

A Study of an Unpublished Group of Byzantine Golden Coins from Tell EL Deir Cemetery in New Damietta.

Dalia Mohamed Goda

PhD researcher in Egyptology, Archaeologist at Ministry of Tourism and
Antiquities, Damietta, Egypt

mdody5027@gmail.com

Ebrahim Ezat Ghonaim

Director of Excavations and Missions at Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities,
Damietta, Egypt

ebrahimezat1981@gmail.com

Abstract: This research aims to publish and study seven unpublished gold coins housed at The Egyptian Museum in Tahrir, Cairo, which were discovered at Tell El Deir Cemetery in New Damietta during the 2019-2020 season.

The research is based on a descriptive study of these coins, including the coin number in the preservation records, the coin's material, denomination, diameter, and weight, with a detailed explanation of the subjects depicted on the front and back of the coin, and the reading and translation of the inscriptions recorded on these coins.

The descriptive study is followed by a thorough analytical examination of the themes represented on the coins. This analysis covers their presence in Egypt and other countries, the materials used to make the coins, their denominations, the mints where they were produced, and whether the coins are of local or foreign origin.

Through the analytical study of coins, we will learn about the economic and commercial situation of Damietta during the Byzantine Period, in addition to knowing the political and religious situation prevailing at this time, and in addition to knowing the reason for the presence of these coins at the cemetery site and the monitoring the relationship between these currencies and the mints in which they were minted.

Keywords: Tell El Deir Cemetery - Golden Coins - Byzantine Period - New Damietta.

دراسة لمجموعة عملات ذهبية بيزنطية غير منشورة من جبانة تل الدير بدمياط الجديدة

داليا محمد جودة

باحثة دكتوراه في الآثار المصرية، مفتش آثار بوزارة السياحة والآثار بدمياط، مصر

mdody5027@gmail.com

إبراهيم عزت غنيم

مدير البعثات والحفائر، وزارة السياحة والآثار بدمياط، مصر

ebrahimezat1981@gmail.com

الملخص: يهدف هذا البحث لنشر ودراسة سبع عملات ذهبية لم تُنشر من قبل محفوظة بالمتحف المصري بالتحرير، تم الكشف عنها بجبانة تل الدير بدمياط الجديدة موسم ٢٠١٩ - ٢٠٢٠.

البحث قائم على دراسة وصفية لهذه العملات تشمل رقم العملة بسجلات الحفظ، مادة العملة، فنتها، قطرها، ووزنها، مع تقديم شرح مفصل للموضوعات المصورة على وجه وظهر العملة، وقراءة وترجمة النقوش المسجلة على هذه العملات.

يلي الدراسة الوصفية الدراسة التحليلية المتأنية للموضوعات المصورة على العملات، ومدى انتشارها في مصر وخارجها، وكذا مادة الصنع المصنوع منها العملات، وفئات العملة ودور السك التي سكّت فيها وهل هي محلية أم خارجية.

ومن خلال الدراسة التحليلية للعملات المعدنية سوف نتعرف على الوضع الاقتصادي والتجاري لمدينة دمياط خلال العصر البيزنطي، علاوة على معرفة الوضع السياسي والديني السائد في هذا الوقت، بالإضافة إلى معرفة سبب وجود هذه العملات في موقع الجبانة ورصد العلاقة بين هذه العملات ودور السك التي سكّت بها.

الكلمات الدالة: جبانة تل الدير - العملات الذهبية - العصر البيزنطي - دمياط الجديدة.

Research topic:

The research deals with the study of a group of Byzantine gold coins, which were discovered by the Egyptian mission working in the Tell El-Deir cemetery in New Damietta in the 2019-2020 season. These coins had not been published or studied before, and are now preserved in the Egyptian Museum in Tahrir. They were discovered in the surface layer of the hill, which dates back to the Byzantine Period, according to the archaeological finds discovered there.

The aim of this study:

Coins are considered one of the most important archaeological finds in any archaeological site. Despite their small size compared to other archaeological finds, they carry many important historical information. They immortalize for us the Figures of emperors and rulers, and show their emblems and titles. In addition, they shed light on some economic, political, religious and social aspects with its development and deterioration.

By studying the topics depicted on the coins, the material of their manufacture, their category, and the place of their minting, we will learn about the economic situation of Damietta during the Byzantine Period, as well as knowing the political and religious situation at this time, in addition to learning about the coins themselves and knowing the extent of their spread in Egypt and abroad and what their relationship is to the location of the cemetery. Monitoring the relationship between these currencies and the mints in which they were minted, and whether they are local or foreign.

1.The geographical framework:**1.1 Tell El Deir Cemetery:**

Tell El Deir Cemetery in the city of New Damietta is considered one of the most important and oldest archaeological sites in Damietta Governorate, which has the merit of completely re-dating the governorate, as archaeological discoveries have proven that the archaeological hill represents a huge cemetery that has been used to bury the dead since the Period of the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty, specifically the Period of King Wah-ib-Ra." "Ibris", and continued to be used for the same purpose for several consecutive years until the Ptolemaic Period and then the Roman Period. It was then reused in a different form during the Byzantine era, where it was used as a place of worship and monasticism.¹

1.2 The geographical location of Tell El Deir cemetery:

Tell El-Deir cemetery is currently located in the city of New Damietta, north of the industrial zone. It is bordered by agricultural lands to the east, the Arab Contractors Company to the west, the city of New Damietta with its residences to the north, and the industrial zone to the south. The archaeological hill bears code number "050109" according to the Atlas of Archaeological Sites in the Rest of Lower Egypt Governorates.² The archaeological hill is approximately seven acres, and it rises about

¹ Dalia Goda, "The Cemetery of Tell El Deir in Light of the Recent Archaeological Discoveries", (Unpublished Master's Thesis in Arabic, Faculty of Arts, Mansoura University, 2025), 224.

² Atlas of archaeological excavations places in Damietta, the Supreme Council of Antiquities, (Cairo, 2002).

fifteen meters above the surface level of the surrounding lands, descending on all four sides. (Fig.1)



Fig.1: The location of Tell El Deir cemetery © Google Earth.

2. Historical Framework:

2.1 A Historical Overview of the Emperors Depicted on Coins:

The coins under study are attributed to Emperor Phocas, Emperor Heraclius, and his sons.

2.1.1 Emperor Phocas (602-610 AD):

He was one of the military leaders who succeeded in seizing the throne of Emperor "Maurice". During his reign, chaos loomed, and conflict intensified between factions within the major cities. This led to the alienation of the eastern states and their declaration of rebellion. This allowed the Persians to advance into Byzantine lands, which were undefended, penetrating into Asia Minor and the southern Levant. The situation worsened with the spread of an epidemic, which dwindled supplies and caused the population to become fed up. Even the Green Party, which supported Emperor Phocas, raised the banner of rebellion and denounced him. Revolts erupted against this rule. The only people who saved the country from this chaos were the people of Constantinople, who resorted to writing to Heraclius, the ruler of North Africa, to rescue the empire from its woes.¹

2.1.2 Emperor Heraclius (610-641 AD):

Emperor Heraclius is considered one of the greatest Byzantine rulers and the founder of a large dynasty. He came to throne when it seemed that the empire was about to disintegrate.²

Heraclius was born in Cappadocia in the year 575 AD. He is the son of the ruler of North Africa. He was thirty-five years old when he ascended to the throne on October 5, 610 AD, after launching a revolution against the former Emperor Phocas. Byzantium was going through a major political, economic, and social crisis, so he worked to correct the defects of the administration, revive the economy, organize the army, and achieve victory on the external level. The first twelve years of his rule were full of disasters and destruction. The Persians invaded Asia Minor, and in 617 AD they seized Egypt and Alexandria, thus cutting off the empire's main supplier of wheat and causing famine and

¹ Norman Baynes, *The Byzantine Empire* (London: Oxford University press, 1925), 44-46.

