

41. Numismatic notes.

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE HISTORY OF A CURIOUS REVERSE DIE<sup>1</sup>

Figure 1.

Numismatic Circular, September 1981, no. 6111.



Figure 2.

Catalogue 35.13.



Figure 3.

Private collection.



Students of the Byzantine series and many other collectors will be familiar with the follis type which has, as its obverse, a profile bust and, on the reverse, the denominational mark M with the mint signature CON below and a six or eight pointed star to either side.

This design seems to have been struck continuously between circa 507 and 532 thereby straddling the reigns of Anastasius I, Justin I and Justinian I. A chance comparison between two coins, one each in the collection of two London Numismatic Club members, has provoked an intriguing problem.

The coins are die-linked, both having been struck with a flawed reverse die which has imparted a pronounced mark above the right hand star on each example. What is therefore most interesting is that the obverse inscriptions bear the names of Anastasius I (figure 1) and Justinian I (figure 2) respectively. It would be exceptional, even in the context of the relaxed regime that frequently characterises Byzantine mint administration, if a reverse die had survived for a period of over 10 years and took in three reigns. The mint mark, however, actually reads NOC indicating that the maker correctly inverted the individual letters, but forgot to reverse their order when cutting the die. This, together with certain other features - retrograde letters belonging to the obverse inscriptions of both specimens

<sup>1</sup> Donald, P. J., and Mansfield, S. J., originally published in the London Numismatic Club Newsletter, date uncertain, possibly 1988.

and an untypical portrait of Anastasius - makes it highly likely that the coins were struck unofficially, outside the Imperial mint at Constantinople.

One explanation is that the forger began operating towards the end of the reign of Anastasius I (491-518) and, following a period of inactivity - enforced or otherwise, resumed his trade with preserved dies after the accession of Justinian I in 527. Another explanation, slightly more prosaic, is that the coins were struck at much the same time. The counterfeiters first efforts may have employed as a model an earlier coin of Anastasius, but, following difficulty in marketing his stock, he then began copying obverse dies portraying the ruling Emperor Justinian.

A third die-linked example is known to the authors which was at first assigned to the reign of Justin I (518-527) and would therefore have supported the theory of spasmodic production. Closer examination has shown, however, that the ruler portrayed is Justinian.

All three specimens are of good style and reasonably competent workmanship, unlike the overtly barbarous imitations of the time that are to be found frequently in dealers' trays. There is, of course, another possibility - that of the official "travelling" mint established at some outpost to provide currency for the local population and the army, but the evidence would not seem to support such an hypothesis.

#### A NEW HALF FOLLIS OF JUSTINIAN I<sup>2</sup>



Figure 1.

#### DNIVSTINI [

Bust right, with diadem, cuirass and paludamentum, star-shaped badge or design on the Emperor's right shoulder.

R. Large K, to left, long cross; to right E (obscured by flat striking). Christograms above and below, the latter inverted. Ae. 25mm. 8.44 gms. Die axis 180°.

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<sup>2</sup> Mansfield, S. J., originally published in the Numismatic Circular, February 1991.



Figure 2. The officina letter on this coin, like that above, is not struck up.

The coin at figure 1, which appears to be unpublished, is quite clearly the 20 nummi counterpart of a scarce follis of Justinian I of the mint of Constantinople (figure 2). Wolfgang Hahn<sup>3</sup> gives the follis to 537/8 (MIB 89); all known specimens are of the fifth workshop (officina) of the mint.

Hahn considers that the reverse design of the follis was changed at regular intervals in accordance with the "lustra" or five year sub-divisions of the fifteen year indictional series of dating. The half folles, which are scarcer, were changed in line with the indictional period itself. He considers that there were also "supplementary" issues for the follis of which the Christogram type is one, struck to meet any excess demands which could not have been anticipated when the original output was fixed in accordance with the estimated scale of the requirement at the beginning of each lustrum.

While Hahn's theory has not escaped criticism - largely on the basis of its oversimplification - the coin under discussion provides no evidence at all which serves to undermine it generally. However, the concept of a supplementary issue would seem to rest on less firm ground when applied to the third lustrum of the reign which began on 1 September 537. The issue was soon interrupted by the currency reform undertaken on behalf of the Emperor Justinian by the Comes Sacrarum Largitionum (whose duties included the control of coinage) which introduced a type bearing regnal dates, the first being year 12 (538/9). The short lived issue with star/cross on globe (Hahn 85) would not, perhaps, need to have been supplemented in this way.

The use of the fifth officina (and no other) for these Christogram types is, of course, significant. The workshop appears often to have been used in some special role including that of production to meet sudden and irregular demands. But in the very exceptional circumstances of Justinian's currency reform, it is at least possible that the type represented a special issue struck to mark both the end of the traditional coinage and the imminent and radical change in the size and appearance of the follis and half follis.

As far as we are aware, the Christogram type does not extend to the smaller denominations of the ten and five nummi coins. However, there would be less need to mark the changes brought about by the reform in both these cases. The dekanummium and the pentanummium did not adopt the facing bust applied for the first time to the reformed follis and the 20 nummi issues and the pentanummium are undated.

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<sup>3</sup> Hahn, W., *Moneta Imperii Byzantini* (MIB), Volume 1, Vienna, 1973.

#### A BYZANTINE IRREGULAR ISSUE OF "YEAR 20"<sup>4</sup>



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3

This article describes a group of 24 specimens of barbarous appearance and bearing on the reverse, in the usual position for Byzantine coins of the period, the letters СНО, a retrograde version of CON (see Figure 1) and being a blundered attempt to signify Constantinople.

The coins were produced to very low standards. In particular, the misshapen flans used do not permit the mint mark to be read in all cases. However, each coin also bears, in full or part, the numerals X/X in column to the right of the denomination mark M and the letters И/И similarly to the left. This arrangement would, for a regular issue, normally indicate that the coins were struck in the twentieth year of the reign. In this case, however, the date appears to be meaningless. Where legible, the letter imitating the officina (workshop) of an official mint is either A (for the first officina) in 14 cases or Δ (the fourth) in five instances. The reverses alone are, in the opinion of the writer, sufficient to attribute the coins to a common point of origin. A line drawing of the reverse type is at Figure 1.

There are two classes of obverse, of different styles. The less numerous, represented by four examples, features a facing, beardless, bust wearing a crown with cross with a small cross (almost certainly the top of a globus cruciger) in the right field (Figure 2). All these are of officina A. The second class (20 specimens) has a facing bust with a fairly luxuriant set of beard and whiskers and a more carefully engraved form of dress. A few specimens show the globus cruciger held in the right hand quite clearly. The best preserved coin is shown at

<sup>4</sup> Mansfield, S. J., originally published in the Numismatic Circular, April 1992.

Figure 3. There is at least one clear die-link between the reverses of two specimens in different classes.

Class 1 is the product of a single obverse die. Class 2 incorporates several obverse dies although it is possible to detect a die link running through 12 of the 20 specimens. A further two specimens have a common obverse die linked by a  $\Delta$  reverse die to the largest group. Of the remaining six specimens, the condition of three permits a further three obverse dies to be identified. Therefore, at least six different obverse dies exist within the group.

The generally poor condition of the coins makes a similar die study of the reverses difficult, but there is certainly no obviously consistent pattern of use of the A or  $\Delta$  dies.

The obverse style of Class 1 has an appearance somewhat reminiscent of the reasonably common year 3 Constantinople follis issue of Constans II (Grierson<sup>5</sup> Class 2 bis) who reigned from 641 to 668. The appearance of Class 2 approximates rather roughly to the same Emperor's follis issue of year 11 (Grierson Class 4 bis). Irregular coins imitating the former appear to be quite common, however and although taken together these similarities point to the strong possibility that both types are meant to portray Constans, little of significance should otherwise be read into them. What makes the coins under discussion here particularly interesting is that they combine the two obverse types with a completely anomalous reverse.

All the folles issues of Constans II which bear a bust of the Emperor have reverses quite unlike these coins (essentially in their use of Greek letters signifying the abbreviation ANANEO - "renewal" or in their portrayal of Constans' sons). The only realistic prototype for the "year 20" reverse is the Class 5 Constantinople issue of Heraclius, Constans' father (610-641), regnal year 20 (629/630) being the first year of a substantial output. That issue portrays on its obverse Heraclius in military uniform together with his eldest son Heraclius Constantine. In short, it is unlikely that whoever caused these coins to be produced intended them to pass for a known issue. Realistically, they cannot be simple forgeries.

