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ABBREVIATIONS

AJC Y. Meshorer. *Ancient Jewish Coinage*. Dix Hills, NY 1982
AJN *American Journal of Numismatics*
BMC e.g., *BMC Arab*.: G.F. Hill. *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Arabia, Mesopotamia, and Persia*. London 1922
BMCO e.g., *BMCO* 1: S. Lane-Poole. *The Coins of the Eastern Khaleefehs in the British Museum. Catalogue of the Oriental Coins in the British Museum* 1. London 1875
CH *Coin Hoards*
CHL Y. Meshorer, G. Bijovsky and W. Fischer-Bossert. *Coins of the Holy Land: The Abraham and Marian Sofaer Collection at the American Numismatic Society and the Israel Museum*. Ed. by D. Hendin and A. Meadows. New York 2013
CIL *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*
CNP e.g., L. Kadman. *The Coins of Akko Ptolemais* (Corpus Nummorum Palaestinensium IV). Jerusalem 1961
CRE e.g., H. Mattingly. *The Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum I. Augustus to Vitellius*. London 1923
DOC e.g., P. Grierson. *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* 3. *Leo III to Nicephorus III 717–1081*. Washington, D.C. 1973
IEJ *Israel Exploration Journal*
IG *Inscriptiones Graecae*
IGCH M. Thompson, O. Mørkholm and C.M. Kraay. *An Inventory of Greek Coin Hoards*. New York 1973
INJ *Israel Numismatic Journal*
INR *Israel Numismatic Research*
LA *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Liber Annuus*
LRBC e.g., P.V. Hill and J.P.C. Kent. Part 1: The Bronze Coinage of the House of Constantine, A.D. 324–46. In *Late Roman Bronze Coinage (A.D. 324–498)*. London 1965. Pp. 4–40
MIB e.g., W. Hahn. *Von Anastasius I. bis Justinianus I (491–565)*. Moneta Imperii Byzantini 1. Österreische Akademie der Wissenschaften Philosophisch-Historische Klasse Denkschriften 109. Veröffentlichungen der Numismatischen Kommission 1. Vienna 1973
MIBE W. Hahn. *Money of the Incipient Byzantine Empire (Anastasius I–Justinian I, 491–565)* (Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Numismatik und Geldgeschichte der Universität Wien 6). Vienna 2000
MIBEC W. Hahn and M. Metlich. *Money of the Incipient Byzantine Empire Continued (Justin II—Revolt of the Heraclii, 565–610)*. (Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Numismatik und Geldgeschichte der Universität Wien 13). Vienna 2009
MN *American Numismatic Society Museum Notes*
NC *Numismatic Chronicle*
NCirc. *Numismatic Circular*
NNM *Numismatic Notes and Monographs*
RIC e.g., C.H.V. Sutherland. *The Roman Imperial Coinage* I. *From 31 BC to AD 69*. London 1984
RN *Revue Numismatique*
RPC e.g., A. Burnett, M. Amandry and I. Carradice. *From Vespasian to Domitian (AD 69–96). Roman Provincial Coinage* 2. London 1999
RRC M.H. Crawford. *Roman Republican Coinage*. Cambridge 1974
SC e.g., A. Houghton and C. Lorber. *Seleucid Coins. A Comprehensive Catalogue. Part I. Seleucus I through Antiochus III*. New York, Lancaster, PA-London 2002
SICA e.g., S. Album and T. Goodwin. *Sylloge of Islamic Coins in the Ashmolean* 1*: The Pre-Reform Coinage of the Early Islamic Period*. Oxford 2002
SNAT e.g., L. Ilisch. *Sylloge Numorum Arabicorum Tübingen–Palästina IVa Bilād aš-Šām* I. Tübingen 1993
SNG *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum* (with suffix as necessary, e.g. *SNG Cop.*)
SNR *Schweizerische Numismatische Rundschau*
TINC *Transactions of the International Numismatic Congress*
TJC Y. Meshorer. *A Treasury of Jewish Coins from the Persian Period to Bar Kochba*. Jerusalem-Nyack 2001
ZfN *Zeitschrift für Numismatik*

Abila: A Phantom Arab-Byzantine Mint

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Abstract
It has been argued that the obverse legends of a small group of coins point to the existence of a mint striking Arab-Byzantine coinage of the Imperial Image type at Abila during the late seventh century CE. It is argued here that the legends on these coins have been misread, and that they preserve corrupt readings of the name of Gerasa rather than of Abila, although whether they are the genuine product of Gerasa or the product of some 'irregular' mint nearby instead remains unclear.

