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RESTORED COINS OF TRAJAN DEDICATED TO JULIUS CAESAR WITH NEMESIS ON REVERSE

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Abstract: Restored coins of Trajan stand out as one of the most curious events in the coinage of the Principate. We are especially attracted by the sample coined in memory of Julius Caesar with Nemesis on the reverse. This image does not have a prototype. A note in Appianus could serve as an explanation for Trajan's choice of this motif. The destruction of the temple of Nemesis, during operations of Trajan's army in Egypt, and its possible restoration, were reasons for the appearance of the Nemesis motif on coins.

Key words: Principate, restored coins, Trajan, Caesar, Nemesis, Pax-Nemesis, Appianus.

Trajan's large series of restored coins of the Republic and Principate stands out as an extraordinary episode in the coinage of Principate. This especially refers to the origin of their models and the explanation for their occurrence. The case is simpler with the types of restored coins that have direct prototypes. For those few that do not have prototypes one should look both into their direct and their hidden meaning. Commemoration of notable individuals from the distant or not so distant past is well known in Roman tradition. Even before Trajan, under Titus and Domitian, a certain number of the restored coin types had been minted (*BMC* II: nos. 261–306, 504–512; *RIC* II: nos. 184–249; 453–464). After Trajan, one first notes an isolated example of the coinage of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, which repeats legionary coins of Mark Antony (*BMC* IV: no. 500, pl. 62/17; *RIC* III: no. 443, pl. 9/191). Then follows the large *consecratio* series of Trajan Decius (*RIC* IV.3: nos. 77–100). However, none of these emissions could compare with huge series of Trajan's restored coins.¹

¹ Mattingly (*BMC* III: lxxxvii–lxxxviii) believed that the issue of the series had two different motives: a) the withdrawal of obsolescent coins from circulation and the wish to preserve some record of what is being lost; b) the desire to explain and commend current policy by linking it to the record of the great past. Relying on Dio Cassius, Mattingly mentions that in 107 A.D. Trajan melted down all the worn-out coinage and, since the restored coins series dates from that year, he concludes that there is no doubt over the relationship of these two events.

The reasons for the selection of particular types of restored coins, which was made on various grounds, were not always clear.² The choice of models predominantly refers to the army, whether it was military deities, glorious ancestors and their military achievements, or allusions that linked contemporary political and military events to those of times long past. At another level of comprehension, these types glorify ultimate military virtues that were highly praised by the Romans. Foremost are military courage and respect of duty, e.g. *Virtus* and *Pietas*. Trajan's choice is not at all casual; being a professional soldier himself, in his regular issues he uses motifs connected to the army and victory of Roman arms. It comes as no surprise that, when it came to re-issuing coins, his choices were exactly these motives and virtues. The great victories of Trajan were thus represented as a continuity of familiar achievements from the past and as the natural course of the further development of the Roman state.

In the restored coins series of Trajan, Julius Caesar is honoured with three different types. The first has Venus' head on the obverse, while Aeneas carrying Anchises and a palladium, with the inscription CAESAR, are on the reverse (*BMC* III: no. 31, pl. 23/4; *RIC* II: no. 801).³ This sample repeats Caesar's denar from 47–46 B.C. (*RRC*: no. 458/1, pl. 54/10). Venus on this coin is *Venus Genetrix*, since the obverse and the reverse together imply the descent of Julii from Venus. In the 1st century B.C. coinage there is no prototype for the second sample of Trajan's restored coins dedicated to Caesar.⁴ It displays Caesar's head with the inscription C IVLIVS CAES IMP COS III on the obverse, while on the reverse there is the standing figure of Venus. Her back is turned three quarters to the viewer, her elbow resting on a column. She holds a helmet and spear, while a shield rests in front of her (*BMC* III: no. 696, pl. 23/17; *RIC* II: no. 806). This type of Venus is *Venus Victrix*, who played the major role in the famous battle at Pharsalus.⁵ The coin is an

² Trajan's series contains commemorative pieces of the Republic and the Principate. The first group has 37 types, which repeat coins minted from 225 B.C. to Caesar's era. Eighteen types from the second group represent "good" *principes*, endowed with extraordinary virtues, from Octavius Augustus to Nerva. Excluded from this list of Roman patriots are tyrants – Caligula, Nero, Otho, Vitellius and Domitian – but not the coins from the Civil War of 68/69.

³ The inscription IMP CAES TRAIAN AVG GER DAC P P REST stands on the reverse of all the commemorative issues, whether they belong to the Republican or the Imperial era. Following this inscription, there is the inscription from the model-coin, if there was one.

⁴ The images of *Venus Victrix* that appear in the coinage of Julius Caesar have different attributes. For example, on the denar of 44 B.C. Venus holds Victory and the sceptre, her elbow resting on the shield (*RRC*: no. 480/3, pl. 56/20).