² David Sear, *Byzantine Coins and their Values* (London: Audley house, 1973), 142.

disease¹, but Heraclius declared a crusade in 622 AD, and after six years of fighting, the Persians were defeated.

The last years of Heraclius' rule witnessed the first major expansion of Islamic conquests, and Persia submitted without resistance. In 634 AD, the Arab conquest of Syria began, and Damascus, Jerusalem, and then Egypt were captured. Despite all these events, the period of Heraclius' rule is considered a turning point in Byzantine history.

On the personal level, "Heraclius" married an African girl named "Fabia," who bore him a daughter and a son, "Heraclius Constantine." After her death, "Heraclius" married his niece, Empress "Martina," who bore him a large family. "Heraclius" died at the age of 66 years old after ruling for about 30 years, and left a will dividing the empire between his two sons, "Heraclius Constantine" from his first wife, and "Heraclius" from his second wife.²

2.2 Byzantine Coins:

Byzantine coins are considered a continuation of Roman coins, but they are less beautiful and elaborate in terms of engraving and mastering the mold³. Many scholars ignore the term Byzantine coins and prefer to apply the term Roman coins to coins until the fall of Constantinople in 1453 AD⁴, while others believe that the term Byzantine coins was used since the era of Emperor Arcadius" 395-405", basing this on the fact that it was the beginning of the separation of the Roman Empire into two halves, an eastern half and a western half.⁵

Worth considers that Byzantine coins begin from the era of Emperor Anastasius (491-518 AD) in his catalog, when he carried out monetary reforms that gave Byzantine coins special features. During the reign of Emperor Justinian, I (527-566 AD), Byzantine coins witnessed another reform and continued to prevail until the era of Emperor Justinian II (681-695 AD).⁶

3. Descriptive study:

The coins under study all agree on the place of discovery, place of preservation, museum preservation number, material of manufacture, and category, and their statement is as follows:

Discovery location	The surface layer on the northeastern side of Tell El-Deir cemetery in New Damietta
Place of preservation	Egyptian Museum in Tahrir
Museum Conservation No.	JE 100374
Material	Pure Gold

¹ Hugh Goodarce, *A Hand Book of the Coinage of the Byzantine Empire* (London: Spink & sons, 1971), 93-94.

² Robert Bagnall, *Egypt in the Byzantine World, 300-700* (England: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 46.

³ Sear, *Byzantine Coins and their Values*, 12.

⁴ Philip Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins, Dumbarton Oaks Catalogues, Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection, II, part 2* (Washington: DC: Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University, 1993), 2.

⁵ Justin Sabatier, *Description Générale des Monnaies Byzantines I* (Paris: Rollin et Feuardent, 1862), 98.

⁶ Warwick Wroth, *Catalogue of the Imperial Byzantine Coins in the British Museum I* (London: British Museum Press, 1908), Xiii.

Denomination	Solidus ¹
---------------------	----------------------

Coin No.1 Fig.1

Description	
In the middle of the obverse of the coin is a frontal bust of Emperor Phocas (602-610 AD), with a sharp triangular face, circular eyes, connected eyebrows, a pointed beard, and short hair hanging below the imperial crown that he wears on his head and surmounted by a cross. He holds in his right hand the globe surmounted by the cross, and wears a shield and a cloak. The remains of a clasp or cloak pin appear on the right shoulder, and around the obverse is a Latin inscription that reads " ON FOCAS PERP AVC " Which means " Our Lord Phocas, Perpetual Augustus (Emperor)". ²	 Obverse
The reverse of the coin shows an image of a winged angel advancing in front and wearing a tunic and pallium. He holds in his right hand a long archbishopric staff that ends with a swastika, and in his left hand he holds a globe surmounted by a cross. To his right, there is a Latin inscription that reads "Vict," which is an abbreviation of the word "Victoria," meaning "victory," and to his left The word "AAVCC", which is an abbreviation of the word "Augustorum" ³ , meaning Augustinians or eternal, and thus the entire phrase means victory "for the Emperor" the eternal. Inscription ends with the letter ε to indicate the number of the workshop where the coin was struck. Below the angel, there is an inscription reading "CONOB", which are the first letters of the name of the Constantinople Mint. It is divided into two parts: CON, which means Constantinople, "Mint House", and OB, which is an abbreviation of the word "Obryzum" ὀβρυζον in Latin, which means pure gold. ⁴	 Reverse
Weight	4.22 gram
Diameter	2 Cm
Mint & Workshop	Constantinople & ε
Dating	602-604 AD ⁵

¹ Solidus: A gold coin was issued instead of the gold dinar 'Aureus' and weighs 4.5 grams. It was considered the main standard used to calculate the weight and value of other monetary denominations. For additional information, please refer to :Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins*, 344.

² Philip Grierson, *Byzantine Coins* (California: university of California press,1982), 48.

³ Philip Grierson, *Byzantine Coinage* (Washington: Harvard Universtiy,1999), 27; Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins*,99; Wroth, *Catalogue of the Imperial Byzantine Coins in the British Museum*, 162; Sear, *Byzantine Coins and their values*, 33.

⁴ Grierson, *Byzantine Coins*, 20-21.

⁵ Cécile Morrisson, *Catalogue des Monnaies Byzantines de la Bibliothèque Nationale I* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale,1970), 219.

Case	Good
------	------

Coin No.2 Fig.2

Description	
In the middle of the obverse of the coin is a large front bust of Emperor Heraclius (610-641 AD), showing the features of the emperor's face with round eyes, clear eyebrows, a fairly wide nose, a small mouth, a short beard, and a mustache. The chest shows the folds of the Byzantine imperial clothing, the "Chlamys" $\chi\lambda\alpha\mu\acute{\upsilon}\varsigma$¹ knotted on the right shoulder with a "fibula" clasp² in the shape of a small jewel, and to the left is a smaller bust of Heraclius Constantine, who has facial features without a beard or mustache. The mouth and nose are small, and the eyes are round. Each of them wears the imperial crown surmounted by a spherical cross. The imperial crown covers the majority of the forehead and goes over the front of the head. It consists of two parallel rows of jewels surrounded by a straight frame at the bottom and a semicircular frame at the top. The locks of each of their hair hang on both sides of the face bend inward, not outward, and above them on the right is another cross. Around the face of the emperor is an incomplete inscription bearing the name of Heraclius and Heraclius Constantine and reading "ddNNhERA.....S.... Et hER..."³ The completed reading is "ddNN hERA[CLIH]S ET hER[A CONST PP AV]"⁴, It means our masters Heraclius and Heraclius Constantine, the eternal.	 Obverse

¹ $\chi\lambda\alpha\mu\acute{\upsilon}\varsigma$ "Chlamys": It is a distinctive form of civilian clothing. It is a long, purple coat that reaches the ankle of the foot and is fastened to the right shoulder with a circular clasp. Chlamys continued in this form until the eighth and ninth centuries AD. For more, see: Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins* II, 30.

² The "Fibula" clasp is a circular fastener adorned with jewels, with three chains hanging from it that secure the cloak over the right shoulder. It was used by the Romans to fasten their cloaks, and later by the Byzantines.

³ Wroth, *Catalogue of the Imperial Byzantine Coins in the British Museum*, 186.

⁴ Andreas Sommer, *Katalog der Byzantinischen Münzen* (Göttingen: universitätsverlag Göttingen, 2003), 74; Mando Oeconomides & Phane Drossoyianni, "A Hoard of Byzantine gold coins from samos", *Revue Numismatique* 31, (1989): 159.

