

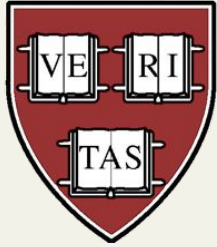
From the collection of  
**The Semitic Museum**  
Harvard University

## The Coinage of Ancient Judea

*Artifacts from the Numismatic Collection*

*Semitic Museum,  
Harvard University*





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## Early Coins in Ancient Judea

Coins of the ancient Mediterranean were first struck in Asia Minor in the 7th century BCE. Coinage was unknown to ancient Israel at that time.



[Click map for larger view](#)

The territory of Judea was ruled under a number of foreign dynasties before coming into its own during the Hasmonean Period. Each foreign entity impacted the style and type of coinage which was minted and circulated within the land.



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Silver tetradrachm of Alexander the Great  
minted in Tyre circa 305–294 BCE

2.5 cm, 17.4 g



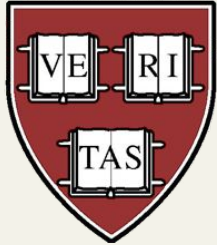
Obv: Head of Heracles, right, wearing lion skin;  
border of dots.



Rev: Zeus, enthroned, seated left holding eagle in  
right hand, scepter in left hand; monogram in field left  
and below throne; Greek inscription to right  
ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ ("of Alexander")

Alexander the Great was tolerant of Jewish religious practices, and the people of Judea fared well under him.  
Coins of Alexander the Great were minted extensively across Europe and the Ancient Near East and circulated widely,

**1982.2.331**



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## Bar Kochba Revolt

132–135 CE

The Second Jewish Revolt, also known as the Bar Kochba Revolt, was named after the leader of the Jewish rebellion, Simon Bar Kosiba.

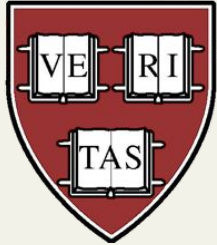
There is significant difference between coinage of the Bar Kochba Revolt and the First Jewish Revolt. Coins of the first war were minted from flans of pure silver; however, for the second war, rebellious Jews struck their designs and inscription on previously minted Roman and Greek denarii and tetradrachms. Many coins of the Second Revolt reveal traces of the original pagan design type.



A lead weight bearing the Paleo-Hebrew inscription  
“Simon of Kosiba, Prince of  
Israel.”

The reverse depicts a palm  
branch. (Color inverted  
version on right).

From R. Deutsch: A Lead Weight of  
Shimon Bar Kokhba, IEJ [Israel  
Numismatic Journal] no. 51 (2001) p.  
96-8.



From the collection of  
**The Semitic Museum**  
Harvard University

Bronze coin of Year 3  
circa 134/135 CE

2.5 cm, 10.39 g



Obv: Seven branched palm tree; inscription  
יָאֵו שִׁמּוֹן (‘‘Simon’’); border of dots



Rev: Vine leaf surrounded by inscription  
חֵירוּת יְרוּשָׁלַיִם (‘‘Freedom of  
Jerusalem’’); border of dots

Coins of the Bar Kochba Revolt emphasized the importance of reclaiming Jerusalem and restoring it as the religious, political center of the Jews. By either direct or indirect means, all coins of the Second Jewish Revolt refer to Israel, holy Jerusalem, and its Temple.

**1982.5.3**