

Zeitschrift: Schweizerische numismatische Rundschau = Revue suisse de numismatique = Rivista svizzera di numismatica
Herausgeber: Schweizerische Numismatische Gesellschaft
Band: 86 (2007)

Artikel: The dated coinage of Gaza in historical context (264/3 BC - AD 241/2)
Autor: Hoover, Oliver
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-178710>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 28.03.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

OLIVER HOOVER

THE DATED COINAGE OF GAZA IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

(264/3 BC - AD 241/2)*

PLATES 8-10

In general, the coins of Gaza produced in the Hellenistic and Roman periods are all relatively unassuming and give little hint of their importance for interpreting the political and financial history of the city. They usually either follow patterns imposed by external rulers, as in the case of the Ptolemaic kings, or they tend to repeat similar types related to the local cults of the city (especially those of Tyche, Marnas, Heracles-Azon, and Io). There are no obvious historical types and no clear advertisements of triumphs, games, or imperial visits, such as can be found on other provincial coinages, despite the fact that we know the city to have had all of these things. The money of Gaza becomes a tool for political history largely through its use of dates and several dating eras, indicative of the city's relationship vis-à-vis its Ptolemaic, Seleucid and Roman overlords. The dates are especially important for understanding the city's financial history, for as is well known, most ancient cities did not mint coins on a regular annual basis, but rather sporadically in response to local need.¹ Thanks to the consistently dated coinage of Gaza, it is possible to see when precisely the city felt a need for new money and interpret it

Bibliography

- BELLINGER A. BELLINGER, *The Syrian Tetradrachms of Caracalla and Macrinus*, NS 3 (New York 1940)
- CSE A. HOUGHTON, *Coins of the Seleucid Empire from the Collection of Arthur Houghton*, ACNAC 1 (New York 1983)
- PRIEUR M. PRIEUR, *A Type Corpus of the Syro-Phoenician Tetradrachms and their Fractions from 57 BC to AD 253* (Lancaster 2000)
- ROSENBERGER II M. ROSENBERGER, *The Rosenberger Israel Collection II* (Jerusalem 1975)
- SC A. HOUGHTON / C. LORBER, *Seleucid Coins, Part I: Seleucus I through Antiochus III* (Lancaster/London 2002)
- Sofaer Coll. Y. MESHORER / G. BIJOVSKY, *Coins of the Holy Land: The Abraham D. Sofaer Collection at the American Numismatic Society* (forthcoming)
- SVORONOS J.N. SVORONOS, *Ta nomismata tou kratous ton Ptolemaion* (Athens 1904-1908, in modern Greek)

* The author wishes to thank Donald T. Ariel, Gabriela Bijovsky, Wolfgang Fischer-Bossert, Alla Kushnir-Stein, Lutz Ilisch, and Catharine Lorber for commenting on earlier versions of this paper. Special thanks are also due to Abraham D. Sofaer for his kind permission to use many of the coins in his collection for illustrations. All conclusions are the sole responsibility of the author.

¹ RPC I, pp. 16-17; K. HARL, *Civic Coins and Civic Politics in the Roman East* (Berkeley 1987), p. 19.

against the backdrop of the surviving textual evidence for the history of the city, the surrounding region and the wider Hellenistic and Roman worlds.

The following survey of the dates that appear on Gazaean coinage in the Roman period shows that the city primarily produced its money, or supplemented its usual emissions (in the Antonine and Severan periods), in response to the stimuli of military events and, to a somewhat lesser extent, by celebratory occasions. This pattern at Roman Gaza is consistent with that shown by other provincial coinages,² but appears to have been inherited from practices of the Hellenistic period, as evidenced by the preceding dated issues of the Ptolemaic, Seleucid and autonomous periods.

Ptolemaic Gaza

Although the numismatic history of Gaza actually begins with its Philistian silver coinage of the fifth and fourth centuries BC, none of it was dated and therefore is not of interest here.³ No coinage appears to have been struck by the city following the Macedonian conquest, but during the long Ptolemaic domination of Coele Syria (281-198 BC), the mint of Gaza struck coins (octadrachms, tetradrachms, and bronzes) under Ptolemy II Philopator (281-246 BC) and Ptolemy III Euergetes (246-222 BC). The regnal years 25 (262/1 BC), 28-33 (259/8-254/3 BC), and 36-38 (251/0-249/8 BC) that date the Gazaean silver (*Pl. 8, 1*) and the year 29 that dates the gold of Ptolemy II suggest that these coins were produced largely to support military operations against the Seleucids during the Second Syrian War (261-253 BC), as well as to pay the expenses of the peace agreement that ended the conflict.⁴ As part of the settlement, Ptolemy married his daughter, Berenice Syrus, to Antiochus II Theos and sent her to her new husband along with so much gold and silver that she received the popular epithet, *Phernophoros* («Dowry-bringer»)⁵.

² HARL (*supra*, n. 1), p. 19; C. HOWGEGO, *Greek Imperial Countermarks* (London 1985), pp. 24-31 and 90-91.

³ See now, H. GITLER / O. TAL, *The Coinage of Philistia in the Fifth and Fourth Centuries BC* (Milano 2006), pp. 41-42 and 114-132.

⁴ SVORONOS, 822-833. For the years 28 and 29 see A. DAVESNE / G. LE RIDER, *Le trésor de Meydancikkale* (Paris 1989), 4011-4012, and *Classical Numismatic Auctions* 20 March 1991, 247, respectively. – Svoronos also attributed bronzes bearing club and double cornucopiae symbols to Gaza, but there is little find evidence to support this. They may be issues of Tyre (Catharine Lorber, personal communication). A. DAVESNE, *La deuxième guerre de Syrie* (ca. 261-255 avant J.-C.) et les témoignages numismatiques, in: M. AMANDRY / S. HURTER, eds., *Travaux de numismatique grecque offerts à Georges Le Rider* (London 1999), p. 124, cautions against assuming that the new Ptolemaic mints at Ake-Ptolemais, Joppa, and Gaza were all opened in 261/0 BC specifically for the Second Syrian War, but it seems remarkably coincidental that these mints should all open at precisely the same time that the war erupted. The continuation of the series following the conclusion of hostilities can be explained by expenses incurred during the course of the fighting and especially the cost of securing the peace.

⁵ *FGrHist* 260 F43 ; E. WILL, *Histoire politique du monde hellénistique I* (Nancy 1979), pp. 242-243 with n. 1.

The regnal year 2 (245/4 BC) that appears on tetradrachms of Gaza under Ptolemy III also points to a military connection for his coinage (*Pl.* 8, 2).⁶ In 246 BC, the murder of his sister, Berenice and her infant son by agents of Seleucus II caused the outbreak of the Third Syrian War (246-241 BC), which involved multiple punitive campaigns by the armies of Ptolemy III in Syria and the wider Seleucid Empire.⁷ It is very likely that the mint of Gaza reopened at this time to provide funds for the conflict. Coins marked with regnal year 23, formerly thought to be issues of Ptolemy II,⁸ are now believed to have been struck under Ptolemy III and therefore must date to 224/3 BC.⁹ With such a date they may represent the financing of a military response to the intensified Seleucid activity on the northern frontier of Ptolemaic Phoenicia in 225/4 BC. In this year, the north Phoenician city of Simyra suddenly struck tetradrachms for Seleucus II, while the neighbouring cities of Aradus, Gabala, Carne, and Marathus issued Alexandrine tetradrachms, probably also in support of the Seleucid king.¹⁰ These Seleucid emissions were probably struck in order to underwrite the cost of a new campaign against Ptolemaic possessions in Phoenicia and Coele Syria that never materialized because of the sudden death of Seleucus II in early 225/4 BC.¹¹

Following this emission in the twenty-third year of Ptolemy III, the mint of Gaza appears to have shut down for more than eight decades. Coin production only resumed again in the later second century BC – years after Ptolemaic Phoenicia and Coele Syria had fallen to the Seleucids under Antiochus III in the Fifth Syrian War (202-198 BC).

⁶ SVORONOS, 1045.

⁷ *Plyæn.* 8.50; *App. Syr.* 65; *Just.* 27.1.6-10; *OGIS* 54; I. FINKEL / R. VAN DER SPEK, *Babylonian Chronicles of the Hellenistic Period* (forthcoming), no. 11 (preliminary version available online at http://www.livius.org/cg-cm/chronicles/bchp-ptolemy_iii/bchp-ptolemy_iii_01.html).

⁸ SVORONOS 821; *SNG Cop. Suppl.* 1283-1284.

⁹ O. MØRKHOLM, *A Group of Ptolemaic Coins from Phoenicia and Palestine*, *INJ* 4, 1980, pp. 4-7.

¹⁰ *SC* 927-930; PRICE, Alexander 3380; F. DUYRAT, *Les ateliers monétaires de Phénicie du Nord à l'époque hellénistique*, in: C. AUGÉ / F. DUYRAT, eds., *Les monnayages syriens. Quel apport pour l'histoire du Proche-Orient hellénistique et romain? Actes de la table ronde de Damas, 10-12 novembre 1999* (Beirut 2000), pp. 26 with nos. 77-78, p. 38 with nos. 35-38, and p. 43 with nos. 7-9.