Ten named mints certainly struck so-called Imperial Image or Phase 2 coinage in the greater Syrian region in a period roughly dated from the middle of the 670s to the early 690s CE, but five mints dominated the production: Emesa, Heliopolis, Damascus, Tiberias and Scythopolis.[1] Each of these mints used a different obverse design. In the case of Scythopolis, this obverse design (Fig. 1) imitated that of the regular Byzantine *folles* struck under Justin II and Sophia during the period 565–578 (Fig. 2) depicting two figures seated side by side, but with one important difference: Both figures held transverse cross scepters, whereas the original obverse had depicted the figure to the left (Justin II) with a *globus cruciger* rather than a cross scepter.[2] Initially, these coins followed the weight and size of their Byzantine model, but these declined over time (from 14 g to about 4 g, and from about 30 mm to 25 mm in diameter). Nevertheless, the coins produced at Scythopolis were substantially larger and heavier than those produced in any other named mint with the exception of those produced at Gerasa nearby in the same *jund*. The main coinage of Gerasa imitated the same model copied by Scythopolis with only relatively minor differences of detail in the obverse design, the most noticeable being that the *globus cruciger* remained in Justin II's hand.[3] The similarities between these

1 For a survey of Arab-Byzantine coinage in the greater Syrian region, see Goodwin and Gyselen 2015:12–28.

2 For a detailed study of the coinage of Scythopolis, see Oddy 2015. As to how the viewer was supposed to interpret these figures surrounded by the name Scythopolis, see Woods 2015:144–150.

3 The standard treatment of the coinage of Gerasa remains Amitai-Preiss, Berman and Qedar 1994–1999. It may serve to illustrate the relative productivity of the mints at Scythopolis and Gerasa to note that Oddy 2015 reports the existence of 295 coins from the former and 162 from the latter.

two groups of coins included the fact that both depicted the name of the mint in Greek around the central design of the obverse, whereas the coins struck elsewhere preferred to depict the name of the mint on the reverse in accordance with standard Byzantine practice.



Fig. 1. A *fals* of Scythopolis (6.25 g, 27 mm; Zurqieh on VCoins, October 29, 2015; SKU aa311) (1.5:1 scale)



Fig. 2. A *follis* of Nicomedia under Justin II and Sophia (13.18 g, 30 mm, *MIB* 46a; CNG Auction 161, March 28, 2007, Lot 291) (1.5:1 scale)

In the case of the coins struck at Scythopolis, the name of the mint runs clockwise around the circumference starting in the lower left quadrant. To be more specific, the legend ϹΚVΘΟ runs up the left side of the seated pair and the legend ΠΟΛΗϹ runs down the right side of the pair, to spell the name of Scythopolis in full. This name is in the nominative case, but preserves a variant spelling of the noun ΠΟΛΙϹ wherein *eta* replaces the normal *iota*. In the same way, the spelling of the name of Emesa on its coins varies between ЄMHCIC and ЄMICHC, while spelling of the name of Tiberias varies between ΤΙΒЄΡΙΑΔΟϹ and ΤΗΒЄΡΙΑΔΟϹ.[4] In the case of the coins struck at Gerasa, the intention generally seems to have been to spell the name of

4 For the coinage of Emesa, see *SICA* I: Pls. 37–38, Nos. 531–558; for that of Tiberias, Pl. 40, Nos. 588, 590–592.

the mint clockwise around the circumference also. In the majority of cases, the letters may be found either crammed together to the right of the seated figures as ΓЄΡΑϽΟΝ (Fig. 3) or spread to both sides of them (Γ)Є–ΡΑϽΟΝ (Fig. 4), where the initial letter Γ seems always to be omitted in the latter case.[5] Three features of this name deserve special attention.



Fig. 3. A *fals* of Gerasa (11.74 g, 31 mm; CNG Auction 248, January 26, 2011, Lot 495). The legend ΓЄΡΑϽΟΝ is visible to the right of the seated figures on the obverse (1.5:1 scale)



Fig. 4. A *fals* of Gerasa (11.36 g, 29 mm; Zurqieh on VCoins, January 2, 2013; SKU 11426). The legend ΡΑϽΟИ is visible to the right of the seated figures on the obverse (1.5:1 scale)

The first noteworthy feature of this name is that it always includes a ligature formed from a lower-case medial *sigma* and an *omicron*, where the result looks very like a letter *beta* that has fallen onto its front. This is not the only example of the use

