of Agrippa I are **B301**, **B302**, **B303**, and **B304**.



**B299: VF £25 / \$50**

AE Judaea 42/43 AD Herod Agrippa I, minted Jerusalem or Caesarea



**B300: VF £700 / \$1400**

AE Herod Agrippa I, 37-44 AD. Obv. Head of Agrippa I  
Rev. Agrippa II, as prince, on horseback



**B301: VF £1500 / \$3000**

AE Herod Agrippa I. Obv. Head of Claudius  
Rev. Agrippa in chariot



**B302: VF £700 / \$1400**

AE Herod Agrippa I Obv. Head of Agrippa  
Rev. Crossed cornucopiae





**B303: VF £350 / \$700**

AE Herod Agrippa I, Caesarea 43/4 AD. Obv. Head of Agrippa. Rev. Tyche, reading “Caesarea near the harbour of Augustus”.



**B304: VF £1100 / \$2200**

AE Herod Agrippa I. Obv. Head of Claudius.  
Rev. Temple scene of uncertain meaning

As regards St. Paul (still only “Saul” at this stage), he and Barnabas, who came from Cyprus, went with John Mark to join the church at Antioch; and in Acts chapter 13 they are commissioned by the church there to go on the First Missionary Journey.

John Mark (the name by which our “St Mark” is known in Acts) may have been the son of the person whose upper room was used by Jesus to hold His Last Supper on the night before the Crucifixion. He may be the young man mentioned in St. Mark chapter 14, verses 51-2 who was in the Garden of Gethsemane at the time of Jesus’ arrest, possibly after attempting to warn Him of approaching danger. Later, he was to write St. Mark’s Gospel, and eventually, after his bones had been stolen from Alexandria, to end up in Venice as the Venetian patron saint. On **B305** we see him on the right of the obverse presenting the standard of Venice to the reigning Doge.



**B305: VF £30 / \$60**

AR grosso Venice, 1205-29, Doge Pietro Ziani.  
Obv. St. Mark and the Doge. Rev. Christ enthroned

So let’s get the numismatic feel of Antioch! It is a confusing city with regard to dating, with some Seleucid Era dates (from 312 BC): some Actian (from 31 BC); but probably most Caesarian (from 48 BC). Antioch was the seat of the Roman governor of Syria, and the city was accounted the third greatest of the Roman Empire – after Rome and Alexandria. One snag for numismatists is that there are many different “Antiochs”. We’ll be meeting up with “Pisidian Antioch” quite soon; but I feel that the collector will soon be able to have an idea which coins come from this “Syrian Antioch”, or “Antioch

on the (River) Orontes” as it is often called. **B306** to **B311** are samples of the earlier coinage. Antoninus Pius, 138 – 161 AD, made Antioch a Roman Colony; but this fact affected the coinage here less than anywhere else! In particular, the language remains Greek, and apart from the use of “S.C.” - which was used on some Antioch coins long before it became a colony - we are not shown legionary standards or Romulus and Remus suckled by the wolf, or similar obviously Roman designs. The long series of “S.C.” bronzes (as **B312**) are by far the commonest coins of Antioch, and it is possible to find the occasional rarer Roman Emperor among them – I found a Macrinus “S.C.” Antioch coin recently.



**B306: VF £30 / \$60**

AE Antioch in Syria, Seleucid year 231= 81 BC.  
Obv. Head of Zeus. Rev. Zeus seated



**B307: VF £30 / \$60**

AE Antioch. Caesarian era 105 = 53 AD. Rev. names  
Quadratus as Governor of Syria. The ram shows that Antioch  
was founded in the Zodiacal sign of Aries.



**B308: VF £30 / \$60**

AE Antioch, 59 AD Obv. Artemis Rev. Lyre



**B309: VF £30 / \$60**

AE Antioch, 77 AD Obv. Head of Tyche (city goddess).  
Rev. Lighted altar



**B310: VF £20 / \$40**

AE Antioch 146 AD Obv. Apollo. Rev. Branch of laurel



**B311: VF £20 / \$40**

AE Antioch 146 AD Obv. Apollo Rev. Caduceus



**B312: VF £15 / \$30**

AE Antioch, 218-222 AD Obv. Elagabalus

Some of the bronzes are really big coins, as is **B313**, where we note that Antioch now calls itself MHTPOKO for “Mother Colony”. We see on **B307** a leaping ram over Tyche’s head, indicating that Antioch was founded when the constellation of Aries the Ram was in the ascendant. It was founded in 301 BC and named after Seleucus I’s father Antiochus.



**B313: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Antioch as last. Rev. The Tyche of Antioch seated on rocks, with the half-figure of the River Orontes swimming below. Ram overhead

From Antioch comes a series of billon Imperial Tetradrachms for general use through the Eastern part of the Roman Empire, as **B314**; but do look between the eagle’s legs, as for instance a small “Radiate bust of Helios” placed in that position might indicate that a particular coin comes from Emisa, or you might find other interesting symbols for other mints.



**B314: VF £40 / \$80**

Billon Imperial tetradrachm Antioch, Philip I, 244-9 AD;  
Rev. legend gives Roman titles written in Greek

But Antioch was subject to some terrible earthquakes. In Byzantine times, in 526 AD, an earthquake killed 250,000 people; and two years later, in 528 AD, another claimed a further 5,000 lives. At this point the name of the city was changed to “Theoupolis”, “the city of God”, in the hope that God would protect the city from further such disasters. **B317** is a Byzantine bronze from Theoupolis (Antioch) dating from the reign of Maurice Tiberius, whom I wanted to include in this book anyway, as it was during the reign of this Emperor that Pope Gregory commissioned St. Augustine to proceed to England to preach the Gospel to the pagan Angles – he arrived in 597 AD.



**B315: VF £35 / \$70**

AE. Antioch, 244-249 AD. Obv. Philip I Rev. Bust of Tyche with Aries the Ram above. “Of the people of Antioch, the mother-colony”.



**B316: VF £35 / \$70**

AE Antioch, 251-253 AD. Obv. Trebonianus Gallus. Rev. Shrine within “Tyche of Antioch”, with river Orontes swimming below



**B317: VF £40 / \$80**

AE follis. Antioch as Theoupolis (between 528 and 610 AD).  
Byzantine Empire, Maurice Tiberius, 582-602 AD

From Antioch one final coin: **B318**, from the Crusading Principality of Antioch, which lasted from 1098 until 1268 AD.



**B318: VF £25 / \$50**

AR denier Crusading Principality of Antioch, Bohemund III,  
1149-1201, or Bohemund IV, 1201-1233

### First Missionary Journey

So, in Acts chapter 13, verse 4 Saul of Tarsus and friends begin the First Missionary Journey, “so they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus”.

This Seleucia was the port of Antioch, known as Seleucia Pieria to distinguish it from numerous other “Seleucias”. It was situated only 25 kilometres distant from Antioch, but it had its own coinage going back to soon after its foundation by Seleucus I in 300 BC. Its distinctive types of “thunderbolt” **B319**, “thunderbolt on stool” **B321**, and “sacred stone of Zeus Kasios within a tetrastyle shrine” **B320** are illustrated.



**B319: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Seleucia Pieria 2nd cent BC. Obv. Zeus.  
Rev. Winged thunderbolt within wreath



**B320: VF £50 / \$100**

AE Seleucia Pieria, 98-117 AD. Obv. Trajan.  
Rev. Sacred stone of Zeus Kasios within shrine



**B321: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Seleucia Pieria, dated Actian era 188 = 57 AD. Obv. City  
goddess, name of (Governor) Comodus.  
Rev. Thunderbolt on cushion on stool

So now to Cyprus! On the earlier Cypriot coins such as **B322**, though the language is Greek, alphabetically we are in a different world! This is a syllabary, with each “letter” consisting of consonant plus vowel, and it reads from right to left. The strange thing is that this Cypriot form of writing is related to the Minoan “linear B” script deciphered by Michael Ventris as recently as 1952. Reading this stater of Euagoras “backwards” from the A in front of the goat, we have the syllables *BA SI LE VO SE*, which is a form of the Greek *BASILEOS* “of King”. After a long and chequered history, Cyprus passed to Cleopatra, and then, after the Battle of Actium in 31 BC, to Augustus, who established it as a Roman province, producing coins such as **B321** to **B327**. There were two main centres in the island at this time – Salamis in the East (not connected in any way with “the Battle of Salamis” of 480 BC, which was fought off the island of Salamis near Athens); and Paphos in the West. Salamis is represented on some Cypriot coins, such as **B325**, by the figure of “Zeus Salaminios”; but Paphos is far more interesting. It was at Paphos that Aphrodite (Venus) reputedly was born, rising up from the sea, as shown in Botticelli’s famous painting “The Birth of Venus” painted c1482-4. But it comes as a shock to see on **B326** what she was really like! Her temple at Paphos is shown either with or without a semicircular courtyard in front, and it looks very impressive – but the conical object in the centre is Aphrodite! “She” is a baetylic stone worshipped here from primitive times, assimilated by the Phoenicians to the Semitic goddess Astarte, and then, on the arrival of the Greeks, “becoming” the beautiful Classical goddess Aphrodite/Venus. I don’t blame them; I don’t feel that I could have worshipped a baetylic stone either! **B327** shows representations of both ends of the island side by side, Zeus Salaminios and the Temple of Aphrodite at Paphos. Saul and his party went first to Salamis, but nothing of note happened there; then on to Paphos, where they met up with the governor Sergius Paulus, who accepted the Gospel message and became a Christian. We note that this is the point where Saul changes his name from the Jewish “Saul” to the Roman form “Paul” (same name as the

governor!). It is interesting that inscriptions relating to the family of Sergius Paulus have been found at Pisidian Antioch; and this may indicate that Sergius Paulus himself suggested that this could be where Paul should aim for next.



**B322: VF £450 / \$900**

AR stater Cyprus - Salamis. Euagoras I, 411-374 BC.  
Note Cypriot syllabary.



**B323: VF £60 / \$120**

AE Roman Province of Cyprus, c27-22 BC. Obv. Augustus.  
Rev. Victory



**B324: VF £400 / \$800**

AR tetradrachm. Cyprus, 43/44 AD. Obv. Head of Claudius.  
Rev. Name of Governor Cominius Proculus



**B325: VF £60 / \$120**

AE Cyprus, 22/23 AD. Obv. Drusus (son of Tiberius)  
Rev. Zeus Salaminios



**B326: VF £250 / \$500**

AR tetradrachm, 77/8 AD. Obv. Vespasian.  
Rev. Temple of Aphrodite at Paphos



**B327: VF £70 / \$140**

AE Cyprus, 22/23 AD Obv. Drusus  
Rev. Zeus Salaminios and temple of Aphrodite at Paphos

Acts chapter 13, verse 13 tells how Paul, in company with Barnabas and John Mark, set sail from Paphos for Perga, on route for Pisidian Antioch; but John Mark does not make it – he turns back, and Paul and Barnabas go on alone.

Perga was the centre of the worship of a very strange primitive “goddess”, this time assimilated to the Classical Artemis/Diana. **B330** shows a close-up of this most peculiar object of worship, shown enlarged inside its temple; but what actually is it? Peter Lewis thinks that it is an elaborately decorated round stone, possibly a meteorite. Coin **B328** shows a human-looking, entirely Greek Artemis, but the writing is in “Pamphylian”, which may look like Greek, but isn’t. This is a strange and different world! One feels that St. Paul’s missionary journeys would have been practically impossible if Alexander the Great and his successors had not made Greek a language known by people throughout the East. How would Paul have managed in the towns of Lycaonia, for instance, if nobody had spoken any language except Lycaonian? However, in Perga we see both native Pergaean and imported Greek influences at work – compare **B329** and **B330** with **B331**, and with **B332** from Philip’s reign, which shows the locked chest in which were kept the purses given out to prize winners at the games. This is very Greek in spirit!



**B328: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Perga in Pamphylia, late 2nd cent BC - Imperial times.  
Obv. Artemis - Pamphylian legend. Rev. Sphinx





**B329: VF £50 / \$100**

AE Perga, 161-180 AD Obv. Marcus Aurelius.  
Rev. Pergaian Artemis within temple



**B330: VF £400 / \$800**

AE (reverse only) Perga, 161-169 AD. Obv. Head of Verus.  
Rev. A close-up of Pergaian Artemis



**B331: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Perga, 198-209 AD Obv. Geta Caesar.  
Rev. Artemis the huntress



**B332: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Perga, 244-249 AD, Philip II. Rev. Chest on which three  
purses to be awarded at the games

St. Paul must have felt much more at home on arrival in Pisidian Antioch. This city is often called “Antioch in Pisidia”; but it is not actually in Pisidia, but in Phrygia. The mistake arises from the fact that the geographer Strabo, c54 BC – 24 AD, named it “Antioch towards Pisidia” to distinguish it from yet another Antioch. Augustus had made it a Roman Colony, and the coinage **B333** to **B336** has obviously been made to look as Roman as possible. Paul begins his ministry here by going to the Jewish synagogue, and telling the Jews about Jesus; but it is the Gentiles who seem the keenest to hear the Gospel message, and in Acts chapter 13, verse 46, Paul tells the

Jews, “but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles”, thus marking a turning point in his ministry, and in the whole life of the Christian Church. But the Jews in Pisidian Antioch did not like this approach to his ministry, and Paul and his friends had to leave town in a hurry!