¹¹ For the reattribution of the issues of 225/4 to Seleucus II, see O. HOOVER, *A Second Look at the Aradian Bronze Coinage Attributed to Seleucus I* (*SC* 72-73), *AJN* 18, 2006, pp. 43-50. Such a planned campaign is attributed to Seleucus III by Porphyry (*FGrHist* 260 F44) and accepted by H. SEYRIG, *Monnaies hellénistiques XVIII. Séleucus III et Simyra*, *RN* 1971, pp. 10-11. However, the association of military preparations with Seleucus III, rather than Seleucus II may have been caused by Porphyry's defective regnal chronology, which placed the reign of Seleucus II in 246/5-227/6 BC. Cuneiform evidence, which was unavailable to both Porphyry and Seyrig, shows that Seleucus III did not succeed his father until December/January of 225/4 BC. See A.K. GRAYSON, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (Locust Valley, N.Y. 1975), no. 13; I. FINKEL/VAN DER SPEK (*supra*, n. 7), no. 10. (preliminary version available online at [http://www.livius.org/cg-cm/chronicles\(bchp-dynastic/dynastic_01.html](http://www.livius.org/cg-cm/chronicles(bchp-dynastic/dynastic_01.html)).

Seleucid Gaza

Although Gaza struck its first Seleucid coins under the pretender Alexander I Balas (150-145 BC),¹² its first dated coinage under the new regime was actually civic in nature (*Pl. 8, 3*).¹³ The types feature the head of Tyche and a standing figure of Zeus holding a wreath with an inscription naming the Demos of the Gazaeans, rather than the king as the minting authority. The only evidence of Seleucid influence is to be found in the somewhat generic Zeus-type, which is derived from contemporary quasi-municipal issues produced under Alexander I, and in the Seleucid Era (SE) date of 165 (148/7 BC).¹⁴ This dated series and another of SE 166 produced at nearby Ascalon should probably be connected to the conflict between Alexander and Demetrius II Nicator which broke out in 148/7 BC. The year SE 166 (147/6) saw the destruction of Gaza's neighbour, Azotus, the capitulation of Ascalon and the occupation of the coastal cities by the forces of Alexander's patron, Ptolemy VI Philometor.¹⁵ If the date is correctly read as SE 166, it is tempting to think that this civic issue of Gaza, which makes no direct reference to Alexander, might have been struck after Ptolemy took control of the southern coast.¹⁶ The clear presence of foreign and local armies in the region around Gaza is likely to have prompted the production of coinage in order to make change in the city's market. Likewise, the coinage may have been deemed necessary to deal with wartime expenses incurred by the city.

In SE 171 (142/1 BC), Gaza also struck a dated coinage for Alexander's *nemesis*, Demetrius II (145-139 BC) (*Pl. 8, 4*).¹⁷ Because these coins were struck in such a brief period, after which the mint of Gaza appears to have closed for another period of decades, it is most likely that their production was motivated by some special circumstances at the city. A review of the city's history in the late 140s BC suggests a probable military motive for this coin series as well.

In 143/2 BC, disaster struck the Hasmonaean Jews when through trickery Diodotus Tryphon, the power behind the throne of the Seleucid king Antiochus VI Dionysus, captured and killed their high priest, Jonathan Apphus.¹⁸ The blow was felt even harder when Tryphon followed up this bloody act in 142/1, with the

¹² SNG Spaer 1560-1560A and 1573-1575. For the reattribution of SNG Spaer 1561-1571 to Marisa on the basis of excavation finds, see A. HOUGHTON / C. LORBER / O. HOOVER, *Seleucid Coins Part 2: Seleucus IV through Antiochus XIII* (forthcoming), 1850-1851.

¹³ SNG ANS 6, 905-906; ROSENBERGER II (Gaza) 32.

¹⁴ It is not absolutely clear from the known examples whether the initial digit of the date is *epsilon* (5) or *digamma* (6). For the Seleucid quasi-municipal comparanda, see SNG Spaer 1495 (Laodicea by the Sea), 1496 (Cyrrhus), 1556 (Ascalon), 1560-1560A (Gaza).

¹⁵ *I Macc.* 10:67-11:8; *Jos. AJ* 13.86-105.

¹⁶ An undated civic series employing identical types, but naming the Demos of the Se[leucians] in Gaza (ROSENBERGER II [Gaza], 27; BMC Palestine [Gaza] 4) is likely to be contemporary with the issue of SE 165/166. For the related issues of the Seleucians in Gaza, see also Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 29-28.

¹⁷ SNG Spaer 1738-1745; E. BABELON, *Les rois de Syrie, d'Arménie et de Commagène* (Paris 1890), 979 (where the date is misread as SE 173).

¹⁸ For Jonathan's death followed by his replacement as high priest by Simon in SE 170 (142/1 BC by the Jewish/Babylonian reckoning), see *1 Macc.* 13:23-41. St. Jerome er-

secret murder of Antiochus VI and his assumption of the kingship.¹⁹ This crisis is almost certain to have had an impact on Gaza, because under Antiochus VI, Jonathan had been recognized as the Seleucid *strategos* of the territory from the Ladder of Tyre to the borders of Egypt, a region that included Gaza. Indeed, the city received somewhat unwanted attention during Jonathan's tenure as *strategos*, when its citizens initially refused to recognize the authority of Antiochus or his Jewish official. In response, Jonathan ravaged Gaza's hinterland and lay siege to the city until its citizens, having given up hope of rescue by Demetrius II, sued for peace. According to Josephus and I *Maccabees*, in return for ending the siege, Jonathan required Gaza to enter into an alliance (συμμαχία) with him and to give hostages to be held in Jerusalem.²⁰

Upon the death of Jonathan, the Jews chose his brother Simon Thassi to be the new high priest. His first order of business was to repudiate the former Hasmonaean recognition of Antiochus VI and Tryphon, and to renew the old friendly relationship with Demetrius II.²¹ Since Gaza was technically an ally of the Hasmonaeans and probably still concerned for the safety of the hostages given to Jonathan, a return to the city's former allegiance to Demetrius II makes perfect sense at this time. Not only had this king been preferred by the Gazaeans before the usurpation of Antiochus VI and Tryphon, but it would have been an unwise political move to back Tryphon while Simon still had hostages and remained within striking distance of the city.²² Thus, it seems likely that the close yet coerced relationship between Gaza and the Hasmonaeans at the end of the 140s BC accounts for the city's return to the fold of Demetrius II at a time when neighbouring cities like Ascalon and Dora had recognized Tryphon willingly or by force.²³

Likewise, the personal animosity between Simon and Tryphon, as well as their conflicting desires to control southern Coele Syria, made renewed warfare in the region virtually certain and the involvement of Gaza almost inescapable. In such an atmosphere we might expect the city to produce coinage in order to cover the

erroneously places Tryphon's murder of Jonathan in the fourth year of Olympiad 159 (=141/0 BC).

¹⁹ Jos. *AJ* 13.219 indicates that he was killed in 143/2, although his dated coinage continued into SE 171 (142/1 BC). I *Macc.* 13:23-41 implies that Antiochus VI was killed in 143/2, since the event is placed before Simon's assumption of the high priesthood in SE 170 (142/1 BC by the Jewish/Babylonian). St. Jerome erroneously places the death of Antiochus VI in the first year of Olympiad 160 (=140/39 BC) because he does not recognize the reign of Tryphon. For the suspicious death of Antiochus VI, see also, Livy, *Epit.* 55; App. *Syr.* 68; Just. 36.1.7.

²⁰ Jos. *AJ* 13.151-153; I *Macc.* 11:61-62.

²¹ I *Macc.* 13:21-40. Jos. *AJ* 13.213-214, however, gives the false impression that Simon claimed unilateral autonomy for Judaea without reference to Demetrius II.

²² Early in his tenure as high priest, Simon made some inroads into the south, capturing the cities of Joppa, Jamneia, and Gazara: Jos. *AJ* 13.215; *BJ* 1.50; I *Macc.* 13:43. Textual variants of *AJ* and I *Macc.* give Gaza for Gazara, but this is almost certainly an error.

²³ Ascalon issued coinage in the name of Tryphon for every year of his reign (CSE 816; SNG Spaer 1843-1844) and Dora served as the usurper's stronghold during the war with Antiochus VII (Jos. *AJ* 13.223-224; I *Macc.* 15.11; D. GERA, Tryphon's Sling Bullet from Dor, *IEJ* 35, 1985, pp. 157-158).

costs of improving the city's defences or to pay soldiers stationed within its walls, whether citizens, hired mercenaries, or Hasmonaean garrison troops. Although there is no textual evidence to indicate that Gaza was garrisoned after its capitulation to Jonathan, Simon may very well have sent soldiers to hold it following the break with Tryphon. The coinage may also have been required for small change in the markets that would have appeared along with any influx of foreign troops.

