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THE MENORAH DEPICTED ON THE ARCH OF TITUS. A PROBLEM OF ITS ORIGIN AND THE HELLENISTIC SYMBOLS ADORNING ITS BASE

In the most books and handbooks about the Roman art, it appears a famous photo of the relief copied on the Arch of Titus.¹ The picture shows a procession's scene of the triumph of the Caesar Titus in 71 A.D., after the victorious war in Judea and capturing Jerusalem. In the middle part of it, there are imagined Roman soldiers crowned with wreaths and probably some Jewish prisoners carrying the Temple's menorah, other sacral equipments and tablets. In the central part of the relief, it is carved a huge seven-branched candlestick carried on the stretchers (*ferculum*). Its two-steps base, hexagonal or octagonal in form, is decorated with various Hellenistic and Roman symbols, as "dragon" (*capricornus*), griffins and lions – on the lower base's step and two eagles with a garland, as well as "sea creatures" (*hippokampos*) – on a higher level of the menorah's basis.²

The Arch of Titus

The triumphal Arch of Titus (fig. 1) was erected at via Sacra in Rome in 81 A.D. – ten years after the capturing of Jerusalem. It happened just after the death and deification of Titus' brother – Vespasian, what informs

¹ About the Arch of Titus see: Andrae 1982, p. 192–195, fig. 68, 394–395; Bianchi-Bandinelli 1969, p. 213–216, fig. 237–241; Hannestad 1988, p. 124–132, fig. 78–81; Busagli 1999, p. 93–95; Cornell, Matthews 1991, p. 80–81; Ostrowski 1999, p. 282–285, fig. 244; Sadurska 1980, t. 2, p. 139–145.

² See Sperber 1998, p. 50–52; Sperber 1965, p. 135–159; Klagsbald 1987, p. 126–134; Go-odenough n.d., vol. VIII, p. 123–125.

a dedicatory inscription written on the attica: SENATVS POPVLVSQVE ROMANVS DIVO TITO DIVI VESPASIANI F[ilio] VESPASIANO AVGVSTO. In the middle ages the arch was incorporated into a fortress and in the XIX-th century its pillars were reconstructed, so now only its middle part is ancient. Scholars presume the arch was never finished in antiquity.³

The Arch of Titus has one gate of 13.5 m breath, 15.4 m height and 4.75 m depth. It is adorned with three groups of relieves, which originally were covered with polychrome. Two most famous relieves (3.80 m length and 2.03 m height) are placed on both sides of the passage. On the northern relief it is imagined the emperor Titus standing on a chariot decorated with the eagles and a garland. In front of him and behind there are walking twelve men with wreaths on heads holding bunches of sticks with axes (*fascies*). The emperor's chariot is conducted by the goddess Roma, while Victoria is putting the wreath (*corona triumphalis*) on Titus' head. Behind him, there is showed a personification of Genius of the Roman People in the shape of a young man and the old Genius of the Senate dressed in toga.

The above mentioned relief with the menorah and other Temple's equipments (fig. 2) has been carved on the southern wall of the passage. Besides the menorah and the table for shewbread with tied trumpets, carried probably by the Jewish captives (with wreaths on their heads), other prisoners are lifting an armchair apparently for one of the Jewish leaders.⁴ On the contrary, the tablets probably with the names of the captured cities are hold by the Roman soldiers. The conduct is heading for the gate *Porta Triumphalis* with a chariot on its top.

Regarding the form, both relieves are featured by the depth of space, dynamism, rhythm and an illusion of the movement of the stepping persons, as well as the optical light-shadow effects. Looking at the southern relief one might have an impression the processional conduct (of a semicircle shape) after a while will enter the gate. This effect has been obtained through a differentiation between the conduct's direction and the triumphal gate's axis. On the opposite northern relief (fig. 3), the chariot and the horses make an impression, as if they were on the bend.⁵ According to the relieves' authors, they were intended to be watched from a certain distance looking at the both arch's facades. It is the reason, now these effects are best visible from afar.

Comparing the compositions of both relieves, one can notice they were designed according to the specially defined rules. These are first of all a mutual symmetric appearance of the most important motives, as the emperor on the chariot on one relief and the menorah on the other. The

³ Hannestad 1988, p. 126.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 129.

⁵ See the note 1.

