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## PERSONIFICATIONS OF JUDAEA ON FLAVIAN COINS

The accession of Vespasian to the principate – owing in part to his success in stifling the Jewish revolt, and to the support of the legions stationed in the East – became the occasion for the creation of an entire range of art works intended to commemorate the suppression of the uprising in Judaea. To be sure, the uprising was still in progress when the emperor took the throne, but in June of A.D. 71, only a few months after the fall of Jerusalem on April 15, 70, Vespasian celebrated a triumph in Rome, riding with Titus on the chariot, and accompanied by Domitian on horseback. This triumph – known to us from the precise description given by Josephus (*Bell.iud.* VII.4.5.), and from the reliefs adorning the Arch of Titus (erected ten years later)<sup>1</sup> – served in a par-

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to the two generally familiar reliefs from the passage, depicting scenes from the triumph, this arch is also adorned by a small continuous frieze located below the

ticular way to legitimate the authority of the new emperor. Masada held out until April 15, 73, but this did not restrain Vespasian and Titus from making the official claim that Judaea had been conquered.

For this purpose, the emperor and his elder son together began a very carefully conceived propaganda campaign, the goal of which was to make the people of Rome aware of the fact that the new authorities had achieved an important military success, and also on the fact that, thanks to his success, peace once again prevailed in the Roman Empire, as it had in the days of Augustus.<sup>2</sup>

The Flavian emperors reached for the surest instrument of political propaganda: coins, which in thousands of copies made their way to every corner of the expansive Empire. To an extent hitherto unexampled in Rome's history, this military victory bore fruit in an enormous number of representations on coins.<sup>3</sup> What is more, the image types created at that

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attic. It presents other fragments of the triumphal parade, including a scene unexampled in Roman art., of a sculpture personifying the Jordan being carried on a *ferculum*. Josephus (*loc.cit.*) writes that images of rivers were carried in the procession. Cf. M. Pfanner, *Der Titusbogen*, Mainz 1983, p. 84, Pl. 86, 4-7; J. A. Ostrowski, *Personifications of Rivers in Greek and Roman Art*, Cracow 1991, p. 50, figs. 49-49a. It is worth mentioning certain other equally famous reliefs, those from the tomb of Haterius, indirectly connected with the triumph. These reliefs depict various Roman buildings, including the *Arcus ad Isis* standing next to the shrine of Isis on the Via Labicana, where, as we are told by Josephus (*Bell. Iud.* VII.5.4.), Vespasian and Titus spent the night before their triumph. On the relief the sculptures on the attic of the arch are clearly visible: a palm, under which is a captive, and thus a motif familiar from Flavian Coins. Cf. Ostrowski, p. 180, s.v. IUDAEA, no. 19.

<sup>2</sup> The building of the large Templum Pacis complex (the Forum of Vespasian), consecrated in 75, was intended to serve as a reminder that peace again prevailed in the Roman Empire. There is no good reason not to compare this complex with the complex in which the Ara Pacis was located, erected by Augustus on the Campus Martius.

<sup>3</sup> If writing on coins it should certainly be noted that the first personification of Judaea was placed on a coin (*semis*) emitted in 37 B.C. by C. Sosius, with the legend on the reverse reading C.SOSIVS IMP. (cf. BMCRR II, p. 508, no. 46; RCC II, p. 63, no. 152; Toynbee, p. 117, Pl. XVI, 16; Ostrowski, p. 178, s.v. IUDAEA, no. 1). It depicts two captives sitting under a trophaeum: a woman dressed in a long gown, her head hanging down, and a man with his arms tied behind his back. Sosius, who accompanied Marc Antony as quaestor in his Eastern expedition, became governor of Syria and Cilicia in 38 B.C., and on October 3, 37 B.C., conquered Jerusalem, on which occasion he was hailed imperator by his army. It is generally thought that the woman on the coin in question is a personification of Judaea, while the man is the Jewish king Antigonus Mattathias, whom Marc Antony put to death. In 33 B.C. in Rome, C. Sosius rebuilt the temple of Apollo known as the "Apollo Sosianus". On the frieze from this temple, which has been preserved in fragments, there is a scene from a triumphal parade. Two youths are lifting a *ferculum*, on which two captives are sitting under a tropha-

time passed permanently into the repertoire of Roman triumphal art. Without undue controversy, then, one may regard the emperors from this dynasty as the true creators of the personifications of conquered peoples and pacified provinces.<sup>4</sup>

The coins emitted in Rome to commemorate the victory (those minted elsewhere have been indicated in the table below) may be divided, on the basis of the reverse decoration, into three basic types, within which several compositional variants can be distinguished.