**B333: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Pisidian Antioch, 193-211 AD. Obv. Septimius Severus.  
Rev. Genius of the colony (Roman equivalent of Tyche, the City goddess)



**B334: VF £30 / \$60**

AE Pisidian Antioch, 222-235 AD. Obv. Severus Alexander.  
Rev. Eagle



**B335: VF £50 / \$100**

AE Pisidian Antioch as last. Rev. Wolf suckling Romulus and Remus



**B336: VF £25 / \$50**

AE Pisidian Antioch, 251-253 AD. Obv. Volusian.  
Rev. Legionary standards

Next stop is Iconium, 125 kilometres South-East of Pisidian Antioch. Iconium was honoured by Claudius (41 – 54 AD) by being allowed to call itself “Claudiconium”, as on **B338**; but was given full “colonial” status by Hadrian (117 – 138 AD). **B339** and **B340** are from the Colonial period. In later times this city was to become Konya, capital of the great Mediaeval Islamic Empire of the Seljuqs of Rum, as **B341**. Originally, Iconium was supposed to have got its name from the “face” or “image” (Greek *eikon*) of the Gorgon Medusa, which would turn any who looked at it to stone. The hero Perseus, who had succeeded in decapitating this monster, is shown holding Medusa’s head on the reverse of **B337** and **B338**. He had reputedly used this as his weapon with which to conquer the Lycaonians. In Acts chapter 14 we find Paul and Barnabas, thinking to give the Jews another chance to accept the Gospel, going to the synagogue, where many, both Jews and Greeks, believed; but the unbelievers planned to stone the apostles, and they had to flee “to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia”.



**B337: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Iconium, 1st cent BC Obv. Zeus Rev. Perseus holding the harpa (a sort of sickle, given to Perseus by Hermes for cutting off the Gorgon’s head), and the head itself.



**B338: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Iconium as Claudiconium, 41-54 AD Obv. Head of Governor Annus Afrinus. Rev. Perseus



**B339: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Iconium (Roman Colony), 253-268 AD. Obv. Gallienus Rev. Heracles



**B340: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Iconium as last. Rev. Fortuna (Tyche) seated



**B341: VF £70 / \$140**

AR dirhem. Minted in Konya (= Iconium) Seljuqs of Rum.  
Kai-Khusru II, 1236-45 AD.

Obv. The Sun in Leo, horoscope of the Sultan's beautiful  
Georgian wife

As this part of the First Missionary Journey happened around 48 AD, it seems likely that Lycaonia was ruled by King Antiochus IV of Commagene, 38 – 72 AD, represented by **B342**, though he was no doubt closely controlled by the Romans. Their first stop within Lycaonia was Lystra, which had been made a Roman colony by Augustus around 6 BC. **B343** has a common “colonial” reverse design showing the founder of the colony with two oxen ploughing the first furrow which would mark out the boundary line of the new foundation. The story of what happened here is told in Acts chapter 14 verses 8 – 18. Paul heals a crippled man, and the locals think he and Barnabas must be the gods Jupiter and Mercury come down to earth. They had difficulty stopping the people making sacrifices in their honour; and, if they had gone to a lot of trouble preparing bulls for sacrifice, only to be told by Paul that they were being foolish, this may have upset them. At any rate, when Jews arrived from Pisidian Antioch and Iconium urging the people to expel the Christians, they seemed very ready to turn against Paul and Barnabas. They threw stones at them and Paul fell. His friends thought that he had been killed; but fortunately he was able to get up, and next day he and Barnabas went on to Derbe; though nothing spectacular is recorded in Acts as happening here. I illustrate two coins from Derbe, **B344** and **B345**. From here Paul and Barnabas retraced their steps right through to Perga, going on from there to another port, Attalia, whence they sailed back to Antioch in Syria. Attalia did mint coins such as **B346** and **B347**, but Acts does not record that Paul and Barnabas did anything much there either; though I suspect that by this stage they were very ready to get home to recuperate. Even St. Paul had to rest sometimes!



**B342: VF £70 / \$140**

AE King Antiochus IV of Commagene, 38-72 AD, minted for Lycaonia. Rev. Scorpion.



**B343: VF £350 / \$700**

AE Lystra (Roman Colony from c6 BC). Obv. Augustus. Rev. Founder ploughing.



**B344: VF £160 / \$280**

AE Derbe as Claudioderbe, 147-175 AD Obv. Faustina II. Rev. Tyche standing.



**B345: VF £150 / \$300**

AE Derbe, 164-183 AD. Obv. Lucilla Rev. Victory writing on shield



**B346: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Attalia - imperial times. Obv. Head of Poseidon. Rev. Victory



**B347: VF £70 / \$140**

AE Attalia, 41-54 AD Obv. Claudius. Rev. Athena

But just before we finish entirely with the First Missionary Journey, there is one other matter – that of “The Epistle to the Galatians”. Galatia was a Roman Province North of the area we have been referring to. I illustrate it by **B348** of Amyntas, King of Galatia, 36 – 25 BC, and by an imperial coin **B349** of the “Koinon” (federation) of Galatia; but it does seem likely that the area to the South of this was also at this period known as Galatia, so that Paul’s Epistle would have been actually meant for the churches in Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra.



**B348: VF £200 / \$400**

AE Kings of Galatia, Amyntas, 36-25 BC. Obv. Head of Heracles, club at neck. Rev. Lion



**B349: VF £75 / \$150**

AE “Koinon” of Galatia, 98-117 AD. Obv. Trajan  
Rev. “Men” (an Oriental god).

In 49 AD Paul and Barnabas visited Jerusalem to attend a special council, called partly at least to sort out how the Church ought to deal with converted Gentiles. Had they all got to be circumcised, and matters like that? They then returned to Antioch, to continue a teaching and preaching ministry. But this must have seemed very dull to a man such as Paul after all the excitement of the First Missionary Journey, and he suggested returning to see how all the recent converts in Lystra, Derbe, etc, were progressing. This time Paul went with Silas, and the Second Missionary Journey now begins, lasting from the second half of 49 AD until around 52 AD.

## The Second Missionary Journey

After travelling through Asia Minor, Paul and Silas arrived at Troas, a seaport at the point where Asia and Europe come very close together. It is here that they must have met Luke, because we come to one of the “we” passages in Acts, where Luke, the author of Acts, seems to imply that he himself was now one of Paul’s companions. Acts chapter 16, verse 9 reads “a vision appeared to Paul in the night; there stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over unto Macedonia, and help us”. Luke may well have met Paul the previous day and begged him to visit Macedonia, his own homeland, and I imagine Paul refusing on the grounds that there was still far too much missionary work needing to be done in Asia Minor. The special vision, though, would have shown him the true way God desired them to go forward – they must obey the call to cross over to Macedonia in Europe!

So Troas was a very special place. It had always been special to the Greeks and to the Romans, because it was in this area that in ancient times the Greeks and the Trojans had fought the Trojan War. The Greeks founded a city here in 310 BC, which came to be called Alexandria (Alexandria Troas) after Alexander the Great, and **B350** and **B351** were minted here during the Greek period. Augustus was to make the city a Roman Colony under the name “Colonia Augusta Alexandria Troas”, to which Caracalla added the titles “Aurelia Antoniniana”. Coins **B352** to **B354** are from the Roman colony and inscribed in Latin rather than Greek. Constantine the Great thought of making this city his Eastern capital; but chose Constantinople instead! Troas was particularly noted for its temple of Apollo Smintheus, whose statue is seen on the reverse of **B354**.



**B350: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Alexandria Troas, 3rd-2nd cent BC Obv. Head of Apollo  
Rev. Horse feeding.



**B351: VF £60 / \$120**

AE Alexandria Troas, 2nd-1st cent BC Obv. Head of Apollo  
Rev. Lyre within wreath



**B352: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Alexandria Troas (Roman Colony) c200-260 AD  
Obv. City goddess, legionary standard at shoulder.  
Rev. Wolf and twins.



**B353: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Alexandria Troas Obv. As last  
Rev. Eagle holding bull's head in its claws.



**B354: VF £60 / \$120**

AE Alexandria Troas, 198-222 AD Obv. Caracalla or  
Elagabalus. Rev. Apollo Smintheus on plinth, tripod in front

From Troas (Acts chapter 16, verse 11) Paul's party sailed for Samothrace, **B355**, and then on to Neapolis, coin **B356**, which was the port for Philippi 16 kilometres away. Neither of these cities minted coins in New Testament times, though they had done so at one time. Dr. Lewis thinks Paul's visit to Philippi took place in 50 AD. The name "Philippi" refers to Philip II of Macedon, 359 – 336 BC, after whom it was named, see coin **B357**. In 42 BC a great battle of the Roman Civil War was fought here – Mark Antony and Octavian (later to become "Augustus") were victorious; which victory is commemorated on **B358**, which appears to have been minted quite some years after the battle. **B359** has only recently been attributed to Philippi, where two colonists are ploughing the first furrow of an unnamed colony. However both city and ruler are clearly named on **B360**.





**B355: VF £250 / \$500**

AE & AR Samothrace c280 BC Obv. Head of Athena.  
Rev. Cybele on throne



**B356: VF £150 / \$300**

AR Macedonia - Neapolis, 411-350 BC. Obv. Head of nymph.  
Rev. Gorgon's head



**B357: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Philippi, 358-336 BC. Obv. Head of Heracles. Rev.  
Tripod



**B358: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Philippi, c50 AD Obv. Winged victory  
Rev. military standards



**B359: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Philippi, 31 BC-14 AD Obv, Augustus  
Rev. Two colonists ploughing (could these be Mark Antony  
and Octavian, who together won the Battle of Philippi in 42  
BC? – unlikely, but a nice thought)



**B360: VF £60 / \$120**

AE Philippi, 41-54 AD Obv. Claudius  
Rev. Julius Caesar crowning Augustus

But whatever the Greeks and Romans did in Philippi, it was certainly an very exciting place with regard to Paul and Silas. In Acts chapter 16, verse 16 we read that “a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying”. Paul and Silas healed this poor mad woman, which her “owners” did not like as her fortune-telling value was now nil. They had Paul and Silas imprisoned for interfering with their property – and they were thrust into the inner prison for security. Acts chapter 16, verse 25 relates “and at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God . . . and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone’s bands were loosed”. The prison warder thought his prisoners had escaped and was about to commit suicide, when Paul stopped him, saying, “Do yourself no harm: for we are all here.” No wonder the warder asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” Paul told him, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” Next morning the city magistrates came to beg them to leave their city!

Paul and Silas passed through Amphipolis, **B361** to **B367**, and came to Thessalonika. Here Paul’s first missionary act was once again to go to the synagogue, where he reasoned with the Jews on three Sabbaths. His arguments caused the unbelievers there to riot and to tell the magistrates, “These men that have turned the world upside down are come hither also” (Acts chapter 17, verse 6), and they were forced to leave. **B368** to **B375** show something of the richness of the coin designs from this city.



**B361: VF £30 / \$60**

AE Amphipolis, 424-358 BC Obv. Head of Apollo  
Rev. Race-torch



**B362: VF £35 / \$70**

AE Amphipolis, after 168 BC Obv. Head of Apollo.  
Rev. Ear of corn



**B363: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Amphipolis, after 168 BC. Obv. Head of Artemis.  
Rev. Two goats contending.



**B364: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Amphipolis, after 168 BC Obv. Head of Poseidon (Roman:  
Neptune) Rev. Club within wreath



**B365: VF £50 / \$100**

AE Amphipolis, 31 BC-14 AD. Obv. Augustus Rev. Artemis  
Tauroposos with inflated veil riding on bull



**B366: VF £50 / \$100**

AE Amphipolis, 31 BC-14 AD Obv. Military figure (? Roma)  
standing. Rev. Artemis (?) seated.



**B367: VF £30 / \$60**

AE Amphipolis, 177-192 AD Obv. Commodus  
Rev. Artemis holding long torch.



**B368: VF £30 / \$60**

AE Thessalonika, after 168 BC Obv. Head of Artemis.  
Rev. Quiver



**B369: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Thessalonika, after 168 BC Obv. Zeus  
Rev. Eagle on thunderbolt



**B370: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Thessalonika, after 168 BC Obv. Dionysus wearing  
ivy-wreath. Rev. Goat



**B371: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Thessalonika, after 168 BC. Obv, Athena  
Rev. Bull feeding



**B372: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Thessalonika, after 168 BC. Obv. Head of Poseidon  
Rev. Prow of galley



**B373: VF £50 / \$100**

AE Thessalonika, Imperial times Obv. Head of City goddess.  
Rev. Cabeiros (an ancient mystic deity) holding hammer.



**B374: VF £35 / \$70**

AE Thessalonika. As last. Rev. name of city within wreath



**B375: VF £45 / \$90**

AE Thessalonika, 222-235 AD Obv. Severus Alexander  
Rev. Victory holding small Cabeiros

Paul and Silas retired to Beroea, 65 kilometres away, where they tried the synagogue again. We are told of the Jews here, Acts chapter 17, verse 11, “these were more noble than those in Thessalonika” and they searched the Scriptures to see if what Paul was telling them was true – and many believed. Then along came the Jews from Thessalonika and “stirred up the people”. At this point Silas and Timothy sent Paul away, and he went on ahead of the others to Athens. Unfortunately, Beroea did not mint coins, and coins we come across naming “Beroea” come from the city of that name in northern Syria.

Athens was the great intellectual centre of the world, a city with a wonderful past. When Paul visited this city one presumes that most of the wonderful temples and statues there were still intact – notably those on the Acropolis, which the reverse of **B386** attempts to portray. Here, standing on Mars’ Hill, Paul told them about the Unknown God. “Whom therefore you ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you”. Unfortunately, Paul did not do very well here – the Athenians loved discussing and arguing, and were less inclined to come to definite conclusions. **B376** to **B386** show a selection of coins from Athens.