If additional data on the die axis and weight of each specimen are also considered, the essential characteristics of the group appear to be as follows:

1. a deliberate design, not based on any existing prototype, but using a reverse type which was well known;
2. a minimum of six obverse dies used and (taking into account the two styles) an output likely to be product of more than one workman;
3. at least two reverse dies (and probably several more). The use of two officina letters possibly suggesting some basic means of sharing out work (although the large obverse die group for type 2 is not restricted to one officina letter);

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<sup>5</sup> Grierson, P., Byzantine Coins, London and Los Angeles, 1982.

4. a substantial output - the coins are not rare;
5. some uniformity in the die axes. In every case the axis selected is between 90° and 180° and in all but one (a specimen of Class 1 with 90°) approximate to 180° (i.e., ↓);
6. a very wide variation in weight. Class 1 varies between 2.29 and 2.70 grams, and Class 2 between 2.37 and 4.46 grams;
7. use of unskilled labour. The poor standards of production and particularly the incidence of retrograde letters suggest that the workmen were unfamiliar with mint practice.

These features by themselves go some way towards a conclusion that the coins are the product of a small mint, that is they may have been produced by a group of moneymasters to meet local need.

If on this basis it is correct to suggest that the coins represent some sort of irregular issue then it is an easy step to associate them with a much larger group of non-Imperial types. These have been described as forgeries of the Syria-Palestine area (Hahn<sup>6</sup> pp. 140-141 and plate 29) and it is possible to attribute them to issuing authorities (of some kind) operating in that area towards the end of an extended and confused period following the Arab conquest (Jerusalem surrendered to the Caliph Omar late in 637).

The provenance of the coins supports this hypothesis. With two exceptions, the coins were obtained from Beirut. (One was found in Cyprus, the origin of the other is unknown.) The recent improvements in the Lebanese political situation appears to have brought with it easier access to material from Syria and possibly Israel and Jordan also. All these areas formed part of the theatre of operations of the Imperial or Arab armies. There is no evidence for a hoard, although most of the specimens which were acquired as a single group (17 in all) possess a common patina.

Is it realistically possible to speculate as to the nature of the issuing authority? In the absence of any marks on the coins indicating that their origin lies with the Arab occupying forces, it appears from one point of view reasonable that they should be the product of a Byzantine enclave - albeit one without any tradition of minting. On the other hand, an area such as this (a small fortified town at most) could possibly have managed with the coinage in circulation. The mass of material (much of it only found in the last few years) which imitates the copper coinage of Constans II, and of which Hahn only illustrates a representative selection, is so varied that some of it at least must represent the results of the lengthy process whereby the Arab authorities freed themselves from dependence on the Byzantine monetary system. If the group does form part of an imitative coinage which was subsequently overtaken by more regular issues of distinctly "Arab-Byzantine" types, it surely falls into an early phase of that transitional period.

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<sup>6</sup> Hahn, W., *Moneta Imperii Byzantini*, Volume III, Vienna, 1981.

Comparatively little has been written about these interesting irregular coins (although several eminent numismatists have addressed different aspects of them from time to time) and no example of the "year 20" type appears to have been published. It is hoped that the modest amount of research underpinning this article and the collecting together of a small group of specimens might assist in the eventual formation of a corpus.

The author is indebted to Mr P. Pavlou and Dr. M. S. Phillips for allowing him to examine coins in their collections. He is also grateful to Mr. P. J. Donald for the same privilege and for his constructive points on the possible origins of the coins. The author has had the sense to include most of these suggestions; for any errors of interpretation he alone is responsible.

#### THE CORONATION ISSUE OF HERACLIUS CONSTANTINE<sup>7</sup>



Figure 1



Figure 2

The obverse inscription reads:

ΑΝΗΕΡΑΚΙΙΣ ΣΤΗΕΡΑΚΟΝΣΠΙΑΒΚ

A Byzantine copper coin of the 40 nummi ("follis") denomination struck by the Constantinople mint during the reign of the Emperor Heraclius (5 October 610 to 11 January 641) is present in two major public collections<sup>8</sup>, but has, despite its interesting iconography, apparently not yet been commented upon. Two further specimens in private collections are known to the authors.

On 22 January 613, Heraclius' son was publicly acclaimed Augustus. The junior Emperor, Heraclius Constantine, had been born on 3 May 612. Although still a baby at the time of his

<sup>7</sup> Mansfield, S. J., and Pavlou, P. S., originally published in the Numismatic Circular, August 2001.

<sup>8</sup> Bibliothèque Nationale Paris (B. N.) collection, Catalogue des Monnaies Byzantine, Morisson, C., Paris, 1970, Volume 1, page 274, AE/13. Hermitage collection (T.), Monnaies Byzantines, Tolstoi, J., St. Petersburg, 1913-14, Volume 6, 228 (plate 48, 228).

coronation, Heraclius Constantine is shown as a youth on the coinage which, for the gold, silver and copper, is reflected in the change of design of a new issue - from the facing bust of Heraclius to a two bust type (for the gold) and a two standing figure type for the silver and copper. On the new issue, both Emperors wear the imperial cloak, or chlamys. It is the copper coinage that is the subject of this article.

The majority of the copper coinage of this period is dated, almost all of it by regnal year, reflecting the anniversary of the date on which the senior ruler was acclaimed Augustus. Thus, the change in design took place in October 612, the new follis being first dated year 3.

Year three Heraclian folles of Constantinople are plentiful, but of poor appearance, indeed, Grierson<sup>9</sup> notes "it is curious that an issue provided entirely by coins of earlier Emperors most inexpertly overstruck should have been regarded as a suitable advertisement of the coronation and association of the heir apparent as Emperor". The normal type, struck in years three, four, five and six (D. O. 76 and 79-81), has the two Emperors wearing the chlamys and holding, in their right hands, globus crucigers. A variety, slightly less common, of this "coronation issue" is known (D. O. 77 and 78). Examples of this variety, restricted to year 3, substitute long crosses for the globus crucigers.

On the new type, Heraclius Constantine holds a long cross, but the senior Emperor has his right hand across his chest, holding what is without doubt the piece of imperial insignia known as the *mappa* or *akakia*. Grierson comments that, given the fact that this insignia was "in a state of transition in the seventh century", it is difficult to know how best to name it<sup>10</sup>. The mappa, a folded piece of cloth, was originally thrown by the consul into the arena to signify the start of the games. While the consulate, except as an honorary office either given by the Emperor to his favourites or held by the ruler himself, had died out in the mid-sixth century, it was only in the eighth century that the mappa "began to lose its consular associations"<sup>11</sup>. Constantinople folles of the Emperor Phocas (602 - 610) in consular robes show him raising the mappa, imitating the act of throwing it. The fact that Heraclius holds the insignia to his chest possibly associates it more with the akakia - a piece of fabric arranged in the form of a scroll with closed ends, designed to contain the "handful of dust" necessary to remind the Emperor of his mortality.

Formerly, the earliest use of the insignia, other than in the raised throwing position, appears to be on a Constantinople solidus of Justinian II (first reign; 685-695) dated to 692-695 (D. O. Class 3) on which the Emperor wears the type of robe, derived from consular dress, known as the loros. On the coinage of later Emperors, the akakia is associated with both the chlamys and the loros.

The appearance of the insignia held by Heraclius on these coins can be clearly made out, resembling a dumbbell, i.e., a scroll with bulbous ends. If these bulbous ends are meant to be the stoppers (shown in an exaggerated way) at each end of the scroll, this might be taken to reinforce the argument that the insignia is meant to be the akakia. Unfortunately, its

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<sup>9</sup> Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and the Whittemore Collection, Volume 2 (D. O. 2), Grierson, P., Washington D. C., 1968, page 278, footnote 76 (DOC).

<sup>10</sup> DOC, op. cit.

