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The Byzantine coinage of the mint of Jerusalem

(Pl. XL-XLII)

Summary. — Considered here are four issues, one of copper folles and three of gold solidi which have been tentatively attributed to a mint in Jerusalem for the last 25 years. The copper folles can definitely be attributed to Jerusalem since one variety bears the city's name as a mint-mark. In order to attribute the solidi it has been necessary to consider the detailed history of the eastern mediterranean for the first thirty years of the seventh century, inadequate though the facts are. This study occupies the first part of the article. The result of the historical study indicates that two groups of solidi, one of Phocas and one of Heraclius' sole reign, were probably struck in Jerusalem but that the type struck in the early years of the joint reign of Heraclius and Heraclius Constantine cannot have been struck there. While the writer is unable to suggest any certain mint, this last group of solidi was possibly struck over a period of a couple of years between *ca.* 613 and 617 in considerable quantity at a temporary mint in south eastern Anatolia.

Résumé. — Cet article examine quatre émissions (une de cuivre et trois d'or) qu'on a proposé d'attribuer à un atelier byzantin de Jérusalem dans les dernières décennies. Il rappelle d'abord les événements des années 600-630 dont le détail reste mal connu. L'attribution des folles de cuivre dont certains portent le nom de Jérusalem comme marque d'atelier peut être considérée comme définitive. Pour les solidi, deux groupes frappés par Phocas et Héraclius pendant son règne seul proviennent probablement de Jérusalem. Ce n'est certainement pas le cas d'un groupe frappé au début du règne conjoint d'Héraclius et Héraclius Constantin qui est plus commun et pourrait avoir été émis pendant quelques années entre 613 et 617 dans un atelier temporaire du sud-est de l'Anatolie sans que l'auteur puisse préciser davantage.

In *Studies in the Byzantine Economy, c.300-1450* by Michael F. Hendy, published in 1985, appears the following footnote, no. 190 on page 416: « M.F. Hendy and S. Bendall, 'Bonosus, Comes Orientis, and the mints of Antioch and Jerusalem under Phocas and Heraclius' (in preparation) ». This has never appeared and, indeed, was never begun. Basically Michael Hendy was to write the article with all the historical background with the author of this article providing a certain amount of numismatic material. Unfortunately Hendy has retired from the numismatic fray. From time to time, when I was asked when

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the article was due, I jotted down a few notes. I have been spurred to write the following article, which is far from what was initially envisaged, by seeing a reference in CNG's Mail Bid Sale 46 (24 June 1998, lot 1569) to the article which could be construed as as though it had already been published.

I owe most of the historical background to the work of Professor David Michael Olster¹ recommended by Hendy as the expert on the period and also to Professor Clive Foss.² Both have kindly answered some of my particular enquiries. Also consulted has been Strategius' account of the fall of Jerusalem.³ What follows is a simplified historical recapitulation of events as far as they can be coherently arranged since the revolt of Heraclius is one of the poorest documented events of the seventh century. The few sources we have often misdate them by several years.

The revolt of the Heraclii began in the eleventh indiction, i.e. between 1 September 607 and 31 August 608 but probably in the spring or early summer of 608. It was the Persian war which seemed to have sparked off the revolt. By the end of 607 the Persians had captured several important frontier fortresses and, although the situation was not disastrous, the entire Byzantine army in the east was committed and there were few reserves. The elder Heraclius, Exarch of Africa, was about 60 years old and the actual fighting was undertaken by his son Heraclius, the future emperor, and his nephew Nicetas. The revolt was apparently not originally undertaken to place Heraclius on the throne but merely to depose Phocas, nor was it undertaken as a result of encouragement from any faction or persons in Constantinople although, once it had commenced and appeared to be succeeding, encouragement was received.⁴

Heraclius senior had been appointed Exarch by Maurice Tiberius around 600 and had thus been in command for some eight years. His army was small, possibly about 18,000 men, but it was well organised. The army was under the command of Nicetas and the first objective was Egypt which was no doubt expected to fall easily and provide the wealth and ships to enable the revolt to proceed while Phocas' army was engaged with the Persians. Heraclius senior paved the way by paying the Berber tribes not to attack the province of Africa

1 M. OLSTER, *The Politics of Usurpation in the Seventh Century: Rhetoric and Revolution in Byzantium*, Amsterdam, 1993. There is the problem of a circular argument here. Olster has used Hendy's attribution of coins to the mint of Jerusalem in constructing his version of the history of the period while we are using his history to prove the existence of the mint of Jerusalem. However, his book seems indispensable for the history of the revolt of the Heraclii. The most recent study of the period is W.E. KAEGL, *Heraclius Emperor of Byzantium*, Cambridge, 2003.

2 C. FOSS introduction to H. POTTIER, *Le monnayage de la Syrie sous l'occupation perse (610-630)*, Paris (Cahiers Ernest-Babelon 9), forthcoming. I have been able to consult a typescript of this introduction for which I must thank Professor Foss.

3 F. C. CONYBEARE, Antiochus Strategos' Account of the Sack of Jerusalem in A.D. 614, *English Historical Review*, 25, 1910, p. 502-517. Cf. B. FLUSIN, *Saint Anastase le Perse et l'histoire de la Palestine au début du VII^e siècle*, II, Paris, 1992, p. 130-134.