That the issue of SE 171 was probably motivated by the military threat posed by Tryphon is also supported by the fact that no Seleucid coinage was struck at Gaza for Demetrius or Tryphon in SE 172 or 173, nor was any issued in SE 174 (139/8 BC), the year in which the brother of Demetrius II, Antiochus VII Sidetes, landed in Syria and hounded Tryphon to his death.²⁴ Gaza's coinage ceased once the threat of Tryphon had been lifted, any mercenaries hired to defend against him had been released from their contracts, and any garrison troops had been removed. The mint did not reopen for another thirty-four years, when another extraordinary occurrence made a local coinage necessary at Gaza.²⁵

Our reconstruction of the Demetrius II series of Gaza as a coinage struck for essentially civic purposes is supported by its use of a tripod type that is reprised on the autonomous coinage of SE 205 (108/7 BC) (*Pl.* 8, 5),²⁶ and a prominent dual mintmark, which advertises the name of the city in the form of a monogram (ϸ), and that of its chief deity, Marnas, by the initial letter of his name in Phoenician (θ). The general inability of these coins to circulate far beyond the territory of Gaza also strongly points to civic use.²⁷ In these regards, the Demetrius II issues, like other quasi-municipal series struck under the Seleucids,²⁸ seem to prefigure the many provincial coinages of the Roman imperial period struck to meet the needs of the cities, but which feature the names and portraits of emperors as well as city ethnics and emblems (see below).²⁹

²⁴ Jos. *AJ* 13.222-224; I *Macc.* 1510-14 and 25-37.

²⁵ The dated Athena/owl issues of SE 177-178 (SNG Spaer 2113-2127) formerly attributed to Gaza under Antiochus VII are now thought to be probable issues of Ake-Ptolemaïs on the basis of control marks and fabric, while the undated cornucopiae and Tyche types of Antiochus VII formerly attributed to Gaza (SNG Spaer 2101-2112) are now attributed to Marisa on the basis of extensive finds at the site of that city. See SC 2119 and 2125.

²⁶ A. KUSHNIR-STEIN, *Late Hellenistic Coins of Gaza and the Date of the Hasmonaean Conquest of the City*, SM 198, June 2000, p. 23, no. 2.

²⁷ Two examples are known from a commercial source in Sebaste (SNG Spaer nos. 1744-1745). Three Gazaeen issues of Alexander I also occurred in the Northern Israel 2002 hoard (CH X, forthcoming) and a single specimen of the same king was found in the excavations of Hellenistic Marisa.

²⁸ For the civic qualities of quasi-municipal bronze coinage and the Phoenician weight silver, see O. HOOVER, *Ceci n'est pas l'autonomie: The Coinage of Seleucid Phoenicia as Royal and Civic Power Discourse*, *Topoi Suppl.* 6, 2004, pp. 485-507. See P. IOSSIF, *The Seleucid Mints of Sidon and Tyre* (forthcoming) for the view that the silver coinage of the Phoenician mints was generally produced to meet civic and regional (in the case of Tyre) requirements, rather than royal needs.

²⁹ For the decision to place the royal portrait on the quasi-municipal coinage as originating with the city, following the Roman provincial paradigm, see V. HEUCHERT, *The Chrono-*

Autonomous Gaza

When the mint of Gaza resumed production of dated coinage in SE 205 (108/7 BC), it no longer carried the name or portrait of a Seleucid king, but instead employed civic types and the ethnic of the Gazaeans.³⁰ Gaza may have received a grant of autonomy in 108/7 BC, or perhaps shortly before, as part of a spate of such grants that Antiochus VIII gave out in the late second century. In 111/10 BC, Sidon received its autonomy from the king, as did Seleucia in Pieria in 109 BC, and Ascalon in 104/3 BC.³¹ The fact that all of these important coastal cities received their freedom in very close succession tends to suggest that Antiochus VIII used grants of autonomy as a means to deny – or at least complicate – the use of these cities as bases by Antiochus IX and his Ptolemaic allies, without going to the expense of garrisoning them himself.³² If we are correct in viewing the autonomy of the coastal cities as a strategic policy, it would make sense for Gaza to have received its freedom in the same period. It would also make sense of the apparent absence of Seleucid authority in *c.* 104/3 BC, which compelled the Gazaeans to seek aid on their own behalf from Ptolemy Lathyrus against the depredations of the Hasmonaean priest-king, Alexander Jannaeus.³³

logical Development of Roman Provincial Coin Iconography, in: C. HOWGEGO / V. HEUCHERT / A. BURNETT, eds., *Coinage and Identity in the Roman Provinces* (Oxford 2005), p. 44. This is contrary to the longstanding (but less compelling in light of the Roman provincial model) interpretation of the quasi-municipal coinages as imposed by the king for the benefit of the city, rather than as city coinages that recognized the king. See O. MØRKHOLM, *Antiochus IV of Syria* (Gyldendal 1966), pp. 129-130; A. MEADOWS, *Money, Freedom, and Empire in the Hellenistic World*, in: A. MEADOWS / K. SHIPTON, eds., *Money and its Uses in the Ancient Greek World* (Oxford 2004), pp. 59-61.

³⁰ An undated issue with the types of Zeus and parallel double cornucopiae struck in the name of the Demos of the Gazaeans is likely to have closely preceded the dated issue of 108/7 BC: Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 30-31; ROSENBERGER II (Gaza), 26-27; BMC Palestine (Gaza), 1-2.

³¹ Sidon: CSE, p. 71; Seleucia: RC 71/72; Ascalon: *Chron. Paschale* 448' B; A. SPAER, *Ascalon: From Royal Mint to Autonomy*, in: A. HOUGHTON *et al.*, eds., *Festschrift für Leo Mildenberg* (Wetteren 1984), pp. 229-231. Berytus received a grant of *asylia* from Antiochus VIII in 110/09 BC, but only became autonomous in 81/0 BC. H. SEYRIG, *Notes on Syrian Coins*, ANSNM 119 (New York 1950), p. 19 has suggested that a similar policy may underlie the grant of *asylia* to Tyre by Demetrius II in 141/0 BC. Tripolis received its autonomy between 105/4 and 95 BC, probably from Antiochus IX: H. SEYRIG, *Antiquités syriennes* 42. *Sur les ères de quelques villes de Syrie: Antioche, Apamée, Aréthuse, Balanée, Épiphanie, Laodicée, Rhosos, Damas, Béryte, Tripolis, l'ère de Cléopâtre, Chalcis du Liban, Doliché, Syria* 27, 1950, pp. 39-42.

³² That the expense was becoming a real concern for Antiochus VII in this period is suggested by the reduction in both his die usage and in the weight of the tetradrachm at Antioch. See O. HOOVER, *A Revised Chronology for the Late Seleucids at Antioch* (121/0-64/3 BC), *Historia* 55.3 (2007), pp. 280-301. For the general exhaustion of both kings, see *Jos. AJ* 13.327.

³³ *Jos. AJ* 13.348.

Following this issue, the mint of Gaza appears to have ceased to produce dated coinage for thirty years. Operating under the assumption that SE 205 (108/7 BC) represents the earliest possible year in which the city could have gained its autonomy, Alla Kushnir-Stein has argued that a civic era counting from this date was used on typologically related issues dated Year 13 (misread by earlier authors as Year 205 or Year 16) and Year 14 (*Pl. 8, 6-7*).³⁴ Counting from 108/7, these coins must then date to 96/5 and 95/4 BC, respectively, which might then connect them to expenses related to the war against the Hasmonaean Alexander Jannaeus, which ultimately resulted in the siege and destruction of the city.³⁵

The purpose of a previously unknown lead series of 78/7 BC that resurrects dating by the Seleucid Era (*Pl. 8, 8*) is obscure, not least because Gaza is believed to have been destroyed at the end of the second century and lain in ruin until its refoundation was ordered by Pompey the Great.³⁶ Following this enigmatic lead emission, the mint of Gaza again ceased production, this time for 26 years. Gaza's next issues of coinage, dated Year 10 (52/1 BC) (*Pl. 8, 9*), 16 (46/5 BC), and 19 (43/2 BC) (*Pl. 8, 10*) are much cruder in style and represent the first numismatic appearance of the 'Pompeian' Era of Gaza, counting from 61/0 BC.³⁷ As in the cases of the earlier autonomous, Seleucid, and Ptolemaic issues, the primary motivation for the production of bronzes in these two years seems to have been the cost of war. It is surely no coincidence that the coins of Year 10 (52/1 BC) should have appeared in the same year that C. Cassius Longinus, serving as proquaestor, expelled the Parthians from Syria following the disastrous eastern campaign of the consul, M. Licinius Crassus. Those of Year 16 (46/5 BC) were struck precisely when the rebellious Pompeian cavalry officer, Q. Caecilius Bassus and the Caesarean quaestor *pro praetore*, C. Antistius Vetus, were at war over the control of Syria, while those of Year 19 (43/2 BC) were produced when Cassius was preparing armies in Syria for his war with the proconsular governor P. Cornelius Dolabella and for the final showdown with Antony and Octavian.³⁸

Julio-Claudian Gaza

The pattern of striking coinage in order to meet emergency expenses, rather than to regularly maintain a local circulating medium continued without change at Gaza under the Roman Empire. Following the coinage of Year 19, the mint closed

³⁴ Hill read LIC (with square *sigma*, Year 210) with difficulty in BMC Palestine (Gaza), p. lix and no. 6 and his reading was followed at SNG ANS 6, no. 908. However, a close inspection of the well-preserved specimens reveals that the date should be read as LII (Year 13). See A. KUSHNIR-STEIN, Gaza Coinage Dated LIC: A Reappraisal, SNR 74, 1995, pp. 50-51 with pl. 2.1a; *ead.*, (*supra*, n. 26), pp. 22-24.

