

VICTORIA *VEL* VICTORINA AND HER CAREER
ACROSS THE CENTURIES IN EARLY MODERN
AND MODERN NUMISMATIC LITERATURE.

A CASE STUDY ON THE RECEPTION OF ANCIENT CULTURE*

by

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ABSTRACT: The article recalls what was established by researchers in reference to Victoria, the mother of emperor Victorinus, and mentioned in the ancient literary sources, the *Liber de Caesaribus* by Aurelius Victor and the *Historia Augusta*. These works present Victoria, *augusta* and *mater castrorum*, as a woman who was politically engaged in the events in the *Imperium Galliarum* in the 3rd century. The ancient tradition exerted an influence upon the modern authors of the numismatic corpora. Above all the remark of an early *scriptor* about coins issued with a portrait of Victoria on them proved particularly inspiring. By taking her as a point of departure, but also by engaging creatively with the details of Victoria's biography which emerge from the reading of ancient texts, the early modern writers created the figure of Victorina in their works. She was supposed to issue her own coins, but she was also commemorated on various monetary types and honoured by consecration coins.

PROLOGUE

Memories of Victoria, a Gallic heroine who operated in the Gallic empire (*Imperium Galliarum*) during the times of Postumus (M. Cassianus Latinus Postumus, 260–269), Marius (M. Aurelius Marius, 269), Victorinus (M. Piavonius Victorinus, 269–271) and Tetricus (C. Esuvius Tetricus, 271–274), assumed various forms¹. Without doubt the fragmentary knowledge about her which was preserved in ancient tradition was conducive to this.

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¹ For information about the *Imperium Galliarum*, cf. LAFAURIE 1975: 853–1012; KÖNIG 1981; DRINKWATER 1987; KOTULA 1992: 30–37; LUTHER 2008: 325–341.

Anne DE LESELEUC, in the historical novel entitled *Le secret de Victorina*, based on available ancient accounts and freely developing her own *licentia poetica*, builds the plot focused on the life of Victorina, set against the political background of the western lands of the Roman empire². The protagonist was born in Bordeaux to an aristocratic family, but was familiar with the Eternal City that she admired as a woman of provincial origin. She was a relative of the Gallic emperor Postumus and a friend of the Palmyrene ruler Zenobia, and she gradually developed her career. A spouse of Valentinus, who was killed by the invaders from the other side of the Rhine, she subsequently stood at the side of Postumus and the legions supporting him. She manifested great merit in fights against the barbarians and against the *bagaudae*. She became an *adiutrix* of the emperor. As a result, she was called Victoria, an ideologically significant name which could be a source of concern for the authorities in Rome. It made Victorina/Victoria a Gallic heroine...

The fate of Victorina/Victoria as she is depicted in the novel, with her individual experience, human feelings and desires, is intertwined with the *macro*-history of the Roman state. After all, her fate was set against the background of events which occurred in the tumultuous period of the 3rd century. Moreover, the sources depicting this period of Roman history still provide a base for the reconstruction of various biographies, including such spectacular ones as Victorina/Victoria.

VICTORIA SIVE VITRUVIA IN THE ROMAN HISTORIOGRAPHICAL TRADITION

Victoria – or Vitruvia – was mentioned only by Sex. Aurelius Victor in the *Liber de Caesaribus* and by the author of the *Historia Augusta* (HA), who enlists her among *Tyranni Triginta*³. She was active in the period of the crisis of the 3rd century. She was mother of Victorinus (Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 33, 14; HA *Tyr. trig.* 5, 3; 6, 3; 7, 1; 24, 1; 31, 1) and grandmother of Victorinus junior (HA *Tyr. trig.* 31, 1). She was also thought to be a relative of Tetricus (HA *Tyr. trig.* 24, 1: *adfinis*). She declared her grandson Victorinus *caesar*. However, he was killed shortly thereafter (HA *Tyr. trig.* 6, 3)⁴. She also initiated the ascension to positions of authority in the *Imperium Galliarum* of a number of other pretenders. Among them there were Marius (HA *Tyr. trig.* 5, 3), Tetricus (Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 33, 14; HA *Tyr. trig.* 24, 1; 31, 2) and the son of the latter, Tetricus junior (HA *Tyr. trig.* 5,

² DE LESELEUC 2003. For a different proposal of a novel featuring Victoria as one of the protagonists, see SCHMIDT 1987.

³ *Nomina* – Victoria: Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 33, 14; HA *Tyr. trig.* 7, 1; 25, 1; 30, 23; HA *Claud.* 1, 1; Vitruvia: HA *Claud.* 4, 4; Vitruvia vel Victoria: HA *Tyr. trig.* 5, 3; 6, 3; Vitruvia sive Victoria: HA *Tyr. trig.* 31, 1; Victoria sive Vitruvia: HA *Tyr. trig.* 24, 1.

⁴ He was declared a *caesar* by his father or by his grandmother: HA *Tyr. trig.* 7, 1.

3; 24, 1; 25, 1). She herself was honoured with the title of *augusta* (*HA Tyr. trig.* 5, 3). She also came to be called a *mater castrorum* (*HA Tyr. trig.* 5, 3; 6, 3; 25, 1; 31, 2). She was affluent (*Aur. Vict. Caes.* 33, 14). She did not live long, being supposedly killed during Tetricus' reign (*HA Tyr. trig.* 31, 4). Indeed, she played an impressive role in the Roman state – as the mother of an emperor and the one who created *augusti* and *caesares*. The significance of Victoria in the West was compared to the role of Zenobia, a Palmyrene female ruler, in the East (*HA Tyr. trig.* 30, 23; *HA Claud.* 4, 4)⁵.

Victoria's life quickly turned into legend. As was demonstrated by Tadeusz KOTULA in one of his studies, the colourful details featured in the *HA* obfuscated the modest reality which is suggested in the form of a single mention in the *Liber de Caesaribus*. Victoria's role in the creation of successive Gallic rulers and her personal titles, which are recorded in the literary sources, have no equivalents in both epigraphical material and numismatic data. Hence it is so difficult not only to find any confirmation of Victoria's titles and merits ascribed to her in Roman history, but also to definitely prove her historicity⁶. In this regard we may therefore confine ourselves to the interpretations and conclusions of T. KOTULA and the critical evaluation of data concerning Victoria. The only source of reliable information is a brief mention in the *Liber de Caesaribus*, whereas the data in the *HA* remains either uncertain or false⁷.