**B376: VF £400 / \$800**

AR tetradrachm. Athens, c445-430 BC. Obv. Head of Athena  
Rev. Owl, with spray of olive above.  
The famous "Attic Owl" type



**B377: VF £70 / \$140**

AR diobol Athens, 393-300 BC. Obv. Athena.  
Rev. Double-bodied owl.



**B378: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Athens, 393-322 BC. Obv. Demeter in winged chariot  
drawn by serpents. Rev. Pig



**B379: VF £350 / \$700**

AR "new style" tetradrachm. Athens, 166-57 BC.  
Rev. Owl stands on amphora.



**B380: VF £30 / \$60**

AE Athens, 166-57 BC. Obv. Veiled head of Demeter  
Re. Poppy-head and corn ears.



**B381: VF £30 / \$60**

AE Athens, 166-57 BC Obv. Head of Apollo. Rev. Corn ears



**B382: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Athens, 166-57 BC Obv. Athena  
Rev. Zeus hurling thunderbolt.



**B383: VF £30 / \$60**

AE Athens, 166-57 BC Obv. Apollo Rev. Amphora



**B384: VF £50 / \$100**

AE Athens, Imperial times. Obv. Athens.  
Rev. Owl on olive-tree. Amphora to right.



**B385: VF £50 / \$100**

AE Athens, Imperial times. Rev. Agonistic (pertaining to athletic contests) table (for putting the prizes on) on which wreath, head of Athena, and owl. Amphora beneath.



**B386: VF £200 / \$400**

AE Athens, Imperial times. Rev. View of the Acropolis

**B376** is from the period of Athens' greatness, when Pericles led the state, and when the Battles of Marathon and of Salamis, where the two great Persian invasions of Greece had been beaten back, were still within living memory; and when the "owls" of Athens were a very highly respected currency through much of the known world. One notes that **B376** and the later "new-style" tetradrachm, **B379**, are of the same weight, despite the different size of flan. Earlier Greek coins tend to be small but thick; later coins large but thin!

Paul then moved on to Corinth, and was probably there from October 50 AD until April 52 AD. Here he met up with a Jewish couple called Aquila and Priscilla, who were tentmakers. Paul, who had also been a tentmaker, joined them at their work, but attended the synagogue Sabbath by Sabbath to tell the Jews and others about Christ. Acts chapter 18, verse 11 states that, "he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them". But opposition was building up, and the Jews who did not accept his message brought Paul in front of Gallio, the Roman governor of the province of Achaia (who resided in Corinth), and stupidly accused him of persuading men to worship God contrary to the law. That certainly would not worry a Roman official too much, so Gallio "drove them from the judgment seat". However, Paul, taking Aquila and Priscilla with him, went down to the port at the eastern end of the Gulf of Corinth called Cenchreae (which is named on the side of the galley on the reverse of **B395**) and took ship for Ephesus, and thence by way of the various churches of Asia Minor, back home via Caesarea to Antioch. When we look at the coins of Corinth we note that they are of two sorts. The earlier ones, **B387** to **B389**, are Greek; but the later, **B390** to **B395**, have Latin legends.



**B387: VF £150 / \$300**

AR stater (of three drachms) Corinth, 338-300 BC. Obv. Athena. Rev. Pegasos. But note that a recent study by Derek R. Smith published in the January 2006 issue of "The Celator" points to the likelihood that the helmeted goddess of Corinth is not Athena, but Aphrodite as a war goddess



**B388: VF £120 / \$240**

AR diobol Corinth, 350-338 BC. Obv. And Rev. Pegasos



**B389: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Corinth 400-300 BC Obv. Pegasos Rev. Trident





**B390: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Corinth, late 1st cent BC Obv. Poseidon, trident at shoulder. Rev. Pegasus.



**B391: VF £80 / \$160**

AE Corinth (a Roman Colony), reign of Augustus. Obv. Agrippa Postumus, a grandson of Augustus, died 14 AD. Rev. names of the city magistrates within wreath of parsley

Corinth had once played an important part in the affairs of old-time Greece, and this is when the “Greek-style” coins were minted; but in 146 BC the city was completely destroyed by the Roman general Mummius. However, when a city has such a wonderful geographical situation as Corinth had, connecting, as it did, the Greek mainland with the Peloponnese; and also linking the Aegean Sea with the Gulf of Corinth and thence the Ionian Sea; people such as the Romans were not going to leave such a choice site desolate for ever. So in 44 BC Julius Caesar founded a Roman colony there, called Colonia Laus Julia Corinthiensis, and it was from this colony that **B390** to **B395** emanate. The one big link between old Greek and new Roman seems to be the winged horse Pegasus, who appears on coins of both periods! It was to the Roman city that St. Paul wrote his Epistles to the Corinthians – notably First Corinthians chapter 13 about “love”, “but now remain faith, hope love, these three; but the greatest of these is love”.



**B392: VF £70 / \$140**

AE Corinth, 37-41 AD Obv. Caligula. Rev. Pegasus



**B393: VF £70 / \$140**

AE Corinth, c67 AD Obv. City goddess. Rev. Temple



**B394: VF £70 / \$140**

AE Corinth, 138-161 AD. Obv. Antoninus Pius.  
Rev. Temple of Aphrodite on Acrocorinth. Within, Aphrodite  
looks into the shield of Ares



**B395: VF £90 / \$180**

AE Corinth, 54-68 AD. Obv. Head of Nero.  
Rev. Head of Aphrodite above galley inscribed “Cenchreae”, the  
name of the port

### The Third Missionary Journey

So ended Paul’s Second Missionary Journey with his arrival back in Antioch; but he was a restless man, and was soon off again. For his Third Missionary Journey, Paul travelled by land across Asia Minor “strengthening all the disciples”, arriving once again in Ephesus, where he remained over two years, 52/3 until 54 AD. Acts chapter 19, verse 11 tells us that “God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul”: but some local Jews tried to copy him (I suppose it looked easy!) attempting to cast out an evil spirit with the words, “We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth”. But this evil spirit was having none of it and answered, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?” Acts tells us, “and the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.”

Ephesus had a long history of producing beautiful coins, with many of them being connected in some way with the worship of Artemis (the Roman Diana). Here they had an even greater temple to a primitive “goddess” assimilated by the Greeks to Artemis than the one at Perga. The Temple of Artemis at Ephesus was one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world, and they had very many visitors to the shrine, many of whom would have bought a souvenir to take home – maybe a little silver model of the goddess, whom we see in her temple on **B402**. Paul’s preaching about Christ must have had a tremendous impact on the people of Ephesus, because the local silversmiths, led by a man named Demetrius, became worried that their trade would be adversely affected if hordes of people became Christians and neglected Artemis. They rioted, shouting out, “Great is Diana of the Ephesians”. Fortunately, Ephesus had a good town clerk who quieted the rioters, telling them to put any lawful complaints they might have before the law in a proper manner.

The symbol of the primitive goddess of Ephesus was a bee; and the stag was particularly associated with Artemis as the Greek goddess of hunting. Most of the Ephesian coins illustrated, **B396** to **B403**, show some sort of Artemis connection.

As we look at **B402** we see that Ephesus claims to be “the first of Asia”: on **B403** we read “of the Ephesians four times temple guardians” – their religion must have meant a lot to these people.



**B396: VF £400 / \$800**

AR tetradrachm Ephesus, 387-295 BC. Obv. Bee  
Rev. Stag and date-palm



**B397: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Ephesus under name “Arsinoe”, 288-280 BC.  
Obv. Veiled head of Queen Arsinoe, wife of King Lysimachus of  
Thrace, 323-281 BC.



**B398: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Ephesus, 280-258 BC Obv. Bee Rev. Stag



**B399: VF £150 / \$300**

AR Cistophoric tetradrachm. Ephesus, dated 66 of era  
commencing 133 BC = 68 BC Obv. Cista mystica (to do with  
worship of Dionysus). Rev. Bow in bow case, serpents, torch  
and crossed cornucopiae



**B400: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Ephesus, 48-27 BC. Obv. Artemis.  
Rev. Long torch between two stags.



**B401: VF £50 / \$100**

AE Ephesus 41-54 AD  
Obv. Jugate heads of Claudius and his wife Agrippina.



**B402: VF £150 / \$300**

AE Ephesus. 222-235 AD Obv. Severus Alexander  
Rev. Temple of Ephesian Artemis



**B403: VF £50 / \$100**

AE Ephesus, 253-268 AD. Obv. Gallienus.  
Rev. Artemis the huntress

From Ephesus, Paul went up into Macedonia, thence to Greece and then over to Troas, where he stayed seven days. We read in Acts chapter 20, verses 7 – 12 how Paul preached rather a long sermon. He “continued his speech until midnight”. A certain young man called Eutychus sat up in a window to see and listen; but unfortunately he fell asleep and “fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead”. Paul went down and “fell on him, and embracing him, said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him”.

From Troas, whilst his companions went by sea, Paul chose to walk the comparatively short distance South to Assos, represented by coins **B404** to **B406**. They all then took

ship to Mitylene on the island of Lesbos, **B407** and **B408**, sailing by Chios, **B409**, on to Samos, coins **B410** to **B412**. Next day they reached Miletus, and Paul asked for the elders of the church of Ephesus to come and meet him there. Paul was now definitely on his way home to Jerusalem and he knew that this was the last time he would be seeing them during his earthly life. In Acts chapter 20, verses 18 – 35, he delivered his farewell speech to the Ephesians. Miletus, of course, was a coin-issuing city. Many of its coins, as **B413** and **B414**, show a lion looking back at a star, whilst others make reference to the famous oracle at the great Temple of Apollo at Didyma, 20 kilometres south of the city. Here the sculptor Canachus had made a bronze statue of Apollo of Didyma, which is shown on **B414** and **B415**.



**B404: VF £30 / \$60**

AE Troas - Assos, 400-c241 BC. Obv. Head of Hermes  
Rev. Griffin



**B405: VF £50 / \$100**

AE Assos, after 133 BC Obv. Athena. Rev. griffin



**B406: VF £30 / \$60**

AE Assos, 41-54 AD Obv. Head of Claudius  
Rev. Head of Athena



**B407: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Lesbos - Mytilene, 250-200 BC Obv. Apollo Rev. Lyre



**B408: VF £50 / \$100**

AE Mytilene, 2nd-1st cent BC Obv. Head of Zeus Ammon. Rev.  
“Terminal”(a figure without arms or legs) statue of Dionysus



**B409: VF £50 / \$100**

AE Chios, after 84 BC. Obv. Sphinx Rev. Amphora



**B410: VF £30 / \$60**

AE Samos, c205-129 BC. Obv. Head of Hera.  
Rev. Ship's prow



**B411: VF £50 / \$100**

AE Samos 31 BC-14 AD Obv. Augustus Rev. Peacock



**B412: VF £60 / \$120**

AE Samos, 238-244 AD Obv. Tranquillina  
Rev. “River Imbrasos” reclining.



**B413: VF £80 / \$160**

AR Octobol Miletus 2nd cent BC. Obv. Apollo  
Rev. Lion looking back at star.



**B414: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Miletus, c39-17 BC Obv. Cultus statue of Apollo of  
Didyma. Rev. Lion and star



**B415: VF £60 / \$120**

AE Miletus, 54-68 AD. Obv. Nero  
Rev. Statue of Apollo of Didyma.

From Miletus, Paul's party continued its journey by ship, calling at Cos, **B416** and **B417**, and Rhodes, **B418** and **B419**. Then on to the port of Patara on the Lycian coast, **B420** to **B422**, where they found a ship that was sailing across to Phoenicia. They landed at Tyre, and stayed there seven days, and I illustrate a small selection of Tyrian coins, **B423** to **B429**. The Tyrians had particular veneration for the male god Melqart, whom the Greeks assimilated to their own Heracles (Roman Hercules), and for the female goddess Astarte, both of which deities are to be seen frequently on the coinage. The city gives us a rich diversity of designs, becoming a Roman Colony in the reign of Elagabalus, 218 – 222 AD. The “Baetylic” rock on **B427** is associated with a legend of its origins – Tyre was supposedly founded on two floating baetylic rocks, but came to rest after a sacrifice had been made! This whole region has also, of course, many Crusader connections. Coin **B429** has a reverse which, as John Wilkinson states, probably depicts the Cathedral of Tyre where the great Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa was buried after his body was carried right the way from Tarsus, near which city he drowned, to Tyre in 1190.



**B416: VF £45 / \$90**

AE Cos 300-190 BC. Obv. Head of Heracles. Rev. Crab



**B417: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Cos, 80-50 BC Obv. Asclepius Rev. Serpent-staff



**B418: VF £90 / \$180**

AR drachm Rhodes, 166-88 BC. Obv. Head of Helios (the sun-god) Rev. Rose



**B419: VF £25 / \$50**

AE Rhodes Obv. Head of Helios  
Rev. Victory with wreath and palm



**B420: VF £30 / \$60**

AE Lycia - Patara, 168 BC- Imperial times.  
Obv. Apollo Rev. Bow and quiver.



**B421: VF £30 / \$60**

AE Patara, 168 BC - Imperial times Obv. Head of Apollo  
Rev. Head of Artemis.





**B422: VF £90 / \$180**

AE Patara, 238-244 AD Obv. Gordian III Rev. Apollo holding bow and branch, and an eagle standing on omphalos (the navel, the knob at the centre of a shield: a stone set at the centre of the world).