³⁵ For the chronology, see O. HOOVER, A Late Hellenistic Lead Coinage from Gaza, INR 1, 2006, pp. 28-29.

³⁶ HOOVER (*supra*, n. 35), pp. 25-36; Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), nos. 33-35.

³⁷ Year 10: ROSENBERGER II (Gaza), 31; KUSHNIR-STEIN (*supra*, n. 34), nos. 2A-3B (?). Year 16: BMC Palestine (Gaza), no. 9; KUSHNIR-STEIN (n. 34), 4 and 5B (?). Year 19: KUSHNIR-STEIN (*supra*, n. 34), nos. 5A-5B (?); ROSENBERGER II (Gaza), no. 37.

³⁸ Jos. *AJ* 14.272-277 and 280.

down for 46 years, reopening again only in Year 66 (AD 5/6) with the issue of two bronze series, one of which depicted the city Tyche on the obverse and the other a portrait of Augustus (*Pl. 8, 11*).³⁹ This was an important year for Gaza because it saw the annexation of Judaea to the Roman *provincia Syria*, much to the delight of the region's non-Jewish inhabitants. The Gazaeans, whose city had been attached to Herod the Great's Judaeian kingdom since 30 BC,⁴⁰ must have been among those with special cause to celebrate the absorption of Judaea into Syria. Gaza had (and still has) a long and often violent history of conflict with its Jewish neighbours going back to the second half of the second millennium BC. It is probably in the context of celebrations or expenses associated with the annexation that the coinage of Year 66 was struck.

A Gazaeian bronze issue with an illegible date has also been attributed to Augustus' successor, Tiberius, by Ya'akov Meshorer.⁴¹ However, the close similarity of the obverse portrait and Tyche (Marnas?) reverse type to those used for the Year 130 (AD 69/70) half denominations of Vespasian (Titus?) makes it seem likely that this coin is simply a standard issue of Year 130 and not a specimen of a coinage struck under Tiberius.⁴² If this view is correct, then after the issue of Year 66 the mint of Gaza again fell silent for some sixty-three years before striking any new coinage, and once again the goad to produce appears to stem from regional military developments.

Flavian Gaza

The next series to appear after that of Augustus is dated Year 130 (AD 69/70) and bears the laureate portrait of either Vespasian or Titus (*Pl. 8, 12*).⁴³ The date suggests that they may have been issued in part to celebrate the acclamation of Vespasian as emperor by his troops in July of AD 69. However, it is even more likely that they were struck to defray expenses and promote commerce when Vespasian's son Titus encamped with the Egyptian legions at Gaza during the march to Caesarea Maritima in the spring of AD 70.⁴⁴ Change would have been needed for the markets that must have appeared at Gaza to cater to the needs of the soldiery, as well as for any costs (i.e. of foodstuffs, materiel, billeting, etc.) that might have been downloaded onto the city by the commanders. If the coinage was still being produced in the late summer and early autumn of AD 70 it may also have served to fund celebrations of the Roman capture and destruction of Jerusalem, which took place in August of that year.

³⁹ Tyche: KUSHNIR-STEIN (*supra*, n. 34), 6; RPC I, 4895; BMC Palestine (Gaza), 7. Augustus: RPC I, 4894 and 4896; SNG ANS 6, 910-911; ROSENBERGER II (Gaza), 44; BMC Palestine (Gaza), 10-11. Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 46, for a previously unpublished AD 5/6 issue with the types of Augustus and a club.

⁴⁰ Jos. *AJ* 15.217; *BJ* 1.396.

⁴¹ Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), no. 47.

⁴² Cf. Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 47; RPC II, 2202; SNG ANS 6, 912; ROSENBERGER II (Gaza), 50-51.

⁴³ RPC II, 2201; ROSENBERGER II (Gaza), 48; BMC Palestine (Gaza), 12.

⁴⁴ Jos. *BJ* 4.662.

Considering Gaza's frequent pattern of producing coinage during periods of military crisis, it may seem a little surprising that the city issued no coins for any of the other years of the Jewish Revolt (AD 66-72), when nearby Ascalon is known to have struck coinage (*Pl. 8, 13*) at the start of the conflict in AD 66/7 and 67/8, as well as in AD 72/3, the year celebrating its conclusion.⁴⁵ Presumably the damage done to Gaza by the Jewish rebels in AD 66 was extensive enough to keep the mint closed until the arrival of Titus made coinage a necessity.⁴⁶ On the other hand, Ascalon is reported to have been burned to the ground (πυρποληθείς) in the same year, and yet in the next it managed to produce a bronze coinage before falling silent for the remainder of the war.⁴⁷

Antonine Gaza

Following the visit of Titus to the city, another long coining hiatus ensued at Gaza for a period of sixty years, which was only ended by a new coinage in Year 191 (AD 130/1) struck to commemorate the emperor Hadrian's visit to the city in AD 129/30. As with all of Gaza's money, the reverse typology, which features local deities, gives no indication of its celebratory purpose, but it is implied by the sudden introduction of double dates, one of which is based on the old Pompeian Era of Gaza and the other, a new Era of the Visit, introduced on the coins by the abbreviation ΕΠΙ (ΔΗΜΙΑ). While the commemorative and celebratory aspect of the Year 191 (*Pl. 9, 14*) issues seems to be assured by the introduction of this new Hadrianic era, one suspects that the coinage also served an emergency financial purpose. It cannot have been cheap to host a Roman emperor with his entourage and military escort, or to found games in his honour (the *panegyris Hadriana*) and possibly to renew the work of rebuilding the city's Marneion.⁴⁸

It is notable that under Hadrian, Gaza's coinage did not end with the issues of Year 191 (AD 130/1), but instead continued to be produced annually up to and including Year 197 (AD 136/7).⁴⁹ The explanation for this development may be found in the Bar Kokhba War, which broke out in the late summer of AD 132 (late Year 192 at Gaza) and was at last crushed in autumn of AD 135 (end of Year 195 at Gaza).⁵⁰ This bloody Jewish rebellion, centred in southern Judaea, would have brought elements of *Legio X Fretensis* and *Legio VI Ferrata* from their more northerly

⁴⁵ RPC I, 4889-4892; RPC II, 2203; Sofaer Coll. (Ascalon), 62-64.

⁴⁶ According to Jos. *BJ* 2.460, the city was actually razed (κατεσκάπτων).

⁴⁷ Jos. *BJ* 2.460.

⁴⁸ For the *panegyris*, see *Chron. Pasch.*, p. 474, where it is mistakenly dated to the second year of Olympiad 224 (AD 118/19). The rebuilding of the Marneion has been implied, probably wrongly, by the types depicting Marnas and Artemis within a distyle temple used for issues of Year 192/Year 3 (AD 131/2) and Year 195/Year 6 (AD 134/5).

⁴⁹ Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 116-132; SNG ANS 6, 914-923; ROSENBERGER II (Gaza), 52-69; BMC Palestine (Gaza), 14-55.

⁵⁰ For the chronology, see L. MILDENBERG, *The Coinage of the Bar Kokhba War*, TYPOS VI (Aarau 1984), p. 82.

bases into the neighbourhood of Gaza.⁵¹ As on previous occasions, the city would have required a coinage over the course of the conflict in order to meet any financial impositions placed upon it, as well as to supply change for the markets catering to the army. The production of the coinage for an additional two years after the conclusion of the war (but apparently not into Year 198 [AD 137/8], the year of Hadrian's death) may be attributed to the continued heavy military presence in the region as well as to the slave market that opened at Gaza to sell off the thousands of Jewish captives taken during the fighting.⁵²

That Gaza's bronze coinage did indeed come into the hands of legionary soldiers in this period may be suggested by the movement of the coinage into rebel territory, where it was not infrequently captured and overstruck with the medium bronze types of Bar Kokhba, produced after the first year issues of the revolt.⁵³ Although it is generally asserted that the coinage of Gaza formed an important part of the circulating medium in Judaea at this time, no Hadrianic issues have yet been excavated in Jerusalem or in regions known to have been held by the rebels,⁵⁴ nor is there positive evidence for the overstriking of Hadrianic issues of Gaza in the first year of the war.⁵⁵ If the coinage of Gaza was more local than regional in character under Hadrian, and if it only began to be overstruck in the second year of the Bar Kokhba War, it is tempting to think that it might have been carried into rebel territory by Roman legionaries based in Gaza or nearby camps. It would then have fallen into rebel hands primarily when individual soldiers were killed or when baggage trains were plundered.