Nevertheless, numismatic specimens occupy an important place in the legend which accreted around the figure of Victoria. Recorded by a *scriptor* in the *HA*, they subsequently became a peculiar part of the early modern tradition about Victoria. In the present study, I indicate the meanders of her "life" featured, first of all, in works of numismatic research, especially the ones which date back to the early period of the development of numismatics (16th–19th cent.). However, as I do not intend to indicate the complete corpus of such works, preference will be given to those which in an exceptional way determined the successive stages of Victoria's career as one of the principal figures in the *Imperium Galliarum*⁸.

⁵ The praise of Victoria in contrast to the criticism of Gallienus: *HA Tyr. trig.* 31, 1 and *HA Claud.* I, 1 f.; cf. LAFAURIE 1975: 862.

⁶ KOTULA 1990: 368. Cf. BARNES 1972: 176; CHASTAGNOL 1994: 857; PASCHOUD 2011: 196 f.

⁷ KOTULA 1990: 361–369 (with earlier bibliography): there are no grounds for the acceptance of the alternate names Victoria and Vitruvia, the latter is featured only in the *HA*. One may assume that she was the mother of Victorinus and an affluent figure. Her titles *mater castrorum* and *augusta* are not confirmed by epigraphical evidence. The statement of Zenobia about Victoria remains the stuff of literary anecdote. Her initiative and role in the ascension of Marius and Victorinus remain uncertain; as far as Victorinus junior is concerned, other sources do not mention him. One should rather deny Victoria the initiative of elevating Tetricus junior to the caesarship. She participated in the advancement of Tetricus, which is attested by *Aur. Vict. Caes.* 33, 14. Cf. ELMER 1941: 74; HANSLIK 1958: 2071 f.; LAFAURIE 1975: 864; KÖNIG 1981: 60 and 158–181; DRINKWATER 1987: 35–40; LUTHER 2008: 335 f.

⁸ I do not engage with the question of the authenticity of the numismatic specimens which are described in particular works. Their authors frequently referred to specimens which were familiar to

THE BIRTH OF VICTORIA *VEL* VICTORINA IN THE EARLY MODERN
PERIOD

After centuries of oblivion, Victoria emerged in the early 16th century, when Johann HUTTICH placed her among the ancient figures in the *Imperatorum Romanorum libellus*, published in 1525⁹. He based his account on the detail-rich biography of Victoria contained in the *HA*. This work, which is preserved in medieval manuscripts and which was read and commented upon in the 14th–15th century, had already been published numerous times in that period (*editio princeps* 1475)¹⁰. It is in such a context of the popularity and the recognition of the value of the *HA* that one should place HUTTICH's inclusion of references to Victoria in the section devoted to the *Imagines tyrannorum*. She appeared there as a *mater castrorum* under the name Victoria *vel* Victorina. The latter name directly leads to the figure of emperor Victorinus. Although J. HUTTICH did not establish a direct link between these two figures, his references to Victoria (Victorina) – which was original in reference to the tradition of literary sources – seem to be a mutation of the accounts of the ancients about Victoria's affinity with Victorinus. However, J. HUTTICH repeated all the information about her participation in Tetricus' attainment of the imperial purple and of Tetricus the Younger's receiving of the caesarship¹¹.

The introduction of the information about the numismatic specimens of the mother of Victorinus which was drawn from *HA* was also important. The early *scriptor* wrote the following in her *vita* (*HA Tyr. trig.* 31, 2 f.): “Insignita est praeterea hoc titulo, ut castrorum se diceret matrem. Cusi sunt eius nummi aerei, aurei et argentei, quorum hodieque forma extat apud Treviros”. This account was more or less reliably echoed in early modern literature. It served as a foundation for commentaries about the coins of Victoria/Victorina, about her monetary representations and *tituli*, and about her memory preserved in numismatic specimens. J. HUTTICH noted the following in the *Imperatorum Romanorum libellus*: “Victoria vel Victorina [...] Quae mater castrorum est dicta, in cuius memoriam nummi cusi sunt, diu durantes apud Treviros”¹². The significance of the original piece of information was paraphrased. In the place of coins issued by Victoria, there is the introduction of numismatic specimens which commemorated her. HUTTICH's work does not feature graphical representations of these *nummi*. His

them, among them either to erroneously interpreted ancient numismatic specimens or, in the majority of cases, the products of the early modern period.

⁹ HUTTICH 1525. For Johannes/Joannes HUTTICHUS (c. 1480–1544), see BABELON 1901: 93–95; BERGHAUS 1992: 43–64; CUNNALLY 1999: 197 f.

¹⁰ CALLU 1992: LXXXII f.; LEWANDOWSKI 2007: 410–412.

¹¹ HUTTICH 1525: 43v.

¹² *Ibidem*.

brief note about Victoria was merely graphically supplemented by a simple ring which remains empty, which suggests that it was impossible to seek support in the image of a specimen of a coin (fig. 1).

Some illustrative material was soon created. It was the work of an antiquarian and numismatist, Guillaume ROUILLÉ. In his *Promptuaire des medalles* of 1553 (a Latin edition, *Promptuarium iconum insigniorum a seculo hominum*, was published in the same year), word and image occupy an equal amount of space in the description of the ancient figure¹³. Victoria *seu* Victorina was therefore mentioned in commentaries devoted to those Gallic usurpers, to the extent to which it was described by ancient Roman writers. Victorinus' mother was also described in a relatively comprehensive *commentaire*, in which she received separate treatment. All in all, ROUILLÉ collected biographical notes dispersed in various *loci* of the lives of rules and usurpers in the *HA*, although he basically did not go beyond them¹⁴. In reference to Victoria, he also repeated the following: “fut par les gens de guerre appelee Mere du camp: ce qu'elle accepta, & ainsi se nomma. Elle feit battre monnoye d'aloy, d'argent & d'or”¹⁵. However, the novelty consisted in the “numismatic portrait” of the protagonist who was described. The medallion shows her bust *en profil*, which is identified by an inscription: VICTORIA AVG (fig. 2).



