

Mariusz Rosik

"Jewish War under Trajan and Hadrian", William Horbury, Cambridge 2014 : [recenzja]

The Biblical Annals 5/2, 447-448

2015

Artykuł został opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej bazhum.muzhp.pl, gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

William Horbury, *Jewish War under Trajan and Hadrian* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014). Pp. 501 + X. 4 maps. \$110. ISBN 978-0-521-62296-7 (Hardcover).

MARIUSZ ROSIK

Pontifical Faculty of Theology in Wrocław, Poland
address: ul. Katedralna 3/4, 50-328 Wrocław, e-mail: mrosik@pnet.pl

The stifling of the first Jewish uprising in 70 (73) A.D. was one of the major catastrophes in the Jewish history. Jerusalem was captured and the Temple was destructed; it meant permanent annihilation of the sacrificial cult. After these events the status of Jewish citizens worsened. The uprising participants suffered repressions and forfeitures of the propriety. This situation gave birth to the new form of Judaism – the rabbinic Judaism with the central role of rabbis. The Jews didn't stop to dream about the independence. The years A.D. 116-117 brought the new uprising of the Jews in diaspora (Egypt, Cyrene, Cyprus, Mesopotamia), and probably in Judea, even if we cannot confirm the fact definitively. Much more important was the next uprising in the years A.D. 132-135, led by Bar Kokhba, under Hadrian's principate. Eventually, Bar Kokhba was killed in the fortress Betar, the uprising was quenched, and Jerusalem was renamed as Aelia Capitolina.

In his book William Horbury tries to offer a new history of these uprisings. He is a Fellow of Corpus Christi College in Cambridge and a Fellow of the British Academy. He is also the Old Testament and Late Antiquity specialist at the Faculty of Divinity at the University of Cambridge. In the revised work he presents a quite new overview of sources and interpretations concerning the Jewish uprisings under Trajan and Hadrian. The book consists of five chapters and is enriched with the list of maps, acknowledgements, abbreviations, select bibliography, index of authors and literature, and index of persons, places and subjects.

Horbury starts his study with a proper survey of the research history and the present status of research. Studies of Jewish war against the Romans in the years 66-70/73 are quite abundant, but there exist only a few comprehensive studies of Jewish uprisings in the early second century (*Der jüdische Krieg unter den Kaisern Trajan und Hadrian* by F. Münter, *Sociology and Strategy*

of *Bar Kochba's War* by S. Applebaum, *The Jews under Roman Rule, from Pompey to Diocletian: a Study in Political Relations* by E. M. Smallwood).

In the second chapter, entitled "Sources and historians", Horbury investigates the writings of Cassius Dio, Eusebius of Caesarea, Josephus Flavius, Orosius, mediaeval writers (Abraham ibn Daud, Maimonides, Raymund Martini) and modern historians (Münter to Graetz, Renan, Mommsen, Juster, Dubnow, Eisler, S.W. Baron, M. Simon, Y.E. Baer, G. Alon *et al.*). He also deals with non-literary sources, early literary notices, rabbinic literature, and ancient ecclesiastical writers.

In the next chapter, entitled "Antecedents", the author presents the situation of the Jews in Roman Empire before the uprisings in the second century. He naturally pays special attention to the First Jewish War, which broke out in 66 under Vespasian and was quenched with the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple (in 70) and the victory of Romans soldiers over Jews in Masada (in 73). In this part of the book, Horbury analyses with great attention and rigor the writings of Josephus. The author notices also that after the war, Vespasian introduced for all the Jews the tax called *Fiscus Iudaicus*. The tax was maintained by his successors Titus (79-81 A.D.), by Diocletian (81-96 A.D.), and Nerva (96-98 A.D.). Diocletian enlarged the population of those who were obligated to prosecute the *Fiscus Iudaicus*, including persons who "lived the Jewish way". From 70/71 to 96 A.D. also Jewish-Christians and probably some of Pagan-Christians were obligated to pay the tax. The situation influenced the parting of the way process between Judaism and Christianity.

The next two chapters, "Trajan and Hadrian" and "Hadrian and Pius", seem to be the most important in the work of professor Horbury. In a limited review it is impossible to discuss the interpretation of the archaeological and historical data given by the author. What counts, is the reconstruction of the Jewish uprising in the years 116-117 and of the Bar Kokhba revolt. This reconstruction is very detailed due to the fact, that Horbury examines simultaneously many sources and draws the conclusions with precision.

In the days, when the studies of relations between Judaism and early Christianity were conducted almost exclusively by Christian scholars (most of whom had no great sympathy for Judaism), the relations between the Church and Synagogue in the antiquity were seen as a story of decay of the old Jewish religion and eventual triumph of nascent Christianity. In his study, Professor William Horbury comes to the conclusion that the uprisings of the Jews against Romans in the first half of the second century A.D. were not decay, but continuum of Jewish life. These uprisings can be seen as the last political confrontation between the biblical traditions on the one hand and *Romanitas* on the other. This point of view gives us a new perspective on the origins of Christianity.