#### I. Lone woman

##### I.1. Woman with lowered head, seated below a trophaeum (fig. 1)

Legend: IVDAEA (in exergue)

Vespasian. AV. D. Emitted 69–73

RIC II, p. 16, no. 15; p. 18, no. 34; p. 20, no. 45; p. 44, no. 254 (minted in Tarraco, 69–70); p. 46, no. 266; Toynbee, p. 118, pl. XVII, 4; Ostrowski, pp. 178–179, s.v. IUDAEA, no. 6.

##### I.2. Woman sitting under a palm, with a weapon lying next to her (fig. 2)

Legend: IVDAEA CAPTA, or IVD CAP (rim) S.C. (in exergue), or IVDAEA Vespasian. As. Emitted 71

RIC II, pp. 73–74, nos. 489–491; p. 84, nos. 595–596; p. 133, no. 141 (semis emitted by Titus); Toynbee, p. 118, pl. XVII, 5; Ostrowski, p. 179, s.v. IUDAEA, no. 7.

##### I.3. Woman with bound hands, sitting under a palm or a trophaeum

Legend: IVDAEA (in exergue); on the ases, IVD.CAP.S.C. (in field)

Vespasian. AV. D. As. Emitted: 69–71

RIC II, p. 16, no. 16; p. 48, no. 287; p. 63, no. 393 (woman's hands not bound); Toynbee, p. 118, Pl. XVII, 6–9; Ostrowski, p. 179, s.v. IUDAEA, no. 8.

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eum, with their arms tied behind their backs. It is hard to determine today what their nationality is, but in view of Sosius's activity in Judaea, it cannot be ruled out that they represent the people of that country. Cf. Ostrowski, p. 207, s.v. Provinces indefinites, no 1 (with further references).

<sup>4</sup> In the Flavian period – or to put more precisely, in the reign of Domitian – the first personifications of Germania began to appear in coinage (cf. Ostrowski, pp. 149–163, s.v. GERMANIA) and the first personification of a border river, the Rhine.

I.4. Woman with hands bound in front, standing under a palm

Legend: IVDAEA DEVICTA (rim)

Vespasian, D.As. Emitted: 70–71

RIC II, p. 49, no. 289; Toynbee, p. 118, Pl. XVII, 14; Ostrowski, p. 179, s.v. IUDAEA, no. 13.

II. Lone figure and Victory or the emperor

II.1. Captive lying under a trophaeum held up by Victory

Legend: VICTORIA AVG.S.C.

Vespasian. As. Emitted: 71

RIC II, p. 74, no. 501; Toynbee, p. 117; Ostrowski, p. 178, s.v. IUDAEA, no. 2.

II.2. Woman seated under a palm with a shield hanging from it, on which Victory is writing; Victory's foot is resting on a helmet lying on the ground (fig. 3–6)

Legend: VICTORIA AVGVSTI or IVDAEA DEVICTA (rim)

Vespasian. S. Emitted: 71; Lugdunum, 69–70

RIC II, p. 63, no. 398; p. 67, no. 419 (legend is DEVICTA IVDAEA S.C.; Victory is writing the letters SPQR on the shield); p. 71, nos. 467–468; Toynbee, p. 118, Pl.

XVII, 12–13; Ostrowski, p. 179, s.v. IUDAEA, no. 12.

II.3. Woman seated under a palm; emperor, standing, is holding a spear, resting his foot on a helmet lying on the ground (figs. 7–8)

No legend

Vespasian, AV. D. Emitted: 71–73; Antioch, emitted 72–73

RIC II, p. 19, no. 41a; p. 20, no. 53; p. 34, no. 160; p. 58, no. 363 and 367; Toynbee, p. 118, Pl. XVII, 10; Ostrowski, p. 179, s.v. IUDAEA, no. 10.

Legend: IVDAEA CAPTA

Vespasian. S.

RIC II, p. 68, no. 427; p. 86, no. 608; p. 101, no. 733; Toynbee, p. 118, Pl. XVII, 11; Ostrowski, p. 179, s.v. IUDAEA, no. 11.

III. Pair of captives

III.1. Kneeling man and woman extending their hands towards standing emperor; behind the captives, a palm

Legend: S.C. (in exergue)

Vespasian. S. Emitted: 72–73

RIC II, p. 77, no. 525; Toynbee, p. 117, Pl. XVI, 17; Ostrowski, p. 178, s.v. IUDAEA, no. 3.

III.1.a. Identical, except that the emperor is holding a cult figure of Victory in his hands

Legend: S.C. (in exergue)

Titus, in the reign of Vespasian. S. Emitted: 72

RIC II, p. 89, no. 638; Toynbee, p. 117, Pl. XVI, 18; Ostrowski, p. 178, s.v. IUDAEA, no. 4.