Fig 1. Page of HUTTICH 1525: 43v.

¹³ ROUILLÉ 1553. His work was published in a parallel manner in a number of languages: in French, in Latin and in Italian. For Gulielmus ROVILLIUS (c. 1518–1589), also, e.g., Rouille / Rovillé / Rouville / Rouillio, see BABELON 1901: 95–99; BERGHAUS 1995: 15 f.; CUNNALLY 1999: 96–104, 206.

¹⁴ ROUILLÉ 1553: 61, 69 and 72.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 72.



Fig. 2. Portrait of Victoria. ROUILLÉ
1553: 72.

The works of J. HUTTICH and of G. ROUILLÉ, despite the considerable differences which they manifest, adhere to a similar convention. One may classify these works within the group *libri di medaglie / Bildnisvitenbücher*, i.e. collections of biographies of well-known figures enhanced by monetary portraits, which had been popular since the appearance of the work of Andrea FULVIO: *Illustrium imagines* (1517)¹⁶. However, they occupied a marginal place in the discussion about the essence, peculiar nature and cognitive significance of numismatic specimens which was in progress at that time. Nevertheless, in both works the

numismatic specimens, both authentic ones i.e. those of ancient provenance and the ones which were created on the basis of the ancient ones or made up *ex nihilo* in subsequent periods, served as illustrations of the *hommes & femmes illustres* who were described with “portraits”. These figures, animated in these *quasi-monetary* representations, returned to the sphere of memory and acquired a peculiar immortality¹⁷. Therefore these representations did not have to be realistic

¹⁶ FULVIO 1517. This work comprises 204 chronologically arranged biographical notes, mainly of Roman emperors and their family members, illustrated by portraits on medallions. Cf. BABELON 1901: 91 f. and WEISS 1968: 185 f.: “The real aim of the *Illustrium imagines* was not, however, strictly numismatic, for it really set out to furnish an iconographic repertory, though derived whenever possible from numismatic sources. Thus each person included in it has a medallion with his or her portrait and a short biographical account underneath it [...]. On the other hand those of the imperial age were derived from contemporary coins, and when a coin was not available the space for the medallion was generally left blank”. A more comprehensive description of this trend is presented e.g. in GIARD 1980: 225–245 and 1993: 277–279; BERGHAUS 1995: 13–17; CUNNALLY 1999: 52–65 and 95–104; VEILLON 2008: 12; CHIAI 2013: 219–236; GUILLEMAIN 2013: 70–77; HELMRATH 2013: 397–399.

¹⁷ Cf. ROUILLÉ 1553: 4: “Auquel Promptuaire nous mettons en avant aux yeux les yeux: et aux faces les faces des hommes, et femmes qui depuis le commencement du monde on esté dignes de memoire. Lequel œuvre certes comme il a esté d’un labeur presque incroyable: ainsi esperons nous bien qu’il sera de fruit incomparable. Car les spectateurs de ce Theatre non seulement delecterons leurs yeux, et ne les paistront de vaine peinture: mais aussi rassasieront leurs esprits de la cognoissance tresdigne des choses, et personnes, tellement que comme par un miroir verront en presente contemplation ceux qui des longtemps ne sont plus en vie, estants par cest œuvre rappellez des basses tenebres, en nouvelle lumiere. Ils les regarderont presens par effigie, les entendront parlans pas l’escriture, contempleront leurs hauts faits par l’histoire, et rameneront les temps passez de toute memoire d’homme, iusque à leur siecle present”. In antiquity, one established the purpose and the result of describing famous people in a similar way by not only placing their names but also their representations, cf., e.g., Plin., *HN* XXXV 9–11: “Non est praetereundum et novicium inventum, siquidem non ex auro argentove, at certe ex aere in bibliothecis dicantur illis, quorum immortales animae in locis iisdem locuntur, quin immo etiam quae non sunt finguntur, pariuntque desideria non traditos vultus, sicut in Homero evenit. Quo maius, ut equidem arbitror, nullum est felicitatis specimen quam semper omnes scire cupere, qualis fuerit aliquis. [...]”

portraits or images based on originals. However, they evolved such an iconographical pattern and the style of medallions and ancient coins (*ex antiquis numismatibus*). Attention could be attracted by *imagines agentes*, which may have been enhanced by inscriptions. Along with those inscriptions, these *imagines* constituted an image of a hero who was invested with positive qualities, deeds and merits¹⁸.

THE “LIFE” OF VICTORIA VEL VICTORINA FROM JACOPO STRADA
TO ADOLF OCCO

Epitome thesauri antiquitatum, hoc est, impp. Rom. Orientalium & Occidentalium Iconum, ex antiquis Numismatibus quam fidelissime deliniatarum, was written and published by Jacopo STRADA, an antiquarian, collector and numismatist, in 1553¹⁹. Gallic Victoria is present there in a very interesting way. Referring to details presented in the *HA*, the work features some incomplete episodes from her life²⁰. Then the *Epitome* presents the numismatic history of Victoria in a number of ways. It mentions coins which “in cuius memoriam [...] cusi sunt, quorum forma apud Treuiros extat”²¹. It also gives a description of one of those *nummi*; STRADA notes a difficulty connected with the deciphering of a Greek (*sic*) inscription on the early and damaged specimens: “Numus hic æreus in altera parte imaginem refert aquilæ expansis alis fulmini insidentis. Inscriptio est Græcis characteribus, quæ tamen propter vetustatem cognosci non potuit”. There is an obverse monetary representation of Victoria. Her bust is enhanced by a *titulus*: IMP VICTORIA AVGVSTA (fig. 3)²².



Fig. 3. Portrait of Victoria. STRADA 1553: 151.