<sup>11</sup> DOC, op. cit.

appearance differs relatively little either from the mappa held in a raised position by Phocas or the akakia held to the chest by later rulers such as Anastasius II (713-715; D. O. 1-2). Insufficient evidence can really be drawn from the iconography to demonstrate that the akakia is intended.

What of the coins themselves? Four examples are known:

Collection	Overstruck?	Officina	Weight/die axis	Reference
B. N. (Paris)	No	A	11.37 gms/ 220	Ae/13
A. N. 432.93	No*	B	13.02 gms/210	Figure 1
Private UK	No	Γ	12.90 gms/200	Figure 2
Hermitage	No	Γ	10.50 gms	T. pl. 48, 228

\* The reverse shows some disfiguration, possibly as the result of rotation of the blank; there is no sign of an undertype to the obverse.

Dies.

Opinion differs on the extent of die-links between the obverses of these four coins; indeed, it has not been possible to examine the first and fourth specimens. Suffice it to say that all the obverses are of a very similar style and to suggest that they may be "of the same hand" - perhaps a particularly skilled die-cutter worked at all three workshops. All the coins are very well preserved. The dies were clearly skillfully engraved and care appears to have been taken in the striking.

Weights and overstriking.

Forty seven coins of this type, dated year 3, are recorded in D. O., the Bibliothèque Nationale Paris collection (B. N.) and the British Museum catalogue<sup>12</sup>; 39 of the globus cruciger type and eight of the long cross type. Excluding two pierced examples, 11 exceed 12 grams and three weigh less than 10 grams. Only six out of 47 are not overstruck, however. Use of undertypes from all the previous four reigns are recorded in these catalogues (i.e., over a period of at least 35 years) as well as for several mints, Given, also, the need to account for wear, it seems difficult to draw any conclusions about the weights of the akakia types relative to the known issues.

What appears to be of greater significance, however, is the incidence of overstriking. Grierson<sup>13</sup> states "during the seventh century virtually no copper coins were struck on freshly prepared flans". Only one in eight of the long cross and globus cruciger are not overstruck compared with all four of the akakia types. It seems sensible to suggest that, at the outset of striking, fresh flans were used initially, and supplemented later by existing coins. Indeed, use of apparently fresh flans is recorded in the catalogues for four out of the five workshops of the Constantinople mint.

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<sup>12</sup> Wroth, W., Catalogue of Imperial Byzantine Coins in the British Museum, London, 1908.

<sup>13</sup> In D. O., Volume 2.

If three different types are now known for the year 3 folles of Constantinople (and, in D. O., Grierson distinguishes between the long cross and globus cruciger types), what was the order of their issue? The globus cruciger issue must have been produced last since it was continued up to year 7. Again, it seems sensible to place the akakia type before that of the long cross - since the second and third types, rather than the first and third, would then in common be consistent in their portrayal of the insignia held by the two Emperors.

Grierson states that he believes the long cross to be "symbolic in character"<sup>14</sup>. The mappa-akakia clearly was not, but it is difficult to find any convincing reason for its adoption. That it was meant to symbolise new birth, as well as mortality, i.e., to emphasise the continuity of the Heraclian dynasty, seems a little far-fetched.

Nevertheless, it is proposed that this interesting issue, incorporating probably the first new design to be struck after the birth of Heraclius Constantine, and carefully manufactured, can be considered to be his coronation issue.

Note: since this article was published, two further specimens of the coin have been sold at auction: ex Carroll F. Wales collection, Morton and Eden, London, December 2008. See also nos. 17.30-31 in this catalogue.

#### MORE ON HERACLIAN FOLLES OF REGNAL YEAR THREE<sup>15</sup>

In the Numismatic Circular for August 2001, Paul Pavlou and I published a hitherto unknown coin of Heraclius and his eldest son, Heraclius Constantine, struck at Constantinople in regnal year 3 (5 October 612 to 4 October 613). On this coin, the former holds the Imperial device known as the akakia, and the latter a long cross. On iconographical grounds, we suggested that the coin could be associated with the coronation of Heraclius Constantine (born on 3 May 612) in January 613.

The iconography of the issues of Heraclius at Constantinople in 612-613 is unusually varied. On the most common type, which continued to be struck down to 615/616, both Emperors (although actually an infant, Heraclius Constantine is portrayed throughout as a young adult) hold globus crucigers. Pavlou and I suggested that the coronation issue was likely to be the earliest iconographical type. Sandwiched between these two issues, we placed a coin on which both Emperors are shown holding long crosses. The possible order of issue for the Class 2 folles<sup>16</sup> is thus:

October 612 to January 613                          Type 1 - coronation issue: akakia and long cross.

After January 613; before October 613                  Type 2: long crosses.

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<sup>14</sup> DOC, op. cit.

<sup>15</sup> Mansfield, S. J., originally published in the Numismatic Circular, 2013.

<sup>16</sup> Class 2 refers to the two standing figures/globus crucigers type in the classification of Heraclian copper coins at the Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies in the USA. Arguably, a re-classification of Class 2 should incorporate the three types listed here. It is possible that other variants exist but, given the poor condition of the coins, it has not been possible to determine this altogether satisfactorily.

Before October 613; until October 616      Type 3: globus crucigers.

Given the longitude of type 3, perhaps types 1 and 2 should be bracketed together as a special issue. Although probably struck over only a few months, type 2, the subject of this article, is relatively common. Its production seems mainly, although not exclusively, to have been assigned to the third workshop of the Constantinople mint. Until now, and along with type 1, it was known only for Constantinople.

During 2012, a coin of type 2 with the mint mark **NIKO**, for Nicomedia, was posted for sale on the VCcoins site. A further specimen was more recently noted in a private collection which permits the formal publication of the new coin here:

**ΑΝΗΕΡΑCLIV ΣΕΤΗΕΡΑCΟΣΤ**

Two figures standing facing, each wearing chlamys and crown with cross and holding a long cross in right hand; cross between figures.

M, A/N/N/O to left, II/I to right, A beneath, **NIKO** below.

Both the coins were struck by the first workshop but not with the same dies. Perhaps comment on the new coins would end here but for the fact that their appearance is unusual for Nicomedia.

Although the obverse inscription given above is a composite (the VCcoins specimen is much the better of the two coins), there was an effort to engrave a neat and full inscription on both. By contrast, of 21 Nicomedia specimens in the British Museum and Dumbarton Oaks collections, the obverse inscriptions of 10 are largely obscured, sometimes by overstriking. In 2001, we quoted Philip Grierson on the year three issues at Constantinople - "It is curious that an issue provided entirely by coins of earlier Emperors most inexpertly overstruck should have been regarded as a suitable advertisement of the coronation and association of the heir apparent as Emperor". We pointed out that all four of the coronation coins that were then known were struck on fresh flans<sup>17</sup>. While both of the new coins are overstruck, we also said that existing coins may have been used once the stock of fresh flans ran out. Certainly, very few fresh flans seem ever to have been used at Nicomedia in the early seventh century.

The Nicomedia issues are also stylistically rather crude. Figure 4 shows an example with a characteristic bulge to the Emperors' left shoulders. Other examples are pencil like with little attempt to show how the insignia are being held. The obverse style of the new coins resembles the superior products of the Constantinople mint more than those of Nicomedia.

It seems possible that one or two of the more skilled die-cutters at the Constantinople mint might have been sent to Nicomedia to produce what may have been part of a special issue for year 3. For this reason, the discovery of a coronation type from Nicomedia is awaited with anticipation.

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<sup>17</sup> Two further examples are now known, at least one of which is overstruck.

Figure 1.  
Type 1: Coronation issue; CON  
13.02 gms; 210.  
Private collection.



Figure 2.  
Type 2: NIKO  
11.58 gms.  
Overstruck on a follis of Phocas.  
VCoins.



Figure 3.  
Type 2: NIKO  
10.99 gms; 210.  
Overstruck.  
Private collection.

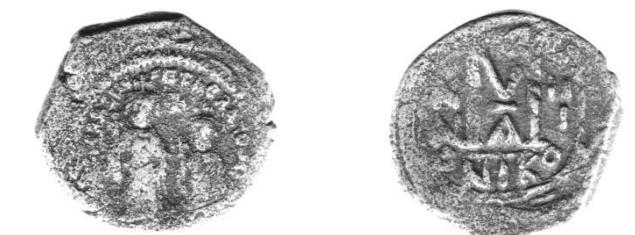


Figure 4.  
Type 3: NIKO  
15.44 gms; 180.  
Private collection.