4 W.E. KAEGL, p. 25, 37-43.

and by bribing garrison commanders in Egypt and Libya, in the second of which the Heraclian family seem to have had estates. He also got in touch with former officials of Maurice in Egypt who had been replaced by Phocas⁵ and one of his first actions seems to have been to stop the corn supply, presumably at first from Carthage to Rome and later from Alexandria to Constantinople, in the hope that this would provoke unrest in the two cities.

One of the first effects of the revolt was that there was a series of riots in Syria between the Blues and the Greens, particularly in Antioch and Laodicea. These were more serious than the usual riots involving these two factions. It seems that the Blues supported Phocas and the Greens, Heraclius. They were so serious that Phocas appointed Bonosus, Eparch of Constantinople, as *Comes Orientis* and instructed him to put down the riots. At first he was unable to do so but after gathering together an army he did so with great brutality. That these were not ordinary riots is clear from Pseudo-Sebeos who states that the rioters, presumably the Greens, were rebels which was, no doubt, why Bonosus dealt with them so severely.⁶ There were also riots in Jerusalem but these did not seem to have the same cause as those further north. However, when Bonosus came to Jerusalem it was not to suppress rioting but to reorganise the city as his winter quarters. At this period the factions were considered, despite their military incompetence, as a supplementary military force or militia, and Bonosus seems to have sent some of the Blues from Antioch and placed them, together with those in Jerusalem in power in the city.

When he heard of the invasion of Egypt (in late 608?) Bonosus had arrived in Caesarea in Cappadocia and he sent his general Cottan, then apparently based in Antioch, to Egypt with reinforcements. Slightly later Bonosus moved his army south and was apparently preparing to winter in Caesarea in Palestine when he heard of Nicetas' capture of Alexandria and he advanced to Jerusalem (608/9).⁷ Why this should have been so is uncertain for although Jerusalem was some miles south of Caesarea, it was inland and not on the direct coastal route to Egypt.

Heraclius senior's nephew Nicetas had occupied Alexandria and subdued Lower Egypt by the beginning of 609. He won over the local populace by giving them a three year tax remittance, and despite being a Chalcedonian, he tolerated the Monophysites and was merciful to the defeated supporters of Phocas, thus earning their gratitude.⁸

Bonosus arrived in Egypt with his army in the spring of 609.⁹ The subsequent fighting was intense and lasted all summer. Indeed the outcome

⁵ OLSTER, p. 120 and footnote 17. Phocas, however, kept most of Maurice's provincial appointees, Heraclius senior, of course, being one of them.

⁶ OLSTER, p. 107-108 ; FLUSIN, p. 142-145.

⁷ OLSTER, p. 107, citing Strategius (see footnote 3).

⁸ OLSTER, p. 17 and 121-22 ; KAEGI, p. 44-45.

⁹ OLSTER, p. 107 and footnote 29.

was in the balance until the end and casualties were heavy on both sides. At the end of the summer Bonosus defeated Nicetas' commander Bonakis who was killed in battle. The army retreated in disorder to Alexandria. However Nicetas regrouped, counter-attacked and defeated Bonosus decisively, probably at the beginning of October 609.

While Nicetas was struggling for control of Egypt, Heraclius junior set sail from Carthage. There is little information regarding his itinerary but an inscription from Constantia in Cyprus indicates that he was on the island in February 610,¹⁰ while the earliest coinage struck there in the name of the two Heraclii as consuls is dated by indiction 13 (1st September 609-31st August 610) which might indicate that he wintered there in 609/610. It is possible that Heraclius did not leave Carthage until he had learnt that Egypt had finally been secured which would have been rational if, as is likely, he had heard of Nicetas' difficulties. On the other hand Heraclius may well have taken the gamble of setting out from Carthage before victory in Egypt had been secured in order to catch the sailing season.

John of Nikiu stated that Heraclius called at several islands and sea ports on his way to Constantinople without naming a single one.¹¹ There appears to have been fighting between the Blues and Greens in Rhodes at this time with those described as 'Blues' being supporters of Bonosus escaping from their defeat in the east.¹² Since it is recorded that Heraclius collected Greens in the various islands on his way to Constantinople,¹³ it is probable that Rhodes was one port of call.

While Heraclius was in Cyprus he commenced issuing copper coins dated to indictions 13 and 14 (1st September 609-31st August 611).¹⁴ There are also much commoner copper coins signed ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔ for the same two years.¹⁵ Hahn considered these issues of Alexandria but this cannot be for several reasons. Firstly, the coins are not usually found in Egypt but in Syria and Lebanon (see footnote 32). Secondly, the follis was not a denomination struck in Egypt where the denominations were 12, 6 and 3 nummi pieces which in any case were not generally struck in copper as were these folles but rather in leaded copper or bronze. These ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔ folles are very similar in style to those of Cyprus (figs. 23 and 24) but nothing like the Alexandrian solidi (figs. 30-31). It seems more likely that they were struck, as other authorities believe, in Alexandretta (*Alexandria ad Issum*) and that this was one of the unnamed ports that Heraclius visited on his journey to Constantinople. Phocas' army had, after all, been drawn