Imaginum amorem flagrasse quondam testes sunt Atticus ille Ciceronis edito de iis volumine, M. Varro benignissimo invento insertis voluminum suorum fecunditati etiam septingentorum inlustrium aliquo modo imaginibus, non passus intercideri figuras aut vetustatem aevi contra homines valere, inventor muneris etiam dis invidiosi, quando immortalitatem non solum dedit, verum etiam in omnes terras misit, ut praesentes esse ubique ceu di possent”.

¹⁸ The expressiveness of the representations and the emotions which they caused was pointed out by GIARD 1993: 278.

¹⁹ STRADA 1553. His work was also published in French. For Jacobus STRADA (Jacobus da Strada, Jacopo da Strada, etc; 1505/1515–1588), see BABELON 1901: 112–114; CUNNALLY 1999: 26–33 and 208 f.; HEENES 2010: 295–310.

²⁰ STRADA 1553: 149–152.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 152.

²² *Ibidem*.

There is a striking similarity between the stylisation of Victoria and the representation of Zenobia, a Palmyrene female ruler, who was compared with the Gallic protagonist in the *HA*. This *nummus* will recur in subsequent periods in other numismatic corpora as a mark of the commemoration of Victoria in mintage. However, in STRADA's work, the reader's attention is attracted by a description of another coin from the group of numismatic specimens of two Postumi (*numisma Iunioris*):

Aureus hic numus in altera parte continet Aram, in qua est ignis iniectus. A dextra aræ parte est muliebris statua, longiore veste induta, dextra globum Imperatori ab altera aræ parte stanti offerens, sinistra schedam tenens. A tergo eius duo signa militaria Labarum & Aquila, sunt collocata. Imperator loricated & paludatus ab altera aræ parte stans, sinistra sceptrum gerit, dextra globum oblatum recipit. A tergo eius Tribunus militum adparet, cum tali inscriptione: VICTORIA MATRIS CASTRORVM. Infrà subscriptum: F. M. P. A.²³.

This description refers to the coins of Postumus the Younger, who was supposed to be the son of the founder of the *Imperium Galliarum*²⁴. Although ancient authors did not directly associate the figures of Postumi with Victoria, she was nevertheless a *mater castrorum*, who could metaphorically stand at the side of the rulers who were elevated due to her intervention. It is possible that in the numismatic specimen which is described, her significant role was symbolically transferred to the period of the first of the Gallic emperors, Postumus, for in the content of the *aureus* one exaggerated the role of Victoria, who was mentioned in the passages of the *HA*. Here one may perceive a style which refers to many pretenders who were described in the *HA* and who were represented in content-rich numismatic specimens described in STRADA's *Epitome* and in other early modern works. The *nummi* which were described were the product of the so-called Illustrator of the *Historia Augusta*. This artist operated in the first half of the 16th century. He based his work mainly on the content of the *HA*, which was popular at that time, interpreting it in a more or less faithful or creative manner. By being familiar with the episodes and anecdotes which enhanced the descriptions of the figures of the pretenders, he created numismatic specimens whose content constructed a version of the life and the reign of "tyrants", almost parallel to the message conveyed by the *HA*. Among the pretenders who were described either in the book *Tyranni triginta*, or in *Quadrigae tyrannorum*, e.g. Lollianus, Aureolus, Piso, Proculus, Trebellianus, Herodes, Herennianus, Saturninus, Bonosus and Timolaus, the Gallic Victoria was also featured in such a manner²⁵.

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 142.

²⁴ His presence in numismatic literature is discussed in KLUCZEK 2014b: 351 f. and 359–366 (with a further bibliography).

²⁵ See ESTIOT 2002: 218–225 (*Saturninus et alii*); ESTIOT 2014: 205–218 (*Proculus and Bonosus*); PASCHOUD 2011: 196; KLUCZEK 2017: 513–523. Cf. MISSERE FONTANA 2009: 159–170 (*Tyranni*). Cf. also GIARD 1974: 201 f.: "Les monnaies anciennes, ou plutôt les médailles, comme on disait alors,

Numerous convergences of numismatic slogans with the phrases or themes paraphrased from the *HA* attest that the “Illustrator of the *Historia Augusta*” based his numismatic production on the particular biographies from this collection. Therefore he drew inspiration *inter alia* from the *res fictae* which – apart from reliable and credible information – were provided by the author of the *HA*. As a result of this double invention – first ancient and then early modern – numismatic specimens which referred to the history of the pretenders of the 3rd century were introduced in early modern works. Doubts were repeatedly expressed as to the authenticity of these numismatic specimens. It was pointed out that they differed in terms of their iconography and inscriptions from other ancient coins which are known. For example, Antoine LE POIS (1525–1578), a doctor, a scholar and an antiquarian in one person, wrote the following in the context of STRADA’s work:

Là sont effigiez & portraits les Empereurs & Cesars Romains, avec description de leurs vies & actions principales, au dessous d’iceux. Mais ie crains fort qu’il n’y en ait quelques uns de supposez, estans le revers fort estranges, & quelquefois les inscriptions d’iceux esloignees de la façon d’escrire des anciens²⁶.

However, the products of the work of the “Illustrator of the *Historia Augusta*” were frequently considered to be authentic numismatic specimens. Many of the *nummi* of this early modern artist which were treated in this manner found their way into numismatic corpora of other authors in the 16th century. Also Hubert GOLTZ, in the *Thesaurus rei antiquariae* of 1579, made reference to numismatic specimens which represented content drawn from ancient literature²⁷. In the *Thesaurus*, Victoria appeared under the name Victorina²⁸. Her status was represented in the following manner: “Victorina Augusta, Castrorum Mater”, and *nummi* with inscriptions were also ascribed to her: AURELIA VICTORINA AUG., VICTORINA PIA FELIX AUG.²⁹

In Adolf OCCO’s work entitled *Impp. Romanorum Numismata a Pompeo Magno ad Heraclium*, also published in 1579, Victoria emerges merely from the accounts of the reign of her son, Victorinus, and the advancement of her

connaissaient une vogue considérable [...]. Faussaires, imitateurs et inventeurs l’avaient belle pour écouler leur production”. See BIMARD DE LA BASTIE 1739: XII (Préface de l’éditeur): “dans ce tems-là (*scil. c.* 1560), il y avoit près de 200 Cabinets dans lès Pays-Bas, 175 en Allemagne, plus de 380 en Italie, & environ 200 en France”. Cf. WEISS 1969: 180–202.