⁵ Venus, who is ancient Italic deity, gained a new function and a particular meaning in an intense war of propaganda, which took place during the 1st century B.C. First it was Sulla who founded the cult of *Venus Felix*, whose mysticism of the victory over the Marii helped the creation of the new cult of *Venus Victrix*. It was officially introduced by Pompey, who put himself under the protection of the goddess. Stressing the origin of Julii from Venus, Caesar founded the cult of *Venus Genetrix*. In that way he was simply following in the footsteps of the forerunners, as his *Venus Genetrix* in fact represents Sulla's Trojan Venus (Alföldi 1956: 83). Until the Battle of Farsala, Pompey was faithful to the *Venus Victrix* cult, only to switch his allegiance, which reveals the faithlessness of that cult's advocates (Schilling 1954: 299). Namely, in the account of Plutarch (Plut.: Pomp. 68) and Appian (App. Bell. Civ. II. 76), after seeing a bad omen before the Battle of Pharsalus, Pompey had a dream in which he decorated the temple of *Venus Victrix*. Because, Pompey believed that this omen would bring glory and splendour to the *gens Iulia* and Caesar itself, he chose for his battle cry *Herules Invictus*, instead of *Venus Victrix*, which, on that occasion was used by Caesar.

(Suet.: Aug. 10),⁶ while Claudius pardoned his political opponents (Dio. Cass. LX.3). The above-mentioned Nemesis in the coinage of the civil war of Gaul of 68–69 A.D. made patriotic, republican allusions to liberation that characterized the whole coinage of the Spanish and Gallic group. It showed the goals of the movement as ones that would restore freedom to the Roman people, bringing victory and new life. The peace that was alluded to was not without the suggestion of revenge in the word-play *Ultor* – *Vindex* and *Adsertor* – *Vindex*.⁷ The appearance of Nemesis in the coinage of Claudius and the Civil war of 68–69 A.D. should be defined as Pax-Nemesis in the sense of *paci augustae*, as is also indicated in the inscriptions.⁸

Searching for the meaning of the appearance of Nemesis in the commemorative coinage of Trajan we came across an interesting account in Appian, in which he describes Pompey's arrival in Egypt and his murder. It was committed by the tutors of the under aged Ptolemy, in order to gain Caesar's sympathy (App. Bell. Civ. II.84). They cut off Pompey's head and kept it for Caesar, expecting a huge reward. Someone buried the rest of the body on the shores of the Nile, erecting a modest monument above (App. Bell. Civ. II.86). Arriving in Egypt, Caesar immediately executed the organizers of the murder because of their crime. When the head of Pompey was brought to him, Caesar ordered it to be buried in front of the town, and the shrine of Nemesis to be constructed there. Appian explains further that later, when Trajan decimated the Jews in Egypt, the shrine was demolished in the exigencies of war (App. Bell. Civ. II.90). Whether Trajan renewed the shrine then, is impossible to conclude from Appian's account. Could one establish the connection between the destruction of the shrine of Nemesis, built by Caesar, with the appearance of Nemesis on the restored coins of Trajan? We assume that the destruction of the shrine in Egypt must have provoked, with Trajan, the memory of Caesar as a just avenger of the death of his opponent, but also a great military leader, Pompey.

Further comparing the relationship Caesar – Pompey and Trajan – Decebalus, we found another coincidence. Namely, when Roman soldiers caught the fleeing Decebalus they cut off his head and brought it to Trajan (Cichorius 1896: pl. 51/183; Speidel 1970: 142–143). It cannot be by accident that the next and the last appearance of Nemesis in the imperial coinage of the Principate occurred under Hadrian. It is again in Appian that we find a remark, where he links that emperor both with Caesar and Pompey.⁹ Informing

⁶ However, Nemesis is unknown in Octavian's coinage.

⁷ The civil war started in March 68 A. D. with the revolt against Nero in Gaul, the leader of which was Julius Vindex, who was soon joined by Galba. The coin inscriptions *Ultor* (Revenger, Punisher) and *Adsertor* (Liberator, Defender) allude to the name of the leader of the movement, *Vindex* (Protector, Avenger).

⁸ For the Pax-Nemesis connection see: *RE* XVIII.4: 2431, 30–40, 2435, 6–33; *LIMC* VII: 210.

⁹ There is a view that the representation of Nemesis on Hadrian's coinage should be connected to the Nemesis from Smyrna, where there was her shrine. The gesture of Nemesis, in which she lifts the mantle in front of the face, should thus indicate the demand for caution. It was brought in connection to the thoughtfulness of the emperor, as well as the measures he undertakes for the happiness and the wellbeing of the world (Stevenson 1964: 569).

us of the death of Pompey, the cutting off of his head and the burial of the rest of his body and the erection of the modest monument, Appian further narrates how, with time, the sand covered the monument, and how the bronze statues, which Pompey's relatives later erected on the hill Cassius, were damaged and thrown inside the shrine. Hadrian found them, restored the monument and made it known again, and also restored the statues of Pompey himself (App. Bell. Civ. II.86).