After Year 197 (AD 136/7) the mint of Gaza again fell silent – this time for a mere three years – before it resumed coin production for Hadrian's successor, Antoninus Pius (AD 138-161). Unlike the preceding issues of the city, the Antonine emissions (*Pl. 9, 15*) are not so easily linked to a precise occurrence of fiscal need at Gaza. Instead, they form a massive series struck over almost the full course of the emperor's

⁵¹ MILDENBERG, p. 81 with n. 214.

⁵² *Chron. Pasch.*, p. 474. However, the chronographer has mistakenly associated the opening of the slave market with the institution of the *panegyris Hadriana*, both of which are impossibly dated to the second year of Olympiad 224 (AD 118/9).

⁵³ For examples overstruck with «Year 2 (AD 132/3) for the Freedom of Israel» types, see MILDENBERG, nos. 61.4, 71.3, 77.8, 88.1, and 178.2. For overstruck examples with «For the Freedom of Israel» types dated to AD 133/4-autumn of AD 135, see MILDENBERG, nos. 106.4, 107.5, and 117.4. For the movement of coastal city coinages into the interior of Judaea during the First Revolt, see K. and M. LÖNNQVIST, *The Numismatic Chronology of Qumran: Fact and Fiction*, NC 166, 2006, p. 144.

⁵⁴ Information courtesy of Donald T. Ariel (Israel Antiquities Authority). It is notable that not a single specimen of Gaza was found in the excavations of Horbat Zalit (about 65 km from Gaza as the crow flies), a fortress used the rebels. All of the provincial city coins on the site were issues of Ascalon. See G. BIRJOVSKY, *The Coins from Horbat Zalit*, *ʿAtiqot* 39, 2000, p. 158.

⁵⁵ Currently, only overtypes of Year 2 or later have been found overstruck on Hadrianic issues of Gaza. The very few traces of the undertype visible on the Berlin cast of a large Bar Kokhba bronze of Year 1 (MILDENBERG no. 12.12) are not clear enough to determine that the host was struck under Hadrian, let alone the originating mint.

reign. The dates begin with Year 201 (AD 140/1) and continue into Year 221 (AD 160/1) with only a gap in Year 206 (AD 145/6).⁵⁶

It may be that this somewhat unexpected shift from Gaza's former sporadic production of coinage might have been related to regional expenses incurred for rebuilding *Syria Palaestina* (Judaea) in the aftermath of the devastation wrought by the Bar Kokhba War and for the maintenance of legionary garrisons. There may have been costs associated with the repression of another obscure Jewish uprising in Pius' reign as well.⁵⁷ Ascalon, a mint that had not struck coinage since the outbreak of the Bar Kokhba War, also produced an extensive dated coinage (*Pl. 9, 16*) during Pius' reign (with only three gaps) and then promptly closed for almost twenty years.⁵⁸ The sudden extended production of coinage at both Gaza and Ascalon seems to suggest that they were striking coinage to meet some regional need together. Aelia Capitolina (Jerusalem) also struck a voluminous coinage in this period, but as this city's issues were undated, it is unclear whether it followed the same pattern as Gaza and Ascalon.

While the preceding minting history of Gaza makes it likely that a regional explanation should be sought for the extended period of production under Antoninus Pius, it is also possible that larger economic forces were responsible for this extensive coinage. The number and output of provincial mints throughout the Greek East has been shown to have hit a peak under Antoninus Pius (dwarfed only under Septimius Severus), which has sometimes been taken as a sign of increased prosperity for the cities through the actualization of the *pax Romana*.⁵⁹ The similar long runs of coinage struck under Marcus Aurelius and the Severans, are likely to be associated with changes to regional minting organization in Coele Syria and this general trend of increased coin production in the eastern Roman provinces. Nevertheless, it will be shown that many of these issues should still probably be connected to military or special celebratory events.

After the death of Antoninus Pius, the mint of Gaza again ceased production for two years. Upon reopening, it struck coins with the portraits of Marcus Aurelius and his junior emperor, Lucius Verus (*Pl. 9, 17*), in Years 224 (AD 163/4) and 225 (AD 164/5), which are almost certainly related to the Parthian campaign of AD 162-166.⁶⁰ After a brief gap in Year 226 (AD 165/6), Gaza struck coins from Year 227

⁵⁶ Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 77-123; SNG ANS 6, 925; ROSENBERGER II (Gaza), 70, 78-83, 90-91; BMC *Palestine* (Gaza), 56-87.

⁵⁷ SHA 5.4 is the only source to mention this revolt. It must have been easily crushed in its early stages since there is no mention of it in the rabbinic literature.

⁵⁸ Ascalonite issues are known for AD 141/2-142/3, 146/7, 149/50-152/3 and 155/6-158/9. The gap between AD 143/4 and 145/6 partially coincides with the gap at Gaza in Year 206 (AD 145/6). For examples, see Sofaer Coll. (Ascalon), 130-160; M. ROSENBERGER, *The Rosenberger Israel Collection I* (Jerusalem 1972) (Ascalon), 169-187.

⁵⁹ HEUCHERT (*supra*, n. 29), p. 32-33; K. HARL, *Coinage in the Roman Economy* (Baltimore/London, 1996), pp. 110-111; T.B. JONES, *A Numismatic Riddle: The So-called Greek Imperials*, *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Soc.* 107, 1963, pp. 308-347.

⁶⁰ Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 113; SNG ANS 6, 930; ROSENBERGER II (Gaza), 94-96, 112-113; BMC *Palestine* (Gaza), 88-91, 102-104.

(AD 166/7) to 231 (AD 170/1), paused again for two years, and then issued more coinage from Year 234 (AD 173/4) to 237 (AD 176/7).⁶¹ The gap in Years 232-233 (AD 171/2-172/3) had been attributed to a regional recession brought on by the plague of AD 165/6,⁶² although this actually sounds like a more plausible explanation for the lack of production in Year 226. The coinage of Years 227-231 (AD 166/7-170/1) tends to suggest that the plague did not seriously impact the mint of Gaza over the long term.

The dynastic issues of years 228 and 229 (AD 167/8 and 168/9), featuring the portraits of Aurelius and Verus, singly and together (*Pl. 9, 18*), as well as those of their wives Faustina Junior and Lucilla (*Pl. 9, 19*), probably relate to celebrations in the aftermath of the Parthian war.⁶³ According to the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* it was on this occasion that Verus, who had done the actual fighting, took the remarkable step of sharing the full triumphal titulature with Marcus Aurelius and showcasing both of their families in the triumphal procession and games.⁶⁴ In short, these coins of Gaza served to mirror the form of the celebrations at Rome.

The series struck in the name of Aurelius' son, Commodus (*Pl. 9, 20*), and dated to Years 232, 236 and 237 (AD 171/2 and 175/6-176/7) were probably produced in connection with the celebration of imperial victories over the Marcomanni and the Sarmatians respectively.⁶⁵ Commodus shared in this triumph with his father and both received the honorific titles of *Germanicus* and *Sarmaticus*.⁶⁶ These victories were celebrated on the Roman imperial coins of the same years (*Pl. 9, 21*).⁶⁷ The coins struck for Commodus and Marcus Aurelius in Years 236-237 (AD 175/6-176/7) (*Pl. 9, 22*) can also be connected to an imperial visit to *Syria Palaestina*, which took place in AD 175/6 and appears to have caused other mints in the region to resume or increase their coin production.⁶⁸ The issue of Year 240 (AD 179/80) is almost certainly related to Commodus' accession upon the death of Marcus Aurelius in March of AD 180,⁶⁹ but it is unclear how or if the bronzes of Years 243-247, 249, and 253 (AD 179/80, 182/3-186/7, 188/9, and 192/3) may be linked to military or celebratory events.⁷⁰

⁶¹ Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 114-123; SNG ANS 6, 930-932; ROSENBERGER II (Gaza), 97-101; BMC Palestine (Gaza), 92-98.

⁶² H. GITLER, Numismatic Evidence on the Visit of Marcus Aurelius to the East, INJ 11, 1990-1991, p. 45 and n. 46.

⁶³ Aurelius and Verus: Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 124-130; SNG ANS 6, 933-934; ROSENBERGER II (Gaza), 102-104; Faustina: Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 128-130; SNG ANS 6, 935-936; ROSENBERGER II (Gaza), 105-110; BMC Palestine (Gaza), 99; Faustina and Lucilla: Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 140-143; SNG ANS 6, 937-939; ROSENBERGER II (Gaza), 111; BMC Palestine (Gaza), 100-101.