On the reverse of the coin appears the Holy Cross standing on four steps, and to the right of the cross there is an inscription that reads VICTORIA meaning "victory," and on the left is an unclear inscription, leaving only the letter Ψ to indicate the abbreviation $\Psi\chi$ = (Augustorum) and the letter Epsilon ϵ, which symbolizes the workshop number of the mint, there is also a symbol with unclear details on the left of the Cross, which may be the monogram¹ of Emperor Hercules. At the bottom of the coin was engraved a word reading CONOB, which symbolizes the Constantinople Mint and the material of manufacture is pure gold.	 Reverse
Weight	4.46 gm.
Diameter	2.1 cm.
Mint & Workshop	Constantinople & ϵ
Dating	614-615 AD ²
Case	Good

Coin No.3 Fig.3

Description	
In the middle of the obverse of the coin is a large front bust of Emperor Heraclius (610-641 AD), showing the features of the emperor's face with round eyes, clear eyebrows, a fairly wide nose, a small mouth, and a short, thick beard. The chest shows the folds of the Byzantine imperial clothing, the "Chlamys" "$\chi\lambda\alpha\mu\acute{\upsilon}\varsigma$" knotted on the right shoulder with a pin in the shape of a small jewel, and to his left is a smaller bust of Heraclius Constantine wearing the same clothes with the features of a young man's face, round eyes, a broad nose, a mouth, and full lips topped with a mustache, each of them wears the imperial crown surmounted by a spherical Cross. The imperial crown extends over the front of the head and covers most of the forehead. It consists of two parallel rows of jewels, and the locks of Emperor Heraclius' hair hang on both sides of the face with a bow outward, not inward. Above them on the right is another cross, and around the face of Emperor Heraclius there is an incomplete inscription bearing the names of Hercules and Heraclius Constantine and reading "dNN hERACLIHSE" This means our Lord Hercules, the Eternal and Exalted, but the rest of the inscription is unclear and obliterated.	 Obverse

¹ Monogram: This name is given to a shape that brings together many letters that seem to give one shape or one letter. It is possible that the monogram was executed on the coin to prevent its counterfeiting; For more, see: Sear, *Roman Coins and their Values*, 171.

² Wroth, *Catalogue of the Imperial Byzantine Coins in the British Museum I*, 186.

The reverse of the coin represent the Holy Cross standing on three steps and to its left the symbol **I** appears, To the right of the cross is an inscription reading VICTORIA meaning "Victory" and to the left is an inscription reading **AVS** Which means "Augustus" or "the divine," and the rest of the inscription is unclear. It ends with the letter A, which symbolizes the mint workshop number, and at the bottom of the coin is engraved a word that reads CONO, which symbolizes the Constantinople Mint "CON," while the word loses the letter B from the abbreviation "OB," which means Pure gold.



Reverse

Weight	4.44 gm
Diameter	1.9 cm
Mint & Workshop	Constantinople & A
Dating	620-632 AD ¹
Case	Good

Coin No.4 Fig.4

Description

In the middle of the obverse of the coin is a larger front bust of Emperor Heraclius at an older age, with a face with round eyes, clear eyebrows, a broad nose, a small mouth, and a short, thick beard. The chest shows the folds of the Byzantine imperial clothing, the "Chlamys" "χλαμύς", knotted on the right shoulder with a pin in the shape of a small jewel, and to its left is a portrait of a smaller bust of Heraclius Constantine wearing the same clothes with circular eyes, full cheeks, a semicircular chin, and an indistinct mouth topped with a mustache extending below the cheeks, both of them wear the imperial crown surmounted by a cross, with another cross in the middle. The royal crown extends above the front of the head and covers most of the forehead. It consists of two parallel rows of jewels, and the locks of Emperor Heraclius' hair hang on both sides of the face with a bow inward, not outward, around the face of Emperor Heraclius there is an unclear inscription in some parts bearing the names of Hercules and Heraclius Constantine and reading ".dNN hERACLIHS ET hERAP AV"

Comparing this inscription with what was stated on the gold coins of Emperor Heraclius, it became clear that the complete reading of the inscription is "[d]dNN hERACLIHS ET hERA [CONST P]P AV"²

It means "our masters, Heraclius and Heraclius Constantine, the great eternal".



Obverse

¹ Wroth, *Catalogue of the Imperial Byzantine Coins in the British Museum* I, 189.

² Wroth, *Catalogue of the Imperial Byzantine Coins in the British Museum* I, 188.

The reverse of the coin shows the Holy Cross standing on three steps, and to the right of the cross there is an inscription that reads VICTORIA meaning "victory," and to the left is an inscription that reads ΑΥΣΗ "Augustus" or "Eternal," and the inscription ends with the letter Ε, which symbolizes the workshop number of the mint, and at the bottom of the coin is engraved a word reading CONOB, which symbolizes the Constantinople mint and the material of manufacture is pure gold.	 Reverse
Weight	4.30 gm.
Diameter	1.9 cm
Mint & Workshop	Constantinople & ε
Dating	613-614 AD
Case	Good

Coin No.5 Fig.5

Description	
In the middle of the obverse of the coin is a frontal bust of Emperor Heraclius, of older age, with a face with round eyes, clear eyebrows, a long sharp nose, a long, thick beard, and a small mouth surmounted by a long mustache. To his left is a bust of the same size of Emperor Heraclius Constantine, with a face with clear features without a beard or mustache, and both of them wear the imperial crown¹ topped with a cross. The imperial crown extends over the front of the head and covers most of the forehead. It consists of two parallel rows of jewels. The locks of Emperor Heraclius' hair hang on both sides of the face with a bow outward, not inward. In the middle of their heads is another cross, and the chest shows the folds of the Byzantine imperial clothing, the "Chlamys" "χλαμύς" knotted on the right shoulder with a pin in the shape of a small jewel, and around their faces there is an unclear inscription in some parts that reads: "..NN hERACLIHS ET hERA CONST PP AV" Comparing this inscription with what was stated on the gold coins of Emperor Heraclius, it became clear that the complete reading of the inscription is: "[dd]NN hERACLIHS ET hERA CONST PP AV"² It means "Our lords Heraclius and Heraclius Constantine,	 Obverse

¹ Imperial Crown: It is a crown consisting of two rows of jewels adjacent to each other, surmounted by a front decoration consisting of a cross, sometimes placed above a semicircle. The crown ties are tied behind the head from below, and these ties are not visible. For more, see: Grierson, *Catalogue of The Byzantine Coins*, 117,119.

² Wroth, *Catalogue of the Imperial Byzantine Coins in the British Museum I*, 188.

the great eternal.	
The reverse of the coin shows the Holy Cross standing on three steps, and to the right of the cross there is an inscription that reads VICTORIA meaning "victory," and on the left is an inscription that reads ΑΥΣΗ "Augustus" or "Eternal," and the inscription ends with the letter Delta Δ , which symbolizes the workshop number of the mint, and at the bottom of the coin is engraved a word reading CONOB, which symbolizes the Constantinople mint, and the material of manufacture is pure gold.	 Reverse
Weight	4.35 gm.
Diameter	2 cm.
Mint & Workshop	Constantinople & Δ
Dating	629-630 AD ¹
Case	Good

¹ Wroth, *Catalogue of the Imperial Byzantine Coins in the British Museum I*, 188.