Caesar, being a central motif of the northern relief, is carved right opposite the menorah – the main element of the southern composition. Following it, the horses with heads turned upright and left are parallels to the captives bearing the seven-branched candlestick. The imagination of the emperor Titus has been symmetrically set with the menorah – a symbol of Judaism and the Temple. In this way the glory of Rome has been opposed to the glory of Israel, which was destroyed after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. The former and the latter are expressed in the decoration of the menorah's base and the Caesar's chariot – both ornamented with the eagles and a garland.⁶

The third less known relief is found on a partially preserved frieze in the middle part of the eastern wall.⁷ It shows a triumphal procession, which there are left the imaginations of sacrificial animals, donors, men in toga and soldiers. A special attention should be turned there to a personification of Jordan, which is the oldest personification of that river in art.

The middle of the arch is decorated with panels, but a separated metope is filled with a relief showing Titus' apotheosis on eagle's wings.⁸ On the vaults of the outer part of the arch, there is depicted an imagination of the young Genius of Roman People. Following it, in the spaces between the bow's line and the beams there are imagined the flying Victories.

A description of the Titus' triumph was written down by Josephus Flavius, who was a witness of the procession in 71 A.D.⁹ The writer mentions in the procession took part around 700 Jewish captives, and one of the uprising leaders – Simon, was executed the same day. Basing on Josephus' account, it is quite probably on the southern relief of the Titus arch there were imagined some Jewish prisoners bearing the menorah and other Temple's equipments. Of the Jewish origin of those men might ensure us their Semitic features, leaned heads, faces expressing the pain, shame and sorrow. Looking on the crowns on their heads, we may explain them as the symbol of their slavery.¹⁰ Josephus Flavius noticed also the menorah had a different shape as usually, apparently because of the two-steps decorated base. Writing about a further fate of the Temple's treasures, he adds after the procession some of them were taken to *Templum Pacis* and others to Neron's *Domus Aurea*.

⁶ It seems, the parallel appearance of the eagles with a garland on both opposite relieves weren't accident there. We only don't know if the menorah's base was genuine, or it was elaborated later after the destruction of the Temple.

⁷ See the fig. 1.

⁸ See Bianchi-Bandinelli 1969, fig. 241. This scene is similar to the other depicted on *Gemma of Claudius*, which shows an apotheosis of one of the Roman emperors; see Hannestad 1988, p. 79, fig. 51; Ostrowski, 1999, p. 268.

⁹ Josephus Flavius, *Bell. Iud.*, VII, 122–156.

¹⁰ See Kopaliński 1990, the entry „wieniec”; Cooper 1999, the entry „wreath”; Cirlot 2000, the entry “wreath”; de Vries 1974, the entry “wreath”.

The menorah. Its base and origin

While studying the southern relief of the Arch of Titus, we might ask about the authenticity of the menorah's base ornamented with some Hellenistic motives, as well about their origin.¹¹ First of all, it's wondering if the base decorated with the elements almost totally alien to contemporary Judaism was truly supporting this seven-branched candlestick standing in the middle of the Temple? Or, wasn't the two-steps base especially done for the procession? Or, if its Hellenistic ornamentation wasn't invented by artists creating the arch for Titus' glory?¹²

Other problem is regarding the origin of the antique motives decorating the base, namely a "dragon" (*capricornus*), griffins, lions, eagles and "sea creatures" (*hippokampos*) and – what do they might express. The following question considers, what kind of shape should have a menorah base according to the Jewish, *halbachic*, prescriptions, as well as how it looked out before the Herod's era?¹³

Considering a problem of the authenticity of the menorah's base copied on the Titus arch (fig. 4), we have to think if there are reasons for claiming the antique decoration was only an invention of artists making the whole relief.¹⁴ If it were such, it could make impossible the studies on the base and its ornamentation in the context of the Herod's Temple. But looking at the copied menorah, we see the upper part is a typically Jewish, compatible with the Biblical description – so, it was precisely copied by the artists. Besides, the time of the Titus arch's creation – some years after the capture of Jerusalem – confirms its makers had a direct access to the Temple's booties. The artists had a very good opportunity to carve the menorah, as it was in reality. Knowing Romans inclination to realism and verism, it is difficult to presume, the artisans carving the southern relief of this triumphal building invented a new kind of menorah's base, having its original at hand! Moreover, we have to remember the whole arch's decoration truly depicts the historic events and belongs to the documental stream of the Roman art.¹⁵

On the other hand, it's wondering the Caesar chariot's ornamentation with eagles and a garland on the southern relief is parallel to the upper level of the menorah's base, also embellished with those motives. In connec-

¹¹ See the note 2, also Wirgin 1961, p. 51–53.