10 OLSTER, p. 107. Cf. KAEGI, p. 45-47 for a recent discussion of Heraclius' route, with a different conclusion.

11 OLSTER, p. 107.

12 OLSTER, p. 111 and footnote 42 and p. 128

13 OLSTER, p. 136.

14 W. HAHN, *MIB*, II, 1975; III, 1981; *MIB* II, 18-20. (fig. 23).

15 *MIB* II, 16-17 (fig. 24).

to the struggle in Egypt and perhaps Alexandretta could have been occupied quite easily and used as a stronghold on the mainland intended to block the northward retreat of Phocas' forces after their defeat in Egypt which may have been why some of Bonosus' supporters fled by sea to Rhodes.

Heraclius arrived at Abydus, slightly to the south of Constantinople in late September 610. Here many people from Constantinople deserted to him, those no doubt who had been in contact with him after the commencement of the revolt, including Priscus, the son-in-law of Phocas. Heraclius then moved to Heraclea where he was crowned at the end of September. At first he had only sought to dethrone Phocas but now his goal was plainly the crown. After a brief defence of Constantinople Phocas was overthrown, captured, and then executed on the fifth of October and Heraclius was acclaimed emperor later on the same day.¹⁶

In the Spring or Summer of 611 the Persians captured Antioch and by October had captured Apamea and Emesa. The Persian success in Syria was in part due to the fact that the Phocas' army had moved to Egypt. The revolt of the Heraclii was thus one of the causes of the collapse of the empire in the east. Nicetas hurried north from Egypt with what forces he had gathered together and fought the Persians near Emesa in late summer 611. Nicetas possibly made Jerusalem his headquarters before the battle since it was one of the major cities in the region and housed the True Cross. The battle seems to have been a stalemate and both sides suffered heavily. While the Persians made no fresh advances, the Byzantines were unable to reconquer what they had lost. At the same time, further north, another Persian army captured Caesarea in Cappadocia and were subsequently trapped there until the Spring of 612 when, making a sortie and defeating the Byzantine besiegers, they were able to escape to Armenia.¹⁷

The historian and Patriarch Nikephorus stated that Nicetas arrived in Constantinople at the same time as the birth of Heraclius Constantine which occurred on the 3 May 612.¹⁸ If correct, this was presumably to co-ordinate future military action. When Nicetas set out for Constantinople it might well have been considered that the Persians trapped in Caesarea would be soon defeated.

At the end of 612 the situation was grave with the Persians still occupying Antioch and a large part of Syria. The year 613 saw a struggle for Syria. Heraclius won a bloody battle outside Antioch but suffered so heavily that when the Persians brought up reinforcements he was forced to retreat. He soon abandoned Cilicia and, discouraged, returned to Constantinople.¹⁹

¹⁶ KAEGI, p. 48-52.

¹⁷ FLUSIN, p. 78, 81-83; KAEGI, p. 67-69.

¹⁸ C. MANGO, *Nikephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople: Short History*, Washington, 1990 (DO Texts X), p. 39. Cf. KAEGI, p. 70, 72-73.

¹⁹ FLUSIN, p. 78-79; KAEGI, p. 75-77.

Nothing is known of the actions of Nicetas' forces during this campaign after the battle at Emesa. They may well have fallen back on Jerusalem. Agapius states that Nicetas retired to Egypt²⁰ but he can hardly have done so immediately and left the whole of Palestine open to the Persians since the status-quo after the battle at Emesa seems to have lasted for about two years. We have noted that Nicetas was in Constantinople in May 612. This was presumably to coordinate his actions with Heraclius' attack on Antioch which he can hardly have done if he and his troops were in Egypt. Cooperation between the two forces would have been much simpler if Nicetas' troops were still occupying Jerusalem.

However, at the end of 613 or the beginning of 614 the Persians advanced on Palestine. They soon captured Caesarea which they made their base for further operations and they demanded the surrender of Jerusalem. The archbishop Zacharias and the city officials, despairing of relief, agreed terms and accepted a Persian garrison. After a short while the circus factions rebelled and massacred the Persian garrison.²¹

The Persian army dispersed a small detachment of Byzantine reinforcements sent from Jericho and commenced to besiege Jerusalem. Apparently, after 20 days or so their siege engines had made a breach in the wall and the city fell in May 614.²² It is obvious that the siege lasted longer than 20 days which is far too short a time in which to have struck the bronze coins discussed below as type 1. No doubt it would have been necessary for the Persians to have transported their siege engines from elsewhere or manufacture them on site. It seems reasonable to allow a period of more than three weeks for the siege.²³

After consolidating their position and increasing their forces, the Persians moved on Egypt. Foss suggests that Alexandria fell in June 619 and that the whole of Egypt was occupied by early 621.²⁴ Nicetas seems to have left Alexandria in late 618 or early 619.²⁵ The fact that it was Jerusalem, containing the Holy Cross, that appears to have been the only Byzantine stronghold holding up the Persian advance to Egypt between 611 and 613 indicates its importance and the possibility that it was garrisoned by Nicetas and was the mint for type 3 (see below).