Coin No.6 Fig.6

Description	
In the middle of the obverse of the coin is a front bust of Emperor Heraclius, depicted at an older age, with a face featuring round eyes, clear eyebrows, a long, sharp nose, a long, thick beard, and a small mouth topped with a long mustache. To his left is a bust of Emperor Constantine, of the same size as Heraclius, with defined facial features, a light beard, and a mustache, both wearing the imperial crown topped with a cross. The crown extends over the front of the head, covering most of the forehead, and consists of two parallel rows of jewels. Emperor Heraclius' hair falls on either side of his face in outward-facing locks. In the center of their heads is another cross. The chest shows the folds of Byzantine imperial clothing, the "Chlamys" "χλαμύς" knotted on the right shoulder with a jewel-shaped pin. A small inscription, partly unclear, surrounds their faces on the right side, reads: "..... ΕΤ ΗΕΡΑ CONST PP Α" Comparing this inscription with what was stated on the gold coins of Emperor Heraclius, it became clear that the complete reading of the inscription is: "[ddNN hERACLI⁴S] ΕΤ ΗΕΡΑ CONST PP Α[V]" It means "Our lords Heraclius and Heraclius Constantine, the eternal."	 Obverse
The reverse of the coin shows the Holy Cross standing on three steps, and to its right there is an inscription that reads "TORIA," which is part of the word VICTORIA, meaning "victory" On the left is an inscription that reads, ΑΥΣ means "Augustus" or "the Eternal," and Η Ι indicates the sixth year of the emperor's reign, corresponding to 616-617 AD, and the inscription ends with the letter γ, which symbolizes the workshop number of the mint At the bottom of the coin was engraved a word reading ΟΝΟΒ, which symbolizes the Constantinople Mint and the material of manufacture is pure gold, but it loses the first letter C.	 Reverse
Weight	4.46 gm.
Diameter	2 cm.
Mint & Workshop	Constantinople & γ
Dating	630 AD ¹
Case	Good

¹ Wroth, *Catalogue of the Imperial Byzantine Coins in the British Museum* I, 188.

Coin No.7 Fig.7

Description	
In the middle of the obverse of the coin are three images of Emperor Heraclius at an older age, accompanied by his two sons. The images depict a face with round eyes, clear eyebrows, a long sharp nose, a long, thick beard, and a small mouth topped with a long mustache. Above his head, he wears the imperial crown surmounted by an indistinct cross, and wears long clothes. Heraclius appears to be moving forward from his son Heraclius Constantine, who stands to his left wearing the long clothes "Loros" λῶρος¹. The imperial crown is surmounted by the cross, but the facial features are not clear. To the right of Emperor Heraclius, his youngest son is smaller than his father and brother. He wears long clothes and the imperial crown, but it is not surmounted by the cross. All the emperors hold in their hands the globe "Globus Cruciger," which is surmounted by the cross, but it is more visible with the younger emperor. There is no inscription on the coin's obverse.	 Obverse
On the reverse of the coin, a Holy Cross is standing on three steps, and to its left, there is a symbol  that represents the monogram of Emperor Heraclius. On the right of the cross, there is an inscription that reads VICTORIA, meaning "Victory," and on the left is an inscription that reads , which means "Augustus" or "Eternal," and the inscription ends with the letter ε, which symbolizes the workshop number of the mint. At the bottom of the coin was engraved a word reading CONOB, which symbolizes the Constantinople Mint and the material of manufacture is pure gold.	 Reverse
Weight	4.44 gm.
Diameter	2 cm.
Mint & Workshop	Constantinople & ε
Dating	629-630 AD and later
Case	Good

¹ Loros "λῶρος": It is an embroidered robe that wraps around the body in such a way that its end hangs over the left arm. The robe falls straight from the front and back and reaches up to the ankles. It is worn over a simple robe made of either silk or another material. For more see: Grierson, *Catalogue of The Byzantine Coins*, 120.

4. Analytical study:

4.1 Coins Denomination:

All of the coins being studied are of the solidus denomination. The Byzantine monetary system relied on the solidus as its main monetary denomination. Until the eleventh century, it remained weighty and pure, which earned it a reputation and fame that made it the most important and widely circulated monetary denomination among other monetary units, and it is widely traded.¹

The first person to issue the Golden Solidus was Emperor Constantine I in the year 312 AD. It weighed about 4.55 grams and was minted from the main minting houses in Constantinople until the reign of Emperor Nikephoros II (963-969 AD). Its purity was reduced to 97.7%, which is the case that did not happen for fifty years.²

The solidus is equal to 40 grams of gold and is divided into 24 carats, each of which is one-sixth of a gram of gold. During the era of Emperor Anastasius I, who reformed the monetary system, money during his reign began to include the gold solidus in all its parts. He issued half of the solidus denomination and called it "Semisess.", and a third was known as "Tremissis". Due to the continuing state of financial inflation and the deterioration of the value of money, he ordered the minting of bronze coins of the "Follis" denomination and linking them to gold cash. Small copper coins were also found called "Nummus," which is another name for the follis denomination.³

The typical solidus during the sixth century was characterized by its diameter estimated at 2 cm⁴, which is approximately the same diameter as the coins under study.

4.2 Material of Manufacture:

All the coins studied were identical in material, as they were all made of pure gold. Byzantine gold coins were distinguished by their purity and high-quality gold, known as "Obryzum," "ὀβρυζός" a term synonymous with the Arabic "Obryz" or "Obryz gold," the pure gold which used to mint the coins. This was confirmed by an inscription of the letters "OB," indicating pure gold⁵, combined with the abbreviation "CON" to symbolize the pure gold of Constantinople. This abbreviation appeared on all the coins examined, except for Coin No.3, which features an unclear letter "B." Emperor Constantine I was the first to issue gold coins in 312 AD, known as solidus, which replaced the aureus in 324 AD.⁶

Gold coins played an important role during late Roman and Byzantine issues. By the year 350 AD, the basic structure of Roman coins was well established, and minting houses minted different denominations of metals. Coins were minted from only three

¹ Philip Grierson, *Byzantine Coinage*, 8.

² Andrew Oddy & Suzan La Niece, "Byzantine Gold Coins and Jewellery a Study of Gold Contents", *Gold Bulletin* 19 (1), (1986): 19.

³ Grierson, *Byzantine Coinage*, 1-2

⁴ Grierson, *Byzantine Coinage*, 3.

⁵ Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins* II, 344.

⁶ A. H. M., Jones, *The Later Roman Empire, 284–602* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1964), 224–225.

metals in name; because by the fifth century AD, silver coins had declined and were limited only to ceremonial issues, unlike gold coins, the introduction of the solidus denomination during the reign of Emperor Constantine I led to a huge increase in its production ¹.

It is worth noting that the gold and silver coins were intended for the wealthy classes of the people, including employees and military personnel, while the bronze coins were intended for daily use and a larger number of citizens.²

4.3 Mint House:

The coins under study were distinguished by the fact that they were all attributed to one mint, which was "CONSTINOPLE," that was opened during the era of Emperor Anastasius I. The mint was mentioned on the back of all coins with this abbreviation "CONOB," which is a compound abbreviation consisting of "CON," that expresses the word "CONSTINOPLE", meaning the city of Constantinople, and "OB", the abbreviation for the word Obryzum, that means pure gold, and this abbreviation appeared on most Constantinople coins. In addition to some other abbreviations that used to appear on the coins of the Constantinople Mint, such as CON, CONOS, COB, then followed by the symbol of the workshop in which the coin was minted. The workshop symbols were mentioned on the coins under study as follows:

A, ε, γ, Δ

This means that the coins under study were minted in Constantinople in four different workshops:

Workshop No.	Workshop symbol	Coin No.
First workshop	alpha A	Coin No. 3
Third workshop	gamma Γ / γ	Coin No. 6
Fourth workshop	Delta Δ	Coin No. 5
Fifth workshop	epsilon ε	Coins No. 1,2,4,7

The workshops mentioned on the coins that are the subject of the study were not all the workshops in Constantinople, since 330 AD or a little earlier, there were eleven mints and they are symbolized by the letters from "A" until "IA" ³.