⁶⁴ *SHA Verus* 7.9; *SHA M. Antoninus* 12.

⁶⁵ Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 144-145, 148, 152; SNG ANS 6, 940; ROSENBERGER II (Gaza), 118-121; BMC Palestine (Gaza), 105. For Year 237 see Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 155.

⁶⁶ *SHA M. Antoninus* 7.12.5.

⁶⁷ RIC III (M. Aurelius), 1049-1060, 1090-1093, 1154-1190.

⁶⁸ GITLER (*supra*, n. 62), pp. 36-51.

⁶⁹ Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 153; ROSENBERGER II (Gaza), 122.

⁷⁰ Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 146-150, 152-154; ROSENBERGER II (Gaza), 117 and 123-131.

Severan Gaza

Following these last emissions for Commodus, the mint of Gaza appears to have shut down again for seven years. Although the coinage struck under Commodus' successor, Septimius Severus, is spread over his entire reign, much of it was probably struck in relation to the many military or celebratory events of his tenure as emperor. The inaugural issue (*Pl. 9, 23*) of Year 254 (AD 193/4) along with that of the following year are most likely connected to the triumph of Septimius Severus over Pescennius Niger and the resulting division of *provincia Syria* into the administrative provinces of *Coele Syria* and *Syria Phoenice*.⁷¹ The coins (*Pl. 9, 24*) of Years 256 to 259 (AD 195/6-198/9) fall into the period of Severus' two Parthian wars – events that also saw minting resume at Ascalon in AD 197/8-198/9 (*Pl. 10, 25*).⁷²

The Gazaeian coins struck from Years 260 to 269 (AD 199/200-208/9) all serve to advertise the Severan family through the use of obverses depicting Septimius Severus, his wife, Julia Domna, and their sons, Caracalla and Geta (*Pl. 10, 26-28*). Coins struck for Year 260 (AD 199/200) depict all four imperial personages individually while the sole issue of the following year (AD 200/1) struck in addition to the usual series depicting Septimius Severus bears the confronted portraits of Caracalla and Geta.⁷³ These were almost certainly issued in connection with the celebrations surrounding Severus' elevation of Caracalla to the position of Augustus and Geta to that of Caesar in AD 198, while the dynastic issues of Year 264 (AD 203/4) may possibly be related to Severus' celebration of the 800th Saecular Games in 204.⁷⁴ As the games highlighted the beginning of a new era, it is perhaps no coincidence that Caracalla's wife, Fulvia Plautilla, also appears on the coins at this time. A full dynastic set with portraits of the Severan family without Plautilla reappears at Gaza for the last time in Year 269 (AD 208/9), probably in association with celebrations surrounding Geta's elevation to the status of Augustus in AD 209.⁷⁵ In Year 262 (AD 201/2) coins were only struck for Septimius Severus, while

⁷¹ Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 157-158; SNG ANS 6, 943-945; ROSENBERGER II (Gaza), 132; BMC Palestine (Gaza), 112.

⁷² Gaza: Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 159-160 and 170-175; SNG ANS 6, 946; ROSENBERGER II (Gaza), 133-135, 138-140; BMC Palestine (Gaza), 114-115, 120, 123-124; Ascalon: Sofaer Coll. (Ascalon), 167-168; M. ROSENBERGER, *The Rosenberger Israel Collection III* (Jerusalem 1977) (Ascalon), 197-198.

⁷³ Severus: Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 156 and 161-169; ROSENBERGER II (Gaza), 141; Julia Domna: Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 176; ROSENBERGER II (Gaza), 149; BMC Palestine (Gaza), 125; Caracalla: Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 187-191; ROSENBERGER II (Gaza), 153; BMC Palestine (Gaza), 131-132; Caracalla and Geta: ROSENBERGER II (Gaza), 158; BMC Palestine (Gaza), 134; Geta: Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 180-186; ROSENBERGER II (Gaza), 160-161; BMC Palestine (Gaza), 136.

⁷⁴ Severus: ROSENBERGER II (Gaza), 144-145 and 147; BMC Palestine (Gaza), 119; Caracalla: Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 187; ROSENBERGER II (Gaza), 155; Geta: Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 184-186; ROSENBERGER II (Gaza), 164-165; Plautilla: ROSENBERGER II (Gaza), 159; BMC Palestine (Gaza), 135.

⁷⁵ Severus: ROSENBERGER II (Gaza), 137 and 145; Julia Domna: ROSENBERGER II (Gaza), 149; Caracalla: ROSENBERGER II (Gaza), 154; Geta: SNG ANS 6, 953.

incomplete dynastic sets appeared in Year 263 (AD 202/3), as well as 266 and 267 (AD 205/6-206/7).⁷⁶ The issues of Years 262 and 263 may possibly have something to do with the celebration of Severus' *decennalia*, which took place in AD 202, while any special impetus for the issues of Years 265 to 268 is unclear.

Following the dynastic series of Year 269 (AD 208/9) the mint of Gaza closed down again, only to reopen during the fourth consulship of Caracalla (AD 213-217). During this period of closure, no new coin was produced, but old issues of Septimius Severus, Julia Domna, Caracalla, and Geta were recycled with date countermarks in Years 269 (AD 208/9), 271 (AD 210/11), and 273-274 (AD 212/13-213/14).⁷⁷ When the mint resumed production, instead of the usual bronze coinages that the city had been striking as occasion warranted over almost three centuries, Gaza began to issue billon tetradrachms (*Pl. 10, 29*) as did other cities in the region.⁷⁸ This sudden outpouring of debased silver coinage was almost certainly predicated by the massing of troops in the east and other military expenses incurred for Caracalla's Parthian war of AD 215-217.⁷⁹ Tetradrachms were also struck for Caracalla's murderer, the short lived usurper M. Opellius Macrinus (*Pl. 10, 30*) and his son Diadumenian (AD 217-218), who required money to continue the unfinished Parthian campaign until it could be brought to a conclusion through bribery, as well as to retain the loyalty of the eastern army.⁸⁰ No bronzes were struck at Gaza in this period except for an issue of Year 277 (AD 216/7) in the name of Diadumenian (*Pl. 10, 31*), probably in connection with the celebrations surrounding his elevation to the position of Caesar in April of AD 217.⁸¹

Gaza issued bronzes for Elagabalus (*Pl. 10, 32*), the victorious Syrian opponent of Macrinus and Diadumenian, from Year 279 to 281 (AD 218/19-220/1) as well as for his grandmother, Julia Maesa (*Pl. 10, 33*), in Years 280 and 281 (AD 219/20-220/1), and his wife, Cornelia Paula (*Pl. 10, 34*) in Year 280 (AD 219/20).⁸² The issues of Year 280, which comprise a dynastic set similar to those produced under Marcus Aurelius and Septimius Severus, are probably related to the celebration of

⁷⁶ Severus: Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 166, 174-175; ROSENBERGER II (Gaza), 136 and 142-143; BMC Palestine (Gaza), 116 and 118; Julia Domna: Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 178-179; ROSENBERGER II (Gaza), 15-152; BMC Palestine (Gaza), 126-129; Caracalla: ROSENBERGER II (Gaza), 154 and 156; BMC Palestine (Gaza), 133; Geta: ROSENBERGER II (Gaza), 163-163; BMC Palestine (Gaza), 137.

⁷⁷ *GIC* 462.

⁷⁸ PRIEUR, nos. 1684-1694; SNG ANS 6, 952; BELLINGER, 377-380. In *Syria Palaestina* the cities of Gadara, Neapolis, Aelia Capitolina, Caesarea Maritima and Ascalon also issued tetradrachms in the same period along with some twenty-two other cities in *Syria Phoenice*, *Syria Seleucis*, Commagene, and Cyprus.

⁷⁹ PRIEUR, p. xxv; BELLINGER, pp. 6-7. For the course of the war see Dio 79.1.1-4.4; *SHA Caracalla* 6.1-7.2.

⁸⁰ PRIEUR, 1695-1698; SNG ANS 6, 954; BELLINGER, 381. For Macrinus and the Parthian war see Dio 78.26.2-27.2 and 79.27.1-3; *SHA Macrinus* 4.8, 7.1-8.4; Herodian 4.15.

⁸¹ ROSENBERGER II (Gaza), 167.

⁸² Elagabalus: Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 200-212; SNG ANS 6, 955-956; ROSENBERGER II (Gaza), 168-184; Julia Maesa: Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 213-214; SNG ANS 6, 957; ROSENBERGER II (Gaza), 185-187; Cornelia Paula: Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 215; ROSENBERGER II (Gaza), 188.