Some ten years later, by strenuous campaigning, Heraclius reached the point where he was able to force a Persian withdrawal from Syria and also Egypt. The Byzantine reoccupation of Jerusalem probably took place after July 629 and

²⁰ OLSTER, p. 86.

²¹ FOSS, introduction; FLUSIN, p. 151-154; KAEGLI, p. 77-78.

²² CONYBEARE, p. 506.

²³ *Contra* FLUSIN, p. 154-161 and KAEGLI, p.78.

²⁴ FOSS, intro, footnote 15. Cf. KAEGLI, p. 91-93.

²⁵ FOSS, intro.

Egypt a few months later. The Holy Cross was returned and was set up in its place in Jerusalem on the 21st of March 630 by Heraclius himself.²⁶

The coinage

There are four types of coins discussed here, three types of solidi and one type of follis. These folles are the only coins that bear a mint mark which indicates that they were struck in Jerusalem. Since it is better to work from the known to the unknown, this certain issue from Jerusalem is discussed first although it is not the earliest of the types considered in this article.

Type 1.

Heraclius (A.D. 610-641). AE Follis. Jerusalem.

Obv. DNH ϵ RACL IUSPPA

Facing bust with pointed beard, wearing crown surmounted by trefoil, and loros, holding akakia and eagle-topped sceptre.

Rev. Large M flanked by ANNO IIII, cross above; in exergue, IEPOCO2 or XCNKA

Ref. IEPOCO2: *MIB* III, X 27 (fig. 1); XCNKA: *MIB* III, X 28 (fig. 2).

These copper folles, of two varieties, depict the single bust of Heraclius with a short pointed beard, a portrait almost indistinguishable from that of Phocas and copied from the folles of Phocas struck at Antioch between 608 and 610 (*MIB* II, 84a) although with the crown of Maurice Tiberius. They are dated to Heraclius' fourth regnal year and bear the mint marks IEPOCO2 and XCNKA. We know that they were struck in this sequence since the commonest obverse die, which was used for both varieties, developed a die flaw which clearly indicates the order in which they were issued.

Since these coins were struck in Heraclius' fourth regnal year they must have commenced in very late September 613 at the earliest and ceased by the beginning of October 614. These folles were therefore issued during the siege of Jerusalem which commenced in May 614 and they can have been issued for only a short time. At first these folles bore the name of the city but as things became desperate it is not difficult to envisage that the besieged changed the legend in the reverse exergue to « Christ conquers » as a prophylactic.

The fact that these folles copy the portrait of Phocas surely indicates that even by May 614 the die engraver(s) in Jerusalem had never seen a coin of Heraclius (fig. 3) even though they had been issued for some three years and

²⁶ The Holy Cross was not « set up » again. It had been sent from Persia in a crate and Heraclius left it so. Strategius stated that Heraclius « re-established in its own place the glorious and precious tree of the Cross, sealed as before in a chest, just as it had been carried away » (from Persia). CONYBEARE, p. 516. For the date see C. MANGO, *Deux études sur Byzance et la Perse sassanide*, *Travaux et Mémoires*, 9, 1985, p. 112-113.

had already been replaced by those bearing the busts of Heraclius and Heraclius Constantine at Constantinople. (fig. 4)

The previous issue from Jerusalem was the solidus of Phocas discussed below.

Type 2.

Phocas (A.D. 602-610), Solidus. Jerusalem?

Obv. $\Delta NFOCAS \text{ PERPAVC}$

Facing bust with pointed beard, wearing crown and chlamys, holding cross.

Rev. $VICTORIA \text{ AV}\epsilon\chi\iota\Gamma$ (ϵ reversed); in exergue, $CONOB$

Angel standing facing, holding long staff surmounted by Christogram and globus cruciger.

Ref. *MIB* II, 30 (fig. 5).

This unique solidus of Phocas has the letters $\iota\Gamma$ at the end of the reverse legend. It is possible that these letters represent the mint, $\text{IEPOCOA}\Upsilon\text{MA} \text{ POAIC}$. These rare coins may well have been struck in Jerusalem during the winter of 608/9 while Bonosus' army was wintering there before advancing to Egypt. The only known specimen of this coinage has an Egyptian provenance but this is not surprising since the troops for whom it was struck moved on to Egypt in the spring of 609. This type certainly cannot have been struck in Egypt since the troops of Phocas never occupied the country securely enough to establish a mint.

Hahn has suggested that this type was struck in Cyprus. This seems very unlikely since there was no need for a mint in the island in the early years of Phocas' reign and in his later years his forces were engaged in Syria and then in Egypt. These coins cannot have been struck until the end of 607 since it was only at the change of indiction on the first of September of that year that the end of the reverse legend of the solidi was changed from $AVCC$ to $AV\epsilon\chi$ at Constantinople.

These solidi were followed by a similar issue of Heraclius struck during his sole reign (610-613) which are extremely rare (type 3 below) but commoner, of course, than that of Phocas. The title of the article envisaged by Hendy seems to indicate that he possibly thought there were coins struck in Antioch during these campaigns, presumably other than the regular bronze issues of Phocas, but this is unlikely. If only the solidi of type 2 of Phocas existed and there were no issues of Heraclius of the following type 3 it might be suggested that type 2 was issued in Antioch but the similarity of the two types 2 and 3 surely indicates that they were issued from the same mint and the dies produced by the same engraver(s) and Heraclius never occupied Antioch between 610 and 629.

