

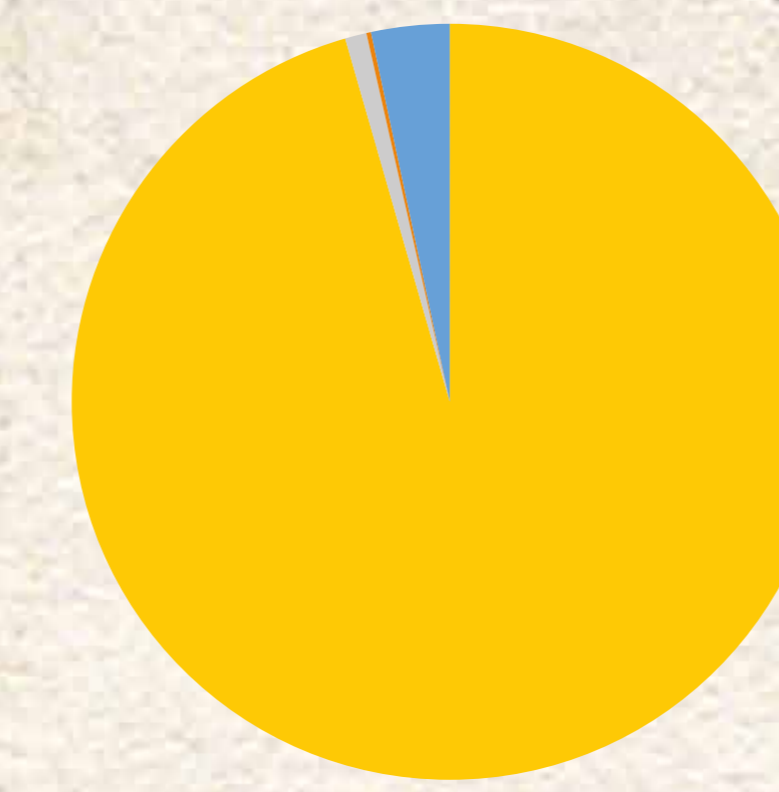
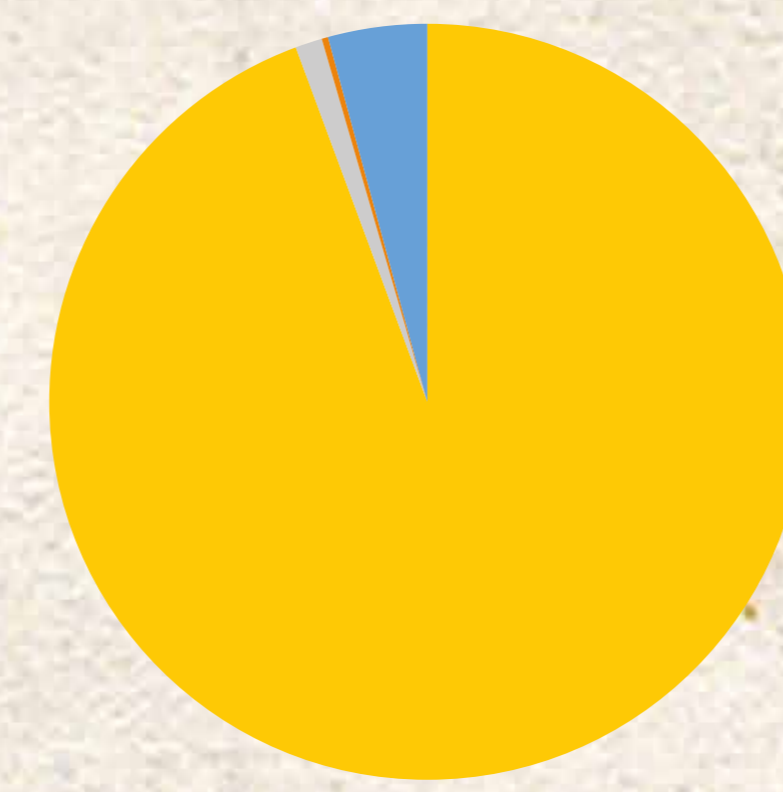
THE CARTHAGE 1945 HOARD

This hoard was found at the site of Carthage (near modern Tunis) in 1945. Piecing together its history has been a difficult process because two decades passed between its discovery and the study of it (by Philip Whitting). The hoard contained between 32 and 72 gold coins. The original Byzantine Carthaginian owner probably buried it sometime after 641, the same time that the Byzantine Syrian owner of Hoard A was burying that in northern Syria (see the case opposite).

Like Byzantine Syria, Byzantine North Africa in the 7th century saw protracted war with the newly-emergent Islamic Caliphate. By 642 what is now Egypt and Libya had changed hands, bringing the Caliphate to the borders of Byzacena and Zeugitana (roughly the area of modern Tunisia). Then various pressures led the Byzantine governor of North Africa, Gregory, to declare himself Emperor in 646, before being killed in a battle with the Caliphate at Sufetula the following year. As Whitting himself put it, 'It is not difficult to find sound reasons for a concealment of treasure around 646'.