²⁶ LE POIS 1579: 2v–3. Cf. also AGOSTINI 1592: 9; BABELON 1901: 116; GIARD 1974: 192–211 (esp. 195); GUILLEMAIN 2013: 74.

²⁷ GOLTZ 1579. For Hubertus GOLTZIUS (1526–1583), see BABELON 1901: 102–105; DEKESEL 1988; DEKESEL 2005: 259–279; CUNNALLY 1999: 190–195; WREDE 2013: 91–100.

²⁸ GOLTZ 1579: 73.

²⁹ *Ibidem*.

grandson³⁰. The following phrase sounds particularly significant: “Victorini f. Victoriae nepos, à patre & auia sub eadem hora qua Victorinus interemptus, Cæsar nuncupatus...”³¹. In the second edition of the work (1601), a numismatic note devoted to Victoria was greatly extended. With reference to H. GOLTZ, the *nummi* of Victoria *aut* Victorina herself were introduced (Vxor M. Aur. Victorini): “AVRELIA VICTORINA AVG. *alius* PIA FELIX AVG.”³². With reference, in turn, to the authority of Fulvio ORSINI (1529–1600) the *nummi* were described in a comprehensive manner with the following reverse:

[A. OCCO] ...ara ardens, & mulier, dextra orbem Imp. porrigens, à tergo signa aquila & labarum. Imp. loricatedus & paludatus, sceptrum gerens læva, dextra orbem, cui tribunus militum adest cum inscript. VICTORIA MATER CASTRORVM F. M. P. A.³³.

[F. ORSINI] ...pertinet aureum Victorini numisma, in cuius altera parte signata est ara ardens, & mulier dextra orbem Imperatori porrigens, ac sinistra volumen tenens; à tergo sunt signa, aquilæ & labarum, Imperatorque loricatedus & paludatus, sceptrum gerens læva, dextra orbem, cui tribunus militum adest cum inscriptione: VICTORIA. MATER. CASTRORVM. F. M. P. A.³⁴.

This reverse resembles an example from STRADA’s work. Nevertheless, in the works of OCCO and ORSINI, *aurei nummi* belong to emperor Victorinus. In further re-impressions and supplemented editions of the work of A. OCCO (1625, 1683, 1730), the figure of Victorina was recalled (for this version of the name was preferred), and the fragments which were devoted to her repeated the traditional references about her role as the mother and the grandmother of the Victorini³⁵. The descriptions of numismatic specimens which referred to her were also replicated. However, the ones which featured the theme of *mater castrorum* were replicated only in 1625³⁶. The descriptions of coins were featured in catalogues for a longer period of time: “AURELIA VICTORINA AUG., *aliis* PIA FELIX AUG.” (fig. 4)³⁷.

³⁰ OCCO 1579. For Adolphus OCCONUS (1524–1606), see BABELON 1901: 110 f.; CUNNALLY 1999: 202 f.; MISSERE FONTANA 2006: 297–354; KLUCZEK 2014a: 25–37.

³¹ OCCO 1579: 336.

³² OCCO 1601: 487 and 490.

³³ *Ibidem*, p. 487.

³⁴ ORSINI 1595: 511. For more detailed information about the author, see DE NOLHAC 1884: 139–231; BABELON 1901: 105–110; CUNNALLY 1999: 203–205.

³⁵ OCCO 1625: 487–490. Here the merits in the elevation of the Tetrici were also recorded. MEZZABARBA 1683: 398 f.; ARGELATI 1730: 398 f.

³⁶ OCCO 1625: 487. Cf. p. 490: “Cusi sunt eius nummi ærei, aurei & arg. Tetrico imperante obijt. Mater Castrorum dicta”.

³⁷ OCCO 1625: 487; MEZZABARBA 1683: 399; ARGELATI 1730: 399.



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VICTORINA, seu VICTORIA

Mater Victorini Aug. Filio, & Nepote interfectis Imperium in Gallis suscipit, Tetricoque participat. (1)

(2) COSS. Ovinus Paternus II. Marinianus.

*A.U.C. 1021.
Christi 208.*

AURELIA VICTORINA AVG. alius PIA FELIX AVG. Goltzius.

**(3) IMP. VICTORIA AVG. Caput Galeatum.
* J. L. Aquila expansis alis. Strada f. 150.**

Fig. 4. Coin of Victorina seu Victoria. ARGELATI 1730: 399.

“FEMME DE BON ESPRIT & DE GRAND SENS, MAGNANIME & GENEUSE”, I.E. A GLOSS ON THE NUMISMATIC SPECIMENS

Information about the deeds and features of Victoria emerged from a few biographies of emperors and usurpers contained in the *HA* and almost always continued to be an integral part of early modern works. In sections or longer chapters devoted to the Gallic female ruler, the image constructed from these pieces of information was equal to the numismatic specimens which were described. However, emphasis was sometimes placed differently. A commentary on the fates, merits and virtues of a unique personality which was supposed to be represented by Victoria became a testimony of the first order of her presence in early modern works.

In his *Commentaires historiques, contenant l'histoire generale des empereurs, imperatrices, césars et tyrans de l'Empire romain* (1644) Jean TRISTAN (1595?–1656) went beyond a simple enumeration of the inscriptions and themes featured on numismatic specimens. However, the numismatic specimens also became important for this author because the inscriptions which are featured on them furnished an argument in favour of the acceptance of the alternative version of the name Victoria/Victorina (“...VICTORINA, & en l’vne AVRELIA VICTORINA AVG, comme en l’autre VICTORINA PIA FELIX AVG”). Both forms of the name were popular in the Roman world, as was concluded by TRISTAN on the basis of epigraphical testimonies³⁸. According to him, the *imperatorice* Victoria became the sister of Postumus – which was supposed to be confirmed by epigraphical data. This may, in turn, account for the first alliance

³⁸ TRISTAN 1644: 202. Also “deux Inscriptions de Monnoyes rapportées par Goltzius” became an argument for him.

of the Gallic ruler with one of the successive ones: Victorinus³⁹. TRISTAN lauded the qualities of the spirit and the valour of Victoria (“elle estoit femme de bon esprit & de grand sens, magnanime & genereuse”), and her contribution to the Victorini (“Piauuonius Victorinus, & Lucius Aurelius Victorinus”), the son and the grandson, as well as to Tetricus. Her greatness was recognised even by Zenobia, with whom she was supposed to share power over the entire world. In a long passage in the *Commentaires historiques*, a faithful echo of praises directed toward Victoria/Vitruvia by ancient authors may be identified⁴⁰.