**B423: VF £350 / \$700**

AR tetradrachm Tyre, 400-332 BC Obv. Melqart riding on a hippocamp. Rev. Owl with crook and flail



**B424: VF £25 / \$50**

AE Tyre, c93-153 AD Obv. Head of City goddess  
Rev. Astarte standing on a galley



**B425: VF £30 / \$60**

AE Tyre, dated 115 AD. Obv. Head of Melqart. Rev. Club



**B426: VF £50 / \$100**

AE Tyre 2nd cent AD Obv. Melqart  
Rev. Temple of the Koinon (federation) of Phoenicia. (The  
AKT on the reverse may or may not be a date)



**B427: VF £100 / \$200**

AE Tyre, 251-3 AD Obv. Trebobianus Gallus Rev. Baetylic  
(meteorite) stone with serpent entwined around it



**B428: VF £100 / \$200**

AE Tyre, 253-260 AD Obv. Valerian I Rev. Astarte standing



**B429: VF £400 / \$800**

AE Crusading Lords of Tyre, Philip de Montfort,  
after 1247 - 1270. Rev. The cathedral of Tyre

Acts chapter 21, verse 7 tells us that Paul's next call was at Ptolemais, where he stayed just one day, illustrated by coins **B430** to **B432**. Name-wise this is a most difficult city – sometimes Ake, sometimes Ptolemais-Ake, sometimes just Ptolemais; then in Crusader times St.Jean d'Acree, and nowadays just "Acree"; but there is no doubt that here it is the Crusaders who are historically the most interesting, especially when our King Richard I, "the Lionheart" and King Philip of France arrived with the Third Crusade. They took Acree from Saladin in 1191, and it remained the capital of the

Crusading Kingdom of Jerusalem until its fall in 1291. Unfortunately, there were no English coins in Richard's own name – his people used “Henricus” short-cross pennies classes 2, 3 and 4 – so I illustrate “the Lionheart” with a denier from his French possession of Poitou, **B433**.



**B430: VF £35 / \$70**

AE Ptolemais-Ake as Antioch in Ptolemais 2nd cent BC  
Obv. Castor and Pollux jugate



**B431: VF £30 / \$60**

AE Ptolemais-Ake 2nd cent BC Obv. Apollo Rev. Lyre



**B432: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Ptolemais-Ake, 117-138 AD Obv. Hadrian Rev. Founder  
ploughing, military standards behind (the city had been  
made a Roman colony by Claudius)



**B433: VF £150 / \$300**

AR denier of Poitou (France) Richard the Lionheart, 1189-99

From Ptolemais, Paul's party moved on to Caesarea, where he stayed with Philip the Evangelist. Whilst there, a prophet called Agabus came to Paul, took his belt and bound his own hands and feet with it (Acts chapter 21, verse 11), telling him, “Thus saith the Holy Spirit, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owns this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles”; but Paul said, “I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus”. Caesarea had been built by Herod the Great, who gave it this name to please the Emperor Augustus Caesar. This city became the seat of the Roman governors of Judaea, who much preferred it to Jerusalem. Later it was to become the Roman colony of “Colonia Prima Flavia Augusta Felix Caesarensis”, and a “metropolis”. Caesarea is illustrated by coins **B434** to **B440**, which show how completely “un-Jewish” it always

was.



**B434: VF £35 / \$70**

AE Samaria - Caesarea. Reign of Augustus. Obv. Head of City goddess Rev. "Augustus" in wreath



**B435: VF £120 / \$240**

AE Caesarea (Roman Colony) 117-138 AD. Obv. Hadrian Rev. Founder ploughing.



**B436: VF £50 / \$100**

AE Caesarea, 222-235 AD Obv. Severus Alexander Rev. Eagle holding wreath in which "SPQR"



**B437: VF £50 / \$100**

AE Caesarea, 249-251 AD Obv. Trajan Decius. Rev. Military standard between two eagles



**B438: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Caesarea, 249-251 AD Obv. Radiate bust of Trajan Decius. Rev. City goddess.



**B439: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Caesarea, 250-251 AD Obv. Hostilian Caesar. Rev. Serapis standing



**B440: VF £80 / \$160**

AE Caesarea, 251-3 AD Obv. Volusian Rev. Dionysus riding on lion

In Acts chapter 21, verse 15, Paul's party at last arrive in Jerusalem, and the Third Missionary Journey is over!

### St Paul Goes to Rome

Once in Jerusalem, Paul visited the Temple on a number of occasions; but on one of these, he was unfortunately recognised by some visiting Jews opposed to his views who came from one of the cities in the province of Asia where he had preached (this was possibly Ephesus). These men, as we are told in Acts chapter 21, verses 27 – 28, made a grab at Paul, and started shouting, “Men of Israel, help: this is the man that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the Law, and this place.” This caused a public riot, and Paul had to be rescued by a contingent of Roman soldiers. Whilst in Roman hands a plot by certain Jews to kill Paul became known, and the Romans took him off to Caesarea under a very strong escort. They stopped for the night (Acts chapter 23, verse 31) at Antipatris, on the route between Jerusalem and Caesarea, a small town which at a later date issued a few coins, represented here by **B441**.



**B441: VF £200 / \$400**

AE Samaria - Antipatris, 218-222 AD Obv. Elagabalus  
Rev. Temple in which Tyche standing holding sceptre and small bust

In Caesarea, Paul was taken before Procurator Antonius Felix, who kept him prisoner, hoping that Paul would buy his freedom with a bribe. Acts chapter 24, verse 7 tells us that Felix held Paul for two years, until a new governor, Porcius Festus, arrived. But we are not sure what year Festus took over. It is a pity that Procurators of Judaea were not important enough to have their names inscribed on the coinage! Prutahs **B442** and **B443** are dated 54 AD, and were certainly minted by Felix. The big question is **B444**, dated to “Year 5” of Nero equalling 58/9 AD. If Festus, as is most likely, had arrived by 58/59 AD and was responsible for **B444**, then probably Paul was held prisoner in Caesarea from 57 AD to 59 AD.



**B442: VF £35 / \$70**

AE prutah Judaea and Samaria, 54 AD Procurator Felix, naming Claudius on the reverse, and Julia Agrippina, wife of Claudius (who poisoned him), on the obverse.



**B443: VF £35 / \$70**

AE prutah of Procurator Felix, “year 14” of Claudius = 54 AD.  
Obv. Naming Nero (heir to the throne). Rev. Naming Britannicus Caesar (Claudius’ son, died 55 AD).



**B444: VF £20 / \$40**

AE prutah, year 5 of Nero = 58 AD. Procurator Festus

Herod Agrippa II, 50 – c95 AD, ruled areas to the North of Palestine, but also had certain responsibilities for “Jewish affairs” within the Holy Land, and Festus invited him to hear Paul’s case. We read about St. Paul’s defence before King Agrippa in Acts 26; at the end of which comes verse 28: “Then Agrippa said to Paul, ‘Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian’”. Agrippa and Festus might have had Paul released; but he had already appealed to Caesar (ie. to Nero, 54 – 68 AD), and they had to send him to Rome.

At this point I show a selection of Herod Agrippa II’s coins – **B445** – **B459**.



**B445: VF £350 / \$700**

AE Herod Agrippa II, 50-c95 AD. Minted Paneas now called “Neronias”, 61 AD Obv. Head of Nero



**B446: VF £350 / \$700**

AE Agrippa II, minted “Neronias”. Obverse legend “King Agrippa Year 11, which is also (Greek - ΤΟΥ ΚΑΙ) 6 (the monogram at the bottom below the caduceus)”, which are dates of two eras used by Agrippa (one starting in 56 AD, the other in 61 AD); which mean that this coin was minted in 67 AD



**B447: VF £200 / \$400**

AE Agrippa II, minted Neronias/Paneas 67 AD, the reverse giving the two dates - the monogram in the centre being “Year 6”.



**B448: VF £400 / \$800**

AE Agrippa II. Obv. Head of Vespasian. Rev. Tyche standing “Year 29” (of the 56 AD era). Minted Paneas 85 AD (though Vespasian had died in 79 AD)



**B449: VF £400 / \$800**

AE Agrippa II Obv. Domitian Rev. Victory. Minted Paneas “Year 19” = 75 AD



**B450: VF £400 / \$800**

AE Agrippa II Obv. Domitian  
Rev. Victory writing on shield "Year 27" = 83 AD Paneas mint.



**B451: VF £200 / \$400**

AE Agrippa II Obv. Domitian  
Rev. War-galley, dated "19" = 75 AD



**B452: VF £400 / \$800**

AE Agrippa II Obv. Domitian Rev. "Year 24" = 80 AD



**B453: VF £400 / \$800**

AE Agrippa II Obv. Domitian  
Rev. Date-palm "Year 25" = 81 AD



**B454: VF £200 / \$400**

AE Agrippa II Obv, Domitian Rev. Cornucopia, 81 AD



**B455: VF £400 / \$800**

AE Agrippa II Obv. Domitian  
Rev. Square altar, dated "26" = 87 AD (era from 61 AD)





**B456: VF £200 / \$400**

AE Agrippa II Obv. Domitian Date as last, 87 AD



**B457: VF £400 / \$800**

AE Agrippa II Obv. Domitian Rev. Caduceus and cornucopiae, 87 AD



**B458: VF £200 / \$400**

AE Agrippa II Obv. Tyche Rev. Cornucopia.  
Date (56 AD era) "34" = 90 AD



**B459: VF £200 / \$400**

AE Agrippa II Obv. Domitian Rev. "Year 35" = 91 AD

Paul was sent with a number of other prisoners - plus St. Luke, because this is a "we" passage - on a ship of Adramyteum, a city of Mysia, North-West Asia Minor, which is not far from Assos. Coins **B460** and **B461** were minted at Adramyteum. Next day (Acts chapter 27, verse 3) they touched at Sidon, and Paul was allowed to land and visit friends. Coins **B462** - **B472** come from Sidon; which strangely on coins **B467** and **B470** is called "the goddess Sidon". The Phoenician legend on **B464**, above and below the rudder, translates, "Of the Sidonians, Mother of Carthage, Hippo, Citium, Tyre" - but we had a chalcous of Tyre (**B74**), minted by Antiochus IV, reading, "Of Tyre, the mother of the Sidonians"! Very mixed-up family relationships in this part of the world! But perhaps the Crusader denier is the most interesting of any. In Crusading times Sidon was a feudal fief of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. Count Renaud's title was "Seigneur de Sagete ou Sidon", Sagete being based on the Arabic form of the name, which in French was pronounced as "Saette" - the same word as the Old French for "arrow". Renaud used an arrow, as on the reverse of this denier, illustrated as **B472**, in punning allusion to the name of his fief.



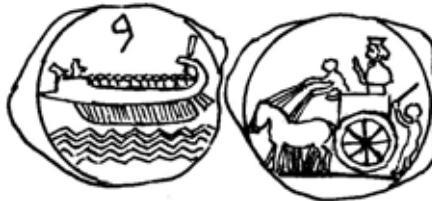
**B460: VF £25 / \$50**

AE Mysia - Adramyteum 2nd- 1st cent BC Obv. Zeus  
Rev. Forepart of winged horse.



**B461: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Adramyteum, 120-63 BC Obv. Apollo Rev. Cornucopia  
between piley (the caps of the Dioscuri, Castor and Pollux).



**B462: VF £400 / \$800**

AR Sidon double shekel of King Baalshallim II, c386-372 BC  
Obv. War-galley. Rev. King of Persia in chariot with  
charioteer. Attendant behind.



**B463: VF £30 / \$60**

AR Sidon 1/16th shekel, Abd-Ashtart I, 372-359 BC  
Rev. King of Persia at left fighting a rampant lion



**B464: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Sidon, 174-150 BC Obv. Tyche  
Rev. Rudder with Phoenician legend



**B465: VF £35 / \$70**

AE Sidon, 174-150 BC Rev. Europa with inflated veil on bull



**B466: VF £150 / \$300**

AR tetradrachm Sidon, 107 BC-43 AD Dated “Year 80” = 32/31 BC



**B467: VF £35 / \$70**

AE Sidon, 110-44 BC Rev. Galley, above “Year 34 of the goddess Sidon” = 77 BC.



**B468: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Sidon, 64 BC - 116 AD Obv. Dionysus  
Rev. “Cista Mystica”. Dated 156 = 45 AD



**B469: VF £80 / \$160**

AE Sidon, dated 116 AD Obv. Trajan Rev. Cadmus standing  
on the prow of a galley “of Sidon, commander of ships”.



**B470: VF £80 / \$160**

AE Sidon, 117-138 AD Obv. Hadrian  
Rev. Car of Astarte (containing baetylic stones)



**B471: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Sidon (Roman Colony), 218-222 AD Obv. Elagabalus.  
Rev. Legionary standards.



**B472: VF £400 / \$800**

Billon denier. Crusading Counts of Sidon,  
Renaud, 1165-1187

From Sidon, Paul's party sailed to Myra, an important city of Lycia in southern Asia Minor, illustrated by coins **B473** to **B475**. Here, as the ship of Adramyteum would most likely have been turning home northwards fairly soon, they transferred to a ship of Alexandria in Egypt, which was probably carrying corn to Rome – we see the sort of ship they must have travelled in on the reverse of coin **B476**. They sailed westwards, reaching Cnidus, the extreme South-West point of Asia Minor, coins **B477** and **B478**, but the wind did not allow them to continue westwards. They had to go South round the East side of Crete, and then along the South of Crete to a place called The Fair Havens. As the nearest coining city to this was Phaestus, I show a coin from Phaestus, **B479**, plus two coins, **B480** and **B481**, from the Koinon ("federation") of Crete. Paul advised the Roman centurion who was escorting the prisoners that it was too late in the year to go too much further until the spring; but they did go on, and were met, as Paul had foreseen, by a tempest. In Acts chapter 27, verse 21 Paul told them, "Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete. I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship". He added that an angel had said," Fear not, Paul: thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee."