It is noted that the name of the country of minting was written in Latin letters, while the name of the workshop was symbolized by a Greek letter, such as coin number "6", where the number was written in the Greek letter " γ Γ " "gamma" to symbolize workshop number 3. The reason for this is that the Romans maintained the mints that existed in the East during the Greek era and continued to produce Roman coins in Latin,

¹ Peter Guest, "The Production, Supply and Use of Late Roman and Early Byzantine Copper Coinage in the Eastern Empire", January 2012 *Numismatic Chronicle* 172(1): 105.

² Georges Depeyrot, *Le Bas-Empire Romain: économie et Numismatique* (Paris: Errance Publishing, 1987), 55.

³ El.Said Roshdy & Mahmoud El fatatry, *Coin in Roman Period*, in Arabic (Cairo: Hajar House for Photography and Printing, 2002), 202-203.

retaining their ancient Greek symbols, considering that they were the symbols for which they had been famous since ancient times, and the Byzantines followed in their footsteps.¹

Mint marks have appeared on coins since the middle of the third century AD, although they were found before that in rare cases in a circular shape around the frame of the coin.² The mint was also divided into several "officinae" workshops for minting coins using the letters of the alphabet.

In total, the Byzantine mints amounted to 28 mints, and of course, not all of them operated at the same time. The change in the conditions of the empire between prosperity and deterioration had of course affected the establishment of new mints and the closure of other mints. Among the most famous Byzantine mints were Constantinople "CON" and Alexandria "AΛΞ", Antioch "ANTIX", Rome "ROM" and other mints³, and some mints used to put the number of the workshop in which the coin was struck, such as A=1, B=2, Γ= 3, Δ=4. These numbers disappeared just as the mint disappeared in the early eighth century.⁴

4.4 Topics depicted on coins:

4.4.1 Emperors Portraits:

The coins under study bore bust depictions of the emperors Phocas, Heraclius, and his two sons, Heraclius Constantine and Heraclius.

Byzantine coins used to bear on their obverses images of emperors and members of the imperial family, as was the case before in Roman coins, but it became common for more than one person to appear on the obverse of the coin in a complete manner, such as "Coin No.7".⁵ The coins under study, which date to the end of the sixth century, and the beginning of the seventh century were also distinguished in that it followed the change that occurred in the depiction of emperors on coins, instead of the side image "profile" For the Emperor, the depiction became half-length with the frontal image of the emperor, and this depiction remained prevalent on gold and bronze coins of various denominations.⁶

The era of Emperor Constantine II is considered the beginning of the appearance of the depiction of emperors on the obverse of the coin in the front image, and from the era of Phocas until the era of Constantine IV, images of emperors carried some personal features with some limited details such as the difference in the shape of the crown or the hairstyle, in addition to the appearance of some of them in an unconventional form, such as the depiction of a bearded Phocas (Coin No.1), while the common styles were

¹ Roshdy & El fatatry, *Coin in Roman Period*, 211.

² Azza Qabil, "A study of a collection of Roman and Byzantine coins from an archaeological find from the Rashid excavations (1992-1995)" in Arabic, *JGUAA* 18, (2017): 472.

³ For more see; Hussin Abdel Aziz, *Roman and Byzantine Currency*, in Arabic (Alexandria: Kalima Publishing House, 2010), 70.

⁴ Sear, *Byzantine Coins and their Values*, 18-21.

⁵ Philip Whitting, *Monnaies Byzantines* (Paris: Bibliothèque des arts, 1973), 127.

⁶ Grierson, *Byzantine Coinage*, 29.

for the emperor to appear with a shaved beard, just as Hercules appeared in four different styles with a pointed beard, then with a short beard with a helmet, with a short beard with a crown, with a long beard¹, the last two styles appeared in the coins under study No."2-3-4-5-6-7".

The coins under study, from numbers "2" to "6," were all of Emperor Heraclius with his son Heraclius Constantine. It is customary when depicting more than one emperor at the same time on the coin, for the eldest to be depicted in a larger size and with a long beard, and his place would be on the left, while the second, the youngest, would be depicted in a larger size with no beard, and his place is on the right.² This is what appeared on the coins under study, as the depiction of the features of Emperor Heraclius and Heraclius Constantine in each coin differed from the other.

The aim of depicting the emperor with one of his sons on coins was to emphasize the emperor's authority and influence, as coins became a source for announcing and disseminating the name of the ruler, his dynasty, and the continuity of power, through which we could track down the emperors, link them to their sons and declare them as co-emperors in power.³

Coin No. 2:

The obverse of the coin shows Emperor Heraclius at an average age, with a large size, a short beard, and a short mustache, while to his left appears his son, Heraclius Constantine, in a smaller size, without a beard or mustache, with features that are almost those of a boy. It is possible that this coin was minted at the time of Heraclius' coronation of his infant son, Heraclius Constantine, as his co-ruler.⁴

Coin No. 3:

The obverse of the coin shows the double half-portrait of both Heraclius and his son Heraclius Constantine, but the features of Heraclius Constantine differ, which confirms that he is at an older age than the depiction on coin No.2, but it agrees with coin No.2 in that the depiction of Emperor Heraclius is still bigger than his son, Heraclius Constantine.

Coin No.4:

The obverse of the coin shows the busts of Heraclius and his son, Heraclius Constantine. The features of Emperor Heraclius reveal slight signs of aging, while his son, portrayed to his left, has youthful characteristics. However, he is still rendered on a smaller scale than his father."

Coin No.5:

The obverse of the coin shows the difference in the depiction of both Emperor Heraclius and his son Heraclius Constantine, who appeared in the same size, with a clear change in the features of Emperor Heraclius' face, confirming this change in the emperor's advanced age.

¹ Wroth, *Catalogue of the Imperial Byzantine Coins in the British Museum I*, Lxxxvi.

² Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins*, 30

³ Grierson, *Byzantine Coinage*, 7.

⁴ Wroth, *Catalogue of the Imperial Byzantine Coins in the British Museum I*, 186.

Coin No.6:

The obverse of the coin shows the greatest change in the features of both Emperor Heraclius and his son, Emperor Heraclius Constantine, who was depicted the same size as his father.

According to the Wroth catalog of Byzantine Empire coins in the British Museum, coins No.2 to No.6 date from 613-614 AD to 630 AD.

Coin No.7:

This coin differs from earlier issues of Emperor Heraclius, yet it corresponds to similar types struck during his reign. It appears to date to the period of shared rule between Emperor Heraclius and his sons, in particular Heraclius Constantine, who is depicted on a larger scale than his brother. Notably, Heraclius Constantine is shown crowned, while his younger brother is represented without a diadem. This coin corresponds to the coin no. "BAAM.1034", discovered at Canopus (Abu Qir), in the Heraclium-Minotis" excavation season of 1999–2000 AD.¹

4.4.2 Clothes:

The clothing of emperors in the Byzantine era was divided into three types: military, civil, and consular.² These clothes were depicted on the coins under study as follows:

Coin No.1:

It shows Emperor Phocas wearing chest armor decorated with transverse lines, wearing the commander's cloak or coat, and above his head is the imperial crown, a symbol of the Eastern Empire.³ This depiction of the emperor on the coin in his military clothing is common to indicate that the emperor is the one who protects and defends the empire.

On the reverse of the coin, the angel appears wearing the tunic and pallium, which are Roman clothes. The tunic is a long Roman robe with sleeves worn by men, women, and perhaps also priests. As for the pallium, its first appearance dates back to the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when he used the pallium cloak instead of the Roman costume known as the toga and appeared in it publicly on one of the official occasions, then at the end of the fourth century AD the pallium became the main official cloak used in consular clothing.⁴

The pallium is a Latin word that means a rectangular piece of cloth, and in Greek it is synonymous with the word "Himation" ἡμίτιον the rectangular shape of this type of cloth made it have many uses, such as ship sails, floor mats, curtains, towels, covers, bed sheets, and shrouds. It was also used, of course, as a robe.⁵ (fig. 8)

Coins from "2-6":

¹ Salwa Muhammad, "Gold Coins from Canopus Abi Qir Heracleum - Minotis, Excavation Season 99-2000 AD", *Journal of the Faculty of Arts, Tanta University*, Issue 16, Part 2, in Arabic (2003): 769

² Grierson, *Byzantine Coins*, 30.

³ Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins*, 125,126.

⁴ Charles Daremberg & Edmond Saglio, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, "Pallium" (Paris: Hachette, 1873), 293.

⁵ William Smith, *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities* (London: J. Murray, 1875), 851.

The coins under study combined to show the emperors in the distinctive form of civilian clothing, which is the "Chlamys" "χλαμύς". The Chlamys was worn over a silk robe¹ (Fig. 9), which is a long purple cloak. The Chlamys was one of the most important elements in the coronation badge and one of the distinctive features of the Chlamys is the "tablion" ταβλίον, which is a rectangular embroidered piece of cloth that contrasts in color with the purple cloak "Chlamys". Which was fixed on its edge from the bottom of the armpit level to the waist level, and the Chlamys was fixed on the right shoulder using a circular clasp "brooch" with a prominent decoration above it, and three gold chains hung from it (Fig. 10). This design of the is continued without any change on the coins of the eighth century and the ninth AD.²

Coin No. 7:

Depicting the three emperors dressed in consular vestments "Loros" λῶρος reached up to the feet, and were worn over a simple robe made either of silk or another material. The traditional form of the loros λῶρος as a long-embroidered sash wrapped around the body in a rather elaborate manner so that its tip hung over the emperor's left forearm, and continued in use until the 11th century.³

4.4.3 Imperial Crown:

The Byzantine imperial crown is divided into two types: either a "diadem" "διάδημα" or a "crown", along with the helmet that sometimes-accompanied military clothing.⁴

The coins of Emperor Phocas and the coins of Emperor Heraclius and his sons were distinguished by the wide crown decorated and studded with pearls on the upper and lower edges, and between them were decorated in the middle with circular rings and small lines, and on the front circle, the cross was placed. Then the shape of the crown was developed to become much simpler, as it consisted of two strips of pearls without any decoration, in the middle is a ring surmounted by a cross.⁵

This shape of the imperial crown was depicted on the coins under study in coin No.1



and the same depiction is similar in coins No.3, 4, 5, 6, which consisted of two parallel rows of small jewels surmounted by a front decoration with a circular part or circular ring in the middle surmounted by a Holy Cross, as for coin number "2". The depiction of the imperial crown differed to be closer to the horizontal rectangular shape that covers the forehead without the presence of the circular part in the middle surmounted by the cross. The depiction of the crown of the three emperors also differed in coin number "7," as it consists of two separate semicircular rows surmounted by the Holy Cross.

¹ Depeyrot, *Le Bas-Empire Romain: économie et Numismatique*, 58,59.

² Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins*, 117.

³ Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins*, 120.

⁴ Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins*, 127.

⁵ Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins*, 128.

4.4.4 The Angel:

The themes of the reverse of Byzantine coins, especially gold, underwent many changes. After they bore the image of the goddess of victory, Victoria, as an influence derived from previous Roman monetary issues.¹ The influence of the Christian religion began to appear and distinguish itself on the reverse of the Byzantine gold coins, "solidus," and starting from the reign of Emperor Justinian I, the inscription of the goddess of victory was replaced by a male angel holding a ball surmounted by a cross and a cross-shaped scepter. This shape became the ideal style for engraving the reverse of the solidus, which continued for a century, except for the period under the rule of Justinian II and Tiberius II², when Justinian II introduced a pattern of the seated goddess of Constantinople, while Tiberius II introduced a pattern of a cross on three or four steps. However, this pattern soon changed during the reign of Emperor Phocas, who again reused the male angel on his gold coins, such as coin No.1. As for Emperor Heraclius and his successors, they replaced the male angel with the cross based on steps, which was used until the reign of Emperor Leo III³, such as coins from 3 to 7.

4.4.5 The Cross:

The first appearance of Christian symbols on Byzantine coins dates back to the era of Emperor Constantine the Great in the year 317 AD. The coins under study were distinguished by the depiction of the cross on both the obverse and reverse of the coin, especially the coins of Emperor Heraclius and his sons. This is in addition to its depiction on the coin of Emperor Phocas on the obverse and the reverse, whether above the globe, on the emperor's crown, or worn by an angel on the back of the coin. The cross is the main element on coin patterns at the end of the sixth and seventh centuries AD. It is also a symbol of the authority of the emperors and confirms the emperor's affiliation to the church and that he derives his political and religious powers from it.

4.4.6 The Cross on Steps

As for the cross standing on steps and depicted on the reverse of the coins of Emperor Heraclius and his sons, it symbolizes the altar of the church, as the cross here symbolizes the emperor's affiliation to the church and that he is the protector of the church from which he derives his political and religious powers.⁴ The first appearance of the cross standing on steps dates back to the era of Emperor Tiberius II (578-582 AD)⁵, and after him, Maurice Tiberius (582-602 AD) came to depict the cross with a support only, which is the traditional Latin form. Heraclius and his successors then reused the cross standing on steps, which is evidence of complete control over the empire.

Sometimes the cross is based on four steps, but if we consider that the fourth step is just a straight line of the margin separating the cross from the abbreviation of the mint,

¹ Sear, *Byzantine Coins and their Values*, 12.

² Grierson, *Byzantine Coinage*, 24-25.

³ Grierson, *Byzantine Coinage*, 33.

⁴ Sear, *Byzantine Coins and their Values*, 13.

⁵ Wroth, *Catalogue of the Imperial Byzantine Coins in the British Museum I*, Lxxxiv, Lxxxvii.

then the cross is based on three steps, so these steps symbolize the life of Jesus Christ, "life, death, and resurrection."¹

4.4.7 The Cross above the Globe:

It is one of the most common elements on coins of the sixth and seventh centuries AD, as it appeared on all Byzantine coins on the obverse in the hand of the emperor and on the back in the hand of the angel, and symbolizes Byzantine sovereignty over the world.²

The shape appeared in the fourth and fifth centuries AD, with the ball only, without the cross, to symbolize their control over the world. When Emperor Justinian I ascended the throne, he inserted the male angel on the back of the coin, holding a long cross in his hand and a ball surmounted by a cross in the other hand. This ball, surmounted by the cross, did not appear in the emperor's hand only during the reign of Emperor Justinian I; instead of the spear, it then became a major symbol represented on coins, held by the emperor with his right hand and sometimes with his left hand.³

It is noted that the main goal of depicting the cross in its various forms accompanying the scepter, the archbishopric staff, or other church inscriptions and winged angels is to confirm the civil authority of the emperor, which is derived from religious authority, and that the emperor is a sacred person, as he derived his worldly authority from religious authority, and he was represented as the head of the church and the world, and that deviating from his authority is a departure from the orders of religion, the church, and the sacred attribute.

5. The Inscriptions:

They are writings or abbreviations that indicate the name of the authority that issued the coin, the titles, and names of the rulers, the names of the mints that issued the coin, which helps determine the identity of the coin, or signs indicating the dating of the coin.

The inscriptions used on Byzantine coins developed from the Roman ones, especially during the sixth and seventh centuries AD, which concerns the coins under study. The inscriptions on the coins were written in small letters that were engraved with high precision and with remarkable consistency between the central writing or central image and the surrounding inscriptions.