An encomiastic description of the Gallic protagonist was also repeated by Guillaume BEAUVAIS (1698–1773) in his *Histoire abrégée des empereurs romains et grecs, des impératrices et des césars, des tyrans et des personnes des familles impériales* (1767). According to his portrayal, Victorina/Victoria was gifted with virtues to the greatest extent; she gained the trust of military troops, the title of *augusta* and the title of *mater castrorum*, as well as the following:

Cette Princesse qui paroissoit plus qu’humaine, ne concevoit que des desseins hardis: suivant le portrait qu’on nous a laissé de Victorine, elle portoit sur son front cette fierté tranquille qui annonce des avantages quand on attaque ses ennemis: elle exécutoit ses entreprises avec succès, & conduisoit presque toujours ses soldats à des victoires assurées⁴¹.

She brought about a situation in which her sons Victorinus, Marius, Tetricus became *augusti*, whereas her grandsons Victorinus junior and Tetricus junior became *caesares*. She left the political stage in uncertain circumstances. According to some she died *naturales ob causas*, according to others – and here G. BEAUVAIS creatively developed an alternative provided in the *HA* – it was emperor Tetricus, envious about her authority over the military and desirous of wielding power individually, who sentenced her to death⁴². This did not change the fact that according to this author Victorina/Victoria gained immortal fame⁴³.

“IN CUIUS MEMORIAM NUM(M)I AUREI, ARGENTEI & ÆREI CUSI SUNT”

Let us return to the coin issued in order to commemorate Victorina with an image of an eagle on the reverse, which was introduced in STRADA’s catalogue (cf. fig. 5)⁴⁴.

³⁹ TRISTAN 1644: 201; cf. p. 163; he sought a connection between Postumus and Victorinus in the inscription. Cf. MAZOCHIUS 1521: 144v.

⁴⁰ TRISTAN 1644: 201 f., 223 and 233.

⁴¹ BEAUVAIS 1767: 63 f.

⁴² *Ibidem*, p. 64 f. Cf. *HA Tyr. trig.* 3I, 4.

⁴³ BEAUVAIS 1767: 63.

⁴⁴ STRADA 1553: 152. Cf. ESTIOT 2002: 222, n^{os} 13 and 224. See also STRADA 1615: 150 f., n^o 209: IM[P] VICTORIA AVG, the helmeted bust of Victoria / eagle with wings spread. Cf. MISSERE FONTANA 2009:



Fig. 5. Coin of Victoria. STRADA 1615: 150, n° 209.

The description of this piece was developed by a Milanese scholar, Francesco MEZZABARBA (Mediobarbus, 1645–1697) in his *Imperatorum Romanorum numismata* (1683):

IMP VICTORIA AVG. Caput Galeatum.
Aquila expansis alis⁴⁵.

He supplemented this piece of information with a graphical representation of the monetary obverse, which presents Victoria's bust. Then a Bolognese antiquarian, Filippo ARGELATI (1685–1755), placed the following description and image of the coin in a later edition of the *Imperatorum Romanorum Numismata* (published in 1730)⁴⁶. Such mentions were then repeated by others. They included Anselmo BANDURI (1670–1743), the author of the *Numismata Imperatorum Romanorum a Traiano Decio ad Palaeologos Augustos* (1718). He expressed certain objections as to the data which was provided by his predecessors and he classified the specimen in the category: “Nummus incerti metalli ac moduli”⁴⁷. In the *Supplementum ad Banduri Numismata Imperatorum Romanorum* (1791) Girolamo TANINI provided a more accurate description of the *nummus*:

166, n. 212. Cf. coins of the Ostrogoths probably struck in the times of Theodoric and Athalaric (c. 493–534): INVICTA ROMA, bust of Roma, wearing a crested helmet / eagle with wings spread; WROTH 1911: 102 f., n^{os} 6–18, pl. XIII 2–8; cf. DI PAOLA 2002: 149; OVERBECK 2005: 159 f.

⁴⁵ MEZZABARBA 1683: 399.

⁴⁶ ARGELATI 1730: 399. For more detailed information about the author, see LUPPI 1889: 287–293; MISSERE FONTANA 2000: 159–215.

⁴⁷ BANDURI 1718: 324 and n. 1. Cf. pp. 399, 407, 446, 458 f. and 469, also about Victoria in the context of the elevation of Tetricus and Tetricus junior.

IMP VICTORIA AVG. Caput Victorinae galeatum.
 CONSECRATIO. Aquila alis expansis fulmine insistens; in exergo S C⁴⁸.

He also indicated that it was a “numus aereus tertiae formae”, which additionally provides evidence about an apotheosis which Victorina acquired owing to Tetricus’ will. After all, this would be an argument for the idea that this ruler could not have killed the *augusta*, but that she died a natural death⁴⁹.

In the work entitled *Doctrina numorum veterum conscripta* (1797) a Jesuit scholar, Joseph Hilarius ECKHEL (1737–1798), ascribed the type CONSECRATIO to two different obverses. The first one – with the inscription IMP VICTORIA AVG – was the same specimen which had been described as *singularis nummus* since the middle of the 16th century (“museo d’Ennery”), the second one – with the inscription IMP VICTORINA AVG – was a new specimen (“museo Pembrock”). However, ECKHEL expressed certain doubts as to the authenticity of these specimens, having written the following:

Si verum est testimonium Trebellii narrantis in haec verba: *cusi sunt ejus numi aerei, aurei, et argentei, quorum hodieque forma exstat apud Treviros*, non desperandum de aliis ejus numis, quos olim proferat tempus, tametsi mirum, ejus vix unum alterumve circumferri, et quem major pars vix genuinum credet, cum tamen aliorum ejus aevi Galliae tyrannorum abundant numi⁵⁰.