5 For a specimen depicting the legend crammed together to the left of the two figures; see Goussous 1996:78. For three specimens depicting the legend crammed together to the right of the two figures in the more normal fashion, see Naghawi 1989:220, Fig. 1. For three more specimens of the same type; see Bates and Kovacs 1996:167, Nos. 47–49.

of a ligatured form on an Arab-Byzantine coin, as the mint at Heliopolis used the ligatured combination of *omicron* and *upsilon* (ȣ) in the spelling of its name on the reverse of its Imperial Image coinage, but it is certainly unusual (see *SICA* I: Pls. 39–40, Nos. 583, 586). The second feature is the use of the letter *omicron* where the letter *omega* would have been more correct. One finds a parallel to this in the obverse legend ЄN TȣTO NIKA as used on the *folles* of Constans II during the period 641–657, where the final O of TȣTO should actually read Ѡ.[6] Finally, the intention seems to have been to spell the legend ГЄPACѠN as if the name of Gerasa was in the genitive case plural, whatever the precise letter forms used.[7] As far as the case is concerned, this is not problematic. The main series of coins from Emesa and Tiberias depict their names in the genitive case also, ЄMHCIC (or some slight variant) 'of Emesa' rather than ЄMHCA in the nominative, and TIBЄPIAΔOC (or some slight variant) 'of Tiberias' rather than TIBЄPIAC in the nominative. Coins from Heliopolis depict a slightly abbreviated form of its name in the genitive also, HΛIȣΠOΛЄ for HΛIȣΠOΛЄѠC 'of Heliopolis' rather than HΛIȣΠOΛIC or –HC in the nominative. However, the name of Gerasa in Greek (ГЄPACA) was unusual in that it could be treated either as a singular feminine noun ending in –A (of the first declension by modern conventions) or as a neuter plural noun ending in –A (of the second declension).[8] In this case, the person responsible for the legend on these coins has clearly decided to construe this name as if it were a neuter plural noun ending in –A. In summary, the legend on the coins from Gerasa reads ГЄPAƧON in a somewhat clumsy attempt at ГЄPACѠN where this was intended to mean 'of Gerasa'.

So what has any of this to do with Abila? It was in the course of his work on the coinage of Scythopolis and Gerasa that Oddy noticed a group of coins whose obverse legends included what looked like the sequence *alpha*, *beta* and *lambda* — ABΛ (Oddy 2004; Oddy 2011). Given that the module and design of these coins

6 *DOC* 2/2:442–453, Nos. 59a-78b.2 (Constantinople); 476–477, Nos. 134–136 (Carthage).

7 Oddy 1994 discusses the coinage of Gerasa without commenting on the precise reading or meaning of the mint legend. Amitai-Preiss, Berman and Qedar (1994–1999:139) translate this legend as 'of the people of Gerasa', that is, as if it read ГЄPACHNѠN instead, or was some abbreviation of this. However, such a reading would be inconsistent with the practice of the other Arab-Byzantine mints that always use the name of the town rather than the ethnic denoting its inhabitants. One notes here that the Imperial Image coins from Jerusalem bear the mint name IЄPOCOΛVMѠN, meaning simply 'of Jerusalem', but Goodwin (2005:87 and 2015:52) mistakenly translates this as 'of the people of Jerusalem'. The reason for the genitive plural ending in this legend has is that the name IЄPOCOΛVMA 'Jerusalem' is neuter plural in form; see Lampe 1961:671. The legend 'of the people of Jerusalem' would actually read IЄPOCOΛVMITѠN.

8 For its treatment as a neuter plural noun, see e.g., Josephus, *BJ* 2:458, 3:47, 4:487; for its treatment as a singular feminine noun, see e.g., Euseb. *Onomasticon* 16:20, 32:7, 64:2, 102:21, 110:13, 134:20.

resembled that of the coinage of Scythopolis and Gerasa, he naturally assumed both that this sequence formed part of some mint name and that this town would have had to be situated relatively close to Scythopolis and Gerasa. He therefore identified the town of Abila within the same *jund* of al-Urdunn as the site of a mint striking Arab-Byzantine coinage. While other specialists in Arab-Byzantine coinage have proven noticeably reluctant to accept the existence of a mint at Abila, no one seems to have reexamined Oddy's evidence and arguments in order to advance an alternative explanation of the coins that he discussed.[9] The numismatic trade has been less reluctant than Oddy's academic colleagues to accept his arguments, so that one can now come across coins attributed to Abila as if there were no doubt whatsoever concerning the existence of this mint.[10]