● Gold
● Silver
● Copper
● Other



● Gold
● Silver
● Copper
● Other

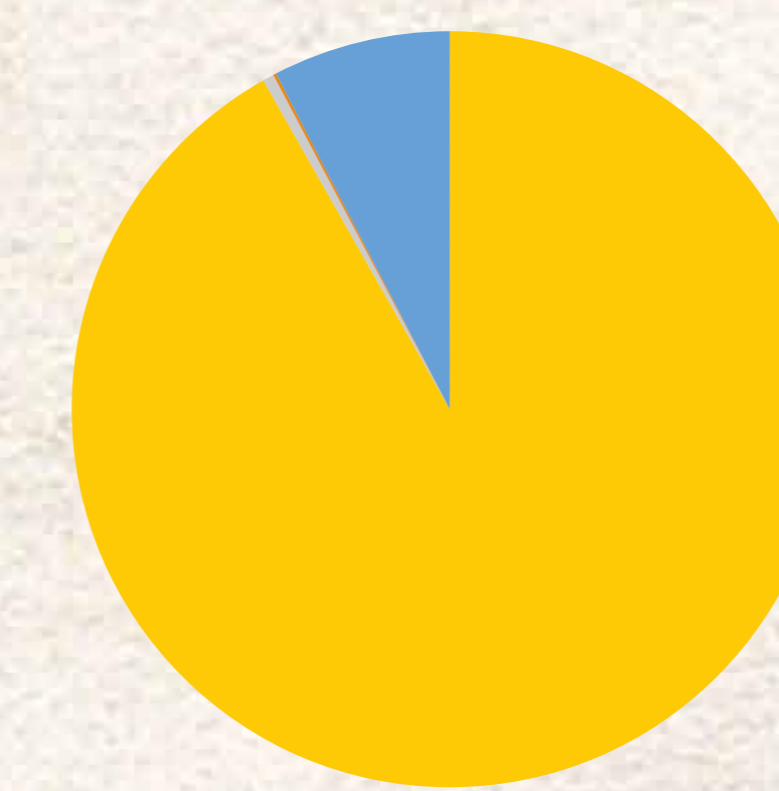
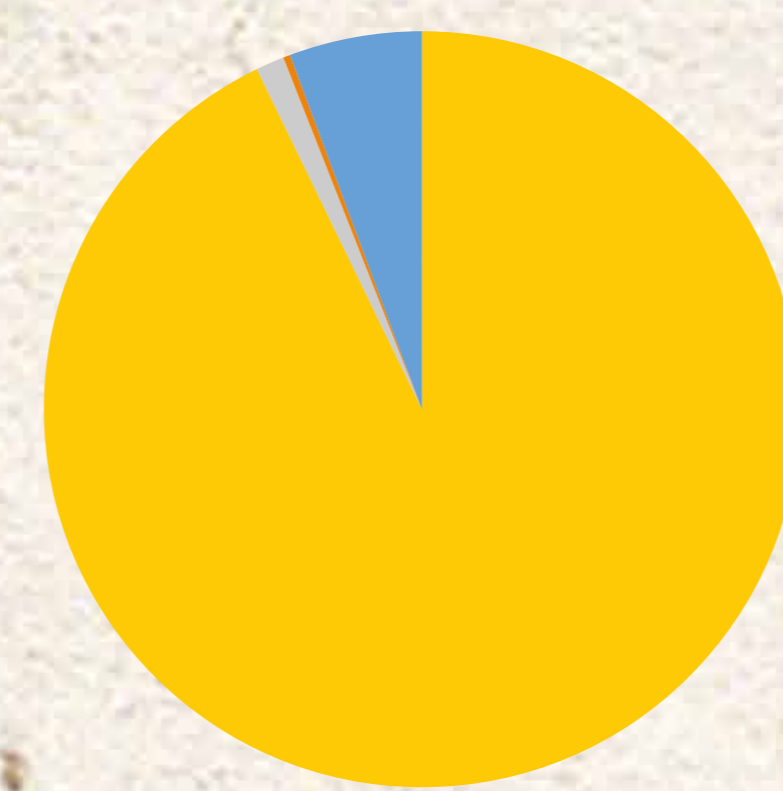


Gold purity: all that glitters?

The Carthage 1945 Hoard (see left) is a more typical gold hoard for its period than Hoard A of about the same date (see the case opposite) because it contains coins from a wide chronological range. This is probably because gold coins retained their value, even after the depicted emperor's death or deposition, because of the high purity of gold within them. The coins displayed above, also part of the Carthage 1945 Hoard, have been tested on the University of Birmingham Chemistry Department's X-ray fluorescence (XRF) machine. This showed that the gold content was consistently above 90%.



● Gold
● Silver
● Copper
● Other



● Gold
● Silver
● Copper
● Other

THE TUNIS 1954 HOARD

This hoard was found near the city of Tunis (on the outskirts of mediaeval Carthage) in 1954, although its exact context and original size is undocumented. It contained gold *solidi* from the reign of the Emperor Maurice (582-602) to the first reign of Justinian II (685-695), so must have been buried sometime during or after 685. This was shortly before the final fall of Carthage (the capital of Byzantine North Africa) to the Caliphate in 698.

That the known contents of this hoard cover a period of about a century is fairly typical of Byzantine gold hoards for this period. It suggests that gold coins were circulating around the Mediterranean world based on their gold content, in contrast to our modern coins, which have only a token value.



420
First coins from Carthage 1945 Hoard struck

582
First coins from Tunis 1954 Hoard struck

634
Arab-Byzantine war begins in earnest

641-646
Probable deposition date for Carthage 1945 Hoard

647
Gregory killed in battle of Sufetula

685-695
Probable deposition of Tunis 1954 Hoard

533
Carthage, along with all of Vandal North Africa, captured by the Byzantines

608
Herakleios begins a revolt against the Emperor Phocas from Carthage

641
Year of 4 Emperors: Herakleios, Constantine III, Herakleonas and Constans II

646
Gregory, the Exarch of North Africa, declares himself emperor

670 (about)
Kairouan established, becomes capital of Muslim North Africa

698
Carthage captured, end of Byzantine North Africa