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## Coinage during the Bar Kochba Rebellion

Jonathan Allen

*Pepperdine University*, [Jonathan.Allen@Pepperdine.edu](mailto:Jonathan.Allen@Pepperdine.edu)

Robbie Robles

*Pepperdine University*, [RobbieAngelo.Robles@Pepperdine.edu](mailto:RobbieAngelo.Robles@Pepperdine.edu)

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# Coinage during Bar Kochba Rebellion

Jonathan Allen & Robbie Robles

## Abstract:

This is a coin that Jews used during the Bar Kochba Rebellion, The dates of the Bar Kochba are from 132-135 A.D. The rebellion was started in response to the rule of Emperor Hadrian, who was insensitive to Jewish Traditions and started banning Jewish religious practices. In response, Jews began minting their own coins to honor their religious rituals and the leaders of the rebellion.



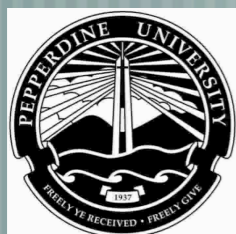
Obverse



Reverse

## Methods:

We viewed our coin in great detail with Reflectance Transformation Imaging provided by USC. We researched the images and their significance to Jewish culture. We had to look up the meaning of the letters inscribed. We researched the Bar Kochba Rebellion looking at the causes and involvement of the major leaders like Simon and Priest Eleazar by using mostly research books.



## Intro:

### Coin:

Using RTI Imaging, we were able to conclude that on the obverse side of the coin, there is an image of a date palm tree. Under and surrounding the palm tree were letters in ancient Hebrew.. On the reverse side is a vine of grapes. Also under the grapes, similar to the obverse side, are more ancient Hebrew inscriptions. We observed these details again with the RTI Imaging.

Coin details:

minted on small bronze

18mm long

### Bar Kochba Rebellion:

The rebellion started after Emperor Hadrian started disrespecting Jewish culture. For example, he started putting pagan statues on coins and did not support circumcision. Also, he promised to rebuild the temple for the people but never completed the job. Hadrian also renamed Jerusalem to Aelia Capitolina. All of these factors together were enough to get the Jewish people to rebel. The rebellion was led by Simon Bar Kosiba, later renamed Simon Bar Kochba meaning "Son of the Stars." The rebellion also took place mostly around Jerusalem. The rebels were able to get close to Jerusalem but the rebellion was later put down after the Roman soldiers were able to surround them.

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## Results:

We found that this coin had very deep meaning and significance during the rebellion. It was a very carefully designed to honor Jewish traditions, recognize the rebellion's leaders, and to ultimately declare their disgust with the Emperor.

The symbolism of the coin is very clear. On the Obverse side, we see a date palm tree with ancient Hebrew lettering. The date palm tree's significance to the Jewish people is that it is representative of nation of Judea. In the context of the Bar Kochba rebellion, the purpose of putting it on the coin seems to be trying to rally the Jewish people to get people behind the rebellion. The tree is a patriotic symbol. The letters on the coin we found to be written in old language of Paleo-Hebrew. Much like the palm tree, Simone chose this writing to pay tribute to ancient Jewish tradition. The inscription reads "Eleazar the priest." Scholars have had a hard time trying to figure who Eleazar is. The little they do know is speculation. Leading theories say he is a priest leading the rebellion who died early on and was replaced by Simon Bar Kochba. Some think He was a supporter of Simon in his endeavors, like Rabbi Akiba. Others have also speculated that he could also be related to Simon



On the reverse side, with the vine of grapes and more Paleo-Hebrew writing, we found more references to old Jewish tradition. In Jewish culture, grapes play a major role in celebrations such as making wine. Grapes are a great representation of Jewish rituals. The same celebratory theme is found with the interpretation of the letters, they read "year one of the redemption of Israel."

## Conclusion:

The purpose of this coin was to prove a point to the Emperor that the Jewish people would not tolerate their traditions being jeopardized or disrespected. This coin represents that stance by honoring multiple aspects of ancient Jewish culture.