

## *Six Unrecorded Yehud Silver Coins*

*by Robert Deutsch*

**V**ery few Judean coins from the fourth century BC were known until 1966. Since then, however,

the rich and fascinating material that has become known has changed the situation entirely.<sup>1</sup> This article presents a unique Yehud silver drachm and five hemiobols which yet again expand the corpus of Judean fourth-century BC coins.

### **A Silver Drachm**



Figure 1: AR; 11 mm.; 2.70g; axis: 1h. Obv.: Head of Athena r., wearing helmet with three olive leaves. Rev.: Owl standing r., facing; behind it on l. olive-spray. Paleo-Hebrew legend, retrograde, from lower l. upwards: "yhd".

The famous Yehud drachm in the British Museum<sup>2</sup> is the only known parallel of a drachm in the repertory of the Yehud coinage. It differs from this coin in depicting on the obverse a male head to right wearing a Corinthian helmet and on the reverse a male divinity to right, seated on a winged wheel. With the exception of two hemidrachms, of the Judean series minted in the early Ptolemaic period,<sup>3</sup> the majority of Judean coins are minute silver fractions. The unique drachm published here weighs 2.70 gr. It shows that the Judean series of the Athena/owl type also included drachms.

### **Hemiobol #1**



Figure 2: AR; 8mm; 0.40g; axis 12h. Obv.: Head of Athena (?) with ear-ring r., wearing helmet with concentric triangles. Rev.: Owl standing r., facing; behind it on l. lily. Paleo-Hebrew legend on r.: "dh[y]", ie, the first and third letters transposed.

This coin belongs to the Athena/owl type. Its style is rather crude. The head on the obverse seems to be a stylized representation of the head of Athena. The reverse, in which the first and third letters are transposed, is unrecorded.

### Hemiobol #2



Figure 3: AR; 7mm; 0.30g; |^ (Pl. 1:5-6). Obv.: Flower. Rev.: Bird (dove?) standing r., head turned backwards. Paleo-Hebrew legend above bird.

The flower is a schematic, stylized version of the lily (fleur-de-lis). Another stylized version of a lily occurs on a hemiobol with a falcon on the reverse.<sup>4</sup> The bird (dove?) with head turned backwards on the reverse of our coin occurs regularly on the reverse of the horse head/bird with head turned backwards type.<sup>5</sup> This coin thus establishes a connection (although not a die-link) between the two latter types.

### Hemiobol #3



Figure 4: AR; 7mm; 0.30g; axis: 11h. Obv.: Helmet with cheek-piece. Rev.: Falcon with spread wings; head and legend(?) off flan.

The falcon on the reverse of this coin is the same as that of the type with a small bearded male head to right wearing a crown (kidaris) thought to represent the king of Persia.<sup>6</sup> The representation on the obverse of this coin differs in being larger than the bearded head with crown and apparently depicts a Corinthian helmet.

### Hemiobol #4



Figure 5: AR; 7mm; 0.30g; axis: 11h. Obv.: Horn. Rev.: Falcon with spread wings, facing; legend (?) off fian.

The obverse of this coin is of a new type and depicts a horn, perhaps, of a gazelle. This is a hitherto unknown motive on the "Yehud" series and appears here for the first time. The falcon on the reverse is of a new variant, standing on his feet rather than hovering in the air as, e.g., on coin #4 or other parallels.<sup>7</sup>

### Hemiobol #5



Figure 6: AR; 7/8mm; 0.23g; axis: 12h. Obv.: Human head, facing. Rev.: Owl standing r., facing; the feathers of the head forming a beaded circle. Paleo-Hebrew legend: on r. downward "yehizqiyah", on l. upward "ha-peha yh(d)".

The closely set almost linked *YH* in what we propose to read as "*yh(d)*" has a parallel in another coin of Yehizqiyah the governor.<sup>8</sup> It remains, however, uncertain whether on this specimen the third letter is off-flan or was initially missing. Another example, published by Meshorer, seems to preserve the legend... *Yehizqiyah ha-peha*.<sup>9</sup> If this interpretation is correct, it provides proof that Yehizqiyah ha-peha was governor of Judea. This has always been assumed but seems now to be corroborated by the legend on this coin.



### Notes

<sup>1</sup> "A Preliminary Study of the Provincial Coinage of Judaea" Mildenberg, Yehud. *Essays in Honor of Margaret Thompson*. Morkholm, O. & Waggoner, N. M. (eds.). Weiteren, 1979. Pp 183-196, Pls 21,22

- Idem: *Handbuch der Archäologie, Vorderasien*, 11/1. Yehud-Munzen. Munich, 1988; Pp 719-728.
- Meshorer, *AJC*, I, Pp 13-34, 115-7, 184, Pls 1-3
- "A Silver Coin of Yohanan the High Priest and the Coinage of Judea in the Fourth Century BC". Barag, D. *INJ* Vol 9, 1986-7, Pp 4-21. Pl 1.

<sup>2</sup> *BMC, Palestine*. Hill, G. F. London, 1914. Pp ;xxxvi-vii, 181, No. 29, Pl XIX.

<sup>3</sup> Meshorer, *AJC*, I, p 184.

<sup>4</sup> see <sup>3</sup>; p 116, No. 8a, Pl 2.

<sup>5</sup> see <sup>3</sup>; p 14-5, Fig 1, p 117, Nos. 17-17b, Pl 2.

<sup>6</sup> see <sup>3</sup>; p 116, No. 9-9b, Pl 2.

<sup>7</sup> see <sup>3</sup>; p 116, No. 8-9b, Pl 2.

<sup>8</sup> see <sup>3</sup>; p 116, No. 10, Pl 2.

9 see 3; p 116, No. 10b, Pl 2.

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