**B473: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Lycia - Myra, c81 BC - Imperial times. Obv. Apollo  
Rev. Lyre



**B474: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Myra as last Obv. Artemis Rev. Stag



**B475: VF £70 / \$140**

AR drachm. Province of Lycia, 98-117 AD Obv. Trajan.  
Rev. Two lyres and an owl



**B476: VF £150 / \$300**

Billon tetradrachm Alexandria, 54-68 AD Obv. Nero  
Rev. Merchantman in the Imperial service "Transporter of the  
Emperor"



**B477: VF £30 / \$60**

AE Caria - Cnidus, 300-190 BC Obv. City goddess  
Rev. Forepart of lion



**B478: VF £25 / \$50**

AE Cnidus, 300-190 BC Obv. Apollo  
Rev. Prow of galley, bunch of grapes and KNI below.



**B479: VF £60 / \$120**

AE Crete - Phaestus, 300-250 BC Obv. Hound on the scent  
 Rev. The giant Talos (a man of brass made by Hephaestos, who  
 watched over Crete by walking round the island three times  
 every day, according to one legend)



**B480: VF £60 / \$120**

AE Roman Crete, 98-117 AD Obv. Trajan  
 Rev. River god reclining



**B481: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Roman Crete, 117-138 AD Obv. Hadrian Rev. Altar

They were shipwrecked on the island of Malta, where the earlier coins are inscribed, as **B482** and **B483**, with the three Phoenician (or “Punic”) letters (right to left) Alef N N. It is thought that the Alef represents “gh”, and that the Phoenician name for the island was “Ghonan”, a word that meant “ship”, a very appropriate description for Malta. Later coins are in Greek: later still in Latin, the Classical name for the island being “Melita”. The head on the obverse of **B482** may be that of Eshmun, a god particularly associated with Sidon. The female heads on the obverses of **B483** to **B486** are probably Astarte.



**B482: VF £60 / \$120**

AE Malta (Melita), 211-175 BC Obv. head of god Eshmun  
 Rev. Priest's cap



**B483: VF £50 / \$100**

AE Malta, 2nd-1st cents BC. Obv. Veiled head of ?Astarte  
Rev. Ram's head



**B484: VF £100 / \$200**

AE Malta, 2nd-1st cent BC Obv. Bust of ?Astarte  
Rev. Four-winged figure of ?Eshmun



**B485: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Malta, 1st cent BC Obv. Head of ?Astarte Rev. Tripod



**B486: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Malta c35 BC Rev. Curule chair (used by magistrates)

Paul's party were treated well in Malta, and Paul prayed over the father of Publius, the chief man in the island, who, as a result, was healed. It has been suggested that Paul's party stayed on the island from November 59 AD to January 60 AD, when they then departed in another Alexandrian ship.

They travelled to Syracuse in Sicily, represented by just one, out of very many possible coins - **B487**; thence on (Acts chapter 28, verse 13) to Rhegium in southern Italy, coins **B488** and **B489**. Then to non-coin issuing Puteoli, and on to Rome itself, represented by **B490**, the head on the obverse being that of Nero, 54 – 68 AD.



**B487: VF £50 / \$100**

AE Sicily - Syracuse, under the Romans after 212 BC.  
Obv. Athena. Rev. Victory with knife about to sacrifice bull



**B488: VF £40/ \$80**

AE South Italy - Rhegium, 350-270 BC. Obv. Apollo  
Rev. Lion's scalp



**B489: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Rhegium, 217-203 BC Obv. Artemis. Rev. Lyre



**B490: Fine £75 / \$150**

AE Rome, 54-68 AD Obv. Nero Rev. The temple of Janus  
(doors open in wartime; closed in peace)

It was probably during his time in Rome, between his arrival there and his martyrdom in, say, 64 AD, that Paul wrote at least some of his Epistles, and he may have been involved in further missionary travels.

“Romans” he wrote earlier, before he actually reached the city; but it was this letter that had the greatest impact on the later Church, especially during the 16 Century Reformation. Thus a silver coin of 1545, **B491**, minted by Albert of Brandenburg, 1525-68, Master of the Teutonic Knights, has for its obverse legend, “the Just shall live by Faith”, which is a quotation from Romans chapter 1, verse 17, which had been adopted as a slogan by the Protestants. The other cities named as recipients of a Pauline Epistle have other mentions, with numismatic illustrations shown, elsewhere



in the book – all except “Colossians”, which probably was written from Rome. Colossae was in Phrygia, Central Asia Minor, not far from Laodicea (which gets a real telling off in Revelation chapter 3). Coins **B492** and **B493** come from Colossae – coins from this city are not common.



**B491: VF £30 / \$60**

AR groschen of 1545. Albert, Margrave of Brandenburg.  
Protestant slogan on obv. taken from Paul's Epistle to Romans.



**B492: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Phrygia - Colossae, 1st-2nd cent AD.  
Obv. Head of Serapis. Rev. Isis standing.



**B493: VF £50 / \$100**

AE Colossae, 139-161 AD. Obv. Marcus Aurelius as Caesar.  
Rev. Artemis the huntress

During Nero's persecution of the Christian Church, both Peter and Paul were martyred in Rome around 64-66 AD. Not, though, in the Colosseum, as this building, (seen on **B494**) had not yet been built. This was commenced by Vespasian and officially opened by Titus in 80 AD. Tradition states that Peter was crucified upside down; but Paul, as a Roman citizen, was beheaded by sword.



**B494: Very Rare and Expensive**

AE Sestertius Rome, 80 AD. Obv. Titus, 79-81 AD Titus seated amidst arms. Rev. The newly erected Colosseum

## Chapter Seven

### WHAT THE JEWS DID NEXT!

#### First Jewish Revolt

From 58 AD there were no more Procuratorial coins; possibly because so many prutahs had been minted in that year. After Felix and Festus, who knew St.Paul, came governors Albinus and Florus. Florus, 64 – 66 AD, was not a tactful man, and by offending the Jews helped to bring about the first big Jewish Revolt of 66 – 70 AD (going on to 73 AD if you count the “last stand” at Masada), during which they minted a number of interesting coins.

#### Vocabulary of Hebrew Illustrations (in order of appearance)

Letters written in the Hebrew are transliterated by capitals in the English – other letters are in lower case.

|                                   |                  |            |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|------------|
| לָפֶן                             | SheQel           | Shekel     |
| לְיִשְׂרָאֵל                      | YiSRAel          | Israel     |
| יְרוּשָׁלַיִם or<br>יְרוּשָׁלַיִם | YeRUSaLIM        | Jerusalem  |
| הָא                               | Ha               | The        |
| לִי                               | Li               | Of, for    |
| קָדוֹשׁ                           | QaDOShaH         | Holy       |
| חֵצֵל                             | ChaTzI           | Half       |
| שְׁנַיִם                          | SiTIM            | Two        |
| חֵירוּת or חֵירוּת                | ChaROTh          | Freedom    |
| צִיּוֹן                           | TzIION           | Zion       |
| אַרְבָּע                          | ARB'             | Four       |
| כְּפָדוּת                         | GALaTh           | Redemption |
| רָבָע                             | RoBA'            | Quarter    |
| שִׁמְעוֹן or שִׁמְעוֹן            | ShiM'ON or ShiM' | Shim'on    |

|        |                          |                 |
|--------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| פזלwy  | NaSI (plus silent alef)  | Prophet, Prince |
| xBF    | AKhaTh                   | One             |
| q POLF | EL'aZaR (name of priest) | Eleazer         |
| wYAW   | ShaLOSh                  | Three           |

Coin **B495** is a silver shekel, with the one or two letters over the chalice on the obverse which give us the date (first to fifth year of the Revolt) – in this case “Year Two”.



**B495: VF £1000 / \$2000**

AR shekel Jewish First Revolt, 66-70 AD Obv. Chalice “Year Two” (67 AD) Rev. Stem with three pomegranates

### Dates over the Chalice on Shekels of the First Revolt

|           |               |
|-----------|---------------|
| w for xYw | Year - SaNaTh |
| F (no w)  | Year One      |
| sw        | Year Two      |
| rw        | Year Three    |
| qw        | Year Four     |
| fw        | Year Five     |

The obverse legend, remembering to read the Hebrew from right to left, is “Shekel of Israel”, with “Jerusalem the Holy” round the reverse. “Holy” has the extra “H” at the end, making it feminine, to go with “Jerusalem”, which is a feminine noun.

Everything about these coins, and those of the Second Revolt too, is connected with the Jewish religion centred on the Temple in Jerusalem – we have to remember that the Jews believed that God Himself lived in the Holy of Holies within the Temple – but we do not know what many of the particular designs actually mean. Was the chalice on **B495** the “pot of manna”, or was it the golden utensil that held the omer (first grain harvest) in the Temple? Does the reverse depict a branch with three pomegranates, and, if it does, what exactly were they used for?

Coin **B496** is the very similar Half-shekel, dated “Year Three”, and reading *chatzi ha-sheqet*, “Half the Shekel”.

What the Jews did next!



**B496: VF £1100 / \$2200**

AR half-shekel "Year 3", 68 AD. Types as last.

The bronze prutahs, **B497** and **B498**, are the last of the long series that began with the "prototype mite" of Antiochus VII in 132 BC. Coin **B497** reads "Year Two" round a lidless amphora on the obverse, with "The Freedom of Zion" round the vine-leaf on the reverse. **B498** is similar, but dated "Year Three", and the amphora has a lid.

Why an amphora? It has been suggested that this might be an oil jug used for giving the menorah a refill! Why the vine-leaf? Perhaps this connects with the thinking of Psalm 80 and of Isaiah chapter 5, that Israel is the Vine of God, and the leaf is shown to prove that the Jews are God's chosen people.



**B497: VF £60 / \$120**

AE prutah, "Year Two". Obv. Amphora. Rev. Vine leaf



**B498: VF £70 / \$140**

AE prutah "Year Three". Obv. Amphora with lid  
Rev. as **B497**

**B499** reads "for the redemption of Zion" round a date-palm on the obverse, with "Year Four: a half" round the reverse. I presume this means that this is a Half-Shekel, which ought to be a silver coin, but was evidently minted in bronze because by now silver was running short in Jerusalem under siege. The date-palm was a Roman symbol for Judaea; whilst on the reverse we have a citron between two lulavs. A lulav was a bundle made up of myrtle, willow, and palm branches, and they were carried by the faithful at the Feast of Tabernacles (see Leviticus chapter 23, verse 40). They carried the lulav in their right hand, and a citron in the left. Coin **B500** is very similar, with a citron on the obverse, and two lulavs on the reverse, with the legend "Year Four: a Quarter (Quarter-shekel)". Coin **B501** has the chalice on the obverse, with a lulav and two citrons with the legend "Year Four" on the reverse.



**B499: VF £4000 / \$8000**

AE half-shekel "Year Four", 69 AD Obv. Date-palm with baskets at side. Rev. Citron with lulavs at sides



**B500: VF £750 / \$1500**

AE quarter-shekel. "Year Four" Obv. Citron. Rev. Two lulavs



**B501: VF £250 / \$500**

AE "Year Four" Obv. Chalice. Rev. Lulav and two citrons

Coins **B502a**, **B502b**, and **B502c** are examples of the way that the prutahs of the First Revolt were copied, probably by unauthorised metal-workers in Caesarea – some even show the Emperor's head on one face **B502c**.



**B502A: VF £25 / \$50**



**B502B: VF £25 / \$50**



**B502C: VF £25 / \$50**

AE a,b,c imitations of **B497** and **B498**, probably minted at Caesarea

On the Roman side the Tenth Legion, Legio X Fretensis, was one of those involved in the siege of Jerusalem, and it was then given the final task of taking the hill fortress of Masada, which held out until 73 AD. The Tenth remained in Palestine on garrison duty – and countermarked a number of coins, with X or XF for the name of the legion. In 2004 I bought coin, **B503**, from a scrapbox for 25p. It needed a lot of cleaning, and there seemed to be a horrible dent in the middle of the obverse. I asked a friend to check whether it actually was Gadara as I thought it was – and a week later he offered £5 for this very rubbishy-looking coin. Fortunately I refused the offer, and asked why he was so keen to acquire it – he revealed that he had cleaned out "the dent", and it was actually a Tenth Legion countermark!



**B503: VF £50 / \$100**

AE (shown without a countermark as B166) “X” countermark of the 10th Legion on a coin of Gadara.

**B504** is a different sort of thing altogether. It is fairly modern “Censer Piece”, of the type produced in Western Europe between c1500 and the beginning of the First World War. A 90-year-old gentleman presented me with one such, of indeterminate metal. It is in a little round box, with a label reading “MEDALS – copie (sic) from a genuine Jerusalem silver shekel for 30 of which Our Saviour Jesus Christ was sold – to be had at A. Bühner’s 46, Skinner Street, London”. It is in fact meant to be a copy of Coin **B495**, made by someone who had read a description of the original, without actually having seen it. The legends are more or less correct, only in Modern Hebrew lettering, reading “Shekel of Israel” and “Jerusalem the Holy”; but the actual designs were completely misunderstood. The two date letters above the chalice were thought to be smoke rising up – so the chalice became a censer containing burning incense. The reverse design was thought to be Aaron’s rod that budded (Numbers chapter 17, verse 8), and depicted as such. Certainly not a “Judas Piece” (which it would not have been, even if it had been a genuine **B495**); but very interesting.