Since publication of this article, Donald (private correspondence) has indicated that coins of a similar type are known for regnal year 4. Thus, the coin is probably a substantive issue rather than a special issue of 613.

## A MILITARY HALF FOLLIS OF TIBERIUS II<sup>18</sup>



] TIOC NT [

Bust facing, wearing crown with cross; holding consular mappa in right hand.

XX, cross above, ΤΕΗUP beneath exergual line, U (year 5) to left.  
Ae. 22 mm. 6.51 grams. Die axis 180°.

Apparently unrecorded. Provenance: Trade, London, 2003.

There is a substantial group of Byzantine copper coins of the later sixth century which, while they bear different forms of mint mark, cannot, on grounds of style, be assigned to the regular mint system. Instead, they are attributed to coin production that seems to have been peripatetic and transitory in nature. One explanation is that the coins were struck to serve the needs of the army, the aim being production of familiar-looking coins, likely to be acceptable both as soldiers' pay and transactions in the local economy. Folles of this type imitating the regular issues of the Antioch mint for Tiberius II Constantine (578-582) and Maurice (582-602) are relatively common, but no half folles, other than those bearing the imitative mint signature ROM, appear to have been noted.

The military coins are generally well made and the mint signature ΤΕΗUP (for THEOPOLIS) on the specimen described here therefore presents something of a problem. The mint mark (properly ΤΗΕUP) is garbled and the coin may simply be a forgery, with the counterfeiter seeking to pass it off as an issue of Tiberius II - Antioch products of this reign are usually identified by the cross (rather than the trefoil associated with Maurice) surmounting the crown. There is no known prototype for Tiberius II that incorporates both the ΤΕΗUP signature and a date (regnal year 5), however. (See MIB II<sup>19</sup>, plate 14, 50-55.) By contrast, the circumstances of the military issues, as suggested above, are not inconsistent with the design of such a composite coin.

The style of the obverse does not sit well with the regular products of the Antioch mint. The crown is represented as a double-line arch resting on a series of semi-flattened roundels framing the Emperor's forehead and temples. This "string of sausages" effect is typical of some of the issues of the military mint (plate 16, op. cit.); it may also be noted in relation to the mint of Nicomedia. Workers from the regular mints were probably assigned to the production of army pay.

There are reasonable grounds to assign this coin to the military mint, while admitting that the attribution is not yet uncontested.

<sup>18</sup> Mansfield, S. J., originally published in the Numismatic Circular, August 2003.

<sup>19</sup> Hahn, W., Moneta Imperii Byzantini, volume II, Vienna, 1973.

## A NEW COIN OF THE BYZANTINE EMPEROR LEONTIUS (695-698)<sup>20</sup>



No inscription. Bust facing, bearded, wearing crown with cross and loros; in right hand, akakia, in left hand, globus cruciger.

Large K, exergual line below, beneath which, SC[L], to left, small cross, to right, I.

Ae. 14 mm. 2.43 gms. Die axis 180°.

Apparently unrecorded. Provenance: Trade, London, 1999.

There can be almost no doubt that this coin belongs to a previously unknown half follis issue which should, *prima facie*, be attributed to the Sicilian mint of Syracuse and be dated to regnal year one of the reign of Leontius (695/6).

Although slightly short of flan, at 0° and 180°, the specimen is of neat appearance, struck on a well-prepared flan and in very fine, or better, condition. Indeed, the portrait of the Emperor Leontius, one of the most distinctive of the entire Byzantine series, requires little further comment.

The detail of the coin's reverse is obscure, or partly obscure, at two points. The folles issues known to have been struck at Syracuse for this reign (MIB<sup>21</sup> 36 and 37) each include a monogram of Leontius above the denominational mark - K. Nothing can be read above the K denominational mark on this coin, but it belongs undeniably to Leontius. The first two letters of the mint mark - SC - are sufficiently clear to demonstrate that the coin can be associated with Sicily (*SiCiLia*), of which the main mint was Syracuse. While Leontian half folles are known for the mints of Constantinople, Sardinia and Ravenna (MIB 33, 35, 40), the design of the reverse of this coin is quite distinct from the types known to have been struck at these three mints and, on general style grounds, it is difficult to associate the coin, all that readily, with any of them.

The abandonment of the denominational mark K by the Syracuse mint is thought to have occurred during the reign of Leontius' predecessor Justinian II (685-695; MIB 74), some 40 years before it ceased to be used by the Constantinople mint. It may be, therefore, that this coin represents the last ever half follis issue struck in the western part of the empire; it cannot be held to be certain that a small module coin of Constantine V (641-75; DOC<sup>22</sup> 20) is of the same denomination.

<sup>20</sup> Mansfield, S. J., originally published in the *Numismatic Circular*, November 1999.

<sup>21</sup> Hahn, W., *Moneta Imperii Byzantini*, volume 3, Vienna, 1981.

<sup>22</sup> Grierson, P., *Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and the Whittemore Collection*, volume 3, Washington DC, 1973.

Other explanations are possible, however, since unresolved issues remain:

- this half folles is dated while the Syracusan folles of Leontius are not;
- the date is probably regnal (an indictional date of year 10, i.e., 697/8 - the penultimate year of the brief reign, seems much less likely), while indictional dates are the norm for Syracuse in this period;
- neither the style of the coin nor the good quality of its workmanship are characteristic of Sicily.

An anomalous issue purporting to be the product of an established mint, but actually struck elsewhere, would not be unique in the Byzantine series. On occasions, such practices have produced good quality coinage. It is not inconceivable that this is the case here, although it is difficult to identify any circumstances associated with the fortunes of Leontius (which declined soon after his accession) that might have made necessary the import of coinage into Sicily.

I am grateful to Mr P. J. Donald for suggesting the possibility of an "import coinage". I must retain responsibility for the development of the argument and for other views expressed.

Enlargement x2.



Postscript.

During this reign the Constantinople mint used Greek letters to identify the regnal year. Syracusan folles are not dated and, before the publication of this article, no fractions were known for the mint. (A second half follis specimen has now been identified.) The article, following the pattern of minting at Constantinople, took the date arrangement I to be regnal year one (695/6) on the assumption that Syracuse might be less likely to use Greek letters. There is the possibility that it represents indictional year 10 (696/7), however. The case for regnal or indictional years appears to be well balanced. It would be surprising if the coinage of the new reign was, for unknown reasons, postponed until 696/7. On the other hand, the use of Greek letters by the Syracuse mint to represent the indictional year occurred towards the end of the first reign of Justinian II (685-695).

## AN EMERGENCY COINAGE IN ANTIOCH: A. D. 540-542<sup>23</sup>

### Abstract.

Twelve copper coins are described that appear to be Byzantine issues from Antioch, dateable, by their mint signatures, to A. D. 537-539. The coins are in fact hybrids, muling obverses based on coins issued, in all but one case, by Anastasius I (491-518) with reverses that sign the Antioch mint in a form first used in 537. The coins could be the products of an unofficial mint operating in the city following its sack by the Persians in June 540.

### Introduction.

In the early sixth century, the city of Antioch (modern Antakya in Turkey) was one of the great trading centres of the Eastern Roman, or Byzantine, Empire. After A. D. 512, when the base metal coinage was reformed during the reign of the Emperor Anastasius I, 491-518, heavy copper coins (the follis and its fractions) bearing the name of the city were issued in enormous quantities<sup>24</sup>.

In the first half of the sixth century, the prosperity of Antioch suffered a severe decline. Earthquakes struck the city several times during the 520s, one of which, at least, resulted in a large loss of life<sup>25</sup>. In 532, the Sasanian Persians violated the “everlasting peace” between the two empires, capturing and burning Antioch in June 540<sup>26</sup>.