However, this opinion should be treated as exceptional. Other editors uncritically featured these coins to their catalogues⁵¹. Théodore Edmé MIONNET (1770–1842) described them in the relevant volume of the work entitled *De la rareté et du prix des médailles romaines* (1815), but also in later editions of this book⁵². John Yonge AKERMAN (1806–1873) repeated this piece of information⁵³. Thus, until the middle of the 19th century, numismatic literature featured descriptions of consecration coins, whose creator was the previously mentioned “Illustrator of the *Historia Augusta*”. A hint was contained in the life of Victoria in the *HA* in the form of a mention about her coins (*eius nummi*). Nevertheless, as we know,

⁴⁸ TANINI 1791: 125.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁰ ECKHEL 1797: 454. The author evinced criticism toward the sources. He preferred the name Victorina, for only one codex preserves the reading Vitruvia. He quoted the content of the inscription: “DIS. MANIBVS / L. VICTORINI. VICTORIA / PISSIMA. VICTORINI. VXOR. etc.”. See also pp. 437, 450 and 452 f. For more detailed information about the author, see BABELON 1901: 187 f.; VEILLON 2008: 96–100.

⁵¹ Cf. BEAUVAIS 1767: 65: “RRR, en P.B. il y en a une véritablement antique, dans le Cabinet de M. d’Ennery, avec la tête casquée & la Légende IMP. VICTORIA AUG. au revers CONSECRATIO. L’aigle les ailes éployées sur la foudre...”.

⁵² MIONNET 1815: 302; also 1827: 76 and 1858: 76. On him see BABELON 1901: 197–202.

⁵³ AKERMAN 1834: 68.

it was J. HUTTICH who already interpreted it as information about *nummi* which were issued *in memoriam*.

Some ascribed the consecration of Victorinus to the initiative of Victoria herself. Such an argument was expressed by A. BANDURI in the commentaries on the coins DIVO VICTORINO PIO / CONSECRATIO and DIVO VICTORINO PIO / CONSACRATIO⁵⁴. In this context, he also recalled the piece of information provided in the *HA* that, after the death of emperor Victorinus and his namesake son, a tomb was erected for them on which the following epitaph was placed: “Hic duo Victorini Tyranni siti sunt”⁵⁵.

“SOUS LES TRAITS DE VICTORINE”

Henry COHEN (1806–1880) explained the presence of Victoria in mintage in yet another way. In a brief historical commentary featured in the work entitled *Description historique des monnaies frappées sous l'Empire Romain* (1861), he accepted the contribution of Victoria in the advancement of the emperors: first of Victorinus, then Marius and Tetricus⁵⁶. He had the original idea that one may not rule out the existence of allusions to Victoria in a series of Victorinus' gold coins, whose obverse iconography presents original single or double busts. According to H. COHEN, Victoria was stylised to represent the goddess Victory, as depicted on the *aurei* of the VICTORIA AVG type (fig. 6)⁵⁷, and Roma, as depicted on the reverses of the ROMAE AETERNAE type⁵⁸. The reverses of the *aurei* of the VOTA AVGVSTI type “sous les traits de Victorine” showed Diana, her bust being juxtaposed with the bust of Apollo, and to the latter one the properties of Victorinus junior were accorded⁵⁹. It is also possible that Victorina's

⁵⁴ BANDURI 1718: 312 and n. 2; 319 and n. 1. Cf. VAILLANT 1743: 14; ECKHEL 1797: 452. Cf. commemorative *antoniniani* CONSACRATIO: ELMER 1941, n° 715; SCHULZKI 1996, D. Vict., n° 1; cf. LUTHER 2008: 336.

⁵⁵ BANDURI 1718: 312. See: *HA Tyr. trig.* 7, 2. The information about the epitaph was made up, cf. CHASTAGNOL 1994: 842 f.

⁵⁶ COHEN 1861: 62 and 75; COHEN 1886: 85 and 90. On him, see BABELON 1901: 218 f.; AMANDRY 1980; VEILLON 2008: 107–109.

⁵⁷ COHEN 1861, Vict. et Victorine?, n° 2: IMP VICTORINVS PIVS AVG, busts of Victorinus and Mars / VICTORIA AVG, bust of Victorina? (or Victory); n° 1: IMP VICTORINVS AVG, bust of Victorinus / VICTORIA AVG, bust of Victorina? (or Victory). Cf. SCHULTE 1983, Vict. n° 10 (*aureus*): IMP VICTORINVS PIVS AVG, busts of emperor and Mars / VICTORIA AVG, bust of Victory; n° 11–12: IMP VICTORINVS AVG, bust of emperor / VICTORIA AVG, bust of Victory.

⁵⁸ COHEN 1861, Vict. p., n° 60: IMP VICTORINVS P F AVG, bust of Victorinus / ROMAE AETERNAE, bust of Roma “sous les traits de Victorine?”. Cf. SCHULTE 1983, Vict., n° 16 (*aureus*): IMP CAES VICTORINVS P F AVG, bust of emperor / ROMAE AETERNAE, bust of Roma.

⁵⁹ COHEN 1861, Vict. p., n° 83: IMP VICTORINVS P F AVG, bust of Victorinus / VOTA AVGVSTI, busts of Apollo and Diana (“sous les traits de Victorine?”); and COHEN 1886, Vict. p., n° 137: VOTA AVGVSTI, busts of Victorinus junior? (“sous les traits d'Apollon”), and Diana (“sous



6. Coin of Victorinus. COHEN 1861: 76, n° 1.

bust with a helmet on her head was represented as one of the elements of reverse iconography on coins of the LEG IIII FLAVIA P F type⁶⁰.

