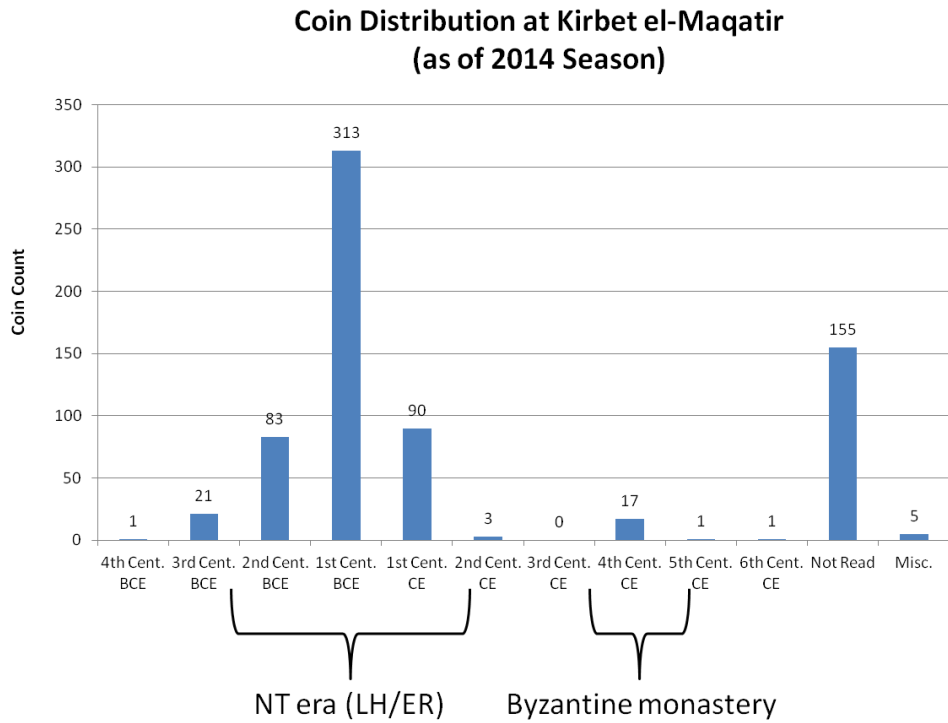


A Persian to Byzantine History at Khirbet el-Maqatir – Based on Numismatics  
Donald McNeeley

Numismatic evidence can be used to collaborate the occupational phases within an archaeological site. Khirbet el-Maqatir has four occupational phases: an Amorite Bronze Age fortress, an Israelite occupation from the Iron Age I (IA I), a city from the NT Hellenistic/Roman time, and a Byzantine monastery. During the NT and the Byzantine periods coins would be dropped by accident and then wait patiently for many centuries for the excavator's trowel to find them and use them to explain the chronology of the site. The graph below (Figure 1) shows the overall distribution of the 690 coins through the centuries uncovered from Kirbert el-Maqatir. The distribution of coins suggests extensive occupation time frames that match the overall occupation years as defined from other archaeological evidence (pottery, architecture, and other objects). The earliest coin (Figure 2) excavated thus far was minted in the late Persian Period (4th century BC). This coin when combined with a partial Persian period lamp and a piece of Persian era jewelry excavated in 2014 indicates a minimal occupation of this site in the Persian era.



**Figure 1: Coin Distribution by Century**












**Figure 2: Earliest Coin Excavated From Site**


This coin (Figure 2) was minted during the Later Persian Period. For being in the ground for such a long time, it seems to be in fairly good shape.

Another view of the distribution is in the following table. Starting with when the site was occupied (Aqua for LH/ER period, Green for Byzantine) and associated archaeological periods, each coin type (normally named after the king who authorized the minting) has been listed, the timeframe the coin was

minted, and the total coins for that coin type. Additionally, a picture of significant coin(s) associated with the archaeological periods is shown.