At the time of the Persian capture of Antioch, and during almost all of the 12 year period following an earthquake in November 528, the folles produced there bore various forms of mint signature that were abbreviations in Latin or in Greek of THEOPOLIS (City of God), the name by which the city had become known in the hope of protection from future natural disasters<sup>27</sup>. The mint signature with which this article is concerned is ΘΥΠΟΛΑΣ. Hahn<sup>28</sup> dates this mint mark to 537-539, a period which may be a truncated *lustrum* (the period of five years between censuses in the Roman world<sup>29</sup>). The ΘΥΠΟΛΑΣ mint mark is referred to as Class 4 in the Dumbarton Oaks catalogue<sup>30</sup>.

Coins with the ΘΥΠΟΛΑΣ mint signature seem to have been issued alongside the implementation of a further reform of the coinage by Justinian I (527-565). This reform

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<sup>23</sup> Mansfield, S. J., originally published in the Journal of the Oriental Numismatic Society, number 207 (2011), pp. 6-10.

<sup>24</sup> Grierson, P., *Byzantine Coins*, Methuen and University of California Press, 1982, (page 63).

<sup>25</sup> Procopius, *History of the Wars*, Book 1, Loeb Classical Library, 1914, Book II, xiv, page 383.

<sup>26</sup> Procopius, op. cit., Book II, viii - ix.

<sup>27</sup> Hahn, W., *Money of the Incipient Byzantine Empire (MIBE)*, Anastasius I - Justinian I, 491-565, Vienna, 2000, page 60.

<sup>28</sup> MIBE, op. cit.

<sup>29</sup> Thus, Hahn, in MIBE, op. cit., suggests that the three mint signatures used during the 12 years referred to (all variants of THEOPOLIS) covered periods of five years, five years, and two years respectively.

<sup>30</sup> Bellinger, A., *Catalogue of Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks and Whittemore Collections (DOC)*, volume 1, Anastasius I to Maurice, 491-602, Washington, 1966.

introduced a new system of dating coins according to regnal year and a new type of Imperial portrait<sup>31</sup>.

At Antioch/Theopolis, the new “regnal coinage” of Justinian seems to have been issued later than at Constantinople, perhaps because of a delay in the “bureaucratic transmission of orders”<sup>32</sup>. In any case, the first reformed folles issued at Antioch are dated year 13 (April 539 to April 540) and bear the mint signature ΘΥΠΟ. No folles of the following regnal year are known and the issuing of coinage seems not to have resumed at Antioch until 542-543 (regnal year 16). This hiatus in coinage is conventionally, and quite logically, associated with the Persian sack of Antioch, and the issue of regnal year 16 with a Byzantine reoccupation. It is of significance to the arguments outlined in this article that the reformed coinage of Justinian also brings in a novel portrait. At Antioch, as at virtually all the mints, the new coinage portrays Justinian in martial dress - a facing bust wearing a cuirass and a plumed helmet, and holding a shield with the device of a mounted soldier thrusting with a spear. These broad, handsome, coins are well known to collectors<sup>33</sup>. They contrast with the rather more non-aggressive iconography of most of the pre-539 profile bust coins produced at Antioch<sup>34</sup>.

The coins.

Writing in 1966, in DOC volume 1<sup>35</sup>, on page 140, Alfred Bellinger describes a coin in the following terms: “This is a surprising mule of what looks like a perfectly genuine reverse of Class IV with an obverse of Anastasius with the name so garbled that it must surely be a contemporary forgery”. On the coin itself (plate XXXVI, Ae 213), the mint signature ΘΥΠΟΛΑΣ can be discerned and Bellinger includes the coin among the regular Class 4 issues of Antioch signed in that way.

Since 1966, a number of other specimens have come to light. Together, they make up a group of coins that are related to the D. O. specimen, either very closely or more distantly, and form the subject of this paper. All the coins are hybrids, that is, they mule the Class 4 reverse of Justinian showing the ΘΥΠΟΛΑΣ mint mark with obverses that name earlier Emperors, either Anastasius I or Justin I (518-527). A catalogue of the known examples is at Annex A. Before trying to identify a possible historical context for the coins, a discussion of the known examples is necessary.

The group as a whole is composed of three types all of which are mules of one kind or another. The distinction between type 1 and type 2 rests on the reverse design.

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<sup>31</sup> Grierson, P., *Byzantine Coins*, Methuen, 1982, (page 60) suggests that the reformed coinage was a “belated application to the coinage of a provision of Novel XLVII of 31 August 537 which ordered that regnal years should be used in the dating of official documents”.

<sup>32</sup> Hahn, in MIBE, op. cit, page 57.

<sup>33</sup> See DOC, op. cit., plate XXXVII et seq.

<sup>34</sup> DOC, op. cit., plates XXXV - XXXVI.

<sup>35</sup> DOC, op. cit.

### Type 1a.

Obverse: Garbled inscription naming Anastasius.

Profile bust right with diadem, cuirass and paludamentum.

Reverse: **M** between two eight-pointed stars, cross above, officina letter beneath, ΘVΠOΛS in exergue.

Nine examples are known, probably all struck with the same obverse die. Three officina (workshop) letters occur: A (one example), B (one) and Δ (seven).

### Type 1b.

Obverse: Similar type naming Justin.

Reverse: Same.

One example is known: MIB volume 3<sup>36</sup>, N131<sup>2</sup> (officina Δ).

### Type 2.

Obverse: Garbled inscription naming Anastasius.

Reverse: **M** between two crosses on globes, officina letter beneath, ΘVΠOΛS in exergue.

Two examples are known, both of officina A. The coins appear to be die-linked.

### The dies.

Were the dies used to strike the coins products of the regular mint or were they made outside of the regular Imperial mint system? In relation to this, it is type 1a that is key. The obverse dies are without question irregular. As noted above, Bellinger believed that a regular reverse die was used to strike the D. O. specimen. Peter Donald, though, has commented that the Class 1a reverse dies are good copies<sup>37</sup>.

Unfortunately, the Class 4 follis of Antioch struck between 537 and 539 is a scarce coin, possibly because it had to be squeezed into the third, truncated, lustrum referred to above. Only three specimens in all are illustrated in D. O. and the catalogues of the United Kingdom and French national collections<sup>38</sup>. No die-links are observable between the coins described here and specimens of Class 4 in these public collections. For the present, whether the reverse dies are regular or not remains unclear.

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<sup>36</sup> Hahn, W., *Moneta Imperii Byzantini*, volume 3, Heraclius to Leo III, Vienna, 1981, plate 54.

<sup>37</sup> Donald, P. J., in private correspondence with the author.

<sup>38</sup> As well as DOC, op. cit., see Wroth, W., *Imperial Byzantine Coins in the British Museum*, 1908, Morrisson, C., *Catalogue des Monnaies Byzantine de la Bibliothèque Nationale (BN)*, 1970. In fact, DOC illustrates two coins and BN one.

For type 1a, there is a long die-link chain of seven specimens struck, without question, from the same obverse die. For the reasons explained in the catalogue, there are doubts about two of the other coins, although I think it probable that only one such die was used. The seven coins that show on their reverses the symbol  $\Delta$  (for the fourth officina of the mint) were all struck with the same reverse die. Thus, type 1a employs a maximum of three obverse dies, but possibly only one, and three reverse dies. With only one specimen available for study, no die-links have yet been identified for type 1b. The two specimens of type 2 are die-linked. For the group as a whole, it seems that at least six dies were used.

Type 1b is an oddity. The coin is of good style and seems to have been struck with regular dies. Like Class 1a, it is a mule. If the dies are regular, at least 10 years would have elapsed between the making of the obverse die (which names Justin I) and the reverse (which conforms to Class 4 for Justinian I, i.e., 537-539). This does not necessarily mean that the coin was struck outside of the regular mint system, however. Single dies can survive the end of production of the coins for which they were made and be used mistakenly in the striking of subsequent issues.

Type 2 has a reverse for which there is no regular prototype and is fairly crudely engraved. The obverse names Anastasius. It lacks the cross placed before the Emperor's bust that occurs on products of the Antioch mint and the die used is, very probably, also irregular.

#### Metrology and die-axes.

It is a pity that the data on weights are incomplete. Judging from the coins for which weights are known (which vary from just over 10 grams to nearly 15 grams) little control seems to have been exercised over the weights of the flans produced. Thus, it seems unlikely that there was any attempt to reflect the official Byzantine weight standard. The sample is of course small. All the coins for which die-axes are known were struck at roughly  $\uparrow\downarrow$ .