¹² Scholars don't agree as regards this problem. For instance S. A. Cook maintained the menorah's decoration was any given and it was made in Rome on a basis of the account of some Jewish prisoners. See *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, I, p. 644–647; *PEFQS*, 1903, p. 185f; Goodenough n.d., IV, p. 72.

¹³ See Sperber 1998, p. 50f.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹⁵ Bianchi-Bandinelli 1969, p. 213–216, Hannestad 1998, p. 124ff; Ostrowski 1999, p. 285.

tion with that it is worth to consider, if such iconography on both relieves wasn't intentionally designed by their authors? Following it, one can ask whether, after taking the menorah from the Temple, artists didn't project a new base, which Hellenistic decoration would express it was ideologically conformed to Rome and matched the whole compositions of both relieves? Let's see, the symbols of Romans glory – the wreaths, during the procession were apparently carried also by some Jewish prisoners, in that case being a symbol of their captivity.¹⁶ According to it, we might ask if such antique motives, as eagles with a garland, griffins, a "dragon" (*hyppokampos*) and others appearing on the menorah's base, wasn't just symbols indirectly uttering the slavery of Judaism, which the heart was the Temple symbolized by the menorah?

There are two answers to the above-mentioned questions. First possibility is such, the menorah received a two-steps base after bringing it to Rome, and its Hellenistic ornamentation was about to symbolize the conforming of Jews and Judaism to Rome and its culture, as well as expressing the glory of the conquerors. Second possibility, supported by many scholars is such, the menorah's base was original and it was created in the Herod's times, confirming a phenomenon of the Hellenisation of the Jewish culture.¹⁷

In connection with the above considerations, there are wondering some words written by Josephus Flavius describing the Titus' triumph. He writes there such sentence about the seven-branched candlestick: "...the menorah made also from gold was constructed according to other pattern than we use".¹⁸ These words express his surprise, the menorah's shape was different than usually. The reason of such reflection was a presence of the two-steps decorated base, while ordinary menorahs use to stand on three-triple legs, as it is describe in Talmudic literature and illustrated in late antique synagogue art.¹⁹ Assuming, Josephus Flavius saw the menorah during the time of the Temple's existence (what is probable but not completely sure), this sentence might utter his astonishment the menorah carried during the procession looked differently than the former. Such interpretation would hold up the first idea, the candlestick's base was elaborated already after the fall of the Jewish uprising, and it was about to express the domination of Judea and Judaism to Rome and the Hellenistic culture. On the other hand, presuming Josephus never saw the original menorah, the above sentence would express his surprise it was made due to a different pattern, than this valid in the Jewish canon, that is standing on three legs.

¹⁶ Most of the scholars see there only Roman soldiers; compare *ibidem*.

¹⁷ Sperber 1998, p. 63.

¹⁸ Josephus Flavius, *Bell. Iud.*, VII, 122–156.

¹⁹ See *The Babylonian Talmud*, "Menahot" 28b. Regarding the art see Hachlili, *Ancient Jewish* 1988, p. 236–256.

The earliest imagination of such menorah on coins come from the period of Matatias Antigonus (40–37 B.C.), the last Hasmonean king.²⁰ Its characteristic feature is the equal ending of three arms and three legs serving as a base. Such shape of this candlestick was presumably a continuation of the older tradition. In other menorah's depictions coming from the post-Herodian era, in all cases they have three legs supporting seven arms.²¹ The biggest number of such imaginations was executed in the late antique period, namely on synagogues from Galilea, Golan, Judea and in catacombs at Beth Shearim.²² In the synagogue art the menorahs usually have five, seven and nine arms, as well three legs bases.²³

Such depiction of a menorah is in unison with the *halachic* description of its standard outlook known from the Talmud. One of them begins in this way: "*Samuel said in the name of ancient sages: a height of the menorah should amount to eighteen width of a human palm and a height of its legs and the flowers – three width of a human palm*".²⁴ Although this text doesn't mention the precise number of legs, it reminds they should support the whole candlestick. Three legs would be a most logical number in this case.

Basing both on the Talmudic literature and the archaeological artefacts, we have the right to suppose that primarily – from the period of the Salomon Temple and later in the time of the Second Temple – the menorah had a base with three legs. Other thing is, in the Biblical description there is not given a kind of the menorah's base. There it is only written the candlestick, its base and a trunk have to be wrought from the genuine gold and the same lump.²⁵ Three legs supporting the menorah would perfectly harmonize with its three arms and their seven endings.