Type 3.

Heraclius (A.D. 610-641). Solidus, sole reign, 610-613. Jerusalem?

Obv. DN H ERACL IUS PPAVC

As type 2.

Rev. As type 2, with legend ending ΙΔ or ΙΠ

Refs. ΙΔ Tolstoi 1 (fig. 6);²⁷ *MIB* III, –; R.N. Bridge colln., Glendining auction, 7 March 1990, lot 195; ΙΠ, *MIB* III, 76. (fig. 7).

On these coins Heraclius also looks like Phocas and indeed the solidi of both types 2 and 3 were surely produced by the same engraver(s) and therefore presumably at the same mint. Obviously the mint did not yet know what Heraclius looked like and the mint officials continued to use the effigy that they had produced for the earlier issue of Phocas, despite the fact that coins with Heraclius' portrait had been issued at Constantinople since 610. The reverse legend usually ends ΙΠ (fig. 7) but on two coins ΙΔ (fig. 6). Since Heraclius is Augustus, they must have been struck after October 610 and before the capture of Jerusalem in 614 but not during the siege. Since, on the capture of Antioch by the Persians in the spring or summer of 611, Nicetas advanced north from Egypt to engage the Persians at Emesa, it is not impossible, given the importance of Jerusalem, containing as it did the True Cross, that the city became a mint once more to pay Nicetas' army between mid-611 and their retreat back to Egypt before the siege of the city in the spring of 614.

The letters ΙΔ represent the indictional date 14 (1st September 610-31st August 611). Since Nicetas did not advance from Egypt until mid-611, this rare variety can only have been struck in a short two or three month period between *ca.* July and 31 August 611. These coins bear the indictional year as had the consular solidi struck by Nicetas in Alexandria in the name of the Heraclii as consuls in 607/8.

This variety was presumably followed by those solidi with the reverse legend ending ΙΠ. It is unlikely that this latter variety was struck in Jerusalem as Nicetas advanced north before the battle at Emesa. A brief period between July and the end of August 611 might have been sufficient to produce the solidi with the legend ending ΙΔ at Jerusalem but it is unlikely to be the occasion when the slightly commoner coins with legend ΙΠ were produced. The latter, or possibly both varieties may have been struck in Jerusalem after the battle at Emesa when Nicetas retired south to reorganise. A Byzantine military presence in Jerusalem in 611-613 seems likely since the city contained the True Cross and the Persians did not advance south from Antioch until at least late 613. This period would have been long enough to produce the solidi with the reverse legend ending ΙΠ. Grierson notes that some solidi of this variety have been found in Egypt²⁸ but this is not surprising since they would no doubt have been

27 Count J. TOLSTOI, *Monnaies byzantines*, St. Petersburg, 1912-14. Tolstoi published this coin with the reverse legend ending ΙΑ but it is clear that it ends ΙΔ.

28 P. GRIERSON, *DOC* II, part I, p. 232.

carried back there by Nicetas' retreating troops early in 613.

It is, I suppose, faintly possible that Bonosus wintered in Caesarea in Palestine and not in Jerusalem. Perhaps Olster had only suggested Jerusalem because Hendy had suggested that it was a mint at this time. However, it seems certain that when Nicetas retired to Egypt in *ca.* 613, he did so from Jerusalem since Agapius states that he sent to Constantinople the spear that pierced Christ's side and the sponge just as he retreated before the siege of Jerusalem.²⁹

Type 4.

Heraclius and Heraclius Constantine (*ca.* 613-616?). Solidus. Uncertain eastern military mint?

Obv. DΔNNHΕΡΑΚΛΙΟΥΣΕΤΗΕΡΑΚΟΝΣΤΡΡΑ

Facing bust of Heraclius, on left, and a small bust of Heraclius Constantine, on right, each wearing crown and chlamys; cross above.

Rev. VICTORIA AVΓΗ, ΙΧ or ΙΠ; in exergue, CONOB.

Cross potent on three steps.

Ref. I *MIB* III, 77/3 (fig. 8); 77/4 (fig. 10); IX: *MIB* III, 77/5 (fig. 11); 77/6 (fig. 13); 77/7 (fig. 15); ΙΠ: *MIB* III, 77/8 (fig. 14) and 77/9 (fig. 16)

This is the third and commonest series of solidi that have on occasion been attributed to Jerusalem because of the letters ΙΠ and ΙΧ at the end of the reverse legend, ΙΠ appearing on the coins of types 2 and 3 while the letters ΙΧ might represent the initials of Jesus Christ although, as we shall see, since type 4 cannot have been produced in Jerusalem, perhaps an alternative explanation should be sought for their use on this particular type.