Elagabalus' marriage to Paula, while those of Year 279 are associated with the triumph of Elagabalus over Macrinus in June of AD 218.⁸³ The coins of Year 281 may possibly be related to the celebration of the emperor's adoption of his cousin, the future Severus Alexander, as Caesar in AD 221.⁸⁴

Gaza under Gordian III

After Year 281 Gaza ceased production for almost twenty years, reopening for the last time to strike a two-year bronze coinage (*Pl. 10, 35*) for Gordian III in Years 301 and 302 (AD 240/1-241/2).⁸⁵ This final Gazaeian issue coincides with the military build-up for the war against the expanding Sasanian Empire, which took place from AD 242-244.⁸⁶ The concentration of troops in the region would have created an added financial burden for cities like Gaza, but this series may have had a celebratory purpose as well. Gordian is known to have recognized the status of the city prior to the campaign against the Sasanian shah, Shapur I.⁸⁷

Epilogue

When Gaza reopened as a mint almost 600 years later, it virtually picked up where it had left off under Gordian III by again producing a bronze coinage for use by its inhabitants. Although by this time old Marnas and Heracles-Azon had given way to Allah and Muhammad, and Roman overlords had been exchanged for the Islamic 'Abbasid dynasty, the coinage of Gaza still advertised the city's name (now in Arabic Gaza rather than Greek Gaza), just as it always had. Likewise, this coinage was dated, although the old 'Pompeian' Era had been traded in for the Hijri Era, counting from 16 July, AD 622, the date of Muhammad's flight (*hijra*) from Mecca to Medina. Also as in times past, the new bronze *fals* of Gaza (*Pl. 10, 36*) was not struck on a regular basis in order to maintain the circulating medium of the city, but only in AH 217 (AD 832/3).⁸⁸ In this year other cities of Jund Filastin, including Al-Quds (Jerusalem), Al-Ramla and 'Asqalan (Ascalon) also suddenly struck their own *fulus*,⁸⁹ which tends to suggest that they along with Gaza were prompted by

⁸³ Dio 79.39.1-40.2.

⁸⁴ Dio 80.2-3; Herodian 5.3.3.

⁸⁵ Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 216-217; ROSENBERGER II (Gaza), 189-192.

⁸⁶ *SHA Gord.* 26.3-27.4; Amm. Marc. 23.5.17; Zon. 12.18.

⁸⁷ *IGRRPI*.387.

⁸⁸ L. ILISCH, *Sylloge Nummorum Arabicorum Tübingen. Palästina IVa, Bilad aš-Šam I* (Tübingen 1993), 179-180. An undated *fals* issue naming the otherwise unknown local figures, Sa'd ibn Ibrahim and Šuġa, was also struck at Gaza, probably in c. AH 198-200 (AD 813-815). See *op. cit.* 175-178. These were probably issued to support local governors who remained loyal to the caliph Mahammad ibn Harun al-Amin in the interim between his execution and the consolidation of power by his destroyer and brother, Abu Jafar al-Ma'mun (Lutz Ilisch, personal communication).

⁸⁹ ILISCH (*supra*, n. 88), 23-22, 96-102, 130; S. SHAMMA, *A Catalogue of 'Abbasid Copper Coins* (al-Rafid 1998), 130.

some special event. It is probably no accident that AH 217 was the very year that the 'Abbasid caliph, Abu Jafar al-Ma'mun, and his entourage progressed through the region on their way to visit the troubled province of Misr (Egypt). Clearly, the memory of Gaza's old monetary ways was a very long one.

Table of the Dated Coinage of Gaza and Associated Historical Events

<i>Authority</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Events</i>
Ptolemy II	Year 25=262/1 BC	Outbreak of Second Syrian War (261-253 BC)
3 YEAR GAP		
Ptolemy II	Year 29=258/7 BC	Second Syrian War (261-253 BC)
Ptolemy II	Year 30=257/6 BC	Second Syrian War (261-253 BC)
Ptolemy II	Year 31=256/5 BC	Second Syrian War (261-253 BC)
Ptolemy II	Year 32=255/4 BC	Second Syrian War (261-253 BC)
Ptolemy II	Year 33=254/3 BC	Second Syrian War (261-253 BC)
3 YEAR GAP		
Ptolemy II	Year 36=251/0 BC	Settlement of Second Syrian War
Ptolemy II	Year 37=250/49 BC	Settlement of Second Syrian War
3 YEAR GAP		
Ptolemy III	Year 2=245/4 BC	Third Syrian War (246-241 BC)
22 YEAR GAP		
Ptolemy III	Year 23=224/3	Preparation for potential war with the Seleucids
83 YEAR GAP		
Demetrius II	SE 171=142/1 BC	Alliance with Simon Thassi against Tryphon
34 YEAR GAP		
Gaza	SE 205=108/7 BC	Gaza becomes autonomous
12 YEAR GAP		
Gaza	GE 13=96/5 BC	Conflict with Alexander Jannaeus
Gaza	GE 14=95/4 BC	Conflict with Alexander Jannaeus
17 YEAR GAP		
Gaza	SE 235=78/7 BC	Uncertain
33 YEAR GAP		
Gaza	GE 10=51/0 BC	C. Cassius Longinus expels the Parthians from Syria
5 YEAR GAP		
Gaza	GE 16=45/4 BC	C. Cassius Longinus prepares for war with Dolabella
2 YEAR GAP		
Gaza	GE 19=43/2 BC	C. Cassius Longinus prepares for war with Octavian
46 YEAR GAP		
Augustus	GE 66=AD 5/6	Annexation of Judaea to Syria
63 YEAR GAP		
Vespasian	GE 130=AD 69/70	Titus camps at Gaza
60 YEAR GAP		
Hadrian	GE 191=AD 130/1	Celebration of Hadrian's visit to Gaza in AD 129/30
Hadrian	GE 192=AD 131/2	Bar Kokhba Revolt (AD 132-136)

<i>Authority</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Events</i>
Hadrian	GE 193=AD 132/3	Bar Kokhba Revolt (AD 132-136)
Hadrian	GE 194=AD 133/4	Bar Kokhba Revolt (AD 132-136)
Hadrian	GE 195=AD 134/5	Bar Kokhba Revolt (AD 132-136)
Hadrian	GE 196=AD 135/6	Bar Kokhba Revolt (AD 132-136)
Hadrian	GE 197=AD 136/7	Bar Kokhba Revolt (AD 132-136)
3 YEAR GAP		
Antoninus Pius	GE 201=AD140/1	Reorganization of Judaea / Third Jewish revolt?
Antoninus Pius	GE 202=AD141/2	Reorganization of Judaea / Third Jewish revolt?
Antoninus Pius	GE 203=AD142/3	Reorganization of Judaea / Third Jewish revolt?
Antoninus Pius	GE 204=AD143/4	Reorganization of Judaea / Third Jewish revolt?
Antoninus Pius	GE 205=AD144/5	Reorganization of Judaea / Third Jewish revolt?
1 YEAR GAP		
Antoninus Pius	GE 207=AD146/7	Reorganization of Judaea / Third Jewish revolt?
Antoninus Pius	GE 208=AD147/8	Reorganization of Judaea / Third Jewish revolt?
Antoninus Pius	GE 209=AD148/9	Reorganization of Judaea / Third Jewish revolt?
Antoninus Pius	GE 210=AD149/50	Reorganization of Judaea / Third Jewish revolt?
Antoninus Pius	GE 211=AD150/1	Reorganization of Judaea / Third Jewish revolt?
Antoninus Pius	GE 212=AD151/2	Reorganization of Judaea / Third Jewish revolt?
Antoninus Pius	GE 213=AD152/3	Reorganization of Judaea / Third Jewish revolt?
Antoninus Pius	GE 214=AD153/4	Reorganization of Judaea / Third Jewish revolt?
Antoninus Pius	GE 215=AD154/5	Reorganization of Judaea / Third Jewish revolt?
Antoninus Pius	GE 216=AD155/6	Reorganization of Judaea / Third Jewish revolt?
Antoninus Pius	GE 217=AD156/7	Reorganization of Judaea / Third Jewish revolt?
Antoninus Pius	GE 218=AD157/8	Reorganization of Judaea / Third Jewish revolt?
Antoninus Pius	GE 219=AD158/9	Reorganization of Judaea / Third Jewish revolt?
Antoninus Pius	GE 220=AD159/60	Reorganization of Judaea / Third Jewish revolt?
Antoninus Pius	GE 221=AD160/1	Reorganization of Judaea / Third Jewish revolt?
2 YEAR GAP		
M. Aurelius / L. Verus	GE 224=AD163/4	Parthian War (GE 222-227 =AD 162-166)
M. Aurelius / L. Verus	GE 225=AD164/5	Parthian War (GE 222-227 =AD 162-166)
1 YEAR GAP		
M. Aurelius / L. Verus	GE 227=AD166/7	Parthian War (GE 222-227 =AD 162-166)
M. Aurelius / L. Verus/ Faustina / Lucilla	GE 228=AD167/8	Parthian triumph of Aurelius and Verus
M. Aurelius / L. Verus/ Faustina / Lucilla	GE 229=AD168/9	Parthian triumph of Aurelius and Verus
M. Aurelius	GE 230=AD169/70	Uncertain
M. Aurelius	GE 231=AD170/1	Uncertain
Commodus	GE 232=AD 171/2	Marcomannic triumph of Aurelius and Commodus
1 YEAR GAP		
M. Aurelius	GE 234=AD173/4	Uncertain
M. Aurelius	GE 235=AD174/5	Uncertain
M. Aurelius/ Commodus	GE 236=AD175/6	Sarmatian triumph of Aurelius and Commodus
M. Aurelius/ Commodus	GE 237=AD176/7	Sarmatian triumph of Aurelius and Commodus