Finally, one should note that none of the coins discussed by Oddy display the sequence ABIΛ, as he himself readily admits, so none actually spell the name of Abila correctly. As we will see next, the coins of his Group 1 perhaps come nearest if it is correct to read their legend as ABΛ–HƆ, which does indeed resemble ABIΛHC 'of Abila', but that is not the only or even the most plausible explanation of this type. Oddy concluded his last treatment of this subject with the hopeful prediction that "it can only be a matter of time before a more literate coin with one of these legends can be discovered" (Oddy 2011:341). However, another five years have now elapsed without the discovery of such a coin, and this during a period when a substantial number of Arab-Byzantine coins have entered the market, so that the prospect of discovering a coin with the required sequence ABIΛ looks markedly less likely than it previously did. Hence, it is the purpose of this note to reexamine Oddy's evidence and arguments in order to offer an alternative explanation of the sequence ABΛ and the coins attributed to Abila.

Oddy (2011:340–341) listed 13 coins that include the sequence ABΛ in the obverse legend. He then divided these coins into three groups according to their legends. His Group 1 consists of five coins, all from the same obverse die, where "the obverse legend reads ABΛ downwards on the right of the figures and either CH downwards or HC upwards on the left" (Fig. 5). To these, one may now add another three examples, all from the same obverse die as the examples already

9 Foss (2008:55) included a reference to a coin from 'Abila?', while carefully stating that "the attribution must remain in question". Walmsley (2010:23) briefly suggested that these coins could belong to Arbela (modern Irbid) rather than Abila. Goodwin and Gyselen (2015:20 n. 74) briefly acknowledged Oddy's theory about Abila, but failed to include it among the named mints producing Imperial Image coinage without explaining why they did not do so. However, Lichtenberger and Raja (2015:303) and Schulze 2016:3 do refer to a mint at Abila as if this were uncontested.

10 This includes the attribution to Abila of coins that do not belong to any of the groups so identified by Oddy 2011. See Stephen Album, Sale 19, May 15, 2014, Lot 211 and Zurqieh on VCoins, January 23, 2016, SKU aa803.

noted by Oddy, bringing the number of known examples to eight.[11] His Group 2 consists of five coins from two obverse dies, where "the obverse legend reads ABΛ downwards on the right of the figures and either ЄΔ downwards or ΔЄ upwards on the left" (Fig. 6). To this, one may now add a sixth example, from dies known from the existing examples (Baldwin, Islamic Coin Auction 20, May 8, 2012, Lot 55). Oddy also included another coin in this group where the legend to the left of the figures on the obverse reads either AΛ downwards or ΛA upwards, this because it is die linked by means of its reverse to the other coins within this group. Finally, his Group 3 consists of two coins from the same pair of dies where the obverse legend seems to read ABΛ downwards on the left of the figures this time, and either ЄOΛΛΛ downwards or ΛΛΛOЄ upwards on the right (Fig. 7). Unfortunately, the reading of the legend to the right is most uncertain as it is only preserved on one of the two apparent specimens of this type, and only poorly preserved there, so that Oddy (2004:239) had previously interpreted it as ΠOMA reading downwards. Indeed, Foss (2008:140) read ABI downwards on the left and ЄONH downwards on the right.



Fig. 5. An 'Abila' *fals* of Oddy Group 1 (8.20 g, 29 mm; private coll.) (1.5:1 scale)



Fig. 6. An 'Abila' *fals* of Oddy Group 2 (10.19 g; Israel Museum 89.8.12319). (1.5:1 scale)

11 See CNG, Auction 209, April 22, 2009, Lot 466, misidentified as a coin of Scythopolis; Stephen Album Sale 19, May 15, 2014, Lot 209, misidentified as a coin of Scythopolis; Zurqieh on VCoins, March 28, 2016, SKU aa1484.



Fig. 7. An 'Abila' *fals* of Oddy Group 3 (7.25 g, 29 mm; Dumbarton Oaks BZC.2004.35). Dumbarton Oaks, with permission. (1.5:1 scale)