Maybe one of the proves in the Herod's era and later the menorah had this kind of base, as on the Arch of Titus, is a fragment of the book by Philo from Alexandria, *Quis rerum divinarum heres*.²⁶ The philosopher, living between 20 B.C. and 40 A.D., tackles there a problem of the number relations in the menorah. Discussing about the mutual correlations of the number seven and three appearing in its construction, he doesn't mention at all the menorah's base had three legs. If it were such, Philo didn't hesitate to mention it. From this we can conclude, in the turn of our era the

²⁰ Sperber 1998, p. 50.

²¹ *Ibidem*. Some examples of the menorah with a three legs base, dated on the post-Herodian era, were found in Jerusalem and its vicinity.

²² Avigad 1976.

²³ See the fig. 7.

²⁴ *The Babilonian Talmud*.

²⁵ The Book of Exodus 25, 31–40.

²⁶ Philo Judeus, *Quis rerum divinarum heres*, The Loeb Classical Library, IV, London 1932, p. 218–220; Sperber 1998, p. 52.

menorah could have a different base, than a three legs one. So, probably the base could be such, as that copied on the Arch of Titus.

Accepting a theory, the menorah had a two-steps base in the moment, when it was taken from the Temple, we could ask a question – when it received such a base, considering primarily it had a base consisting of three legs? One may suppose, it could happen yet in the times of Herod the Great, who built up and embellished the Temple. It is possible the two-steps base of the menorah decorated with motives belonging to the repertoire of the Hellenistic art was made as a result of these works. Or it had happened earlier before the year 20 A.D., when it started the renovations works at the Temple. Josephus Flavius writes for instance in the year 40 A.D., during the reign of Matatias Antigonus, Jerusalem was invaded and looted by Parts.²⁷ It is very probable the invaders plundered also the Temple, damaging and violating its interior, and if they didn't take the menorah, they could break it at its basis. After that event the seven-branched candlestick could have received a new double-steps base. It lasted through the Herod's era and wasn't changed both after his death and during the reign of his sons, as well later on till the capture of Jerusalem by Romans in 70 A.D.²⁸ Following this kind of thinking, one can presume the menorah's base obtained such shape, as it is visible on the Titus' arch, yet during the supremacy of Herod before the rebuilding of the Temple, or in the course of it.

The motives decorating the menorah's base and their origin

As it was mentioned above, the menorah copied on the arch of Titus (fig. 5) has the base consisting with two parts: an upper one and a broader, lower part. On the relief itself there is not seen if the base's steps had six or eight sides.²⁹ The middle panel of the upper level is adorned with two eagles with slightly spread wings, holding a garland in their beaks. The both side-parts of it are decorated with the "sea creatures" (*hippokampos*) with long twisted tails. The main middle panel of the lower step is adorned with a mythological animal looking as a "dragon" or Capricorn – with a long upright tail. The side-parts of that level are decorated with the antithetic griffins (on the left one) and lions (on the right panel).

²⁷ Josephus Flavius, *Ant. Iud.*, XIV, 363f.

²⁸ Sperber 1998, p. 53f.

²⁹ In the opinion of D. Sperber, the menorah's base had a hexagonal shape.

Where did these symbols come from? Answering to this question shouldn't be a difficult task. To start with, a motif of the eagles holding a garland, present on the middle panel of the upper base's step, was a very popular in the Hellenistic and Roman art. It appeared in a decoration of the secular and triumphal buildings, temples and altars, as well as in the funeral art – on the territory of the whole Roman empire. The following symbol placed beneath the eagles – the “dragon” or Capricorn is very closely connected with the imaginations of Octavian August, because the Capricorn was his sign of zodiac. Hence a presence of the latter e.g. on so called *Gemma Augustea* (fig. 6).³⁰ Going further, the griffins adorning one of the next panels, in the Greek and Roman tradition were connected with Apollo – the god of beauty, art and death. They ornated for instance the armours of many Roman Caesars, as well appeared on sides of several sarcophagi.³¹ With the sea god – Neptune, it is related the next decorative element of the upper level of the base, namely the “sea creatures” (*hippokampos*) with a horse torsos and a fish tails. In the Roman art of the Republic period similar creatures appeared for instance on one of the frieze of Domicius Ahenobarbus altar.³² They were assisting Neptune and Amphitryte being a part of the sea conduct (gr. *Thiasos*) together with Nereids sitting on dolphins, trythons, sharks and other sea animals. The “sea creatures” are also directly connected with the cult of Apollo. One of them appeared for instance on a column's basis of the Apollo temple in Didyma in south-west Asia Minor.³³ The only difference between them is the latter has a human being's torso and is ridden by a nymph. The last motives – the lions depicted on the right panel of the lower base's step, in the ancient tradition were the most important symbols of kings and gods; they had also a solar and an apotropaic character on resembles of griffins and eagles.³⁴

In the Herod's time, the analogies between a decoration of the Apollo temple in Didyma and the menorah enlightened the Jerusalem Temple wasn't rather accidental.