The Latin language was the language of writing in the sixth century AD, with some exceptions, as some Greek letters were found within the writings, which were the result of the template engraver not understanding their meaning.⁴

The inscriptions are divided into:

5.1 Obverse inscriptions:

¹ Wafaa Al-Jawabra, "Critical Changes in Syria during the Period Extending from the Mid-Sixth Century to the Mid-Eighth Century" (Unpublished Phd Diss., Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences, University of Damascus, 2016), in Arabic, 312.

² Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins*, 131.

³ Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins*, 132.

⁴ Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins*, 102-104.

The inscriptions recorded on the obverse of the coins differed depending on the emperors depicted on them, as the obverse of the coin represents inscriptions of the names and titles of the emperors.

Abbreviations of emperors' titles that appeared on study coins:

inscription usually begins with the name of the emperor, preceded by the abbreviation:

DN: is an abbreviation for the word (**Dominus Noster**), which means our master or lord. This title appeared for the first time in official correspondence and on the coins of the Roman Empire during the reign of Emperor Diocletian. It is symbolized on the imperial coin by the letters "**DN.**" This title did not come out of nowhere. Diocletian admired it as Alexander the Great once admired the kings of the East and their life of luxury, transcendence, and deification, because this surrounded them with a sacred aura that prevented their soldiers from revolting against them. From this standpoint, Diocletian surrounded himself with holiness and isolationism, and the custom of sanctifying emperors continued throughout the second century AD and continued during the Byzantine era, but without a religious significance¹, and the letter **DN** was repeated twice on the coins of Emperor "Heraclius" because it belonged to two emperors, "Heraclius" and "Heraclius Constantine." The inscription ends with the abbreviation:

- "**PP.AVG**" which is an abbreviation of the word "**Perpetuus Augustus**", which means eternal or exalted Emperor.
- **PP** is an abbreviation for "**Perpetuus**," meaning eternal.
- **AVC** is the origin of the word **AVG** in the Byzantine period, the letter "**C**" was replaced by the letter "**G**", which is an abbreviation of the word "**AVGUSTUS**", which means the venerable, majestic, venerable, tsar, Augustus.²

Coin No.1:

It bears an inscription that reads "**ON FOCAS PERPAVC** " meaning "Our Lord Focas Perpetual Augustus (Emperor)." It is noted that the beginning of the inscription began with the letter "**O**" instead of "**D**," and this may be due to an error on the die-sinker.

Coins from "3-6":

It bears an inscription that reads "**ddNN hERACLIHS ET hERA CONST PP AV**" which means "Our masters Hercules and Heraclius Constantine, the eternal". In some coins, the inscription was not complete, and some letters are missing, but by comparing these coins with other coins with the complete inscription under study and others that date to the era of the Emperor Heraclius in the "worth" catalog, the inscription has been completed.

Coin number "7":

It did not bear any inscription on its obverse.

¹ Said Al-Nasiri, *The Political and Cultural History of the Roman Empire*, in Arabic (Cairo: Al Nahda Al Arabiya Publishing House, 1991), 409-410.

² Wroth, *Catalogue of the Imperial Byzantine Coins in the British Museum* I, civ.

5.2 Reverse Inscriptions:

The inscriptions on the back of the coin always included the value, mint, and date, in addition to sometimes combined letters that appeared since the time of Emperor Justinian, and these letters referred to the names of the emperors.¹

Coin No.1:

The inscription included the phrase "**VICTORIA AAVCC**", which means "victory" of the eternal or great (Emperor). As for the repetition of the letter "C", this is because in the fourth and fifth centuries AD, the number of emperors associated with each other was indicated by the repetition of the letter "G"="C", but in the second half of the fifth century AD, the number usually became three letters "GGG" and later returned to two "GG", even if there was only one emperor.² This phrase was followed by a letter indicating the minting workshop, as each mint was divided into workshops.

Coins from "2-7":

The inscription included the phrase "**VICTORIA AVζ**", which means "victory" of the eternal or venerable (emperor), and this sentence was followed by the year of rule and the number of the mint workshop and mint house.

6. Dating Marks:

Dating appeared on many Byzantine coins according to the years of each emperor's rule from the sixth century until the beginning of the eighth century. Emperor Justinian began this tradition on bronze denominations in the twelfth year of his reign (538-539 AD), and the date is determined according to the years that each emperor spent on the throne begins from the time he attained the rank of Caesar or Augustus, and the date was written in Latin numerals or letters.³ The date appeared on the coins under study, which bear numbers from "2" to "7." Below are the years of rule as they appeared on the coins and their significance:⁴

The Sixth Year	ϠI/ Ϡ	The First Year	I
The Seventh Year	ϠI or ϠII	The Second Year	II
The Eighth Year	ϠII or ϠIII	The Third Year	III
The Ninth Year	ϠIII or ϠIIII	The Fourth Year	IIII
The Tenth Year	X	The Fifth Year	Ϡ

¹ Wroth, *Catalogue of the Imperial Byzantine Coins in the British Museum I*, cix.

² Philip Grierson & Melinda Mays, *Catalogue of late Roman coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* (Washington: DC: Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University, 1992), 85.

³ Abdel Aziz, *Roman and Byzantine Currency*, 67.

⁴ Sear, *Byzantine Coins and their Values*, 29.

Conclusion:

Through the analytical study of the Byzantine coins discovered in Tell El-Deir cemetery in New Damietta, we conclude that the coins under study are of the style of Byzantine gold coins that date to the era of Emperor Phocas, Emperor Heraclius and his sons (the end of the sixth century and the beginning of the seventh century AD), and the style that distinguished them is the Christian religious style, which considering the emperor the protector of religion and the church as well as his other religious authorities, and it follows the styles of the general features of Byzantine coins that spread in the Arab East.

Below are the most important results drawn from this research:

- 1- The seven coins were discovered in the surface layer of the Tell El-Deir cemetery in New Damietta, which dates back to the Byzantine era. As the nature of the use of the cemetery in this period differed from a cemetery for burying the dead to a place of worship and habitation by Christians, just like many other archaeological sites spread throughout northern and southern Egypt.
- 2- The coins under study are of one denomination, which is the solidus. They are largely equal in weight and diameter, and the material of their manufacture is pure gold.
- 3- The coins under study bore the names of the emperors "Phocas," "Heraclius," and "Heraclius Constantine". This political period was characterized by turmoil and many political and military events, both on the internal level of Constantinople and on the external level, from the Persian occupation of most of the Roman states and ending with the Arab conquest of most of the states of the empire, including Egypt.
- 4- On the reverse of the coins, two different styles were depicted, the first style of the emperor's coin, "Phocas," which represents the standing angel holding a spherical cross in his hand and an archbishop's staff surmounted by a swastika. As for the rest of the coins, they all agreed in depicting the Holy Cross above the steps.
- 5- The religious symbols and insignia depicted on the coins under study, which are represented by the spherical cross and the cross standing on three steps, are purely Christian symbols that express the authority of the church and its role in the empire.
- 6- The depiction of Emperor Heraclius in the middle of his two sons indicates the unity of the imperial family and shared authority, and embodies the strength of the Byzantine Empire and its religious traditions. This depiction also highlights the importance of moving towards the Christian religion as an expression of unity and authority, at a time when the emperor and his sons were seeking to strengthen their authority and renew the empire.
- 7- All the coins under study were minted at the Constantinople Mint in its various workshops, according to what was stated on the reverse of all the coins.
- 8- Coin No.1 dates back to the reign of Emperor Phocas from 602-610 AD, while the rest of the other six coins date from the reign of King Heraclius in the period from 610-641 AD.