#### Provenances.

Information on provenances is limited. From type 1a, coin number 4 in the catalogue formed part of a Lebanese dealer's stock; number 5 has a glossy green patina that is often associated with coins found in northern Syria, although a Lebanon provenance is also possible; and number 8 was found in Bulgaria<sup>39</sup>. Coin number 11 (type 2) was found in the vicinity of Rafah in the Gaza Strip<sup>40</sup>.

#### The historical context.

It is suggested that some or all of these coins could have been produced in Antioch after the Persian sack of the city in mid-540 and before its reversion to Imperial control during 542-

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<sup>39</sup> Jekov, G., Two Imitations of Byzantine Copper Coins of the Sixth Century, *Numismatika 1'87* (1987), pp. 22-25 (in Bulgarian with a resume in French). The article is poorly illustrated which partly accounts for the quality of the reproduction here.

<sup>40</sup> Spaer, A., The Rafah Hoard - Byzantine Sixth-Century Folles, *Numismatic Chronicle, Seventh Series, Volume XVIII* (1978), pages 66 - 71, number 51.

543. Those responsible for its issue might, perhaps, have been some kind of informal city council anticipating the need for a coinage to facilitate trade, albeit at a low level.

During the past 15 or so years, there has been substantial work on the question of whether some of the enormous number of coins found in the Middle East that imitate regular Byzantine issues of the seventh century might be the products of unofficial mints<sup>41</sup>. The most important, and the most relevant to this article, has been the work of Pottier on the “Syrian mint” that produced coins based on a wide variety of Byzantine prototypes during the Persian wars of Heraclius (610-630) in the course of which Syria was under Persian occupation for extended periods<sup>42</sup>.

A number of events following the Persian army’s successful assault on Antioch’s city walls in June 540 have to be considered, all of which are recorded by Procopius<sup>43</sup>. The Persians got into the middle of the city and fought with the civilian population slaughtering many (page 335 of the Loeb edition); the survivors were captured and enslaved [341]; the Persian army, except for a small number of men ordered to fire the entire city, withdrew back to its encampment (343); in the ensuing fire, many houses at the extremity of the city were not in fact destroyed (345); the whole army went to Apamea (355); all the captives from Antioch were resettled in a new city close to the Persian capital at Ctesiphon (381).

Are these events consistent with the possibility of an unofficial mint located in Antioch issuing an emergency coinage? Parts of the city were left standing and the Persian army withdrew. Thus, there may have been both reason and opportunity to strike a coinage. On the other hand, Procopius says that the entire population was removed. Is this likely though? Modern history suggests that the resources necessary to deport entire populations are enormous and ancient authors often appear unreliable about numbers; for example, the statement by Procopius about the extent of the earthquake death toll<sup>44</sup>. It is quite possible that people remained in Antioch after the Persians withdrew.

The case for an official mint in Antioch in 540-542 also rests on:

the number of dies used, suggesting organised and coherent activity;

the presence on the coins of the ΘΥΠΟΛΟΣ mint signature used on regular Byzantine issues at Antioch about a year, and perhaps only a few months, before the capture of the city by the Persians.

The obverses on the coins show not the iconography of the reformed folles of Justinian but the anachronistic designs of Justin I, and, particularly, of Anastasius I, both of whom are clearly named.

<sup>41</sup> Mansfield, S. J., A Byzantine Irregular Mint of “Year 20”, *Numismatic Circular*, April 1992, pages 81 - 82; Oddy, A., and Mansfield, S. J., The “Year 20” Mint Revisited, *Journal of the Oriental Numismatic Society* number 214 (Winter 2013), pp. 4-11; Pottier, H., *Le Monnayage de la Syrie sous L’Occupation Perse (610-630)*, *Cahiers Ernest-Babelon* 9, Paris 2004.

<sup>42</sup> Pottier, *Le Monnayage de la Syrie*, op. cit.

<sup>43</sup> Procopius, op. cit.

<sup>44</sup> Procopius, op. cit., Book II, xiv, page 383.

In relation to the Syrian mint during the Persian occupation of 610-630, Pottier<sup>45</sup> was able to demonstrate that, in their choice of designs, the issuers were sensitive to the prevailing political situation and, at times when the Persians were more strongly placed locally, they struck coins based on pre-Heraclian prototypes. He had at his disposal a large body of coins and his treatment of the metrology was meticulous. The arguments that can be assembled here for an irregular mint operating 70 years earlier are far more slight. There are similarities nonetheless and credit should be given to Tony Goodwin for suggesting to me that a parallel exists<sup>46</sup>. At risk of stating the obvious, coins showing the current Emperor Justinian in a martial pose would not be acceptable to a Persian army which, if not actually occupying the city, was still well placed, for some months at least, to intervene.

### Conclusion.

There is no literary evidence of which I am aware for this possible emergency mint. Nothing relevant can be concluded from the Rafah hoard, the coins in which cannot have been deposited before 573/574<sup>47</sup>. All we have is what can be drawn from just the 12 coins described here. Coins might still have been needed even in a despoiled and partly depopulated city. The local economy was probably shattered but human nature is such that people will continue to do business. Whoever produced the coins may have used both redundant regular dies drawn from the old official mint and new dies made by local artisans. In both cases, care seems to have been taken not to offend the Persians - whose permission to strike a coinage may have been needed - by portraying the Emperor with whom they were still at war. The best indication for activity of this kind rests with the type 1a coins for which at least three reverse dies were apparently made.

There are no die-links between the three types. Type 1b might be excluded completely on the basis that it could be the result of poor management practice at the regular mint at a completely different time. Type 2 is known from only one pair of dies and could have been produced under different circumstances although it is interesting that the reverse, without drawing completely on any regular prototype, has the ΘΥΠΟΛΑΣ mint signature.

The provenances present some difficulty for what is predicated as a local Syrian coinage. One example of type 1a was found in Bulgaria and one of type 2 in Gaza. But this is not necessarily inconsistent with the partial depopulation of Antioch and the dispersal of its former inhabitants.

It can reasonably be suggested that the enigmatic coinage that is type 1a, and possibly types 1b and 2 also, might have made to meet a short-term, local, need and which could, plausibly, be fixed within the historical context of conditions in the city of Antioch in the months following June 540. If so, the claim made by Procopius that the city was emptied of its population might be wrong. He records that the city was not entirely destroyed. Little more can be advanced with confidence about the coins since other explanations are possible and might, sometime in the future, be made.

<sup>45</sup> Pottier, *Le Monnayage de la Syrie*, op. cit.

<sup>46</sup> Goodwin, T., in private correspondence with the author.

<sup>47</sup> Spaer, *The Rafah Hoard*, op. cit.

Catalogue

Type 1a

- |    |  |  |   |
|----|--|--|---|
| 1. | Officina A<br>Obverse die uncertain<br>Reverse die a1<br>Observed in trade in 1986           | (i)  |   |
| 2. | Officina B<br>Obverse die A1<br>Reverse die b1<br>UK private collection 1                    |    |    |
| 3. | Officina Δ<br>Obverse die A2<br>Reverse die c1<br>UK private collection 1                    |    |    |
| 4. | Officina Δ<br>Obverse die A3<br>Reverse die c2<br>14.67 gms; 180°<br>UK private collection 2 |   |   |
| 5. | Officina Δ<br>Obverse die A4<br>Reverse die c3<br>10.28 gms; 200°<br>UK private collection 2 |  |  |
| 6. | Officina Δ<br>Obverse die A5<br>Reverse die c4<br>13.46 gms; 180°<br>D. O. 213               |  |  |
| 7. | Officina Δ<br>Obverse die A6<br>Reverse die c5<br>MIIB 131 <sup>1</sup>                      |  |  |

8. Officina Δ  
Obverse die A7  
Reverse die c6



9. Officina Δ  
Obverse die uncertain (ii)  
Reverse die c7  
10.03 gms; 180  
European private collection



Type 1b  
10. Officina Δ  
MIB N131<sup>2</sup>



Type 2  
11. Officina A  
Same dies as no. 12  
9.94 gms; 180  
Private collection no. 2



12. Officina A  
Same dies as no. 11  
Rafah Hoard, no. 51 (iii)



(i) I observed this coin in Baldwins' trays in 1986. I recorded insufficient detail and I was unable to photograph the coin. I was convinced that the reverse die was that used to strike D. O. 213a. It seems very likely that the obverse was also die-linked to the rest of the series, but my notes say only "obverse die-link?".