It is very likely the official cult of Apollo in the Roman state played a certain role in the Herod's policy. It is worth to mention Octavian

³⁰ See Bianchi-Bandinelli 1969, p. 195–197, fig. 209, 211; Hannestad 1988, p. 78–79, fig. 51; Ostrowski 1999, p. 233, fig. 180.

³¹ Cooper 1999 “gryphon”; Cirlot 2000, “gryf”; Kopaliński 1990, “gryf”; Vries 1974 “gryphon”. The griffins adorned e.g. the armour of Octavian August from Prima Porta; see Hannestad 1988, p. 50–54, fig. 34–35; Ostrowski 1999, p. 222f, fig. 166–167.

³² Ostrowski 1999, p. 179.

³³ See Sperber 1998, p. 51f, fig. 3–4. According to this writer, a lack of the human torso and a nymph was a result of adjusting the “sea creature” to the Jewish peculiarity. He calls also it a “dragon”.

³⁴ See the note 10, the enter “lion” (in Eng. ed.) or “lew” (in Polish ed.).

August devoted to Apollo the victory over Antonius in the battle at Akcium in 31 A.D.³⁵ With a cult of this god, as well as Neptune could have been connected certain symbols used on Herod's coins, as: a triple, palms leaves, an incense basin and a shield with a solar motif. In the face of it, in the menorah's base ornamentation the presence of griffins being an attribute of Apollo, as well the appearance of the "sea creatures" (*hippokampos*), analogically to those from Didyma, wouldn't be unintentional.

In this moment we should ask a question, how could we explain the symbolism of the eagles with a garland adorning the central panel of the upper base's level? Generally the answer on this question may be such: the aim of putting the *aquilae* with a garland symbolizing among others the glory, magnitude, the victorious power and immortality was giving a splendour to the menorah.³⁶ As it was mentioned earlier, the eagles holding garland in their beaks often appeared in the Greek and Roman art. Garlands themselves, that is wreaths made of flowers and leaves, were from the most ancient times a symbol of the splendour and glory, and in a connection with the eagles their symbolism expressed the biggest glory from the all possible.³⁷ It is wondering though, if the eagles and other motives decorating the menorah's base were placed there not longer after the Octavian's victory over Pompeius in 31 A.D. If it happened so, then their symbolism on one hand could directly point to Octavian's and Herod's victories, but on the other – it might be an echo of the Apollo's cult. The motives adorning the menorah's base, like those appearing on Herod's coin and later on the Temple facade (a golden eagle), would be a clear bow towards Augustus – symbolically underlining a political dependence of the Judean kingdom to Rome, as well as being an expression of the Hellenisation of the contemporary Judaism.³⁸ Hence the presence of the Capricorn – a zodiac sign of Octavian on the middle panel of the lower menorah's base.

Analysing a composition of the elements decorating both steps of this candlestick's basis, one can notice their mutual symbolic connections going on a diagonal line. So, the eagles' relief on the middle upper level's panel – are matching two griffins on the left side of the lower basis' level, as well two lions carved on its right side. Following it, with the "dragon" (Capricorn) filling the middle part of the lower step – harmonize two *hippokampos* (the "sea creatures") flanking the panel with the eagles. The latter and the griffins might symbolise a sphere of the air and the sky, having a clear solar aspect (like the lions), while a pair of the griffins and lions would symbolize also a sphere of the earth. Going

³⁵ Sperber 1998, p. 51f.

³⁶ *Ibidem*.

³⁷ See the note 10, the enter "garland" (in English ed.) or "girlanda" (in Polish ed.).

³⁸ Sperber 1998, p. 53.

further, the "dragon" (Capricorn) and the "sea creatures" (*hippokampos*) expressing a sphere of the earth and the sea, would have a "telluric" character.³⁹ In this way it has been shown, the menorah was symbolically set both on the earth and the oceans reaching the sky, while its light had to enlighten all those spheres – that is the whole visible world.