It is most probable that, in some way, all of these facts influenced the choice of the reverse type of Nemesis. First, there is the huge respect Trajan had for Caesar, as a great statesman, military leader and man who possessed all of the major Roman virtues. The aspiration of Trajan to compare himself to Caesar, as well as to show himself as his worthy successor was of no small importance. Like Caesar before him, Trajan added new territories to the Roman state and widened her influence. Finally, one has to take into consideration Appian's account of the connection of both Trajan and Hadrian with Caesar and Pompey. The conclusion that we arrive at was that the destruction of the temple of Nemesis, during military operations of the Trajan's army in Egypt, and its possible restoration, were reasons for the appearance of the Nemesis motif on coins. The proposed solution, obtained through use of Antique sources, is only one among many still unsolved riddles in Antique coinage. However, this is an indication of the explanation and the issue will need further elucidation.

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МИРЈАНА ВОЈВОДА

ТРАЈАНОВ КОМЕМОРАТИВНИ НОВАЦ ПОСВЕЋЕН ЦЕЗАРУ С РЕВЕРСНОМ ПРЕДСТАВОМ НЕМЕЗЕ

Резиме

Трајанова серија комеморативног новца представља сасвим изузетну појаву у ковању Принципата. Нашу пажњу посебно је привукао примерак кован у част Цезара који на реверсу има представу Немезе (т. I/1a–b). На аверсу овог примерка налази се глава Цезара с легендом DIVVS IVLIVS, док је на реверсу Немеза приказана како хода надесно, у левој руци држи крилати кадуцеј уперен надоле, десном руком придржава наборе одеће и приноси је лицу, испред ње је змија, такође окренута надесно. У редовном ковању током Принципата с оваквом представом сусрећемо се само неколико пута. Најпре у ковању Клаудија где представу прати легенда PACI AVGVSTAE (т. I/2), потом, уз исту легенду, на аверсу галског ковања грађанских ратова 68–69. г. (т. I/3), и коначно, у ковању Хадријана (т. I/4). У тражењу објашњења за појаву Немезе на комеморативном ковању Трајана наишли смо на податак код Апијана. Наиме, Апијан описује долазак Помпеја у Египат и његово убиство које су осмислили тутори малолетног Птолемеја, а све у циљу придобијања Цезарове наклоности. Помпејеву главу су одсекли и чували за Цезара, а остатак тела неко је сахранио на обали Нила и подигао му скроман споменик. По приспећу у Египат, Цезар је одмах погубио организаторе убиства. Када су му донели Помпејеву главу,

allusion to Caesar's great victory in that battle, since it was her name that was invoked in his battle cry on that occasion. We should bear in mind that mighty conqueror and military leader that he was, Trajan greatly appreciated Caesar. The image of *Venus Victrix* in the coinage of the Principate, long after Caesar's death, in the beginning was the allusion to Caesar and the origin of the *gens Iulia*, later expanding the meaning to the origin of Rome herself. In the coinage of Hadrian, representing the state cult, the new type of *Venus Genetrix populi Romani* was created. At the same time, the cult of imperial *Venus Genetrix*, separated from the state cult, had preserved the traditional iconographic type (Strack 1933: 177).

We focused our attention upon the third type of Trajan's commemorative series, coined in honour of Caesar, also without a prototype (pl. I/1a-b). Caesar's head with the inscription *DIVVS IVLIVS* is on the obverse, while on the reverse there is Nemesis. She is walking to the right, with a winged caduceus directed to the ground in her left hand, and holding the draperies of her robe high in front of her face, with her right hand. In front of her there is a snake, also turned to the right (*BMC* III: no. 697, pl. 23/18; *RIC* II: no. 816). The wings are typical for Victory, caduceus for Pax or Felicitas, snake for Salus, sometime also linked to *Minerva Victrix*. However, the gesture of her right hand undoubtedly indicates Nemesis. In the regular coinage of the Principate there are only a couple of instances with this figure. The first is in the coinage of Claudius; the inscription that accompanies her reads *PACI AVGVSTAE* (*BMC* I: no. 6, pl. 31/5; *RIC* I: no. 31) (pl. I/2). After that, we find the same depiction and the inscription on the reverse of the Gallic coinage from the period of the Civil war of 68–69 A.D. (*BMC* I: no. 26, pl. 50/14; *RIC* I: no. 18) (pl. I/3) and in Hadrian's coinage (*BMC* III: no. 1549, pl. 89/1; *RIC* II: no. 779) (pl. I/4). In the last case, the depiction differs slightly: the snake is missing, and instead of the winged caduceus Nemesis holds a branch in the same arrangement, the branch being the most common attribute of Pax.