**B504: VF £15 / \$305 In original box £30 / \$60**

Various metals, c1500-c1914 Censer piece, “copying” **B495**

It helps with the First Revolt that we know the Roman commanders. Vespasian had commanded part of the forces that invaded Britain in 43 AD. Then, in 67 AD Nero gave him command of the army facing the rebel Jews. In 69 AD the legions at Alexandria were to proclaim Vespasian Emperor; whereupon he returned to Rome, leaving his son Titus, another future Emperor, in charge of operations in Judaea. When Jerusalem finally fell, the Romans certainly had numismatic celebrations. There were local Greek-style bronzes minted at Caesarea, and we begin with these - with **B505** of Vespasian, and **B506** of Titus (with the same reverse) showing a winged Victory writing up the victory on a shield, as she stands beneath a palm-tree. Then there was another Titus type, **B507**, depicting a bound captive sitting beneath a large trophy of arms. These are inscribed with the Greek words *IOUDAIAS EALOKUIAS*, which mean “Judaea has been captured”. Apart from these there was a very large issue of celebratory coins from

Rome itself with the legend “Judaea Capta” (the same as the Greek, only in Latin). Vespasian minted silver denarii, as **B508**, depicting a very mournful “Judaea” seated beneath a trophy, as well as Sestertii, such as **B509** (with many variations), and Asses, as **B510**.



**B505: VF £400 / \$800**

AE “Judaea Capta” Greek type minted at Caesarea.  
Obv. Head of Vespasian



**B506: VF £400 / \$800**

AE as last. Obv. Titus, minted 70-81 AD. Rev. Victory writing on shield. Palm-tree to right.



**B507: VF £400 / \$800**

AE as last. Obv. Titus Rev. Trophy and captive.



**B507A: VF £250 / \$500**

AR Roman Provincial Tetradrachm. Dated Year 3 of Titus Caesar  
= 70/71 AD.

Though this has a club on the reverse which would seem to indicate “Tyre”, Richard McAlee suggests that this coin may be a military issue minted in or near Jerusalem after the fall of that city in August 70 AD. If true, this would make it the earliest of the *Judaea Capta* series



What the Jews did next!



**B508: VF £160 / \$320**

AR denarius Rome, 70-79 AD. Obv. Vespasian. Rev. Trophy and “Judaea” in mourning.



**B509: VF £1000 / \$2000**

AE Sestertius Rome, 70-79 AD. Obv. Vespasian Rev. “Judaea Capta” Jewish male captive, and female in mourning.



**B510: VF £400 / \$800**

AE “as” Rome, as last. Rev. “Judaea” mourning

Though Domitian, Vespasian’s other son, Emperor 81 – 96 AD, does not mention the words “Judaea Capta”, he did mint a number of coins at Caesarea, of similar style, though inscribed in Latin rather than Greek. Coins **B511** to **B516**, which follow the “war against the Jews” sort of theme, are therefore included here.



**B511: VF £200 / \$400**

AE minted Caesarea, 81-96 AD, continuing “Judaea Capta” types. Obv. Domitian. Rev. Date-palm



**B512: VF £200 / \$400**

AE as last Rev. Minerva (Greek, Athena) standing on galley.  
Trophy to left.



**B513: VF £200 / \$400**

AE as last Rev. Victory holding wreath and trophy



**B514: VF £200 / \$400**

AE as last Rev. Minerva and trophy



**B515: VF £200 / \$400**

AE as last Rev. Trophy



**B516: VF £350 / \$700**

AE as last Rev. Soldier holding spear and uncertain object

The next coin with Jewish connections is a Roman Sestertius of the Emperor Nerva, 96-98 AD, **B517**, with the date-palm symbolising Judaea on the reverse, and the legend, “to efface the shame of the Jewish tax” written around in Latin. After the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple, Vespasian had forced the Jews to continue to pay the old Temple Tax; but now it went to the Romans. Roman officials under Titus and Domitian continued to collect it, often in a brutal and humiliating manner. Nerva, however, abolished this very unpopular and unfair tax, minting this coin to commemorate its abolition.



**B517: VF £1000 / \$2000**

AE Sestertius, 96-98 AD. Obv. Nerva. Rev. Date-palm, “to efface the shame of the Jewish tax”

## Second Jewish Revolt

The Jews revolted from Roman rule once again, from 132 to 135 AD. This is known either as the “Bar Cochba War”, or, more simply, as “the Second Jewish Revolt”. It would seem likely that this was caused by the Emperor Hadrian’s attempt to make Jerusalem a Roman colony, with the erection there of a temple of Jupiter. For many years it was thought that the colony of Aelia Capitolina was founded after the end of the war in 135 AD; but the Israeli numismatic scholar Meshorer relates in his book “Coins of the Second Temple Period” that he had recently found an Aelia coin in a hoard which must have been laid down during the war. This leads us to think that the Roman Colony was probably founded during Hadrian’s visit to Judaea in 130 AD, during his grand tour of the provinces of the Roman Empire, and that this pagan desecration of Jerusalem was the actual cause of the Jewish revolt. **B518** is a coin of Hadrian from his new colony, on the reverse showing the Emperor as the founder ploughing the first furrow which marked out the boundary of the new foundation.



**B518: VF £400 / \$800**

AE Aelia Capitolina (Jerusalem), c130-138 AD Obv. Hadrian  
Rev. Founder ploughing first furrow of new Colony

The Jewish coins of the revolt were all overstruck on coins already circulating in the Holy Land, with the original designs filed off (though parts can still be visible sometimes). Though there is much variation of design, the legends are not so varied. During the first year “El’azar the Priest”, who probably reconsecrated the holy places in Jerusalem, is named; but the name appearing on most of the coins is that of “Shim’on”, which would seem to have been part of Bar Cochba’s own name.

The slogans that appear on the coins are as follows.

|             |                                                      |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| First Year  | “Year One of the Redemption of Israel”               |
| Second Year | “Year Two of the Freedom of Israel”                  |
| Third Year  | “For the Freedom of Jerusalem” (not naming the year) |

It is thought likely that the Jews held Jerusalem in Years One and Two, so their concern was for the whole land of Israel; but the Romans had taken Jerusalem by Year Three; so the main aim of the Jews now was to regain it – hence the legend “for the freedom of Jerusalem” in Year Three.

I refer to the coins by the name of the denomination of the underlying non-Jewish coin, though the Jews would no doubt have viewed them as Shekels and parts of a Shekel. Please note that though I have illustrated most of the possible coin designs, and listed the legends, these have to be taken on a pick ‘n’ mix basis. I mean that your “tetradrachm” may be Year One or Year Two rather than the Year Three type I illustrate as Coin **B519**, and may therefore have the legends appropriate to that particular year rather than those shown on my illustration.

The large silver “tetradrachm”, **B519**, shows the façade of the Temple on the obverse. This is presumably, though not necessarily, the Temple destroyed by Titus in 70 AD. The feature inside, between the central columns, is probably the Ark of the Covenant, though this may well have been taken to Ethiopia many years before! Around is the name “Shim’on”. The reverse has a lulav and citron, as used at the Feast of Tabernacles, and the “For the Freedom of Jerusalem” legend of Year Three. Coin **B520**, the “Didrachm”, was discovered and identified during the 1980s, when only two examples were known. This has an obverse depicting the Entranceway to the Temple, with the shewbread table inside.



**B519: VF £1500 / \$3000**

AR tetradrachm 132-135 AD Bar Cochba Revolt. Obv. Façade of the Temple in Jerusalem, with the Ark of the Covenant between the central columns. Rev. Lulav and citron. Undated, attributed to Year 3.



**B520: VF Very Rare and Expensive**

AR Didrachm (double zuz), 132-5 AD Obv. Entranceway to Temple with the shewbread table within. Rev. Lulav. Year 3.

Coins **B521-B525** are “Denarii” of Year Two – all with the same legends, though the name “Shim'on” is sometimes shortened to Shim'. The jugs, lyres, trumpets, palm-branches, and presumably the bunches of grapes as well, are all connected in some way with the Temple worship. The Year Three “denarii”, **B526-B528**, use very similar designs. Note that some catalogues describe what I call a “denarius” as a “Zuz” (plural Zuzim).



**B521: VF £250 / \$500**

AR denarius of “Year Two” (133/4 AD). Obv. “Shim'on”(prob.= Bar Cochba himself) bunch of grapes. Rev. “For the freedom of Israel” Jug; palm-branch at side.



**B522: VF Very Rare and Expensive**

AR denarius of “Year Two” (133/4 AD). Obv. “Shim” within wreath. Rev. Palm branch “For the freedom of Israel”



**B523: VF £250 / \$500**

AR denarius of “Year Two” (133/4 AD). Obv. “Shim” Rev. Two Trumpets “For the freedom of Israel”



**B524: VF £2000 / \$4000**

AR denarius of “Year Two” (133/4 AD). Obv. “Shim’  
Rev. Lyre “For the freedom of Israel”



**B525: VF £250 / \$500**

AR denarius of “Year Two” (133/4 AD). Obv. “Shim’on”  
grapes. Rev. Palm-branch “For the freedom of Israel”



**B526: VF £350 / \$700**

AR denarius, 134/5 AD, undated but attributed to Year  
Three. Obv. “Shim’on” bunch of grapes. Rev. Lyre “For the  
freedom of Jerusalem”



**B527: VF £350 / \$700**

AR denarius, 134/5 AD, undated but attributed to Year  
Three. Obv. “Shim’on” within wreath. Rev. “For the freedom  
of Jerusalem” Jug and palm-branch



**B528: VF £350 / \$700**

AR denarius, 134/5 AD, undated but attributed to Year  
Three. Obv. “Shim’on” bunch of grapes. Rev. “For the  
freedom of Jerusalem” Two trumpets

Coin **B529** is a “Sestertius” of Year One, with the obverse naming Shim’on as “Prince of Israel”, and the reverse, round the amphora, reading “Year One of the Redemption of Israel”. Perhaps the commonest and best known of all the Bar Cochba coins is the bronze “As” **B530** with the date-palm and the vine-leaf on obverse and reverse. Coins

**B531** and **B532** are smaller bronzes with similar designs and legends.



**B529: Very rare and expensive**

AE Sestertius, 132/3 AD. Obv. "Shim'on, Prince of Israel"

Rev. Amphora, "Year One of the redemption of Israel"



**B530: VF £150 / \$300**

AE 134/5 AD Obv. Date-palm "Shim'on" Rev. Vine leaf "for the freedom of Jerusalem"



**B531: VF £550 / \$1100**

AE 132/3 AD Obv. Palm-branch within wreath "Shim'on, Prince of Israel" Rev. Lyre "Year One of the redemption of Israel"



**B532: VF £400 / \$800**

AE 133/4 AD Obv. Date-palm "Jerusalem" (letters in "funny" order). Rev. Bunch of grapes "Year Two of the freedom of Israel".

After the suppression of the revolt in 135 AD, the Jews were excluded from Jerusalem altogether, and Hadrian ordered a temple to Venus to be built on the site of Calvary, probably hoping to suppress Christianity as well as Judaism. But all he really did was to ensure that when the Roman Empire became Christian in the Fourth Century AD, people knew exactly where the true site was.

Coins of Aelia Capitolina continued to be minted until the reign of Valerian, 263-260 AD; after which there were no more coins except probably a few rare Byzantine solidi minted around 610 AD. Recently attributed to the Jerusalem mint by Bendall and Hendy, they were produced in Jerusalem until 614 AD, during the reign of the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius, when the city underwent a further siege, this time by the Sassanian Persian Khusru II. He was supported by large numbers of Jews who were wanting to get back into the city from which they had been excluded for so long. Coin **B533** was minted during the short siege that ensued, and we note that the name of the city is now definitely “Jerusalem” again. But it did fall to the Persians who took the wood from “the True Cross” as part of their booty.



**B533: Very Rare and Expensive**

AE follis. 614 AD Jerusalem held by the Byzantines under Heraclius. Siege by Persians under Khusru II.

Heraclius recaptured the city for the Byzantines in 629, and with it the “true Cross”, but in 637 AD Jerusalem was captured again – this time by the Arabs under Caliph Omar. The Arabs were soon to mint coins of the type we know as “Arab-Byzantine” here, as **B534**, and on these the name of the city is given as “Iliya Filistin”, Iliya being a form of “Aelia”, “Aelia in Palestine”, and we have gone back temporarily to its old Roman colonial name.



**B534: VF £100 / \$200**

AE “follis” Jerusalem c670-700 AD. Obv. Standing Caliph. Rev. Arabic words, *Iliya* at the right and *Filistin* (retrograde) at the left of the large “M”

The Crusaders were to set up the “Kingdom of Jerusalem” as the most important of their Crusading states, and I illustrate just one of their Frankish deniers minted there – Coin **B535** was minted by King Baldwin III, 1143-63, with the Tower of David



depicted on the reverse. Unfortunately the Crusaders lost Jerusalem to the Moslems under Saladin in 1187, soon after the disastrous Battle of Hattin. The next Christian army to enter the city was in 1917, when, after a Turkish withdrawal, the British under General Allenby marched in singing the hymn, “Jesus shall reign where'er the sun” to the tune “Rimington”. Allenby himself, not wishing to enter Jerusalem on horseback where his Master had ridden a humble donkey, dismounted and marched in on foot.



**B535: VF £60 / \$120**

Billon denier, 1143-63. Crusading Kingdom of Jerusalem, King Baldwin III Rev. The Tower of David. Note how the legend continues from obverse to reverse – *Baldvinvs re de Ierusalem*, “Baldwin King of Jerusalem”.

Meanwhile the Jews spread out through the world. To cite just two examples of how they “got around” in mediaeval times, we find Jews named as moneyers on a number of English pennies of the short-cross type. For example, **B536** is a class 5 penny, attributed to the reign of King John, 1199 – 1215, naming Samuel, moneyer of Canterbury. His name identifies his Jewish origin. There are a number of others.