(ii) The obverse of this coin is certainly similar to the coins struck with die A but the reproduction is not good enough to establish a definitive die link.

(iii) Numismatic Chronicle, 1978, The Rafah Hoard, op. cit.

## AN EMERGENCY COINAGE IN ANTIOCH: A. D. 540-542, SOME ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE<sup>48</sup>

In JONS 2007 (Spring 2011), I posited the idea of an unofficial mint in Antioch that issued coins following the Persian sack of the city in June 540. Twelve coins were described, all of which muled reverses dateable to 537-539 with obverse dies, almost certainly irregular, naming either Anastasius I (reigned 491-518) or Justin I (518-527).

Since publication, five more coins have come to light. While one of these coins appears to add significant weight to the argument, it is convenient first to describe the three coins belonging to the typology already used in JONS 207. Coins of type 1a bear obverse inscriptions that may be read as Anastasius and those of type 1b as Justinus.



Figure 1; type 1a. D. O. 213, MIB N131, 1.  
11.92 gms. 190.  
M between two eight-pointed stars,  
Δ beneath, ΘΥΠΟΛΑΣ below.



Figure 2; type 1b<sup>49</sup>.  
13.42 gms.  
M between two eight-pointed stars,  
E beneath, ΘΥΠΟΛΑΣ below.



Figure 3; type 1b. MIB 131.  
13.20 gms. 150.  
M between two eight-pointed stars,  
A beneath, ΘΥΠΟΛΑΣ below.

The obverse of the fourth coin, particularly the representation of the garbled inscription naming Anastasius, strongly resembles type 1a. The reverse die is well made and might be regular. The manufacture of copper coinage at Byzantine mints seems rarely to have been characterised by strict controls and, if the coin does form part of the emergency coinage, the mint signature CON should not be regarded as particularly surprising. In view of the new mint signature, this might be termed type 3.

The fifth coin is the most interesting. The mint signature is again new to this series and the coin might reasonably be classed as type 4. Unfortunately, the image is poor<sup>50</sup> and a fuller description of the obverse will be helpful:

<sup>48</sup> Mansfield, S. J., originally published in Oriental Numismatic Society, Journal number 216, 2013, pp. 8-9.

<sup>49</sup> Leimonstoll collection. While certainly a mule of the kind described here, the coin is of good style and I am not certain that it is a product of the emergency mint.



Figure 4; type 3.  
12.27 gms. 190.  
M between two eight-pointed stars, Δ beneath, CON  
below.



Figure 5; type 4.  
DNAIIAGCA GIVGPPAV. Profile bust right with  
diadem, cuirass and paludamentum.  
11.71 gms.  
M between two eight-pointed stars, A beneath,  
+TNBC+ below.

It is curious that the obverse inscription makes a much better attempt to name Anastasius than on the coins noted hitherto. Coupled with the garbled rendering of the normal mint signature +THEUP+ (used for the regular Antioch coinage just 10 years before, in 528 or 529 to 532<sup>51</sup>), it will be seen that this is another example of the workers at the emergency mint providing familiar looking coins while taking care not to offend the sensibilities of the Persians by naming the current ruler, Justinian I (527-565)<sup>52</sup>.

#### AN INAUGURAL ISSUE OF PHOCAS WITH THE EFFIGY OF MAURICE<sup>53</sup>



Facing bust holding in right hand a mappa, and in left an eagle-tipped sceptre.

K, A/N/N/O to its left.

This is a very enigmatic coin. It is in poor condition and the description above represents what can, with very little doubt, be made out.

With almost as much confidence, part of the obverse description can be read as OCA. The reverse, though, presents more difficulties. A single stroke appears to the right of the denomination mark K and, if this reading is correct, it would indicate regnal year one (602/3) of the reign of Phocas (602-610). A best guess as to what is below the K is the symbol Γ for the third officina (workshop) of the mint.

<sup>50</sup> This coin appeared on EBay in May 2012 and permission was given to publish it. The promised high resolution image never materialised, however, and the poor quality picture used here is, nonetheless, the best that could be obtained from the EBay site.

<sup>51</sup> Hahn, W., Money of the Incipient Byzantine Empire, Vienna, 2000, p. 60.

<sup>52</sup> A further example of Type 4 was sold on EBay in February 2016. The obverse die is new.

<sup>53</sup> Unpublished.

Realistically, the mint can only be Constantinople - where five workshops normally operated - and the K can also stand for the name of the city. But the coin cannot be a normal issue of Phocas since the K denominational mark only appears on his coins in association with the mint of Thessalonica and (again with the exception of Thessalonica) the first eastern issues of Phocas portray him with the Empress Leontia.

A possible explanation is as follows. The mappa and sceptre, which are consular insignia, were used on coins of the last two years of the reign of Phocas' predecessor, Maurice. Folles of this consular type are common, but the corresponding consular half follis is unknown. The portraiture here is quite unlike that of Phocas (typically a triangular face and a shaggy beard) but bears a strong resemblance to the portrayal of Maurice on these consular folles of years 20 and 21. Coins of Phocas bearing an effigy of Maurice are known to have been struck at Carthage on the basis that they were issued before the arrival of the Imperial image. Such an analogy cannot be applied to Constantinople which was the geographical focus of the overthrow of Maurice and the succession of Phocas. It is quite plausible, though, that once the triumph of Phocas was known, the workshop personnel hurriedly re-engraved an obverse die prepared for striking consular half folles of Maurice by adding the inscription FOCAS. This was used in combination with a newly produced new reverse die of regnal year 1 to strike the coin under discussion.

Why the obverse die was not used during the reign of Maurice cannot properly be guessed at. His half folles of year 20 are all of the armoured bust type although their style varies considerably. They are plentiful and this suggests that a further issue may not have been needed.

This rather miserable coin may be one of the very first coins of Phocas, struck in the first few days of what eventually proved a disastrous reign.

Enlargement x2.



## TWO NEW DATED BYZANTINE MILITARY ISSUES - AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE<sup>54</sup>

An Italian dekanummium of Justinian I of regnal year 30.



3.29 gms. 180.

Obverse: Profile bust right with diadem and paludamentum.

Reverse: I between A/N/N/O and X/X/X, CON below.

This coin, which is competently made and well preserved, displays, as part of both the obverse and reverse lettering, the unbarred As ( $\Lambda$ ) characteristic of coins struck in the western part of the empire. It belongs to a series of half folles and dekanummia that MIBE<sup>55</sup> attributes to an imitative mint in Italy. These coins show the mint signatures, NI, P as well as the misleading CON. In practice, (since die-links have been identified) it is difficult to exclude other coins, including folles, that MIBE gives to Salona (these issues have no mint mark) or to another imitative mint (folles, half folles, dekanummia and pentanummia) which are either anonymous or show the mint signature CON<sup>56</sup>. Where the coins are dated, the regnal years shown occur between 26 and 33.

The specimen recorded in MIBE that most resembles the coin above is 99, 5 which shares with it the date of year 30 and a dumpy form of the denomination mark I. The mint signature of the MIBE coin is, however, NOC. The description in MIBE of some of the dekanummia as degenerated can be challenged by the good style of the coin shown here.

It may be that the coin described in MIBE is a contemporary forgery. This seems unlikely though - three such examples are known. By contrast, the coin described here - of good style and with CON engraved correctly - appears not to have been published previously.

For the moment, this coin may add in a small way to an understanding of this complex series on which further work is needed and may, in the future, be undertaken.

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<sup>54</sup> Unpublished.

<sup>55</sup> Hahn, W., Money of the Incipient Byzantine Empire (MIBE), Vienna, 2000, pp. 72-73.

<sup>56</sup> MIBE, op. cit., pp. 72-73.

A North African half follis of Maurice of regnal year 10.



10.54 gms. 000.

Obverse: Bust facing, wearing cuirass and crown with circlet and cross.

Reverse: K between A/N/N/O and X, A below.