The most striking features of these groups of coins, although Oddy does not comment on it, are the close similarities between the obverse legends of his Groups 1 and 2 (excluding the sole coin in Group 2 with the sequence ΛA to the left of the seated figures). In each case, a pair of letters to the left of the seated figures is separated from the sequence ABΛ to the right. In each case, this pair of letters is similarly situated immediately above the front post of the throne. Finally, the forms of the two pairs of letters are also similar: the lunate C of the Group 1 obverse type corresponds to the form and sequence of the Є of the Group 2 obverse type, while the angular H of the Group 1 obverse type corresponds to the angularity and sequence of the Δ of the same Group 2 obverse type. It ought to be clear, therefore, that these legends are closely related, that either one represents a slight corruption of the other, that is, that HC has been miscopied as ΔЄ or ΔЄ has been miscopied as HC, or they both represent a slight corruption of a common ancestor. Attention has been drawn to the fact that the obverse legend on the coins of Group 2 could actually be read as ABΓ–ΔЄ, that is, as a sequence formed of the first five letters of the Greek alphabet, if the right angled *lambda* was treated as a letter *gamma* instead.[12] However, there is no clear evidence that it was to be so understood. Furthermore, even if the engraver of this type had misinterpreted his model as a sequence formed from the first five letters from the alphabet, it would not really be clear whether he had misread the apparent legend ABΛ–HC to create this sequence or some common ancestor once more.

Oddy assumed that the obverse legend must begin with the sequence ABΛ in the case of each of his three Groups, and so summarized their legends as follows:

12 Amitai-Preiss, Berman and Qedar 1994–1999:148, Nos. D10 and 10a. Foss (2008:55) seemed to accept this reading also.

Group 1: ABΛ–CH or ABΛ–HC
Group 2: ABΛ–ЄΔ or ABΛ–ΔЄ
ABΛ–AΛ or ABΛ–ΛA
Group 3: ABΛ–ЄOΛΛΛ or ABΛ–ΛΛΛOЄ

One cannot argue with the direction in which Oddy reads these inscriptions, because the obverse legends on the coins of Scythopolis and Gerasa normally do read in the same clockwise direction. However, one can question his assumption concerning the starting point of these legends, his claim that they begin with the A of the apparent sequence ABΛ. He attempted to justify his position by pointing to the fact that the mint name of Gerasa (usually) starts on the right of the seated figures, which is where the ABΛ sequence is situated in the case of coins of Groups 1 and 2. However, in those cases the mint name is fully contained in the space to the right of these figures. One does not have to read across from right to left *beneath* these figures to finish the reading of the mint name on their left. If one assumes that the legend reads from left to right clockwise *above* the main design instead, as it does in the case of the standard type from Scythopolis with the broken legend CKVΘO–ΠOΛHC, and of the type from Gerasa with the broken legend (Γ)Є–PAƆON, the legends of the three groups can be read as follows:

Group 1: HƆ–ABΛ
Group 2: ΔЄ–ABΛ
ΛA–ABΛ
Group 3: ΛBA–ЄOΛΛΛ

Oddy did not comment upon what is perhaps the most striking feature of the ABΛ group of coins. It is the similarity in position (with the exception of the two coins of his Group 3), sequence and form between the ABΛ of this group and the AƆON of the coins produced at Gerasa, whether of the type with the legend ΓЄPAƆON crammed together to the right of the seated figures or the type with the broken legend (Γ)Є–PAƆON spread to either side of them. The A of the ABΛ group corresponds to the A of the coins from Gerasa, the apparent *beta* B of the ABΛ group corresponds to the ligatured combination of *sigma* and *omicron* in the coins from Gerasa, and the apparent *lambda* Λ of the ABΛ group corresponds to the *nu* N of the coins from Gerasa. In other words, the sequence ABΛ is simply a slight corruption of the sequence AƆON from the legend ΓЄPAƆON, the primary difference being that the original *nu* has been transformed into a *lambda*.[13] This identification is reinforced by the fact that if one identifies the apparent *beta* of the ABΛ group with

13 For a similar transformation of an original *nu* into a *lambda*, note that it is generally agreed now that the legend ΛЄO occurring on the obverse of many Imperial Image coins from Damascus derives from the last half of the legend ANANЄO on the reverse of the *folles* of Constans II. See Goodwin 2005:67 n. 31; Foss 2008:28, 46.