A presence of the eagles with a garland on the middle part of the upper level just below the menorah's trunk and arms – underlying its splendour and magnitude – could also be connected with the symbolism of the light. It means a kinship between the seven-branched candlestick – a symbolic tree bearing the light pointing to the divine and astral light – with the solar eagles.⁴⁰ The *aquila*, a symbol of the highest ancient gods, was in a certain sense the bearer of their light. Hence the depictions of two eagles on the menorah's base is fully justified from the Hellenistic point of view. It is worth to mention, in antiquity the mutual relations between the symbolism of the eagles and the light was also expressed by placing the former on olive lamps, as well as making some lamps and candlesticks in their shapes.⁴¹

The motif of the eagles pair on the menorah corresponds also with the golden eagle put by Herod on the Temple's facade. Consisting together in the magical number "three" – the eagles were about to express the glory of the Temple and the God, which it was devoted to, as well as the honour of its maker – Herod.⁴² As it was stated above, the eagles together with other Hellenistic motives on the menorah's base were a manifestation of the Hellenisation of Judaism pointing to a symbolic symptom of the dependence of Judea to Rome. Close to the eagles' symbolism would be here the griffins, often associated with Apollo. Being a fusion of a lion with an eagle they expressed in the art of Hellenism the greatest powers, including the strength of death. They were also the attributes of gods and emperors.⁴³ Imagined on the menorah together with the eagles they strengthen a symbolic power of the latter. Similarly, it referred to them a royal and a solar character of the lions carved on the right part of the lower candlestick's basis.

One doesn't need to be a student of ancient art or theology to understand the presence of the above-described iconographic motives on the Temple's menorah base was almost completely in contrary to the Jewish tradition.

³⁹ See Cooper 1999 "dragon"; *Mala encyklopedia kultury antycznej, A-Z* (Warszawa 1983), "hippokampos".

⁴⁰ See the note 10, the entry "eagle" or "orzeł". See also Cooper 1992, "eagle" (Polish ed., Cooper (1998), "orzeł").

⁴¹ For the antique olive lamps see Bernhard 1955, p. 320, nr 295, pl. LXXXI; p. 241, 319, nr 287, 288, pl. LXXIX; p. 320, nr 297, pl. LXXXII; Goodenough n.d., III, p. 152f, fig. 285; Fortin 1999, p. 118, fig. 77.

⁴² Sperber 1998, p. 52f; Goodenough n.d., VIII, p. 123–125.

⁴³ See the note 29.

On the other hand, because these imaginations weren't an object of a sacral cult, their appearance on the menorah wouldn't be a violation of the Second Commandment. But in a fear of idolatry among the Jews, in Mishna there is written e.g. such a text: "If a man finds some things decorated with pictures of the sun, the moon and a dragon, he should cast them to the Dead Sea".⁴⁴ It is not wondering then in later Judaic art, starting from II–III century, in most cases the menorahs are imagined with a base formed in three legs, as it was characteristic for the earlier tradition (fig. 7). In this way, the menorah – a symbol of Judaism was deprived a base of the Hellenistic and Roman influences.⁴⁵

Presuming the double-steps menorah's base copied on the Titus' arch was genuine, we can conclude the decorative motives, as the eagles, griffins, "dragon" (Capricorn) and the "sea creatures" (*hippokampos*) had an ornamenting function, but on the symbolic level – they underlay the majesty of the seven-branched candlestick enlightened the Temple's interior. In the cultural and religious spheres these symbols indicated on the contemporary relations of Judaism and Hellenism, manifesting also a political dependence of Judea to the Roman Empire. Finally, they expressed a depth of the spiritual, cultural, religious and political meanings characteristic for them in the whole tradition of antiquity.

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⁴⁴ *The Babylonian Talmud*, "Avodah Zarah" 3, 3.

⁴⁵ The modern menorah, besides the Star of David – both the symbols of the State of Israel, is a copy of the menorah depicted on the Arch of Titus.