- 9- The presence of the coins under study in Tell El-Deir cemetery in New Damietta, Egypt, does not mean that they were in circulation at this time and is in effect, meaning; The circulation of Roman and Byzantine coins was regional, meaning that each state minted its own currency, for example Currencies minted in Alexandria are circulated and dealt with in Egypt only and become worthless in any other Roman state. Conversely, no foreign currencies were circulated inside Egypt.¹ Therefore, these coins in Tell El-Deir cemetery do not mean that they were used in circulation. Rather, it is possible that one of the merchants, soldiers, or tourists brought them with him to save them for use when he traveled outside Egypt, and when he died, he left them. What confirms this idea is that all the coins discovered are of one artistic style that was common in this period.
- 10- The presence of these coins dating back to the Byzantine period in Tell El-Deir cemetery in New Damietta and other archaeological evidence confirm the extent of the richness and importance of this site, which continued for many centuries from the era of the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty until the Byzantine era.
- 11- Therefore, it is likely that these coins discovered in Tell El-Deir cemetery are grouped together and are not contained in any vessel. They belonged to a merchant who moved from one country to another between 602 and 641 AD and needed these coins specifically for trade in Constantinople. This small number of coins confirms that they were used by a merchant rather than for personal savings. Due to the rapid political changes and turmoil during this period, such as the Arab entry into Egypt and the withdrawal of the Roman emperors, these coins became useless and uncirculated, leading him to stop trading with them. Only this small number remained with him. The presence of these coins in the Tell El-Deir cemetery provides clear evidence that the site was well known and that Damietta itself constituted a densely populated center characterized by diverse social, cultural, economic, and commercial activities. This, in turn, reflects the active trade exchange between the city and Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire, to which Egypt belonged at that time. Such a context is further supported by the historical account of Amr ibn al-Aṣṣ conquest of Egypt and his delegation of al-Miqdad ibn al-Aswad to capture Damietta and establish his renowned mosque there in 642 AD a monument that remains standing in the city to this day.
- 12- The coins under study, which are made of pure gold and bear Christian religious symbols, cannot confirm the economic situation of Damietta at this time because they were minted in a non-local mint "Constantinople", but they generally reflect the prevailing religion in the states affiliated with the Byzantine Empire, including Egypt and of course Damietta as a part of Egypt.
- 13- The gold coins under study are completely identical to the gold coins of Emperor Phocas, Emperor Heraclius, and his sons discovered whether inside or outside Egypt.

¹ Roshdy & El fatatry, *Coin in Roman Period*, 211.

The Catalog



Fig. 1. Gold coin No.1 of Emperor Phocas, sixth century AD, Tell al-Deir cemetery in New Damietta ©Sherwet Ashour.



Fig. 2. Gold coin No.2 of Emperor Heraclius and his son Heraclius Constantine, seventh century AD, Tell El-Deir cemetery in New Damietta ©Sherwet Ashour.



Fig. 3. Gold coin No.3 of Emperor Heraclius and his son Heraclius Constantine, seventh century AD, Tell el-Deir cemetery in New Damietta ©Sherwet Ashour.



Fig. 4. Gold coin No.4 of Emperor Heraclius and his son Heraclius Constantine, seventh century AD, Tell El-Deir cemetery in New Damietta ©Sherwet Ashour.



Fig. 5. Gold coin No.5 of Emperor Heraclius and his son Heraclius Constantine, seventh century AD, Tell el-Deir cemetery in New Damietta ©Sherwet Ashour.



Fig. 6. Gold coin No. 6 of Emperor Heraclius and his son Heraclius Constantine, 7th century AD, Tell El-Deir cemetery in New Damietta ©Sherwet Ashour.



Fig. 7. Gold coin No.7 of Emperor Heraclius and his son Heraclius Constantine, 7th century AD, Tell El-Deir cemetery in New Damietta ©Sherwet Ashour.



Fig. 8. Tunic and Pallium ©
<https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010275400>



Fig. 9. Byzantine Empire clothing "Chlamis" © Wafaa, Al-Jawabra, "Critical Changes in Syria during the Period Extending from the Mid-Sixth Century to the Mid-Eighth Century", 304.



Fig. 10. pin of "Fibula" © Wafaa, Al-Jawabra, "Critical Changes in Syria during the Period Extending from the Mid-Sixth Century to the Mid-Eighth Century", 306.

Bibliography

- Abdel Aziz, Hussin. *Roman and Byzantine Currency*. Alexandria: Kalima Publishing House, 2010, in Arabic.
- Al-Jawabra, Wafaa. "Critical Changes in Syria during the Period Extending from the Mid-Sixth Century to the Mid-Eighth Century", Unpublished Phd Diss., in Arabic, Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences, University of Damascus, 2016.
- Al-Nasiri, Said. *The Political and Cultural History of the Roman Empire*. Cairo: Al Nahda Al Arabiya Publishing House, 1991, in Arabic.
- Bagnall, Robert. *Egypt in the Byzantine World, 300-70*. England: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Baynes, Norman. *The Byzantine Empire*. London: Oxford University press, 1946.
- Daremberg & Edmond. *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, "Pallium". Paris: Hachette, 1873.
- Depeyrot, Georges. *Le Bas-Empire Romain: économie et Numismatique*. Paris: Errance Publishing, 1987.
- Goda, Dalia. "The Cemetery of Tell El Deir in Light of the Recent Archaeological Discoveries", Master's Thesis in Arabic, Faculty of Arts, Mansoura University, 2025.
- Goodarce, Hugh. *A Hand Book of the Coinage of the Byzantine Empire*. London: Spink & sons, 1971.
- Grierson, Philip. *Byzantine Coins*. California: university of California press, 1982.
- Grierson & Melinda. *Catalogue of late Roman coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*. Washington: DC: Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University, 1992.
- Grierson, Philip. *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins, Dumbarton oaks Catalogues, Dumbarton oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, II, part 2. Washington: DC: Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University, 1993.
- _____. *Byzantine Coinage*. Washington: Harvard Universtiy, 1999.
- Guest, Peter. "The Production, Supply and Use of Late Roman and Early Byzantine Copper Coinage in the Eastern Empire", January 2012 *Numismatic Chronicle* 172(1), 105-131.
- Jones, A. H. M. *The Later Roman Empire, 284–602*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1964.
- Morrisson, Cécile. *Catalogue des Monnaies Byzantines de la Bibliotheque Nationale I*. Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1970).
- Muhammad, Salwa. "Gold Coins from Canopus Abi Qir Heracleum - Minotis, Excavation Season 99-2000 AD", *Journal of the Faculty of Arts*, Tanta University, Issue 16, Part 2, in Arabic (2003): 744-779.
- Oddy & Suzan. "Byzantine Gold Coins and Jewelry a study of Gold Contents", *Gold Bulletin* 19 -1, (1986): 19-27.

- Oeconomides & Phane. "A Hoard of Byzantine gold coins from samos", *Revue Numismatique* 31, (1989): 145-182.
- Qabil, Azza. "A study of a collection of Roman and Byzantine coins from an archaeological find from the Rashid excavations (1992-1995)", *JGUAA* 18, (2017), in Arabic: 451-493.
- Roshdy & Mahmoud. *Coin in Roman Period*. Cairo: Hajar House for Photography and Printing, 2002, in Arabic.
- Sabatier, Justin. *Description Générale des Monnaies Byzantines*. Paris: Rollin et Feuarent, 1862.
- Sear, David. *Byzantine Coins and their Values*. London: Audley house, 1973.
- Smith, William. *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*. London: J. Murray, 1875.
- Sommer, Andreas. *Katalog der Byzantinischen Münzen*. Göttingen: universitätsverlag Göttingen, 2003.
- Whitting, Philip. *Monnaies Byzantines*. Paris: Bibliothèque des arts, 1973.
- Wroth, Warwick. *Catalogue of the Imperial Byzantine Coins in the British Museum I*. London: British Museum Press, 1908.

Websites:

<https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010275400>