the ligatured combination of *sigma* and *omicron*, it is revealed to be of the same orientation of the other two letters within the sequence, and not a *beta* that has been strangely rotated 45 degrees clockwise. If one then turns to the remaining part of the legend from the ΑΒΛ group, one notes the similarity once more between the ΔЄ of the Group 2 coins and the ΓЄ at the start of the mint name ΓЄΡΑϽΟΝ, where it is clear that the *delta* represents a misreading of the original *gamma*. One also notes the similarity between the ΗϽ of the Group 1 coins and the ΓЄ at the start of the mint name ΓЄΡΑϽΟΝ, where it is clear that the *eta* represents a misreading of the original *gamma* and the (reversed) *sigma* a misreading of the original *epsilon*. It seems probable, therefore, that the legends ΗϽ–ΑΒΛ and ΔЄ–ΑΒΛ, better transcribed as ΗϽ–ΑϽΟΛ and ΔЄ–ΑϽΟΛ, represent similar corruptions of a common original legend ΓЄ–ΡΑϽΟΝ, where the first two letters of this legend have been corrupted into broadly similar forms, the third letter *rho* has been omitted altogether, and the final letter corrupted into a similar form once more. This leaves only the two coins of Group 3. It seems impossible now to detect what sequence of error resulted in the obverse legend ΛΒΑ–ЄΟΛΛΛ, or however exactly it should be read, but the continued presence of the ΑΒΛ sequence, even if reversed and/or in retrograde, suggests that this also derives ultimately from the legend ΓЄΡΑϽΟΝ.

It is my argument, therefore, that the ΑΒΛ group of coins as identified by Oddy all preserve corrupt versions of the name of Gerasa rather than of Abila. There seem to be two possible explanations of this phenomenon. The first is that these coins were the official product of the mint at Gerasa, but were produced at a time when the die engravers there were no longer literate in Greek, did not understand the inscription that they were supposed to be copying, and so bungled it badly.

It is noteworthy in this respect that the latest coins from Scythopolis, as determined by their declining weight, display increased errors in their reverse legends, with retrograde letters and the occasional transposition of legends between left and right fields (Oddy 2015:162–165). Hence declining weight and declining levels of literacy or accuracy in the reproduction of legends combine to confirm that these coins really were the latest product of Scythopolis. On this basis, the best evidence that the ΑΒΛ group of coins were in fact the last product of Gerasa would be the discovery that they weigh much less than the earlier coins with the correct obverse legends. However, the eight examples of Oddy's Group 1 noted above display a range of weights from 10.70 g to 7.70 g that seems generally consistent with the range of weights displayed by coins of correct legends ΓЄΡΑϽΟΝ and (Γ)Є–ΡΑϽΟΝ, so that it is clear that one cannot distinguish between them on the basis of weight.

The second possibility is that the ΑΒΛ group coins were not produced at Gerasa, but at some other mint where careless or illiterate die engravers bungled the mint name as they attempted to imitate the coinage of Gerasa. It has become increasingly clear that, during the Imperial Image phase of production, a number of small mints struck 'irregular' coins in close imitation of those struck in a nearby town. For example, there was an 'irregular' production of coinage in close imitation

of the Imperial Image coinage of Emesa and a particularly large production of coinage in close imitation of the Imperial Image type of Damascus by a mint now conventionally referred to as the Pseudo-Damascus mint.[14] It is possible, therefore, that the ABΛ group of coins represents a similar 'irregular' production of coinage by some small mint in the vicinity of Gerasa.

Where one can distinguish, the obverse dies of Oddy's Groups 1 and 2 depict both seated figures with transverse cross scepters in the manner of the coins struck at Scythopolis despite bearing a corrupt form of the name of Gerasa. Furthermore, the sole obverse die used for the coins of Group 1 depicts a small cross high between the heads of the seated figures such as one finds on the coins of Scythopolis, while also depicting a large star at waist level between these figures reminiscent of the star between the heads of the figures on the coins of Gerasa. In other words, this obverse type combines the cross of Scythopolis with the star of Gerasa. The fact that these coins combine different influences from Scythopolis and Gerasa in this way, together with the corrupt nature of their legends, could encourage the belief that they are so-called 'irregular' coins as already noted. However, it may simply be the case that the last die engravers at Gerasa copied elements of the designs of the coinage of Scythopolis as they proceeded with their work. This confusion of the earlier designs of Scythopolis and Gerasa was simply another sign of the same carelessness that saw them so badly bungle the mint name Gerasa .

In conclusion, there is no good evidence for the existence of an Arab-Byzantine mint at Abila. The obverse legends of those coins recently attributed to Abila are best explained as corrupt versions of the name of Gerasa. It remains unclear whether these coins are best treated as the products of Gerasa or of some 'irregular' mint nearby imitating the product of Gerasa; however, the evidence for attributing them to Abila in particular does not withstand close scrutiny.

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14 See Schulze 2015 who seemed to prefer the term 'semi-official' in reference to these mints and their product. Alternatively, Goodwin and Gyselen 2015:38–40 seemed to prefer the term 'irregular'. However, all refer to the same phenomenon.

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