The busts of the two emperors may or may not rest on an exergual line (figs. 13-14 and 15-16). This does not appear to be of particular importance. Those without the exergual line are somewhat commoner as are those with the legend ending ΙΠ rather than ΙΧ. It is, perhaps, possible that there is a chronological sequence in these two varieties. It may not be out of place to mention that the presence of the exergual line under the busts does not, as some think, indicate an attribution to the mint of « Jerusalem » – early Constantinopolitan solidi also show this feature (fig. 17).

The rare coins with Ι at the end of the reverse legend (figs. 8 and 10) rather than ΙΠ or ΙΧ are possibly the earliest variety since there exists a solidus with the reverse legend ending Ι which later had an Χ added to the end of the legend (*MIB* III, 77/5) (fig. 11). In its earliest form with only an Ι, the reverse die was used with an obverse die which appears to differ slightly in style from the obverse dies used on the commoner varieties of this mint with ΙΠ and ΙΧ at the end of the reverse legends. It may be that in its original form (fig. 10) it may

²⁹ Agapius, cited by OLSTER, p. 86, footnote 20. It seems strange that Nicetas was unable to carry off the True Cross. Perhaps his departure from Jerusalem was very hurried.

have been struck at a different mint than that where figs. 13-16 were issued.

There also exists a new variety of this series (fig. 9)³⁰ which appears at first sight to combine the obverse of *MIB* III, 77/4 (fig. 10) and the reverse of *MIB* III, 78 (fig. 12) possibly with an X added to the end of the reverse legend. However, unlike *MIB* III, 77/4, this new coin has a square cross with serifs in the obverse field, unlike the crosses on *MIB* III, 77/3 and 77/4 which are taller than they are wide and lack serifs. To the writer it seems possible that there is enough stylistic difference between the obverse dies of *MIB* III, 77/1-77/5 (figs. 8-12) and *MIB* III, 77/6-77/9 (figs. 13-16) to suggest that the two groups were produced at more than one mint.³¹

The two bust solidi with IX and IΠ are no longer rare and tend to be found in what is now Lebanon, Syria and south-eastern Turkey although several have been found in Egypt and one in a hoard dating to *ca.* 645 at Rougga in Tunisia. In a collection of Byzantine coins formed in Egypt, there are six, all but one found in the Delta.³² The fact that coins of type 4 of *MIB* III, 77/6-77/9 (figs. 13-16) are found in Egypt and Tunisia merely confirms that this issue was struck in some quantities in the east. It may be of interest to note that all these eastern solidi discussed here are always found in extremely fine condition and seldom worn to any great degree.

There also exist other extremely rare solidi of Heraclius and Heraclius Constantine struck at this time, all in the east in the experience of the writer, which are illustrated here (figs 18-21)³³ which can surely only indicate that in the troubled times between 613 and 616/8 there may have been a number of ephemeral mints connected with Heraclius' campaigns in the east.

From the provenances it is certain that wherever these coins of type 4 were struck it was at the eastern end of the Mediterranean. The period of the production of type 4 must fall, if issues of Jerusalem, into one of two periods. The first is between early 613 (the date of the introduction of the two bust

30 CNG Auction, Triton V, January 15-16 2002, lot 2275.

31 The writer would mention at this point that, judging by the photographs, he does not believe that there is an obverse die link between *MIB* III, 77/3 and 77/4.

32 A few years ago I was shown an early print-out of the manuscript for the catalogue of a collection of Byzantine coins formed in Egypt by Raoul Baiocchi (born 1908) and family, members of « Fratelli Baiocchi », long established Egyptian jewellers and coin dealers. I was kindly given photocopies of the text and plates of the coins relevant to this article. There are general provenances for many of the coins. This catalogue is in preparation. Coins of interest were two Alexandrian solidi of the Heraclii as consuls, one of *MIB* II, 3 and one of *MIB* II, 4, both coming from the Delta, and seven solidi of type 4, one of *MIB* III, 77/3, two of *MIB* III, 77/7, two of *MIB* III, 77/8 and one of *MIB* III, 77/9, the last from the Fayum and the others from the Delta. There were no Alexandretta folles in the collection.

33 Fig. 18, *MIB* III, 107a; fig. 19, *MIB* III, 107b; fig 20, *MIB* III, – (not no. 82); fig. 21, *MIB* III, –. Although Hahn tentatively suggests either Rome or Alexandria for figures 18 and 19, all four types are eastern.

solidus at Constantinople)³⁴ and the Spring of 614, before the siege of Jerusalem but this short period is impossible since the type would then predate the bronze siege folles which continued to depict Heraclius as sole ruler and looking like Phocas. In 614 the authorities in Jerusalem obviously had no idea of how Heraclius was depicted on his Constantinopolitan coinage nor that the young Heraclius Constantine had started to appear on the coinage. In addition, although the youthful bust of Heraclius Constantine suits this period, a single year is far too short a time to produce so large a coinage in so many minor varieties. Also, if these two bust solidi of type 4 were struck in Jerusalem in 613/614, they should surely bear a stylistic resemblance to the preceding single bust solidi of type 3 which they do not. The only thing they have in common are the letters ΙΠ at the end of the reverse legends.