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Przedstawienie menory na Łuku Tytusa Problem jej pochodzenia oraz kwestia symboli hellenistycznych dekorujących jej podstawę

Streszczenie

W artykule autor naświetlił historię pochodzenia samego łuku oraz opisał zdobiące go reliefy. Najbardziej szczegółowy opis został poświęcony reliefowi znajdującemu się na południowej stronie bramy łuku, przedstawiającemu procesję rzymskich żołnierzy z wieńcami na głowach i żydowskich jeńców w czasie triumfu Tytusa w Rzymie w 71 r. n.e., po stłumieniu powstania w Judei. Procesję tę opisał Józef Flawiusz. Osoby w niej uczestniczące niosą różne przedmioty pochodzące ze świątyni jerozolimskiej, wśród których centralne miejsce zajmuje ogromna menora. Autor zadaje pytanie, czy na reliefie, obok rzymskich żołnierzy, nie zostali również przedstawieni żydowscy jeńcy – o ich pochodzeniu świadczyłyby semickie rysy oraz wyraz smutku na twarzach. Mieliby oni ewentualnie nieść na swoich barkach nosze z siedmioramiennym świecznikiem.

Szczególne miejsce zajmują rozważania na temat menory i jej oktagonalnej bazy dekorowanej przez hellenistyczne motywy, takie jak: koziorożec (smok), gryfy, lwy, orły z girlandą oraz tzw. stworzenia morskie (*hippokampos*). Autor zastanawia się, czy baza świecznika była tak oryginalnie ozdobiona jeszcze w czasach Heroda Wielkiego, czy też została ona zakomponowana w ten sposób przez rzymskich artystów, już po zdobyciu świątyni, specjalnie dla potrzeb procesji. Ewentualnie, czy taka kompozycja bazy nie została wymyślona przez artystów tworzących płaskorzeźby łuku, dopasowujących ją do dekoracji reliefu północnego bramy łuku, przedstawiającego m.in. Tytusa na rydwanie ozdobionym również przez orły z girlandą.

Próbując odpowiedzieć na powyższy problem, autor przypomina, że typowa podstawa dla menor w czasach antycznych miała kształt trójnogu. Gdyby więc po zdobyciu Jerozolimy i przywiezieniu łupów świątynnych do Rzymu menorą otrzymała nową, zhellenizowaną podstawę, taki akt wyrażałby zdominowanie judaizmu – symbolizowanego przez menorę – przez Rzym i jego hellenistyczną kulturę. Z drugiej strony, autor przychyli się do teorii, że menorą otrzymała taką bazę jeszcze w I w. p.n.e., czyli długo przed zniszczeniem świątyni przez Rzymian. Stało się to najprawdopodobniej w czasach Heroda Wielkiego (37–4 r. p.n.e.) lub tuż przed nim, a taka dekoracja bazy menorę wyrażałaby symboliczny wpływ kultury hellenizmu na ówczesny judaizm.

Na koniec autor analizuje poszczególne motywy w kontekście sztuki i tradycji antycznej. Przypomina, że np. motyw koziorożca (smoka) jest połączony z osobą Oktawiana Augusta jako jego znak zodiaku, zaś gryfy w tradycji greckiej i rzymskiej są związane z Apollinem – bogiem piękna, sztuki i śmierci; ten ostatni był także bóstwem szczególnie bliskim temu pierwszemu. Zwraca także uwagę na solarny i królewski charakter motywów, takich jak orły, lwy i gryfy, których symbolika miała przydać splendoru samej menorze. W przypadku orłów zasygnalizowany został również fakt umieszczenia przez Heroda rzeźby orła na fasadzie świątyni. Przypomina, że motywy orłów i gryfów symbolicznie wyrażałyby sferę nieba, a te ostatnie, podobnie jak lwy, odnosiły się do sfery ziemi, podczas gdy motywy koziorożca (smoka) i *hippokamposa* – wyrażały sferę świata wodnego. W ten sposób zostało podkreślone to, że menor – symbol boskiego światła – była ustanowiona nad wszystkimi sferami ziemi i nieba, i miała oświetlać cały widzialny świat.

W wyobrażeniu menorę świątynnej dekorowanej przez powyższe motywy wyrażone zostały więc wzajemne związki judaizmu z rzymskim hellenizmem oraz podkreślono wpływ tego drugiego na ten pierwszy – zarówno w sferze kulturalnej, jak i politycznej. Same zaś kompozycje odnoszące się bezpośrednio do menorę przedstawiają sobą głębię duchowych, kulturalnych i religijnych znaczeń charakterystycznych dla nich w całej tradycji antyku.