In Byzantine Coins (1982)<sup>57</sup>, Grierson refers to *half folles, dekanummia and pentanummia of distinctively Carthaginian style but not fitting into the pattern of Carthaginian issues for the reign* (of Maurice). In DOC, volume 1, they are attributed to the north African mint of Constantine in Numidia. MIB attributes some of these coins (with the mint signature CON or KWN and dated year 10) to a military mint while the half folles without a mint signature and dated year 11 are given to Carthage.

Among the latter, i.e., half folles without a mint signature and dated year 11, both heavy and light coins exist. Referring to a coin in D. O. (261.1), Bellinger comments that its high weight of 10.18 grams suggests an irregular issue. Further heavy specimens - one of 14.01 grams struck on an exceptionally thick flan<sup>58</sup> and another sold by Glendinings, 9-13 March 1931, ex lot 492 (*struck on a thick flan*) - are recorded.

The interest in the above coin lies in its similar high weight of 10.54 grams and thick flan and the fact that it is dated regnal year 10. Whether or not this "heavy series" of north African half folles dated years 10 and 11 do belong to an irregular mint remains yet to be seen.

#### A NEW CLASS OF SICILIAN COUNTERMARK FOR HERACLIUS<sup>59</sup>

Three types of countermarks reading SCL (for Sicily) appear on coins of Heraclius and all are quite common. On two of them, Heraclius is portrayed together with his heir Heraclius Constantine and it is the iconography of this obverse countermark, together with the form of the Sicilian mint signature, that concerns us.

Two of the known types (D. O. Classes 2 and 3 respectively) are at Figures 1 and 3 below. On the first coin, Heraclius is portrayed with a short beard while Heraclius Constantine is beardless; the mint mark is a simple SCL monogram with a bar above. On the third, Heraclius has a long beard and his son a shorter one. The mint mark is in similar form but is preceded by a Heraclian monogram. The new class of coin (which we can call Class 2a) is at Figure 2.

<sup>57</sup> Grierson, P., Byzantine Coins, London, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1982, p. 77.

<sup>58</sup> Catalogue no. 12.51.

<sup>59</sup> Unpublished.



Figure 1; Class 2 (catalogue 19.62).  
Circa 629-632.  
MIB Km 5, D. O. 242b.



Figure 2; Class 2a (catalogue 19.63).  
MIB - , D. O. - .  
6.72 gms. The host coin cannot be identified.



Figure 3; Class 3 (catalogue 19.64).  
Circa 632-641.  
MIB Km 6, D. O. 243.

It can be seen that the reverse countermark of Figure 2 belongs to D. O. Class 3 (only SC can be clearly made out). The obverse countermark appears to be a variant of D. O. Class 2 as Heraclius has a medium length (rather than short) beard and Heraclius Constantine is shown with a short beard rather than beardless. Assuming that the portraiture is not accidental, the countermark would seem to be an unpublished interim type issued between Classes 2 and 3 and dateable to circa 632.

#### THE CARTHAGINIAN COPPER COINAGE OF THE EMPEROR MAURICE<sup>60</sup>

On 25 November 602 (in some part of Asia Minor), the Byzantine Emperor Maurice (A. D. 582-602) was overthrown and killed by supporters of the usurper Flavius Focas (usually Phocas; reigned 602-610).

The copper coinage of Maurice struck at the Carthage mint is varied in design. For example, three types of follis (the coins are rare) are known. The more common fractions (20 nummi, 10 nummi and five nummi) are more varied still although some of these coins cannot yet be attributed to Carthage with complete certainty. It is the chronology of the 10 nummus (dekanumnummum), straddling the reigns of both Emperors, and in light of the appearance of two unpublished specimens (Figures 2 and 3), that is the subject of this article.

Only one Carthaginian issue of Maurice is dated – coins of all four denominations are dated INDIII, that is the third year of the indictional cycle, or 584/5. The ordering of the other issues is attempted by Hahn<sup>61</sup> but the problems of attribution, coupled with the rarity of some of the coins, make a fully coherent analysis problematic. The letters N and M (for

<sup>60</sup> Unpublished.

<sup>61</sup> Hahn, W., Money of the Incipient Byzantine Empire Continued, Vienna, 2009.

nummus) appear on many of the coins and Hahn suggests that the combination of these letters with pellets above and below the letters marks out the final issue struck during the last five years of the reign.

This N-M/pellets arrangement reappears, for the dekanummium and pentanummium, during the reign of Phocas, albeit as part of an overall design considered (up to now at least) to be novel. Rather curiously, Hahn places the relevant pentanummia (MIBEC 101) at the beginning of the reign but the dekanummia (MIBEC 100; the reverse design of these coins comprises a large X between N and M with pellets placed as described previously; Figure 1) from about the middle, perhaps 605/6 onwards.

Figure 1.



Carthage dekanummium of Phocas (602-610) - note the pointed beard - placed by Hahn in the middle of the reign.

The reasoning behind Hahn's chronology (although this is not explicit) appears to encompass the existence of coins, quite rare, that spell out the name of the new Emperor (DNFOCA PERPAVC) while actually portraying Maurice. (It is very easy indeed to tell coins of the two rulers apart; Maurice is shown beardless with a full, round face, while Phocas has a distinctive pointed beard.) Hahn argues, quite reasonably, that these strange coins exist because the image of Phocas (intended, *inter alia*, to show the mint workers how he wished to be portrayed) only reached Carthage after coins had already been issued with the portrait of Maurice retained. Thus, coins with the true portrait of Phocas came later.

Two coins (dekanummia) have recently been identified that combine an obverse with the bust of Maurice with the Figure 1 reverse. These are shown as Figures 2 and 3. Neither coin is in particularly good condition and the inscriptions are not fully legible. On the Figure 3 coin, the letters PAVC can be made out on the right but this could be part of either DN MAVRICPPAVC or DNFOCAPERPAVC. Equally, the letters TIb also seem legible at the beginning of the legend. While the portraits are indisputable of Maurice, this begs the question of whether the coins are further examples of the "Maurice coinage" of Phocas (struck before the arrival of the latter's portrait in Carthage) or a true issue of Maurice himself. We should examine these possibilities separately.

Figures 2 and 3.

2. CNG, sale 93, lot 1328.  
2.73 gms; 240; 14mm.



3. Private collection<sup>62</sup>.  
2.66 gms; 090; 12x15mm.



<sup>62</sup> Catalogue no. 12.27.

The “Maurice coinage” under Phocas is already known for one Carthage issue (Figure 4) the reverse design of which is quite different from the coins discussed here. The head of Carthage mint might already have felt at risk from the new Emperor by retaining Maurice’s portrait at all. Is it likely that he would have authorised a second issue? Indeed, would a second issue have been needed at all in the few weeks or months before the arrival of the Phocas portrait?

Figure 4.



Carthage dekanummium in the name of Phocas but with the bust of Maurice (MIBE 99, 1)<sup>63</sup>.

So let us assume that the new coins of figures 2 and 3 belong to Maurice. Does they fit in with the pattern of designs used by the mint for Maurice and, subsequently, for Phocas? I am inclined to agree with the cataloguer of the CNG auction (see Figure 2) that the coins belong at the end of the reign of Maurice. This is logical as the design is retained under Phocas. Hahn also places the existing “pelleted” coins at the end of the reign, suggesting that they were applied as part of a final “augmentation” in the chronology of the coinage.

There is one problem with this theory, however. If the N-M/pellets coins were already in circulation at the time that news of Maurice’s fall reached Carthage, why did the mint simply not change the inscription to cite Phocas? Instead, what seems to have happened is that the mint struck the Figure 4 coins – first on an interim basis and subsequently as a substantive issue with the correct portrait. A possible explanation lies in the date and in the reverse design of the coin. The coins seem to be dated indictional year six – 602/603 (NS occurs at the end of the obverse inscription). Perhaps by dating them in this way, the head of the mint wished to imply that the coins portraying Maurice were a temporary expedient only. The reverse boldly spells out FOCA. It is an unusual reverse which presumably was intended to make clear at the outset, and despite showing Maurice, that *Phocas rules*. Perhaps the new Emperor saw and liked the coinage and intervened to authorise its continued striking with his own portrait shown. It is possible that the coin continued to be produced after 602/3.

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<sup>63</sup> Catalogue no. 15.73.