If type 4 was struck in Jerusalem, as has been suggested, the only alternative occasion for their issue would have been the presence of Heraclius in the city. He arrived there in early 630 to set up once again the True Cross recovered from the Persians. He would have brought a considerable retinue and troops and would no doubt have incurred considerable expenses for which it may well have been more convenient to strike coins on the spot rather than carry large supplies of Constantinopolitan solidi. Since the bulk of the finds of these coins tends to be rather to the north of Jerusalem, this could be accounted for by the fact that this is the direction in which Heraclius returned to Constantinople. However, we have noted that these two bust solidi should be considerably earlier because of the small size of the bust of Heraclius Constantine and thus of a type only issued at Constantinople between 613 and 616, a time when Jerusalem was occupied by the Persians. If these solidi were struck at the time of Heraclius' visit he would surely have made sure that these coins bore the latest Constantinopolitan design where he is depicted wearing a long beard and with his son considerably older than he was 14 years earlier (fig. 22) and, in any case, Heraclius' visit was far too short to strike so many coins in so many varieties.

Other alternative mints proposed for all these solidi of type 4 have been Cyprus, Alexandria or an eastern military mint of which the latter seems to be the only rational option.³⁵ These solidi can hardly have been struck in Cyprus. Although the island was occupied by Heraclius as consul on his journey to Constantinople when copper coins were issued it is unlikely that he left any substantial forces there requiring a gold coinage since he would have needed all his forces for the final struggle with Phocas. Had this type been struck in Cyprus one might expect an accompanying copper coinage. In addition type 4

³⁴ Heraclius Constantine was crowned by the Patriarch on 25 December 612 and again by Heraclius on 22 January 613. See references in *RN* 1997, p. 455-456.

³⁵ W. HAHN for Cyprus or a military mint and for Jerusalem, HENDY, *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy c. 300-1450*, Cambridge, 1985, p. 415-16.

bears no resemblance stylistically to the earlier consular copper coins of this mint (fig. 23) or those of Alexandretta (fig. 24). No precious metal coinage was struck in Cyprus until it obtained its own ruler, the usurper Isaac in 1184, while we have no evidence that Nicetas later occupied the island in any force since he needed all his troops to face the Persians on the mainland.

If type 4 was struck in Alexandria it must have been issued between late 613 or early 614 and the Persian attack in 619. However, it seems unlikely that such a substantial coinage could have been issued during these years of crisis. Although we know that Byzantine gold coins circulated in Egypt under the Persian occupation as a high value currency, since the Alexandrian Heraclian consular solidi (see below; figs. 30-31) were struck in minimal quantities in late 608, and possibly in indiction 13 (609-610), it seems unlikely that the Byzantines had the facility of striking such a common gold coinage as type 4 only a few years later. In addition the coins of type 4 are stylistically nothing like the Alexandrian consular solidi struck only a few years earlier (figs. 30 and 31).

We know from the biography of John the Almsgiver, who was patriarch of Alexandria until the Persian invasion, that the city was extremely wealthy and that many, presumably those who could afford to, fled the city for Cyprus between the approach of the Persians and the fall of the city.³⁶ Thus, if type 4 solidi had been issued in Alexandria, one might have expected them to be found in Cyprus today, given their commonness.

What then could be the mint of these solidi of type 4? There are so many minor varieties that they can hardly have been the product of a single mint especially as there are several differences in style and detail and it therefore seems possible that they were struck in more than one mint in the east. The fact that the coin illustrated as fig. 11, and possibly fig. 9, have altered reverse dies might indicate a certain amount of mint movement but the bulk of these coins (*MIB* III, 77/6-77/9; figs. 13-16) were surely produced in quantity and from a single mint over a period of more than a year. Alexandria between 613 and 618/9 is unlikely since the general provenance of these solidi, although eastern, is generally more northerly and we have noted that they are not found in Cyprus and they look nothing like the earlier consular solidi of Alexandria struck in 607/608 and possibly 609/610 while we have already indicated why these coins cannot have been struck in Jerusalem. If the coins illustrated as figs. 13-16 were struck in Alexandria between 613 and 615 or between 613 and *ca.* 619, it is hard to understand why their provenances are so widespread when the earlier consular Alexandrian solidi appear only to be found in Egypt.

The joint reign of Heraclius and Heraclius Constantine was one of constant fighting against the Persians with Heraclius campaigning widely. As a result there appear to be, more than in any other reign, numbers of rare solidi which by style and the excellent epigraphy of their legends must be official issues.

³⁶ FOSS, intro.

They are, in the author's experience, all eastern issues and yet, surely, all of different mints (figs. 18-21). Their rarity indicates that they are all the product of short-lived mints operating during these troubled times. Wherever the two bust Π and IX series of Heraclius' solidi were struck, it will have been in a more important and settled place, occupied for a greater length of time than anywhere that these other extremely rare and unusual issues illustrated as figs. 18-21 were produced.

The only connection between the coins with the reverse legend ending I (figs. 8-12) and those with IX and Π (figs. 13-16) is the fact that one specimen of the former (fig. 10) later had an X added to the end of the reverse legend (fig. 11). However all the coins with reverse legends ending I seem to the writer to be of a slightly different style to those with IX and Π , especially in the form of Heraclius' chlamys and the arrangement of his hair. It would not surprise the writer if these two groups were the products of more than one mint. Of course, there are some minor differences between those coins with IX and Π with and without an obverse exergual line but this consists only of the size of the imperial busts. It would be surprising if all the varieties of type 4 were struck at a single eastern mint on the fringe of the war-zone over possibly a three year period although those coins illustrated as figs. 13-16 are obviously the products of a single mint.