Fig. 1. The Arch of Titus seen from the eastern side
(After: Busagli 1999, p. 94)



Fig. 2. The southern relief from the passage in the Arch of Titus
with the procession scene after victory over Judea
(After: Andrae 1982, fig. 8)

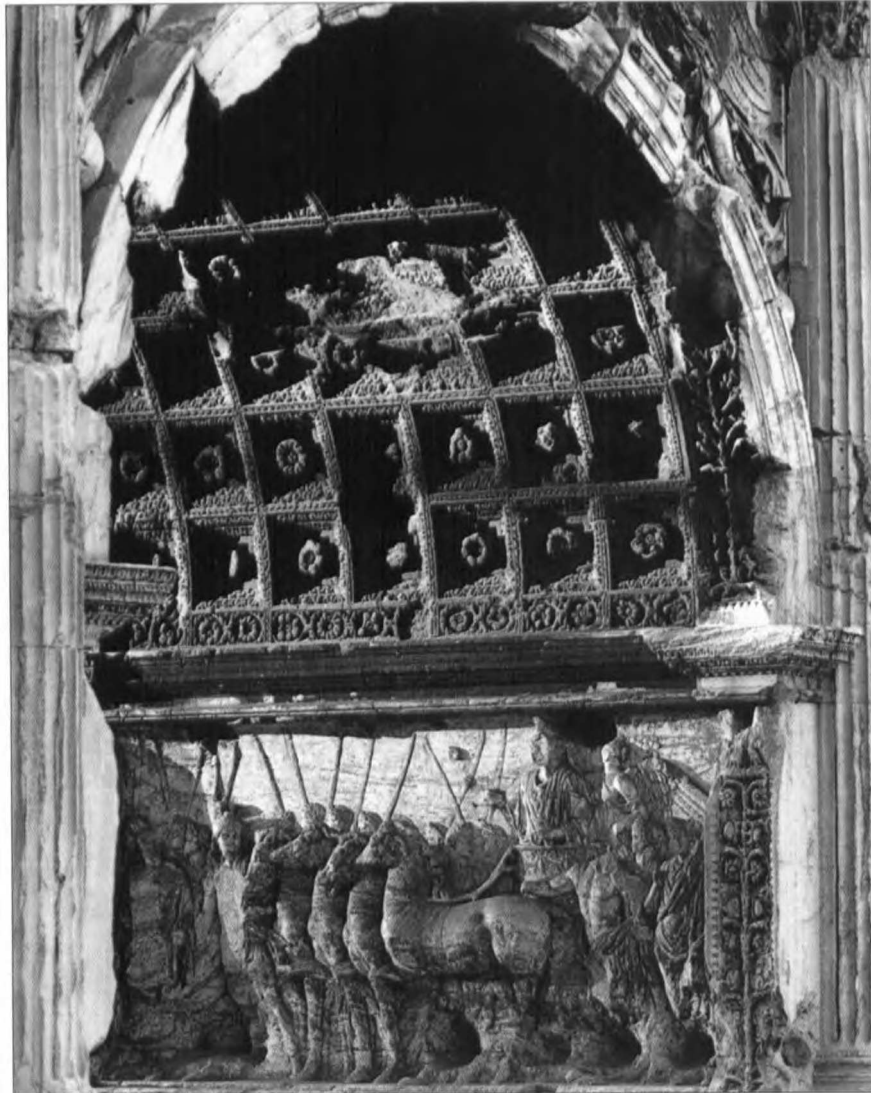


Fig. 3. The northern relief of the passage in the Arch of Titus
(After: Busagli 1999, p. 95)



Fig. 4. Fragment of the southern relief from the Arch of Titus
(After: Cornell, Matthews 1991, p. 80)

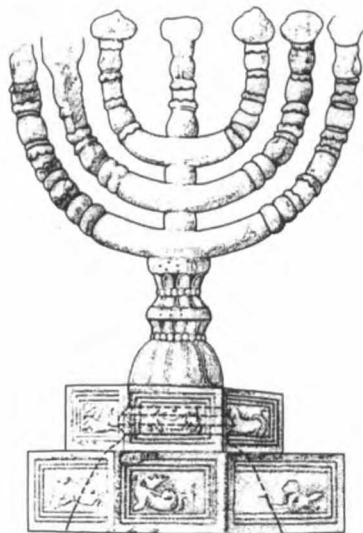


Fig. 5. Drawing of the menorah from the relief of the Arch of Titus
(After: Hachlili 1988, p. 239)



Fig. 6. Fragment of the *Gemma Augustea* with the Capricorn
(After: Bianchi-Bandinelli 1969, fig. 211)



Fig. 7. Relief with a menorah from the synagogue in Jehudiye (Golan). III–VI century A.D.
(After: Ma'oz 1993, p. 534–546)