Occupied	Period	Coin Type Names	Timeframe	Number Coins	Representative Coins of Period
Not occupied or minimally occupied	Persian Period	Yehizkayah	550-329 BC	1	 <p>Above: Yehizkayah From Maqatir</p>
	Early Hellenistic (332-198 BC)	Ptolemy II	285-246 BC	4	 <p>Above: Antiochus III From Maqatir</p>
		Ptolemy III	246-221 BC	1	
		Antiochus III	223-187 BC	17	
		Indeterminate	332-198 BC	2	
	Late Hellenistic (198-63 BC)	Seleucus IV	187-175 BC	1	 <p>Above: Antiochus IV From Maqatir</p>
		Antiochus IV	175-164 BC	14	
		Demetrius I	162-150 BC	4	
		Antiochus VII	138-129 BC	2	
		Hasmonean	167-63 BC	24	 <p>Above: John Hyrcanus I From Maqatir</p>
		John Hyrcanus I	135-104 BC	12	
		Demetrius II	145-141 BC & 129-125 BC	2	
		Ptolemy X Alexander I	107-88 BC	1	

Occupied	Period	Coin Type Names	Timeframe	Number Coins	Representative Coins of Period
		Alexander Jannaeus	104–76 BC	316	 Above: Alexander Jannaeus From Maqatir
		Indeterminate	198-63 BC	9	 Above: Herod I From Maqatir
	Mattathias Antigonus	40–37 BC	2		
	Herod I	37–4 BC	15		
	Aretas IV	9 BC–AD 40	1		
	Herod Archelaus	4 B.C.–A.D. 6	1		
	Valerius Gratus	AD 15–26	6	 Above: Pontius Pilate From Maqatir	
	Pontius Pilate	AD 26–36	3		
	Agrippa I	AD 37–44	7	 Above: Festus From Maqatir	
	Festus	AD 60–62	3		
	Antonius Felix	AD 52–60	3		
	Porcius Festus	AD 59–60	1	 Above: Jewish Revolt From Maqatir	
	Jewish Revolt	AD 66–70	45		
	Marcus Ambibulus	AD 70	2		
	Tyre	AD 73	1		
	Trajan	AD 98–117	2		
	Indeterminate	63 BC - AD 135	21		
	Early	Theodosius I	AD 379-383	5	

Occupied	Period	Coin Type Names	Timeframe	Number Coins	Representative Coins of Period
	Byzantine (AD 324-491)	Early Byzantine III	AD 392-450	4	 <p>Above: Theodosius I From website</p>
		Early Byzantine IV	AD 450-491	13	
		Indeterminate	AD324-491	3	
	Late Byzantine (AD 491-640)	Late Byzantine	AD 491-640	1	
	Modern	Modern coins		5	
	In Process	In processing and analysis		135	
White	No permanent occupation		Total coins	690	
Aqua	LH/ER Period				
Green	Byzantine				

### Occupational History Based on the Numismatics

From the archaeological evidence, the site was first occupied near the end of the Middle Bronze III period (1600-1485 BC) and remained occupied until the Late Bronze destruction (c. 1400 BC). The site was re-occupied and abandoned during the Iron I (1177-915 BC) by the Israelites. The site remained abandoned until a new era of occupation by Israelites either returning from the Persian exile or during the Ptolemaic era (301-198 BC). While coins from the Early Hellenistic period (332-167 BC) featuring Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285–246 BC) and Ptolemy III (246–221BC) have been identified on the site, over 75% of this period's coins are associated with Antiochus III (223–187 BC). After Antiochus III defeated the Ptolemies at the battle of Paneas, the Land of Israel passed to Seleucid dominion, so this would suggest an initial village settlement of c. 200 BC near the end of the Early Hellenistic Period, though some minimal occupation from both the Persian and Ptolemaic periods is possible. This village continued to exist through the Late Hellenistic (LH) Period (198-63 BC) and into the Early Roman (ER) Period (63 BC - AD 69) for a total of 269 years. While the name of this LH/ER city is not yet known, the possibility of it being the Ephraim of John 11:53-54 is suggested. The demise of this city definitely occurred during the third year of the First Jewish Revolt against Rome (AD 68/69) based on other archaeological evidence and the sudden absence of coins after AD 69. Between the time of the city's demise and the next occupant, the site was vacant for 315 years. The Byzantine coinage from Maqatir suggests that during the reign of Theodosius I (AD 383 - 395) the site was re-occupied and a memorial basilica and monastery was built on the summit above the old LH/ER city.