It is a set of *aurei* in which Victorina would be concealed anonymously – “sans son nom” – in the reverse representations of the coins of her son Victorinus. H. COHEN himself explained that, indeed, it was risky to introduce another figure to the catalogue of numismatic protagonists, for in the given case the point was about an *augusta* and a famous figure⁶¹.

Subsequently, such an interpretation of representations was accepted by an expert in the coinage of “Gallic” rulers, Jean Joseph Antoine Marie DE WITTE (1808–1889). According to him, the allusions to Victoria could have been featured in the series of Victorinus in the form of the representations of the goddess Victoria (VICTORIA AVGVSTI)⁶² and Roma (ROMAE AETERNAE)⁶³. Victoria herself also could have issued coins. On her own initiative – or on the initiative of Tetricus the Elder – coins were created with a portrait of Tetricus I on the obverses, whereas the reverses featured the image of Postumus or Victorinus as well as their titles. Thus the creators of the *Imperium Galliarum* were commemorated⁶⁴.

* * *

les traits de Victorine?”). Cf. SCHULTE 1983, Vict., n° 27 (*aureus*): IMP VICTORINVS P F AVG, bust of emperor / VOTA AVGVSTI, busts of Apollo and Diana.

COHEN 1861, Vict. p., n° 84: IMP CAES VICTORINVS P F AVG, bust of Victorinus / VOTA AVGVSTI, busts of Apollo and Diana (“sous les traits de Victorine?”); and COHEN 1886, Vict. p., n° 138: VOTA AVGVSTI, bust of Roma (“sous les traits de Victorine?”) and Diana. Cf. SCHULTE 1983, Vict. n° 24 (*aureus*): IMP CAES VICTORINVS P F AVG, bust of emperor / VOTA AVGVSTI, busts of Roma and Diana. Cf. also BRENOT 1972: 255–258.

⁶⁰ COHEN 1861, Vict. p., n° 37. Cf. VAILLANT 1743: 15: Pallas. Current identification: Africa – DE WITTE 1868: 100, n° 36; ELMER 1941, n° 715 and SCHULTE 1983, Vict., n° 33 (*aureus*).

⁶¹ COHEN 1861: 75; cf. COHEN 1886: 85.

⁶² DE WITTE 1868: 113, n° 90, 114, n° 91.

⁶³ *Ibidem*, p. 110, n° 77 and 78.

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 175, n° 1 and 2. Cf. RIC V 2, Tetr. I, n° 197–199 (*quinarius*).

The case of Victoria/Victorina reflects the reception of ancient forms both by the representation of content drawn from ancient literature and by the copying of ancient artefacts. The expression of this reception had to do with the creation of numismatic specimens which refer to Victoria/Victorina, and also the interpreting of the content of authentic Roman coins in the context of the figure of the “Gallic” female ruler⁶⁵. As far as the rank of Victoria and her significance in the *Imperium Galliarum* is concerned, her biography, which was built on such monetary types, was basically convergent with what emerged from ancient literary sources. By taking this data as a point of departure, in an original way but adhering to the stylisation of the figure which was taken over from the antiquity – the titles of Victoria were enhanced and her *nomina* were even supplemented. She became not only Victoria *mater castrorum*, but also Aurelia Victorina Augusta, Victorina Pia Felix Augusta, Imperatrix Victoria/Victorina Augusta. On the basis of the information drawn from the work of Aurelius Victor and creatively treated passages from the *HA*, the career of Victoria/Victorina experienced rapid growth, especially from the middle of the 16th century. There is a consensus among researchers with reference to suppositions that the first erroneous pieces of information about Victoria could have originated as early as antiquity, due to the representation of the goddess Victoria in reverses of imperial coins of the VICTORIA AVG type⁶⁶. The reverse inscription written in the form of an abbreviation may be resolved in the following way: *Victoria Aug(usti)*, i.e. the *victoria* of an emperor (*augustus*), or *Victoria Aug(usta)*, i.e. the goddess Victoria Augusta. One may also decipher – erroneously or intentionally – the abbreviation as Victoria Augusta, i.e. a female ruler by the name of Victoria who bore the title of *augusta*⁶⁷. After all, those who assumed power in the Imperium could announce their status *inter alia* by issuing their own numismatic specimens (*HA Tyr. trig.* 26, 2; 31, 3; *HA Quadr. Tyr.* 2, 1–3). This in turn solidified the belief in the existence of the coins also of our Victoria. This was demonstrated by examples selected from numismatic corpora. It was Robert Knight MOWAT (1823–1912), who based his work on the account of the *HA*, who initially expressed an opinion that in the period of Constantine the collection of numismatic specimens was familiar, and then he expressed the hope that authentic specimens, heretofore unknown, could be unearthed⁶⁸. Nevertheless, the Gallic *augusta* Victoria was gradually eliminated from numismatic catalogues⁶⁹.

⁶⁵ See, for example, *aurei* CONCORDIA MILITVM (SCHULTE 1983, Mar., n^{os} 3 and 4), cf. BANDURI 1718: 325; VAILLANT 1743: 18.

⁶⁶ KÖNIG 1981: 160; KOTULA 1990: 364. Cf. MENADIER 1914: 19–23. For the inspiration possible *vide supra*: note 44 (bronzes of the Ostrogoths).

⁶⁷ CHASTAGNOL 1994: 857 f.

⁶⁸ MOWAT 1895: 165 f.

⁶⁹ A sceptical position in reference to the alleged portrait of Victoria in the series of coins of Victorinus was assumed by P.H. WEBB, *RIC* V 2: 326 f. and 382. This possibility, as a piece of trivia drawn

The example of Victoria vel Victorina demonstrates the extent of the permanence which could be represented by early numismatic specimens as carriers of ideas. On the one hand, the content of ancient coins reflected, obviously to a varying extent, the current problems of the period of the issuers, therefore they may enhance our knowledge of this early world. On the other hand, the association of coins with authority and the identified principles of the emission of said coins could provide (in the modern period) grounds for a peculiar understanding of the antiquity and also, by the creation of numismatic specimens which were thematically dependent on ancient texts, an appreciation of ancient tradition.

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