III.2. Woman sitting on one side of a palm, man standing on the other side with hands bound behind his back (figs. 9–13)

Legend: IVDAEA CAPTA (rim) S.C. (in exergue); or IVD CAP S.C. (in field); or IVD CAP (in field) S.C. (in exergue)

Vespasian and Titus. S. As. Emitted: (S) 71 and 80; (As) 80–81

RIC II, p. 68, nos. 424–426; p. 127, nos. 91–93; p. 131, no. 128; Toynbee, p. 117, Pl. XVI, 19–21; XVII, 1–3; EAA IV, fig. 326; Ostrowski, p. 178, s.v. IUDAEA, no. 5.

III.3. Seated woman, and standing soldier bound to trophaeum

Legend: IVDAEA CAPTA S.C.

Domitian. S. Emitted: 85

RIC II, p. 189, no. 280.

Naturally, the compositions listed under Type I, the figure of a lone woman, are the simplest representations. Her head lowered in a gesture of sadness is typical for personifications depicting a newly conquered nation or a pacified province. This is no innovation in Roman art: suffice it to recall the two personifications adorning the armor of the Prima Porta Augustus, depicted in the same gesture. Indeed, this is a classic representation maintained in the typology of the *provincia capta*, as it was aptly named at the beginning of this century by Piotr Bieńkowski,<sup>5</sup> using and paraphrasing the legend so ubiquitous in Roman coinage.

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<sup>5</sup> P. Bieńkowski, *De simulacris barbararum gentium apud Romanos*, Cracow 1900, p. 10.

Sometimes this woman has her hands tied behind her back or in front. This is of course a typical image of the captive, already in use in the days of predynastic Egypt,<sup>6</sup> and occurring with ever greater frequency in Roman iconography, beginning with the Flavians.<sup>7</sup> The striking thing is that this motif is used here for the first time in history with a woman figure. She depicts metonymically the entire defeated people, and is thus simultaneously a personification of the pacified country. The placement of a woman under symbols of victory – a trophæum or a palm (at once a symbol of Judaea as well) – is completely unambiguous.

The scenes listed under Type II are also played out under a palm or a trophæum. They are supplemented by the figure of Victory or the emperor. Victory is either coronating with a trophæum, affirming in some way that a victory has been won, or she is writing on a shield hung on the palm. Victory holding a shield in her outstretched arms and writing on it is an innovation of sorts introduced by Flavian art.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> In addition to the images of actual captives, a large role was certainly played by Apelles' famous panting of War with its hand tied behind its back, located by Augustus on his forum and constantly admired. Pliny the Elder writes about this work, *N.H.* XXXV 93.

<sup>7</sup> It is worth mentioning at this point that on the *statua loricata* of Vespasian found in Sabratha and preserved in the museum there, the armor is decorated with a palm located in the center. On one side stands Victory, writing on a shield suspended from the tree; on the other, a captive with his arms tied behind his back. Below this group, a woman dressed in a cloak and trousers is sitting on a heap of shields. On the center pteryx of the armor, against a background of mountainous landscape, there is an eagle dropping a snake. This is a double personification of Judaea: in the form of both the captive and the woman sitting on the shields (this last representation being without parallel in the numismatic material). The scene with the eagle and the snake is known as early as the *Iliad* (XII. 200ff) as a symbol of victory sent by Zeus (identical to the imagery on Elis coins from 471–421 B.C.), a victory which the Romans won in mountainous Judaea. Cf. C. C. Vermeule, *Hellenistic and Roman Cuirassed Statues*, I, *Berytus* 13, 1959/60, no. 95, Pl. 8, 25; H. C. Niemeyer, *Studien zur statuاریschen Darstellung der römischen Kaiser*, Berlin 1968; K. Stemmer, *Untersuchungen zur Typologie, Chronologie und Ikonographie der Panzerstatuen*, Berlin 1978, no. V, 10, Pl. 38, 1–2; Ostrowski, p. 180, s.v. IUDAEA, 17, and p. 182.

<sup>8</sup> The prototype was probably the statue of Victory discovered in Brescia (the so-called "Victory of Brescia"), 1.95 meters high, adorning the city's Capitolium, erected by Vespasian in 72. The arrangement of the goddess's hands indicates that she was writing something on a shield she was holding. As late as the time of Constantine the Great, this figure was many times imitated, including on Trajan's Column, where it stands as a sort of punctuation mark between scenes illustrating the First and Second Dacian Wars. Domitian used it on his earliest coins with personifications of Germania (RIC II, p. 186, no. 255; p. 190, no. 282 a–b; p. 194, no. 315). Cf. T. Hölscher, *Die Victoria von Brescia*, *Antike Plastik* 10 (1970), pp. 67–80.

Another innovation is the introduction of the figure of the emperor, holding a spear and resting his foot on a helmet lying on the ground (as a sign of victory, showing that the helmet is no longer necessary), a posture also assumed by Victory.