What other eastern mints struck coins at this time? There are copper coins with the mintmarks SELISY and ISAVRA , the former, quite common, struck at the mint of Seleucia ad Calycadnum in Heraclius' regnal years 6 and 7 (Nov. 615 to Oct. 617) (Figs 25), and the latter, much rarer, at the mint of Isaura (Zengibar Kalesi), in regnal years 7 and 8 (Nov. 616 to Oct. 618) (fig. 26).³⁷ At Seleucia, the type changed from two busts to two standing figures sometime in year 7 while at Isaura all the coins depict the emperors as busts into 618. The styles of the two mints are crude but dissimilar and it seems unlikely that the solidi of type 4 could have any connection with either of these mints unless, of course, the the gold coins were issued from a different establishment to that of the copper coinage as was usual at the major mints which struck coins in both metals.

Since the mint of Isaura continued to depict Heraclius Constantine as a small bust after November 617, it is possible that there were uncertain eastern mints where the type 4 solidi and other gold issues continued to be issued in the east into 617, well after the type had ceased to be struck at Constantinople in 616.

37 *MIB* II, 192-197.

Appendix

Solidi of the Heraclii as Consuls.

Hahn originally attributed consular solidi to the three mints of Carthage (*MIB* II, 1; fig 27), Alexandria (*MIB* II, 2; figs. 28- 29) and Cyprus (*MIB* II, 3; figs. 30-31) but later in *MIB* III he reattributed the Alexandrian issue (figs. 28-29) to Carthage, the mint at which they were obviously struck. Since Hahn had originally attributed *MIB* II, 1 to Carthage and *MIB* II, 2 to Alexandria it is possible that he then attributed *MIB* II, 3 to Cyprus since he, presumably, had to find another mint to attribute it to. However, when he reattributed *MIB* II, 2 to Carthage, he left *MIB* II, 3 at Cyprus, thus leaving no gold consular coinage for Alexandria.

Figures 27-29 are all issues of Carthage and both sizes were struck in indiction years 11 and 13 (September 607 to August 610)³⁸ and continued into the reign of Heraclius. On the other hand *MIB* II, 3 (figs. 30 and 31) were only struck in indiction 11 and possibly 13.

Only the consular solidi of Hahn type 3 (*MIB* II, 3 and 4) are Alexandrian, partly because of provenance (three in the Egyptian collection, two specimens with Delta provenances, and none in Cyprus or on the mainland nearest the island – Syria and south-east Turkey), their rarity and their crude style. Hahn attributed them to Cyprus but it is extremely unlikely that Heraclius had arrived in the island before the beginning of the twelfth indiction. It is much more likely that these rare coins dated to indiction 11 (607-608) (fig. 30), were struck in the brief period after Nicetas had occupied Alexandria but before Cottan or Bonosus had arrived in Egypt. There are rare coins struck from the same obverse die with the reverse reading, instead of VICTORIA CONSABIA (*MIB* II, 3), VICTORIA AVGGΓ (*MIB* II, 4). Hahn considers that the last letter of this legend represents indiction 13 (ΙΓ) (fig. 31) with the Ι omitted as it was on the folles of Cyprus, which may be why Hahn attributed these solidi to Cyprus.

It is possible that *MIB* II, 4 is an issue for indiction 13 (1st September 609-31st August 610) since Nicetas defeated Bonosus in October 609 and it would be quite rational for him to have issued a coinage which advertised the victory of Heraclius. The fact that there are no coins of indictional year 12 (608-609) might be accounted for by the fact that it was in this year that Nicetas was engaged in fighting the forces of Cottan and Bonosus. On the other hand, the reverse legend of *MIB* II, 4 should have celebrated the Victory of the Consuls and not the Victory of the Emperors since Heraclius was not crowned until the end of October 610.

It may be that this variety was the earliest coinage from Alexandria and that the reverse die was copied from that of an earlier solidus and that the Γ is

³⁸ Carthaginian solidi in both sizes continued to be struck by Heraclius after he became emperor, *MIB* III, 91-92.

merely a notional officina letter and not a date. Although there are obverse die links between these two varieties, these coins are generally found in such good condition that wear can play no part in dating them.

Hahn's consular type 3 (figs. 30 and 31) cannot be Cypriot – there are no finds in the island where many wealthy Alexandrians fled, or indeed in the more northerly areas where the folles of Cyprus and Alexandretta are found and we have noted that where provenances are known, they are Egyptian. Byzantine solidi circulated widely in Egypt during the Persian occupation as the high value unit of exchange.³⁹ The great rarity of these consular solidi is solely because they were originally struck in very small quantities before 1st September 608 after Nicetas arrived in Alexandria and before the arrival of Bonosus and his army and later, if we believe that Γ represents indiction 13, before Nicetas advanced north to Jerusalem to confront the Persians outside Emesa.

39 Foss, intro. and footnote 79.