**B536: VF £100 / \$200**

AR short-cross penny England. King John, 1199-1216.  
Minted by Samuel at Canterbury

Coin **B537** from Gniezno in Poland was minted during the reign of Mieszko III, 1171-1202. It has the name “Gniezno” actually written in Hebrew letters. Hebrew writing appears on a number of Central European coins of this period.



**B537: VF £60 / \$120**

AR bracteate (uniface coin). Poland, Mieszko III, 1173-1202.  
Across the centre the town name of “Gniezno” is written in Hebrew writing, though you need a good imagination actually to read it!

Help! How can you hope to keep up to date with Biblical coins? I thought I had finished this book, and the manuscript is now actually in the publisher's hands. I have just opened my January 2007 copy of "The Celator" and find that David Hendin has discovered a hitherto completely unknown "prutah" of Herod Antipas.



**B537B: Very Rare and Expensive**

AE 14.1 mms. Weight 1.58 grams, bevelled edge.  
Obv. TETRA(PX)HC /delta/ ("Year Four of the Tetrarch")  
round a grain of wheat or barley.  
Rev. Palm-tree with seven branches. HPW - for "Herod"

This can only be Herod Antipas, because Herod the Great was already "King" rather than "Tetrarch" by his Year Three, and the style and size fit Year Four of Antipas, which equals 1BC/1AD.

This predates all previously known Antipas coins, such as B118 and B210, by many years, and was probably minted in Sepphoris, predating B204 by sixty-seven years the previous "earliest" coin minted there.

This new coin may also have given the idea of putting a palm-tree on his prutahs to Procurator Coponius (B126).

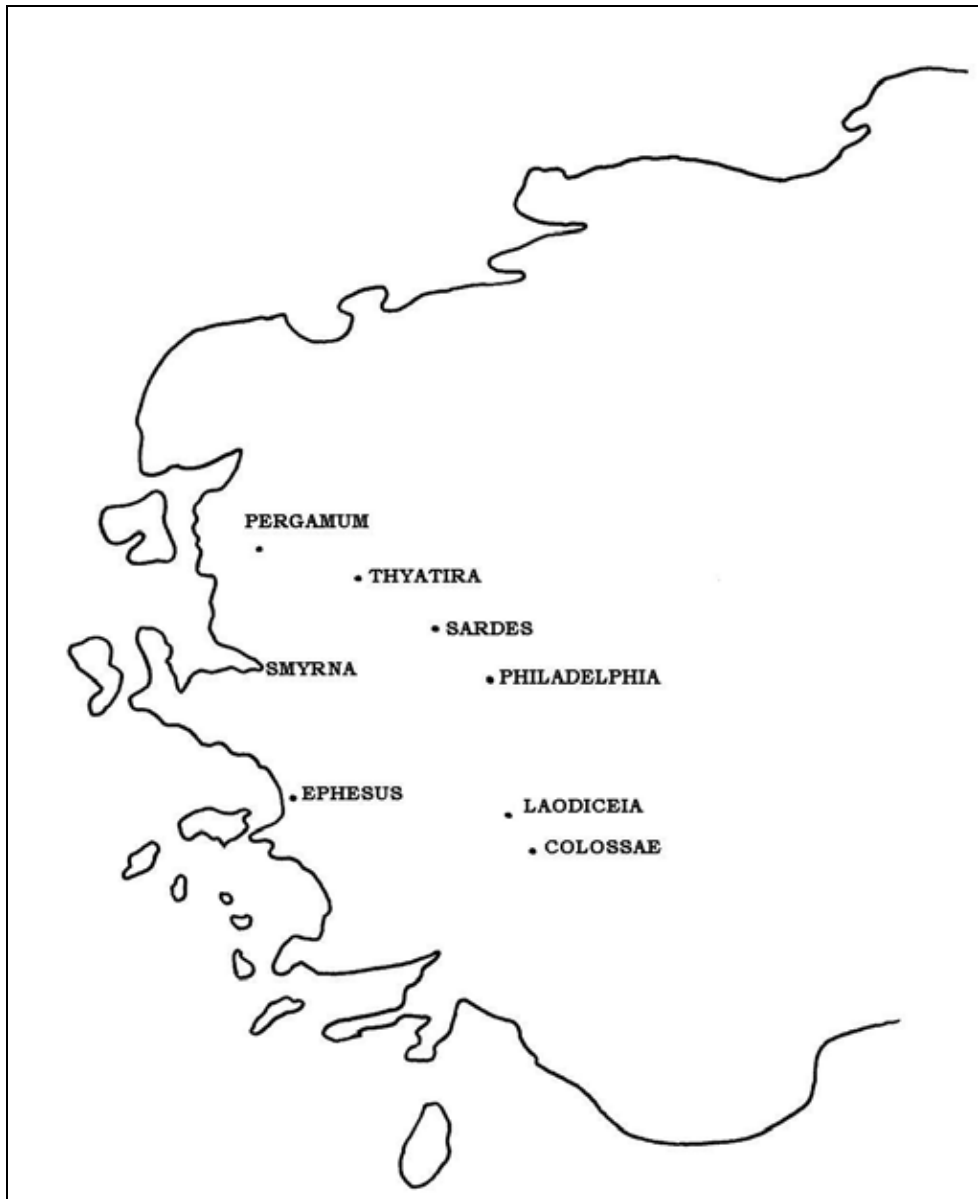
## Chapter Eight

### THE BOOK OF REVELATION AND AFTER

Fortunately this is not a theological manual; because if it had been we would have found “Revelation” one of the most difficult parts of the Bible to interpret. The writer, St. John the Divine, probably wrote the book towards the end of the reign of the Emperor Domitian, 81-96 AD, during his time as a prisoner on the island of Patmos (which did not mint coins). Much of it is extremely hard to understand; and can be a happy hunting ground for all sorts of religious cranks – St. John the Divine would seem to have been trying to get a message across to the Christian faithful in such a way that no persecution-minded non-Christian reader would be able to work out what he was actually saying. But this unfortunately means that, though we modern-day Christians are in full sympathy with the Early Church, we are likely to have as much difficulty as those persecutors had in grasping what he was really getting at.

So what about Revelation chapter 13, verse 18? “Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six”. I remember being told that this quite definitely referred to the Soviet leader, Joseph Stalin; but perhaps that just shows my age! Still I expect St. John’s readers could work it out. It is interesting to see a similar sort of hidden meaning on coins from the Indian native state of Hyderabad, as **B538**. I was puzzled for years as to why coins from this state have the Arabic numerals “92” on them. This could not be a date, or a regnal year; but then one day I saw an article that explained it. The population of Hyderabad were mainly Hindus; but the ruling house, the Nizams, were Moslem. If they had placed the name of “Mohammed” or the Moslem statement of faith openly on the coins, these might quite easily have been dropped on the ground and trodden under foot by infidels. The Nizams avoided this problem and yet still managed to name their Prophet by cleverly using a numerical code. “Mohammed” is written in Arabic with the four letters M H M D (vowel signs and double-letter markings do not count as ordinary letters): by using the letters as numerals we have M=40: H=8: M=40: D=4, totalling “92”, a “secret” way of acknowledging their religious leader. Jewish letters are also able to be used as numerals, and in the Book of Revelation the number “666” was certainly a “secret” way of naming a terrible enemy.

**THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF REVELATION (and COLOSSAE)**





**B538: VF £10 / \$20**

AR rupee Indian Native States – Hyderabad, dated 1278AH = 1862 AD. Obv. Top right, Arabic “92” for “Mohammed”

As we come back to the beginning of “Revelation”, we find in chapter 1, verse 8, that Jesus, Who through St.John is writing a letter to each of the seven main Christian churches in the Province of Asia, says of Himself, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending”. “Alpha” and “Omega” are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, therefore Jesus meant that there was nothing before Himself, and there will be nothing after Him. In other words Jesus is Eternal, from everlasting to everlasting. Coin **B539**, minted by Wulfric (whose name is written beginning with the Runic letter “Wen”, which is a “W”, though it looks like a “P”) of London during Anglo-Saxon King Aethelred II’s reign, shows on the reverse the Hand of God coming downwards, with the letters Alpha and Omega at the sides. It was a bad time for England with Vikings ravaging the land, and Aethelred trying to buy them off with “Danegeld”. The poor old Saxons needed God’s help very much and it must have been very comforting to be reminded by the coinage that God is in charge, that His Hand controls the universe. Actually my particular coin was found in Sweden, so it must have been plundered by a Viking band, or been paid to Vikings to buy off a raid. Masses of pennies of this and other Aethelred types ended up in Scandinavia, and the Vikings traded many down into Central Europe, where our “Hand of God” coin design was much copied.



**B539: VF £230 / \$460**

AR penny England – Aethelred II (“the Unready”), 978-1016.  
Rev. The Hand of God between Alpha and Omega.

The letters of Jesus to the seven churches come in Revelation chapters 2 and 3, and though Ephesus, represented here by Coin **B540**, has already been looked at in connection with St.Paul’s Missionary Journeys, none of the other six have; and, as they all have coins that are fairly easy to obtain, we ought to be prepared to enlarge our collection to include them.



**B540: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Ephesus 193-211 AD. Obv. Septimius Severus. Rev. Tyche (= "Fortuna") holding cornucopia and rudder.

We have to remember that by the 90s AD the church congregations were probably second or third generation believers. The tremendous enthusiasm of the first generation had largely died down, and there had been time for false teachings to creep in. Ephesus, to which the first letter is addressed, does not do too badly; but in chapter 2, verse 4 Jesus tells the Ephesians, "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love".

The second letter is addressed to Smyrna, which is illustrated by coins **B541-B549**, included to give the reader a general taste of what Smyrna coins looked like during the centuries of Greek and Roman rule. On coin **B541** we see the poet Homer seated; for Smyrna was one of the seven cities that claimed to be his birthplace. Homer's books, "The Iliad" and "The Odyssey", were the nearest thing to a Bible that the pagan Ancients had. With regard to the gods, who reputedly resided on Mount Olympus, the poems could quite aptly be entitled "Gods behaving badly". They were not very nice either to each other or to any mortal to whom they took a dislike. We are very fortunate that our God is a God of love! Coins **B542** and **B543** have the head of the Asiatic goddess Cybele on the obverse. Her worshippers wore a crown of flowers; and Edward Blaiklock in "The new International Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology" suggests that Revelation may be thinking of this aspect of Cybele worship when in chapter 2, verse 10, the writer promises the Church at Smyrna, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life".



**B541: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Smyrna 2nd-1st cent BC. Obv. Apollo Rev. Homer seated holding scroll ("The Iliad" or "The Odyssey")



**B542: VF £35 / \$70**

AE Smyrna 2nd-1st cent BC Obv. Head of Cybele  
Rev. Aphrodite Stratonikis.



**B543: VF £25 / \$50**

AE Smyrna as last Rev. Portable altar



**B544: VF £30 / \$60**

AE Smyrna 2nd-1st cent BC Obv. Apollo Rev. Hand in caestus (boxing glove)



**B545: VF £50 / \$100**

AE Smyrna, 38-39 AD Obv. Head of Caligula Rev. Head of his parents, Germanicus and Agrippina Senior.



**B546: VF £50 / \$100**

Smyrna, 117-138 AD. Obv. Hadrian Rev. Temple



**B547: VF £35 / \$70**

AE Smyrna 2nd cent AD. Obv. Head of Zeus Akraios Rev. Lion



**B548: VF £35 / \$70**

AE Smyrna as last Rev. The Amazon Smyrna



**B549: VF £60 / \$120**

AE Smyrna 2nd-3rd cents AD Obv. Head of the “Senate”.  
 Rev. The two Nemeses (these were goddesses of indignation and retribution, who dealt out happiness and unhappiness, making sure that happiness was not too frequent or excessive).

The third letter, Revelation chapter 2, verses 12 to 17, was addressed to the church at Pergamum, illustrated by coins **B550-B559**. This city ruled over a large empire during the time of her kings, the last of whom, Attalus III, bequeathed his kingdom to the Romans on his death in 133 BC. This is why Greek coin catalogues often date coins from Asia Minor as being “Before 133 BC” or “After 133 BC”, usually inferring that the city concerned had been part of the Pergamene Empire prior to 133 BC. Coins from the royal period of Pergamum have the name “Philetaeros” inscribed on them (see Coins **B550, B551, B552**). Philetaerus was the founder of the dynasty, though he did not actually take the title of king himself – the kings who did reign were all named either Eumenes or Attalus. Actually King Eumenes II, 197-159 BC, is credited with the invention of parchment. He thought out a method of treating the thin inner part of the skin of a sheep so that it could be used to write on – so it became known as “pergamena” – this became “parchemin” in French, and thence “parchment” in English.



**B550: VF £350 / \$700**

AR tetradrachm Pergamum, 241-197 BC, reign of Attalus I.  
 Head and name of Philetaerus, the founder of the dynasty.  
 Rev. Athena seated



**B551: VF £25 / \$50**

AE Pergamum, 281-197 BC Obv. Athena Rev. Bow –  
 “of Philetaeros”.