THE DATED COINAGE OF GAZA IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

<i>Authority</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Events</i>
2 YEAR GAP		
Commodus	GE 240=AD179/80	Commodus succeeds Aurelius as emperor
2 YEAR GAP		
Commodus	GE 243=AD182/3	Uncertain
Commodus	GE 244=AD183/4	Uncertain
Commodus	GE 245=AD184/5	Uncertain
Commodus	GE 246=AD185/6	Uncertain
Commodus	GE 247=AD186/7	Uncertain
1 YEAR GAP		
Commodus	GE 249=AD188/0	Uncertain
5 YEAR GAP		
Commodus	GE 253=AD192/3	Uncertain
7 YEAR GAP		
Septimius Severus	GE 254=AD193/4	War against Pescinnius Niger in Syria
Septimius Severus	GE 255=AD194/5	Celebration of triumph over Pescennius Niger in Syria
Septimius Severus	GE 256=AD195/6	Parthian War (AD 195-197)
Septimius Severus	GE 257=AD196/7	Parthian War (AD 195-197)
Septimius Severus	GE 258=AD197/8	Parthian War (AD 195-198)
Septimius Severus	GE 259=AD198/9	Parthian War (AD 195-198)
Septimius Severus / Julia Domna / Caracalla / Geta	GE 260=AD199/200	Celebration of Caracalla as Augustus / Geta as Caesar (AD 198)
Septimius Severus / Caracalla / Geta	GE 261=AD200/1	Celebration of Caracalla as Augustus / Geta as Caesar (AD 198); imperial visit to Syria
Septimius Severus	GE 262=AD201/2	Decennalia of Septimius Severus; imperial visit to Syria
Septimius Severus	GE 263=AD202/3	Decennalia of Septimius Severus?
Septimius Severus / Caracalla / Plautilla / Geta	GE 264=AD203/4	Saecular Games (AD 204)?
Septimius Severus	GE 265=AD204/5	Uncertain
Septimius Severus	GE 266=AD205/6	Uncertain
Septimius Severus	GE 267=AD206/7	Uncertain
Septimius Severus	GE 268=AD207/8	Uncertain
Septimius Severus/ Julia Domna / Caracalla/ Geta	GE 269=AD208/9 countermark also	Geta becomes Augustus (AD 209)
1 YEAR GAP		
1 YEAR GAP	GE 301=AD 210/11 countermark only	
1 YEAR GAP		
1 YEAR GAP	GE 303=AD 212/213 countermark only	
1 YEAR GAP	GE 304=AD 213/14 countermark only	
Caracalla	COS IV=AD 213-217	Parthian War (AD 215-217)
Macrinus/Diadumenian	COS I=AD 217-218	Parthian War (AD 215-217) and maintenance of army
Diadumenian	GE 277=AD 2161/7	Diadumenian becomes Caesar (AD 217)

<i>Authority</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Events</i>
1 YEAR GAP		
Elagabalus	GE 279=AD 218/9	Defeat of Macrinus and Diadumenian (AD 218)
Elagabalus/ Julia Maesa/ Cornelia Paula	GE 280=AD 219/220	Marriage of Elagabalus to Cornelia Paula
Elagabalus/ Julia Maesa	GE 281=AD 220/1	Adoption of Severus Alexander as Caesar (AD 221) ?
19 YEAR GAP		
Gordian III	GE 301=AD 240/1	Preparations for Persian War (AD 242-244)
Gordian III	GE 302=AD 241/2	Preparations for Persian War (AD 242-244)

Zusammenfassung

Behandelt werden hier die Münzprägungen von Gaza von der ptolemäischen Periode bis zum Ende der provinziellen Prägungen unter dem Kaiser Gordian III. Der Vergleich der verschiedenen Perioden der Münzprägung mit den historischen Begebenheiten zeigt, dass in Gaza allgemein die Prägungen im Zusammenhang mit kriegerischen Ereignissen erfolgten, oder aber mit kaiserlichen Besuchen oder mit Festivitäten. Die kurzlebigen Bronzeemissionen unter den Abbasiden im frühen 9. Jahrhundert entstanden unter gleichen Bedingungen.

Oliver D. Hoover
 The American Numismatic Society
 96 Fulton Street
 New York, NY 10038, USA
 oliver.hoover@sympatico.ca

Key to Plates 8-10

- 1 AR tetradrachm of Ptolemy II, Gaza mint. Regnal year 31 (256/5 BC). Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 21.
- 2 AR tetradrachm of Ptolemy III, Gaza mint. Regnal year 2 (=245/4 BC). CNG 67, 2004, 946.
- 3 AE of Gaza. Probably SE 166 (147/6 BC). SNG ANS 6, 905.
- 4 AE of Demetrius II (first reign), Gaza mint. SE 171 (142/1 BC). Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 25.
- 5 AE of Gaza. SE 205 (108/7 BC). SNG ANS 6, 907.
- 6 AE of autonomous Gaza. Year 13 (96/5 BC). Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 27.
- 7 AE of autonomous Gaza. Year 14 (95/4 BC). Kushnir-Stein 2000 (supra, n. 26), fig. 2.
- 8 Lead of Gaza. SE 235 (78/7 BC). Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 34.
- 9 AE of Gaza. Year 10 (52/1 BC). Kushnir-Stein 1995 (supra, n. 34), pl. 2, 2A.
- 10 AE of Gaza. Year 19 (43/2 BC). Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 41.
- 11 AE of Gaza with portrait of Augustus. Year 66 (AD 5/6). Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 44.
- 12 AE of Gaza with portrait of Vespasian. Year 130 (AD 69/70). Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 48.
- 13 AE of Ascalon. Year 176 (AD 72/3). Sofaer Coll. (Ascalon), 73.
- 14 AE of Gaza with portrait of Hadrian. Year 193 / Epidemia 4 (AD 132/3). Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 60.
- 15 AE of Gaza with portrait of Antoninus Pius. Year 211 (AD 150/1). Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 88.
- 16 AE of Ascalon with portrait of Antoninus Pius. Year 256 (AD 152/3). Sofaer Coll. (Ascalon), 152.
- 17 AE of Gaza with portrait of Lucius Verus. Year 224 (AD 163/4). Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 139.
- 18 AE of Gaza with portraits of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus. Year 229 (AD 168/9). Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 129.
- 19 AE of Gaza with portraits of Faustina Junior and Lucilla. Year 228 (AD 167/8). Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 145.
- 20 AE of Gaza with portrait of Commodus as Caesar. Year 236 (AD 175/6). Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 149.
- 21 Aureus of Commodus as Caesar, Rome mint. AD 175-176. NAC 33, 2006, 512.
- 22 AE of Gaza with portrait of Commodus as Caesar. Year 236 (AD 175/6). Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 149.
- 23 AE of Gaza with portrait of Commodus as emperor. Year 245 (AD 184/5). Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 155.
- 24 AE of Gaza with portrait of Septimius Severus. Year 259 (AD 198/9). Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 164.
- 25 AE of Ascalon with portrait of Septimius Severus. Year 301 (AD 197/8). Sofaer Coll. (Ascalon), 174.
- 26 AE of Gaza with portrait of Julia Domna. Year 260 (AD 199/200). Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 182.
- 27 AE of Gaza with portrait of Caracalla as Caesar. Year 258 (AD 197/8). Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 193.

- 28 AE of Gaza with portrait of Geta as Caesar. Year 260 (AD 199/200). Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 188.
- 29 Billon tetradrachm of Caracalla, Gaza mint. COS 4 (AD 217). CNG 60, 2004, 1417.
- 30 Billon tetradrachm of Macrinus, Gaza mint. COS 1 (AD 217). Triton VII, 2004, 816.
- 31 Billon tetradrachm of Diadumenian, Gaza mint. COS 1 (AD 217). Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 205.
- 32 AE of Gaza with portrait of Elagabalus. Year 280 (AD 219/20). Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 214.
- 33 AE of Gaza with portrait of Julia Maesa. Year 280 (AD 219/20). Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 219.
- 34 AE of Gaza with portrait of Julia Paula. Year 280 (AD 219/20). Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 221.
- 35 AE of Gaza with portrait of Gordian III. Year 302 (AD 241/2). Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 222.
- 36 AE fals of Ghazza under the 'Abbasids. AH 217 (AD 832). Sofaer Coll. (Gaza), 226.



Oliver Hoover The Dated Coinage of Gaza in Historical Context (1)





Oliver Hoover The Dated Coinage of Gaza in Historical Context (3)