The most elaborated scenes belong to the third and final group. The kneeling captives stretching out their hands to the emperor in a beseeching gesture constitute the virtual quintessence of Roman political propaganda and triumphal art. The emperor may now show mercy towards the conquered, and we know that *clementia* was one of the virtues that a good ruler should possess. What is more interesting, in comparing the figures of the emperor and the captives, we can see that the principle of hierarchy holds sway here, a thing unheard of at that time. This may result from the fact that the war was fought in the East, where this principle had been in effect for millennia, where the pharaoh or the King of Kings was larger than an ordinary mortal. On some of the coins, there is a smallish figure of Victory in the emperor's hand. It would be difficult to equate Vespasian or Titus with Zeus, but the comparison inevitably thrusts itself forward between this coin and the statue of Zeus hold Nike in his hands, made by Phidias for Olympia.

The most common coins, however, were the sesterces on which are presented a woman sitting and a man standing with his arms pinned behind his back (Type III.2). The woman, her lowered head covered by the edge of her garment, belongs to that very numerous group of images, previously noted, of the *provincia capta*. She is accompanied by her bearded compatriot, clad only in a short cloak (*sagum*) thrown over his naked body. This cloak was used by not only by slaves and shepherds, but also by soldiers, and even became in colloquial language a symbol of war. It is difficult today to judge whether this is intended to be an allusion to the inhabitants of Judaea, shepherds transformed into slaves, or whether it is meant to symbolize that this captive was once a soldier fighting against the Romans.

This brief sketch indicates how many problems associated with the personifications of Judaea (and others) are still waiting to be solved, and how much can be achieved in joint research involving numismatists, archaeologists, and historians.



## List of Abbreviations Used

- RIC Mattingly, E. A. Sydenham, C. H. V. Sutherland et al., *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, I–IX, London 1923–1981.
- Ostrowski J. A. Ostrowski, *Les personifications des provinces dans l'art. romain*, Warsaw 1990.
- Toynbee J. M. C. Toynbee, *The Hadrianic School: A Chapter in the History of Greek Art.*, Cambridge 1934.

## JANUSZ A. OSTROWSKI

### Personifikacje Judei na monetach Flawiuszy

Flawiusze zyskawszy tron dzięki poskromieniu wojny żydowskiej, zwycięstwo to uczynili głównym akcentem swej propagandy politycznej (Jej punkt ciężkości Domitian przesunął na wydarzenia nadreńskie i naddunajskie). Prócz słynnych płasko-rzeźb zdobiących łuk Tytusa, najważniejszym nośnikiem idei zwycięstwa były monety. Po raz pierwszy w dziejach Rzymu pojawiło się w mennictwie tyle aluzji do pacyfikacji kraju. Szczególną rolę pełniły personifikacje Judei, wśród których można wyróżnić kilka schematów kompozycyjnych:

#### **I. Samotna kobieta**

I.1. Kobieta z opuszczoną głową, siedząca pod trofeum

Leg. IVDAEA (w wycinku)

I.2. Kobieta siedząca pod palmą; obok niej leży broń

Leg. IVDAEA CAPTA lub IVD CAP (w otoku) S.C. (w wycinku) lub IVDAEA

I.3. Kobieta ze związanymi rękami, siedząca pod palmą lub trofeum

Leg. IVDAEA (w wycinku); na asach IVD.CAP. S.C. (w polu)

I.4. Kobieta z rękami związanymi z przodu, stojąca pod palmą

Leg. IVDAEA DEVICTA (w otoku)

#### **II. Samotna postać i Wiktoria lub cesarz**

II.1. Jeniec leżący pod trofeum wznoszonym przez Wiktorię

Leg. VICTORIA AVG. S.C.

II.2. Kobieta siedząca pod palmą, na której zawieszona jest tarcza; na niej pisze stojąca obok Wiktoria. Stopa Wiktorii spoczywa na hełmie leżącymi na ziemi

Leg. VICTORIA AVGVSTI lub IVDAEA DEVICTA (w otoku)



II.3. Kobieta siedząca pod palmą. Cesarz stojący z włócznią, stawia stopę na helmie leżącym na ziemi

### **III. Para jeńców**

III.1. Klęczący mężczyzna i kobieta wyciągają ręce w kierunku stojącego cesarza. Za jeńcami palma.

Leg. S.C. (w wycinku)

III.1.a. identycznie, tylko cesarz na ręce trzyma posążek Wiktorii

Leg. S.C. (w wycinku)

III.2. Z jednej strony palmy siedząca kobieta, z drugiej – stojący mężczyzna z rękami związanymi na plecach

Leg. IVDAEA CAPTA (w otoku) S.C. (w wycinku); lub IVD CAP S.C. (w polu); lub IVD CAP (w polu) S.C. (w wycinku)

III.3. Siedząca kobieta i stojący żołnierz przywiązani do trofeum.

Leg. IVDAEA CAPTA S.C.



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