**B552: VF £30 / \$60**

AE Pergamum, 159-138 BC Obv. Athena Rev. Coiled serpent –  
“of Philetaeros”



**B553: VF £100 / \$200**

AR Cistophoric tetradrachm Pergamum, 200-133 BC Obv. Cista  
mystica in ivy-wreath Rev. Two serpents with decorated bow-case. This  
coin type was copied extensively by other cities, cf. **B400** and **B577**



**B554: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Pergamum, 133-67 BC Obv. Head of Athena Rev.  
Asklepios standing holding serpent-staff



**B555: VF £35 / \$70**

AE Pergamum as last Rev. Trophy of arms with  
magistrates' names at side



**B556: VF £35 / \$70**

AE Pergamum as last Rev. Victory crowning name of city



**B557: VF £30 / \$60**

AE Pergamum as last Rev. Owl on palm; magistrates above and below



**B558: VF £50 / \$100**

AE Pergamum, c27-23 BC Obv. Augustus. Rev. "C.A", for "Community of Asia"



**B559: VF £25 / \$50**

AE Pergamum 1st cent AD Obv. Head of "Senate"  
Rev. Head of "Roma"

Dr.Peter Lewis thinks that Revelation Chapter 2, verse 13, which describes Pergamum as "even where Satan's seat is", refers to the fact that the city was the chief centre of Emperor worship in the province, and that "Satan" actually means the Emperor Domitian who, according to the Roman historian Suetonius was regularly addressed as "Lord and God". As Domitian was probably responsible for St.John the Divine's exile to Patmos, you couldn't really expect him to say anything nice about him! The Pergamene kings introduced a large silver coin known as the "Cistophoric Tetradrachm", Coin **B553**. This gets its name from the basket from which a serpent emerges on the obverse – this was the "cista mystica", a very special box used particularly in the worship of Dionysus, the god of wine. This coin type, with variations of design, continued into Roman times, when the "cistophorus" was valued at three Denarii.

The fourth letter, Revelation Chapter 2, verses 18 – 29, was for the church at Thyatira. We do not know who is referred to in verse 20, “Thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols”- a dangerous woman by the sound of things! We will stick to the coins, of which **B560-B563** come from Thyatira. The most interesting feature is the “labrys” or double-axe on the reverse of Coin **B560**, which is also held by local hero, Tyrimnos, as he rides on horseback on the reverse of **B561**. The double-axe appears in Minoan and Mycenaean art, and is carved into some of the stones at Stonehenge in southern England. The reverse of **B563** shows Selene, the moon goddess, thought of as being a form of Artemis, who has a crescent at her shoulders and holds two torches, possibly representing the rising and the setting moon as one is pointed upwards and the other downwards.



**B560: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Thyatira, 54-68 AD Obv. Bearded Heracles.  
Rev. Double-axe (labrys)



**B561: VF £50 / \$100**

AE Thyatira, 117-138 AD Obv. “the Senate”. Rev. Tyrimnos  
on horse holding labrys



**B562: VF £45 / \$90**

AE Thyatira, 160-192 AD Obv. Bust of Artemis Boreitene  
Rev. Eagle



**B563: VF £45 / \$90**

AE Thyatira, 222-235 AD Obv. Severus Alexander Rev.  
Selene/Artemis holding two torches

We move on to the fifth letter, written to the church at Sardes (or “Sardis”: you can use either spelling), found in Revelation chapter 3, verses 1 - 6. Sardes is illustrated by coins **B564** to **B569**. Verse 1 must have shaken them, “I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead”. Sardis had been the ancient capital of the often very important Kingdom of Lydia, and that may have given the people there a sense of being superior to others, thus hindering their spiritual life. On Coin **B549** we see an ancient cult image of “Kore” (a name meaning “the maiden” by which Persephone is often known) decorated with corn-ears and pomegranate, which had probably been worshipped from ancient times even before the Greeks arrived in the area.



**B564: VF £25 / \$50**

AE Sardes, before 133 BC Obv. Head of Heracles Rev.  
Apollo standing holding bird and branch



**B565: VF £20 / \$40**

AE Sardes as last Obv. Apollo Rev. Club within wreath



**B566: VF £30 / \$60**

AE Sardes as last Obv. Dionysus Rev. Forepart of lion



**B567: VF £35 / \$70**

AE Sardes as last Obv. Head of City goddess Rev. Zeus Lydios



**B568: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Sardes after 133 BC Obv. Bust of Artemis Rev. Athena standing



**B569: VF £60 / \$120**

AE Sardes, 211-244 AD Obv. Bust of "Sardis". Rev. Cultus statue of Kore (the "Maiden" – a name for Persephone) with corn-ear and poppy-head

Revelation chapter 3, verses 7-13, contain the letter written to the church in Philadelphia (in Lydia: not to be confused with the city of the same name in the Decapolis, and most certainly not with the one in Pennsylvania!). This is illustrated by coins **B570** - **B575**. Coin **B573** shows Aphrodite (Roman, "Venus"), the goddess of Love, one of the goddesses involved in the so-called "Judgement of Paris". The Trojan prince Paris, who had to choose the most beautiful of the three, Hera, Aphrodite and Athena (thus, of course, earning the enmity of the two losers), chose Aphrodite, presenting her with the prize of a golden apple, which she is seen holding proudly in her left hand on the reverse of **B573**.



**B570: VF £35 / \$70**

AE Philadelphia (Lydia), before 133 BC Obv. Macedonian shield Rev. Thunderbolt.



**B571: VF £30 / \$60**

AE Philadelphia, before 133 BC Obv. Zeus Rev. Lyre



**B572: VF £30 / \$60**

AE Philadelphia, after 133 BC Obv. Dionysus Rev. Thyrsus (staff of Dionysus, with a pinecone at the top).



**B573: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Philadelphia, c193-211 AD Obv. Head of Zeus Korymbosus. Rev. Aphrodite holding the end of her veil and the golden apple.



**B574: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Philadelphia, c193-211 AD Obv. Head of “Philadelphia” Rev. Apollo holding lyre.



**B575: VF £35 / \$70**

AE Philadelphia, 211-268 AD Obv. Head of “Demos” (= “the people”)

The worst report of all comes in the seventh letter (Revelation chapter 3, verses 14 - 22) sent to the church in Laodiceia in Phrygia, which is told in verses 15 and 16, “I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth”. However, after a severe telling off, Jesus gives the Christians of Laodiceia a really wonderful promise. In verse 20 Jesus tells them, “Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me”. This was to be the inspiration for Holman Hunt’s famous picture, “The Light of the World”, which shows Jesus standing at the door of a human heart knocking for admittance. The trouble with Laodiceia was that it was rich. In the area around they bred a special sort of sheep with superior quality wool of a raven-black colour, enabling the city to

become the centre of a thriving textile trade. Where there is money, people do not feel the need for faith. Laodiceia is represented by coins **B576** to **B581**. The reverse of **B576** shows a horn of plenty (cornucopia), with the caduceus staff of Hermes (Roman, “Mercury”) to symbolise prosperity. Of the coins I show the most interesting is the Cistophoric tetradrachm, **B577**, which we can date to 57/56 BC by the magistrate named on the reverse - he is named as Euenos, son of HEROD, on a coin minted long before Herod the Great's reign, which started in 40 BC. Coins can come up with surprises! (Note that this “Laodiceia” has no connection with “Laodiceia ad Mare” on the coast of Syria).



**B576: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Laodiceia (Phrygia), after 133 BC. Obv. Uncertain female head Rev. Cornucopia and caduceus



**B577: VF £150 / \$300**

AR cistophoric tetradrachm 57/56 BC (type originating in Pergamum (as Coin 553). Magistrate Euenos son of Herod named above the bowcase.



**B578: VF £50 / \$100**

AE Laodiceia, 31 BC – 14 AD Obv. Augustus Rev. Zeus Laodiceus



**B579: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Laodiceia, 31 BC – 14 AD Obv. Head of Apollo Rev. Head-dress of Isis on altar round which serpent entwined.



**B580: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Laodiceia, 31 BC – 14 AD Obv. within wreath a ?wolf seated with labrys over shoulder (the city stood on the River Lycos, a name which means “wolf”).  
Rev. Aphrodite holding a dove



**B581: VF £40 / \$80**

AE Laodiceia, 54-79 AD. Obv. Head of “the People of Laodiceia”. Rev. Zeus Laodikeus.

The Christian Church survived Nero's persecution, and Domitian's and a few more - until eventually in 312 AD on the eve of Constantine the Great's battle against his pagan rival Maxentius, fought at the Milvian Bridge, Constantine prayed fervently for divine help. He supposedly saw a vision of a cross of light, with the words, *in hoc signo vinces*, “In this sign you shall conquer”. He was directed to make the sign of Christ on the shields of his soldiers - and the sign he made was “Chi-Rho”, a monogram of the first two letters of Christ in Greek, which we often refer to as the “Christogram”. Dr. Peter Lewis suggests that Constantine's soldiers already had a six-armed “sun-wheel” painted on their shields in honour of Mithras, the popular god of the soldiery; and that all they had to do to change this into the Christian Chi-Rho sign was to add a loop to the topmost “arm” making this become a “P”, and thus “X P”.

The earliest numismatic Christogram is supposed to be on the side of Constantine the Great's helmet on the obverse of a coin minted at Siscia in 319 AD; but, looking at the illustration of the coin of this type in Kenneth Jacob's “Coins and Christianity”, I am not at all sure that it really is a Christogram.

The next “Christian” coin, **B582**, is another bronze, minted at Constantinople in 327-8 AD. This shows a standard the bottom of which pins down a serpent representing evil. The standard here does have a definite Christogram at the top.



**B582: Very Rare and Expensive**

AE Constantine the Great. Constantinople mint, 326 AD.  
Rev. Standard topped by Christogram pinning down a serpent



After this Christograms become quite common on ordinary Roman coppers from certain mints (Lugdunum, Arelate, Aquileia and Siscia) after around c335 AD. Here the mintmasters (probably themselves Christians) have chosen to include the Christian symbol as part of the mintmark in the exergue, or at some other point in the reverse design.

On slightly later coins the Emperor is often shown holding the “Labarum”, which is a standard on which the Christogram is inscribed - particularly common is the Labarum on “Gloria Romanorum” coins of Valens and Valentinian I, as **B563**; but, before buying, make sure the Christogram is well-drawn and clear, as many of them are not.



**B583: VF £8 / \$16**

AE Roman Empire. Valens, 364-78 AD Rev. Emperor holds “Labarum” and a captive

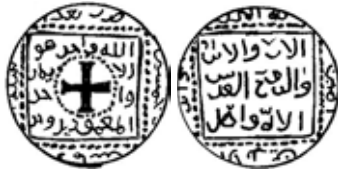
For a “full” Christogram design you need the type shown as **B584** produced at certain Western mints 351 - 353 AD in the names of Magnentius, Decentius, or Constantius II.



**B584: VF £100 / \$200**

AE 351-353 AD Magnentius. Rev. The Christogram (“Chi-Rho” monogram), with the marginal legend, *salvus dd nn Avg et Caes*, “The health (or “safety”) of our lords the Augustus and Caesar”; but the word “salus” was at some point to acquire the meaning “salvation” – did it have any religious connotation on this coin type?

I do hope you enjoy forming, or building up, your Biblical collection. This book is not meant in any way to be a final word on the subject, and I hope that you will think of many other “Biblical” coins.



**B585: VF £250 / \$500**

AR dirhem Crusaders (based on Arab type from Damascus mint, which, of course, did not have the Christian statements of faith or the Cross). Obv. in the central square "One Single God, one single faith, one single baptism". Outer margin "minted Acre 1250 (AD)". Rev. in square "The Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, One God"; outer margin, "Glory to God, for ever and ever. Amen".

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## VALUATIONS

It has not been an easy task giving each coin a valuation, because the coins concerned have come from such a wide historical and geographical range.

We have priced B1 and B2 from modern Israel at £2 each; but you will not need actually to buy either of these coins – any modern Israeli coin with a letter / numeral date of the “Creation Era” will do just as well, and in the same way with many of the others, any of a number of similar coins would do just as well.

On the other hand some shown and listed here are very rare indeed – and as you are unlikely to see these in any dealer’s shop or Coin Fair, any price suggested by us has to be pretty meaningless.

But you, the collector, do have certain advantages. Firstly you are completely free to decide what coins you wish to include or exclude. For starters, you can leave out anything Arabic, or anything Crusader. You can decide to specialise in “Madonna and Child” coins, or those showing saints, or anything else you fancy.

Secondly, you will have “luck” on your side – I did when that elderly gentleman gave me B504, still actually in its little round box. I predict that, though you may have plenty of disappointments, you will also have many lucky finds.

Thirdly, you will almost certainly know more about the subject than the dealer. I would expect that he will know enough to identify correctly his “Tribute Penny” and his “Judas Piece” and his little row of Judaeen prutahs; but it is most unlikely that he will know for example that Jesus wrote a letter to the Church at Laodiceia in Revelation chapter 3. This means that a Laodiceian coin on his tray will not have a bit extra added on to the price for its Biblical connection.

But do please remember that, though we have done our best with the pricing, it can be no more than a VERY rough guide

Remember that valuations listed here, except very occasionally, are for identified coins in VF conditions. Coins in lesser condition may be worth less, often much less, than the price given here.

## **GRADING ANCIENT COINS – A ROUGH GUIDE**

The easiest way to determine condition is where there is a portrait.

A well struck coin in Very Fine (VF) condition must show most of the hair, though a small worn patch on the high point is allowable.

In Fine condition one would expect the clear outline of a head with some hair visible.

The legend may be partially off the coin because of the striking, or it may have suffered because of a worn die; but normally one would expect a coin in Very Fine condition to be clearly legible and most of a Fine coin to be more or less readable.

With ancient coins so many other factors can be involved such as toning, a coin being off-centre, having a ragged flan, or a crack, or signs of corrosion. Or a coin may appear worn on one side only because a worn die has been used for that side.

But, other factors apart, a coin in VF condition would normally be worth three times as much as one in Fine condition - or more! In the case of a Nero Sestertius, perhaps six times as much.



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