The approach of the Greek Nemesis to the circle of the representations of Pax, provokes a certain vagueness in interpretation. It is known that Pax stems from the Aidos-Nemesis deities, who impersonate the primal forces of the Roman state (*RE* XVIII.4: 2431.40). The amalgamation of Nemesis and Nike is also known. The imperial army venerated Nemesis, who had been associated with Mars as the protector of the Danubian army. Thus, she was also some sort of Victory. Contemporaries probably variously interpreted this occurrence, but the soldiers, whose environment gave birth to that idea, most likely identified the two deities (*RE* XVIII.4: 2435.20–30). Since the role of Nemesis had been to take care of the balance of moral order, justifying just revenge, it seems that the original idea of the Nemesis-Pax representations lay in self-restriction in triumphs or in the just use of the benefit it brought, not excluding the right to revenge. In the first place it referred to the relationship to prisoners or political opponents. Thus, Octavian stressed his legitimate right to avenge his father

Цезар је наредио да се она сахрани испред града и на том месту подигне светилиште које је назвао Немезиним именом. Када је цар Трајан уништавао Јудејце у Египту, ово светилиште било је срушено из ратних потреба. Да ли се рушење Немезиног светилишта које је подигао Цезар, а које Апијан помиње, може довести у везу с појавом Немезе на комеморативном новцу Трајана или је овај догађај бар иницирао сећање на Цезаров поступак као праведног осветника за смрт свог противника, али такође великог војсковође – Помпеја? Поредиши даље однос Цезар/Помпеј и Трајан/Децебал, наилазимо на још једну подударност. Наиме, римски војници сустигли су Децебала у бекству, убили га и одсекли му главу, коју су потом донели Трајану. Не може бити случајност да се управо наредно и последње појављивање Немезе у царском ковању Принципата јавља под Хадријаном и да опет наилазимо на напомену код Апијана која и овог цара повезује с Цезаром и Помпејем. Наиме, у делу који говори о смрти Помпеја, одсецању главе, сахрањивању остатка тела и подизању скромног споменика, Апијан, даље каже да је временом песак засуо цели споменик, а бронзани кипови, које су касније поставили Помпејеви рођаци на брду Касију, били су оштећени и бачени у унутрашњост светилишта. У доба Апијана, цар Хадријан их је пронашао, очистио споменик и опет га учинио познатим, а обновио је и кипове самог Помпеја. Највероватније је да су, на извештај начин, све наведене чињенице имале утицаја код избора реверсног типа Немезе. Најпре ту је велико поштовање Трајана према Цезару као великом државнику, војсковођи и човеку који је поседовао најважније римске врлине. У овом смислу, сигурно се истицала и жеља Трајана да се пореди с Цезаром, односно да се прикаже као достојан наследник. Трајан је, као и Цезар пре њега, придодео нове територије римској држави и проширио њен утицај. Коначно, не могу се пренебрећи наводи код Апијана који, првенствено, Трајана, али потом и Хадријана доводе у везу с Цезаром и Помпејем. Наша жеља била је да скренемо пажњу на одређене детаље који можда могу имати утицаја на решење конкретног питања или бар да подстакну даља размишљања.

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nts (Dio. Cass. l war of Gaul of that character- ved the goals of Roman people, was not without and *Adsertor* – us and the Civil e sense of *paci* the commo- ant in Apian, in t was committed aesar's sympathy it for Caesar, ex- the shores of the (.86). Arriving in urder because of esar ordered it to o be constructed ated the Jews in . Bell. Civ. II, 90). o conclude from n the destruction of Nemesis on the re shrine in Egypt ust avenger of the ey. ay and Trajan – Roman soldiers ough it to Trajan ot be by accident rial coinage of the that we find a re- mpey.⁹ Informing

in Gaul, the leader of s *Ullor* (Revenge, Pun- the movement, *Vindex* -6-33; *LIMC* VII: 210. ge should be connected emesis, in which she lifts t was brought in connec- takes for the happiness

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Plate I



1. Trajan's commemorative series: obverse displays Caesar's head with inscription DIVVS IVLIVS (a), reverse displays Nemesis with inscription IMP CAES TRAIAN AVG GER DAC P P REST (b) (from *BMC* III: pl. 23/18). 2. Coinage of Claudius: the inscription that accompanies Pax-Nemesis reads PACI AVGVSTAE (from *BMC* I: pl. 31/5). 3. Pax-Nemesis on the Gallic coinage from the period of the Civil war of 68-69 A.D. (from *BMC* I: pl. 50/14). 4. Nemesis on Hadrian's coinage (from *BMC* III: pl. 89/1).